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Philosophy in Qajar Iran

Edited by

Reza Pourjavady



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Cover illustration: The Mausoleum of Abū l-Ḥasan Jilwa (d. 1314/1897) in Ibn Bābawayh Cemetery of Tehran.
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Introduction

Reza Pourjavady

1 Early Scholarship on the Philosophers of the Qajar Era

The first European scholar who showed interest in the indigenous philosophical thought of Qajar Iran was the French romantic race theorist, Joseph Arthur Comte de Gobineau (d. 1882). Working as a French diplomat, Gobineau travelled twice to Iran, first as a chargé d'affaires (1856–8) and then as ambassador (minister) (1862–3). It seems that it was during his second trip that Gobineau pursued his intellectual interests, first with the help of some of the students of the distinguished philosopher Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī (d. 1289/1873), and then with the help of a philosopher living in Tehran, Āqā 'Alī Ṭīhrānī (d. 1305/1888). In his *Les religions et les philosophies dans l'Asie centrale*, published first in 1865, Gobineau provided a descriptive account of the latest philosophical trends in “Persia”.¹ Presumably, under the influence of Āqā 'Alī Ṭīhrānī, Gobineau points to Mullā Ṣadrā (d. 1045/1635–36) as the person who revived the philosophical tradition in Safavid Iran.² Following Mullā Ṣadrā, Gobineau named and gave short biographical accounts of forty-nine other philosophers. Of these, only three were from the Safavid period, a few were active at the late eighteenth century at the cusp of the Qajar period, and the rest were Qajar philosophers who were either active in the early nineteenth century or were Gobineau's contemporaries, including the aforementioned Sabzawārī and Āqā 'Alī. The author generally refrains from mentioning his source. However, he indicates on one occasion that Āqā 'Alī was his source of information.³ Apart from his verbal exchange with the latter, Āqā 'Alī wrote for Gobineau a short treatise, containing biographical accounts of the philosophers of Iran from the late fifteenth century onwards.⁴ Despite his interest in mapping this philosophical

1 Joseph Arthur Comte de Gobineau, *Les religions et les philosophies dans l'Asie centrale* (Paris: Leroux, 1900), pp. 63–112.

2 Ibid., pp. 86–91.

3 Ibid., p. 98.

4 See Sayyid Muḥammad 'Alī Jamālzāda, “Mīrāth-i Gubīnu (Sanad-i Chahārūm u Panjum),” *Yaghmā* 154 (1340 Sh./1961), pp. 63–68. According to Jamālzāda the work is preserved in two pieces in the Bibliothèque nationale et universitaire de Strasbourg, files no. 66 and 68. Jamālzāda presented transcription of one of these pieces (file no. 68) in the article mentioned above. Sayyid Ibrāhīm Ashkīshīrīn has published these two pieces together. See “Ṭabaqāt-i

tradition in Iran and the significance of the biographical accounts that he provided, Gobineau knew almost nothing about the ideas of these individuals.

In the early 20th century, Muhammad Iqbal (d. 1938) in his doctoral dissertation, titled *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, devoted a chapter to "Later Persian Thought".⁵ Iqbal maintained there that Mullā Ṣadrā's metaphysics was the "the final step which the Persian intellect took towards complete monism".⁶ He further identified this development as a "movement towards Platonism" which was best illustrated in philosophical works of Sabzawārī.⁷ Iqbal provided an account of Sabzawārī's metaphysics and psychology based on the latter's book *Asrār al-ḥikam*.⁸ He also referred to Bābī and Bahā'ī movement and traced its roots back to the thoughts of Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsā'ī. The latter was introduced as "an enthusiastic student of Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophy".⁹ A few years later, in 1912 and 1913, the German orientalist, Max Horten (d. 1945) studied the works of two philosophers of Safavid Iran, namely Mullā Ṣadrā and 'Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī (d. 1072/1661–62).¹⁰ However, apart from a few references to Sabzawārī, Horten did not show interest in the writings of the Qajar philosophers.¹¹

Studies on the philosophical tradition of the Qajar period resumed in the second half of the 20th century. One of the pioneers was Henry Corbin (d. 1978). Corbin's interest in the intellectual history of this period was initially limited to Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsā'ī (d. 1241/1826) and his followers. This interest can

ḥukamā'-i muta'akkkhirin," in Muḥammad Ra'īszāda, Fāṭima Minā'ī, Sayyid Aḥmad Hāshimī (ed.), *Jashnnāma-yi Duktur Muḥsin Jahāngīrī* (Tehran: Nashr-i Kitāb-i Hirmis, 1386 Sh./2007), pp. 35–58.

5 Muhammad Iqbal, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia: A Contribution to the History of Muslim Philosophy* (London: Luzac and Company, 1908).

6 M. Iqbal, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, p. 175.

7 Ibid., p. 175.

8 Ibid., pp. 175–186. Iqbal used the lithograph edition of *Asrār al-ḥikam* (Tehran, 1286/1869). It is notable that Iqbal falsely assumed Sabzawārī lived in the 18th century. See M. Iqbal, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, p. 175.

9 Ibid., p. 187.

10 See Max Horten, *Die Gottesbeweise bei Schirazi (1640 [gest.]): Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie im Islam* (Bonn: Cohen, 1912); idem, *Das philosophische System von Schirāzi (1640 [gest.]): übersetzt und erläutert* (Strassburg: K. J. Trübner, 1913); idem, "Die philosophischen und theologischen Ansichten von Lahígi (ca. 1670): nach seinem Werke, „die aufgehenden Sterne der Offenbarung“, einem Kommentare zur Dogmatik des Ṭūsī (1273 [gest.])", *Der Islam* 3 (1912): 91–131.

11 M. Horten, *Das philosophische System von Schirāzi (1640 [gest.])*, pp. 1 (fn. 2), 6 (fn. 25), 17 (fn. 11), 197–199. Horton's *Das philosophische System von Schirāzi* consists of a partial translation of Mullā Ṣadrā's *al-Hikma al-muta'āliya fī asfār al-'aqliyya al-arba'a* based on its 1282/1865 Tehran lithograph edition. This lithograph edition contains, on the margins, Sabzawārī's gloss on Mullā Ṣadrā's work. Horton sometimes consulted this gloss.

be traced back as early as 1954, when Corbin wrote an article on resurrection according to the Mazdeans, the Ishrāqīs and the Shaykhīs, i.e., the followers of Shaykh Aḥmad.¹² He later developed the ideas discussed in the article into an extensive chapter on Shaykh Aḥmad and his followers in his *Terre céleste et corps de résurrection: de l'Iran mazdéen à l'Iran shi'ite*, first published in 1960.¹³ Corbin continued his studies on the Shaykhīs in the following years.¹⁴ Particularly noteworthy here is his discussion on the Shaykhiyya School in volume four of his *En Islam iranien: aspects spirituels et philosophiques*, first published in 1973.¹⁵

A broader study of the philosophers of the Qajar period was started in the 1960s in Iran by Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (d. 1384 Sh./2005). In 1964, Āshtiyānī edited Muḥammad Ja'far Lāhijī's (d. ca. 1251/1835–36) commentary on Mullā Ṣadrā's *Risālat al-Mashā'ir*. Āshtiyānī asked Jalāl al-Dīn Humā'ī (d. 1359 Sh./1980) to write an introduction to this work, which was the first attempt to elucidate developments in philosophy in the Qajar period.¹⁶ Later Āshtiyānī himself acknowledged that he had followed in the footsteps of Humā'ī in the introduction he wrote on the work as well as in his later publications.¹⁷ The significance of Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī's studies and his editions of philosophical works of this period can hardly be exaggerated. However, while reading his related works, one needs to be conscious about his deliberate exclusion, or at times debasement, of the thought of Shaykh Aḥmad and his

12 Henry Corbin, "Terre céleste et corps de résurrection d'après quelques traditions iraniennes (Mazdéisme, Ishrāq, Shaykhisme)," *Eranos-Jahrbuch* XXII 1953 (Zurich: Rhein-Verlag, 1954), pp. 97–194.

13 This book has been translated into English by Nancy Pearson, under the following title: *Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth: From Mazdean Iran to Shi'ite Iran* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977).

14 In 1961 Corbin published "L'École shaykhie en théologie shi'ite," *Annuaire de l'École pratique des hautes études, Section des sciences religieuses* 68 (1960–1961): 3–59. In the following years, Corbin continued to publish writings on Aḥsā'ī and his school. See Henry Corbin, "Le commentaire de Qāzī Sa'īd Qommī sur le Tawḥīd de Shaykh Sadūq, livre III et commentaire du Hadīth du Nuage blanc," and "L'École shaykhie: Le livre des enseignements de Shaykh Ahmad Aḥsā'ī (suite)" (Rapport sur les cours 1966–1967), *Annuaire de l'École Pratique des Hautes Études, Section des Sciences religieuses* 75 (1966): 138–146; idem, "La gnose islamique dans le recueil des traditions (Mashāriq al-Anwār) de Rajab Borsī" and "Le pèlerinage spirituel aux douze Imāms (al-Ziyārat al-Jāmi'a) et le commentaire de Shaykh Ahmad Aḥsā'ī" (Rapport sur les cours 1967–1968), *Annuaire de l'École Pratique des Hautes Études, Section des Sciences religieuses* 77 (1968): 148–156.

15 Paris: Gallimard, 1973, pp. 232–255. This volume was republished in 1978 and 1991.

16 Muḥammad Ja'far Lāhijī, *Sharḥ Risālat al-Mashā'ir*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (Mashhad: Zuwar, 1384 /1964).

17 Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, "Ḥakīm-i Muḥaqqiq Ḥājī Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī," *Muṭāla'āt-i Islāmī* 1 (1347 Sh./1968): 9–22 (11–12).

followers. In 1966, Āshtiyānī published the edition of *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya* together with glosses by Sabzawārī.¹⁸ In the introduction to this edition, Āshtiyānī mapped the reception of Ṣadrīan philosophy in the period following Mullā Ṣadrā's death, particularly in the Qajar era. Two years later, in 1968, Āshtiyānī wrote an article on the life and works of Sabzawārī.¹⁹ Āshtiyānī's *Anthologie des philosophes iraniens depuis le XVII^e siècle jusqu'à nos jours*, published in 1980, contains editions of several philosophical works by Qajar philosophers, namely, *Qurrat al-ʿuyūn* by Mullā Mahdī Narāqī (d. 1209/1795),²⁰ *Tahqīq fi qāʿidat basīṭ al-ḥaqīqa* and *Risāla fi waḥdat al-wujūd* by Mullā ʿAlī Nūrī (d. 1246/1831), and *Kitāb al-Tuḥfa* by Mullā Nazār ʿAlī Gīlānī (d. 1206/1791–92 or 1217/1802). Besides this volume, Āshtiyānī edited numerous other works by Qajar philosophers. These include a collection of treatises by Sabzawārī (1969),²¹ Mullā ʿAbd Allāh Zunūzī's (d. 1257/1841–42) *Anwār-i jalīyya* (1976),²² Āqā Muḥammad Ridā Qumshaʿī (d. 1306/1888) and Āqā Mīrzā Maḥmūd Burūjirdī's (d. 1337/1918–19) glosses on Ṣāʿin al-Dīn Turka's (d. 835/1432) *Tamhīd al-qawāʿid* (1976),²³ Narāqī's *al-Lumʿa al-ilāhiyya wa-l-kalimāt al-wajīza* (1978),²⁴ Zunūzī's *Lamaʿāt al-ilāhiyya* (1982),²⁵ and Mīrzā Hāshim Ashkiwarī's (d. 1332/1914) glosses on Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī's (d. 673/1274) *al-Nuṣūṣ* (1983).²⁶

With the exception of Shaykh Aḥmad, Corbin did not conduct research on the philosophers of this period. However, his writings in the last fifteen years of his life reflect Āshtiyānī's studies on the Qajar philosophers. This can be discerned in his writings as early as 1964, when he published his French translation of Mullā Ṣadrā's *al-Mashāʾir* along with its Persian translation, which

18 Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya fi l-manāḥij al-sulūkiyya*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (Mashhad: Dānishgāh-i Mashhad, 1346 Sh./1967).

19 See above fn. 17.

20 This work was also published separately. See Mullā Muḥammad Mahdī Narāqī, *Qurrat al-ʿuyūn*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (Tehran: Anjuman-i Shāhanshāhī-i Falsafa-yi Irān, 1357 Sh./1978).

21 See Ḥājī Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī, *Rasāʾil-i Ḥakīm-i Sabzawārī*, 2 vols., ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (Mashhad: Intishārāt-i Idāra-yi Kull-i Awqāf-i Khurāsān, 1348 sh./1969; repr. Tehran: Intishārāt-i Uswa, 1376 Sh./1997).

22 Mullā ʿAbd Allāh Zunūzī, *Anwār-i jalīyya*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (Tehran: McGill Institute of Islamic Studies, 1354 Sh./1976).

23 Ṣāʿin al-Dīn Turka, *Tamhīd al-qawāʿid: ḥawāshī az Muḥammad Ridā Qumshaʿī u Mīrzā Maḥmūd-i Qummi*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (Tehran: Anjuman-i Shāhanshāhī-i Falsafa-yi Irān, 1357 Sh./1976).

24 Muḥammad Mahdī al-Narāqī, *al-Lumʿat al-ilāhiyya wa-l-kalimāt al-wajīza*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (Mashhad: Anjuman-i Falsafa, 1357 Sh./1978).

25 Mullā ʿAbd Allāh Zunūzī, *Lamaʿāt-i ilāhiyya u maʿārif-i rubūbiyya*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (Tehran: Anjuman-i Shāhanshāhī-i Falsafa-yi Irān, 1355 Sh./1976).

26 Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī, *Risālat al-Nuṣūṣ* (Tehran: Markaz-i Nashr-i Dānishgāhī, 1362 Sh./1983).

was done by the Qajar prince, Badī' al-Mulk Mīrzā (d. after 1324/1906).²⁷ In the introduction to this book, Corbin provided a short survey of the philosophers of this period, primarily based on Āshtiyānī's aforementioned introduction to Mullā Ṣadrā's *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya*, published earlier in the same year.²⁸ In his second part of his *Histoire de la philosophie islamique* (i.e., *depuis la mort d'Averroës jusqu'à nos jours*), first published in 1974, Corbin briefly introduced some major philosophers of the Qajar era.²⁹ Āshtiyānī also asked him to write a French introduction for each volume of his editions of *Anthologie des philosophes iraniens* (published between 1972 and 1980).³⁰ Three of four projected volumes of this anthology were published, together with Corbin's introductions.³¹ The manuscript of the fourth volume, on the Qajar philosophers, was completed only after Corbin's death and hence published without his introduction.

From the mid-1960s, Sabzawārī attracted the attention of several scholars. In 1966, Seyyed Hossein Nasr wrote an article on Sabzawārī for *A History of Muslim Philosophy* edited by M. M. Sharif.³² Three years later, in 1969, Mehdi Muhaghegh and Toshihiko Izutsu edited the first part of Sabzawārī's *Sharḥ Ghurar al-farā'id*, better known in Iran as *Sharḥ-i Manẓūma*. The volume contains an extensive introduction to Sabzawārī's thought by Izutsu titled "The Fundamental Structure of Sabzawārī's Metaphysics".³³ In 1973, 'Abd al-Jawād Falāṭūrī and Mehdi Muhaghegh edited Mīrzā Maḥdī Āshtiyānī's (d. 1372/1952–53) glosses on *Sharḥ-i Manẓūma*, which came out together with an English

27 Mullā Ṣadrā, *Le Livre des pénétrations métaphysiques: Kitāb al-mashā'ir*, ed. H. Corbin (Tehran/Paris: L'Institut français, 1342 Sh./1964).

28 See *ibid.*, pp. 21 (n. 4), 31, 32, 50, where the author gives references to Āshtiyānī.

29 Henry Corbin, *Histoire de la philosophie islamique: depuis la mort d'Averroës jusqu'à nos jours* (Paris: Gallimard, 1986), pp. 476–496.

30 Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, *Anthologie des philosophes iraniens: depuis le XVII^e siècle jusqu'à nos jours* (Tehran: Département d'iranologie de l'Institut franco-iranien de recherche, 4 vols., 1350–1359 Sh./ 1971–1980).

31 These French prolegomena have been assembled in Corbin's posthumous work *La philosophie iranienne islamique aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles* (Paris: Buchet/Chastel, 1981).

32 Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Renaissance in Iran: Ḥājī Mullā Hādī Sabziwārī", in Mian Mohammad Sharif (ed.), *A History of Muslim Philosophy: With Short Accounts of Other Disciplines and the Modern Renaissance in Muslim Lands* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1966), vol. 2, pp. 1543–56.

33 Ḥājī Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ Ghurar al-farā'id yā sharḥ-i Manẓūma-yi ḥikmat. Qismat-i umūr-i 'amma u jawhar u 'araḍ*, ed. Toshihiko Izutsu and Mehdi Mohaghegh (Tehran: McGill University [Tehran Branch], 1348 Sh./1969). Izutsu at the time also dealt with some philosophers of the Qajar period, particularly Sabzawārī, in his *The Concept and the Reality of Existence* (Tokyo: Institute of Cultural and Linguistic studies of Keio University, 1971).

introduction by Izutsu.³⁴ In 1977, Mohaghegh and Izutsu published *The Metaphysics of Sabzavari*, which contains their translation of parts one and two of Sabzawārī's commentary on his own *Ghurar al-farā'id*.³⁵

Along with Corbin, Nasr also collaborated with Āshtiyānī. In 1976, Nasr wrote an introduction to the edition of Zunūzī's *Lama'āt al-ilāhiyya* prepared by Āshtiyānī.³⁶ In this introduction, Nasr produced an English translation of the autobiography of Aqā 'Alī Ṭīhrānī. In 1983, Nasr wrote another article titled "The Metaphysics of Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī and Islamic Philosophy in Qajar Iran".³⁷ The article mainly dealt with Mullā Ṣadrā. Nevertheless, it contains some valuable insights on the period after Mullā Ṣadrā. In this article, Nasr asserts, probably for the first time, that the philosophical tradition of this period is not homogeneous and it is wrong to assume that it is merely a continuation or repetition of the ideas of Mullā Ṣadrā.³⁸

In addition to the above editions and studies, two biographical works on the Qajar philosophers are noteworthy. One of them is *Mu'jam al-ḥukamā'* composed by Murtaḍā Mudarris Gīlānī (d. 1378 Sh./1999). The first draft of this work, titled *Tadhkirat al-ḥukamā'*, was completed in Najaf in 1358/1939. In his *al-Dhar'ā ilā taṣānīf al-Sh'ā*, Āqā Buzurg Ṭīhrānī (d. 1389/1970) referred to this work, mentioning its inclusion of three hundred biographical entries on

34 Mīrzā Mahdī Mudarris Āshtiyānī, *Ta'liqa bar sharḥ-i manẓūma-yi ḥikmat-i Sabzawārī*, ed. 'Abd al-Jawād Falāṭūri and Mehdi Mohaghegh, English Introduction by Toshihiko Izutsu (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Dānishgāh-i Ṭīhrān, 1367 Sh./1988–1989).

35 Ḥājī Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī, *The Metaphysics of Sabzavārī*. Trans. Mehdi Mohaghegh and Toshihiko Izutsu (Delmar, New York: Caravan Books, 1977).

36 See above fn. 25.

37 Published in Clifford Edmund Bosworth and Carole Hillenbrand (ed.), *Qajar Iran: Political, Social, and Cultural Change, 1800–1925* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1983), pp. 177–98.

38 In the recent years, Nasr has used the term "the School of Tehran" to refer to philosophy in Tehran during Qajar period. This can be found for instance in his *Islamic Philosophy from its Origin to the Present: Philosophy in the Land of Prophecy* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2006), which includes a chapter titled "From the School of Isfahan to the School of Tehran". Nasr's main purpose in writing this chapter was to show that there has been a continuity of philosophical tradition from the time of Mullā Ṣadrā to the present. Nasr also wrote, "Hādī Sabzavārī, Shaikh Mollā" for *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (2003—online edition), vol. 11/4, pp. 437–441 and "Ṭīhrān: Ḥawza-yi falsafī", for *Dānishnāma-yi Jahān-i Islām*, ed. Ghulām-'Alī Ḥaddād 'Ādil (Tehran: Bunyād-i Dā'irat al-ma'ārif-i Islāmī, 1382 Sh./2004), vol. 8, pp. 749–753. More recently Nasr and Mehdi Amin-razavi have published *An Anthology of Philosophy in Persia* in five volumes (London and New York: I. B. Tauris in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 1999–2015). Part 3 of volume 5 contains selected translations of the works of several philosophers of the Qajar period and the period preceding it. This part starts with an introduction by Nasr as well.

Qajar philosophers.³⁹ The book then was subject to two more revisions. The first revision was completed in 1370/1950–51 in Najaf, when it was expanded and given the title of *Muʿjam al-ḥukamāʾ*. Then again in 1380/1960, Gīlānī revised and finalized the work, which by then contained around one thousand two hundred entries.⁴⁰ The book, however, was never published in its entirety. It is now preserved in the Majlis Library in Tehran (MS Majlis 16651). A selection from it, consisting of about three hundred entries was published with the annotations by Manūchihr Ṣadūqī Suhā.⁴¹ The other work, *Tārīkh-i ḥukamāʾ u ʿurafāʾ-i mutaʾakhhirīn-i Ṣadr al-mutaʾallihīn*, was written by Manūchihr Ṣadūqī Suhā himself. The title reveals its inclusion of biographical accounts of the philosophers after Mullā Ṣadrā. However, with a few exceptions, it provides biographies of Qajar philosophers only.⁴² Published in 1359 Sh./1980, this work, unlike *Muʿjam al-ḥukamāʾ*, was well received and its classifications of the Qajar philosophers was echoed in later scholarship for decades.⁴³ In the last three decades, many works by the philosophers of this period have been edited and the philosophers, particularly Shaykh Aḥmad and Sabzawārī, have been the subject of studies. The details of these editions and studies are beyond the scope of this introduction. However, they are referred to in the various chapters of this book.

2 The Pre-Qajar Period

There can be no doubt that for the last two centuries the major authoritative philosopher of Iran has been Mullā Ṣadrā. This was not a position, however, that he acquired during his life. When Mullā Ṣadrā died in 1045/1635–36, the only scholars known to have remained faithful to his system of thought were his son-in-law and student, Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī (d. 1090/1681) and another supposed student of his, Āqā Ḥusayn Tunikābunī (d. 1101/1690 or 1105/1694). Other philosophers of the time, including Rajab ʿAlī Tabrizī (d. 1080/1669) and

39 Āqā Buzurg Ṭihirānī, *al-Dharʿa ilā taṣānif al-Shīʿa*, 25 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Aḍwāʾ, 1403–6/1983–86), vol. 4, p. 31.

40 See Murtaḍā Mudarris Gīlānī, *Muntakhab-i Muʿjam al-ḥukamāʾ*, edited and annotated by Manūchihr Ṣadūqī Suhā (Tehran: Muʾassasa-yi Pazhūhishī-i Ḥikmat u Falsafa-yi Īrān, 1384 Sh./2005), pp. xx–xxi, 206–207.

41 For the bibliographical details of this publication, see the above footnote.

42 Manūchihr Ṣadūqī Suhā, *Tārīkh-i ḥukamāʾ u ʿurafāʾ-i mutaʾakhhirīn-i Ṣadr al-mutaʾallihīn* (Tehran: Anjuman-i Islāmī-i Ḥikmat u Falsafa-yi Īrān, 1359 Sh./1980).

43 The second edition of this book, which has some revisions, was published in 2002. See Manūchihr Ṣadūqī Suhā, *Tahrīr-i thānī-i Tārīkh-i ḥukamāʾ u ʿurafāʾ-i mutaʾakhhir* (Tehran: Ḥikmat, 1381 Sh./2002).

Āqā Ḥusayn Kh^wānsārī (d. 1099/1688) who were then the leading philosophers, were critics of Mullā Ṣadrā.⁴⁴

In the early 18th century, which corresponds to the reign of the last Safavid ruler, Shāh Sulṭān Ḥusayn (r. 1105–1135/1694–1722), any thought associated with the idea of the unity of existence (*waḥdat al-wujūd*), including Mullā Ṣadrā's, was prohibited. Teaching Avicennan philosophy, however, was permissible. When the renowned Shaykh al-Islām of Isfahan, Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī, died in 1110/1699, Shaykh Muḥammad Ja'far Kamara'ī (d. 1115/1704) was appointed his successor. Kamara'ī was himself a philosopher who had studied Avicennan philosophy with Āqā Ḥusayn Kh^wānsārī.⁴⁵ Mīr Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ Khātūnābādī (d. 1126/1714) who took the office after him, was likewise a student of Āqā Ḥusayn Kh^wānsārī. His cousin Mīr Muḥammad Bāqir Khātūnābādī (d. 1127/1715), who was appointed as the Mullā Bāshī, was also teaching Avicenna's *Shifā'* and *Ishārāt*.⁴⁶ However, it seems all these religious authorities were in principle opposed to the idea of the unity of existence and made efforts to prevent its promulgation.

The leading philosophers of the time were Āqā Jamāl Kh^wānsārī (d. 1125/1713), Bahā' al-Dīn Iṣfahānī (d. 1137/1725), known as Faḍil-i Hindī, and Muḥammad Ṣādiq Ardistānī (d. 1134/1722). They all taught philosophy in Isfahan, the leading intellectual centre of the period. Avicenna's *Shifā'* (particularly the part on metaphysics) and the *Ishārāt* (with Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's Commentary or Quṭb al-Dīn Rāzī's *Muḥākamāt*) seem to have been the primary philosophical texts taught in this period. Āqā Jamāl Kh^wānsārī wrote glosses on the *Physics* of the *Shifā'* (books one and two),⁴⁷ Bahā' al-Dīn Iṣfahānī wrote a commentary on the *Logic*, *Physics*, and *Metaphysics*, titled *Awn ikhwān al-ṣafā' 'alā fahm kitāb al-Shifā'* (Understanding the Book of the *Shifā'* with the Help of the Brethren of Purity).⁴⁸ The other

44 For Rajab 'Alī Tabrizī's criticism of Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophy, see Muhammad U. Faruque and Mohammed Rustom, "Rajab 'Alī Tabrizī's Refutation of Ṣadrian Metaphysics," in Sajjad Rizvi and Saiyad Nizamuddin Ahmad (ed.), *Philosophy and the Intellectual Life in Shī'ah Islam* (London: The Shī'ah Institute, 2017); For Kh^wānsārī's criticism (one of the instances), see chapter 1 in this book, pp. 56–57.

45 Kamara'ī composed a work on physics and metaphysics, titled *Tuḥfa-yi sulṭānī*, ed. Muḥammad Ramaḍānī (Tehran: Khāwar, 1339 Sh./1960).

46 See 'Abd al-Nabī Qazwīnī, *Tatmīm Amal al-āmil*, ed. Sayyid Aḥmad al-Ḥusaynī (Qom: Kitābkhāna-yi Āyat Allāh Mar'ashī, 1407/1986), pp. 66 and 78.

47 Āqā Jamāl Kh^wānsārī, *al-Ḥāshiya 'alā l-Shifā'*, ed. Riḍā Ustādī (Qom: Kungira-yi Buzurgdāsht-i Āqā Ḥusayn-i Kh^wānsārī, 1378 Sh./1999). Āqā Jamāl also wrote glosses on Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāzī's *Muḥākamāt 'alā Sharḥay al-Ishārāt* as well as Mirzā-Jān Bāghnawī's (d. 995/1587) glosses on this work.

48 'Alī Awjabī has edited the first part of this commentary on logic. See Bahā' al-Dīn Iṣfahānī, *Awn ikhwān al-ṣafā' 'alā fahm kitāb al-Shifā'*, ed. 'Alī Awjabī (Tehran: Mu'assasa-yi Pazhūhishī-i Hikmat u Falsafa-yi Īrān, 1393 Sh./2014). Ḥamid Nāji Iṣfahānī also edited a portion of the part on metaphysics. See Avicenna, *al-Shifā': al-Ilāhiyyāt wa-ta'liqāt Ṣadr*

major philosopher, Muḥammad Ṣādiq Ardistānī, is not known to have written a commentary on the *Shifāʾ*. However, his closest disciple, Mullā Ḥamza Gīlānī (d. 1134/1722), reportedly wrote glosses on the *Shifāʾ*, which makes it likely that his teacher also regarded it as the authoritative text in philosophy.⁴⁹ ʿAlī Qulī Jadīd al-Islām (d. after 1135/1722), who lived at the time in Isfahan, attests to the popularity of Avicenna's philosophical works as follows:

Far too often it has occurred that I have been in the company of a group of them [madrasa students] who, having spent years in the madrasas in pursuit of knowledge, believed they knew something and numbered themselves amongst the knowledgeable (*ahl-i ʿilm*). Even as a recent convert at the time with no thorough knowledge of the *ḥadīths*, when I asked them about a tradition that dealt with the most fundamental matters of religion, they did not know anything, and I was the one who taught them on the subject. They said, "We study philosophy (*ḥikma*); it is a number of years now that we have been busy with books like [Mīr Ḥusayn Maybudī's] commentary on [Athīr al-Dīn Abharī's] *Hidāyat [al-ḥikma]* and [Avicenna's] *Shifāʾ* and *Ishārāt*. Hence we could not find any spare time for studying *ḥadīth*", which is worse than the offence itself!⁵⁰

At most, the subjects which were discussed at this time were the origination of the world, God's knowledge, the question of human free will, and the resurrection. These enquiries were refashioned at the time by Āqā Jamāl Khwānsārī, which impelled the scholars to deal with them again.⁵¹ Another subject of

al-mutaʿallihīn ʿalayhā, ed. Ḥamid Nāji Isfahānī (Tehran: Anjuman-i Āthār u Mafākhir-i Farhangī, 1383 Sh./2004), pp. 261–296, 471–485.

49 See Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī's introduction to his edition of Mullā Ṣadrā's *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya*, pp. 3–4.

50 This passage is quoted by Rasūl Jaʿfariyān from ʿAlī Qulī's *Hidāya al-dāllīn* (still unedited) in his introduction to ʿAlī Qulī Jadīd al-Islām's *Sayf al-muʾminīn fī qitāl al-mushrikīn*, published under the title *Tarjuma, sharḥ u naqd sifr-i paydāyish-i Tawrāt: Sayf al-muʾminīn fī qitāl al-mushrikīn*, ed. Rasūl Jaʿfariyān (Qom: Intishārāt-i Anṣāriyān, 1375 Sh./1996), pp. 20–21. I used Ata Anzali and S. M. Hadi Gerami's translation of this passage with some moderations. See Ata Anzali and S. M. Gerami, *Opposition to Philosophy in Safavid Iran: Mulla Muḥammad Ṭāhir Qummī's Hikmat al-ʿArifīn* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2017), pp. 8–9.

51 Apart from the aforementioned glosses on the physics of the *Shifāʾ*, Āqā Jamāl Khwānsārī wrote the following philosophical works: (1) glosses on Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāzī's *Muḥākamat ʿalā Sharḥay al-Ishārāt* and Mīrzā-Jān Bāghnawī's (d. 995/1587) glosses on this work. See Āqā Ḥusayn Khwānsārī and Āqā Jamāl Khwānsārī, *al-Ḥāshiyā ʿalā Shurūḥ al-Ishārāt*, ed. Aḥmad ʿĀbidī, 2 vols. (Qom: Būstān-i Kitāb, 1388 Sh./2009); (2) superglosses on Shams al-Dīn Khafī's (d. 942/1535–36) glosses on the chapter on theology proper of ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn

interest was the origination of the soul, discussed by Mullā Muḥammad Šādiq Ardistānī.⁵²

The siege and fall of Isfahan in 1134/1722 can be regarded as a milestone in the early modern intellectual history of Iran. For a while the scholars of Isfahan were in despair, the madrasas were not active, and the libraries were looted. During the period of transition, Qazvin and Mashhad were the sites of some intellectual activity. Āqā Khalil Qā'īnī (d. 1136/1723–24)⁵³ and Amīr Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Qazwīnī (d. after 1145/1732–33),⁵⁴ both students of Āqā Jamāl Khwānsārī, were active in Qazvin.⁵⁵ Sayyid Muḥammad Khātūnābādī (d. 1151/1739) and Ibrāhīm Mashhadī (d. 1148/1732–33) and Mīr Muḥammad Taqī Shāhī (d. 1150/1737–38) were teaching in Mashhad.⁵⁶

With the rise of Nādir Shāh (r. 1148–1160/1736–1747) Isfahan was gradually restored to its former position. Several scholars, including Mullā Ismā'īl Khwājū'ī Māzandarānī (d. 1173/1759–60), Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Zamān Nūshābādī (d. after 1172/1758–59) and Mullā Muḥammad Harandī (d. 1186/1772–73), started

Qūshjī's commentary on Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's *Tajrīd al-i'tiqād*. See Āqā Jamāl Khwānsārī, *al-Ḥāshiyā 'alā ḥāshiyat al-Khafī 'alā sharḥ al-Qūshchī 'alā Tajrīd*, ed. Riḍā Ustādī (Qom: Kungira-yi Buzurgdāsh-t-i Āqā Ḥusayn-i Khwānsārī, 1378 Sh./1999); (3) *Jabr u ikhtiyār*, ed. 'Abd Allāh Nūrānī (Tehran: Nihdat-i Zanān-i Īrān, 1359 Sh./1980); (4) *Mabda' u ma'ād*, ed. 'Abd Allāh Nūrānī (Tehran: Nihdat-i Zanān-i Īrān, 1359 Sh./1980).

52 See his "Ḥikma Šādiqiyya", in Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (ed.), *Anthologie des philosophes iraniens: depuis le XVII^e siècle jusqu'à nos jours* (Tehran: Département d'iranologie de l'Institut franco-iranien de recherche, 1359 Sh./1980), vol. 4, pp. 55–220. This work is based on the lectures of Mullā Muḥammad Šādiq Ardistānī, transcribed by his student, Mullā Ḥamza Gilānī, revised and completed by Mullā Ismā'īl Khwājū'ī and presented with an introduction by Muḥammad 'Alī Tūnī Khurāsānī.

53 Āqā Khalil Qā'īnī left Isfahan during the Afghan siege and spent the remaining years of his life in Qazvin. Initially, he was a student of Āqā Raḍī Khwānsārī, who was Āqā Jamāl's brother, and then when Āqā Raḍī died he studied with Āqā Jamāl. According to 'Abd al-Nabī Qazwīnī, Qā'īnī taught Avicenna's philosophical works and wrote glosses on the *Ishārāt* and its commentaries. See 'Abd al-Nabī Qazwīnī, *Tatmīm Amal al-āmil*, pp. 142–146.

54 On Amīr Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Qazwīnī and his works, see 'Abd al-Nabī Qazwīnī, *Tatmīm Amal al-āmil*, pp. 52–54.

55 Amīr Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Qazwīnī's son, Sayyid Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad Ibrāhīm, known as Mīr Ḥusaynā (d. 1208/1793–94) was one of the most distinguished scholars of *fiqh* in the Zand period.

56 On Ibrāhīm Mashhadī and Mīr Muḥammad Taqī Shāhī see 'Abd al-Nabī Qazwīnī, *Tatmīm Amal al-āmil*, pp. 55, 84–86. Mīr Muḥammad Taqī Shāhī wrote a treatise, titled *Risāla dar rabṭ-i ḥādith bi-qadīm* (MS Qom, Ihyā'-i Mirāth-i Islāmī 531).

teaching the intellectual disciplines there again.⁵⁷ Of these individuals, Mullā Ismāʿīl Khwājūʿī, who had studied with Muḥammad Ṣādiq Ardistānī, is known to have taught Avicenna's *Shifāʾ*. In his *Tatmīm al-Amal al-āmil*, ʿAbd al-Nabī Qazwīnī (d. 1197/1782–83) explains Khwājūʿī's proficiency in teaching the *Shifāʾ* as follows:

I heard from a trustworthy and noble man that he [= Khwājūʿī] had gone through the [metaphysics of the] *Shifāʾ* thirty times, either by reading or teaching or studying. I also heard from another person who told me that his copy of the [*Metaphysics* of the] *Shifāʾ* was missing a few folios, Khwājūʿī recited the missing part to him by heart. Later that person had the chance to collate it with the correct text. It was entirely correct, except for one or two words.⁵⁸

One of the outcomes of the fall of the Safavids was that the mystics who for a long time had been suppressed under their rule, particularly during the reign of Shāh Sulṭān Ḥusayn, enjoyed more freedom to express and propagate their ideas. Quṭb al-Dīn Nayrīzī (d. 1173/1760) and ʿAbd al-Raḥīm Damāwandī (d. 1160/1747) were the two distinguished Sufi scholars of the time who, on the one hand, distanced themselves from Avicennan philosophy and on the other promoted the mystical thought of Ibn ʿArabī.⁵⁹ Besides these two certain philosophers of the age displayed a more explicit inclination towards the thought of the school of Ibn ʿArabī and Mullā Ṣadrā. One of these was Naʿīm al-Dīn Ṭāliqānī (d. 1160/1747), better known as Mullā Naʿīmā. He was the keeper of the books at the royal library (Kitābkhāna-yi Sulṭānī) of Shāh Sulṭān Ḥusayn. During the siege, he fled to Qom and eventually to Ṭāliqān. It was only after the fall of the Safavids that Mullā Naʿīmā reveals his inclination for the mystical thought of Ibn ʿArabī and the philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā. In his treatise titled *Aṣl al-uṣūl* (completed in 1135/1723), Mullā Naʿīmā refers to Mullā Ṣadrā as the “best of scholars” and approves of his notion of the primacy of existence.⁶⁰ But

57 On Mullā Ismāʿīl Khwājūʿī Māzandarānī, Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Zamān Nūshābādī and Mullā Muḥammad Harandī see chapter 1 in this book, pp. 37–38.

58 ʿAbd al-Nabī Qazwīnī, *Tatmīm Amal al-āmil*, pp. 67–68.

59 On these two mystics, i.e., Quṭb al-Dīn Nayrīzī and ʿAbd al-Raḥīm Damāwandī, see Sajjad Rizvi, “Whatever happened to the school of Isfahan? Philosophy in 18th century Iran”, in Michael Axworthy (ed.), *Crisis, Collapse, Militarism & Civil War: The History & Historiography of 18th Century Iran* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 71–104 (86–90).

60 Naʿīm al-Dīn Ṭāliqānī, *Aṣl al-uṣūl*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (Tehran: Anjuman-i Shāhanshāhī-i Falsafa-yi Irān, 1357 Sh./1978), p. 16.

although he was aware of Mullā Ṣadrā's explanation of the modulation of existence, he preferred Ibn 'Arabī's simple concept of the unity of existence and expressed his approval of the view of the Sufis.⁶¹

The increasing recourse to mysticism seems to have been sensed by Khwājū'i, who wrote a treatise against the doctrine of the unity of existence.⁶² Gradually, in the second half of the 12th/18th century, the intellectual interests of the tutors of Isfahan inclined more and more towards the mystical teachings of the school of Ibn 'Arabī and the philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā. Āqā Muḥammad Bīdābādī, who was the leading philosopher of the city, along with Mīrzā Muḥammad 'Alī b. Muẓaffar Iṣfahānī (d. 1198/1783–84), Mīrzā Abū l-Qāsim Mudarris Khātūnābādī (d. 1203/1788–89), Mullā Muṣṭafā Qumshā'ī (d. 1215/1800–1), Shaykh Mahdī Mashhadī (d. 1217/1802–3 or 1218/1803–4) and Mullā Naẓār 'Alī Gīlānī were active in this development. It was in line with this strand of thought that Mīrzā Muḥammad 'Alī b. Muẓaffar started teaching Ibn 'Arabī's *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* and some other mystical works of the school of Ibn 'Arabī.⁶³

Bīdābādī is known to have written glosses on two works by Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Ḥikma al-muta'āliya* better known as *al-Asfār*, and his *Mashā'ir*. It is likely that these glosses were written while he was teaching them. The period when he was teaching, which was some decades before his death in 1198/1783–84, is the earliest in the post-Safavid era when Mullā Ṣadrā's works were taught. Apart from the works of Mullā Ṣadrā, Bīdābādī wrote glosses on the *Metaphysics* of the *Shifā'*, which makes likely that he was teaching this philosophical text as well. Interest in the text of the *Shifā'* can be found at the least in the writings of one of Bīdābādī's student, namely Muḥammad Ḥusayn Khātūnābādī Iṣfahānī (d. 1233/1817–18), who likewise wrote glosses on the *Metaphysics* of the *Shifā'*.⁶⁴ However, Bīdābādī's most prominent student, Mullā 'Alī Nūrī gave the *Shifā'* no particular attention, nor did any of his students including Sabzawārī. Reading the *Shifā'* revived only in the last decades of the 19th century by Mīrzā Abū l-Ḥasan Jilwa (d. 1314/1897).

61 Ṭāliqānī, *Aṣl al-uṣūl*, pp. 35–39, 94.

62 Ismā'īl Khwājū'i Māzandarānī and Raḥīm Qāsimī (ed.), "Waḥdat al-wujūd," in Sayyid Aḥmad Sajjādī and Raḥīm Qāsimī (ed.), *Mīrāth-i ḥawza-yi Iṣfahān* (Isfahan: Markaz-i Taḥqīqāt-i Rāyāna'ī-i Ḥawza-yi 'Ilmiyya-yi Iṣfahān, 1383 Sh./2004–2005), vol. 1, pp. 137–166.

63 See 'Alī Karbāsizāda Iṣfahānī, *Ḥakīm-i muta'allih-i Bīdābādī: Iḥyā'gar-i ḥikmat-i Shī'r dar qarn-i dawāzdahum-i hījri* (Tehran: Pazhūhishgāh-i 'Ulūm-i Insānī u Muṭāla'āt-i Farhangī, 1381 Sh./2002), pp. 101–103, 146–148, 150–153, 163–167. See also Gobineau, *Les religions et les philosophies dans l'Asie centrale*, pp. 93–95.

64 MS Tehran, University of Tehran, Ilāhiyyāt 594.

3 The Qajar Period: Historical Context and General Attitude

The rise of Āqā Muḥammad Khān (r. 1203–12/1789–97), the founder of the Qajar dynasty, coincided with a reformation in Shīʿī orthodoxy in which the mujtahids established their position and function in society.⁶⁵ The eminent jurisconsult, Muḥammad Bāqir al-Bihbihānī (d. 1206/1791–2), who was active in Karbala, is usually credited for bringing Akhbārī dominance to an end both through his writings and through his long-term teaching activities. Bihbihānī trained a generation of Uṣūlī scholars who successfully eliminated Akhbārism as an intellectual force in the Shīʿī madrasas.⁶⁶ Following this development, the Uṣūlīs regarded philosophical/mystical training as a residual but “harmful” form of teaching in the Shīʿī educational system. The primary reason for such aversion was that philosophers did not fully recognize the religious authority of the ‘ulamā’. At least inwardly, they were inclined to believe in the superiority of *ḥikma* over *fiqh*. Moreover, philosophical training at the time involved numerous discussions on mystical subjects. Most of the philosophers of this period were adherents of the doctrine of the unity of existence (*waḥdat al-wujūd*). Even those who criticised it were engaged in the same discourse. In the eyes of the Shīʿī ‘ulamā’ of the time, this kind of intellectual engagement was aberrant. In his refutation of the teachings of the Sufis, titled *Khayrātīyya*, Āqā Muḥammad ‘Alī Kirmānshāhī (d. 1216/1801), son of Muḥammad Bāqir Bihbihānī, felt the need to address philosophical training as well. He argued that there are many philosophical arguments which are entirely opposed to the verses of the Qurʾān and the prophetic traditions. Thus, they not only fail to support religion, but they are also harmful to the Islamic faith:

If they say: God praises knowledge in the Qurʾān, and in many of the traditions transmitted from the chosen prophet and the pure *Imāms* the sciences of the scholars are praised, and since *ḥikma* [in the sense] of *falsafa* is a science, how could it be bad? We would reply: knowledge is [gained from] the decisive verses of the Qurʾān and the traditions of the infallible ones. From the time of the prophet to the time of Maʾmūn, the Abbasid caliph, people acquired knowledge from the Qurʾān and the traditions. They used to rely on the decisive verses of the Qurʾān and the established

65 Hamid Algar, *Religion and State in Iran 1785–1906: The Role of Ulama in the Qajar Period* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), pp. 40–41.

66 On the conflict of Uṣūlīs and Akhbārīs see Robert M. Gleave, “Akhbārīyya and Uṣūlīyya,” *EI3*, ed. Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, and Everett Rowson. Consulted online on 12 September 2017 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/1573-3912_ei3_COM_0029>.

traditions for their theological understandings and religious rulings. Until Ma'mūn, deceived by Satan the accursed one, brought from the Byzantine lands the books of philosophy which contained the vain thoughts and corrupted fantasies of the Greek and Milesian philosophers, and ordered those who knew Greek and Arabic, to translate those books into Arabic [...]. And since the caliph of the time rigorously promoted philosophy, it became widespread among the Sunnī people. To find a better position, or to gain respect in the eyes of the caliph or to become closer to him, people tried their best to learn it. After Ma'mūn, other caliphs and scholars likewise engaged in teaching and learning philosophy.

The Imāmī Shī'īs used to follow their Imāms all the time. Until towards the end of the [Abbasid] caliphate, a distinguished Imāmī scholar for a pragmatic reason (*maṣlaḥatī*) learned philosophy and dealt with its false arguments. The verifier and the learned scholar, the Master Naṣīr [al-Dīn Ṭūsī], in his commentary on the *Ishārāt*, which he wrote to disgrace Imām Fakhr [al-Dīn] Rāzī, who was one of the greatest scholars of the Sunnī Muslims, did not refute philosophy. Nevertheless, in his *Fuṣūl*, he rejected those positions of the philosophers which are against religion. Gradually, however, philosophical discussions became popular among the Shī'īs, to the extent that some ignorant people among them tried to learn philosophy, assuming that it is a religious science.⁶⁷

Such harsh criticism of philosophy was not common among the jurists of the time. However, many of them seem to have held more or less the same opinion, even though they were not outspoken about it. In a letter to Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh, Mīrzā Abū l-Qāsim Shaftī (d. 1231/1815–16), commonly known as Mīrzā-yi Qummī advised the Shah to keep away from philosophical discussions, particularly when they concerned religious beliefs. He explains that:

No verse of the Qur'ān and no tradition of the Prophet obliged people to know about the intellects, the souls, the idea of the unity of existence and existent. It suffices us to know that God is all-perfect, without any flaw or fault. It's not our duty to know the quality of His knowledge, whether His knowledge is acquired knowledge or knowledge by presence, whether He has a general knowledge or He knows things in detail. Neither is it our duty to know the quality of His knowledge of things before their

67 Āqā Muḥammad 'Alī Kirmānshāhī, *Khayrātīyya dar ibṭāl-i ṭarīqa-yi Šūfīyya*, ed. Mahdī Rajā'ī, 2 vols. (Qom: Mu'assasa-yi 'Allāma-yi Mujaddid Waḥīd-i Bihbihānī, 1370 Sh./1991), vol. 2, pp. 219–221.

existence. We must believe that God is free from flaw, fault, evil or cruelty [...]. In sum, it is undoubtedly desirable to have a general knowledge about the stages of belief. But knowledge of the details might not be our duty. On the contrary, we should be silent about many of them. It is therefore required of the shah to avoid this type of discussions.⁶⁸

Najaf and Karbala, the cities in which the mujtahids could easily marshal their forces, remained to a large extent without philosophy courses. But in the territory ruled by the Qajars, philosophy continued to be taught ever more vigorously as compared to the state of affairs in late Safavid and early post-Safavid times. One important reason was that the Qajar authorities were in favour of philosophers. In their anti-Akhbārī campaign, the jurists received the approval of the Qajar authorities. However, an anti-philosophy coalition never emerged between the jurists and the authorities.⁶⁹ The Qajar shahs and then their princes, Qajar statesmen and their regional governors supported the teaching of philosophy. Moreover opposition, even on the part of the jurists was not excessive. It is notable that the jurists' radical confrontation with the Akhbārīs was due to the fact that they considered the Akhbārīs an existential threat. Philosophy, however, could never receive the sort of publicity that Akhbārism had because, in contrast to the latter, it required an extended period of study. As a result, it was not a real threat to the jurists. Philosophers were seemingly careful not to provoke the jurists' animosity. They were happy to comply with the jurists as long as they were tolerated. What the philosophers expected from the ruling authorities was not financial patronage as in the earlier periods, it was more a matter of security and protection in terms of their teaching.⁷⁰

In the Qajar period, the philosophers' sources of income became increasingly different from those of the 'ulamā'. In the Safavid period, many philosophers were also *mujtahids*. Hence, they received socio-religious positions, such as *shaykh al-Islām*, *ṣadr*, and *imām* of the Friday prayer. In the post-Safavid era, when the 'ulamā' started to keep away from philosophical

68 Mīrzā Abū l-Qāsim Shafī and Riḍā Ustādī (ed.), "Nāma-yi Mīrzā-yi Qummī bi Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh-i Qājār," *Kīyān-i farhangī* 108 (1373 Sh./1994): 14–17 (17).

69 In particular, Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh and Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh are known for their patronage of the philosophers. For Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh's interest in philosophy and his support of philosophers, see chapter 3 (pp. 132, 136). For Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh's patronage see chapter 4 (p. 187) and chapter 7 (p. 286) in this book.

70 For instance, neither Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī nor Mīrzā Abū l-Ḥasan Jilwa expected financial support from Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh. Nevertheless, they both seem to have been inclined to accept his patronage for security and protection. For the attitude of Sabzawārī and Jilwa to the Shah, see chapter 4 (p. 187) and Chapter 7 (p. 286).

discussions, the two groups fell into two different camps. Mullā Mahdī Narāqī seems to have been one of the last philosophers of the time who benefited financially from the privileges of being a mujtahid. While the ‘ulamā’ had access to the income of the endowments (*awqāf*) attached to shrines, mosques, and madrasas, Qajar philosophers scraped a living through teaching philosophy in the madrasas. Even that was only possible if the endowment document of the madrasa permitted philosophical training and the current *mutawallī-bāshī* (the chief administrator) of the madrasa was not against it. Some philosophers, of course, like Sabzawārī and Mirzā Abū l-Ḥasan Jilwa inherited a private income from their fathers which freed them from the need to earn a living.⁷¹

Even though some of the renowned philosophers of the time had many students, there seems to be no particular attempt on their part to expand the philosophical sources at their disposal. Comparing the philosophers of the Qajar period with those of the Safavid period, in terms of the variety of philosophical sources they used, it becomes clear that the Qajar philosophers had a far narrower range of sources. Out of Greco-Arabic philosophical works, the only one referred to was the *Theology of Aristotle*.⁷² There was no other work by the philosophers of the pre-Avicennan period, which received any particular attention from the scholars of this period. Thanks to lithograph technology, several philosophical works of pre-Avicennan and early post-Avicennan period became available in the late nineteenth century. Even then the philosophers of the time did not show any interest in these works. They seem to have been more eager to collect philosophical works produced in the previous two or three centuries.⁷³

Likewise, these philosophers did not show any interest in the Western sciences which were gradually being introduced in Iran during the nineteenth century. At least, any such interest was not pronounced in their writings. Generally speaking, they seem to have underestimated the possibility that these scientific developments might have affected the validity of their philosophical thought. Such disregard can be seen to a greater or lesser extent in their treatment of Western political ideas too. Although from the mid-nineteenth century these ideas were increasingly the subject of discussion in Iran, the philosophers did not actively participate in any of these discussions. However, one cannot rule out the possibility that they shared their political opinions with

71 Cf. chapter 4 (pp. 186–187) and chapter 7 (p. 285) in this book.

72 Among the philosophers of this period, Āqā ‘Alī Ṭīhrānī is known for his use of this work. See chapter 5, pp. 246, 250.

73 This can be gathered from the references given to the philosophical works in their writings. See, for instance, chapter 5 (particularly, pp. 249–250.), in which the references given by Āqā ‘Alī Ṭīhrānī to the philosophical works were discussed.

some of their advanced students. It is notable that the circle around one of the philosophers of the late nineteenth century, namely Mīrzā Abū l-Ḥasan Jilwa, included several political activists, each of whom played a significant role in the Constitutional Movement of 1284–1290/1905–1911.⁷⁴

4 Centres for Philosophical Education: Cities and Madrasas

In 1200/1786, Tehran was proclaimed the capital of the new state by the founder of the Qajar dynasty, Āqā Muḥammad Khān Qājār. For several decades after this, however, Isfahan remained the central intellectual city of the country. One of the centres of philosophical education in Isfahan at the time, and for decades after, was Madrasa-yi Kāsagarān (also known as Ḥakīmiyya and earlier as Shamsiyya).⁷⁵ Mullā ‘Alī Nūrī (d. 1246/1831) taught in this madrasa, and it seems that his lectures were well attended. In a letter Nūrī wrote to Faṭḥ ‘Alī Shāh, he claimed that at the time four hundred students were studying with him.⁷⁶ It is difficult to imagine that Mullā ‘Alī Nūrī was the only philosopher who was teaching in the Kāsagarān and it is very likely that his senior students were also teaching there. The madrasa continued to be the centre of philosophical education for years after Nūrī’s death. Mīrzā Abū l-Ḥasan Jilwa (d. 1314/1897) was studying in this madrasa in the 1250s/1830s–40s.⁷⁷

74 See chapter 7 (pp. 288–292), where biographical accounts of some students of Jilwa, involved in the Constitutional Movement such as Mīrzā Tāhir Tunikābunī and Sayyid Naṣr Allāh Taqawī are provided. Apart from the figures mentioned there, the political activist, Mīrzā Yahyā Dawlatābādī (d. 1318 Sh./1939), also belonged to the same circle.

75 It was called Shamsiyya, because of its founder Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Yazdī. Later it was rebuilt by Amīr Mahdī Ḥakīm al-Mulk Ardīstānī, a reconstruction that was completed in the final year of the reign of the Safavid Sulaymān Shāh (r. 1077–1105/1666–1694). From then on it was called the Madrasa-yi Ḥakīmiyya. However, because of the location of the madrasa in the pottery district, it became commonly known as the Madrasa-yi Kāsagarān (the School of Bowl Makers). See Muṣliḥ al-Dīn Mahdawī, *Isfahān: Dār al-‘ilm-i sharq*, ed. Muḥammad Riḍā Nilfīrūshān (Isfahan: Sāzmān-i Farhangī-Tafriḥī-i Shahr-dārī-i Isfahān, 1386 Sh./2007–2008), p. 303; Maryam Moazzen, *Formation of a Religious Landscape: Shi‘i Higher Learning in Safavid Iran* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), p. 50.

76 Āqā ‘Alī Mudarris Ṭīhrānī narrates this piece of information in his autobiography. See Āqā ‘Alī Mudarris Ṭīhrānī, *Majmū‘a-yi muṣannafāt-i Āqā ‘Alī Mudarris-i Ṭīhrānī*, ed. Muḥsin Kadiwar, 3 vols. (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Itṭilā‘āt, 1378 Sh./1999), vol 3, p. 146.

77 It is known that Jilwa studied with Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥasan Nūrī (d. before 1294/1877), Mullā Muḥammad Ja‘far Langarūdī Lāhījī (d. before 1294/1877), Sayyid Raḍī Lāhījī (d. 1270/1853–54), Mīrzā Ḥasan Chīnī (d. 1264/1847–48) and Mullā ‘Abd al-Jawād Tūnī Khurāsānī (d. 1281/1864). It is likely that at least some of these teachers were teaching at the madrasa of Kāsagarān. See chapter 7 in this volume, pp. 284–285.

The first madrasa in Tehran in which philosophy was taught was Madrasa-yi Khān-i Marwī or simply Marwī (otherwise is known as Madrasa-yi Fakhriyya).⁷⁸ It was founded by Muḥammad Ḥusayn Khān Qājār, known as Fakhr al-Dawla (d. ca. 1233/1818), who was one of the intimate companions of Faṭḥ ‘Alī Shāh (r. 1212–1250/1797–1834). The founder particularly invested in the library of the madrasa and purchased many valuable books, including numerous philosophical codices.⁷⁹ From the beginning, philosophy was one of the subjects which its founder was keen should be taught there. Fakhr al-Dawla asked Faṭḥ ‘Alī Shāh to invite Mullā ‘Alī Nūrī to come from Isfahan to Tehran and teach in this school. Nūrī excused himself from coming and instead sent one of his students, namely Mullā ‘Abd Allāh Zunūzī, who started teaching at the madrasa in 1227/1812. As far as is known, he was a metaphysician with a definite inclination for Ṣadrian philosophy, although nothing is known about his interest in logic or other disciplines of the rational sciences. He seems to have been patronised by the court. Comte de Gobineau noted that even Faṭḥ ‘Alī Shāh attended a teaching session of his on one occasion.⁸⁰ Following the death of Zunūzī philosophy was not taught at the madrasa for several decades.⁸¹ In 1264/1848, the year in which Muḥammad Shāh died, Isfahan was still the main centre of philosophical endeavour.

During the reign of Muḥammad Shāh (r. 1250–1264/1834–1848), the Qajar court seems to have stopped patronising philosophy. It is even doubtful if, during this period, philosophy and rational theology were taught in the Marwī or at any other madrasa in Tehran. When Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh (r. 1264–1313/1848–1896) ascended the throne, things changed in favour of philosophical education in

78 On Madrasa-yi Marwī in the Qajar period see Nūr Allāh Kasā’ī, “Madāris-i qadīm-i Tihārān dar ‘aṣr-i Qājār,” *Nāma-yi farhang* 30 (1377 Sh./1998): 114–139 (122–124).

79 The library of the madrasa now contains 1050 manuscripts, catalogued by Riḍā Ustādī, *Fi-hrist-i nuskhahā-yi madrasa-yi Marwī-i Tihārān* (Tehran: Kitābkhāna-yi Madrasa-yi Marwī, 1370 Sh./1989). It provides unique copies of some philosophical works; Codex Marwī 19, for instance, includes 24 works by Yaḥyā b. ‘Adī which otherwise are thought to be lost. See Robert Wisnovsky, “New Philosophical Texts of Yaḥyā ibn ‘Adī: A Supplement to Endress’ Analytical Inventory,” in Felicitas Opwis and David Reisman (ed.), *Islamic Philosophy, Science, Culture, and Religion: Studies in Honor of Dimitri Gutas* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), pp. 307–326. This codex has been recently published in facsimile. See Robert Wisnovsky (ed.), *A Safavid Anthology of Classical Arabic Philosophy: MS Tehran Madrasah-i Marwī 19* (Tehran: Kitāb-i Rāyzan, 1395 Sh./2016).

80 Gobineau, *Les religions et les philosophies dans l’Asie centrale*, p. 96.

81 Presumably, the trustee of the madrasa’s *waqf* (*mutawallī*) at the time was against teaching philosophy. Some decades later, however, Shaykh ‘Alī Nūrī (d. ca. 1335/1916) who was known for teaching ‘Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī’s *Shawāriq al-ilhām*, for which he was known as Shaykh al-Shawāriq, taught in the madrasa. On Shaykh ‘Alī Nūrī, see chapter 5 in this book, p. 238.

Tehran. With the support of the court, courses in philosophy were started in several of the city's madrasas. This process gradually made Tehran the main centre of intellectual activity.⁸²

The newly established Qāsim Khān Madrasa, which was located in the courtyard of the royal palace (*arg-i sulṭānī*) in Tehran, was one of these madrasas in which teaching philosophy was permitted.⁸³ The founder, Amīr Muḥammad Qāsim Khān, was the maternal grandfather of Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh. Āqā 'Alī Mudarris Ṭīhrānī taught at this madrasa for seven years, from 1273/1856 to 1280/1863. Besides Ṭīhrānī, a more senior philosopher of the time, whom Ṭīhrānī referred to as one of his teachers, Ḥājji Ibrāhīm Naqshafīrūsh (d. after 1280/1863) also taught there at the same time.⁸⁴ Around 1275/1858, the madrasa was expanded on the orders of Mahd-i Awliyā' (d. 1290/1873), Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh's mother. It was for this reason that it was called Madrasa-yi Mādar-i Shāh (the Madrasa of the Shāh's Mother).

After several years teaching at Madrasa-yi Mādar-i Shāh, Āqā 'Alī moved to another madrasa of the city called the (Old) Sipahsālār. It was located in 'Udlājān, a district mainly inhabited by the Jewish community of Tehran. It was founded shortly after the construction of the Marwī Madrasa by Mīrzā Muḥammad Khān Sipahsālār (1283–84/1866–67), the uncle, and for a while the grand vizier (*ṣadr-i a'ẓam*), of Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh.⁸⁵ There is no evidence that the rational sciences were taught in this school in the early years of its life. The earliest evidence came around 1280/1863 when Āqā 'Alī Ṭīhrānī was invited to teach there. In the end, Ṭīhrānī taught there for more than twenty years.⁸⁶ After the death of Ṭīhrānī in 1307/1888, Mīrzā Ḥasan Kirmānshāhī (d. 1336/1918) was appointed as the new teacher of rational sciences there. The madrasa was referred to later as the Old Sipahsālār to distinguish it from a new madrasa established in 1299/1882, with the same name, by Mīrzā Ḥusayn Khān Mushīr al-Dawla Sipahsālār (d. 1298/1881).

Two other madrasas in Tehran are worth mentioning here: Madrasa-yi Dār al-Shifā' and Madrasa-yi Ṣadr. The Dār al-Shifā' was built at the early period of

82 The great drought and subsequent famine of 1870–71 which devastated the city of Isfahan was also decisive in the transfer of cultural and intellectual life from Isfahan to Tehran.

83 The madrasa was founded in the early years of the reign of Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh. It was located in an alley called Darb-i andarūn (later known as Almāsiyya), which divided the Arg in two, an eastern and a western part. On Madrasa-yi Qāsim Khān see N. Kasā'ī, "Madāris-i qadīm-i Tīhrān dar 'aṣr-i Qājār," (124).

84 Gobineau, *Les religions et les philosophies dans l'Asie centrale*, p. 97.

85 On the Old Sipahsālār Madrasa (madrasa-yi Sipahsālār-i qadīm) see N. Kasā'ī, "Madāris-i qadīm-i Tīhrān dar 'aṣr-i Qājār," (125–26).

86 On Āqā 'Alī Mudarris Ṭīhrānī's teaching in Qāsim Khān and Old Sipahsālār, see also chapter 5 in this book, p. 233.

Faṭḥ ‘Alī Shāh’s reign. Initially, as its name suggests, it was meant to be a hospital. However, it is not known if it was ever used as a hospital and if so, when it was turned into a madrasa. The earliest recorded instance of philosophy being taught in this madrasa is in 1273/1856–57 when Mīrzā Abū l-Ḥasan Jilwa moved from Isfahan to Tehran and from the time of his arrival he chose this madrasa as his place of residence and teaching. Altogether, Jilwa was active as a tutor of philosophy in this school for more than forty years.⁸⁷ The other madrasa, Madrasa-yi Šadr, was founded around 1224/1809 by Mīrzā Shafī‘ Khān Mu‘tamid al-Dawla Māzandarānī (d. 1234/1819), who was the grand vizier (*šadr-i a‘zam*) of Faṭḥ ‘Alī Shāh. It was because of the association with the founder that the madrasa was called ‘Šadr’. Between 1288/1871 and 1303/1885, Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha‘ī taught philosophy and mysticism there.⁸⁸

Qazvin was another centre for the study of philosophy. One of the distinguished students of Mullā ‘Alī Nūrī, Mullā Āqā Ḥikmī Qazwīnī (d. 1285/1868) moved to Qazvin after completing his education. In 1233/1817, Madrasa-yi Šālīḥiyya was founded in this city by Muḥammad Šālīḥ Baraghānī (d. 1271/1855), and it attracted students from a wide area of Iran and even from as far away as India. Mullā Āqā Ḥikmī Qazwīnī and some of his senior students, including Mullā Yūsuf Ḥikmī (d. 1276/1859) taught philosophy and the rational sciences in this madrasa for many years. Āqā ‘Alī Mudarris Ṭihirānī (d. 1305/1888) and, reportedly, Jamāl al-Dīn Asadābādī, known as Afghānī (d. 1314/1897), were among Mullā Āqā’s students. It is a remarkable fact that certain women also attended his philosophy classes, including Muḥammad Šālīḥ Baraghānī’s wife, Āmina Šālīḥī and her daughter Fāṭima, better known as Tāhira Qurrat al-‘Ayn (d. 1268/1852). The latter, who became a significant figure in the Bābī movement, studied the rational sciences to such a level of proficiency that she taught them in the women’s section of the madrasa.⁸⁹

In Sabzevar, Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī (d. 1289/1873) taught at a madrasa founded by Ḥājj ‘Abd al-Šānī‘ Fašīḥī, known as Madrasa-yi Fašīḥiyya. Later this madrasa came to be known as the Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī Madrasa. Sabzawārī must have started teaching there sometime after his return to his hometown around 1253/1837, and he continued to do so until the end of his life in 1289/1873. In

87 On Madrasa-yi Dār al-Shifā’, see N. Kasā’ī, “Madāris-i qadīm-i Tihirān dar ‘aṣr-i Qājār,” (120). On Mīrzā Abū l-Ḥasan Jilwa’s residence and teaching in this madrasa, see chapter 6 of this book, pp. 285–286.

88 On Madrasa-yi Šadr, see N. Kasā’ī, “Madāris-i qadīm-i Tihirān dar ‘aṣr-i Qājār,” (119–120). On Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha‘ī’s teaching in this madrasa, see also chapter 7 of this book, pp. 260–261.

89 Moojan Momen, “Usuli, Akhbari, Shaykhi, Babi: The Tribulations of a Qazvin Family,” *Iranian Studies* 36 3 (2003): 317–337 (321, 328).

other words, he was teaching in this school presumably for more than thirty years. It was because of his fame that students came to study with him not only from other major cities of Iran but also from other countries.⁹⁰

Thus, Isfahan, Tehran, Qazvin, and Sabzevar were the major Iranian centres for the study of philosophy in the Qajar period. When Gobineau wrote on this topic in 1865, he limited himself to discussing these four centres. However, he pointed out that in recent years there had been some considerable scholars active in other cities such as Hamadan, Kermanshah, Tabriz, Shiraz, Yazd, Kerman and Mashhad.⁹¹

5 Lithographic Publication of Philosophical Works

The first lithographic publication in Iran was produced in 1248/1832–3 in Tabriz. Some years later, in 1253/1837, lithographic printing was also established in Tehran. Most of the philosophy texts published at the time in Iran were printed in Tehran. What follows is a review of these philosophical publications which are mostly from Tehran (unless otherwise specified). The earliest publication of a philosophy work in Iran took place in 1267/1851, when ‘Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī’s commentary on Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī’s *Tajrīd al-i’tiqād*, titled *Shawāriq al-ilhām* came out together with the glosses by Mullā ‘Alī Nūrī (d. 1245/1829) and Mullā Ismā‘īl Iṣfahānī (d. 1239/1823–24).⁹² Lāhijī’s *Shawāriq* was one of the most popular philosophy works of the rest of the Qajar era (some seventy-five years). There are at least a further eight lithographic editions of this work known in this period.⁹³ Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī’s commentary on Avicenna’s *al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbihāt* was published partially (except for the section on logic) in 1271/1854–55.⁹⁴ ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Qūshjī’s commentary on Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī’s *Tajrīd al-i’tiqād* and its glosses were likewise popular at the time. The first known edition of this work was produced in 1274/1858. It contains glosses by Ṣadr al-Dīn Dashtakī (d. 903/1497), Jalāl al-Dīn Dawānī (d. 908/1502) and Fakhr al-Dīn

90 On Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī’s teaching at Madrasa-yi Faṣḥiyya, see chapter 4 of this book, pp. 185–186.

91 Gobineau, *Les religions et les philosophies dans l’Asie centrale*, p. 105.

92 The edition of ‘Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī’s *Shawāriq al-ilhām* (Tehran: 1267/1851) is in the hand of Muḥammad ‘Alī Ṭīhrānī.

93 *Shawāriq* was published in 1280/1863–64 (by Muḥammad Bāqir Khwānsārī, proofread and collated by Muḥammad ‘Alī Khurāsānī), 1291/1874–75, 1295/1878, 1299/1881–82 (by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn Khurāsānī), 1303/1885 (transcribed by Zayn al-‘Ābidīn), 1312/1894–95, 1330/1912.

94 See Muḥammad Taqī Mudarris Riḍawī, *Aḥwāl u Āthār-i Khwāja Naṣīr al-Dīn-i Ṭūsī* (Tehran: Asāṭir, 1386 Sh./2007), p. 436.

Sammākī (d. 984/1576–77).⁹⁵ At least three more lithographic editions were published in Iran in the following decades: one in Tehran in 1285/1868, and two in Tabriz in 1301/1883–84 and 1307/1889–90. Apart from the glosses by Dawānī and Dashtakī, these publications include the glosses by Aḥmad Ardabīlī known as Muqaddas Ardabīlī (d. 993/1585–86) and Āqā Jamāl Khwānsārī.⁹⁶

Al-Ḥikma al-mutaʿaliya fī asfār al-ʿaqliyya al-arbaʿa was the first of Mullā Ṣadrā's works to be lithographed in four volumes. It came out in 1282/1865 together with the glosses by Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī. In the same year, Mullā Ṣadrā's *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb* was published, again with the glosses by Sabzawārī. The book includes an endorsement by Āqā ʿAlī Mudarris Ṭīhrānī, in which he praises Mullā Ṣadrā.⁹⁷ Four years later, in 1286/1869, Mullā Ṣadrā's *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya* was published together with Sabzawārī's glosses.⁹⁸ A collection of Mullā Ṣadrā's shorter works was published in 1302/1885.⁹⁹ His glosses on the *Metaphysics* of Avicenna's *al-Shifāʾ* was published in 1303/1885.¹⁰⁰ Mullā Ṣadrā's commentary on Athīr al-Dīn Abharī's *Hidāyat al-ḥikma* together with the glosses by Abū l-Ḥasan Jilwa was published in 1313/1896.¹⁰¹ His *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād* was published in 1314/1896–97 together with the glosses by Sabzawārī. Finally, Mullā Ṣadrā's *al-Mashāʾir* and *al-Ḥikma al-ʿarshīyya* were published together in one volume around 1316/1898.

Of the other philosophers of the Safavid period, Mīr Dāmād and ʿAbd al-Razzāq Lāhijī were the most popular. Several works by Mīr Dāmād appeared in a single volume in 1315/1897. It contained *al-Qabasāt* together with Mīr Dāmād's glosses on the work and Shams al-Dīn Gīlānī's (d. 1064/1654) and Abū l-Ḥasan Jilwa's glosses on it, as well as Mīr Dāmād's *al-Īqāḍāt*, his *Khalsāt al-malakūt*, his *Risālat fī madhhab Arastātālīs* and his *Ḥudūth al-ʿālam*. The volume was compiled by Mīrzā Maḥmūd Burūjirdī who studied philosophy with Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumshaʿī and Abū l-Ḥasan Jilwa.¹⁰² Beside these

95 This edition was transcribed in the hand of Kalb-ʿAlī b. ʿAbbās Afshār Qazwīnī.

96 The edition of Tabriz 1307/1889–90 contains the glosses by Fakhr al-Dīn Sammākī, Muqaddas Ardabīlī (d. 993/1585–86), and Āqā Jamāl Khwānsārī. Transcribed by ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ b. ʿAbd al-Raḥīm, it was published by Chāpkhāna-yi Ibrāhīm Tabrizī.

97 On this endorsement see chapter 5 of this book, p. 248.

98 Transcribed by Muḥammad ʿAlī Iṣfahānī.

99 This collection contains Mullā Ṣadrā's *Risāla fī l-ḥudūth*, *Risāla fī ittīṣāf al-māhiyya bi-l-wujūd*, *Risāla fī tashakhkhuṣ*, *Risāla fī sarayān al-wujūd*, *Risāla fī l-qaḍā wa-l-qadar*, *Risāla fī l-wāridāt al-qalbiyya*, *Iksīr al-ʿarīfīn* and *Risāla fī khalq al-aʿmāl*.

100 See below, pp. 25–26.

101 It was published by Muḥammad ʿAlī Tājir Shīrāzī in Tehran, Chāpkhāna-yi Sayyid Murtaḍā Bāsmachī Ṭīhrānī. The edition is in the hand of Mīrzā ʿAbd al-Karīm Sharīf Shīrāzī.

102 The text is in the hand of Abū l-Qāsim b. Riḍā Nūrī Kamarbunī. On Mīrzā Maḥmūd Burūjirdī, see chapter 6 in this book, p. 266.

treatises, Mīr Dāmād's *Risāla fī tawḥīd al-wājib*, *Risāla fī khalq al-a'māl* and his treatise on the legal question of breastfeeding (*riḍā'*) were published in another volume which came out some months later (1315/1898).¹⁰³ Leaving aside his commentary on *Tajrīd al-i'tiqād* (*Shawāriq al-ilhām*) mentioned earlier, 'Abd al-Razzāq Lāhījī's Persian *Gawhar-i murād* appears to have been widely used at the time as a philosophy textbook.¹⁰⁴ It was first published in 1271/1855 and was one of the earliest philosophical works ever published,¹⁰⁵ and was republished again and again in the following decades.¹⁰⁶

Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī seems to have been the first Iranian philosopher whose writings were published during his life. Evidently, his autocommentary on *Ghurar al-farā'id*, known as *Sharḥ-i Manzūma* was first published sometime before 1282/1865.¹⁰⁷ As mentioned before, his glosses on Mullā Ṣadrā's *al-Ḥikma al-muta'aliya* were published in 1282/1865. His Commentary on Rūmī's *Mathnawī* was published in 1285/1868–69 at the request of the grand vizier Mīrzā Yūsuf Āshtiyānī, known as Mustawfī al-Mamālik (d. 1303/1886).¹⁰⁸ His *Asrār al-ḥikam* was first published in Tehran in 1286/1869–70. The publication was financed by the Qajar prince 'Alī Qulī Mīrzā I'tiḍād al-Salṭana (d. 1298/1880).¹⁰⁹ Sabzawārī's writings continued to be popular after his death, particularly his *Sharḥ-i Manzūma*, which was published several times in the following decades, either

103 Published with the support of a certain Āqā Mīrzā Sayyid Bāqir, it consists of two parts: part one includes several treatises on legal questions on breastfeeding (*riḍā'*) and land tax/tribute (*kharāj*) by Mīr Dāmād, 'Alī al-Karakī (d. 940/1534), Ibrāhīm al-Qaṭifī (d. after 945/1539), Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Ardabili (d. 993/1585) and Mājīd Faḍīl-i Shaybānī (fl. 10th/16th). The second part is on theology and contains treatises on free will (by Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawānī, Mīr Dāmād, Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī and Waḥīd Biḥbahānī) and some other subjects. It also includes Avicenna's *Sirr al-ṣalāt*, a treatise on *A'yān al-thābita* attributed to Ibn 'Arabī, Sayyid Sharīf Jurjānī's Persian treatise on *wujūd*, and Qāḍī Sa'īd Qummī's *Risāla fī ḥaqīqat al-ṣalāt*.

104 Its advantage was that it explained philosophical matters in Persian, which made it more accessible/readable for the students.

105 It was published in Chāpkhāna-yi Āqā Mīr Muḥammad Bāqir Ṭīhrānī.

106 It was first published in 1313/1895–96 in Tabriz by Chāpkhāna-yi Āqā Ibrāhīm Tājir Kitābfurūsh Tabrizī, and again by his son, Aḥmad Tājir Kitābfurūsh in Tabriz in 1315/1897–98.

107 Gobineau refers to the publication of *Sharḥ-i Manzūma* in *Les religions et les philosophies dans l'Asie centrale*, p. 100, therefore its publication must have taken place before the date of publication of Gobineau's work (1865).

108 Sabzawārī's commentary on *Mathnawī* was published in the Chāpkhāna-yi Āqā Mīr Bāqir Iṣfahānī, transcribed by 'Alī Aṣghar Tafrishī.

109 This edition of Sabzawārī's *Asrār al-ḥikam* was in the hand of 'Alī Aṣghar Khudā-Raḥm, proofread by Muḥammad Bāqir Qazwīnī. It was published in the Chāpkhāna-yi 'Alī Qulī Khān Qājār. Another edition of this work, transcribed by Muḥammad Ḥusayn Kāshānī was published in Tehran in 1323/1905 by Muḥammad Taqī Kitābfurūsh.

with or without glosses by later scholars.¹¹⁰ His commentary on *al-La'ālī al-muntaẓama* was published for the first time in 1298/1881. Sabzawārī's reply to versified questions by Mīrzā Bābā Gurgānī was published in 1300/1882–83.¹¹¹ His works *al-La'ālī al-muntaẓama* and *Ghurar al-farā'id* (though without any commentaries), were published together in 1315/1898.¹¹² His glosses on Mullā Ṣadrā's *al-Mabda' wa-l-ma'ād* were published in 1314/1896–97.¹¹³

The collected works of Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsā'ī were published in Tabriz by his followers. They appeared in two volumes under the title *Jawāmi' al-kalim*, the first volume in 1273/1856, and the second in 1276/1859.¹¹⁴

In contrast to the works of Sabzawārī and Shaykh Aḥmad, the works of the major philosophers of Tehran, namely Āqā 'Alī Mudarris Ṭihrānī, Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha'ī and Abū l-Ḥasan Jilwa had to wait three more decades to appear in lithograph. Ṭihrānī's *Sabīl al-rashād fī ithbāt al-ma'ād* was the first of these to be published in 1310/1893.¹¹⁵ Most of the works of these philosophers were produced sometime between 1313/1896 and 1316/1898–99 by a certain Shaykh Aḥmad Shīrāzī, son of Muḥammad 'Alī, at the printing house of Sayyid Murtaḍā Bāsmachī Ṭihrānī. In 1313/1896, he published Mullā Ṣadrā's commentary on Athīr al-Dīn Abharī's *Hidāyat al-ḥikma*, which contained in its margins the following works: Jilwa's glosses on this commentary, Jilwa's *Risāla fī taḥqīq al-ḥaraka fī l-jawhar*, his *Risāla fī bayān rabṭ al-ḥādīth bi-l-qadīm*, Ṭihrānī's *Risāla fī bayān anna al-naḥs kull al-quwā* and Qumsha'ī's *Risāla fī bayān taḥqīq asfār al-arba'a*.

A year later in 1314/1897, Shaykh Aḥmad Shīrāzī published Ṭihrānī's *Badāyi' al-ḥikam*.¹¹⁶ Then, in 1315/1898, he published his *Risāla fī l-wujūd al-rābi'ti*. The year after, in 1316/1898, he published a volume containing Ṣā'in al-Dīn Turka's *Tamhīd al-qawā'id* with Qumsha'ī's marginal notes and the latter's *Risāla fī waḥdat al-wujūd bi-l-mawjūd* as well as Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī's *Nuṣūṣ* together

110 *Sharḥ-i Manẓūma* was published together with *Ghurar al-farā'id* by Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭājir Kāshānī at the Kārkhāna-yi Muḥammad Taqī Lawāsānī.

111 It was produced at the request of Ismā'īl Ṭabīb Ṭihrānī at the Chāpkhāna-yi Muḥammad Ḥusayn Bāsmachī Ṭihrānī.

112 It was produced by Shaykh Aḥmad Shīrāzī.

113 It was produced by Ibrāhīm Ṭājir Ṭabātabā'ī.

114 This/these edition/s of al-Aḥsā'ī *Jawāmi' al-kalim* is in the hand of 'Abd al-Ḥamid Rawḍa-kh'ān. Aside from this publication, some philosophical works by Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsā'ī were published separately; for instance, his commentary on Mullā Ṣadrā's *al-Mashā'ir* (Tabriz, n.d.) and his commentary on Mullā Ṣadrā's *al-Ḥikma al-'arshīyya* (Tabriz: Chāpkhāna-yi Mīrzā 'Alī Khushnawīs Tabrizī, 1278/1861–62).

115 The edition is in the hand of Abū l-Qāsim Gilānī.

116 The edition is in the hand of Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Hazār-Jarībī.

with marginal notes by one of Qumsha'ī's students, Mirzā Hāshim Ashkiwarī.¹¹⁷ Later that year or shortly after, he published another philosophical volume containing Mullā Ṣadrā's *al-Mashā'ir* with the glosses by Mullā 'Alī Nūrī, Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm Ardakānī (fl. 1228/1813), Mullā Ismā'īl Iṣfahānī and Abū l-Ḥasan Jilwa on it in the margins as well as Mullā Ṣadrā's *al-Ḥikma al-'arshiyya* together with glosses on it by Mullā Ismā'īl Iṣfahānī.¹¹⁸ Apart from Shaykh Aḥmad Shīrāzī, some other people tried to make the writings of the recent philosophers of Tehran more accessible to the public. As mentioned before, Shaykh Maḥmūd Burūjirdī published Abū l-Ḥasan Jilwa's glosses on Mīr Dāmād's *al-Qabasāt* in the margins of the edition of the latter work. Moreover, a certain Muḥammad Hāshim Mūsawī published Ṭihrānī's *al-Risāla al-ḥamlīyya* in 1314/1897,¹¹⁹ and Ibrāhīm Lārījānī known as Sa'īd al-'Ulamā' (d. 1333/1914–15) published Qumsha'ī's *Risāla fī mawḍū' al-'ilm* and his *Risāla fī mawḍū' khilāfa al-kubrā* in 1315/1898.¹²⁰

The Physics and Metaphysics of Avicenna's *al-Shifā'* were published in 1303/1885 in the printing house of the modern, polytechnic-style school, the Madrasa-yi Dār al-Funūn (established in 1268/1851). The publication was in two volumes. Volume one contained the Physics and Metaphysics of the *Shifā'* together with some interlinear or marginal glosses by Mullā Yūsuf Rāzī known as Mullā Awliyā' (fl. 11th/17th century), Sayyid Aḥmad 'Alawī (d. in/shortly after 1054/1644) and Sulaymān Māḥūzī Baḥrānī, known as Mullā Sulaymān (d. 1121/1710). Volume two contained Mullā Ṣadrā's commentary on the Metaphysics I–VI of the *Shifā'*. Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's *Ḥall Mushkilāt al-Ishārāt* was published partially (*Physics* and *Metaphysics*) in 1271/1854–55 and in its entirety in 1305/1887–88. Moreover, the publication of Mullā Ṣadrā's *Sharḥ Hidāyat*

117 The volume is in the hand of 'Alī Akbar Ṭāliqānī.

118 The volume also contains Āqā Ḥusayn Tunikābunī's *Risāla fī ithbāt ḥudūth al-'ālam*, Ibn 'Arabī's *al-Anqā al-mughrib* and *Risāla fī l-'ilm al-ladunnī wa-l-kasbī* attributed to Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī. It was copied by 'Abd al-Karīm Shīrāzī, proofread by Muḥammad Bāqir Qūchānī. For the complete list of the works that Ḥājī Shaykh Aḥmad Shīrāzī published, see his note titled 'fīlān' on the last page of the book (p. 210). The date of the colophon at the end of *al-Mashā'ir* is 1315/1897 (p. 109). However, from the aforementioned list of publications by Ḥājī Shaykh Aḥmad Shīrāzī which includes *Tamhīd al-qawā'id*, one can conclude that it was published at least a year later when *Tamhīd al-qawā'id* was published.

119 It was published as an appendix to *Miftāḥ al-kalām fī sharḥ Sharāyī' al-Islām*. The edition is in the hand of Aḥmad Ṭihrānī.

120 They were both published together with *al-Jam' bayna ra'yay al-ḥakīmāy*n attributed to Fārābī.

al-ḥikma in 1313/1896 mentioned before, includes several short treatises by (or attributed to) Avicenna, including parts of *al-Mubāḥathāt*.¹²¹

As for the Ishrāqī tradition, Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī's commentary on Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī's *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq* seems to have been the only major work to be lithographed at this time. It was published in 1315/1898.¹²² In contrast to this, the works of the mystical school of Ibn 'Arabī were quite popular in the late Qajar period as evident from the history of their publication. Dāwūd Qayṣarī's commentary on Ibn 'Arabī's *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* was published in 1299/1881–1882. It was published by the Madrasa-yi Dār al-Funūn at the request of one of the tutors of the school, 'Abd al-Ghaffār Najm al-Dawla (d. 1326/1908–9).¹²³ The other significant works of this tradition which appeared in lithograph include Shams al-Dīn Lāhijī's commentary on Maḥmūd Shabistarī's *Gulshan-irāz* (1301/1884),¹²⁴ 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī's *Lawāyih* (1312/1894–95),¹²⁵ 'Abd al-Razzāq Kāshānī's *Risāla fī iṣṭilāḥāt al-'urafā'* (1313/1895–96),¹²⁶ Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī's *Nuṣūṣ*¹²⁷ and Ṣā'in al-Dīn Turka's *Tamhīd al-qawā'id* (1316/1898),¹²⁸ and finally Shams al-Dīn Fanārī's *Miṣbāḥ al-uns* (1323/1905).

Of philosophical works written prior to Avicenna, the "Theology of Aristotle" (*Ūthūlūjīyā*) was published in 1315/1897 in the margins of the edition of Mīr Dāmād's *al-Qabasāt* referred to above. The compiler of the volume, Shaykh Maḥmūd Burūjirdī, claimed that this work was the root and origin of most works produced by philosophers and that he had used a reliable copy of the text for this publication.¹²⁹ Of the works of Fārābī (and those considered to

121 Other short tracts in the book are the alleged correspondences between Abū Sa'īd Abū l-Khayr and Avicenna, *Tafsīr āyat al-Dukhān*, *Tafsīr sūrat al-Tawhīd*, *Tafsīr sūrat al-Falaq*, *Tafsīr sūrat al-Nās*, *Risāla fī ma'rifat al-ashyā'*, *Risāla fī sirr al-qadr*, *Risāla fī l-akhlāq*, *Risāla fī l-'ahd*, *Risāla fī l-quwa al-insāniyya*.

122 It was published with the financial support of Ḥājji Sayyid Ibrāhīm Tājir Tabātabā'i. The text is in the hand of Muḥammad b. Mīrzā Darjazīnī. The edition also contains *al-Jam' bayna ra'yay al-ḥakīmāyn* attributed to Fārābī.

123 By Asad Allāh Maḥallātī. The edition is in the hand of Muḥammad Ḥusayn.

124 Chāpkhāna-yi Mīrzā 'Abbās.

125 It was published by Muḥammad Qazwīnī.

126 It was attributed in the lithograph to Ibn 'Arabī.

127 The edition includes the marginal notes by Mīrzā Hāshim Ashkiwarī. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad 'Alī Shīrāzī Ṭīhrānī published it together with Ṣā'in al-Dīn Turka's *Tamhīd al-qawā'id*. The volume is in the hand of 'Alī Akbar Ṭāliqānī. On Mīrzā Hāshim Ashkiwarī see chapter 6 in this book, pp. 262–263.

128 Published by Aḥmad b. Muḥammad 'Alī Shīrāzī Ṭīhrānī. The volume is in the hand of 'Alī Akbar Ṭāliqānī.

129 See Muḥammad Bāqir Mīr Dāmād, *al-Qabasāt*, lithograph edition by Shaykh Maḥmūd Burūjirdī (Tehran, 1315/1897), p. 323.

be his), *al-Jam' bayna ra'yay al-hakimayn* was published in 1315/1898.¹³⁰ Ismā'īl Shanb-Ghāzānī's commentary on *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, attributed to Fārābī, was published in 1318/1901,¹³¹ and *ʿUyūn al-masā'il* was published in 1325/1907–8.

In the subject of logic, the most distinguished works appeared in lithograph were the works of Quṭb al-Dīn Rāzī (d. 766/1365). His commentary on Najm al-Dīn Kātibī's (d. 675/1277) *al-Shamsiyya (Tahrīr Qawā'id al-mantiqiyya fī sharḥ al-risāla al-Shamsiyya)* was first published in 1267/1850–51, and then nine times during the next fifty years in Tehran and Tabriz.¹³² Its publication usually included the glosses by Sayyid Sharīf Jurjānī (d. 816/1413) on this work. But sometimes some other glosses were also included. The edition of 1301/1883–84, for instance, contained the glosses by Qara Dāwūd Qūjawī (d. 948/1541) as well.¹³³ Another work of Quṭb al-Dīn Rāzī, published frequently in lithograph, was his commentary on the logic part of Sirāj al-Dīn Urmawī's (d. 682/1283) *Ṭawālī' al-anwār (Lawāmi' al-asrār fī sharḥ Ṭawālī' al-anwār)*. It was published first in 1270/1853–54, and then again and again in the following decades in Tehran and Tabriz.¹³⁴

Among the works of European philosophers, a Persian translation of René Descartes's *Discours de la méthode* was the only work to be lithographed in Tehran. It was published under the title *Ḥikmat-i Nāṣirī* in 1279/1862. The translation was a commission by de Gobineau given to an Iranian Rabbi, Mullā Lālazar Hamadānī, and it was done with the assistance of a French diplomat, Emile Berney. I'tiḍād al-Salṭana was reportedly involved in the publication of this book.¹³⁵

130 It was published by Ibrāhīm b. Aḥmad Lārījānī known as Sa'īd al-'Ulamā' (d. 1333/1914–15).

131 There is also an edition published in 1319/1901–1902, which is in the hand of Aḥmad Hazār-Jarībī.

132 It was published in Tehran in 1271/1854, 1276/1859–60, 1280/, 1282/1865–66, 1304/1886–87, 1314/1896–97, and in Tabriz 1296/1878–79, 1301/1883–84. See Khānbābā Mushār, *Fihrist-i kitābhā-yi chāpī-i 'Arabī-i Īrān: Az āghāz tā kunūn*, Tehran: Anjuman-i Kitāb, 1344 Sh./1965, pp. 162–63.

133 Tehran, Dār al-Ṭibā'ah Mashhadi Muḥammad Taqī.

134 It was published in Tehran 1274/1857–58, 1284/1867–68, 1293/1886–87, 1315/1897–98, and in Tabriz in 1294/1877. See Kh. Mushār, *Fihrist-i kitābhā-yi chāpī-i 'Arabī-i Īrān*, p. 772.

135 Firiydūn Ādamiyyat, *Andīsha-yi taraqqī u ḥukūmat-i qānūn: Aṣr-i Sipahsālār* (Tehran: Kh'arazmī, 1356 Sh./1977), pp. 17–18. On the Persian translation of Descartes's *Discours de la méthode*, see chapter 8 of this book, pp. 338–342.

6 The Present Book

So far, studies on Qajar philosophy have been restricted to either a general description of philosophical endeavour in this period or studies of a few individuals, particularly Sabzawārī and Aḥsā'ī. The present publication aims to accomplish both these goals at the same time. It contains studies of the philosophers individually, yet at the same time, its collective character will provide an overview of philosophy in Iran in this period. Although seven major figures of the period have been included in this book, there are some important figures such as Mullā Aḥmad Ardakānī, Mullā 'Abd Allāh Zunūzī, Mullā Ismā'īl Iṣfahānī from the early Qajar era and Mīrzā Hāshim Ashkiwārī from the later period who deserve separate chapters. However, including separate chapters on these figures would require focused studies about them to be carried out, something which is yet to happen.

The present volume consists of eight chapters. Chapter 1 of the book is on Mullā Mahdī Narāqī, a philosopher whose career took place mainly during the Zand era (1164–1209/1751–94), preceding the Qajar period. However, because of his significance and the impact of his thought on Qajar philosophers, he has been included in the volume. For several reasons, Narāqī should be regarded as an exceptional figure in this period. He was both a philosopher and a *mujtahid* (*faqīh*). Besides *fiqh* and philosophy, he was also interested in mathematics and astronomy. Moreover, he was the only philosopher of the period who dealt with ethics. As a metaphysician, he was a critic of Mullā Ṣadrā, though he had many things in common with the latter. The aspect of his thought discussed in this chapter is not intended to introduce his philosophical positions in its entirety. For a comprehensive understanding of Narāqī's philosophy, more studies are required.

Chapter 2 is about Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsā'ī, who was arguably the most innovative thinker of the Qajar period. His impact on the later intellectual developments in Iran cannot be neglected. Similar to Narāqī, Aḥsā'ī was a critic of Mullā Ṣadrā's thought. But unlike Narāqī, he was detached from any particular philosophical trend, and that is the reason his criticism is radically opposed to the whole philosophy establishment. The author of this chapter chose not to employ a historical approach, as in the rest of this book, adopting a philosophical one instead and seeking to explain Aḥsā'ī's thought with the help of a new trend in modern logic. For this reason, this chapter is dissimilar to the rest of the book.

The third chapter is on Mullā 'Alī Nūrī. Nūrī had a significant role in popularizing philosophy and reviving the teaching of philosophy in the Qajar period. He taught in Isfahan and had around five hundred students. His interpretation

of Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophy, which was close to that of his teacher Bīdābādī was to some extent conservative. Besides being a philosopher, he was also an occultist, who engaged in the science of letters (*ʿilm al-ḥurūf*). This engagement with occult had an impact on his philosophical thoughts as it has been explained in the article.

Chapter 4 is about Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī who was one of the students of Mullā ʿAlī Nūrī. Like the latter, Sabzawārī played a significant role in popularizing Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophy in the Qajar period. He spent many years teaching philosophy to a large number of students in Sabzevar. His writings, including *Ghurar al-farāʾid* (known as *Manẓūma*) and his commentary on it, became widely read philosophical texts. As a master of philosophy, Sabzawārī enjoyed a great deal of publicity and fame in his lifetime, beyond that of any other philosopher of the Qajar era.

Chapter 5 is about Āqā ʿAlī Ṭīhrānī. Ṭīhrānī, who was active in Tehran, was another commentator of Mullā Ṣadrā and made a valuable attempt to complete Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophical project. Although his philosophical writings never became as popular as Sabzawārī's, his scrutiny of philosophical matters is remarkable. As is evident from his writings, Ṭīhrānī was familiar with a great deal of what was the current writings on *ḥikma*. Although he was an adherent of Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophy, he used a large number of contemporary philosophical sources in his writings. He was also exceptional among the scholars of this period for his immense interest in logic.

Another philosopher of the Qajar period who is the subject of discussion in this volume is Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumshaʿī, to whom chapter 6 is devoted. Qumshaʿī was also a commentator on Mullā Ṣadrā. But he was closer to Ibn ʿArabī and his commentators than any other commentators on Mullā Ṣadrā. For this reason, in his interpretation of Mullā Ṣadrā, he also stresses his debt to Ibn ʿArabī's ideas. Another aspect of Qumshaʿī's thought was his Shīʿī interpretation of Ibn ʿArabī's mystical ideas of spiritual authority (*walāya*). Although this kind of interpretation was not unprecedented in Shīʿī tradition, his efforts in the context of Qajar philosophical thought has a particular significance.

The last philosopher whose life, works and thoughts are discussed in this volume is Mirzā Abū l-Ḥasan Jilwa (chapter 7). Similar to Narāqī and Aḥsāʾī, Jilwa was a fundamental critic of Mullā Ṣadrā's metaphysics. Instead, he leaned towards the philosophy of Avicenna and played a significant role in reviving Avicennan studies in late 19th century Iran. Moreover, Jilwa promoted critical thinking in general which was applied by his students on the various subjects far beyond those Jilwa was himself engaged in, including on newly arrived western ideas.

The final chapter of the book (chapter 8) is about the reception of European philosophy in Iran during the Qajar period. This chapter, with its different structure, can be considered as an appendix to the studies of the major philosophers of this period. The author of this chapter provides an overview of translations of European philosophical works in this period and discusses the role of intellectuals who promoted western philosophers in their writings. Among the intellectuals, specific attention was paid to five eminent figures: Faṭḥ 'Alī Ākhūndzāda (1295/1878), 'Abd al-Raḥīm Ṭālibūf (d. 1329/1910), Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn Asadābādī, known as Afghānī (d. 1314/1897), Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī (d. 1314/1896) and Mīrzā Malkam Khān (d. 1326/1909).

The structure of each of the first seven chapters of the book, which deal with the major philosophers of this period, is similar. Each of these chapters starts with biographical notes on the philosopher under study, and after introducing his significant students, his works are listed. This list is complete if the philosopher wrote only on philosophy. Otherwise, it contains only the works directly related to rational thought. With the detailed biographies and descriptions of the works given, it is intended to provide a basis for further research on the philosophers of this period. Finally, the chapters also contain a section on the thought of the individual, in which there has been an attempt to demonstrate those aspects of his philosophical views which distinguish him from others.

There is no question that the metaphysics of Mullā Ṣadrā is of fundamental significance for understanding the philosophical thought of this period. The philosophers of the Qajar era can be considered Post-Ṣadrian philosophers in the sense that Mullā Ṣadrā was the primary challenge to their thoughts and they used his books as their basic sources for philosophy. Despite the relevance of Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophy, it is not the task of this book to deal with his ideas in an extensive fashion. It is supposed that the reader is familiar, at least to a certain extent, with his thought. Nevertheless, on some specific matters, the positions of Mullā Ṣadrā is elucidated.

The present volume is meant to engage students of philosophy with the philosophical discourses of Qajar Iran and to provide an impetus for further research on the philosophers of this period. However, it must be admitted that some significant elements are lacking in the volume. For instance, a chapter on the methodology of Shī'ī law would have been desirable. Another aim of this book is to pave the way for studies on philosophical discourses in contemporary Iran. Undoubtedly, any study on contemporary Iranian philosophy would be deemed to have failed if it had not been appropriately grounded in studies of the earlier periods, particularly early modern Iran. However, to accomplish that task more complementary studies need to be done.

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Mullā Mahdī Narāqī

Reza Pourjavady¹

1 Life²

Muḥammad Mahdī³ Narāqī was born around 1146/1732 in Narāq, a village near Kashan.⁴ It was in Kashan that he started his education, in literary sciences (*funūn-i adabī*), with a certain Mullā Muḥammad Jaʿfar Bīdgulī.⁵ After some years and probably in his early youth, he left Kashan for Isfahan. There he studied philosophy, rational theology (*kalām*), legal theory (*uṣūl al-fiqh*) and law

- 1 The first draft of this chapter was presented at a Workshop on Rationalist Sciences: Logic, Physics, Metaphysics, and Theology in the Post-Classical Period, Washington University of St Louis 2012. The author would like to thank Annabel Keeler, Sajjad Rizvi, and Sabine Schmidtko for their comments on an earlier draft.
- 2 On Narāqī's life see Ḥasan Narāqī, *Tārīkh-i ijtimāʿī-i Kāshān* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Muʾassasa-yi Muṭālaʾāt u Taḥqīqāt-i Ijtimāʿī, 1345 Sh./1966); ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn Ṭālīʿī, "Zindagīnāmāhā-yi khudnīvisht, sharḥ-i ḥāl-i Mullā Aḥmad Narāqī az zabān-i farzandash," *Kitāb-i Shīʿa*, 3 (1390 Sh./2001): 148–150; Sayyid Ḥasan Fāṭimī, "Kuhantarīn sharḥ-i ḥāl-hā-yi Mullā Muḥammad Mahdī Narāqī," *Kitāb-i māh-i dīn*, 53–54 (1380–81 Sh./2002): 26–30; idem, "Laghzishhā dar sharḥ-i ḥāl-i Mullā Muḥammad Mahdī Narāqī," *Fiqh-i ahl-i bayt* 29 (1381 Sh./2002): 210–224; Sayyid ʿAbbās Mīrī, "Āthār-i ʿilmī-farhangī-i Mullā Mahdī-i Narāqī," *Kitāb-i māh-i dīn* 53–54 (1380–81 Sh./2002): 3–19; M. Amin Razavi, "Muḥammad Mahdī Narāqī," in Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Mehdi Amin Razavi (eds.), *An Anthology of Philosophy in Persia*. Volume 3: Philosophical Theology in the Middle Ages and Beyond from Muʿtazilī and Ashʿarī to Shīʿī Texts (London/New York: I. B. Tauris 2010), pp. 431–432; Juan R. I. Cole, "Ideology, Ethics, and Philosophical Discourse in Eighteenth Century Iran," *Iranian Studies* 22 (1989): 7–34 (16–20).
- 3 His son, Aḥmad Narāqī mentions his father's full name as Muḥammad Mahdī. See ʿA. Ṭālīʿī, "Zindagīnāmāhā-yi khudnīvisht," 148. But in the introduction to his works, Narāqī refers to his first name simply as Mahdī, and it seems this was name by which he preferred to be called and was usually called.
- 4 This date of birth was calculated on the basis of Sayyid Ḥasan Zunūzī's statement in his *Riyāḍ al-janna*, where Narāqī was said to be around 63 years old at his death in 1209/1795. See S. H. Fāṭimī, "Kuhantarīn sharḥ-i ḥāl-hā," 29.
- 5 Abū l-Ḥasan Ghaffārī, *Gulshan-i murād* (Tehran: Zarrīn, 1369 Sh./1990–91), p. 392; Aḥmad Narāqī introduces Bīdgulī as the chief and the most knowledgeable of the *ʿulamā* of the city. For Aḥmad Narāqī's *ijāza* for his brother Muḥammad Mahdī, see S. H. Fāṭimī, "Kuhantarīn sharḥ-i ḥāl-hā," 27.

(*fiqh*) with Mullā Ismā'īl Khwājū'ī Māzandarānī (d. 1173/1759–60), who is the only person referred to by Narāqī as his teacher.⁶

Khwājū'ī was a philosopher and theologian as well as a legal scholar.⁷ The best known of his philosophical writings is *Risāla fī ibtāl al-zamān al-mawhūm*, in which he defends Mīr Dāmād's (d. 1030/1621) doctrine of the perpetual origination of the world (*hudūth dahrī*) against the criticism of Jamāl al-Dīn Khwānsārī (d. 1125/1713).⁸ He also wrote a treatise on eschatology, titled *Ḥidāyat al-fu'ād ilā nubdh min aḥwāl al-ma'ād*. In this work, Khwājū'ī follows the view of Mullā Ṣadrā (d. 1045/1635–36) when he states that following the corruption of the body, the soul will join a virtual body (*al-ashbāḥ al-mithālīyya*) and not its original body in the intermediary world (*'ālam al-barzakh*).⁹ He also wrote a Persian treatise on the Sufi idea of the unity of existence (*waḥdat al-wujūd*), in which he takes a critical stance towards this idea.¹⁰ In teaching metaphysics,

6 See Muḥammad Mahdī Narāqī, *Jāmi' al-afkār wa-nāqid al-anzār*. 2 vols., ed. Majīd Hādizāda (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Ḥikmat, 1381 Sh./2002), vol. 1, p. 210, where Narāqī refers to Khwājū'ī as "*ustādhunā al-muḥaqqiq al-Māzandarānī*".

7 This is according to Aḥmad Narāqī's *ijāza* to his brother Muḥammad Mahdī; see S. H. Faṭīmī, "Kuhantarīn sharḥ-i ḥālḥā," 27.

8 This work has been edited twice: (i) by Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, *Muntakhabātī az āthār-i ḥukamā'-i ilāhī-i Īrān az 'aṣr-i Mīr Dāmād u Mīr Findiriskī tā zamān-i ḥāqīr* (Tehran: Anīstītū-yi Īrān u Farānsi-yi Pazhūhishhā-yi 'Ilmī dar Īrān, 1357 Sh./1978), vol. 4, pp. 233–291; (ii) by Sayyid Aḥmad Tūysirkānī in Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawānī and Ismā'īl Khwājū'ī Māzandarānī, *Sab' rasā'il* (Tehran: Mirāth-i maktūb, 1381 Sh./2002), pp. 239–283.

9 See Ismā'īl Khwājū'ī, "Ḥidāyat al-fu'ād ilā nubdh min aḥwāl al-ma'ād," in *Muntakhabātī az āthār-i ḥukamā'-i ilāhī-i Īrān*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, vol. 4, pp. 151–233, particularly p. 231. On Mullā Ṣadrā's position on this issue, see Eiyad S. Kutubi, *Mullā Ṣadrā and Eschatology: Evolution of Being* (London/New York: Routledge, 2015), especially pp. 104–123.

10 Ismā'īl Khwājū'ī Māzandarānī and Rahīm Qāsimī (ed.), "Waḥdat al-wujūd," in Sayyid Aḥmad Sajjādī and Rahīm Qāsimī (ed.), *Mirāth-i ḥawza-yi Isfahān*, vol. 1 (Isfahan: Markaz-i Tahqīqāt-i Rāyāna'i-i Ḥawza-yi 'Ilmiyya-yi Isfahān, 1383 Sh./2004–05), pp. 137–166. Besides the editions mentioned above, most of Khwājū'ī's writings have been edited by Sayyid Mahdī Rajā'ī. See Ismā'īl Khwājū'ī Māzandarānī and Mahdī Rajā'ī (ed.), "Risāla-yi Nawrūziyya," in Rasūl Ja'fariān (ed.), *Mirāth-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, vol. 4 (Qom: Kitābkhāna-yi Mar'ashī, 1376 Sh./1997), pp. 165–190; idem, *al-Rasā'il al-i'tiqādiyya*, 2 vols., ed. Sayyid Mahdī Rajā'ī (Qom: Dār al-Kitāb al-Islāmī, 1411/1990); idem, *al-Rasā'il al-fiqhiyya*, 2 vols., ed. Sayyid Mahdī Rajā'ī (Qom: Dār al-Kitāb al-Islāmī, 1411/1990); idem, *Wajh tasmīyat al-Mufid bi-l-mufid: fihā munāzarāt kalāmīyya wa-abḥāth ḥawla l-dirāya wa-l-rivāya wa-l-farq baynahumā wa-ghayruhā min al-ḥaqā'iq wa-l-daqa'iq wa-l-raqa'iq* (Tehran: Maktab al-Qur'ān, 1413/1992); idem, *Miftāḥ al-falāḥ wa-miṣbāḥ al-najāḥ fī sharḥ du'a' al-ṣabāḥ*, ed. Sayyid Mahdī Rajā'ī (Mashhad: Mu'assasat al-Ṭab' wa-l-Nashr al-Tābi'a li-l-Āstāna al-Riḍawiyya al-Muqaddasa, 1993); idem, *al-Durar al-multaqaṭa fī tafsīr al-āyāt al-Qur'āniyya*, ed. Mahdī Rajā'ī (Qom: Dār al-Qur'ān al-Karīm, 1412/1992); idem, *al-Arba'ūn ḥadīthan*, ed. Mahdī Rajā'ī (Qom: Maktabat al-Marḥūm Āyat Allāh al-Ṣadr al-Khādīmī, 1412/1991–92).

it is said that he had a particular emphasis on Avicenna's *al-Shifā'*, which he taught several times.¹¹ Kh^wājū'ī seems to have had a remarkable impact on Narāqī's thought. It is clear that on many philosophical issues Narāqī's positions are close to those of his teacher.

In addition, Narāqī is said to have studied in Isfahan with Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Zamān Nūshābādī Kāshānī (d. after 1172/1758–59), Muḥammad Mahdī Ṣāḥir Harandī (d. 1186/1772–73), and Mirzā Naṣīr (d. 1186/1772–73).¹² Among these scholars, only the first, Nūshābādī, is known to us through his own extant works. Nūshābādī was a scholar of *fiqh* and *kalām* with some knowledge of astronomy. In the field of *kalām*, he composed at least three works: (1) *Mir'āt al-zamān*¹³ (completed in 1062/1748–49), on the origination of the world, in which he critiques Kh^wājū'ī's treatise mentioned above; (2) *al-Qawl al-sadīd*, likewise on the origination of the world; and (3) *Hidāyat al-mustarshidīn wa-takhtī'at al-mubalkafīn* (completed in 1166/1752–53), on the nature of place (*ayn*) and quality (*kayf*) and the proposition that God is not subject to them.¹⁴

After the Afghan siege and conquest of Isfahan in 1134/1722, some *madrasas* continued to function in the devastated city, though reduced in number and students. A small number of scholars who had remained there, including those mentioned above, carried on the intellectual life of the city. Within a few decades, Isfahan was again lively enough to attract the young Narāqī.¹⁵

The duration of Narāqī's stay in Isfahan is unknown to us. Nevertheless, it is evident that this was a formative period for his thought. For a while after his return to Kashan, Narāqī performed the duties of *imām* of the Friday prayer.¹⁶ But not long after his return he travelled to Iraq and specifically to

It is also notable that Kh^wājū'ī completed and translated the *Ḥikma Ṣādiqiyya* (a treatise on the soul written by Mullā Ḥamza Gilānī, based on the lectures of Muḥammad Ṣādiq Ardīstānī). See *Muntakhabātī az āthār-i ḥukamā'-i ilāhī-i Īrān*, vol. 4, pp. 56–220 (67).

11 'Abd al-Nabī al-Qazwīnī, *Tatmīm al-amal al-āmil*, ed. al-Sayyid Aḥmad al-Ḥusaynī (Qom: Maktabat Āyat Allāh al-Mar'ashī, 1407/1986), p. 67.

12 See S. Ḥ. Fāṭimī, "Kuhantarīn sharḥ-i ḥālḥā," 27.

13 Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Zamān al-Kāshānī, *Mir'āt al-zamān*, ed. Mahdī Dihbāshī, (Tehran: Anjuman-i Āthār u Mafākhir-i Farhangī, 1381 Sh./2002).

14 MS Majlis 1966, fols. 17b–32b; MS Mar'ashī 4319, fols. 69b–85a. On Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Zamān Nūshābādī Kāshānī, see M. al-Kāshānī, *Mir'āt al-zamān*, xxv–xxvii.

15 J. R. I. Cole, "Ideology, Ethics, and Philosophical Discourse," 16.

16 Safavid scholars had a long debate about the validity of Friday congregational prayer. Starting with 'Alī al-Karakī (d. 940/1534), certain scholars argued that the prayer is obligatory and that a learned *faqīh* could be appointed to lead the prayer sessions. This position was rejected by some conservative scholars who believed that only the true Imām could lead the congregational prayer. Narāqī seems to have been among those who believed in its obligation. For the debates on Friday congregational prayer in Safavid and post-Safavid era see Andrew J. Newman, "The Vezir and the Mulla: A Late Safavid Period Debate

Najaf and Karbala, where he was mainly engaged with legal theory (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), law (*fiqh*) and *ḥadīth*. He studied with outstanding Shīʿī scholars such as Shaykh Yūsuf Baḥrānī (d. 1186/1772–73), Muḥammad Bāqir Bihbihānī, known as “Waḥīd” (d. 1206/1791–92), and Shaykh Muḥammad Mahdī Futūnī Najafī (d. 1183/1769–70), some of whom issued him with licenses to transmit *ḥadīth* (*ijāzāt*).

Around 1180/1766, or shortly before this date, Narāqī returned to Kashan. With the exception of a few brief trips, he spent the rest of his life in this city.¹⁷ Shortly after his arrival, he also married.¹⁸ Kashan at this time was ruled by ‘Abd al-Razzāq Khān, who had been appointed by Karīm Khān Zand (r. 1179–1193/1779–1765) to administer the region. In 1182/1768–69, ‘Abd al-Razzāq Khān built a *madrassa* in Kashan (named Rāziqiyya after him), where Narāqī may have taught.¹⁹

On Tuesday 25 Dhū l-Qa‘da 1192/December 15 1778, Narāqī witnessed the disastrous earthquake that struck Kashan.²⁰ His family was among the survivors who were evacuated from the city and accommodated in one of the neighbouring villages. But the damage to the water supply led to an outbreak of cholera, which claimed further victims, among them one of Narāqī’s children. We know from contemporary sources that the current ruler of Iran, Karīm Khān Zand (r. 1179/1750–1193/1779), organized immediate assistance to be sent to the governor ‘Abd al-Razzāq Khān so that he could reconstruct the city. A few months later, in Rabīʿ I 1193/March 1779, Karīm Khān died. In the following years, ‘Abd al-Razzāq Khān, who was loyal to the successors of Karīm Khān, effected repairs to the damaged city. But by then the country as a whole was in the grip of civil war. There were several battles, and much blood was shed

on Friday Prayer,” in M. Bernardini, M. Haneda and M. Syuppe (eds.), *Études sur L’Iran Médiéval et Moderne Offertes à Jean Calmard: Eurasian Studies* 1–2 (2006): 237–69; Rasūl Jaʿfariyān, *Siyāsāt u farhang-i rūzgār-i Ṣafawī* (Tehran: Nashr-i ‘Ilm, 1388 Sh./2009), vol. 1, pp. 593–744.

17 Narāqī completed his *Anīs al-tujjār* in Kashan on 10 Rabīʿ I 1180/15 September 1766. See *Anīs al-tujjār* (Qom: Būstān-i Kitāb, 1383/2004–05), p. 394.

18 A contemporary poem quoted in Ḥ. Narāqī’s *Tārikh-i ijtimāʿī-i Kāshān* (p. 24) provides this piece of information.

19 Maḥmūd Ṭayyār Marāghī, “Madāris-i ‘ilmiyya-yi Kāshān (Qurūn-i panjum tā pānzdahum),” *Waqf-i mūrāth-i jāwidān* 22 (1377/1998): 68–79 (75).

20 At the end of his *Jāmiʿ al-afkār*, completed on 1 Rabīʿ I 1193/20 March 1779, Narāqī explains the reason for delay in completion of this work to be an earthquake that took place shortly before he managed to finish the work. About eight thousand people were reportedly killed in this earthquake. See M. M. Narāqī, *Jāmiʿ al-Afkār*, vol. 2, p. 598. See also N. N. Ambraseys and C. P. Melville, *A History of Persian Earthquakes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 53–54.

by various groups competing for power. Eventually, Āghā Muḥammad Khān Qājār, the founder of the Qājār dynasty, emerged in the north of the country as the victor. In 1198/1783–84, Āghā Muḥammad Khān, on his way to capturing Isfahan, camped his army outside the city walls of Kashan to force open the gates of the city. Fearing an attack, ‘Abd al-Razzāq Khān sent a delegation led by Narāqī, accompanied by a group of scholars, to Āghā Muḥammad Khān, seeking to persuade him to leave the city alone. His request was accepted, and the army moved towards Isfahan without entering Kashan.²¹

Our knowledge about the last two decades of Narāqī’s life is limited. In his *Gulshan-i murād*, Abū l-Ḥassan Ghaffārī reports that he went on a pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina and also to the shrine cities in Iraq and Iran.²² During the last three or four years of his life, he no longer taught but devoted his time to worship and contemplation.²³ The subjects of his late works were astronomy and *fiqh*.²⁴ Narāqī died on 8 Sha’bān 1209/28 February 1795 in Kashan. According to his son, Aḥmad, his body was conveyed to Najaf and buried there.²⁵

2 Students

The following scholars are known to have studied with Narāqī:

- 1) Muḥammad Ja’far Kabūdārāhangī, known as Majdhūb ‘Alī-Shāh (d. 1239/1824).²⁶ Born in 1175/1761–62, Kabūdārāhangī’s early education was in Hamadan, where he studied literary subjects (*‘ulūm adabī*) and logic. He was about eighteen years old when he left Hamadan for Isfahan. He stayed there for about five years and studied philosophy and

21 Ḥ. Narāqī, *Tārīkh-i ijtimā’ī-i Kāshān*, pp. 159–160.

22 A. Ghaffārī, *Gulshan-i murād*, p. 394.

23 See Muḥammad Ja’far Kabūdārāhangī (Majdhūb ‘Alī-Shāh), *Mir’āt al-ḥaqq*, ed. Ḥamid Nāji Iṣfahānī (Tehran: Ḥaqqīqat, 1383 Sh./2004), p. 70. Sayyid Ḥasan al-Zunūzī also confirms this in his *Riyāḍ al-janna*. See S. Ḥ. Fāṭimī, “Kuhantarīn sharḥ-i ḥālḥā,” 28–29.

24 Narāqī’s major astronomical work, *al-Mustaḥṣal masā’il al-hay’a*, which seems to be a late work, was never completed. Another astronomical work, *Muḥaṣṣal masā’il al-hay’a*, appears to have been composed by Narāqī in the last decade of his life. MS Qom, Markaz-i Ihya’-i Mirāth-i Islāmī 2290 contains the oldest known copy of this work, dated 1206/1792–93. In *fiqh*, his *Lawāmī’ al-aḥkām fī fiqh sharī’at al-Islām* is likewise a late work. The earliest dated copy of this work, MS Qom, Mar’ashī 8350, was completed on 29 Ramaḍān 1206/21 May 1792.

25 S. Ḥ. Fāṭimī, “Laghziṣṣhā dar sharḥ-i ḥāl,” 224.

26 For Majdhūb ‘Alī-Shāh’s life and works, see Muḥammad Ja’far Kabūdārāhangī, *Mir’āt al-ḥaqq*, ed. Ḥamid Nāji Iṣfahānī (Tehran: Ḥaqqīqat, 1383 Sh./2004), pp. 15–24; idem, *Rasā’il-i Majdhūbiyya: Majmū’a-yi haft risāla-yi ‘irfānī*, ed. Ḥamid Nāji Iṣfahānī (Tehran: Ḥaqqīqat, 1377 Sh./1998), pp. 17–34.

mysticism with Āqā Muḥammad Bīdābādī (d. 1198/1783–84) and his student, Mīrzā Muḥammad ‘Alī b. Muẓaffār (d. 1198/1784). From Isfahan, he continued to Kashan, where he studied philosophy, *kalām*, *uṣūl al-fiqh* and *fiqh* with Mullā Mahdī Narāqī for about four years. After that, he went to Qom to continue his studies in theology and legal theory with Mīrzā Abū l-Qāsim Qummī (d. 1231/1815–16). Sometime around 1207/1792–93, he was initiated into the Ni‘matullāhī Sūfī order and became the disciple of Ḥusayn ‘Alī-Shāh (d. 1234/1818–19). In 1233/1818, Ḥusayn ‘Alī-Shāh appointed him as the head of the Ni‘matullāhī order. In 1239/1823–84, he went to Tabriz, where he was well received by Prince ‘Abbās Mīrzā (d. 1249/1833) and the prime minister (*ṣadr-i a‘zam*), Abū l-Qāsim Qā‘im-Maqām Farahānī (d. 1251/1835).²⁷ But soon afterwards he caught cholera and died in Dhū l-Qa‘da 1239/June-July 1824 in Tabriz. Kabūdarāhangī’s works reflect his training in the various intellectual fields of study. His works include *Mir’āt al-ḥaqq*,²⁸ *Marāḥil al-sālikīn*,²⁹ *Risāla-yi ‘irfāniyya*,³⁰ *Risāla-yi i’tiqādāt*³¹, glosses on Mir Ḥusayn Maybudī’s commentary on Athīr al-Dīn Abharī’s *Hidāyat al-ḥikma*, and superglosses on Mīrzā-Jān Bāghnawī’s glosses on Quṭb al-Dīn Rāzī’s *al-Muḥākamāt bayna sharḥay al-Ishārāt*.³² In the latter work, Kabūdarāhangī cites three glosses by his teacher, Mahdī Narāqī, to whom he refers with respect as “my teacher or, rather, everyone’s teacher” (*ustādhī bal ‘alā l-kull*).³³

- 2) Aḥmad Narāqī, Narāqī’s son. Following his father’s death, he was recognized as the major *faqīh* of the city of Kashan. Fath ‘Alī Shah (r. 1212–1250/1797–1834) appointed him as the rector of the *Madrasa-yi Sulṭānī* (the “Royal Madrasa”) in the city. Although he might have studied some

27 See Majdhūb ‘Alī-Shāh, *Dīwān-i ‘arīf-i nāmī Muḥammad Ja‘far Qaragūzlū Kabūdarāhangī Hamadānī ma‘rūf bi Majdhūb ‘Alī-Shāh*, ed. Ḥusayn Kāẓimzāda Īrānshahr (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Iqbāl, 1361 Sh./1982).

28 Muḥammad Ja‘far Kabūdarāhangī, *Mir’āt al-ḥaqq*, ed. Ḥamid Nājī Iṣfahānī (Tehran: Ḥaqīqat, 1383 Sh./2004).

29 Muḥammad Ja‘far Kabūdarāhangī, *Marāḥil al-sālikīn*, ed. Ḍiyā’ al-Dīn Najafī (Tehran: Chāpkhāna-yi Kitāb, 1320 Sh./1941).

30 Muḥammad Ja‘far Kabūdarāhangī and ‘Alī-Riḍā Dhakāwatī Qarāgūzlū (ed.), “Risāla-yi ‘irfāniyya,” *Mīrāth-i Islāmī-i Īrān*, ed. Rasūl Ja‘fariyān (Qom: Kitābkhāna-yi Mar‘ashī, 1376 Sh./1997), vol. 4, pp. 151–164.

31 Published in his *Rasā’il-i Majdhūbiyya*.

32 Maḥmūd ‘Ālimī, and ‘Alī-Riḍā Dhakāwatī Qarāgūzlū (eds.), “Ta’liqāt Ḥājī Muḥammad Ja‘far Qarāgūzlū Majdhūb Kabūdarāhangī bar ḥāshiya-yi Bāghnawī bar al-Muḥākamāt-i Quṭb-i Rāzī,” *Ma‘ārif* 14 iii (1376 Sh./1997–98): 108–135. Apart from the works mentioned above, seven treatises of Kabūdarāhangī were published in *Rasā’il-i Majdhūbiyya*.

