

DIALOGUE WITH THE MASTER: EARLY SHĪ‘A ENCOUNTERS WITH AKBARĪAN MYSTICISM¹

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Abstract: Muhy al-Dīn Ibn ‘Arabī’s theoretical mysticism has been the subject of lively discussion among Iranian Sufis since they first encountered it in the seventh century. ‘Abdul Razzāq Kāshānī was the pioneer and forerunner of the debate, followed by reading and interpreting al-Shaykh al-Akbar’s key texts, particularly *Fuṣūṣ al-Hikam* (Bezels of Wisdom) by future generations of Shī‘ī scholars. Along with commentaries and glosses on his works, every element of ibn ‘Arabī’s mysticism, from his theory of the oneness of existence (*wahdat al-wujūd*) to his doctrines of *nubuwwa*, *wilaya*, and *khatm al-wilaya*, was accepted by his Shī‘ī peers, incorporated into their context and adjusted to Shī‘a doctrinal platform. This process of internalization and amalgamation was so complete that after seven centuries, it is difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish between Ibn ‘Arabī’s theory of *wahdat al-wujūd*, or his doctrines of *wilaya* and *khatm al-wilaya* and those of his Shī‘ī readers. To have a clearer picture of the philosophical and mystical activities and interests of Shī‘ī scholars in Iran under Ilkhanids (1256-1353), I examined the intellectual and historical contexts of seventh century Iran. The findings of my research are indicative of the contribution of mystics such as ‘Abdul Razzāq Kāshānī to both the school of Ibn ‘Arabī in general and of Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī in particular on the one hand, and to the correlation between Sufism and Shī‘ism on the other. What I call the ‘Shī‘ītization of Akbarīan Mysticism’ started with Kāshānī and can be regarded as a new chapter in the history of Iranian Sufism.

Keywords: Theoretical mysticism, Ibn ‘Arabī, ‘Abdul Razzāq Kāshānī, *Wilaya*, *Khatm al-Wilaya*, Sufism, Shī‘ism.

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Introduction

I will provide a general picture or idea of intellectual activities in Iran prior to the first encounter of Sufis with the ‘*irfān*’ of Ibn ‘Arabī in the second half of the seventh century. Ibn ‘Arabī had a profound impact on a number of Sufis with Shī'a inclination, although the reason(s) why it was important for them to analyze him from a Shī'a perspective has yet to be studied. It is interesting to note that Ibn ‘Arabī’s relationship with his Shī'i exponents was deeper and more sophisticated than mere interpretation, and in fact, contains ‘adjustment’ and ‘dissemination’. *Akbarīan* mysticism in these figures’ hands, whom I prefer to call Shī'a-minded Sufis, surpassed its original construct and transformed into a new configuration that, while maintaining similarities with and being influenced by it, should be treated as an independent philosophical system. ‘Abd al-Razzāq Kāshānī, ‘Alā’ u-Dawlah Simnānī (d. 736 H/1336), Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī (d. 787 H/1385), and the *Azerbaijānī* Sufi and poet, Shaykh Mahmūd Shabistārī² (d. 740 H/1340) of the seventh and eighth centuries, to mention a few, are notable exponents in this regard.

It is possible to identify two reasons for Iranian Sufis’s interest in reading and interpreting Ibn ‘Arabī’s mysticism in a Shī'a style. First, Twelver Shī'ism contains the same elements as *Akbarīan* mysticism, albeit existing in a more primitive mode of a “raw mysticity”, which needs to be fertilized and inseminated when the necessary catalyst is available.

Several resources such as the office of the imamate as the cornerstone of Shī'ism with the personality of the *imām* as the living exemplar at its heart, the doctrine of *mahdawiyya*, the concept of divine knowledge and the allegorical interpretation of religious duties and of

² Shabistārī’s brightness of mind is revealed by his comprehension of the complexities of *wahdat al-wujūd* and his skills in adding to Ibn ‘Arabī’s intellectual system. He could be regarded as the representative of a brand of mysticism whose main characteristic was pouring ‘*irfān*’ into Persian literature as a means of expounding and illuminating it. For Shabistārī, the rich tradition of Persian literature was a framework through which the *Akbarīan* mysticism’s intricacies were expressed more fully. In his magnum opus *Gulshan-i Rāz* (*the Rose Garden of Mystery*), which is written in the form of an ode (*mathnawī*), Shabistārī discusses the main ‘*irfāni/kalāmi*’ ideas of the First Emanated, the state of completeness or totality (*maqam-i jāmi'*), as well as the theory of the Perfect Man, of *wilāya* and *nubunna*. See Mahmūd b. ‘Abd al-Karīm Shabistārī, *Gulshan-i Rāz* (*the Rose Garden of Mystery*), Muhammad Ḥimāṣīyān (ed), (Kerman: Khadamāt-i Farhangī-ya Kerman, 2003), 16.

the Book, nourished this mysticity. All of them had the potential for mystical interpretations, thanks to the scholarly works of Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, who provides us with abundant information about classical Shī‘ism, as well as the role of these elements in creating a Shī‘a identity in its formative period.³ One can add to these sources supplications, salutations, and psalms, which always occupied a central place in Twelver culture.⁴ Kāmil Muṣṭafā Al-Shaybī, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, and Shahrām Pāzūkī,⁵ who considerably contributed to the existing scholarship on the correlation between Shī‘ism and Sufism in general, and the reception of *Akbarian* mysticism among Shī‘ī scholars in particular,⁶ studied the role of the abovementioned factors in this union but neglected to discuss the potential of supplications in preparing the background for such a relationship.