33 See below, fn. 47.

philosophical works with his father, his scholarly works suggest that he avoided deep engagement in this subject, perhaps deliberately. The majority of his writings are concerned with law (*fiqh*) and legal theory (*uṣūl al-fiqh*). However, he presented a Persian summary of his father's *Jāmi' al-sa'ādāt* in a work titled *Mi'rāj al-sa'āda*.³⁴ He also composed an apologetic work in defence of Islam, titled *Sayf al-umma wa-burhān al-milla*, in response to the polemical treatises written by Henry Martyn (d. 1812).³⁵

- 3) Ḥājji Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Kalbāsī (or Karbāsī, d. 1261/1845). Apart from Narāqī, Kalbāsī studied with two other philosophers of the time, Āqā Muḥammad Bidābādī (d. 1198/1783) and Mullā Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Rafī' Gilānī (d. 1190/1776). He also studied in the shrine cities of Iraq with Sayyid Muḥammad Mahdī Ṭabāṭabā'ī ("Baḥr al-'ulūm", d. 1212/1797) and Muḥammad Bāqir Waḥīd Bihbihānī. Kalbāsī was one of the outstanding jurists of his age. His *Shawārī' al-hidāya* and his *Ishārat al-uṣūl* on legal theory as well as his *Minhāj al-hidāya* and *Irshād al-mustarshidīn* in the field of law became major sources of study and reference.³⁶
- 4) Muḥammad b. Ḥājji Ṭālib Ṭāhirābādī (fl. 1194/1780). Information on his life is mostly based on the colophons he added to the works that he had copied. On the basis of these notes, it is evident that he resided in Kāshān and studied with Narāqī from 1182/1768 to 1094/1780. He transcribed several works of his teacher, including *Qurrat al-'uyūn* (in 1182/1768),³⁷ *Anūs al-mujtahidīn* (in 1185/1771)³⁸, and *Jāmi' al-afkār wa-nāqid al-anzār* (in 1194/1780). Apart from Narāqī's works, he also copied some other works including Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's (d. 672/1274) *Bīst bāb dar ma'rīfat-i Aṣṭurlāb*, an anonymous versification of this work composed in 1104/1692–93, and

34 Aḥmad Narāqī, *Mi'rāj al-sa'āda* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Jāwīdān, 1331 Sh./1959).

35 Aḥmad Narāqī, *Sayf al-umma wa-burhān al-milla*, ed. Sayyid Mahdī Ṭabāṭabā'ī (Qom: Pazhūhishkade-yi 'Ulūm-i Insānī, 1385 Sh./2006–2007). On Aḥmad Narāqī and his authoritative-religious role see Hamid Dabashi, "Chapter Nineteen: Early Propagating of Wilayat-i Faqih and Mulla Ahmad Naraqī," in Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Hamid Dabashi, and Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr (eds.), *Expectation of the Millennium: Shi'ism in History* (Albany: Suny Press, 1989), pp. 287–300; Saïd Amir Arjomand, "Political Ethic and Public Law in the Early Qajar Period," in Robert Gleave (ed.), *Religion and Society in Qajar Iran* (Oxford: Routledge-Curzon, 2005), pp. 21–40.

36 See Hossein Modarressi Tabataba'ī, *An Introduction to Shi'ī Law: A Bibliographical Study* (London: Ithaca, 1984), pp. 93, 99; Sajjad H. Rizvi, "Hikma muta'aliya in Qajar Iran: Locating the Life and Work of Mulla Hadī Sabzawari (d. 1289/1873)," *Iranian Studies* 44 (2011): 473–496 (478).

37 MS Tehran, University of Tehran 6772.

38 MS Tehran, University of Tehran, Ilāhiyyāt.

Bahā' al-Dīn 'Āmilī's *Ṣaḥīfa* which is on the same topic.³⁹ The last three works suggest that Ṭāhirābādī was also interested in astronomy. It is therefore plausible to assume that apart from philosophy, rational theology and law, he also studied Ptolemaic astronomy with Narāqī.

3 Works

Narāqī was a prolific writer. "A tireless man of action", as Corbin describes him,⁴⁰ he left behind an enormous corpus of writings in various disciplines.⁴¹ His career as an author seems to have started during his time in Karbalā, wherein 1178/1764–65 he completed his *Risālat al-Ijmā'* (Treatise on Consensus) concerning aspects of legal theory.⁴² His early works were all either on *fiqh* or *uṣūl al-fiqh*, both being topics that continued to engage Narāqī for the rest of his life. But gradually Narāqī's domain of writings expanded to include also philosophy, *kalām*, ethics, astronomy, and mathematics. It seems that some of his writings were designed to be textbooks for students. These include three Arabic works whose titles all begin with *Jāmi'* ("compendium"): *Jāmi' al-afkār wa-nāqid al-anzār* (on *kalām*), *Jāmi' al-sa'ādāt fī mūjibāt al-najāt* (on moral philosophy), and *Jāmi' al-uṣūl* (on legal theory). He also composed five introductory works whose titles begin with "*Anīs*" ("companion"): *Anīs al-ḥukamā'* (on philosophy), *Anīs al-tujjār* (on trading laws, completed in 1180/1766),⁴³ *Anīs al-ḥujjāj* (on pilgriming laws), *Anīs al-muwahḥidīn* (on *kalām*), and *Anīs al-mujtahidīn* (on legal theory, completed in 1189/1775).⁴⁴ In what follows, his works on philosophy and theology as well as other related topics are introduced:

1) *Jāmi' al-afkār wa-nāqid al-anzār* ("Compendium of the [Theological] Ideas and Their Verifications")⁴⁵

This work, Narāqī's first and most comprehensive work on *kalām*, was completed on 1 Rabi' I 1193/20 March 1779.⁴⁶ Evidently, Narāqī had started writing

39 MS Majlis 3761/1–3, copied in 1182/1768–69.

40 Henry Corbin, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, tr. Liadain Sherrard with the assistance of Philip Sherrard (London 1964), p. 350.

41 For a full list of Narāqī's writings, see Sayyid 'Abbās Mīrī, "Āthār-i 'Ilmī-Farhangī-i Mullā Mahdī-i Narāqī," *Kitāb-i māh-i dīn* 53–54 (1380–81 Sh./2002): 3–19.

42 Ḥ. Narāqī, *Tārīkh-i ijtimā'ī-i Kāshān*, p. 10.

43 Muḥammad Mahdī Narāqī, *Anīs al-tujjār* (Qom: Būstān-i Kitāb, 1383 Sh./2004–05).

44 Published in Qom: Mu'assasa-yi Būstān-i Kitāb, 1388 Sh./2009–10.

45 Edited in two volumes by Majīd Hādī-zāda (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Hikmat, 1381 Sh./2002).

46 Ḥ. Narāqī, *Tārīkh-i ijtimā'ī-i Kāshān*, p. 20.

this work as early as 1186/1773. In the introduction to his *Qurrat al-ʿuyūn fī l-wujūd wa-l-māhiyya*, which was completed in the same year, Narāqī explains that his *Jāmiʿ al-afkār* includes all the discussions treated in Avicenna's *al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbihāt* and its commentaries and glosses, with the exception of the discussions on existence which he treated in a separate monograph, namely his *Qurrat al-ʿuyūn fī l-wujūd wa-l-māhiyya*. In the introduction to his *Jāmiʿ al-afkār*, however, the author says it contains the metaphysical discussions presented by ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Qūshjī in his commentary on Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's *Tajrīd al-iʿtiqād* and the various glosses on this work (*wa-li-ishtimālihi ʿalā jāmiʿ al-afkār al-ilāhiyya wa-naqdihā siyyamā maʿa mā taʿallaq bi-l-sharḥ al-jadīd li-l-Tajrīd* [wa-] *min al-ḥawāshī*). It may be that Narāqī initially intended to cover the discussions developed in the commentaries on Avicenna's *Ishārāt* but then, once he became involved in writing the book, changed his mind and turned instead to Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's *Tajrīd al-iʿtiqād* and its commentaries. In any case, the structure of the work has a greater resemblance to the commentaries on the *Tajrīd* than to the commentaries on the *Ishārāt*. Narāqī's work consists of five introductions (*muqaddimāt*) and two main parts (*maqālāt*): the first on the proof of the existence of the Necessary Existent and the second on His attributes of affirmation and negation. This work seems to belong to the *Ithbāt al-wājib* genre, which was initiated by Jalāl al-Dīn Dawānī.⁴⁷

2) *Anīs al-muwaḥḥidīn* ("Companion of the Unitarians")

This work, written in Persian, is a typical Twelver Shīʿī creed, containing an introduction and five parts (*abwāb*): (1) on the proof for the existence of God; (2) on His attributes; (3) on the prophecy of Muḥammad; (4) on imamate and various interpretations of it; (5) on the resurrection.⁴⁸

3) *al-Lamaʿāt al-ʿarshiyya* ("The Radiances of the Throne").⁴⁹

This work contains five chapters (*lamaʿāt*): 1) On existence and quiddity and some of their states (*fī l-wujūd wa-l-māhiyya wa-baʿḍ mā lahā min al-aḥwāl*); 2) on what of the attributes of greatness and perfection relates to the Origin (*fī mā yataʿallaq bi-l-mabdaʾ min ṣifāt al-jalāl wa-nuʿūt al-kamāl*); 3) on the quality of His creation and His emanation and other issues related to the emanation of His actions (*fī kayfiyyat ijādihi wa-ifādatihi wa-sāʾir mā yataʿallaq bi-ṣudūr al-afʿāl*); 4) on the human soul and related issues (*fī l-naḥs al-insāniyya wa-mā*

47 See Reza Pourjavady, *Philosophy in Early Safavid Iran: Najm al-Dīn Maḥmūd al-Nayrizī and His Writings* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 118–119.

48 Muḥammad Mahdī Naraqī, *Anīs al-muwaḥḥidīn*, ed. Asad Allāh Ṭabāṭabāʾī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Dānishgāh-i al-Zahrāʾ, 1363 Sh./1984).

49 Muḥammad Mahdī Naraqī, *al-Lamaʿāt al-ʿarshiyya*, ed. ʿAlī Awjabī (Karaj: Alburz, 1381 Sh./2002).

yata'allaq bihā); and 5) on prophethood and the quality of the revelation and the descent of the angel (*fī l-nubuwwāt wa-kayfiyyat al-waḥy wa-nuzūl al-malik*).

4) *al-Lum'a al-ilāhiyya fī l-ḥikma al-muta'āliya* ("The Divine Illumination on Transcendental Philosophy").⁵⁰

Following a brief introduction, this work consists of five chapters (*abwāb*): 1) On existence and quiddity (*fī l-wujūd wa-l-māhiyya*); 2) on the proof for the existence of the Necessary and His attributes (*Ithbāt al-wājib wa-ṣifātihi*); 3) on emanation and creation (*al-ifāda wa-l-ijād*); 4) on the states of the soul and its origins (*aḥwāl al-naḥs wa-nash'atuhā*); 5) prophecy and its mission (*al-nubuwwa wa-l-ba'tha*). The structures of *al-Lama'āt al-'arshiyya* and *al-Lum'a al-ilāhiyya* are quite similar, to such an extent that Āshtiyānī suggests that the *al-Lum'a al-ilāhiyya* is the concise form of *al-Lama'āt al-'arshiyya*.⁵¹

5) *al-Kalimāt al-wajīza* ("The Pithy Discourse").⁵²

This work consists of six chapters, each of which is called a *kalima*. These are devoted to the following subjects: 1) on existence and quiddity (*fī l-wujūd wa-l-māhiyya*); 2) on proofs for the existence of His essence and His attributes (*fī ithbāt dhātihi wa-ṣifātihi*); 3) on emanation (*fī l-ifāda*); 4) on the soul and its origins (the original title is missing); 5) on prophecy (the original title is missing); 6) on imāma (*fī l-imāma*).

Al-Lama'āt al-'arshiyya, *al-Lum'a al-ilāhiyya*, and *al-Kalimāt al-wajīza* closely resemble each other in terms of structure. Moreover, with regard to their structure, all three can aptly be described as creeds in the classical Islamic sense. However, rather than discussing philosophical preliminaries (*al-umūr al-'amma*) or the unity of God (*tawḥīd*), as is usually the case for the opening chapter of an Imāmī creed during this period, Narāqī begins each of these works with a chapter on existence and quiddity. The reason for this might be his categorical objection to the idea of the unity of existence, which he regarded as a deviation from the orthodox notion of God's unity. Another feature that sets these works apart from other creeds is the fact that they do not include an independent chapter on the resurrection (*fī l-ma'ād*).⁵³ Further, two of these works, *al-Lama'āt al-'arshiyya*, *al-Lum'a al-ilāhiyya*, do not include a chapter on *imāma* either, although *al-Kalimāt al-wajīza* does. It is evident that Narāqī did not strive to follow the typical model for a creed in these works, whereas he did so in *Anīs al-muwahḥidīn*.

50 See Muḥammad Mahdī Narāqī, *al-Lum'a al-ilāhiyya wa-l-kalimāt al-wajīza* by Sayyid Jalāl Āshtiyānī (Mashhad: Anjumān-i Falsafa, 1357 Sh./1978).

51 See M. M. Narāqī, *al-Lum'a al-ilāhiyya*, p. 42.

52 This work has been edited by Sayyid Jalāl Āshtiyānī. See Muḥammad Mahdī Narāqī, *al-Lum'a al-ilāhiyya wa-l-kalimāt al-wajīza*.

53 However, chapter 4 of *al-Lum'a* does cover the Resurrection.

6) *Anīs al-ḥukamāʾ* ("The Companion of the Philosophers")

This work consists of three parts (*fann*): logic, physics, and metaphysics.⁵⁴

7) Commentary on the Metaphysics of Avicenna's *al-Shifāʾ*⁵⁵

This is a lemmatized commentary on Book One and part of Book Two (up to the end of Chapter Two) of the metaphysics of the *Shifāʾ*. Although incomplete, it is the only known attempt to write a systematic and lemmatized commentary on Avicenna's major work on metaphysics. In the introduction, Narāqī apologizes for not being able to present this work in the form it deserves, blaming the difficult times in which he was living:

If our brothers and predecessors who excelled in knowledge, had lived in the same period of tyranny and cruelty as we are in, their thought would be likewise blocked, and their names and works would not have survived them.⁵⁶

Throughout the commentary, Narāqī seems to have made some attempts at editing the text of the *Shifāʾ*.⁵⁷ Evidently, he consulted earlier commentaries on the work. According to Nāji Iṣfahānī, he was mainly engaged with two earlier commentaries on it by Mullā Ṣadrā and Āqā Ḥusayn Khwānsārī (d. 1098/1687). While he frequently agreed with the views of Mullā Ṣadrā, it seems that he sided with Khwānsārī whenever the latter criticized Mullā Ṣadrā.⁵⁸

8) Remarks on Ḥabīb Allāh Bāghnawī's gloss on Quṭb al-Dīn Rāzī's *Muḥākamāt bayn Sharḥay al-Ishārāt*

In his supergloss on Ḥabīb Allāh Bāghnawī's gloss on Rāzī's *Muḥākamāt*, Narāqī's student, Muḥammad Jaʿfar Kabūdārāhangī, included three remarks

54 A unique, albeit incomplete, manuscript of this work is extant in the Marʾashī Library in Qom (MS Marʾashī 7328).

55 This work has been edited by Ḥamid Nāji Iṣfahānī. See Muḥammad Mahdī Narāqī, *Sharḥ al-Ilāhiyyāt min kitāb al-Shifāʾ*, 2 vol., ed. Ḥamid Nāji Iṣfahānī (Qom: Kungira-yi Buzurg-dasht-i Muḥaqqiqān-i Narāqī, 1380 Sh./2001). Prior to this edition, Mehdi Mohaghegh (Mahdī Muḥaqqiq) edited this work partially. See Muḥammad Mahdī Narāqī, *Sharḥ al-Ilāhiyyāt min kitāb al-Shifāʾ*, ed. Mahdī Muḥaqqiq, vol. 1 (Tehran: Institute of Islamic Studies of McGill University [Tehran Branch], 1367 Sh./1986). Only the first volume of this commentary has ever been published.

56 M. M. Narāqī, *Sharḥ al-Ilāhiyyāt min kitāb al-Shifāʾ*, ed. Ḥamid Nāji Iṣfahānī, vol. 1, p. 5.

57 See, for instance, Avicenna, *The Metaphysics of the Healing*, translated, introduced and annotated by Michael E. Marmura (Provo Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2005), p. 383.

58 See M. M. Narāqī, *Sharḥ al-Ilāhiyyāt min Kitāb al-Shifāʾ*, ed. Ḥamid Nāji Iṣfahānī, vol. 1, pp. 20–22.

by Narāqī on Bāghnawī's gloss. These remarks concern the first *namat* of Avicenna's *Ishārāt* on physics.

9) *Qurrat al-'uyūn fī l-wujūd wa-l-māhiyya* ("Consolation of the Eyes on Quiddity and Existence")⁵⁹

This work was completed on 5 Rabī' 11 1182/17 August 1768.⁶⁰ In the introduction, Narāqī refers to his *Jāmi' al-afkār* as his major contribution to the study of philosophy and theology, adding that he had decided not to include the discussions on existence (*wujūd*) in the *Jāmi'* but instead to devote an independent treatise to this subject. *Qurrat al-'uyūn* constitutes this independent examination of existence and quiddity which is divided into fourteen discussions (*mabāḥith*). Āqā Muḥammad Bidābādī wrote glosses on this work.⁶¹

10) *Jāmi' al-sa'ādāt fī mūjibāt al-najāt* ("Compendium of the Blissess regarding the Necessary Requirements for Salvation")⁶²

This work, the seemingly most comprehensive ethical work ever written by a Muslim author, consists of an introduction and three chapters (*bāb*): 1) on preliminary discussions (*muqaddimāt*); 2) on various types of character (*fī bayān aqsām al-akhlāq*); 3) on the method of achieving and maintaining excellence of character (*fī tariq ḥifẓ i'tidāl al-akhlāq al-maḥmūda wa-istiṣṣāliahā*). Following Naṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī's *Akhlāq-i Nāsirī*, the usual habit when composing works of this nature was to include discussions on household management (*tadbīr al-manzil*) and politics (*siyāsāt al-mudun*) as well. Narāqī, however, did not follow this model. He stated in the introduction that he did not discuss about those subjects because his intention in this work was merely to cleanse the soul for moral qualities.⁶³

59 There are two editions of this text: 1) Muḥammad Mahdī Narāqī, *Qurrat al-'uyūn fī l-wujūd wa-l-māhiyya*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (Tehran: Anjuman-i Shāhanshāhi-i Falsafa-yi Irān, 1357 Sh./ 1978). This edition has also been included in *Muntakhabātī az āthār-i ḥukamā'-i ilāhī-i Irān*, vol. 4, pp. 345–536; 2) Muḥammad Mahdī Narāqī, *Qurrat al-'uyūn fī l-wujūd wa-l-māhiyya*, ed. Ḥasan Majīd 'Ubaydī (Beirut: Dār al-Maḥajja al-Bayḍā', 2009). A partial English translation of this work, by Joseph E. Lombard, is included in S. H. Nasr and M. A. Razavi (ed.), *An Anthology of Philosophy in Persia*, vol. 3, pp. 433–456.

60 See the author's colophon, M. M. Narāqī, *Qurrat al-'uyūn*, ed. Ḥasan Majīd 'Ubaydī, 297.

61 Some, if not all, of these glosses are included in Ḥasan Majīd 'Ubaydī's edition of *Qurrat al-'uyūn*. For these glosses see also Āghā Buzurg, *Dharī'a*, vol. 17, 75. Images of a copy of *Qurrat al-'uyūn* with Bidābādī's margin glosses are preserved at the Centre of Great Islamic Encyclopedia (shelfmark no. 1972/2). See Muṣṭafā Dirāyatī, *Fihristwāra-yi dast-nivishthā-yi Irān*, 12 vols. (Tehran: Kitābkhanā Mūzi u Markaz-i Asnād-i Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī, 1389 Sh./2010), vol. 8, p. 178.

62 Muḥammad Mahdī Narāqī, *Jāmi' al-sa'ādāt fī mūjibāt al-najāt*, ed. Sayyid Muḥammad Kalāntar (Najaf, 1375/1955).

63 M. M. Narāqī, *Jāmi' al-sa'ādāt fī mūjibāt al-najāt*, vol. 1, p. 5.

The type of ethics discussed in this work is Aristotelian, resembling that of Abū 'Alī (Ibn) Muskūya's (or Miskawayh, d. 421/1030) in his *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq wa-taṭhīr al-a'rāq*, later elaborated in Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī*. Narāqī quotes from Muskūya⁶⁴ and Ṭūsī⁶⁵ in this work. He also refers to Jalāl al-Dīn Dawānī's *Lawāmi' al-ishrāq fī makārim al-akhlāq* (otherwise known as *Akhlāq-i Jalālī*). Narāqī seems to have drawn upon Dawānī's ethical work in several respects. However, he omits most Sunnī connotations replacing them with Shī'ī elements and *ḥadīths*.⁶⁶ His primary source for the Shī'ī material was *al-Maḥajja al-bayḍā' fī tahdhīb al-Iḥyā'* by Muḥsin Kāshānī, known as "Fayḍ" (d. 1090/1680). In addition to these Shī'ī ideas, Narāqī gleaned extensive material from Fayḍ's discussions of Sufi states and stations, which were in turn inspired by Abū Ḥamid Ghazālī's (d. 505/1111) elaborations in his *Iḥyā' al-'ulūm al-dīn*.⁶⁷ Narāqī's *Jāmi' al-sa'ādāt* seems to have received much attention among later scholars of Iran. Soon after its completion, Muḥammad Ḥasan Qazwīnī (d. 1240/1824–25), who was residing in the city of Karbala, summarized the work under the title, *Kashf al-ghīṭā' 'an wujūh marāsīm al-ihtidā'*.⁶⁸ As mentioned above, Narāqī's son, Aḥmad, incorporated a translation of some parts of *Jāmi' al-sa'ādāt* in his Persian *Mī'rāj al-sā'ada*.⁶⁹ Mullā Aḥmad Ardakānī (d. ca. 1245/1829) translated *Jāmi' al-sa'ādāt* into Persian.⁷⁰ In his ethical work, *Tuḥfat al-Irāq fī 'ilm al-akhlāq*, Muḥammad Ja'far Sharī'atmadār Astarābādī (d. 1263/1846) seems to have used *Jāmi' al-sa'ādāt* as a model. A lithograph edition, published in Tehran in 1312/1894–95 is further evidence of the popularity of this work.⁷¹

64 Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 48–49.

65 Ibid., vol. 1, p. 62.

66 See, e.g., the discussion on '*alāj al-khawf*' in *Jāmi' al-sa'ādāt*, vol. 1, pp. 208–212, and compare it with Jalāl al-dīn Dawānī, *Akhlāq-i Jalālī*, ed. 'Abd Allāh Mas'ūd Ārānī (Tehran: Iṭṭilā'āt, 1391 Sh./2012–13), pp. 159–165.

67 Cf., e.g., the following discussion in these two works: *dhamm al-māl* (*Jāmi' al-sa'ādāt*, vol. 2, 103 ff. and *al-Maḥajja al-bayḍā'*, vol. 6, 39 ff.), and *tawba* (*Jāmi' al-sa'ādāt*, vol. 3, 49 and *al-Maḥajja al-bayḍā'*, vol. 7, 5 ff.).

68 Muḥammad Ḥasan al-Qazwīnī, *Kashf al-ghīṭā' 'an wujūh marāsīm al-ihtidā'*, ed. Muḥsin al-Aḥmadī (Qazvin: Qism al-Abḥāth wa-l-Dirāsāt fi l-Ḥawza al-'Ilmiyya, 1381 Sh./2002). According to Muḥammad Taqī Dānishpazhūh, this work was completed before 1202/1787–88, cf. Muḥammad Taqī Dānishpazhūh, *Fihrist-i nuskhahā-yi khatṭī-i Kitābkhāna-yi Markazī u Markaz-i Asnād-i Danishgāh-i Tihrān*, vol. 17 (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Dānishgāh-i Tihrān, 1364 Sh./1985), p. 103.

69 See above, p. 42.

70 See 'Alī Karbāsizāda Iṣfahānī, *Ḥakīm-i muta'allih-i Bidābādī. Iḥyā'gar-i ḥikmat-i Shī'ī dar qarn-i dawāzdahum-i hijrī* (Tehran: Pazhūhishgāh-i 'Ulūm-i Insānī u Muṭāla'āt-i Farhangī, 1381 Sh./2002–2003), pp. 105–106.

71 The editor of this lithograph was Shaykh Maḥmūd Burūjirdī (d. 1337 Sh./1918–19), who studied philosophy with Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumshā'ī (d. 1306/1888).

11) *Nukhbat al-bayān* ("The Finest Rhetoric").⁷²

This is a short Persian treatise, written at the request of certain friends, on simile (*tashbih*), metaphor (*isti'āra*), free trope (*majāz-i mursal*) and metonymy (*kināya*).

12) *Mushkilāt al-'ulūm* ("Problems in the Sciences").⁷³

This work is divided into thirteen chapters (*abwāb*) which are devoted to topics ranging from aspects of literature to mathematics, logic, and philosophy, from religious fields of study to games and puzzles.

13) *al-Mustaṣṣā fī l-hay'a* ("The Comprehensive Account of Astronomy").

This is an extensive work on astronomy, consisting of an introduction and four chapters (*abwāb*). In it, Narāqī refers to the motion of the earth as the view of the Modern Europeans.⁷⁴

14) *Muḥaṣṣal masā'il al-hay'a* ("A Collection of Astronomical Problems")

An Arabic work on astronomy, containing six chapters (*abwāb*): (1) introductory issues; (2) the configurations of the orbs and subjects related to them; (3) the circles and the arcs; (4) what occurs to the planets in their motions; and (5) the form of the Earth and subjects related to it.⁷⁵

15) *Tahrīr Kitāb Ukar li-Thāwdhiyūs* ("A Commentary on [the Arabic version of] the *Sphaerica* by Theodosius of Bithynia")⁷⁶

A revision of Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's *Tahrīr kitāb Ukar* with some additional discussions.⁷⁷

16) *Tawḍīḥ al-Ashkāl* ("Elucidating the Shapes")⁷⁸

This work is a Persian translation of Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's *Tahrīr kitāb al-Uqlīdis*. In the introduction, Narāqī explains that there has been an earlier Persian translation of this work by Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī (d. 710/1311). However, the translator had failed to demonstrate properly the obscure notions and expressions

72 Muḥammad Mahdī Narāqī, *Nukhbat al-bayān. Dar wujūh-i tashbih, isti'ārāt, muḥsināt-i bad'iyya*, ed. Ḥasan Narāqī (Tehran: Chāpkhāna-yi Majlis, 1335 Sh./1956–57).

73 Muḥammad Mahdī Narāqī, *Mushkilāt al-'ulūm*, ed. Ḥasan Narāqī (Tehran: Mu'assasa-yi Muṭāla'āt u Taḥqīqāt-i Farhangī, 1367 Sh./1987).

74 Muḥammad Mahdī Narāqī, *al-Mustasqā*, MS Mashhad, Āstān-i Quds-i Riḍawī 11567, fol. 50a.

75 For the extant copies of this work, See Ḥasan Narāqī's introduction to M. M. Narāqī, *Qurrat al-'uyūn*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, pp. 42–43; Muṣṭafā Dirāyatī, *Fihristwārah-yi dast-nivishthā-yi Īrān* 1–12, vol. 9, p. 183.

76 On this work and its Arabic translation, see Richard Lorch, "The Transmission of Theodosius' *Sphaerica*," in Menso Folkerts (ed.), *Mathematische Probleme im Mittelalter: Der lateinische und arabische Sprachbereich* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1996).

77 The holograph of this work is preserved in Ḥasan Narāqī's private collection. But a microfilm of it is said to be available at the Library of Majlis Shūrā-yi Islāmī. See Ḥasan Narāqī's introduction to Muḥammad Mahdī Narāqī, *Qurrat al-'uyūn*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, pp. 39–40, 43.

78 MS Tehran, University of Tehran 467.

found in the text. In his rather free translation, Narāqī tries to clarify Ṭūsī's text and render its contents more accessible to its readers.

Apart from the above-mentioned works, Narāqī composed *Lawāmi' al-ahkām*, *Mu'tamad al-Shī'a*, *Anīs al-tujjār*, *Anīs al-ḥujjāj*, *al-Manāsik al-Makkiyya* and *al-Tuhfat al-Riḍawīyya*, *Risāla fī Ṣalāt al-Jum'ā* on law, and *Tajrīd al-uṣūl*, *Jāmi' al-uṣūl*, *Anīs al-mujtahidīn*, and *Risālat al-ijmā'* on legal theory.⁷⁹ He was also a poet and composed about three thousand strophes of poetry in Persian and Arabic. The pen name he used in his poems was Narāqī.⁸⁰

4 Philosophical Thought

Mullā Ṣadrā seems to have had significant impact on Narāqī's philosophical thought. Although there are some crucial ontological issues with respect to which Narāqī took a different position, his discourse remains invariably post-Ṣadrian. Even his commentary on the metaphysics of Avicenna's *al-Shifā'* should be studied within the post-Ṣadrian context. The situation is similar to that of a philosopher of the late 6th/12th and 7th/13th centuries who might have relied heavily on Avicenna's writings. As we shall see, even the majority of the references and quotations from earlier sources that Narāqī cites are in fact gleaned from Mullā Ṣadrā's works.

Nevertheless, Narāqī was by no means a Ṣadrian philosopher, particularly when it came to certain issues where he had theological concerns about the position of Mullā Ṣadrā. On the question of the origination of the world, for instance, following his teacher, Khwājū'i, Narāqī distanced himself from Mullā Ṣadrā's view and instead adopted Mīr Dāmād's doctrine of the perpetual origination of the world (*ḥudūth dahrī*).⁸¹ He emphasised in his writings in his independence of thought and the fact that he did not belong to any one school:

Do not think that I adore a certain school of Sufi, Ishrāqī, theological, or peripatetic thought. Rather, in one hand I hold the incisive demonstrative proof and in the other, the incisive proof of the revelation [...] I use

79 For the extant copies of these works, see Ḥasan Narāqī's introduction to M. M. Narāqī, *Qurrat al-'uyūn*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, pp. 25–29.

80 See Ḥasan Narāqī's introduction to M. M. Narāqī, *Qurrat al-'uyūn*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, pp. 17, 44–46.

81 See M. M. Narāqī, *Jāmi' al-Afkār*, vol. 1, pp. 178–243.

these incisive proofs regardless of [their] being opposed to the principles of one of these schools.⁸²

In ontology, Narāqī follows Mullā Ṣadrā in his view of the primacy of existence (*aṣālat al-wujūd*). However, upon closer analysis, some differences can be discerned. Narāqī adheres to the Ṣadrian view that in reality there is no duality of essence-existence. Following Avicenna, the mainstream philosophers believed that existence is accidental (*ʿarīḍ*) to the quiddity or, as Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī put it, superadded (*zāʿid*) to it. Narāqī argues that this is a mere conceptual analysis which has no correspondence in reality. In the external world, there is only one single reality, and that is existence. Utilizing the concept of *jaʿl* (meaning “to create”), Narāqī maintained that existence is created (*majʿūl*) and not quiddity. In other words, what is created by the Necessary Existent is the existence of things and not their quiddities. This position is the one referred to by Mullā Ṣadrā as the primacy of existence. Although Narāqī accepted this idea, he did not approve of Ṣadrian metaphysics in its totality. Narāqī refers to the existence of things in the extra-mental world as special existence (*al-wujūd al-khāṣṣ*). Similar to Mullā Ṣadrā, he thinks that this existence is real and not something accidental to the quiddity of things. However, to Narāqī what the existents, in so far as they exist, have in common, i.e., absolute existence (*wujūd al-muṭlaq*), is something intelligible (*maʿqūl*) and conceptual.⁸³

In his metaphysical system, Mullā Ṣadrā sought to synthesize Ibn ʿArabī's doctrine and terminology with Avicenna's explanation of the God-universe relationship. First of all, he identified Absolute Existence with the Necessary Existent, maintaining that the latter's reflection results from the first effulgence from His Being. This first effulgence, in the sense that it is pure existence, is identical to the Necessary Existent. However, being the result of His first self-reflection, it is also something different. Mullā Ṣadrā calls this existence the “expanding existence” (*al-wujūd al-munbaṣiṭ*). The Necessary Existent, or Absolute Existence, is a transcendent unity with no quiddity and therefore is unknowable. But this first effulgence possesses quiddity and is therefore knowable. This self-expanding existence mediates between the Necessary Existent and the world of contingents. God's attributes, which are adumbrated as a unity and contained in an implicit manner in Absolute Existence, manifest themselves at this level of existence. In other words, by adopting Ibn ʿArabī's doctrine, Mullā Ṣadrā maintained that, as far as their manifestations are

82 Muḥammad Mahdī Narāqī, *al-Lamaʿāt al-ʿarshīyya*, ed. ʿAlī Awjabī (Karaj: Alburz, 1381 Sh./2002).

83 M. M. Narāqī, *Qurraṭ al-ʿuyūn*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, pp. 81–86.

concerned, God's attributes are distinct from God's essence. But this is only a conceptual distinction. In reality, there is no distinction between God's attributes and His essence. Likewise, there is no real distinction between the existence of contingents and that of the Necessary Existent. The existence of contingents is nothing but the overflowing of expanding existence. Although the contingents appear to be distinct, they are united existentially. The idea of expanding existence was one of the crucial elements of Ibn 'Arabī's thought, and Mullā Ṣadrā incorporated it into his philosophical system.

In a short Persian treatise titled *Risāla dar waḥdat-i wujūd u ta'addud-i mawjūdāt* ("On the Unity of Existence and the Plurality of Existents"), Narāqī's teacher, Mullā Ismā'īl Khwājū'i, criticizes what he calls "the Sufi idea" of the unity of existence.⁸⁴ In this work, Khwājū'i goes straight to the problem and targets the Sufi belief that the Necessary Existent is identical to absolute existence. He argues that existence in its absolute sense is something that all existent beings have in common; therefore, referring to absolute existence as the Necessary Existent implies that every existent in its true sense is the Necessary Existent. This, according to Khwājū'i, is an irrational statement (*ghayr-i ma'qūl*) and leads to infidelity (*kufr*) and idolatry (*ilhād*).⁸⁵ Khwājū'i also criticizes the idea of expanding existence, which, according to him, paves the way for the Sufis to claim unification with God. It is evident that Khwājū'i's criticism is directed against the school of Ibn 'Arabī. However, Khwājū'i does not distinguish between this school and those of other Sufis adequately.⁸⁶ As shall be pointed out below, Narāqī follows the arguments of his teacher. However, unlike Khwājū'i, Narāqī carefully phrases his criticism of those who followed Ibn 'Arabī, whom he calls *wujūdīyya*.⁸⁷

Narāqī's most extensive discussion on this issue is to be found in chapter thirteen of the *Qurrat al-ʿuyūn*. There he conceives of three "hypothetical stages" (*i'tibārāt-i 'aqlī*) for existence in its general and obvious sense:

- 1) *lā bi-sharṭ* or "non-conditional"
- 2) *bi-sharṭ lā* or "negatively conditional"
- 3) *bi-sharṭ shay'* or "positively conditional"

84 Here in this treatise, Khwājū'i indicates that he had dealt with this subject at length (*bar wajh-i shāfi u qadr-i kāfi*) in another of his works (p. 137). I have been unable to identify that other work.

85 Khwājū'i, "Waḥdat al-wujūd," p. 139.

86 Khwājū'i's treatise was evidently influenced by anti-Sufi literature produced during the Safavid era. Nevertheless, he does not dismiss all the Sufis. He differentiates between Shī'i Sufis who follow the path of the Imāms from the rest whom he regards as "deviant". See Khwājū'i, "Waḥdat al-wujūd," pp. 158–159, 165–166.

87 See, e.g., M. M. Narāqī, *Qurrat al-ʿuyūn*. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (ed.), p. 129, where he defends the view of "*akābir al-Ṣūfiyya*" against the criticism of Mullā Ṣadrā.

These logical divisions can be traced back to Avicenna, but they became a moot problem within the exegetical tradition of Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's *Tajrīd al-i'tiqād*.⁸⁸ "Negatively conditional" existence, which means existence without quiddity or determination, corresponds to the Necessary Existent, according to the philosophers. "Non-conditional" existence, which is existence with no positive or negative condition with respect to quiddity, corresponds to the Necessary Existent, according to the Sufis. Finally, "positively conditional" existence is existence with quiddity and in this sense is identical to contingents.

Narāqī explained that early Sufis (*qudamā' al-Ṣūfiyya*) adhered to the idea of the unity of existence, but meant by this that existence is unique, that is to say, that the Necessary Existent flows into the bodies of the contingents. However, this should not be understood to be in the way of infusion (*ḥulūl*) or accidental attachment (*'urūd*). The exact quality of this overall presence is indeed unknown. The early Sufis emphasize the point that the perception of it requires unveiling and spiritual observation and that it is not possible to apprehend it by means of arguments and theories. By contrast, some later Sufis (*jam'un min al-muta'akhhirīn*), who combined insight with theory, sought to explain the unity of existence in rational terms. They argued as follows:

The reality of existence (*ḥaqīqat al-wujūd*) which is universal by nature (*kullī ṭabī'ī*) can be considered in three different stages:

- 1) The first stage is the *aḥādīyya* of existence when it is not conditioned by any quiddity (*bi-shart' adam māhiyya*), nor by any determination whatsoever. The philosophers' (*ḥukamā'*) idea of the Necessary Existent corresponds to this stage.
- 2) In the second stage, existence is a pervading entity (*ḥuwiyya sāriyya*), i.e., when it is not conditioned by any quiddity or its absence. The Sufis' idea of the Necessary Existent corresponds to this.
- 3) The third stage is existence conditioned by quiddity. This is the stage of the contingents, in which the reality of existence is mixed with quiddities.⁸⁹

As Narāqī explains, according to the Sufis the reality of the contingent, which is a way of determining existence, is something conceptual and accidental to the reality of existence. But this idea challenges the concept of God's unity. Narāqī admits that Mullā Ṣadrā was aware of this problem and it was for this reason that he emphatically states that by Absolute Existence the Sufis meant negatively

88 For the discussion on these hypothetical stages in the exegetical tradition of *Tajrīd*, see T. Izutsu, "Basic Problems of 'Abstract Quiddity,'" in M. Mohaghegh and T. Izutsu (eds.), *Collected Texts and Papers on Logic and Language* (Tehran, 1974), pp. 1–25.

89 Narāqī's discussion here relates to Mullā Ṣadrā's similar discussion in *al-Ḥikma muta'ālīya fī l-asfār al-'aqlīyya al-arba'a*, 9 vols. (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1981–1990), vol. 2, pp. 327–347.

conditioned existence and not expanding existence (*wujūd munbasit*). In fact, mistaking Absolute Existence for expanding existence leads to dreadful consequences (*mafasid shanī'a*) such as infusion (*hulūl*) and anthropomorphism (*tashbīh*).⁹⁰ Despite this exercise, Narāqī remained dissatisfied:

I say: these three stages of existence, that is the reality negatively conditional, reality non-conditional, and reality positively conditional, are either different and separate in the external world (*fī l-wāqī'*) and in and of themselves (*fī nafs al-amr*) or not, meaning that their differences and separateness are merely intellectual and conceptual. If we go for the first, the unity of existence is not real since accordingly the Necessary Existent, the contingents, and the expanding existence must each have separate existences. That is to say, expanding existence would be neither identical with the existence of the Necessary Existent nor with the existence of the contingents. In this case, I do not know how to define it, although no Sufi would admit to this. From what we have seen until now and will see in the future, this mystic (*'arif*) [= Mullā Ṣadrā] does not believe such a thing either. If we go for the second possibility, which corresponds to the explicit statements of the Sufis [...], there are no differences between these stages of reality; indeed the difference is merely conceptual. Therefore in the same way that the first stage is applicable to the existence of the Truth, so is the second and even the third stage as well.⁹¹

Narāqī argues, therefore, that if we consider the distinction between the necessary and possible existents to be conceptual, then it is perfectly correct to see existence as that which descends from the stage of Oneness (*aḥadiyya*) to the second and even the third stage. Since the rejection of this idea undermines the doctrine of the unity of existence, its advocates need to choose between the two positions; either the unity of existence or the adjoining (*inḍimām*) of Absolute Existence (= the Necessary Existent) with quiddities in the second and the third stages.⁹² To Narāqī, it appeared that Mullā Ṣadrā was contradicting

90 M. M. Narāqī, *Qurrat al-'uyūn*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, p. 175. Narāqī here summarizes and paraphrases Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Hikmat al-muta'ālīya*, vol. 2, p. 330.

91 M. M. Narāqī, *Qurrat al-'uyūn*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, pp. 175–176.

92 Narāqī uses the term '*ḥaqīqat al-wājib*'. He argued that this *ḥaqīqa* in itself is free from any determination. He stated, however, that the majority of Sufis believe that it can be adjoined (*munḍamm*) with the quiddities. He quotes an anonymous Sufi who explicitly states that the distinction between *wājib* and *mumkin* is purely conceptual and not extra-mental (pp. 165–166). Narāqī goes on to explain that if we maintain the position that the Necessary Existent, which is pure existence with no determination, can become

himself when he distinguished between the possible existents and the Necessary Existent, on the one hand, and when he adhered to the doctrine of the unity of existence, according to which the distinction between the three stages of existence is conceptual. He would have been more accurate had he asserted that the idea of expanding existence does not compromise transcendence of God.

Although Narāqī's primary focus is Mullā Ṣadrā and his metaphysics, he occasionally aims his criticism at his predecessor, Shams al-Dīn Khafī (d. 942/1535–36), who was among the first to adopt Ibn 'Arabī's doctrine of *wahdat al-wujūd* in his metaphysical thought. One of the statements of Khafī he quotes is the following:

Summarizing the things [we have] mentioned, according to the Verifiers of the Truth, the caused is a conceptual aspect (*ḥaythiyya i'tibāriyya*) of the complete cause; for them (i.e., the verifiers), therefore, creation (*ijād*) means the external result of the True Existence. The Truth is the true existence, and the creatures are His manifestations. The distinction is somewhat conceptual and intellectual (*bi-l-i'tibār wa l-ta'aqqul*). The Qur'ān alerts one to this by stating: "He is the First and the Last, the External and the Internal and He is aware of all affairs."⁹³ [...] Creation (*ijād*) for them [i.e., the verifiers] means the True Existence becomes something determined. If you like, you [may] say it [i.e., creation] means the True Existence becomes determined by the conceptual determinations of the contingents. You [may equally] say that it [i.e., creation] is the expansion (*inbisāt*) of the True Existence into contingents or that it [i.e., creation] means the True Existence turns into the separable quiddities of the contingents.⁹⁴

Narāqī concludes that, according to Khafī, the distinction between the true existence (*wujūd ḥaqīqī*) which is the first stage (*bi-sharṭ lā* or "negatively conditional") and the creature (*khalq*) which is the third stage (*bi-sharṭ shay'* or "positively conditional") is merely conceptual. This is even more true of the

determined and thus turn into a possible existent, there is no real difference between the Necessary Existent and the contingents (p. 167).

93 Narāqī introduces these quotations with "*thumma qāla*".

94 M. M. Narāqī, *Qurrat al-'uyūn*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, pp. 181–183. The quotations are gleaned from Khafī's *Risāla fī ithbāt wājib al-wujūd bi-l-dhāt wa-ṣifātih*. See Shams al-Dīn Khafī, *Sitta rasā'il fī ithbāt wājib al-wujūd bi-l-dhāt wa-fī l-ilāhiyyāt*, ed. Fīrūza Sā'atchiyān (Tehran: Kitābkhāna u Mūzi u Markaz-i Asnād-i Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī, 1390 Sh./2011), pp. 152–153.

distinction between the True Existence and the expanding existence, that is, between the first and the second stages. This, Narāqī indicates, runs counter to the principle of maintaining the stages (*ḥifẓ al-marātib*), which is essential for believing in the unity of God and what differentiates a true believer from a heretic (*zindīq*).⁹⁵

Narāqī takes pains to clarify for his readers that his criticism of Ibn ‘Arabī’s doctrine of the unity of existence had already been voiced before him. We know that, following Mullā Ṣadrā’s adaptation of this doctrine, it had repeatedly been criticized by a number of philosophers, among them ‘Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī (d. 1072/1661), Āqā Ḥusayn Khwānsārī (d. 1099/1688), Rajab ‘Alī Tabrizī (d. 1080/1669), Qāḍī Sa‘īd Qummī (d. 1107/1696), Muḥammad Ismā‘īl Khātūnābādī (d. 1116/1704–1705), and Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ Tunikābunī (d. 1124/1712–13), not to mention Narāqī’s teacher, Ismā‘īl Khwājū‘ī, as was pointed out earlier.⁹⁶ Narāqī reiterated some of these criticisms while adding his own, as is indicated by his quoting some of these criticisms without specifying the names of authors.⁹⁷ One of the critical remarks he quotes originated from Āqā Ḥusayn Khwānsārī, although Narāqī refrains from identifying his source. In his commentary on Avicenna’s *al-Shifā’*, Narāqī sided with Khwānsārī in his critique of Mullā Ṣadrā’s notion of existence. Following a quotation from Mullā Ṣadrā’s commentary on Avicenna’s *al-Shifā’*, in which Mullā Ṣadrā explains existence as being, at one and the same time, the first cause (*awwal al-‘ilal*) and the last caused (*ākhar al-ma‘lūlāt*), and as the source of knowledge, light, and collectivity (*jam‘*) on the one hand, and ignorance and darkness and fraction (*tafraqa*) on the other, Narāqī quotes the following criticism of Āqā Ḥusayn Khwānsārī:

[...] this is a poetic language which is inappropriate for philosophical discussions and does not correspond to external reality. How do you know that the external reality of such things is possible? It may be necessarily non-existent. The intellect does not prevent it from being non-existent. It would be possible to establish the existence of an unlimited number

95 M. M. Narāqī, *Qurrat al-‘uyūn*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, p. 183.

96 For the critical attitude of ‘Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī, Rajab ‘Alī Tabrizī and Qāḍī Sa‘īd Qummī towards Mullā Ṣadrā see Muhammad U. Faruque and Mohammed Rustom, “Rajab ‘Alī Tabrizī’s Refutation of Ṣadrian Metaphysics,” in Sajjad Rizvi and Saiyad Nizamuddin Ahmad (ed.), *Philosophy and the Intellectual Life of Shī‘a Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), pp. 184–207.

97 See, e.g., Narāqī, *Qurrat al-‘uyūn*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, pp. 174, 234.

of non-existents such as mountains [made] of ruby and seas of mercury and so on.⁹⁸

In his *Qurrat al-ʿuyūn*, Narāqī chooses to appeal to two Sufi critics of Ibn ʿArabī: the Kubrawī shaykh ʿAlāʾ al-Dawla Simnānī (d. 736/1336)⁹⁹ and the Chishtī shaykh, Sayyid Muḥammad Gīsū-Darāz (d. 825/1422),¹⁰⁰ to whom he refers explicitly. Narāqī's acquaintance with Gīsū-Darāz seems to have been vague, perhaps based merely on secondary sources, as there is no evidence that he was acquainted with any of his writings. He had a far better knowledge of Simnānī's position. His source was mainly Mullā Ṣadrā's account in his *al-Ḥikma al-mutaʿāliya*, in which the latter quotes some of Simnānī's criticisms of Ibn ʿArabī from his glosses (*ḥāshiya*) on *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*.¹⁰¹ One of Ibn ʿArabī's crucial statements, which was severely criticized by Simnānī, was that "absolute existence is subject to every attribute" (*inna l-wujūd al-muṭlaq manʿūt bi-kull naʿt*). Simnānī responded to this by saying that "the existence of the Truth is the Truth and not absolute existence (*al-wujūd al-muṭlaq*) or determined existence (*al-wujūd al-muqayyad*)."¹⁰²

Narāqī pointed out the failed attempt by Mullā Ṣadrā to respond to Simnānī's criticism. Mullā Ṣadrā argued that the dispute (*munāqasha*) between Ibn ʿArabī

98 M. M. Narāqī, *Sharḥ al-Ilāhiyyāt min Kitāb al-Shifāʾ*, ed. Ḥāmid Najī Iṣfahānī, 761. This quotation can be found in Āqā Ḥusayn Khwānsārī, *al-Ḥāshiya ʿalā al-Shifāʾ (Ilāhiyyāt)*, ed. Ḥāmid Najī Iṣfahānī (Qom: Kungira-yi Buzurgdāsh-i Muḥaqqiqān-i Khwānsārī, 1378 Sh./1999–2000), p. 62.

99 On ʿAlāʾ al-Dawla Simnānī and his criticism of Ibn ʿArabī's doctrine of the unity of existence, see F. Meier, "ʿAlāʾ al-Dawla al-Simnānī," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C. E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel (ed.), vol. 1, pp. 346–347; Jamal J. Elias, *The Throne Carrier of God: The Life and Thought of ʿAlāʾ al-Dawla al-Simnānī* (New York: Suny Press 1995); Hermann Landolt, "Deux Opuscules de Semnānī sur le moi théophanique," in S. H. Nasr (ed.), *Mélanges offerts à Henry Corbin* (Tehran: Institute of Islamic Studies of McGill University 1977), pp. 279–319, reprinted in Hermann Landolt, *Recherches en spiritualité iranienne: Recueil d'articles* (Tehran: Presses Universitaires d'Iran/Institut français de recherches en Iran, 1384 Sh./2005), pp. 210–243; idem, "Der Briefwechsel zwischen Kāšānī und Simānī über Waḥdat al-wuḡūd," *Der Islam* 50 (1973): 29–81, reprinted in Hermann Landolt, *Recherches en spiritualité iranienne*, pp. 245–300; idem, "La 'double échelle' d'Ibn ʿArabī chez Simnānī," in M. A. Amir-Moezzi (ed.), *Le voyage initiatique en Terre d'Islam. Ascensions célestes et itinéraires spirituels* (Louvain-Paris 1996), pp. 251–264, repr. in Hermann Landolt, *Recherches en spiritualité iranienne*, pp. 197–209.

100 On Sayyid Muḥammad Gīsū-Darāz, see Richard M. Eaton, "Gisu-Darāz," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, Ehsan Yarshater (ed.), vol. x1, pp. 1–3.

101 Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, *al-Ḥikma al-mutaʿāliya fī l-asfār al-ʿaqliyya al-arbaʿa* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1981–1990), vol. 2, pp. 336–337; M. M. Narāqī, *Qurrat al-ʿuyūn*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshitiyānī, pp. 215–217.

102 M. M. Narāqī, *Qurrat al-ʿuyūn*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshitiyānī, pp. 177–178.

and Simnānī was merely a matter of preferring different vocabulary (*yarja' ilā l-lafẓ*). He also explained Ibn 'Arabī's original statement. According to him, it is not clear what Ibn 'Arabī meant here by "absolute existence" (*wujūd muṭlaq*). If he meant that expanding existence which overflows into quiddities, then it is correct that He is the subject of every attribute. But if he meant by it the pure existence (*wujūd baḥt*) of the Necessary Existent, then by "every attribute" he meant either (1) every attribute of perfection or necessity, which is identical to his Essence, or (2) His attributes in a general sense, including those of His Essence, at the stage of oneness and those attributed to Him at subsequent stages such as Mercifulness, Bounteousness, Generousness, and Gracefulness.

Taking Mullā Ṣadrā to the task, Narāqī maintains that Simnānī was opposed to a semantic compromise over God's unity and therefore accused Ibn 'Arabī and his followers of infidelity.¹⁰³ Narāqī states that the pure existence of the Necessary Existent is beyond any attribute or name. This is the consensus of belief. So if Ibn 'Arabī predicates every attribute to the absolute existence, then by absolute existence he must have meant something other than existence in the stage of oneness. He must be referring to his notion of expanding existence, which according to Ibn 'Arabī and his followers flows through all the quiddities. Narāqī reminds the reader that the use of the term "absolute existence" for expanding existence was condemned by Mullā Ṣadrā as it would lead to dreadful consequences (*maḥāsib shanī'a*) such as the idea of God being infused in creatures (*ḥulūl*) and anthropomorphism (*tashbīh*). However, surprisingly, Mullā Ṣadrā did not seem to mind if Ibn 'Arabī used the term here in the sense of expanding existence.

Narāqī also notes Simnānī's insistence on the point that the unity of existence is a subject that should be disputed in epistemology rather than ontology. As the latter stated:

I also reached this state, and the unity of existence became unveiled to me. However, when I ascended beyond this state, it appeared to me that it is the opposite [of what I expected]. I then realized that the followers of *wujūdiyya* [i.e., Ibn 'Arabī and his followers] never reached this state.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 215.

¹⁰⁴ M. M. Narāqī, *Qurrat al-'uyūn*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, p. 217. Narāqī indicates to Simnānī's correspondence with 'Abd al-Razzāq Kāshānī as the source of this statement. 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Jāmī has recorded this Persian correspondence in his *Nafaḥāt al-uns*, and it is likely that Narāqī's became acquainted with it through this work. On this correspondence, see H. Landolt, "Der Briefwechsel zwischen Kāshānī und Simānī über Waḥdat al-wuḡūd".

In the above quote Simnānī maintained that the perception of the unity of existence belongs to a particular state; when the wayfarer goes beyond that state, as Simnānī himself did, it becomes apparent to him that his previous perception was mistaken. Through this quotation, Narāqī undermines the spiritual experience on which the doctrine is based. In other words, as far as he was concerned the doctrine was not only invalid theoretically, but also is based on an immature spiritual experience.

As mentioned above, Āqā Muḥammad Bīdābādī wrote glosses on Narāqī's *Qurrat al-'uyūn*. Bīdābādī's intention in writing these glosses, as he himself puts it, was to correct (*iṣlāḥ*) Narāqī's mistakes.¹⁰⁵ Among other things, Bīdābādī deals with Narāqī's treatment of the doctrine of the unity of existence. He argues that, according to this doctrine, the existence of the contingents is merely conceptual (*i'tibārī*). It is best referred to as a "shadowy existence" (*wujūd ḡillī*), i.e., a secondary existence.¹⁰⁶ Using this paradoxical notion, Bīdābādī tries to conform to the idea of God's transcendence while committing himself to the doctrine of the unity of existence. The same idea, albeit in a more elaborate fashion, was expressed by Bīdābādī's student, Mullā 'Alī Nūrī (d. 1246/1831). In his *Risāla fī basīṭ al-ḥaqīqa*, Nūrī argues for the Necessary Existent as the sole existent in reality. He uses the term "shadowy existence" for the contingents, by which he means that the contingents lack real existence. They possess only a certain weak and incomplete existence, caused by the relationship they have with the expanding existence or "the breath of the Merciful".¹⁰⁷ In his *Qurrat al-'uyūn*, Narāqī did not deal specifically with this position of Bīdābādī (and Nūrī). However, it is safe to assume that those of his contemporaries who were adherents of the doctrine of the unity of existence, including Bīdābādī, were the target of his criticisms.

Narāqī himself indicated other contemporary adherents of the doctrine, namely the Sufis. He said that the doctrine was commonly accepted by most of the Sufi orders of his time, including the Nūrbakhshī, Naqshbandī and Ni'matullāhī orders, and hence he implied his disapproval of these Sufi orders.¹⁰⁸ Why Narāqī names only these three Sufi orders is not clear. It is known that the Dhahabī order, for instance, was active in his time and that the

105 See Bīdābādī's colophon to his glosses in M. M. Narāqī, *Qurrat al-'uyūn*, ed. Ḥasan Majīd 'Ubaydī, pp. 25–26.

106 Ibid., p. 253.

107 'Alī Nūrī, *Rasā'il-i falsafī: Basīṭ al-ḥaqīqa wa-waḥdat al-wujūd*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (Mashhad: Anjuman-i Hikmat u Falsafa-yi Īrān, 1357/1978), 32, 58. See also Janis Esots, "Mullā 'Alī Nūrī as an exponent of Mullā Ṣadrā's teachings," *Transcendent Philosophy* 12 (2011): 55–67.

108 M. M. Narāqī, *Qurrat al-'uyūn*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, p. 178.

shaykhs of this order were advocates of the doctrine of the unity of existence.¹⁰⁹ Likewise, it is unclear if Narāqī had a particular interest in the orders he mentioned. Nevertheless, Narāqī happened to have Majdhūb ‘Alī-Shāh among his students later in his career, and consequently, he managed to have a significant impact on a particular phase of Ni‘matullāhī order, when Majdhūb was the shaykh of this order (i.e., from 1234/1819 to 1238/1822). In his *Risāla-yi i‘tiqādāt*, Majdhūb criticizes the doctrine of the unity of existence. Although he does not explicitly refer to his teacher and his criticism of this doctrine, his view seems to have been almost identical to that of Narāqī. Quoting from Simnānī and Aḥmad Sirhindī (d. 1034/1624), Majdhūb argues that the sense of unity reached by some Sufis in the state of annihilation (*fanā*) is subjective and it may have nothing to do with any external reality.¹¹⁰ Apart from Majdhūb, a younger contemporary of Narāqī, Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsā’ī (d. 1241/1826), partook of some aspects of Narāqī’s criticisms of Mullā Ṣadrā’s metaphysics. Although Aḥsā’ī made no reference to Narāqī, it is not inconceivable that he had at least some remote knowledge of Narāqī’s positions.¹¹¹ Despite these criticisms, one generation after Narāqī the doctrine of the unity of existence was promoted widely by Bidābādī’s student, Mullā ‘Alī Nūrī, and his disciples, to the extent that one may argue that it became the main philosophical discourse in the Qajar period. But there remained some critics of it among later Qajar philosophers, most notable among them being Abū l-Ḥasan Jilwa (d. 1314/1896).

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109 On the Dhahabī order and the teachings of its shaykhs see Ata Anzali, “*Mysticism*” in *Iran: The Safavid Roots of a Modern Concept* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina, 2017), pp. 117–156.

110 Majdhūb’s source for Simnānī’s position was his debate with ‘Abd al-Razzāq Kāshānī. As for his quotation from Aḥmad Sirhindī, he does not specify his source.

111 It is known that Aḥsā’ī spent some part of his youth in the ‘Atabāt; this corresponds to the last decade of Narāqī’s life when the latter travelled at least once to the ‘Atabāt. So the two might have even met each other. But regardless of this, the teachings of Narāqī and his works seem to have been known among the scholars of the ‘Atabāt at the time.

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Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsā'ī

Idris Samawi Hamid

1 Biography

1.1 *Life and Travels*

“The Philosopher of the Era” (*ḥaylasūf al-‘aṣr*),¹ more popularly known as “the Most Unparalleled Shaykh” (*al-shaykh al-awḥad*), Aḥmad the son of Zayn al-Dīn, was born in Rajab 1166 (during or just after May 1753) in al-Muṭayrafi, a village of what was then the emirate of al-Aḥsā', located near the Eastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula. The tribe into which Shaykh Aḥmad was born originally belonged to the Āmma; his family on his father's side converted to Tashayyu' five generations earlier.² According to Shaykh Aḥmad's testimony (in his spiritual autobiography),³ al-Muṭayrafi in particular had become something of a backwoods, an oasis far removed from major population centers and largely devoid of significant scholars or resources in Islamic learning.

Upon noticing an interest in grammar on the part of his son, Shaykh Zayn al-Dīn sent him to a nearby village to study with a local scholar. At some point during these early studies, he began having visions and dreams in which a young man would teach him the meanings of Qur'ānic signs (*āyāt*, s. *āya*).⁴ Eventually he saw in a vision three of the Twelve Imāms of the Ahlulbayt: the Second Imām al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, the Fourth Imām 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī, and the Fifth Imām Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn. The high point of this

1 This title was given by the well-known biographer Muḥammad Bāqir Khwānsārī, in the course of an introductory epitaph for Shaykh Aḥmad. This epitaph occurs at the outset of the entry on the latter in Khwānsārī's *Rawḍāt al-Jannāt fī aḥwāl al-‘ulamā' wa-al-sādāt* (Qom: Ismā'īliyyān, 1390/1971); see vol. 1, p. 216.

2 The expression '*al-āmma*' (meaning “the people at large”) is a term used by the later Imāms of Ahlulbayt to refer to the self-titled “Ahl al-Sunna wa-l-Jamā'a”. The expression '*tashayyu'*' is what they used to refer to the praxis of what we now call “Shī'ī Islām”.

3 Shaykh Aḥmad ibn Zayn al-Dīn al-Aḥsā'ī, *Jawāmi' al-kalīm*, 2nd ed., 9 vols. (Basra: Maktaba al-Ghadir, 2009), vol. 8, pp. 458–466. The next four paragraphs draw from this famous autobiographical account.

4 It is significant that one of the first things this stranger taught young Aḥmad was, in effect, the priority of matter over form (S. A. al-Aḥsā'ī, *Jawāmi' al-kalīm*, 2nd ed., vol. 8, p. 461). This is a germ of the *inverse hylomorphism* which would later become one of the bedrocks of Shaykh Aḥmad's philosophy; see below, page 110.

vision occurs when Imām Ḥasan places his mouth over that of young Aḥmad, who is lying flat on his back, letting him taste the Imām's saliva. Afterwards the Imām placed his hand on Aḥmad's face, then upon his chest, sending a profound coolness through his heart.

After some conversation, young Aḥmad requested, "My Master! Inform me of something such that, whenever I recite it, I can see you all." Imām Ḥasan replied with the following hemistiches:

Become a shunner of your affairs;	Entrust all affairs to the Decision.
Thus tight spaces sometimes widen;	And open spaces sometimes get tight.
Often a matter which is tiresome;	In its ends, for you there lies Riḍā. ⁵
Allāh will do whatever He Wishes;	Become not one who interferes.
Allāh habituated you to the beautiful;	So do compare with what has passed.

Then the Imām added the following:

A matter over which the ego (*nafs*) has tightened;
 Often there comes to her [the ego] from Allāh relief.
 Become not a despairer of the arrival of a breeze;
 So often indeed are those impediments dispelled.
 All the while a man is despondent in deathly illness;
 Yet Allāh comes to him with a breeze and a relief.

For months young Aḥmad recited the two poems every night without result. Then he realized that the Imām meant for him to not merely repeat the verses but to embody their inner meanings. So over the following months young Aḥmad began focusing on the cultivation of sincerity (*ikhhlās*)⁶ in his devotions, increasing his recitation of the Qur'ān, spending late night to dawn in seeking forgiveness (*istighfār*) and in meditation, as well as deepening his contemplations on the world at large. The intensity of his visions increased until, finally, the gate of vision of the Ahlulbayt opened and he would see some of them over the course of "most days and nights". Eventually he reached a point where he was able to see the Imāms and even the Messenger almost at will, and to ask difficult questions of them. He could even choose which of them he wanted to

5 The word '*riḍā*' may be translated by 'well-pleaseness'. In the process of spiritual *walāya* it is one of the highest stations, if not the very highest. For further detail, see Idris Samawi Hamid, *Islam, Station and Process: The Spirituality of Walāyah* (New York: Global Scholarly Publications, 2011), pp. 95–97.

6 The word '*ikhhlās*' has a technical meaning in the process of spiritual *walāya*; see *ibid.*, pp. 101–106.

see and speak to. At one point (around 1208/1794) he had a vision wherein the Tenth Imām ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Hādī passed him twelve licenses (*ijāzāt*), one license (*ijāza*) from each *imām*.⁷

In his twenty-first year, young Aḥmad went to the centers of the Shī‘ī scholastic establishment in southern Iraq to advance his studies.⁸ The chief figure of this establishment at the time of his arrival was Āqā al-Waḥīd Bāqir Bihbahānī (d. 1205/1791): It was he who finalized, within the scholastic establishment, the dominance of the analytic *principlist* (*uṣūlī*) school of jurisprudence, including its associated philosophy of law and language. The Shaykh also attended the lectures of many of the most prominent students of Āqā al-Waḥīd, including Shaykh Ja‘far b. Khidr al-Najafī (d. 1228/1813), also known by the honorific title *Kāshif al-ghitā’* (Uncoverer of the Veil); and Sayyid Muḥammad Mahdī b. Murtaḍā al-Ṭabāṭabā‘ī (d. 1212/1797), better known by the honorific *Baḥr al-‘ulūm* (Sea of Sciences). Baḥr al-‘ulūm was also known as a great ‘*ārif*’ (cognizant), viz., someone who had reached some of the higher modes of experience generally associated with mysticism. Shaykh Aḥmad was to receive licenses (*ijāzāt*) from these and other prominent and important scholars of his day, all of which contain comments praising his erudition and piety in the highest terms. Baḥr al-‘ulūm, a generation senior, even goes so far as to call Shaykh Aḥmad a “brother” and “best or cream (*nukhba*) of the cognizants (‘*urafā*’).⁹

7 In the traditional scholastic establishment, an *ijāza* (license or permission) given by a teacher to a student or colleague served as something akin to a diploma. It connected the recipient to higher links in a continuous chain of teachers going back to the first transmitters, who in turn narrated directly from the Prophet or from another member of the Ahlulbayt.

8 Sources for what follows include ‘Abd al-Riḍā Ibrāhīmī’s Introduction to S. A. al-Aḥsā‘ī, *Sharḥ al-Ziyāra al-jāmi‘a al-kabīra*, reprint (with different pagination and formatting) of the 4th edition, 4 vols (Beirut: Dār al-Mufid, 1424/2003), vol. 1, front matter, pp. 11–14. See also S. A. al-Aḥsā‘ī, *Jawāmi‘ al-kalim*, 2nd ed., vol. 1, front matter, pp. 13–18.

9 It is unfortunate that the expression ‘*ārif*’ (pl. ‘*urafā*’) is still commonly and uncritically translated by ‘gnostic’ (and that the cognate gerunds ‘*ma‘rifā*’ and ‘*irfān*’ are translated by ‘gnosticism’). Many scholars and historians of the Muslim philosophical and mystical traditions remain heavily affected by the terminology of the late Henry Corbin, who worked to assimilate elements of Muslim traditions into his personal project, inclusive of a universalist conception of gnosis. Corbin interprets much in the Muslim philosophical and mystical traditions as a “meta-historical” continuation of the early dualist and antinomian schools of Christian Gnosticism and related traditions. This use of ‘gnostic’ by Corbin was arguably appropriate in his studies of Ismā‘īlī thought, a Muslim tradition that strongly exhibits certain Gnostic elements. A few of the more radical Šūfī or Extremist (*Ghulāt*) schools (some of them also studied by Corbin) may also be amenable to such a treatment. But the use of that term to cover the full gamut of Islām’s cosmological and mystical traditions, including and especially those of Twelver Tashayyū‘, crosses the border into anachronism or confusion.

In primary senses, the words ‘*ma‘rifā*’ and ‘*ārif*’ are used to denote a mode of objectual, phenomenological knowing. In contrast to Arabic or the Romance languages—‘savoir’

We do not know whether or to what degree Shaykh Aḥmad attended formal lectures in the *falsafa* of Mullā Ṣadrā or other philosophers (at the time commonly referred to as *ḥikma*). The Shaykh makes mention of a prominent philosopher whom he met in Basra,¹⁰ but neither the Shaykh nor the reference for this information gives his name. It is known that, in addition to his studies in the standard curriculum including prophetic traditions, philosophy of language and law, jurisprudence, ethics, and *kalām* (doctrinal philosophy and theology), he pursued and delved deeply into other sciences such as mathematics and astronomy, alchemy and chemistry, mineralogy, the occult Hermetic arts (such as numerology and letter-based hermeneutics), even medicine. He was particularly attracted to alchemy, which the first Imām, 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, had famously called “the sister of prophecy”.¹¹ By all accounts the Shaykh attained a profound mastery in this science and undertook what appears to have been original research in the field. Since some of these disciplines, such as alchemy and other Hermetic arts, were taught only privately and secretly, we do not know the identities of his outward teachers in these fields, if any. We do know that he was associated with a certain obscure alchemist and scholar Shaykh 'Alī b. 'Abd Allāh b. Fāris, on some of whose works Shaykh Aḥmad wrote commentaries; he apparently lived mostly in seclusion. Shaykh Aḥmad also extols Shaykh 'Alī with a degree of praise he bestows upon few other scholars.

versus ‘connaître’ in French is an example—English does not have a common or everyday way to express the natural, intuitive distinction between propositional knowledge and objectual or phenomenological knowledge. ‘Recognition’ comes close but is too restrictive. We will use the word ‘cognizance’, an English word for objectual knowledge derived from the same Latin root as ‘connaître’, and its cognates. It is not as common in everyday English as it could be, but semantically it is more precise and philosophically neutral than the loaded word ‘gnostic’.

For the distinction between propositional and objectual knowledge, see J. Corcoran and I. S. Hamid, “Investigating Knowledge and Opinion,” in A. Koslow and A. Buchsbaum (ed.), *The Road to Universal Logic* (Cham: Birkhäuser, 2015).

10 Abū l-Qāsim Khān Ibrāhīmī, *Fihrist-i kutub-i mashāyikh-i 'izām* (Kerman: Chāpkhāna-yi Sa'ādat, n.d.), p. 183.

11 The reasons for this attraction are not difficult to discern. To a degree greater than any of the traditional sciences of Muslim civilization, the aim, object, and method of alchemy fundamentally involve *dialectical* and *objective-logical* considerations (see Section 4.2). We intend to explore the relation of alchemy to the philosophy of Shaykh Aḥmad in the course of a future work. It is worth noting that something similar has already been done in the case of Hegel; see Glenn Alexander Magee, *Hegel and the Hermetic Tradition* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001).

Shaykh Aḥmad's life was characterized by considerable dynamism and mobility. After leaving al-Aḥsā' for the 'Atabāt,¹² he returned a few years later because of a plague that was ravaging southern Iraq. He married and settled down for some years in his homeland; during the first conquest of al-Aḥsā' by the Wahhabis (in 1208/1794)¹³ the Shaykh escaped to Bahrain.¹⁴ After staying in Bahrain for four years, he visited the 'Atabāt for a time, then settled with his family near Basra. In 1221/1806 he made the fateful decision to go on pilgrimage to Mashhad, in eastern Iran, in visitation of the tomb of the Eighth Imām, 'Alī al-Riḍā. Along the way he passed through the central Iranian city of Yazd. The scholars of the city, coming from various fields of learning, quickly became enamored of Shaykh Aḥmad; so much so that they lobbied him heavily, begging him to stay and settle in their city.

The Shaykh promised to spend time with the people of Yazd after finishing his pilgrimage to Mashhad. So once he completed his visitation of Imām 'Alī al-Riḍā, Shaykh Aḥmad settled in Yazd. There he gave lectures and wrote many treatises in response to difficult questions presented to him in philosophy, alchemy, esoteric traditions of the Ahlulbayt, and so forth. Already a *mujtahid* (independent expert in jurisprudence), after a short time he became (what a few decades later would be called) a major *marja'* *al-taqlīd* (source of jurisprudential emulation), as well as the most important theologian on the Iranian scene. Eventually he attracted the attention of the reigning monarch, Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh Qājār (r. 1211–1250/1797–1834). The Shah began a correspondence with the Shaykh, and attempted to induce him to visit Tehran. Shaykh Aḥmad politely but pointedly refused, citing his strong dislike of intermingling with the opulent, let alone emperors.

The Shah replied politely and respectfully; at the same time he made it clear that, if the Shaykh did not come to Tehran, then the king would have to travel to Yazd, with a standard royal entourage of at least 10,000 men, which the people of Yazd would have to provide for.¹⁵ Shaykh Aḥmad was, by all accounts,

12 The 'Atabāt comprises the sacred cities of Najaf, Karbala, and Kazimayn, burial sites for the remains of six of the Twelve Imāms.

13 The Wahhabis conquered al-Aḥsā' three times. The first Wahhābī occupation of al-Aḥsā' lasted from 1794 to 1818 (during the lifetime of Shaykh Aḥmad); the second from 1830–1871; and the third from 1913 to the present day.

14 According to his son 'Abd Allāh, in the latter's *Sharḥ Aḥwāl al-Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsā'ī*, p. 10, "the Khārijī 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Muḥammad [ibn Sa'ūd], known as the Wahhābī," personally did his utmost to capture Shaykh Aḥmad, even spending a large sum of money to that end. 'Abd Allāh also quotes his father to the effect that the Wahhābī conquest of al-Aḥsā' took place on 24 Sha'bān, 1208/26–27 March, 1794. See also the following footnote.

15 Many of the details of this episode are chronicled by 'Abd Allāh, the son of Shaykh Aḥmad, in the latter's *Sharḥ Aḥwāl al-Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsā'ī*. The somewhat inaccurate

aghast and in distress at the prospect of getting dragged into the agendas of the ruling authorities, so much so that he attempted to return to Iraq. But the scholars and leaders of Yazd pressed upon him that, even if he were to reach Iraq, they would still face the king's wrath (as accomplices in his escape). When it became clear that leaving or staying would bring undue hardship upon the people of Yazd, he finally relented and did in fact visit Tehran in 1223/1808.

The king asked the Shaykh to settle in Tehran. However, bluntly citing the incompatibility of the oppressive and tyrannical nature of monarchic rule with his own dignity,¹⁶ the Shaykh refused and sought permission to return to Yazd; the Shah granted the request. About six years later, in 1229/1814, following a command from Imām 'Alī received in a vision, he decided to return to the 'Atabāt, despite the desperate attempts of the people of Yazd to convince him to remain. Upon his arrival in Kermanshah—by way of Isfahan, where he stayed for forty days and debated Mullā Ṣadrā's doctrines with the *falāsafa* of the city—the eldest son of Fath 'Alī Shāh persuaded him to spend some time in the town. He settled his family there and continued his journey to the 'Atabāt, where he spent some time before returning to Kermanshah. Aside from other pilgrimages and journeys (including undertaking the *hajj*), he remained in Kermanshah until 1239/1824. During 1238/1822–23 the Shaykh made a final visitation to the tomb of Imām Riḍā. Over the course of the return journey he spent a few months in Yazd, followed by some time in Isfahan (where he famously gave 53 days of lectures). In 1239/1824 he left Iran and settled with his family in Karbala.

Unfortunately, the jealousy of some less senior jurisprudents and theologians in the scholastic establishment created problems for the Shaykh.¹⁷ One

Persian translation is a well-known source referenced by, e.g., Algar, al-Ṭāliqānī, and others. This author has been given access to a transcription of a rare manuscript of the Arabic source (the original Arabic text was once thought to have been lost).

16 Hamid Algar, *Religion and State in Iran 1785–1906* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), p. 67.

17 Most contemporary scholars, including Hamid Algar, Mangol Bayat, Henry Corbin, and Muḥammad Ḥasan al-Ṭāliqānī, concur that jealousy was the original motivating factor in the Shaykh's being declared an unbeliever. See H. Algar, *Religion and State in Iran 1785–1906*, p. 68; Mongol Bayat, *Mysticism and Dissent: Socioreligious Thought in Qajar Iran* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1982), pp. 39–40; Henry Corbin, *History of Islamic philosophy* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1993), pp. 353–354; Muḥammad Ḥasan al-Ṭāliqānī, *al-Shaykhīyya: Nash'atuhā wa-taṭawwuruhā wa-maṣādir dirāsātihā* (Beirut: al-Āmāl li-l-Maṭbū'āt 1420/1999–2000), p. 95. The 19th century biographer and scholar, Muḥammad Bāqir Khwānsārī, a junior contemporary of Shaykh Aḥmad but not his disciple, also shared this view (M. B. Khwānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt*, vol. 1, pp. 227–229; quoting approvingly from Sayyid Kāzīm Rashtī); even Shaykh Aḥmad points to it as a factor in the later persecution he had to endure (see S. A. al-Aḥsā'ī, *Jawāmi' al-kalim*, 2nd ed.,

prominent and proud *mullā* in Qazvin, Mullā Muḥammad Ṭāqī Baraghānī (d. 1263/1847), apparently felt slighted because Shaykh Aḥmad did not immediately call upon him during a stopover as he was making his way to Mashhad for his last visitation of the Eighth Imām.¹⁸ During his stay in Qazvin, Baraghānī declared the Shaykh to be an unbeliever; he accused the Shaykh, ironically, of being a follower of Mullā Ṣadrā in eschatology and in the latter's alleged denial of physical resurrection. This sparked a more general reaction on the part of other segments of the scholastic establishment. Although few, if any, senior scholars concurred with Baraghānī's pronouncement—at worst some demurred or remained non-committal—concern in different quarters began to be expressed about Shaykh Aḥmad's unique, iconoclastic, and non-scholastic approach to theology; as well as to the potential effects of his teaching and leadership on the traditional establishment.

By the time the Shaykh finally settled himself and his family in Karbala, the atmosphere in the 'Atabāt had been poisoned by the propaganda of Baraghānī and his associates to the point where there were, among other intrigues,¹⁹ attempts to get him into trouble with the Ottoman authorities in Baghdad. Finally, the Shaykh decided to go to Mecca, ostensibly to undertake the *hajj* pilgrimage, and to perhaps even go into exile there. But there are indications that he was aware that his life in this world was soon coming to an end;²⁰ as in the case of his decision to leave Yazd, it appears he had been commanded by his inward masters to make this move. In Damascus he fell ill, and he passed away just outside Medina on 21 Dhū l-Qa'da 1241/27 June 1826 at age seventy-three

vol. 8, pp. 198–199). Because so many of the Shī'a in Iran, India, and elsewhere were now sending their religious dues to the Shaykh, there were probably financial motives as well behind the intrigues of Mullā Baraghānī and some of his associates; see M. Ḥ. al-Ṭāliqānī, *al-Shaykhīyya*, p. 107.

- 18 M. Ḥ. al-Ṭāliqānī, *al-Shaykhīyya*, p. 97. 'Abd al-Riḍā Ibrāhīmī, in the course of his Introduction to the 4th edition of *Sharḥ al-Ziyāra al-jāmi'a al-Kabīra*, suggests that this incident took place on the return journey to Kermanshah from his sojourn in Isfahan after the final pilgrimage to Mashhad. See S. A. al-Aḥsā'ī, *Sharḥ al-Ziyāra al-jāmi'a al-kabīra*, reprint (with different pagination and formatting) of the 4th edition in four vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Mufid, 1424/2003), vol. 1, p. 13; see also S. A. al-Aḥsā'ī, *Jawāmi' al-kalīm*, 2nd ed., vol. 1, p. 16.
- 19 Such intrigues included going so far as to interpolate some of his works to make them sound explicitly offensive to scholastic and even popular sensibilities. See, e.g., M. Ḥ. al-Ṭāliqānī, *al-Shaykhīyya*, pp. 100–101.
- 20 For example: Sayyid Kāẓim Rashtī explains that the manner in which he made his journey to Mecca was in intentional imitation of Imām Ḥusayn's departure from Medina on the journey that would end in his martyrdom. In other words, Shaykh Aḥmad had no expectation of surviving the journey. See S. K. Rashtī, *Dalīl al-Mutaḥayyirīn*, published in the course of *Jawāhir al-ḥikam* (Basra: Maktaba al-Ghadīr, 2011), vol. 7, p. 270. There are other indications as well.

(seventy-five in lunar years). His entourage buried him in the cemetery of al-Baqī' in Medina, at the feet of the same three *a'imma* (s. *imām*) he had seen in his first visions, and who had initiated him into the profundities of the wisdom (*ḥikma*) of the Ahlulbayt.

1.2 *Character and Charisma*

Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsā'ī was, at once, the most influential and the most controversial Shī'ī scholar of 19th-century Iran and of Tashayyū' at large. Over one hundred and ninety years after his passing, the dust thrown up when he burst upon the Shī'ī scene has still not settled. At the same time, if there is one thing agreed upon by virtually all scholars and historians, past and present, including his many detractors (who still largely dominate the scholastic establishment), it is that the Shaykh possessed a unique and electrifying spirituality, as well as an uncanny charisma. The eloquent rhymed prose of the establishment biographer Muḥammad Bāqir Kh^wānsārī (d. 1313/1895) encapsulates a large portion of this consensus:

In these recent times no one like him has been encountered with regard to cognizance (*ma'rifa*) and understanding, nobility and sound resolve, excellence in temperament, beauty in path (*tarīqa*), purity in inner reality (*ḥaqīqa*), abundance of spirituality, knowledge of Arabic, ethics of the Sunna, well-approved characteristics, points of theoretical and practical wisdom, beauty of expression and eloquence, subtlety and fineness of writing style, and sincerity of love and devotion to the magnificent Ahlulbayt of the Messenger; so much so that some of the exoteric-minded people have accused him of excess and extremism (*ghuluww*); whereas in fact he is, without a doubt, one of the people of majesty and transcendence.²¹

There is an important point to be made in this context. At that time—it remains the case today—most of the influential scholars of Bahrain, the 'Atabāt, and Iran came from well-established families and belonged to networks which spanned the major cities of the region. In Iran and in the 'Atabāt, most of them were Iranian or of Iranian origin. The phenomenon of Shaykh Aḥmad presented something of a shock to the leaders and students of the scholastic establishment, as well as the cultured community at large. To paraphrase al-Ṭāliqānī's analysis of the matter: Most Iranians of that time generally looked upon Arabs with contempt and considered them inferior in their intellectual capabilities.

21 M. B. Kh^wānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt*, vol. 1, pp. 216–217.

Then, despite any real or imagined status already possessed by the elites of the scholastic establishment, this individual from an oasis in the Arabian desert seemed to come out of nowhere, to surpass them in their own areas of expertise, supersede them in honor in their own cities, lead them by the thousands in communion; even the king of Iran reserved for him a reverence that he had not previously shown to any Persian scholar, let alone an Arab.²²

Despite his strenuous disagreement with Shaykh Aḥmad over some of the latter's criticisms of Mullā Ṣadrā, Mullā 'Alī Nūrī (d. 1246/1831) still considered him at least equal in stature to his late teacher Āqā Muḥammad Bīdābādī (d. 1197/1783), another powerful spiritual personality. Once Mullā 'Alī Nūrī was asked, "How does Shaykh Aḥmad compare in stature with Āqā Bīdābādī?" He replied,²³ "Distinguishing between them cannot be done unless the one who wants to do it has already reached their station (*maqām*). And where do I fit in the midst of all of that?"

2 Works

Shaykh Aḥmad was a prolific writer; the range covered by his learning was encyclopedic. He wrote over 160 books and treatises: They range in length from long, multi-volume compositions to short treatises of only a couple or so pages in length. The subjects covered by the Shaykh range over the gamut of disciplines of traditional Muslim civilization, including metaphysics, cosmology, mysticism, theology, ethics and mystical wayfaring, philosophy of language and law, jurisprudence proper, interpretation of the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth, alchemy, mineralogy, astronomy, the occult sciences, poetry and literary arts, music, medicine, grammar, prosody, and others.

2.1 *Fundamental Philosophical Works and Opera Majora*

Over two-thirds of the writings of Shaykh Aḥmad are in the field of philosophy. Of these, we may identify eight as the most important, in-depth, and whose primary concern is philosophy proper²⁴ (listed in chronological order).

22 M. Ḥ. al-Ṭāliqānī, *al-Shaykhiyya*, p. 95.

23 M. B. Kh'wānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt*, vol. 1, p. 226.

24 Many individual works of the Shaykh consider important philosophical matters in concert with other topics, particularly in many of those treatises written in reply to multiple inquiries of a questioner.

1. *Mabāhith al-alfāz* (Discourses on Semantics)²⁵

This incomplete treatise is a part of what was intended to be Section 3 of a larger work, *Fawā'id al-uṣūl* (Observations on Principles) in the field of principles of jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), i.e., philosophy of law. This was almost certainly written during the pre-Iran period of the Shaykh's life, when most of his jurisprudential works were produced. Many of the Shaykh's positions on issues of fundamental philosophical importance, such as his rejection, with respect to God, of both the *ishtirāk ma'nawī* (univocity) of the word 'existence' (*wujūd*) as well as the *ishtirāk lafẓī* (equivocity) of 'existence', can hardly be appreciated without reference to his underlying philosophy of language.

2. *al-Fawā'id al-hikmiyya* (Observations in Wisdom)²⁶

This comparatively short text constitutes a synopsis of the metaphysical and cosmological system of the Shaykh. The original *al-Fawā'id* consists of 12 chapters referred to as "observations" (*fawā'id*). Although there is room for further research on the matter, *al-Fawā'id al-hikmiyya* was apparently completed sometime during the winter of 1223–24/1808–1809. After completing his own commentary on this work, he later added seven more *fawā'id* (see below).

3. *Sharḥ al-Ziyāra al-jāmi'a al-kabīra* (Commentary on the Grand Comprehensive Visitation)²⁷

This work was begun in Yazd and completed in Kermanshah on the night before 10 Rabī' I 1230/19–20 February 1815; he completed an addendum exactly ten days later. In four volumes, this is Shaykh Aḥmad's longest, most famous, and most controversial book. It is a commentary on a particularly long visitation (*ziyāra*), a formula recited when one "visits" or communes with the body and spirit of the Prophet, his daughter Fāṭimah, or one of the Twelve Imāms. Philosophically it is the most profound work of its kind, covering various facets of the dialectics of primordial Shī'ī cosmology and the anthropology of the perfect human (*al-insān al-kāmil*). Drawing upon a broad spectrum of interdisciplinary expertise, brilliantly woven into a dense but consistent fabric, Shaykh

25 Published in the course of the original *Jawāmi' al-kalim* (JK1), vol. 1, towards the end, pagination confused (Tabriz, lithograph, 1276/1856–57); *Jawāmi' al-kalim* 2nd edition (JK2), vol. 6, p. 189 ff. (Basra, 2009). For the remainder of this chapter we will use the abbreviations 'JK1' and 'JK2' respectively to refer to the original and second editions of *Jawāmi' al-kalim*.

26 Published in the course of *Sharḥ al-Fawā'id* (Tabriz, lithograph, 1274/1857–58); JK2, vol. 2, p. 175 ff.

27 Published in multiple lithograph and typeset editions. The standard editions for reference are Tabriz 1276/1859–60; reprint (with different pagination and formatting) of the self-styled "4th edition" (Kerman, p. 197), 4 vols., Beirut: Dār al-Mufid, 1424/2003.

Aḥmad's massive commentary constitutes the most extensive and penetrating elaboration of this concept in the history of Muslim civilization.

4. *Sharḥ Risālat al-ʿilm* (Commentary on the Treatise on Knowledge)²⁸

Apparently begun almost immediately after finishing *Sharḥ al-Ziyāra*, this work was completed in Kermanshah on 5 Rabīʿ II 1230/16–17 March 1815. It constitutes a critique of the theological epistemology of Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī (d. 1090/1679), the disciple and son-in-law of Mullā Ṣadrā. The point of departure for the discussion is Fayḍ Kāshānī's theory of the nature of God's Knowledge of His creation.

5. *Sharḥ al-Fawā'id al-ḥikmiyya* (Commentary on the Observations in Wisdom)²⁹

The Shaykh initiated this work in 1232/1817 on his way to Mecca to perform the ḥājj; he completed it on 9 Shawwāl 1233/11–12 August 1818. As the title indicates, this book is an elaboration of his philosophical epitome, *al-Fawā'id al-ḥikmiyya*. Sometime after its completion the author wrote another seven observations and appended them to the original twelve. *Sharḥ al-Fawā'id*, along with the additional seven observations, together constitute a broad overview of the philosophy of Shaykh Aḥmad. Mullā ʿAlī Nūrī, the most prominent professor of Ṣadrian philosophy at that time, wrote a set of annotations on *Sharḥ al-Fawā'id* (see below, Section 4.3).

6. *Sharḥ al-Mashā'ir* (Commentary on the [Metaphysical] Organa)³⁰

This work is the first major commentary by Shaykh Aḥmad on one of Mullā Ṣadrā's books. The Shaykh began work on this project sometime prior to starting on *Sharḥ al-Fawā'id*. He completed a draft of *Sharḥ al-Mashā'ir* on 27 Ṣafar 1234/25–26 December 1818; he finalized revision and correction (*taṣḥīḥ*) of the manuscript exactly three months later (26 Jumādā I 1234/23 March 1819). As indicated by the title, this is a study of *al-Mashā'ir* (*The Organa*), in which Mullā Ṣadrā presents his *ontological* metaphysics of existence, followed by applications to theology and cosmology. Shaykh Aḥmad's commentary constitutes a critique of this metaphysics and of the methodology (*Aristotelian cognitivism*) involved in its articulation; throughout he compares and contrasts them with his own *dialectical* metaphysics of existence and essence and with his own methodology (*Hermetic cognitivism*), both of which he applies to problems in theology and cosmology.³¹ In important respects this is Shaykh Aḥmad's most

28 JK1, Vol 1, p. 166 ff.; JK2, vol. 2, p. 1 ff.

29 Multiple editions, including standard references: Tabriz, lithograph, 1274/1857–58; JK2, vol. 2, p. 175 ff.

30 Tabriz, 1278/1860–1861; JK2, vol. 3.

31 We will discuss the distinction between ontological and dialectical metaphysics, and between Aristotelian and Hermetic cognitivism, in Subsections 4.2 and 4.4 respectively.

difficult work in philosophy.³² It is also a masterpiece of critical commentary with numerous original ideas, such as his subtle, incisive critique of the Aristotelian (and scholastic) logic of predication; ideas that Mullā Muḥammad Ja'far Lāhijānī (d. 1260/1844), a student of Mullā 'Alī Nūrī who wrote his own commentary on *al-Mashā'ir*, calls "cogent observations, knowledge, and majestic light" (*fawā'id jalīla wa 'ilm wa nūr jalīl*).³³

7. *Sharḥ al-Ḥikma al-'arshīyya* (Commentary on the Empyrean Wisdom)³⁴

This is the second of Shaykh Aḥmad's two major commentaries on the writings of Mullā Ṣadrā; it was completed on 27 Rabī' I 1236/April 29–30, 1821. This is the author's longest and most famous work after *Sharḥ al-Ziyāra*. It is an extensive, critical commentary on *al-Ḥikma al-'arshīyya* (Empyrean Wisdom), a summary of Mullā Ṣadrā's theology, cosmology, psychology, and eschatology. Not quite as difficult as *Sharḥ al-Mashā'ir* but no less profound and original, this commentary contains some of the most extensive discussions of eschatology to be written in Islamaic philosophy³⁵ after Mullā Ṣadrā's own section on this topic in *al-Asfār al-arba'a*.

8. *Risāla fī l-umūr al-i'tibārīyya* (A Treatise on Matters of Subjective Significance)³⁶

Apparently not completed, this is likely the last major work written by Shaykh Aḥmad. It constitutes a critique of the general practice of scholastic philosophers and theologians to define the extensions of general metaphysical concepts out of objective reality via analytical reductionism. This work drives home what Alfred North Whitehead would later call "the fallacy of misplaced concreteness", as well as the priority the Shaykh gives to *objective logic* over *ontology*, to be discussed later (in Subsection 4.2).

32 One manifestation of the vicissitudes suffered by the school of Shaykh Aḥmad, from his passing up to the present day, can be seen in the fact that there has not been a single study produced on this critically important philosophical work, neither by anyone from the major Shaykhī communities nor by anyone else.

33 M. J. Lāhijānī, *Sharḥ al-Mashā'ir* (Mashhad: Chāpkhāna-yi Khurāsān, 1383/1963), p. 167.

34 Tabriz, 1271/1854–55; 1278/1861–62; JK2, vol. 4.

35 We use 'Islamaic philosophy' in place of the usual 'Islamic philosophy', 'Muslim philosophy', or 'Arabic philosophy'. The distinction between Islamic and Islamaic is analogous to the distinction between Hellenic and Hellenistic. Examples: 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib articulated an Islamic, but not an Islamaic, philosophy. Maimonides was an Islamaic, but not an Islamic, philosopher. Islamaic philosophy appropriates and develops a non-Islamic (Aristotelian, Neoplatonic, etc.) heritage. It is our intention to discuss this distinction in further detail in the course of a forthcoming work.

36 JK1, vol. 2, p. 222 ff.; JK2, vol. 1, p. 49 ff. The last part of this work (ibid., pp. 76–97) ends with a little-noticed commentary on a section of Mullā Ṣadrā's *Asfār* (Safar 3, Mawqif 2, Faṣl 5).

The final seven works of the eight mentioned in the list above represent the philosophy of Shaykh Aḥmad in its most mature form. They constitute his *opera majora* as well as the most complete expression of the last major philosophical school of traditional Muslim civilization, occurring as it did on the cusp of the onset of the civilizational condition currently called “modernity”.

2.2 *Secondary Philosophical Works and Opera Minora*

Space does not permit an inventory of all of Shaykh Aḥmad’s numerous other philosophical works. Some of them, such as *al-Risāla al-Tawbilyya* and *al-Risāla al-Rashtiyya*, are quite long and contain deep, original answers to numerous questions on mysticism, alchemy, and other Hermetic sciences. Other works contain insightful answers to questions from his students on difficult passages in major works such as *Sharḥ al-Fawā'id*. From a plethora of treatises (*rasā'il*) and individual responses to questions, one could construct a genuine *opera minora* of his secondary philosophical works.

3 Legacy and Influence

3.1 *Students and Close Disciples*

A comprehensive list of all the known students of Shaykh Aḥmad has not been drawn up, and the lists one finds in the various sources for his life are incomplete. The vicissitudes of the era, including the intense persecution suffered by the devoted followers of the Shaykh, have left us, in many cases, with little information about a given student of significance beyond a name. What follows is a short selection of important students and disciples.

1. Sayyid Kāẓim Rashtī (d. 1259/1844)

By far the most significant of Shaykh Aḥmad’s disciples, Sayyid Kāẓim became a student of the Shaykh during the Yazd period. He became so close to Shaykh Aḥmad that Kh^wānsārī describes him as the equivalent of the “shirt on the body” of the Shaykh.³⁷ In the last years of his life, Shaykh Aḥmad often delegated the task of responding to philosophical questions he had received to Sayyid Kāẓim.

As persecution of the school of Shaykh Aḥmad began in earnest shortly after his passing, it became the responsibility of Sayyid Kāẓim to defend his teacher as well as continue to expand upon his teachings. He wrote at least 140 books and treatises in Arabic and Persian, most of them under constant, unrelenting

37 M. B. Kh^wānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt*, vol. 1, p. 225.

duress. He died in Karbala, his adopted home for many years, at about 55 years of age. Most of his larger projects were never completed and some of his works exhibit a rushed quality. There was hardly ever time to go back and carefully edit any particular book or treatise.

No one among the immediate students of the Shaykh appears to have grasped the dialectical and objective-logical depth of the thought and methodology of Shaykh Aḥmad to the same degree as Sayyid Kāẓim.³⁸ At the same time, in his own writings Shaykh Aḥmad always keeps the expression of his dialectical metaphysics and phenomenology under tight control so that a careful reader can, with reasonable effort, follow its phases. In the case of Sayyid Kāẓim the reins on the movement of dialectical thought are loosened to the point where, on occasion, he becomes extremely obscure. One of the Sayyid's more accessible philosophical works is his *Commentary on the Ḥadīth of 'Imrān al-Ṣābī*. The text being explained is a dialogue and debate between Imām Riḍā and a Hermetic philosopher.³⁹

2. Mullā Kāẓim b. 'Alī Naqī Simnānī

Shaykh Aḥmad wrote three treatises in reply to Mullā Kāẓim. In the first of them, the student addresses the teacher as his spiritual father. In the third, the teacher calls the student his "dear and honored son".⁴⁰ Mullā Kāẓim Simnānī wrote a commentary on *al-Fawā'id al-ḥikmiyya* that has been at least partially preserved in manuscript.

3. Mullā Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Naṣīr Rashtī Gilānī

From a note by Sayyid Kāẓim,⁴¹ one gathers that he was the son of a prominent judge. Mullā Muḥammad wrote an important commentary on *al-Fawā'id al-ḥikmiyya* which was written during the lifetime of the Shaykh; a complete copy is available only in a single manuscript.⁴² This commentary is drawn in large part from lectures given by Shaykh Aḥmad, who earlier (in 1230/1815)

38 Hence the famous statement attributed to Shaykh Aḥmad: "Sayyid Kāẓim *gets* it; the rest do not."

39 This dialogue may be found in a number of sources, including the *ḥadīth* collection *al-Tawḥīd* by Shaykh Ṣadūq (Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Babawayh, d. 381/990–991).

40 JK2, vol. 2, pp. 286 and 332.

41 Sayyid Kāẓim b. Qāsim al-Ḥusaynī Rashtī, *Jawāhir al-ḥikam*, 15 vols. (Basra: Maktaba al-Ghadīr, 2011), vol. 7, p. 339.

42 Henry Corbin had access to a photocopy of the manuscript of this work, and was apparently impressed with Mullā Muḥammad al-Gilānī's commentary. See Henry Corbin, *Face de Dieu, Face de l'Homme* (Paris: Flammarion, 1983), p. 167; idem, *En Islam Iranien*, 4 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1973), vol. 4, p. 264. That unique manuscript is now housed in Kitābkhāna u Markaz-i Asnād, Markaz-i Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif-i Buzurg-i Islāmī, Tehran; call no. 298. It is our hope to be able to present a critical edition of this commentary in the near future.

completed a treatise in response to some of Mullā Muḥammad's philosophical questions. There he rebuts an interesting attempt by his student to reconcile some of the Shaykh's positions with those of Mullā Ṣadrā.

4. Mullā Muḥammad b. Muqīm Bāfirūshī Māzandarānī

A budding scholar pursuing his higher studies in Isfahan, Mullā Muḥammad apparently met Shaykh Aḥmad during the latter's final visit to the city, where he gave the 53 days of lectures mentioned earlier. He asked Mullā Muḥammad to take time from his other studies and to focus some attention upon his major works such as *Sharḥ al-Ziyāra*, *Sharḥ al-Mashā'ir* and *Sharḥ al-Ḥikma al-'arshiyya*. At some point this *mullā*, possessing only the first volume of *Sharḥ al-Ḥikma al-'arshiyya*, began a commentary on it for the benefit of beginning and intermediate students. Apparently he never completed it, but what he wrote survives in a number of manuscripts.⁴³

5. Shaykh 'Alī Naqī b. Aḥmad b. Zayn al-Dīn (d. 1246/1830)

Among the children of Shaykh Aḥmad, the most learned of them and the closest to his way of thinking was his second son, 'Alī Naqī. He passed away in Kermanshah less than five years after his father. He often served as his father's secretary; a number of manuscripts said to be autographs of Shaykh Aḥmad are actually in the handwriting of Shaykh 'Alī Naqī.⁴⁴ At his father's request he sometimes wrote responses to questions received by the former. Like Sayyid Kāẓim, he participated in writing works in defense of the thought of Shaykh Aḥmad. His early passing (from a plague that swept through Kermanshah) is one factor that made the burden of Sayyid Kāẓim that much greater.

6. Mīrzā Ḥasan Gawhar (d. 1266/1849)

Mīrzā Ḥasan met Shaykh Aḥmad in Karbala, probably around 1230/1815. He became a devoted student of the Shaykh, and later became a close companion and student of Sayyid Kāẓim.⁴⁵ Mīrzā Ḥasan was arguably more attracted to theology (*kalām*) proper than to philosophy (*falsafa*) per se. His works provided the foundations for the more *scholastic sub-branch* of the Shaykhiyya after the passing of Sayyid Kāẓim. His most prominent student, Mīrzā Muḥammad Bāqir Uskū'ī (d. 1301/1883), became the progenitor of what would become one of the most important families in the leadership of this sub-branch of the Shaykhī community. Towards the middle of the 20th century this family came to dominate the leadership of scholastic Shaykhism, a position it maintains up to the present day.

43 This includes one at the Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī collection, Tehran; and four at the Mar'ashī Library, Qom.

44 This includes some of the manuscripts in the Kirmānī Collection of Shaykhī manuscripts.

45 See M. Ḥ. al-Ṭāliqānī, *al-Shaykhiyya*, pp. 183–185.

7. Mīrẓā Muḥammad Shafī' b. Ḥusayn Māmaqānī (d. 1269/1852)

After completing his higher studies in jurisprudence and theology in the 'Atabāt, Mīrẓā Muḥammad Shafī' passed through Kermanshah on the return journey to his hometown of Tabriz. Going to the city's main mosque, he happened to hear a lecture that Shaykh Aḥmad gave after performance of the public communion. Deeply impressed, he decided to put off return to his city. He became a devoted disciple of the Shaykh, who eventually commanded Mīrẓā Muḥammad to return to Tabriz and to serve the community there.⁴⁶

Mīrẓā Muḥammad Shafī' never became a full-fledged philosopher in its theoretical dimensions, although he lived his later life in Tabriz under the profound influence of his teacher's practical philosophy. His importance lies primarily in the fact that he and a few generations of his descendants in Tabriz constituted one of the most important families in the scholastic sub-branch of Shaykhī thought until the early-to-mid 20th century; during this period, the Māmaqānī family produced a number of historically important and exceptional scholars.

8. Shaykh Muḥammad b. 'Abd 'Alī Āl Jabbār al-Qaṭīfī (d. 1252/1836)

Shaykh Muḥammad b. 'Abd 'Alī was a very important *mujtahid* of Greater Bahrain (also called Hajar), including the districts al-Qaṭīf, al-Aḥsā', and the island of Bahrain proper. He corresponded with Shaykh Aḥmad, and the latter wrote at least two treatises in response to questions from Shaykh Muḥammad. Sayyid Kāẓim also wrote at least one treatise in response to this scholar.

9. Shaykh 'Abd al-Ṣamad b. Muḥammad Ḥusayn Hamadānī

It is not clear if Shaykh 'Abd al-Ṣamad ever met Shaykh Aḥmad; however, he is said to have been one of the most important students of Sayyid Kāẓim Rashtī. Later he became associated with Āqā Muḥammad Karīm Khān Kirmānī.⁴⁷ He is known for his Persian treatise *ʿIlm-i ilāhī*, a philosophical investigation of Divine Knowledge that also replies to and seeks to refute the objections of some of the philosophers of Isfahan to Shaykh Aḥmad's own *Sharḥ Risālat al-ʿilm* (Commentary on the Treatise on Knowledge). Shaykh 'Abd al-Ṣamad has another work in Arabic that, as far as this author is aware, a) exists in a single manuscript;⁴⁸ and b) is not mentioned either in the published bibliographies

46 Ibid., pp. 186–188.

47 See page 84 f. There is a brief entry on him in Aḥmad Ḥusaynī Ashkiwārī, *Tarājim al-rijāl: Majm'a tarājim li-a'lām aktharuhum maghmūrūn tunsharu mawādduhā al-tārīkhīyya li-awwal marra*. 4 vols. (Qom: Dalil-i Mā, 1423/2007), vol. 2, p. 62. See also Muḥammad Karīm Khān Kirmānī, *Sharḥ Du'ā' al-saḥār* (Tehran, 1318/1900), p. 3.

48 UCLA Biomedical Collection, Arabic, MS 116 (coll. 1062); held previously in the Shaykhiyah Collection (coll. 1655). Most recently a few leaves of this work from another manuscript (details not yet available) have come to the attention of the author of this chapter.

or any other work. The manuscript is apparently incomplete; it appears likely that the work was not finished. It constitutes a more detailed philosophical study of knowledge. It includes the author's own critical commentary on passages from Mullā Ṣadrā, as well as references to Pre-Socratic philosophers such as Thales.

3.2 *Licensees and Other Contemporaries*

A number of Shaykh Aḥmad's contemporaries in the scholastic establishment were not, strictly speaking, his students or disciples. Although pillars of the learned establishment, they were also admirers of the Shaykh who sought and received licenses from him for the narration of the traditions (*aḥādīth*) of the Imāms. Mention is restricted to four of the most famous as well as one lesser-known figure:

1. Ḥājj Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Karbāsī (d. 1261/1845)

Of the most influential scholars of Isfahan, he was probably the most outwardly devoted to Shaykh Aḥmad. Like his friend Mullā 'Alī Nūrī, he was also a student of the mystical philosopher Āqā Muḥammad Bīdābādī. Ḥājj Muḥammad Ibrāhīm specialised in philosophy of law, a field in which he wrote a famous multi-volume work, *Ishārāt al-uṣūl*.⁴⁹

2. Sayyid 'Abd Allāh Shubbar (d. 1241/1825)

Sayyid 'Abd Allāh was especially well known as a theologian and as a commentator on the Qur'ān. One of his most popular books is his two-volume *Haqq al-yaqīn*, on the essentials of creed (*'aqīda*).

3. Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥasan al-Najafī (d. 1266/1849)

Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥasan was the author of *Jawāhir al-kalām*, an encyclopedia of jurisprudence that remains the most important work written in the field up to the present day.⁵⁰ Despite his (relatively minor) connection with Shaykh Aḥmad, he was critical of the efforts of the latter's student, Sayyid Kāẓim.

4. Shaykh Murtaḍā al-Anṣārī (d. 1281/1864)

It was Shaykh Murtaḍā who revolutionized the foundations of the philosophy of law; so much so that it is not an exaggeration to say that virtually all

49 The aforementioned biographer Muḥammad Bāqir Khwānsārī was one of the disciples of Karbāsī.

50 Followed closely by *al-Ḥadā'iq al-naḍira* by the *akhbārī* scholar Shaykh Yūsuf al-Baḥrānī (d. 1186/1772). The traditionalist (*akhbārī*) school of jurisprudence stands in contradistinction to the principlist (*uṣūlī*) school mentioned earlier (p. 68).

mujtahidūn (s. *mujtahid*) today follow his school of legal philosophy in one way or other. He is famous for the advanced text *Farā'id al-uṣūl*.

5. Mullā Muḥammad Mahdī b. Muḥammad Shafī' Astarābādī (d. 1259/1843–44)

Already an established scholar, he happened to be living in Kermanshah around the time that Shaykh Aḥmad established residence there. Three or four treatises of Shaykh Aḥmad were written in response to sets of questions submitted by this *mullā*. One of the sets of questions sent by Mullā Muḥammad Mahdī to Shaykh Aḥmad includes inquiries pertaining to some fine points in the Peripatetic philosophy of Ibn Sīnā and Fārābī.⁵¹ This is unusual; philosophical questions presented to the Shaykh were usually in the context of either his own thought or that of Illuminationists belonging to the school of Mullā Ṣadrā.

An important contemporary, admirer, and sometime critic of the Shaykh was Mullā 'Alī b. Jamshīd Nūrī. We will speak more about Mullā 'Alī Nūrī in Section 4.3.⁵²

3.3 *Shaykhism*

The spark ignited by Baraghānī and his associates inevitably led to a polarization in the scholastic establishment between the supporters of Shaykh Aḥmad and his detractors. Despite the best attempts of some of the students of Shaykh Aḥmad and the companions of Sayyid Kāẓim, such as Mīrzā Ḥasan Gawhar and Shaykh Muḥammad b. 'Abd 'Alī Āl Jabbār, to effect a reconciliation with official circles (especially in the 'Atabāt), the growing consensus of the leaders of the establishment gradually leaned much more towards the detractors of the Shaykh than towards his supporters.

There is a consensus among historians and researchers that Shaykh Aḥmad never had any intention to establish a distinct division or community within Tashayyu'.⁵³ Unfortunately, the mischief of the Shaykh's enemies brought the discussion of his high cosmological meditations down to the "marketplace," a circumstance bitterly lamented by Henry Corbin.⁵⁴ Shunned by the officialdom of the scholastic establishment, the most devoted followers of Shaykh Aḥmad began to coalesce with their families into a sub-community of the larger Shī'ī community. This community, which came to be known as that of the

51 JK2, vol. 2, pp. 469–504.

52 It has been stated that Mullā 'Alī Nūrī also received an *ijāza* from Shaykh Aḥmad (H. Algar, *Religion and State in Iran 1785–1906*, p. 69); this author has not been able to confirm that claim.

53 See, e.g., M. Ḥ. al-Ṭāliqānī, *al-Shaykhīyya*, p. 197; H. Algar, *Religion and State in Iran 1785–1906*, pp. 68–69.

54 See H. Corbin, *History of Islamic philosophy*, p. 356.

Shaykhiyya—from ‘*shaykh*’, used to mention the most common title of Aḥmad al-Aḥsā’ī—developed in three directions:

1. Scholasticism

Prominent, mainstream disciples such as Mīrzā Ḥasan Gawhar, Mīrzā Muḥammad Shafī‘, and Shaykh Muḥammad b. ‘Abd ‘Alī did, their utmost to situate the teachings of Shaykh Aḥmad within the perimeter set by the scholastic Uṣūlī establishment. Although they were never entirely successful in this effort, they did achieve a fair degree of tolerance.

On the other hand, with perhaps a few exceptions, one does not find a high degree of philosophical development in this branch. The theology propounded by this branch of the Shaykhiyya does possess considerable spiritual depth, especially with regard to the cosmological status of the Ahlulbayt. But these insights are largely (though not exclusively) framed in close proximity to the perimeter of the very scholastic framework that Shaykh Aḥmad sought to overcome (see Section 4).

The scholastic branch of the Shaykhiyya community survives up to the present day, particularly in the Persian-Gulf lands of Eastern Arabia, Bahrain, and Kuwait.

2. Theosophy

No one did as much to develop the theosophical potential latent in the writings of Shaykh Aḥmad and Sayyid Kāẓim as did one of the latter’s most important students, Āqā Muḥammad Karīm Khān Kirmānī (d. 1288/1871). A powerful and iconoclastic personality, the mark he left on the Shaykhī community was so great that, even today, Shaykhism *eo nomine* is often identified with the work of this man and with the sub-branch of the Shaykhī community that he established.⁵⁵

In response to the persecution of Sayyid Kāẓim in the scholastic establishment, Āqā Muḥammad Karīm made the fateful decision to break off from it entirely. Most significantly: Via the focused application of his own genius,⁵⁶ he *distilled* much of the cosmological meditations of Shaykh Aḥmad and Sayyid

55 Even Henry Corbin considered Āqā Muḥammad Karīm to be the only genuine successor of Sayyid Kāẓim. This is not surprising since, of the three sub-branches of the Shaykhī community, the theosophical sub-branch was the most amenable to Corbin’s over-arching project of *gnosis*.

56 A number of western scholars, such as Mongol Bayat, have erroneously treated the thought of Āqā Muḥammad Karīm Khān Kirmānī as though it is identical to that of Shaykh Aḥmad. That is, they commit the fallacy of reading the theosophical distillations made by the Āqā and then assuming that their content, context, and intentions are identical to those contained in the cosmological meditations of Shaykh Aḥmad. This has contributed to severe misunderstandings and misreadings of the Shaykh’s own socio-historical context as well as of the philosophical foundations and intentions of his thought. Partly for this reason, a

Kāẓim into a new and accessible form intended for both lay people and experts alike: This distillation especially emphasized concepts such as the high metaphysical stations of the Ahlulbayt and the cosmogony of the intermediary universe of subtle matter, space and time: *Hūrqiḷyā*.⁵⁷ A particularly controversial doctrine developed by the Āqā is the doctrine of the Fourth Pillar (*al-rukn al-rābi'*), pertaining to the need of the Shī'ī community at any given time for the existence of at least one especially enlightened cognizant in their midst. These and other doctrines distilled from high cosmological meditations on the Prophetic sources, via a loving spiritual connection with the Ahlulbayt, constitute what we call Āqā Muḥammad Karīm's *theosophy*.⁵⁸ This contrasts with the scholastic establishment's traditional method, which involves the distillation of *scholastic theology* from the Prophetic sources via (in large measure) the dry and dispassionate application of traditional Aristotelian logic.

Āqā Muḥammad Karīm was keenly aware of the importance of the dialectical and objective-logical aspects of the thought of Shaykh Aḥmad. However, the dialectical movement of the cosmos and consciousness that is so critical to the *philosophy* of Shaykh Aḥmad becomes somewhat ossified in the *theosophy* of Āqā Muḥammad Karīm. His theosophy and associated praxis are, in an important sense, conservative. Indeed, it is not far-fetched to compare Āqā Muḥammad Karīm's interpretation of the teachings of Shaykh Aḥmad with the contemporary phenomenon of Right-Hegelianism in Europe.

The theosophical school of Shaykhī thought still has many adherents: The main sub-branch, led until recent times by the descendants of Āqā Muḥammad Karīm, is centered in Kerman and Basra. A smaller sub-branch of theosophical Shaykhism, founded by one of Āqā Muḥammad Karīm's best students, Mīrzā Muḥammad Bāqir Hamadānī (d. 1319/1900–1901), is still active in cities such as Mashhad, Isfahan and Tehran.

3. Radicalism

Sayyid 'Alī Muḥammad Shīrāzī (d. 1265/1850) attended the lectures of Sayyid Kāẓim for about two years. Soon after the passing of the latter in 1259/1844, he announced his own mission as the Gate (*bāb*) of the awaited Twelfth Imām of

major portion of Chapter 2 of Bayat's *Mysticism and Dissent* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1982), which discusses Shaykh Aḥmad and his teachings, is worthless.

57 Commonly misspelled '*hūrqaḷyā*' (with middle 'a' in place of 'i') by Corbin and others; however, Shaykh Aḥmad has explicitly vocalized it as '*hūrqiḷyā*'. See, e.g., JK2, vol. 2, p. 91; vol. 5, p. 129.

58 We are using 'theosophy' in a broad sense to mention an organized framework of doctrine and practice grounded in claims to special cognizance of (as opposed to mere faith in) matters pertaining to cosmological origin, meaning, and destiny, as well as of mysteries beyond the physical world.

Tashayyu', al-Ḥujja b. al-Ḥasan. This was the beginning of that 19th-century revolutionary movement known as Bābism.

Although many of its adherents and the bulk of its leadership were students or admirers of Sayyid Kāẓim to one degree or other, Bābism is best described as *post-Shaykhī*. Three points stand out. First, Bābism was radically theosophical: The Bāb would eventually claim a semi-divine status for his position. Second, Bābism was quite Gnostic in the classical sense: The age of the Islamic legal and ritual dispensation (*sharī'a*) was now coming to an end, to be replaced in the new, post-legalist era. Finally, Bābism culminated in a revolutionary, egalitarian fervor that actually tried to overthrow the Iranian monarchy. In these three aspects we see that Bābism may, in all fairness, be considered as constituting both a Gnostic and a millenarianist movement, much like certain phases in the history of Ismā'īlism.

In Bābism the vertical dialectic of Shaykh Aḥmad is aggressively mapped onto the horizontal plane of the phenomenal world of historical time. During the rebellion against the monarchy, followers of Bābism (if not the Bāb himself) promoted a *radical* praxis which may be positively compared with socialism or even communism. Bābism was to Shaykhism as the Hegelian Left was to Hegelianism.

The leaders of Shaykhism proper, from both the scholastic and theosophical communities, vigorously opposed Bābism. On the theosophical side, the Bāb and Āqā Muḥammad Karīm Khān became bitter enemies. On the scholastic side, Mirzā Muḥammad Shafī' of Tabriz played an important leadership role in the trial and, after a curiously long wait, the final condemnation of Sayyid 'Alī Muḥammad for spreading corruption in the earth.⁵⁹

3.4 *Later Trends*

The failed but ferocious Bābī rebellion in Iran reinforced the burgeoning anti-Shaykhī sentiment in the scholastic establishment. Any public teaching of the works of Shaykh Aḥmad was largely banned. Although his admirers and followers among the Shaykhiyya have continued to vigorously defend him from false accusations and to preserve his writings (as well as those of Sayyid Kāẓim), the exposition and further development of the philosophy proper of the Shaykh went into a very steep decline from which it has not yet recovered.

59 The Bāb was executed on 28 Rajab 1266/9 June 1850. Accounts of the history and doctrines of the Bābī movement include H. Algar, *Religion and State in Iran 1785–1906*, Ch. 8; M. Bayat, *Mysticism and Dissent*, Ch. 4; and D. MacEoin, *The Messiah of Shiraz* (Leiden: Brill, 2009). Each account is significantly problematic in one respect or other and must be approached with caution.

Yet even in the current centers of the scholastic establishment such as Qom and the ʿAtabāt, certain senior scholars have privately continued to read and benefit from him, although they would never admit this publicly. As this author has mentioned elsewhere:⁶⁰ Despite being followers of Mullā Ṣadrā in philosophy and, to a degree, Ibn ʿArabī in mysticism; there is reason to believe that mystical philosophers and cognizants such as Mīrzā Muḥammad ʿAlī Shāhābādī (d. 1323 Sh./1944), as well as his famous student, Sayyid Rūḥ Allāh Khumaynī (d. 1368 Sh./1989), were under the influence of Shaykh Aḥmad in some significant way. It was bad enough that they were philosophers in the tradition of Mullā Ṣadrā (a tradition that was barely tolerated by the establishment in the middle of the 20th century); to openly acknowledge the additional influence of the Shaykh with so much as a whisper or even a nod would have spelled professional suicide.

Another example is provided by Shaykh Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī al-Baḥrānī al-Najafī (ca. 1275/1858), a well-respected mainstream scholar of the ʿAtabāt: He wrote an influential book on spiritual wayfaring, *al-Ṭarīq ilā Allāh*.⁶¹ The biographical encyclopaedia *Aʿyān al-Shīʿa*, by Sayyid Muḥsin al-Amīn (d. 1371/1952), has an entry on him.⁶² Now Sayyid Muḥsin displays a negative attitude towards Shaykh Aḥmad, one exemplified by an extraordinarily prejudiced entry that arguably crosses the line into scholarly misconduct.⁶³ In contrast, this sayyid gives both Shaykh Ḥusayn and his book unqualified high praise. Yet Chapter Nine of *al-Ṭarīq ilā Allāh* constitutes, in virtually its entirety, praise of and commentary on the verses received in his early visions by Shaykh Aḥmad from Imām Ḥasan!⁶⁴ Again, Shaykh Aḥmad's name is not mentioned explicitly.

As far as this author can tell, attitudes towards Shaykh Aḥmad in the scholastic establishment are slowly but steadily relaxing; there is still a considerable way to go. On the other hand, despite the increasing availability of his works—one can now find them sold semi-openly even in Qom—profound, critical philosophical examination and further development of the cosmological meditations of the Shaykh remain in a sorry and deplorable state.

60 Hamid Idris Samawi, "Al-Qurʾān wa al-ʿItrāḥ: A Treatise from the Raṣaḥāt al-Biḥār of Mīrzā Muḥammad ʿAlī Shāhābādī," *International Journal of Shīʿī Studies* 2 1 (2003): 121–158 (121–126).

61 Shaykh Ḥusayn al-Baḥrānī, *al-Ṭarīq ilā Allāh* (Tehran: al-Zahrāʾ, 1423/2002).

62 Sayyid Muḥsin al-Amīn, *Aʿyān al-Shīʿa* (Beirut: Dār al-Taʿāruf li-l-Maṭbūʿāt, 1403/1983), vol. 6, p. 119.

63 Ibid., vol. 2, p. 569.

64 See p. 67 of this chapter.

4 Selected Arcs in the Philosophy of Shaykh Aḥmad

4.1 Preliminary Considerations⁶⁵

Among the conditions of Wisdom is that the investigator not place all of his reliance upon his principles and axioms. Whoever does that will hardly ever hit upon the true. Rather, he will see each thing which agrees with his principles as correct, even if his ego (*nafs*) discovers that that thing is outweighed [by something else]: When he turns towards its being outweighed, he still complies with it owing to his dependence on his principles. And he will see each thing which conflicts with his principles as false, even if he finds within his ego (*nafs*) that that thing outweighs [what he already holds to be the case] or otherwise finds its truth; owing to his over-reliance on his principles. But maybe the mistake is in his principles.

*Sharḥ al-Fawā'id al-ḥikmiyya*⁶⁶

Approaching the factual content of philosophy (*falsafa* or *ḥikma*) with a clean slate and no presuppositions: That is perhaps the key *point of attack* in Shaykh Aḥmad's iconoclastic approach to philosophy and science. Although there is no escape from the *pre-philosophical* choices that must be made, even those choices have a presuppositionless aspect. The presuppositionless movement of consciousness directs one to the pre-philosophical choices, and the pre-philosophical choices direct and give context to the presuppositionless movement of consciousness.

For *presuppositionless* philosophy is, first and foremost, *objective* philosophy. It calls for the cultivation of one's entire *subjective* self, of the entire microcosm, in objective *cohesion* with the world; as a mirror that reflects the macrocosm.⁶⁷ This emphasis on the *entirety of the subjective self* (= *ego*, *nafs*)⁶⁸

65 In conformance with the standard convention for the use-mention distinction, throughout this chapter we use a single-quote name to mention an expression, sentence, or other string of characters; we use a double-quote name to mention a concept, proposition, or other object of conceptual thought per se. We also use double quotes in the usual sense of quoting the speech or comments of others. For each case, the context should make clear which sense of double-quotes is intended.

66 JK2, vol. 1, p. 282.

67 The precise senses in which we are using 'objective', 'subjective', and their cognates will be clarified in the course of Section 4.2.

68 Shaykh Aḥmad emphasizes the distinction between *nafs* in the Hellenistic sense (psyche or soul) and *nafs* in the Qur'ānic sense (subjective self); the latter is a sense for which the English word 'ego' is a good approximation. Similar to the case with the word '*aql*' (to be

points to the fact that, in contrast to the paradigm of Aristotelian science followed by traditional Islamaic philosophy, the theoretical and practical cannot at this, or at any, point be separated:

Sometimes, by '*ḥikma*' is meant "theoretical wisdom (*al-ḥikma al-ilmīyya*)"; and sometimes, "practical wisdom (*al-ḥikma al-'amalīyya*)". Now we mean by '*ḥikma*' that wisdom which is, *at once*, both theoretical and practical.⁶⁹

Through night and day the microcosm meditates on Heaven and Earth. The struggle of the microcosm, in its subjective self (*nafs*), to objectively reflect the macrocosm is symbolic of the relationship between receiving light (analogous to a mirror) and accurately sending it back. Receiving and sending back, in turn, is symbolic of the relationship between a principle of revelation (or descent) and one of ascension (or ascent). Finally, the relationship between a principle of revelation and one of ascension is symbolic of something to which the Shaykh and his intended audience (viz., the contemporary intelligentsia of the Shī'ah) already had access: the Qur'ān and the Ahlulbayt. According to a famous tradition of the Messenger: "Just as I fought for the *tanzīl* (descending from the origin), you, O 'Alī! will fight for the *ta'wīl* (ascending to the origin)."

From the initial point of attack, Shaykh Aḥmad makes a pre-philosophical commitment. As a Shī'ī Muslim an objective, and hence, presuppositionless, commitment to the Qur'ān and the Ahlulbayt as the sources of wisdom is already demanded:⁷⁰

Weigh and measure with a straight and effective balance. That is better and more beautiful by way of *ta'wīl*. (Q 17:35)

Going further: If the Qur'ān and the Ahlulbayt are indeed true, in an appropriate and strong sense of 'true', then these two in their relationship to one another must also *objectively* map onto the relationship between the macrocosm and the microcosm, between the objective *horizons* and the subjective *ego*. Thus

discussed below, p. 3), the Hellenistic influence on Islamaic philosophy has obscured the primordial prophetic and Qur'ānic senses of the former term. A detailed theory of the *nafs* qua ego, under development by the author, is being prepared for an upcoming book; see fn. 143.

69 Ibid.

70 That is, the Qur'ān and the Ahlulbayt demand the struggle for an objective commitment to themselves, not a dogmatic one. See Idris Samawi Hamid, *Islām, Sign and Creation: The Cosmology of Walāyah* (New York: Global Scholarly Publications, 2011), pp. 33–35.

the presuppositionless, objective movement of consciousness involves a cosmological meditation and praxial spirit within a four-way system of *universes of discourse* (i.e., *categories*) and the *maps* between them: an objective mapping between the macrocosm and the microcosm (movement one), an objective mapping between the Qur'ān and the teachings of the Ahlulbayt (movement two); and, most critically, an objective mapping between movement one and movement two, e.g., from macrocosm to the Qur'ān and from microcosm to the Ahlulbayt. It is within this framework of *objective logic* that the enterprise of presuppositionless philosophy begins, and in which the primary aim of *ḥikma* develops:

We will show them Our signs in the horizons [macrocosms] and in their egos [microcosms] until it becomes clear to them that He is the True (Q 41:53).

Approaching the philosophy and cosmological meditations of Shaykh Aḥmad is a difficult task. In part, this is because his presuppositionless approach cannot be mapped in any one-to-one manner onto the principles or methodology of any major philosopher, scientist or theologian of Muslim civilization preceding him. In comparison: Mullā Ṣadrā, for all his genius and creativity, was fundamentally an *ishrāqī* (Illuminationist) philosopher in the tradition of Suhrawardī. Suhrawardī, for all his criticism of Ibn Sīnā, still conducted argumentation by use of Peripatetic methods of discourse rooted in the Aristotelian paradigm of logic and apodictic method (the same goes for Mullā Ṣadrā). Shaykh Aḥmad was, in a distinct manner, much more radical. Some western scholars have erroneously tried to peg our Shaykh as a follower of Mullā Ṣadrā, Mīr Dāmād, Suhrawardī, or even, absurdly, of Ismā'īlī and "Gnostic" thought.⁷¹ Yes, there is an important sense in which Shaykh Aḥmad does belong to the Illuminationist tradition of the afore-mentioned figures, as will be discussed in the sequel; there can be no doubt that the thought of the Shaykh is a product (as well as a criticism) of his era. However, he initiated a radical paradigm shift away from Peripatetic apodictics and its framework of first principles

71 See, e.g., Morris' ill-informed statement in James Winston Morris, *The Wisdom of the Throne: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Mulla Sadra* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 71. In the case of Āqā Muḥammad Karīm Khān Kirmānī, the case for Ismā'īlī (but not Gnostic) influence is perhaps arguable; more likely that is a matter of appearance only. Just as he did successfully with Ismā'īlī thought, Henry Corbin certainly tried to fit Āqā Muḥammad Karīm's theosophy into his own project of universal *gnosis*. But it is a fallacy to project these hypotheses backwards and to identify them with the philosophical intentions of Shaykh Aḥmad per se. Cp. fn. 56.

presumed known to be true: For Shaykh Aḥmad, every definition and concept of any significance, from any source, was subject to being *filtered* through his presuppositionless objective logic within the perimeter of the four-way system of categories and mutual mappings mentioned above. In that context, no axiom, principle, or method is sacrosanct except to the degree that it can survive being critically filtered through that four-way system, a system which itself must be approached via presuppositionless consciousness.

In the philosophical career of Shaykh Aḥmad, the first exposition of the four-way system and of the movement of presuppositionless thought within it is to be found in his extensive treatise on Hermetic sciences entitled *Lawāmi' al-wasā'il fī ajwibati Jāmi' al-masā'il*, popularly known as *The Tawbaliyya*. Completed in early 1211/1797,⁷² this is one of the Shaykh's earliest works. The date of completion is significant, in part because it precedes by nearly two decades the beginning of the Shaykh's explicit and extensive critique of the works of Mullā Ṣadrā and his followers. A comparison of content shows this early exposition to be identical in spirit with that of the introduction of *Sharḥ al-Fawā'id*, a work written concurrently with the critique of the Mullā, and from which the epigraph that began this section is taken. Specifically, *The Tawbaliyya* stresses the indispensable importance of cultivating presuppositionless consciousness with respect to philosophical meditation within the four-part system. These facts implicate, and the preponderance of the evidence establishes, that the development of the philosophical thought of the Shaykh was not motivated by or conceived as a reaction to the school of Mullā Ṣadrā. On the contrary, the philosophical system of Shaykh Aḥmad was driven by a *nisus* to develop and establish a genuine theory and praxis of wisdom on the foundation of the four-way system of objective mappings, not borrowing any presupposition (= axiom, principle) that does not flow from that system. According to Shaykh Aḥmad, any such presupposition constitutes a merely formal hypothesis of abstract, subjective thought, rational deduction

72 To be precise, *Lawāmi' al-wasā'il* was completed on the night before 22 Sha'bān 1211/19–20 February 1797; see JK2, vol. 8, pp. 39–266. Its alternative title is derived from the name of a small village in Bahrain, the hometown of Shaykh 'Abd 'Alī ibn Shaykh 'Alī al-Tawbali. Shaykh 'Abd 'Alī was the author of *Jāmi' al-masā'il*, a work consisting of a set of questions (pertaining, for the most part, to Hermetics) addressed to Shaykh Aḥmad; *Lawāmi' al-wasā'il* constitutes the latter's reply to those questions.

For an exposition of the four-way system of presuppositionless consciousness, see *ibid.*, pp. 131–132.

from which does not demonstrate anything.⁷³ This last point is emphasized in many places, especially throughout *Sharḥ al-Mashā'ir*.⁷⁴

That philosophical work must begin with a non-hypothetical (= presuppositionless, concrete) starting point has been emphasized in different ways and contexts by philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Kant, and Hegel.⁷⁵ Furthermore, it is the job of philosophy to do systematic justice to each mode of human cognitive experience in conjunction with the objects of that experience, i.e., to bring all such modes and their objects into systematic cohesion (*ijtimā'*). According to Shaykh Aḥmad, phenomenological investigation reveals three fundamental modes of human cognitive experience; they constitute a scale from base to summit. The first is knowledge (inclusive of coming-to-know) in the narrow sense (*'ilm*, *ta'allum*); its locus is peripheral consciousness (*ṣadr*), its object (in the broad sense of 'object' that encompasses that which is grasped by each cognitive mode) is form (*ṣūra*) and appearance (*ẓuhūr*). The second is nexal prehending (*aqḥ*, *ta'aqqul*); its locus is central consciousness (*qalb*), its object is some specific reality (*ḥaqīqa*) and object in the strict sense (*ma'nā*). At the peak of cognitive experience there is cognizance (*ma'rifa*); its locus is primordial, singular, blaze consciousness (*fu'ād*), its object is the True (*al-ḥaqq*).⁷⁶ This non-hypothetical, concrete starting point of Wisdom, objectively grasped by the highest mode of cognitive experience, is what Shaykh Aḥmad calls *al-wujūd al-ḥaqq* (True Existence); it is the proper denotation of Hegel's expression '*die Sache selbst*' (the Fact itself).⁷⁷ For Shaykh Aḥmad, the

73 See the distinction between Aristotelian cognitivism and Platonic deductivism discussed in Section 4.4. In short, Shaykh Aḥmad rejects the Aristotelian cognitivism that was a hallmark of Islamic philosophy up to his time.

74 For example, JK2, vol. 3, p. 379.

75 See R. G. Collingwood, *An Essay on Philosophical Method, New Edition* (Oxford, 2005), p. 123.

76 The phenomenology of cognitive experience is discussed in many places; for a standard exposition see Observation 1 of *Sharḥ al-Fawā'id*: JK2, vol. 1, pp. 285–295. Cp. the early exposition of these three modes in *The Tawbaliyya*: JK2, vol. 8, pp. 50–54. It is critical to the comprehension of Shaykh Aḥmad to note that, in his system, neither of the two lower modes constitutes the proper vehicle for *true* philosophical meditation; that is subserved by the highest, viz, cognizance; see p. 111.

The word 'singular' is used, in the context of the topos of cognizance, as the adjectival form of both 'single' (*aḥad*) and 'singularity' (*ṣamad*); see p. 113.

77 See JK2, vol. 1, p. 296ff. For Hegel, '*die Sache selbst*' denotes the ultimate object of *Vernunft* (Reason); see Collingwood, loc. cit. Shaykh Aḥmad, however, would say that *Vernunft* in Hegel's sense, even if concrete, does not and *cannot* reach the Fact itself (= the True). At most, *Vernunft* belongs to the second mode of cognitive experience, that constituted by nexal-prehending; see previous footnote. In the sense expressed by Kant, *Vernunft* is not *concrete*: It does not grasp any real *object*, only an *abstract* structure belonging to a conscious *subject*; see fn. 107.

True (= the Fact itself) is the primordial phenomenological and metaphysical ground through which one meditates and operates within the network consisting of the four universes (the macrocosm, the microcosm, the Qur'an, and the Tradition (*sunna*) of the Ahlulbayt) and the objective mappings between them. For the earlier Islamaic traditions of philosophy, the doctrines and methodology of Aristotle and his successors are to a significant degree taken as canonical; such canonicity is rejected by the Shaykh as a form of unwarranted dogmatism (*taqlid*) because it absolutizes a criterion that does not result from presuppositionless consciousness via the Fact itself.⁷⁸

It has been maintained that the historical development of philosophy in Muslim civilization after Ibn Rushd (d. 595/1198), especially with regard to the traditions of Illuminationism and Sufi metaphysics, constitutes a movement towards a philosophy that may truly be called "Islamic" in the strict sense of 'Islamic'.⁷⁹ Shaykh Aḥmad's framework of Wisdom involves i) a cohesion of *die Sache selbst* with a four-way system of universes and mappings that includes the Qur'an and the Tradition of the Ahlulbayt as primary (as opposed to derivative) sources of philosophical meditation and direction, coupled with ii) a commitment to the movement of concrete, presuppositionless consciousness through all the modes of cognitive experience and their objects. As such, this framework constitutes a major milestone in the gradual transition from *Islamaic*⁸⁰ towards genuinely *Islamic* philosophy. At the same time, every original philosophy constitutes, at once, a product and a criticism of its era.⁸¹ That Shaykh Aḥmad, in his later works, took a sharply critical approach to the thought of Mullā Ṣadrā and his followers, that the Shaykh's thought constitutes a criticism of its era, is well known to later Islamaic philosophers and intellectual historians; even if that critique has for the most part been subjected

78 See, e.g., JK2, vol. 3, p. 60. The Shaykh does not consider his own system dogmatic because i) recognition of the four-way system constituting the ground for the phenomenological realization of *die Sache selbst* already has an objective basis; and ii) presuppositionless consciousness via *die Sache selbst* within the four-way system places no restriction on cognitive experience (as found in, say, the Kalām). So there is no limitation on the determination of doctrine or the articulation of content to either a peripheral understanding of the prophetic sources or to the techniques of discursive reasoning.

79 See, e.g., Corbin, *History of Islamic philosophy* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1993), p. 254. For the strict sense of 'Islamic', see Hamid, op. cit., pp. 11–12.

80 For our use of 'Islamaic philosophy', see fn. 35. Shaykh Aḥmad persistently presses upon his audience, the Shī'ī Illuminationists, that a proper cognitive framework for metaphysics is already explicitly present in the teachings of the Ahlulbayt; presuppositional attachment to Aristotelian apodictics blinds them from seeing it; see, e.g., JK2, vol. 3, p. 210.

81 See G. R. G. Mure, *Retreat from Truth* (Oxford, 1958), pp. 246–247.

to caricature and severe misunderstanding.⁸² What has not been recognized or sufficiently emphasized, however, is that the systematic critique of the Mullā began only after at least two decades of development on the part of the Shaykh, over the course of which his unique philosophical position matured to its zenith.⁸³ That position, as is obvious from the slightest inspection of his works, draws upon and addresses many of the metaphysical interests and problems contemplated in Shīʿī cosmology and praxis, Peripatetic philosophy, the Illuminationist tradition extending from Suhrawardī to Mullā Ṣadrā, even Sufi metaphysics;⁸⁴ as such it is a product of its era. The Shaykh's systematic articulation of his meditation and praxis within the four-way system of universes and objective mappings, via the highest mode of presuppositionless consciousness, encapsulates a radical, alternative philosophical approach to contextualizing those interests through a cohesive framework and to solving the associated problems.

Concomitant to being a product of its era, another step on the part of the Shaykh in his appropriation of the content of traditional Islamaic philosophy was necessitated, so that its form of expression could appropriately subserve the articulation of his philosophical position. The movement of presuppositionless consciousness and action through the four-way system of universes and mappings, and the filtering of other concepts and principles through that system, result in the *sublation* of the language of traditional philosophy. Put another way, as one filters the problems of traditional *falsafa* (or any other science or discipline) through presuppositionless cosmological meditation and praxial spirit, the terminology has to be *dissolved* and *recombined* so that it will function at a higher level commensurate with the results of that meditation and praxis.

Expressions such as 'sublation' (German 'aufheben') invoke echoes of Shaykh Aḥmad's Western European contemporary G. W. Hegel (d. 1831). Words such as 'dissolving' and 'recombining' have an alchemical ring. Phrases expressing multiple universes of discourse in objective mutual cohesion carry a Hermetic and objective-logical flavor. Locutions such as 'movement of presuppositionless consciousness' carry a Heraclitean vibration. This is no accident: The immediate outcome of presuppositionless philosophy turns out to be irreducibly

82 A point often stressed by Henry Corbin.

83 The moment of maturity can be dated: It corresponds to the completion of his magnum opus, *Sharḥ al-Ziyāra al-jāmi'a al-kabira*. It is no accident that the effort to systematically critique Mullā Ṣadrā and his followers in writing began immediately upon finishing *Commentary on the Grand Comprehensive Visitation*; see p. 8.

84 Even at the height of his critique of Mullā Ṣadrā, the Shaykh matter-of-factly acknowledges this. See, e.g., JK2, vol. 4, p. 241.

dialectical in an important sense of 'dialectic'. *Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsā'ī was a dialectical philosopher, and his ḥikma constitutes a dialectical philosophy.* This is a crucial point that must be grasped if one is to have any hope of genuinely understanding the Shaykh or of properly contextualizing his thought within philosophy in general.

Shaykh Aḥmad's dialectic is constituted by the cohesion of presuppositionless consciousness with its object in their mutual revelation and development throughout all the modes of cognitive experience. The most obvious manifestation of this dialectic consists in the dynamic tension or synthesis of opposites found *within* every level and *between* every two levels of the world. Contrary to the oft-repeated pronouncements of his detractors, Shaykh Aḥmad had a thorough understanding of the technical vocabulary of traditional *falsafa* and scholasticism. But much of that vocabulary had to first be dissolved and recombined, it had to be sublated, it had to be at once *negated*, *preserved*, and *lifted up* (*aufheben*) in order for it to function as the proper vehicle for articulating a dialectical philosophy.

A related difficulty in approaching Shaykh Aḥmad involves his use of *phenomenological* categories, i.e., categories of the modes of experience. This phenomenology is not something to be brought in posterior to an exercise in abstract ontological analysis and scholastic apodictics. Rather, the phenomenology of cognizance (*ma'rifa*) of the True must be taken into account as an integral, concrete factor in the movement of presuppositionless thought between the nodes (= categories) of the four-way system. Bringing in phenomenology at the outset of the exercise in objective logic is critical to being able to properly account for things such as the primordial dialectical unity of consciousness and (contingent) existence in the concrete phenomenological category of the True.⁸⁵ As Hegel famously remarked, "The examination of knowledge can only be carried out by an act of knowledge."⁸⁶ More precisely for the purposes of our Shaykh: *The examination of phenomenological knowledge or cognizance can only be carried out by an act of cognizance.* Cognizance of the True, of the Fact itself, is a necessary condition of genuine metaphysical thought. But for the

85 "The onset of the *wujūd* (existence) of a thing is the onset of its *wijdān* (existential consciousness)"—JK2, vol. 1, p. 492. The use here of 'existential' to translate some of the sense of '*wijdān*' is suggestive of a yet to be explored relationship with its phenomenological uses in contemporary existentialism. Except in the context of translating '*wijdān*', throughout this essay 'existential' will be used to translate the adjectival form of '*wujūd*' per se. The unity of *wujūd* and *wijdān* constitutes singular, blaze consciousness (*fu'ād*); see p. 23.

86 Fredrik G. Weiss (ed.), *Beyond Epistemology: New Studies in the Philosophy of Hegel* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974), Foreword (p. v).

masses who have not phenomenologically realized *die Sache selbst* (cognized in and as that mode of experience that is the True, and which constitutes a unity of consciousness and contingent existence) there is still hope, for the objective logic of the Shaykh maps this phenomenological category onto a *symbolic category* that a fledgling philosopher can comprehend, but provided one starts off with a clean slate free of presuppositions.

4.2 *Objective Logic and Dialectics*

The long chains of correct reasonings and calculations of which subjective logic is justly proud are only possible within a precisely defined universe of discourse, as has long been recognized. Since there are many such universes of discourse, thinking necessarily involves many transformations between universes of discourse as well as transformations of one universe of discourse into another. The results of applying logic in the narrow sense to the laws of these objective transformations are necessarily inadequate....

*Sets for Mathematics*⁸⁷

Surely those who possess the kernels of consciousness (*ʿulu al-albāb*) know that the way of inference to what is there cannot be known except by what is here!

Imām ʿAlī b. Mūsā l-Riḍā, in the course of his debate with the Hermeticist ʿImrān al-Ṣābi⁸⁸

The terminology and other linguistic devices that Shaykh Aḥmad uses to express the outcomes of his cosmological meditation and praxis belong to his *object-language*. In the object language of the Shaykh we do not find explicit Arabic translations of words such as ‘objective logic’ or ‘dialectic’.⁸⁹ These and similar expressions belong to the *meta-language* in which we seek to articulate

87 F. William Lawvere and Robert Rosebrugh, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 239–240.

88 See fn. 39. This statement is frequently cited throughout the oeuvre of the Shaykh. Its first occurrence in *Sharḥ al-Fawāʿid* is found in JK2, vol. 1, p. 279.

89 There is a translation of ‘dialectic’, in an Aristotelian sense of that word, common throughout Islamaic logic: *ʿjadal*. But Aristotle’s conception of dialectic, particularly as understood by Islamaic scholasticism, is too impoverished to be useful in the context with which we are concerned. More relevant to our meta-language are Hegelian conceptions of dialectic.

Note the distinction between a dialectical *paradigm* and a dialectical *doctrine*. It is the case that Shaykh Aḥmad and Hegel each operates within a dialectical paradigm of metaphysics overall; in the effort to accurately articulate and convey certain arcs in the metaphysics of the Shaykh, our meta-language uses, as appropriate, something of Hegel (as well as of contemporary objective logic). However, it does not follow, and it is not the

the philosophical content of our Shaykh's *ḥikma*, as well as to give it its proper context in the field of Islamaic philosophy.⁹⁰ Let us discuss some of this meta-linguistic terminology in a more precise manner.

Traditional Aristotelian and scholastic metaphysics (including Illuminationism in the forms it took prior to Shaykh Aḥmad) largely involves an exercise in *ontology* in some scholastic sense of 'ontology'. Used precisely, 'ontology' has two standard families of meaning that are relevant to our discussion of the *ḥikma* of Shaykh Aḥmad and that of related philosophers such as Mullā Ṣadrā. These are the scholastic, Parmenidean senses and the contemporary-logical, meta-linguistic senses.⁹¹

– Scholastic and Parmenidean senses of 'ontology'

In most traditional scholastic senses, ontology is a branch of metaphysics concerned with being per se. The word 'ontology' was popularized by Christian Wolff (d. 1754), who identified ontology with "general metaphysics"; this includes what is called "general matters" (*al-umūr al-āmma*) in the terminology of Islamaic philosophers, e.g., that of Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī (d. 1289/1873).⁹² In the main, ontology in a scholastic, Parmenidean sense considers abstract, fixed categories and forms of being, posited and grasped by rational thought; the truths pertaining to these abstract categories and forms are intuited as true first principles (e.g., Aristotle) or else posited as hypotheses (e.g., Plato). Logical consequences of the first principles or hypotheses are then deduced by discursive thought. Such usages of 'ontology' may be called Parmenidean, after the pre-Socratic Parmenides, arguably the father of ontology with respect to this family of senses.

– Contemporary-logical and meta-linguistic senses of 'ontology'

In contemporary-logical senses, given a philosophical theory, its associated ontology involves the universe of discourse constituted by those objects,

case that this essay in any way suggests, that they reach identical final conclusions or share the same metaphysical doctrine; far from it. See also fn. 118.

90 For a succinct summary of this distinction, see John Corcoran and Idris Samawi Hamid, "Meta-language, object-language," *Bulletin of Symbolic Logic* 19 31 (2013), 232–233.

91 In contemporary Western philosophy, there is third family of usages of 'ontology' that may be traced back to Heidegger, in the context of what he calls, "fundamental ontology." But this is irrelevant to our concerns here.

92 Although remarkably similar terms, Sabzawārī's (and earlier Islamaic philosophers') use of 'general matters' (*al-umūr al-āmma*) is significantly more restrictive than Wolff's 'general metaphysics': It does not include the categories substance and accident. In the course of discussing Sabzawārī or others who use '*al-umūr al-āmma*', however, ontology must include both general matters as well as substance and accident. After all, the latter categories are fundamental to ontology in any appropriate scholastic or Aristotelian sense. Thus it is a mistake (and, unfortunately, a common one) to translate '*al-umūr al-āmma*' by 'ontology'.

properties, and internal mappings whose existence is in some sense necessary for propositions expressed in that theory to be true. The proponent of a given theory may or may not be aware of the ontology entailed by that theory; the proponent of that theory may not even be committed to the existence of the objects in the entailed universe of discourse. The sentences used to express a given philosophical theory belong to the object-language of that theory; in general, the sentences used in the effort to determine the ontology of a given theory belong to a meta-language with respect to that theory. That is, in a meta-language with respect to a given theory, one attempts to determine the ontology expressed by sentences in the object-language of that theory.⁹³

Strictly speaking, Shaykh Aḥmad does *not* practice ontology in the scholastic, Parmenidean sense.⁹⁴ Parmenides stands in opposition to his contemporary Heraclitus, who did not take being per se (as opposed to becoming) as the sole locus of reality. The way of the Shaykh, we shall see, is closer in spirit to the dialectical approach of Heraclitus than to the ontological approach of Parmenides, whose focus on being per se dominates the entire history of Western metaphysics, including Islamaic philosophy.

At the same time one might ask: What kinds of objects have to exist as a necessary condition for the propositions expressed in Shaykh Aḥmad's dialectical metaphysics to be true? The answer to this question is not as straightforward as one might suppose. This is because the very notion "object" cannot be taken in isolation. The question is still trapped in the confines of abstract categories of being per se. Ontology in such a contemporary-logical sense involves the positing of a single universe of discourse per philosophical theory. Now one could force an answer to the question about the Shaykh's so-called "ontology". But that would be unnatural or "inadequate" (quoting Lawvere and Rosebrugh in the above epigraph). We could speak of "multiple ontologies" but that would be misleading and confusing. It is better to speak of *universes of discourse* or *categories* (plural) in dialectical cohesion. Shaykh Aḥmad is explicit:

93 This paragraph on ontology in the modern-logical sense was inspired in part by John Corcoran's review of K. Hodeston "Mathematical Representation: Playing a Role," *Philosophical Studies* 168 (2014): 769–782.

94 For convenience, in what follows we will speak elliptically of ontology in *the* scholastic (= Parmenidean) sense and of ontology in *the* contemporary-logical (= meta-linguistic) sense. 'The scholastic, Parmenidean sense' is short for 'any one of a family of related scholastic, Parmenidean senses.' 'The contemporary-logical sense' is short for 'any one of a family of related contemporary-logical senses.'

It has been established in Wisdom (*ḥikma*), through the inferential-indicator of Wisdom (*dalīl al-ḥikma*), that all of the motes of existence, of both the invisible and visible realms, including [what are traditionally classified as] substances and accidents, are [at once] correlational accidents and also correlational substances; meaning that a given substance is an accident in relation to its cause from which it has emanated; and that cause [in turn] is an accident with respect to its own cause, and so forth. Likewise we say that a given substance is a substance with respect to its accident, and that a given accident is a substance with respect to that which subsists through it.⁹⁵

To the traditional practitioner of ontology in the scholastic, Parmenidean sense, this is outrageous. In ontology the respective ranges of applicability of the concepts “substance” and “accident” are fixed. An Aristotelian substance is a locus of being in an absolute sense, not a relative one. However, Shaykh Aḥmad is saying that whether or not something appears as a substance or an accident depends on the perspective of some universe of discourse in which it functions. In one universe, a given thing may function as a substance; with respect to a higher universe, it functions as an accident. The mapping from the higher universe (locus of relative cause) to the lower universe (locus of relative effect) involves what the Shaykh calls emanation (*ṣudūr*). His specific technical term for this mapping is ‘*jiha*’ (aspect,⁹⁶ *functor*). In a single universe of discourse, in an absolute ontology in the contemporary-logical sense, what the Shaykh is doing appears odd. But when one switches to a conceptual system of multiple universes of discourse within a dialectical unity of development and sublation (*aufheben*), when we move from *absolute* ontology to *correlational* categories or universes of discourse in dialectical movement and cohesion, then one can see that what the Shaykh says makes perfect sense.

Ontology in the scholastic sense, as practiced in post-Avicennan Islamic philosophy, from Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī and Suhrawardī down to Mīr Dāmād and Mullā Ṣadrā, became preoccupied with dualisms and their solution via

95 JK2, vol. 2, pp. 293–294. Note that *dalīl al-ḥikma* (the inferential-indicator of Wisdom) involves, at once, the activity of the highest mode of cognitive intuition (*fuʿād*) in cohesion with a cogent discursive movement to an established conclusion. The structure and content of cogent discursion in the context of *dalīl al-ḥikma* needs further study: For an initial exploration, see I. S. Hamid, “A Foundation for Shīʿī Metaphysics,” 94–103. See also fn. 151.

96 The word ‘aspect’ here is being used in a somewhat outdated astronomical sense of ‘direction’.

reductionist abstractions.⁹⁷ The existence-essence controversy that dominated later Illuminationist and Peripatetic debates is a case in point: “Existence” (*wujūd*) is a concept of being; “essence” (*māhiyya*) is a concept of being. These two concepts are incommensurate with each other: Being cannot be an extension of both concepts because then each thing would be two things (i.e., two beings). This would lead to an indefinite regress; and so on. Therefore any real being is the extension of only one of them. However, the essentialist (such as Aristotle, Suhrawardī, or Mīr Dāmād) can only with great difficulty account for the genuine unity of the cosmos, if at all.⁹⁸ And the existentialist (such as Mullā Ṣadrā or Mullā ‘Alī Nūrī) can only with great difficulty account for genuine multiplicity, if at all.⁹⁹

A spirit common to (the legendary) Hermes, Lao-Tzu (Taoism), Heraclitus, Shaykh Aḥmad, Hegel, and Whitehead suggests a way out of these reductionist dead ends. The chasms and dualisms that are posited within the paradigm of ontology largely result from what Alfred North Whitehead calls the “fallacy of misplaced concreteness.” This fallacy occurs when the intellect abstracts from its experience of the world (or some significant subsystem of it) a set of concepts, and then identifies the external world with the extension of one or more of those concepts on the basis of abstract conceptual analysis. Often the concepts involve some apparent binary opposition or mutual incompatibility (such as mind versus body, spiritual versus material, or existence versus essence). In such a case one has to either pull an intellectual high-wire act to maintain both concepts (dualism), or else abandon one of the concepts and identify the entirety of reality (or some significant subsystem of it) with the extension of the other concept (reductionism). This is exactly the trap that Islamaic scholastic philosophy fell into:

I noticed many of the seekers penetrating deeply into the divine sciences, and supposing that they have penetrated deeply into the[ir] intended object (*ma’nā*)—but it is only a deep penetration into semantics (*alfāz*), nothing else ...¹⁰⁰

97 Cp. the crisis in later Western philosophy engendered by the Cartesian dualism of mind and body, which Whitehead pointed to as involving the *fallacy of misplaced concreteness*. See the next paragraph.

98 For a profound discussion of Aristotle’s struggle with this matter, see G. R. G. Mure, *Aristotle* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 176; pp. 182–183.

99 See, e.g., F. Rahman, *The Philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1975), pp. 37–38.

100 JK2, vol. 1, pp. 279–280.

The “semantics” being criticized here involves an analysis of conceptual forms via peripheral consciousness. Such analyses involve merely abstract thought that in no manner can demonstrate anything about the True (= *die Sache selbst*) or provide cognizance (*ma'rifa*).¹⁰¹ In the effort to overcome the fallacious dualisms and reductionisms entailed by traditional scholasticism, one must leave ontology behind and seek recourse to *objective logic*. The expression ‘objective logic’ is due to Hegel;¹⁰² a usage of this expression closely related to our own is due to the contemporary mathematician William Lawvere (a deep and critical student of Hegel’s dialectic). As a formal science, objective logic is a relatively new and highly abstract discipline, closely connected or identified with the branch of mathematics called category and topos theory, of which Lawvere is one of the seminal developers. Yet that formal development is inspired by an ancient idea, one that finds its roots in Hermeticism, Taoism, alchemy; and, most importantly for the purposes of Shaykh Aḥmad, in the teachings of the Qur’ān and the Ahlulbayt. It is not as though other philosophers or intellectuals never read or were not influenced by these two sources; the problem is that the cobwebs of Hellenic and Hellenistic thought, and related alien influences, kept getting in the way of the presuppositionless movement of consciousness:

The symbol of those who have taken comforters (*awlīyā'*) in lieu of God is that of the spider: It builds a house and moves into it. Yet the flimsiest of houses is indeed the spider’s house. If they could only know! (Q 29:41)

In this *āya* the Qur’ān observes two universes of discourse: the world of those who go outside the *walāya* (dynamic loving) of God, and the world of the spider. Two points of application are relevant here. First, in stepping outside the four-way system of categories and the presuppositionless objectivity required in order to seek truth by means of this framework, the *walāya* of God has now become mixed with alien absolute axioms and principles (“comforters in lieu of God”). The result is manifested in the dead-ends of the flimsy framework

101 See Section 4.1. Put another way: Thought restricted to hypothetical first principles conceived and manipulated through formal discursion is *abstract*. True *concrete* thought involves a mode of consciousness and experience that i) is inseparable from the True, i.e., *die Sache selbst*, and ii) moves in cohesion with the world through the True; cp. p. 93 f.

102 According to Hegel,

The objective logic thus takes the place rather of the former metaphysics which was supposed to be the scientific edifice of the world as constructed by thoughts alone. If we look at the final shape in the elaboration of this science, then it is ontology which objective logic most directly replaces in the first instance.

See G. W. F. Hegel, *The Science of Logic*, trans. George di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 20.

that is ontology.¹⁰³ Second, this *āya* provides an example of objective-logical prehending, of the movement of objective-logical consciousness between two universes of discourse.

But how does the mind or psycheprehend or grasp any necessary connection between the symbol (such as the spider's house) and the symbolized? From the perspective of ontology, this is pleasant enough to meditate upon, but in the final analysis is it not merely an analogy or metaphor, not a proof per se? The next *āya* addresses this:

And those are the symbols we propound to the people and no one *prehends* (*ʿaql*) them except the knowers (Q 29:41).

Here a verbal form of the gerund '*ʿaql*' is being used. As the terminology of doctrinal theology (*kalām*) and *falsafa* began to dominate the educated discourse of Muslim civilization, the original, dynamic meaning of this gerund was lost, and substituted with various Aristotelian and Neoplatonist-inspired abstractions that divorce intellectual activity and movement from process. For example, the Intellect becomes, in yet another ontological dead-end for our scholastic, Peripatetic, and Illuminationist philosophers, an absolutely simple (*basīṭ*) substance immune from process, even from creation.¹⁰⁴

However, based on the use of the gerund '*ʿaql*' in the Qurʾān and the *aḥādīth* of the Ahlulbayt, the primary philosophical use of this word for the Shaykh is to mention either a) a movement or activity of consciousness that constitutes a *faculty*—in which case '*ʿaql*' is synonymous with '*taʿaqqul*' and translated by 'prehending'; or b) an *organ of prehending* (*mashʿar*, literally, *locus of awareness*), the origin and source of a mode of cognitive experience that lies beyond the mind or psyche per se, and which constitutes that which actually *does* the movement or activity and *has* the faculty—in which case we translate '*ʿaql*' by 'nexal-consciousness' ('nexus' for short).¹⁰⁵ The movement performed by nexal-consciousness is constituted by prehending, i.e., grasping the binding

103 At the end of an extensive critique of a point in Peripatetic and Illuminationist ontology, the Shaykh concludes, "In sum, their "proofs" are flimsier than a spider's house." See JK2, vol. 3, p. 231.

104 See fn. 153. Note that active *nous* in the Aristotelian sense is concrete in that its activity is one with its object. But active *nous* in that sense is also abstract in that its activity is utterly bifurcated from process; see, e.g., *De Anima* 430^a20 ff.

The *āya* Q 29:41 is quoted by the Shaykh in many places, in contexts bearing on the current discussion; see, e.g., JK2, vol. 2, p. 130.

105 See JK2, vol. 3, pp. 583–584. There is also an objective-logical mapping between, on the one hand, i) the relationship of the Nexus of the Whole (*ʿaql al-kull*) to the whole macrocosm; and ii) the relationship of the particular nexus (*ʿaql juzʿiyy*) associated with a given

connection ('*uqla* [from "*aql*"]) between the symbol's universe of discourse, on the one hand, and that of the symbolized, on the other. According to the *āya*, only "the knowers" can exercise this objective logic correctly and cognize the cogency of its movement.¹⁰⁶ Put another way: The struggle to think objective logically, according to Shaykh Aḥmad, involves the cultivation of a cognitive intuition proper to an organ of prehending (*mash'ar*) higher than that of the mind or psyche (*ṣadr*, i.e., *nafs* in the Hellenistic sense), i.e., proper to the nexus ('*aql*') itself.¹⁰⁷

Even in the organ of prehending constituted by the mind or psyche (the locus of conceptual discursion), rules to specify the cogent movement of thought from one universe of discourse to another, to codify objective logic, were never developed by Aristotle or in the Aristotelian tradition, including the Avicennan and Illuminationist traditions. It is only in the last century that mathematicians have begun to codify a system of formal rules for objective logic with respect to the organ of prehending constituted by the mind per se. A brief exposition follows.

microcosm to that microcosm. Each particular nexus is a mode (*ra's*) of the Nexus of the Whole; see JK2, vol. 1, pp. 4–5.

Note that, following the usage of Shaykh Aḥmad, 'prehending' has a strict sense and a broad sense. In the strict sense, the one most often used by the Shaykh, prehending ('*aql*, *ta'aqqul*) is constituted by the activity of the second cognitive mode of experience, that of the nexus proper; each object of prehending constitutes a *ma'nā* in the strict sense. In the broad sense, the activity of each of the three modes of cognitive experience constitutes a kind of prehending; in this usage each object of prehending constitutes a *ma'nā* in the broad sense. Cp. pp. 92–93.

106 Entering the ranks of "the knowers" mentioned in the *āya* involves a phenomenological dialectic of praxis and prehending whose details lie beyond the scope of this chapter. It is analogous to Plato's dialectic of learning and knowing. In Aristotle, the dialectic is severed: Bifurcation occurs between learning and knowing, between practice and theory, and between praxis and prehending; see pp. 117–118. The author is currently completing a book project in which certain aspects of the phenomenology of consciousness and action are developed and examined in detail; see fn. 142.

107 The distinction that the Shaykh draws between *nafs* (in the sense of 'psyche' as opposed to that of 'ego') and '*aql*' is analogous to a distinction found in Plato and Aristotle: that between *dianoia* and *nous*. It is also analogous to a distinction found in Kant and Hegel: that between the Understanding (*Verstand*) and Reason (*Vernunft*). According to Kant, Reason, although a higher mode of grasping than the Understanding, cannot but subserve sense perception. That is, Reason for Kant constitutes a mode of *abstract*, even *subjective*, thought and does not intuit any real object (*ma'nā*, what Kant called *noumenon*). For Shaykh Aḥmad, by contrast (as well as for Hegel, albeit with different terminology and philosophical context), nexal-consciousness (Reason for Hegel) constitutes a mode of *concrete*, *objective*, thought that intuits the real object (*ma'nā*) that grounds the appearance of that object. But see fns. 76 and 77.

In one's thought and meditation on some significant subsystem of the world (i.e., fact) around or within one's self, one seeks to mirror this subsystem in a system of concepts that will accurately reflect or *shadow* the reality of the subsystem. This system or class of concepts (of objects, properties, or processes) will then, for a given set of investigators, constitute a mutually agreed-upon *category* (= universe of discourse). To the degree that one is engaged in a genuine struggle to reflect this subsystem, the observer is engaged in *objective* thought. Once a system of concepts is defined, one can identify or express initial propositions (= *axioms*) in this universe of discourse. The rules of thought governing the effort of deduction from the axioms are *subjective* in the sense that thought is now restricted to movement within a single universe of discourse or category. Even if the axioms are false it does not affect the rules governing deduction. Yes, in order for the deduction to constitute a proof of some proposition of interest, the premises must all be true as well as known to be true. But the chain of reasoning involved in establishing a relation of implication between the premises and the conclusion does *not* depend on the propositional truth of the premises. For these reasons Lawvere calls deductive logic *subjective logic*.

Let us extend this idea. Operating strictly within a given category or universe of discourse constitutes a subjective endeavor. There are many such universes; furthermore, each discipline of human investigation may contain within it many other categories as well. The movement of thought from one category to another is analogous to the movement of the thought of the investigator in one's effort to shadow the world (or a subsystem of it). Speaking from a cosmological perspective, the investigator himself is a universe, a microcosm seeking to reflect within himself the macrocosm, the world at first appearance external to his subjective self. From this point of view, one can view objectivity as involving stepping outside a given universe of discourse of interest and into another, accompanied by the effort to translate that other universe into the given one and vice versa. This could be the effort to translate the fact that is the macrocosm (or a significant subsystem of it) into a system of concepts and objects of thought. But it can also involve the movement of thought from one category into another and back. The study of the cogent movement of thought in the effort to translate or transform the concepts of objects and mappings of one category or universe of discourse into those of another, with a view to i) critique and clarify the original concepts, and ii) discover new concepts within one or the other of those universes, constitutes the science of objective logic as developed in contemporary mathematics and logic.

A terminological note. With respect to an object language meant to subserve some degree of peripheral (= conceptual) consciousness: The word 'fact' (with lower-case 'f') is used in a broad sense to denote the world or any subsystem

of the world; this is close in meaning to the Arabic *'wāqī'*. The opposite of fact is fiction. Fact and fiction contrast with concept: The word 'concept' is used to denote or name the form of conceptual thought that is grasped by the mind per se. Given an expression or linguistic symbol (word, name, phrase or sentence): It *expresses* its sense (viz., the conceptual entity grasped by the mind) and *denotes* its denotation (e.g., the fact that is being *named*). A special kind of conceptual entity is the proposition, the proper bearer of the properties true and false (in narrow senses of 'true' and of 'false' common to formal logic and correspondence theories of truth). The expression 'true proposition' denotes what in Islamaic philosophy is called *naḥs al-amr* (heart of the matter, philosophical truth), i.e., the objective referent of any knowledge-producing discursive judgment.

With this in mind, mention should be made of one of the key discoveries of contemporary logic. In the words of Lawvere and Rosebrugh:

The long chains of correct reasonings and calculations of which subjective logic is justly proud are only possible within a precisely defined universe of discourse, as has long been recognized.¹⁰⁸

Given a declarative sentence, it expresses a true proposition or a false proposition with respect to a specified universe of discourse. But there is a third possibility. In the course of formulating and using a sentence to express a conceptual thought, if one predicates a property belonging to one universe of discourse of an object belonging to another, one runs the strong risk of making a *category mistake*.¹⁰⁹ That which is expressed by a sentence involving a category mistake is neither true nor false; rather, the object of conceptual thought it expresses is incoherent. In traditional Muslim intellectual thought, the Arabic adjective that comes closest to expressing the idea of incoherence is, perhaps, *'muḥmal'* (unintelligible).

Shaykh Aḥmad was keenly aware of the spirit behind the above points. One of his main criticisms of the *falāsafa* is that they consistently and persistently make category mistakes.¹¹⁰ He could see this clearly because in his dialectics he always operated in a framework of multiple (yet objectively cohesive)

108 F. William Lawvere and Robert Rosebrugh. *Sets for Mathematics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 239.

109 For example: The statement, "The number two is blue", involves a category mistake; physical color cannot be predicated of non-physical numbers. The statement, "The numeral two is blue", does not involve a category mistake; physical color can be predicated of physical numerals.

110 There are at least two words used by Shaykh Aḥmad to mention a category (= universe of discourse): *'rutba'* and, less often *'ṣuq'*. He often, but not exclusively, uses the latter word

universes of discourse. His opponents could not grasp his point, in part because they operated within a single universe of discourse in the context of ontology in the scholastic sense.¹¹¹ And a single universe of discourse constitutes a subjective box, in the sense of 'subjective' explained above.

Given two categories or universes of discourse, or within a single universe: Rather than speaking of *conceptual distinctions* between opposites, it is often more appropriate to speak of *dialectical contrasts*. That is, the question of how one category is objectively mirrored or transformed into another category involves a struggle with and discovery of dialectical contrasts between the two categories. This dialectical contrast will more precisely reflect or shadow the general movement of the subsystem of the world that is being investigated. Overemphasis on rigid conceptual distinctions in scholastic ontology incurs the risk of running afoul of the fallacy of misplaced concreteness discussed earlier. In particular: The natural cohesion of the continuous and the discrete (or the existential and the essential) in macrocosmic and microcosmic *fact* is cut asunder in a purely *ontological conceptual analysis* of fact.

A symbol of this point may be observed in the North Pole and South Pole of a magnet: From a conceptual point of view these are two distinct, discrete things. But there is no such discrete thing as a North Pole or a South Pole. Rather, what we have are two modal extremes of a unified and continuous electromagnetic field. Borrowing from a Hegelian object-language of dialectics, we say that the North Pole and South Pole each constitutes a *moment* of the electromagnetic field. A moment of any fact is a modality of that fact that is inseparable from the whole fact. Shaykh Aḥmad has precise terms that he often uses to make exactly this point, e.g., '*musāwīq*' (coterminous, dialectically reciprocal or inseparable). The notion of the movement of consciousness and reality between pairs of coterminous contrary opposites (*diddayn*)—as it occurs *between* universes of discourse as well as *within* any one of them—constitutes one of Shaykh Aḥmad's most ubiquitous themes.¹¹²

Let us recall a matter (introduced in Section 4.1) that must be taken into consideration for what follows. Conceptual thought is specific to the organ of prehending (*mash'ar*) that is constituted by what is normally called the mind,

in the context of pointing out a category mistake. He often, but not exclusively, uses the former word to mention a *concrete* category or *topos*. See below, p. 110 ff.

111 Note that Aristotle did not, explicitly at any rate, establish a single-universe-of-discourse ontology. Rather, his system was one of a hierarchy of universes of discourse, each of which he called a *genus*. The first philosopher in the Aristotelian tradition to make explicit a conception of ontology as a distinct demonstrative science with a single universe of discourse embracing all being was Ibn Sīnā (inspired by an analysis of Fārābī).

112 See *Sharḥ al-Fawā'id al-ḥikmīyya*, e.g., observations 3, 7, and 11.

psyche, or soul (*nafs*). Thought in this context is a special case of something more general, viz, *consciousness*. So in the preceding paragraphs where we spoke of the movement of *thought*, we may speak more generally of the movement of *consciousness*. Rephrasing our earlier discussion: According to Shaykh Aḥmad there is a scale of cognitive experience and praxial consciousness, consisting of three organs of prehending relevant to inference in general: a) peripheral consciousness (= psyche/periphery, *nafs/ṣadr*), the organ of conceptual learning (*ta'allum*) and knowing (*'ilm*); b) central consciousness (= nexus/center, *'aql/qalb*),¹¹³ the organ of objectual (*ma'nawī*) prehending (*ta'aqqul*) and objective certainty (*yaqīn*); and c) singular consciousness (= blaze-flux, *fu'ād*), the organ of *true* philosophical cognizance (*ma'rifa*).¹¹⁴

One of the most important applications of the Shaykh's dialectical method is to the traditional problem of existence and essence. The concept and fact of existence (= being *qua for-other-than-itself*) is always relative to a specific category. Essence (= becoming *qua for-itself*) is always relative to a specific category. Viewed from a higher category, a moment of being *qua for-other-than-itself* will constitute becoming *qua for-itself*. Viewed from a lower category, a moment of becoming *qua for-itself* will constitute being *qua for-other-than-itself*. In Shaykh Aḥmad's cosmological hierarchy of universes, essence and existence are always correlational, form a coterminous (*musāwīq*) pair of contrary opposites, and constitute a dialectical process of development:

Know furthermore that the accidentality (*'araḍiyya*) of each thing we have mentioned is the aspect (*jiha*) of its need for its contrary (*ḍidd*). So the accidentality of existence is the aspect of its need, with respect to its appearance (*ẓuhūr*), of essence. The accidentality of essence is the aspect of its need, with respect to its realization (*taḥaqquq*), of existence. Due to this the accidentality of each one follows the entityness (*dhātīyya*) of the other.¹¹⁵

113 There are two phenomenological senses of '*qalb*'. In the context of an organ of pure prehending, the word '*qalb*' is generally used synonymously with '*'aql*'; see, e.g., JK2, vol. 2, pp. 311–313. In the context of an organ that mediates both nexal consciousness and egoistic anti-consciousness (*jahl*), then '*qalb*' is used to mention the centre (*qalb*)—though not the primordial onset—of existential consciousness (*wijdān*, cp. fn. 85); see, e.g., JK2, vol. 1, pp. 551–552. Further elaboration belongs to a phenomenology of consciousness and action that is beyond our current scope; see fn. 106.

114 In previous research, we translated '*fu'ād*' by 'heart-flux'. See, e.g., I. S. Hamid, "A Foundation for Shī'ī Metaphysics," 83–86 and elsewhere. It is our intention to update this discussion in future publications.

115 JK2, vol. 1, p. 591. Thus the point made by Aristotle in *The Parts of Animals* (640a 18, and elsewhere in the corpus), viz., "Becoming is for the sake of substance, not substance for

Furthermore, when concrete presuppositionless meditation considers the appearance and reality of a given fact, that fact is seen to manifest itself to conceptual thought via its structure. Yet nexal-consciousness (*ʿaql*) actually intuitively (= prehends) the reality or content of that which lies behind the structure of that fact qua real object (*maʿnā*). The appearance (*ẓuhūr*) and structure (*ṣūra*) of a given fact owe their realization to the “material” reality (*ḥaqīqa māddiyya*, also *maʿnā*) of the fact which remains invisible to consciousness until it appears via that structure. We thus have another dialectical contrast, that of realization and appearance—mentioned explicitly by Shaykh Aḥmad in the quote above. One may speak of this as the *dialectical unity of reality and appearance*.

The spirit of the above observation flows from the following comprehensive guiding principle enunciated by Imām Jaʿfar al-Šādiq; it is arguably the most important single inspiration for the cosmological framework of Shaykh Aḥmad:

Servitude [yielding and receptivity, mirror, diversity, essence, *yin*, appearance, microcosm, subjectivity] is a jewel whose ultimate reality is lordship [acting and activity, light, unity, existence, *yang*, reality, macrocosm, objectivity]. So what is lost in servitude is found in lordship; what is hidden in lordship is attained in servitude.¹¹⁶

the sake of becoming”, is no longer tenable as an absolute principle. See G. R. G. Mure, *Aristotle* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 7.

The gerund *ʿaḥḥaqquq*, translated here by ‘realization’, more precisely means “becoming true”, where ‘true’ is being used in a sense expressing something like *“aletheia”* in Plato’s sense or *“Wahrheit”* in Hegel’s sense. However, ‘truth’ in this sense does *not* express *“energeia”* (“actuality”) in Aristotle’s sense. In contradistinction to Aristotle and his followers (such as Plotinus and the Islamic Illuminationists), for Shaykh Aḥmad the development of a concrete fact towards the True, constituted by the dialectical process of appearance and realization, of truth manifesting in appearance and of appearance becoming truth, is everlasting: “[On the road] to My Love there is no final goal and no end”; see JK2, vol. 1, pp. 498–499. This issue marks a major point of difference between Shaykh Aḥmad and Mullā Šadrā. For the Mullā, substantial motion *ends* in conjunction (*ittiṣāl*) with the Active (and Divine) Intellect which, as pure *energeia*, is not in any way subject to substantial motion (*ḥaraka jawhariyya*); see, e.g., JK2, vol. 3, p. 667. For Shaykh Aḥmad even the Active (but contingent (*mumkin*) and *not*-Divine) Intellect is in process; cp. fn. 153.

116 This quote is repeated throughout the works of the Shaykh. Its first occurrence in *Sharḥ al-Fawāʿid* is found in JK2, vol. 1, p. 331. Its source is *Miṣbāḥ al-Sharīʿa*, an early collection of lectures attributed to Imām Šādiq. The identity of the compiler is disputed. Shaykh Aḥmad often restates this meta-principle in an alternate form; see fn. 149.

This can provisionally be called the *fundamental dialectical (meta-)principle*. The implications of this meta-principle for the philosophy of Shaykh Aḥmad and for dialectics in general are beyond the scope of this chapter. The expressions in square brackets hint at its broad range of application.

In the spirit of this meta-principle, Shaykh Aḥmad now makes one of his most ingenious moves: Matter (= content, *mādda*) is identical to existence; form (= structure) is identical to essence. The second half of this sentence is not controversial in the history of ontology in the Parmenidean sense; the first half is very much so. Identifying form (*ṣūra*) with essence is non-controversial because this is basically what Aristotle did; his theory of substance or locus of being builds on the idea that what constitutes a reality is its essential structure which, following Plato, is called *form*. The essence (*māhiya*) is just that essential form or structure from the perspective of the question of definition ("What is it?").

The most fundamental guiding principle of Platonic and Aristotelian metaphysical thinking involves the identification of the *real* (whose locus is identified with being per se) with the *intelligible*. This meta-principle guides the entire spectrum of ontological speculation from Platonism through Peripateticism, Neoplatonism, Classical Islamic philosophy, and Illuminism up to the time of Shaykh Aḥmad. The main reason that Plato and Aristotle identify being with essential form, not matter, is that matter per se is not, according to them, capable of being grasped by discursive or intelligent thought. Allegedly neither real nor intelligible, matter (according to Aristotle) is only *potentially* real.

Traditional *falsafa* follows this principle *uncritically*. In *falsafa*, following Plato and Aristotle, intelligibility is a faculty of the psyche, i.e., soul (*nafs*) or mind. In the Shaykh's phenomenology of the three *organa* of prehending (*mashā'ir*, s. *mash'ar*), the faculty of nexus (*'aql*), higher than that of the *nafs*, is capable of grasping the specific material reality (*ḥaqīqa māddiyya*) that constitutes a given fact (i.e., its *ma'nā*).¹¹⁷ This works in Shaykh Aḥmad's system, in part, because the matter of a given fact, its being qua for-other-than-itself, in a higher category constitutes a mode of becoming qua for-itself with an associated structure. Thus it can be intuited objective-logically. Furthermore, one finds that, in concept, matter qua matter carries many of the characteristics of existence per se: unity, being unconditioned, and so forth. One of Mullā Ṣadrā's

117 See fn. 107. For the identification of *ma'nā* with *ḥaqīqa māddiyya*, see JK2, vol. 1, p. 283. Note that, in the object language of the Shaykh, 'material' does not mean "physical"; matter qua being-for-other-than-itself has as many states as there are degrees of contingent (*mumkin*) reality.

most important contributions to metaphysics lies, not so much in the doctrine that existence is principial (*aṣīl*) whereas essence is not, but in establishing the fact that the concept “existence” has an extension in external reality. Furthermore, existence is an *active* principle. However, our Mullā could not identify existence with matter because, following his Aristotelian presuppositions, the latter is a purely potential (and hence passive) principle.

Shaykh Aḥmad takes the next step. According to his *inverse* and *dialectical hylomorphism*¹¹⁸ in the relationship between matter and form in a relative entity or substance, *matter*, and not *form*, is the active and acting principle of *being* (qua for-other-than-itself) and *reality*. Going further, the relationship between matter and form is no longer to be understood within a static ontology but within a dynamic dialectics. Form is no longer the active or actualizing principle in a substance, neither is form now merely passive or potential: Form is the receptive and responding principle of *becoming* (qua for-itself) and *appearance*. The identity of matter with existence is now a philosophically viable position.

Another result of the fundamental dialectical principle is that a given entity can only be defined (“What is it?”) in terms of an *intra*-cohesive structure internal to that entity as well as an *inter*-cohesive structure through which it relates to other entities; no entity stands alone or through itself. For each given entity (*dhāt*) Shaykh Aḥmad posits six *entitative* (*dhātiyy*) properties:¹¹⁹ quantum and quality, space and time, and, finally, *topos* (*rutba*) and aspect or functor (*jīha*).¹²⁰ Each entity, whether microcosmic (such as a human being) or macrocosmic (such as a larger universe of entities and mappings between them), constitutes a *concrete topos* (i.e., the factual extension of a *closed*)¹²¹ conceptual category or universe of discourse) with an associated objective and directed mapping (= functor) onto another concrete topos. An entity or substance

118 See, e.g., JK2, vol. 3, pp. 209–213. The expression ‘dialectical hylomorphism’ is an accurate and convenient name for Shaykh Aḥmad’s general metaphysical position. In comparison: Philosophical positions developed via a dialectic paradigm of metaphysical meditation and praxis include original Taoism (Lao-Tzu), objective idealism (Hegel), dialectical materialism (Marx), and dialectical hylomorphism (Shaykh Aḥmad). See also fn. 89.

119 The adjective ‘entitative’ is a back-formation from ‘entity’.

120 See JK2, vol. 1, p. 449 ff. A quantum (*kamm*) is a “substantial amount” (*qadar jawhariyy*) of matter unique to a specific entity (here ‘substantial’ is a back-formation from ‘substance’ in the metaphysical sense). Quantum in this sense is analogous to the “monad” of Leibniz or the “actual entity” of Whitehead. The words ‘topos’ and ‘functor’ are used as technical terms in formal objective logic, i.e., mathematical category and topos theory.

121 *Closed*: Informally, closure with respect to a category captures the idea that no objects or arrows (= mappings) that do not fit *naturally* in the category are included; and none that fits naturally is excluded.

cannot be truly defined without taking its characteristic higher and lower objective mappings or functors into account.

The ultimate purpose of dialectical metaphysics and objective logic is the cognizance (*maʿrifa*) of God the True and of the world through that cognizance of the True.¹²² At each stage in the dialectical ascent of objective logic, the nexus intuits the matter behind the form of the fact that is being meditated upon in its relationship with some other fact. At each stage of the vertical movement, within each topos (*rutba*) one encounters contrary opposites in dialectical contrast. What is intuited as matter is found to still manifest itself with a dialectical structure of continuity and discreteness, of existence and essence, of being and becoming, of determination and choice, of space and time, and so forth. But with persistent application of cosmological meditation on the objective “horizons” (*āfāq*, i.e., macrocosms, large scale universes of discourse) and on the subjective “egos” or “selves” (*anfus*, i.e., microcosms, small scale universes of discourse), via the prehending of the nexus (*ʿaql*) and in concert with persistent praxis, eventually the organ of prehending that is the blaze-flux (*fuʿād*) opens and the goal that is the cognizance (*maʿrifa*) of God is achieved. This is the true starting point of the science of Wisdom.

Here one enters a singular concrete topos, corresponding to a special universe of discourse. Every dialectical contrast vanishes, and every attribute of perfection stands in a dialectical unity (*coincidentia oppositorum*) with, not its *contrary* opposite, but rather its *contradictory* opposite. God is Far in His Not-Farness and Not-Far in His Farness; God is Near in His Not-Nearness and Not-Near in his Nearness. This phenomenological *topos of cognizance* (= the phenomenological True, *die Sache selbst*) constitutes, at once, the reality of one’s self-qua-appearance and the appearance of God-qua-Reality. When one steps out of the topos of cognizance and looks back at it, one sees that this very act of cognizing God through the blaze-flux leaves, via the mediation of the nexus, a very precise shadow (*ẓill*) on the mind as the grasp of objective propositional truth (*nafs al-amr*): Between God and creation there is no continuity; between God and creation there is no discontinuity.¹²³ This corresponds to two things: the way that God describes Himself literally in the Qurʾān and the *aḥādīth* of the Ahlulbayt; and to the way that God describes Himself cosmologically and phenomenologically, via the topos of cognizance, to the dialectical unity of reality and appearance that constitutes the servant. In the topos of cognizance every distinction and dialectical contrast in the world is phenomenologically *bracketed*. Then one immediately cognizes that

¹²² See JK2, vol. 1, p. 284, ll. 2–5; p. 287 *et passim*. See also fn. 76.

¹²³ E.g., JK2, vol. 1, pp. 161–162.

what is the case for the phenomenological True is the case for God the True. And what is not the case for the phenomenological True—qua phenomenological—is not the case for God the True.

The concept “transcendence” does not extend to God (i.e., extension of concept) in propositional truth (*naḥs al-amr*): Shaykh Aḥmad is no Ismāʿīlī. The concept “immanence” does not extend to God in the *naḥs al-amr*: Shaykh Aḥmad is no Ṣūfī. Even the concept “analogical gradation” (i.e., “*tashkīk*”) does not extend to God: The Shaykh is no traditional Ishrāqī. Furthermore, based upon an ingenious sublation of ontological terminology, both the univocity (*ishtirāk maʿnawī*) of ‘existence’ and its equivocality (*ishtirāk lafẓī*) with respect to God are negated (space does not allow us to follow his argumentation here).

4.3 *The Followers of Mullā Ṣadrā and the Philosophy of Shaykh Aḥmad*

O examiner into this discourse of mine! Beware of saying, “This is something that not one of the scholars nor any of the philosophers has said.” For if you are following them dogmatically then there is nothing for us to discuss with you. Otherwise, genuinely seek to understand and comprehend; you will be delivered. And do not belie that of which you have no knowledge, even before its hermeneutic has reached you.

*Sharḥ al-Mashāʾir*¹²⁴

In his *Annotations on Sharḥ al-Fawāʾid*,¹²⁵ Mullā ʿAlī Nūrī takes issue with the Shaykh’s rejection of *tashkīk* and of the univocity (*ishtirāk maʿnawī*) of “existence”. He first attempts an argumentation from authority, which he knows proves nothing. He then tries to rescue *tashkīk* via an appeal to an alleged distinction between analogical gradation in the general sense (*tashkīk ʿamm*) and analogical gradation in the specific sense (*tashkīk khāṣṣ*). He gives the reader little indication as to the exact propositional content of *tashkīk khāṣṣ*; he says only, in effect, “It’s very difficult”. But the entire point of theoretical *falsafa*, from the time of al-Kindī onwards, is to achieve and to express conceptual knowledge of propositional truth (*naḥs al-amr*) to the best of human ability. Mullā ʿAlī’s appeal to expressions such as ‘*tashkīk khāṣṣ*’ is just as vacuous as Mullā Ṣadrā’s appeal to locutions such as ‘*alā naḥwin ashraf*’ (in a more noble way) to take the panentheist, or even pantheist, sting out of some of his more daring propositions. When we read Mullā ʿAlī’s annotations, we find him repeatedly

124 JK2, vol. 3, p. 133. The last sentence of this epitaph is adapted from Q 10:39.

125 A manuscript of this work is available in the Marʿashī Collection in Qom (MS Marʿashī 5653).

falling back on what amounts to claims of higher meanings that cannot be articulated or established in a clear propositional form (*nafs al-amr*). But that is fundamentally un-philosophical.¹²⁶

Shaykh Aḥmad elsewhere acknowledges that statements made by Mullā Ṣadrā and his followers such as, “The simple reality is, in its simplicity, all matters” (*basīṭ al-ḥaqīqa kull al-umūr*), may have some interpretation that corresponds to the philosophical *nafs al-amr*. “But if the [inward] hermeneutic of the text is correct then the expression is void. And if we take it on its outward meaning then it is void both outwardly and inwardly.”¹²⁷ The way the concept of *tashkīk* is posed in Mullā Ṣadrā’s existential version of Illuminationism with respect to God involves a category mistake. The topos of cognizance cannot be grasped by either continuity or discontinuity.

The attempt by Mullā ‘Alī Nūrī to escape Shaykh Aḥmad’s criticism of *tashkīk* in its single-universe-of-discourse-ontology version fails. When God is included in a concrete topos of *tashkīk*, then the conceptual point in the universe of *nafs al-amr* where the Names of God express one identical concept can be approached *continuously* as an asymptotic limit, although never actually reached. If it could be reached, the entire point of *tashkīk* would be vitiated and we would be back to explicit anthropomorphism or pantheism. Only in the concrete topos of cognizance does the simultaneous negation of both continuity and discontinuity, of both transcendence and immanence, take place. *Tashkīk* can only approach this topos in a one-sided manner: It always leans to one side of the opposition between continuity and discontinuity, viz., continuity. In the topos of cognizance that is the True, *singularity* results: Object, property, and mapping (*jīha*) are identical in every respect and every way. There is no other mapping or functor from or onto this single (*aḥad*), solitary singularity (*ṣamad*): “It begets not, nor is it begotten” (Q 112:3). And the conceptual, propositional truth of these points is grasped and known via the shadow left by the blaze-flux on the mind.

Towards the end of his notes, Mullā ‘Alī Nūrī takes the Shaykh to task for affirming contradiction in the *nafs al-amr* with respect to God. Joining together contradictory opposites cannot be conceptualized, let alone realized, he alleges (echoing traditional Aristotelian logic). Mullā ‘Alī’s mistake lies in the fact that he was not aware of the notion of a universe of discourse; his system

126 Then, when Shaykh Aḥmad solves a thorny problem by an application of logic that steps outside the straitjacket of only-one-universe-of-discourse ontology, Mullā ‘Alī Nūrī cries foul and (amazingly) accuses the Shaykh of sophistry!

127 JK2, vol. 2, p. 595. Elsewhere, the Shaykh says that this statement is incoherent (*muhmal*); see p. 105 and JK2, vol. 2, p. 449 ff.

of *tashkīk* constitutes a rigid one-universe-of-discourse ontology. There are a couple of points to be made.

First, for the purposes of *nafs al-amr* a special universe of discourse is needed that is a shadow and symbol of the concrete topos of cognizance. Note that contradiction cannot be affirmed in the distinctions of conceptual understanding in some universes of discourse, but they can be affirmed, if not conceptualized, in other categories. For example, in a mathematical topos fundamentally characterized by continuity as opposed to discreteness, the law of the excluded middle does not hold.¹²⁸ Furthermore, there are also universes of discourse (in the context of formal systems of logic) where it is permissible that some contradictions be true. In any conceptual topos that is a shadow of the concrete topos of cognizance, certain contradictions are true. As for the impossibility of conceptualization of contradiction in such a topos, God qua God cannot be conceptualized by the mind so that difficulty is moot: The impossibility of conceptualization in a symbolic, relatively abstract, topos exactly shadows the phenomenology of contradiction in the primordial concrete topos cognized by the blaze-flux.

Second, one must remember that Shaykh Aḥmad is operating in complete awareness and application of the universe-of-discourse framework. The chains of implication of a given proposition remain within the universe of discourse, as previously discussed. Given a contradiction, it logically implies every other proposition within its universe of discourse, *not absolutely*. Within the universe of natural numbers: Given the contradiction “Two is even and it is not the case that two is even”, every proposition in that universe is one of its implications. Of those implications, an infinite number of them are false; therefore that contradiction is also false.¹²⁹ But the contradiction “Two is even and it is not the case that two is even” does not *logically* imply, e.g., the proposition “Leaves are green”. To suggest that the former does logically imply the latter is to commit a category mistake.¹³⁰

¹²⁸ A standard way of expressing the law of excluded middle is as follows: Every proposition *p* is either true or false. In the universe of discourse of natural numbers, the proposition “Two is even” is either true or false. Put another way, given a proposition, it has one of two truth-values: true or false. However, in some toposes there are more than two truth-values. See, e.g., John Bell., *A Primer of Infinitesimal Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 5–7, 102–105.

¹²⁹ Rule of deductive logic: Every proposition that implies a false proposition is false.

¹³⁰ Objections may be raised to the last statement of this paragraph. For example, what is the metaphysical status of universes of discourse? Are they objective or merely subjectively posited? If merely subjectively posited, then can not one simply expand the universe of discourse to include other domains so that, without falling into incoherence, a given contradiction implies every proposition in the larger universe? One answer

Now the situation in that single, singular, and symbolic universe of discourse which corresponds to the topos of cognizance is special. As mentioned above, there is a mapping from the phenomenological, concrete topos of cognizance onto that category of conceptual thought within which we can express true propositions about God qua God. And each true proposition about God qua God is either a tautology¹³¹ or a contradiction within the category. Given a contradiction in this singular universe of discourse, such as “God is Near and it is not the case that God is Near”, it also implies an infinite number of propositions. But none of these implications lie outside the universe of discourse that is a shadow of the concrete topos of cognizance. Indeed, in the unique category corresponding to the topos of cognizance, every contradiction is also a tautology, and every tautology is true. For in the topos of cognizance God is characterized by no-continuity and by no-discontinuity. Mullā ‘Alī Nūrī objects: Allowing contradictions to be predicated of God entails the negative consequence that God is, at once, a necessary and a contingent being. But the concept of contingency does not belong to the symbolic universe of discourse (*ṣuqʿ*) that corresponds to the concrete topos of cognizance; therefore it is not the contradictory opposite of necessity. Mullā ‘Alī thus makes another category mistake!

Over the course of his annotations, Mullā ‘Alī Nūrī veers from extreme praise of Shaykh Aḥmad to charges of sophistry and back again. His notes illustrate an often cursory, even superficial, reading of the Shaykh’s work in philosophy on the part of the Mullā and his students. Sabzawārī restricted himself to some obscure notes on Shaykh Aḥmad’s introduction to *Sharḥ Risālat al-‘ilm*.¹³² Mullā Ismā‘īl Iṣfahānī¹³³ (d. ca. 1239/1823–24) reaches only some five out of

involves the position that universes of discourse do have objective import. For example, Shaykh Aḥmad explains that there is no *factual* continuity or discontinuity that spans both Contingency (*ḥudūth*) and Necessity (*wujūb*); hence there can be no *concrete* conceptual thought of a *true* universe of discourse, in appropriate senses of ‘concrete’ and ‘true’, which encompasses both concepts “contingency” and “necessity”. The traditional scholastic method of semantic analysis is upended: Objective-logical thought constitutes a concrete shadow (*ẓill*) of the nature and flow of the domain of reality that it is about. Universes of discourse and the conceptual entities which constitute them are not *subjectively* and *abstractly*, but *objectively* and *concretely*, posited. This is in accordance with the fundamental dialectical principle; see also Shaykh Aḥmad’s alternative formulation of this meta-principle, quoted in fn. 149. This discussion deserves further critical refinement that is beyond our current scope.

131 See I. S. Hamid, “A Foundation for Shī‘ī Metaphysics,” 78.

132 Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī, *Rasā'il-i Ḥakīm Sabzavārī*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (Tehran: Shirkat-i Chāp u Intishārāt-i Uswa, 1376 Sh./1996–97), pp. 579–601.

133 Mullā Ismā‘īl Iṣfahānī, *Sharḥ al-Ḥikma al-‘arshiyya*, ed. Muḥammad Mas‘ūd Khudāwardī (Tehran: Mu‘assasa-yi Pazhūhishī-i Ḥikmat u Falsafā-yi Irān, 1391 Sh./2012).

127 pages of *al-Hikma al-'arshiyya*, and only 70 out of 840 pages of *Sharḥ al-Hikma al-'arshiyya*.¹³⁴ Shaykh Aḥmad himself responded to many of the criticisms and misunderstandings but, as Corbin points out, “no one has paid any attention”.¹³⁵ Mullā Muḥammad Ja'far Lāhijānī, author of his own commentary on *al-Mashā'ir*,¹³⁶ shows signs that he made some effort to understand Shaykh Aḥmad with limited success. Most of the comments where he mentions the Shaykh seek to defend Mullā Ṣadrā from criticism, although he occasionally approves of Shaykh Aḥmad's interpretation. On the other hand, and by his own admission, he hardly delves into or questions any of the philosophical positions taken by the Shaykh or the details of his philosophical system as expressed in the latter's commentary. The reason for this, Lāhijānī says, is that he does not dispute the Shaykh's claim that his philosophical system is an expression of the teachings of the Ahlulbayt; however, he does not understand the Shaykh well-enough to engage his ideas critically and chooses to defer the matter to someone granted the knowledge to be able to do so.¹³⁷

The attitude of Lāhijānī is indicative of two general points: The chief *falāsafa* of Isfahan had difficulty penetrating and comprehending Shaykh Aḥmad's system of dialectical metaphysics. Yet their critical remarks in defense of Mullā Ṣadrā should not be allowed to obscure the fact that, wherever they did understand the Shaykh, and even in some places where they did not, they thought he was nothing short of brilliant. Mullā Muḥammad Ja'far Lāhijānī, despite disputing some of his criticisms of Mullā Ṣadrā, accorded Shaykh Aḥmad a comparable status in knowledge and learning.¹³⁸ Careful perusal of the record shows that, in many instances (including throughout Mullā 'Alī Nūrī's *Annotatiōns*), they went to great pains to make the case that Shaykh Aḥmad and Mullā Ṣadrā were, in fact, saying the same thing but in different languages.

¹³⁴ JK2, vol. 4.

¹³⁵ H. Corbin, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, p. 356. Elsewhere, Henry Corbin emphatically rejects the notion that Shaykh Aḥmad did not understand the terminology and methods of Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophy; rather, he insists, the matter is the other way around: The philosophers of Isfahan did not try very hard to understand Shaykh Aḥmad's terminology and methodology. Corbin is particularly critical of Mullā Ismā'īl (also known as Wāḥid al-'Ayn): “Did Mullā Ismā'īl, on his part, even make an effort?” See Corbin's introduction to his edition of *Kitāb al-Mashā'ir: Le livre des pénétrations métaphysiques. Kitāb al-Mashā'ir: texte arabe publié avec la version persane de Badi'ol-molk Mirza, Emadoddawleh/Mollā Sadra Shirazi* (980/1572–1050/1640), ed. H. Corbin (Tehran: Departement d'Iranologie de l'Institut Franco-iranien, 1964), p. 49.

¹³⁶ *Sharḥ al-Mashā'ir* (Mashhad: Chāpkhāna-yi Khurāsān, 1383/1963).

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 191.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

The *falāsafa* of Isfahan were moving in the direction of an important thought, although they never came into full possession of it: Mullā Ṣadrā's doctrine of the extra-mental, extra-conceptual reality of existence, along with his doctrine of substantial motion (*al-ḥaraka al-jawhariyya*), are crucial precursors to the dialectical metaphysics of Shaykh Aḥmad. The Shaykh alludes to this: Upon reviewing several different theories of essence and existence, he says that the existentialist position of the contemporary Illuminationists (i.e., Mullā Ṣadrā and his successors) is the one closest to his own.¹³⁹

4.4 *Dialectical Metaphysics and the Project of Illuminationism*

The True is shown via symbol. The False is shown via disputation.

SHARḤ AL-MASHĀ'IR¹⁴⁰

This introduction to the dialectical metaphysics of Shaykh Aḥmad began with the observations i) that his objective logic involves a presuppositionless movement of cosmological meditation and praxis within the four-part network of objective mappings between the macrocosm, the microcosm, the Qur'ān, and the Ahlulbayt; and ii) this system came about in the context of the historical movement, after Ibn Rushd, of Islamaic philosophy towards the articulation of a genuinely Islamic (as opposed to Hellenistic) system of metaphysics. In that context the Illuminationist philosophers of Isfahan were, to a significant degree, concerned with the Qur'ān and the teachings of the Ahlulbayt: In its broad outline the four-part system of universes and mappings was familiar to them. At least one critical difference is that, for the Illuminationists, each category or movement of this framework was evaluated separately with respect to axiomatic presuppositions, in accordance with the doctrine of Aristotelian cognitivism. For Shaykh Aḥmad, this is a monkey wrench that impedes the concrete, presuppositionless movement of consciousness that grounds objective logic. Axioms are provisional with respect to the exigencies of the praxis

139 JK2, vol. 9, pp. 757–758.

140 JK2, vol. 3, p. 313. In a common, strict sense, 'Illuminationist' (translation of '*ishrāqī*') is used to express a category that applies to Suhrawardī and the adherents of his specific school. In a broader sense (one sometimes used by Shaykh Aḥmad and his contemporaries), the category expressed also includes Mullā Ṣadrā and his followers; their school may be taken as a distinct type of Illuminationism. Used in an even broader sense, the same can be said to apply to the Shaykh and his disciples; his philosophy may be viewed as a recasting of the Illuminationist paradigm. From an historical perspective, then, the traditions of Suhrawardī, Mullā Ṣadrā, and Shaykh Aḥmad constitute successive stages in the development of the Illuminationist project.

involved in learning and working in the field. Recall a passage cited near the outset of this philosophical essay (p. 89): “We mean by ‘*ḥikma*’ that wisdom which is, at once, both theoretical and practical.” The purpose of axioms and foundations is not to provide some absolute set of unassailable truths, but, rather, to “concentrate the essence of practice and in turn use the result to guide practice”.¹⁴¹

This insight constitutes a special case of another dialectical guiding principle, one often repeated by Imām ‘Alī, and a favorite of Shaykh Aḥmad:

Through nexal-consciousness (‘*aq̣l*’) the depths of praxial wisdom (*ḥikma*) are fathomed; through praxial wisdom the depths of nexal-consciousness are fathomed ... Cosmological meditation (*tafakkur*) constitutes the life of the heart of the one with vision, just as a walker with a light walks in the darkness beautifully free of entrapments and with few interruptions.¹⁴²

The first and crucial sentence of this tradition expresses what may be called the *fundamental (meta-)principle of sublation (aufheben)*.¹⁴³ One of its entailments is that axioms are provisional: To render them absolute stunts (= “entrap”) the progressive and self-transcending movement of the presuppositionless consciousness that is facilitated and deepened via persistent meditation (*tafakkur*) and praxis (‘*amal*’).

In this regard Sabzawārī makes a curious point. In the main text of *Sharḥ al-Manẓūma* he remarks, “Not one of the philosophers has claimed that both [existence and essence] are principal [i.e. that they are both *in fact* extensions of the concept “being”].”¹⁴⁴ Then, in a note to this passage he adds, “Among our contemporaries there is someone [Shaykh Aḥmad] who does not consider the principles of philosophy [as canonical]: This person claims that both [existence and essence] are principal.”¹⁴⁵ Although Sabzawārī makes his point in a pejorative context, he is correct when he says, in effect, that Shaykh

141 F. William Lawvere, “Foundations and Applications: Axiomatization and Education,” *Bulletin of Symbolic Logic* 9 2 (2003): 213–224 (213).

142 This principle provides the engine of the process of prehending and practicing alluded to earlier; see fn. 106.

143 A full discussion of this principle is beyond our scope. In an upcoming work, currently entitled *The Logical Foundations of Islamic Economics*, this principle and its application are discussed in considerable detail.

144 Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ Ghurar al-farā’id yā Sharḥ-i Manẓūma-yi ḥikmat: qismat-i umūr-i āmma u jawhar u ‘araḍ*, ed. M. Muḥaqqiq (3rd ed., Tehran: University of Tehran Press, 1369 Sh./1990), p. 44.

145 Ibid., p. 212.

Aḥmad does not absolutize the principles and axioms of traditional scholastic philosophy. Let us place this in a wider context.

In the history of philosophy there are two main approaches to metaphysics and cosmology, viz., ontology and dialectics. As practiced by the *falāsafa*, ontology in the scholastic, Parmenidean sense is generally based on *Aristotelian cognitivism*. With respect to a single universe of discourse, Aristotelian cognitivism holds that there are ultimate, absolute, and true first principles (axioms); according to Aristotle, the principles are known to be true via the rational intuition of the metaphysician. A feature of Aristotelian cognitivism is that the process of learning that ends in rational intuition (*nous*) and the immediate cognition of the first principles is divorced from the process of rational discursion (*dianoia*) and cognition via deductive demonstration.¹⁴⁶ In Illuminationism, the effort to determine the correct set of axioms is aided by “mystical” insight (involving one of the higher sub-modes of central, nexal consciousness, or even singular, blaze consciousness), which plays the role of a process of learning that ends in cognition of the first principles. Each additional proposition in the metaphysical system is then established via discursive derivation (= deduction) from the presuppositions, viz., the first principles (allegedly) known to be true. The bifurcation of learning from discursive knowing provides another instance of an opposition abstracted from the dialectical development of the microcosm in cohesion with the rest of the world. So it comes as no surprise that Shaykh Aḥmad rejects Aristotelian cognitivism with respect to ontology in the Parmenidean sense, although he does accept that *Platonic deductivism* applies to that endeavour. In accordance with Platonic deductivism, the practitioner of ontology in the scholastic sense generally does not know if the principles (= presuppositions) are true; in the best-case scenario one only knows that one’s metaphysical deductions follow from the principles.¹⁴⁷

The dialectical, Heraclitean approach to metaphysics is, in contrast, based upon *Hermetic cognitivism* throughout an interconnected network of universes of discourse. The *first (meta-)principle of Hermetic cognitivism* is encapsulated in the statement of Imām ‘Alī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā to the Hermeticist ‘Imrān

146 The cleavage of rational intuition from rational discursion in Aristotle is discussed admirably by Mure, op. cit., p. 219.

147 Cp. the earlier description of scholastic and Parmenidean senses of ‘ontology’ (p. 24). The distinction between Aristotelian cognitivism and Platonic deductivism (and the definition of each) derives from John Corcoran and Hassan Masoud, “Plato’s Mathematical Deductivism,” *Bulletin of Symbolic Logic* 21 (2015): 199; the name ‘Aristotelian cognitivism’ is due to Idris Samawi Hamid.

al-Šābī'.¹⁴⁸ Hermetic cognitivism holds that, given an interconnected system of concrete categories, the primary philosophical struggle of the metaphysician is to identify the best symbolic category in which to contextualize the cosmological investigation of any specific fact. Put another way, the *objective-logical* symbolic category (*mithāl*) in effect takes the place of the *ontological* first principle or axiom. Once the proper symbolic category is determined, *provisional* axioms are intuited via an objective-logical investigation of the symbolic category in conjunction with its correspondence to some other cosmological category of fact.¹⁴⁹ Furthermore, there is no divorce of learning from knowing, of practice from theory. Echoing the guiding principle of sublation, the Shaykh says,

Practicing is the cause of the rule-based light called *practical* ('*amālī*) potential; knowing is the cause of the cosmic light called *cognitive* or *theoretical* ('*ilmī*) potential. And through practicing ('*amal*) the depths of knowing ('*ilm*) are fathomed; through knowing the depths of practicing are fathomed.¹⁵⁰

This statement expresses what we may call *the second (meta-)principle of Hermetic cognitivism*, also encapsulated within the fundamental (meta-)principle of sublation expressed by the tradition of Imām 'Alī. A genuine dialectical philosophy cannot absolutize axioms and principles, cannot restrict itself to Aristotelian cognitivism. The move from ontology to dialectics, from the priority of *presuppositional* subjective logic in a single universe of discourse to that of *presuppositionless* objective logic in a cohesive network of multiple, interconnected universes of discourse, must keep axiomatic systems fluid, not fixed. If one cardinal philosophical sin may be attributed to the scholastic (as well as classical) traditions of Islamaic philosophy, it was an inability to step outside their ontological paradigm governed by an ossified subjective logic and absolutized axioms. Although it was, to an important degree, the very aim of the Illuminationist project to take this step, in the end it failed in this task (despite other important accomplishments). The remark made by Jonathan Barnes in a slightly different (but related) context summarizes a key aspect of how Shaykh Aḥmad viewed pre-dialectical Islamaic and Illuminationist

148 See the epigraph that begins Section 4.2.

149 The objective-logical intuition of provisional axioms is guided, in large part, by application of one of Shaykh Aḥmad's most important meta-principles, expressed as an interpretive formulation of the fundamental dialectical principle (see p. 108): "Every impression (*athar*) imitates the descriptor (*ṣifa*) of its proximate impressor [i.e., agent] (*mu'aththir*)."

See, e.g., *Sharḥ al-Fawā'id*, JK2, vol. 1, p. 337.

150 *Sharḥ al-Ḥikma al-'arshiyya*, JK2, vol. 4, p. 633.

philosophy: "Thought was fettered; and if the old thinkers and scientists sang, they sang in chains."¹⁵¹

Only an objective logic can provide the appropriate, *continual* philosophical linking mechanism between the higher modes of cognitive experience (including so-called "mystical" consciousness), on the one hand, and propositional knowledge on the other. It is only the objective mapping of the categories of nexal prehending and singular cognizance onto true propositions (*nafs al-amr*), expressed within the appropriate universe of discourse, that makes Illuminationism a genuinely viable philosophical project. Yet, ironically, it is exactly this mechanism that traditional Illuminationism misses, in both its essentialist formulation (Suhrawardī) as well as its existentialist formulation (Mullā Ṣadrā).¹⁵² The role of higher cognitive intuition and praxis stops at each presumed-to-be-known-to-be-true first principle (= presupposition); discursive deduction then takes over from cognitive intuition. Each first principle is absolutized and, contrary to the meta-principle of sublation quoted earlier, is not itself susceptible to progressive development via higher cognitive intuition and praxis. But if we want to genuinely fulfill the hope and promise of Illuminationism then something else is needed. Neither the subjective-logical system of absolute cognitivism systematized by Aristotle, nor the single-universe-of-discourse ontology ossified by the scholastic tradition, is appropriately suited to the task of subserving a dynamic metaphysics to be developed in true cohesion with all the modes of cognitive experience.

Shaykh Aḥmad's *ḥikma* constitutes the dialectical phase of Islamaic philosophy and Illuminationism. Analogously, Suhrawardī's *ḥikma* constitutes the essentialist phase of Illuminationism; that of Mullā Ṣadrā constitutes its existentialist phase. Crucially, the latter's theory of substantial motion (*al-ḥaraka al-jawhariyya*) took traditional metaphysics in a processual (and Islamic) direction as far as it could go without breaking out of ontology in the Parmenidean sense. But Mullā Ṣadrā did not go far enough,¹⁵³ and most of the philoso-

151 Jonathan Barnes, introduction to his translation of Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* (Oxford University Press, 1993), p. xi. Sorely needed is a comparative study of i) the structure and content of scientific discursion in cohesion with cognitive intuition (of the *fu'ād*), in Shaykh Aḥmad's framework of *dalil al-ḥikma* (inferential-indicator of wisdom); and ii) the structure and content of scientific discursion in *bifurcation from* cognitive intuition (of the *nous*), in Aristotle's framework of *apodictics* (scientific demonstration), developed in *Posterior Analytics*. Cp. fn. 95.

152 For a summary discussion regarding Suhrawardī's essentialism and Mullā Ṣadrā's existentialism, as well as their sublation in Shaykh Aḥmad's dialectical hylomorphism, see, e.g., JK2, vol. 3, pp. 295–301.

153 For example: The budding (Heraclitean in spirit) process metaphysics implicit in the theory of substantial motion is vitiated by residues of Aristotelian and Neoplatonic ontology.

phers of Isfahan could not see the next step. In the context of the historical movement from Islamaic towards Islamic philosophy: The next revolution in Illuminationist metaphysics would involve breaking out of the chains of *Parmenidean ontology* and moving into the open, dynamic spaces of *Heracleitean dialectics*. Bringing this revolution to pass, viz., the shift in metaphysics from a rigid ontology and subjective logic to a flexible dialectics and objective logic: This was the great accomplishment and contribution of Shaykh Aḥmad ibn Zayn al-Dīn al-Aḥsā'ī.

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According to Mullā Ṣadrā, the Intellect (*'aql*) is not something *apart* from God (*mimmā ṣiḥwā Allāh*): It undergoes no substantial movement and is, in its simplicity, all existents. Nor is it *identical* to God: God is "above" it. See *al-Mashā'ir*, quoted in Shaykh Aḥmad's commentary: JK2, vol. 3, p. 40. The Intellect is simple pure activity devoid of process (cp. Aristotle): It subsists purely as an entailment of God's Existence, not by any divine act (*bāq-in bi-baqā' Allāh faḍl-an 'an ibqā' Allāh*; cp. Plotinus); see JK2, vol. 3, p. 569. In the context of Mullā Ṣadrā's framework of substantial motion and divinity, this residue of the ontology paradigm leads to an obscure no-man's land between Contingency (*ḥudūth*) and Necessity (*wujūb*), one that is never resolved; cp. F. Rahman, *The Philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1975), pp. 15–16. This point of obscurity is a frequent target of Shaykh Aḥmad's criticism at various places in *Sharḥ al-Mashā'ir* and *Sharḥ al-'Arshīyya*; cp. fn. 115.

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Mullā ‘Alī Nūrī

Sajjad Rizvi

1 Life

Originally from Mazandaran, ‘Alī b. Jamshīd Nūrī was an established teacher of philosophy in Isfahan and renowned as a major ‘philosopher concerned with theology’ (*ḥukamā’-i ilāhiyyīn*).¹ After his preliminary studies in his hometown and his juristic formation in Qazvin where he studied *fiqh* (substantive law) and *uṣūl al-fiqh* (legal theory and hermeneutics) with Sayyid Ḥasan Qazwīnī, he studied in Isfahan with Āqā Muḥammad Bīdābādī (d. 1197/1783) and Mīrzā Abū l-Qāsim Mudarris Khātūnābādī (d. 1202/1788).² Through the former, he associated himself with a significant group of his fellow countrymen engaged in the study of philosophy and mysticism. Bīdābādī’s father Mullā Muḥammad

- 1 Mīrzā Muḥammad ‘Alī Mu‘allim Ḥabībābādī, *Makārim al-āthār dar aḥwāl-i rijāl-i dawra-yi Qājār* (Isfahan: Maṭba‘-yi Muḥammadi, 1337 Sh./1958), vol. 4, pp. 1264–1267, §668; Muḥammad ‘Alī Khīyābānī Mudarris Tabrizī, *Rayḥānat al-adab fī tarājīm al-ma‘rūfīn bi-l-kunya aw al-laqaḥ* ([Tehran:] Chāpkhāna-yi Sa’dī, 1326–31 Sh./1947–53), vol. 4, pp. 249–250; Mahdī Bāmdād, *Sharḥ-i ḥāl-i rijāl-i Īrān dar qarn-i 12 u 13 u 14 hijrī* (Tehran: Kitābforūshī-i Zuwwār, 1347 Sh./1968), pp. 154–155; Muḥammad Ḥasan Zunūzī, *Riṣāḍ al-janna*, ed. ‘Alī Rafī‘ī ‘Alamrawdastī (Qom: Kitābkhāna-yi Āyat Allāh Mar‘ashī Najafī, 1370 Sh./1991), vol. 4, pp. 23–24; Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir Kh‘ānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt* (Beirut: al-Dār al-Islāmiyya, 1991), vol. 4, pp. 391–393; Riḍā-Qulī Khān Hidāyat, *Tadhkira-yi Riṣāḍ al-‘arīfīn* (Tehran: Kitābkhāna-yi Mahdiyya, 1937), p. 328; idem, *Majma‘ al-fuṣṣahā’* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Amīr Kabīr, 1957), vol. 2, p. 496; Muḥammad b. Sulaymān Tunikābunī, *Qīṣaṣ al-‘ulamā’*, ed. Muḥammad-Riḍā Barzagar-Khālīqī and ‘Iffat Karbāsī (Tehran: Shirkat-i Intishārāt-i ‘Ilmī u Farhangī, 1383 Sh./2004), pp. 191–210, 238–229; Murtaḍā Mudarris Gilānī, *Muntakhab mu‘jam al-ḥukamā’*, selected and edited by Manūchihr Ṣadūqī Suhā (Tehran: Mu‘assasa-yi Pazhūhishī-i Hikmat u falsafa-yi Īrān, 1384 Sh./2005), p. 130; Sayyid Muḥsin al-Amin, *A‘yān Shī‘a* (Beirut: Dār al-Ta‘āruf, 1983), vol. 8, p. 368; Manūchihr Ṣadūqī Suhā, *Ḥukamā’ va ‘urafā’-yi muta‘akkhkhīr az Ṣadr al-muta‘allihīn* (Tehran: Anjuman-i Islāmī-i Hikmat u Falsafa-yi Īrān, 1359 Sh./1980), pp. 33–40; Ghulām-Ḥusayn Riḍānizhād Nūshīn, *Ḥakīm-i Sabzawārī: Zindagī, āthār, falsafa* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Sanā‘ī, 1371 Sh./1992), pp. 65–69; Āshtiyānī, “Muqaddima,” to Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya fī l-manāhij al-sulūkiyya* (Qom: Daftar-i Tablighāt-i Islāmī, 1378 Sh./1999), pp. 86–95. For a brief discussion of the philosophers in this period, see Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Philosophy from its Origin to the Present* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2006), pp. 235–239.
- 2 ‘Alī-Riḍā Dhakāwati Qarāghuzlū, “Murāsala-yi ḥakīm u faqīh,” *Kayhān-i Farhangī* 33 (Ādhar 1365 Sh./March 1986): 8–12 (9).

Rafī' Gilānī was a well-known scholar, and he moved to Isfahan settling in the suburb of Bīdābād.³ Bīdābādī himself was a philosopher inclining to *theosis* (*ḥakīm-i muta'allih*), which meant that he believed philosophy was a practice and way of life by which one acquires a resemblance to the divine (*al-tashabbuh bi-l-bārī*), famed as a mystic (*ahl-i sayr u sulūk*), and as someone known for his piety and even miracles (*ṣāhib al-maqāmāt wa-l-karāmāt*).⁴ A contemporary witness, the Ni'matullāhī Sufi Muḥammad Ja'far Kabūdarāhangī, known as Majdhūb 'Alī-Shāh (d. 1238/1823), claims that the Bīdābādī circle was renowned for their mystical and spiritual practices (*riyāḍat u mujāhada-yi nafsānī*) alongside their *'irfān* (mystical) orientation in their study of metaphysics.⁵ More

- 3 'Abd al-Nabī Qazwīnī, *Tatmīm Amal al-āmil*, ed. Sayyid Aḥmad Ḥusaynī (Qom: Maktabat Āyat Allāh Mar'ashī Najafī, 1407/1987), p. 162; Khwānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt*, vol. 7, p. 124; Zunūzī, *Riyyāḍ al-janna*, vol. 4, pp. 422–438.
- 4 Muḥammad Hāshim Āṣaf 'Rustam al-ḥukamā', *Rustam al-tawārīkh*, ed. M. Mushīrī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Amīr Kabīr, 1348 Sh./1969), pp. 405–408; Hidāyat, *Tadhkira*, vol. 1, pp. 66–70; Mudarris Tabrizī, *Rayḥānat al-adab*, vol. 1, pp. 187–188; Ma'sūm 'Alī-Shāh, *Ṭarā'iq al-ḥaqā'iq*, ed. Muḥammad Ja'far Maḥjūb (Tehran: Kitābkhāna-yi Bārānī, 1339 Sh./1960), pp. 98, 214–215; Mudarris Gilānī, *Muntakhab*, p. 166; Khwānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt*, vol. 7, pp. 116–118; Abbās Qummī, *Fawā'id al-Raḍawīyya fī aḥwāl 'ulamā' al-Ja'fariyya* (Tehran: Kitābkhāna-yi Markazī, 1359 Sh./1980), pp. 618–619; Ghulām-Ḥusayn Khudrī, *Ta'ammulī bar sayr-i taṭawwūr-i ḥukamā' u ḥikmat-i muta'ālīya* (Tehran: Pazhūhishgāh-i 'Ulūm-i Insānī u Muṭāla'āt-i Farhangī, 1391 Sh./2012), pp. 300–303; Ata Anzali, *Safavid Shi'ism, the Eclipse of Sufism, and the Emergence of 'Irfān* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Rice University, Houston, 2012), pp. 258–262. Bīdābādī was himself originally from Mazandaran and had been the recipient of the patronage of the previous Zand ruler, 'Alī-Murād Khān (d. 1785); his interest in the occult and in alchemy may also account for 'Alī Nūrī's interest in Ibn Turka and the occult. A number of works have been published on Bīdābādī and some of his mystical works as well: 'Alī Ṣadrā'ī Khū'ī, *Āshinā-yi ḥaqq: sharḥ-i aḥwāl u akfār-i Āqā Muḥammad Bīdābādī* (Qom: Intishārāt-i Nihāwandī, 1379 Sh./2000); 'Alī Karbāsizāda, *Ḥakīm-i muta'allih-i Bīdābādī: Ith'yā'gar-i ḥikmat-i shī'ī dar qarn-i dawāzdahum-i hijrī* (Tehran: Pazhūhishgāh-i 'Ulūm-i Insānī u Muṭāla'āt-i Farhangī, 1381 Sh./2002); 'Abd al-Raḥmān Ḥātim, *Rā'id al-'irfān al-Āqā Muḥammad Bīdābādī* (Beirut: Dār al-Hādī, 2002), pp. 7–24; Mīr Sayyid Ḥasan Mudarris Hāshimī, *Sharḥ-i Risāla-yi sayr u sulūk mansūb bi Āqā Muḥammad Bīdābādī* (Isfahan: Kānūn-i Pazhūhish, 1376 Sh./1997); 'Alī Ṣadrā'ī Khū'ī, *Tadhkirat al-sālikīn: nāmahā-yi 'irfānī-i Āqā Muḥammad-i Bīdābādī* (Qom: Nūr al-Sajjād, 1385 Sh./2006); Muḥammad Bīdābādī, *Ḥusn-i dil*, ed. 'Alī Ṣadrā'ī Khū'ī and Muḥammad Khwājāwī (Qom: Intishārāt-i Nihāwandī, 1376 Sh./1997).
- 5 Muḥammad Ja'far Majdhūb 'Alī-Shāh Kabūdarāhangī, *Mir'āt al-ḥaqq*, ed. Hāmid Nāji Iṣfahānī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Haqīqat, 1383 Sh./2004), pp. 69–70. He had studied with Mahdī Narāqī and Mullā Mihrāb Gilānī and was acquainted with 'Alī Nūrī, although his main teacher in *ḥikmat* was Mīrzā Muḥammad 'Alī Muẓaffar Iṣfahānī (d. 1198/1784) who was a student of Bīdābādī. On Iṣfahānī, see Zunūzī, *Riyyāḍ al-janna*, vol. 4, pp. 502–503; Mu'allim Ḥabībābādī, *Makārim* vol. 1, pp. 70–71; 'Alī Shāh, *Ṭarā'iq al-ḥaqā'iq*, vol. 3, pp. 254–258; 'Abd al-Razzāq 'Maftūn' Dunbulī, *Tajribat al-aḥrār wa-taṣliyat al-abrār*, ed. Ḥasan Qādī Ṭabāṭabā'ī (Tabriz: Dānishgāh-i Tabriz, 1971), p. 160.

recent studies have traced the modern tendency of *‘irfān* in the Shi‘i shrine cities of Iraq back to the Bīdābādī circle.⁶

Bīdābādī had studied with Mīrzā Muḥammad Taqī Almāsī (d. 1159/1746),⁷ who was the prayer-leader in Isfahan under Nādir Shah (r. 1736–47), and the theologian-philosopher Mullā Muḥammad Ismā‘īl Khwājū‘ī Māzandarānī (d. 1174/1760), as well as Sayyid Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad Nayrīzī (d. 1173/1760), the Dhahabī *pīr*—they had all been students of Mullā Ṣādiq Ardistānī (d. 1134/1722), the leading philosopher (inclining towards mysticism) in Isfahan. We know very little about Ardistānī apart from the claims of his saintly nature, the influence of Mullā Ṣadrā upon him, and his interest in mysticism not just in theory but also in practice such that he was described in biographical sources as a ‘divine mystic’ (*‘arīf-i rabbānī*).⁸ Similarly, we know little about Khwājū‘ī beyond his role as a teacher in Isfahan whose students included, alongside Bīdābādī, Mullā Mahdī Narāqī (d. 1209/1794) and Mullā Miḥrāb Gīlānī (d. 1217/1802)—apart from one treatise critiquing the ‘estimative’ nature of time (defending Mīr Dāmād’s position on perpetual creation) and another on the mystical concept of the unity of being (*waḥdat al-wujūd*), most of his works that have been published are on the scriptural disciplines.⁹ About Nayrīzī, we know quite a bit more due to his role in the Dhahabī order—and through him, we can trace lines of transmission and dissemination of philosophy

6 E.g. Ḥāṭim, *Rā‘id al-‘irfān*, pp. 17–18, citing Sayyid Kāzīm ‘Aṣṣār.

7 Qazwīnī, *Tatmīm*, p. 82; al-Amin, *A‘yān al-Shi‘a*, vol. 9, p. 197; Mudarris Tabrizī, *Rayḥānat al-adab*, vol. 1, p. 168; Khwānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt*, vol. 2, p. 88; Khudrī, *Ta‘ammulī*, pp. 264–266; Mīr Sayyid ‘Alī Janāb, *Rijāl u mashāhīr-i Isfahān* (al-Iṣfahān) (Isfahan: Sāzmān-i Farhangī-Tafriḥi-i Shahrdārī-i Isfahān, 1385 Sh./2006), pp. 630–631, 647. Jalāl Humā‘ī suggests in his *Tārīkh-i Isfahān* that Almāsī might have been the first person to teach the works of Mullā Ṣadrā but this is not corroborated in any source of the period.

8 Muḥammad ‘Alī Ḥazīn Lāhijī, *Tārīkh u safarnāma-yi Ḥazīn*, ed. ‘Alī Dawānī (Tehran: Markaz-i Asnād-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī, 1375 Sh./1996), p. 192; Qazwīnī, *Tatmīm*, p. 135; Ma‘šūm ‘Alī-Shāh, *Ṭarā‘iq*, vol. 3, p. 165; Mudarris Tabrizī, *Rayḥānat al-adab*, vol. 1, pp. 104–105; Amin, *A‘yān al-Shi‘a*, vol. 8, p. 128; Āshtiyānī, ‘Muqaddima’, p. 97; Āqā Buzurg Ṭihrānī, *al-Kawākib al-muntashara fi l-qarn al-thānī ba‘d al-‘ashara* [*Ṭabaqāt a‘lām al-Shi‘a*], ed. ‘Alī-Naqī Munzawī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Dānishgāh-i Tihrān, 1372 Sh./1952), pp. 359–360; Khudrī, *Ta‘ammulī*, pp. 250–256.

9 Qazwīnī, *Tatmīm*, p. 67; Ṭihrānī, *Kawākib*, pp. 62–64; Ḥabībābādī, *Makārim*, vol. 7, p. 2421; Mudarris Tabrizī, *Rayḥānat al-adab*, vol. 2, pp. 105–107; al-Amin, *A‘yān al-Shi‘a*, vol. 3, p. 402; Mudarris Gīlānī, *Muntakhab*, p. 48; Khudrī, *Hukamā’*, pp. 274–281; Sayyid Mahdī Rajā‘ī, *Aḥwāl u āthār-i Mullā Ismā‘īl-i Khwājū‘ī* (Isfahan: Shahrdārī-i Isfahān, 1378 Sh./1999). His published works include: *al-Arba‘ūna ḥadīthan*; *al-Durar al-multaqaṭa*; *al-Rasā‘il al-fiqhiyya*; *al-Rasā‘il al-i‘tiqādiyya*; *Miftāḥ al-falāḥ*; *Ibtāl al-zamān al-mawḥūm*; *Risālat tajassum al-a‘māl*; *Risālat waḥdat al-wujūd*; *Thamarat al-fīfād*.

and mysticism in the shrine cities of Iraq in the eighteenth century.¹⁰ Given Nayrīzī's metaphysical espousal of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, the key notion of monism that became the focus of controversy and philosophical discussion from the eighteenth century in particular (although it was much contested in Shi'i contexts before), he was known as the 'second Ibn 'Arabi'.¹¹ Like many Sufi masters, he expressed his ideas in verse—most of his works are epic poems upon which his disciples and later followers wrote commentaries.

Bidābādī was famed for his asceticism and known as a spiritual master as well as teacher of *ḥikmat* texts—some Dhahabī sources even describe him as a master in their order, although the reliability of the claim is doubtful.¹² Working as a grocer, he was a philanthropist and a skilled alchemist—this latter brings into focus the interest that his circle had in the occult, as we shall see later with Nūrī.¹³ His positions in *fiqh* were known such as his insistence on the necessity of convening Friday prayers (*wujūb 'aynī*, a position that may indicate his Akhbārī tendencies).¹⁴ Nūrī indicates his possible Akhbārī sympathies, citing his commitment to precautionary agency (*iḥtiyāṭ*) and his adherence to the manual *Ḥadīqat al-muttaqīn fī ma'rīfat aḥkām al-dīn* of the Akhbārī inclined Muḥammad Taqī Majlisī (d. 1070/1661).¹⁵ His main work, *al-Mabda' wa-l-ma'ād*, is a study of the nature of being and its expression in the human

10 Ma'sūm 'Alī-Shāh, *Ṭarā'iq*, vol. 2, pp. 216–219; Asad Allāh Khāwarī, *Dhahabīyya: taṣawwuf-i 'ilmī, āthār-i adabī* (Tehran: University of Tehran Press, 1362 Sh./1983), pp. 297–337; Iḥsān Allāh Istakhārī, *Uṣūl-i taṣawwuf* (Tehran: Kānūn-i Ma'rīfat, n.d.), pp. 414–461; Khudrī, *Ta'ammulī*, pp. 270–274; Anzali, *Safavid Shi'ism*, pp. 204–221. Some of Nayrīzī's works, mainly on mystical topics, have also been published: *Qaṣīda-yi 'ishqīyya*; *Anwār al-walāya wa-mishkāt al-walāya*; *Mizān al-ṣawāb dar sharḥ-i Faṣl al-khiṭāb-i Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad-i Nayrīzī*; *Tarjuma-yi manẓūm-i ḥadīth-i nūrāniyyat*.

11 See Sajjad H. Rizvi, "The *takfīr* of the Philosophers (and Sufis) in Safavid Iran," in Camilla Adang, Hassan Ansari, Maribel Fierro, Sabine Schmidtke (ed.), *Accusations of Unbelief in Islam: A Diachronic Perspective on Takfīr* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), pp. 244–269.

12 Khāwarī, *Dhahabīyya*, p. 325.

13 He is credited with a number of treatises on alchemy—see Karbāsizāda, *Ḥakīm-i muta'allih-i Bidābādī*, pp. 178–79.

14 On this issue, see Rasūl Jafariyān, *Namāz-i jum'a: zamīnahā-yi tārikhī u āgāhihā-yi kitābshināsī* ([Qom:] Shūrā-yi Siyāsatgudhārī-i umūr-i a'imma-yi Jum'a, 1372 Sh./1993), pp. 35–37; Andrew Newman, "Fayd al-Kashani and the rejection of the clergy/state alliance: Friday prayer as politics in the Safavid period," in Linda Walbridge (ed.), *The Most Learned of the Shi'a: The Institution of the Marja' Taqlid* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 40–45; Karbāsizāda, *Ḥakīm-i muta'allih-i Bidābādī*, pp. 48–51.

15 Dhakāwatī Qarāghuzlū, "Murāsala-yi ḥakīm u faqīh," 9. At the very least, this indicates that Bidābādī supported the idea of emulating and following the precepts of a dead jurist (*taqlid al-mayyit*), which is normally considered impermissible in uṣūlī moral agency. Cf. Karbāsizāda, *Ḥakīm-i muta'allih-i Bidābādī*, pp. 44–47.

that follows the themes and concerns of Mullā Ṣadrā.¹⁶ His glosses on *al-Asfār al-arba'a* of Mullā Ṣadrā were published in the margins of the Tehran lithograph of 1282/1865, and another set of glosses on *al-Mashā'ir* are extant on the margins of MS Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī 1020.¹⁷ As he taught the *Metaphysics* of *al-Shifā'* of Avicenna, a set of glosses is extant on the margins of MS Astān-i Quds-i Ridāwī 786 dated 1082/1672.¹⁸ He also glossed *Qurrat al-'uyūn* of his contemporary Mahdī Narāqī, defending the doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd*.¹⁹ Most of his other works are on Sufi topics (his treatise *Sayr u sulūk*) and glosses on Qur'ānic exegeses of Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī (d. 1090/1681) and Nizām al-Dīn Nisābūrī (d. 730/1330)—a holograph of this latter work is MS Tehran, University of Tehran 1854 dated 14 Rajab 1173/1760.²⁰ Bīdābādī's students included Āqā Mīrzā Abū l-Qāsim Mudarris Khātūnābādī (d. 1202/1788), Mullā 'Alī Nūrī, Sayyid Ṣadr al-Dīn Dizfūlī (b. 17 Ṣafar 1174/1760, d. 14 Sha'bān 1258/1842), a renowned mystic associated with the Dhahabī order who also did much to spread *'irfān* in the shrine cities of Iraq,²¹ Mullā Miḥrāb Gilānī (d. 14 Jumāda 1 1217/1802), described as a 'Sufi' and a member of the Dhahabī order,²² Muḥammad Ḥasan

16 *Al-Mabda' wa-l-ma'ād*, in Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, *Muntakhabātī az āthār-i ḥukamā-yi ilāhī-i Īrān* (Qom: Daftar-i Tablighāt-i Islāmī, 1378 Sh./1999), vol. 4, pp. 376–418.

17 Āshtiyānī, "Muqaddima", pp. 98–99. Mullā 'Abd Allāh Zunūzī (d. 1257/1841), a leading student of Nūrī, cites these glosses extensively in his *Lama'āt-i ilāhiyya*, see 'Abd Allāh Zunūzī, *Lama'āt-i ilāhiyya wa ma'ārif-i rubūbiyya*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (Tehran: Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy, 1976), p. 425 (citing Bīdābādī's gloss on the meaning of the divine attribute of 'life' from his marginalia on *al-Asfār*). The text was completed on 6 Rabī' I 1240/October 1824 and dedicated to Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh. See Muṣṭafā Dirāyatī, *Fihristwāra-yi dastnawishtā-yi Īrān* (Dinā) (Tehran: Kitābkhāna, Mūzi u Markaz-i Asnād-i Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī, 1389 Sh./2010), vol. 8, pp. 1075–1076.

18 Karbāsizāda, *Ḥakīm-i muta'allih-i Bīdābādī*, pp. 180–181.

19 Karbāsizāda, *Ḥakīm-i muta'allih-i Bīdābādī*, p. 182, citing Ṭihrānī, *al-Dharī'a ilā taṣānīf al-Shī'a*, vol. 17, p. 75.

20 Karbāsizāda, *Ḥakīm-i muta'allih-i Bīdābādī*, pp. 173–174.

21 Mu'allim Ḥabībābādī, *Makārim*, vol. 5, pp. 1558–1559; Ma'sūm 'Alī-Shāh, *Ṭarā'iq*, vol. 3, p. 219; Sayyid 'Abbās Qā'im-maqāmī, "Āthār u afkār-i Ṣadr al-Dīn 'Kāshif' Dizfūlī," *Kayhān-i Andisha* 38 (1370 Sh./1991): 77–93 (82–85); Ḥāṭim, *Rā'id al-'irfān*, pp. 20–24; Karbāsizāda, *Ḥakīm-i muta'allih-i Bīdābādī*, pp. 112–114. He wrote a number of works in mysticism such as *Qāṣim al-jabbārīn*, *Hidāyat al-sālikūn*, *Miṣbāḥ al-ṭarīqa* and *Mir'āt al-ghayb*. He seems to have been the leader of a branch of the Dhahabiyya as well. The following works have been published: *Mir'āt al-ghayb*; *Miṣbāḥ al-'arīfīn*; *Ḥaqq al-ḥaqīqa li-arbāb al-ṭarīqa*.

22 Mudarris Tabrizī, *Rayḥānat al-adab*, vol. 5, p. 385; Mu'allim Ḥabībābādī, *Makārim*, vol. 3, pp. 622–623; Ma'sūm 'Alī-Shāh, *Ṭarā'iq*, vol. 3, p. 255; Mudarris Gilānī, *Muntakhab*, p. 192; Khudrī, *Ta'ammulī*, p. 207; Karbāsizāda, *Ḥakīm-i muta'allih-i Bīdābādī*, pp. 123–125. Gilānī was also a student of the philosopher Mullā Mahdī Narāqī. He used to teach *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, the *Mathnawī* and the *Asfār*. He did not write much: a short treatise on the unity of being (*waḥdat al-wujūd*), and a gloss on *Gawhar-i murād*, the Safavid mystico-theological text of 'Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī.

Qazwīnī Ḥā'irī (d. 1240/1824) a teacher in the shrine cities of Iraq and author of a popular mystico-ethical text *Kashf al-ghīṭā' 'an wujūh marāsīm al-ihtidā'*,²³ Mullā Naẓār 'Alī Gilānī (d. after 1206/1792), another member of the circle and author of an Arabic treatise *al-Tuḥfa*,²⁴ Mahdī Narāqī (d. 1209/1794) arguably the most important philosopher of the 18th century,²⁵ Sayyid Aḥmad Ardakānī (d. 1245/1830) who translated *al-Mabda' wa-l-ma'ād* and *Sharḥ al-Hidāya* of Mullā Ṣadrā into Persian,²⁶ and the prominent jurist Shaykh Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Karbāsī (d. 1261/1845).²⁷ What is significant is that in the person of Bidābādī, we can discern the confluence of philosophy and mysticism not just in terms of the theoretical study but also the practice. His works attest to this interpretation, as do his networks of formation and knowledge dissemination. Bidābādī's circle, which later included Nūrī, embraced a number of scholars from his native region of Gilān and included his friend the prominent jurist Abū l-Qāsim Gilānī, better known as Mirzā-yi Qummī (d. 1231/1815) whose own interest in Sufism and philosophy was well known despite his critique of 'decadent' Sufis.²⁸

Khātūnābādī, Nūrī's other main teacher, was a philosopher and a jurist who was descended from a prominent sayyid family that had produced leading scholars of the late Safavid period—he was a scion of the Majlisī family.²⁹

23 Karbāsīzāda, *Ḥakīm-i muta'allih-i Bidābādī*, pp. 137–138; Raḥīm Qāsimī, *Bazm-i ma'rīfat* (Isfahan: Kānūn-i Pazhūhish, 1388 Sh./2009), pp. 95–96.

24 Aẓam Rijālī, *Āthār u afkār-i ḥukamā' u 'urafā'-yi mashhūr-i Isfahān az qarn-i davāzdahum tā 'aṣr-i ḥāḍir* (Isfahan: Dānishgāh-i Āzād-i Islāmī, 1383 Sh./2004), vol. 1, pp. 67–78; Gilānī, *Risālat al-tuḥfa*, in Āshtiyānī (ed.), *Muntakhabātī*, vol. 4, pp. 677–880, and also in Nūrī, *Rasā'il-i falsafī*, pp. 71–312; Khudrī, *Ta'ammulī*, pp. 316–319; Karbāsīzāda, *Ḥakīm-i muta'allih-i Bidābādī*, pp. 166–67.

25 Karbāsīzāda, *Ḥakīm-i muta'allih-i Bidābādī*, pp. 156–60, and see Chapter One in this volume.

26 Khudrī, *Ta'ammulī*, pp. 309–311; Karbāsīzāda, *Ḥakīm-i muta'allih-i Bidābādī*, pp. 165–66; Sayyid Aḥmad Ardakānī, *Mir'āt al-akwān: Taḥrīr-i sharḥ-i Hidāya-yi Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī*, ed. 'Abd Allāh Nūrānī (Tehran: Mīrāth-i Maktūb, 1375 Sh./1996); idem, *Mabda' u ma'ād*, ed. 'Abd Allāh Nūrānī (Tehran: Markaz-i Nashr-i Dānishgāhī, 1362 Sh./1983).

27 Mirzā Muḥammad Mahdī Lakhnawī Kashmīrī, *Nujūm al-samā'* (Qom: Maktaba-yi Baṣīratī, 1397/1976), vol. 1, pp. 67–68; Karbāsīzāda, *Ḥakīm-i muta'allih-i Bidābādī*, pp. 133–135.

28 Cf. Ḥusayn Mudarrisī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, "Falsafa u 'irfān az naẓar-i Mirzā-yi Qummī," in *Qummiyyāt: majmū'a-yi maqālāt darbāra-yi Qumm* (New Jersey: Zagros Publishers, 1386 Sh./2007), pp. 183–195. On Qummī, see Mudarris Tabrizī, *Rayḥānat al-adab*, vol. 5, pp. 42–44; Zunūzī, *Riyāḍ al-janna*, vol. 1, pp. 522–523; Mu'allim Ḥabībābādī, *Makārim*, vol. 3, pp. 911–919.

29 Zunūzī, *Riyāḍ al-janna*, vol. 1, pp. 524–525; Mu'allim Ḥabībābādī, *Makārim*, vol. 1, pp. 129–133; Mudarris Tabrizī, *Rayḥānat al-adab*, vol. 3, p. 504; al-Amin, *A'yān al-Shī'a*, vol. 8, p. 111; Mudarris Gilānī, *Muntakhab*, pp. 16–17; Khudrī, *Ta'ammulī*, pp. 303–305; Karbāsīzāda, *Ḥakīm-i muta'allih-i Bidābādī*, pp. 101–103.

Prayer-leader at the Masjid-i Shāh in Isfahan for some thirty years, he taught at the Madrasa-yi Chahār-bāgh.³⁰ He had studied philosophy with Bīdābādī and his teacher Khwājū’ī, *fiqh* and *uṣūl* with Sayyid Mahdī Ṭabāṭabā’ī ‘Baḥr al-‘ulūm’ (d. 1212/1799),³¹ and was the author of a few works such as a *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*, a short Persian Qur’ānic exegesis, a set of glosses on the four books of classical Shi’i *ḥadīth*, and a gloss on Fayḍ Kāshānī’s Qur’ānic exegesis (probably *al-Ṣāfi* is meant). Khātūnābādī represented the old Safavid clerical establishment that complemented the new clerical elites from the North. Nūrī was probably his most famous student.

If one wished to trace a lineage of teachers and disciples linking Nūrī back to Mullā Ṣadrā—and this is not identical to a chain of transmission of his works since most were still using Avicenna’s *Metaphysics* of *al-Shifā’* and *al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt* as the key texts in philosophy (the evidence of the biographical dictionaries and the licenses authorising transmission, the *ijāzāt*, suggest as much), then it would look something like this: Bīdābādī → Quṭb al-Dīn Nayrīzī and Mullā Ismā’il Khwājū’ī and Muḥammad Taqī Almāsī → Ṣādiq Ardīstānī → Āqā Ḥusayn Tunikābunī → Mullā Ṣadrā. However, one ought to exercise some caution with such constructed genealogies, thinkers usually did not see themselves as constituting a link in a chain, but it was much later when an individual wished to make sense of his lineage that he would articulate such a chain, using its authority to make claims for himself and for his qualification to transmit to the next generation.

Nūrī was the recipient of the patronage of Ja’far Khān Zand (r. 1199/1785–1203/1789) who bestowed, through the mediation of Mīrzā Muḥammad Bāqir Nawwāb, the tax revenues of a number of villages upon him including ‘Aliyābād and Ḥabībābād near Isfahan.³² Since Ja’far Khān took Isfahan in

30 On this royal seminary also known as Madrasa-yi Sulṭānī, see Sayyid Muṣliḥ al-Dīn Mahdawī, *Isfahān dār al-‘ilm-i sharq: madāris-i dīnī-i Isfahān*, ed. M. Riḍā Nīlfirūshān (Isfahan: Sāzmān-i Farhangī-Tafriḥī-i Shahr-dārī-i Isfahān, 1386 Sh./2007), pp. 103–106.

31 Baḥr al-‘ulūm may have had mystical inclinations; see Ma’šūm ‘Alī-Shāh, *Ṭarā’iq*, vol. 3, p. 217, even though it is perhaps not the most reliable source. It would account for one link to mysticism in the shrine cities, an issue that still requires further research. A text *Risāla-yi sayr u sulūk* has been published (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Mawlā, 1361 Sh./1982) although its attribution to him is not uncontroversial. He is mentioned in some Dhahabī sources, usually as a disciple of Nayrīzī; see Khāwarī, *Dhahabīyya*, pp. 309, 322. Another contemporary source mentions his spiritual states and miracles, see Zunūzī, *Riyāḍ al-janna*, vol. 4, pp. 587–618.

32 Tunikābunī, *Qīṣaṣ al-‘ulamā’*, p. 172.

1199/1785 and died four years later, the grant of the villages was probably made in that period.³³ Furthermore, since we do not have a birth date for Nūrī, we can probably deduce from this grant and the death date of Bīdābādī, that Nūrī is likely to have been at the very least advanced in his twenties around 1199/1785 suggesting a birth date of around 1173/1760. Later in life, he wrote a number of works in response to notables at the Qajar court and even Faṭḥ ‘Alī Shah—and perhaps that political relationship extended to networks established in his home town since the first ‘capital’ of the Qajars before they moved to Tehran in 1778 was Sarī in Māzandarān. In matters of *fiqh*, he was a close confidant of first Mīrzā-yi Qummī, the prominent jurist and friend of Bīdābādī, then Shaykh Ibrāhīm Karbāsī and Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir Shaftī (d. 1260/1844). Although he was not known for his expertise in jurisprudence, Nūrī was closely associated with the leading jurists of his time both in Iran (Qummī in Qom whom he visited regularly, Shaftī and Karbāsī in Isfahan) and in Iraq (Sayyid ‘Alī Ṭabāṭabā’ī and Shaykh Ja‘far and his son ‘Alī Kāshif al-Ghiṭā’).³⁴ These friendships attest to his prominence and fame in the seminary and demonstrate that his scholarly reputation extended from Isfahan to other seminary centres in Iran and in the shrine cities, although we cannot necessarily deduce from his role the significance of *ḥikmat* and *‘irfān* in this period. His court links are also indicated by the fact that Nūrī had been requested by Muḥammad Ḥusayn Khān Marwī to come to Tehran to teach in his new *madrassa* established in 1232/1817; however, citing his ‘two thousand’ students in Isfahan, he sent in his stead Zunūzī.³⁵

33 See Rustam al-ḥukamā’, *Rustam*, pp. 447–450; Birgitt Hoffmann, *Persische Geschichte 1694–1835 erlebt, erinnert und erfunden. Das Rustam al-tawārīḥ in deutscher Bearbeitung* (Bamberg: AKU Verlag, 1986), vol. 2, pp. 734–739; Tunikābunī, *Qīṣaṣ al-‘ulamā’*, pp. 171–172; John Perry, “The Zand dynasty,” in Peter Avery, Gavin Hambly and Charles Melville (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Iran*. Volume 7: From Nadir Shah to the Islamic Republic (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 63–103 (93–94); idem, *Karīm Khan Zand* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), pp. 298–299; Mehdi Roschanzamir, *Die Zand-Dynastie* (Hamburg: Hartmut Lüdke Verlag, 1970), pp. 97–103; Abū l-Ḥasan Ghaffārī-i Kāshānī, *Gulshan-i murād: Tārīkh-i Zandīyya*, ed. Ghulām-Riḍā Ṭabāṭabā’ī-Majd (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Zarrīn, 1369 Sh./1990, pp. 687ff; Riḍā-Qulī Khān Hidāyat, *Fihris al-tawārīkh*, ed. ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn Nawā’ī and Mīr Hāshim Muḥaddith (Tehran: Pazhūhishgāh-i ‘Ulūm-i Insānī u Muṭāla‘āt-i Farhangī, 1373 Sh./1994), pp. 300, 417, 421.

34 On these jurists as heading the anti-Akhhārī front of the time, see Andrew Newman, “Anti-Akhhārī Sentiments among the Qajar ‘Ulamā’,” in Robert Gleave (ed.), *Religion and Society in Qajar Iran* (London: Routledge, 2005), pp. 155–173, (pp. 162–165). On Nūrī’s visits to the shrine cities, see Dhakāwātī Qarāghuzlū, “Murāsala-yi ḥakīm u faqīh,” 9.

35 ‘Abbās Ṭarīmī, “Ḥawza-yi falsafī/‘irfānī-i Tihārān I,” *Khīradnāma-yi Šadrā* 13 (1377 Sh./1998): 65–71. (66–67); Āshtiyānī, ‘Introduction’, to ‘Abd Allāh Zunūzī, *Anwār-i jalīyya*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl Āshtiyānī (Tehran: McGill Institute of Islamic Studies, 1354 Sh./1976), p. 39.

Once established in Isfahan, he began teaching at the Madrasa-yi Shamsiyya, which, because it was in the neighbourhood of that name, was known as Madrasa-yi Kāsagarān.³⁶ According to Khwānsārī, Nūrī in his mature years had white hair and a white beard; he was fond of smoking a water-pipe (*ghalyān*). In one anecdote, it is recorded that Nūrī visited the jurist Sayyid ‘Alī Ṭabāṭabā’ī (d. 1231/1816) who did not smoke but arranged for a pipe to be brought for Nūrī.³⁷ He began to puff on the pipe but no smoke came—frustrated he turned to Sayyid ‘Alī and said, ‘The water-pipe that the Akhbārīs forbid is none other than this one!’³⁸ In the year 1245/1829, when Faṭḥ ‘Alī Shāh was on procession, he passed by Isfahan and held court in Jazz, a village near the city and various notables came to meet him including Mullā Nūrī.³⁹ When he died in Isfahan on 22 Rajab 1246/6 January 1831, his body was taken to Najaf. There, Shaykh ‘Alī b. Ja‘far Kāshif al-Ghiṭā’ (d. 1254/1837) received it and led the prayer, and he was buried at the shrine in a grave at Bāb al-Ṭūsī. His surviving son Mirzā Ḥasan was a philosopher who taught a number of famous thinkers of the next generation in Tehran, and his grandson ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn also had scholarly credentials.

2 His Students

His students included: Mirzā Abū l-Qāsim Rāz-i Shīrāzī (d. 1287/1869) a renowned Dhahabī shaykh;⁴⁰ Mullā Āqā Ḥakīm Qazwīnī (d. 1282/1865); Shaykh Ibrāhīm Karbāsī (mentioned above), Mullā Ismā‘īl b. Muḥammad Ja‘far Iṣfahānī (d. 1282/1865), who was the grandson of Ismā‘īl Khwājū’ī and the author of works on philosophy and exegesis including a short Persian treatise on the unfolding of existence titled *Jalawāt-i Nāṣiriyya* dedicated to Nāṣir al-Dīn Shah;⁴¹ Sayyid Raḍī Lārījānī Māzandarānī (d. 1270/1854), a mystically

36 Riḍānizhād Nūshīn, *Ḥakīm-i Sabzawārī*, pp. 50–51. On this madrasa, see Mahdawī, *Iṣfahān dār al-ilm-i sharq*, pp. 216–218.

37 Tunikābunī, *Qīṣaṣ al-‘ulamā’*, p. 191.

38 On Sayyid ‘Alī, see Ma’šūm ‘Alī-Shāh, *Ṭarā’iq*, vol. 3, pp. 337, 506; Mudarris Tabrizī, *Rayḥānat al-adab*, vol. 3, pp. 370–372.

39 Hidāyat, *Fihris*, pp. 417, 421.

40 Mudarris Tabrizī, *Rayḥānat al-adab*, vol. 2, pp. 59–60; Ma’šūm ‘Alī-Shāh, *Ṭarā’iq*, vol. 3, p. 330; Istakhrī, *Uṣūl*, pp. 496–506; Khāwarī, *Dhahabīyya*, 364–386. Cf. Leonard Lewisohn, ‘The *Qawā’im al-anwār* of Rāz-i Shīrāzī and Shi‘i Sufism in Qajar Persian,’ in Denis Hermann and Fabrizio Speziale (ed.), *Muslim Cultures of the Indo-Iranian World during the Early Modern and Modern Periods* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz/IFRI, 2010), pp. 247–271.

41 Mu‘allim Ḥabībābādī, *Makārim*, vol. 2, p. 324; Āqā Buzurg Ṭihrānī, *al-Dharī‘a ilā taṣānīf al-Shī‘a* (Beirut: Dār al-Aḍwā, 1983), vol. 5, p. 127 §523; Muṣliḥ al-Dīn Mahdawī, *Sayrī dar tārikh-i takht-i fülād-i Iṣfahān* (Isfahan: Anjuman-i Kitābkhānahā-yi ‘Umūmī-i Iṣfahān,

inclined thinker and teacher of Muḥammad Riḍā Qumshā'ī (d. 1306/1889) who played a prominent role later in the establishment of the *'irfān* curriculum in Tehran;⁴² Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Tunikābunī (who later moved to and taught in Tehran); Mīrzā Sulaymān Tunikābunī (d. 1270/1853), the father of the author of the prominent Qajar biographical dictionary *Qīṣaṣ al-ʿulamāʾ*;⁴³ his own son Mīrzā Ḥasan (d. 1306/1888) who wrote a short treatise on mysticism titled *Asfār-i arbaʿa* (and, in fact, the famous gloss by Nūrī on this element of the opening of Mullā Ṣadrā's work is transmitted by him) as well as glosses on the *Asfār* and *Shawāriq*;⁴⁴ and, of course, Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī (d. 1289/1873).⁴⁵ To continue the Gilānī theme, most of his major students were also fellow countrymen from the north (Langarūd, Tunikābūn, Māzandarān). The presence of Sufis among his students and contemporaries brings into question the reliability of the story cited by Tunikābunī of Nūrī's meeting with Abū l-Qāsim Sukūt Shirāzī during which he allegedly refused to shake the hand of the Sufi whom he considered to be both impure and an unbeliever (*najis u kāfir ast*).⁴⁶ Alternatively the anecdote—from a rather anti-Sufi source—might be accurate but, instead of reflecting an anti-Sufi bias, demonstrate Nūrī's embroilment in intra-Sufi polemics since Sukūt was a Nūrbakhshī but most of Nūrī's affiliates were Dhahabīs.

Apart from Sabzawārī, his most important students for the transmission of philosophy were:

1. Mullā Muḥammad Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad Ṣādiq Lāhijānī Langarūdī (d. 1260/1844) who was a commentator on *al-Ḥikma al-ʿarshiyya* and *al-Mashāʾir*, that latter in particular, was heavily influenced by Nūrī.⁴⁷ Two

1370 Sh./1991), vol. 1, p. 116. The text was recently published and attributed to Mullā Ismāʿīl Darb-i Kūshkī Iṣfahānī (d. 1304/1887) who had been a student of Mīrzā Ḥasan Nūrī, see *Jalawāt-i Nāshirīyya*, ed. ʿAlī-Riḍā Jawānmardī Adīb (Tehran: Bunyād-i Ḥikmat-i Islāmī-i Ṣadrā, 1394 Sh./2015). Another work, which has also been published in the name of Darb-i Kūshkī, is also attributed to Mullā Ismāʿīl Iṣfahānī, see "Sharḥ-i ḥadīth-i Ra's al-Jālūt," ed. Sayyid Muṣṭafā Muḥaqqiq Dāmād, *Nāma-yi Farhangistān* 12–13 (1378 Sh./1999): 121–126.

42 Tunikābunī, *Qīṣaṣ al-ʿulamāʾ*, p. 145; Mudarris Gilānī, *Muntakhab*, pp. 96–97; Amīr Saʿīd Ilāhī, "ʿArāʾ u aḥwāl-i Sayyid Raḍī Lārījānī," *Kayhān-i andīsha* 62 (Mīhr 1374 Sh./1995): 65–73; idem, "Sayyid Raḍī Lārījānī," *Ittilāʾāt: Ḥikmat u maʿrifat* 56 (Ābān 1389 Sh./2010): 55–60.

43 Mudarris Gilānī, *Muntakhab*, p. 101; Tunikābunī, *Qīṣaṣ al-ʿulamāʾ*, p. 192.

44 Muṣṭafā al-Dīn Mahdawī, *Aʿlām-i Iṣfahān* (Isfahan: Markaz-i Iṣfahānshināsī, 1386 Sh./2007), vol. 2, p. 505.

45 See chapter 4 in this volume.

46 Tunikābunī, *Qīṣaṣ al-ʿulamāʾ*, p. 192.

47 Dirāyatī, *Fihristwāra*, vol. 6, p. 1059; Raḥīm Qāsimī, *Gulzār-i muqaddas* (Isfahan: Sāzmān-i Farhangī-Tafrīḥī-i Shahr-dārī-i Iṣfahān, 1389 Sh./2011), vol. 1, pp. 249–250; Mahdawī, *Aʿlām-i Iṣfahān*, vol. 2, pp. 306–307; Muḥammad Jaʿfar Lāhijānī, *Sharḥ-i risāla-yi Mashāʾir*, ed.

glosses on the *Tajrīd al-i’tiqād* cycle are attributed to him: on the gloss of Āqā Jamāl Kh^wānsārī (d. 1125/1713) on Shams al-Dīn Khafrī (d. 942/1535), and on the ‘new’ commentary of ‘Alī al-Qūshjī (d. 879/1474)—the latter is dated 1255/1239. He supposedly wrote an incomplete mystical exegesis titled *Miftāḥ al-khazā’in*. Qāsimī and Mahdawī record a death date of 9 Rabi‘ 11 1260/28 April 1844 and state that Karbāsī led his funeral prayers after which he was buried in Wādī al-Salām in Najaf near the shrine to the prophets Hūd and Šālīḥ.⁴⁸ Lāhijānī had studied with Karbāsī and Mīrzā Abū l-Qāsim Khātūnābādī as well as Nūrī, and was famed as the teacher of the next generation who were significant teachers in Tehran such as Āqā ‘Alī Ṭīhrānī, Sayyid Raḍī Māzandarānī, Sayyid Abū l-Ḥasan Jilwa (d. 1314/1897) and Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha‘ī. He taught the latter three texts in ‘irfān such as Qayṣarī’s *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*—this influence is clear in the texts’ many citations of that tradition.

The commentary on *al-Mashā‘ir* should be placed within the desire of the circle of Nūrī to gloss the Sadrian text but also to refute the hostile commentary of Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsā‘ī (d. 1241/1826).⁴⁹ In the text, which was edited by Āshtiyānī based on three manuscripts the earliest dating from 1255/1839 suggesting that it was written before then and hence late in his life, he rarely cites other works but consistently responds to the positions of Aḥsā‘ī that he cites, each time beginning with the phrase, ‘the Shaykh claims’ (*qāla l-shaykh*). Most of the commentary is on the first section on ontology. Lāhijānī states that his aim in the work was to clear up confusions and respond to the ignorance of his time—alluding to Aḥsā‘ī—especially since those who do not understand the claim maintain it is undemonstrative and rhetorical when it is fact they who fail to see the argument.⁵⁰ Most of his corrections of Aḥsā‘ī relate to the

Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (Mashhad: Kitābfurūshī-i Zuwwār, 1342 Sh./1963). Āshtiyānī’s edition of the text is extremely useful because he consistently comments in footnotes on the relevant views of Nūrī on the same text. The gloss on the ‘*Arshiyya*’ is cited by Ṭīhrānī, *Dharī‘a*, vol. 12, p. 368.

48 Qāsimī, *Gulzār-i muqaddas*, vol. 1, p. 249; Mahdawī, *A‘lām-i Isfahān*, vol. 2, p. 307.

49 Corbin in his edition and translation of *al-Mashā‘ir* relied heavily on the commentary of Aḥsā‘ī; see Mullā Ṣadrā, *Le livre des pénétrations métaphysiques: Kitāb al-mashā‘ir*, ed. H. Corbin (Tehran/Paris: L’Institut français, 1964). Apart from the lithograph, there is a modern edition of Aḥsā‘ī’s *Sharḥ al-Mashā‘ir* (Beirut: Mu‘assasat al-Balāgh/Mu‘assasat al-Iḥqāqī, 2007). The recently published edition and English translation of *al-Mashā‘ir* draws heavily in its interpretation on Lāhijānī; see Mullā Ṣadrā, *The Book of Metaphysical Penetrations*, tr. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, edited and annotated by Ibrahim Kalin (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 2014).

50 Lāhijānī, *Sharḥ-i risāla-yi Mashā‘ir*, pp. 15–19, 24.

metaphysics of Mullā Ṣadrā since the former often criticises both the notion of the ontological primacy of existence (*aṣālat al-wujūd*) as well as its modulation (*tashkīk*). Aḥsā'ī famously held that both existence and essence come into extra-mental reality simultaneously and are instaurated by God, contrary to Mullā Ṣadrā who held that essences were unreal and merely posited in the mind and hence could not be instaurated by God.⁵¹ Similarly, Lāhijānī defends the Sadrian doctrine of God, insofar as He is the simplest reality being identical to all things, by referring to narrations from 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib.⁵² In fact, this strategy of combating Aḥsā'ī's use of the narrations by citing scripture is conscious and also in line with his position that true philosophy, following the Sadrian tradition, arises from the prophetic intellectual inheritance.⁵³

2. Mullā 'Abd Allāh Zunūzī (d. 1257/1841) had already studied jurisprudence with Mīrzā-yi Qummī before coming into the service of Nūrī.⁵⁴ The latter sent him to Tehran to teach at the Madrasa-yi Khān Marwī—at the request of the court and with the patronage of Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh—and thus he was central to the establishment of the philosophical curriculum, and especially the works of Mullā Ṣadrā there, perpetuated by his students who included his son 'Alī as well as Mīrzā Ḥasan Ṭāliqānī and other figures. He was a prolific glossator on the works of Mullā Ṣadrā including *al-Shawāhid*, *al-Asfār*, *al-Mabda' wa-l-ma'ād*, and *Asrār al-āyāt*, all works that had been of interest to his teacher. Of his independent works, two in Persian stand out: *Lama'āt-i ilāhiyya wa ma'ārif-i rubūbiyya* on the nature of God dedicated to Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh and completed 6 Rabi' I 1240/29 October 1824, and *Anwār-i jalīyya* glossing (at the request of Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh when on procession in Fars and completed two years later in 1247/1832) the famous narrative of Kumayl on the nature of reality (*mā l-ḥaqīqa*) reported from 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib.⁵⁵

In the *Lama'āt*, he broadly follows Mullā Ṣadrā and cites his work copiously, and on the Peripatetic tradition he draws upon the *Ishārāt* and *Tajrīd* cycles of text. The text is divided into twenty chapters starting with the proof for the existence of God (including the importance of the element of infinite regress in the cosmological argument) and its

51 Ibid., pp. 40, 182–187, 253.

52 Ibid., p. 236.

53 Ibid., p. 19.

54 Mudarris Tabrizī, *Rayḥānat al-adab*, vol. 2, p. 390; Mu'allim Ḥabībābādī, *Makārim*, vol. 5, p. 1551; Bāmdād, *Sharḥ*, vol. 6, pp. 147–148; Mudarris Gilānī, *Muntakhab*, pp. 116–117.

55 Zunūzī, *Lama'āt*, and idem, *Anwār*.

relationship to key Sadrian doctrines such as the primary and objective reality of existence (*aṣālat al-wujūd*), its modulation (*tashkīk*), and the singular reality comprising all things (*basīṭ al-ḥaqīqa kull al-ashyā’*) albeit within the Avicennan framework of radical contingency. The remaining chapters examine the divine attributes of which he devotes the most space (as was the tradition) to the nature of divine power and knowledge. Like his teacher, he displays an interest in Mīr Dāmād and his theory of perpetual creation in *al-Qabasāt* but puts forward an independent Avicennan position, criticising the positions of Mullā Ṣadrā and Mīr Dāmād in favour of Avicennan eternalism (*ḥudūth dhātī*) in which creation is merely a logical result of the Necessary Being.⁵⁶ In fact, he tries to reconcile them by arguing that they both understood that Avicenna’s position was the most satisfactory. Elsewhere he defends Mullā Ṣadrā’s position on divine knowledge as one stemming from presence and the identity thesis (*ittiḥād al-‘āqil wa-l-ma‘qūl*), drawing upon the analogy with human knowledge which, like the external senses are considered to be faculties of the soul (reflecting the strong internalism of Mullā Ṣadrā), and defending God’s knowledge of particulars by rejecting Avicenna’s account of representational knowledge.⁵⁷ Reading the text, one gets the distinct impression of a thinker steeped in the Avicennan as well as the Sadrian tradition.

Anwār-i jaliyya is a more mystically inclined work and the most detailed commentary on the famous narration. Like the *Lama’āt* (to which he intermittently refers back), he begins with an extensive metaphysical introduction on the Sadrian doctrines of the primacy of existence and its modulated nature, pointing towards monism, and then drawing upon scriptural proofs to corroborate his positions.⁵⁸ It is only after that that he begins the commentary proper. He links his reading of the text with the school of Ibn ‘Arabī even citing previous major Shi‘i figures within it such as ‘Abd al-Razzāq Kāshānī (d. 736/1336) and Ibn Abī Jumhūr al-Aḥsā‘ī (d. after 909/1504).⁵⁹ Kāshānī’s own commentary is cited extensively. He also connects this tradition of monism with a mystical reading of the (in) famous *namaṭ* IX of Avicenna’s *al-Ishārāt*.⁶⁰

56 Zunūzī, *Lama’āt*, pp. 18–19, 34–35, 171–172.

57 Ibid., pp. 81–82, 318–320.

58 Ibid., pp. 25–28, 31–34, 54–62.

59 Ibid., pp. 360–364.

60 Ibid., pp. 249–250.

3. Mullā Ismāʿīl b. Samīʿ ‘Wāḥid al-ʿAyn’ Iṣfahānī (d. 1277/1860), who was a commentator of the *Asfār*, *ʿArshiyya* and *Mashāʿir*, as well as glossator of *Shawāriq al-ilhām* (dated 1272/1855, printed on the margins of the Tehran 1267/1851 lithograph). Like his teacher, he defended the school of Mullā Ṣadrā, especially against Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsāʾī.⁶¹ He was also a teacher of Sabzawārī. In later life, at the request of the court, he moved to Tehran; while accompanying the Shah to Sulṭāniyya, he fell ill and died in Gīlān.

In the introduction to the *Sharḥ al-ʿArshiyya*, Iṣfahānī clarifies the need to write a commentary on the valuable work of Mullā Ṣadrā, which truly revives the ancient (Neoplatonic) tradition because of the vicious refutation of Aḥsāʾī—‘may God preserve him from misfortunes and errors’—that may mislead students.⁶² He claims to have been commissioned by his friends and dear ones, perhaps an allusion to Nūrī’s order to refute Aḥsāʾī. His text draws upon the glosses of Nūrī and systematically responds to Aḥsāʾī’s critique. He explicitly says so and then proceeds to defend the key doctrines of the primacy, modulation, and unity of existence—the systematic nature of their presentation recalls the textbook of his student Sabzawārī, the *Sharḥ ghurur al-farāʾid*.⁶³ As expected, he defends Mullā Ṣadrā against the charge of absolute monism (that only God exists and all that we perceive is literally in God, a notion known as *sinkhiyyat al-wujūd*) and glosses the famous doctrine of the simple reality to express the absolute dependence of creation upon God.⁶⁴ Repeatedly, Iṣfahānī claims that Aḥsāʾī’s refutations are inaccurate because they merely reflect his misunderstanding of the text of Mullā Ṣadrā and not the inadequacy of the proofs.⁶⁵ Sometimes he takes up certain debates, for example, on the Platonic forms adjudicating between Avicenna and Suhrawardī, of course taking the latter’s side and affirming the importance of the ‘imaginal realm’ (*ʿālam al-mithāl*).⁶⁶ Similar to the previous two thinkers, he uses scriptural proof texts to refute Aḥsāʾī.

61 Tunikābunī, *Qīṣaṣ al-ʿulamāʾ*, p. 41; Muʿallim Ḥabībābādī, *Makārim*, vol. 6, pp. 2152–2153; Mudarris Gīlānī, *Muntakhab*, pp. 45–46; Ṭīhrānī, *Dharīʿa*, vol. 5, p. 57; vol. 10, p. 202; vol. 21, p. 38; Mullā Ismāʿīl Iṣfahānī, *Sharḥ al-Ḥikma al-ʿarshiyya*, ed. Muḥammad Maṣʿūd Khudāwardī (Tehran: Muʿassasa-yi Pazhūhishī-i Ḥikmat u Falsafa-yi Īrān, 1391 Sh./2012); the glosses on *al-Mashāʿir* were printed on the margins of the 1315/1898 Tehran lithograph.

62 Ibid., pp. 134–135.

63 Ibid., pp. 171ff.

64 Ibid., pp. 195–199.

65 Ibid., p. 211.

66 Ibid., pp. 216–221. Mullā Ṣadrā’s own position on Platonic forms is not so straightforward; see Rüdiger Arnzen, *Platonische Ideen in der arabischen Philosophie* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011), pp. 203–211.

Ṣadūqī Suhā mentions thirty-five students in all—most of them studied the works of Mullā Ṣadrā and the *Tajrīd al-i'tiqād* of Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274) the main textbook in philosophical theology from the medieval period via the explanatory paraphrase *Shawāriq al-ilhām* of 'Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī (d. 1072/1661), the son-in-law and student of Mullā Ṣadrā, the fruit of which was no doubt the *marginalia* of Nūrī and Ismā'īl Wāḥid al-'Ayn Iṣfahānī on the Tehran 1267/1851 lithograph. Many of his famous students also became in turn teachers of the *Shawāriq* and the works of Mullā Ṣadrā. The *Shawāriq* covers the first three sections (*maqṣad*) of the *Tajrīd*, namely the ontology (*umūr 'amma*), the categoriology (*al-jawhar wa-l-'araḍ*) and the proof of the existence of God and His attributes (*ithbāt al-Ṣāni'*), which were the philosophically critical sections much glossed by Khafī and Āqā Jamāl and were central to the debates within Avicennan *kalām* from the medieval period if not from the late Timurid one.⁶⁷ The *Shawāriq* inducted students into the study of philosophical theology and was a propaedeutic to the higher study of the works of Avicenna (particularly at this stage it seems *al-Ishārāt* but not the metaphysics of *al-Shifā'* which had been popular until the eighteenth century but was no longer), and Mullā Ṣadrā. Zunūzī and Tunikābunī took Nūrī's teachings to Tehran, thus initiating the formation of what is called by Sayyed Hossein Nasr the 'school of Tehran' in philosophy and mysticism, which owes much to the mediation of his network. Another major line of influence on philosophy that reverted to Tehran and also to the modern seminary in Qom is mediated through Sabzawārī. For the transmission of his mystical and even occult ideas, Sayyid Raḍī Lārījānī Māzandarānī is the key figure; his own inclinations led to an accusation of *taḳfīr* from Ibrāhīm Karbāsī, a friend of Nūrī.⁶⁸ Perhaps due to this attack, he took the invitation of Mīrzā Ismā'īl Gurgānī, a comptroller at court, to move to Tehran to teach.⁶⁹ Mīrzā Ḥasan, Nūrī's son, remained an important teacher in Isfahan and continued his father's interest in philosophy and mysticism, tying the two together in a short treatise titled *Risāla-yi Asfār-i arba'a dar sulūk*.⁷⁰ Alongside Sayyid Raḍī, he was a teacher of Qumsha'ī, who established

67 Khafī, Shams al-Dīn, *Ta'liqa bar ilāhiyyāt-i Sharḥ-i Tajrīd-i Mullā 'Alī Qūshchī*, ed. Firūza Sā'atchiān (Tehran: Mīrāth-i Maktūb, 1382 Sh./2004), which covers the proof for the existence of God (*maqṣad* 111); part of Khwānsārī's gloss dealing with the incipience of the cosmos, criticising Mīr Dāmād's position of perpetual creation (*ḥudūth dahrī*) has been published in *Sab' rasā'il*, ed. Tūysirkānī, pp. 229–237. Cf. 'Alī Ṣadrā'ī Khū'ī, *Kitābshināsī-i Tajrīd al-i'tiqād* (Qom: Kitābkhāna-yi Āyat Allāh Mar'ashī Najafī, 1382 Sh./2003), pp. 97–101, 121–124.

68 Āshtiyānī, 'Muqaddima', to Mullā Ṣadrā, *Shawāhid*, pp. 89–90.

69 Ṭārimī, 'Ḥawza,' pp. 67–69.

70 Āshtiyānī, 'Muqaddima', p. 102. Ṣadūqī Suhā, *Ḥukamā'*, p. 151. Mīrzā Ḥasan apparently spent some time teaching *ḥikmat* in Karbala (perhaps through his association with

the *Tamhīd al-qawā'id* of Ibn Turka Iṣfahānī (d. 835/1432) as a key text in the study of *ʿirfān* in Tehran.⁷¹ However, it is quite clear given the evidence of Nūrī's ownership and glossing of the work of Ibn Turka that the introduction of his occultist's ideas into the seminary curriculum of *ʿirfān* may well have started with Nūrī.

3 His Works

Nūrī was a prolific glossator who presented the work of Mullā Ṣadrā through his comments. He also exhibited an interest in the works of Mīr Dāmād and the occult, in particular, lettrism (*ʿilm al-ḥurūf*) that played a major role in his conception of philosophy.⁷² In terms of the works of Mullā Ṣadrā, he wrote glosses on both metaphysical works and those in philosophical theology and scriptural disciplines:

- 1) Gloss (*ḥāshīya*) on *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-Kāfī* focuses primarily on the section on divine unity (*kitāb al-tawḥīd*).⁷³ The original commentary of Mullā Ṣadrā is in itself incomplete. A number of the glosses concern a Sadrian explanation of the relationship between God and the cosmos as being in a state of togetherness (*maʿiyya*) and within the paradigm of a modulated order of being (*tashkīk*), which is Mullā Ṣadrā's understanding of Ibn ʿArabī's monism.⁷⁴
- 2) Gloss on *Asrār al-āyāt* comprises a brief set of notes printed with the text of Mullā Ṣadrā.⁷⁵ These are just some marginal glosses on his copy of the text. In one place, he comments on the importance of death as a stage in

nascent Shaykhī circles), and also in Tehran, where his students included Jilwa. His gloss on the *Sharḥ al-Hidāya* of Mullā Ṣadrā was published in the margins of the Tehran lithograph of 1313/1895.

71 On the course of *ʿirfān* since the Qajar period and the development of curricula and ideas, see Zoheir Esmail, *Between Philosophy and ʿIrḥān: Interpreting Mullā Ṣadrā from the Qājārs to Post-revolutionary Iran*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Exeter, Exeter, 2016.

72 His interest seems to arise from both Shiʿi lettrism and the tradition associated with the school of Ibn ʿArabī; on which, see Pierre Lory, *La science des lettres en Islam* (Paris: Dervy, 2004).

73 Dirāyatī, *Fihristwāra*, vol. 4, p. 273; there are two manuscripts mentioned: MS Qom, Gulpāyigānī 1233, and MS Tehran, Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī 1265 which specifies only *kitāb al-tawḥīd*. The glosses are published in Mullā Ṣadrā, *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-Kāfī*, ed. Muḥammad Khwājāwī (Tehran: Muʿassasa-yi ʿUlūm-i Insānī u Mutālaʾāt-i Farhangī, 1370 Sh./1991), vol. 3, pp. 397–462; vol. 4, pp. 403–428.

74 Mullā Ṣadrā, *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-Kāfī*, vol. 3, pp. 446–448; vol. 4, pp. 419–420.

75 Mullā Ṣadrā, *Asrār al-āyāt*, ed. Muḥammad Khwājāwī (Tehran: Anjuman-i Hikmat u Falsafa-yi Irān, 1360 Sh./1981).

the process of human becoming which allows the animal spirit to be transformed into an angelic one for the afterlife.⁷⁶ In another place, he has a long comment on the nature of the path or bridge of unity along which all the friends of God traverse towards success in paradise; he says that in fact this path or bridge is identical to the soul of the believer on the path to God, thus internalising what is often externalised as part of the landscape of the afterlife.⁷⁷

- 3) Gloss on *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb* is broadly systematic and demonstrates, in particular, his interests in scriptural *‘irfān* and lettrism.⁷⁸ The original text is Mullā Ṣadrā’s major exposition of the nature of the scripture and how it reveals reality and opens the seeker to the homologies between the books of scripture, the cosmos and the human; as Nūrī says, it is God who reveals Himself through the human created in His image and through the scripture and the cosmos.⁷⁹ On the mystical exposition of the perfect human, he engages in a lettrist analysis of the name Muḥammad.⁸⁰ Elsewhere, he states that the descent of multiplicity from unity is mediated by the proliferation of letters and so the reversion to the One requires meditation upon words and letters, mediated by the person of the Imām who possesses *walāya*.⁸¹ Throughout the text, he stresses the importance of the method of *ta’alluh*, of *theosis*, a process of understanding and tasting reality that is beyond the level of reason; it is the rational faculty that needs to be tamed by the love of the intimates of God and those trained in *walāya*.⁸² It is only then that the seeker can truly understand the divine language of scripture, as he will have purified his heart and mind. Once the inner person is pure and focused upon the manifestation of the divine, he can read the text and begin to see the points from which meanings ascend, citing the famous mystical saying that is attributed to ‘Alī that each verse has an outer and inner sense as well as the limits and rising points of meaning (*ḥadd, muṭṭala’*).⁸³

76 Ibid., p. 158.

77 Ibid., p. 191.

78 *Dirāyatī, Fihristwāra*, vol. 4, p. 453, citing MS Tehran, Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī 1388 which I have consulted. The gloss has been published in Mullā Ṣadrā, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, ed. Muḥammad Khwājāwī (Tehran: Mu’assasa-yi Muṭāla’āt u Taḥqīqāt-i Farhangī, 1363 Sh./1984), pp. 787–881.

79 Ibid., p. 789.

80 Ibid., p. 792.

81 Ibid., p. 791.

82 Ibid., pp. 788–789, 795–804.

83 Ibid., pp. 810–811. The report is given in Sahl al-Tustarī, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘aẓīm*, ed. Muḥammad Bāsīl al-Sūd (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2002), p. 16, and on the authority

- 4) A set of glosses on *al-Mashā'ir* is attested in a Tehran lithograph of 1315/1897.⁸⁴
- 5) Gloss on *al-Hikma al-'arshiyya* is found in a singular manuscript that attracted the attentions of his contemporary Mullā Ismā'īl Wāḥid al-'Ayn Iṣfahānī and Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsā'ī, the latter in a more critical vein.⁸⁵ These glosses primarily concern the second part of the text of Mullā Ṣadrā on the nature of the human and its reversion to the One (*al-ma'ād*).
- 6) Gloss on *al-Asfār al-arba'a* is a series of notes usually commenting on the metaphysics and at times drawing out the mystical sense of Mullā Ṣadrā's *magnum opus*. It was printed on the margins of the Tehran lithograph of 1282/1865 and again in the old Qom edition of the 1950s. Nūrī's own glosses primarily are found in the first section of the first journey and are relatively sparse compared to Sabzawārī; he does not comment at all on the natural philosophy of the second journey (although his student Mullā Ismā'īl Wāḥid al-'Ayn Iṣfahānī does) nor on the third journey on divine attributes or even on the fourth on the nature of the soul. A number of glossators discussed what Mullā Ṣadrā meant by the four journeys themselves. In a gloss reported from his son Ḥasan, Nūrī argues that the purpose of the journeys is to make the human being realise that we live in a disintegrated and plural reality which is illusory and hence that we need to be integrated and understand the basically monistic nature of reality; as the seeker approaches God, he understands that the proof of the veracious (*burhān al-ṣiddiqīn*) is not only an ontological affirmation of God but also the only means to understand the totality of reality, hence the return to the sobriety of plurality in this universe in which the presence

of the fifth Imām al-Bāqir in *Tafsīr al-'Ayyāshī*, ed. Sayyid Hāshim Rasūli Maḥallātī (Beirut: Dār al-Maḥajjā' al-Bayḍā', 1991), vol. 1, p. 11.

84 Dirāyatī, *Fihristwāra*, vol. 4, p. 408, citing MS Tehran, Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī 1934, pp. 49–205. However, this information is wrong as the gloss in the manuscript is on *al-Hikma al-'arshiyya*. The gloss was on the margins of the lithograph produced by Aḥmad Ardakānī Shirāzī in Tehran in 1315/1897. Another manuscript in MS Tehran, Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī 1020, pp. 25–66, contains some glosses of Nūrī on the metaphysics and was copied in 1218/1804 by a student of Nūrī in Isfahan.

85 MS Tehran, Majlis-i Shūrā 1934, fols. 49–205 [‘Alī Ṣadrā’ī Khū’ī et al., *Fihrist-i nuskhahā-yi khaṭṭī-i kitābkhāna-yi Majlis-i shūrā-yi Islāmī* (Qom: Daftar-i Tablighāt-i Islāmī, 1376 Sh./1997), 1x.2, p. 645]. There are numerous copies of the Mullā Ismā'īl commentary, which was also published on the margins of the lithograph of Mullā Ṣadrā's original text: manuscripts include MS Tehran, Majlis-i Shūrā 4346. It has now been published in a critical edition (2012). For the hostile commentary, see Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsā'ī, *Sharḥ al-'Arshiyya*, ed. Šāliḥ Aḥmad al-Dabāb, 3 vols. (Beirut: Mu'assasat Shams Hajar, 2005).

of God everywhere can only happen once he has found God.⁸⁶ This is a clear expression of Mullā Ṣadrā's own monism filtered through the school of Ibn 'Arabī.

- 7) Gloss on *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya* is a series of notes partly in Arabic and partly in Persian on a set of issues about the nature of being and on the human soul taken from the first four sections (*mashāhid*) of Mullā Ṣadrā's text.⁸⁷ In particular, he keeps returning to *ishrāqs* 3, 4 and 5 of the first section that deal with the relationship between existence and essence and between the reality of being and things that exist.⁸⁸ His focus is thus upon the ontology of the school of Mullā Ṣadrā in this gloss.

He wrote a number of glosses on the works of the Safavid thinker Mīr Dāmād that indicate, in particular, his interest in lettrism and the desire to perpetuate his occultist heritage. We can trace a lineage of scholarly transmission from Nūrī back to Mīr Dāmād in the following manner: Nūrī → Bīdābādī → Nayrīzī → Mīr Muḥammad Hādī Qazwīnī → Jamāl al-Dīn Khwānsārī (d. 1125/1713) → Ḥusayn Khwānsārī (d. 1098/1687) → Mīr 'Alā' al-Dīn Ḥusayn known as Khalīfa Sulṭān (d. 1064/1654) and Sayyid Aḥmad 'Alawī (d. 1060/1651) → Mīr Dāmād.⁸⁹ The works in this category included the following:

First, there is the gloss on *Jadhawāt u mawāqīt*. The original text is perhaps Mīr Dāmād's most important work in Persian and a major attempt to reconcile metaphysics with the hermeneutics of theophany found in scriptural texts and a lettrist understanding of reality.⁹⁰ The editor has drawn on Nūrī's glosses in the codex 1674 in the Kitābkhāna-yi Malik (Tehran), though only a few are given. They are comprised of thoughts that derive from the school of Ibn 'Arabī and Mullā Ṣadrā such as his gloss upon the nature of the emanation of letters

86 The glosses are in the older Qom/Beirut edition of the text (1981) and not in the new SIPRI one; see Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Ḥikma al-muta'aliya fi l-asfār al-'aqliyya al-arba'a*, ed. R. Luṭfī et al. (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1981), vol. 1, pp. 16–17.

87 Dirāyatī, *Fihristwāra*, vol. 4, p. 313 citing two manuscripts from which I have consulted MS Tehran, University of Tehran 870, fols. 73–102 ['Alī-Naqī Munzawī, *Fihrist-i nuskhahā-yi khaṭṭī-yi kitābkhāna-yi markazī-i Dānishgāh-i Tihirān* (Tehran: Chāpkhāna-yi Dānishgāh, 1952), vol. 3, pp. 243–45].

88 Nūrī, *Hāshiya 'alā l-Shawāhid*, fols. 73r–88r, 94r–98r.

89 Most of these figures are well known. Khalīfa Sulṭān was a major courtier, vizier and son-in-law of Shāh 'Abbās I; see Iskandar Bay Munshī, *Ālam-ārā'-yi 'Abbāsī*, ed. Īraj Afshār (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Amīr Kabīr, 1335 Sh./1956), vol. 3, pp. 1681–1682; Mīrzā 'Abdullāh Afandī, *Riyāḍ al-'ulamā' wa-ḥiyaḍ al-fuḍalā'*, ed. Sayyid Aḥmad al-Ḥusaynī al-Ashkiwārī (Qom: Maktabat Āyat Allāh al-Mar'ashī al-Najafī, 1401/1981), vol. 2, pp. 51–55; Amīn, *A'yān al-Shī'a*, vol. 6, p. 164; Rula Abisaab, *Converting Persia: Religion and Power in the Safavid Empire* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2004), pp. 99–105.

90 Mīr Dāmād, *Jadhawāt u mawāqīt*, ed. 'Alī Awjabī with the glosses of 'Alī Nūrī (Tehran: Mīrāth-i Maktūb, 1380 Sh./2001).

and numbers from the One, denying that this entails a common genus between them and affirming the ontological priority of existence as the very stuff of the One and the many, as well as lettrist discussions such as the value of Abū Turāb, the nickname of Amīr al-mu'minīn (which also occurs in the glosses on *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* of Ibn Turka).⁹¹ Given the relative absence of the occult in the work of Mullā Ṣadrā, reading Nūrī is sometimes like reading what a lettrist Mullā Ṣadrā might be.

Second, he wrote a gloss on *Nibrās al-ḍiyā' wa-taswā' al-sawā' fī sharḥ bāb al-badā' wa-ithbāt jadwā l-du'ā'*. The original text is divided into two sections, the first on the nature of God's creative agency and the theological problem of *badā'* or how it seems to human beings that God changes His mind, and the second is a lettrist discussion that draws, often verbatim, on the well-known *Risāla-yi Hurūf* of Ibn Turka Iṣfahānī (d. 835/1432).⁹² The first section is prefaced with a long preliminary on the *walāya* of the *imāms* and proof texts that support it, no doubt to demonstrate why the scriptural basis of *badā'* should be accepted. Nūrī's glosses on section one demonstrates his debt to the conceptual framework of Ibn 'Arabī: while agreeing with Mīr Dāmād that *badā'* cannot be reduced to an analogy with legislative abrogation (*naskh*), he rejects the idea that it follows from a view that essences are ontologically prior (*aṣālat al-māhiyya*), which is attributed to Mīr Dāmād, and argues instead that one can understand the distinction between the divine decree (*al-qadr*) and the process of existentiation (*takwīn*) by an analogy to the levels of reality that unfold from the One as expounded in the cosmogonic scheme of Ibn 'Arabī.⁹³ It is not essence that is produced by the One since the first creation is the Muḥammadan reality (equivalent to the first *nous*), an existent from which all existents ensue; thereby he rejects the ontological priority of essence and the idea that essences issue from God in terms of the emanative process.⁹⁴ Similarly, the unreality of the divine attributes, often associated in the Shi'i tradition with a Mu'tazilī influence, is explained here in terms of the distinction between the unemanated and ineffable level of the divine essence (*aḥadiyya*) and the emanated and 'shadowy' level of the attributes and other

91 Ibid., pp. 295–296.

92 Mīr Dāmād, *Nibrās al-ḍiyā' wa-taswā' al-sawā' fī sharḥ bāb al-badā' wa-ithbāt jadwā l-du'ā'*, ed. Ḥamid Nāji Iṣfahānī with the glosses of 'Alī Nūrī (Tehran: Mirāth-i Maktūb, 1374 Sh./1995). On Ibn Turka and his *risāla*, see Matthew Melvin-Koushki, *The Quest for a Universal Science: The Occult Philosophy of Ṣā'in al-Dīn Turka Iṣfahānī* (1369–1432) (Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University, New Haven, 2012), esp. pp. 88–90, 463–475.

93 Mīr Dāmād, *Nibrās*, pp. 56, 64, 65.

94 Ibid., pp. 66–72.

effects of the One.⁹⁵ The recovery of human agency follows the same pattern of transposing divine determinism with a voluntarism that acknowledges the dominance of the divine names over the human realm, culminating in a saying attributed to Amīr al-mu’minīn which he repeats extensively in other works (such as the glosses on *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*), that the differentiation between God and His creatures is not characterised by remoteness but by distinction and analogy of the attribute (*al-tamyīz baynūnat al-ṣifa lā baynūnat ‘uzla*), which echoes a famous paradoxical formula encoded in the *Nahj al-balāgha* on the distinction and analogy of God and creation, namely that God is neither identical to nor distinct from his creation.⁹⁶ His glosses on the second section are fewer but show not only his interest in lettrism but also his clear engagement with the work of Ibn Turka whose *Kitāb al-Mafāḥiṣ* was clearly in his mind as he wrote—and corresponds with his discussion on letters, their values and significance discussed in his glosses on the *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* of Ibn Turka.⁹⁷

Third, he added a gloss on Mīr Dāmād’s *Taqwīm al-īmān*, which is one of his main works on philosophical theology.⁹⁸ The comments are fairly sparse and often involve a correction of Mīr Dāmād’s metaphysics based on Mullā Ṣadrā. For example, he criticises the former’s understanding of existence and its relationship to the predicable of genus based on the latter’s concept that it is existence that is ontologically prior (*aṣālat al-wujūd*) when considering any entity.⁹⁹ Elsewhere, he corrects Mīr Dāmād on the dynamic nature of existents by indicating Mullā Ṣadrā’s conception of motion in substance (*ḥaraka jawhariyya*).¹⁰⁰ One suspects that the brevity of the glosses suggests that they were written for personal use.

In *kalām*, he has sets of glosses on some further works of the Safavid era that reflect his own teaching on the subject. First, he wrote a gloss upon the gloss of Jamāl al-Dīn Khwānsārī (d. 1125/1713) upon the gloss of Khafīrī upon the *Sharḥ al-Tajrīd* of Qūshjī (d. 879/1474).¹⁰¹ Another gloss focuses on the

95 Ibid., p. 66.

96 Ibid., p. 67; Nūrī, *al-Raqūma al-nūriyya*, p. 67; cf. al-Sayyid al-Raḍī (compl.), *Nahj al-balāgha*, ed. Ṣubḥī al-Ṣāliḥ (Qom: Dār al-Hijra, 1386/1967), p. 40.

97 Mīr Dāmād, *Nibrās*, pp. 81, 82, 97, 101, 109–114.

98 Mīr Dāmād, *Taqwīm al-īmān wa-sharḥuhu Kashf al-ḥaqā’iq al-ḥakīm al-ilāhī Sayyid Aḥmad al-Alawī al-‘Āmilī ma’ ta’liqāt al-ḥakīm al-ilāhī Mullā ‘Alī al-Nūrī*, ed. ‘Alī Awjabī (Tehran: Mirāth-i Maktūb, 1376 Sh./1997), based primarily on the *ḥāshiya* in MS Mashhad, Āstān-i Quds-i Riḍawī 7517.

99 Mīr Dāmād, *Taqwīm*, pp. 257–258, n. 7.

100 Ibid., p. 274, n. 8, and also pp. 276, n. 3, 277, n. 3.

101 Khwānsārī, as we saw above, appears in his lineage back to Mīr Dāmād. Cf. Dirāyatī, *Fihristwāra*, vol. 4, p. 115, which cites MS Qom, Mar’ashī 7347, fols. 1b–85a, although the

Shawāriq al-ilhām of Mullā Ṣadrā's student 'Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī.¹⁰² He signs them as 'Nūrī', and covers mainly sections of the first part of the text on ontology defending Mullā Ṣadrā's position on, for instance, motion in substance that was denied by Lāhijī (and which was one of the most common positions disputed in eighteenth century thinking). A third gloss is on the *Qurrat al-'uyūn fī a'izz al-funūn* of Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī (d. 1090/1680), a text on theology in twelve chapters that draws upon rational and scriptural argumentation to present Shi'ī positions on everything from knowing God and His attributes to understanding the resurrection and the afterlife.¹⁰³ The original text was completed two years before Fayḍ's death in 1088/1677, and demonstrates that his 'scripturalist' turn late in life did not obviate the need for rational theology, and perhaps it was for this reason that Nūrī was attracted to it.

He glossed one work by a contemporary. A *ḥāshiya* on the *Sharḥ al-fawā'id* of Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsā'ī is highly critical of his abilities in metaphysics.¹⁰⁴ He condemns much of Aḥsā'ī's speculations as polemical sophistries, and vehemently defends the monistic doctrine of being that was advocated by Mullā Ṣadrā whom Aḥsā'ī had targeted by saying that the idea that the philosophers

catalogue [Sayyid Aḥmad al-Ḥusaynī, *Fihrist-i nuskhahā-yi khaṭṭī-i kitābkhāna-yi 'umūmī-yi Āyatullāh Najafī Mar'ashī* (Qom: Kitābkhāna-yi Āyatullāh Mar'ashī Najafī, 2008), xix, p. 147] only mentions a gloss but not the glossator; Ṣadrā'ī Khū'ī, *Kitābshināsī-i Tajrīd*, pp. 125–126.

102 These glosses were published on the margins of the lithograph prepared by Riḍā Tajjir in Tehran in 1311/1893, which I have consulted (there is an earlier one dated 1274/1858). The lithograph has a number of glosses in the margins, the most prolific being by Nūrī's student Mullā Ismā'īl (signed 'Muḥammad Ismā'īl'), Nūrī's son Mirzā Ḥasan and Āqā 'Alī Ṭihrānī. For a useful discussion of the *Shawāriq*, its tradition, ideas and commentaries, see Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, *Dar ḥikmat u ma'rifat: Majmū'a-yi maqālāhā u muṣāḥaba-hā-yi ḥikmī*, ed. Ḥasan Jamshīdī (Qom: Pazhūhishgāh-i Farhang u Andisha-yi Islāmī, 1385 Sh./2006), pp. 77–121.

103 Cf. Dirāyatī, *Fihristwāra*, vol. 4, p. 355, citing MS Mashhad, Āstān-i Quds-i Riḍawī 11869, and MS Qom, Mar'ashī 6995 (*nasta'liq*, 32 ff, contemporary to the author); I have consulted the latter. For *Qurrat al-'uyūn*, I have consulted MS UCLA Minasian 120. There is also a lithograph of the *Qurrat al-'uyūn* [*fī l-ma'ārif wa-l-ḥikam*] appended to his *al-Ḥaqā'iq fī maḥāsīn al-akhlāq*, copied by Muḥammad Luqmān b. Abī l-Qāsim al-Ḥusaynī, Tehran, 1299/1882, pp. 165–251. Given that Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsā'ī wrote a critical gloss on the text, it is quite likely that Nūrī's gloss is a response to it.

104 On Aḥsā'ī, see Ma'sūm 'Alī-Shāh, *Ṭarā'iq*, vol. 3, pp. 337–338. Cf. Dirāyatī, *Fihristwāra*, vol. 4, p. 273 citing MS Qom, Mar'ashī 5653 [Ḥusaynī, *Fihrist*, xv, p. 50]. This is a very clear manuscript. For the original text and a study, see Idris S. Hamid, *The Metaphysics and Cosmology of Process According to Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsā'ī: Critical Edition, Translation and Analysis of Observations in Wisdom* (Ph.D. Dissertation, SUNY at Buffalo, 1998). Another edition of the text is: *Sharḥ al-Fawā'id*, ed. Shaykh Rāḍī Āl Salmān, 3 vols. (Beirut: Mu'assasat Fikr al-Awḥad, 2006).

held that the term ‘existence’ has shared semantic content (*ishtirāk ma‘nawī*) between the concept and its reality is a false accusation: rather, he argued that the mode of homonymy is a special case of modulation (*al-tashkīk al-khāṣṣī*).¹⁰⁵ Throughout this gloss, Nūrī staunchly defends the positions of Mullā Ṣadrā and the monistic reading of Ibn ‘Arabī naturalised in the *ḥikmat* tradition—it is a correction of the text from that perspective. For example, he takes the concept of lights that emanate from the divine and explains how the expression in the saying that Aḥsā’ī uses really fits the monistic reading of the relationship between the one and the many.¹⁰⁶ He completes the gloss with a repetition and explanation of the four journeys of the mystic that structure Mullā Ṣadrā’s *magnum opus*.¹⁰⁷ Along the way, we get another glimpse of his interest in the occult through a numerological and lettrist examination of the tripartite Shī‘ī profession of faith.¹⁰⁸

Apart from these glosses, he wrote a number of independent works, mainly short treatises in Arabic and Persian. There are numerous copies of a *Tafsīr sūrat al-tawḥīd* purporting to be a philosophical commentary.¹⁰⁹ The text seems incomplete, only consisting of the following: an introduction that includes *fawā’id*: the first on names of the *sūra*, the second on the contexts of revelation, the third on the levels of unity, the fourth on whether divine unity can be established by reason alone or requires revelation, the fifth on the term ‘*tawḥīd*’. These are then followed by discussions (*mabāḥith*): the first is on how to vocalise the term, the second on the grammar of the term, the third on the derivation of the term. The rest of the text consists of a philosophical commentary on the *basmala*. Overall there is nothing textually that conclusively points to it being Nūrī’s composition. *Al-Sirāj al-munīr fī l-kashf ‘an al-waḥdāniyyat al-kubrā* is an Arabic epistle on monism and seemingly survives in a single manuscript.¹¹⁰ There is a brief epistle in Persian on the imamate.¹¹¹ Another related epistle examines the infallibility of the Imams in Persian.¹¹² *Asrār-i*

105 Nūrī, *Hāshiya ‘alā Sharḥ al-Fawā’id*, MS Qom, Mar‘ashī 5653, fols. 1a, 2a.

106 Ibid., fols. 18a–18b.

107 Ibid., fol. 81a.

108 Ibid., fol. 13a.

109 Dirāyatī, *Fihristwāra*, vol. 3, p. 143, citing a number of manuscripts: MSS Mashhad, Āstān-i Quds-i Riḍawī 7511 and 11572, MS Qom, Mar‘ashī 14614, and MS Tehran, Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī 1719, fols. 436–454, which I have consulted.

110 Dirāyatī, *Fihristwāra*, vol. 6, p. 80 citing MS Tehran, University of Tehran 3092, fols. 540–623.

111 Dirāyatī, *Fihristwāra*, vol. 2, p. 151 citing a single manuscript MS Tehran, University of Tehran 4354, fols. 173–178.

112 Dirāyatī, *Fihristwāra*, vol. 7, p. 519 citing two manuscripts: MSS Tehran, Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī 1132 and 17535.

basmala is a Persian mystical investigation into the nature of the name of God.¹¹³ Writings on philosophy and legal theory (*maqālāt falsafīyya wa uṣūlīyya*) are cited in one manuscript.¹¹⁴ Another text contains some glosses on the ideas of Mullā Ṣadrā.¹¹⁵ This is another short text from the manuscript of his student Mīrzā Muḥammad Ṣādiq b. Muḥammad Jaʿfar.

Al-Maqālāt al-nūriyya ("Luminous writings") is attested in a single manuscript.¹¹⁶ This is a short set of notes on *ʿirfān* in the hand of the author on the nature of the emanation of being from God and its reversion through the human isthmus. This may be the same as *Risāla dar ʿirfān*.¹¹⁷ It may also be a short excerpt from *al-Raqīma al-nūriyya* discussed below. Another text is a set of thirty-five questions and answers, solicited from the court either directly from Āqā Muḥammad Khān (d. 1212/1797) or more likely from his nephew Faṭḥ ʿAlī Shāh (d. 1250/1834), on the nature of the human, the soul and its relationship to the body, on Jesus, the Imams and the afterlife (recently published).¹¹⁸ The repetitive nature of the text suggests that it is a compilation of a series of exchanges of correspondence with the Qajar court. *ʿIlm al-Bārī* is a short epistle on divine knowledge in Arabic with a mystical reading.¹¹⁹

Perhaps the most important philosophical work associated with his name is *Risāla basīṭ al-ḥaqīqa*, which has been published, and although it might not be his, it is probably by someone in his circle. His friend Mīrzā-yi Qummī requested it of him, and wrote an incomplete set of glosses on this text.¹²⁰ While the title suggests a focus, it is a wider treatise on aspects of the metaphysics of

113 Dirāyatī, *Fihristwāra*, vol. 1, p. 773 citing two manuscripts of which I have consulted MS Tehran, Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī 1020 in the hand of Nūrī's student Muḥammad Raḥīm Ṭāliqānī.

114 Dirāyatī, *Fihristwāra*, vol. 9, p. 1114 citing MS Tehran, University of Tehran 3092/5.

115 Dirāyatī, *Fihristwāra*, vol. 6, p. 530 citing MS Tehran, Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif-i Buzurg 534; vol. 4, p. 805 citing MS Tehran, University of Tehran, Adabiyyāt 387 is probably the same text.

116 Dirāyatī, *Fihristwāra*, vol. 9, p. 1115 citing MS Qom, Marʾashī 11214, fols. 76–79 [Ḥusaynī, *Fihrist*, xxviii, p. 305].

117 Dirāyatī, *Fihristwāra*, vol. 7, p. 465, citing a single manuscript MS Tehran, Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif-i Buzurg 534.

118 Nūrī, "Pursishhā u pāsukhhā-yi ḥikmī".

119 Dirāyatī, *Fihristwāra*, vol. 7, p. 590 citing one manuscript MS Tehran, Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif-i Buzurg 534.

120 Mudarrisi Ṭabāṭabāʾī, "Falsafa u ʿirfān," pp. 184–185. Cf. Dirāyatī, *Fihristwāra*, vol. 2, p. 498, citing the following manuscripts including MS Tehran, Dānishgāh 2624, MSS Mashhad, Āstān-i Quds-i Riḍawī 8127 and 12040, and MS Tehran, Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī 1719, fol. 388–403 which I have consulted. There is also an edition of the text in Nūrī, *Rasāʾil-i falsafī*, pp. 9–62.

Mullā Ṣadrā.¹²¹ A set of glosses upon this text is also attributed to Nūrī.¹²² The text begins with an examination of this key Sadrian doctrine on monism that uses the Neoplatonic motif of everything existing immanently in the simple intellect to describes the nature of God as being and his encompassing of the totality of existence. The *incipit*, therefore, reminds one of the famous passages in the *Theologia Aristotelis* from *mūmar* X on the one being the cause and perfection of all things (*tamām al-ashyā*).¹²³ Partly adopting a *kalām* style of dialectical argumentation, the author defends both the ontological primacy and the monistic reality of existence. The second treatise edited by Āshtiyānī is more of an *‘irfān* defence of the doctrine of being, focusing on the notion of being-a-thing (*shay’iyya*) in which the author cites and glosses a long extract from the work of Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī.¹²⁴ As such it acts like a short summary of Sadrian semantics of being with a primary concern to distinguish between existence as a concept and as an extra-mental reality in order to show that being is not one of the five universal predicables (from the tradition of Porphyry’s *Isagoge*) that can be applied to existent things that we encounter.¹²⁵ The Āshtiyānī edition is severely defective based on a single manuscript that explains the rather disjointed structure.

Another longer version of this titled *al-Raqīma al-nūriyya fī qā’idat baṣīṭ al-ḥaqīqa* has recently been edited—the title is attested in one of the manuscripts used for the edition.¹²⁶ It is far more systematic and improves on the Āshtiyānī text—or rather is a more complete version—based on different manuscripts.¹²⁷ Nūrī analyses existence from the perspective of *‘irfān*. He starts with the concept of existence, and what it means to be a thing.¹²⁸ Arguably, it brings out the more mystical side of the legacy of Mullā Ṣadrā. When we ascribe existence to something contingent, we ascribe an existential relationship that it bears

121 The only piece, to my knowledge, in English, on Nūrī is based on an analysis of this treatise; see Janis Esots, “Mullā ‘Alī Nūrī as an exponent of Mullā Ṣadrā’s teachings”, *Ishrāq* 7 (2016), pp. 44–53.

122 Manuscripts include MS Qom, Mar’ashī 11214 and MS Tehran, Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī 1719, which I have consulted.

123 ‘Abd al-Rahmān Badawī (ed.), *Aflūṭīn ‘inda l-‘Arab* [Uthūlūjiyā] (Cairo: al-Maktaba al-Nahḍa al-Miṣriyya, 1955), p. 134.

124 *Rasā’il-i falsafī*, pp. 41–43.

125 *Rasā’il-i falsafī*, pp. 53ff.

126 Nūrī, *al-Raqīma al-nūriyya*.

127 Nāji based his edition on MS Tehran, Sipahsālār 6459 (*naskh*, dated 1297/1880, based on autograph), MS Mashhad, Āstān-i Quds-i Riḍawī 8127 (*naskh*, 1303/1886, acephalous), and a codex (details not given!) in University of Tehran Central Library that he says is a compromise between the previous two manuscripts.

128 Nūrī, *al-Raqīma al-nūriyya*, p. 36.

to ourselves and to the Necessary Existent (known as the *idāfa ishrāqīyya*); in itself, a contingent has no existence but wallows in ontological indigence.¹²⁹ This is followed by a defence of the ontological primacy of existence within the dyad of existence-essence that defines contingents and the logical and semantic properties that arise.¹³⁰ Consistent with his glosses on the work of Mīr Dāmād, he criticises him for opposing the ontological primacy of existence in contingent beings.¹³¹ One of the results is to distinguish the concept of existence that is a secondary intelligible and can be analysed as one of the ten Aristotelian categories from the very act of being.¹³² However, allowing for the term 'existence' and 'thing' to be applied to God requires a discussion of the analogy between God and the creation that is known as modulation (*tashkīk*), critically focusing on the singularity of existence differentiated by levels of intensional intensity.¹³³ The remainder of the text focuses on the principle of the simple thing and how God's existence extends to all that exists, expressing a basic monism in which essences are purely illusory, and how multiplicity is manifest and emanates from unity. A striking element of his method is the blending of the philosophical language of Mullā Ṣadrā, with the mystical terminology of the school of Ibn 'Arabi and copious citations of Qur'ānic and scriptural texts including phrases of famous supplications like the Day of 'Arafa attributed to Imam Ḥusayn that describes God as 'absent but not lost, present but not found'.¹³⁴

Apart from these works, there are sets of Arabic glosses on different *ḥadīth* of Amīr al-mu'minīn 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (to whom in all his works he refers as *Qiblat al-ʿārifīn* or the Pole of the mystics) that pertain to the nature of the cosmos and of the Imam:

- a. *Inna l-arḍa ʿalā l-ḥūt*—"The Earth rests upon a whale".¹³⁵ Nūrī commented upon this famous mythical text on the nature of the cosmos in an allegorical manner associating every level upon which the cosmos sits with

129 Ibid., p. 43.

130 Ibid., pp. 46–64.

131 Ibid., p. 61.

132 Ibid., pp. 64–70.

133 Ibid., pp. 74–79.

134 Nūrī, *al-Raḡīma al-nūrīyya*, 175. For the phrase in the supplication, see Raḍī al-Dīn 'Alī Ibn Ṭawūs, *Iqbāl al-a'māl* (Beirut: Dār al-Ḥujja, 1997), p. 661.

135 Dirāyatī, *Fihristwāra*, vol. 6, p. 606, citing a single manuscript. The edition by Ḥamid Nāji Iṣfahānī (in *Mirāth-i ḥadīth-i Shī'a*, ed. 'Alī Ṣadrā'ī Khū'ī and Mahdī Mihrizi (Qom: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 1377–83 Sh./1998–2004), vol. xv, pp. 233–242) is based upon a single MS Tehran, Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif-i Buzurg 534 dating from the time of the author. The original *ḥadīth* is found in al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, ed. 'Alī-Akbar Ghaffārī (Tehran: al-Maktaba al-Islāmiyya, 1387/1968), vol. 8, p. 89, *ḥadīth* no. 55; 'Alī b. Ibrāhīm al-Qummī, *Tafsīr*, ed. Sayyid Ṭayyib

elements of the base nature of humans that tie them to materiality such as the bull denoting the appetitive and carnal desires of the human being that take him away from God. The *ḥadīth* ends with the inability of scholars to understand how far to take the parable and their amazement at the fact that everything stands on ‘water’—Nūrī in his mystical approach points to the fact that their lack of comprehension is because they are incapable of walking on water, an ability that the true friends of God (*awliyā’*) possess.

- b. *Al-ma’rifā bi-l-nūrāniyya*—that the gnosis of the Imam is luminous. This was another text that was popular in the Qajar period and some twenty manuscripts are extant, including three copies of Nūrī’s.¹³⁶ There is a famous and extensive gloss by Sabzawārī.¹³⁷ The text itself upon which the gloss was made seems to be similar to other material on the divine nature of the Imam such as the Expository Sermon (*khuṭbat al-bayān*) and the sermon of illumination (*khuṭbat al-nūrāniyya*).¹³⁸ Nūrī cites and comments on this *ḥadīth* in his other works as well. His own gloss, following the long text of the *ḥadīth*, makes clear his distance from purely literal and discursive understandings of the text. He identifies himself and his friends as ‘the brethren of purity and gnosis’ (*ikhwān al-ṣafā’ wa-l-’irfān*) who eschew invalidly speculative interpretations (*ta’wīl* that in effect are corruptions of the text—*tahrīf*). A proper understanding of this text entails an esoteric taste of the literal sense and only arises once a person on the mystical path understands the essentially monistic nature of reality. Nūrī uses his commentary to expound on monism and insists that everything that we think exists and is manifest including our very understanding of that existence stems from the One who alone truly exists, God.

Mūsawī al-Jazā’irī (Najaf: Maṭba‘at al-Nu‘mān, 1387/1968), vol. 2, p. 58; and Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār* (Beirut: Dār al-Aḍwā’, 1983), vol. 57, p. 79.

136 Dirāyatī, *Fihristwāra*, vol. 6, pp. 625–626, citing the manuscripts of Nūrī: MS Mashhad, Āstān-i Quds-i Riḍawī 11287, MS Tehran, Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī 17353, MS Qom, Ḥaram-i Ḥaḍrat-i Ma’šūma 703. The text was critically edited by Ḥamid Nāji Iṣfahānī.

137 Hādī Sabzawārī, *Majmū‘a-yi rasā’il-i faylasūf-i kabir Ḥājī Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (Mashhad: Idāra-yi Kull-i Awqāf-i Khurāsān, 1349 Sh./1970), pp. 381–487. There are plenty of other commentaries including ‘Abd al-Ṣamad Hamadānī (d. 1802), *Baḥr al-ma’ārif*, ed. Ḥusayn Ustād-Walī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Ḥikmat, 1416/1995), vol. 2, pp. 469–74. Cf. Dirāyatī, *Fihristwāra*, vol. 6, p. 626.

138 The *ḥadīth* is found in Majlisī, *Biḥār*, vol. 26, p. 1 (*bāb* 13, *ḥadīth* 1). Cf. Rajab al-Bursī, *Mashāriq anwār al-yaqīn fī asrār Amīr al-mu’minīn* (Beirut: Dār al-‘Alamī, n.d.), pp. 160–162, 164–172 for the other sermons. For an analysis of these sermons, see Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, “Aspects de l’imamisme duodécimaine I: Remarques sur la divinité de l’Imam,” *Studia Iranica* 25 (1996): 193–216.

Along the way, he cites both the Sadrian idea of God as the simple reality that encompasses all things (*basīṭ al-ḥaqīqa kull al-ashyāʾ*), and the Sadrian proof for the existence of God through the very analysis of divine being known as the proof of the veracious (*burhān al-ṣiddiqīn*). He continues with an exposition of how the One emanates existence through the stages of divine presence through to the perfect human being, the Muḥammadan reality. As such, the commentary is a classic example of a Sadrian explanation of a *ḥadīth*. At the end, he engages in polemics with some of this ‘contemporaries’ who fail to understand monism because they assume that matter is the basic principle and hence assume material continuity between all things that exist. Neither is God matter or materially continuous with the cosmos nor is the perfect human part of the same matter as the cosmos.

- c. *Hal ra ʾayta fī l-dunyā rajulan*—‘Have you seen a man in this world?’ This seems to have been a popular text to gloss in the Qajar period—there are more than fifty manuscripts of commentaries on it including nine copies of Nūrī’s gloss.¹³⁹ Nūrī uses it to gloss the nature of vision, the true nature of the human being and his faculties as well as the subtle substances and levels of the human that correspond to the level of reality emanating from the One. Ultimately what he means by the human being is the perfect human being (*al-insān al-kāmil*) or the cosmic nature of the Imam.
- d. Zaynab al-ʿAṭṭāra used to sell perfume to the Prophet and his daughter and the text is a conversation cited in the varia section (*rawḍa*) of *al-Kāfī* of al-Kulaynī on the nature of the cosmos.¹⁴⁰ This is the most extensive

139 Dirāyatī, *Fihristwāra*, vol. 6, pp. 630–632, including the following manuscripts of Nūrī: MSS Tehran, Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī 842 and 1819, MS Qom, Fayḍiyya 1570, and MSS Qom, Marʾashī 7297, fols. 48b–51a, and 3840, fols. 93a–96a. The text has also been edited by Ḥamid Nāji Iṣfahānī (in *Mīrāth-i ḥadīth-i Shīʿa*, vol. III, pp. 141–160). The *ḥadīth* is found in al-Bursī, *Mashāriq*, p. 231. Other glosses include: the Niʿmatullāhī Sufi Majdhūb ʿAlī-Shāh Kabūdarāhangī (*Rasāʾil-i Majdhūbiyya*, ed. Ḥamid Nāji Iṣfahānī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Ḥaqīqat, 1377 Sh./1998), pp. 109–110); Mahdī Narāqī, *Mushkilāt al-ʿulūm*, ed. Sayyid Muḥammad ʿAlī al-Raḍawī (Lucknow, 1305/1887), pp. 220–223; Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsāʾī, Sayyid Kāzīm Rashtī, and Abū l-Qāsim *mudarris* (who may be Khātūnābādī, his teacher).

140 Dirāyatī, *Fihristwāra*, vol. 6, p. 610, citing the following manuscripts: MS Tehran, University of Tehran 3092, MS Tehran, Dāʾirat al-Maʾārif-i Buzurg 534, MS Qom, Marʾashī 2010, fols. 1b–78b, and MS Tehran, Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī 1934, pp. 1–46, which I have consulted. The *ḥadīth* is cited in al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 5, p. 151, and Ibn Bābawayh, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, *bāb* 38, *ḥadīth* 1, pp. 269–270. There is apparently a commentary by Mullā ʿṢadrā, MS Tehran, Millī 264 comprising 6 folios in the hand of Muḥammad Ṣādiq Khurāsānī dated 1259/1843.

commentary that Nūrī wrote on a *ḥadīth* and another example of a gloss that expounds on monism.

- e. *Innā Abā Bakra minnī bi-manzilat al-sam‘*—this is an unusual report in a Shī‘i context in which the Prophet is purported to be praising the caliphs, striking a similitude of Abū Bakr to his hearing, ‘Umar to his seeing and ‘Uthmān to his feeling.¹⁴¹ Nūrī’s commentary follows the pattern of Safavid commentaries.

His most extensive independent treatise was *Hujjat al-Islām yā burhān al-milla* [also known as *Radd-i pādri*], an anti-Christian polemical response to Henry Martyn (1781–1812) with a completion date of 23 Rabī‘ I 1232/1817.¹⁴² It is the longest piece that Nūrī wrote in Persian—although similar to other Qajar era works, it contains a considerable number of passages in Arabic and hence was written for a scholarly audience. Martyn, who was a chaplain to the military of the East India Company, having served as a missionary in India from 1806 to 1810 and translated the New Testament into Urdu, turned his attention to a Persian New Testament and visited Iran in 1811, seeking to present copies to the Shah.¹⁴³ In Shiraz, he became embroiled in disputations with Mīrzā Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Ḥusaynī Fasā’ī (d. 1255/1839), and wrote two responses

141 Dirāyatī, *Fihristwāra*, vol. 6, p. 596, citing three manuscripts including MS Tehran, Majlis-i Shūrā 1020. The original *ḥadīth* is cited in the following: Muḥammad b. ‘Alī Ibn Bābawayh, *‘Uyūn akhbār al-Riḍā* (Najaf: al-Maṭba‘a al-Ḥaydariyya, 1390/1970), vol. 1, p. 280; idem, *Ma‘ānī l-akhbār*, ed. Sayyid Muḥammad Mahdī al-Kharsān (Najaf: al-Maṭba‘a al-Ḥaydariyya, 1391/1971), p. 387; Sayyid Hāshim al-Baḥrānī, *Tafsīr al-burhān* (Qom: Maṭba‘-yi Ismā‘īliyyān, 1412/1981), vol. 2, p. 240; ‘Abd ‘Alī Ḥuwayzī, *Tafsīr Nūr al-thaqalayn* (Qom: al-Maṭba‘a al-‘Ilmiyya, 1383/1965), vol. 3, p. 164. Ḥuwayzī cites the text from *‘Uyūn* completing it to note that the *ḥadīth* does not denote approval of the caliphs but rather that the faculties of the human such as sight, hearing and so forth are held accountable on the day of judgement and particularly on the issue of whether they testified to the *walāya* of ‘Alī.

142 Ed. Hāmid Nājī Iṣfahānī. There are numerous manuscripts (18) of this text, sometimes under the title *Radd-i pādri* (which denotes the genre).

143 John R. C. Martyn, *Henry Martyn (1781–1812), Scholar and Missionary to India and Persia: A Biography* (Lampeter: E. Mellen Press, 1999), pp. 95–128 for a useful if uncritical narrative; Avril Powell, *Muslims and Missionaries in Pre-Mutiny India* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1993), pp. 89–102, 107–114. For a discussion of these polemics and Persian responses, see ‘Abd al-Hādī Ḥā’irī, *Nakhustīn rūyārūyihā-yi andīshagarān-i Īrān bā du rūya-yi tamaddun-i būrzhūwāzī-i gharb* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Amīr Kabīr, 1367 Sh./1988); for the Safavid background to the polemics, see Rasūl Ja‘fariyān, *Siyāsāt u farhang-i rūzgār-i Ṣafawī* (Tehran: Nashr-i ‘Ilm, 1388 Sh./2009), pp. 965–998. A number of the sources seem rather confused about the text and suggest that Nūrī’s critique is aimed at the *Mizān al-ḥaqq* of Martyn; however, *Mizān al-ḥaqq* was a Christian polemic originally written in Arabic in 1829 and then translated into Persian in 1832 by the German missionary Karl Gottlieb Pfander (1803–65). Iṣfahānī in his introduction to the edition (pp. xxxii–xxxiii) discusses the relation between the two texts, and also gives a full list of the refutations of Martyn in Iran.

to his Arabic critique of Christianity.¹⁴⁴ He also debated with Sufis like the Nūrbakhshī Mīrzā Abū l-Qāsim ‘Sukūt’ Shīrāzī (d. 1239/1823), which may account for a Sufi response from the Ni‘matullāhī Ḥusayn ‘Alī-Shāh Iṣfahānī (d. 1234/1818).¹⁴⁵ Most Shi‘i responses to Martyn in Iran and India followed the ‘argument from reason’ by providing philosophical objections to Christianity, as well as rational defences of the Islamic notion of prophecy and revelation.¹⁴⁶ Another response was the *Ithbāt al-nubūwa* of Mīrzā ‘Īsā Khān Qā’im-Maqām Farahānī known as Mīrzā-yi Buzurg (d. 1239/1824), which was published by his son Mīrzā Abū l-Qāsim (d. 1251/1835); he also passed on the request from the court, in particular, from the Qajar prince ‘Abbās Mīrzā (d. 1251/1835), for Nūrī to write the refutation.¹⁴⁷ The request was partly due to the weakness of Fasā’ī’s response and the need for a more robust defence, which Nūrī himself recognised. Another impetus for Nūrī’s work could have been another refutation by the famous jurist Mīrzā-yi Qummī (d. 1231/1816), a close friend of his teacher Bīdābādī as we have seen above and an acquaintance of his own; this incomplete work titled *I’jāz al-Qur’ān* focused on Martyn’s attack on the divine origins of the scripture.¹⁴⁸ His ambivalence towards Sufi leaders and disdain for their work could also signal a need for a response as he felt that previous works, like that of Ḥusayn ‘Alī-Shāh, were inadequate.¹⁴⁹ Nūrī’s work was written at roughly the same time as another philosophical refutation by Mullā Aḥmad Narāqī (d. 1245/1829) titled *Sayf al-umma*, commissioned by the same Qajar prince ‘Abbās Mīrzā and completed in 1233/1817. Nūrī states that he wrote

144 A manuscript that contains Fasā’ī’s Arabic text and Martyn’s two Persian responses is MS Oxford, Bodleian Or. 765. These texts were translated in Samuel Lee, *Controversial Tracts in Christianity and Mohammadanism by the Late Rev. Henry Martyn and Some of the Most Eminent Writers of Persia* (Cambridge: J. Smith, 1824). Lee’s work included the response of Mullā Muḥammad Riḍā Hamadānī (d. 1237/1822) titled *Irshād al-muḍillīn fi ithbāt khātām al-nabiyyīn*.

145 Ḥusayn ‘Alī-Shāh, *Risāla-yi radd-i pādri*, ed. Maḥmūd Riḍā Isfandyār (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Ḥaqīqat, 1387 Sh./2008), esp. p. 44 on the request of ‘Abbās Mīrzā. Sukūt-i Shīrāzī was sometimes claimed as a Ni‘matullāhī but seems to have been Nūrbakhshī; see ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn Zarrīnkūb, *Dunbāla-yi justuyū dar taṣawwuf-i Irān* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Amīr Kabīr, 1369 Sh./1990), p. 317. On Ḥusayn ‘Alī-Shāh, see Zayn al-‘Ābidīn Shīrwānī, *Bustān al-sīyāḥa* (Tehran: Sanā’ī, 1315/1895), pp. 82–83; Ma’šūm ‘Alī-Shāh, *Ṭarā’iq*, vol. 3, p. 221.

146 Cf. Powell, *Muslims and Missionaries*, pp. 170–179. Another response of this type was Muḥammad Taqī Kāshānī, *Hidāyat al-mustarshidīn fi radd al-muḍillīn*, ed. Ḥamīd Riḍā Kiyānī (Tehran: Mu’assasa-yi Pazhūhishī-i Hikmat u Falsafā-yi Irān, 1396 Sh./2017).

147 See ‘Alī-Qulī Mīrzā l’tiḍād al-Saltāna, *Iksīr al-tawārikh*, ed. Jamshīd Kiyānfar (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Wismān, 1370 Sh./1991), pp. 539–540.

148 Ed. Sayyid Ḥusayn Mudarrisi Ṭabāṭabā’ī, *Waḥīd* 10 (1351 Sh./1972): 115–118.

149 Nūrī, *Hujjat al-Islām*, pp. 27, 73, describes Sufis as a Satanic group of heretics who in their ignorance and ability to misguide are like Christian missionaries.

the work at the request of his scholarly friends and dedicated it to Fath 'Alī Shāh, the same ruler to whom Martyn sent his work, adding that the need was great because of the increasing lack of intellectual skill among the scholars of his age.¹⁵⁰ Significantly, all the major responses to Martyn were commissions from the court, not least because he had dedicated his Persian translation of the New Testament and his vindication of Christianity to the King; it demonstrates the role of the court, as in the Safavid period before it, as the forum for polemics with missionaries.

In terms of method, Nūrī insisted upon using only rational arguments and drew upon his training in *ḥikmat*. Starting with rational premises, he demonstrates the invalidity of his opponents' argument, followed by the truth of his own position, in order to demonstrate the truth of Islam.¹⁵¹ For example, in his section on miracles, especially the splitting of the moon into two, he cites the Sadrian idea of motion in substance (*ḥaraka jawhariyya*) to prove its possibility.¹⁵² This proof is prefaced by his critique of the position of 'Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī, the famous theologian and son-in-law of Mullā Ṣadrā that miracles are due to a heightened faculty of imagination in the prophet, a theory that has its origin in the ideas of Avicenna.¹⁵³ Nūrī is clearly defending Mullā Ṣadrā against his Avicennan disciple, Lāhijī. The text itself is divided into two preliminary principles followed by a series of arguments. The preliminaries concern the nature of being and its division into perfect and imperfect, followed by a discussion of the dual nature of the human being as inclined to the good and to heaven on the one hand, and as inclined to the bad and to hell on the other. He then moves on to the nature of prophecy and contrasts Jesus, critiquing the notion of his divinity and the doctrine of the trinity as well as the doctrine of sacrifice and redemption, to Muḥammad, as a more rational exemplar. The proof in favour of Muḥammad then progresses to a discussion of the privileged nature of the Qur'ān and of miracles. Along the way there is an important discussion of *walāya* from the perspective of *ḥikmat*, the cosmological status and authority that the prophets and the Shi'i Imams have, citing by way of example 'Alī's presence at the time of Dhū l-Qarnayn.¹⁵⁴ In fact, this is the major theme of the text, an exordium on *walāya* that fits within the Qajar interest in the issue across the divide between Sufis and *ḥukamā'* that was growing at the time.

150 Nūrī, *Hujjat al-Islām*, pp. 4–7.

151 Ibid., pp. 10–11.

152 Ibid., pp. 184–186.

153 Ibid., pp. 179–184.

154 Ibid., pp. 266–273, 292–293.

Finally, Nūrī exhibited an interest in the occult and in the school of Ibn ‘Arabī. He wrote a set of glosses on the *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* of Ibn Turka Iṣfahānī, the famous occultist of the Timurid period, and another set of glosses on his *Tamhīd al-qawā’id*. He may well have established the ground for the promotion of the latter text as a key work in the ‘irfān curriculum. The gloss on the *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* demonstrates not only his deep affinity to and understanding of the Shi‘i school of Ibn ‘Arabī (in particular, to monism) but also his skill as a lettrist. His attempt at reconciling this school and lettrism with a Shi‘i commitment is clear through his extensive use of *ḥadīth* especially attributed to ‘Alī to exemplify the point; for example, monism is reconciled with Shi‘i *ḥadīth*.¹⁵⁵ He repeats in an abbreviated form his commentary on the famous *ḥadīth* on the luminous gnosis of the Imam.¹⁵⁶ He even seems to point towards one tendency in the modern ‘irfān tradition, namely the notion that Ibn ‘Arabī was a crypto-Shi‘i. For example, on the question of the seal of sainthood (*khatm al-walāya*), where it is famously stated that Ibn ‘Arabī claimed this status for himself during the Muḥammadan dispensation, he argues that if that was indeed his position, he was wrong since it is the prerogative of the Twelfth Imam.¹⁵⁷ He then goes on to claim that he saw in ‘an old manuscript’ a statement in the hand of Ibn ‘Arabī where he makes it clear that it is the Twelfth Imam who is the seal.¹⁵⁸

His gloss on the *Kitāb al-Mafāḥiṣ* of Ibn Turka, perhaps the *magnum opus* of early modern lettrism, is less well known but still significant.¹⁵⁹ Nūrī’s interest in the occult work of Ibn Turka is clear: he owned and annotated the oldest manuscript of his collected works, now preserved as MS Tehran, Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī 10196 and these glosses include a set on *al-Mafāḥiṣ*.¹⁶⁰ This

155 Ṣā’in al-Dīn Ibn Turka Iṣfahānī, *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, ed. Muḥsin Bidārfar (Qom: Intishārāt-i Bidār, 1420/1999), vol. 1, pp. 13, 16, 63, 117, 135, 191, 206, 219, 323; vol. 2, p. 701 and *passim*.

156 Ibn Turka, *Sharḥ*, vol. 1, p. 258.

157 On the issue of the seal of sainthood and its Shi‘i interpretation, see Henry Corbin, *En Islam iranien* (Paris: Gallimard, 1972), vol. 3, pp. 198–200; Michel Chodkiewicz, *The Seal of Saints: Prophethood and Sainthood in the Doctrine of Ibn ‘Arabī* (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1993), pp. 49, 136–137; ‘Abd al-Raḥīm ‘Anāqa, “Khatm-i walāyat az didgāh-i Ibn ‘Arabī u Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī,” *Pazhūhishnāma-yi zabān u adabiyāt-i Fārsī* 13 (winter 1388 Sh./2009): 87–110.

158 Ibn Turka, *Sharḥ*, vol. 1, p. 200.

159 Melvin-Koushki, *Quest*, pp. 330–378, 573–574.

160 MS Tehran, Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī 10196, fols. 52a–118b; Melvin-Koushki, *Quest*, p. 80; on the codex, see Muḥammad Taqī Dānishpazhūh, “Majmū‘a-yi rasā’il-i Khujandī,” *Farhang-i Īrān-zamīn* 14 (1345–46 Sh./1966–67): 307–312. While Nūrī’s hand is in relatively clear *nasta‘līq*, the age of the text and the nature of the fading ink make his glosses at times very difficult to read.

codex is the earliest and arguably the most valuable collection of Ibn Turka's works since at least one text might be an autograph. The whole codex is heavily annotated with numerological observations. Letters have a cosmogonic role as well as a scriptural reality that descends with prophecy.¹⁶¹ The descent of being into the cosmos is an expression of both the letters as well as the person of the perfect human being in the form of the Prophet and 'Alī—for which he cites the narration, 'If it were not for you, I would not have created the spheres.'¹⁶² All this is within a monist context as he cites the famous narration of God being alone and persisting in His solitude.¹⁶³ Throughout the text, he sees his job as the elucidation of the various allusions that are made, perhaps in the first instance clarifying their meaning for himself and his circle. His approach is to locate lettrism within the idiom of the mystical metaphysics of the school of Ibn 'Arabī.

4 His Philosophical Thought

While the most famous figure of Qajar philosophy, Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī owes his fame to his role in the dissemination of the school of Mullā Ṣadrā, especially through his composition of what became the central philosophy school-text of the modern period, the *Sharḥ Ghurar al-farā'id*, and through his glosses on the works of Mullā Ṣadrā, the individual who was responsible for reviving the study of philosophy in its traditional home of Isfahan was Sabzawārī's eminent teacher and who was also commentator on the work of Mullā Ṣadrā (d. 1045/1635–6), Mullā 'Alī Nūrī.¹⁶⁴ The Afghan sack of Isfahan 1134/1722 and the interregnum that followed drove philosophers out of the city, as Mullā

161 Ibn Turka, *Mafāḥiṣ*, fol. 53b.

162 Ibid., fol. 56b.

163 Ibid., fol. 57b.

164 For studies of Sabzawārī, see Sajjad H. Rizvi, "Hikma muta'alīya in Qajar Iran: Locating the life and work of Mulla Hadi Sabzavari (d. 1289/1873)," *Iranian Studies* 44 (2011): 473–496; Riḍānizhād Nūshīn, *Ḥakīm-i Sabzawārī. On Sharḥ Ghurar al-farā'id* or what is more popularly known as *Sharḥ-i manẓūma*, see the editions by T. Izutsu and M. Mohaghegh (Tehran: McGill Institute of Islamic Studies, 1348 Sh./1969) and by M. Mohaghegh (1999). It has been translated as *The Metaphysics of Sabzevari* by M. Mohaghegh and T. Izutsu (Tehran: Iran University Press, 1362 Sh./1983). For a wide-ranging and thoughtful modern commentary, see Murtaḍā Muṭaḥḥarī, *Sharḥ-i mabsūṭ-i Manẓūma*, 4 vols. (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Hikmat, 1404/1984).

Muḥammad Naʿīmā Ṭāliqānī (d. 1152/1739) described eloquently in the preface of his major work *Aṣl al-uṣūl*:¹⁶⁵

I was asked to write this when the age had taken up the sword of enmity against the people during the occupation of the city of Isfahan by the Afghan forces, and their killing of many of the inhabitants and of my fellow countrymen, and their pillaging of the city and the countryside around it and the putting to death of many believers, not least among whom were my friends, my relatives and my family (*al-ʿashāʾir wa-l-aqārib wa-l-ikhwān*). I fled to the city of Qom—the city of the sanctuary (*balḍat aman wa-amān*)—may God preserve her from misfortunes and from the ravages of the Afghans. I found refuge there far from my family and home. But there the request was renewed—and I was obliged to comply—and I did so willingly and determinedly, setting forth the text with the assistance of God and arranging it with an introduction, there chapters and a conclusion, and I called it *Aṣl al-uṣūl*.¹⁶⁶

The destruction led to the scattering of scholars and the emergence of new scholarly networks and patronage circles associated with regional court and cultural centres. However, the displacement of Isfahan was rather momentary and scholars had flocked back there in the generation before Nūrī—the fact that his teachers were based there and his intellectual formation was fashioned there testify to this.

Although he was not the first person whose work showed the influence of Mullā Ṣadrā's thought—that was probably, after the latter's students, Mullā Ṣādiq Ardistānī (d. 1134/1722), who was a teacher of Ṭāliqānī, in his *Ḥikmat-i Ṣādiqīyya*—nor the first to write glosses on the works of Mullā Ṣadrā—that was probably Muḥammad Bīdābādī, his own teacher—Nūrī does seem to have been the first to place the works of Mullā Ṣadrā at the heart of his teaching and to write a systematic set of glosses on all his major works.¹⁶⁷ Nūrī, therefore,

165 al-Amin, *Aʿyān al-Shiʿa*, vol. 10, p. 81; Iʿtimād al-Saltāna, *al-Maʾāthir wa-l-āthār*, ed. ʾIraj Afshār (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Asāṭir, 1363 Sh./1984), pp. 163, 182; Sayyid Aḥmad Ḥusaynī, *Talāmīdhat al-ʿAllāma al-Majlisī* (Qom: Kitābkhāna-yi Āyat Allāh Marʾashī Najafī, 1410/1989), p. 89; Khudrī, *Taʾammulī*, pp. 293–299; Henry Corbin, *La philosophie iranienne islamique aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles* (Paris: Buchet/Chastel, 1981), pp. 300–334.

166 Mullā Naʿīmā Ṭāliqānī, *Aṣl al-uṣūl*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (Tehran: Iranian Academy of Philosophy, 1359 Sh./1980), p. 2.

167 The text is actually in the hand of Ḥamza Gilānī quoting his teacher; cf. *Ḥikmat-i Ṣādiqīyya*, in Āshtiyānī (ed.), *Muntakhabāt*, vol. 4, pp. 63–220. It is primarily a study of perception, sensation and the nature of the soul and its faculties, and demonstrates two Sadrian doctrines: that the soul is united with its multiple faculties and that it comes into existence

represents a critical stage in the transmission of the school of Mullā Ṣadrā to the Qajar and the modern periods, bridging the generation of students and key figures of the eighteenth century with the period of the lithographing and dissemination of Mullā Ṣadrā's works and ideas in the modern Shi'i seminary and the intellectual world of Iran. A careful study of Nūrī reveals his pivotal role as well as his contribution to the formation of what is the modern tradition of *ḥikmat* and *'irfān* of the Shi'i seminary, of the study of philosophy, theology and mysticism with a dash of the occult.

Nūrī's career demonstrates the key features of the philosophical synthesis of the early Qajar period that followed on from the themes of *ḥikmat* in the eighteenth century such as the rise of the role of Mullā Ṣadrā, a tendency towards an Illuminationist (*ishrāqī*) reading of Avicennan philosophy through commentaries on texts of both schools, and the emergence of the discourse of *'irfān* as a serious development from and specialisation within a tendency of *ḥikmat* towards a particular 'way of life', and the mixing of inquiry as spiritual exercise (*riyāḍat*) and the quest for inner revelation (*kashf*).¹⁶⁸

One eighteenth-century figure, and teacher of Nūrī, in a work of *'irfān* summarised inquiry in his time as consisting of the ways of four types of scholars: theologians who are people of dialectic (*aṣḥāb-i qāl*), Peripatetic philosophers (*mashshā'in*) who are salesmen of discourse (*dar bāzār-i guftār*), Illuminationist philosophers who see their discipline in terms of spiritual exercise and inner revelation, and the Sufis who are people seeking direct experience of the ultimate (*ahl-i dhawq*) and who pursue the purification of the soul (*tazkiya-yi nafs*).¹⁶⁹ His own taste was clearly for the latter two, but the twin pillars of the *ḥikmat* tradition in the Qajar period became *ishrāqī* philosophy and a more theoretically minded approach to mystical speculation within the paradigm

with the body and survives it (*jismāniyyat al-ḥudūth wa-rūḥāniyyat al-baqā'*). But he denies another key Sadrian doctrine, namely, motion in substance (*ḥaraka jawhariyya*). Another text attributed to him demonstrates his adherence to the doctrine of the modulation of existence (*tashkīk al-wujūd*); see Khudrī, *Ta'ammulī*, p. 252. The espousal of these two doctrines is a key indicator as anti-Sadrians in the eighteenth century were at pains to refute them. It seems that before the eighteenth century, the work of Mullā Ṣadrā was not cited much in either philosophical or philosophical-theological texts; a good example of this is Sayyid Ashraf 'Alawī (d. before 1160/1747), a great-grandson of Mīr Dāmād in his *Ālāqat al-Tajrīd*, mentions a number of important authorities including ones from the Safavid period but does not once mention Mullā Ṣadrā. See Sayyid Ashraf 'Alawī, *Ālāqat al-Tajrīd*, ed. Ḥāmid Nāji Iṣfahānī, 2 vols. (Tehran: University of Tehran Press/Anjuman-i āthār u mafākhir-i farhangī, 1381 Sh./2002).

168 On the emergence of *'irfān*, see the excellent recent work of Anzali, *Safavid Shi'ism*, especially pp. 190ff.

169 Muḥammad Bidābādī, *Husn-i dil*, p. 50.

of 'philosophy as a way of life'.¹⁷⁰ The subsequent history of learned scholarly culture in the seminaries of Tehran and Qom exhibit the influence of this new configuration.

Nūrī's main intellectual contribution was to establish the school of Mullā Ṣadrā with its focus on the metaphysics of existence and its particular approach to philosophy and mysticism as a singular holistic intellectual endeavour rooted in spiritual practice and received as a grace of prophetic inheritance. There is little that he adds beyond defending, reformulating and refuting detractors; he rarely adds perspectives and approaches not found in the work of Mullā Ṣadrā. But in addition to that, retaining the Neoplatonic taste of his masters and their use of the revived Hellenic tradition of late antiquity, he had a strong commitment to the occult, especially lettrism, which demonstrates the influence of Mīr Dāmād. In that sense, he was a unique figure because there are barely any thinkers in whose work one finds the confluence of the rather different thought of Mīr Dāmād and his student Mullā Ṣadrā. I shall indicate some of the positions that he stresses in metaphysics, *irfān*, and lettrism.

In metaphysics, his concerns are to defend and establish the positions of Mullā Ṣadrā not least because they were contested and far from uniformly accepted in the eighteenth century. This relates to his three central doctrines: the primacy and the unity of existence (*aṣālat, waḥdat al-wujūd*), the modulation of existence defined through intensity in opposition to Ibn Sīnā (*tashkīk al-wujūd bi-l-shidda wa-l-ḍuḥ*), and the dynamic of reality mediated by motion in the category of substance (*ḥaraka jawhariyya*). Much of this is clear in his glosses on the work of Mullā Ṣadrā, not least on *al-Asfār al-arbaʿa*, and but also critically in his *al-Raqīma al-nūriyya*. He stresses repeatedly that in our experience of phenomenal reality it is not things with their properties that are, but rather they are just aspects of existence.¹⁷¹ Existence is ontologically prior even if it might seem epistemologically posterior—although through mystically attuned contemplation a person can have a non-discursive vision of the fact that existence is primary and that essences are illusory.¹⁷² Existence is identical to the being of God and all that exists is named and annexed to Him and exists by virtue of being contingent and reliant upon Him; in themselves contingent

170 See Sajjad H. Rizvi, "Philosophy as a way of life in the world of Islam: Applying Hadot to the study of Mullā Ṣadrā Shirāzī (d. 1635)," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 75 (2012): 33–45.

171 Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Ḥikma al-mutaʿālīya*, vol. 1, pp. 40, 45.

172 *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 248.

entities do not exist.¹⁷³ God's everlasting countenance is existence and, just like existence, is hidden but also manifest in a paradoxical manner.¹⁷⁴

This is further emphasised in his approach to the graded and modulated nature of existence as being the arranged manifestations of the divine; it is God's being and mercy that spreads out and is deployed to manifest the existents that we experience.¹⁷⁵ Hierarchy in existence is defined through the process of intensity—the higher in the pyramid of being the more intense, and the lower the more debilitated—and in affirming that, he agrees with Mullā Ṣadrā on good Neoplatonic bases, while criticising Ibn Sīnā who, on good Aristotelian grounds, rejected the possibility of existence permitting of more or less in terms of intensity.¹⁷⁶ In his treatise (or perhaps it is by a student based on his teachings) on the Simple One being the totality of what exists (*basīṭ al-ḥaqīqa*), he argues similarly that God is identical to the totality and perfection of existence, but also is the noblest and highest degree of being; He is both the entirety of the pyramid of existence as well as its pinnacle and that pyramid is arranged hierarchically, differentiated by intensity; this is argued alongside the proof of the primacy and the unity of existence.¹⁷⁷

A corollary of the doctrine of existence is Mullā Ṣadrā's insistence that the dynamic of existence, and what ultimately determines the cosmos being created anew in time constantly and also what determines the path of perfection that beings take towards their reversion to the One, is the notion of a changing self or substance in motion.¹⁷⁸ It is through the renewal and changing of the self that the person or the existent persists in the flowing now (*al-ān al-sayyāl*).

Ultimately, even his exposition of Mullā Ṣadrā is tinged with a mystical, monistic emphasis. In a gloss on the nature of the *differentia* in *al-Asfār al-arba'a*, he comments:

True *differentia* is nothing but true being and is neither a substance nor an accident as has been shown. All things are perishing, fleeting, fading into being (*wujūd*), which is singularly true insofar as it is the True One. It is what it is and there is nothing but it, just as God bears witness that there is no God but he. The entifications are a level emanated figuratively from the reality of being and its manifestations. He is the first and the last

173 Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 128, 210.

174 Ibid., vol. 1, p. 118.

175 Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 68, 113.

176 Ibid., vol. 1, p. 253.

177 ‘Alī b. Jamshīd Nūrī, *Rasā’il-i falsafī: Basīṭ al-ḥaqīqa wa-waḥdat al-wujūd*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (Mashhad: Anjuman-i Hikmat u Falsafa-yi Īrān, 1357 Sh./1978), pp. 9–10.

178 Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Hikma al-muta’āliya*, vol. 1, p. 395.

and the apparent and the hidden and they are mirrors of his manifestation. The mirror insofar as it is a mirror fades into the self-disclosure of the divine. There is no veil between him and you except your being. So elevate your contemplation until it is clear to you that he is the goal of all contemplation.¹⁷⁹

In *ʿirfān*, we know that Nūrī upheld the monism of the school of Ibn ʿArabī and continued the Shīʿi expression of it through glossing significant narrations of the Imams through its lens. His glosses on the *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* of Ibn Turka are the obvious source to consider here. There is only the One—and it is not that we participate in the True One—and all else is a sign and manifestation of the One. The relationship between God and the cosmos is primarily presented through the very famous formulation of ʿAlī in *Nahj al-balāgha*: God is neither identical nor distinct to the creation, he is ‘inside’ everything but not in the sense of one thing or substance being in another, and He is ‘outside’ everything but not in the sense in which a thing or substance is outside another in the sense of physical contiguity—God is with you wherever you are (Qurʾān 4:57) and this is not what ‘the ignorant unbelieving Sufis’ (*juhhāl malāḥidat al-ṣūfiyya*) think.¹⁸⁰ Similarly, in order to gloss the quotation of Ibn ʿArabī that the essences that determine things in the cosmos—the ‘permanent archetypes’ (*al-aʿyān al-thābita*)—have never been existent as independent entities (*mā shammāt rāʾiḥat al-wujūd*) he cites a version of a famous narration from Imam al-Kāzīm: ‘God was and there was nothing with Him, and He is as He was.’¹⁸¹ He relates this to the principle of existence as the ground of everything as opposed to essence. Multiplicity arises through the desire of God—insofar as He ‘was’ a hidden treasure—to be known and hence He creates, and in the first instance manifests Himself through the Muḥammadan reality.¹⁸² By citing here a supplication of the month of ʿAlī, that is Rajab, he insists that the person of the Imam (and the Prophet before) mediates the mystical unfolding of nature, and its return to the One.¹⁸³

179 Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Ḥikma al-mutaʿāliya*, vol. 2, p. 41. Cf. Nūrī, *al-Raqīma al-nūriyya*, p. 159: “Existence in reality and in essence is naught but He; what exists in actuality is merely His essence, His acts, His creation and His mercy that encompasses all things.”

180 Ibn Turka, *Sharḥ*, vol. 1, pp. 10, 219; see Sayyid Ṣādiq al-Mūsawī (ed.), *Tamām Nahj al-balāgha* (Beirut: al-Dār al-Islāmiyya, 2005), p. 39 (sermon ṣ1).

181 Ibn Turka, *Sharḥ*, vol. 1, pp. 63, 123; vol. 2, p. 701 (citing the same narration from Imam Ṣādiq).

182 Ibn Turka, *Sharḥ*, vol. 1, pp. 18, 135.

183 Ibid., pp. 138, 143–144.

Monism is then related to questions on will and determinism. Correcting the doctrine of the school of Ibn 'Arabī by citing a narration from Imam al-Riḍā, he argues that there is a distinction between the divine intention (*mashī'a*) and will (*irāda*): the former relates to existence and the latter to the thing itself. The coming into being of a thing requires a six-stage process: divine knowledge (*'ilm*), intention (which is identified with the first emanation of the Muḥammadan reality of light), will, the measuring out (*taqdīr*), the decree (*qadā'*), and the inscribing into existence (*imḍā'*).¹⁸⁴ The intention is that by which all things are—in the language of Ibn 'Arabī *al-ḥaqq al-makhlūq bihi*. That divine intention is related to the totality of existence but the divine will allows for the modulation and gradation in matters as they pertain to individual entities. In this sense, monism does not entail a hard determinism.

Consistent with the Shi'i school of Ibn 'Arabī on the famous issue of the seal of saints, he follows the tradition of 'Abd al-Razzāq Kāshānī and Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī on insisting that it is 'Alī who constitutes the absolute seal, citing the famous saying in which he claimed to be the 'dot under the bā', not least because that dot is the totality of the cosmos and the 'secret' of God (*sirr Allāh*).¹⁸⁵ The Imam is the simple manifestation that expresses the totality of the divine. On the question of the seal of sainthood in the Islamic dispensation, he follows again the Shi'i school that identifies it with the Mahdī (*al-ḥaḍra al-mahdawiyya al-fāṭimiyya*), criticising what seems to be Ibn 'Arabī's position, but also with a nod to those later in the tradition who saw him as crypto-Shi'i, he says that he saw an 'old' copy of a text in which Ibn 'Arabī identifies the seal with the Mahdī and not himself.¹⁸⁶ Another aspect of this polemic on *walāya* is to criticise as Ismaili (*malāḥidat al-bāṭiniyya*) the position that seal is superior to the Prophet in whose dispensation his function arises.¹⁸⁷

The Imam is the perfect human, the eternal Adam, the calamus, and the intellect, the first level of manifestation from the One.¹⁸⁸ The Imam's Adamic nature is the comprehensive reality and presence of the divine (*ḥaqīqa jāmi'a*) as well as the comprehensive divine name because of Adam being the 'totality of the names' (*jawāmi' al-kalim*), and citing a narration of Imam al-Ḥasan

184 Ibid., pp. 13–14, 288. Cf. Nūrī, *al-Raqīma al-nūriyya*, pp. 142–143.

185 Ibn Turka, *Sharḥ*, vol. 1, p. 107; Mullā Ṣadrā, *Maḥfātīḥ al-ghayb*, 703; Majlisī, *Bihār*, vol. 40, p. 165; for a series of references and discussions from an earlier period, see Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī, *Tafsīr al-muḥīṭ al-a'ẓam wa-l-baḥr al-khiḍam*, ed. Sayyid Muḥsin Mūsawī Tabrīzī (Qom: Mu'assasa-yi Farhangī-i Nūrun 'Alā Nūr, 1380 Sh./2001), vol. 1, pp. 210–211.

186 Ibn Turka, *Sharḥ*, vol. 1, p. 200; see Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ḥusaynī Tīhrānī, *Rūḥ-i mujarrad* (Mashhad: Intishārāt-i 'Allāma-yi Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1421/2000), pp. 313–371.

187 Ibn Turka, *Sharḥ*, vol. 1, p. 203.

188 Ibid., p. 24.

al-‘Askarī, because it is the Imams alone who truly manifest God and through whom His secret is revealed.¹⁸⁹ It is because of this that Adam was created in God’s image so that he might reveal God as the breath of the merciful, and then as the microcosm reverting to God.¹⁹⁰ In this sense, the Imam is an ontological mediation between God and the cosmos as well as being the face of God turned to the cosmos and the reciprocating face of the cosmos turned to God. This status, which is ultimately that of *walāya*, is the trust (*amāna*) of Qur’ān 72:33, the vicegerency of God, through which human beings revert to God and transfer their annihilation (*fanā’*) into an everlasting subsistence (*baqā’*) with the divine.¹⁹¹ The Imams are the symbols of the divine and hence they speak the language of symbols to facilitate through their concrete examples what God wishes to convey and manifest; Nūrī draws upon the famous metaphor of the Imam as the sun hidden in the clouds the effulgence of whose existence sustains the cosmos as an expression of how the light of God emanates and sustains the cosmos.¹⁹²

Knowledge of the realities of things is difficult because one cannot access them without someone who can reveal their realities and knows them through divine inspiration.¹⁹³ It is the persons of the Prophet and the Imams as both the veil of God and the everlasting face of God (*wajh Allāh al-bāqī*) who can guide people. For this to happen human beings must first recognise the luminous nature of the Imam (*ma’rifā bi-l-nūrāniyya*).¹⁹⁴ Proper training leads people to recognise themselves as followers of the Imams who can then see the realities of things.¹⁹⁵ But that is not easy since bearing the *walāya* of the Imams is difficult and arduous (*ṣa’b mustaṣa’b*) in the words of the narrations.¹⁹⁶ The one who is initiated and recognises himself and his Imam begins to see his own exigency and realises God, and through seeing his ephemerality, understands that God is everlasting.¹⁹⁷ This is true piety (*taqwā*)—to refrain from ascribing existence to what is utterly indigent and contingent.¹⁹⁸ Once he understands the basic monist truth, he realises that everything in extra-mental reality is actually the product of imagination and is what the universal imagination and

189 Ibn Turka, *Sharḥ*, vol. 1, pp. 25, 206–207; vol. 2, pp. 600–601.

190 Ibn Turka, *Sharḥ*, vol. 1, pp. 74, 89, 242; vol. 2, pp. 736–737.

191 Ibn Turka, *Sharḥ*, vol. 1, p. 117.

192 Nūrī, *al-Raqīma al-nūrāniyya*, p. 46.

193 Ibn Turka, *Sharḥ*, vol. 1, p. 190.

194 Ibid., vol. 1, p. 258.

195 Ibid., vol. 1, p. 272.

196 Ibid., vol. 1, p. 125.

197 Ibid., vol. 1, p. 323.

198 Ibid., vol. 1, p. 153.

our imagination projects; since imagination and this world is graded in intensity, imagination emanates from the universal imagination (associated with the Imams al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn as we shall see shortly) to the imagination in the imaginal realm and down to imagination in this cosmos.¹⁹⁹ The next step is then the path back to God, and drawing upon the Kubrawī schema of subtleties (*laṭā’if*), Nūrī says that this involves seven stages: raw nature, then soul (*naḥs*) that has passions, then the moonlike heart (*al-qalb al-qamarī*) that is manipulated by the imagination, then the theoretical intellect (*al-‘aql al-naẓarī*) that inquires into reality, then the *rūḥ* which is the intellect assisted by God that acquires certainty, then the secret (*al-sirr*) through which one sees the subtle lights and acquires the rank of the saints and the ability to doff the body and experience the higher ecstasy of the beatific vision, and then the hidden (*al-khaṭī*) being in the world of reality and the abode of prophets.²⁰⁰

An aspect of his use of the Shi’i school of Ibn ‘Arabī is indicated by his commentary on *sūrat al-dahr* and the light verse that is linked to lettrism, and shows how the two passages that were commonly associated with mystical Shi’i exegesis are woven into a singular interpretation. In this passage he demonstrates the correspondences and homologies between God and His attributes that are the family of the Prophet and between numbers associated with God and with the values of the names of the Prophetic household:

Ḥā-mīm is the most comprehensive of the beautiful names that are ninety-nine; whoever enumerates them enters paradise. The Ḥā refers to the nine and the mīm to the ninety, and the total is the Muḥammadan reality (*al-ḥaqīqa al-muḥammadiyya*), which is the essence of the realities of all things. Lām is the imams of the names, and he taught Adam all the names, and the clear book, that clear book is the highest nature of ‘Alī (*al-‘alawīyya al-‘ulyā*), who is the Adam of writing (*Ādam al-kitābī*), just as the Muḥammadan whiteness (*al-Muḥammadiyya al-bayḍā*) is the universal intellect (*al-‘aql al-kull*) which is the Adam of speech (*Ādam al-kalāmī*). The highest nature of ‘Alī is the universal soul (*naḥs al-kull*) that is the highest essence of God, the *khalīfa* of the universal intellect, who is the Adam of writing, extracted from the Muḥammadan whiteness just as Eve follows Adam and the tablet follows the highest pen. So the book is the expansive nine, just like Adam, and it is the primordial first Adamic state of writing and the first Eve, just as the Muḥammadan whiteness is the primordial Adamic state of speech. Writing is the *khalīfa*

199 Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 305, 360.

200 Ibid., vol. 1, p. 279.

of speech just as distinguishing (*furqān*) is the *khalīfa* of the Qur'ān. 'Verily we sent it down on a blessed night, that is, we sent down the clear book which is the universal discriminator (*al-fārūq al-kull*) to the Fāṭimī nature of al-Zahrā', and al-Zahrā' is the spiritual Eve; God is the light of the heavens and the earth, the similitude of his light is like a niche, that is the Fāṭimī nature of al-Zahrā' in which is a lamp, that is the Muḥammadan whiteness, and lamp is in a glass, that is the highest nature of 'Alī, and that nature of 'Alī descended into the niche of the nature of Zahrā', the descent of the universal spirit into the universal body, through which every wise thing distinguishes (between good and evil), that is Imam after Imam until the day of resurrection. The referent of the light verse is the Muḥammadan person in its lamp and its glass and its niche. Ḥā-mīm and the clear book, which we sent down in its totality as the blessing of *walāya*.²⁰¹

There is a strong gnostic element to the interpretation in this passage associating the Neoplatonic triad of the universal intellect, the universal soul, and the universal nature with the primordial and essential natures of the Prophet, 'Alī and Fāṭima. The 'Muḥammadan whiteness' indicates his understanding of a famous narration about the divine throne and the lights associated with it.

In the gloss on the *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* of Ibn Turka, he explains the sense of the Muḥammadan reality as being both identical to the entirety of the divine throne, since the divine throne is a cipher for the totality of the cosmos or all save God, and also one of the four pillars of the throne.²⁰² The throne of God has four pillars of colour: a white pillar of Muḥammad that symbolises the totality of the Muḥammadan reality as the primary emanation of the One, a yellow pillar of 'Alī that is the universal soul, the *Umm al-kitāb* and the 'preserved tablet' in which all is contained (as another gloss has it on the notion of the *imām mubīn*), a green pillar of al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn associated with the universal imagination through which the cosmos unfolds, and a red pillar of al-Fāṭima which is identical to the universal nature whence all generation in the cosmos proceeds. What is clear is that Nūrī's approach to *'irfān* recalls the work of Rajab Bursī (d. 813/1411) in his blending of the Shi'i school of Ibn 'Arabī with a commitment to an esoteric Shi'i mysticism that arises from the

201 Mullā Ṣadrā, *Maḥfātīḥ al-ghayb*, p. 797; cf. Ibn Turka, *Sharḥ*, vol. 1, pp. 287–288.

202 Ibid., vol. 1, p. 16. On the *ḥadīth* from Amīr al-Mu'minīn of the throne of God being created with four lights, see al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, (*Kitāb al-Tawḥīd, bāb al-'arsh wa-l-kursī*), vol. 1, pp. 129–130; in his glosses on this narration in Mullā Ṣadrā, *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-Kāfī*, vol. 3, pp. 332–352, Nūrī has barely anything to say. Cf. Henry Corbin, *Temple and Contemplation*, tr. L. Sherrard (London: KPI, 1986), pp. 27–37.

meditation upon the nature of the Imam and upon the narrations alongside the imamophilic lettrism of Ibn Turka.

His commitment to lettrism follows from this *mélange* of Ibn ‘Arabī and esoteric Shi‘ism. As in his glosses on *al-Mafāḥiṣ*, he argues that letter symbolism constitutes the key to understanding reality, and to opening up the heart to grasp that reality.²⁰³ Similarly, numbers and their significance also lie at the heart of uncoding reality, understanding proportions and the relationship between various types of units, odds and evens and so forth.²⁰⁴ While Mullā Ṣadrā refers to the importance of letters in his *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, Nūrī glosses that they are essential because they represent the emanation from the abode of meaning into the abode of forms, where meanings are essences of the higher world that descend.²⁰⁵ The heart, as the true throne of God, can, therefore, make sense of that code, not least when it is the heart of the perfect human being who in his reality manifests the totality of the Divine.²⁰⁶ The descent of letters is glossed through the meaning of the mysterious letters *alif-lām-mīm* of the Qur’ān as well as the notion of the expansion of being from the one (*baṣṭ*) and the significance of its letters (focusing on the *bā*).²⁰⁷ The *alif* stands alone and never fully descends—it is only when one gets to *lām* that the expansion of being occurs and descends into time, while the *mīm* indicates the reversion back to the One and the afterlife. In other words, the *alif* is the time before that was in pre-eternity, the *lām* represents the now in this world, and the *mīm* the return to God tomorrow.

Lettrism, once applied to the totality of the cosmos and space and time, also explains the relationship of God and humanity through meditation upon the nature of Adam, and his relationship to the divine throne and to God.²⁰⁸ The human being (*insān*) is the mediating reality between God and the cosmos but also between different human beings because the word is made up of two T’s (*anā*) mediated by a *sīn*: the human being mediates between the two egos. Apart from this, there are plenty of other examples of lettrist and numerological analyses as interpretation. For example, in his commentary on the nature of Jesus and the relationship with Mary, he calculates that the numerical value of Maryam (290) added to the value of *alif-dāl-alif* equals 296 which is also the value of the verbal root *ṣād-waw-rā* so that the coming of Mary together with

203 Ibn Turka, *Sharḥ*, vol. 1, p. 101.

204 Ibid., vol. 1, p. 179.

205 Mullā Ṣadrā, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, p. 700.

206 Ibn Turka, *Sharḥ*, vol. 1, pp. 248, 270.

207 Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 44–45.

208 Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 28, 76–79.

the spirit of the divine formed Jesus in the womb; in this sense Jesus comes from Mary, as recognised through this calculation.²⁰⁹

Another calculation relates to the name Muḥammad.²¹⁰ The first *mīm* indicates his origins and the origins of the cosmos and the final *mīm* the return to the One; the *ḥā'* is medial, relating to this world and the origination of Adam, while the *dāl* indicates Muḥammad's role as the ultimate indicator (*dalīl*) of God. Because the *mīm* is doubled, the name comprises two *ḥā'-mīm* the first indicates his prophecy and the second his *walāya*, both of course having the same numerical value of 99. These calculations are spiritually efficacious—as he says, 'Whoever calculates them enters paradise,' The real name of Muḥammad is, therefore, *Ḥā-mīm*, and the remaining letters *mīm-dāl* indicate the extension (*madd*) of his light and being so as to cover the totality of the elements of the cosmos. This is lettrism and occult calculation as a means to extend the notion of the perfect human being as the comprehensive name and reality of the cosmos.

One final example brings us back to the earlier discussion of the relationship of the divine intention (*mashī'a*) and the divine will (*irāda*) through an examination of the fiat '*kun*' and the form of the letters.²¹¹ The *kāf* is the letter of intention that relates to being and existence, while the *nūn* represents the thing and its essence. The *kāf* is the Lord of the relationship—and thinking back to His metaphysics, no doubt, because existence is actuality and presence and essence is potentiality and absence—and the *nūn* is like the deep ocean of contingency which presents two facets: one that looks towards its Lord and the other that looks to itself. The fiat brings together the ocean of light that is a necessity with that of fire that is contingency and their confluence is the confluence of the two seas indicated in the Qur'ān 55:19. The human soul lies at this confluence because it is a blend of the 'yellow' spirituality of existence with the 'green' temporality of non-existence. What we can see in these examples is a holistic approach in which lettrism is combined as a hermeneutics to make sense of the philosophical, theological and mystical meanings of the text and of reality.

Nūrī was the pivotal figure, who established the thought of Mullā Ṣadrā in the seminaries through his works, his glosses, and his networks of students. It was not just the particular study of philosophy and the curriculum focused on the Sadrian texts that he engineered; he also played a major role in the dissemination of the curriculum of '*irfān*'. His interest in the occult similarly became

209 Ibid., vol. 2, p. 587.

210 Ibn Turka, *Sharḥ*, vol. 2, p. 935; Mullā Ṣadrā, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, p. 697.

211 Ibn Turka, *Sharḥ*, vol. 2, p. 978.

a key aspect of the mystical underground in Qom and Tehran from the Qajar period onwards. His deep commitment to esotericism as a philosophical way of life took him beyond the practice of Mullā Ṣadrā. Nūrī may not have been the greatest thinker of the Qajar period, nor even the greatest commentator and glossator on the work of Mullā Ṣadrā, but he was a key figure who brought together a set of interests—even in the neglected thought of Mīr Dāmād—and who influenced a generation of students that engaged with the emergent new thought in the European institutions of learning in Iran and beyond. In that sense, the identification of Mullā Ṣadrā and his approach to philosophy and mysticism as the key intellectual defence against modern philosophy in modern Iran owes much to the legacy of Nūrī.

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Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī

*Fatemeh Fana*¹

1 Life

Ḥājj Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī was born in 1212/1797 in Sabzevar as the son of Mahdī Sabzawārī.² He was therefore born in the same year in which Āqā Muḥammad

¹ Translated from Persian and Arabic by Joep Lameer.

² If it was only a matter of his brief autobiography, Sabzawārī's life would be easily told. However, things are complicated by the fact that available accounts by his students and his relatives are sometimes rather different. This situation occasioned a number of scholars to sometimes try and fill some of the gaps in the autobiography by having recourse to a mixture of material drawn from these inconsistent and unsupported records. This dependence on uncorroborated third-hand material produced a number of assertions that are in plain contradiction with Sabzawārī's own account of events. Nevertheless, the autobiography being exceptionally concise, it will sometimes be necessary to have recourse to these reports, but then in a way that is compatible with Mullā Hādī's own declarations, as well as with commonly accepted, historical facts. In writing this article, I have made every effort to follow this principle. Sabzawārī's autobiography was transmitted in an identical form in a number of sources. In this article, my references will be based on Qāsim Ghani's edition of the autograph in his "Sharḥ-i ḥāl-i marḥūm Ḥājj Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī," *Yādgār* 13 (1323 Sh./1944): 45–47 (bibliographical details on all the works mentioned in this article can be found in the Bibliography). An English translation of the autobiography can be found in the introduction of T. Izutsu & M. Mohaghegh, *The Metaphysics of Sabzawārī* (Tehran: McGill Institute of Islamic Studies [Tehran Branch] 1348 Sh./1983), pp. 11–13. This introduction also contains an English translation of a biography of Sabzawārī written by his son-in-law Āqā Mīrzā Sayyid Ḥasan, for which see pp. 13–16. Āqā Mīrzā's account of Sabzawārī's life was written at the request of Muḥammad Taqī Sipīhr (d. 1297/1879–80), author of a major historical reference work of the 19th century, the *Nāsikh al-tawārikh*. The report by Āqā Mīrzā differs from Sabzawārī's autobiography, which is why I only used it in case of necessity. It was inserted at the end of Hidājī's (d. 1349/1930) *Ḥāshiya bar sharḥ-i Manẓūma-yi Sabzawārī* (lith. ed., Tehran, 1346/1927), pp. 421–425 (= typeset edition, *Ta'liqāt al-Hidājī 'alā l-Manẓūma wa-sharḥihā* (Tehran: Manshūr al-A'lām, 1363 Sh./1984–85), pp. 4–7. Izutsu's English translation of this biography contains some errors that will be dealt with in due course. There is another account of Sabzawārī's life by one of his great-grandchildren, Walī Allāh Asrārī Sabzawārī, titled "Sharḥ-i zindagānī-i Ḥājj Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī (Asrār)," in Ḥājj Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī, *Dīwān-i Asrār: Kullīyāt-i ash'ār-i fārsi-i Ḥājj Mullā Hādī-i Sabzawārī*, ed. Sayyid Ḥasan Amīn (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif-i Irānshināsī, 1380 Sh./2001–2002), pp. 199–281. It was published again as an annexe to Aḥmad Karamī's edition of Sabzawārī's *Dīwān*, titled *Dīwān-i Asrār*, ed. Sayyid Ḥasan Amīn (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif-i Irānshināsī, 1380 Sh./2001), pp. 199–281. This detailed report is more or less consistent with Sabzawārī's

Khān, the founder of the Qajar dynasty, was assassinated. Sabzawārī's father and forefathers belonged to the wealthy traders and landowners of Sabzevar and were charitable and pious people. His mother, Zīnat al-Ḥājjīya, stemmed likewise from a wealthy and God-fearing home. At the age of seven, Sabzawārī embarked on his studies of Arabic grammar. When he was eight, his father died in Shiraz on his way home from Mecca.³ Mullā Hādī stayed in Sabzevar until he was ten years old. He then left for Mashhad to further continue his studies, escorted by his paternal cousin⁴ Ḥājj Mullā Ḥusayn Sabzawārī, who had studied and lived there for years. For a period of ten years, Sabzawārī studied with Ḥājj Mullā Ḥusayn in Mashhad. These were his undergraduate studies and included Arabic literary disciplines, law, theology, philosophy, logic, and related subjects. Once these studies were brought to a close, Mullā Hādī returned to his hometown of Sabzevar and married sometime around the year 1232/1817. After about two years, Sabzawārī started to make preparations for his pilgrimage to Mecca (ca 1234/1819). Having heard about the fame of the seminaries of Isfahan and of the blossoming of philosophical learning in them, he had a strong desire to go there and study *Ishrāqī* philosophy, as he puts it in his autobiography. He thus decided to leave somewhat earlier in order to travel by way of Isfahan. In this manner, he could first do some research on the seminaries, and more particularly on the way in which philosophical studies were organized there. During his investigations, he also went for some days to the

own account. There is also an account of the life and the household of Sabzawārī that was given by two of his sons and his wife, this at the request of Ṣanī' al-Dawla Muḥammad Ḥasan Khān I'timād al-Salṭana (d. 1313/1896), Minister for the Press and Head of the Royal Translation College during the reign of Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh Qājār. The minutes of this account, given in the presence of I'timād al-Salṭana, were printed literally in his *Maṭla' al-Shams*, vol. 3, Tehran: Dār al-Ṭibā'a al-Humāyūnī, 1301–1303; repr. 1355 Sh./1976), pp. 194–203. A partial English translation of this biography is given in Izutsu and Mohaghegh, *The Metaphysics of Sabzavārī*, pp. 17–23.

- 3 According to Sajjad Rizvi, Modarrisī Chahārdehī maintains that Sabzawārī's father died in Mecca. See Sajjad Rizvi, "*Hikma muta'aliya* in Qajar Iran, Locating the Life and Work of Mulla Hadi Sabzawari (d. 1289/1873)," *Iranian Studies* 44 (2011): 473–496 (477 note 14). This is not correct. Basing himself on Riḍā Qulī Khān Hidāyat, Modarrisī reports that Sabzawārī's father died in Shiraz. Cf.; Mudarrisī Chahārdehī, *Zindagī u falsafa-yi Ḥājj Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī* (Tehran: Khitābkhāna-yi Ṭahūrī, 1334 Sh./1965), pp. 13, 16.
- 4 Rizvi (ibid.) says that Mīrzā Ḥusayn was Sabzawārī's cousin from father's and from mother's side. But in his autobiography, Sabzawārī says in his description of him: *wa-ibn 'ammātī*, i.e., "and the son of my paternal aunt". Cf. Q. Ghani, "Sharḥ-i ḥāl-i marḥūm Ḥājj Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī," p. 46. See also W. Asrārī Sabzawārī, "*Sharḥ-i zindagānī-i Ḥājj Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī (Asrār)*," p. 2050, where we read: "Ḥājj Mullā Ḥusayn was his Excellency's cousin from mother's and from father's side", where the expression "maternal cousin" (*khāla-zāda*) must be a mistake or a misprint.

lectures of Mullā Ismāʿīl Darb-i Kūshkī Iṣfahānī (d. 1239/1823–24), also known as Wāḥid al-ʿAyn (“One-Eye”).⁵ Sabzawārī became infatuated by the beauty of his language and the civilized way in which he spoke to his students, so much so that he decided that it was his religious duty to continue his philosophical studies there and then and to postpone his pilgrimage until some later occasion. He spent the money meant for his pilgrimage on books and a place to stay and set up quarters in Isfahan.

For a period of five years, Sabzawārī studied philosophy, and especially Mullā Ṣadrā’s philosophy, with Mullā Ismāʿīl. Mullā Ismāʿīl himself was a student of Mullā ʿAlī Nūrī (d. 1246/1831), in those days the most prominent commentator and promoter of Mullā Ṣadrā’s philosophy. Mullā Ismāʿīl Darb-i Kūshkī’s classes were probably held in the local Darb-i Kūshk Mosque since he also lived in that district. Mullā Ismāʿīl wrote glosses on Mullā Ṣadrā’s *Asfār*⁶ and *Kitāb al-Mashāʾir*, a commentary on his *al-Ḥikma al-ʿarshīyya*,⁷ as well as glosses on ʿAbd al-Razzāq Lāhijī’s (d. 1072/1661) *Shawāriq al-ilhām*. Sabzawārī relates that after Mullā Ismāʿīl died—going by circumstantial evidence from his autobiography this must have been around 1239/1823–24⁸—he continued

5 Because Mullā Ismāʿīl Darb-i Kūshkī was blind in one eye, he was known by this nickname. However, alluding to Mullā Ismāʿīl’s cleverness and insight, Sabzawārī called him “The Many-Eyed One” (*Dhū l-ʿuyūn*). See Sulṭān Ḥusayn Tābanda, *Nābigha-yi ʿilm u ʿirfān dar qarn-i chahārdahum. Sharḥ-i ḥāl-i marḥūm Ḥājī Mullā Sulṭān Muḥammad Gunābādī: Sulṭān ʿAlī-Shāh* (Tehran: Tābān, 1350 Sh./1971), p. 25.

6 “*Asfār*” being shorthand for Mullā Ṣadrā’s *al-Ḥikma al-mutaʿāliya fi l-asfār al-aqliyya al-arbaʿa*.

7 In his commentary on *al-Ḥikma al-ʿarshīyya*, he answers Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsāʾī’s (d. 1241/1826) criticisms of Mullā Ṣadrā, rejecting most of them as arising from misunderstandings. Of this commentary many manuscript copies are extant. One of them is described in ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn Ḥāʾirī, *Fihrist-i Kitābkhāna-yi Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Millī*, vol. 5 (Tehran: Chāp-Khāna-yi Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī, 1345 Sh./1966), p. 326 (no. 1858). Mullā Ismāʿīl’s glosses on the *Asfār* are included in the footnotes of the printed editions of that work. For his glosses on Mullā Ṣadrā’s *Kitāb al-Mashāʾir* see Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī’s edition of Muḥammad Jaʿfar Lāhijī’s *Sharḥ risālat al-Mashāʾir* (Mashhad: Intishārāt-i Zuwwār, 1343 Sh./1964).

8 There is some disagreement about the year of death of Mullā Ismāʿīl, which cannot be fixed with precision. Going by Sabzawārī’s statements in his autobiography, Mullā Ismāʿīl must have died in 1239/1823–24 or 1240/1824–25. But if we base ourselves on the report by Sabzawārī’s son-in-law who states that his father-in-law remained in Isfahan until 1242/1826 and that after Mullā Ismāʿīl left for Tehran, he went to Mashhad, Mullā Ismāʿīl must have died after 1242/1826–27, although the exact date remains unknown. In the Introduction to his edition of *Rasāʾil ḥakīm Sabzawārī*, vol. 1, pp. 117–118, Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī maintains that he has definite proof that Mullā Ismāʿīl was alive in 1267/1850–51. Unfortunately, Āshtiyānī does not cite his source. Sajjad Rizvi mentions the year 1268/1851–52 but furnishes no proof for this either. Cf. Sajjad Rizvi, “*Hikma mutaʿaliya* in Qajar Iran,” 478.

his philosophical studies for another three years with Mullā ‘Alī Nūrī⁹ in the Madrasa-yi Kāsagarān, also known as the Madrasa-yi Shamsiyya.¹⁰

Sabzawārī tells us that during the first two years of his stay in Isfahan, he spent an hour every day at the lectures on law given by Āqā Muḥammad ‘Alī Najafī (d. 1245/1829–30). Āqā Muḥammad was a descendant of Āqā Muḥammad Bāqir Hazār-Jarībī (d. 1170/1756–57), a prominent scholar and jurisconsult of the twelfth/eighteenth century.¹¹ Āqā Muḥammad ‘Alī was born in 1188/1774–75 in Najaf, which is why he came to be known as “Najafī” (i.e., “from Najaf”). He was a student of Mīrzā-yi Qummī (d. 1231/1815–16), but once he had completed his studies in Qom, he left for Isfahan. He had full command of both the traditional and the rational sciences. In Isfahan, he took up teaching law (*fiqh*) and legal theory, and theology (*uṣūl*), eventually receiving the predicate of *faqīh muṭlaq* (“supreme jurisconsult”, the highest distinction for a Shī‘ī legal scholar).¹² Sabzawārī’s son-in-law further reports that on the recommendation

9 Q. Ghanī, “Sharḥ-i ḥāl-i marḥūm Ḥājj Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī,” p. 46; T. Izutsu and M. Mohaghegh, *The Metaphysics of Sabzavārī*, p. 12. See also W. Asrārī Sabzawārī, “Sharḥ-i zindagānī-i Ḥājj Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī (Asrār),” pp. 205–206. Sabzawārī’s son-in-law, however, tells a slightly different story about the former’s studies with Mullā ‘Alī Nūrī. According to him, when Sabzawārī was a student of Mullā Ismā‘īl, after he had finished his lectures he and his teacher would go to listen to the courses given by Mullā ‘Alī Nūrī. Then, when Mullā Ismā‘īl left for Tehran at the end of 1242, Sabzawārī himself went to Mashhad. Cf. Izutsu and Mohaghegh, op. cit., p. 14. However, going by Sabzawārī’s own statements and some contemporary testimonies, this report by his son in law can hardly be correct. Cf. Q. Ghanī, op. cit., p. 46; Izutsu and Mohaghegh, op. cit., p. 12.

10 E.g., Ghulām-Ḥusayn Riḍānizhād Nūshīn, *Ḥakīm-i Sabzawārī: Zindagī, āthār, falsafa* (Tehran: Sanā‘ī, 1371 Sh./1992–93), pp. 50–51. The name Shamsiyya derives from Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Yazdī, who first built this *madrasa*. But since it had fallen into disrepair it was reconstructed by Amīr Mahdī Ḥakīm al-Mulk Ardistānī, a reconstruction that was completed in the final year of the reign of Safavid Shāh Sulaymān (r. 1077–1105/1666–1694). From then on it was called the Madrasa-yi Ḥakīmiyya. But since the madrasa is located in the Kāsagarān neighbourhood, it became commonly known as the Madrasa-yi Kāsagarān. See also Maryam Moazzen, *Shī‘ite Higher Learning and the Role of the Madrasa-yi Sulṭānī in Late Safavid Iran*, pp. 47–48.

11 Āqā Muḥammad Bāqir was the teacher of Sayyid Muḥammad Mahdī Ṭabāṭabā‘ī (d. 1212/1797–98), also known as Baḥr al-‘Ulūm (The Ocean of Learning), Shaykh Ja‘far Najafī Kāshif al-Ghiṭā’ (d. 1227/1812–13), and Mīrzā Abū l-Qāsim Gilānī known as Mīrzā-yi Qummī (d. 1231/1815–16).

12 Q. Ghanī, “Sharḥ-i ḥāl-i marḥūm Ḥājj Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī,” p. 46; T. Izutsu and M. Mohaghegh, *The Metaphysics of Sabzavārī*, p. 12; Mīrzā Muḥammad Bāqer Mūsawī Khwānsārī, *al-Rawḍāt al-jannāt fī aḥwāl al-‘ulamā’ wa-l-sādāt* (Qom: Maktaba Ismā‘īliyyān, 1390–92/1972–73), vol. 7, pp. 153–157. Sabzawārī’s son in law says that when Mullā Hādī first arrived in Isfahan with the intention of staying just one month, he attended the classes of Ḥājj Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Kalbāsī/Karbāsī (d. 1261/1845, author of the *Ishārāt al-uṣūl*), and of Shaykh Muḥammad Taqī Isfahānī (d. 1248/1832–33, author of *Hidāyat al-mustarshidīn*).

of Mullā 'Alī Nūrī, Sabzawārī attended the classes of Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsā'ī (d. 1241/1826) for a period of fifty-three days.¹³

Taking account of his eight-year stay in Isfahan as a student of these authorities on Ṣadrian philosophy, Mullā Hādī must have completed his studies when he was around thirty years old. It is worthy of note that his studies and the formation of his personality as a scholar were not limited to the absorption of the official canon of learning (i.e., the traditional (*naqlī*) and the intellectual (*'aqlī*) learned disciplines), but that he was also formed by a spiritual way of conduct and the study of mysticism. It is however, not clear in whose presence Sabzawārī developed these aspects of his personality. His autobiography and statements by his family only allow for the conclusion that while he was staying with his cousin Ḥājj Mullā Ḥusayn Sabzawārī in Mashhad, he not only studied the basics of the official disciplines mentioned earlier, but on top of this the two of them also engaged in exercises and acts of devotion that were aimed at the purification of their souls and the acquisition of a pious mode of conduct, directed at spiritual growth. Later, during his studies in Isfahan, he displayed a similar interest in combining exercises in spiritual conduct with formal education. In his own words:

I stayed there [i.e., in Isfahan] for eight years gaining, with God's aid, an ascetic temperament, free of excessive passions, as well as success in my studies of the learned disciplines and the *sharī'a*.¹⁴

Even though Sabzawārī's spiritual conduct reflected the practices of the pious mystics, we do not have any testimony that would confirm that this motivated him to become a member of any specific mystical order or the disciple of any of the shaykhs of these orders. If we look at his awareness and understanding

Cf. T. Izutsu and M. Mohaghegh, op.cit., p. 13. In his autobiography, Sabzawārī himself does not refer to any studies under these two scholars. This would seem to imply that he went only very briefly to their lectures, the whole matter being too insignificant to deserve separate mention. According to Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, Sabzawārī went for a considerable period of time to the lectures of Mīrzā Ḥasan Nūrī (fl. 1255/1839–40), the son of Mullā 'Alī Nūrī, and also to those of Mīrzā Ḥasan Chīnī (d. 1264/1847–48). He also maintains that Sabzawārī attended Sayyid Riqā Lārījānī's classes on Islamic mysticism for a brief period of time. Unfortunately, Āshtiyānī does not supply any reference in support of his claims. See Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, *Fi l-manāḥij al-sulūkiyya. Bā ḥawāshī-i Ḥājj Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (2nd ed., Tehran: Markaz-i Nashr-i Dānishgāhī, 1360 Sh./1981), p. 115.

13 T. Izutsu and M. Mohaghegh, *The Metaphysics of Sabzawārī*, p. 14.

14 Q. Ghanī, "Sharḥ-i ḥāl-i marḥūm Ḥājj Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī," p. 46; T. Izutsu and M. Mohaghegh, *The Metaphysics of Sabzawārī*, p. 12.

of the important sources of theoretical mysticism such as the works of Muḥyī l-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī (d. 638/1240) and some of his commentators, it is not clear whose student he may have been in this discipline. Perhaps he had mastered these works through independent study. But it is also possible that at the time of Sabzawārī's studies in Isfahan, and in view of the link between Ibn 'Arabī's theoretical mysticism and Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophy and the impact of the former on the latter, the study of seminal Gnostic texts like Ibn 'Arabī's *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* and some of its commentaries were part of the curriculum of the philosophical seminaries. Surprisingly, this possibility was rejected by Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (d. 1384 Sh./2005), who argued that Sabzawārī's acquaintance with mystical discussion had been merely based on Mullā Ṣadrā works:

Sabzawārī did not attend any seminar on theoretical mysticism or any readings from works on mysticism (Shams al-Dīn Fanārī's (d. 834/1431) *Miṣbāḥ al-uns*,¹⁵ Ṣā'in al-Dīn Turka's (d. 835/1432) *Tamhīd al-qawā'id*, Dāwūd Qayṣarī's (d. 751/1350) commentary on *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*). His knowledge in the field of mysticism and Sufism limits itself to the actual mystical themes that are found in the works of Mullā Ṣadrā. But he had a very keen sense of taste and was extremely perceptive in matters concerning the mystical "savouring" (*dhawq*) of reality. In practical mysticism and in his caution with regard to the performance of acts of worship and his total immersion in these, he was unrivalled and looked upon as a Master of spiritual unveilings and miracles.¹⁶

Having completed his studies, Sabzawārī left Isfahan in 1242/1826 to go and teach in Mashhad. For five years he taught philosophy and a bit of law and Qur'ān interpretation in the school of Ḥājī Ḥasan.¹⁷ Then, in the year 1247/1831,

15 The *Miṣbāḥ al-uns* is Muḥammad b. Ḥamza Fanārī's (d. 834/1431) commentary on Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī's (d. 673/1274) *Miftāḥ ghayb al-jam' wa-l-wujūd*.

16 Ḥājī Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī, *Rasā'il-i Ḥakīm-i Sabzawārī*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, 2 vols. in one binding (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Uswa, 1376 Sh./1997), vol. 1, p. 121. It is noteworthy that many years before this work was published, Āshtiyānī had another view on Sabzawārī's competence in the field of Islamic mysticism, believing that his works do not reveal any depth or rootedness in Islamic mysticism or in the ways and principles of the Sufis. See his introduction to his edition of Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī's *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya*, p. 115.

17 H. Sabzawārī, *Rasā'il-i ḥakīm-i Sabzawārī*, vol. 1, p. 118; Basing himself on Edward Browne and Ghulām-Ḥusayn Riḍānizhād Nūshīn, Sajjad Rizvi reports that Sabzawārī returned to Mashad to complete his studies in jurisprudence. This is however, not consistent with the account in Sabzawārī's autobiography. Cf. Sajjad Rizvi, "Hikma muta'aliya in Qajar Iran," 479; Q. Ghani, "Sharḥ-i ḥāl-i marḥūm Ḥājī Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī," pp. 46–47.

he returned to his native city of Sabzevar. After a year or two, around 1248/1832, Hājī Mullā Hādī and his wife went on the pilgrimage. Tragically, his wife died on the journey.¹⁸ As his return from the pilgrimage coincided with the death of Fath 'Alī Shāh Qajar (r. 1212–1250/1797–1834) and since the roads were far from safe, Sabzawārī was forced to make a halt in Kerman, taking up residence in the Madrasa-yi Ma'šūmiyya there, where he stayed for the better part of a year. Under the circumstances, he preferred to remain incognito, without anyone being aware of his social station or scholarly rank. It seems that he wanted to seize this opportunity to work on his character, to combat unwanted inclinations of his soul, and to engage in pious exercises. This is why he took it upon himself to assist the janitor of the madrasa, Mullā Muḥammad, also known as 'Ārif, in his tasks as a servant and cleaner, in payment for putting him up in his own quarters.¹⁹ However, one day his learned answer to a question by one of the students caused his rank and scholarly background to become finally known to the professors and the students, and they all paid tribute to him and bowed to him in respect. During this very same forced stopover in Kerman and having lost his first wife, Sabzawārī decided to remarry, pledging his faith to the daughter of Mullā Muḥammad, the janitor of the Madrasa. In 1251/1835–36 or early 1252/1836, the roads had become safe again, and Mullā Hādī returned to Sabzevar, accompanied by his second wife. After a brief stay in Sabzevar, he went again to Mashhad, where he taught for about ten months.²⁰ Then he went back to Sabzevar where he remained until his death, teaching in the Madrasa

18 The available sources do not contain any precise information as to where and when Sabzawārī's first wife passed away. Going by Izutsu's translation of the biography written by Sabzawārī's son-in-law, she died during their stay in Kerman (T. Izutsu and M. Mohaghegh, *The Metaphysics of Sabzavārī*, p. 14). But the original wording of this biography does not allow for this: "He remained there (Kerman) for the better part of a year. His first wife and the mother of the late Mullā Muḥammad, his eldest son, having died, he married a second wife in Kerman." Cf. M. Hīdajī, *Ta'liqat al-Hīdajī 'alā l-Manẓūma wa-sharḥi-hā*, p. 5.

19 Referring to Ghulām-Ḥusayn Riḍānizhād Nūshīn and a personal interview with Ghulām-Ḥusayn Ibrāhīmī Dīnānī, Rizvī claims that Mullā Muḥammad 'Ārif the janitor was Sabzawārī's spiritual master during his stay in Kerman. Cf. S. Rizvī, "Hikma muta'aliya in Qajar Iran," 480. However, his reference to Riḍānizhād's *Ḥakīm-i Sabzawārī*, page 82 does not prove his point. Sabzawārī himself has not made any statement to this effect either, and nor is anything found in other written sources of that period.

20 According to the account of his life given by his son-in-law, after the pilgrimage, Sabzawārī stayed ten years in Mashhad. Cf. T. Izutsu and M. Mohaghegh, *The Metaphysics of Sabzavārī*, p. 14. But this seems to be a mistake because Sabzawārī says nothing about this in his autobiography and ten years is not a brief period to be passed over without any mention. Cf. also G. Ḥ. Riḍānizhād Nūshīn, *Ḥakīm Sabzawārī*, pp. 85–89.

of Ḥājj ‘Abd al-Šānī’ Faṣīḥī, also known as the Madrasa-yi Faṣīḥiyya.²¹ Later this same madrasa came to be known as the Madrasa-yi Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī. In spite of the existence of great philosophical seminaries in Tehran and Isfahan during that period, Sabzawārī’s fame soon led to an influx of students of Ṣadrian philosophy and mysticism from all over Iran. Some also came from neighbouring countries. The seminary of Sabzevar was now the place where the learned would come together.²² Ḥājj Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī died on the 28th of Dhū l-Ḥijja of the year 1289 (February 26, 1873),²³ aged 77.

Throughout his life, Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī used only the inheritance from his father to ensure a livelihood for himself and his family. At the same time, he led a life of extreme simplicity and contentment. He avoided all luxury, his lifestyle being rather that of an ascetic. All his efforts were concentrated on learning and the purification of his soul, along with his teaching and the moral education of his students. He never worked for a salary, and he never received a penny for his teaching. On the contrary, he always spent a portion of the income from his father’s inheritance on his students and on feeding the poor. In the words of Comte de Gobineau:

He belongs to a modest family, though not without financial resources. He has always lived in the most humble manner on the revenues of his father’s inheritance, without ever seeking to boost his income, be it by

21 Q. Ghanī, “Sharḥ-i ḥāl-i marḥūm Ḥājj Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī,” p. 47, T. Izutsu and M. Mohaghegh, *The Metaphysics of Sabzavārī*, pp. 14–15, W. Asrārī Sabzawārī, “Sharḥ-i zindagānī-i Ḥājj Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī (Asrār),” pp. 208–209, 212. It seems that T. Izutsu and M. Mohaghegh (op. cit., p. 14) understood the expression “*dār al-mu’minīn*” in the phrase “*wa ḥāl biṣṭ-u hasht sāl ast ki dar dār al-mu’minīn-i Sabzawār bi tadrīs-i ḥikmat mashghūlam*” as the name of a madrasa, while in fact, it is the *epitheton ornans* of Sabzevar. Cities and towns that have holy places in them are called thus, such as Dār al-mu’minīn-i Qom and similar examples.

22 Joseph Arthur Comte de Gobineau, *Les religions et les philosophies dans l’Asie centrale* (Paris: Leroux, 1900), p. 99; Asrārī Sabzawārī, “Sharḥ-i zindagānī-i Ḥājj Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī (Asrār),” p. 211.

23 M. Ḥ. I’timād al-Saltāna, *Maṭla’ al-shams*, p. 200. Since Sabzawārī died just a few days before the new year, some also mention the year 1290. Cf. G. Ḥ. Riḍānizhād Nūshīn, *Ḥakīm-i Sabzavārī*, pp. 35–39. According to Rizvi, Sabzawārī’s son-in-law gives the year as 1290, while in fact, he says 1289. Cf. S. Rizvi, “*Hikma muta’aliya* in Qajar Iran,” 481; T. Izutsu and M. Mohaghegh, *The Metaphysics of Sabzavārī*, p. 16. Edward Browne wrongly gives 1295/1877–78, for which see his *A Year amongst the Persians*, 3rd ed., with a memoir by E. D. Ross and a foreword by E. H. Minns (London: A. and C. Black, 1950), p. 145. Finally, S. Rizvi (ibid.) mistakenly gives the 2nd of Dhū l-Ḥijja 1289 as the date of his death, while in fact, Sabzawārī died on the 28th.

hunting for some employment or by engaging in trade. He completely immersed himself in his studies. At the beginning of every year, he customarily receives his Legal part of the revenues of his lands in cash or goods, handed over to him by his tenants. He then sets aside a certain sum of money for his own upkeep, taking care to be as modest as possible in his calculations. The rest, he distributes immediately among the poor.²⁴

And basing himself on information provided by his private teacher, Mīrzā Asad Allāh Sabzawārī, Edward Browne said:

The simplicity and indeed austerity of his life was far from being his chief or only merit. Being possessed of private means greatly in excess of what his simple requirements demanded, he used to take pains to discover which of the students stood most in need of pecuniary help, and would then secretly place sums of money varying from one to five or even ten tumans (six shillings to three pounds) in their rooms during their absence, without leaving any clue which could lead to the identification of the donor ... He was always ready to help the widow, the orphan, and the stranger.²⁵

Even though Sabzawārī was held in esteem by the king and the political establishment, who all had special feelings of friendship and devotion for him, he never used these contacts to seek any rank or political office, which he in fact abhorred. Thus when Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh (r. 1264–1313/1848–1896) came to visit him in Sabzevar while on his way to Mashhad in 1284, Sabzawārī received the king in the same way in which he used to receive anyone else. During the visit, the king asked him to compose a work in Persian on the “principles of religion” (*uṣūl al-dīn*)²⁶ or on “Origin and Return” (*al-mabda’ wa-l-ma’ād*).²⁷ Sabzawārī responded to this request by writing his *Asrār al-ḥikam*.

24 J. A. Comte de Gobineau, *Les religions et les philosophies dans l'Asie centrale*, p. 99. Cf. also, W. Asrārī Sabzawārī, “Sharḥ-i zindagānī-i Ḥājj Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī (Asrār),” pp. 199–202, 233.

25 E. G. Browne, *A Year amongst the Persians*, pp. 144–45.

26 See the biography by Sabzawārī's son in law Mīrzā Sayyid Ḥasan in T. Izutsu and M. Mo-haghegh, *The Metaphysics of Sabzavārī*, p. 15.

27 Ḥājj Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī, *Asrār al-ḥikam: Bā muqaddima u ḥawāshī-i Mīrzā Abū l-Ḥasan Sha'rānī* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Mawlā, 1362 Sh./1983), p. 2.

2 Students

In the foregoing, it was explained that after his studies, Sabzawārī spent the rest of his life teaching in Mashhad and Sabzevar. It was under his direction that the madrasa of Sabzevar acquired its fame. In his teaching of philosophy and mysticism and in the moral education of his students Sabzawārī followed his own arrangements. This is clear from the following account by Edward Browne, who had it from his teacher Mullā Asad Allāh Sabzawārī, a former student of Mullā Hādī:

During the day he used to give two lectures, each of two hours' duration ... The complete course of instruction in philosophy which he gave lasted seven years, at the end of which period those students who had followed it diligently were replaced by others.²⁸

Among his students, one can find people who had previously studied the traditional Islamic disciplines of learning as well as those who had first read philosophy under other professors. From among Mullā Hādī's prominent students, the following persons may be mentioned:

- 1) Mullā Muḥammad, Sabzawārī's oldest son and one of the outstanding students of his father's seminary. Mullā Muḥammad had participated in his father's classes for quite a number of years, and because of this, he had accumulated so much learning and experience, that his father entrusted the undergraduate courses to him. There is some disagreement on his time of death. According to some he died before his father, according to others he died in 1292/1875–76.²⁹
- 2) Shaykh 'Alī Fāḍil-i Tabbatī, who was among Sabzawārī's students in Mashhad. About his life, nothing is known. He conducted a correspondence with Sabzawārī in the form of questions and answers. In one of his answers, Sabzawārī is full of praise for him, calling him his "spiritual son". Apparently, Fāḍil-i Tabbatī suspended his studies of the rational sciences for a while in favour of the traditional ones, much to the displeasure of Sabzawārī, who for some time left Tabattī's letters unanswered.³⁰
- 3) Mīrzā 'Abbās Dārābī Shīrāzī (d. 1300/1882–83), author of the *Tuḥfat al-murād*, a commentary on a philosophical poem (*al-Qaṣīda al-yā'īyya*) by

²⁸ E. G. Browne, *A Year amongst the Persians*, pp. 144–145.

²⁹ G. Ḥ. Riḍānizhād Nūshīn, *Ḥakīm-i Sabzawārī*, pp. 104–105.

³⁰ H. Sabzawārī, *Rasā'il-i ḥakīm-i Sabzawārī*, vol. 1, pp. 122–123 and vol. 2, p. 521. The correspondence will be discussed below in the section dealing with Sabzawārī's writings.

- Mīr Findiriskī (d. 1050/1640–41). He studied Ṣadrian philosophy with Sabzawārī for a long time, after which he went to teach this subject in Shiraz. Among his students were Furṣat Shīrāzī (d. 1339/1920–21) and Mīrẓā Sayyid ‘Alī Kāzirūnī (d. 1343/1924–25).
- 4) Mīrẓā Ḥusayn Sabzawārī (d. 1337/1914–15), another one of Sabzawārī’s leading students, who after his graduation went to Tehran to teach the rational and the traditional Islamic sciences in the Madrasa-yi ‘Abd Allāh Khān, situated in the *bāzār* of the drapers. Mīrẓā Ḥusayn’s speciality was mathematics, in which he surpassed all of his contemporaries. He also had full command of medicine. In religious learning, he was a student of Mīrẓā Ḥasan Shīrāzī (d. 1312/1894–95). His students included Mīrẓā Ibrāhīm Zanjānī (d. 1351/1932–33), Ḥakīm Muḥammad Hidaǧī (d. 1349/1930), and also Mīrẓā ‘Alī Akbar Ḥikmī Yazdī (d. 1322/1904).³¹
 - 5) Nūr Allāh Mīrẓā, also known as Shāhzāda Janāb (d. 1293/1876–77). He was likewise among Sabzawārī’s talented students. For many years he lectured on Sabzawārī’s *Sharḥ al-Manẓūma* and other introductory works on philosophy to undergraduate students, in a classroom facing Sabzawārī’s own.³²
 - 6) Mīrẓā ‘Abd al-Karīm Khabūshānī, who studied with Sabzawārī in Mashhad and Sabzevar. He wrote glosses on *al-La’ālī’ al-muntaẓama*, the logical part of Sabzawārī’s *Manẓūma*.³³ According to Asrārī Sabzawārī, these glosses have been published. But I have found no indication of this. There is a copy of them in Khabūshānī’s own hand in the Majlis Library, completed in the Madrasa-yi Ṣadr in Tehran in 1292/1875.³⁴
 - 7) Mīrẓā Asad Allāh Sabzawārī, with whom Edward Browne studied philosophy in Tehran. Browne names him as his source on Sabzawārī. The

31 W. Asrārī Sabzawārī, “Sharḥ-i zindagānī-i Ḥājj Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī (Asrār),” p. 248; Sabzawārī, *Rasā’il-i ḥakīm-i Sabzawārī*, vol. 1, Introduction, p. 128; Sayyid Ḥusayn Naṣr, “Ḥawza-yi falsafī u ‘irfānī-i Tihṛān,” in *Dānishnāma-yi jahān-i Islām*, ed. Ghulam-‘Alī Ḥaddād ‘Ādil, vol. 8 (Tehran: Bunyād-i Dā’irat al-Ma’ārif-i Islāmī, 1383 Sh./2004), pp. 749–753 (752).

32 W. Asrārī Sabzawārī, “Sharḥ-i zindagānī-i Ḥājj Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī (Asrār),” p. 249; Manūchīhr Ṣadūqī Suhā, *Tahrīr-i thānī-i tārikh-i ḥukamā’ u ‘urafā’-i muta’akkhkhir* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Ḥikmat, 1381 Sh./2002), p. 182.

33 W. Asrārī Sabzawārī, “Sharḥ-i zindigānī-i Ḥājj Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī (Asrār),” p. 258; H. Sabzawārī, *Rasā’il-i ḥakīm-i Sabzawārī*, vol. 1, p. 122.

34 MS Tehran, Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī 15329. See Sayyid Ṣādiq Ḥusaynī Ashkiwarī, *Fihrist-i Nuskhahā-yi khatṭī-i kitābkhāna-yi Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī*, vol. 43 (Tehran: Kitābkhāna, Mūzi u Markaz-i Asnād-i Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī, 1389 Sh./2010–11), p. 24.

information provided consisting of Mīrzā Asad Allāh's personal recollections of his teacher and of conversations with his children.³⁵

- 8) Mullā Muḥammad Kāẓim Khurāsānī (d. 1329/1911–12) is also said to have been among Sabzawārī's students. Mullā Muḥammad was a jurisconsult and legal scholar of high repute. Author of the *Kifāyat al-uṣūl*, he was a recognized authority in matters concerning the Shī'ī faith and the Head of the Seminary of Najaf. According to Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, Mullā Muḥammad was on his way to the Holy Shrines of Najaf and Karbala when he interrupted his journey to follow Sabzawārī's classes for a period of about one year.³⁶
- 9) Sulṭān Muḥammad b. Ḥaydar Muḥammad (d. 1327/1909–10) better known as Sulṭān 'Alī-Shāh Gunābādī. He was a famous representative of the Ni'matullāhī Sufi order, and a disciple of Ḥājj Muḥammad Kāẓim Iṣfahānī (d. 1293/1876–77), also known as Sa'adat 'Alī-Shāh. When Sa'adat 'Alī-Shāh broke away from the Ni'matullāhī order, Sulṭān 'Alī-Shāh took his place. After Sulṭān 'Alī-Shāh's death, this branch of the Ni'matullāhī order came to be known as the Gunābādī or Sulṭān 'Alī-Shāhī line. Sulṭān 'Alī-Shāh wrote a famous commentary on the Qur'ān with the title *Bayān al-sa'ada fī maqāmāt al-'ibāda*, as well as some valuable works on the subject of Islamic gnosis. Sulṭān 'Alī-Shāh was one of Sabzawārī's celebrated students in the rational sciences and Ṣadrian philosophy at the seminary of Sabzevar.³⁷
- 10) Sayyid Aḥmad Riḍawī (d. 1349/1930–31), nicknamed Adīb Pīshawārī, a poet and learned Sufi who went in 1287/1870 to Sabzevar, attending the

35 E. G. Browne, *A Year amongst the Persians*, p. 146.

36 H. Sabzawārī, *Rasā'il-i ḥakīm-i Sabzawārī*, vol. 1, p. 125. Some say that Ākhūnd-i Khurāsānī did not stay that long. According to 'Abd al-Riḍā Kafā'i, Ākhūnd-i Khurāsānī only attended a single lecture during a one-day stopover of his caravan in Sabzawār, on his way to the Holy Shrines of Iraq. Cf. 'Abd al-Riḍā Kafā'i, "Muṣāḥaba bā Ḥujjat al-Islām wa-l-muslimīn 'Abd al-Riḍā Kafā'i," in Muḥsin Daryābaygī (ed.), *Ḥayāt-i siyāsī u farhangī u ijtīmā'i-i Ākhūnd-i Khurāsānī* (Tehran: Mu'assasa-yi Taḥqīqāt u Tawṣā'a-yi 'Ulūm-i Insānī, 1386 Sh./2007–2008), p. 118. On Khurāsānī, cf. also Muḥammad Ra'īszāda. "Khurāsānī, Ākhūnd Mullā Muḥammad Kāẓim," in *Dānishnāma-yi Jahān-i Islām*, ed. Ghulām-'Alī Ḥaddād 'Ādil (Tehran: Bunyād-i Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif-i Islāmī, 1390 Sh./2011), vol. 15, pp. 317–334.

37 M. Ṣadūqī Suhā, *Taḥrīr-i thānī-i tārikh-i ḥukamā' u 'urafā'-i muta'akkhkhir*, p. 182; Shahrām Pāzūkī, "Taṣawwuf dar Īrān ba'd az qarn-i shishum," in *Dānishnāma-yi jahān-i Islām*, ed. Ghulām-'Alī Ḥaddād 'Ādil (Tehran: Bunyād-i Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif-i Islāmī, 1382 Sh./2003), vol. 7, pp. 387–398 (393).

lessons of Mullā Hādī during the last two years of his life. He also studied under Sabzawārī's son, Mullā Muḥammad.³⁸

- 11) Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥakīm Ilāhī, who belonged to the first generation of Mullā Hādī's students in Sabzevar. After his studies, he returned to Tehran to teach. Adīb Pīshāwarī also attended his classes for some time.³⁹
- 12) Mullā Ismā'īl 'Ārif Bujnūrdī was one of Sabzawārī's most talented students who carried on a correspondence with him.⁴⁰
- 13) Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Mūsā 'Irāqī Buzshalū'ī Kumījānī (d. 1313/1895), was a student of Sabzawārī whose thought was strongly marked by Suhrawardī's philosophy. He is known to have written two works, one being a commentary on the *Du'ā-yi iftītāh*, and the other work on *Ishrāqī* philosophical tradition, called *Nūr al-fu'ād*.⁴¹ Both of these works are in Persian.
- 14) Ḥusayn Qulī Khān Shāwandī Dargazīnī (d. 1311/1893–94) also known as Hamadānī. Apart from philosophical education which he had with Sabzawārī, he studied mysticism with Sayyid 'Alī Shūstārī (d. 1283/1866–67), and law and theology with Shaykh Murtaḍā Anṣārī (d. 1281/1864). Famous mystics were educated in Ḥusayn Qulī's school, such as Mīrzā Jawād Malikī Tabrīzī (d. 1343/1924–25), Shaykh Muḥammad Bahārī Hamadānī (d. 1325/1907–1908), and Sayyid Aḥmad Karbalā'ī (d. 1332/1913–14). Another well-known student of his, in Ṣadrian philosophy this time, was Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn Asadābādī (d. 1314/1896–97).⁴²
- 15) Mullā Aḥmad Yazdī, also known as Fāḍil-i Yazdī, author of a response to difficulties raised by Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsā'ī against the *Risāla-yi 'ilm* of Fayḍ Kāshānī (d. 1091/1680),⁴³ which incited his own teacher Sabzawārī to

38 See W. Asrārī Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ-i zīndigānī-i Ḥājī Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī* (Asrār), p. 252; Aḥmad b. Shihāb al-Dīn Adīb Pīshāwarī, *Dīwān-i qaṣā'id u ghazaliyyāt-i Fārsī u 'Arabī-i Adīb-i Pīshāwarī*. Collected, annotated and commented by 'Alī 'Abd al-Rasūlī (Tehran: Silsila-yi Nashriyyāt-i Mā, 1362 Sh./1983–84), pp. 3–4.

39 H. Sabzawārī, *Rasā'il-i ḥakīm-i Sabzawārī*, vol. 1, p. 132.

40 The correspondence will be discussed below in the section dealing with Sabzawārī's writings.

41 See Shihāb al-Dīn Kumījānī. *Inner Light* [Nūr al-Fu'ād]. A 19th Century Persian Text in Illuminationist Philosophy, ed. Hossein Ziai and Mohammad Karimi Zanjani Asl (Costa Mesa: Mazda, 2012); Hossein Ziai, "Nūr al-Fu'ād. A Nineteenth-Century Persian Text in Illuminationist Philosophy by Shihāb al-Dīn Kumījānī," in L. Hahn, et al. (ed.), *The Philosophy of Seyyed Hossein Nasr* (Chicago IL, 2001), pp. 763–774.

42 Muḥammad Muḥsin Āqā Buzurg Ṭīhrānī. *Ṭabaqāt al-'ālam al-Shī'a: Al-Qism al-thānī min al-Juz' al-awwal wa-huwa Nuqabā' al-bashar fi l-qarn al-rābi' 'ashar*, 2 vols. (Mashhad: Chāp-i Sa'īd, 1404/1983), vol. 2, pp. 674–677.

43 In the bibliography of Fayḍ-i Kāshānī there is no such treatise. But if we look at Sabzawārī's rebuttal of Aḥsā'ī's objections, it seems that the work, meant is Kāshānī's *al-Lubāb fi*

write a reply to Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsā'ī as well. Sabzawārī also wrote a response to the original work, titled *al-Muḥākamāt wa-l-muqāwamāt 'alā Risālat al-'ilm li-l-shaykh Aḥmad al-Baḥraynī*.⁴⁴

In addition to the persons listed above, Ḥājj Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī counted many more academics among his students, but for reasons of brevity, they cannot be mentioned here.⁴⁵

3 Works

Of Sabzawārī's writings, some fifty have come down to posterity. They cover a variety of subjects and disciplines, ranging from philosophy, logic and mysticism to law, legal theory, the traditions, as well as literary pieces. Written in Arabic and Persian, they take the form of books, short tracts, mostly in answer to questions addressed to him, and also of glosses and notes. Because of Sabzawārī's renown in the rational sciences, his philosophical writings have always enjoyed special attention.⁴⁶ In this brief overview, I shall restrict myself to a general presentation of Sabzawārī's major works in Ṣadrian philosophy

'ilm Allāh. This work has been edited by Mahdī Ḥājjīyān and published in *Majmū'a-yi rasā'il-i Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ-i Kāshānī*, ed. Bihzād Ja'fari (Tehran: Madrasa-yi 'Alī-i Shahīd Muṭahharī, 1387 Sh./2008), vol. 3, pp. 317–329.

44 H. Sabzawārī, *Rasā'il-i ḥakīm-i Sabzawārī*, vol. 1, p. 127.

45 Cf. Q. Asrārī Sabzawārī, "Sharḥ-i zindagānī-i Ḥājj Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī (Asrār)," pp. 248–259; M. Ṣadūqī Suhā, *Taḥrīr-i thānī-i tārikh-i ḥukamā' u 'urafā'-i muta'akhhir*, pp. 179–195; H. Sabzawārī, *Rasā'il-i ḥakīm-i Sabzawārī*, vol. 1, pp. 122–132. According to Murtaḍā Mudarrisī Chahārdihī (d. 1376 Sh./1977), Shaykh Murtaḍā Anṣārī studied 'Abd al-Razzāq Lāhījī's *Shawāriq al-ilḥām* and various philosophical subjects for two years under Sabzawārī in the Ḥājj Ḥasan Madrasa in Mashhad. He also relates that Sabzawārī held Shaykh Murtaḍā Anṣārī in great esteem. Cf. M. Mudarrisī Chahārdahī, *Zindagī u falsafa-yi Ḥājj Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī*, p. 34. Referring to Mudarrisī Chahārdahī, Rizvi reports that Shaykh Murtaḍā Anṣārī studied philosophy and theology under Sabzawārī before going to Najaf in 1252/1836–37. Cf. Rizvi, "*Hikma muta'aliya* in Qajar Iran," 487. All this is, however, doubtful. Firstly, because although he may have used an oral source, Mudarrisī Chahārdahī gives no reference for his assertions, and there is no mention of these in the available sources; secondly, because Rizvi provides a date where Mudarrisī does not, while going by the testimony of Sabzawārī's autobiography and his family, he spent the period 1248–1250/1832–1834 on preparations for the pilgrimage, on the pilgrimage itself, and on the return journey. It seems to be a confusion in Rizvi's account between Shaykh Anṣārī and Ākhūnd Mullā Muḥammad Kāẓim Khurāsānī.

46 For an inventory of his writings, see M. Ṣadūqī Suhā, *Taḥrīr-i thānī-i tārikh-i ḥukamā' u 'urafā'-i muta'akhhir*, pp. 172–173.

(*al-ḥikma al-mutaʿāliya*) and the rational sciences and also introduce two other works, one on Islamic mysticism, while the other concerns his poetry.

- 1) *Ghurar al-farā'id* (The Blazes of the Pearls), also called *al-Urjūza fī l-ḥikma*, but most commonly known as the *Manzūma (fī l-ḥikma)*. This is an important versified work in Arabic on general principles (*umūr ʿamma*) of philosophy, metaphysical theology (*ilāhiyyāt bi-l-ma'nā l-akhaṣṣ*) and several issues in physics and psychology. It also provides an outline of matters of practical wisdom and ethics. It is notable that in the past, the writing of didactic poems was an art form designed to facilitate the acquisition and memorisation of complex subjects of learning. Obviously, the conciseness of these poems led to obscurity and problems of understanding, which is why people usually wrote explanatory commentaries on them.
- 2) *Sharḥ Ghurar al-farā'id* or also *Sharḥ al-Manzūma fī l-ḥikma*. In the colophon of this commentary, Sabzawārī states that he had started writing *Ghurar al-farā'id* itself in 1240, i.e., when he was still in Isfahan and that he completed the commentary on it in 1261/1845. In later years, he also wrote glosses on this latter work.⁴⁷
- 3) *al-La'ālī' al-muntaẓama* (The Strung Pearls), also known as *al-Manzūma fī l-mantiq* and *al-Urjūza fī l-mantiq*. Like his *Ghurar al-farā'id*, this work is composed in Arabic verse. In his *Ghurar al-farā'id*⁴⁸ and in the *Sharḥ al-asmā'*,⁴⁹ Sabzawārī refers to verses from *al-La'ālī' al-muntaẓama*,⁵⁰ saying that he intends to complete this work and that he looks forward to

47 A separate copy of these glosses is located in the Central Library of the University of Tehran (MS Tehran, University of Tehran 342, fols. 1b–99b, copied in 1281/1864–65 by 'Alī Firūzkūhī. See Muḥammad Taqī Dānishpazhūh. *Fihrist-i kitābkhāna-yi ihdā'ī-i Sayyid Muḥammad Mishkāt bi kitābkhāna-yi Dānishgāh-i Tihirān*, vol. III. 1 (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Dānishgāh-i Tihirān, 1332 Sh./1953), p. 239. Another copy of this work is preserved in MS Majlis-i Shūrāyi Islāmī, Sinā 1774 (old no. 50906), with a colophon that says that the glosses were completed in 1281. See 'A. Ḥ. Ḥā'irī, *Fihrist-i nuskhahā-yi khaṭṭī-i Kitābkhāna-yi Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Millī*, vol. 5, p. 158. The copy located in the Library of the University of Tehran has a prologue that is missing in the copy of the Majlis Library.

48 H. Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-Manzūma* (lithograph edition, Tehran, 1298/1880), p. 87.

49 H. Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-asmā' aw Sharḥ du'ā' al-jawshan al-kabīr*, ed. Najaf-Qulī Ḥabībī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Dānishgāh-i Tihirān, 1375 Sh./1996), pp. 453–454.

50 In his *Sharḥ al-Manzūma*, *ḥikma* section, lithograph, p. 87, Sabzawārī refers to the three basic philosophical questions of *mā* (what?), *hal* (whether), and *lima* (why?), discussed in *al-La'ālī' al-muntaẓama* and contained in *Sharḥ al-manzūma*. Cf. H. Sabzawārī. *Sharḥ al-manzūma: al-La'ālī' al-muntaẓama wa-Ghurar al-farā'id*, edited and glossed by Ḥasan Ḥasanẓāda Āmulī, 5 vols. (Tehran: Nashr-i Nāb, 1369–1374 Sh./1990–1995), vol. 1, p. 183. In his *Sharḥ al-asmā'*, he refers to the verses on the sophistic reasoning of the *La'ālī' muntaẓama*, for which see Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-manzūma*, logic section, vol. 1, pp. 319–320.

appending it to *Ghurar al-farā'id*. This allows one to conclude that he was writing *al-La'ālī' al-muntaẓama*, the commentary on *Ghurar al-farā'id*, and the *Sharḥ al-asmā'* all in parallel, and that he completed *al-La'ālī' al-muntaẓama* only after he had finished the others.

- 4) A Commentary on *al-La'ālī' al-muntaẓama*; unlike *Ghurar al-farā'id*, he wrote no glosses on this commentary.

The *Manẓūma* complex described above is the most celebrated part of Sabzawārī's works. Asrārī Sabzawārī, one of his great-grandchildren, claims that Sabzawārī had taught the whole commentary only once, whereupon he entrusted the teaching of it to his son Mullā Muḥammad and to Shāhẓāda Janāb in those cases where students needed an introductory course in philosophy.⁵¹ According to Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, the commentary was not only taught in the seminary of Sabzevar; indeed, during the author's lifetime, it had already become a philosophical textbook in Tehran.⁵² Little by little, the fame of this work increased until the point that, in the first half of the twentieth century, virtually all the academies in Iran where philosophy and mysticism was part of the curriculum, offered a course on the *Sharḥ al-Manẓūma* as an introduction to the study of the philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā. Today, the *Bidāyat al-ḥikma* and the *Nihāyat al-ḥikma* by 'Allāma Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'ī (d. 1360 Sh./1981) are more commonly used as introductory works on Ṣadrian and regular Islamic philosophy. Nevertheless, during private courses, some scholars still read the *Sharḥ al-Manẓūma* with their students.

The *Manẓūma* complex was published in its entirety in a lithograph edition in Tehran in 1298/1881.⁵³ There are many commentaries and

51 W. Asrārī Sabzawārī, "Sharḥ-i zindagānī-i Ḥājj Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī (Asrār)," pp. 236–237.

52 H. Sabzawārī, *Rasā'il-i ḥakīm-i Sabzawārī*, vol. 1, p. 107.

53 Since then, this edition has seen many photomechanical reprints. The works were also published in movable type in separate volumes, under the following titles: 1) *Sharḥ Ghurar al-farā'id yā Sharḥ-i Manẓūma-yi ḥikmat*, comprising the sections on general principles of philosophy and on substance and accident of the *Sharḥ Ghurar al-farā'id*, accompanied by Hīdajī's glosses and Shaykh Muḥammad Taqī Āmulī's (d. 1391/1972) superglosses, published in Tehran in 1348 Sh./1969 by Mehdi Mohaghegh and Toshihiko Izutsu, Institute of Islamic Studies of McGill University [Tehran branch]; 2) *Fī l-ilāhiyyāt bi-l-ma'nā l-akḥaṣṣ min Kitāb Sharḥ Ghurar al-farā'id yā Sharḥ-i Manẓūma-yi ḥikmat*, comprising the part on metaphysical theology of the *Ghurar al-farā'id* and the commentary (*sharḥ*), published by Mehdi Mohaghegh in 1368 Sh./1989 and 1378 Sh./1999, together with glosses by Hīdajī, Shaykh Muḥammad Taqī Āmulī, and Sayyid Abū l-Ḥasan Rafī'ī Qazwīnī (d. 1395/1975); 3) *The Metaphysics of Sabzawārī*, being an English translation of the parts of the *Sharḥ Ghurar al-farā'id* that deal with general principles of metaphysics and with substance

glosses on the *Sharḥ al-Manẓūma*, of which the following deserve special mention:

1. The glosses by Ākhūnd-i Hīdajī who, in Tehran, was a student of Mīrzā Ḥusayn Sabzawārī, Āqā ‘Alī Mudarris Ṭīhrānī, and Mīrzā Abū l-Ḥasan Jilwa. Ākhūnd-i Hīdajī taught for many years in the Madrasa-yi Sayyid Naṣr al-Dīn in Tehran.⁵⁴ His glosses were published in a lithograph edition in Tehran in 1346/1967, and in a typeset edition, likewise in Tehran, in 1363 Sh./1984.
2. *Durar al-fawā'id*, being the glosses on Sabzawārī's *Sharḥ al-Manẓūma* by Shaykh Muḥammad Taqī Āmulī, a celebrated teacher and authority on philosophy who had studied under Ākhūnd-i Hīdajī, Mīrzā Ḥasan Kirmānshāhī (d. 1336/1917–18) and Mīrzā Ḥāshim Rashtī (d. 1332/1914).⁵⁵ The *Durar al-fawā'id* was published in 1377 in Tehran when the author was still alive.
3. The glosses by Mīrzā Mahdī Mudarris Āshtiyānī (d. 1372/1952–53). According to Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, Mīrzā Mahdī Āshtiyānī's glosses on the *Sharḥ al-manẓūma* are the best ever written, while his presentation of the foundations of mysticism and the complexities of Sufism is to be preferred over Sabzawārī's own, his command of the sources being without equal in recent times.⁵⁶ An edition of these glosses was published by ‘Abd al-Jawād Falāṭūrī and Mahdī Muḥaqqiq, together with an English introduction by Toshihiko Izutsu, in Tehran in 1352 Sh./1973 (reprinted in 1367 Sh./1988).
4. The *Ta’līqa rashīqa*, being the glosses on the logical part of the *Sharḥ al-Manẓūma*, also by Mīrzā Mahdī Mudarris Āshtiyānī, first published in Tehran in 1371/1951–52, and then in Qom in 1404/1983.⁵⁷

and accident. Preceded by an Introduction to Sabzawārī's life by T. Izutsu, published in New York in 1356 Sh./1977, reprinted in Tehran in 1362 Sh./1983; 4) *Sharḥ al-Manẓūma*. This edition comprises the logic (*Sharḥ al-Manẓūma, al-Juz’ al-awwal, Qism al-mantiq al-musammā bi-l-La’lī’ al-muntaẓama wa-sharḥu-hā*) and the part on natural philosophy and metaphysics (*Qism al-ḥikma, Ghurar al-farā'id wa-sharḥu-hā*) and was published in 5 volumes by Ḥasan Ḥasanẓāda Āmulī, together with his own notes and an introduction by Mas’ūd Ṭālibī (Tehran, 1369–1379 Sh./1990–2000). As compared to other editions, it is the most scholarly one available.

54 H. Sabzawārī, *Rasā'il-i ḥakīm-i Sabzawārī*, vol. 1, 106, note 2.

55 Ibid, 107, note 3. For his biography, see Yaḥyā ‘Ābidī, *Zindagināma-yi marḥūm Āyat Allāh Shaykh Muḥammad Taqī Āmulī* (Tehran: Anjuman-i Āthār u Mafākhir-i Farhangī, 1380 Sh./2001).

56 Sabzawārī, *Rasā'il-i ḥakīm-i Sabzawārī*, vol. 1, Introduction, p. 107, note 1.

57 For an inventory of commentaries and glosses on the *Sharḥ al-Manẓūma*, cf. M. Ṣadūqī Suhā, *Taḥrīr-i thānī-i tārikh-i ḥukamā’ u ‘urafā’-i muta’akhhir*, pp. 173–179.

5. Finally, there is a commentary in Arabic on the metaphysical part of the *Sharḥ al-Manẓūma* by Muḥammad ‘Aṣṣār (d. 1356/1937–38), titled *al-Ishrāqāt al-raḍawīyya*. The author’s handwritten copy was completed in 1345 Sh./1966 and bequeathed to the Āstān-i Quds-i Riḍawī Library in Mashhad in 1346/1977 (MS Mashhad, Āstān-i Quds-i Riḍawī 324 M.).⁵⁸
- 5) *Sharḥ al-asmā’ al-ḥusnā*, also known as *Sharḥ du‘ā’ Jawshan al-Kabīr*. According to Sabzawārī, the *Du‘ā’ Jawshan al-Kabīr*, which discusses one thousand names for God, was transmitted from the Prophet by the fourth Imam of the Shī’a, ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn. Sabzawārī’s commentary on this prayer has a philosophical and Gnostic hue. Together with the *Sharḥ Du‘ā’ al-Ṣabāḥ* (see the following lemma) this work was published in Tehran in 1283/1866–67.⁵⁹
- 6) *Sharḥ Du‘ā’ al-Ṣabāḥ*; this prayer, which is gnostic in content, is attributed to ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, may peace be upon him. Sabzawārī’s commentary on this prayer is also philosophical and gnostic in character.⁶⁰
- 7) Glosses on *al-Ḥikma al-Muta‘āliya fi l-asfār al-aqliyya al-arba’a* (also known as *Asfār al-arba’a*), Mullā Ṣadrā Shirāzī’s *opus major*. According to Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, Sabzawārī wrote his glosses on the four “Journeys” (*asfār*, sg. *saḡfār*) of the *Asfār* in a regular, uniform style from beginning to end, with the exception of the section on substance and accidents. The first, lithograph, edition of the *Asfār* that included Sabzawārī’s glosses was published in his own lifetime, in Tehran in 1282/1865–66.⁶¹ Sabzawārī’s glosses are likewise included in the typeset editions of the *Asfār*.
- 8) Glosses on Mullā Ṣadrā’s *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya fi l-manāhiḡ al-sulūkiyya*. In the opinion of Āshtiyānī, these glosses are more solid and

58 See ‘Abd al-‘Alī Ūktāyī, *Fihrist-i kitābkhāna-yi mubāraka-yi āstān-i quds-i Riḍawī*, vol. 4 (Mashhad: Āstān-i Quds-i Riḍawī, 1325 Sh./1946), p. 22 (no 364). According to S. Rizvi, Ākhūnd Mullā Kāẓim Khurāsānī also wrote a gloss on the *Sharḥ al-Manẓūma*, for which cf. S. Rizvi, “*Hikma muta‘āliya* in Qajar Iran,” 491. However, according to Mullā Kāẓim Khurāsānī’s grandson, ‘Abd al-Riḍā Kafā’ī, even though Ākhūnd-i Khurāsānī did teach Sabzawārī’s *Manẓūma* in his younger years in Najaf, any such gloss has so far not been found. See ‘Abd al-Riḍā Kafā’ī, “Bayān u sharḡi mukhtaṣar az ḡayāt u shakḡṣiyyat-i Ākhūnd Mullā Kāẓim Khurāsānī.” *Nashriyya-yi dānishkāda-yi ilāḡhiyyāt-i dānishḡāḡ-i Firdaws-i Mashhad* 34–35 (1376 Sh./2007), 11–44 (42).

59 In 1372 Sh./1993, Najaf-Qulī Ḥabībī published an edition of this text. See Ḥājj Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ du‘ā’ al-ṣabāḡ*, ed. Najaf-Qulī Ḥabībī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Dānishḡāḡ-i Tihrān, 1372 Sh./1993). This edition was reprinted in 1375 Sh./1996.

60 A new edition of this text was published in Tehran in 1372 Sh./1993. See Ḥājj Mullā Hādī *Sharḥ al-asmā’ aw Sharḥ du‘ā’ al-jawshan al-kabīr*, ed. Najaf-Qulī Ḥabībī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Dānishḡāḡ-i Tihrān, 1375 Sh./1996).

61 H. Sabzawārī, *Rasā’il-i ḡakīm-i Sabzawārī*, vol. 1, Introduction, p. 107.

academic than his glosses on the *Asfār*. The first, lithograph edition of Mullā Ṣadrā's *Shawāhid* which included Sabzawārī's glosses was also published in his lifetime, in Tehran in 1286/1869–70.⁶²

- 9) Glosses on Mullā Ṣadrā's *al-Mabda' wa-l-ma'ād*. These glosses are concise and to the point. According to Āshtiyānī, this is because *al-Mabda' wa-l-ma'ād* repeats the subject matter of the *Asfār*, indeed, it is sometimes even a summary of it, so that Sabzawārī would have had to rewrite his glosses on the *Asfār* and the *Shawāhid* had he wanted to write a comprehensive set of glosses on *al-Mabda' wa-l-ma'ād*. A lithograph edition of these glosses was published in Tehran in 1314/1896–97.⁶³
- 10) Glosses on Mullā Ṣadrā's *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*. Sabzawārī used to teach this work by Mullā Ṣadrā, and in the course of his lessons, he would write glosses and notes on it. An edition of the *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb* that included his glosses was published in Sabzawārī's own lifetime in 1282/1866.⁶⁴
- 11) *Asrār al-hikam fī l-muftatīḥ wa-l-mukhtatim* (The Secrets of Wisdom on the Beginning and End); In two volumes. The first volume on rational wisdom is on the Origin and the Return (*al-mabda' wa-l-ma'ād*), while the second volume is about practical wisdom. In his presentation of the book's chapters and their ordering in the Introduction, Sabzawārī declares the following:

Islamic gnosis consists of three parts. First: knowledge of God, which divides into knowledge of the Origin and the Return; second, knowledge of the Self; and third, knowledge of God's commandments, which further divides into two parts, one being the knowledge of the commandments of His law, the other of the commandments of His path. In this book, we shall, with the help of God, the Exalted and Most High, compile some elements taken from a number of branches of Transcendent philosophy and gnosis. We shall start our account first from the beginning while afterwards, it will start from the end. Knowledge of the Self playing an auxiliary role in respect of knowledge of the Origin, which itself is the prologue to the Return, we shall consider psychology as coming prior to

62 Ibid., p. 108. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī published a new edition of the *Shawāhid* with Sabzawārī's gloss, together with an introduction containing Sabzawārī's biography. See Ṣadr al-Dīn Shirāzī, *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya fī l-manāḥij al-sulūkīyya*. Bā ḥawāshī-i Ḥājj Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (Mashhad: Dānishgāh-i Mashhad, 1346 Sh./1967, 2nd ed., Tehran: Markaz-i Nashr-i Dānishgāhī, 1360 Sh./1981).

63 A new edition of *al-Mabda' wa-l-ma'ād* containing Sabzawārī's gloss and with a foreword by Seyyed Hossein Nasr was brought out by Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (*al-Mabda' wa-l-ma'ād*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (Tehran: Anjuman-i Shāhanshāhī-i Falsafa-yi Irān, 1354 Sh./1975).

64 H. Sabzawārī, *Rasā'il-i ḥakīm-i Sabzawārī*, vol. 1, p. 111.

eschatology. And because knowledge of the commandments of the law and the path is dependent upon our knowledge of the Prophet and the infallible Imams of Guidance, may peace be upon them ... we shall give matters of prophetology and imamology precedence over practical wisdom if God so desires and with His support. We organized this book in a number of chapters etc.⁶⁵

As said earlier, Sabzawārī wrote this book at the request of Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh. It was completed in 1286/1869, and through the good efforts of Mirzā Yūsuf Mustawfī al-Mamālik, it was published in 1303/1885–86 in Tehran in a lithograph edition.⁶⁶

- 12) *Hidāyat al-ṭālibīn fī maʿrifat al-anbiyaʾ al-maʿsūmīn wa-l-aʿimma al-hādīn* (The Guidance of the Students on Knowledge of the Infallible Prophets and the Rightly Guiding Imams); A treatise on matters concerning divinity, with some discussions on the *mundus imaginalis* (*ʿālam al-mithāl*), and on the examination of prophethood and imamism from a Twelver Shīʿī point of view. Sabzawārī wrote this treatise at the request of Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh, and it was completed before the *Asrār al-ḥikam*.⁶⁷
- 13) Reply to Questions by Āqā Mirzā Abū l-Ḥasan Riḍawī, son of the celebrated high-ranking clergyman and jurisconsult of the Qajar era Āqā Sayyid Muḥammad Qaṣīr. These are seven questions concerning religious doctrine and philosophy and mysticism.⁶⁸
- 14) Reply to Questions by Shaykh Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Wāʿiz Ṭihrānī (d. 1353/1934), who requested an answer to ten questions, mostly about religious doctrine and theology.⁶⁹
- 15) Reply to Questions by Sayyid Ṣādiq Simnānī. These are thirteen questions on philosophical matters.⁷⁰

65 H. Sabzawārī, *Asrār al-ḥikam*, p. 4.

66 Ibid.; Umīd Qanbarī (ed.), *Zindagīnāma u khadamāt-i ʿilmī u farhangī-i marḥūm Ḥājī Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī* (Tehran: Anjuman-i Āthār u Mafākhir-i Farhangī, 1383 Sh./2004), p. 134. According to Riḍānizhād, Mirzā Yūsuf Mustawfī al-Mamālik published his first edition of this work in 1286/1869–70. See Ghulām-Ḥusayn Riḍānizhād Nūshīn, *Ḥakīm-i Sabzawārī: Zindagī, āthār, falsafa* (Tehran: Sanāʾī, 1371 Sh./1992–93), p. 173.

67 The title of this treatise was chosen by Sabzawārī himself. Cf. Sabzawārī, *Rasāʾil-i ḥakīm-i Sabzawārī*, vol. 1, pp. 211–212. Texts 12 to 29 in the above list of Sabzawārī's works were published in *Rasāʾil-i ḥakīm-i Sabzawārī*, as will be indicated below. The *Hidāyat al-ṭālibīn* is found in vol. 1, pp. 207–296.

68 Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 297–316.

69 Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 317–349.

70 Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 351–372.

- 16) Reply to Questions by a Scholar from Qom, which are six questions on religious doctrine and theology.⁷¹
- 17) Reply to Versified Questions by Mīrzā Bābā Gurgānī, questions concerning the death of the individual (*mawt dhātī*), the death of the will (*mawt ikhti'yārī*), and natural (inevitable) death (*mawt idtīrārī*), with the request for a versified reply from Sabzawārī as well.⁷²
- 18) Reply to a Question by Mullā Aḥmad Dāmghānī. It is about the immutable archetypes, the extent to which they differ in respect of their origination, and about the manner in which they will cease to be.⁷³
The previous six letters and the *Hidāyat al-ṭālibīn* are all in Persian.
- 19) Reply to Questions by Mullā Ismā'īl 'Ārif, who is the Mullā Ismā'īl 'Ārif Bujnūrdī mentioned above. This tract deals with eighteen questions on religious doctrine and theology, while there are some that pertain to mysticism.⁷⁴
- 20) Reply to Questions by Mullā Ismā'īl Bujnūrdī, also known as 'Ārif. This treatise contains ten questions on matters of religious doctrine and theology, such as the miraculous way in which the Prophet split the moon asunder, the question of the Return (*raj'at*), bodily resurrection (*ma'ād jismānī*), the manner in which the congregation of the bodies (*ḥashr al-aqsād*) will take place, and the location of Heaven and Hell. Edited by Āshtiyānī,⁷⁵ a copy of this treatise dated 1270/1853–54 and bearing the call number 10339 is held in the Mar'ashī Library in Qom under the title *al-Ajwiba al-Asrāriyya 'alā l-as'ila al-'irfāniyya*.⁷⁶
- 21) Reply to Questions by Mullā Aḥmad Fāḍil Yazdī or *As'ila Aḥmadiyya wa-Asrāriyya*. on the unity of being and motion in substance (*ḥaraka jawhariyya*).⁷⁷
- 22) Reply to Questions by Fāḍil-i Tabbatī, about the imaginal world (*'ālam al-mithāl*) by way of the arc of ascent (*ṣu'ūdī*) and the arc of descent (*nuzūlī*), the demonstration of the existence of the suspended images

71 Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 373–381.

72 Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 383–388.

73 Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 389–394.

74 Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 401–469.

75 Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 471–492.

76 Sayyid Aḥmad Husaynī. *Fihrist-i nuskhahā-yi khaṭṭī-i kitābkhāna-yi 'umūmī-i ḥaḍrat-i Āyat Allāh al-'Uzmā Mar'ashī Najafī*, vol. 26 (Qom: Kitābkhāna-yi 'Umūmī-i Ḥaḍrat-i Āyat Allāh al-'Uzmā Mar'ashī Najafī, 1375 Sh./1996), p. 282.

77 H. Sabzawārī, *Rasā'il-i ḥakīm-i Sabzawārī*, vol. 2, pp. 493–518.

- (*ashbāḥ mu'allaqa*, i.e., archetypes), and about the separate existence of the forms of the imagination (*ṣuwar mutakhayyala*).⁷⁸
- 23) Reply to Questions by Ākhūnd Mullā Ismā'īl 'Ārif Bujnūrdī or *Istihā'āt Ismā'īliyya wa-hadāyā Asrāriyya*. On matters pertaining to knowledge of Shī'ism and its doctrines, together with some questions on philosophy and mysticism.⁷⁹
 - 24) *Al-Muḥākamāt wa-l-muqāwamāt 'alā sharḥ Risālat al-'ilm li-l-Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsā'ī*. Aḥsā'ī had written the *Sharḥ risālat al-'ilm*⁸⁰ in explanation of Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ-i Kāshānī's *Risālat al-'ilm*, and also had criticized him in it. Sabzawārī wrote *al-Muḥākamāt* on Mullā Aḥmad Fāḍil-i Yazdī's request that he answer and overturn Aḥsā'ī's criticisms.⁸¹
 - 25) *Risāla dar ishtirāk-i ma'nawī-i ṣifāt-i kamālīyya-yi wujūd bayn-i Ḥaqq u khalq*.⁸²
 - 26) *Risālat mushāraḳat al-ḥadd wa-l-burhān*.⁸³ Sabzawārī wrote this treatise in response to a request made by some of his friends.
 - 27) Reply to Questions by Sayyid Samī' Khalkhālī or *As'ila Samī'īyya wa-ajwiba Asrāriyya*. On various subjects, such as the modes of correct and eloquent speech by 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, the unity of being, the creation of the universe, and a number of issues regarding Mullā Ṣadrā's *Risālat al-ḥudūth* and *Kitāb al-mashā'ir*.⁸⁴
 - 28) Reply to Questions by Mullā Ismā'īl Miyānābādī Isfarā'inī. This treatise does not contain the original questions.⁸⁵
 - 29) A Commentary on a Saying Attributed to 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib: "To know me as Light is to know God" (*ma'rifatī bi-l-nūrānīyya ma'rifat Allāh*), and the correspondence of a number of scholars with Sabzawārī, including the latter's answers to questions presented to him.⁸⁶
- Items 19 to 29 are all in Arabic.
- 30) A Commentary on Rūmī's *Mathnawī*. The commentary on Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī's (d. 672/1273) *Mathnawī* is one of Sabzawārī's principal works and shows the extent of his reading in and grasp of the works of the masters of mystical thought, be it in poetry or in prose, and his remarkable fluency in

78 Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 519–534.

79 Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 535–578.

80 See above, note 43.

81 H. Sabzawārī, *Rasā'il-i ḥakīm-i Sabzawārī*, vol. 2, pp. 580–601.

82 Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 603–609.

83 Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 613–615.

84 Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 617–645.

85 Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 647–674.

86 Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 675–763.

these texts. With his poetical acumen and command of the Islamic sources, he cites from the Qurʾān, the Traditions, or from mystical poetry, whichever the context may require. Thus we find quotations from the mystical works of people like ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (d. 898/1492), Farīd al-Dīn ʿAṭṭār (d. ca. 618/1221), Khwāja ʿAbd Allāh Anṣārī (d. 481/1088), ʿAbd al-Razzāq Kāshānī (d. 736/1335–36), Muṣliḥ al-Dīn Saʿdī (d. ca 690/1291) and others alongside excerpts from the philosophical works of Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī (d. 587/1191) and Mullā Ṣadrā. It is worthy of note that in his commentary on the *Mathnawī*, Sabzawārī did not have any recourse to previous commentaries on this work.⁸⁷ From the introductory passages, it is clear that Sabzawārī found the *Mathnawī* a work of the utmost importance. In the eyes of Sabzawārī, the *Mathnawī* is an encrypted and oblique versified commentary on the Qurʾān.⁸⁸ He wrote this commentary on the *Mathnawī* at the request of Sulṭān Murād Mīrzā Ḥusām al-Saltāna (d. 1300/1882–83), the governor of Khurāsān at the time. It was completed in 1283/1866–67 and published in Tehran in 1285/1868–69.⁸⁹

- 31) *Dīwān-i Asrār*. These are Sabzawārī's collected poems in Persian, in which he renders themes of philosophy and mysticism with poetical acumen into unaffected, tender verse. Mediocre as a literary product, his poetry is nevertheless enjoyable, exhilarating, and expressive. Most of his *ghazals* have the flavour of Ḥāfiẓ of Shiraz (d. 792/1390), while their themes, too, were inspired by him. Sabzawārī's *nom-de-plume* was "Asrār". His *Dīwān* was published in a lithographic edition in 1285/1868–69.⁹⁰

4 Philosophical Thought

Sabzawārī is without question one of the most important advocates of and commentators on Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophy. In fact, the assumptions underlying his philosophy are identical to those underlying Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophy. If we look at the names of his professors in philosophy and at the works

87 Ibid., vol. 1, Introduction, p. 111.

88 H. Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ-i asrār-i mathnawī*, p. 2. A new edition of this text was brought out by Muṣṭafā Burūjirdī (Tehran: Sāzmān-i Chāp u Intishārāt-i Wizārat-i Farhang u Irshād-i Islāmī, 1384 Sh./2005–2006).

89 H. Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ-i asrār-i mathnawī* (lithograph, Tehran, 1285/1868–69), colophon on page 511.

90 Two new editions of this work have been published by Aḥmad Karamī and ʿAlī Falsafī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Mā, 1370 Sh./1991.), and by Sayyid Ḥasan Amīn (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Uswa, 1376 Sh./1997).

that he left behind Sabzawārī's philosophical lineage is clearly evident. Two of his teachers, Mullā Ismā'il Darb-i Kūshkī and Mullā 'Alī Nūrī, were prominent commentators on and promoters of Sadrian philosophy, and it is in the intellectual tradition represented by these that Sabzawārī cultivated his thought. Apart from Mullā Ṣadrā's *Aṣfār*, Sabzawārī's writings were mainly inspired by Mīr Dāmād's *Qabasāt*, Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī's commentary on Suhrawardī's *Hikmat al-ishrāq*, Naṣīr al-Dīn Tūsī's commentary on Ibn Sīnā's *Ishārāt*, and 'Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī's *Shawāriq al-ilhām*.⁹¹ Having assimilated all these works and with years of experience in teaching the writings of Mullā Ṣadrā, Sabzawārī was eminently qualified to question Ṣadrā's views on certain specific points, which appear to be concerned mainly with matters of epistemology and natural philosophy. Thus one could say that he was a loyal follower of Ṣadrā's ontology who would only allow himself to raise questions when the discussion moved away from that topic. In the following, some of these questions will be analyzed and assessed at a level of detail that is commensurate with the scope of this article.

4.1 *Matter and Form and Their Type of Composition*

Among Muslim philosophers, the discussions on the major theoretical assumptions underlying the composition of concrete, perceptible body out of matter and form took their inspiration from the philosophy of Aristotle.⁹² In Islamic philosophical texts, this issue is treated as a prime topic and ranks among the general principles of philosophy (*umūr 'amma*) or as a theme in metaphysics (*ilāhiyyāt bi-l-ma'nā l-a'amm*). Examining the parts that constitute the essence of corporeal things, Sabzawārī speaks in his *Sharḥ al-Manẓūma* of matter and

91 Seyed Hossein Nasr, "Renaissance in Iran (continued): Ḥājī Mullā Hādī Sabzewārī," in M. M. Sharif (ed.), *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1963–66), vol. 1, pp. 1543–56 (1545–46).

92 On the nature of body and its composition out of matter and form, see, e.g., Ibn Sīnā, *Kitāb al-Shifā': al-Ilāhiyyāt*, ed. S. Zāyid et al. (repr. Tehran: Intishārāt-i Nāṣir-i Khusrāw, 1363 Sh./1984–85), vol. 1, pp. 61–79; idem, *Kitāb al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbihāt ma'a sharḥ al-Muḥaqqiq Naṣīr al-Dīn ... al-Tūsī wa-sharḥ al-sharḥ li-l-'allāma Quṭb al-Dīn ... al-Rāzī* (Qom: Nashr al-Balāgha, 1375 Sh./1996), vol. 2, pp. 9–59. In these two large fragments, Ibn Sīnā first examines and criticizes rival views, rejecting these, and then continues by proving the soundness of the position that he adopts as his own. In the course of subsequent discussions in later times, philosophers in the Muslim world would usually side with Ibn Sīnā. Suhrawardī, on the other hand, criticized and rejected the Aristotelian conception of body and its composition out of matter and form. Denying the actual and independent existence of matter, he believed that body was incomposite, calling it an "autonomous quantity". See Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī, *Majmū'at muṣannafāt Shaykh al-Ishrāq*, vol. 2, *Hikmat al-ishrāq*, pp. 74–88.

form and their mode of composition in natural body, concerning which he describes two different views, viz. 1) the one in favour of composition by association (*tarkīb inḍimāmī*), and 2) the one in support of composition by unification (*tarkīb ittiḥādī*).

Composition by association consists in that a certain thing is joined together with some other thing, their association and composition resulting in the emergence of something else. In this kind of composition, each component part has an existence of its own, independent of the other. Sometimes, composition by association is “natural” (*ṭabīʿī*), such as the composition of and association between, parts of water and air, producing vapour, while at other times, the association is “artificial” (*ṣināʿī*), such as the composition of building materials and their being placed one on top of the other that we see in a house. Those who speak of matter and form and their composition by association always have the natural type in mind. Composition by association presupposes the adoption of the doctrine of generation and corruption with regard to the sublunary world. This means that in the process of composition of matter and form, a form is “slipped off” (*khalʿ*, like a garment), after which matter is “dressed” (*lubs*) by another form. This process was called “stripping and dressing” (*khalʿ wa-lubs*). According to Sabzawārī, all major Peripatetic philosophers before the time of Ṣadr al-Dīn Dashtakī (d. 903/1498) believed that matter and form were composed by association.⁹³

Composition by unification consists of one and the same thing becoming something else. Mullā Ṣadrā adhered to this doctrine, which he vindicated by positing the existence, in the sublunary world, of motion and change in substance, taking place by degrees and progressing towards perfection. Based upon the doctrine of composition by unification, one can, for instance, envisage a process during which semen turns into a clot, the clot into an embryo, and the embryo into a human being. As stated just now, the doctrine of composition by unification requires the adoption of the idea of motion in substance (*ḥaraka jawhariyya*), which consists of a transmutation of forms called “dressing after dressing” (*lubs baʿda lubs*). This means that a thing, in the process of motion and change, adopts one form after another, the previous form and the matter with which it was united jointly becoming “matter”, predisposed (*mustaʿidd*) to receiving yet another form. Thus in the previous example, the semen, while itself composed of “ready” matter and semen’s form, these now having been united in existence, serves as “matter”, ready for the reception of the form of a clot, and once this form has taken possession of that matter, and the clot having obtained actuality, it will in turn become “matter”, ready for the

93 H. Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-Manẓūma*, vol. 2, pp. 371–372.

reception of a subsequent form, and so forth, until the form of a human being (i.e., a rational soul) is united with “ready” matter (i.e., the body) arising out of this process of change in substance, and an actual human being comes to be.

Basing himself on Lāhijī’s *Shawāriq al-ilhām*,⁹⁴ Sabzawārī reports that Ṣadr al-Dīn Dashtakī adhered to the doctrine of composition by unification and that Mullā Ṣadrā had adopted this doctrine as well.⁹⁵ Criticizing this theory in an oblique manner, Sabzawārī ends up by endorsing the Peripatetic doctrine of composition by association as being commensurate with his own teachings.

Sabzawārī begins his argument by saying that according to Dashtakī and Mullā Ṣadrā who followed him in this, the composition of the parts of any concrete thing in the extra-mental world (i.e., matter and form) is a composition by unification. But if this statement, as it would seem, implies a plurality of things, this in the sense that matter is regarded as a locus (*maḥall*) in which a form inheres (*ḥāll*) and body as their physical composite, then how does one justify this view, when the whole idea is compatible with the doctrine of composition by association? Also, if we separate the form from its matter, we see that the form, without a locus, still has an existence of its own in the *mundus imaginalis* (*‘ālam al-mithāl*), while prior to an occurrence of transmutation, secondary matter, too, exists separately from the form with which it will later be united. For instance, when the form of a drop of semen is composed with matter ready for its reception and semen comes to be, this self-same semen is secondary matter, that is to say, potentiality with regard to the subsequent form of a clot, which has not yet acquired actuality. In that case, there exists matter without a form. In view of these two points, viz. the separate existence of the form in the *mundus imaginalis* (*‘ālam al-mithāl*) and of secondary matter in respect of the pending form (*ṣūra lāḥiqa*), the conclusion must be that their composition is by association rather than by unification—which was also the position of the major Peripatetic philosophers before Dashtakī—and that this is the doctrine which is commensurate with his own teachings.⁹⁶

94 ‘Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī, *Shawāriq al-ilhām fī sharḥ Tajrīd al-kalām*, ed. Akbar Asadzāda, pref. Ja’far Subḥānī, 5 vols. (Tehran: Mu’assasa al-Imām al-Ṣādiq, 1383–1389 Sh./2004–2010), vol. 2, pp. 141–142.

95 H. Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-Manẓūma*, edited and glossed by Ḥasan Ḥasanzāda Āmulī, vol. 2, p. 371. For a detailed account of Mullā Ṣadrā’s view and his analysis of the matter, cf. Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, *al-Hikma al-muta’āliya fī l-asfār al-aqliyya al-arba’a*, 9 vols. (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 1981), vol. 5, pp. 282–309.

96 H. Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-Manẓūma*, lithograph edition, p. 100, gloss on “And this is commensurate with our teachings” (*wa-huwa l-munāsib li-maqām al-ta’līm wa-l-ta’allum*) of the commentary: “Allusion to our endorsement of composition by association” (*ishāra ilā anna l-tarkīb al-inḍimāni huwa l-murḍī*).

In his annotations to this section of the *Sharḥ al-Manzūma*, Mīrzā Mahdī Āshtiyānī calls Sabzawārī's criticisms apposite, though surely only with reference to the subject as *taught*, which is a setting in which one reasons and voices opinions, and not in relation to (mystical) intuition (*mushāhada*) or inner revelation (*kashf*). For when the intellect is illuminated by the light of inner revelation and overcome by Oneness, potentiality and matter do not exist for it anymore, since it denies all plurality, this as opposed to the intellect in a state of "restraint" (*al-'aql al-muqayyad*), in which case it is veiled from Reality by everything to do with ratiocination. The possibility that Āshtiyānī's reference to the veiling of the intellect by ratiocination was a polite way for him to discredit and disparage Sabzawārī should not be excluded. Later on in his annotations, he criticizes Sabzawārī more openly by saying that his statements are in contradiction to his assertions on mental existence (*wujūd dhihnī*). This is because, in that context, Sabzawārī maintains that the only way in which the knower can be united with the known is when matter and form are composed by a process of unification.⁹⁷ Sayyid Riḍā Shīrāzī, too, wonders how it is possible that on the one hand, Sabzawārī discusses motion in substance, while on the other, he accepts the concept of composition by association which, founded as it is on the notion of generation and corruption, is, in fact, incompatible with the idea of motion in substance.⁹⁸

4.2 *Mental Existence*

Among Sabzawārī's criticisms of Mullā Ṣadrā, one is to do with the latter's reply to one of the difficulties raised regarding the concept of mental existence (*wujūd dhihnī*). Before going into the nature of this criticism, we must first have a general look at mental existence and at the particular difficulty raised in its regard.

For Avicenna and his followers, the division "mental" (*dhihnī*) vs. "extra-mental" (*khārījī*) is one of the basic divisions of existence. Extra-mental existence, also referred to as individual, corporeal existence, is the kind of existence that is the source of the effects that a corporeal thing may be expected to have. By contrast, a thing's mental existence, in so far as it is identical with the thing's essence occurring in the mind, does not have the specific effects

97 Mīrzā Mahdī Mudarris Āshtiyānī, *Ta'līqā bar sharḥ-i manzūma-yi ḥikmat-i Sabzawārī*, ed. 'Abd al-Jawād Falāṭūrī and Mahdī Muḥaqqiq, English Introduction by Toshihiko Izutsu (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Dānishgāh-i Tihārān, 1367 Sh./1988–89), p. 397.

98 Sayyid Riḍā Shīrāzī, *Darshā-yi Sharḥ-i manzūma-yi ḥakīm Sabzawārī*, ed. Fāṭima Fanā (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Ḥikmat, 1383 Sh./2004), vol. 1, p. 666.

associated with the extra-mental existence of that thing. By way of example, in its extra-mental existence, fire has a number of effects, such as scorching, heat, and luminosity. In comparison with these concrete, extra-mental effects, fire in its mental existence (i.e., its mental form) will never scorch, nor give heat or light. At the same time, mental existence as such may have its own special effects, among which the removal of ignorance from the soul of the observer is certainly one. Or when someone praises you, for instance, with kind words, making you feel good and content, this feeling is the effect of the mental existence of these very things that you have just heard. At the same time, the mind is an area of the soul, which is and has an objective reality. This being the case, and in as much as the existence of mental forms is a consequence of the existence of the soul, the area of the mind therein, and then, of perception, these forms are something objectively and actually existent. And if they are called “mental”, this is in comparison with things outside of the soul and the mind, in the same way in which the expression “extra-mental” is used in contrast with the soul and the mind. This having been said, the forms that result from perception (*taṣawwur*), intellection or imagination have an existence in the mental area of the soul that is characterized by special properties and conditions that are unlike the properties and conditions of a thing’s objective, extra-mental existence with its own, specific effects. Over and above the extra-mental things which sense perception, followed by conception, cause to be present in the mind, there are some things which, though lacking extra-mental existence because they happen to be non-existent at a certain point in time or because it is impossible for them to exist at any time, can nevertheless be assumed and imagined to exist, and thus to have mental existence. An example of the first kind would be a sea of quicksilver, and of the second kind a triangular square.⁹⁹

Going by Sabzawārī’s statements on the problematics of mental existence in his *Sharḥ al-Manẓūma*, extra-mental things do not just have individual, extra-mental existence, but also an existence in the mind. Extra-mental and mental existence concur at the level of essence, this in the sense that whenever we perceive and bring a concrete thing before our minds, it is the essence of that physically extant thing that is present to the mind, and not the physical existence of it, since otherwise the mental would be confounded with the physical, which is impossible. Thus every possible existent has an essence that may have any of two modes of existence: mental or extra-mental, the former being devoid of the effects associated with the latter. The expressions “mental” and

99 H. Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-Manẓūma*, edited and glossed by Ḥasan Ḥasanzāda Āmulī, vol. 2, pp. 121–124; Sayyid Riḍā Shīrāzī, *Darshā-yi Sharḥ-i Manẓūma*, vol. 1, pp. 156–158.

“extra-mental” should not be taken to mean that the mind or the outside world are receptacles by which all things are embraced; rather, the outside world is none other than the individual reality of a thing, while the mind is none other than the mental reality of its form.

To use our earlier example: the essence of fire has two different modes of existence, viz. mental or extra-mental. The distinction between these two modes of existence can be observed in the distinction between their effects. While the essence of fire is the same in either case, its effects are not. For where physical fire scorches, heats and illuminates, mental fire has none of these effects. It will thus be clear that one of the basic issues, discussed ahead of any treatment of mental existence, is the matter of the principality of existence (*aṣālāt al-wujūd*) and the being mentally posited (*iʿtibārī*) of essence. This is because the effects of each and every thing originate from the being of that thing rather than from its essence. Indeed, it is in accordance with the mode of its being that essence has any effects, remaining the selfsame essence whichever mode of being it may have.

The doctrine of mental existence has been met with criticism, although it is not quite clear who these critics were. In their writings, the supporters of this doctrine just recorded the criticisms, without mentioning any names. Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī (d. 606/1209) did quite some research on the subject, providing detailed discussions of the claims on either side.¹⁰⁰ These discussions return in some form or another in all the accounts from later times—by philosophers and theologians. But there, too, the names of the critics remain unmentioned. In his *Aṣfār*, Mullā Ṣadrā analyses the arguments against mental existence, overthrowing them one by one. The most important one from among these arguments, Sabzawārī presents as follows:

How can “substance” and “accident” be conjoined?

Indeed, how could both come under “quality”?

*Fa-jawharun maʿa ʿaraḍin kayfa ijtamaʿa?
am kayfa taḥta l-kayfi kullun qad waqaʿa?*¹⁰¹

100 Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī, *al-Mabāḥith al-mashriḡiyya fī ʿilm al-ilāhiyyāt wa-l-ṭabīʿiyyāt*, ed. Muḥammad al-Muʿtaṣim bi-llāh al-Baghdādī (Qom: Bidār, 1428/2007–2008), vol. 1, pp. 130–132 (on Being), 439–443 and 458–459 (on Knowledge).

101 H. Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-Manẓūma*, edited and glossed by Ḥasan Ḥasanzāda Āmulī, vol. 2, p. 121.

When we have a conception (*taṣawwur*) of a particular substance, its essence with all its properties (*dhātiyyāt*) will be present to the mind. For instance, when we have a conception of “man”, and man being an essence in the category of substance, it will be as a substance that his essence will be present to the mind. On the other hand, while signifying substance, as a piece of knowledge this essence is a state (*ḥāl*) of, or in, the soul. But even though the soul is the locus and underlying subject (*mawḍūʿ*) of this piece of knowledge, it does not stand in need of it, which means that “man” seen in this way is also an *accident* (*ʿaraḍ*), in this case in the category of quality. Substance and accident being opposites, our conception of “man” therefore leads to a conjunction of opposites in as much as one and the same thing is both substance and accident at one and the same time.¹⁰²

In his *Asfār*, Mullā Ṣadrā tried to find an answer to the above difficulty by having a closer look at the matter of predication, explaining that the predication of a thing of some other thing, which is equivalent to the union (*ittiḥāḍ*) between a subject and a predicate in and by an act of predication, takes place in one of two ways:¹⁰³

- 1) The kind of predication in which subject and predicate, though conceptually distinct, are nevertheless united *in being*. This sort of predication is called “customary” (*mutaʿāraf*) predication, or also predication that is “common with respect to the arts” (*shāʿʿīnāʿī*), which is the kind of predication that is common in a general understanding and used in the sciences and the arts.
- 2) The kind of predication in which subject and predicate are united *at the level of concepts*. This kind of predication is called “primary” (*awwalī*), “essential” (*dhātī*) predication. This sort of predication is only used to express essential relationships, such as the predication of the genus and the differentia of the species. This is also why it is called “essential”, this in contradistinction with predication that is “common with respect to the arts”, which is totally accidental. In this latter kind of predication, the predicate may or may not apply *essentialiter*. If the former, the predication is called “common essential predication” (*al-ḥaml al-shāʿʿī bi-l-dhāt*); if the latter, then it is called “common accidental predication” (*al-ḥaml al-shāʿʿī bi-l-ʿaraḍ*). But in spite of this distinction, common predication is, and we have said this already, as such totally accidental.

¹⁰² Ibid., pp. 126–128.

¹⁰³ Ṣ. Shīrāzī, *al-Ḥikma al-mutaʿāliya*, vol. 1, pp. 263–326; H. Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-Manẓūma*, edited and glossed by Ḥasan Ḥasanzāda Āmulī, vol. 2, p. 138.

After this preliminary introduction, Mullā Ṣadrā says that, when we have a conception of, for instance, the essence of “man”, “substance” is contained in it because substance is its genus. When we define “man”, we say: “Man is a three-dimensional, living, rational substance that moves by volition.” According to this mental concept, and in terms of “primary, essential predication”, man belongs to the category of *substance*. However, in as much as the thing that we have just conceived, viz. the mental form of “man”, is an attribute (*ṣifa*) that qualifies the soul, it also belongs, in terms of “common predication with respect to the arts”, to the category of *quality* (*kayf*). This is because mental forms have a derivative existence (*wujūd ḡillī*), their presence in and to the soul following from knowledge’s presence in and to it, and not from independent, objective existence. Thus it is by reason of the fact that their existence depends on the existence of knowledge in the soul, that mental forms are a quality accidentally.

This being so, it is by reason of different kinds of predication that “man” is both a substance and, accidentally, a quality, there being thus no inconsistency. In other words, we can say that the mental form of man both is and is not a substance, without involving us in any contradiction. This is because the unity of predication, which is one of the prerequisites for there being a contradiction, is in this case not maintained. In other words, Mullā Ṣadrā is saying that mental substance is not the same as individual substance, meaning that the former is not substance in a discourse involving common predication, the concept of substance only being true of it by way of essential predication, mental substance also having none of the effects produced by the extra-mental existence of substance. For, in order for there to be a case of predication that is “common with respect to the arts”, two conditions must be met: first, the notion representing the category of the predicate must be part of the definition of the subject; second, any effects that the predicate might have must derive from the subject. In the example aforementioned, “substance” is part of the definition of the concept of “man” (first condition fulfilled); the effects of the specific, extra-mental existence of substance, however, are not grounded in “man” as a concept (second condition not fulfilled). Thus the two conditions aforementioned are not met at the same time, implying that mental man is not a substance at the level of common predication, i.e., mental man is not an individual man.

Mullā Ṣadrā further declares that, respecting their aptitude to being intellectualised as universals, universal intellectual natures are not predicable of anything whatsoever, while in so far as these universal natures have a presence in the soul as one of its states, the soul being the source or locus of appearance

of these universal forms as vehicles of knowledge, they come under the category of quality. In other words, in so far as they have a presence in the intellect, these natures are universal and predicable of a plurality of things, while in their extra-mental existence, they are particular and not predicable of anything whatsoever. The referent of whatever we conceive and arises in our minds is not predicable of anything in the way of common predication; rather, it is the notion of it as predicated that has this property, inasmuch as mental forms of things predicated are disconnected from the external effects of their referents—which is why they are predicable at all—while the soul is the source or locus of appearance of these mental forms.¹⁰⁴

Sabzawārī raises an objection to Mullā Ṣadrā's explanations by asking whether a thing like the form of "man" as present in the knowing part of the soul—which according to Mullā Ṣadrā is a substance in terms of essential predication and a quality in terms of common predication—is an individual instance of a quality *by essence*, or merely a quality in the way of an *accident*? Now if it should be an individual instance of a quality *by essence*, then this aspect must be included in our account of the nature of that individual, meaning that it is a quality by *essential* predication. But it was stated previously that in terms of essential predication, it was a substance, one and the same thing thus being both a substance and a quality under one and the same consideration, which is impossible. And if it should be stated that it is a quality in the way of an *accident*, everything that is by accident reverting to something that is by essence, then what is that thing that is a quality by essence?

Sabzawārī solves this difficulty by explaining that Ṣadrā's phrase of his *Aṣfār*, "in so far as they exist in the soul",¹⁰⁵ does not refer to the existence of *essences* or *universal natures* in the intellect, but rather to a special kind of existence that has its own particular essence. In other words: a special kind of existence from which the essence of "knowledge", which by its very nature comes under the category of quality, can be derived. These particular existents are nothing but so many individual appearances to the soul of the essence of knowledge, appearances that can be regarded as a kind of second perfection or fulfilment of the existence of these forms, which had another kind of existence in the extra-mental world. So, knowledge is a quality by essence, while the forms of individual knowns in the mind are all qualities by accident.¹⁰⁶

104 Ṣ. Shīrāzī, *al-Ḥikma al-muta'āliya*, vol. 1, pp. 292–296; 'Abd Allāh Jawādī Āmulī, *Raḥiq-i makhtūm*, vol. 1, fasc. 4. (Qom: Markaz-i Nashr-i Asrā', 1417/1996), pp. 134–136; H. Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-Manẓūma*, edited and glossed by Ḥasan Ḥasanẓāda Āmulī, vol. 2, pp. 138–139.

105 Ṣ. Shīrāzī, *al-Ḥikma al-muta'āliya*, vol. 1, pp. 294–295.

106 H. Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-Manẓūma*, edited and glossed by Ḥasan Ḥasanẓāda Āmulī, vol. 2, pp. 144–145; see also his comments on the text of Mullā Ṣadrā's *al-Ḥikma al-muta'āliya* (Ṣ. Shīrāzī, *al-Ḥikma al-muta'āliya*, vol. 1, p. 298, note. 1.).

Continuing his account, Sabzawārī then declares that his interpretation of Mullā Ṣadrā's explanations, a reading in which knowledge is viewed as a quality by essence, does not represent his personal point of view and that Mullā Ṣadrā's repeated affirmations notwithstanding, he himself does not believe that knowledge is, in fact, a quality. In his *Sharḥ al-Manzūma* and also in his *Glosses* on Mullā Ṣadrā's *Aṣfār*, Sabzawārī's reasoning is as follows:

For forms as vehicles of knowledge (*ṣuwar ʿilmiyya*), to exist in themselves (*wujūd fi nafsīhi*) or to belong to the soul (*wujūd li-l-nafs*) is one and the exact same thing. To all things whose actuality depends upon an underlying subject (*mawḍūʿ*), viz. for all accidents, to exist in itself is the exact same thing as to belong to something other. But accidents are of two kinds: either they are predicated of a subject in so far as they add something to that subject, or they are not predicated of anything. All of the nine Aristotelian categories other than substance are predicated of a subject in so far as they add something to that subject. "White", for instance, is predicated of "body" in so far as it adds something to it; after all, in order for a body to be white, it will be necessary that whiteness be added to it since whiteness is not part of its essence. Whiteness itself, however, is not white by virtue of something else. Now if mental existence would be a quality, it would have to be predicated of the soul in so far as it adds something to it. This would mean that something would need to be added to the forms in the soul in order for these forms to appear to the soul at all. However, to appear is, for these forms, the exact same thing as to exist. Mental beings, that is to say, forms as vehicles of knowledge present in the soul, have both a being and an essence the latter of which, by way of essential predication, for instance, is a substance. But their being is beyond any category, be it substance or any of the other nine categories, which means that we are dealing with the existence of essences and not with existence added to essences. The existence of an essence *in* the soul and *in* itself cannot be seen as distinct from its appearance *to* the soul. Thus our conception of the essence of "man" has a mental existence in our soul, and this mental existence is identical to the existence of this essence, both *in* itself and *to* the soul; these are two aspects of one and the same act of existence, and not two distinct acts. On a different note, the intelligible forms that appear to the soul represent an "unfolding of existence" (*iḍāfa ishrāqiyya*) in and through the soul. To put it more precisely, these forms exist as a resplendence, a radiance of the soul; in fact, the soul is nothing but this radiance and resplendence, there being only the soul and its resplendence (*ishrāq*). So, mental being is a kind of derivative existence (*wujūd tabʿī*), and in the same manner in which the Immutable Archetypes (*al-aʿyān al-thābita*) exist through the derived existence—in the realm of the Divine—of the knowledge, the names and the attributes, of the Truly Existent, likewise the forms as vehicles of knowledge exist in us in relation to the soul:

The truth of the matter is that it is only by way of comparison that knowledge is a quality and that the forms as known in themselves are qualities. Just as the “Holy Emanation” of God, I mean, the “unfolded existence” (*al-wujūd al-munbasit*), is neither a substance nor an accident and yet pervades all the quiddities of the substances and all the accidents, and just as the “Most Holy Emanation” through the unity of which all individuation appears as unity is not a quality and neither the individuation (*ta’ayyun*), so also the illumination of the soul which pervades all the quiddities that are the objects of its knowledge is neither a substance nor an accident. So it is not a quality while being knowledge. Nor are the quiddities that are pervaded by the illumination of the soul qualities while being objects of knowledge.¹⁰⁷

4.3 *The Unity of the Knower and the Known*

One of the other issues concerning which Sabzawārī criticized Mullā Ṣadrā concerns the latter’s proof of the union between the knower and the known when the knowing subject knows something other than itself. Mullā Ṣadrā says that whenever we have an intellection of say, a horse, there are three things involved: 1) the knowing subject, viz. our soul which intelligizes, 2) that which is an object of intellection per se, viz. the horse’s intelligible form which (now) exists in our soul, and 3) that which accidentally is an object of intellection, viz. the particular, physical horse. In the present context “the known” clearly stands for the intelligible form, the idea being that in the process of our intellection of a horse, our being becomes united with the being of the intelligible form of the horse or more precisely, the being of our faculty of intellection assumes the very being of the intelligible form of the horse.

The above doctrine was much debated among Muslim thinkers. In as much as intellection is always either of the self or of something outside the self, there was no difference of opinion on self-knowledge as a union between the knower and the known. It was only when our knowledge of the other was at stake that this doctrine became the object of dispute.

In his *Shifā’* and *Ishārāt*, Avicenna criticizes this doctrine as unfounded, comparing whatever its protagonists had to say about it to “putrid dates”

107 H. Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-Manẓūma*, edited and glossed by Ḥasan Ḥasanzāda Āmulī, vol. 2, pp. 146–147; T. Izutsu and M. Mohaghegh, *The Metaphysics of Sabzavārī*, p. 65.

(*hashaf*).¹⁰⁸ But in his *al-Mabda' wa-l-ma'ād*, he accepts it and even validates it on the basis of rational proof.¹⁰⁹

Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī, too, is among those who reject it and in the manner customary to him, he discusses the various points of view. In the course of his discussion of the subject in his *al-Mabāḥith al-mashriḳiyya*, he draws attention to the fact that Avicenna rejects this doctrine throughout his works, save for his *al-Mabda' wa-l-ma'ād*.¹¹⁰

In his commentary on the *Ishārāt*, Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, who was a supporter of the doctrine, explains Avicenna's rejection of this theory, adding that his apparent endorsement of it in his *al-Mabda' wa-l-ma'ād* is an explanation of the views of the Peripatetics rather than his own. This may also be inferred from the opening lines of this work¹¹¹ where Avicenna promises to set forth the views of the Peripatetics in three separate tracts.¹¹² In any case, his rejection of the doctrine is better documented than his acceptance of it.

Mullā Ṣadrā was an advocate of the doctrine of the union of the knower and the known. He had a special concern with the subject, so much so that, over and above his detailed discussions in his *Aṣfār*, he even wrote a special treatise on this topic which also contains a multitude of arguments in support of it.¹¹³ Among Mullā Ṣadrā's proofs, there is the one "from correlation" (*burhān al-taḍāyuf*). In his *Sharḥ al-Manẓūma* and in his notes on Mullā Ṣadrā's *Aṣfār*, Sabzawārī raises objections against this proof. In his *Kitāb al-Mashā'ir*, Mullā Ṣadra explains the proof from correlation as follows:

The existence of every form perceived (*ṣūra idrākīyya*), be it by the intellect or by the senses, coincides with the existence of the perceiving subject, for which God inspired me with the following proof: of every form perceived, let's say by the intellect, (a) the bare existence, (b) its existence as an object of intellection (*ma'qūliyya*), and (c) its existence to the

108 Ibn Sinā, *Kitāb al-Shifā': al-Nafs*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥasanẓāda Āmulī (Qom: Maktab al-I'lām al-Islāmī, 1375 Sh./1996), pp. 327–329; idem, *Kitāb al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*, vol. 3, pp. 292–296.

109 Ibn Sinā, *al-Mabda' wa-l-ma'ād*, ed. 'Abd Allāh Nūrānī (Tehran: McGill University [Tehran Branch], 1363 Sh./1984), pp. 6–10. In his discussion of the particular perfection of the rational soul in the *Ilāhiyyāt* of the *Shifā'* (vol. 2, pp. 425–426), Avicenna also says clearly that intellection, the intellect, and the thing intellected are one, or very close to being one.

110 Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī, *al-Mabāḥith al-mashriḳiyya*, vol. 1, p. 448.

111 Ibn Sinā, *al-Mabda' wa-l-ma'ād*, p. 1.

112 See Ṭūsī's commentary on Ibn Sinā, *Kitāb al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*, vol. 3, p. 293.

113 On Mullā Ṣadrā's discussion on this subject see Ibrahim Kalin, *Knowledge in Later Islamic Philosophy: Mullā Ṣadrā on Existence, Intellect, and Intuition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). Kalin's study includes an English translation of Mullā Ṣadrā's *Risāla fī ittiḥād al-'āqil wa-l-ma'qūl* (pp. 256–291).

intellecting subject (*‘āqil*) are all one and the same without distinction, this in the sense that it is not possible to imagine another way of existence for a form associated with intellection (*ṣūra ‘aqliyya*) according to which it would not be an object of intellection to the intellecting subject. For otherwise, it would not be what it is.

This being so, we declare: the existence of this form cannot be different from the existence of the intellecting subject (*‘āqil*), to the extent that it would have an existence and the intellecting subject another existence, the relation of “object of intellection” (*ma‘qūliyya*) vs. “intellecting subject” (*‘āqiliyya*) only befalling them by way of an accidental property at a later point in time, as in the case of the father and the son and the king and the city, and all the other things that stand in some relation to something else and upon which the relation befalls as an accidental property after these things themselves have come to exist. Otherwise, its existence would not be its actual existence as an object of intellection. But the assumption was that it was, so their being distinct is impossible.

It, therefore, follows that the form that is associated with intellection, if we take it in isolation from everything that transcends it, is intellect-ed and, at the same time, intellect-ing because to exist as an object of intellection is not conceivable without there being an intellecting subject, as is the case for all correlates. And as soon as we take this form in isolation from everything that transcends it, it must by itself be an object of intellection to itself.

Now, we started from the axiom that there is an entity that intellects its objects of intellection; from our argument, it followed that the objects of intellection are united [in existence] with the intellecting subject. And this is precisely what we had assumed.¹¹⁴

Sabzawārī finds this proof from correlation (*taḍāyuf*) for the union between the knower and the known insufficient, and it would seem to be for this reason also that he called it not a proof, but an “approach” (*maslak*). In the course of his discussion of God’s self-knowledge in his *Sharḥ al-Manẓūma*, he raises the following difficulty against Mullā Ṣadrā’s proof:

114 Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, *Kitāb al-Mashā’ir. Bā tarjuma-yi Fārsī-i Badī’ al-Mulḥ Mīrzā ‘Imād al-Dawla*, edition and French translation by Henry Corbin (Tehran: Kitābkhāna-yi Ṭahūrī, 1363 Sh./1984), pp. 50–51; idem, *al-Ḥikma al-muta’āliya*, vol. 3, pp. 312–316, and vol. 6, pp. 165–169.

Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn, may God hallow his secret, did indeed avail himself—in the *Mashā'ir* and elsewhere—also of the argument from the mutual correspondence of correlates (*takāfu' al-mutaḍā'ifayn*) to prove the union between the intellecting subject and the thing intellectured in relation to one's knowledge of something other than the self. But I do not think that he proved his point in this way. This is because the “being on an equal footing” (*al-takāfu' fī l-martaba*) which is one of the distinctive features of correlation (*taḍāyuf*), does not require anything more than the coming true of one of the correlates—simultaneously that is, and not prior nor posterior to it—with the other, and no amalgamation (*ittiḥād*). How could it be otherwise, the cause being the correlate (*muḍā'if*) of the thing caused and the mover the correlate of the thing moved? Mutual correspondence only requires the effective simultaneity of states on either side and not the amalgamation of their respective stations or of their being. If this were not so, this would violate the law of contradiction.

And what he says about the assumption of a blocking-out of all otherness when we come to speak of a thing's existence as an object of intellection, is not possible when he uses a proof from correlation. This is because the object of intellection (*ma'qūl*) is, as a notion, only intelligible if we keep the subject that has the intellection (*'āqil*) well within view. How could this be otherwise, one part of a relation only being intelligible in comparison with the other part?

All this means that in the same way in which two correlate notions do not require that they be multiple as to their station and their being, just because as notions, they are different, their mutual correspondence, too, does not require their multiplicity nor their amalgamation; even though it does not resist amalgamation either, but then for some outside reason. Think about this.... The thing whose very and only mode of existence is identical with its being an object of intellection is the intellect in a state of intellection and being intellectured.¹¹⁵

The last part of Sabzawārī's account has been understood by some of the glossators of the *Sharḥ al-manẓūma* as an admission of the weakness of his own objections to Mullā Ṣadrā's point of view. By way of example, one could refer to the Notes on the *Sharḥ al-Manẓūma* by Mīrzā Mahdī Āshtiyānī who, after his rebuttal of Sabzawārī's objections, makes the observation that it is strange

115 H. Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-Manẓūma*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥasanzāda Āmulī, vol. 3, pp. 565–567.

that Sabzawārī sharply criticizes Mullā Ṣadrā in one place, but then admits the weakness of this criticism in another.¹¹⁶

But over and above all this, in his Notes to Mullā Ṣadrā's *Aṣfār*, and after having voiced his objections to Mullā Ṣadrā's proof from correlation, Sabzawārī stands up in explanation and support of Mullā Ṣadrā's view, stating:

Indeed, if he should hold fast to [this idea of] "relation", and if he should then mean by it an "unfolding of existence" (*idāfa ishrāqīyya wujūdiyya*) and that whatever is an object of intellection per se has a derivative [kind of] existence (*wujūd rābiṭ*) which requires some sort of amalgamation (*ittiḥād*) and unitedness (*ittiṣāl*) wherever it manifests itself, such without having any negative impact on the elevation of this station [i.e., of intellection], then this would make sense ... And in all fairness it must be stated that his—may God hallow his secret—intention is not to hold fast to mere correlation; rather, the foundation of his argument is that [the notion] "perceiving subject" (*mudrik*) has no being and no sense other than "being in a state of perception" (*idrākiyya*) because this being is cognitive (*'ilmī*) and luminary (*nūrī*), and it has already been established that luminary existence is both knowledge and the known, in the sense that if we should assume there to be nothing other than the subject itself, its existence would be luminary and perceptive. If perceiving, its state is thus, while that which it perceives is its very Self (*dhāt*), the assumption being that nothing else exists as in the case of that which is separate by and in itself [and not by some separating agent] and which has no other existence than being in a state of perception, in which the Self perceives itself.¹¹⁷

As stated before, Sabzawārī after initial objections ends up by endorsing and explaining Mullā Ṣadrā's view. In his defence it might be said that this is an aspect of Sabzawārī's general way of examining things, where he sometimes starts out from an objection, only to end up sanctioning the view in question by proposing some solution in reply, mostly in an effort to render things where possible consistent with his own position. We find the same kind of approach in Mullā Ṣadrā, both in his *Aṣfār* and in some of his other works, so that we can say that Sabzawārī is his follower in his doctrines as well as in his methods.

116 See M. Mudarris Āshtiyānī, *Ta'līqā bar Sharḥ-i Manẓūma*, pp. 532–534; M. Hīdajī, *Hāshīya-yi Hīdajī bar sharḥ-i Manẓūma-yi Sabzawārī*, pp. 356–357; Muḥammad Taqī Āmulī, *Durar al-fawā'id* (Tehran: Markaz Nashr al-Kitāb, 1377/1957–6), pp. 483–484.

117 See Sabzawārī's gloss in Ṣ. Shīrāzī, *al-Ḥikma al-muta'āliya*, vol. 6, pp. 169–170.

4.4 *The Estimative Faculty*

Another difficulty raised by Sabzawārī against Mullā Ṣadrā concerns the matter of the estimative faculty (*al-quwwa al-wāhima*). Statements by Muslim philosophers about this faculty are ambiguous and suffer from inconsistencies. In their view, the matter comes down to this: man and other animals sometimes have a sense of what particular things betoken (*ma'ānin juz'īyya*): for instance, a cub senses its mother's love or, seeing a wolf, a sheep senses the wolf's hostile attitude and immediately runs away. Clearly, these connotations (*ma'ānin*) cannot be picked up by the external senses, the *sensus communis*, the faculty of imagination or the intellect. There must, therefore, be another faculty by which one senses what particular things portend. This is the estimative faculty. In connection with this faculty all kinds of issues have been raised, such as whether or not it opines, and if it does, whether its judgements are true or false, and whether it is independent of, or tributary to the intellect. Since this is not the place to go into each and every one of these issues, I shall limit myself to a discussion of Mullā Ṣadrā's exposition of his view concerning the idea that the estimative faculty is tributary to the intellect, and then follow this up with an account of Sabzawārī's objections.

Having set forth the customary views of the philosophers in the matter of the estimative faculty, Mullā Ṣadrā embarks upon the clarification of his own, reasoned position, stating:

Even though the estimative faculty is other than the faculties that we just have mentioned, it has in our opinion no selfhood (*dhāt*) in separation from the intellect. Rather, it stands for a relation between the intellectual part of the soul and a particular individual, for its being connected with, and its acting upon, it. Thus the association between the faculties of intellection and imagination is what makes up the estimative faculty. Likewise, its objects of perception are universal notions in their relation to the forms of individuals as present in the faculty of imagination. In all creatures, the estimative faculty coincides with the intellect, in the same manner in which natural universals and essences have no reality outside extra-mental or mental existence respectively.¹¹⁸

Summing up, the existence, in particular individuals, of intelligibles of a universal nature is either such that the mind extracts the latter from the former, as in the case of causality or consecutiveness and all the other notions that bear out a relationship, like father-hood, son-hood, and the

118 Ṣ. Shīrāzī, *al-Ḥikma al-muta'āliya*, vol. 8, pp. 215–217.

like; or in as much as they have a (corresponding) form in those individuals, such as blackness, odor, and taste. The first part of the division is either perceived solely by the intellect, which happens in the case in which the perception takes place without further regard to the corresponding individuals; or by the estimative faculty in case the perception is associated with one or more specific individuals. Perception of the second part of the division occurs by means of one of the outer senses or the imagination. Animosity, for instance, belongs to the first part of the division. Universals that concern special, implied characteristics are associated with these without having subsistence in individual bodies. They are perceived by the estimative faculty and not by the senses. Thus the estimative faculty perceives universals as qualified by particulars.¹¹⁹

As can be seen from Mullā Ṣadrā's account, he did not regard the estimative faculty as a faculty independent from the faculty of intellection, but rather as united with it in being. The perceptions of the estimative faculty are the very perceptions of the intellect but tied to particular forms and things. The perceptions of the intellect are universal, while those associated with the estimative faculty are particular, and commonly referred to as specific "connotations" (*ma'ānin juz'īyya*), such as the hostility of John or the friendliness of Jack, which are specific and individual notions and connotations. According to Mullā Ṣadrā the estimative faculty is in fact none other than the faculty of intellection in its qualified understanding of universal objects of perception; while the intellect has a perception of such universal notions as animosity or friendliness, the estimative faculty grasps these universal things in as much as they are *betokened* by this or that individual.

So the estimative faculty has no reality in separation from the intellect. In order to clarify his view, Mullā Ṣadrā then compares the relationship between the intellect and the estimative faculty to the one between the natural universal and mental or extra-mental being. The difference between the natural universal or an essence per se in respect of its mental or extra-mental actuality is not a true difference in respect of its being; rather, essences, be they mental or extra-mental, obtain actuality in and through their individual instances, the difference between these being a mere mental consideration (*i'tibār*). By way of example, the being of the essence of man is not different for mental or extra-mental individuals; rather, the reality of this essence lies in the sum total of its existing individuals. Likewise, there is no true difference between

¹¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 217–218. For similar discussions see also op.cit, vol. 8, pp. 239–240, and vol. 3, p. 360.

the perceptions of the intellect and those of the estimative faculty; rather, the latter is nothing but the individual embodiment (*tashakkhkhuṣ*) of the former.

Thus one can say that the perception of universal notions is one of two things: either these notions are perceived in their universality and as abstractions, that is to say as universal notions that have a plurality of concrete actualizations but which the intellect perceives in abstraction from their attachment to, and association with, particular individuals. Examples of these are causality, consecutiveness and all the other relational concepts (*iḍāfāt*). In the other case, they are perceived as notions that have taken shape in individuals, such as the animosity of John. In the first case, the object of perception is the universal notion itself, which means that the perceiving agent is none other than the intellect, while in the second case, the perceiving agent is the estimative faculty which perceives the notion of animosity in its attachment to, and association with, the particular individual John. In other words, in the above example, it is the estimative faculty that has a perception of the universal notion of animosity in its association with something specific, and which has thus become individual and determined, i.e., the universal in its individual determination (*al-kullī al-muqayyad bi-qayd juzʿī*).

For Mullā Ṣadrā the perceiving agent is in fact none other than the faculty of the intellect, but because the intellect perceives universals, we cannot make a (direct) connection between something like the perception of John's animosity—which is individual and particular—and the intellect. From Ṣadrā's account we can infer that he regards the individual-related being of particular notions such as the animosity of John as *relational* (*iḍāfī*) in character in as much as these (universal) notions become particular in their *association with* an individual, and not as (universal) notions that have an actual individual existence as particular instances of them. As will be set forth below, Sabzawārī's objections against Mullā Ṣadrā turn precisely around this point.

According to Sabzawārī, Mullā Ṣadrā's proof that the estimative faculty stands for the faculty of intellection as qualified by particulars (*al-ʿaql al-muqayyad*) is not conclusive, a view that he explains as follows:

If that would be correct, then it would also be correct to say that the estimative faculty stands for the faculty of intellection [as] qualified [by particulars]. But since the former is not true, neither is the latter. This is because an affection (*maḥabba*), which is something perceived by the estimative faculty, neither belongs to the [universal] things that are extracted [from individuals] without having individual subsistence, nor to those universals whose [lowest] species are tied to an individual. Indeed, if the latter would be the case, then [the correctness of the aforementioned

description of] the estimative faculty would be established. Rather, affection belongs to those universals that unfold over several individuals (*muntashirat al-afrād*), such as the affection of this man and of this sheep for its offspring, of that donkey and the like, and of this man for his child, for his wife and for everything he loves. And in a single day, he may be overcome a thousand times by a sense of affection, or even more. There is no doubt that these inclinations, passions, and affections or whatever you would like to call them, say “connotative particulars” (*juz’iyyāt ma’nawīyya*), subsist in a thing called the soul where they are subject to generation and corruption. Such connotative particulars stand in need of a perceiving subject, due to the correlation between perceiver and the thing perceived. Now, none of the outer senses, the *sensus communis* (*al-ḥiss al-mushtarak*), or the imagination (*khiyāl*) is capable of grasping these connotative particulars of the emotions because they are assigned to grasp and retain forms, while these [things] are connotations (*ma’ānin*). And neither can it be the faculty of intellection, because that faculty is concerned with the grasping of universals while these are particulars, though their being particular is not solely grounded in a relationship. So there must be a faculty other than the senses, the imagination or the intellect, and this is what they mean by [the faculty of] estimation. The intellect does not distinguish between whiteness and affection as unfolding over several individuals. Only, individual instances of whiteness are forms and objects of sense perception, while individual instances of affection are connotative emotions (*ma’ānin wijdāniyya*).¹²⁰

According to Sabzawārī the individuality of notions such as the affection of Jack is not grounded in its being associated with a single individual. Rather, they are universals that unfold over several individuals, such as someone’s love for his child, and may be called “connotative particulars”. As perceptions they reside in the soul, but they cannot be perceived by the senses since connotative emotions are not physical or otherwise open to perception by the outer senses. And neither can they be perceived by the *sensus communis* or the imagination, since these two are concerned with the perception and retention of forms conveyed by the senses. Finally, they cannot be perceived by the intellect either, because connotative particulars are particulars while the intellect is designed to perceive universals. Thus there must be another power involved, a power that is called the estimative faculty, and it is this faculty that perceives particular, connotative emotions.

120 See Sabzawārī’s gloss in Ṣ. Shīrāzī, *al-Ḥikma al-muta’aliya*, vol. 8, p. 216.

In his *Sharḥ al-Manzūma*, Sabzawārī devotes a brief discussion to the estimative faculty in which he describes it as a faculty by which we grasp individual notions in their relationship to forms conveyed by the senses. It would seem that this comes closer to Mullā Ṣadrā's understanding of the matter than the critical position taken by him in his *Glosses* on the *Aṣfār*. Only, he does not say a word here about the independence or lack of independence of the estimative faculty in its relationship to the faculty of intellection.¹²¹

4.5 *The Identity of the Truly Existent and His Attributes of Perfection*

Another of Sabzawārī's objections to Mullā Ṣadrā concerns one of the latter's proofs regarding the identity between God's undivided nature and His attributes of perfection. Mullā Ṣadrā's proof runs as follows:

If these attributes of perfection such as Knowledge, Power and the like would be superadded to His self (*dhāt*) *in actu*, then His self would have existence without itself bearing testimony to the truth of these attributes of perfection. Consequently, His self would by itself be void of these qualities, He, by His self, thus having [for example] no knowledge of things, nor the power over anything willed by Him, which is all false. This is because His self is the principle of anything that is good and perfect. So how could He possibly be lacking in any way, deriving perfection from what is other than He, this "other" affecting Him and He being affected by this "other"? But it is He who affects others, while [the co-existence of] the aspects of affecting and being-affected leads to multiplicity, which is impossible, and so is the premise from which all these impossibilities flow forth.

As far as the inseparable properties (*lawāzim*) of any essence (*māhiyya*) are concerned, these do not complete it in the sense that by reason of their being inseparable from it, this essence should derive some perfection from them—implying [in this case the simultaneous existence of] a giving and a taking, which would bring about the existence of multiplicity in the One itself [which is impossible]. Rather, these things are mentally posited (*umūr i'tibārīyya*) and follow from essence.¹²²

¹²¹ H. Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-Manzūma*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥasanzāda Āmulī, vol. 5, pp. 63–64.

¹²² Ṣ. Shirāzī, *al-Ḥikma al-muta'āliya*, vol. 6, pp. 133–134.

The above proof is the first in a series of proofs adduced by Mullā Ṣadrā in support of his own position. The proof is cast in the form of a conditional syllogism to the effect that, if the attributes of perfection such as knowledge and power would be superadded to His self *in actu*, then His self would exist without itself bearing testimony to the truth of these attributes. The consequent leads to the assertion that God derives His perfection from elsewhere, which is impossible because if this were to be the case, he would be in a state of need and being affected, while in fact, it is He who affects everything else. Thus affection and being-affected would co-exist in multiplicity in Him, which is impossible. The consequent being thus proven false, the antecedent must be false as well.

Sabzawārī believes that this proof is a case of begging the question but then explains it in such a way as to be acceptable and proving the author's point. In his glosses on Mullā Ṣadrā's *Aṣfār*, he directs his arrows at two separate issues raised by Mullā Ṣadrā's proof. In the first gloss, relating to the first part of the proof, Sabzawārī states the following:

I say: This is a case of begging the question, because the statement that [God's] self (*dhāt*) *in actu* does not bear testimony to the fact that His attributes of perfection are part of His self, and the assertion that His self is *eo ipso* void of these and similar contentions, are [all] the very same thing that the adversary wants to prove. For the latter says: these do not belong to His self as such, even though they are never negated of it either because they are essential properties that flow forth from it. Those who talk about something being superadded are just waiting to admit to the conclusion [drawn by Mullā Ṣadrā]. Indeed, this conclusion is the very same as the premise on which it is based, as is obvious. What he (Ṣadrā) is really saying is that the thing that we have to steer clear of—which is the conclusion that he, may God hallow his secret, is actually driving at—is left unstated, namely that these various suppositions imply that [God's] self is an *essence*, which is disproven by the facts. The explanation of the [faulty] implication [that God's self is an essence] lies in the fact that the self that is “void of” these perfections and their opposites is of necessity an essence. This is because “thing-ness” (*shay'īyya*) [implied by the self as *dhāt*] either refers to essence or to being. But [God's] being is not void of these perfections; indeed, it is identical with them as was [also] established by the author. And thus it would remain that His self is an essence (*māhiyya*), the inference [to this effect] being demonstrative in character.¹²³

123 Ibid., p. 133, Sabzawārī's comment in the footnote.

As stated before, Sabzawārī is of the opinion that Mullā Ṣadrā is begging the question here because he says that if the attributes of perfection are superadded to God's self *in actu*, then His self will exist without itself bearing testimony to the truth of these attributes of perfection, and thus God Himself will, by virtue of His self, be void of these attributes. As may be inferred from the above quotation, Sabzawārī's objection concerns the fact that the conclusion of Mullā Ṣadrā's implication is identical with the claim made by his adversaries. This is so because these say that these attributes are not included in God's self but superadded to it, and even if they are never denied of it either, this is only so because they are inseparable properties of God, but not His very essence. Surely those who adhere to the doctrine of God's attributes as something superadded will have no qualms about admitting Ṣadrā's conclusion that (on their assumption) God's self will be void of these attributes. Indeed, one could say that the former statement is identical to the latter.

Sabzawārī follows this up with an explanatory analysis of Ṣadrā's account, saying that one must be careful to remember that the supposition that God's attributes are superadded to His self bears with it the implication—and this is what Ṣadrā really meant to say—that God's self (*dhāt*) should be an essence (*māhiyya*), which is false. This is so because if God's self is void of these attributes of perfection—as well as of their opposites¹²⁴—this self is necessarily an essence. For the thing-ness (*shay'īyya*) that self implies, is either being or essence. But His being is not void of these perfections; indeed, it is identical to these. On the adversary's supposition, it will, therefore, be God's essence that is void of perfection. However, as has been proved elsewhere, God is pure, absolute being and has no essence.

The second issue raised by Sabzawārī concerns the part of Ṣadrā's proof in which he says:

This is because His self (*dhāt*) is the principle of anything good and perfect. So how could He possibly be lacking in any way, deriving perfection from what is other than He?

Commenting on the above, Sabzawārī says the following:

¹²⁴ This is so because if the opposites of the attributes of perfection would not be intrinsically negated of Him, He could never have any of the attributes of perfection, not even in the form of superadded accidental properties. The question here is not whether or not God possesses attributes of perfection, but whether or not these attributes are superadded to His self.

I say: The proof can be completed without this if one [just] considers the point that we added to it [previously]. The inclusion of this [consideration by Ṣadrā] introduces a weakness because deriving perfection from [outside] attributes and being affected by these would only follow in the case that these [attributes] were not essential properties (*lawāzim*, sg. *lāzim*). But if they are—and we know that they owe their existence to that which they are inseparable from (*malzūm*), which is their source and principle—then God does not derive any perfection from them because they necessarily belong to Him at all times by virtue of His nature, He not deriving these perfections from some other. It would, however, be better to say¹²⁵ that if they would be superadded to His self, then the latter would in itself be void of them, and obviously it would also be void of their opposites because otherwise, His self would be identical with the negation of these perfections [which is impossible]. Now if this “being-void-of” (*khuluww*) is predicated of a so-called “essence” (*māhiyya ta’ammulīyya*), then [the potentiality that this void necessarily creates] would represent an “essential possibility” (*imkān dhātī*). But the Necessary Being, may He be exalted, has no essence. Thus the subject of this being-void-of would be pure being, perfect reality, and pure individuality. A being-void-of and [the implied] potentiality in a subject with objective existence represent a potentiality that is a disposition whose bearer is matter. And matter is inevitably connected to a form, while their composite is body. [But God] is elevated far beyond that.¹²⁶

According to Sabzawārī, God would only derive perfections from elsewhere and be affected by them in the case that such perfections are not necessary attributes of His nature. But if they are, He derives no perfection from elsewhere, these perfections belonging to Him by necessity and at all times. Sabzawārī points out that the proof can be completed without emphasizing that perfection would be derived from elsewhere and that his own, earlier addition to it is sufficient for the proof to be complete and yes, even more apposite. In the above quotation, Sabzawārī’s account boils down to the following: if the attributes of perfection would be superadded to God’s self, and if His self would be void of these, then His self would also be void of their opposites, for if this were not the case, then God’s self would be the very negation of knowledge, power, will and so forth, which is impossible. Thus God’s self would be void

125 In his *Sharḥ al-Manzūma*, vol. 3, pp. 549–550, Sabzawārī gives two proofs for the identity of the attributes of perfection and God’s self, the first of which is almost the same as the one given here.

126 See Sabzawārī’s gloss in Ṣ. Shīrāzī, *al-Ḥikma al-muta’ālīya*, vol. 6, pp. 133–134.

of the perfections and their opposites, while at the same time it is potentially qualified by any of these. This potentiality is either essential or by way of disposition. If the underlying subject of this potentiality is an essence that was abstracted by the intellect, then this potentiality would be essential. But the Necessary Existent is pure being and has no essence, so the potentiality cannot be essential. But if dispositional, the bearer of this potentiality would be pure being and reality itself, while the bearer of *dispositional* potentiality is matter, which is inevitably connected to a form. This would imply that God's self is composed of matter and form, and thus a body, but God Almighty is far beyond being a body. Thus God's selfhood is not void of these attributes which belong to Him by virtue of Himself.

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Āqā ‘Alī Mudarris Ṭīhrānī

Mohsen Kadivar¹

1 Life

Āqā ‘Alī Mudarris Ṭīhrānī was born in Isfahan in Dhū l-Qa‘da 1234/August or September 1819. The prefix *Āqā* was attached to his name at some point, as it was also attached to the names of some other philosophers and jurists of the Safavid and Qajar periods. In some of his works, he calls himself by this name.² He came from a pious family of scholars and philosophers. His father, Mullā ‘Abd Allāh Mudarris Zunūzī Tabrīzī (d. 1257/1841), nicknamed Bābākhān, a native of Zunūz (a small town 25 kilometres north of Marand), was one of the most distinguished scholars of his age. Out of all the fields of learning, Zunūzī was particularly interested in philosophy. He is considered one of the most important students of Mullā ‘Alī Nūrī. His most significant works were two treatises in Persian, the *Lama‘āt-i ilāhiyya dar ma‘ārif-i rubūbiyya* (The Divine Flashes Concerning the Knowledge of Lordship)³ and *Muntakhab al-khāqānī*

¹ Translated from Persian by Janis Esots.

² Thus, at the beginning of the *Badāyi‘ al-ḥikam*, he says: “[Prince ... ‘Imād al-Dawla Badī‘ al-Mulk ... sent some questions concerning matters about Divine Wisdom ...] to this unworthy one, known as Āqā ‘Alī Mudarris Ṭīhrānī, the son of the forgiven pardoned Mullā ‘Abd Allāh Mudarris Zunūzī Tabrīzī ...’ At the end of the *Badāyi‘*, he writes: “[In praise of God and through His favour, the book *Badāyi‘ al-ḥikam* was completed on 5 Jumādā I 1307/12 December 1889] by the pen of this writer, known to the common people as Āqā ‘Alī Mudarris Ṭīhrānī”. At the beginning of the treatise *Sabīl al-rashād fī ithbāt al-ma‘ād*, he says: “After that, the destitute unworthy servant, known in brief and in the abridged form as ‘Alī Ṭīhrānī and famous as Mudarris Ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Zunūzī al-Tabrīzī al-Mudarris, etc.” In the *Risāla-yi sargudhasht*, he calls himself “This destitute one ‘Alī Mudarris Ṭīhrānī, the son of Mullā ‘Abd Allāh Zunūzī”. See Āqā ‘Alī Mudarris Ṭīhrānī, *Badāyi‘ al-ḥikam*, ed. Muḥammad Jawād Sārāwī and Rasūl Fathī Majd (Tabrīz: Intishārāt-i Dānishgāh-i Tabrīz, 1380 Sh./2001), p. 7; idem, *Majmū‘a-yi muṣannafāt*, ed. Muḥsin Kādīwār, 3 vols (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Ittīlā‘āt, 1378 Sh./1999), vol. 2, p. 87; Ibid., vol. 3, p. 147.

³ The *Lama‘āt-i ilāhiyya dar ma‘ārif-i rubūbiyya*, also known as the *Sharīfīyya khāqānīyya*, completed on 6 Rabī‘ I 1240/24 October 1824, was composed at the request of Faṭḥ ‘Alī Shāh Qājār. It establishes the principle of existence and its attributes of perfection, explains the manner in which multiplicity appears from the true one, and deals with the issues pertaining to God’s knowledge and other problems related to Lordship. The book consists of twenty chapters, each of which is called a “divine flash” (*lum‘a ilāhiyya*). This work was edited by

fī kashf ḥaqā'iq 'irfānī (The Khāqān's Selection Concerning the Disclosure of Mystical Truths),⁴ which deals with metaphysics in the narrower sense. In addition, he also wrote glosses on several works of Mullā Ṣadrā, including *al-Ḥikma al-muta'aliya fī l-asfār al-'aqliyya al-arba'a*, *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya*, and *al-Mabda' wa-l-ma'ād*, and to 'Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī's commentary on Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's *Tajrīd al-i'tiqād (Shawāriq al-ilhām)*,⁵ and composed superglosses on Lāhijī's glosses on Qūshjī's commentary on the aforementioned Ṭūsī's work.⁶

In 1237/1822, when Āqā 'Alī was three years old, his father, together with the family, moved from Isfahan to Tehran. Āqā 'Alī studied the introductory sciences, Arabic literature, 'Alā' al-Dīn Qūshjī's (d. 879/1474) *Sharḥ al-Tajrīd* in rational theology and Ḥasan b. Zayn al-Dīn 'Āmilī's (d. 1011/1602) *Ma'ālim al-uṣūl* in legal theory in a *madrassa* in Tehran. He then read with his father some books in transmitted sciences (e.g., *Rawḍat al-bahīyya fī sharḥ al-Lum'a al-dimashqiyya* by Zayn al-Dīn Jubā'ī 'Āmilī (d. 966/1559) known as al-Shahīd al-Thānī and *Qawānīn al-uṣūl* by Abū l-Qāsim Gilānī (d. 1231/1815–1816) known as Mīrzā-yi Qummī) and the rational sciences (e.g., *Shawāriq al-ilhām* by 'Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt* by Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī and *al-Mabda' wa-l-ma'ād* by Mullā Ṣadrā). When Āqā 'Alī was twenty-three, his father died. After this event, he went to 'Atabāt. Initially, he intended to continue his religious studies there. However, a short while later he went to Isfahan, where he continued studying the rational sciences for about five years.⁷ During this period, he read Mullā Ṣadrā's *al-Ḥikma al-muta'aliya* and *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb* and Avicenna's *Shifā'* with Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥasan Nūrī (d. after 1267/1850), the son of Mullā 'Alī Nūrī.⁸ The latter wrote glosses on Mullā Ṣadrā's *al-Ḥikma al-muta'aliya* as well as his

Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (Tehran: Anjuman-i Shāhanshāhī-i Ḥikmat u Falsafa-yi Īrān [1355 Sh.]/1976).

4 Fath 'Alī Shāh Qājār asked Mullā 'Abd Allāh to prepare an abridged version of the *Lama'āt*. In response, Zunūzī wrote this book, which is shorter than the *Lama'āt*. Hence, it can be treated as an abridgement of the latter. In this short treatise, which was completed on 2 Jumādā I 1240/23 December 1824, Mullā 'Abd Allāh discusses the opinions of certain Shī'ī thinkers, the views of several mystics, and the beliefs of the Mu'tazilis and Ash'aris. The book is arranged in twenty chapters and a conclusion, and deals with the levels and way-stations of the knowledge of God. It was edited by Najīb Māyil Hirawī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Mawlā, 1361 Sh./1982).

5 This gloss was published in the margins of the lithograph edition of 'Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī's *Shawāriq al-ilhām*, printed in Tehran in 1311/1893.

6 The manuscript of this work is preserved in the Library of the Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī in Tehran (MS Majlis 1734). Āqā 'Alī wrote some additional glosses to those of his father. See below, p. 245.

7 "Risāla-yi sargudhasht," in Āqā 'Alī Mudarris Ṭīhrānī, *Majmū'a-yi muṣannafāt*, vol. 3, pp. 145, 146.

8 Joseph Arthur Comte de Goubineau, *Les religions et les philosophies dans l'Asie centrale* (Paris: Ernst Leroux, 1865, 3rd ed., 1900), p. 104.

commentary on Athīr al-Dīn Abharī's *Hidāyat al-ḥikma*.⁹ In some of his writings, Āqā 'Alī refers to Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥasan Nūrī as "my venerated teacher" (*ustādhī al-mu'azẓam*) and relates some of his opinions.¹⁰ Apart from Mīrzā Ḥasan, Āqā 'Alī also studied with such students of Mullā 'Alī Nūrī and Mullā Ismā'īl as Mullā Muḥammad Ja'far Lāhijī Langarūdī (d. after 1251/1835), Sayyid Raḍī Lārījānī (d. 1270/1853) and Ḥājj Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Naqshafirūsh.¹¹ During these years, Āqā 'Alī also spent some time in Qazvin, where he attended the classes of Mullā Āqā Qazwīnī (d. 1282/1865–1866).¹² Eventually, in 1270/1853, after the completion of his studies, Āqā 'Alī Mudarris returned to Tehran and began to teach.

Āqā 'Alī taught Ṣadrian Philosophy, in particular, the *Asfār*, in Tehran for more than thirty years—first (for around seven years) in the Qāsim Khān Madrasa (known later as Madrasa-yi Mādar-i Shāh), then in the Old Sipahsālār Madrasa (situated in the 'Udlājān quarter).¹³ He taught both rational and transmitted sciences. However, he owes his fame to his expertise in philosophy. Muḥammad Ḥasan Khān I'timād al-Salṭana (d. 1331/1912) in his *al-Ma'āthir wa-l-āthār* writes:

[Āqā 'Alī Mudarris] teaches in the *madrassa* of the late Mīrzā Muḥammad Khān Sipahsālār Qājār, situated in the capital city Tehran. He is one of the few teachers, outstanding in the teaching of [both] rational and transmitted sciences. He teaches both Transcendent Philosophy (*al-Ḥikma al-muta'āliya*) and argumentative (*istidlālī*) legal theory.¹⁴

9 These glosses appeared on the margins of the lithographical edition of Mullā Ṣadrā's *Sharḥ hidāyat al-ḥikma*, printed in Tehran in 1313/1895–96.

10 Eg. Āqā 'Alī's glosses on *al-Ḥikma al-muta'āliya*.

11 "Risāla-yi tārikh al-ḥukamā," in Āqā 'Alī Mudarris Ṭihrānī, *Majmū'a-yi muṣannafāt*, vol. 3, pp. 125, 142.

12 Regarding his competence in rational sciences, Āqā 'Alī describes Mullā Āqā Qazwīnī as "an infinite turbulent sea". See "Risāla-yi sargudhasht," in Āqā 'Alī Mudarris Ṭihrānī, *Majmū'a-yi muṣannafāt*, vol. 3, p. 148.

13 J. A. Goubineau, *Les religions et les philosophies dans l'Asie centrale*, p. 104. Sayyid Aḥmad Dīwān-Baygī in his memorandum *Ḥadīqat al-shu'arā'* remarks that Āqā 'Alī Mudarris shunned the company of formal religious scholars: "Āqā 'Alī was more inclined towards philosophy, perfecting that noble science. For this reason, he gave up the place of his father, who belonged to the elite of the formal religious scholars, preoccupying himself in his blessed abode with the teaching of the divine philosophy." See Sayyid Aḥmad Dīwān-Baygī, *Ḥadīqat al-shu'arā'*, ed. 'Abd al-Ḥusayn Nawā'ī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Zarrīn, 1364 Sh./1985–1986), pp. 482–483.

14 Muḥammad Ḥasan I'timād al-Salṭana, *Kitāb al-ma'āthir wa-l-āthār*, ed. Īraj Afshār (Tehran: Asāṭir, 1363 Sh./1984), vol. 1, p. 211.

According to Mudarris Tabrizī, Āqā ‘Alī was nicknamed ‘Mudarris’ because he taught both rational and transmitted sciences employing an analytical and argumentative approach.¹⁵ Of all philosophical works, Āqā ‘Alī paid particular attention to the teaching of Mullā Ṣadrā’s *al-Ḥikma al-muta‘āliya fī asfār al-arba‘a al-‘aqliyya*, known as the *Asfār*. In his age, his classes on this book are said to have been the ones most attended. He taught the *Asfār* in its entirety several times, and these classes continued until 1306/1888. Apart from the *Asfār*, he taught Mullā Ṣadrā’s *al-Mabda’ wa-l-ma‘ād*,¹⁶ *Sharḥ Hidāyat al-ḥikma* and *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya*, the Metaphysics of Avicenna’s *Shifā’* and Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī’s commentary on Suhrawardī’s *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq*.¹⁷

Āqā ‘Alī had numerous public disputes with Ḥājī Muḥammad Karīm Khān Kirmānī (d. 1288/1871), the third leader of the *Shaykhiyya* and an account of one of these disputes has come down to us.¹⁸ According to this account, the dispute demonstrated Karīm Khān’s inability to answer most of the questions in a convincing manner, and those present acknowledged Āqā ‘Alī’s greater learning.

Āqā ‘Alī Mudarris died in Tehran on 17 Dhū l-Qa‘da 1307/27 July 1888¹⁹ and was buried in Rayy. As can be seen in his last work, which remained incomplete due to his sudden death, at the end of his life, Āqā ‘Alī suffered from intense pain. Thus, he writes: ‘When I raise my head from the knees, I beat the wall [due to the intense pain and inability to bear it].’²⁰

His spouse Sayyida Baygum, the endowments she established demonstrate that she was a virtuous woman.²¹ Āqā ‘Alī had one son and two daughters. His

15 Muḥammad ‘Alī Mudarris Tabrizī, *Rayḥānat al-adab: dar sharḥ-i aḥwāl u āthār-i ‘ulamā’, ‘urafā’, fuqahā’, falāsifa, shu‘arā’ u khattātīn-i buzurg* (Tehran: Khayyām, 1374 Sh./1995), vol. 2, p. 391.

16 The notes of one of his classes on Mullā Ṣadrā’s *al-Mabda’ wa-l-ma‘ād*, made by one of Āqā ‘Alī’s students, have been preserved. See below p. 247.

17 Āqā ‘Alī might have taught these three last books along with his additions to them which survive.

18 “Munāzara,” in Ā. ‘A. Mudarris Tīhrānī, *Majmū‘a-yi muṣannafāt*, vol. 3, pp. 509–518. On this dispute see below pp. 245–246.

19 His friend Muḥammad Ḥasan I‘timād al-Saltāna writes: “On Saturday, 17 [Dhū l-Qa‘da] the soul of the philosopher, Āqā ‘Alī, was entrusted to God’s mercy. I am unable to fathom the depth of my grief.” See Muḥammad Ḥasan I‘timād al-Saltāna, *Rūznāma-yi khāṭirāt*, ed. Īraj Afshār (Tehran: Amīr Kabīr, 1345 Sh./1966), p. 705.

20 “Muqaddima-yi sharḥ-i Asrār al-āyāt Mullā Ṣadrā,” in Ā. ‘A. Mudarris Tīhrānī, *Majmū‘a-yi muṣannafāt*, vol. 3, p. 160.

21 The books endowed by Sayyida Baygum are now held at the Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī Library.

son Sharaf al-Mulk Āqā Ḥasan Ḥakīmzāda (d. 1320 Sh./1941) participated in the Constitutional Revolution, and later held senior judicial positions in Tehran and Yazd.²² Āqā 'Alī's sons-in-law were both philosophers, Mīrzā Ibrāhīm Ibtihāj al-Ḥukamā' (d. 1332/1913), one of his former students, and Mīrzā Naṣr Allāh Khān Mustawfī Sawādkūhī (d. 1380/1960).

Āqā 'Alī appears to have been a humble person. This can be inferred from the manner he describes himself in his writings:

I have a weak perception, feeble intellect, inconstant vigour and am extremely thick-headed. I have studied with my father, Mullā Āqā Qazwīnī, Ḥājji Muḥammad Ibrāhīm, Āqā Sayyid Raḍī and Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥasan Nūrī, but this made little sense, because, in order to profit from effusion, the matter must be able to receive it, in the first place.²³

Nā'ib al-Ṣadr Shīrāzī, who was one of Āqā 'Alī's students, claimed that he "secretly became the *murīd* of Munawwar 'Alī-Shāh [Muḥammad Mujtahid Shīrāzī, one of the shaykhs of the Ni'matullahī order]",²⁴ but this claim is not confirmed by any other source. According to the words of Mīrzā Muḥammad 'Alī Mudarris, "[Āqā 'Alī], in his essence, possessed the attributes of a *darwīsh*; he loved the needy, was a mystic by his vocation and a Sufi by his character, being carefree and not bound by any limitation (*bi ta'ayyun*)."²⁵ Āqā 'Alī also wrote poetry, including *ghazals*, as he indicates in his *Risāla-yi sargudhasht*.²⁶ However, only some of his *rubā'īs* have survived.²⁷

Āqā 'Alī is reported to have a good relationship with the Qajar court and Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh (r. 1264–1313/1848–1896) in particular. He dedicated his *Badāyī' al-ḥikam* to Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh, highly praising the monarch in the introduction. The introduction to the *Kashf al-asrār*, which was composed during the final months of Āqā 'Alī's life, also contains fulsome praise of Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh. From the remarks that Āqā 'Alī makes, it can be inferred that he attended the

22. Ā. 'A. Mudarris Ṭīhrānī, *Majmū'a-yi muṣannafāt*, vol. 1, p. 30.

23. "Risāla-yi tārikh al-ḥukamā'", in Ā. 'A. Mudarris Ṭīhrānī, *Majmū'a-yi muṣannafāt*, vol. 3, p. 141.

24. Muḥammad Ma'sūm b. Zayn al-'Ābidīn Ma'sūm 'Alī-Shāh, *Ṭarā'iq al-ḥaqā'iq*, ed. Muḥammad Ja'far Maḥjūb (Tehran: Kitābkhāna-yi Sanā'ī, 1331 Sh./1952), vol. 3, p. 505.

25. M. A. Mudarris Tabrizī, *Rayḥānat al-adab*, vol. 2, p. 391.

26. "Risāla-yi sargudhasht," in Ā. 'A. Mudarris Ṭīhrānī, *Majmū'a-yi muṣannafāt*, vol. 3, p. 149.

27. Ā. 'A. Mudarris Ṭīhrānī, *Majmū'a-yi muṣannafāt*, vol. 3, pp. 181–185.

public disputes that took place at the court and in the king's presence.²⁸ Nevertheless, Āqā 'Alī's letters do not contain any indications that he was fixated on the possessors of power, dignity and domination or any inclination towards them. I'timād al-Saltāna, a companion, attendant and comrade of Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh, was Āqā 'Alī's friend and a frequent visitor to his home. I'timād al-Saltāna had studied in France. It was his close relationship with Āqā 'Alī that was, apparently, the cause of the latter's rapprochement with the monarch and the court, also accounting for Āqā 'Alī's intimate acquaintance with the modern world.

The French scholar and diplomat Arthur de Gobineau (d. 1882), who spent two periods in Tehran (1855–1858 and 1862–1863) and conducted research into the history of Iranian thought, was on friendly terms with Āqā 'Alī and urged him to write a history of philosophy in Iran during the last few centuries, indicating that there had been little investigation in this field. In compliance with Gobineau's request, Āqā 'Alī wrote a treatise, which Gobineau then took to France. The original copy of the treatise in Āqā 'Alī's hand is preserved in the National University Library of Strasbourg. In his book, *Les religions et les philosophies dans l'Asie centrale*, published in 1865, Gobineau presents the philosophy of Iran according to the information provided by Āqā 'Alī.²⁹ Gobineau writes about Āqā 'Alī himself in the following way:

Āqā 'Alī Ṭihrānī, a professor at the *madrasa* of the Shāh's mother in Tehran, is a remarkable scholar. He is small, has a frail and thin body, dark face and penetrating eyes, and he is extremely intelligent. He studied with his father Mullā 'Abd Allāh Mudarris, Mullā Āqā Qazwīnī, Ḥājj Mullā Ja'far [Lāhijī] Lārījānī, Ḥājj Muḥammad Ibrāhīm [Naqshafrūsh], Sayyid Raḍī [Lārījānī], and Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥasan Nūrī. He remarked in writing on the views of [some] famous philosophers. He used to teach law, legal theory and metaphysics but then he stopped. However, his students did not let him go—they visit him at home, in order to profit from his knowledge. In short, his retreat did not reduce his fame. He is now writing a book on the history of philosophy, from Mullā Ṣadrā to the present day. He is the first scholar after Shahrastānī who has attempted to write such a history.³⁰

28 "Muqaddima-yi Kashf al-asrār fi sharḥ Asrār al-āyāt," in Ā. 'A. Mudarris Ṭihrānī, *Majmū'a-yi muṣannafāt*, vol. 3, p. 158.

29 J. A. Goubineau, *Les religions et les philosophies dans l'Asie centrale*, pp. 80–104.

30 Ibid., p. 104.

Āqā 'Alī's *Badāyi' al-ḥikam* was written in response to the questions of the Qajar prince, Badī' al-Mulk Mīrzā, known as Ḥishmat al-Saltāna (d. after 1324/1906). Badī' al-Mulk was a learned prince, who was deeply interested in philosophy. He had studied philosophy with Mīrzā 'Alī Akbar Ḥikmī Yazdī (d. 1304/1886). He translated into Persian Mullā Ṣadrā's *Mashā'ir*, to which he gave the title *Imād al-ḥikma*, and wrote a commentary in Persian on 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī's *al-Durra al-fākhira*, with the title *al-Ḥikma al-Imādiyya*. He knew some French and apparently, to some extent, was acquainted with the works of modern European philosophers.³¹ After having approached Mīrzā 'Alī Akbar with his questions and not satisfied with the answers he received,³² Badī' al-Mulk presented then to Āqā 'Alī. The very size of the *Badāyi' al-ḥikam* and the definitions that Āqā 'Alī gives in the introduction show that he treated these questions, and the questioner, as extremely important. In the seventh question, Badī' al-Mulk mentions the names of several post-mediaeval Western philosophers (Bacon, Descartes, Spinoza, Bossuet, Kant, Fichte and Hegel), attributing to them certain views, which shows that his knowledge of these thinkers was rather limited.

2 Students

During his career which lasted almost forty years, Āqā 'Alī taught many students. Some of his distinguished students, including Mīrzā Ḥasan Kirmānshāhī (d. 1336/1917–18), Mīrzā 'Alī Akbar Mudarris Ḥikmī Yazdī, and Mīrzā Ghulām-'Alī Ḥakīm Shīrāzī (d. after 1329/1911) also studied with Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumshā'ī and/or Abū l-Ḥasan Jilwa and since they were attracted to the thinking of the latter philosopher(s), they are introduced elsewhere in this book. Some other students of Āqā 'Alī will be introduced here:

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- 31 In a letter to a friend, Badī' al-Mulk Mīrzā asks him to procure for him the book of the French philosopher François Jean-Marie Evellin (d. 1910), *Infini et quantité: étude sur le concept de l'infini en philosophie et dans les sciences*. See Karīm Mujtahidī, "Dhikr-i falāsi-fa-yi gharb dar kitāb-i *Badāyi' al-ḥikam*," *Rāhnāmā-yi kitāb*, 18 10–12 (Day-Isfand 1354 Sh./January-March 1975): 827–834; idem, "Badī' al-Mulk Mīrzā 'Imād al-Dawla u Ivilin, fīlsūf-i farānsawī," *Rāhnāmā-yi kitāb*, 19 11–12 (Bahman-Isfand 1355 Sh./February-March 1976): 807–815.
- 32 For the edition of Mīrzā 'Alī Akbar Ḥikmī Yazdī's response to the questions of Badī' al-Mulk, see Sayyid Muṣṭafā Muḥaqqiq Dāmād, "Nukhbagān-i 'ilm u 'amal-i Īrān: Mīrzā 'Alī Akbar Mudarris Ḥikmī Yazdī," *Nāma-yi Farhangistān-i 'ulūm*, 43 (1376 Sh./1997): 103–144 (134–144); reprinted in idem *Nukhbagān-i 'ilm u 'amal-i Īrān* (Tehran: 1378 Sh./1999), pp. 155–164.

- 1) Ḥaydar Qulī Khān Qājār Nihāwandī, who became one of the two successors of Āqā ‘Alī at the Old Sipahsālār Madrasa. In his endorsement (*taqrīz*) of the lithographic edition of the *Badāyi’ al-ḥikam*, published in 1314/1896–1897, he speaks of his studies with Āqā ‘Alī in clear and definite terms.³³
- 2) Shaykh ‘Alī Nūrī (d. ca. 1335/1916–1917), He was a prominent student of Āqā ‘Alī Mudarris and Qumsha’ī, and the intellectual leadership of the Madrasa-yi Marwī reached its peak under him. Because of his frequent teaching of ‘Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī’s *Shawāriq al-ilhām*, he was known as “Shaykh-i Shawāriq”. He wrote glosses on *Shawāriq al-ilhām* and Mullā Ṣadrā’s *Asfār*. He attended the last course on the *Asfār* that Āqā ‘Alī’s gave, and in his gloss on the *Asfār* he refers to his teacher as *al-ḥakīm al-mu’assis* (the philosopher-founder). He died in Tehran in 1335/1917 and was buried in the mausoleum of Ibn Bābawayh.³⁴
- 3) Mullā Naẓār ‘Alī Ṭāliqānī (d. 1306/1888). Having completed his initial studies in Najaf, he went to Tehran, settling at the Marwī Madrasa, where he first studied the rational disciplines, and later started to teach and write. Among his works, the *Kāshif al-asrār* (on ethics and theology)³⁵ and *Risāla dar fanā’* should be mentioned. He died in 1306/1888 and was buried in Mashhad at the shrine of Imām Riḍā.

3 Works

In his *Risāla-yi sargudhasht*, written at the end of his life, Āqā ‘Alī mentions only five of his works. In turn, Shaykh Āqā Buzurg Ṭihirānī in his *Dharī’a* lists six works of Āqā ‘Alī. In his *Rayḥānat al-adab*, Mīrzā Muḥammad ‘Alī Mudarris adds one more work to these six. To this list, Gobineau, in his *Les religions et les philosophies dans l’Asie centrale*, adds the *Tārīkh al-ḥukamā’*. Thus the total amount of Āqā ‘Alī’s works mentioned by himself and his contemporaries does not exceed ten. However, Āqā ‘Alī definitely authored twenty-five works, to which three more can probably be added. In what follows, I will discuss about thirty-one works, arranging them in several groups.

33 See Ā. ‘A. Mudarris Ṭihirānī, *Majmū’a-yi muṣannafāt*, vol. 1, p. 36.

34 See Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha’ī. *Majmū’a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā bi hamrāh-i zindaḡināma-yi ‘arīf-i ilāhī Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha’ī*, ed. Khalīl Bahrāmī Qaṣrichamī and Ḥamid Nāji Iṣfahānī (Tehran: Kānūn-i Pazhūhish, 1378 Sh./1999), pp. 137–138; ‘Abbās Ṭārimī, *Shahr-i hazār ḥakīm* (Tehran: Rawzana, 1382 Sh./2003), p. 115.

35 This book was published by Mahdī Ṭayyib (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Rasā, 1373 Sh./1994).

3.1 *Independent Works*

1. *Badāyi' al-ḥikam (Marvels of Wisdom)*: The most important work of Āqā 'Alī Mudarris and one of the most significant books dealing with Ṣadrian philosophy. The book, which is written in Persian, consists of detailed and persuasive answers to the seven questions of Prince Badī' al-Mulk Mīrẓā 'Imād al-Dawla, pertaining to metaphysics in its narrower sense. The title of the book hints at the name of the questioner. His questions were as follows:

- 1) How to predicate the attributions of God to Him, when we regard His Essence to be the true existence?
- 2) How to conceive of the multiplicity of existents, given that God is the unique true existence?
- 3) How to conceive the essence of God as being distinct from the contingents?
- 4) Is God's knowledge of the contingents summary or detailed, and also with regard to particulars as well?
- 5) Does God's knowledge incite actions or no?
- 6) What is the final cause of the emergence of the contingents?
- 7) In discussions with European scholars, what position should we take concerning the issue of the identity of God's attributes with His essence?

The work arguably was not structured properly. It was perhaps because of this structural weakness that the work did not receive any attention in the philosophical curriculum despite its ontological discussions. It was completed on 5 Jumādā 1 1307/28 December 1889, and its first (lithographic) edition was published in Tehran in 1314/1896.³⁶ In 1377/1957, seventy years after the completion of the *Badāyi'*, Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ Ḥā'irī Simnānī Māzandarānī, who was one of the opponents of Ṣadrian metaphysics, wrote a treatise called *Wadāyi' al-ḥikam fī kashf khadāyi' Badāyi' al-ḥikam* in which he attempted to refute the proofs for the primacy of

36 The first modern edition of the *Badāyi' al-ḥikam* by Aḥmad Wā'izī, came out in 1376 Sh./1997 (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Zahrā'). This edition was based purely on the lithograph edition without consulting the manuscripts, and it contains numerous omissions in the text. In addition, the eulogy of Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh at the beginning of the work was omitted. In 1380 Sh./2001, Muḥammad Jawād Sārawī and Rasūl Fathī Majd published a critical edition based on three extant manuscript copies. Two pieces of the *Badāyi' al-ḥikam* (his discussion on the principality of existence and his brief remark on the ideas of Western Philosophers) have been translated by Nicholas Boylson and the present author in Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Mehdi Aminrazavi, *An Anthology of Philosophy in Persia: Vol 5. From the School of Shiraz to the Twentieth Century* (London & New York: I. B. Tauris Publishers, 2015), pp. 476–488.

existence as presented by Āqā 'Alī in this work. He argued that these proofs were nothing but deceit.³⁷

2. *Sabīl al-rashād fī ithbāt al-ma'ād* (The Right Way to Prove Resurrection):³⁸ At the beginning of this treatise, Āqā 'Alī remarks that this work should, in fact, be treated as an addendum to the discussion on resurrection in Mullā Ṣadrā's *Aṣfār*, which he extracted, giving it the form of an independent treatise on corporeal resurrection (*ma'ād jismānī*). Apparently, the treatise was composed between 1289/1872 and 1302/1884. The first chapter of the treatise represents a philosophical explanation of Āqā 'Alī's specific approach to corporeal resurrection. The second chapter is a critique of the Ash'arī and Ṣadrian opinions on the issue. The third chapter consists of a detailed presentation of the proofs that confirm Āqā 'Alī's own opinion.

One of Āqā 'Alī's students, Muḥammad 'Alī Kirmānshāhī, wrote explanatory glosses on this treatise. It was also endorsed by Sayyid Abū l-Ḥasan Rafī'ī Qazwīnī (d. 1395/1975), who compiled glosses, explaining the difficult passages in it.

3. *Risāla fī mabāḥiṭh al-ḥaml* (Treatise on the Discussions Pertaining to Predication):³⁹ The work was not completed. It lacks an introduction, and the discussion remains incomplete. It consists of thirty-four chapters of different length. The text begins with the discussion on the derived (*bi-l-ishtiḳāq*) and univocal (*bi-l-muwāṭ'a'a*) predication. The univocal predication then is divided into primary essential predication (*ḥaml awwālī dhātī*), and common technical predication (*ḥaml shāyī' šinā'ī*). Āqā 'Alī discusses sixteen different issues that pertain to predication, and examines and criticizes the opinions of Ṣadr al-Dīn Dashtakī (d. 903/1498), Jalāl al-Dīn Dawānī (d. 908/1502), Āqā Jamāl Khwānsārī (d. 1125/1713–1714).
4. *Risāla fī l-wujūd al-rābiṭ* (A Treatise on Existence as a Copula):⁴⁰ The discourse of this treatise is completely based on Ṣadrā's discussion on existence as a copula (*wujūd-i rābiṭ*) in the *Aṣfār*. In all likelihood, the work initially represented as a lengthy gloss on this discussion of the *Aṣfār*,

37 Ḥā'irī Māzandarānī's *Wadāyī' al-ḥikam* was published as an appendix to the third volume of his *Ḥikmat-i Bū 'Alī Sīnā*. See Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ Ḥā'irī Simnānī Māzandarānī, *Ḥikmat-i Bū 'Alī Sīnā*, ed. Ḥasan Faḍā'ilī Shaydā and Ḥusayn 'Imādzāda (Tehran: Shirkat-i Sahāmī-i Chāp 1335 Sh./1956; 2nd ed. Tehran: Ḥusayn 'Ilmī, 1362 Sh./1983).

38 "Risāla sabīl al-rashād fī ithbāt al-ma'ād," in Ā. 'A. Mudarris Ṭihrānī, *Majmū'a-yi muṣannaḟāt*, vol. 2, pp. 85–142.

39 "Risāla fī mabāḥiṭh al-ḥaml," in *Ibid.*, pp. 193–269.

40 "Risāla fī l-wujūd al-rābiṭ," in *Ibid.*, pp. 143–192.

which then received the form of an independent treatise. While focusing on the analysis of the opinion of Mullā Ṣadrā, Āqā ‘Alī also deals with the positions of some other thinkers, including Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī (d. 606/1209), Jalāl al-Dīn Dawānī (d. 908/1502), Mīr Dāmād (d. 1041/1631–32), Mullā Muṣṭafā Qumshā’ī (d. 1215/1800), Mullā Muḥammad Ismā’īl Iṣfahānī (d. 1241/1825), Ḥājī Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī (d. 1289/1873), and his own teacher Mullā Muḥammad Ja‘far Lāhijī Langarūdī.⁴¹

5. *Risāla fi tawḥīd* (A Treatise on God’s Unity):⁴² This treatise in Arabic was written before 1294/1877. The text, which seems to have been written as a gloss on Mullā Ṣadrā’s *Asfār*, during the author’s lifetime, was made into an independent treatise with an introduction written by one of Āqā ‘Alī’s students. The treatise consists of thirteen sections, each of which deals with one of the propositions of the issue of (God’s) unity. The treatise begins with a demonstrative discussion and ends with a mystical insight. During this spiritual journey, it is the Qur’ānic inspirations that serve as the guiding lights. Journeying along three paths—the Qur’ān, Gnosis and demonstration, the wayfarer reaches the same destination, which is God’s unity, namely the attestation that “He is One; there is no god but He”.
6. *Risāla fi aḥkām al-wujūd wa-l-māhiyya* (Treatise on Properties of Essence and Existence):⁴³ The unique extant manuscript of this work (MS Mar‘ashī 5588), does not contain the first and the last pages of the work. While the early part of the text is in Persian, the rest is in Arabic. It deals extensively with the metaphysical discussion of Mullā Ṣadrā’s *Asfār*, as well as with Mullā ‘Alī Nūrī’s glosses on this work. The relevant opinions of Avicenna, Suhrawardī and Jurjānī are also discussed and evaluated.
7. *Risāla-yi ḥaqīqat-i Muḥammadiyya* (Treatise on the Muḥammadan Reality):⁴⁴ A treatise in Persian and Arabic, which explains the meaning of the terms *murshid* (‘spiritual master’) and *hādī* (‘guide’) and establishes his existence in accordance with the tenets of Ṣadrian Philosophy. The issue of the Muḥammadan Essence is dealt with in the context of the discussion on the stations of the spiritual journey and the levels of existence. One notices that the discussion in the treatise rests on the

41 See Ā. ‘A. Mudarris Ṭihrānī, *Majmū‘a-yi muṣannafāt*, vol. 2, pp. 172, 175, 185–187.

42 “*Risāla fi tawḥīd*,” in Ā. ‘A. Mudarris Ṭihrānī, *Majmū‘a-yi muṣannafāt*, vol. 2, pp. 67–84.

43 “*Risāla fi aḥkām al-wujūd wa-l-māhiyya*,” in Ā. ‘A. Mudarris Ṭihrānī, *Majmū‘a-yi muṣannafāt*, vol. 3, pp. 55–106.

44 “*Risāla-yi ḥaqīqat-i Muḥammadiyya*,” in *Ibid.*, vol. 3, pp. 107–124.

Qurʾān and *Hadīth* rather than on philosophical works. While, in this treatise, Āqā ʿAlī discusses several *ḥadīths*, he never quotes a philosopher or a mystic. He divides existents into four groups—imperfect, sufficient (*mustakfi*), perfect and supra-perfect (*fawqa l-tāmm*). The Throne of the [divine] He-ness (*ʿarsh-i huwiyyat*) rests on four pillars: 1) the white pillar, or the [Universal] Intellect, or the Muḥammadan [Essence]; 2) the yellow pillar, or the Universal Soul; 3) the green pillar, or the Universal Imagination (*al-khayāl al-kull wa-l-mithāl al-kull*); 4) the red pillar, or the Universal Nature. In conclusion, the author identifies the Intellect with the Muḥammadan Essence and explains the meaning of the *ḥadīth Kuntu kanz^{an} makhfiyy^{an}* (‘I was a hidden treasure’).

8. *Risāla tārikh al-ḥukamāʾ* (A History of the Philosophers): Written at the request of Gobineau, this treatise consists of two chapters. The autograph, split into two parts, is kept at the National University Library of Strasbourg. The first part consists of the biographies of eleven Iranian philosophers (Mīr Sayyid Sharīf Jurjānī and his son Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Jurjānī, Jalāl al-Dīn Dawānī, Mīr Ṣadr al-Dīn Dashtakī Shīrāzī, his son Ghiyāth al-Dīn Maṣṣūr Dashtakī, Shams al-Dīn Khafīrī, Shāh Ṭāhir Ḥusaynī (also known as Dakanī), Mīr Findiriskī, Mīr Dāmād, Shaykh Bahāʾī and Mullā Ṣadrā.⁴⁵ It is worthy of notice that Āqā ʿAlī places Shaykh Bahāʾī along with other philosophers, although the latter did not produce any philosophical works.⁴⁶ The biography of Mullā Ṣadrā given in this treatise repeats numerous passages from the endorsement of the *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*. The second part deals with the philosophers after Mullā Ṣadrā. At the end of the second part, Āqā ʿAlī mentions himself.⁴⁷
9. *Risāla-yi sargudhasht* (Treatise on [My] Biography):⁴⁸ This short treatise, written in Persian, consists of the biographies of Āqā ʿAlī and his father, Mullā ʿAbd Allāh Mudarris Zunūzī. It was written between 5 Jumādā 1 and 17 Dhū l-Qaʿda 1307/28 December 1889 and 5 July 1890, i.e., during the

45 The first part of the treatise was published first by Sayyid Muḥammad ʿAlī Jamāl-zāda under the title “Mirāth-i Gobineau (sanad-i chahārum u panjum),” *Yaghmā* 154 (Urdibihisht 1340 Sh./April-May 1961): 63–68 (64–67). See also “Risāla-yi Tārikh al-ḥukamāʾ,” in Ā. ʿA. Mudarris Ṭīhrānī, *Majmūʿa-yi muṣannafāt*, vol. 3, pp. 125–142.

46 However, while dealing with Mullā Ṣadrā, Āqā ʿAlī quotes Mīr Findiriskī, who allegedly said: “If you are looking for purely exoteric [knowledge], go to Shaykh Bahāʾī.” See “Risāla-yi Tārikh al-ḥukamāʾ,” in Ā. ʿA. Mudarris Ṭīhrānī, *Majmūʿa-yi muṣannafāt*, vol. 3, p. 140.

47 Sayyid Ibrāhīm Ashkishirīn has published the treatise in its complete form. See “Ṭabaqāt-i ḥukamāʾ-i mutaʾakkkhirīn,” in Muḥammad Raʾīszāda, Fāṭima Miānī, Sayyid Aḥmad Hāshimī (ed.), *Jashnnāma-yi Duktur Muḥsin Jahāngīrī* (Tehran: Nashr-i Kitāb-i Hirmis, 1386 Sh./2007), pp. 35–58.

48 “Risāla-yi sargudhasht,” in Ā. ʿA. Mudarris Ṭīhrānī, *Majmūʿa-yi muṣannafāt*, vol. 3, pp. 143–151.

last months of Āqā 'Alī's life. However, in the treatise, Āqā 'Alī mentions only some works by himself and his father, not providing a comprehensive inventory.

3.2 *Exegetical Works*

10. An Introduction to an Intended yet Unwritten Commentary on Mullā Ṣadrā's *Asrār al-āyāt wa-anwār al-bayyināt*.⁴⁹ The latter is one of the philosophical and mystical works of Mullā Ṣadrā. Late in his life, Āqā 'Alī decided to write a commentary on this work. Unfortunately, his death prevented him from completing it—he managed to write only the introduction in Dhū l-Qa'da 1307/June-July 1890. The title of this intended commentary was *Kashf al-asrār fī sharḥ Asrār al-āyāt*. This introduction is the last piece of writing by Āqā 'Alī. Like the introduction to the *Badā'iyī' al-ḥikam*, it is written in mannered prose. While compiling this short piece, Āqā 'Alī felt distressed for two reasons, so much so that he even 'forgot the child of his brain'—first, 'because of the onslaught of the illnesses and afflictions, and the severe pain, anguish and agony' (which we mentioned in the section devoted to his death), and, second, 'because of the abundance of misfortunes and adversities', the details of which, unfortunately, we do not know. The final lines of the introduction speak of the inspiration the author has received, his sensing the aroma of success and his reliance on God's favour.
11. Glosses on Mullā Ṣadrā's *al-Ḥikmat al-muta'āliya fī Asfār al-'aqliyya al-arba'a*: The first volume of Āqā 'Alī's collected works contains 1720 glosses on the four parts of the *Asfār*. These glosses, taken as a whole, form the largest work by Āqā 'Alī. Most of these glosses pertain to the third journey, dealing with God's knowledge. Clearly, they were not written all at once, and there are occasionally long gaps between their authorship. This is evident by the dates given at the end of some of them, for instance, 1283/1866, 1285/1868, 1288/1871 and 1289/1872. They also vary in terms of their structure: some are simply explanations, whereas some others contain innovative opinions and creative theories. Most of them pertain to Mullā Ṣadrā's text. However, in some cases, Āqā 'Alī comments on other glosses of the text, most notably those by Sabzawārī, Mullā Aḥmad Arda-kānī and Mullā Riḍā'ī Tabrīzī. Āqā 'Alī's superglosses on these glosses deserve particular attention since they often scrutinize ideas further. In addition to the above-mentioned glosses, Āqā 'Alī takes into account the previous glosses on this work by Āqā Muḥammad Bīdābādī (d. 1197/1782),

49 "Muqaddima-yi Kashf al-asrār fī sharḥ Asrār al-āyāt," in *Ibid.* 3, pp. 153–160.

- Mullā ‘Alī Nūrī, Mullā Ismā‘īl Darb-i Kūshkī, his father, Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥasan Nūrī and Mullā Āqā Qazwīnī, endorsing or criticizing them.
12. Glosses on ‘Abd al-Razzāq Lāhījī’s *Shawāriq al-ilhām*:⁵⁰ Āqā ‘Alī wrote 398 glosses on ‘Abd al-Razzāq Lāhījī’s (d. 1072/1661) *Shawāriq al-ilhām fī sharḥ Tajrīd al-kalām*. These glosses pertain to the introduction and the first chapter (dealing with general metaphysics). This corpus of the glosses is Āqā ‘Alī’s most important surviving work on general metaphysics (*umūr ‘amma*). In these glosses, Āqā ‘Alī examines and criticizes the glosses on the *Shawāriq*, compiled by some earlier philosophers, in particular by Mullā Ismā‘īl Darb-i Kūshkī Iṣfahānī. In his *Ta’līqāt al-Asfār*, Āqā ‘Alī mentions his glosses on the *Shawāriq*.⁵¹
 13. Glosses on Mullā Ṣadrā’s *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya*:⁵² Along with *al-Asfār* and *al-Ḥikma al-‘Arshiyya*, Mullā Ṣadrā’s *al-Shawāhid* received lots of attention in the Qajar period. Apart from Āqā ‘Alī, the glosses on it were compiled by his contemporaries Mullā ‘Alī Nūrī, Ḥājī Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī and Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha‘ī. Āqā ‘Alī’s glosses consist of two parts. The first part represents a set of glosses on twenty-five points of the first chapter of the first part, dealing with sixteen philosophical issues. The second part represents a separate unfinished discussion on the Necessary Existent’s knowledge of its essence. This part deals with eleven philosophical issues, presented as prolegomena. Gloss eighteen is a summary of Āqā ‘Alī’s opinion on corporeal resurrection. It is worth mentioning that these glosses include a comparative discussion of the subjects of investigation of the legal theory and those of philosophy.
 14. Glosses on Mullā Ṣadrā’s Commentary on Athīr al-Dīn al-Abharī’s *Hidāyat al-ḥikma*:⁵³ Athīr al-Dīn Abharī’s (d. 663/1264) *Hidāyat al-ḥikma* discusses the basics of logic, physics and metaphysics. The final two parts of the work, physics and metaphysics, were the subject of many commentaries including the one by Mullā Ṣadrā. Āqā ‘Alī wrote ninety-four glosses on the part of Ṣadrā’s commentary on physics (*samā‘ ṭabī‘ī*). Almost all these glosses pertain to the second section, on the existence of prime matter. It is worth mentioning that in these Āqā ‘Alī critically examines numerous proofs of the existence of prime matter and displays a remarkable insight when discussing its properties.

50 “Ta’līqāt-i Shawāriq al-ilhām,” in Ā. ‘A. Mudarris Ṭīhrānī, *Majmū‘a-yi muṣannafāt*, vol. 2, pp. 373–490.

51 Ā. ‘A. Mudarris Ṭīhrānī, *Majmū‘a-yi muṣannafāt*, vol. 1, p. 534.

52 “Ta’līqāt al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya,” in Ā. ‘A. Mudarris Ṭīhrānī, *Majmū‘a-yi muṣannafāt*, vol. 2, pp. 271–312.

53 “Ta’līqāt ‘alā sharḥ al-Hidāya al-Athīriyya,” in *Ibid.*, pp. 313–340.

15. Superglosses on Mullā Ṣadrā's Commentary on the Metaphysics of Avicenna's *al-Shifā'*:⁵⁴ Āqā 'Alī wrote seventeen glosses on Mullā Ṣadrā's commentary on Book One and Two of the Metaphysics of the *Shifā'* (sixteen of which pertain to Book One, dealing with the principles of philosophy and the general metaphysics, and one to Book Two, which deals with corporeal substances). In some of these glosses, Āqā 'Alī criticizes Mullā Ṣadrā, defending the position of Avicenna. In several instances, Āqā 'Alī also criticizes Āqā Jamāl Kh^wānsārī's commentary on the Metaphysics of the *Shifā'*.
16. Superglosses on Mullā Ṣadrā's Glosses on *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq*.⁵⁵ Āqā 'Alī wrote twenty-nine superglosses on Mullā Ṣadrā's glosses on Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī's commentary on Suhrawardī's *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq*. All of them pertain to the third section of the third discourse (*al-maqāla al-thālitha*) of Part One of the work (which discusses the Illuminationist judgements on certain issues). In his short glosses, Āqā 'Alī gives a summary analysis of Suhrawardī, Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī's and Mullā Ṣadrā's opinions on such issues as prime matter and its relationship with magnitude, the form of the species, the synthesis of form and matter, the accidents, the aspects in which existence, quiddity and unity can be considered, Platonic likenesses and the rule of the noblest possibility.
17. Superglosses on 'Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī's Glosses on Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's Commentary on Avicenna's *al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbihāt*:⁵⁶ These consist altogether of nine glosses written in 1287/1870, Āqā 'Alī wrote nine superglosses pertaining to the first chapter on philosophy (*namaṭ*) of Avicenna's *al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbihāt* (On the Substantiation of Bodies). The author signed his glosses with the expression 'may God pardon him (*'aḥī an-hu*), 110'.⁵⁷
18. Supersuperglosses on Mullā 'Abd Allāh Zunūzī's Superglosses on 'Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī's Glosses on Mullā 'Alī Qūshjī's Commentary on Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's *Tajrīd al-i'tiqād*:⁵⁸ Āqā 'Alī wrote three glosses on his father's superglosses on 'Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī's glosses on Mullā 'Alī Qūshjī's commentary on Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's *Tajrīd al-i'tiqād*, in which he gave a critical assessment of his parent's opinion.

54 "Ta'liqāt 'alā ḥawāshī Ilahiyāt al-Shifā'," in Ibid., pp. 341–352.

55 "Ta'liqāt 'alā ḥawāshī sharḥ *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq*," in Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 352–371.

56 "Ta'liqāt 'alā ḥawāshī Fayyād 'alā sharḥ *al-Ishārāt*," in Ibid., pp. 491–499.

57 MS Majlis 1723 contains Āqā 'Alī's glosses in his own hand, with the signature "110".

58 "Ta'liqāt 'alā ḥawāshī al-Zunūzī 'alā ḥawāshī al-Fayyād 'alā sharḥ al-Qūshjī," in Ā. 'A. Mudarris Ṭihrānī, *Majmū'a-yi muṣannafāt*, vol. 2, pp. 501–506.

19. Glosses on Mullā ‘Abd Allāh Zunūzī’s *Lama’āt-i ilāhiyya*.⁵⁹ Āqā ‘Alī’s only gloss in Persian consists of twenty-eight short notes on his father’s work, which establishes the existence of the Necessary Existent, the identity of His essence with His existence, the impossibility of the knowledge of the hidden core of His essence, and His unity, and discusses His knowledge. In his works, in particular, in the *Badāyi’ al-ḥikam*, Āqā ‘Alī refers to this book a number of times.
20. Addendum on Jamāl-Dīn Khwānsārī’s Superglosses on Shams al-Dīn Khafīrī’s Glosses on ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Qūshjī’s Commentary on Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī’s *Tajrīd al-i’tiqād*.⁶⁰ In this work, Āqā ‘Alī critically examines Khwānsārī’s objections against Mīr Dāmād’s teaching on the perpetual incipience (*ḥudūth dahrī*).
21. Superglosses on Anonymous’ Glosses on [Pseudo-] Avicenna’s *Sirr al-qadr*.⁶¹ In his one page gloss, Āqā ‘Alī soundly explains the opinion of the author of *Sirr al-qadr ‘an ma’nī qawl al-ṣūfiyya man ‘araḥa sirr al-qadr fa-qad alḥada*, and defends it against any objections to it.
22. Glosses on Mirzā Ḥasan Āshtiyānī’s *Qawā’id al-fiqhiyya*.⁶² This is Āqā ‘Alī’s only work in transmitted sciences, which consists of ninety-six short glosses on the treatise of his teacher in law, Mirzā Ḥasan Āshtiyānī. In his glosses on *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya*, Āqā ‘Alī twice refers to his opinions on the principles of jurisprudence—in Gloss Ten, dealing with the admissibility of the combination of command and prohibition, and in Gloss Twenty, dealing with the idea of two or more meanings being contained in the same word.

3.3 *Lost Works*

23. *Uṣūl al-ḥikam fī sharḥ uthūlūjiyā* (The Principals of Philosophy on Commentation of the Theology of [Pseudo] Aristotle). In two of his works, namely the *Risāla fī mabāḥith al-ḥaml* and the *Ta’līqāt ‘ala al-sharḥ al-hidāya al-athīriyya*, Āqā ‘Alī quotes (altogether five times) from his work, which he calls ‘our commentary on the *Uthūlūjiyā*, known as the *Uṣūl al-ḥikam*’.⁶³ Until now, no trace of this work has been found.

59 “Ta’līqāt-i Lama’āt-i ilāhiyya,” in *Ibid.*, pp. 507–525.

60 “Ta’līqa ‘alā l-ḥawāshī al-Jamāliyya ‘alā l-ḥawāshī al-Khafriyya,” in *Ibid.*, pp. 527–530.

61 “Ta’līqa ‘alā ḥāshiya *Sirr al-qadr*,” in *Ibid.*, pp. 531–535.

62 “Ta’līqāt ‘alā *Risāla Qawā’id al-fiqhiyya* li-Mirzā Ḥasan Āshtiyānī,” in Ā. ‘A. Mudarris Ṭīhrānī, *Majmū’a-yi muṣannafāt*, vol. 3, pp. 187–227.

63 These five quotations were published in Āqā ‘Alī’s collected works (*Majmū’a-yi muṣannafāt*, vol. 3, pp. 173–180) under the title “Baqāyā uṣūl al-ḥikam fī sharḥ Uthūlūjiyā”.

24. "A Treatise on Logic as a Philosophical Science". In his *Risāla-yi sargudhasht*, Āqā 'Alī describes his first work, whose length was 'approximately three thousand lines', using this expression (thus, it must have been twice as big as the *Sabīl al-rashād fī ithbāt al-ma'ād* and approximately half of the size of the *Badāyi' al-ḥikam*).⁶⁴ No trace of this work has been found so far.
25. Poems: In the *Risāla-yi sargudhasht* Āqā 'Alī mentions that sometimes he composed *ghazals*. However, only nine of his *rubā'īs* survive.⁶⁵

3.4 *Notes of Lectures and Disputes*

26. Notes of the Lectures on the *al-Mabda' wa-l-ma'ād*.⁶⁶ Āqā 'Alī taught Mullā Ṣadrā's *al-Mabda' wa-l-ma'ād* in Tehran. The notes of his lectures, partly in Arabic and partly in Persian, were made by an anonymous student (as a rule, he introduces the words of Āqā 'Alī with the expression 'he said thus:'). In the first part of the book (on Lordship), 664 glosses have been noted. These glosses are dealt with a portion of the work, which begins with the Section Four of Chapter One and ends at Section Sixteen of Chapter Three.
27. Lecture Notes on the Unity of Existence (*waḥdat-i wujūd*).⁶⁷ The notes of Āqā 'Alī's lecture in Persian on the unity of being according to Ṣūfī tenets, made by an anonymous student.
28. Scattered notes of different lectures by Āqā 'Alī.⁶⁸ Three notes in Persian of Āqā 'Alī's lectures, dealing with 1) the difference between the Isthmus (*barzakh*) and the Hereafter (*ākhirah*) of the Law and the Isthmus and the Hereafter of existence; 2) the meaning of the Qur'ānic verse 'We offered the trust' (33:72); 3) the subject of philosophy and rational theology (*kalām*).
29. A Collection of Notes of the Dispute with Ḥājj Muḥammad Karīm Khān Kirmānī.⁶⁹ A debate between Āqā 'Alī and Āqā Muḥammad Karīm Khān Kirmānī, one of the masters of the Shaykhiyya, took place in Jumādā 1 1275/December 1858 in the presence of eminent religious scholars and princes. A report of this debate was made by an anonymous observer. The

64 See "Risāla-yi sargudhasht," in Ā. 'A. Mudarris Ṭihrānī, *Majmū'a-yi muṣannafāt*, vol. 3, p. 148.

65 These *rubā'īs* were published in *Ibid.*, pp. 183–184.

66 Published in *Ibid.*, pp. 229–498.

67 Published in Ā. 'A. Mudarris Ṭihrānī, *Majmū'a-yi muṣannafāt*, vol. 3, pp. 499–504.

68 Published in *Ibid.*, pp. 505–508.

69 Published in *Ibid.*, pp. 509–517.

dispute consisted of five parts, which dealt with the following questions: 1) is God's will identical to his essence or different from it? 2) does form precede matter, or matter form? 3) do the antecedent and the consequent have a common maker or no? 4) how can the truthfulness of a non-definitive proposition (e.g., 'the existence of the companion of the Creator is impossible') be established? 5) what is the meaning of the statement 'the thing which is simple in its reality is all things'? This collection of notes was first published in 1276/1859 in a lithographic edition.⁷⁰

3.5 Endorsements (*taqrīzāt*)

30. Endorsement on Mullā Ṣadrā's *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*.⁷¹ During the preparation of the first lithographic edition, Āqā 'Alī was asked to write an endorsement (*taqrīz*) of it. Āqā 'Alī praises both the book and its author. In his opinion, very few people are able to understand the true meaning of this work. The expressions Āqā 'Alī used to describe Mullā Ṣadrā testify to the exceptional magnificence the latter possessed in his eyes. In particular, he described Ṣadrā as the valorous leader, the efficient sage, the accomplished scholar, the pride of the ancients and the moderns, the achiever of the stations of success, the possessor of the true knowledge, gained through verification, the expounder of the secrets of the transmitted reports, the acquirer of the treasures of mysteries, the disseminator of the signs of guidance, the destroyer of the idols of delusion, the model of the verifiers, the essence of the scrupulous investigators, the chief of the unifiers, and the servant of the law of the lord of the envoys.
31. Endorsement on Luṭf-'Alī Dānīsh Tabrīzī's *Risāla Īdāḥ al-adab*.⁷² Āqā 'Alī wrote an endorsement of the treatise of his student Ṣadr al-afāḍil Luṭf 'Alī Dānīsh Tabrīzī (d. 1350/1931–32), which represents a sample of the Persian prose of the early 14th /late 19th century.

⁷⁰ Sayyid Muṣṭafā Muḥaqqiq Dāmād edited these notes, using the lithographic edition. See Sayyid Muṣṭafā Muḥaqqiq Dāmād, "Nukhbagān-i 'ilm u 'amal-i Irān: Āqā 'Alī Mudarris Tīhrānī," *Nāma-yi Farhangistān-i 'ulūm*, 4 (1375 Sh./1996): 129–152, in particular, pp. 143–147. In my edition, apart from the lithograph edition, I used MS Tehran, University of Tehran 3325, copied in 1281/1864. See Ā. 'A. Mudarris Tīhrānī, *Majmū'a-yi muṣannafāt*, vol. 3, pp. 509–517.

⁷¹ "Taqrīz 'alā Mafātīḥ al-ghayb," in *Ibid.*, pp. 161–166.

⁷² "Taqrīz-i risāla-yi Īdāḥ al-adab," in *Ibid.*, pp. 167–171.

4 Thoughts

Of all works of Āqā 'Alī, seven represent his views in most detail. These are the following ones: *Badāyi' al-ḥikam*, *Sabīl al-rashād fī ithbāt al-ma'ād*, *Risāla fī mabāḥith al-ḥaml*, *Risāla fī l-wujūd al-rābiṭ*, *Ta'liqāt al-Asfār*, *Ta'liqāt Shawāriq al-ilhām* and *Ta'liqāt al-shawāhid al-rubūbiyya*.

In his works, Āqā 'Alī pays particular attention to the opinions of Mullā Ṣadrā. Of all Ṣadrā's writings, he gives the most attention to the *Asfār*. In his works, Āqā 'Alī also deals with the contemporary philosophers. He quotes their works, examines and criticizes their opinions, particularly, those of Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī, whom he often praises. From certain expressions, used in his invocations, scattered throughout these glosses, it can be concluded that they were written during Sabzawārī's lifetime.⁷³ Moreover, Āqā 'Alī frequently refers to the opinions of his father Mullā 'Abd Allāh Zunūzī.⁷⁴ Among other philosophers whose opinions Āqā 'Alī examines in his works, mention should be given to Mullā 'Alī Nūrī,⁷⁵ Mullā Muḥammad Ismā'il Iṣfahānī,⁷⁶ Mullā Muṣṭafā

73 See e.g., Ā. 'A. Mudarris Ṭihrānī, *Majmū'a-yi muṣannafāt*, vol. 1, p. 286, where Āqā 'Alī mentions Sabzawārī as "the generous perfect knower, who has no match in our age, may his station in the world of sanctity be elevated"; p. 460, where Āqā 'Alī uses the expression "may his shadow be extended! (*dāma zillahu*)," p. 505, where he says "may God extend the shadow of the skilled verifier, the author of the glosses, upon the heads of the people, as the shadow of knowledge". Apart from his glosses on the *Asfār*, in the *Risāla fī l-wujūd al-rābiṭ*, Āqā 'Alī also quotes from Sabzawārī's glosses on the *Asfār* (see Ā. 'A. Mudarris Ṭihrānī, *Majmū'a-yi muṣannafāt*, vol. 2, p. 175).

74 Apart from his glosses on the works of his father, in his glosses on 'Abd al-Razzāq Fayyāḍ Lāhijī's *Shawāriq al-ilhām*, Āqā 'Alī often refers to his father's glosses on the same work (see Ā. 'A. Mudarris Ṭihrānī, *Majmū'a-yi muṣannafāt*, vol. 2, pp. 398, 429–430, 499). In addition, in his glosses on the *Asfār*, Āqā 'Alī quotes his father's glosses on the *Muḥākamāt* (see Ā. 'A. Mudarris Ṭihrānī, *Majmū'a-yi muṣannafāt*, vol. 1, p. 591).

75 In his glosses on the *Asfār*, Āqā 'Alī quotes from the works of Mullā 'Alī Nūrī on numerous occasions. In most of these cases Nūrī, in turn, quotes from his teacher Āqā Muḥammad Bāqir Bidābādī. In his glosses on the *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya*, Āqā 'Alī refers to Mullā 'Alī Nūrī's glosses on the same work and to the *Asfār* (see *Majmū'a-yi muṣannafāt*, vol. 2, pp. 292–293, 301).

76 Apparently, the only work of Mullā Muḥammad Ismā'il Darb-i Kūshkī available to Āqā 'Alī, was his glosses on 'Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī's *Shawāriq al-ilhām*. In his own glosses on it, Āqā 'Alī refers to these glosses on numerous occasions. In addition, in his *Risāla fī al-wujūd al-rābiṭ* Āqā 'Alī refers to Mullā Ismā'il's glosses on *Shawāriq al-ilhām* (see Ā. 'A. Mudarris Ṭihrānī, *Majmū'a-yi muṣannafāt*, vol. 2, p. 172).

Qumsha'ī,⁷⁷ Mullā Riḍā Tabrīzī (d. before 1307/1889),⁷⁸ Mullā Aḥmad Ardakānī (d. 1240/1824),⁷⁹ Mullā Muḥammad Ja'far Lāhijī Langarūdī (d. after 1251/1835),⁸⁰ Mullā Muḥammad 'Alī Nūrī (d. 1253/1837),⁸¹ Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥasan Nūrī,⁸² and Muḥammad Na'im Ṭāliqānī (Mullā Na'imā) (d. after 1152/1739).⁸³

Certain passages in Āqā 'Alī's works show that he was influenced by Neoplatonism not only through the teachings of Mullā Ṣadrā but also directly from the so called *Theology* of Aristotle. For example, his belief in the existence of the universal soul and its impacts on the particular souls and bodies, as presented in the discussion on the corporeal resurrection, is not compatible with

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- 77 Evidently, Āqā 'Alī did not have access to Mullā Muṣṭafā Qumsha'ī's own works. In several places, he refers to Qumsha'ī's opinions as they are related by his student Mullā Aḥmad Ardakānī—in particular, in the latter's commentary on Mullā Ṣadrā's *Mashā'ir* (see Ā. 'A. Mudarris Ṭīhrānī, *Majmū'a-yi muṣannafāt*, vol. 1, pp. 186, 234).
- 78 Mullā Riḍā Tabrīzī was a student of Mullā 'Alī Nūrī. He taught in Iṣfahān at the *madrassa* of his great-grandfather. Of his works, his glosses on the *Asfār* (the copy of which is kept in Malik Library (MS Malik 2318)) should be mentioned. In his glosses on the *Asfār*, Āqā 'Alī discusses three of these glosses (see Ā. 'A. Mudarris Ṭīhrānī, *Majmū'a-yi muṣannafāt*, vol. 1, pp. 117–118). In the *Badā'iyi' al-ḥikam*, he respectfully refers to Mullā Riḍā as to “the erudite verifier and the perfect victorious sage” (see *Badā'iyi' al-ḥikam*, ed. Muḥammad Jawād Sārawī & Rasūl Fathī Majd, p. 251).
- 79 Mullā Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Ardakānī was a student of Mullā Muṣṭafā Qumsha'ī. His known works are: 1) super-superglosses on Āqā Jamāl Khwānsārī's superglosses on Shams al-Dīn Khafīrī's glosses on 'Alā' al-Dīn Qūshjī's commentary on Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's *Tajrid al-i'tiqād*; 2) glosses on Mullā Ṣadrā's *Mashā'ir*, titled *Nūr al-baṣā'ir fī sharḥ mushkilāt al-Mashā'ir*; 3) glosses on the first “journey” (*saḥar*) of Mullā Ṣadrā's *Asfār*. Most of Āqā 'Alī's glosses on the first journey, in fact, are glosses on Mullā Aḥmad Ardakānī's glosses. In the *Risāla fī mabāhith al-ḥaml* and the *Risāla fī l-wujūd al-rābiṭ*, Āqā 'Alī refers to Mullā Aḥmad Ardakānī as “the perfect sage” and “the distinguished learned man”, and quotes from the latter's glosses on the *Mashā'ir* (see Ā. 'A. Mudarris Ṭīhrānī, *Majmū'a-yi muṣannafāt*, vol. 2, pp. 186, 234).
- 80 In the *Risāla fī l-wujūd al-rābiṭ* and the *Risāla fī mabāhith al-ḥaml*, Āqā 'Alī refers to Mullā Muḥammad Ja'far Lāhijī Langarūdī as “the pride of the philosophers of our days, the ascender of the degrees of truth and certainty, our teacher and warrant” (see Ā. 'A. Mudarris Ṭīhrānī, *Majmū'a-yi muṣannafāt*, vol. 2, pp. 187, 234).
- 81 In his gloss on the *Shawāriq al-ilhām*, Āqā 'Alī refers to Mullā Muḥammad 'Alī Nūrī's gloss on this work (see Ā. 'A. Mudarris Ṭīhrānī, *Majmū'a-yi muṣannafāt*, vol. 2, pp. 426–427, 430–431, 448, 450, 475).
- 82 In his gloss on the *Shawāriq al-ilhām*, Āqā 'Alī quotes two Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥasan Nūrī's gloss on this work, criticizing them (see Ā. 'A. Mudarris Ṭīhrānī, *Majmū'a-yi muṣannafāt*, vol. 2, pp. 451–452).
- 83 In his gloss on the *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya*, Āqā 'Alī quotes a passage from Muḥammad Na'im Ṭāliqānī's *Risāla fī l-mabda' wa-l-ma'ād*. See Ā. 'A. Mudarris Ṭīhrānī, *Majmū'a-yi muṣannafāt*, vol. 2, pp. 274–275. As of now, no copy of this work by Ṭāliqānī has been found.

the tenets of Mullā Ṣadrā.⁸⁴ In his ontological discussions, Āqā 'Alī, while generally following the Ṣadrian tenets, offers a number of innovative approaches. In particular, he provides new demonstrations for such principles as the primacy and simplicity of existence, the perfection of the possible world and that the Necessary Existent has no quiddity. He also offers new proofs of some other principles of Mullā Ṣadrā—e.g., the existential unity of the ascending and descending arcs, as well as the existential unity of the accidents with their substrata.

4.1 *Proofs for the Primacy of Existence*

In his *Badāyi' al-ḥikam*, Āqā 'Alī proposes two new proofs for the primacy of existence. The first proof rests on the fact that quiddity by itself and in its essence does not exist. In other words, quiddity by itself does not necessitate itself. It only exists accidentally (*bi 'araḍ*) and by means of existence. Whereas existence by itself exists, that is to say, existence necessitates itself. Therefore, existence is primary, and quiddity is secondary.⁸⁵

The second proof is that every positive concept (*mafhūm-i thubūtī*), which is extrinsic to the quiddity, yet predicable to it, is indicative of the primacy of existence. In other words, it shows that existence is real and quiddity is conceptual. The best example of these positive concepts is existence. Existence is predicable to quiddity, but it is extrinsic to quiddity. Beside existence, there are other positive concepts such as being the creator and being the creature and all those things which are known as 'the real existential accidents' (*'awāriḍ-i ḥaqā'iq-i wujūdīyya*) such as knowledge, power, life applicable to all existents and concepts such as being existentially possible, being caused, being a formal cause, being connectively united, can all be positively predicated to quiddity, while they are all extrinsic to it. In order to be distinct from negative and non-existential concepts (*mafāhūm-i salbīyya u 'adamīyya*), these concepts need the mediation of existence to predicate quiddity. This mediating role of existence indicates that existence must be real.⁸⁶

The first proof is regarded as one of the strongest proofs of the primacy of existence. Ḥā'irī Simnānī Māzandarānī wrote a detailed refutation of the first

84 See below pp. 252–253.

85 Āqā 'Alī Mudarris Ṭihrānī, *Badāyi' al-ḥikam*, ed. Muḥammad Jawād Sārawī and Rasūl Faṭḥī Majd, pp. 208–209.

86 Ibid., pp. 210–215.

proof. It seems, however, that Āqā ‘Alī was more innovative in his second proof which received less attention.

In his epistemological and eschatological discussions, Āqā ‘Alī does not always follow Mullā Ṣadrā. Particularly in his treatment of the essential accidents, the subjects of different sciences, the relativity of the quiddity, and the corporeal resurrection, he expresses opinions that noticeably differ from those of Mullā Ṣadrā.⁸⁷ For the modern students of philosophy, Āqā ‘Alī is known for his specific opinions on three philosophical matters: corporeal resurrection, predication and copulative existence. Whereas his views on corporeal resurrection were subject to several studies which examined its various aspects,⁸⁸ his views on predication and copulative existence have never been analyzed properly.

4.2 *The Theory of the Corporeal Resurrection*

Many Muslim philosophers, following Avicenna, admitted the possibility of corporeal resurrection only on the basis of the testimonies of the Qur’ān and the *ḥadīth*. Mullā Ṣadrā tried to provide a rational apprehension for this belief. He proposed a new theory, according to which individuals are assembled at the resurrection (*ḥashr*) in their imaginal bodies instead of their physical ones. According to Mullā Ṣadrā, the existence of the human being in its substantial motion reaches the stage when the soul can live without the connection to the physical body. He believes that the soul, after its separation from the elemental body, continues to imagine the body, since the power of imagination remains with the soul after the physical death. When it imagines its body, a body which corresponds to the physical body emerges from the soul. In the hereafter, the soul is resurrected in this body, which is produced by the power of imagination. This body, created by the soul, receives the reward or the punishment of the hereafter. This body of the hereafter is like the shadow and the trace of the soul. It is of such kind that whoever sees it instantly confirms that it is the same this-worldly body and depending on the state of the soul, it is either luminous or tenebrous.

Mullā Ṣadrā also explains that each power, regardless of whether it is one of the faculties of the soul or not, has its particular perfection and it experiences the pleasure and suffering that is peculiar to it. In accordance with its actions, it will receive either reward or punishment. Every physical substance

87 See Kadivar’s introduction to his edition of Mudarris Ṭīhrānī’s *Majmū‘a-yi mušannafāt*, vol. 1, pp. 57–58.

88 See Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī’s introduction to his edition of Mullā Ṣadrā’s *al-Mabda’ wa-l-ma’ād* (Tehran: Anjuman-i Shāhanshāhi-i Falsafa-yi Īrān, 1354 Sh./1975), pp. 52–88.

experiences an essential motion, moving towards God by means of its soul and nature, and being attracted to Him.

Āqā 'Alī does not exactly accept this view of Mullā Ṣadrā: while he endorses most of the general premises of Ṣadrā's thought, he reaches somewhat different conclusions. He holds that, although after the separation of the soul from the physical body, the soul does not administer the body any more, it leaves in the body certain traces and deposits, by means of which each body is distinguished from others. The stronger the soul is and the more of the perfection of ascension it acquires, the stronger is the body after its separation from the soul. Even after the separation from the body, the soul continues to administer the body. The latter continues its substantial motion after its separation from the soul. In turn, the soul, upon reaching its essential perfection, ceases to move. Although the body of the hereafter appears the same as the physical body, this similarity should not be understood as the former's possession of the concomitants of the latter.

Explaining his views on the corporeal resurrection, Āqā 'Alī distinguishes between two types of compound affairs: truly compound and relatively compound. Truly compound affairs consist of two parts—prime matter which is potentiality (*isti'dād*) and form which is actuality and the final cause. The existence of truly compound affair can only be realized when its parts exist, namely its form and matter.⁸⁹ The composition of the soul and the body is a true unified composition. While they are united, the body is the preparatory cause and the basis of the essential and substantial perfection of the soul and the latter necessitates certain forms in the body's organs and parts. Due to this essential homogeneity (*musānakha*), the traces of the soul pervade the body. The kinship of the soul and the material body is so strong that a certain aspect of it persists after physical death.⁹⁰

After the separation of the soul from the material body, the soul achieves its essential perfection and existential goal, by uniting with the universal soul. In turn, the material body continues its essential movement to perfection. At that time it is the universal soul that moves the body. It moves the body by means of the particular soul to which the body was previously connected. The body's goal is to reunite with the soul, and it eventually achieves this goal:

The fullness of the mystery in it [consists of] the necessity of the complete interrelation between the essential agent and the essential object

89 Ā. 'A. Mudarris Ṭihrānī, *Majmū'a-yi muṣannafāt*, vol. 2, pp. 88–89.

90 Ibid., pp. 88–91.

on which it acts. The separation of the body, through its essential motion, turns into unification, and the multiplicity becomes unity, and this worldly [nature] turns into that of the hereafter—which is the place of the realization of multiplicity in the form of unity, in spite of its being multiplicity. It [= the body] unites with the soul, with which it is interrelated in the essence and in several aspects, at the station of the universal soul. The latter establishes between them a unity, which is more complete than the unity that existed between them in this world. [...] This is the meaning of their words ‘everything returns to its principle’. Hence, the soul is the principle of the body in a certain sense, and the body is the principle of the soul in another sense; the universal soul, which establishes the relationship between them, is the principle of both of them.⁹¹

In the *Sabīl al-rashād*, Āqā ‘Alī criticizes the views of Mullā Ṣadrā and the Ash‘aris on corporeal resurrection. He thought that the latter identified the restored affair with this world since they understand the restoration as the return of the soul from the isthmus to this world, and the renewal of its connection with its this-worldly body, without any change in that connection. They hold that when the scattered parts of the this-worldly body are once again brought together and united, the soul returns from the isthmus and joins them. As it is evident, this claim is not only invalidated by reason but also contradicts the testimonies of the transmitted reports, according to which this world and the hereafter cannot be identical.⁹²

Criticizing Mullā Ṣadrā, Āqā ‘Alī says that the literal meaning of his words suggest that he does not consider the physical body as the object of restoration, because, according to him, the bodies of the hereafter are void of any matter and have different states and thus allow the renewal of motion, engendering and corruption, whereas only continuous forms are treated as material. Hence, the body of the hereafter, as treated by Ṣadrā, is the same as the body of the isthmus; the this-worldly elemental body perishes, and the soul does not reunite with it. Refuting this view, Āqā ‘Alī argues that the soul reunites with the material body again. But this reunion is caused by the motion of the material body. The reunion takes place through the return of this body to the hereafter and its ascension to the soul, and not through the return of the soul to this world and its descent to the body. Āqā ‘Alī’s proofs of this postulate are mostly based on the transmitted reports, the most important of which is the report, transmitted from the sixth Imām, Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq:

91 Ibid., p. 92.

92 Ibid.

Indeed, the spirit dwells in its [proper] place. The spirit of the well-doer dwells in light and expanse, and the spirit of the evil-doer—in narrowness and darkness. The body becomes dust, from which it was created and which the beasts and vermin disgorge when they tear it and eat it. All this is preserved in the dust [...]. Then, upon the rising, the rain of resurrection falls on the earth, and the earth ferments, and then it is churned as a leather bottle [of milk], and becomes a human being, as dust becomes gold when it is washed with water, and as milk turns into foam when it is churned. The particles of every body (*qālib*) are brought together in that body and with the permission of the Almighty God, they are transferred to the place of the spirit, and, with the permission of the Form-Giver, their forms, including their shapes, are restored, and the spirit enters them. And, when they stood straight up they do not deny anything in regard to themselves.⁹³

Āqā 'Alī explains this report sentence by sentence, making it the transmitted proof of the subsistence of the spirits after the cessation of their administering connection with the material body following physical death, and of the subsistence of the relationship that necessitates the distinction of the bodies, and their particles preserved in the earth, from each other. In Āqā 'Alī's opinion, the statement "the spirit dwells in its [proper] place" indicates that the body ascends to the station of the soul upon its resurrection and not vice versa. It is impossible for the soul to descend from its lofty station to the body since that entails the motion from actuality to potentiality. Āqā 'Alī also uses this report in order to demonstrate the impossibility of metempsychosis.

In his opinion, this world in its entirety is moving towards the hereafter, because it is pervaded by substantial motion. The hereafter of every part of this world is proportional to it, and the other-worldly configuration of each of these parts is different, as it is the case with their this-worldly configuration. Every part of this world moves towards the goal that matches it. When it reaches that goal, its individuality and ipseity achieve perfection. However, upon a more insightful examination (i.e., in the aspect of the unity of actions and the universal and general order), we see that all things move towards the same goal—namely, God, who is the First and the Last.

According to Āqā 'Alī, given the unified composition of the substratum and the accident, and the perpetual essential motion of the substratum, considered as a substance since the possessor of origin is never separated from its

93 Aḥmad b. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib al-Ṭabarsī, *al-Iḥtijāj*, 2 vols. (Qom: Intishārāt-i Sharīf al-Riḍā, 1380 Sh./2001), vol. 2, p. 350.

origin, and since the substratum is always considered as the origin of the accident, it can be concluded that every action which arises from the soul, being related to one of its levels so that the origin of that action is realized in the essence of that level, is present in the soul in a summary way.

At the end of the treatise, Āqā 'Alī remarks that the corporeal resurrection, in the way that was explained above, does not require a rational demonstration (*burhān*). The proof (*ḥujja*) is only required by those who do not accept the religion of Islam or rather do not accept any of the true religions (*al-milal al-ḥaqqa*) since by intuition we know that belief in the corporeal resurrection is one of the requirements of faith. For this reason, the divine philosophers did not attempt to prove it in a rational manner, and to his knowledge, Āqā 'Alī maintains, no [Muslim] philosopher ever denied it. He then cites from Avicenna's *al-Shifā'* and Mullā Ṣadrā's *al-Asfār* what he regards as the commitment of these two philosophers to this religious idea.⁹⁴

Post Script: Just before the publication of this book a new edition of the collected works of Āqā 'Alī was published in five volumes: *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i Āqā 'Alī Mudarris-i Zunūzī: Ḥakīm-i Ṭīhrān* (Qom: Majma'-i 'Ālī-i Ḥikmat-i Islāmī, 1397 Sh./2018). The publication is the result of a project conducted by Ghulām-Riḍā Fayyāḍī. Sixteen scholars collaborated on this project, editing the various works. This new collected edition of Āqā 'Alī's writings has some advantages over the previous one published in 1999. First of all, Āqā 'Alī's glosses on Mullā Ṣadrā's *Asfār* have been expanded significantly from those in the previous edition with 1325 additional glosses now available, mostly on the soul, resurrection, God's Knowledge and Power, and one long gloss on essence. The additions are based on three manuscripts that were discovered in the past fifteen years. Secondly, seven newly available short works of Āqā 'Alī are included: 1) *Khuṭba fī l-tawḥīd* (A Sermon on God's Unity); 2) Glosses on Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's *Asās al-iqtibās*; 3) Superglosses on Jalāl al-Dīn Dawānī's glosses on 'Alā' al-Dīn Qūshjī's commentary on Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's *Tajrid al-i'tiqād*; 4) A gloss on Mīr Dāmād's *al-Ufuq al-mubīn*; 5) Glosses on Mullā Riḍā Tabrīzī's commentary on Mullā Ṣadrā's *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya*; 6) A gloss on Fayḍ Kāshānī's *Kalamāt maknūna*; and 7) *Fawā'id dar manqūlāt*. The new edition, however, does not contain the following works attributed to Āqā 'Alī, which were included in the previous collection: 1) Lecture notes on the *al-Mabda' wa-l-ma'ād*, 2) Lecture notes on the unity of existence (*waḥdat al-wujūd*), 3) Scattered notes of various different lectures, and 4) his poems. It is noteworthy that the editor of the previous collected works (*Majmū'a-yi muṣannafāt*, 1999) is not referred

94. 'Ā. 'A. Mudarris Ṭīhrānī, *Majmū'a-yi muṣannafāt*, vol. 2, pp. 139–141.

to in the new edition and his pioneering endeavours in collecting and editing Āqā 'Alī's works are ignored.

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Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha'ī

Hamed Naji Esfahani¹

1 Life

Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha'ī was born in 1241/1825² in Qumsha (present-day Shahreza), a small city to the southwest of Isfahan. He undertook his preliminary religious studies under his father Shaykh Abū l-Qāsim Qumsha'ī³ and other teachers in his hometown, after which he moved to Isfahan, where he attracted the attention of the jurispudent and philosopher Āqā Mirzā Ḥasan Mudarris Isfahānī,⁴ a former student of Mullā 'Alī Nūrī. With Mudarris Isfahānī's financial support, he commenced his education in Isfahan.⁵ Among his teachers were Ḥājī Muḥammad Ja'far Lāhijī (d. before 1294/1877)⁶ and Mirzā Ḥasan Nūrī, the son of Mullā 'Alī Nūrī.⁷ According to some marginal

1 Translated from Persian by Keven Brown.

2 Muṣliḥ al-Dīn Mahdawī, *Tadhkirat al-qubūr yā dānishmandān u buzurgān-i Isfahān* (Isfahan: Thaqafi, 1348 Sh./1969), p. 327. Mahdī Bāmdād believed he was born in 1234/1818–19. See Mahdī Bāmdād, *Sharḥ-i ḥāl-i riḡāl-i Īrān dar qarn-i 12, 13, u 14 hijrī* (Tehran: Zuwwār, 1357 Sh./1978), vol. 2, p. 355.

3 M. Mahdawī, *Tadhkirat al-qubūr*, p. 327.

4 He was a student of Mullā 'Alī Nūrī in the rational disciplines, and one of the teachers of Mirzā-yi Shīrāzī-i Buzurg in the traditional disciplines.

5 Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha'ī, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā bi hamrāh-i zindagīnāma-yi 'arīf-i ilāhī Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha'ī*, ed. Khalīl Bahrāmī Qaṣrichamī and Ḥamid Nāji Isfahānī (Tehran: Kānūn-i Pazhūhish, 1378 Sh./2009), p. 26.

6 Lāhijī was a commentator of Mullā Ṣadrā's *Mashā'ir* and wrote glosses on the metaphysics of the Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's *Tajrīd al-i'tiqād*. He was a student of Mullā 'Alī Nūrī. His proficiency in the principles of Ṣadrīan philosophy is completely evident in his commentary on Mullā Ṣadrā's *Mashā'ir*. See Jalāl al-Dīn Humā'ī, introduction to the *Sharḥ Risālat al-Mashā'ir* (Ḥājī Muḥammad Ja'far Lāhijī, *Sharḥ-i Risālat al-Mashā'ir*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, Mashhad: Intishārāt-i Bāstān, 1384/1964), p. 15; Āqā Buzurg Ṭīhrānī, *Ṭabaqāt al-'ālam al-Shī'a* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1430/2009), vol. 11, p. 575; Muḥammad 'Alī Mudarris, *Rayḥānat al-adab*, vol. 5, p. 124; Manūchīhr Ṣadūqī Suhā, *Tārīkh-i ḥukamā' u 'urafā'-i muta'akkhīr* (2nd ed., Tehran: Hikmat, 1381 Sh./2002), p. 45.

7 Mirzā Ḥasan Nūrī later went to Tehran at the invitation of I'timād al-Saltāna, and for some time he held a lectureship there. It has been said that he excelled his father in intelligence and natural talent. It seems that Āqā Mirzā Ḥusayn Kirmānshāhī attended his lectures in Tehran. In addition to his glosses on philosophical works, his supplement to his father's commentary on *Sūrat al-Iklāṣ* survives. For details about his life, see M. R. Qumsha'ī,

notes that Qumsha'ī wrote on the *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*, he studied the *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt* with Mīrzā Ḥasan Nūrī.⁸ Another of his teachers, who stands out above the others for his influence on Qumsha'ī's ideas and views, was Mīr Sayyid Raḍī Lārījānī (d. 1270/1853–4), who himself had been taught by Mullā 'Alī Nūrī and Mullā Ismā'īl Iṣfahānī. As well as being erudite, he apparently had a charismatic personality through which he had a profound influence on his students. In addition to teaching philosophical texts, Lārījānī instructed his students in Islamic mystical literature. One of the texts that Qumsha'ī studied under him was Dāwūd Qayṣarī's *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*.⁹

After completing his education, Qumsha'ī stayed in Isfahan to teach philosophical and mystical works. Comte de Gobineau, in chapter four of his *Les religions et les philosophies dans l'Asie centrale*, giving a brief history of philosophy in Safavid and Qajar Iran, writes about Qumsha'ī:

Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā, whom we consider to have attained the highest level of intelligence and knowledge, studied philosophy and theology under Ḥājī Muḥammad Ja'far Lārījānī and Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥasan Nūrī. He acquired his Sufi doctrines, in which he is excellent, from Ḥājī Sayyid Raḍī [Lārījānī], and now he teaches in Isfahan.¹⁰

This work by Gobineau was published in 1283/1866 when Qumsha'ī was 42 years old and a distinguished teacher in Isfahan. A few years later, in 1288/1871, a famine struck Isfahan. Qumsha'ī gave up teaching and spent the wealth he had inherited on helping the destitute. When his property was seized by some authorities in the area, he went to seek justice in the Qajar capital, Tehran.¹¹ According to the custom of students in that time, he decided to take up residence in one of the colleges in the city, choosing the Madrasa-yi

Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā, pp. 21–24; M. Mahdawī, *Tadhkirat al-qubūr*, p. 327; Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya*, *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya fī l-manhaj al-sulūkīyya*. *Bā ḥawāshī Mullā Ḥādī Sabzawārī*, ed. Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (Mashhad: Intishārāt-i Awqāf-i Khurāsān, 1386 Sh./1967), p. 126; Sayyid Muṣṭafā Muḥaqqiq Dāmād, *Nukhbāgān-i 'ilm u 'amal-i Īrān* (Tehran, 1379 Sh./2000), p. 315.

8 See below, p. 269.

9 Muḥammad Ja'far Lāhijī, *Sharḥ Risālat al-Mashā'ir*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (Tehran: Amīr Kabīr, 1375 Sh./1996), p. 25; M. R. Qumsha'ī, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*, p. 27.

10 Joseph Arthur Comte de Gobineau, *Les religions et les philosophies dans l'Asie centrale* (Paris: 1865; 3rd ed., 1900), p. 102.

11 Ma'ṣūm 'Alī Shāh, *Ṭarā'iq al-ḥaqā'iq*, 3 vols., ed. Muḥammad Ja'far Maḥjūb (Tehran: Kitābkhāna-yi Sanā'ī, 1331 Sh./1952), vol. 3, p. 508.

Ṣadr.¹² It was not long before the students and teachers in the madrasa became aware of his erudition and asked him to teach there.¹³

Apparently, Qumsha'ī was the first teacher in Tehran to give lessons on mysticism. His instruction on the mystical texts led to a trend for investigating *ʿirfān* among seminary students in Tehran, although there was also strong opposition to it. It is reported that a certain individual who opposed his mystical ideas humiliated Qumsha'ī in public in such a way that he incited a crowd of people to turn on him, and Qumsha'ī was nearly beaten up. In defense of Qumsha'ī, Mullā 'Alī Kanī,¹⁴ a prominent Tehran jurist, ordered the instigator of this event to be arrested and punished.¹⁵ But during continuing protests against Qumsha'ī, Ḥājī Sayyid 'Alī Naqī, a confidant of Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh, was petitioned to arrange for Qumsha'ī to be exiled from Tehran. At first, he disregarded these protests, however after the protests intensified he summoned Qumsha'ī to the royal court, where a number of clerics (*ulamā'*) interrogated him about his beliefs. The shah was satisfied with his responses and let him go with some gifts.¹⁶ But the accusations against him again intensified, finally reaching the point where he was declared a heretic (*kāfir*).¹⁷ It may be due to these accusations that in 1303/1885 Qumsha'ī returned for a time to his hometown of Qumsha, where he occupied himself with prayer and service at the Imāmzāda there.¹⁸

Qumsha'ī died in Tehran in 1306/1888.¹⁹ The location of his grave is not known for certain. It has been said that he is buried in the cemetery of Ibn

12 The Madrasa-yi Ṣadr was built by the grand vizier (*ṣadr-i a'ẓam*), Mīrzā Shafī' Māzandarānī, in front of the Maṣjid-i Shāh of Tehran.

13 See Ṣ. Shīrāzī, *al-Shawā'id al-rubūbiyya*, p. 127.

14 For more information about Mullā 'Alī Kanī, see Muḥammad Ḥasan Khān I'timād al-Saltāna, *Kitāb al-ma'āthir wa-l-āthār*, pp. 187–188. It is reported that Qumsha'ī's death coincided with the passing of Mullā 'Alī Kanī, making it difficult to conduct the funeral of the former in a befitting manner.

15 S. M. Muḥaqqiq Dāmād, *Nukhbagān-i 'ilm u 'amal-i Īrān*, pp. 334–335; also Masiḥ Allāh Jamālī, *Tārikh-i Shahriḏā* (Tehran: Thaqafī, 1355 Sh./1976), pp. 275–279.

16 M. Jamālī, *Tārikh-i Shahriḏā*, pp. 275–279.

17 Ghulām-Ḥusayn Khān Afḏal al-Mulk said: "Āqā Muḥammad Riḏā Qumsha'ī affirmed about himself that some of the *ulamā'* pronounced him a heretic from the top of their pulpits." See Ghulām-Ḥusayn Khān Afḏal al-Mulk *Afḏal al-tawārikh*, ed. Sirūs Sa'd-wandiān (Tehran: Nashr-i Tārikh-i Īrān, 1361 Sh./1982), p. 107.

18 M. Bāmdād, *Sharḥ-i ḥāl-i rijāl-i Īrān*, vol. 2, p. 235.

19 Muḥammad Ḥasan Khān I'timād al-Saltāna, *Kitāb al-ma'āthir wa-l-āthār*, p. 222. According to Mahdī Bāmdād, he died in the late afternoon on Sunday 1 Ṣafar, 1306/7 October 1888. See M. Bāmdād, *Sharḥ-i ḥāl-i rijāl-i Īrān*, 6 vols. (Tehran: Zuwwār, 1350 Sh./1971), vol. 2, p. 235; S. M. Muḥaqqiq Dāmād, *Nukhbagān-i 'ilm u 'amal-i Īrān*, p. 362. Another

Bābawayh in Tehran near the resting place of Ḥājj Ākhūnd Maḥallātī.²⁰ Jalāl al-Dīn Humā'ī, however, learnt from students and colleagues of Qumsha'ī that he was buried in the *Sar-i qabr-i āqā*, the mausoleum of Abū l-Qāsim Imām Jum'ā (d. 1272/1855–56) in Tehran.²¹

2 Students

During his lectures, Qumsha'ī wrote notes, or comments, on the margins of the original texts he was teaching, from which it is possible to ascertain which philosophical and mystical works he taught. In philosophy, he taught Mullā Ṣadrā's *al-Ḥikma al-muta'āliya fī l-asfār al-'aqliyya al-arba'a* and the *Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya*, and Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*. In *'irfān*, he taught a number of the works of Ibn 'Arabī especially his *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* as well as Dāwūd Qayṣarī's *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, Ṣā'in al-Dīn Turka Iṣfahānī's *Tamhīd al-qawā'id*, and presumably Shams al-Dīn Fanārī's *Miṣbāḥ al-uns*.²² Qumsha'ī had a large number of students, many of whom later became teachers in the madrasas of Isfahan, Tehran, and Qumsha. Below there will be some detailed discussion given about some students who were associated with his teachings more while referring only briefly to others:

- 1) Mīrzā Hāshim Ashkiwarī. Born in Ashkivar, Māzandarān, for a while he studied traditional sciences in Qazvin with Āqā Sayyid 'Alī Qazwīnī, the author of glosses on Mīrzā-yi Qummī's *al-Qawānīn al-muḥkama* on legal methodology. Then, he moved to Tehran, where he attended the lectures of Mīrzā Abū l-Ḥasan Jilwa, Āqā 'Alī Mudarris, and especially Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha'ī. He was known as one of the most outstanding pupils of Qumsha'ī. When Mīrzā Abū l-Faḍl Ṭīhrānī (d. 1316/1898) founded the new Sipahsālār Madrasa in Tehran in 1312/1894, he appointed Ashkiwarī as one of its teachers. Ashkiwarī taught mystical texts there, including Dāwūd Qayṣarī's *Sharḥ al-Fuṣūṣ*, Shams al-Dīn Fanārī's *Miṣbāḥ al-uns*, and Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī's *al-Nuṣūṣ*. He instructed many students, including Sayyid Kāzīm 'Aṣṣār (d. 1353 Sh./1974), Mīrzā Muḥammad 'Alī Shāhābādī (d. 1328 Sh./1949), Mīrzā Aḥmad Āshtiyānī (d. 1354 Sh./1975),

source specifies the date of his death as Muḥarram/September-October of the same year. See M. R. Qumsha'ī, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*, p. 47.

20 Ma'sūm 'Alī Shāh, *Ṭarā'iq al-ḥaqā'iq*, vol. 3, p. 237.

21 M. Ṣadūqī Suhā, *Tārīkh-i ḥukamā'u 'urafā'i-i muta'akkhkir*, p. 108; M. R. Qumsha'ī, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*, p. 48.

22 See Āqā Buzurg Ṭīhrānī, *Ṭabaqāt a'lām al-Shī'a*, vol. 14, p. 733; M. R. Qumsha'ī, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*, p. 85.

and Muḥammad Ḥusayn Fāḍil-i Tūnī (d. 1339 Sh./1961). Of his works, his glosses on *Miṣbāḥ al-uns* and *al-Nuṣūṣ* are extant. After a long period of affliction with various illnesses, he died in Tehran in 1332/1914.²³

- 2) Āqā Mīr Shihāb al-Dīn Nayrīzī Shīrāzī; He was a descendant of Sayyid Muḥammad Quṭb al-Dīn Nayrīzī, a famous *quṭb* of the Dhahabī Sufi order. Apart from Qumsha'ī, he studied with Abū l-Ḥasan Jilwa. After the death of Qumsha'ī, he became an instructor in the Ṣadr Madrasa of Tehran. His classmate, Ashkiwārī, has praised him for his abilities in scholarship and teaching: "If Mullā Ṣadrā himself lived in this age, it is unlikely he could have taught his books better than Āqā Mīr Shihāb al-Dīn."²⁴ Apparently, he and Ashkiwārī shared many students, with Nayrīzī primarily teaching philosophy and Ashkiwārī *'irfān*. In addition to his glosses on the *Asfār*, a treatise of his on the reality of existence remains. After 18 years of teaching philosophy and *'irfān* at the Ṣadr Madrasa, he passed away 1320/1902–1903 and was buried in the cemetery of Khāk-i Faraj in Qom.²⁵
- 3) Jahāngīr Khān Qashqā'ī: He was the son of Muḥammad Khān, descended from the khāns of the Dara-shūrī clan. In his youth, he loved horsemanship and hunting, and he played the musical instrument, *tār*. It was only in his mid-thirties that he decided to devote his time fully to learning. He moved to Isfahan, where he first resided in the Almāsiyya Madrasa in Chahār-Sū Maqsūd, then in the Jadda Buzurg Madrasa, and finally in the Ṣadr Madrasa. He studied there the traditional disciplines under Shaykh Muḥammad Bāqir Maṣjid-i Shāhī (d. 1301/1883–84) and Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥasan Najafī (d. 1317/1899–1900), while he studied philosophy with Mullā Ismā'īl (d. 1302/1884–85)²⁶ and medicine and natural philosophy with Mīrzā 'Abd al-Jawād Tūnī-i Khurāsānī (d. 1281/1864–65). In order to complete his studies in philosophy, he went to Tehran, where he spent an extended period studying Mullā Ṣadrā's *Asfār* and Qayṣarī's *Sharḥ al-Fuṣūṣ* with Qumsha'ī. Subsequently, he returned to Isfahan, where he lived in the Ṣadr Madrasa until the end of his life. With the assistance of his colleague, Mullā Muḥammad Kāshānī (d. 1335/1916–17), Jahāngīr Khān engaged in teaching the rational disciplines in Isfahan and had hundreds of

23 Ṣ. al-Shīrāzī, *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya*, p. 108; M. R. Qumsha'ī, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*, pp. 91–93; 'A. Ṭārimī, *Shahr-i hazār ḥakīm*, pp. 103–105.

24 'A. Ṭārimī, *Shahr-i hazār ḥakīm*, p. 106.

25 M. Ṣadūqī Suhā, *Tārikh-i ḥukamā' u 'urafā'-i muta'akhhir*, pp. 297–298; M. R. Qumsha'ī, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*, p. 93; 'A. Ṭārimī, *Shahr-i hazār ḥakīm*, pp. 105–107.

26 This is a different Mullā Ismā'īl from the famous Mullā Ismā'īl Darb-i Kūshkī (d. 1242/1826).

students.²⁷ He died in Isfahan in 1328/1910. In addition to his poems, which have not been collected, some of his lectures on Sabzawārī's *Sharḥ-i Manẓūma*, transmitted by Mīrzā Ḥasan Waḥīd Dastgirdī, are extant. His most prominent students include Ḥakīm Muḥammad Khurāsānī (d. 1355 Sh./1976),²⁸ Shaykh Maḥmūd Mufīd Iṣfahānī (d. 1382/1963),²⁹ Shaykh Ṣadr al-Dīn Hāṭilī Kūpāyī (d. 1331 Sh./1952),³⁰ and Sayyid Ḥasan Mishkān Ṭabasī (d. ca. 1327 Sh./1948–49).³¹

- 4) Mīrzā Naṣr Allāh Qumsha'ī; He was born in 1257/1841–42 in Qumsha to a learned family.³² After completing his preliminary religious education in his hometown, he moved to Isfahan, where he studied the traditional disciplines with Mullā Ḥusayn 'Alī Tūysirkānī. Then he went to Sabzevar to study philosophy under the famous philosopher Ḥājj Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī. Only after this did he journey to Tehran to study under Qumsha'ī. Upon completing his training in Tehran, he returned to his hometown of Qumsha, where he became a teacher. Among his noteworthy students were Mullā Muḥammad Hādī Farzāna Qumsha'ī (d. 1344 Sh./1963) and Shaykh Asad Allāh Qumsha'ī (d. 1334/1915–6). It seems he had a greater aptitude for philosophy than *ʿirfān*. It is said that near the end of his life he intended to correlate the ideas of Mullā Ṣadrā with those of Ibn Sīnā. He died in Qumsha in 1324/1906.
- 5) Mīrzā Maḥmūd Mudarris Kahakī Qummī: He was known by the pen-name Riḍwān and was from the village of Kahak near Qom. At first, he pursued his religious education in Qom, but then later went to Tehran, and it seems that he studied in the 'Atabāt as well. He learned the traditional sciences from Shaykh 'Abd al-Karīm Ḥā'irī, Āqā Ḍiyā' al-Dīn 'Irāqī,

27 One of the jests about his instruction was that at first, he would appear calm, and then in a fit of anger, in a tone altogether more severe than customary, he would say: "Dear fellow! Listen and think before you speak!" See M. Ḥ. Kh. Jābirī Anṣārī, *Tārīkh-i Iṣfahān*, p. 269.

28 On Ḥakīm Muḥammad Khurāsānī, see 'Alī Karbāsīzāda, "Khurāsānī, Ḥakīm," *Dānishnāma-yi Takht-i fūlād-i Iṣfahān*, ed. Aṣghar Muntazir al-Qā'im and Nāṣir Karimpūr, vol. 2 (Isfahan: Sāzmān-i Farhangī-Tafrīḥ-i Shahr-dārī-i Iṣfahān, 1391 Sh./2002), p. 99.

29 On Mufīd Iṣfahānī, see 'Alī Karbāsīzāda, "Mufīd-i Iṣfahānī," *Dānishnāma-yi Takht-i fūlād-i Iṣfahān*, vol. 4 (Isfahan: Sāzmān-i Farhangī-Tafrīḥ-i Shahr-dārī-i Iṣfahān, 1394 Sh./2005), pp. 314–324.

30 On Ṣadr al-Dīn Hāṭilī Kūpāyī, see 'Alī Karbāsīzāda, "Kūpāyī," *Dānishnāma-yi Takht-i fūlād-i Iṣfahān*, vol. 3, p. 607.

31 On Sayyid Ḥasan Mishkān Ṭabasī, see Manūchihr Ṣadūqī Suhā, *Shaṭrī az awā'il-i umūr-i āmma* (Tehran: Mawlā, 1387 Sh./2008), pp. 48–49.

32 He was the son of Ḥājj Shaykh Murtaḍā, the grandchild of Mullā Muṣṭafā Qumsha'ī (d. 1215/1800), also known as Muṣṭafā al-'Ulamā', a famous scholar contemporary with Mullā 'Alī Nūrī. Of his works, glosses on Ibn Sīnā's *al-Ishārāt* are extant.

and Mīrzā Ḥusayn Nā'inī, while he studied the rational disciplines under Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha'ī. After the latter's death, he continued his studies under Āqā Mīrzā Hāshim Ashkiwarī, Āqā Mīr Shihāb Nayrīzī, and Mīrzā Ḥasan Kirmānshāhī (d. 1336/1918). When his teacher Nayrīzī died, he became the dean of instruction in the Madrasa-yi Šadr. In addition to some of his poetry, his surviving works include glosses on the *Sharḥ al-Manẓūma*, *Asfār*, *Sharḥ al-Fuṣūṣ*, and a treatise on the universal spiritual authority (*walāya*) [of the Imāms].³³ He died in Tehrān in 1304 Sh./1925 and was buried in Qom.

- 6) Āqā Shaykh Ghulām-'Alī Shīrāzī: He was a student of Āqā 'Alī Mudarris, Mīrzā Abū l-Ḥasan Jilwa, and Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha'ī, and was himself one of the distinguished teachers and residents of the new Sipahsālār Madrasa. He specialised in lecturing on the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, and he reportedly wrote a number of glosses on the *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ*, *Asfār*, and *Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya*. At the end of his introduction to the *Tamhīd al-qawā'id*, Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī attributes a new reading of Avicenna's proof for the existence of God, known as proof of the veracious (*burhān al-ṣiddīqīn*) to him, which demonstrates his intellectual ability. It is said that he passed away while still in the prime of his life. A number of his poems in Persian and Arabic have survived. At first, he used the pen-name Fānī ("evanescent"), but later he adopted the pen name Ḥakīm ("philosopher").³⁴
- 7) Mīrzā 'Alī Akbar Mudarris Ḥikmī Yazdī: He was in the circle of Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha'ī. He was the son of Ḥājī Mīrzā Abū l-Ḥasan Tājir Ardakānī and was born in the city of Yazd. After completing his preliminary religious education in Yazd, he moved to Isfahan, where he joined Qumsha'ī's circle of students. Following the migration of Qumsha'ī to Tehran, he continued his studies under Jahāngīr Khān Qashqā'ī,³⁵ for which reason he is considered one of Qumsha'ī's oldest students. Later, he moved to Tehran, where he took up residence in the Madrasa-yi

33 M. R. Qumsha'ī, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Šahbā*, pp. 97–100; Murtaḍā Mudarris Gīlānī, *Muntakhab Mu'jam al-ḥukamā'*, selected and annotated by Manūchīhr Šadūqī Suhā (Tehran: Mu'assasa-yi Pazhuhishī-i Ḥikmat u Falsafa-yi Īrān, 1384 Sh./2005), pp. 182–184; 'A. Ṭārimī, *Shahr-i hazār ḥakīm*, p. 110.

34 See M. R. Qumsha'ī, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Šahbā*, p. 136; 'A. Ṭārimī, *Shahr-i hazār ḥakīm*, p. 216.

35 For his studies in Isfahan under Jahāngīr Khān Qashqā'ī, see Sayyid Muṣṭafā Muḥaqqiq Dāmād, *Nukhbaqān-i 'ilm u 'amal-i Īrān*, p. 125. At the same time, it is said that Jahāngīr Khān Qashqā'ī was living in Tehran at the time. These reports seem to contradict each other. One is obliged either to reject the one about Qashqā'ī's journey to Tehran or the other about Ḥikmī Yazdī studying with him in Isfahan.

Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn, and at Qumshā’ī’s request engaged in teaching. After the establishment of the modern Seminary of Higher Learning (*ḥawza-yi ‘ilmiyya*) in Qom in 1300 Sh./1922 by Shaykh ‘Abd al-Karīm Ḥā’irī Yazdī, he moved there and was engaged in lecturing on the rational disciplines. Many of the juristic *marāji’* (“sources of emulation”) of the next generation studied under him, including Sayyid Aḥmad Khwānsārī, Sayyid Muḥammad Taqī Khwānsārī, Sayyid ‘Alī Yathribī Kāshānī, and others. Badī’ al-Mulk Mīrzā ‘Imād al-Dawla, a Qajar prince, who was also one of his students, wrote a commentary on Mullā Ṣadrā’s *Mashā’ir* and translated Jāmī’s *al-Durra al-fākhira* based on Mullā Ṣadrā’s writings.³⁶ A number of Mīrzā ‘Alī Akbar Mudarris Ḥikmī Yazdī’s works on philosophy, *irfān*, mathematics, and astronomy remain, as fortunately a collection of his writings together with some of his poems signed with the pen name Tajallī (“effulgence”) were published.³⁷

- 8) Mīrzā Maḥmūd Burūjirdī: He was the son of a learned man from Burūjurd named Mullā Ṣāliḥ. After completing his preliminary religious studies, he moved to Tehran, where he took up jurisprudence and the principles of jurisprudence with Mīrzā Ḥasan Āshtiyānī and the rational sciences with Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumshā’ī and Mīrzā Abū l-Ḥasan. He was killed in 1337/1918–19 in western Iran while returning from a pilgrimage to the ‘Atabāt.³⁸ The years in which Burūjirdī studied under Qumshā’ī are not precisely known. But apparently, he was with Qumshā’ī in 1300/1882–83 and had read the *Tamhīd al-qawā’id* of Ṣā’in al-Dīn Turka Iṣfahānī with him. Between the years 1300/1882 and 1305/1887–88, he compiled and copied a large number of Qumshā’ī’s works in a codex (MS Malik 5957).³⁹ This codex includes the following works of Qumshā’ī: his numerous glosses on the *Tamhīd al-qawā’id* of Ṣā’in al-Dīn Turka, his glosses on Mullā Ṣadrā’s *al-Asfār*, his systematic glosses on Qayṣarī’s *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*: namely, a treatise on the oneness of existence, a treatise on the distinction between the names and attributes of the Essence, a

36 See M. R. Qumshā’ī, *Majmū’a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*, pp. 111–120; ‘A. Tārimī, *Shahr-i hazār ḥakīm*, pp. 212–214; S. M. Muḥaqqiq Dāmād, *Nukhbagān-i ‘ilm u ‘amal-i Īrān*, pp. 115–186.

37 Mīrzā ‘Alī Akbar Ḥikmī Yazdī, *Majmū’a-yi rasā’il-i kalāmī u falsafī u milāl u niḥāl*, with an introduction by Ghulām-Ḥusayn Ibrāhīmī Dīnānī (Tehran: Sāzmān-i Chāp u Intishārāt-i Wizārat-i Farhang u Irshād-i Islāmī, 1373 Sh./1994).

38 Ghulām-Riḍā Mawlānā Burūjirdī, *Tārīkh-i Burūjird* (Qom: Kitābkhāna-yi Ṣadr, 1354 Sh./1975), vol. 2, pp. 525–528.

39 See Īraj Afshār and Muḥammad Taqī Dānishpazhūh in collaboration with Muḥammad Bāqir Ḥujjātī and Aḥmad Munzawī, *Fihrist-i nuskhahā-yi khattī-i kitābkhāna-yi millī-i Malīk* (Mashhad: Āstān-i Quds-i Riḍawī, 1370 Sh./1991), vol. 9, p. 23.

commentary on the *ḥadīth* concerning the *zindīq*, a treatise affirming substance and accident in the parlance of the people of God, a treatise on the caliphate, a treatise on spiritual authority (*walāya*), and his various glosses on the eighth and ninth chapters of this same *Sharḥ*. Burūjirdī played a significant role in the correction and preparation of a number of important philosophical texts, which were printed by lithography in Tehran between 1312/1894–95 and 1317/1899–1900. These texts include Mullā Mahdī Narāqī's *Jāmi' al-sa'ādāt* (published in 1312/1894), *al-Jam' bayna ra'yay al-ḥakīmayn* attributed to Fārābī and Qumsha'ī's *Risālat al-khilāfa al-kubrā* (published in 1315/1897–8), and Mīr Dāmād's *al-Qabasāt* together with the marginal notes of the compiler and those of Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Gilānī, and some glosses of Abū l-Ḥasan Jilwa, as well as three more works of Mīr Dāmād, his *Khusat al-malakūtiyya*, *al-Īqāḍāt*, and *Risāla fī madhhab Aristātālīs*, and lastly *al-Uthūlūjiyā* (The Theology) attributed to Aristotle (published in 1315/1897–98).

Besides the above-mentioned persons, there were other distinguished scholars who studied for a while with Qumsha'ī, such as Mīrzā Ḥasan Kirmānshāhī,⁴⁰ Shaykh 'Alī Nūrī (d. ca. 1335/1917),⁴¹ and Mīrzā Ṭāhīr Tunikābunī (d. 1320 Sh./1941).⁴² These students, however, were not following the teachings of Qumsha'ī closely and instead they chose to follow other trends of thoughts represented at the time.

3 Works

The oldest source for many of Qumsha'ī's writings is a codex, produced by Qumsha'ī's student, Shaykh Maḥmūd Burūjirdī, which is held in the Malik National Library (MS Malik 5759).⁴³ Hereafter this codex will be referred to as the Burūjirdī Codex. Qumsha'ī was a fastidious writer whose works are each, in some manner, in the nature of glosses on an important philosophical or mystical text. It appears that many of his works were written during the course of teaching these texts. Often the volume of one of his glosses is equivalent to a

40 On Mīrzā Ḥasan Kirmānshāhī, see chapter 7, p. 290.

41 On Shaykh 'Alī Nūrī, see chapter 5, p. 238.

42 Tunikābunī studied Qayṣarī's *Sharḥ al-Fuṣūṣ* and Turka's *Tamhīd al-qawā'id* with Qumsha'ī. See S. M. Muḥaqqiq Dāmād, *Nukhbagān-i 'ilm u 'amal*, pp. 338–339. On Mīrzā Ṭāhīr Tunikābunī see chapter 7, pp. 288–289.

43 Ī. Afshār and M. T. Dānishpazhūh in collaboration with M. B. Ḥujjati and A. Munzawī, *Fihrist-i nuskhahā-yi khaṭṭī-i kitābkhāna-i millī-i Malik*, vol. 9, p. 23.

treatise (*risāla*), and in this regard, it is interpreted as an independent treatise. With this point in mind, his works will now be described.⁴⁴

1. *Risāla fī bayān taḥqīq al-Asfār al-arbaʿa* (A Treatise on the Investigation of the Four Journeys)

This treatise is actually a commentary on Mullā Ṣadrā's *al-Asfār*. There is a manuscript of it in the Burūjirdī Codex. It was first published in lithograph in 1313/1895–96 in the margins of Mullā Ṣadrā's *Sharḥ al-Hidāya al-Atharīyya*, and later in the margins of Mullā Ṣadrā's *al-Asfār*.⁴⁵ Sayyid Muṣṭafā Muḥaqqiq Dāmād also independently produced a critical edition of it, based on four manuscripts, and a translation of it into Persian.⁴⁶ It was also published in *Majmūʿa-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*.

2. Glosses on the Discussion on Motion in Mullā Ṣadrā's *al-Ḥikma al-mutaʿāliya fī l-asfār al-ʿaqliyya al-arbaʿa*

These glosses can be found in the Burūjirdī Codex. Additionally, a handwritten copy of this work made by another of Qumshaʿī's students, ʿAlī Akbar Ḥikmī Yazdī, is held in the Library of the Academy of Sciences (*kitābkhāna-yi farhangistān-i ʿulūm*). Muḥaqqiq Dāmād published it in *Nukhbagān-i ʿilm u ʿamal-i Īrān*,⁴⁷ and it was also published in *Majmūʿa-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*.⁴⁸

3. Glosses on Ṣāʿin al-Dīn Turka's *Tamhīd al-qawāʿid*

The oldest copy of this work of which we are aware is in the Burūjirdī Codex, whose compiler transcribed it from a holograph copy under the supervision of the author in Shaʿbān 1304/April-May 1887. Burūjirdī himself also added some glosses to it.⁴⁹ Despite this, not all of Qumshaʿī's glosses are in this codex. Over seven hundred additional glosses by Qumshaʿī are extant in another codex that was compiled and transcribed by Maḥmūd Mudarris Qummī, who was likewise one of Qumshaʿī's students.⁵⁰ These glosses were first published by

44 The compilation of Qumshaʿī's works has been critically edited in *Majmūʿa-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*.

45 See margin of Mullā Ṣadrā's *al-Ḥikma al-mutaʿāliya fī l-asfār al-ʿaqliyya al-arbaʿa*, 9 vols. (Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1981), vol. 1, pp. 13–16.

46 Sayyid Muṣṭafā Muḥaqqiq Dāmād, "Nukhbagān-i ʿilm u ʿamal-i Īrān: ʿarīf u ḥakīm-i mutaʿāllih Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumshaʿī Iṣfahānī mulakhkhaṣ bi Ṣahbā," *Nāma-yi Farhangistān-i ʿUlūm* 6–7: 104–109; it is also included in Muḥaqqiq Dāmād's *Nukhbagān-i ʿilm u ʿamal-i Īrān*, pp. 372–381.

47 Ibid., pp. 379–381.

48 M. R. Qumshaʿī, *Majmūʿa-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*, pp. 209–222.

49 Ibid., pp. 12–13.

50 The precise number of these additional glosses is 768. See M. R. Qumshaʿī, *Majmūʿa-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*, p. 17.

Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī in his edition of *Tamhīd al-qawā'id*.⁵¹ They were also published in *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*.⁵²

4. Glosses on Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's Commentary on Ibn Sīnā's *al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*

In the course of his glosses, Qumsha'ī also transmitted a number of glosses from his teacher, Mīrzā Ḥasan Nūrī. MS Malik 1321, which contains Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*, includes these glosses in the hand of Qumsha'ī. After Qumsha'ī's death, this manuscript came into the hands of one of his students, 'Abd al-'Alī Iḥtishām al-Dawla Thānī, who had studied the glosses with his teacher.⁵³ He transcribed them, together with his own glosses, in the margins of another copy of Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt* (MS Majlis 1818). These glosses were later published in *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*.⁵⁴

5. *Risāla fī waḥdat al-wujūd* (A Treatise on the Oneness of Existence)

Qumsha'ī wrote numerous glosses on Qayṣarī's *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, some of which attained independent status. They form the predominant share of his works. The *Risāla fī waḥdat al-wujūd* is one of these glosses, and he wrote it in the margins of the first chapter of Qayṣarī's introduction to his commentary on the *Fuṣūṣ*. The oldest known copy of this treatise is in the Burūjirdī Codex. It was copied by Burūjirdī in 1300/1882–3.⁵⁵ This treatise was printed in lithographic form for the first time in 1315/1897–98 in the margins of Ṣā'in al-Dīn Turka's *Tamhīd al-qawā'id* together with a brief gloss on it by Abū l-Ḥasan Jilwa. Later on, Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī published it in his edition of Qayṣarī's *Sharḥ al-Fuṣūṣ*. This work was critically edited in *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā* on the basis of the copy of it in the Burūjirdī Codex and the lithographed copy, which contains Jilwa's gloss as well.⁵⁶ William Chittick translated this treatise into English based on the lithograph edition.⁵⁷

51 Ṣā'in al-Dīn Turka, *Tamhīd al-qawā'id*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, (Tehran: Anjuman-i Shāhanshāhī-i Falsafa-yi Īrān, 1355 Sh./1976), pp. 37–45. The glosses in this edition appear in the footnotes attached to the relevant passages of the text.

52 M. R. Qumsha'ī, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*, pp. 177–192.

53 See S. M. Muḥaqqiq Dāmād, "Nukhbagān-i 'ilm u 'amal-i Īrān: 'arīf u ḥakīm-i muta'allih Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha'ī Iṣfahānī mulakhkhaṣ bi Ṣahbā," 35–36.

54 M. R. Qumsha'ī, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*, pp. 225–237.

55 Ī. Afshār and M. T. Dānishpazhūh in collaboration with M. B. Ḥujjati and A. Munzawī, *Fihrist-i nuskhahā-yi khaṭṭī-i kitābkhāna-yi millī-i Malīk*, vol. 9, p. 23.

56 Dāwūd b. Maḥmūd Qayṣarī and Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha'ī, *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, ed. Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (Tehran: Shirkat-i 'Ilmī u Farhangī, 1378 Sh./2009), pp. 25–28; M. R. Qumsha'ī, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*, pp. 33–38.

57 See Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Mehdi Aminrazavi, *An Anthology of Philosophy in Persia: Volume 5, From the School of Shiraz to the Twentieth Century* (London & New York: I. B. Tauris Publishers, 2015), pp. 493–497.

6. *Risāla fi l-farq bayna asmā' al-dhāt wa-l-ṣifāt* (A Treatise on the Distinction between the Names of the Essence and the Attributes)

This is a commentary on the second chapter of Qayṣarī's introduction. The oldest copy of this work is preserved in the Burūjirdī Codex. It was published in Qayṣarī's *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* and in *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*.⁵⁸

7. *Sharḥ ḥadīth al-zindīq* (A Commentary on the Tradition Concerning the Zindīq)

This is another of Qumsha'ī's glosses on the second chapter of Qayṣarī's introduction. This treatise, which is preserved in the Burūjirdī Codex,⁵⁹ was first published by Āshtiyānī in *Rasā'il-i Qayṣarī*,⁶⁰ and later in *Nuṣūṣ wa-rasā'il*⁶¹ and *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*.⁶²

8. *Risāla fi jawhar wa-l-'arad fi lisān ahl Allāh* (A Treatise on the Affirmation of Substance and Accident in the Parlance of the People of God)

This is Qumsha'ī's commentary on the fourth chapter of Qayṣarī's introduction. Preserved in the Burūjirdī Codex, it was published in Qayṣarī's *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*⁶³ and in *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*.⁶⁴

9. *Risāla fi l-ḥaqīqa al-insāniyya* (A Treatise on the Human Inner Reality)

This is Qumsha'ī's commentary on the eighth chapter of Qayṣarī's introduction. It was published in Qayṣarī's *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*⁶⁵ and in *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*.⁶⁶

10. *Risālat al-khilāfa* (A Treatise on the Caliphate)

This treatise is Qumsha'ī's commentary on the twelfth chapter of Qayṣarī's introduction. It is one of the works transcribed by Burūjirdī in his codex.⁶⁷ He

58 D. Qayṣarī and M. R. Qumsha'ī *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, pp. 54–55; M. R. Qumsha'ī, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*, pp. 50–52.

59 See the first part of the introduction (Qumsha'ī's biography) in M. R. Qumsha'ī, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*, p. 15.

60 See Dāwūd b. Maḥmūd Qayṣarī and Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha'ī, *Rasā'il-i Qayṣarī bā ḥawāshī-i 'arīf-i muḥaqqiq Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha'ī*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (Mashhad: Chāpkhāna-yi Dānishgāh-i Mashhad, 1357 Sh./1978), pp. 96–108.

61 Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha'ī, "Sharḥ ḥadīth al-zindīq," *Nuṣūṣ wa-rasā'il*, ed. Khalīl Bahrāmī Qaṣrichamī and Ḥāmid Nājī Iṣfahānī (Isfahan: Kānūn-i Pazhūhish, 1378 Sh./1999), vol. 4, pp. 239–257.

62 M. R. Qumsha'ī, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*, pp. 53–69; idem, "Sharḥ ḥadīth al-zindīq," pp. 239–257.

63 D. Qayṣarī and M. R. Qumsha'ī, *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, pp. 83–85.

64 M. R. Qumsha'ī, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*, pp. 70–71.

65 D. Qayṣarī and M. R. Qumsha'ī, *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, pp. 121–124.

66 M. R. Qumsha'ī, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*, pp. 80–88.

67 M. R. Qumsha'ī, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*, p. 7.

also prepared this work for lithographic reproduction in 1315/1897.⁶⁸ Ṣadūqī Suhā published it as an appendix to his *Dhayl-i faṣṣ-i Shūthī-i Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*.⁶⁹ It was also critically edited and published in *Rasā'il-i Qayṣarī*⁷⁰ and in *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*.⁷¹ Furthermore, 'Alī Zamānī Qumsha'ī translated it into Persian and commentated on it.⁷²

11. *Risālat al-walāya* (A Treatise on Spiritual Authority)

This work consists of Qumsha'ī's glosses on the chapter of Seth (*Shūth*) in Qayṣarī's *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*. As is evident from its numerous extant copies, it is one of the most widely read of Qumsha'ī's works.⁷³ The oldest extant copy of it is in the Burūjirdī Codex, where its transcription date is given as 1302/1884–85.⁷⁴ Ṣadūqī Suhā published this work with the title *Dhayl-i faṣṣ-i Shūthī-i Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*.⁷⁵ It was also published in *Rasā'il-i Qayṣarī*,⁷⁶ Qayṣarī's *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*,⁷⁷ and *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*.⁷⁸ An English translation of this treatise was produced by William Chittick.⁷⁹

12. Glosses on Dawūd Qayṣarī's *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*

During the course of instruction, Qumsha'ī apparently wrote scattered glosses on the eighth and ninth chapters of Qayṣarī's introduction and on the chapters of Adam, Seth, Noah, Isaac, Ishmael, Hūd, Solomon, David, Jonah, Aaron, Elias, Moses, and Muḥammad. The Burūjirdī Codex only contains Qumsha'ī's glosses on the chapter (*faṣṣ*) of Muḥammad. Some other glosses may be contained in a manuscript held at the University of Tehran (MS University of Tehran, Ilāhiyyāt 652/6), which was copied by Sayyid 'Alī Akbar Ṭabāṭabā'ī between 1311/1893–94 and 1312/1894–95. All of these glosses have been published

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- 68 Appendix of *al-Jam' bayna ra'yay al-ḥakīmāyn* (attributed to Fārābī) (lithograph edition, Tehran, 1315/1897–98).
- 69 Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha'ī, *Dhayl-i faṣṣ-i Shūthī-i Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam-i Muḥyī l-Dīn dar mabāḥith-i walāyat bā risāla-yi Mawḍū' al-khilāfa al-kubrā*, ed. Manūchīhr Ṣadūqī Suhā (Qazvin: Maṭba'a-yi Nūr, 1354 Sh./1975), pp. 1–9.
- 70 D. Qayṣarī and M. R. Qumsha'ī, *Rasā'il-i Qayṣarī*, pp. 90–96.
- 71 M. R. Qumsha'ī, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*, pp. 92–98.
- 72 Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha'ī, *Risāla-yi Khilāfat-i kubrā*, Persian translation by 'Alī Zamānī Qumsha'ī (Isfahan: Kānūn-i Pazhūhish, 1378 Sh./1999).
- 73 See the editors' introduction to M. R. Qumsha'ī, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*, p. 16, where six different copies of this treatise are referred to.
- 74 Ī. Afshār and M. T. Dānishpazhūh et al., *Fihrist-i nuskhahā-yi khaṭṭī-i kitābkhāna-yi millī-i Malīk*, vol. 9, p. 23.
- 75 M. R. Qumsha'ī, *Dhayl-i faṣṣ-i Shūthī-i Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, pp. 1–35.
- 76 D. Qayṣarī and M. R. Qumsha'ī, *Rasā'il-i Qayṣarī*, pp. 61–89.
- 77 D. Qayṣarī and M. R. Qumsha'ī, *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, pp. 440–451.
- 78 M. R. Qumsha'ī, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*, pp. 111–129.
- 79 See S. H. Nasr, and M. Aminrazavi, *An Anthology of Philosophy in Persia*, pp. 498–512.

by Āshtiyānī in his edition of Qayṣarī's *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*,⁸⁰ and they were also published in *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*.⁸¹

13. Glosses on Mullā Ṣadrā's *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya*

To date, no manuscript of this work has been discovered. Although, according to Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, there is a copy of it in the Amīr al-mu'minīn Library in Najaf.⁸²

14. Glosses on Muḥammad b. Ḥamza Fanārī's *Miṣbāḥ al-uns*

These glosses are to be found in the margins of one of the manuscripts of *Miṣbāḥ al-uns*, MS Mashhad, Āstān-i Quds-i Ridāwī 14255, copied between the years 1316/1898–99 and 1320/1902–1903.⁸³ Muḥammad Khwājawī included most of these glosses in his critical edition of *Miṣbāḥ al-uns*.⁸⁴ All of them were published in *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*.⁸⁵

15. *Risāla fī mawḍū' al-'ilm* (Treatise on the Subject of Knowledge)

In this short treatise, Qumsha'ī discusses knowledge and refers to Mullā 'Alī Nūrī's analysis of the essential accident. This work was printed lithographically for the first time in 1315/1897–98,⁸⁶ and using this version it was published in *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*.⁸⁷

16. *Risāla fī radd jawāz intizā' mafhūm wāhid min al-ḥaqā'iq al-mutabāyina* (Treatise on the Rejection of the Possibility of Abstracting the Same Concept from Contrary Inner Realities)

As mentioned in the section on Qumsha'ī's philosophical thought, this treatise supports and explains the doctrine of the individual oneness of existence and refutes the position of Abū l-Ḥasan Jilwa. Despite this difference of opinion, he speaks respectfully of Jilwa.⁸⁸ A manuscript of this work, copied in 1315/1897–98 by Muḥammad Ḥusaynī Sāwajī, is held in the Library of the University of Tehran (MS University of Tehran 5248). Sāwajī studied with both

80 D. Qayṣarī and M. R. Qumsha'ī, *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, pp. 7–1197.

81 M. R. Qumsha'ī, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*, pp. 173–178.

82 Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, *Sharḥ-i ḥāl u ārā'-i falsafī-i Mullā Ṣadrā* (Qom: Daftar-i Tablighāt-i Islāmī-i Hawza-yi 'Ilmiyya-yi Qum, 1378 Sh./1999), p. 220.

83 See M. R. Qumsha'ī, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*, p. 17.

84 Muḥammad b. Ḥamza al-Fanārī, *Miṣbāḥ al-uns*, ed. Muḥammad Khwājawī (Tehran: Mawlā, 1375 Sh./1996).

85 M. R. Qumsha'ī, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*, pp. 193–197.

86 Copy printed at the end of *al-Jam' bayna ra'yay al-ḥakīmāyn* (attributed to Fārābī) (lithograph edition, Tehran, 1315/1897–98).

87 M. R. Qumsha'ī, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*, pp. 239–243.

88 See M. R. Qumsha'ī, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*, p. 21.

Jilwa and Qumsha'ī.⁸⁹ This copy was used as the basis for a critical edition in *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*.⁹⁰

17. Sharḥ faqara min Du'ā' al-saḥar (Commentary on a Verse of the Dawn Supplication)

This treatise was written in response to a question put by Muḥammad Mahdī Qumsha'ī, who studied with Qumsha'ī and Jilwa. Muḥammad Mahdī Qumsha'ī wanted to find an explanation for the disparity between the phrase "O God! I beseech Thee for Thy glory at its most glorious (though all Thy glory is glorious)! O God! I beseech Thee by all Thy glory!" and the other verses in the Dawn Prayer, and a response to this problem. Consequently, he resolved to first pose this question to Qumsha'ī and then to Abū l-Ḥasan Jilwa. Afterwards, he engaged in a meticulous legal examination and analysis of the positions of these two philosophers and presented his own approved view. Thus, the present compilation consists of four parts: the presentation of the question, Qumsha'ī's response, Jilwa's response, and the legal examination and analysis by Mullā Muḥammad Mahdī Qumsha'ī. The only known copy of this compilation is MS Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī 6947.⁹¹ It was published in *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*.⁹²

18. Poems

In writing his *ghazals*, Qumsha'ī used the pen name "Ṣahbā" (lit. reddish wine). The unique source for his poems is a codex in the private collection of Ḥusayn Shafī'ī (Isfahan). The poems were first published by Āshtiyānī. They were published in *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā* and also elsewhere.⁹³

4 Philosophical Thought

As mentioned in the section on his life, by the time he had reached middle age Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha'ī was widely recognized as one of the most distinguished authorities of Ṣadrian philosophy. This philosopher, as will be seen, followed in the footsteps of Ibn 'Arabī and believed in the individual oneness of existence, for which reason he was declared a heretic. Some of Qumsha'ī's ontological ideas will now be examined in detail.

89 Ibid.

90 M. R. Qumsha'ī, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*, pp. 245–252.

91 See M. R. Qumsha'ī, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*, pp. 18–19.

92 Ibid., pp. 199–205.

93 M. R. Qumsha'ī, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Ṣahbā*, pp. 255–269; Manūchihr Ṣadūqī Suhā, *Tārikh-i ḥukamā' u 'urafā'-i muta'akhhir*, pp. 268–285.

4.1 *Existence and Its Individual Oneness*

In the course of his philosophical investigation, Mullā Ṣadrā's ontology underwent several stages of development. At first, like his teacher, Mīr Dāmād, he considered existence to be conceptual (*ʿtibārī*). But before long he rejected this and proposed the idea that existence was an extra-mental reality and individually one, being, in fact, identical to the reality of the Necessary Existent (*wājib al-wujūd*). Mullā Ṣadrā then amended this view when he argued that existence is analogically graded unity (*waḥda tashkīkiyya*); in other words, he considered existence a single reality exhibiting unlimited degrees, which differ from each other in intensity and weakness. Consequently, from one perspective, existence is unitary, while, from another, it is multiple. In other words, it can be said that in existence oneness is identical to multiplicity and multiplicity is identical to oneness.⁹⁴

Of the later Qajar philosophers, Sabzawārī, Mudarris Ṭīhrānī, and Qumsha'ī each had a different opinion about Mullā Ṣadrā's conceptual development. While Mudarris Ṭīhrānī believed that the correct, methodical reading of the system of *ḥikma muta'āliya* is the reading of the analogically graded unity of existence, Qumsha'ī considered the reading of the individual oneness of existence to be the final word on the *ḥikma muta'āliya*. Sabzawārī's position was a combination of these two views. In addition to composing a demonstration for his theory, Qumsha'ī, whose goal was to strengthen and consolidate the argument for the individual oneness of existence, also discovered a new proof for establishing the existence of God, and consequently, he was obliged to borrow the remainder of his conceptual framework from the teachings of Ibn 'Arabī. This is why he did not present any of his philosophical work on the prevailing foundation of the *ḥikma muta'āliya*. From a rational point of view, his entire conceptual system is strongly influenced by Ibn 'Arabī and his followers. This outlook is exactly the opposite of the reading of Mudarris Ṭīhrānī, whose goal was to present a precise reading of Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophical propositions based on his own interpretation. In order to understand Qumsha'ī's reasoning, the premises of his argument must first be explained.

In an independent treatise titled *Risāla fī radd jawāz intizā' maḥfūm wāḥid min al-ḥaqā'iq al-mutabāyina*, Qumsha'ī points out that existence has a homonymous meaning for all the subjects to which it is predicated. The abstraction of any concept from a single denotative object (*miṣdāq*) points to the existence

94 See 'Abd Allāh Jawādī Āmulī, *Raḥīq-i makhtūm: Sharḥ-i ḥikmat-i muta'āliya*, 5 vols. (Qom: Dār al-asrā', 1376 Sh./1997), vol. 5, part 2, p. 110.

of the reality of that concept in the object denoted. Thus, if it is judged that existence is predicable to the totality of things in the real world—that is, if all of these things, in fact, share in common the term “existent”—then they actually have existence as a common root. In another place, Qumsha'ī distinguishes three kinds of circumstantial modes used in the description of subjects by predicates: (1) When what is predicated is contained in the subject, this is called the “absolute circumstantial mode” (*ḥaythiyya iṭlāqīyya*), as when we say, “Four is an even number.” (2) When what is predicated of a subject is describing its agency, this is called the “causal circumstantial mode” (*ḥaythiyya ta'līlīyya*), as when we say: “This man is moving.” In order to give assent to this proposition, we must also infer that man is animate, for every animate thing is moving. (3) When what is predicated is external to the subject and merely descriptive of their accidental relationship, this is called the “qualifying circumstantial mode” (*ḥaythiyya taqyīdīyya*), as when we say “This paper is black.”

In his treatise on the oneness of existence (*waḥdat al-wujūd*), after affirming existence and its oneness, Qumsha'ī turns to the difference between the philosophers and the mystics on the existence of the Necessary Existent. While the philosophers consider the existence of the Necessary Existent to be negatively conditioned (*bi-shart lā*), the mystics say His existence is non-conditioned (*lā bi-shart*). Despite this difference, they both agree that the common unfolding existence (*wujūd 'āmm munbasit*) is the “shadow” of the Necessary Existent. Since the shadow of each thing is, in one respect, different from that thing, and, in another respect, united to it, this characteristic is also true in the case of common existence and its relationship to the Necessary Existent. Now, the corresponding view of the mystics can be examined with the aim of establishing the proof for the Necessary Existent with help from the two following principles:

- (A) The essential denotation of every concept is the same as the meaning derived from that concept without any kind of qualifying or causal circumstantial mode.
- (B) The abstraction of the concept of existence from a single nature and its predication to that nature is essentially necessary and has no qualifying or causal circumstantial mode, and if that nature is eternal, the predication of the concept of existence to it is necessarily eternal.

Consequently, the predication of existence to that nature is necessarily eternal, and since the qualification of being negatively conditioned (*bi-shart lā*) plays no role in the abstraction of the concept of existence and qualification is negated, then non-conditioned existence is the essence of the Necessary Existent.

Qumsha'ī presents this argument in his commentary on the *Tamhīd al-qawā'id* in this way:

Minor Premise: The abstraction of the concept of existence from absolute existence (*wujūd mutlaq*), [i.e., existence not conditioned by any determination] does not require either a qualifying circumstantial mode or a causal circumstantial mode.

Major Premise: Every reality from which the concept of existence is abstracted without a qualifying or causal circumstantial mode is by necessity eternally existent.

Conclusion: Absolute existence is perforce eternally necessary.

In his commentary on the *Tamhīd*, he says:

From existence insofar as it is itself, namely, the absolute nature without consideration of any causal or qualifying aspects and modes, the concept of existence is abstracted and then predicated and applied to it. Whatever is like this is the essentially Necessary Existent. Consequently, existence insofar as it is itself is the essentially Necessary Existent. As for the minor premise, it is evident. As for the major premise, because in whatever thing the concept of existence is abstracted from itself essentially the mode of its essence is the mode of actualization and affirmation, therefore the occurrence of non-existence to it is essentially impossible due to the impossibility of the conjunction of the two contradictories and the conversion of one of them into the other. This is what we set out to prove.⁹⁵

Qumsha'ī himself anticipated certain difficulties that might be raised against this position, and in answering them, he explained what he meant more clearly.

The first difficulty might be to consider the reality of the Necessary Existent as the same as the nature of existence, yet argue that the Necessary Existent is neither identical to all things nor to any part of anything.

Qumsha'ī argued that the concept of existence is abstracted from the nature of existence without any kind of causal or qualifying circumstantial mode, whereas the quiddities of possible things are abstracted from them via causal and qualifying circumstantial modes, and the abstraction of possible existence requires the causal circumstantial mode. Therefore, none of the possible existents is identical to the nature of existence. So, if individuals exist because of the nature of existence, God's state is expressed by the verse "Nothing is like him" (Q 42:11).

95 M. R. Qumsha'ī, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Šahbā*, pp. 187–188.

The second difficulty is that according to the answer given above, the Necessary Existent can never have any kind of company (*ma'īyya*) with possible things.

Qumsha'ī stated that according to the mystics, the common unfolding existence is the shadow of the Necessary Existent, being in one respect identical to the Necessary Existent and in another respect other than Him. This unfolding existence in its aspect of identity with the Necessary Existent allows for the company of the Necessary Existent with possible things, while in its aspect of otherness it allows for the transcendence (*tanzīh*) of God from everything else.

Furthermore, as Qumsha'ī himself pointed out, individual oneness (*waḥda shakṣiyya*) predominates over existence: "Should you reflect upon what has been said, you will clearly apprehend another significance, which is that the oneness of existence is an individual oneness. There is no existence, and no existent save Him."⁹⁶ Consequently, the aspect of existence as negatively conditioned (*bi-sharṭ lā*) is a concomitant of the Divine Essence, not the whole of His reality.

The Third Difficulty: Based on the above answer, how are we to understand the diffusion (*sarayān*) of the reality of existence, whether in the Necessary Existent or in possible being?

Answer: It should be noted that by "diffusion," or "permeation," is meant the self-manifestation (*ẓuhūr*) of that reality. On occasion, this manifestation is essential and oriented towards itself, which is its manifestation in the Necessary Existent. On occasion, it is in the names and the fixed entities (*a'yān thābita*) in the station of God's knowledge. And on yet other occasions it is in the possible entities (*a'yān imkānī*). Thus, this reality is diffused both in the Necessary and the possible existents.⁹⁷

Qumsha'ī maintained that in the opinion of the theologians and the majority of the philosophers, multiplicity in existence is real and its oneness is fictitious (*i'tibārī*) since by the evidence of the senses and rational judgement the concrete entities in the external world are multiple and existence is abstracted from them. But there is a group of mystics who consider the oneness of existence real and its multiplicity imaginary. In Qumsha'ī's opinion, however, this position entails the negation of the religious law and the mission of the prophets. They believe this, he said, because of the predominance of the influence of oneness during their spiritual wayfaring (*sulūk*) or due to the intrusion of Satan in the mystical discoveries of its advocates. He said in this regard:

96 Ibid., p. 36.

97 Ibid., p. 36.

We ascribe this belief to their mystical revelations, which cause them to negate religious laws and religions and the sending down of the Books and the messengers, but the senses and the intellect refute them, as you are aware. So this is either because of the influence of the state of oneness, which elevates them [beyond multiplicity] or due to the intrusion of Satan in their mystical discoveries.⁹⁸

Besides these two views, there is another view, which Qumsha'ī ascribed to the preeminent mystics and the intuitive philosophers (*ḥukumā' muta'allih*), and it is the view which he himself held. According to this position, oneness and multiplicity in existence are both real. The multiplicity of existence is observable in the external world, while its oneness is established through traditional and rational proofs. Existence, from this perspective, is an unfolding absolute oneness in which oneness is identical to multiplicity. Qumsha'ī said:

The things in their very multiplicity are one, while in their very oneness they are multiple. If you want to say that existence is both really one and really multiple, there is no contradiction in this since this oneness is absolute [i.e., not conditioned by any determination] and not numerical; otherwise, its multiplicity would be contradictory.⁹⁹

Qumsha'ī explained the point that the wayfarer in the station of oneness perceives the reality of existence as an unfolding oneness (*waḥda inbisāṭiyya*) which includes both the necessary and the possible. But in a higher station, he sees oneness as a reality appointed only to the Necessary Existent. He said:

By oneness here is meant individual oneness, for the term “oneness of existence” (*waḥdat al-wujūd*) may be applied, according to their convention, to the unfolding oneness, which includes both the Necessary and the possible (as clearly revealed in the middle of the first journey of the four spiritual journeys), or it may be applied to the individual oneness confined to the essentially Necessary Existent (which is mystically witnessed at the end of that journey by the perfected and greatly favoured). In this case, existence fades away from the possible entities for it is one with the existence of the Necessary while [being] many. Indeed, there is no existence or existent save Him. Existence is one individual, namely, the essentially Necessary Existent, and the possible existences are gleams

98 Ibid., p. 179.

99 Ibid., p. 180.

(*lum'āt*) of His light and rays (*ishrāqāt*) of His self-manifestation, which are “like a mirage in the desert, which the thirsty man mistakes for water until, coming upon it, he finds it to be nothing, but find God with him” (Q 24:39). The first is the special profession of God's unity (*tawḥīd*), while the second is the special profession of the special profession of His unity.¹⁰⁰

4.2 *Shī'ī Mysticism*

Qumsha'ī attempted to present a new and mystic reading of the question of the Shī'ī imamate. In his opinion, the appointment of a successor (*khalīfa*) to the Messenger of God can only be accomplished by God. Man and even the Messenger himself are not acquainted with the divine knowledge, or as he expressed it, with the exclusive names of God. Because the Messenger is the mediating agent of divine revelation and grace, he is commanded to continue delivering God's judgement until his prophetic mission is fulfilled.

He also had a special interest in the mystical enquiries of Ibn 'Arabī concerning spiritual authority (*walāya*), from which he attempted to construct a Shī'ī narrative tradition. In this respect, he followed in the footsteps of Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī, Ibn Abī Jumhūr al-Aḥsā'ī, and Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī. Of these predecessors, he was most familiar with the mystical works of Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī, including his *al-Kalimāt al-maknūna*.¹⁰¹ An example of an area in which Qumsha'ī intermingled his Shī'ī ideas with Ibn 'Arabī's mysticism is the debate over “the seal of spiritual authority” (*khātam al-walāya*). Ibn 'Arabī's statements in this regard are confusing. In some places, he refers to himself as the *khātam al-walāya*.¹⁰² Dāwūd Qayṣarī, the commentator of the *Fuṣūṣ*, whom Qumsha'ī held in the highest regard, considered Jesus the *khātam al-walāya*. However, in a detailed critique of this statement, Qumsha'ī recognized 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib as the *khātam al-walāya*. He argued that 'Alī was the closest of all human beings to the Seal of the Prophets. This nearness was both external and internal, and whoever is closest to the Seal of the Prophets in this way is the seal of spiritual authority.

100 Ibid., p. 39.

101 On Fayḍ Kāshānī's views on *walāya*, see Shigeru Kamada, “Fayḍ al-Kāshānī's *Walāya*: The Confluence of Shī'ī Imamology and Mysticism,” in Todd Lawson (ed.), *Reason and Inspiration in Islam: Theology, Philosophy and Mysticism in Muslim Thought, Essay in Honour of Hermann Landolt* (London & New York: I. B. Tauris/The Institute of Ismaili Studies 2005), pp. 455–470.

102 On the view of Ibn 'Arabī on this matter see Michel Chodkiewicz, *The Seal of the Saints: Prophethood and Sainthood in the Doctrine of Ibn 'Arabi* (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1993), pp. 116–146.

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Mīrzā Abū l-Ḥasan Jilwa

*Encieh Barkhah*¹

1 Life

Sayyid Abū l-Ḥasan Ṭabāṭabā'ī, who came to be known by his pen name Jilwa,² was born in 1238/1822–23 in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. Jilwa's ancestors were Ṭabāṭabā'ī sayyids. He considered himself a descendant of Imām Ḥasan al-Mujtabā. Jilwa's lineage can be traced back six generations to the theologian and philosopher Rafī' al-Dīn Ṭabāṭabā'ī Nā'inī, known as Mīrzā Rafī'ā (d. 1083/1672–73).³

Jilwa's father, Sayyid Muḥammad Ṭabāṭabā'ī, whose pen name was Maẓhar, was a physician and littérateur in the early Qajar era.⁴ In his autobiography, written in 1294/1877 at the request of 'Alī Qulī Mīrzā I'timād al-Salṭana (d. 1298/1880), the minister of education in Iran at the time,⁵ Jilwa provided some information about his father's journey to India. It was in his youth that his father went from Qandahar and Kabul to Hyderabad and its neighbouring regions in Sindh province in order to complete his training in medicine, and in order to increase his knowledge of literature and history. In Sindh, Mīrzā Ibrāhīm Shāh, the vizier of the emir of Sindh Mīr Ghulām-'Alī Khān (r.

1 Translated from Persian by Aun Hasan Ali. The translator would like to thank Syed Rizwan Rizvi for his help.

2 Muḥammad Ḥasan I'timād al-Salṭana, *Kitāb al-ma'āthir wa-l-āthār* (lithograph, Tehran: Dār al-Ṭibā'a-yi Khāṣṣa-yi Dawlatī, 1307/1928), p. 140; 'Abbās Qummī, *Hadīyyat al-aḥbāb fī dhikr al-ma'rūf bi-l-kunā wa-l-ansāb* (Tehran: Chāpkhāna-yi Ṣadr, 1363 Sh./1984–85), p. 15; Muḥammad Ṭāhir Tunikābunī, "Mukhtaṣar-i sharḥ-i aḥwāl-i Mīrzā-yi Jilwa," *Āyanda* 29 (1306 Sh./2027–28): 654–56 (654); Muḥsin Amīn, *A'yān al-Shī'a*, ed. Ḥasan Amīn (Beirut: Dār al-Ta'āruf li-l-Maṭbū'āt, 1403/1983), vol. 2, p. 337.

3 Mīrzā Rafī'ā was a student of Bahā' al-Dīn al-'Āmilī, Mīr Findiriskī and 'Abd Allāh Shushtarī. He wrote several works on philosophy and theology, including *Thamara-yi shajara-yi ilāhiyya*.

4 Muḥammad 'Alī Ḥabībābādī, *Makārim al-āthār dar aḥwāl-i rijāl-i du qarn-i 13 u 14 hijrī* (Isfahan: Nafā'is-i Makhtūt, 1352 Sh./1973–74), vol. 4, p. 1040; Muṣliḥ al-Dīn Mahdawī, *Tadhkirat al-qubūr yā dānishmandān u buzurgān-i Isfahān* (Isfahan: Thaqaḥī, 1348 Sh./1969–70), p. 74; Ghulām-Riḍā Gulī Zawāra, *Mīrzā Abū l-Ḥasan-i Jilwa: Ḥakīm-i furūtan* (Tehran: Sāzmān-i Tablighāt-i Islāmī, 1372 Sh./1993–34), pp. 20, 22; Muḥammad Ḥasan I'timād al-Salṭana et al., *Nāma-yi dānishwarān-i Nāṣirī* (Qom: Dār al-fikr, 1338 Sh./1959–60), vol. 3, p. 31.

5 See M. Ḥ. I'timād al-Salṭana et al., *Nāma-yi dānishwarān-i Nāṣirī*, vol. 3, pp. 32–35.

1217–1227/1802–1811), gave Maẓhar his daughter in marriage. He stayed in Sindh for a while, then went to Ahmedabad, Gujarat and from there to Bombay. After a while, at the request of his brother, he returned to Isfahan, and since most of his family lived in Zavareh, probably his place of birth, he stayed in Zavareh. Ultimately he died from cholera sometime between 1252/1836⁶ and 1254/1839⁷.

After his father's death, Mīrzā Abū l-Ḥasan Jilwa went to the madrasa of Kāsagarān in Isfahan. After completing his preliminary studies, he began to study the rational sciences, metaphysics, natural philosophy and mathematics. He writes:

Since people's dispositions are inclined toward different subjects, my mind inclined toward the rational sciences, and I spent my time studying the rational sciences including metaphysics, natural philosophy and mathematics, particularly metaphysics and natural philosophy which are popular in Iran, especially metaphysics.⁸

Jilwa did not give the names of any of his teachers in his autobiography. It is reported, however, that he studied with Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥasan Nūrī (d. before 1294/1877),⁹ Mullā Muḥammad Ja'far Langarūdī Lāhījī (d. before 1294/1877),¹⁰

6 M. Mahdawī, *Tadhkirat al-qubūr*, p. 74.

7 Muḥammad 'Alī Ḥabībābādī, *Makārim al-āthār*, vol. 5, pp. 1481–82.

8 M. Ḥ. I'timād al-Saṭṭāna et al., *Nāma-yi dānishwarān-i Nāšīrī*, vol. 3, pp. 33–34.

9 M. Ṭ. Tunikābunī, "Mukhtaṣar-i sharḥ-i aḥwāl-i Mīrzā-yi Jilwa," 655. Tunikābunī only mentions Mīrzā Ḥasan Nūrī as Jilwa's teacher. Muḥammad Ḥasan Nūrī was buried in Najaf. He was also one of Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha'ī's teachers. Mahdawī, 327; Sayyid Muṣṭafā Muḥaqqiq Dāmād, "Ārif u ḥakīm-i muta'allih Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha'ī mutakhalliṣ bi Ṣahbā," *Nāma-yi Farhangistān-i 'ulūm*, 6 & 7 (1376 Sh./1997–98): 47–136 (53–54).

10 He was the son of Muḥammad Ṣādiq Lāhījī. He wrote a commentary on Mullā Ṣadrā's *Mashā'ir* and a supercommentary on the section on metaphysics in 'Alā' al-Dīn Qūshjī's commentary on the *Tajrīd* and Shams al-Dīn Khafīr's gloss on it. He was a student of Mīrzā Abū l-Qāsim Mudarris Khātūnābādī (d. 1202/1787–88), Mullā Miḥrāb Gilānī (d. 1217/1802–1803) and Mullā 'Alī Nūrī (d. 1246/1830). He was a teacher of Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha'ī, Āqā 'Alī Mudarris Ṭihrānī and Ḥājī Mullā Ḥādī Sabzawāri. See Manūchihr Ṣadūqī Suhā, *Tahrīr-i thānī-i tārikh-i ḥukamā' u 'urafā'-i muta'akhhir* (2nd ed., Tehran: Ḥikmat, 1381 Sh./2002), p. 262; S. M. Muḥaqqiq Dāmād, "Ārif u ḥakīm-i muta'allih Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha'ī," 53–54.

Sayyid Raḍī Lāhijī (d. 1270/1853–54),¹¹ Mīrzā Ḥasan Chīnī (d. 1264/1847–48) and Mullā ‘Abd al-Jawād Tūnī Khurāsānī (d. 1281/1864).¹²

In 1273/1856–7 Jilwa left Isfahan and moved to Tehran. In his autobiography he says:

For a time in Isfahan, I was busy with the same pursuit, until staying there became unbearable to me because of the prevalence of poverty, people’s cavilling and the pain they caused to each other, as well as the belief of certain people that they ought to be followed blindly. So I came to Tehran.¹³

Therefore, based on this, we may conjecture that he did not leave Isfahan in order to further his education. The idea that he went to Tehran with the intention of going to Sabzevar in order to benefit from the learning of Ḥājī Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī¹⁴ does not seem to be correct.¹⁵ In Tehran, Jilwa started teaching in the Dār al-Shifā’ madrasa. He chose to live there as well because he was accustomed to the environment, and because he failed to arrange an alternative for himself.

Jilwa was thin and tall. It is said that he lived an ascetic and unpretentious life. He lived off the revenues of estates endowed to his ancestors. He did not accumulate any other worldly wealth: his books were his only possessions. He

11 Sayyid Raḍī Lāhijī was one of the students of Mullā ‘Alī Nūrī and Mullā Ismā‘īl Wāhid al-‘Ayn, and one of the teachers of Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha’ī and Mīrzā Naṣīr Gilānī. He had studied the works of Ibn ‘Arabī and Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī. See Muḥammad ‘Alī ‘Ibrat Nā‘īnī, *Tadhkira-yi madīnat al-adab* (Tehran: Kitābkhāna, Mūzi u Markaz-i Asnād-i Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī, 1376 Sh./1997–98), vol. 2, pp. 731–732; M. Mahdawī, *Tadhkirat al-qubūr*, p. 328; Manūchihr Ṣadūqī Suhā, *Tahrīr-i thānī-i tārikh-i hukamā’ u ‘urafā’-i muta’akhhir*, pp. 261–263.

12 Mullā ‘Abd al-Jawād Tūnī Khurāsānī was a scholar of mathematics, law, jurisprudence, medicine and literature. On Jilwa’s teachers see Ghulām-Ḥusayn Afḍal al-Mulk, *Afḍal al-tawārikh*, ed. Manṣūra Ittīhādiyya and Sirūs Sa’dwandīyān (Tehran: *Nashr-i Tārikh-i Irān*, 1361 Sh./1982), p. 107; M. Ṭ. Tunikābunī, “Mukhtaṣar-i sharḥ-i aḥwāl-i Mīrzā-yi Jilwa,” 655; M. Ṣadūqī Suhā, *Tahrīr-i thānī-i tārikh-i hukamā’ u ‘urafā’-i muta’akhhir*, pp. 469–470.

13 M. Ḥ. I’timād al-Salṭana et al., *Nāma-yi dānishwarān-i Nāshirī*, vol. 3, p. 36.

14 Murtaḍā Muṭahharī, *Khadamāt-i mutaḡābil-i Islām u Irān* (Qom: Ṣadrā, 1360 Sh./1981–82), vol. 2, p. 222.

15 Abū l-Ḥasan Jilwa, *Majmū‘a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Jilwa*, ed. Ḥasan Riḍāzāda (Tehran: Ḥikmat, 1385 Sh./2006–2007), p. 29.

never married.¹⁶ In the last years of this life, he lost his sight, possibly as a result of cataracts. According to a report by Afḍal al-Mulk,¹⁷ he was afflicted with strangury (*ḥabas al-būl*), possibly a diseased prostate, and was bedridden as a result. He died at the age of seventy-six on the night of Thursday 6 Dhū l-Qa'da 1314/9 April 1897 in Tehran. He was buried in the vicinity of the grave of Ibn Bābawayh known as Shaykh Ṣadūq. Two years later, due to the efforts of Mīrzā Aḥmad Khān-i Badr Nāṣir al-Dawla and Prince Sulṭān Ḥusayn Mīrzā Nayyir al-Dawla, the architect of Kashan, 'Abd al-Bāqī, built a dome over his grave. Later on, another dome was constructed over his grave.¹⁸

Abū l-Ḥasan Jilwa, Āqā 'Alī Ṭihrānī (d. 1305/1888) and Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha'ī (d. 1306/1888) were the main teachers of philosophy in Tehran toward the end of the 13th/19th century. These three philosophers, all of whom had studied in Isfahan, had many students in common. After the deaths of Āqā 'Alī Mudarris Ṭihrānī and Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha'ī, the study of the rational sciences in Tehran was mainly limited to the circle of Jilwa.¹⁹

Jilwa had a good relationship with the senior jurists and government officials of the day and, above all, with Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh himself. He also wrote poetry praising Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh, and the shah used to visit Jilwa once a year in the Dār al-Shifā' madrasa.²⁰ Jilwa, however, did not visit the court without an invitation. In his autobiography, Jilwa writes, "In this period, due to my nature or because I was content, they did not invite me in person or in writing;

16 Āqā Buzurg Ṭihrānī, *Ṭabaqāt a'lām al-Shi'a* (Beirut: Dār Ihya' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1430/2009), vol. 13, p. 42.

17 G. H. Afḍal al-Mulk, *Afḍal al-tawārīkh*, p. 106.

18 Ibid.; Yahyā Dawlatābādī, *Ḥayāt-i Yahyā* (Tehran: 'Atṭāt/Firdawsī, 1362 Sh./1983–84), vol. 1, p. 175; Muḥammad 'Alī 'Ibrat Nā'inī, *Tadhkira-yi madīnat al-adab*, vol. 1, p. 652; Ghulām-Riḍā Gulī Zawāra, *Mīrzā Abū l-Ḥasan-i Jilwa. Ḥakīm-i furūtan*, pp. 186–193.

19 G. H. Afḍal al-Mulk, *Afḍal al-tawārīkh*, pp. 106–107.

20 On Jilwa's character and various anecdotes on him see G. H. Afḍal al-Mulk, *Afḍal al-tawārīkh*, pp. 106–107; 'Abd Allāh Mustawfī, *Sharḥ-i zindagānī-i man yā Tārīkh-i ijtimā'ī u idārī-i dawra-yi Qājāriyya* (Tehran: Zuwwār, 1377 Sh./1998–99), vol. 1, pp. 521–522; Mahdī Bāmdād, *Sharḥ-i ḥāl-i riḡāl-i Īrān dar qarn-i 12 u 13 u 14 hijrī* (2nd ed., Tehran: Zuwwār, 1357 Sh./1978), vol. 1, p. 41; Ḥasan Taqīzāda, "Iṭtirām-i 'ulamā", *Yaghma* 2 5 (1328 Sh./1949–50): 181; Aḥmad 'Alī Dīwān Baygī, *Ḥadiqat al-shu'arā*, ed. 'Abd al-Ḥusayn Nawā'ī (Tehran: Zarrīn, 1364–66 Sh./1985–88), vol. 1, p. 375; M. H. I'timād al-Saltāna et al., *Nāma-yi dānīshwarān-i Nāṣirī*, vol. 3, p. 31; Sayyid Muṣṭafā Muḥaqiq Dāmād, "Nukhbagān-i 'ilm u 'amal-i Īrān: Mīrzā Abū l-Ḥasan-i Jilwa-yi Iṣfahānī," *Nāma-yi farhangistān-i 'ulūm* 5 (1375 Sh./1996–97): 97–112 (103); See also Abū l-Ḥasan Jilwa, *Dīwān*, ed. Aḥmad Suhaylī Khwānsārī (Tehran: Chāpkhāna-yi Firdawsī, n.d.), pp. 32–35, 44–48; Aḥmad Bānpūr, "Ḥakīm-i Jilwa," *Kayhān-i andīsha* 10 (1365 Sh./1986–87): 75–79 (78); Muḥammad Riḍā Ḥakīmī, *Bidārgarān-i aqālīm-i qibla* (Tehran: Daftar-i Nashr-i Farhang-i Islāmī, 1355 Sh./1976–77), pp. 47–48.

nor did the Sultān or vizier ever invite me, and without an invitation, although my friends wanted me to come, I did not go.”²¹

Edward Brown, who met Jilwa in Tehran, said about him:

Unfortunately, I did not have the advantage of any prolonged conversation with him, and even such as I had chiefly consisted in answering his questions on the different phases of European thought. He was greatly interested in what I told him about the Theosophists and Vegetarians, and was anxious to know whether the Plymouth Brethren were believers in the transmigration of souls!²²

Jilwa had a great interest in Persian literature, and, as he writes in his autobiography, he used to recite poetry himself:

Even in my youth, I was sociable. I kept company with literati, poets and witty people (*ẓurāfāʾ*). I was friendly with my neighbors and, occasionally, due in part to having inherited this skill, and due in part to the company I kept, I would even recite poetry. Until a time came when I myself understood the art and was able to distinguish between good and bad poetry, and understood that composing a good poem, though it is not of much benefit, is difficult, and mediocre and bad poetry is worthless, but this did not deter me ...²³

He followed Nāṣir-i Khusraw Qubādiyānī's (d. 481/1088) style, and the similarity between their poems, in terms of both form and content, is noteworthy.²⁴

Jilwa had an excellent library consisting of the writings of philosophers, literati, mystics and intellectuals, and it was counted among the richest libraries of his time. In his will, he stated that his books were to be sold and the money given to the poor and needy. Later, the books of this library, which amounted to over two hundred volumes, were sold to the Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Milli Library where they remain. Most of them are listed in the second volume of Yūsuf I'tisāmī's catalogue of the library. The books from Jilwa's personal library are valuable because, aside from his corrections and comparisons with other

21 M. Ḥ. I'timād al-Saltāna & others, *Nāma-yi dānishwarān-i Nāṣirī*, vol. 3, p. 34.

22 Edward Granville Brown, *A Year amongst the Persians* (London: A. and C. Black, 1893), p. 162.

23 M. Ḥ. I'timād al-Saltāna et al., *Nāma-yi dānishwarān-i Nāṣirī*, vol. 3, p. 34.

24 G. Ḥ. Afḍal al-Mulk, *Afḍal al-tawārīkh*, pp. 106–107; Murtaḍā Mudarrīsī Chahārdahī, “Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Ṣahbā-yi Qumshaʿī,” *Yādghār* 1 (1325 Sh./1946): 74–75; A. Jilwa, *Dīwān*, p. 10.

manuscripts that were to be found in Tehran at the time, they contain his annotations, super-commentaries and personal notes.

2 Students

In his many years of teaching in Isfahan and Tehran, Jilwa had numerous students. According to Jilwa himself, some of them only studied with him to learn terminology, others to boast. Very few came seeking truth sincerely and believing in the immaterial world.²⁵ Those of his students who became philosophers in their own right include the following:

- 1) Mīrzā Muḥammad Ṭāhir Tunikābunī (d. 1320 Sh./1941–2). Jurist, philosophy teacher, and politician in Tehran, he was born in one of the villages of Kalārdasht in 1280/1863–64. After receiving his preliminary education in his hometown, he came to Tehran and began to study philosophy under Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha'ī. After Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha'ī died, he attended the classes of Mīrzā Abū l-Ḥasan Jilwa. He attended Jilwa's classes until 1314/1897. Jilwa acknowledged his excellence, and after Jilwa's death, most students turned to Tunikābunī. In the Majlis Library, there is a manuscript of Jilwa's gloss on the introduction to Qayṣarī's *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, which Jilwa gifted to him. In addition to his studies with Jilwa, Tunikābunī also studied philosophy under Āqā 'Alī Mudarris Ṭīhrānī and Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha'ī, and law under Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥasan Āshtīyānī.

Tunikābunī lived in the Madrasa Sipahsālār in Tehran for nearly fifty years. He lectured mainly on the philosophy of Avicenna. He also lectured on Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's (d. 672/1274) *Ḥall mushkilāt al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*, Avicenna's *al-Shifā'*, *al-Najāt*, *al-Qānūn* and Ṣā'in al-Dīn Turka Isfahānī's *Tamhīd al-qawā'id*, and he was an expert on mathematics, astronomy (*hay'at*), astrology (*nujūm*) and medicine.

He was an active member of parliament in at least two terms (1284–1286 Sh./1905–1907 and 1300–1302 Sh./1921–1922). From 1310 Sh./1931–1932, Tunikābunī fell on hard times when he was exiled and imprisoned for criticizing Riḍā Shāh (r. 1305–1320 Sh./1925–1941). He died in 1320 Sh./1941 and, in accordance with his will, was buried next to the grave of his teacher.²⁶

25 See M. Ḥ. I'timād al-Saltāna et al., *Nāma-yi dānishwarān-i Nāsirī*, vol. 3, pp. 34–35.

26 Muḥammad 'Alī Ṣafwat, *Dāstān-i dūstān* (Tabriz: Chāpkhāna-yi Qum, 1328 Sh./1949–50), pp. 119–121; Ḥasan Faqīh 'Abd Allāhī, "Bi yād-i ḥakīm az yād rafta Mīrzā Muḥammad Ṭāhir

Tunikābunī's writings include glosses on Avicenna's *al-Shifā'* (Logic and Metaphysics), Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī's *Mabāḥith al-mashriqīyya*, Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's *Hall mushkilāt al-Ishārāt*, Jamāl al-Dīn Ḥillī's *Jawhar al-naḍīd*, Ṣā'in al-Dīn Turka's *Tamhīd al-qawā'id*, and 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī's *al-Durra al-fākhira*.²⁷ Most of these glosses are listed in volumes five and nine of the catalogue of the Majlis Library. He wrote a biography of Jilwa which was published as *Mukhtaṣar sharḥ aḥwāl Mīrẓā Jilwa* in the journal *Āyanda* (2, 9 1306 Sh./1927–28). He transcribed some of Jilwa's writings. For example, in MS Majlis 3942, which includes the *Asfār* and super-commentaries on it, there are some super-commentaries by Jilwa transcribed by Tunikābunī.²⁸

- 2) Mullā Muḥammad Āmulī (d. 1336/1917–18). He was born in 1263/1846–47 in Āmul. After completing his preliminary education in Amol (Āmul), he went to Tehran and studied law and jurisprudence under Mīrẓā Ḥasan Āshtiyānī, Mīrẓā Abū l-Qāsim Kalāntarī and Sayyid Ṣādiq Ṭabāṭabā'ī. He studied philosophy under Mīrẓā Abū l-Ḥasan Jilwa and Āqā 'Alī Mudarris. After that, he began to hold his own classes in law, jurisprudence, and philosophy. Mullā Muḥammad Āmulī was an opponent of the 1906 Constitutional Revolution. He worked alongside Shaykh Faḍl Allāh Nūrī during the revolution. After the revolution, he was imprisoned and then exiled to his hometown, Amol. He returned to Tehran a few years later and started teaching again. His philosophical works include a gloss on Mullā Ṣadrā's *Asfār*; a gloss on Quṭb al-Dīn Rāzī's commentary on Sirāj al-Dīn Urmawī's *Maṭālī' al-anwār* and Quṭb al-Dīn Rāzī's commentary on Najm al-Dīn Kātibī's *al-Shamsīyya*. He is buried next to the grave of Jilwa.²⁹

Tanikābunī shāgird-i barjasta-yi Jilwa-yi Zawāra'ī," in Ghulām-Riḍā Gulī Zawāra (ed.), *Gulshan-i Jilwa*, pp. 161–169; M. M. Āqā Buzurg Ṭīhrānī, *Ṭabaqāt a'lām al-Shī'a*, vol. 15, p. 973; Muḥammad 'Alī Ḥabībābādī, *Makārim al-āthār*, vol. 7, p. 2302; S. M. Muḥaqqiq Dāmād, "Nukhbagān-i 'ilm u 'amal-i Īrān: Mīrẓā Abū l-Ḥasan-i Jilwa-yi Iṣfahānī," 104.

- 27 Muḥammad 'Alī Ḥabībābādī, *Makārim al-āthār*, vol. 7, p. 2302; Sayyid Muṣṭafā Muḥaqqiq Dāmād, *Nukhbagān-i 'ilm u 'amal-i Īrān* (Tehran: Markaz-i Nashr-i 'Ulūm-i Islāmī, 1378 Sh./1999), pp. 48–50.
- 28 He also transcribed a collection of Jilwa's remarks (*fawā'id*) for himself, a manuscript of which is owned by Tunikābunī's grandchildren. His *Munāzara-yi ḥakīm u faqīh*, which was edited and published by Sayyid Muṣṭafā Muḥaqqiq Dāmād is based on the same collection. See S. M. Muḥaqqiq Dāmād, "Nukhbagān-i 'ilm u 'amal-i Īrān: Mīrẓā Abū l-Ḥasan-i Jilwa-yi Iṣfahānī," 97–112.
- 29 Muḥammad Sharīf Rāzī, *Ikhtirān-i furūzān-i Ray u Tīhrān yā Tadhkirat al-qābir fī aḥwāl al-mafākhir* (Qom, n.d.), pp. 365–366; Manūchīr Ṣadūqī Suhā, *Tahrīr-i thānī-i tārikh-i ḥukamā' u 'urafā'-i muta'akkhkir*, p. 458; Ḥasan Ḥasanẓāda Āmulī, "Sharḥ-i ḥāl-i du ḥakīm-i faqīh," *Kayhān-i andīsha* 54 (1373 Sh./1994): 3–20; M. M. Āqā Buzurg Ṭīhrānī, *al-Dhar'ā ilā taṣānīf al-Shī'a* (Beirut: Dār al-Aḍwā', 1403/1982–83), vol. 4, p. 424; Muḥammad

- 3) Mīrzā Ḥasan Kirmānshāhī (d. 1336/1917–18). He was born and grew up in Kermanshah, where he received his early education. Then he moved to Tehran and studied the rational sciences under Āqā ‘Alī Mudarris Ṭīhrānī and Abū l-Ḥasan Jilwa. After that, he started teaching philosophy. After Ṭīhrānī’s death, Kirmānshāhī was appointed as a teacher at the Sipahsālār Madrasa in Tehran. He trained numerous students, the most famous of whom were Mīrzā Mahdī Āshtiyānī (d. 1372/1952–53), and Sayyid Mūsā Zarābādī (d. 1353/1934). His writings include glosses on Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī’s commentary on Avicenna’s *al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*, on Mullā Ṣadrā’s *Aṣfār* and on Physics and Metaphysics of Avicenna’s *al-Shifā’*.³⁰
- 4) Ḥakīm Mullā Muḥammad Hīdajī Zanjānī (d. 1339/1920–21). He was born in 1262/1846. After completing his preliminary education in Zanjan, he went to Qazvin in 1297/1879. He lived there for eight years and continued his education under the prominent teachers of Qazvin such as Sayyid ‘Alī Khu’aynī Qazwīnī, the author of a gloss on Mīrzā-yi Qummī’s (d. 1231/1815–16) *Qawānīn*. In 1305/1887–88 he went to Tehran, where he studied philosophy and mathematics under Āqā Mīrzā Ḥusayn Sabzawārī and Jilwa.³¹ After having studied with some of the most learned scholars of philosophy, law, and *ḥadīth*, Hīdajī moved to the Munīriyya Madrasa in Tehran and began teaching.³² He is famous for his expertise in mathematics, astrology, and astronomy. Āqā Mīrzā Ibrāhīm Zanjānī was one of his students. He taught the rational and the transmitted sciences until the very end of his life. He died in Tehran in 1348/1929 and was buried in Qom. His writings include a gloss on the *Manẓūma* of Sabzawārī, *Risāla-yi Dukhkhāniyya*³³ and *Kitāb-i Kashkūl* as well as poetry.³⁴

Taqī Āmulī, *Durar al-fawā'id: wa-huwa Ta'liqa 'alā Sharḥ al-manẓūma li-l-Sabzawārī*, ed. Ḥasan Mustafawī (Tehrān: Markaz Nashr al-Kitāb, 1377/1958), pp. iii–iv.

30 Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Durri, *Kanz al-ḥikma* (Tehran: Chāpkhāna-yi Dānish, 1306 Sh./1927), vol. 2, p. 156.

31 Murtaḍā Muṭahharī, *Khadamāt-i mutaḡābil-i Islām u Irān*, vol. 2, p. 225.

32 This place, where he taught for a few decades, is one of the buildings of Amīr Nizām Ḥakīm of Tehran. His sister, Munīr al-Saltāna, the wife of Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh, completed it, and that is why it is called Munīriyya.

33 Mullā Muḥammad Hīdajī, *Risāla-yi dukhkhāniyya*, ed. ‘Alī Akbar Wilāyatī (Tehran: Markaz-i Chāp u Intishārāt-i Wizārat-i Umūr-i Khārija, 1381 Sh./2002).

34 Mullā Muḥammad Hīdajī, *Ta'liqat al-Hīdajī 'alā al-manẓūma wa-sharḥihā* (Tehran: Manshūrāt al-A'lamī, 1363 Sh./1984–85), pp. 8–11; M. Ṣadūqī Suhā, *Tahrīr-i thānī-i tārikh-i ḥukamā' u 'urafā'-i muta'akkhīr*, pp. 496–497; Mullā Muḥammad Hīdajī, *Dānishnāma u dīwān-i ḥakīm-i a'zam u shā'ir-i muḥaqqiq Ḥājī Mullā Muḥammad Hīdajī*, ed. Ghulām-Ḥusayn Riḍānizhād Nūshīn and Muḥammad Diyḥīm (Tabriz: Tālār-i Kitāb, n.d.), pp. 9–33.

- 5) Āqā Mīrzā Muḥammad Bāqir Iṣṭahbānātī. He began his education early and at the age of twelve went to Shiraz where he studied for eight years in the Manṣūriyya Madrasa. Around 1284/1867–68, he went to Tehran and studied under Mīrzā Abū l-Ḥasan Jilwa, Āqā ‘Alī Mudarris Ṭihirānī, Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha’ī, Mullā ‘Alī Kanī, Sayyid Mahdī Qazwīnī Najafī and Muḥammad Taqī Harawī. He returned to Shiraz around 1296/1878–79. He was exiled to Samarra on account of a dispute with the governor of Fārs, Qawām al-Mulk. In Samarra, he joined the classes of Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥassan Shīrāzī (d. 1312/1895), from whom Iṣṭihbānātī earned a license for *ijtihād*. After the death of Mīrzā-yi Shīrāzī, he went to Najaf and established a school for philosophy there. Iṣṭihbānātī was an accomplished litterateur, and an authority on mathematics and related sciences. He wrote various articles in this field. Being politically involved in support of the Constitution, he was killed by the opponents in 1326 Sh./1908 in Shiraz.
- 6) Sayyid ‘Abbās Mūsawī Shāhrūdī (d. 1341/1922–23). One of Jilwa’s students who, on account of his beautiful script, transcribed some of Jilwa’s writings. These included: Jilwa’s gloss on Qayṣarī’s commentary on Ibn ‘Arabī’s *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*;³⁵ his gloss on ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī’s *al-Durra al-fākhira*, which Shāhrūdī copied in *Nasta‘līq* in 1306/1888–89;³⁶ his *Risāla-yi kullī u aqsām-i ān*, copied in 1307/1889–90;³⁷ his gloss on Dawūd Qayṣarī’s commentary on *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*;³⁸ and his *Risāla dar wujūd u aqsām-i ān*.³⁹
- 7) Sayyid Naṣr Allāh Taqawī (d. 1326 Sh./1947–48). He was born in Tehran in 1288/1863–64. He studied the rational and transmitted sciences under Mīrzā Abū l-Ḥasan Jilwa and Mīrzā Ḥasan Āshtiyānī (d. 1319/1901–1902). Then, in order to complete his education, he travelled to the shrine cities of Iraq and studied with the scholars of Najaf. Taqawī also travelled to Europe where he became particularly interested in Western discussions on positive laws (*qawānīn-i mawḍū‘a*), that is the laws enacted by the properly instituted branch of government. He was one of the leaders of the constitutional movement from its inception or even earlier. He was the representative of the ulama and their students (*ṭullāb*) in Tehran in the first two terms of the parliament (1324–1328/1906–1910). Later in his career, Taqawī taught at the Faculty of Law and Rational and Transmitted

35 MS Mashhad, Āstān-i Quds-i Riḍawī 418.

36 MS Mashhad, Āstān-i Quds-i Riḍawī 649.

37 MS Mashhad, Āstān-i Quds-i Riḍawī 1172.

38 MS Mashhad, Āstān-i Quds-i Riḍawī 418.

39 Mūsawī Shāhrūdī transcribed this work at least twice: MSS Mashhad, Āstān-i Quds-i Riḍawī 648 and 1173.

Sciences of the University of Tehran and was for a while the head of the faculty. He edited some philosophical and mystical texts including *Awṣāf al-ashrāf* by Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī; *Durrat al-tāj* by Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī (d. 710/1311); and *Jāwidān-nāma* and *al-Mufīd li-l-mustafīd* by Afḍal al-Dīn Kāshānī known as Bābā Afḍal (d. ca. 667/1212–13). He was also involved in the establishment of the National Library of Iran in 1322/1904.⁴⁰ He purchased some two hundred and five volumes of Jilwa's library from Jilwa's heirs, which he then transferred to the Majlis Library.⁴¹

Apart from the above-mentioned students, some students of Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha'ī's used to attend Jilwa's classes regularly, including Mīrzā Shihāb al-Dīn Nayrīzī (d. 1320/1902–1903), Mīrzā Hāshim Ashkiwarī (d. 1332/1913–1914), Mīrzā Maḥmūd Mudarris Kahakī Qummī (d. 1304 Sh./1925–1926), and Shaykh 'Abd al-Nabī Nūrī (d. 1343/1924).⁴²

3 Writings

Most of Jilwa's writings are glosses on philosophical and non-philosophical books. These glosses have no introduction, and the author made no attempt to organize them. He wrote all his philosophical and scholarly works in Arabic. In his autobiography, he says, "Because I knew that writing an entirely new work is difficult if not impossible, I did not write independent works. Rather I wrote many glosses, on the *Ḥikma muta'āliya*, which is known as the *Asfār*, and other books. Currently, they are in hands of certain students and can be made use of."⁴³ Jilwa's most important writings are listed below:

3.1 Glosses

1. A Gloss on Mullā Ṣadrā's *al-Ḥikma al-muta'āliya fī l-asfār al-'aqliyya al-arba'a*⁴⁴: This is the only work that Jilwa mentions in his

40 Ḥasan Mursawand, *Zindagīnāma-yi rijāl u mashāhūr-i Īrān* (Tehran: Ilhām, 1369 Sh./1990–91), vol. 2, pp. 269–271; Maḥmūd Hidāyat, *Gulzār-i jāwidān* (Tehran: Chāpkhāna-yi Zibā, 1353–55 Sh./1974–76), vol. 1, p. 281; Muḥammad Bāqir Burqa'ī, *Sukhanwarān-i nāmī-i mu'āshir-i Īrān* (Qom: Khurram, 1373 Sh./1994), vol. 2, p. 907; M. 'A. 'Ibrat Nā'īnī, *Tadhkira-yi madīnat al-adab*, vol. 3, pp. 504–507.

41 M. M. Āqā Buzurg Ṭīhrānī, *al-Dharī'a ilā taṣānīf al-Shī'a*, vol. 6, p. 403.

42 M. Ṭ. Tunikābunī, "Mukhtaṣar-i sharḥ-i aḥwāl-i Mīrzā-yi Jilwa," 656; M. M. Āqā Buzurg Ṭīhrānī, *Ṭabaqāt a'lām al-Shī'a*, vol. 14, p. 845; Y. Dawlatābādī, *Ḥayāt-i Yahyā*, vol. 1, pp. 112–113; M. Ṣadūqī Suhā, *Taḥrīr-i thānī-i tārikh-i ḥukamā' u 'urafā'-i muta'akhhir*, pp. 373, 475–483.

43 See M. Ḥ. I'timād al-Salṭana et al., *Nāma-yi dānishwarān-i Nāshirī*, vol. 3, p. 34.

44 A. Jilwa, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Jilwa*, pp. 81–308.

autobiography. It is among the few writings for which there are many extant manuscripts. Throughout the work, the author identifies many unacknowledged sources of Mullā Ṣadrā's *Asfār*. A portion of this work comprises an explanation of the text of the *Asfār*. Another portion of the work consists of Jilwa's critical comments. In some places, he defends Avicenna's ideas, rejecting Mullā Ṣadrā's objections to them as invalid.⁴⁵ Given the fact that he referred to this work in his autobiography, most of it must have been written before 1294/1877. MS Majlis 106 contains a holograph of this work.⁴⁶

2. A Gloss on Mullā Ṣadrā's Commentary on Athīr al-Dīn Abharī's *Hidāyat al-ḥikma*⁴⁷: This gloss was published in lithograph along with the commentary in 1313/1895–96 in Tehran.⁴⁸
3. A Gloss on Mullā Ṣadrā's *al-Mashā'ir*⁴⁹: In this work, Jilwa drew greatly on the commentary on the *Mashā'ir* by his teacher Muḥammad Ja'far Lāhijī. This work was lithographed in Tehran in 1315/1897–98 along with the text of the *Mashā'ir*. MS Majlis 101 contains a holograph of this gloss.⁵⁰
4. A Gloss on Mullā Ṣadrā's *al-Mabda' wa-l-ma'ād*⁵¹: This work was lithographed in Tehran in 1314/1896–97 along with the text of *al-Mabda' wa-l-ma'ād*. It mostly consists of explanatory comments. In places, however, he also raises objections and provides answers to them.⁵²
5. A Gloss on Dawūd al-Qayṣarī's Introduction to His Commentary on Ibn 'Arabī's *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*⁵³: This work reveals Jilwa's mystical inclinations and in writing it he drew on the mystical writings of 'Alā' al-Dawla

45 Ibid., p. 93.

46 For the description of the manuscript copies of this work, particularly MS Majlis 106, see A. Jilwa, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Jilwa*, pp. 87–91.

47 Ibid., pp. 449–482.

48 Another copy of this gloss is MS Majlis 133. According to Ḥasan Riḍāzāda, some glosses preserved in MS Majlis 133 do not exist in the lithograph and vice versa. For his edition, Riḍāzāda used both the lithograph and the manuscript copy. See A. Jilwa, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Jilwa*, pp. 451–452.

49 A. Jilwa, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Jilwa*, pp. 373–388.

50 See A. Jilwa, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Jilwa*, p. 376.

51 A. Jilwa, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Jilwa*, pp. 343–371.

52 Ḥasan Riḍāzāda's edition of this work is based on the lithograph edition only. He states that his efforts to find a manuscript of it have proved unsuccessful. See A. Jilwa, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Jilwa*, pp. 345–346.

53 Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī edited and published this gloss along with Qayṣarī's commentary on *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*. See Dāwūd Qayṣarī, *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, ed. Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (Tehran: 1375 Sh./1996–97). Further, Ḥasan Riḍāzāda edited it on the basis of two manuscripts; MSS Āstān-i Quds-i Riḍawī 418 and Mar'ashī 7021. See A. Jilwa, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Jilwa*, pp. 483–576.

Simnānī, Mu'ayyad al-Dīn Jandī, 'Abd al-Razzāq Kāshānī, 'Abd al-Rahmān Jāmī, Šā'in al-Dīn Turka Iṣfahānī, and Ibn 'Arabī, as well as the philosophical writings of Avicenna, the Ikhwān al-Šafā', Šadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī and Fayḍ Kāshānī.⁵⁴

6. A Gloss on Avicenna's *Shifā'*⁵⁵: In this gloss Jilwa draws on Avicenna's other writings as well as Bahmanyār's *al-Taḥṣīl*, Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī's *al-Mabāḥith al-mashriqiyya*, Sayyid Sharīf Jurjānī's *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*, Mīr Dāmād's *al-Qabasāt*, Mullā Šadrā's *Aṣfār* and his *Sharḥ Hidāyat al-ḥikma*, Fayḍ Kāshānī's *ʿAyn al-yaqīn* and 'Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī's *Shawāriq al-ilhām* in order to elucidate the discussions in the *Shifā'*. Regarding this work, Murtaḍā Mudarrisi Chahārdahī writes:

Among the benefits of Mīrza Jilwa's gloss on Avicenna's *Shifā'* is that, first, as much as possible, he explains ambiguous passages in the *Shifā'* by directly quoting clearer passages by Avicenna himself. Second, Jilwa mentions issues that are related to the writings of early philosophers (*qudamā'*); he confirms, explains, rejects, or problematizes them. He quotes the text verbatim, and he also mentions the sources of his remarks at the end. Jilwa has actually explained the *Shifā'* in Avicenna's own words, and the words of early philosophers, while remaining true to the text. He always connects the content of a passage to its author, even for contemporaneous issues in natural philosophy. In particular, he notes issues in which there have been developments, and he offers additional explanations in the discussions of natural science.⁵⁶

A copy of the *Shifā'* with holograph marginalia by Jilwa is preserved in the Central Library of the University of Tehran (MS Tehran, University of Tehran, Mishkāṭ 241). Jilwa seems to have been teaching the *Shifā'* on the basis of this copy.⁵⁷ He also wrote some editorial remarks in the margins.⁵⁸

7. A Gloss on Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's commentary on Avicenna's *al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*: Most of this gloss comprises citations from other books of

54 For example, see D. Qayṣarī, *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, pp. 170–206.

55 Jilwa's gloss on Physics of the *Shifā'* has been edited in A. Jilwa, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakim-i Jilwa*, pp. 309–342.

56 Murtaḍā Mudarrisi Chahārdahī, "Ḥakīm Mīrzā Abū l-Ḥasan-i Jilwa," *Jilwa* 2 (1324 Sh./1945): 11–23 (17–18).

57 See Muḥammad Taqī Dānishpazhūh, *Fihrist-i kitābkhāna-i iḥdāyī-i Āqā Sayyid Muḥammad Mishkāṭ bi kitābkhāna-yi dānishgāh-i Tihirān*, vol. 3, part 1 (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Dānishgāh-i Tihirān, 1332 Sh./1953–54), p. 289.

58 See Abū l-Ḥasan Jilwa, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakim-i Jilwa*, pp. 315–316.

philosophy and theology, including Quṭb al-Dīn Rāzī's *al-Muḥākamāt*, Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's *Asās al-iqtibās*, Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī's *al-Mabāḥith al-mashriqiyya*, Mullā Ṣadrā's *Asfār*, and 'Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī's *Shawāriq al-ilhām* as well as the latter's *Gawhar-i murād*. Jilwa cites these works to elucidate the text. MS Majlis 126 contains a holograph of this work.⁵⁹

8. A Gloss on 'Alā' al-Dīn Qūshjī's Commentary on Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's *Tajrīd al-i'tiqād*⁶⁰: This gloss was written in a critical manner. MS Majlis 84 contains a holograph of this work.
9. A Gloss on Qāḍizāda Rūmī's Commentary on Muḥammad Jaghmīnī's *al-Mulakhkhaṣ*: On astronomy, this work was published in lithograph in Tehran in 1311/1893–94.

3.2 Short Treatises

1. A Remark on the Unity of the Intellect and the Intelligible (*Fā'ida fī ittiḥād al-ʿāqil wa-l-maʿqūl*)⁶¹: A refutation of the Neoplatonic idea of the unity of the intellect and the intelligible, defended by Mullā Ṣadrā in his writings. This treatise was published in Tehran in 1313/1895 in lithograph on the margins of Mullā Ṣadrā's commentary on Athīr al-Dīn Abharī's *Hidāyat al-ḥikma*.⁶²
2. A Remark on Substantial Motion (*Fā'ida fī bayān al-ḥaraka fī l-jawhar wa-anna al-murād minhā mā hiya*): In defense of Avicenna, this is a refutation in Arabic of motion in the category of essences, and a critique of Mullā Ṣadrā's notion of substantial motion. A lithograph edition of this treatise was published in Tehran in 1313/1895–96 in the margins of Mullā Ṣadrā's commentary on Athīr al-Dīn Abharī's *Hidāyat al-ḥikma*.⁶³
3. An Investigation into the Relationship between the Originated and the Pre-Eternal (*Tahqiq fī bayān rabṭ al-ḥādith bi-l-qadīm*): In this work, Jilwa delved into the views of Avicenna, Ghazālī, and Mīr Dāmād in order to critique Mullā Ṣadrā's view on the relation between that which is

59 Yūsuf I'tisāmī, *Fihrist-i kitābkhāna-yi Majlis-i shūrā-yi millī*, vol. 2 (Tehran: Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Millī, 1311 Sh./1932–93), p. 65. Ḥasan Riḍāzāda edited and published the portion of this work, which he thinks represents Jilwa's distinguished views. See A. Jilwa, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Jilwa*, pp. 389–415.

60 A portion of this work was published by Ḥasan Riḍāzāda. See A. Jilwa, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Jilwa*, pp. 417–448.

61 A. Jilwa, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Jilwa*, pp. 468–470.

62 Riḍāzāda's edition of this gloss is based on the lithography edition and MS Majlis 133.

63 Muḥsin Kadiwār edited this work on the basis of the lithograph edition. See Abū l-Ḥasan Jilwa and Muḥsin Kadiwār (ed.), "Du risāla az Mīrzā-yi Jilwa," *Nāma-yi Mufīd* 26 (1375 Sh./1996–97): 109–122. It was also edited by Ḥasan Riḍāzāda on the basis of the lithograph edition and MS Majlis 133. See A. Jilwa, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Jilwa*, pp. 470–477.

originated and that which is pre-eternal. Āqā ‘Alī Mudarris and Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha’ī both responded to Jilwa’s criticisms in their own writings.⁶⁴ This treatise was first published in lithograph in Tehran in 1313/1895–96 in the margins of Mullā Ṣadrā’s commentary on Athīr al-Dīn Abharī’s *Hidāyat al-ḥikma*.⁶⁵ The date of its authorship is unknown. However, given the responses to it by Āqā ‘Alī Mudarris and Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha’ī, it must have been written before 1306/1888, the year of the death of Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha’ī.

4. A Remark/Treatise on How a Single Concept Can Be Abstracted from Distinct Quiddities (*Fā’ida/Risāla fī kayfiyyat intizā’ maḥmūm al-wāḥid min al-ḥaqā’iq al-mutabāyana*).⁶⁶ Jilwa argues in this work that a single concept of existence can be abstracted from different quiddities in the world without any need to consider these quiddities as being one. Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha’ī (d. 1306/1888) responded to this treatise in a work titled *Refutation of the Permissibility of Abstracting a Single Concept from Distinct Quiddities* (*Risāla fī radd jawāz intizā’ al-maḥmūm al-wāḥid min al-ḥaqā’iq al-mutabāyana*). Despite disagreements with Jilwa, Qumsha’ī refers to him with respect giving him titles such as the philosopher (*ḥakīm*), the verifier (*muḥaqqiq*) and the meticulous thinker (*muḍaqqiq*). Given Qumsha’ī’s response, Jilwa must have completed his treatise before Qumsha’ī’s death.⁶⁷
5. A Remark on the Proof of the Existence of the Forms of Species in Bodies (*Fī ithbāt wujūd al-ṣuwar naw’iyya fī l-aṣṣām*)⁶⁸
6. A Remark/Treatise to Establish that An Indefinite Proposition is a Universal Proposition (*Fā’ida/Risāla al-qaḍiyya al-muhmala hiya al-qaḍiyya al-ṭabī’iyya*): In this treatise, after discussing the views of Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī, Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, and Quṭb al-Dīn Rāzī, Jilwa concludes that a universal proposition (*qaḍiyya ṭabī’iyya*) and an indefinite proposition (*qaḍiyya muhmala*) are one and the same.⁶⁹

64 See A. Jilwa and M. Kadīwar (ed.), “Du risāla az Mīrzā-yi Jilwa,” 111.

65 Kadīwar’s edition is based on the lithograph edition only. But Riḍāzāda used MS Majlis 133 as well. See A. Jilwa, *Majmū’a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Jilwa*, pp. 477–482.

66 See A. Jilwa, *Majmū’a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Jilwa*, pp. 605–608.

67 See A. Jilwa, *Majmū’a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Jilwa*, pp. 603–604.

68 MS Qom, Mar’ashī 8081, fols. 49b–50b. See Aḥmad Ḥusaynī Ashkiwarī, *Fihrist-i nuskhahā-yi khaṭṭī-yi kitābkhāna-yi ‘umūmī-i Ḥaḍrat-i Āyat Allāh al-‘Uzmā Mar’ashī Najafī* (Qom: Kitābkhāna-yi ‘Umūmī-i Ḥaḍrat-i Āyat Allāh al-‘Uzmā Mar’ashī Najafī, 1372 Sh./1993–94), vol. 21, pp. 81–82.

69 See Abū l-Ḥasan Jilwa and ‘Izz al-Dīn Riḍānizhād (ed.), “Risāla-yi al-Qaḍiyya al-muhmala hiya al-qaḍiyya al-ṭabī’iyya,” in Ghulām-Riḍā Gulī Zawāra (ed.), *Gulshan-i Jilwa*, pp. 119–123. This edition is based on the single known copy of this work, MS Mar’ashī 8081, fols. 52b–53b.

7. A Remark on the Acceptance of Supplication (*Fāʿida/Risāla fī bayān istijābat al-duʿā*):⁷⁰ In this short Arabic work, Jilwa divides quiddity into three categories: a quiddity that is auspicious (*saʿīd*) by nature (*dhāt*); a quiddity that is wretched (*shaqī*) by nature; and a quiddity that has the capacity for happiness (*saʿāda*). If God showed this last type of quiddity blessing (*khayr*) and happiness, and that quiddity accepted it, it would achieve happiness. Supplicating God is also one of the causes of salvation and success. For the third type of quiddity, known in the Qurʾān as “the Companions of the Right” (*aṣḥāb al-yamīn*), supplication acts as a medicine for the sick. However, supplication will not benefit the first or second types of quiddity. Jilwa considers knowing God the most effective means of ensuring the acceptance of supplication.

3.3 Lecture Transcriptions

1. On Universals and their Divisions (*Fī l-kullī wa-aqsāmihā*): This treatise is a transcript of a lecture that Jilwa delivered in 1307/1889–90, by his student Sayyid ʿAbbās Mūsawī Shāhrūdī.⁷¹
2. On Existence (*Risāla Wujūdīyya*): This piece, on the idea of the pervasiveness of existence (*sarayān al-wujūd*), is a transcript of Jilwa’s lecture on this issue by one of his students, possibly Sayyid ʿAbbās Mūsawī Shāhrūdī.⁷²
3. Short Philosophical Comments: It comprises several philosophical discussions. It begins with a comment about existence and quiddity, how they are related, and how they are abstracted. The next comment is on Suhrawardī’s theory of light. As far as Jilwa was concerned, when saying that the soul and what lies beyond it is pure light, Suhrawardī was referring to existence. Another comment concerns mathematical body (*jism-i taʿlīmī*) or the three-dimensional extension of body. The piece also includes questions and responses on the relationship between the existence of actual things (*wujūd al-aʿyān*) and God, and how existence can be abstracted. In addition, Jilwa poses a question about the incipience (*ḥudūth*) of existents and then supplies an answer to it. In another

70 There are two known manuscript copies of this work: MSS Marʿashī 8081 (fols. 55a–57b) and Majlis 1911 (copied by Yahyā Dawlatābādī in 1312/1894–95). For the edition of this work see Abū l-Ḥasan Jilwa and Sayyid Hādī Ṭabāṭabāʾī, “Risāla fī bayān istijābat al-duʿā,” in Ghulām-Riḍā Gulī Zawāra (ed.), *Gulshan-i Jilwa*, pp. 107–117.

71 For the edition of this treatise, see Abū l-Ḥasan Jilwa and Ḥusayn Sayyid Mūsawī (ed.), “Risāla dar kullī wa aqsām-i ān: Az taqīrāt-i marḥūm Āqā Sayyid Abū l-Ḥasan Jilwa,” *Khiradnāma-yi Ṣadrā* 3 (1375 Sh./1996): 93–99.

72 See A. Jilwa, *Majmūʿa-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Jilwa*, pp. 623–638.

comment, he also discusses Mullā Ṣadrā's view on the copulative function of existence and explains other expressions from the *Asfār*.⁷³

4. A Gloss on 'Abd al-Rahmān Jāmī's *al-Durra al-fākhira*: In this gloss, which is a transcription of Jilwa's classes made by Sayyid 'Abbās Mūsawī Shāhrūdī in 1306/1888, an attempt is made to explain the concept of the unity of existence (*waḥdat al-wujūd*) as it was understood by 'Abd al-Rahmān Jāmī in his *al-Durra al-fākhira*.⁷⁴

3.4 *Poetry and Other Writings*

1. *Dīwān*: Including odes (*qasīdas*), love poetry (*ghazals*), couplets (*qat'a*) and poems of different forms.⁷⁵
2. An introduction to the *dīwān* of Mujmar: It was published in Tehran in 1312/1894–95.
3. His autobiography: This was written at the request of 'Alī Qulī Mirzā Qājār I'tiḍād al-Saltāna to be included in *Nāma-yi dānishwarān-i Nāṣirī*.⁷⁶

4 Jilwa's Philosophical Thought

Even though Jilwa lived at a time when philosophical discourse revolved around Mullā Ṣadrā more than any other figure, he inclined toward the philosophical views of Avicenna. Most of Jilwa's views were criticisms of Mullā Ṣadrā's ideas and *al-Ḥikma al-muta'āliya*. According to Yahyā Dawlatābādī (d. 1318 Sh./1939) who also attended some of his classes, Jilwa, "teaches the books of later philosophers, particularly Mullā Ṣadrā, but he does not attach much importance to them, especially the *Asfār*, which Jilwa considers a collection of other books compiled later by Mulla Ṣadrā's students."⁷⁷ Below we will note some important examples of Jilwa's criticisms of Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophy.

4.1 *Abstracting a Single Concept from Distinct Quiddities*

One of the philosophical discussions that Jilwa focused on is the abstraction of a single concept from distinct quiddities. In the *Asfār* this issue is fundamental to the univocity, the primacy (*aṣālat*) and the gradation (*tashkīk*) of existence. Jilwa wrote an independent treatise on this issue. In it Jilwa maintained

73 See A. Jilwa, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Jilwa*, pp. 581–582.

74 Ibid., pp. 639–651.

75 As mentioned before, Aḥmad Suhaylī Khwānsārī edited Jilwā's *Dīwān*.

76 M. Ḥ. I'timād al-Saltāna et al., *Nāma-yi dānishwarān-i Nāṣirī*, vol. 3, pp. 31–37.

77 Y. Dawlatābādī, *Ḥayāt-i Yahyā*, vol. 1, p. 113.

that abstracting a single concept from distinct quiddities, which do not have anything essential in common, is impossible.⁷⁸ In other words, he agrees with Mullā Ṣadrā that abstracting a single concept from distinct quiddities necessitates the existence of something in common. However, as far as he is concerned, this does not require what is common in these quiddities to be essential (*dhātī*) or real (*ḥaqīqī*). Therefore, it is possible for the concept of existence to be abstracted from the concomitants (*lawāzim*) of those distinct quiddities since there is no proof for the argument that the concept of existence is essential (*dhātī*). The thing in common might be a negative concept (*ma'nā salbī*), for example, "human" and "tree" are both "not-horse." in which case it does not entail that the thing in common is real or essential. If, however, the existence of the Necessary Existent and the existence of contingents are completely different, how can a single concept be abstracted from them? Jilwa replies that there is indeed something in common between the existence of the Necessary Existent and the existence of contingents. But having something in common does not mean that they have an essential similarity, for it can be said that both of them are effective (*mabda' al-āthār*). In sum, Jilwa undermines the need to posit essential commonality in order to abstract a common concept. So long as there is something in common, even something that is non-essential (*ghayr dhātī*), it will suffice. Therefore, things which have something in common are not necessarily one and the same.

In response to Jilwa's view, Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha'ī wrote a treatise titled *Risāla fī radd jawāz intizā' al-mafhūm al-wāḥid min al-ḥaqā'iq al-mutabāyana*. In this treatise, Qumsha'ī argues that abstracting a single concept from distinct quiddities is possible only when there is an essential commonality between the quiddities. Even when the intended commonality is not essential for the two sides, it must be based on something in common in their essences.⁷⁹ In the closing paragraphs of it, he writes that Jilwa was either speaking to the tastes of laypeople or that what he really meant has not been understood because he was too great to utter such nonsense. Either that or we have not understood the true meaning of his view.⁸⁰

4.2 *Rejecting the Unity of Existence*

As mentioned, the question of the abstraction of a single concept from distinct quiddities is one of the fundamental discussions in Mullā Ṣadrā's ontology. It is precisely for this reason that Jilwa discusses this issue. For Jilwa, the ability to

78 A. Jilwa, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Jilwa*, pp. 605–608.

79 M. R. Qumsha'ī, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha'ī*, pp. 247–252.

80 Ibid., p. 252.

abstract a single concept of existence from different quiddities does not entail these quiddities having any essential commonality. Basically, Jilwa is against the conception of existence found in Ibn 'Arabī's thought, and subsequently in Mullā Ṣadrā's discussions of ontology under the rubric of a single reality, which pervades all existents. He also criticizes the idea of unfolding existence (*wujūd al-munbaṣiṭ*), or existence negatively conditioned (*wujūd bi-sharṭ lā*) which allowed Mullā Ṣadrā to unify all existents. In his gloss on the introduction to Qayṣarī's commentary on Ibn 'Arabī's *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, he makes clear his disagreement with the idea of the unity of existence (*waḥdat al-wujūd*): "Know that the unity of existence, in the sense that existence is necessary in itself and by its essence, is wrong, even if the expressions of mystics give that impression."⁸¹

In his lecture *On Existence (al-Risāla al-wujūdiyya)*, which is about this issue, in particular, Jilwa provides more details. He quotes two examples from the statements of mystics that express the idea of the unity of existence. These two statements are from Ibn 'Arabī's *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyya*:

- (1) "He [= existence of the Truth] is identical with every thing in terms of manifestation, [yet] He is not identical with things in their essences, glorified and exalted be He. Rather, He remains He, and things remain things."⁸²
- (2) "The Absolute is the Truth, described through every description."⁸³

Criticizing these statements, Jilwa said that if we accept that the totality of existence runs through every existent, then every existent has the capacity to be determined by all determinations (*ta'ayyunāt*). For example, the existence of man can be determined by the quiddity of horse or any other determination. For every existent, the existence of one of these determinations over another is not to be preferred:

I say that the unity of existence means that existence is necessary in itself and by its essence (*al-wājib bi-'aynih wa-bi-dhātih*), and it pervades all existents and is determined by every determination, and there is no level of existence, which is separate and detached from those determinations, because if existence is in its totality in every determination, then all [possible] determinations must be in every single determination. For example, it should have been possible to abstract the quiddity of horse, and an infinite number of other quiddities, from the existence of human.

81 See A. Jilwa, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Jilwa*, p. 493.

82 Mūḥyi l-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyya* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, n.d.), vol. 2, p. 484.

83 Ibid., vol. 2, p. 245.

If you say that is indeed so, except that some determinations are manifest while others are not, for instance, in the humanized existence (*al-wujūd al-insānī*) of the human all determinations are there, however only the human determination is manifest, then, I ask, what is the reason that some are apparent while others are not? Since all exist through a single existence, all should be apparent, or all should be concealed.⁸⁴

Jilwa also says that if we consider the Necessary Existent a non-determined existence, then we have actually made it conceptual (*i'tibārī*) because extra-mental existence is determined existence:

Furthermore, it means that the existence of the Necessary Existent is conceptual, and the existence of the contingent is real because existence outside the mind and in and of itself (*fī nafs al-amr*) is determined existence. According to the proponent of the unity of existence, determined existence is contingent. When the existence of this determined thing is considered without considering the determination (of it), it is the Necessary Existent according to the proponent of the unity of existence. So the Necessary Existent is conceptual; it does not exist in the external world qua the Necessary Existent because it is an existent that is free from all determinations apart from being conceptual in the intellect.⁸⁵

In the above passage, it appears that Jilwa is alluding to the issue of existence and quiddity in the Necessary Existent. According to Mullā Ṣadrā, quiddity is determination itself (*'ayn al-ta'ayyun*), and for this reason, he completely rejects it for the Necessary Existent. This is why Jilwa raises objections in the passage above: he thinks the doctrine of the unity of existence entails the Necessary Existent being conceptual, especially from the perspective of Ibn 'Arabī, for whom there is no clear distinction between the existence of the Necessary Existent and the existence of the contingents.

4.3 Substantial Motion

One of the most significant discussions in Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophy concerns substantial motion. Opposing the view of Aristotle and Avicenna, Mullā Ṣadrā links motion and change with the existence of things, and not with categories pertaining to the essence. According to Mullā Ṣadrā, the substance of a thing which is in motion does not stay the same. It changes all the time. Its existence,

84 A. Jilwa, *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm-i Jilwa*, pp. 232–233.

85 Ibid., p. 234.

however, remains stable and that provides individuation (*waḥda shakhṣiyya*)⁸⁶ of the thing over time and it joins the states of quiddity in the course of movement/change. Furthermore, he argues that substantial motion is something continuous (*muttaṣil*), in other words, a thing in motion does not relinquish any of its actualities.⁸⁷

Mullā Ṣadrā proffers several arguments to prove substantial motion. For example, he argues that according to philosophers the nature (*ṭabīʿa*) of everything is the origin of motion in that thing, and they have established proofs for that. What is meant by “nature” here is the form itself, in the sense that it is related to movements and actions. Thus, the nature of a thing must be subject to motion because it is impossible for a new and changeable thing to come from something that is unchangeable.⁸⁸

Avicenna was aware of this issue too. His conclusion, however, was the exact opposite of Mullā Ṣadrā’s. He argued that motion does not necessitate a changing nature because movements are gradual: through the process, the thing moves away from one thing and approaches something else, even as its nature remains unchanged. Thus, the cause of the renewal and change of something must be the renewal of a state of that thing which is not its nature, but something accidental (*ʿarīḍī*) to it.⁸⁹

Mullā Ṣadrā believed that this renewal of states must boil down to its nature, because every forced movement (*ḥaraka qasriyya*) eventually cannot resist the nature of the moving object, and the soul as an agent which possesses the will to move and change could not accomplish this task without involving the nature of the moving object itself. Therefore, he concluded, every renewed motion indicates a change in the nature of the thing, and is caused by it.⁹⁰

The concept of substantial motion was subject to several criticisms. Most of these were actually based on the arguments of Avicenna.⁹¹ Jilwa was one of

86 Ş. Şīrāzī, *al-Ḥikma al-mutaʿaliya*, vol. 3, pp. 83, 86–87.

87 See Ş. Şīrāzī, *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya*, pp. 608–609.

88 See Ş. Şīrāzī, *al-Ḥikma al-mutaʿaliya*, vol. 3, p. 65; vol. 5, p. 253.

89 Avicenna, *al-Shifāʾ al-Ṭabīʿiyyāt*, ed. Ibrāhīm Madkūr et al. (Qom: Kitābkhāna-yi ʿUmūmī-yi Ḥadrat-i Āyat Allāh al-ʿUzmā Marʾaṣhī Najafī, 1404–1406/1984–86), vol. 1, p. 302; idem, *al-Mabdaʾ wa-l-maʿād*, ed. ʿAbd Allāh Nūrānī (Tehran: Institute of Islamic Studies of McGill University [Tehran Branch], 1363 Sh./1984–85), p. 52.

90 Ş. Şīrāzī, *al-Ḥikma al-mutaʿaliya*, vol. 3, pp. 61–62, 65.

91 On Avicenna’s rejection of trans-substantial motion, see Avicenna, *al-Najāt min al-gharq fī baḥr al-ḍalālāt*, ed. Muḥammad Taqī Dānishpazhūh (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Dānishgāh-i Tihirān, 1364 Sh./1985), p. 205. See also Ş. Şīrāzī, *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya*, pp. 210–211. For further reading on this issue, see Munīra Palangī, “Ḥarakat-i jawharī,” *Dānishnāma-yi jahān-i Islām*, ed. Ghulām-ʿAlī Ḥaddād ʿĀdil (Tehran: Bunyād-i Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif-i Islāmī, 1388 Sh./2009–10), vol. 13, pp. 51–54.

those who rejected the concept of substantial motion and wrote a treatise on this topic. He first presented Mullā Ṣadrā's argument: every accidental motion, be it natural (*ṭabīʿī*), voluntary (*irādī*) or forced (*qasrī*), is caused by an essential motion. This essential motion is the motion of the nature of the moving object. Since the nature of movable objects is their substance, we can conclude that the substance of all moving bodies is in motion.⁹² Jilwa then explained that the idea that accidental movements are due to an essential motion is only correct insofar as a moving object cannot be associated with a stationary one.⁹³ However, it is not correct to assume that essential motion is the same as substantial motion because one can say that every movement in the world of generation and corruption is caused by the motions of the spheres. In other words, essential motion can be considered to be the renewal of the spheres, since all accidental movements are related to the renewal of celestial bodies, and caused by them.⁹⁴ Celestial movement has nothing to do with the nature of the celestial bodies, in other words, that motion is not substantial. Even if it were, the nature of celestial bodies was considered to be different from the nature of elements in the sublunary world. So what is applicable to them may not be applicable to the moving objects of the sublunary world.

Jilwa then quotes and criticizes another of Mullā Ṣadrā's arguments for substantial motion.⁹⁵ This, according to Jilwa, is as follows: if there is no motion in the substance, then, in the process of the alteration and succession of instants, prime matter must be without form in between two instants. So, when the form of water changes into the form of air as a result of heat, if first the form of water ceases to exist, and then the form of air comes into existence, without an instant of time between them, that entails a succession of instants (*tawālī al-ānāt*), which boils down to atomism, the falsity of which has been established. And if there is a duration of time between the extinction of one form and the generation of another, then, in between those two forms, prime matter must be void of any type of essence, which is also impossible. Therefore, both the extinction and generation of specific forms occur to prime matter gradually, not instantaneously, and that is substantial motion.

Jilwa problematizes this argument by saying that it does not necessitate a succession of instants (*tawālī al-ānāt*), nor does it mean that prime matter will remain formless, because we can posit another reason for the generation of

92 A. Jilwa and M. Kadiwar (ed.), "Du risāla az Mīrā-yi Jilwa," 112.

93 Ibid., 112–113.

94 We will explain this idea in greater detail in the next section on the connection between what is originated (*ḥādith*) and what is pre-eternal (*qadīm*).

95 A. Jilwa and M. Kadiwar (ed.), "Du risāla az Mīrā-yi Jilwa," 113–117.

the form of air, i.e., the form of air comes into being at the time when it is connected to the form of water. The corruption (*fasād*) of the first form of air is instantaneous but the generation of the second form of air is like intermediary motion (*ḥaraka tawassuṭiyya*), which does not conform to time even when it is temporal (*zamānī*). In defence of the Aristotelian notion of generation and corruption, Jilwa explains that the second form comes into existence at a time when it is connected to the extinction of the first form. The emergence of this new form is not gradual, and therefore it does not entail the alteration of the substance or the nullification of generation and corruption; rather, it is intermediary (*tawassuṭī*), since in intermediary motion there is distance and a lapse of time between the beginning and the end. In the same way that the incipience of intermediary motion is not gradual, the emergence of the second form is not gradual either. So we cannot assume that there is an instant, or a period of time (*zamānī*) between the instant when the first form becomes devoid of matter, and the time when the second form comes into existence; and without this assumption, there is no danger of matter being without form since, according to this theory, there is no gap between the first form and the second. Explaining how an essential form (*ṣūra jawhariyya*) comes into temporal being, Jilwa says, "If you object by saying that Avicenna said that the second form emerges instantaneously, the answer to your question is that Avicenna, in the *Physics* of the *Shifā'*, said that "instantaneous" (*dafʿī*) has two meanings: one in the sense of occurring in an instant, and another in the sense of something that stands in contrast to occurring bit by bit."⁹⁶

Jilwa also gives other arguments for substantial motion and criticizes and refutes them on the basis of Avicenna's principles of philosophy. His most important criticisms are based on the idea that, if we presume that motion occurs within the substance [of a thing], then there is no stable (*thābit*) subject (*mawḍūʿ*) for motion.

Some of the followers of Ṣadrian philosophy responded to Jilwa's criticisms of substantial motion. In his lectures on the *Asfār*, Muṭahharī discussed Jilwa's first objection. He said that to respond to Jilwa's objection, one must fully grasp the difference between two types of motion. In substantial motion, motion is essential (*dhātī*); however, when it comes to accidental motion (*ḥaraka ʿaraḍiyya*), motion cannot be essential (*dhātī*), since the existence of accidents is not an independent one. According to Muṭahharī, it is considered independent and as having individuation (*tashakhkhūṣ*), when, in reality, accidents are not independent of their subjects (*mawḍūʿ*). And if it were assumed to be independent, then by definition it would no longer be an accident. Therefore,

96 A. Jilwa and M. Kadiwar (ed.), "Du risāla az Mīrā-yi Jilwa," 113–117.

without an independent subject, accidents (*a'rāḍ*) cannot be the subject of motion. When Mullā Ṣadrā says that the renewal of things (*mutajaddidāt*) comes down to the fact that their essence (*dhāt*) is in flux, he refers to a motion/change which involves the essence. The objection by Jilwa that motion is not identical to the moving object is only true for accidental motion. In substantial motion, however, motion is indeed identical to the moving object. It is only in accidental motion that these two are distinct and the essence of the moving object remains stable in the course of motion/change.⁹⁷

Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī repeatedly alluded to Jilwa's critical views in his writings and responded to some of them. On one occasion he quoted a passage from Mullā Ṣadrā's *Asfār* which was the subject of Jilwa's criticism:

The subject for trans-substantial motion is prime matter, but not in and of itself, since it cannot exist without some form, rather the subject for this motion is some form (*ṣūrat^{un} mā*) that has no determination (*lā 'alā l-ta'ayyun*); its motion only occurs in the characteristics of the substantial form (*al-ṣūra al-jawhariyya*).⁹⁸

Jilwa objected to this passage by saying that a form that is the basis of the individuation of an individual cannot have an existence that is separate from its characteristics, such that one could say motion occurs in them; rather renewal, change and the transience of characteristics are change and the transience of the substantial form. Both of these exist in a single existence. Although according to rational analysis, they are different, this [purely rational] difference is insufficient, because motion occurs in the external world, and therefore it must have a stable subject too, not just an analytical and mental existence. The description that Mullā Ṣadrā presents of a stable form truly exists in reality. Addressing this objection, Āshtiyānī regarded it as the same as that of Avicenna, in which it is argued that motion requires a subject, and since prime matter does not have independent reality, it cannot be the subject.⁹⁹ According to Aristotle, prime matter is inextricable from form. Based on the inextricability of prime matter and form, it is necessary that, when the form ceases to exist, the body becomes completely nonexistent. According to Āshtiyānī, Jilwa based his argument on Mullā Ṣadrā's principles, in which matter and form are

97 Murtaḍā Muṭahharī, *Ḥarakat u zamān dar falsafa-yi Islāmī* (Tehran: Ilhām, 1366 Sh./1987–88), vol. 1, pp. 302, 332.

98 Ṣ. al-Shīrāzī, *al-Hikma al-muta'aliya*, vol. 4, p. 274.

99 See Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī's introduction to his edition of Fayḍ Kāshānī's *Uṣūl al-ma'arīf* (Qom: Daftar-i Tablighāt-i Islāmī-i Ḥawza-yi 'Ilmiyya-yi Qum, 1362 Sh./1983–1984), pp. 275–304.

unified. Nevertheless, he supposed that his objection was applicable. However, he missed the fact that Mullā Ṣadrā believed in the gradational unity (*waḥda tashkikiyya*) of existence, and he did not consider existence to be in motion. Had he given due attention to the discussion on existence and motion in reality, he would have seen that motion is a description of existence; existence by its essence is not composite; it is characterized by a special gradation; and based on the primacy of existence, and the unity of reality and this special gradation, levels of existence exist in a single existence. In substantial motion it is not necessary for the subject of motion to be individuated; however, in accidental motion, this is necessary since accidents come forth from the substance itself. Āshtiyānī maintained that in all his objections to substantial motion, Jilwa, like Avicenna, had confused the precepts of existence with the precepts of quiddity.¹⁰⁰

4.4 *The Origin of Motion*

According to Avicenna, the circular motion of the spheres (*aflāk*) has no beginning or end, because time, which is the measure of motion, also has no beginning or end. This motion is in one respect singular, simple (*basīṭ*), unchanging (*thābit*) and continuous, and in another respect, it admits the existence of multiplicity and change. Therefore, with respect to change and origination, the circular motion of the spheres is a condition for the origination of the motion of other contingents. On the one hand, it is connected to the immutable and eternal cause from which it is emanated, and on the other, it causes the motions of other contingents. Avicenna considered the “souls” of the spheres to be the proximate cause of their voluntary circular motion, and at the same time considered the intellects to be the primary cause of their motion.¹⁰¹ This is because the eternal motion of the spheres is caused by an eternal agent. The desire to resemble the First Principle with respect to perfection and actualization becomes the basis of their motion. The desire pertains to the “soul” of the sphere, which necessitates its eternal voluntary circular motion. Given the fact that, according to Avicenna, the motion of an individual sphere is neither essential (*bi-l-dhāt*) nor accidental (*bi-l-ʿaraḍ*),¹⁰² we can say that the relation

100 M. Fayḍ Kāshānī, *Uṣūl al-maʿārif*, pp. 276–278.

101 Avicenna, *al-Shifāʾ al-Ilāhiyyāt*, ed. Ibrāhīm Madkūr et al. (Qom: Kitābkhāna-yi ʿUmūmī-i Ḥaḍrat-i Āyat Allāh al-ʿUẓmā Marʿashī Najafī, 1404–1406/1984–86), vol. 1, pp. 381–393.

102 Avicenna, *al-Shifāʾ al-Ilāhiyyāt*, vol. 1, p. 387; Avicenna, Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī and Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbihāt maʿa l-sharḥ li-Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī wa-sharḥ al-sharḥ li-Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāzī* (Tehran: Daftar-i Nashr-i Kitāb, 1403/1983), vol. 3, p. 207; see also Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's relevant comment: vol. 3, p. 209.

between what is unchanging/immutable (*thābit*) and what is changing is the sphere itself, because it possesses a universal soul (*naḥs kullī*) and a universal will, and, in this respect, is connected to the immutable world of the intellect. Moreover, it also possesses particular soul, by virtue of which it is the direct cause of the eternal circular motion of the sphere. This eternal circular motion of the spheres is the origin of other changes in the material world. Avicenna's theory is based on Aristotle, but, in contrast to Aristotle, who only considered the unmoved mover (i.e., the intellect) to be the final cause (*al-illa al-ghā'iyya*), Avicenna also emphasized its efficient causality.

In this case, Mullā Ṣadrā did not follow Avicenna. He proffered another solution based on substantial motion (*al-ḥaraka al-jawhariyya*), which he claims to be in harmony with the view of Plato.¹⁰³ He argued that nature (*ṭabī'a*) or the species form of bodies is that which mediates between what is unchanging and what is changing. To him, the existence of the physical body, or to use his terminology "the natural body (*al-jism al-ṭabī'i*)", is essentially changing. In one respect, the existence of the natural body is an intellectual reality in the knowledge of God. In another respect, it is a continuous (*ittiṣālī*) and graded (*tadrījī*) form which coexists with prime matter. The quiddity of this nature has nothing to do with origination and change; rather it is its mode of existence which makes it receptive to origination and change. In this way, based on trans-substantial motion, change is an essential characteristic of bodies and one of the modes of their existence. From this perspective, the nature of bodies vis-à-vis their existence is itself the condition for the actualization of all change. At the same time, its oneness is explained by the intelligible (*'aqlī*) reality which is connected to the unchanging and eternal existence.¹⁰⁴

Jilwa wrote an independent treatise on this issue. He formulated his critique of Mullā Ṣadrā by delving into the views of Avicenna, Ghazālī and Mīr Dāmād. Following Avicenna, he considered the circular motion of the spheres to be that which mediates between that which is originated and that which is pre-eternal.¹⁰⁵ According to Jilwa, in terms of the argument for substantial motion, the existence of nature is changing; if such an existence comes from an agent (*fā'il*), then change itself must come from the same agent. If you were to say that everything has a stable aspect, and the renewed thing comes from that

103 Ṣ. al-Shirāzī, *al-Hikma al-muta'aliya fi l-asfār al-'aqliyya al-arba'a*, vol. 3, pp. 66, 67–69, 128–41; idem, *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya*, pp. 149–151.

104 See Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shirāzī, *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-Kāfi* (lithograph. Tehran: Maktaba Maḥmūdī, 1391 Sh./1971–72), p. 276; Avicenna, *al-Mabda' wa-l-ma'ād*, pp. 387–398, 410–411, 519.

105 A. Jilwa and M. Kadiwar (ed.), "Du risāla az Mīrza-yi Jilwa," 118–122.

stable aspect, not from the aspect of renewal, we would say that the quiddity of nature is stable whereas its existence is in constant flux. And that which comes from the agent (*fā'il*) is existence. The problem is that existence which is changing does not have a stable aspect for one to say that it is on account of that stable aspect that it comes from the agent. Therefore, the agent which is supposed to be the Unmoved mover should be the direct cause of change and motion. After presenting several objections and the answers to them, Jilwa ultimately returned to Avicenna's view, and considered the circular motion of sphere, which is in one aspect immutable (*thibāt*) and in another aspect changing, to be what connects that which is pre-eternal to that which is generated.¹⁰⁶ Jilwa's belief in the role of spheres in this matter is strange given that he lived at a time when the findings of modern astronomy were known in Iran, particularly in Jilwa's circles. However, in general, there is no indication in his writings that he was aware of modern discoveries in astronomy.

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¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 121.

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The Reception of European Philosophy in Qajar Iran

Roman Seidel

1 Introduction (Historical Context)

Iranian intellectual history in the Qajar era was marked by the incipient reception of European philosophical trends, which took place in the broader context of various processes of knowledge transmission between Europe and the Middle East. Alongside the increasing influence of European colonialist powers, intellectuals and scholars in the Middle East began to encounter various strands of modern Western thought. These encounters initiated new intellectual discourses, which were intended to either overcome the Islamic intellectual tradition or, at least, to supplement or reform Islamic thought. These discussions did not, in fact, lead to a rapid change in the philosophical discourse in Qajar Iran and were—from the perspective of eminent philosophers of the time, as presented in this volume—a rather marginal phenomenon. Nevertheless, they added an important facet to the philosophical tradition by gradually making European philosophical doctrines accessible to Iranian scholars, a phenomenon that became especially significant in the context of the reform of the educational system.

Initially, however, the Iranian interest in European thought was of a technical rather than a philosophical nature. Facing the enormous military, the administrative and economic superiority of Europe, reformists, state officials and intellectuals propagated the idea that reform was needed in matters relating to the army and governmental administration.¹ This reform movement, which, in the context of the Irano-Russian wars,² became known as *Nizām-i jadīd*

1 For early Qajar attempts at military and administrative reform and the rise of European influence on Iran, see Vanessa Martin, “An Evaluation of Reform and Development of the State in the Early Qajar Period,” *Die Welt des Islams* 36 1 (1996): 1–24; Shaul Bakhash, “The Evolution of Qajar Bureaucracy: 1779–1879,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 7 2 (1971): 139–168; and Stephanie Cronin, “Importing Modernity: European Military Missions to Qajar Iran,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 50 1 (2008): 197–226.

2 The first Irano-Russian war in the Qajar period, which took place between 1804 and 1813, led to the Treaty of Gulistān (1813); the second war (1826–28) was concluded by the Treaty

(New Order) was first initiated by Crown Prince ‘Abbās Mīrzā (d. 1249/1833),³ who was governor of Azerbaijan at that time. Besides attempts to reorganize the armed forces with the help of various European military advisors,⁴ he decided to dispatch what was to be the first of a series of groups of Iranian students to study in England in 1226/1811 and 1230/1815.⁵ The idea of this endeavour was to

of Turkmānchāy. These treaties established the borders between Russia and Persia, ceding most of the lands that were the object of struggle between the two kingdoms to imperial Russia. For more detailed accounts of Russo-Persian relations before, during and following the wars, their significance in the “Great-Game”, i.e., the struggle of the colonial powers for supremacy in Central Asia, and their impact on Persian politics, see Muriel Atkin, *Russia and Iran, 1780–1828* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980); Kamran Ekbal, *Der Briefwechsel Abbas Mirzas mit dem britischen Gesandten MacDonald Kinnier im Zeichen des zweiten russisch-persischen Krieges* (1825–28): Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der persisch-englischen Beziehungen in der frühen Kadscharenzeit (Freiburg: Klaus Schwarz, 1977); Stephanie Cronin, “Importing Modernity: European Military Missions to Qajar Iran,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 50 1 (2008): 197–226; G. R. G. Hambly, “Āghā Muḥammad Khān and the Establishment of the Qajar Dynasty,” in W. B. Fisher, P. Avery, G. R. G. Hambly and C. Melville (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 7 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 104–143; idem, “Irān during the reigns of Faṭḥ ‘Alī Shāh and Muḥammad Shāh,” in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 7, pp. 144–173; and F. Kazemzadeh, “Iranian Relations with Russia and the Soviet Union, to 1921,” in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 7, pp. 314–349. For relevant diplomatic records documenting these relations, see J. C. Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East. A Documentary Record: 1535–1914*, vol. 1 (Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1956).

- 3 For more on ‘Abbās Mīrzā and the significance of his reform measures for modern Iranian history, see H. Busse, “‘Abbās Mīrzā Qajar,” *Elr*, vol. I, pp. 79–84; Kamran Ekbal, *Der Briefwechsel Abbas Mirzas mit dem britischen Gesandten MacDonald Kinnier im Zeichen des zweiten russisch-persischen Krieges* (1825–28), pp. 13–49; Karīm Mujtahidī, *Āshinā’ī-i Īrānīyān bā falsafahā-yi jadīd-i gharb* (Tehran: Pazhūhishgāh-i Farhang u Andīsha-yi Islāmī, 1384 Sh./2005–2006), pp. 93–112; Monica M. Ringer, *Education, Religion, and the Discourse of Cultural Reform in Qajar Iran* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2001), pp. 15–51; and Vanessa Martin, “An Evaluation of Reform and Development of the State in the Early Qajar Period,” *Die Welt des Islams* 36 1 (1996): 1–24.
- 4 From the very beginning of the Qajar era, the various colonial powers tried to acquire influence over the Iranian government. Both Great Britain and Napoleonic France, in turn, sought alignment with Iran.
- 5 For a brief account of these first two groups of Iranian students in England and their significance, see M. M. Ringer, *Education, Religion, and the Discourse of Cultural Reform in Qajar Iran*, pp. 26–37; Farideh Jeddi, *Politische und kulturelle Auswirkungen des Auslandsstudiums auf die iranische Gesellschaft im 19. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1992), pp. 20–36; Ḥusayn Maḥbūbī-Ardakānī, *Tārīkh-i mu’assasāt-i tamaddunī-i jadīd dar Īrān* (3rd ed., Tehran: Intishārāt-i Dānishgāh-i Tīhrān, 1378 Sh./1999–2000), pp. 122–208; Denis Wright, *The Persians amongst the English: Episodes in Anglo-Persian History* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1985), pp. 70–86; and Mohammad Hossein Azizi and Farzaneh Azizi, “Government-Sponsored Iranian Medical Students Abroad (1811–1935),” *Iranian Studies* 43 3 (2010): 349–363. For a more detailed account of Iranian students abroad and their significance for modern Iranian intellectual

train a number of future governmental officials in modern sciences, (military) technology and medicine to transfer these new fields of knowledge to Iran and so make them available to ‘Abbās Mīrzā’s attempted modernization project.⁶

Although the primary motivation for sending students abroad was the acquisition of technical knowledge, one student on the second mission (1230/1815–1234/1819), Mīrzā Šāliḥ Shīrāzī (d. ca. 1261/1845), who mainly studied in London and Oxford, unlike his colleagues focused on history, languages, and philosophy.⁷ Upon his return to Iran, he not only worked as a translator for ‘Abbās Mīrzā and was charged with several diplomatic missions but also established one of the earliest printing presses in Iran and founded the first newspaper. Beyond that, he wrote a travelogue about his experiences during his stay in Europe, which is said to have been very popular up until the Constitutional Revolution.⁸ Although this book can hardly be regarded as an example of the reception of modern European philosophy in the proper sense, it nevertheless reflects upon a number of ideas belonging to the realm of political philosophy such as liberalism, constitutionalism, parliamentarianism, and freedom of speech. Mīrzā Šāliḥ was among the first writers to introduce and discuss these ideas in Persian to the Iranian reading public. Concepts of political liberalism were of particular interest to him. He displayed great enthusiasm for the political—i.e., constitutional—system of England, which he called “the lands of freedom” (*wilāyat-i āzādī*). In his book, Mīrzā Šāliḥ discusses and describes at

history, see Nile Green, *The Love of Strangers: What Six Muslim Students Learned in Jane Austen's London* (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2015); and Ghulām-‘Alī Sar-mad, *I’zām-i muḥaṣṣil bi khārij az kishwar dar dawra-yi Qājāriyya* (Tehran: Nashr-i Bunyād, 1372 Sh./1993–94).

- 6 On the subsequent occupations of the students after their return to Iran, see M. M. Ringer, *Education, Religion, and the Discourse of Cultural Reform in Qajar Iran*, pp. 30–34; F. Jeddi, *Politische und kulturelle Auswirkungen des Auslandsstudiums auf die iranische Gesellschaft im 19. Jahrhundert*, pp. 82–102; 155–218; Ḥ. Maḥbūbi-Ardakānī, *Tārīkh-i mu’assasāt-i tamaddun-i jadīd dar Īrān*, pp. 176–195; and Gh. ‘A. Sar-mad, *I’zām-i muḥaṣṣil bi khārij az kishwar dar dawra-yi Qājāriyya*, pp. 223–483. The latter is an appendix to the actual study, offering an extensive inventory of 254 students who studied abroad in the Qajar period, listing their names, periods and subjects of study abroad, their subsequent occupation(s) and known works.
- 7 For an edition of this travelogue see Mīrzā Šāliḥ Shīrāzī, *Safarnāma*, ed. Ismā’īl Rā’īn (Tehran: Rawzan, 1347 Sh./1968). On Mīrzā Šāliḥ in Oxford, see Nile Green, “The Madrasas of Oxford: Iranian Interactions with the English Universities in the Early Nineteenth Century,” *Iranian Studies* 44 6 (2011): 807–829; idem, *The Love of Strangers*, pp. 83–129.
- 8 On the reception of Mīrzā Šāliḥ’s *Safarnāma* and its importance for the genre of travel literature in Iran, see Bozorg Alavi, *Geschichte und Entwicklung der modernen persischen Literatur* (Berlin: Akademie, 1964), p. 24; Bert G. Fragner, *Persische Memoirenliteratur als Quelle zur neueren Geschichte Irans* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1979), pp. 15–18 and N. Green, *The Love of Strangers*, pp. 319–321.

some length the effort put into establishing the provision of education, medicine and public transport. Moreover, he presents the idea of a parliament, for which he coined the Persian expression *mashwirat-khāna* (house of consultation). He maintains that parliament was a decisive factor in England's prosperity and one which can serve as a model for Iran.⁹ He was, therefore, albeit somewhat obliquely, a kind of forerunner of the protagonists of the Constitutional Revolution.

Beyond that, the significance of Mīrzā Ṣāliḥ's *Safarnāma* lies not merely in the highlighting of various political ideas but also in the literary form in which these ideas are presented. Persian travel writing from the early nineteenth century in general, although not modern in terms of style, metaphor, and literary devices, marks a shift towards modern Persian literature. The *Safarnāma* of Mīrzā Ṣāliḥ Shīrāzī can be regarded as a kind of prototype of this travelogue genre. It reveals the individual perspective of the writer describing the benefits and disadvantages of the European way of life and European thought as well as an explicit or implicit reflection on and construction of an Iranian "Self" and a European "Other".¹⁰ In the subsequent decades, other literary genres emerged, often modelled on European examples, such as fictional travelogues (most prominently the *Siyāḥatnāma-yi Ibrāhīm Bay* by Zayn al-ʿAbidīn-i Marāghaʾī¹¹), fictional epistolary writings (for instance, *Maktūbāt-i Kamāl al-Dawla* by Mīrzā Faṭḥ ʿAlī Ākhūndzāda),¹² literary criticism,¹³ novels, short stories, and theatre plays.¹⁴ These new literary developments were crucial for the early reception

9 For a very summary of Mīrzā Ṣāliḥ Shīrāzī's evaluation of these ideas and concepts with references to the 1968 edition of his *Safarnāma*, see Kermatollah Rasekh, *Das politische Denken der Reformisten im Iran 1811–1906* (Münster: Lit Verlag 2000), pp. 95–102.

10 For travelogue literature in the Qajar era, see B. G. Fragner, *Persische Memoirenliteratur als Quelle zur neueren Geschichte Irans*; Sohrabi, Naghmeh, *Taken for Wonder: Nineteenth-Century Travel Accounts from Iran to Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); and M. M. Ringer, "The Quest for the Secret of Strength in Iranian Nineteenth-Century Travel Literature: Rethinking Tradition in the Safarnameh," in Nikki R. Keddie and Rudi Matthee (ed.), *Iran and the Surrounding World: Interactions in Culture and Cultural Politics* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002), pp. 146–161.

11 For Marāghaʾī and his *Siyāḥatnāma-yi Ibrāhīm Bay*, see Iraj Parsinejad, *A History of Literary Criticism in Iran (1866–1951): Literary Criticism in the Works of Enlightened Thinkers of Iran, Akhundzadeh, Kermani, Malkom Khan, Talebof, Maragheʾi, Kasravi and Hedayat* (Bethesda & Maryland: Ibex Publishers, 2003), pp. 141–161.

12 See below, p. 325.

13 For the development of that genre in the context of modern Persian literature, see I. Parsinejad, *A History of Literary Criticism in Iran (1866–1951)*.

14 The emergence of modern Persian prose fiction and playwriting appears to be crucial for the early appropriation and representation of modern European philosophical thought and vice versa. However, since the phenomenon of the reception of modern European

of European philosophy since they heavily influenced the way in which the early reception of modern European ideas took place. However, philosophical reflections were barely presented in systematic scholarly treatises on various concepts and doctrines; instead, we find scattered discussions of European philosophical ideas in a number of intellectual writings of that period, and their authors are often not very thorough with regard to either the original arguments or the sources they refer to. Since these writings belong more to the realm of *littérature engagée* than to that of academic treatises, philosophical accuracy was not their main purpose. Nevertheless, it was largely through these writings that doctrines of modern European philosophical discussions were presented for the first time to an Iranian audience.

Another factor that gradually supported the reception of modern European philosophy in Iran was the reform of the educational system. While sending students abroad was one of the first measures taken to train Iranians in various forms of modern science, it turned out to be an inappropriate and far too expensive way of providing this kind of education for a larger group of prospective state officials. So, reform-minded functionaries at the Qajar court suggested setting up European-style institutions of higher learning in Iran. The most prominent example was the establishment of the Dār al-Funūn in Tehran in 1268/1851, which was fostered by Amīr Kabīr (d. 1268/1852), prime minister under Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh (r. 1264–1313/1848–1896) and a staunch advocate of administrative centralization and educational reform.¹⁵ The importance of the establishment of this school and similar institutions of learning for the history of education can hardly be exaggerated. It marked the beginning of a parallel educational system in Iran that challenged the monopoly of learning which

philosophy by Iranian writers as a whole is very much under-researched, the discussion of the influence of modern European thought on these literary genres goes far beyond the scope of this essay. However, it remains an important object of further research. A case in point is, for instance, the dramatic writings of Ākhūndzāda. See below, pp. 324–326.

- 15 For a brief account of the significance of Amīr Kabīr and the reform of the educational system see Anja Pistor-Hatam, *Iran und die Reformbewegung im Osmanischen Reich. Persische Staatsmänner, Reisende und Oppositionelle unter dem Einfluß der Tanzimāt* (Berlin: Schwarz, 1992), pp. 38–47; For a more detailed study, see Firiyyūn Ādamiyyat, *Amīr Kabīr u Īrān* (Tehran: Khwārazmī, 1348 Sh./1969). On the history of the Dār al-Funūn, see M. M. Ringer, *Education, Religion, and the Discourse of Cultural Reform in Qajar Iran*, pp. 67–108; John Gurney and Negin Nabavi, “Dār al-Fonūn,” *ELr*, vol. VI, pp. 662–668; Maryam Ekhtiar, *Modern Science, Education and Reform in Iran: The Dar al-Funun* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1999); idem, “Nasir al-Din Shah and the Dar al-Funun: The Evolution of an Institution,” *Iranian Studies* 34 1–4 (2001): 153–63; H. Maḥbūbī-Ardakānī, *Tārīkh-i mu’assasāt-i tamaddun-i jadīd dar Īrān*, pp. 253–320.

the *‘ulamā’* had previously held.¹⁶ Dār al-Funūn and other “new schools.” for instance, Madrasa-yi ‘Ulūm-i Siyāsī (School for Political Sciences) can be regarded as forerunners of the Iranian universities set up later in the twentieth century. To run these schools, European teachers were hired, in the initial phase, to instruct Iranian students in subjects such as the military sciences (infantry, artillery, cavalry), mining, medicine, physics and pharmacology. As was the case with the students sent to Europe, subjects from the humanities including philosophy played only a minor role. But in the decades that followed this situation was to change gradually and foreign languages, history, and political theory, in particular, gained more importance. These development were to some extent supported by the establishment of *Farāmūshkhānahā* (Houses of Forgetfulness), Masonic lodges set up by Mīrzā Malkum Khān (d. 1326/1909) in the early 1860s, which a considerable number of students from the Dār al-Funūn joined.¹⁷ Consequently, the students at these new schools studied applied sciences and modern political ideas either from their instructors in the classroom, in private lessons or via textbooks that had been originally written for teaching in Persian or translated from European languages.¹⁸

The translation of writings from European languages, in general, was another development that increasingly gained significance. Not only were textbooks and manuals of the applied sciences translated into Persian, especially from French and English, but a considerable number of historical and literary writings were too.¹⁹ This translation movement was partly supported and, to some

16 It is worth mentioning that, prior to the establishment of the Dār al-Funūn, a number of missionary and other foreign schools had been set up in Iran. These also played a role in the development of alternative education, especially women's education, in the country. See M. M. Ringer, *Education, Religion, and the Discourse of Cultural Reform in Qajar Iran*, pp. 109–143; and Abbas Amanat, “Mujtahids and Missionaries: Shi'i Responses to Christian Polemics in the Early Qajar Period,” in Robert Gleave (ed.), *Religion and Society in Qajar Iran* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), pp. 247–269.

17 For more on the teaching of political theory at these new schools, see Ḥ. Maḥbūbī-Ardakānī, *Tārīkh-i mu'assasāt-i tamaddunī-i jadīd dar Īrān*, pp. 366–420; M. M. Ringer, *Education, Religion, and the Discourse of Cultural Reform in Qajar Iran*, pp. 155–162 and 170–173. On freemasonry and the *farāmūshkhānahā* in Iran, see Hamid Algar, “Freemasonry ii. In the Qajar Period,” *EI*, vol. X, pp. 208–212; idem, “An Introduction to the History of Freemasonry in Iran,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 6 3 (1970): 276–296.

18 For more on the compilation and translation of textbooks in the context of the Dār al-Funūn, see M. M. Ringer, *Education, Religion, and the Discourse of Cultural Reform in Qajar Iran*, pp. 75–76; Yahyā Āriyānpūr, *Az Šabā tā Nimā*, 5th ed., vol. 1 (Tehran: Zuwwār, 1372 Sh./1993–94), pp. 252–260.

19 For more on the beginning of this translation movement, see Iraj Afshar, “Book Translations as a Cultural Activity in Iran 1806–1896,” *Iran* 41 (2003): 279–289; Muḥammad Taqī Danishpazhūh, “Nakhustīn kitābhā-yi falsafa u ‘ulūm-i jadīd dar Īrān,” *Nashr-i dānīsh* 8

extent, initiated by the government. It not only sponsored the translation of textbooks but also set up a government translation bureau (*Dār al-tarjuma-yi khāṣṣa-yi dawlatī*) headed by Muḥammad Ḥasan Khān I'timād al-Saltāna (d. 1313/1896). He was an influential statesman and scholar who, in this function, was also responsible for official censorship as well as organizing the translations of books from European languages (some of which he undertook himself).²⁰

The intellectual activities connected with transferring modern Western thought to Iran, including translation, studying abroad or establishing new educational institutions, did not receive unconditional backing from the state. Whereas the *Niẓām-i jadīd* reform measures were an initiative of a high functionary of the Qajar government, namely Crown Prince 'Abbās Mirzā, from early on those reformers who were state officials had to face sharp opposition from within the administration as well as from the 'ulamā'. Support for and opposition to a single reform project or a specific protagonist of reform often alternated without warning. For instance, at first Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh approved of the idea of establishing the *Dār al-Funūn* proposed by Amīr Kabīr as well as other reform measures he put forward. Nevertheless, in 1267/1851, opponents of Amīr Kabīr, who all feared that his growing influence could eventually limit their importance in political affairs, persuaded the Shah that his activities to institutionalize European education constituted a threat to the cultural and religious integrity of the country. Nāṣir al-Dīn finally dismissed him from office and had him put to death shortly afterwards. The *Dār al-Funūn*, however, continued to operate and remained one of the central projects of Qajar educational reform.²¹

Despite the fact that educational reform continued, the situation for critics of the government remained insecure. Because of the many threats to the

(1360 Sh./1982): 88–101; and Jamshīd Kiyānfār, "Tarjuma dar 'ahd-i Qājār," *Nashr-i dānish* 55 (1368 Sh./1989): 23–28.

20 For more on the significance of the Government Translation Bureau and I'timād al-Saltāna as official promoter of translations from European languages in the context of Qajar politics, see A. Amanat, "E'temād-al-Saltāna, Moḥammad-Ḥasan Khan Moqaddam Marāḡa'i," *Elr*, vol. 8, pp. 662–666; Sayyid Aḥmad Hāshimī, "Tarjuma 4) Tarjuma-yi Fārsī dar Dawra-yi Mu'āṣir," *Dānishnāma-yi jahān-i Islām*, ed. Ghulām-'Alī Ḥaddād 'Adil, vol. 7 (Tehran: Bunyād Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif-i Islāmī, 1382 Sh./2003), pp. 50–66.

21 For more on Amīr Kabīr's struggle for the *Dār al-Funūn* project and the opposition towards him from inside the court and the 'ulamā', see F. Ādamiyyat, *Amīr Kabīr u Irān*, pp. 347–361; M. M. Ringer, *Education, Religion, and the Discourse of Cultural Reform in Qajar Iran*, pp. 67–108; J. Gurney and N. Nabavi, "Dār al-Fonūn." For the development of the *Dār al-Funūn* following Amīr Kabīr's death, see the concise account by M. Ekhtiar, "Nasir al-Din Shah and the Dar al-Funun: The Evolution of an Institution".

sovereignty of the Qajar government from both inside and outside the country, censorship and political oppression increased during the reign of Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh.²² Consequently, many reform-minded officials or intellectuals felt obliged to leave the country to promote their ideas from outside Iran. The exiled dissidents then began to organize themselves in various circles and intellectual networks in Europe, the Ottoman Empire, especially Istanbul and Cairo, and the Caucasus region under Russian control.²³ In the second half of the nineteenth century, they began to launch intellectual journals, which, although prohibited, also circulated in Iran. In these journals, the intellectuals discussed various topics ranging from politics, history (Iranian and European) and economics to religion and related issues, often connected to the question of political and social reform. In their articles, these intellectuals regularly referred to European thinkers and their doctrines although, again, usually without referring accurately to their writings.²⁴

On the one hand, it was via such channels that “Western” philosophy, for one thing infiltrated the curricula of the newly founded institutions of higher learning, and on the other, it became an influential issue in intellectual debates. As a consequence, modern European philosophy was, albeit not in a scholarly fashion, introduced into the Iranian intellectual realm and encouraged subsequent thinkers to engage with it, either exclusively or in comparison with Islamic thought.²⁵

22 Besides the competing European colonialist powers, who were constantly trying to increase their political influence over the Qajar court, various opposition groups inside the country challenged the government, in particular, the Babi movement. See Abbas Amanat, *Resurrection and renewal: The making of the Babi movement in Iran, 1844–1850* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989).

23 A comprehensive (intellectual) history of these expatriate communities, their inner networks, and their interconnectedness as well as their significance for Iranian history has yet to be written. A reasonable vantage point for such an endeavour would be a systematic examination of expatriate journals, their themes, and contributors. For an exemplary case study in this field, see A. Pistor-Hatam, *Iran und die Reformbewegung im Osmanischen Reich. Persische Staatsmänner*. This study, however, does not specifically deal with the reception of European philosophy. See also Thierry Zarcone & Fariba Zarinebaf-Shahr, *Les Iraniens d'Istanbul* (Paris and Tehran: Institut Français de Recherche en Iran, 1993).

24 For an overview of the relevant journals and their significance, see Yahyā Āriyānpūr, *Az Ṣabā tā Nīmā*, 5th ed., vol. 1 (Tehran: Zuwwār, 1372 Sh./1993–94), pp. 234–252; For *Akhtar* see A. Pistor-Hatam, *Nachrichtenblatt, Informationsbörse und Diskussionsforum: Aḥtar-e Estānbūl* (1876–1896)—Anstöße zur frühen persischen Moderne (Münster: Broschert, 1999).

25 Literature particularly focusing on the reception of European philosophy is rather limited. Mention should be made of K. Muṭṭahidī, *Āshināʾ-i Īrānīyān bā falsafahā-yi jadīd-i ǧharb* and Ahmad Ali Heydari, *Rezeption der westlichen Philosophie durch*

Probably the most prominent vehicles used to introduce modern European philosophy into Iran in the Qajar period were the writings of eminent intellectuals, such as Mirzā Fath ‘Alī Akhūndzāda (d. 1295/1878), Abd al-Raḥīm Ṭālibuf (d. 1329/1910), Mirzā Malkum Khān, Mirzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī (d. 1314/1896), and Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn Asadābādī, known as al-Afghānī, (d. 1314/1897).²⁶ They closely followed the intellectual discourses in their host countries and related them to the Islamic intellectual tradition as well as recent political developments in the Muslim world. The intellectual commitment of Iranian reformers materialized, broadly speaking, in two sorts of writings: on the one hand, there were politically engaged essays, which primarily appeared in their exile journals, and monographs, which were also mainly published abroad but circulated in Iran and some of these writings were not even published but circulated as handwritten copies.²⁷ On the other hand, they produced paraphrases of specific doctrines using modern European philosophical works. These were published either in the context of their essayistic writings or separately as contributions to journals and sometimes as translations of essays or even entire books translated into Persian—these not only influenced the intellectual discourse in Iran but also had an impact on Persian as a philosophical language.²⁸

Although it is the writings of the thinkers mentioned above that appear to have been the most influential, it is important to remember that an enormous number of intellectual writings by scholars of the Qajar period have yet to be examined with regard to the early reception of European philosophy.²⁹ In what follows, however, an overview of the current state of research will be provided. First, the most relevant protagonists from this first generation involved in this reception process, together with their works and the first translations of

iranische Denker in der Kadscharenzeit, Ph.D. Dissertation Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, Bonn, 2003.

26 There are a number of studies which deal with these thinkers as important intellectuals in the Qajar period. See for instance, Ali Gheissari, *Iranian Intellectuals in the 20th Century* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1998); Farzin Vahdat, *God and Juggernaut: Iran's Intellectual Encounter with Modernity* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2002); I. Pasinejad, *A History of Literary Criticism in Iran (1866–1951)*.

27 The question as to which of these writings were circulated in Iran and by whom, and to what extent they were read remains to be studied in more detail. What is known, however, is that various circles in Iran organized the distribution of the exile journals. See Hamid Algar, *Mirzā Malkum Khān: A Study in the History of Iranian Modernism* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), pp. 228–237.

28 The issue of how and to what extent the philosophical language of modern Persian was influenced by these writings, for instance via the introduction of European loan words or the creation of new technical terms, is again a question that has yet to be researched in detail.

29 Examples of sources: correspondence, memoirs, travelogues, textbooks, etc.

European philosophy will be briefly introduced. Then the phenomenon of the early encounter of traditional Islamic scholars in Iran with European philosophy will be dealt with. Finally, turning to the expatriate reformists some major intellectual trends and ideas adopted by them to provide a preliminary idea of the prevalent picture of European philosophy in the Qajar era will be discussed.

2 Qajar Intellectuals and the Adaptation of European Philosophy in Their Works

2.1 *Mirzā Faṭḥ ‘Alī Ākhūndzāda*

Mirzā Faṭḥ ‘Alī Ākhūndzāda, born in Nukha, a village close to Shakī which is now in Azerbaijan (Southern Caucasus), can be regarded as probably the first important figure belonging to the earliest generation of expatriate Iranian intellectuals who initiated the development of modern Iranian intellectual history/discourse.³⁰ Ākhūndzāda, also known under the name Akhundov, is one of the founding figures of modern Persian and Azerbaijani literature and literary criticism;³¹ he was among the first advocates of a Persian alphabet reform and an important forerunner of Iranian and Azerbaijani nationalism.

In contrast to many other Iranian intellectuals living outside Iran, Ākhūndzāda was neither forced to leave the country nor did he deliberately emigrate.³² It was rather the political aftermath of the Russo-Persian war—the 1243/1828 treaty of Turkmānchāy—that turned him from an Iranian into a Russian citizen, since he lived in that region of the Caucasus which Iran,

30 On Ākhūndzāda, his life and thoughts, see, in particular, Firiyyūn Ādamiyyat, *Andishahā-yi Mirzā Faṭḥ ‘Alī-i Ākhūndzāda* (Tehran: Khwārazmī, 1349 Sh./1970); I. Pasinejad, *A History of Literary Criticism in Iran* (1866–1951), pp. 39–65; Maryam B. Sanjabi, “Rereading the Enlightenment: Akhundzada and His Voltaire,” *Iranian Studies* 28 1–2 (1995): 39–60; Cyrus Masroori, “French Romanticism and Persian Liberalism in Nineteenth-Century Iran: Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani and Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre,” *History of Political Thought* 28 3 (2007): 542–556; idem, “European Thought in Nineteenth-Century Iran: David Hume and Others,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 61 4 (2000): 657–574; K. Mujtahidī, *Āshīnāʾi Irānīyān bā falsafahā-yi jadīd-i gharb*, pp. 181–200; Hamid Algar, “Ākhūndzāda,” *ELr*, vol. 1, pp. 735–740; updated version available at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/akundzada-playwright> (accessed 16 June 2015); and Muḥammad ‘Alī Mawlawī, “Ākhūndzāda,” *Dāʾirat al-maʾārif-i Islāmī*, vol. 1, pp. 152–157.

31 On that aspect of his thought see particularly I. Parsinejad, *A History of Literary Criticism in Iran* (1866–1951), pp. 39–65.

32 For a short autobiographical account, see Mirzā Faṭḥ ‘Alī Ākhūndzāda, *Alifbā-yi jadīd u maktūbāt* (Baku: Azerbajdzhan SSR elmler Akademijasy, 1963), pp. 349–355.

according to the treaty, had to cede to Russia. Ākhūndzāda, who at the age of twenty entered a religious school in Ganja to pursue a religious education, soon turned away from religious scholarship, apparently under the influence of his calligraphy teacher, Mīrzā Shafīʿ Wāḍiḥ (d. 1299/1852), an Azerbaijani poet who introduced him to modern Western science and learning. He began to learn Russian and entered a newly established Russian school in Nukha. In 1250/1834 he moved to Tbilisi where he became an assistant translator of Oriental languages at the office of the governor of the Caucasus. Apart from one journey to Tehran (1264/1848) and one to Istanbul (1279/1863) Ākhūndzāda remained in Tbilisi until his death in 1295/1878. In the mid-nineteenth century, the city was the social and cultural centre of Transcaucasia and attracted intellectuals and activists from various major cities, such as Berlin, London, Paris, Cairo, and Calcutta. It was also the battleground for Caucasian nationalist movements that were opposed to the rule of Tsarist Russia, and a number of dissident Russian intellectuals, writers, and social critics lived there. It was in this environment that Ākhūndzāda learned about contemporary European ideas and literature. He had contacts with a number of Armenian, Georgian and Russian intellectuals in Tbilisi with whom he exchanged ideas on issues such as the reasons for backwardness and progress, reforming literary styles and the purposes of literature.³³ Among his close associates in his early years in Tbilisi was the Russian Decembrist writer A. A. Bestuzhev (1797–1837), who then wrote under the nom de plume Marlinskiĭ. As a result, he became particularly interested in contemporary lyric poetry and playwriting; he was introduced to some of the works of Gogol, read Shakespeare and Molière in Russian translation and was a great admirer of Pushkin, to whom he dedicated a poem.³⁴

Ākhūndzāda started his career as an author by writing plays in Azeri Turkish—which he later had translated into Persian—with a specific emphasis on social criticism.³⁵ Through the implementation of such devices as the use of everyday speech, these plays had a significant influence on the very

33 On the reception of ideas and writings of the European Enlightenment in Russia, see for instance Inna Gorbatoĭ, *Catherine the Great and the French Philosophers of the Enlightenment*. Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot and Grimm (Bethesda, MD: Academia Press, 2006).

34 For Ākhūndzāda's acquaintance with Bestuzhev, see H. Algar, "Ākhūndzāda"; M. B. Sanjābi, "Rereading the Enlightenment: Akhundzada and His Voltaire," 45–47; I. Parsinejad, *A History of Literary Criticism in Iran (1866–1951)*, pp. 41–43.

35 His plays were translated by Mīrzā Jaʿfar Qarājādāghī. See Mīrzā Faṭḥ ʿAlī Ākhūndzāda and Mīrzā Jaʿfar Qarājādāghī (trans.), *Tamthīlāt*, ed. ʿA. R. Ḥaydarī (Tehran: Khwārazmī, 1349 Sh./1970).

foundations of a modern literary idiom in the Azeri language. Beyond that, the Persian versions of his plays also heavily influenced the emergence of modern Persian playwriting.³⁶ After he abandoned this genre in 1272/1855, he became particularly engaged in the project for Persian alphabet reform. He not only wrote an essay on the issue containing numerous drafts of a modified Persian/Arabic alphabet but also presented a draft for a new alphabet at the Ottoman Academy of Sciences (*Encümen-i Danış*) in Istanbul in 1279/1863 and corresponded extensively on the subject with other intellectuals, such as Mīrzā Malkum Khān.³⁷ When it turned out that the reform was not likely to be successful, Ākhūndzāda again turned to literature and literary and cultural critique. His criticism of religion as a superstition that constitutes an obstacle to progress in Iran was reiterated in his numerous essays and his letters to associates.

As for his knowledge of modern European philosophy, Ākhūndzāda was apparently influenced by anti-metaphysical and materialist philosophical currents that claimed to be entirely based on natural sciences and its results. He was also extremely interested in the European Enlightenment, its protagonists, and their writings. In his writings, he explicitly mentions Voltaire, Montesquieu, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Mirabeau, Ernest Renan, John Stuart Mill, Henry Thomas Buckle and David Hume.³⁸ It is not clear, though, if he had any access to copies of their writings translated into Russian, the only Western language he was acquainted with,³⁹ but it is most likely that at least

36 For more on Ākhūndzāda's plays and their significance, see H. Algar, "Ākhūndzāda." It is interesting to note that the plays were—already at the end of the 19th century—also recognised by European scholars. At least one of these plays "Sargudhasht-i wazīr-i Lankarān" had early English and German translations. The English one is obviously based on the Persian version. See Mīrzā Fath 'Alī Akhūndzāda, *The Vazir of Lankurān: a Persian play; a text-book of modern colloquial Persian for the use of European travellers, residents in Persia, and students in India*, Edited and translated by W. H. D. Haggard and G. Le Strange (London: Trübner, 1882). The German translation was based on the Azeri version: *Der Vezier von Lenkoran: türkische Komödie in vier Aufzügen*, Übersetzt und für die deutsche Bühne bearbeitet von D. Löbel. und C. Fr. Wittmann (Leipzig: Reclam, 1893).

37 On Ākhūndzāda and the alphabet reform, see M. F. 'A. Ākhūndzāda, *Alifbā-yi jadīd u maktūbāt*; Hamid Algar, "Malkum Khan, Akhundzada and the Proposed Reform of the Arabic Alphabet", *Middle Eastern Studies* 5 (1969): 116–130.

38 For reference to European thinkers adopted by Ākhūndzāda see C. Masroori, "European Thought in Nineteenth-Century Iran: David Hume and Others"; M. B. Sanjabi, "Rereading the Enlightenment: Akhundzada and His Voltaire."

39 Sanjabi refers to a letter to A. L. M. Nicholas, the French Consul-General in Tehran, in which Ākhūndzāda admits that he is not familiar with "any European language other than Russian." See M. B. Sanjabi, "Rereading the Enlightenment: Akhundzada and His Voltaire," 39, n. 2. Masroori states that his son Rashīd knew French and translated some

some of their doctrines came to his attention via the circles of exiled Russian intellectuals in Tbilisi (Lermontov/Marlinskiĭ), who in turn were heavily influenced by these French authors. Besides his local intellectual network in Tbilisi, Ākhūndzāda also had wide-ranging intellectual contacts in Iran. He corresponded with numerous intellectuals, Qajar state officials, and dissidents, and it is partly through this extensive correspondence that his ideas had such an influence on the Iranian discourse on modern thought, which is why they are of particular value as a source for modern Iranian intellectual history.⁴⁰ Ākhūndzāda died in Tbilisi in 1295/1878.

Besides his many letters⁴¹ and his plays in Azeri, his essays on literary and cultural criticism, including *Qiritikā* (Criticism), *Risala-yi Īrād* (A Treatise on Critique), *Fann-i Kiritika* (The Art of Criticism), *Uṣūl-i nigārish* (The Principles of Writing),⁴² are significant not only with regard to literary criticism in Persian but also because of their assertion of the need for cultural and political criticism as a liberal right and a means of progress.⁴³ The main source representing his reflections on and appropriations of the philosophical doctrines of the European Enlightenment may be his fictional epistolary debate between an Indian and an Iranian prince *Maktūbāt-i Kamāl al-Dawla*, also known under the title *Si maktūb*, which he wrote in 1279/1863 and tried, unsuccessfully, to publish during his lifetime.⁴⁴ An interesting reference by Akhundzāda to a Western philosopher is a short work that he titled *Letter from David Hume to the Muslim Clergy of India* and which he later incorporated into the *Maktūbāt*. This work seems to be influenced by Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (1779), in which three thinkers dispute the nature of God.⁴⁵

works written in French for his father; so far, however, we have no reliable list of these works and no evidence of the actual translations. See C. Masroori, "European Thought in Nineteenth-Century Iran: David Hume and Others," 666.

40 Among his correspondents were Mīrzā Malkum Khān, A. L. M. Nicholas, the French Consul-General in Tehran, and Mīrzā Yūsuf Khān Mustashār al-Dawla.

41 For more on Ākhūndzāda's correspondence, see M. F. 'Ā. Ākhūndzāda, *Alifbā-yi jadīd u maktūbāt* (this volume besides his major essay on the subject chiefly contains letters he exchanged with various intellectuals and officials on the topic of the alphabet reform).

42 For a discussion of these writings see Iraj Parsinejad, *A History of Literary Criticism in Iran* (1866–1951), pp. 44–65.

43 See below, pp. 353–354.

44 A recent partial German translation of Akhundzāda's *Maktūbāt* by Mahdi Rezai-Tazik and Michael Mäder along with a concise introduction to the text is published in Anke von Kügelgen (ed.), *Wissenschaft, Philosophie und Religion—Debatten um 1900* (Berlin: Schwarz, 2017), pp. 121–195.

45 I was not able to establish whether there has been a Russian translation of Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* in Ākhūndzāda's time. However there has been a multifaceted reception of Hume already in the early 19th century, see Artemieva, Tatiana V.

In Ākhūndzāda's version, which is much shorter than Hume's treatise, two parties are debating the question of an ultimate being as the necessary cause of all beings: on the one hand, the "religious scholars" and, on the other, "the philosophers". Whereas the religious scholars argue that the Necessary Existent is God, dwelling upon Avicenna's essence-existence distinction, the philosophers, whom Ākhūndzāda portrays as the winners of the debate, deny the validity of that distinction and argue that the universe itself is the necessary existence, which needs no cause to necessitate its existence.⁴⁶

2.2 *ʿAbd al-Raḥīm Ṭālibuf*

ʿAbd al-Raḥīm b. Shaykh Abī Ṭālib Najjār Tabrīzī, known as Ṭālibuf, was another outstanding Iranian intellectual to emerge from the intellectual context of the Iranian community in Transcaucasia.⁴⁷ In contrast to Ākhūndzāda, his discourse is not dominated by a critique of religion but rather by religious reform. Apart from that, both thinkers nevertheless have a number of basic convictions in common, such as the belief in the importance of modern science and the necessity of open social critique. He was born into a family of carpenters in the city of Tabriz. At about the age of sixteen or seventeen, he moved to Tbilisi, where he pursued a business career and studied "modern science" and Russian. After some years he then moved to Tīmūr Khān Shūrā, modern-day Buynaksk in Daghestan, where he was able to set up his road-building company, accumulate some wealth and settle down to family life. His career as a writer began quite late, at the age of fifty-five. His first book *Nukhba-yi sipihri* (The Best of the Heavenly Thing), a brief biography of the Prophet Muḥammad that appeared in Istanbul in 1310/1892, already indicates the sincere belief in Islam that he maintained throughout his life, although not without criticizing traditional religious education and religious scholars. His second book, *Kitāb-i Aḥmad yā Safīna-yi Ṭālibī* (The Book of Aḥmad or Ṭālibī's Vessel), which appeared in Istanbul in two volumes in 1311/1893 and 1312/1894, became his most recognized work. He became a popular figure such

and Mikhail I. Mikeshin, "Hume in Russia," in Peter Jones (ed.), *The Reception of David Hume in Europe* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2005), pp. 195–224.

46 For a brief discussion that compares Ākhūndzāda's version with that of Hume, see C. Masroori, "European Thought in Nineteenth-Century Iran: David Hume and Others," 665–671. For an English translation of Ākhūndzāda's rendition of the debate, see *ibid.*, 672–674.

47 For a biographical account of Ṭālibuf, see Firiyyūn Ādamiyyat, *Andīshahā-yi Ṭālibuf-i Tabrīzī* (Tehran: Nahāwand, 1363 Sh./1984), pp. 1–14; Mehrdad Kia, "Nationalism, Modernism and Islam in the Writings of Talibov-i Tabrizi," *Middle Eastern Studies* 30 2 (1994): 201–223 (201–205); and I. Parsinejad, *A History of Literary Criticism in Iran* (1866–1951), pp. 121–123.

that the people of Tabriz voted him into the first *Majlis*—however, for reasons that remain the subject of dispute, he did not take up his seat in parliament. Consciously modelled on Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Émile* in terms of style and purpose, this book consists of twenty-two dialogues between the narrator and his fictional son Aḥmad, which cover various topics, especially focusing on the natural sciences. Without copying Rousseau's educational principles, he aimed to provide a solid basis for a comprehensive education of the youth to prepare for a life that was at once both modern and pious. The education of the young and future elites—specifically in natural sciences—would thus become one of Ṭālibuf's main concerns in writing and activism. For some time, *Kitāb-i Aḥmad* was apparently used as a textbook in modern schools in Tabriz.⁴⁸ His interest in disseminating and popularizing modern sciences is also evident in two translations he undertook from Russian. The first book *Fizik yā Hikmat-i ṭābīrī* (Physics or Philosophy of Nature), published in Istanbul in 1893, is by an unknown author, whereas the second, *Risāla-yi hay'at-i jadīd* (A Treatise on Modern Astronomy),⁴⁹ published in Istanbul in 1312/1894, seems to be a translation from a Russian version of one of Camille Flammarion's (1842–1925) popular works on astronomy. Another translation, attributed to Ṭālibuf, is the *Meditations* of the Roman emperor and Stoic philosopher Marcus Aurelius (121–180). This translation also appeared in Istanbul in 1893, under the title *Pand-nāma-yi Markūs, qayṣar-i Rūm: Tafakkurāt-i Markū Awrīl*, together with an introduction *Ifāda-yi makhṣūṣ* (special note) on the influence of writing.⁵⁰

Flammarion's work probably provided Ṭālibuf with the model for a second book that was to become both popular and controversial in Iran. Flammarion had published an annotated French version of Humphrey Davy's (1778–1829) *Consolations in Travel or The Last Days of a Philosopher*, which was very popular.⁵¹ The *Consolations*, a literary piece of philosophical science-fiction, consists of a series of six intellectual dialogues in which the narrator, after ruminating on the transitory nature of human life, is taken on an educational journey through history and the future of human civilization by a superior intelligence which he calls 'the Genius'. Ṭālibuf's *Masālik al-muḥsinīn* (The Pathways of

48 F. Ādamiyyat, *Andīshahā-yi Ṭālibuf-i Tabrīzī*, p. 6.

49 Camille Flammarion and 'Abd al-Raḥīm Ṭālibuf (trans.), *Resāla-yi hay'at-i jadīd* (Istanbul, 1312/1894).

50 See I. Parsinejad, *A History of Literary Criticism in Iran* (1866–1951), p. 124.

51 For the original English version, see Humphry Davy, *Consolations in Travel: Or, The Last Days of a Philosopher* (London: J. Murray, 1830). For Flammarion's French rendition see Humphry Davy & Camille Flammarion, *Les derniers jours d'un philosophe entretiens sur la nature, les sciences, les métamorphoses de la terre et du ciel, l'humanité, l'âme et la vie éternelle* Humphry Davy (3rd ed., Paris: Didier, 1872).

the Benevolents) narrates a fictional journey in which a group of scientists is dispatched by the Iranian government to climb Mount Damavand in order to conduct a scientific exploration of the dormant volcano. On their way to the summit, the members of the group engage in various discussions on issues of politics, culture, and religion and evaluate reasons for the perceived backwardness of Iranian society. The corruption and oppressiveness of Qajar state officials and Shī'ī *'ulamā'* and their inability to recognize the value of modern sciences are criticized, which explains the harsh opposition Ṭālibuf met with from religious scholars and why the book was eventually banned in Iran. In the discussions, the need for the adaptation of European sciences and political ideas and institutions is highlighted, while, at the same time, a blind imitation of European manners and costumes is also regarded as an obstacle to Iranian progress.⁵²

Three of his later works, all written in the wake of the Constitutional Revolution and its aftermath, are more focused on the issue of political institutions, the idea of liberalism and politics in constitutional Iran. *Masā'il al-ḥayāt* (Challenges of Life) appeared in Tbilisi in 1324/1906 and is sometimes referred to as the third volume of *Kitāb-i Aḥmad*. In this book, the narrator is Aḥmad, the former addressee of *Kitāb-i Aḥmad* and now grown up and an engineer who explores and discusses various forms of governmental systems, out of which he favours the "constitutional system". The book also contains a translation of the Japanese constitution as an appendix.⁵³ In *Īdāḥāt dar khuṣūṣ-i āzādī* (Explanations on the subject of Freedom), Ṭālibuf offers a more substantial discussion on political liberty, with references to John Stuart Mill's work on the subject, and presents a critique of the political situation after the Constitutional Revolution and the first *Majlis*.⁵⁴ His last book *Sīyāsat-i Ṭālibī* (Ṭālibī's Politics), which appeared posthumously in Tehran in 1329/1911, again contains an evaluation of Iranian politics and the country's social crisis embedded in two dialogues, the first between a British and a Russian diplomat in Iran and the second between two Iranians.⁵⁵ Besides his intellectual output, it should be mentioned that Ṭālibuf was also involved in several educational projects, among them the funding of several schools and public libraries both in Iran and the Caucasus region.

52 See 'Abd al-Raḥīm Ṭālibuf, *Masālik al-muḥsinīn*, edited by Bāqir Mu'minī (Tehran: Kitābhā-yi Jībī, 1347 Sh./1968). This edition is based on the Cairo edition, 1902.

53 'Abd al-Raḥīm Ṭālibuf, *Mas'ala-yi ḥayāt* (Tbilisi: Maṭba'a-yi Ghayrat, 1324/1906).

54 'Abd al-Raḥīm Ṭālibuf, *Īdāḥāt dar khuṣūṣ-i āzādī* (Tehran: Maṭba'a-yi Shāhanshāhī, 1325/1907).

55 'Abd al-Raḥīm Ṭālibuf, *Sīyāsat-i Ṭālibī* (Tehran: 'Ilm, 1329/1911).

2.3 *Mirzā Malkum Khān*

Mirzā Malkum Khān was not only an influential intellectual who critically analysed and commented upon the social and political circumstances in Iran in his writings; he also had a more immediate influence on political affairs of Iran, be it as a state functionary or later as a dissident activist.⁵⁶ Born in Isfahan's Armenian quarter, Julfā, he was sent to Paris when he was only ten by his father Mirzā Ya'qūb Khān, who worked as a translator in the diplomatic service of the Qajar administration.⁵⁷ He studied at the Collège Arménien Moorat and, from 1263/1846 on, at the École Polytechnique de Paris, came into contact during his secondary school education with ideas such as Auguste Comte's positivism, liberalism, and Saint-Simonian proto-socialism, which were dominant in nineteenth-century France. In 1267/1850, Malkum Khān returned to Iran and took up a position as a translator in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and converted to Islam at about the same time. He also joined the faculty of the recently founded Dār al-Funūn in Tehran as a teacher of "new sciences" and as an interpreter for the European instructors at the school. What followed was a vigorous career as a diplomat in the service of Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh's government. After having accompanied a number of diplomatic missions, Malkum became an employee at the Iranian embassy in Istanbul and later on in London, where he was appointed ambassador in 1882. Malkum's relations with the court had been of an ambiguous nature. This was true even before his break with Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh and his dismissal from his office in 1306/1890—a result of a scandal over selling a lottery concession that the Shah had already annulled. On the one hand, the Shah seemed to be attracted by some of Malkum's reformist ideas, while, on

56 On Mirzā Malkum Khān's life and political career, see the detailed, though a rather hostile account, by Hamid Algar: *Mirzā Malkum Khān*. This monograph is especially valuable with regard to the various acquaintances and people that Malkum Khān was in contact with; it does not, however, sufficiently take into account the intellectual currents that influenced Malkum Khān as a means to elucidate his intellectual development. For more on his thought, see F. Vahdat, *God and Juggernaut*, pp. 30–36; K. Mujtahidī, *Āshinā'i-ī Īrāniyān bā falsafahā-yi jadīd-i gharb*, pp. 155–180.

57 Mirzā Ya'qūb himself was influenced by modern European liberal thought. As Masroori points out, his essay *Ṭarḥ-i 'arīḍa-yi maḥramāna ki bi khāk-i pā-yi mubārak bāyad 'arḍ shawad* (apparently written after 1874) was one of the earliest works by an Iranian intellectual to advocate a representative government openly. See C. Masroori, "Mirza Ya'qub Khan's Call for Representative Government, Toleration and Islamic Reform in Nineteenth-Century Iran," *Middle Eastern Studies* 37 1 (2001): 89–100 (89). An interesting anecdote in the context of the relationship of Qajar intellectuals to modern European philosophy is Ya'qūb Khān's claim that his grandmother was the offspring of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's cousin, who had settled in Isfahan in 1707—see H. Algar, "An Introduction to the History of Freemasonry in Iran," 5.

the other, he sometimes felt suspicious of his political activity. A case in point was Malkum's initiative to establish Masonic lodges called *Farāmūshkhānahā* (House of Forgetfulness), a move that the Shah had approved in the beginning but which he prohibited soon afterwards in 1278/1861. This led to the temporary exile of Malkum and his father Ya'qūb Khān in Baghdad. Through the conciliation of Malkum's associate, the Iranian ambassador in Istanbul, Mīrzā Ḥusayn Khān Mushīr al-Dawla, later known as Sipāhsālār, both were pardoned and allowed to take up a position at the Iranian embassy in Istanbul in 1862.⁵⁸ Malkum Khān went to London in 1290/1873 to join the embassy there. When the Shah planned his journey to Europe, Malkum was charged with the diplomatic arrangements for the visit and after ten years in London became ambassador. After his dismissal from the post of ambassador, he decided to remain in Europe and to openly promote his criticism of the regime in Tehran. In the year 1890, he launched the dissident journal *Qānūn*, which became highly influential in pre-constitutionalist Iran. He also founded the *Jāmi'a-yi Ādamiyyat* (League of Humanity), a humanist association that, besides helping to distribute his journal clandestinely in Iran, was meant to establish a humanist intellectual society modelled on Auguste Comte's *Religion de l'Humanité*.⁵⁹ After the assassination of Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh in 1896, he again took up a position in the diplomatic service under Muẓaffar al-Dīn Shāh (r. 1313–1324/1896–1907) at the embassy in Italy. He died in Switzerland in 1908.

Alongside his connections with influential state officials and sovereigns, Malkum was actively engaged in establishing vigorous intellectual relationships with many of the reform-minded dissidents of his time. For instance, he corresponded extensively with Ākhūndzāda, especially on the issue of alphabet reform;⁶⁰ he also exchanged letters with Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī, who helped him to set up an Ādamiyyat Lodge in the Ottoman capital and supported him

58 On Mīrzā Ḥusayn Khān Mushīr al-Dawla Sipāhsālār and his relations with Malkum Khān, see See H. Algar, *Mīrzā Malkum Khān*, pp. 63–66, 95–107.

59 The real dimension of this association and its actual influence in Iran remains uncertain. Algar assumes that Malkum Khān exaggerated its influence enormously in order to impress the Iranian government and that it was merely an informal network used to distribute his journal *Qānūn*. See H. Algar, *Mīrzā Malkum Khān*, pp. 228–237. On the intellectual background of this association, see below, pp. 349–351.

60 For his correspondence with Ākhūndzāda see the respective letters in M. F. 'A Ākhūndzāda, *Alifbā-yi jadīd u maktubāt*. For his writings on the alphabet reform, see the relevant writings in Mīrzā Malkum Khān, *Risālahā-yi Mīrzā Malkum Khān-i Nīẓām al-Dawla*, ed. Ḥujjat Allāh Aṣīl (Tehran: Nashr-i Nay, 1381 Sh./2002), pp. 371–430.

in distributing his journal among Iranian expatriates in Istanbul.⁶¹ As for his adaptation of European philosophy, the literature on Malkum Khān alludes to a number of eminent thinkers—usually without providing exact details about which of his writings he refers to them in and which of their works he might have studied. But besides Auguste Comte, whose *Religion de l'Humanité* apparently influenced him, it is most likely that he was also inspired by John Stuart Mill.⁶²

Although Malkum Khān's writings by no means display a coherent philosophical system, one can at least identify some of the major topics and themes he dealt with and trace some important influences on the ideas that are found throughout his articles and essays. More or less all of his writings can be regarded as *littérature engagée* since they all attempted to deliver a specific political message or offer advice to a concrete audience. This also applies to his first essay *Kitābcha-yi ghaybī yā daftar-i tanzīmāt* (The Disclose Book or Booklet of the *Tanzīmāt*), written between 1274/1858 and 1276/1860, which was inspired by his regard for the political systems in France and England and the administrative and legal reform project in the Ottoman Empire known as the *Tanzīmāt*. In this work, which was directed at Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh himself, he openly suggests a number of concrete reform measures in the judicial, educational and administrative systems.⁶³ Evidently, most of the proposals for political and social reform in Iran that Malkum advocated during his career had already appeared in this treatise. Other treatises followed, highlighting the core demands of the *Kitābcha-yi ghaybī* and focusing on various aspects of it with some modifications in style and emphasis.⁶⁴

61 See Bayat-Philipp (1974a, 18). As Bayat-Philipp (1974a, 18, n. 11) indicates, the entire correspondence can be found in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Manuscrits Orientaux, Archive du Prince Malkom Khan, Suppléments Persans, 1996, fols. nos. 60–167.

62 Some scholars assume that he translated Mill's treatise *On Liberty* into Persian (see below, pp. 342–344). Other thinkers that are mentioned as a source of inspiration are John Locke, Francis Bacon, Montesquieu, Antoine de Condorcet, Herbert Spencer, and Voltaire. See K. Mujtahidī, *Āshinā'ī-i Īrānīyān bā falsafahā-yi jadīd-i gharb*, pp. 155–180.

63 The major political demands of this essay was a constitutional proposal submitted to the Prime Minister Mushīr al-Dawla, Mīrzā Ja'far Muhandis. Mushīr al-Dawla was one of the first student sent to England together with Mīrzā Šālīh Shīrāzī. For the political setting in which this essay was written and the way in which it was proposed to the shah, see Hamid Algar, *Mīrzā Malkum Khān*, pp. 26–55.

64 These include the following essays to be found in Mīrzā Malkum Khān, *Risālahā-yi Mīrzā Malkum Khān-i Nizām al-Dawla: Rafiq u wazir; Majlis-i tanzīmāt, Daftar-i Qānūn, Nidā-yi 'adālat*.

2.4 *Mirzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī*

Mirzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī was a highly talented intellectual and an Iranian dissident in the Qajar era.⁶⁵ He was thoroughly acquainted with various theological and philosophical strands of the Islamic tradition and had considerable knowledge of a wide range of modern European intellectual currents. In his writings, he often took up a comparative, and at times syncretistic, perspective attempting to integrate doctrines of different intellectual origin. In contrast to many other intellectuals of his time, some of his writings, although still politically motivated, had a more profound theoretical orientation.

Born in the province of Kerman, he completed a traditional education in Islamic law, Persian and Arabic literature, and mathematics and philosophy—which included a study of the works of Mullā Ṣadrā and Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsāʾī which he read with his teacher Sayyid Jawād Karbalāʾī (d. ca. 1299/1882). Beyond that, he had supposedly acquired some knowledge of Avesta and Old and Middle Persian and learned some English and French, which he improved at the Jesuit mission in Isfahan. In matters of religion, he was variously influenced by different people: his father was a follower of the Ahl-i Ḥaqq, his teachers were Twelver Shīʿīs and Christians, and he was also interested in the Zoroastrian religion, the Ismāʿīliyya, and especially the Bābī movement.⁶⁶ This may be the reason why he had a pluralistic attitude towards religion that was at times eclectic and at times even agnostic. As a result of a sharp disagreement with the governor of Kerman, he had to flee his hometown and finally sought asylum in Istanbul in 1303/1886, where he joined the Iranian exile community, remaining there for the last ten years of his life. Even before he got to Istanbul, he had apparently converted to Bābism and travelled shortly after his arrival in Istanbul to Cyprus, where the Bābī community, led by Mirzā Yaḥyā Nūrī Ṣubḥ-i Azal, had been previously sent by the Ottoman authorities in 1285/1868. In Cyprus, he married one of Ṣubḥ-i Azal's daughters.

65 For more on Kirmānī's life and thought see, in particular, the monograph by Firiḍūn Ādamiyyat, *Andīshahā-yi Mirzā Āqā Khān-i Kirmānī* (Tehran: Payām, 1357 Sh./1978) as well as several studies by Mangol Bayat-Philipp/Bayat Philip. See her *Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani: Nineteenth-Century Persian Revolutionary Thinker*, Ph.D. Dissertation University of California Los Angeles, Los Angeles, 1971; idem, "Mirzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī: A Nineteenth-Century Persian Nationalist," *Middle Eastern Studies* 101 (1974): 36–59; idem, "The Concepts of Religion and Government in the Thought of Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani, a Nineteenth-Century Persian Revolutionary," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 5 4 (1974): 381–400. For a shorter account, see also A. A. Heydari, *Rezeption der westlichen Philosophie durch iranische Denker in der Kadscharenzeit*, pp. 139–155; F. Vahdat, *God and Juggernaut*, pp. 36–42.

66 See F. Ādamiyyat, *Andīshahā-yi Mirzā Āqā Khān-i Kirmānī*, p. 14.

In Istanbul, Mīrzā Āqā Khān became acquainted with a number of dissident intellectuals and was himself an important protagonist of the Iranian community in the Ottoman capital. He contributed on a regular basis to the exile journal *Akhtar* and corresponded with Mīrzā Malkum Khān in London, acting as a kind of representative of Malkum's journal *Qānūn* in Istanbul. Apart from the fees he got for the articles he wrote for *Akhtar*, he earned a living by teaching Persian and Arabic and by copying manuscripts for various scholars, among them, the British Iranologist, Edward G. Browne (d. 1926), who also obtained at least one work by Kirmānī himself.⁶⁷ Beyond that, he also supported Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn Asadābādī Afghānī's pan-Islamic ambitions. While he was in Istanbul, he devoted considerable energy to studying various trends in European intellectual and philosophical thought, although it is difficult to say which books he had at his disposal. We know for certain that he read François de Salignac de La Mothe-Fénelon's (d. 1715) *Les Aventures de Télémaque, fils d'Ulysse* and Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's (1737–1814) *Le Café de Surat* (1790) and *La Chaumière indienne*, since he rendered them into Persian.⁶⁸ It is also apparent that he was at least influenced by the ideas of Descartes, Rousseau, Voltaire, Montesquieu, Spencer, and Darwin and that he also acquired some knowledge of socialist, Marxist and anarchist ideas. He composed a large number of essays, some of which appeared in the journal *Akhtar*, although others were not published during his lifetime. These essays presented his view of some of these doctrines. When in 1313/1896 Mīrzā Riḍā Kirmānī, who sympathized with the Bābī movement, shot Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh, Mīrzā Āqā Khān was charged with being involved in the assassination and was subsequently extradited to Iran, where he was executed the same year.

Almost all Kirmānī's oeuvre was written during the ten-year period he spent in Istanbul before he was executed.⁶⁹ In this short period, he turned out to be a prolific writer, who appropriated a huge variety of intellectual influences of European as well as Islamic origin. His first and his last works are

67 Kirmānī co-authored *Hasht Bihisht* with Shaykh Aḥmad Rūhī. See E. G. Browne, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Oriental Mss. Belonging to the Late E. G. Browne*, ed. Reynold A. Nicholson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932), p. 76; for a more detailed description of this manuscript see Edward G. Browne, "Catalogue and Description of 27 Bābī Manuscripts," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* (Oct. 1892): 433–499, 637–710 (680–697). Browne indicates that he has obtained the manuscript from a certain Shaykh A. (most likely Shaykh Aḥmad Rūhī). Moreover, he states that *Hasht Bihisht* was originally a transcription of the teachings of Sayyid Jawād Karbalā'ī. See *ibid.*, 683–684.

68 See below, p. 343.

69 For a useful descriptive inventory of Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī's works, see F. Ādamiyyat, *Andishahā-yi Mīrzā Āqā Khān-i Kirmānī*, pp. 49–70. Unfortunately, Ādamiyyat only provides rudimentary bibliographical evidence for the works he discusses.

dedicated to Persian literature. Whereas the first, *Kitāb-i Riḍwān* (The Book of Heaven), deals with classical Persian poetry, the last and unfinished work, *Kitāb-i Rayhān-i Būstān-afrūz* (The Book of the Garden-Enlightening Herb), which he began to write only a few months before his death, was meant to be a sharp criticism of the classical Persian literary tradition.⁷⁰ A large number of his writings are devoted primarily to various periods of Iranian history: *Nāma-yi bāstān* (The Book of Ancient Times), *Āīna-yi Sikandarī yā Īrān-i bāstān* (The Alexandrian Mirror or Ancient Iran), *Tārīkh-i Īrān az Islām tā Saljūqīyān* (History of Iran from Islam to the Seljuqs), *Tārīkh-i shānzhmān-i Īrān* (History of Iran's Development) and *Tārīkh-i Qājāriyya u sabab-i taraqqī u tanazzul-i ān* (History of the Qajars and the Reasons for Their Progress and Decline). One crucial issue Kirmānī raised in these writings was the idea of a glorious ancient Iran, upon which, according to his proto-nationalist discourse, a modern Iranian nation should be modelled.⁷¹ His works *Si maktūb u šad khaṭāba* (Three Letters and a Hundred Lectures) and *Inshā' Allāh, Mashā' Allāh* (God Willing, God Blessing) are both highly polemical essays devoted to a social critique of Iranian society. The first work is obviously inspired by Ākhūndzāda's *Si Maktūb yā Maktūbāt-i Kamāl al-Dawla*, to such a degree, indeed, that some scholars assumed it was merely a slightly modified copy of Ākhūndzāda's work. Firiydūn Ādamiyyat, however, argued that, although undoubtedly inspired by Ākhūndzāda, Kirmānī's work was much more elaborate and twice as long as the original.⁷² *Inshā' Allāh, Mashā' Allāh* is a polemic against the dogmatism and hypocrisy of Sunnī as well as Shī'ī religious scholars of his time.⁷³ The works that are probably his most significant writings in terms of philosophical argumentation are *Hikmat-i naẓarī* (Theoretical Philosophy) and *Hasht Bihišt* (Eight Paradises) (both co-authored with Shaykh Aḥmad Rūḥī) as well as *Haftād u du millat* (Seventy-Two Sects) and *Takwīn u Tashrī'* (Creation and Lawgiving). The latter is an essay that argues for the epistemological primacy of natural sciences and positive philosophy over metaphysical or religious reasonings. The other three are, it would appear, less hostile towards religion and instead engaged in a sort of philosophy of religion. *Hikmat-i naẓarī* and *Hasht*

70 For a concise discussion of some aspects of this work, see I. Parsinejad, *A History of Literary Criticism in Iran* (1866–1951), pp. 71–4.

71 On Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī's nationalist discourse, see below, pp. 358–360 and M. Bayat Philipp, "Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī: A Nineteenth-Century Persian Nationalist."

72 See F. Ādamiyyat, *Andīshahā-yi Mīrzā Āqā Khān-i Kirmānī*, pp. 56–58.

73 A recent partial German translation of *Inshā' Allāh, Mashā' Allāh* conducted by Mahdi Rezai-Tazik and Michael Mäder along with a concise introduction to the text is published in Anke von Kügelgen (ed.), *Wissenschaft, Philosophie und Religion—Debatten um 1900* (Berlin: Schwarz, 2017), pp. 196–228.

Bihisht are both religio-philosophical treatises arguing from a perspective of Bābism while engaging with questions concerning knowledge, metaphysics, and ethics with reference to both classical and modern as well as Western and Islamic traditions. *Haftād u du millat*, which is a modified and expanded version of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's story *Le Café de Surat* and *La Chaumière indienne*, deals with the question of religious pluralism.⁷⁴ Most of his writings only circulated as handwritten copies during his lifetime.

2.5 Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn Asadābādī Afghānī

Afghānī is certainly one of the most outstanding and influential intellectuals, ideologists and political activists of the nineteenth-century Muslim world. Although it is also true of the four thinkers mentioned above that their influence, intellectual networks, and significance go beyond local Iranian exile communities and that they corresponded with a wide range of scholars and politicians throughout the Middle East, North Africa and Europe, Afghānī's networks, his political activities and his impact on modern Muslim reform discourse is far more wide-ranging. He can, therefore, be regarded as a "global player" in the intellectual and political discourse that evolved in the context of nineteenth-century Middle Eastern—European relations. Not only did his ideas travel across the Muslim world, but Afghānī himself also moved from country to country throughout the region, often being expelled by local political leaders because of oppositional tendencies Afghānī had encouraged during his stay in a particular country or province. However, he was not merely interested in playing the role of dissident intellectual but also attempted to influence various state leaders directly by trying to become an advisor at their respective courts.

Jamāl al-Dīn Afghānī was born in the village of Asadābād near Hamadan, which is why, in the Iranian context, he is usually referred to by his *nisba* Asadābādī. However, outside Iran he was at pains not to disclose his Iranian origin—probably so as not to be seen as a Shī'ī Muslim—and therefore he chose the name Afghānī.⁷⁵ His first trip abroad led him to India, where he experienced the Indian Rebellion of 1273/1857, which may have influenced his political and anti-imperialist ideas. Another important episode in his intellectual

74 For more on that work by Kirmānī, see below, p. 353. Cf. C. Masroori, "French Romanticism and Persian Liberalism in Nineteenth-Century Iran: Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani and Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre", *History of Political Thought* 28 3 (2007), 542–556.

75 For a biographical account of Afghānī, see Nikki R. Keddie, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism. Political and Religious Writings of Jamāl ad-Dīn "al-Afghānī"* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968), pp. 3–35.

career was his first stay in Istanbul in the years 1286/1869–70 and 1287/1870, where he was active among the reformist *Tanzīmāt* circles and became a member of the Council of Education, which was also responsible for the recently established Polytechnic or *Darülfünun*. One of his lectures at there, which drew a comparison between philosophy and prophecy, was regarded as blasphemous by Ottoman ‘*ulamā*’, who were hostile to the *Darülfünun* and who urged the government to dismiss the head of the school and expel Afghānī from Istanbul. He then went to Cairo where he stayed from 1288/1871 to 1296/1879 and gathered a number of disciples around him, the most important of whom was Muḥammad ‘Abduh (1849–1905). During this period, he was strongly engaged in anti-British agitation and political activism. He openly advocated his ideological and political ideas, accusing the Khedive Ismā‘īl (r. 1279–1296/1863–1879), of cooperating with the imperialist agents of the British and the French and of selling Egypt to Western interests. He is also said to have been a founding figure of the Masonic lodge, “The Eastern Star”, in Egypt. In 1296/1879, Ismā‘īl’s successor Tawfiq (r. 1296–1309/1879–1892) expelled him from Egypt, and he travelled to India again where he stayed in the Muslim principality of Hyderabad. There he became acquainted with Sayyid Aḥmad Khān (d. 1898), whose idea of modernizing Islam appealed to him, even though they were harshly at odds on the question of cooperating with the British.⁷⁶ In that period, he wrote a series of influential Persian articles, among them his longest treatise *Ḥaqīqat-i madhhab-i naycharī wa bayān-i ḥāl-i naychirīyān*. (The Truth about the School of Naturalism and an Explanation of the Positions of Naturalists).⁷⁷ His next destination was Europe, where he stayed until the mid-1880s. In London and Paris, he wrote a number of newspaper articles criticizing the British occupation of Egypt and promoting his pan-Islamist ideology, which he thereafter regarded as the only useful defence against the imperialist threat to the Middle East. Only a modern Islamic ideology, he was convinced, could unite the people of the Muslim world against this threat. It was in these years in Paris that he wrote his famous “Response to Ernest Renan”, the latter having claimed that the backwardness of the Muslim people was essentially linked to the basic nature of Islam.⁷⁸ He also established the newspaper *al-*

76 On Afghānī’s relation to Sayyid Aḥmad Khān and his thought, see N. R. Keddie, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism*, pp. 21–23.

77 Published first in lithography in Hyderabad 1298/1881. For an English translation see N. R. Keddie, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism*, pp. 130–174. The text is usually referred to as “The Refutation of the Materialists” following the title of the Arabic translation *al-Radd ‘alā Dahriyyīn* which was prepared by Afghānī’s disciple Muḥammad ‘Abduh.

78 For the Renan-Afghānī debate, see A. A. Heydari, *Rezeption der westlichen Philosophie durch iranische Denker in der Kadscharenzeit*, pp. 122–139. It is interesting to note that

Urwā al-wuthqā together with Muḥammad ‘Abduh, who had joined him in Paris to promote his pan-Islamism.

After another short stay in London—where he was invited by Wilfrid Blunt to assist him in his endeavour to persuade the British government to partly withdraw from Egypt—Afhānī set out for Iran again, where he was invited to Tehran by Iranian Minister of Press I‘timād al-Saltāna. There he met Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh, whom he advised on political affairs, yet he soon fell from favour and severed ties with the Shah, whom he regarded as a major obstacle to his pan-Islamist ideology because of his granting of concessions to European companies. This criticism eventually led to his support of the so-called Tobacco Protest, in which a mass movement (1308–1309/1891) led by the *mujtahid* Mirzā Ḥasan Shīrāzī (d. 1312/1896) succeeded in bringing about the cancellation of the concession on tobacco from Iran which had been given to a British citizen. In 1308–1309/1891–92, Afhānī spent some months in London, where he joined Malkum Khān in his propaganda against the shah. Later he moved to Istanbul again, where he hoped that he could exert influence on the Ottoman Sultan Abdülhamid II (r. 1293–1327/1876–1909). There he met Mirzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī and Shaykh Aḥmad Rūḥī. When a disciple of Afhānī killed Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh in 1313/1896, the Iranian government demanded his extradition. Fearing that Afhānī might reveal court secrets, this demand was declined on the pretext that he was not an Iranian but an Afghan citizen. Afhānī died of cancer a year later in Istanbul.

Afhānī never wrote a fully-fledged monograph. Nevertheless, there are a number of articles that appeared in various journals which have been highly influential in the context of reformist Islamic discourse.⁷⁹ The earliest available ones are articles that he published in the newspaper *Miṣr* when he was in Cairo. In these he argued for patriotism, liberalism, and opposition to despotism, alluding to both traditional Islamic philosophy and modern European political theory. The relationship between “modern European thought” and “Islamic philosophy” is again discussed in some of his influential Persian articles, such as *Fawā'id-i falsafa* (The Benefits of Philosophy),⁸⁰ *Likchir dar ta'līm u ta'allum* (A Lecture on Teaching and Learning)⁸¹ and “The Refutation of the Materialists”, which were written while he was in India. His articles in *al-Urwā*

Muḥammad ‘Abduh had tried to keep Afhānī’s response from being translated into Arabic.

79 For a collection of his articles see Jamāl al-Dīn Asadābādī, *Maqālāt-i Jamālīyya* (Tehran: Khāwar, 1312 Sh./1933).

80 J. Asadābādī, *Maqālāt-i Jamālīyya*, pp. 134–148. Originally published in the Indian journal *Majalla-yi mu'allim-i shafiq* 10 (1881).

81 J. Asadābādī, *Maqālāt-i Jamālīyya*, pp. 88–96.

al-wuthqā are important because in these he promoted the idea of pan-Islamism, which he had not done before. In his “Response to Rénan” Afghānī again discusses the relationship between philosophy and religion. However here, as did Malkum Khān in some of his writings, he portrays religion as a useful and flexible tool for bringing the working classes together and ensuring their obedience. As regards the influence of modern European philosophers, Afghānī’s writings may not be pertinent in the same way as those of the intellectuals mentioned earlier. Apart from his reference to Darwin in his “Refutation of the Materialists”, he does not explicitly discuss the doctrines of modern Western philosophers or political theorists. However, as his writings on philosophy and religion show, it is apparent that he was at least influenced by European positivist ideas.

3 Early Translations of European Philosophical Works

The first complete translation of a major modern European philosophical text, Descartes’s *Discours de la méthode*, emerged out of an intellectual milieu different to the ones just described.⁸² It was initiated by Arthur Comte de Gobineau, a French diplomat, and scholar who lived in Tehran in the years 1855–58, and again as the French ambassador from 1861 to 1864.⁸³ Gobineau showed a specific interest in the philosophical tradition of Iran and was acquainted with some of the leading Persian philosophers of the time. Among them was Āqā ‘Alī Mudarris Ṭīhrānī (d. 1307/1888), whom he asked to write a history of Iranian philosophers after Mullā Ṣadrā.⁸⁴ Gobineau also presented his account of this tradition, presumably drawing, at least in part, on a draft of the above-mentioned work by Ṭīhrānī in his work *Les Religiones et les philosophies dans l’Asie centrale*.⁸⁵ Beyond that, he was not only interested in observing and describing

82 For a more detailed discussion of the phenomenon of Early Translations of Modern European Philosophy into Persian see Roman Seidel, “Early Translations of Modern European Philosophy. On the Significance of an under-researched Phenomenon for the Study of Modern Iranian Intellectual History,” in Ali Ansari (ed.), *Iran’s Constitutional Revolution of 1906* (London: Haus Publishing, 2016), pp. 207–229.

83 For Gobineau and its significance for Iranian intellectual history see Calmard, Jean, “Gobineau, Joseph Arthur de,” *Elr*, vol. XI, pp. 20–24.

84 An edition of the first part of this work dealing with scholars from Mir Sayyid Sharif al-Jurjānī to Mullā Ṣadrā can be found under the title *Risāla-yi tārikh-i ḥukamā’* in Mudarris Ṭīhrānī, 1378 Sh./1999, Vol. 3, pp. 125–141. The second part which deals with the subsequent generations of scholars up until Ṭīhrānī himself is unedited.

85 Joseph Arthur Comte de Gobineau, *Les religions et les philosophies dans l’Asie centrale* (Paris: Didier, 1865).

the philosophical discourse in Tehran but also intended to contribute to it by giving introductory private lessons on European philosophy to enhance, in his understanding, the development of philosophy in Iran. Another step in his attempt to foster intellectual development was his idea to initiate a translation of Descartes's *Discours de la méthode* into Persian. In his aforementioned work, he alludes to the fact that he has discussed some chapters of Descartes's work in some of his private lessons and that he is convinced that the idea of "Cogito, ergo sum," which he considered a European notion, could have a positive impact on the minds of Iranian thinkers. In a private letter, he also mentions that he was explicitly asked by some Iranians to translate the *Discours* into Persian.⁸⁶ He therefore deliberately chose this work for translation, since he thought that its way of reasoning was new to the Iranian mentality and would be a better complement to it than, for instance, Hegel or Spinoza, whom he viewed as closer to the "Asian" way of thinking.⁸⁷

Gobineau commissioned the Jewish scholar, Mullā Lālazār Hamadānī to carry out the translation with the support of the French diplomat Emile Berney. A lithographed version was finally published under the title *Ḥikmat-i Nāṣirī* (i.e., dedicated to Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh) in Tehran in 1279/1862.⁸⁸ The text

86 This is mentioned in a letter to Anton Graf Prokesch von Osten (1795–1876), an Austrian diplomat who served in Cairo and Istanbul and with whom Gobineau corresponded over many years. But in the letter, he does not say who these Iranians were. See K. Mujtahidi, *Ashināʾī-i Īrānīyān bā falsafahā-yi jadīd-i gharb*, pp. 133–134.

87 In his *Les religions et les philosophies dans l'Asie centrale*, Gobineau says: «Mais, toutefois, les deux hommes que les philosophes de ma connaissance ont la plus grande soif de connaître, c'est Spinoza [sic!] et Hegel; on le comprend sans peine. Ces deux esprits sont des esprits asiatiques et leurs théories touchent par tous les points aux doctrines connues et goûtées dans le pays du soleil. Il est vrai que, pour cette raison même, elles ne sauraient introduire là des éléments vraiment nouveaux.» (139). See also Roman Seidel, *Kant in Teheran. Anfänge, Ansätze und Kontexte der Kantrezeption in Iran* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014), p. 45. On Gobineau's intentions behind this translation project, see also 'Alī Riḍā Manāfzāda. "Nakhustīn matn-i falsafa-yi jadīd-i gharbī bi zabān-i Fārsī," *Īrānnāma* 33 (1369 Sh./1991): 98–108. Despite the fact that Manāfzāda makes no reference to it, more or less follows Mujtahidi's account, which originally appeared in 1354 Sh./1975 ("Dhikr-i falāsafa-yi buzurg-i gharb dar kitāb-i *Badāʾīʾ al-ḥikam*," *Rāhnamā-yi kitāb* 18 10–12: 827–834). Manāfzāda adds some more quotations from Gobineau's *Trois ans en Asie* and *Religions et philosophies dans l'Asie centrale* concerning his intention to initiate this translation (98–105) and some quotations from the translator's introduction (105–107).

88 According to Dānishpazhūh, it was published by Āqā Muḥammad Ḥusayn as a lithograph in a *nastaʿlīq ductus*. See M. T. Dānishpazhūh, "Nakhustīn kitābhā-yi falsafa u 'ulūm-i jadīd dar Īrān," 89. A copy of the lithographed version printed in 1862 is kept in the National Library in Teheran. The text has just recently been edited by Farāmārz Muʿtamid Dizfūlī, see René Descartes, Lālazār Hamadānī and Emile Berney (trans.), *Ḥikmat-i Nāṣirīyya: Kitāb-i*

is about 164 pages long and contains a preface of about fifteen pages, in which the translator highlights the benefits of translations of modern European philosophical works into Persian.⁸⁹ Lālazār, however, seems to have had only some rudimentary philosophical knowledge and he obviously was not very familiar with philosophical terminology either in French or in Arabic and Persian. As a result his Persian equivalents, especially of Descartes's technical terms, were rather incomprehensible, even to a philosophically trained readership, and the translation as a whole failed to convey a consistent philosophical argument.⁹⁰ This might be one reason why this translation did not achieve what Gobineau had hoped, even if we know nothing at all about its reception by Iranian scholars at the time. Furthermore, there is some evidence that most of the copies of the translation were burned. Although this incident is, as far as we know, not documented, it is not unlikely, since only very few copies of it have survived.⁹¹

Although this translation and the intention to use it to influence the philosophical discourse in Qajar Iran was seemingly unsuccessful, Gobineau was not the only person at the time who came to the conclusion that this particular text would be an appropriate way to introduce modern European philosophy into the Iranian discourse. In 1321/1904 a second translation was produced by Afḍal al-Mulk Kirmānī (who was the brother of Shaykh Aḥmad Rūḥī Kirmānī and an associate of Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī) from an unknown Turkish

Diyyākart, Nakhustīn tarjuma-yi "Guftār dar rawish"-i Dikārt dar 'aṣr-i Qājār, ed. Mu'tamid Dizfūlī (Tehran: Nashr-i Tārīkh-i Īrān, 1393 Sh./2014). The edition, however, is not a critical one, it only contains a short introduction by the editor (pp. 9–18) which merely gives some very general information about the original text by Descartes, its significance and the circumstances of its translation into Persian. The edited text itself contains only a very few editorial remarks, no references are given. However, the editor is to be credited for making the text available in print.

89 For this introduction, see K. Mujtahidī, *Āshinā'ī-i Īrānīyān bā falsafahā-yi jadīd-i gharb*, pp. 131–141.

90 This is the evaluation of K. Mujtahidī (*Āshinā'ī-i Īrānīyān bā falsafahā-yi jadīd-i gharb*, pp. 139–141) and M. T. Dānishpazhūh ("Nakhustīn kitābhā-yi falsafa u 'ulūm-i jadīd dar Īrān," 89).

91 Mujtahidī also refers to rumours that the 1279/1862 edition was indeed the second edition and that it was actually the first edition of 1270/1853–54, which was entirely burned by a group of unspecified radicals (*'idda'ī muta'aṣṣib*). But, as Mujtahidī argues, there is no evidence of an earlier edition. Indeed, the 1279/1862 dating fits better with the period of Gobineau's stay in Iran. See Mujtahidī (*Āshinā'ī-i Īrānīyān bā falsafahā-yi jadīd-i gharb*, p. 137). Dānishpazhūh states that on the back of a folio version he has consulted on microfilm there is a note saying that copies of it were burned during the reign of Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh. See M. T. Dānishpazhūh, "Nakhustīn kitābhā-yi falsafa u 'ulūm-i jadīd dar Īrān," 89.

version of the book.⁹² Afḍal al-Mulk, who belonged to the circle of Iranian exiles around Mīrzā Āqā Khān, whose influence on him can be discerned in it, undertook the translation shortly before his death when he was already back in Iran. This took place after he had gone into hiding for some time, probably to avoid meeting the same fate as his brother (see above). The translation, which has a preface by the translator (12 pages) and commentary (56 pages) presumably compiled by the Turkish translator following the original text by Descartes (81 pages), is written, in contrast to the first translation, in fluent Persian. It is apparent that the author was well acquainted with Descartes's thinking. Even if the text sometimes reads rather like a paraphrase of the original French version, it contains various explanations addressed to the Iranian reader that are not indicated as such in the text. In the preface, Afḍal al-Mulk, who was influenced by positivist thought, highlights the importance of philosophy and its complementary relationship with natural science. He argues that this work of Descartes is a cornerstone of modern philosophy (*ḥikmat-i tāza*) in Europe, which has influenced the course of European philosophy significantly and could hence have a similar effect on Iranian philosophy. All this information was missing in the introduction to the first translation. Even this translation was destined not to achieve its purpose since it was never published and there is no evidence that it was ever circulated. It was not until the third translation produced by Muḥammad 'Alī Furūghī (d. 1321 Sh./1942) in the 1930s that Descartes's *Discours* was widely recognized in Iran as an important European philosophical work.⁹³ However, Afḍal al-Mulk's version is nevertheless significant, since this translation was written by one of the expatriate intellectuals who were the main protagonists of the early reception of European philosophy in Iran. A closer examination of this translation and a comparison

92 However, it is still not clear why Afḍal al-Mulk choose to translate the work from a Turkish version since it is said that he knew French; it may be simply for the reason that he had no French original at hand, see Mujtahidī, *Āshinā'i-i Īrānīyān bā falsafahā-yi jadid-i gharb*, p. 210. A manuscript of Afḍal al-Mulk's translation, preserved at Malik Library in Tehran, MS Malik 6172 (film no. 4677), contained in a volume with a manuscript of Mīrzā Āqā Khān's *Haftād u du Millat*. On this translation, see K. Mujtahidī, *Āshinā'i-i Īrānīyān bā falsafahā-yi jadid-i gharb*, pp. 201–212. Mujtahidī originally published this study in *Rāhnāmā-yi kitāb*, 18 (1354), 4–6; M. T. Dānishpazhūh, "Nakhustīn kitābhā-yi falsafa u 'ulūm-i jadid dar Īrān." 89–90. The above description of this translation follows these two sources.

93 Muḥammad 'Alī Furūghī, *Sayr-i ḥikmat dar Urūpā*, 3 vols. (Tehran: Maṭba'a-yi Majlis, 1310–20 Sh./1931–41). On Furūghī and the significance of his translation and his work on European philosophy, see K. Mujtahidī, *Āshinā'i-i Īrānīyān bā falsafahā-yi jadid-i gharb*, pp. 309–340.

with other writings by these intellectuals might, therefore, help elucidate the language, terminology, and style that was developing among these intellectuals. Moreover, the fact that this translation was done by proxy from a Turkish version was not exceptional but rather a specific characteristic of the translation movement in the Qajar era.⁹⁴

Although the number of translations of European writings in general—and especially textbooks on technical subjects, medicine, geography, and history, as well as travel literature and historical novels—increased significantly during the reign of Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh, the translation of major philosophical works was not the focus of this movement. Nonetheless, there are a number of other philosophical writings that were reportedly translated into Persian at that time.⁹⁵ Among them, there are at least two further philosophical treatises: the first is John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty*, which is referred to both under the title *Manāfi-i ḥurriyyat*⁹⁶ and *Manāfi-i āzādī*;⁹⁷ the other is a philosophical work by Jules Simon that was translated as *Zamān u makān*, apparently

94 This is a phenomenon that needs to be researched in more detail with regard to the multifaceted reception process, for instance, the impact of the Turkish reception of European thought on Iranian intellectuals residing in Istanbul. See R. Seidel, "Early Translations of Modern European Philosophy. On the Significance of an under-researched Phenomenon for the Study of Modern Iranian Intellectual History," pp. 200–222.

95 See S. A. Hāshimī, "Tarjuma 4) Tarjuma-yi Fārsī dar Dawra-yi Mu'āṣir"; I. Afshār, "Book Translations as a Cultural Activity in Iran 1806–1896"; M. T. Dānīshpazhūh, "Nakhshtīn kitābhā-yi falsafa u 'ulūm-i jadīd dar Īrān"; J. Kiyānfār, "Tarjuma dar 'ahd-i Qājār".

96 See I. Afshār, "Book Translations as a Cultural Activity in Iran 1806–1896," 284. He gives no further references.

97 This translation, which is only a summary of Mill's treatise, has been attributed to Malkum Khān. See "Manāfi-i āzādī" in his *Majmū'a-yi āthār-i Mīrzā Malkum Khān* (pp. 177–178) as well as M. F. Ākhūndzāda (Akhundov), *Āsār-lāri* (Baku, 1961, 3: 259–61). The true author of this "translation" has yet to be established. Both thinkers were at least influenced by the thought of John Stuart Mill. If the translation is Ākhūndzāda's, it must have been done from a Turkish or more likely a Russian version. Algar is convinced that it was indeed done by Ākhūndzāda, while Parsinejad mentions Malkum Khān as the "translator". See H. Algar, *A History of Literary Criticism in Iran* (1866–1951), p. 97; I. Parsinejad, *A History of Literary Criticism in Iran* (1866–1951), p. 97. Neither, however, provides clear evidence for their claims. Masroori, referring to 'Alī Pūrṣafar, *Kitābshināsi-i inqilāb-i mashrūṭiyyat-i Īrān* (Tehran: Markaz-i Nashr-i Dānīshgāhī, 1373 Sh./1994), p. 224, asserts that Ākhūndzāda had written a brief essay on Mill's treatise. This essay along with Ākhūndzāda's translation of a speech by Mirabeau on the topic of freedom, circulated in handwritten copies in the early 1880s under the title *Guftār dar āzādī*. At least one manuscript that may be an instance of this text can be found in the National Library in Tehran (MS Millī F/13/149). It is part of a *Majmū'a* that primarily contains writings attributed to Malkum Khān and also one attributed to Ākhūndzāda. The essay in question in the catalogue is attributed to Mill and Mirabeau, no particular translator is mentioned.

by Khalīl Khān Thaqafī (d. 1323 Sh./1944).⁹⁸ Most of the translated intellectual writings, however, belong to the genres of fiction and historical literature that also dealt with philosophical questions, especially those connected with the issues of good governance and ethics. Noteworthy here are a number of works by Voltaire and Mirabeau.⁹⁹ Mention should be made, for instance, of Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī's rendition of François Fénelon's (1651–1715) *Les Aventures de Télémaque*. It is a didactic novel narrating the educational travels of Telemachus, son of Ulysses, accompanied by his tutor, Mentor, who at the end of the story is revealed to be the goddess of wisdom, Minerva, in disguise. This novel has been highly popular from 18th until the early 20th century in France and Britain. It is said to have influenced Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The novel reflects a number of political ideas in a philosophical vein and advocates, for instance, a parliamentary governmental system and a kind of federation of nations intended to resolve disputes between nations in a peaceful way.¹⁰⁰ Another translation of this kind was Mīrzā Āqā Khān's adaptation of two short stories by Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, who was influenced by Rousseau. Both of these stories—*La Chaumière indienne* and *Le Café de Surate*—appeared in 1790 and dealt with questions such as the nature of wisdom, God, and religion. Mīrzā Āqā Khān merged both stories into one, which he then modified and extended.¹⁰¹ Besides this kind of intellectual fiction and the above-mentioned treatises by Descartes and Mill, it appears that no major philosophical works were translated into Persian during that period, although there is some evidence that a number of minor textbooks

98 See M. T. Dānīshpazhūh, "Nakhustīn kitābhā-yi falsafa u 'ulūm-i jadīd dar Īrān," 92. Afshar gives a different Persian title, *Zamīn u Zamān*, but does not provide bibliographical references. See Afshar, *Book Translations as a Cultural Activity in Iran 1806–1896*, p. 284. For Jules Simon see Léon Séché, *Jules Simon, sa vie et son œuvre* (Paris: Dupret, 1887).

99 References to translated works by Voltaire and Mirabeau can be found in J. Kīyānfār, "Tarjuma dar 'ahd-i Qājār". An interesting case in point is *L'Orphelin de la Chine*, translated by Āwānīs Khān Musā'īd al-Saltāna. It is a theatre play by Voltaire inspired by the translation of the 13th-century Chinese play, *The Orphan of Zhao* (Chinese: 趙氏孤兒; pinyin: Zhaoshi gu'er). It is the first Chinese play to have been translated into any European language on the Chinese original and its significance see S. H. West and W. L. Idema (ed.), *The Orphan of Zhao and Other Yuan Plays: The Earliest Known Versions* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press 2014).

100 M. Fenelon, *Les aventures de télémaque, fils d'Ulysee* (New York: Leavitt and Allen, 1854); Diane Berrett Brown, "Emile's Missing Text: Les Aventures De Télémaque," *Symposium: A Quarterly Journal in Modern Literatures* 63.1 (2009), 51–71.

101 For a discussion of this adaptation, see C. Masroori, "French Romanticism and Persian Liberalism in Nineteenth-Century Iran".

on philosophy were translated.¹⁰² An interesting case in point is a work titled *Mafātiḥ al-funūn*, which seems to be a selective translation of various writings by the Italian philosopher, Pasquale Gallupie (1770–1846). Despite maintaining the doctrine of the objective reality of human knowledge, Gallupie adopted aspects of Descartes and, in particular, Kant's subjectivist theory of knowledge for his epistemology. The translation, produced from an Ottoman Turkish version, which was itself already a selective compilation, was carried out by Mīrzā Maḥmūd Khān Afshār Kangāwarī and dedicated to Muẓaffar al-Dīn Shāh. It seems to have been produced as a textbook introducing modern logic (*manṭiq-i nuwīn*), although it is not known whether it was used as such.¹⁰³ Altogether, it appears that it was not primarily by way of translations that European philosophy was introduced to Iran.

4 Reception of European Philosophy by Protagonists of the Traditional Philosophical Discourse in Qajar Iran

Hardly anything is known about the influence of these translations or any other kind of writings produced by expatriate intellectuals on the traditional philosophical discourse in Qajar Iran. However, at least one significant incident in the effort to introduce European philosophy into that discourse is reported in the scholarly literature. This is the case of the Qajar prince Badī' al-Mulk Mīrzā (d. after 1324/1906), who as a scholar is known for his Persian translation of Mullā Ṣadrā's *Kitāb al-mashā'ir*.¹⁰⁴ Beyond his interest in Sadrian philosophy, he showed a specific interest in accumulating knowledge of certain philosophical trends in Europe. This becomes evident in two attempts made by Badī' al-Mulk to deal with European philosophy. The first example is of him asking two leading philosophers of his time, 'Alī Akbar Mudarris Ḥikmī Yazdī (d. 1304/1886) and Āqā 'Alī Mudarris Ṭīhrānī, for their opinion on various strands of European philosophy. The second is a request he made

102 See M. T. Dānishpazhūh, "Nakhustīn kitābhā-yi falsafa u 'ulūm-i jadīd dar Īrān," 90–92. Besides the translation of Descartes's *Discours*, he mentions four further translations of philosophical works.

103 Dānishpazhūh reports that the Turkish version printed in 1853 consisted of 162 + 20 pages; he assumes that it must be a selected translation of Gallupie's *Lezioni di Logica e Metafisica*. See M. T. Dānishpazhūh, "Nakhustīn kitābhā-yi falsafa u 'ulūm-i jadīd dar Īrān," 91–92.

104 See Henry Corbin's introduction to Mullā Ṣadrā's *Le Livre des Pénétrations métaphysiques* (kitāb al-Mašā'ir), edited, translated and annotated by Henry Corbin (Tehran: Département d'iranologie de l'institut franco-iranien, 1964), pp. 1–86.

to an associate of his who stayed in France to bring him a particular book by a French philosopher.¹⁰⁵ The first example can be traced in Ṭihrānī's *Badā'ī al-ḥikam*, in which he answers seven philosophical questions posed by Badī' al-Mulk.¹⁰⁶ In the seventh question, Badī' al-Mulk makes a brief allusion to the tradition of modern European philosophers (*ḥukamā'-i farang*), which he divides into three groups. The first group he tends to compare with "Iranian Theologians" (*mutakallimūn-i īn mamlakat/mutakallimūn-i Īrān*), although without mentioning any specific person or school. However, he lists a number of core doctrines that he relates to this tradition, such as believing in an eternal and omniscient creator of the world (*khāliqī qadīm u 'alīm u abadī u azalī*), the perfection of His Attributes (*mujtami'-i jamī'-i šifāt-i kamālīyya*), the identity of His Attributes with His Essence (*šifāt 'ayn-i dhāt mīdānand*), the responsibility of the human for his deeds (*mas'ūl dar a'māl*) and the idea that the actual world is the best of all possible worlds (*bihtarīn-i aqsām-i mumkin al-ijād*). With this group of Western thinkers, he associates René Descartes, Francis Bacon, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, François Fénelon and Jacques Bénigne Bossuet (1627–1704). The second group, according to Badī' al-Mulk, did not believe in an eternal God but in the principles of force or energy (*quwwa*) and matter (*mādda*), which are inseparable from and dependent on one another and together are the sole factors constituting the structure of the world. He mentions Kant and Fichte as proponents of this group. The third group believes in the Unity of Existence, which is actualized in various particular manifestations of this one Being. He does not give any name to this group but merely states that its adherents are rather few.¹⁰⁷ Badī' al-Mulk offered no further clarification of his rationale for this particular classification and the association of the thinkers he mentions with the groups. However, it seems to be the first example of a work by a traditional Islamic philosopher in which the names of

105 Both incidents are reported by K. Mujtahidī, *Āshinā'ī-i Īrānīyān bā falsafahā-yi jadīd-i gharb*, pp. 237–244, 253–264.

106 See chapter 5 in this volume, pp. 239–240.

107 This seventh question of Badī' al-Mulk's, together with the answer given by Āqā 'Alī Mudarris Ṭihrānī, appeared first in the lithographic edition of Ṭihrānī's *Badā'ī al-ḥikam* in 1314/1896–1897; it is cited in full in K. Mujtahidī, *Āshinā'ī-i Īrānīyān bā falsafahā-yi jadīd-i gharb*, p. 240 and "Āshinā'ī-i Īrānīyān bā Kānt," *Dard-i falsafā, dars-i falsafā: Jashn-nāma-yi ustād Karīm-i Mujtahidī*, ed. Moḥammad Ra'īszāda, Bābak 'Abbāsī, Mūhammad Maṇṣūr Hāshimī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Kawīr, 1384 Sh./2005), pp. 551–578 (557–557). For a German translation of this question and discussion, see Heydari (2003, 58–60 [Q&A], 56–68 [discussion]). For an English translation by Nicholas Boyleston and Mohsen Kadi-var, see Seyyed Hossein Nasr & Mehdi Aminrazavi, *An Anthology of Philosophy in Persia: Volume 5, From the School of Shiraz to the Twentieth Century* (London & New York: I. B. Tauris, 2015), pp. 486–488.

Western philosophers are mentioned in Persian. From his short description of the three groups, it becomes apparent that Badī' al-Mulk's knowledge of European philosophy was rather limited. For instance, he erroneously associates Kant and Fichte with a group of atheist thinkers, while his short depiction of this group corresponds more to the doctrines espoused by materialist and naturalist thinkers such as Julien Offray de La Mettrie (1709–51), Claude Adrien Helvétius, Ludwig Büchner or positivist thinkers such as Auguste Comte. It is this strand of European thought that began to attract so many reform-minded modernist intellectuals inside and outside Iran. Which European thinkers he had in mind with the third group we do not know. It is possible, however, that he was alluding to Hegel and Spinoza, the two philosophers Gobineau found to be close to the "Asian mind".¹⁰⁸

Although Badī' al-Mulk's question is not philosophically speaking very profound, it nevertheless shows that he had at least a vague idea of a number of eminent European thinkers. We do not have any secure information about the sources of his knowledge of European philosophy, but it is not unlikely that he was one of the Iranian scholars who attended Gobineau's private classes.¹⁰⁹ What is interesting, though, about Badī' al-Mulk's approach to European philosophy is the fact that, in contrast to some reformist intellectuals, he obviously did not regard it as entirely opposed to or essentially different from the Islamic philosophical tradition he was acquainted with. On the contrary, he set out to differentiate the two and was also interested in looking for similarities between the Islamic and the European traditions of thought.

This observation seems to be affirmed by the second example of his encounter with European philosophy. Two years prior to the questions he posed to Ṭihrānī and Ḥikmī in a series of letters, he asked Ḥajj Muḥammad Ḥasan Iṣfahānī, known as Amīn al-Ḍarb (d. 1316/1898),¹¹⁰ who had been the head of the royal mint (1290/1873–1314/1897 and 1315/1898–1316/1898) and who was in France for business reasons at that time, to purchase a book written by the French philosopher Francoise Jean-Marie Evellin (1835–1910) for him. The book, titled *Infini et quantité, étude sur le concept de l'infini en philosophie et dans les sciences*, is an attempt to reassess Kant's discussion of the antinomies with the premise that human reason is at the end capable of choosing one of the two options within an antinomy.¹¹¹ We have no evidence as to whether he

108 This is also the assumption made by A. A. Heydari, *Rezeption der westlichen Philosophie durch iranische Denker in der Kadscharenzeit*, p. 61.

109 Kadiwar comes to the same conclusion. See Muḥsin Kadiwar "Āshinā'ī-i Īrānīyān bā Kānt".

110 On Amīn al-Ḍarb, see Shireen Mahdavi, "Haj Muhammad Hassan Amin al-Zarb: His World and His Philosophy of Life," *Middle Eastern Studies* 47 2 (2011): 379–393.

111 See K. Mujtahidi, *Āshinā'ī-i Īrānīyān bā falsafahā-yi jadīd-i gharb*, pp. 238–244.

was eventually able to get hold of the book and whether he had any knowledge of Evellin's discourse, but it seems unlikely given his rather shallow and incorrect reference to Kant. It is nonetheless remarkable that he was interested in this particular work by this particular author, who is not very well known today. One reason for this choice might have been that Badi' al-Mulk was in one way or another informed about the fact that Evellin was part of a French anti-positivist current, criticizing Auguste Comte, whose anti-metaphysical materialistic doctrine was not reconcilable with the philosophical tradition Badi' al-Mulk belonged to. It is this positivist doctrine that better fits the characterization of the second group of European philosophers he mentioned in his seventh question, and it is this current that was most prominent amongst those Iranian intellectuals calling for a reform or even a dismissal of the Islamic intellectual tradition. It is striking that Badi' al-Mulk, in contrast to these reform-minded intellectuals, was interested in a proponent of European philosophy who was opposed to positivism.¹¹²

Another noteworthy case of a serious engagement with European thought by a scholar of the period is a refutation of Darwinism written by Shaykh Muḥammad Riḍā Najafī Isfahānī (d. 1362/1943) known under the title *Naqd falsafat Dārwin*.¹¹³ It is of a more critical, even apologetic, and at the same time a more sophisticated, nature. It also a significant example that demonstrates how the reception processes of European thought was mediated across various local contexts. This is because it does not directly respond to the writings of Darwin himself but to a particular reception by an Arab thinker of a specific interpretation of Darwinist thought. More precisely it is the refutation of a number of essays in which the Egyptian intellectual and physician Shibli Shumayyil (d. 1335/1917) summarized his account of Darwinism and evolutionary theory. Shumayyil, who was also sympathetic to communist ideas, came into contact with Darwinism as well as with the ideas of Herbert Spencer whilst he was in Paris studying medicine. There he became aware of Ludwig Büchner's Book, *Kraft und Stoff* which was extremely popular in late 19th-century Europe.¹¹⁴ He apparently translated the book as well as a collection of essays on Darwin by

112 See R. Seidel, *Kant in Teheran*, pp. 86–88.

113 An edition of the text has been published by Ḥamid Nāji Isfahānī in 1390s Sh./2011. The information given above rely on the preface of this edition. See Abū l-Majd Shaykh Muḥammad Riḍā Najafī Isfahānī, *Naqd falsafat Dārwin*, ed. Ḥamid Nāji Isfahānī (Tehrān: Kitābkhāna, Mūzi u Markaz-i Asnād-i Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī, 1389 Sh./2010), pp. IX–LIII.

114 Ludwig Büchner, *Kraft und Stoff: Empirisch-naturphilosophische Studien. In allgemeiner verständlicher Darstellung* (Frankfurt am Main: Meidinger, 1855).

Büchner into Arabic.¹¹⁵ Furthermore, he wrote some essays on the ideas of evolution and natural selection.¹¹⁶ Najafī's book is meant to be a response to Shumayyil's ideas on Darwinism which he regarded as not only against Islam but also philosophically inconsistent. In his *Naqd falsafat Dārwin* he sets out to show this in a detailed discussion, in which as he said in the Preface he deliberately used a rather colloquial form of language and refrained from engaging in a comparative discourse on the basis of Mulla Ṣadrā's philosophy in order to reach a wider public. As the editor, Nāji Isfahānī says in his preface to the edition the book was for some time used as a textbook in the classes given by the author, and he mentions Rūḥ Allāh Khumaynī (d. 1368 Sh./1989) among his students.¹¹⁷

5 Major Currents of European Thought Appropriated by Qajar Intellectuals

Although it is not easy to trace the actual European sources the expatriate intellectuals used in order to adopt and discuss European philosophy, their access to the intellectual discourse in Europe was more immediate than that of for instance Badī' al-Mulk. However, their adaptation of these sources was—as was their whole corpus of writings in general—was not carried out in terms of a consistently elaborate philosophical system. Therefore, one should be cautious when speaking of their doctrines with regard to their references to European Philosophy.

Nevertheless, one may preliminarily identify at least four broader intellectual currents that were adopted and aspects of which were discussed in the writings of these intellectuals: 1) various philosophical trends that may be subsumed under the heading *positivism*; 2) notions of political *liberalism*; 3) *nationalism* based on categories of culture or ethnic unity and race; 4) a variety

115 *Sechs Vorlesungen über die Darwin'sche Theorie von der Verwandlung der Arten und die erste Entstehung der Organismenwelt* (Thomas, Leipzig 1868).

116 For Shumayyil and his account of Darwinism see Marwa Elshakry, "Early Arabic Views on Darwin," in David Marshal (ed.), *Science and Religion. Christian and Muslim Perspectives* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2012), pp. 128–133. For a detailed study on the Arab reception of Darwinism see idem, *Reading Darwin in Arabic, 1860–1950* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2014).

117 Muḥammad Riḍā al-Najafī al-Iṣfahānī, *Naqd falsafat Dārwin*, p. L; the preface also contains a summary of the main arguments of the study (pp. XXIX–XLVIII).

of strands, such as socialism, Marxism, historical materialism, and anarchism, that are all in one way or another associated with the idea of *egalitarianism*.

5.1 *Positivism (materialism, empiricism, naturalism, Darwinism)*

Of significant importance were empiricist and positivist philosophical doctrines (as those of Bacon, Mill, Hume, Berkeley, Locke, Comte, Spencer), which were dominant at that time in France and England. The appeal of this strand of thought was probably grounded in its almost complete reliance on insights drawn from the natural sciences, which were on the rise at that time in Europe and which had impressed intellectuals both inside and outside Europe.

Two aspects of positivism were of particular concern among Iranian intellectuals. On the one hand, there is the anti-metaphysical doctrine that only positive sciences could provide an authentic account of reality and that by describing and explaining the natural order of things observed in the outside world, one could also model a well-ordered society. Hence, following that doctrine, social reform was only to be achieved via positive science. On the other hand, we encounter the idea that this positivist approach to reality could serve as a necessary supplement or even substitute for religion.

In their writings, we find explicit or implicit references to thinkers such as Auguste Comte, Charles Darwin, and Herbert Spencer. In Mīrzā Malkum Khān's works, such as *Daftar-i tanẓimāt* or *Dastgāh-i divān*, we find allusions to Comte's "Law of Three Stages," which states that society as a whole develops through three mentally conceived stages: (1) the theological stage, (2) the metaphysical stage, and (3) the positive or scientific stage. This final stage, he was convinced, can also be achieved in the Iranian context but only via fundamental reform of the educational and administrative system. In an analogy to the development of a grown-up person who has previously passed through the stages of infancy and youth, a society can only blossom and reach stability if it is organized and administered in accordance with the principles of natural order. In almost all his writings, therefore, he argues for concrete political measures relying on this idea of development via order and progress.¹¹⁸

Afghānī likewise links his positivist ideas to activist political measures. His writings, speeches, and letters usually have a concrete addressee—fictional or real—whom he seeks to persuade to join him in his project of Islamic reform.¹¹⁹ One important conviction is the idea that philosophy and its history should be

118 See, for instance, M. Malkum Khān, *Risālahā-yi Mīrzā Malkum Khān-i Nizām al-Dawla*, pp. 23–59, 87–101.

119 Addressees and rulers: Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh, Abdülhamid II, and Tawfiq Pashā.

reconsidered in the light of the results and achievements of positivist thought, i.e., the natural sciences. In his influential essay *Fawā'id-i falsafa* (The Benefits of Philosophy),¹²⁰ Afghānī acknowledges the importance of eminent thinkers from the Islamic intellectual tradition such as Avicenna. However, he accuses contemporary Muslim philosophers of lazily repeating centuries-old debates on abstract epistemological and ontological problems, instead of taking the new insights of the natural sciences and technological developments into account, in order to serve society by finding solutions to questions affecting people's everyday lives.

Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī also stressed the need to ground philosophy on the achievements of the natural sciences and thereby took an empiricist and positivist stance. Particularly in his works *Hasht Bihisht*, *Hikmat-i nazārī*, and *Takwīn u tashrī*, similar to Afghānī, but in more detail, Kirmānī engaged with the metaphysical discourses of Islamic philosophy. In particular, he highlighted Mullā Ṣadrā's principle of "Transubstantial Motion" (*ḥaraka jawhariyya*) and interprets the idea of constant change entailed in this principle in a materialist and empiricist manner with reference to positivist ideas.¹²¹

As for the question of the relationship between philosophy and religion, it is interesting to note that all the above-mentioned thinkers in one way or another agreed upon the need to reform philosophy in the light of the natural sciences. However, they differed in their account and evaluation of the role religion has or should play in the course of a society's development. Mīrzā Malkum Khān, for instance, represents a pragmatic approach to religion in general and—in the specific context of social reform in Iran—to Islam in particular. He acknowledged the significance of Islam as an important and deeply rooted aspect of Iranian society. Opposing the idea of blaming religion or Islam per se for the lack of progress in Iran or the Middle East, instead, he advocated the strategy that anyone attempting to launch a reform project should adopt which involves arguing that its implementation is a religious duty. Islam, he argued in a speech before British diplomats, is very flexible and its rich tradition can be used to back almost every reformist idea. It is evident that Malkum Khān had no intrinsic interest in Islam, his approach to religion was rather a rhetorical tool intended to implement a positivist worldview in a religious society gradually. Advocating a Comtian kind of *Religion de l'Humanité* he founded the *Jāmi'a-yi Ādamiyyat* (League of Humanity) with the aim of creating a community in which positivist ideas of social progress and humanism could be venerated. Malkum Khān's positivist perception of the world is, therefore, more than a mere epistemological principle for understanding sociological

120 J. Asadābādī, *Maqālāt-i Jamālīyya*, pp. 134–148.

121 See Ādamiyyat, *Andīshahā-yi Mīrzā Āqā Khān-i Kirmānī*, pp. 67–104.

events as natural ones—it is also to be seen as a practical approach, by means of which society can be enhanced as well as simply described.¹²²

Ākhūndzāda's understanding of how to implement positivism was unambiguously anti-religious. He also regarded religion as an important social factor, but one to be overcome. It can only be a transitional phase in the development of a society, which ultimately has to reach the stage of positive science. He regarded all religious worldviews as superstition since they try to explain natural processes that can be observed in the world through the influence of supernatural powers. The idea of transcendence leads, he was convinced, to an epistemologically irresolvable dualism between a natural and a supernatural world, which calls all knowledge that we gain via natural science into question. The whole cosmos for him was rather constituted of this-worldly particulars that are related to one another according to the law of nature. Religion as superstition is, therefore, an obstacle to the accomplishment of the highest, i.e., the positivist, stage in the development of a society.¹²³

In contrast to Ākhūndzāda's position, Ṭālibuf and Afghānī explicitly attempted to implement their adaptation of positivist thought and their emphasis on the need to spread the insights from natural science not merely to promote social reform but also to remodel the idea of religion and to improve religious learning in Islam. In his essay *Fawā'id-i falsafa*, for instance, Afghānī understands the perpetual quest for knowledge as a religious duty, which for him specifically entails the necessity to also engage with modern natural sciences in order to gain knowledge about the world. He felt that such an approach to knowledge about this-worldly phenomena is supported by the frequent Qur'ānic appeal to believers to accurately observe natural phenomena. Thus, in this text at least, he explicitly brought religion and positive science into a complementary relationship.¹²⁴

122 For Malkum's idea of humanity was articulated in a way reminiscent of a religious confession as well as guidelines of conduct for members of a quasi-religious society see his "Uṣūl-i ādamiyyat," in *Risālahā-yi Mīrzā Malkum Khān-i Niẓām al-Dawla*, pp. 326–341. On Malkum Khān's attitude towards religion, see also A. A. Heydari, *Rezeption der westlichen Philosophie durch iranische Denker in der Kadscharenzeit*, pp. 107–112.

123 For Ākhūndzāda on the relationship between science and religion, see his book *Maktūbāt: Nāmāhā-yi Shāhẓāda Kamāl al-Dawla bi Shāhẓāda Jalāl al-Dawla*. See also F. Ādamiyyat, *Andīshahā-yi Mīrzā Fath 'Alī-i Ākhūndzāda*, pp. 172–273. A. A. Heydari, *Rezeption der westlichen Philosophie durch iranische Denker in der Kadscharenzeit*, pp. 158–167. Hilda Tanik, *Der aserbajdschanische Autor M. F. Achundov: Leben, Weltbild, Werk. Unter besonderer Berücksichtigung seiner Theaterstücke* (Diplomarbeit Universität Wien, Vienna, 2013), pp. 28–40.

124 See his "Fawā'id-i falsafa" (The Benefits of Philosophy), in J. Asadābādī, *Maqālāt-i Jamāliyya*, pp. 147–148. For the English translation see N. R. Keddie, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism*, pp. 109–122.

Ṭālibuf's approach to the question of religion in general and to Islam in particular likewise maintained that the application of modern natural sciences and their implementation in religious discourse is required for the sake of religion itself. This is because, as far as he was concerned, it is the only way to adjust this discourse to the demands of the ever-changing circumstances of everyday life and thereby keep religion alive and relevant to the needs of the people. To achieve this goal, a sincere and continual reformulation of religious law is therefore necessary. This again can only be accomplished via a reform of the educational system. The issue of education, the way in which modern youth should acquire knowledge, is, therefore, the main topic of one of his major works, *Kitāb-i Aḥmad*, modelled on Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Émile*. In this work, Ṭālibuf presented a dialogue between the narrator and his fictitious son Aḥmad designed to raise the latter up to become both a modern citizen and a Muslim, pious and at the same time with a firm grounding in modern science.¹²⁵

Whereas the goal of Ṭālibuf and Afghānī was, among other things, to reform Islamic education, Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī's attitude towards religion was a more ambiguous one. In *Hasht Biḥisht*, for instance, he juxtaposes the discourse of issues related to moral philosophy with a defence of the legitimacy of the Azalī branch of Babism. Thus he clearly took the side of a particular religious community, though not an orthodox one, while in *Takwīn u tashrīʿ* he appears to be more hostile towards religious discourse in general—even though the main targets are Sunnī and Shīʿī religious doctrines. Apart from that, Kirmānī also reflects upon the phenomenon of religiosity (*diyānat*) in general, from a more sociological perspective. He describes the development of human religiosity following a pattern reminiscent of Herbert Spencer's doctrine of the evolutionary process in human societies, which he also applies to the history of religion as an attempt by human beings to understand the inexplicable. In primitive societies, people wanted to make sense of natural phenomena they did not understand and were afraid of. The belief in supernatural entities such as demons made these phenomena explicable and ways to seek to influence them through worship and cultic acts evolved. This religiosity then developed further into higher and more sophisticated systems of belief until it reached monotheism, in which the supernatural is transferred to a transcendent sphere. This idea of God serves the purpose of explaining things that are beyond human comprehension and has at least the potential to fill human life

125 See 'A Ṭālibuf, *Kitāb-i Aḥmad yā Safīna-yi Ṭālibī*, pp. 11–137. For a discussion of his positivist thought see F. Ādamiyyat, *Andīshahā-yi Ṭālibuf-i Tabrizī*, pp. 15–27, for his social criticism *ibid.*, pp. 79–87.

with meaning and hope. This, according to Kirmānī, is a goal that all religions share and that could even play a positive role in the enhancement of society and the peaceful coexistence of different societies as long as the principle of tolerance is regarded as an integral part of it. However, the fact that religious communities tend to claim exclusive access to the truth in the end results in violence and despotism. Kirmānī discussed this topic of religious pluralism in his essay *Haftād u du millat*, in which he described a fictitious dispute between representatives of various religious communities and *Weltanschauung* about the nature of God and its perceptibility. This essay is not only an interesting instance of Kirmānī's discourse on religion, but it also gives us a good example of his method of creatively adopting the writings of other intellectuals and thinkers. Instead of literally translating or accurately paraphrasing these texts, he rearranged and rewrote them by adding some of his own thoughts to them and, at times, even changing the actual direction of the original argument. For instance, he introduced a new character in his adaptation of the two short stories of Bernardin de Saint Pierre who, in the end, praises enlightened Europeans for their reliance on reason and natural sciences. However, it was precisely these that were the objects of critique in Bernardin's *La chaumière indienne* and *Le café de Surat*. Unlike Bernardin, Kirmānī's interest in the narration was not the romantic reorientation towards nature, as a counter-enlightenment move or the personal belief in God. What motivated Kirmanī to produce an amended version of it was to promote the idea of a peaceful coexistence achieved through the use of reason and civil rights in the face of religious unrest between various religio-political groups in Iran.¹²⁶

5.2 *Liberalism*

The adaptation of various approaches to the idea of liberalism was also exceedingly attractive to dissident Iranian intellectuals. The discourse on the freedom of the individual and Europe's record of technological progress had already appealed to Iranian travellers in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.¹²⁷ Likewise, the intellectuals discussed in this chapter particularly

126 For an edition of "Haftād u du millat" see Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī, *Haftād u du millat* (Berlin: Intishārāt-i Īrānshahr, 1343/1924), pp. 67–122. For a detailed discussion of Kirmānī's approach to religion see F. Ādamiyyat, *Andīshahā-yi Mīrzā Āqā Khān-i Kirmānī*, pp. 131–148. For a discussion of Kirmanī's appropriation of Bernardin de Saint Pierre see C. Masroori, "French Romanticism and Persian Liberalism in Nineteenth-Century Iran," 551–556.

127 A case in point is Mīr 'Abd al-Laṭīf Khān Mūsawī Shūshtarī (1758–1806) who lived in colonial India in the late 18th century and wrote about his perception of British influence there as a source of reform in his *Tuhfat al-ālam*. See, Mīr 'Abd al-Laṭīf Khān Shūshtarī,

highlighted liberal ideas and the political principles derived from them, such as those related to the sovereignty of the people and to constitutionalism. The idea of freedom of the individual and the right to express critical thinking that this implies was therefore regarded sometimes as a general precondition for progress in the first place.¹²⁸

One of Ākhūndzāda's influential essays, *Qirītīqā*, is devoted to the topic of critique as a means for independent thinking and hence a precondition for progress. Also in his *Maktūbāt*, Ākhūndzāda advocated the principles of tolerance, free speech, and engagement in open philosophical debates with frequent reference to Voltaire, Montesquieu and Rousseau, as well as to David Hume and the historian, Henry Thomas Buckle. He also makes allusions to J. S. Mill's *On Liberty*, first published in 1859, whose liberal and positivist ideas he shared. The purpose of all these writings by Ākhūndzāda was first and foremost to criticize religious dogma as a form of superstition that constituted, in his view, the main reason for the lack of freethinking—and hence social progress—in Iran. He argued that religious belief is not only opposed to science but also contradicts the very idea of human freedom since the relationship between a believer and God is equivalent to that of master and servant. Because the monotheistic veneration of an almighty God, who represents the idea of tyranny, is deeply rooted in Middle Eastern culture, Orientals naturally have difficulties in emancipating themselves from the master-servant pattern and understanding the meaning of human autonomy. The only remedy to this situation and the way to lead Iranians to the idea of autonomy and freedom was to develop an open and public critique of religious dogma. With this argument Ākhūndzāda idealized the state of critical discourse in Europe, saying that the Europeans had already reached this degree of critique.¹²⁹

Ṭālibuf was likewise influenced by the authors of the European enlightenment mentioned earlier. In his *Kitāb-i Aḥmad*, as well as in other works, he also emphasized the notion of liberty (*āzādī*), again with some reference to Mill. Liberty, he argued, is a natural attribute of human beings which is based on the idea of subjectivity, for which he coined the Persian term, *manī*. Out of this

Tuḥfat al-ʿālam wa-dhayl al-Tuḥfa: Safarnāma u Khāṭirāt, ed. Šamad Muwaḥḥid (Tehran: Ṭahūrī, 1363 Sh./1984–85). For a brief discussion see A. A. Heydari, *Rezeption der westlichen Philosophie durch iranische Denker in der Kadscharenzeit*, pp. 44–49. Another example, Mirzā Šālih, has already been mentioned.

128 For an overview to the discussion on freedom by intellectuals and reformers of Qajar Iran see S. Ahmad Hashemi, "Freedom as a Remedy for Decline: The Horizon of Freedom in Nineteenth-Century Iran," *Iran Nameh* 30 4 (2016), pp. 102–124.

129 See M. Sanjabi, "Rereading the Enlightenment: Akhundzada and His Voltaire," 48–49; F. Vahdat, *God and Juggernaut*, pp. 42–48.

attribute, he derived three spheres of freedom (life, opinion, and speech) that ought to be recognized as natural rights.¹³⁰

Programmatic emphasis on the notion of secular legislation (*qānūn*) is particularly present in the discourse of Malkum Khān. Not only did he choose *Qānūn* as the title of his exile journal but he was also probably the first to introduce this term into Persian intellectual discourse. In this way, he highlighted the idea of positive and this-worldly law—in contrast to divine law (*sharīʿa*)—a meaning of the term that was already in use in the Ottoman context.¹³¹ *Qānūn*, as he understood it, meant legislation issued by a legitimate government to guarantee welfare and justice for the individuals of a given society.¹³² The idea of a well-ordered and properly administered society is only to be achieved by means of a legal apparatus (*dastgāh-i qānūn*) that is constantly adjusted to the changing social circumstances and developments occurring in it.¹³³ He regarded the Ottoman reform of the administrative and legal systems—known as the *Tanzīmāt*, to which he constantly refers in his writings¹³⁴—as an excellent example of the implementation of the idea of *qānūn* as a concept. He argued that a clear distinction between *sharīʿa* and *qānūn* was a necessary precondition to ensuring that the government is the real sovereign of the legislative process. However, he did not regard the two legal systems as mutually exclusive.¹³⁵ In some of his writings, especially in various articles in his journal, he even argued that the basic idea of the *sharīʿa* as a legal principle explicitly points to the need for worldly legislation. He also emphasized the conceptual distinction between a particular *qānūn*, meaning a bill passed by a legislative institution, and *hukm*, a decree voluntarily issued by a ruler—a distinction that he was convinced had not been recognized in Qajar Iran. Malkum Khān's notion

130 For a brief discussion of Ṭālibuf's liberal discourse see F. Ādamiyyat, *Andīshahā-yi Ṭālibuf-i Tabrizi*, pp. 31–64.

131 See H. Algar, *Mirzā Malkum Khān*, p. 29.

132 See Malkum Khān's "Kitābcha-yi ghaybī yā Daftar-i tanzīmāt," in *Risālahā-yi Mirzā Malkum Khān-i Nizām al-Dawla*, pp. 23–59; H. Algar, *Mirzā Malkum Khān*, p. 29.

133 See, Malkum Khān's "Dastgāh-i divān," in *Risālahā-yi Mirzā Malkum Khān-i Nizām al-Dawla*, pp. 87–101 here for instance 93f.

134 See, for instance, "Kitābcha-yi ghaybī yā daftar-i tanzīmāt," in *Risālahā-yi Mirzā Malkum Khān-i Nizām al-Dawla*, pp. 23–59. For more on the influence of the *Tanzīmāt* on Malkum Khān, see Pistor-Hatam (1992, 62–70).

135 See, for instance, his article, "Yikī az ḥarfḥā-yi tāza-yi mā," *Qānūn* 1 (1 Rajab 1307/28 Feb. 1890): 4; S. A. Hashemi, "Freedom as a Remedy for Decline," p. 111. See also his essay discussing the necessity of a parliamentary system, "Nidā-yi 'adālat," in *Risālahā-yi Mirzā Malkum Khān-i Nizām al-Dawla*, pp. 136–157 (for the conformity of a parliament with religion, *ibid.*, p. 143) and his essay advertising the idea of Humanity and its compliance with the principles of Islam, "Ḥujjat," in *Risālahā-yi Mirzā Malkum Khān-i Nizām al-Dawla*, pp. 342–346.

of liberalism comes into play when the mutual dependence of the concepts of freedom (*āzādī*) and *qānūn* was emphasized because a sound legislative system based on the principle of *qānūn* cannot be achieved unless freedom of expression is granted. This freedom, however, was not an unlimited one; rather, certain restrictions to this freedom were—within legal boundaries—sometimes necessary for the sake of political and legislative order.¹³⁶ Nonetheless, the idea of human freedom was, in his opinion, an essential aspect of the concept of an autonomous agent (*fā'il-i mukhtār*) and therefore constitutive of the idea of humanness or humanity (*ādamiyyat*) as the bearer of natural rights.¹³⁷

Another important aspect of his adaptation of liberal thought is his advocacy of economic liberalism (*āzādī-i riqābat-i iqtisādī*). For one thing, it is based on the idea of the freedom of the individual and its limits, inspired by John Stuart Mill, and, for another, it displays some resemblance to the theories of free-market economics articulated by classical liberalists such as Adam Smith and Jean-Baptiste Say.¹³⁸ He did not discuss the theories of these thinkers directly in his writings, and to date, we have no evidence that he studied their original works, but he appears to have had a general knowledge of some of their basic doctrines and concepts.¹³⁹ For instance, he judged the economic self-interest (*manāfi'-i tijārī*) of European nations (*duwal-i farangistān*) to be rational and even beneficial for Oriental nations such as Iran. He openly advocated the opening up of the Iranian market to European companies as a means to further technological and social development, which without foreign investments could not be secured.¹⁴⁰

136 See, for instance, his essay discussing a proposal for criminal legislation "Daftar-i qānūn", in *Risālahā-yi Mīrzā Malkum Khān-i Nizām al-Dawla*, pp. 102–135 (see especially the introduction pp. 102–109); *ibid.*, "Nidā-yi 'adālat," in *Risālahā-yi Mīrzā Malkum Khān-i Nizām al-Dawla*, p. 146.

137 See Malkum Khān's "Uṣūl-i ādamiyyat," in *Risālahā-yi Mīrzā Malkum Khān-i Nizām al-Dawla*, pp. 326–341; *ibid.*, "Huḡjat," in *Risālahā-yi Mīrzā Malkum Khān-i Nizām al-Dawla*, pp. 342–346. See also F. Vahdat, *God and Juggernaut*, p. 34.

138 See his "Uṣūl-i taraqqī" (which is an essay on the necessary conditions for a prosperous economy in Iran, written in 1301/1884 in London and submitted to Mīrzā 'Alī Khān Amīn al-Dawla), in *Risālahā-yi Mīrzā Malkum Khān-i Nizām al-Dawla*, pp. 169–210.

139 This corresponds to the assessment made by K. Muḡtahidī, *Āshinā'ī-i Irānīyān bā falsafahā-yi jadīd-i gharb*, pp. 174–177.

140 It should be mentioned that it was his ideas of free-market economics that became subject to harsh criticism. Given his attempts to benefit from the selling of Iranian concessions to European companies, it is no wonder that his advocacy of the free-market economy in his writings has been seen as hypocritical.

5.3 *Nationalism (racism)*

Another concept that had an enormous influence on Iranian intellectuals and was adopted by them in different ways and with emphasis on various aspects or justifications of it was that of nationalism, one which was on the rise in nineteenth-century Europe. Although the discourse on nationalism may not be regarded as an intrinsically philosophical one, it nonetheless is worth mentioning here for two reasons. Firstly, since the intellectuals who first adopted modern European philosophical ideas were not systematic philosophers but politically engaged writers, they made no distinction between strictly philosophical (metaphysical, epistemological, ethical, etc.) lines of argument and those that were rather political and ideological. As far as they were concerned both types belonged to the sphere of modern European intellectual discourse with which they were engaged. Moreover, since the idea of nationalism was an essential part of this discourse in nineteenth-century Europe and the intellectuals covered in this chapter were all in one way or another specifically concerned with Iran's political and cultural future, nationalism seemed to them to be an appropriate doctrine for addressing their concerns. In doing so, they laid the groundwork for what in the twentieth century, especially under Pahlavi rule, would develop into a discourse on Iranian national identity. Secondly, in discussing and determining what was specific about "being Iranian," they also touched upon broader concepts with a greater philosophical weight, such as (collective) identity, the self, the other, etc., which all also had a mediated impact on the development of a Persian terminology of this conceptual context. Nationalism based on the idea of national identity or unity was justified, broadly speaking, either through pragmatic or essentialist arguments. Adherents of the pragmatic approach argued for the idea of a nation-state—usually referring to a pre-existing territorial entity ruled by a particular government—in order to stress the unity of this political entity. In this approach, the idea of the nation served the purpose of uniting the existing political entity. In the essentialist approach, the nation-state should be shaped in accordance with ethnic entities.¹⁴¹

¹⁴¹ This is, of course, only a very rough ideal-typical division. There are many more types of nationalism that can be identified and are discussed and analysed in scholarly literature on the history of nationalism. For more on this, see John Alexander Armstrong, *Nations before Nationalism* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1982); Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Eric Hobsbawm and Terence O. Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

Malkum Khān—in keeping with his pragmatic perspective on culture—rather followed the first approach to the idea of nationalism. Although he also explicitly talked of clear differences between various civilizations—especially the civilizations of Europe (*farangistān*) and the Orient—with regard to race (*nijād*) and religion (*dīn*), he regarded these as historical facts that can be changed using the correct measures. He did not build his argument for the need for an Iranian national identity on an essentialist or racist discourse. He regarded neither Islam nor Iranian culture as insuperable obstacles for progress in Iran nor did he argue that belonging to the Aryan race entails any essential supremacy of Iranians over other people. Instead, he suggested that national unity is guaranteed by a properly functioning modern state system that governs a community of people within a distinct territorial realm and according to the judicial and administrative standards he outlined in his various reform proposals. As far as he was concerned what constituted the nation were not essential features of ethnicity, shared history and cultural practices that can be identified as ontological entities but rather the way in which a particular ruling class pragmatically uses these features to construct the unity of the people under its rule.¹⁴²

Ākhūndzāda, Kirmānī, and Ṭālibuf were, unlike Malkum Khān, among the first protagonists of an Iranian nationalist discourse based on models of the cultural, historical and ethnic unity of the Iranian people, which was combined with explicit racist arguments. Ākhūndzāda identified Islam as an alien cultural phenomenon imposed on the Iranians by the Arabs, which caused the cultural decline of the Iranian people and thus the loss of their political power and integrity. He glorified the pre-Islamic Iranian past and the rule of the ancient kings as an idyllic age in which injustice and poverty were almost absent and which therefore should serve as a model for the ideal Iranian community. Advocating this line of reasoning, Ākhūndzāda employed two main principles of the Iranian nationalist discourse: 1) a glorification of the ancient Iranian past, and 2) a strong antipathy towards Arabs and Arabic culture.¹⁴³

Kirmānī, who had read and adopted the writings of Ākhūndzāda, especially his *Maktūbāt*, followed this line of argument in his nationalist discourse and even went one step further. He argued that the difference between Arabs and Iranians is of a fundamental nature, since the two peoples are of different types,

142 See his “Persian Civilisation,” *Contemporary Review* 59 (1891): 238–244. A Persian translation of it can be found in M. Malkum Khān, *Risālahā-yi Mīrzā Malkum Khān-i Nizām al-Dawla*, pp. 158–165.

143 F. Ādamiyyat, *Andīshahā-yi Mīrzā Fath‘ Alī-i Ākhūndzāda*, pp. 109–135. See also Reza Zia-Ebrahimi, “Self-Orientalization and Dislocation: The Uses and Abuses of the ‘Aryan’ Discourse in Iran,” *Iranian Studies* 44 4 (2011): 445–472.

the Arabs belonging to the Semitic (inferior) race and the Iranians to the Aryan (superior) race—a distinction that he attempted to underline by referring to phrenological “evidence” in order to prove the difference “scientifically.”¹⁴⁴ It was thus Kirmānī who introduced the “Aryan myth” into the Iranian national discourse. He interpreted the phenomenon of the miscegenation of these two races after the Islamic conquest of Iran as the beginning of the decline of the Aryan race and the cause of the cultural degeneration of the Iranians. This perspective allowed him to explain their perceived backwardness vis-à-vis Europe and to suggest a way out of this cultural crisis. The solution, Kirmānī argued, was a return to the pre-Islamic history and culture of Iran and to the ancient religion, Zoroastrianism. Consequently, he asserted the need to develop a historical consciousness as a precondition for the development of national identity and hence a strong and independent nation. Kirmānī was convinced that remembering the “glorious” pre-Islamic history of Iran would be one means by which to achieve this goal. Kirmānī, therefore, can be regarded as an Iranian proto-nationalist and the founding figure of a racist discourse that dwelt on the idea of an allegedly superior Aryan race that purportedly could be traced back to the earliest Persian sources, in which the ancient kings had called themselves Kings of the Aryans.

It seems clear that Kirmānī in his nationalist discourse and his use of the idea of the “Aryan” origin of the Iranians drew heavily on the racist discourse that was on the rise in late nineteenth-century Europe.¹⁴⁵ The emergence of the Aryan myth first began as a linguistic argument that identified common roots for Greek, Latin, Sanskrit and Persian. This discovery is usually associated with the British Orientalist Sir William Jones (d. 1794), whereas the term Aryan itself is said to have been coined by the French Orientalist Abraham-Hyacinthe Anquetil-Duperron (d. 1806).¹⁴⁶ First used in reference to a linguistic family, the idea of an Aryan origin gradually turned from a linguistic into an ethnic or racial category, advocated, though with different emphases, by European thinkers such as Arthur Comte de Gobineau, Friedrich Max Müller (1823–1900), George Rawlinson (1812–1902), and Ernest Renan (1823–1892). Out of this notion of an Aryan race there developed a whole discipline of racial anthropology that was accompanied by (pseudo) methods of natural science such as the construction of biological taxonomies of the human race. This idea

144 See F. Vahdat, *God and Juggernaut*, p. 39.

145 For a detailed discussion of the emergence of the Aryan myth and its appropriation by Iranian thinkers, see R. Zia-Ebrahimi, “Self-Orientalization and Dislocation”; R. Zia-Ebrahimi, “‘Arab Invasion’ and decline, or the import of European racial thought by Iranian nationalists,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 37 6 (2014): 1043–1061 [first published online 2012].

146 See R. Zia-Ebrahimi, “Self-Orientalization and Dislocation,” 448.

also served to interpret the history of mankind as a history of miscegenation and cultural decline. In a further step, the idea of racial purification and eugenics was also introduced as a means to re-establish the 'glorious' origin of the pure Aryan race, an idea that eventually culminated in the extremist racist ideology of national socialism. Kirmānī was apparently the first Iranian to adopt this nineteenth-century racist discourse and in a way 'reimported' the term, and with it the notion of the 'Aryan', into modern Persian.¹⁴⁷ It is not clear, though, whether the later Persian 'Aryan' discourse of the twentieth century was directly influenced by Kirmānī or developed through the adoption of European models.¹⁴⁸ What is known, however, is that it was further elaborated in the Pahlavi era by authors such as Ḥasan Pīrniyā¹⁴⁹ and therefore constituted an essential component of the invented tradition of the Pahlavi dynasty that traced its lineage back to the ancient kings.

Ṭālibuf likewise argued for the unity of the Iranian nation by dwelling on pejorative demarcations between Iranians and Arabs. He maintained that it was not the influence of Islam—as in Ākhūndzāda's discourse—but the impact of Arabic culture that was the major obstacle for the advancement of Iranian civilization. At the same time, Ṭālibuf argued that, notwithstanding the undeniable benefits of the ideas of the European enlightenment, the increasing influence and colonial interests of European states in Iran constituted a threat to the integrity of the Iranian nation. With his committed stand against both Arab and colonial influence on Iranian culture, he contributed to a kind of patriotic nationalist discourse by coining a number of Persian word as technical terms for concepts related to nationalism, such as *millat* (in the modern sense

147 That it was indeed reimportation is indicated by Zia-Ebrahimi, who points out that Kirmānī transliterated the term *āriyān* as an equivalent of the English *aryan* or French *arien*. In the same way, for the Semitic languages, he wrote *semetik* instead of *sāmī*. See R. Zia-Ebrahimi, "Self-Orientalization and Dislocation," 454. He does not, however, identify any specific sources Kirmānī might have used.

148 Zia-Ebrahimi does not clarify this issue. He merely says that "it took some time for other Iranian authors to catch up with Kirmānī's racialist enthusiasm". See R. Zia-Ebrahimi, "Self-Orientalization and Dislocation," 455. However, this lack of information is not surprising given the fact that studies on the Iranian reception of Kirmānī still represent a lacuna.

149 For more on Pīrniyā and his idea of an Iranian nation that is rooted in ancient Iranian history, see Helena Rust, *Rasse, Nation und die Konstruktion der iranischen Antike. Zur Funktion der Begriffe nežād (Rasse) und āryānhā (Arier) in Ḥasan Pīrniyās (1872–1935) Īrān-e Bāstānī*, MA Dissertation, Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies und Science of Religion, Universität Bern, Bern, 2014.

of nation), *jism-i millī* (Volkskörper, body metaphor signifying the entirety of an ethnic group), *waṭan* (homeland), and *ḥubb-i waṭan* (patriotism).¹⁵⁰

5.4 *Egalitarianism (socialism, anarchism, nihilism, historical materialism)*

The dissemination of Marxist and socialist thought in Iran was initiated not so much by the appropriation by Iranian intellectuals of the theoretical texts of European socialist and Marxist authors but rather through the contacts Iranian activists established with various groups belonging to the labour movement in the Caucasus. These groups in turn were influenced by socialist and social democratic movements in Russia.¹⁵¹ The propagation of this intellectual trend among Iranians was, therefore, from the very beginning strongly linked to actual political agitation and the formation of political associations for the working class. Besides this, however, some of the intellectuals covered in this chapter also referred to some of the basic concepts and discussions that underlay the activist discourse of these movements. The reception of broadly speaking egalitarian ideas focused on the concept of equality for which the Arabic/Persian term *musāwāt* or the loanword *igāliti* was used. Malkum Khān, for instance, employed the idea of equality in a way that pointed to the equality of all citizens before the law.¹⁵² Ṭālibuf also discussed the idea of equality, which he understood, with reference to Voltaire, as the natural equality of all human beings: thus he dismissed all sorts of class distinctions based on origin and genealogy.¹⁵³ Mīrzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī offered a brief systematic account of various European approaches to the concept of equality. He not only discussed Voltaire and Rousseau in this regard, but also referred to a number of quite recent intellectual trends of his time such as historical materialism, the discourses of eminent anarchist thinkers such as Mikhail Bakunin and

150 Some of these terms like “*ḥubb-i waṭan*”, before being employed by Ṭālibuf, have been in use as technical terms in the Ottoman Turkish discourse of nationalism in the 19th century. Therefore, Ṭālibuf might have picked them up from the writings of Ottoman intellectuals or Iranians based in Istanbul. For a summary of Ṭālibuf’s discourse on patriotism and nationalism see F. Ādamiyyat, *Andīshahā-yi Ṭālibuf-i Tabrīzī*, pp. 87–94.

151 On the development of the early labour movement and socialism in Iran, see Sabine Roschke-Bugzel, *Die revolutionäre Bewegung in Iran 1905–1911: Sozialdemokratie und russischer Einfluß* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1991), Cosroe Chaqueri, *Origins of Social Democracy in Modern Iran* (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 2001).

152 See, for instance his “Nidā-yi ‘adālat,” *Risālahā-yi Mīrzā Malkum Khān-i Nizām al-Dawla*, pp. 136–157.

153 For Ṭālibuf on equality, see his *Mas’ala-yi ḥayāt*. For a brief discussion see also F. Ādamiyyat, *Andīshahā-yi Ṭālibuf-i Tabrīzī*, pp. 31–64; A. A. Heydari, *Rezeption der westlichen Philosophie durch iranische Denker in der Kadscharenzeit*, p. 92.

Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, and nihilism. In doing so, he introduced these strands of thought and their protagonists into Iranian discourse for the first time. What he specifically appreciated with regard to these discourses was the idea of distributional equity. Beyond that, in his discussion on equality, he drew an interesting parallel with the religious movement of Mazdakism, which is said to have had revolutionary social tendencies. Kirmānī particularly highlighted the anticlerical and anti-aristocratic tendency of Mazdakism in a comparison with some Enlightenment and socialist or even anarchist thinkers. What he criticized, above all in anarchism and nihilism, was the rejection of any kind of state authority, which he regarded as indispensable for a functioning society.¹⁵⁴

6 Conclusion

This chapter is intended to provide a broad overview of the multifaceted phenomenon of the process of the reception of several of philosophical ideas into the intellectual and philosophical discourse of nineteenth-century Iran. It became obvious that the protagonists of this process barely elaborated systematic doctrines with regard to the broader intellectual currents discussed above, but rather made use of these ideas eclectically. Although these intellectuals seem to have been well known and are widely discussed in the scholarly literature on the (intellectual) history of Qajar Iran, their writings still await a systematic and more comprehensive evaluation with regard to the appropriation of the ideas of eminent European thinkers in their texts. We still know little about which European philosophical texts they actually studied, which texts were available to them and which of these texts were translated into languages—other than Persian—that they were acquainted with (Ottoman Turkish, Arabic, Russian, English, French, etc.). We also lack a clear image of which of these texts were popular in the period when these Iranian intellectuals were writing their essays. To achieve a more comprehensive image of the reception process, one has to locate these intellectuals in their respective contexts and reconstruct their intellectual networks more thoroughly. One needs to establish, for instance, which people a particular Iranian thinker in mid-nineteenth-century Istanbul had contact with, whether or not there was an exile community, who was active in that community and what its connections were to other local intellectual circles. To better understand the crucial issues discussed in these Iranian exile communities, one must also consider what

154 For some brief references to Kirmānī's account of egalitarianism, see F. Ādamiyyat, *Andīshahā-yi Mīrzā Āqā Khān-i Kirmānī*, pp. 105–130, 250–264.

was discussed in the broader intellectual environment in which these communities were located. In other words, insights from the intellectual history of eighteenth—and nineteenth-century Russia (especially the Caucasus region), the Ottoman Empire and the Arab world need to be systematically examined with regard to the reception and appropriation of European thought as well as the continuation and further development of Islamic intellectual traditions, where applicable. Therefore, more targeted collaborations with experts in these fields are inevitable. In terms of the source material that is involved, it is first necessary to undertake an extensive reassessment of the inventory of texts related to this process of knowledge transmission. This is to be achieved by means of a systematic evaluation of the relevant library catalogues containing the sources of eighteenth—and nineteenth-century Iranian writers focusing thematically on philosophical issues. This needs to be followed by a sophisticated categorization of these sources.

One specific topic that requires particular attention is the question of the translation of European philosophical texts, which, as has been shown, is not only an under-researched but also, by its very nature, a complicated issue. Texts were often only paraphrased rather than literally translated and sometimes the original author was not indicated, while in other instances various original texts were merged and then either shortened or extended. By the same token, translators often chose texts that, from a contemporary view of the history of philosophy in the nineteenth century, seem to be rather marginal (among them textbooks, in particular). Finally, there is the apparently widespread phenomenon of translations that were carried out at one remove using an existing translation of the original work of the author. This seems to have applied in particular to those done by Iranians based in Istanbul, who often used Ottoman Turkish renditions, or intellectuals in Tbilisi, for instance, who had Russian translations at their disposal, although this phenomenon of using already translated versions is not necessarily bound to a specific place. What also needs to be studied in more detail are how other thinkers received these translations and appropriations of European philosophical doctrines presented by intellectuals and scholars of Qajar Iran in the following decades. Which of these texts and translations, which loan words and neologisms of technical terms had an impact on the philosophical discourse—be it among scholars in the religious seminaries or those connected to the newly founded European-style institutions of learning? How they shaped the image of what was perceived to be European philosophy in early twentieth-century Iran? In response to all these questions, this chapter is only able to provide some snapshot answers focusing on a limited number of examples. However, it is hoped it has succeeded in highlighting the significance of the reception of modern

European philosophy as an important problem in the intellectual history of Qajar Iran and will encourage further research in this field of study.

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