Examination of the content of these prayers, which were gathered over centuries, as well as their veracity, is beyond the scope of this research. Therefore, I only briefly indicate the two main themes of this trio (supplications, salutations, and psalms); i.e., *tawḥīd*

³ From among Amir-Moezzi's books, I am particularly interested in these two: Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, *The Divine Guide in Early Shiism: the Sources of Esotericism in Islam*, translated into English by David Streight (New York: State University of New York Press, 1994); Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, *The Spirituality of Shi'i Islam: Beliefs and Practices* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris Publisher, 2011).

⁴ The main two messages of this trio (supplications, salutations, and psalms), are *tawḥīd* and servitude (lit. ‘ubūdiyya), with a special emphasis on safeguarding believers from the hardships of life and death. The allegory of *ḥiṣn* (lit. castle) and/or *silāh* (lit. weapon), which shelter believers or arm them to overcome difficulties is a recurring theme in the Twelvers' prayer culture. The most prominent example is the well-known *Jawshan al-Kabir* and *Jawshan al-Saghīr* (Major and Minor Armor, respectively), which has taken its name from it.

⁵ Shahrām Pāzūkī, *Jāmi‘ al-Asrār: Jāmi‘ bayn Taṣawwuf wa Tashayū‘*, in Muṣṭafā Azmāyish (ed.), *Irfān-i Iran* (Iranian Mysticism), No. 7 (Tehran: Ḥaqīqat Publication, 1379 shamsi), 78-103.

⁶ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Sufi Essays* (New York: Schocken Books, 1977); Kāmil Muṣṭafā al-Shaybī, *al-Silah bayn al-Taṣawwuf wa al-Tashayū‘*, 2 volumes, 3rd edition (Beirut: Dār al-Andalus, 1982); Kāmil Muṣṭafā al-Shaybī, *Sufism and Shi‘ism* (Surbiton: LAAM, 1991). And many other younger scholars who studied Shī‘ism and Sufism from this perspective. One of them is Rebecca Masterton, whose research delves into the spiritual authority of *awliya* and its similarities in *Sufism* and *Shī‘ism*. See Rebecca Masterton, “A Comparative Exploration of the Spiritual Authority of the *Awliya'* in the *Shī'i* and *Sufi* Traditions”, *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (2015), 49-74.

and servitude (lit. *'ubūdiyya*), which indirectly impacted the correlation between Shī'ism and Sufism. On the other hand, since these supplications had the imprint of the *imāms*—as both narrator and teacher—as well as their teachings, the narrator/*imām* is the living exemplar and the ideal type of *'ubūdiyya* and *zuhd*, which are also the two main motifs of Sufism in its formative period.⁷ These common elements in both Sufism and the supplication tradition pursue one aim: they concern themselves with the activation and cultivation of the soul and of the Self (*nafs*) that seem to be neglected outside the realm of Sufi and Shī'a spirituality.⁸

Our analysis is confirmed via Michael Ebstein's discussion of the *Shī'i* group of *ghulāt*'s impact on several *Akbarīan* themes such as incarnation (*būlūl*) and *imām* as a divine manifestation. These ideas, which originally emerged in the *ghulāt* group of Kufa around the mid-second/eighth century, resurfaced later in *Ismā'īlī* circles and finally were endorsed and crystalized by Ibn 'Arabī as *zuhūr* and *tajallī*. Pertinent to this is the binary of divine organs of man and human organs of God (*wali*/good servant is the organ of God and vice versa), as well as the doctrine of the Perfect Man, both with their bold Shī'a coloring. Ebstein points to the *wilāyat al-takwīniya* of the office of *khilāfa* of the Perfect Man, which unlike the elitist Shī'a worldview that limits this right only and exclusively to the *imāms*, embraces humanity and even the whole creation too.⁹ With regard to Ebstein's analysis, there was a unique exchange of ideas between the Shī'a extremists of the mid-second century on the one hand and Ibn 'Arabī's mysticism (via the intermediary role of the *Ismā'īlī* circles such as *Ikhwān al-Safā*) on the other. These exchanges started with the infiltration of a few *ghulāt* ideas to the *'irfān* of Ibn 'Arabī, which were later refined and developed by him and finally returned to its *Shī'a* milieu in the seventh century.

⁷ Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *Sufism: the Formative Period* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007).

⁸ Bernd Radtke has discussed the importance of this goal in Sufism in light of “the impress of enlightenment and science”. See Bernd Radtke, “Between Projection and Suppression: Some Considerations Concerning the Study of Sufism”, in Frederick De Jong (ed.), *Shī'a Islam, Sects and Sufism, Historical Dimensions, Religious Practice, and Methodological Considerations* (Utrecht: Publications of the M. Th. Houtsma Stichting, 1992), 70-82.

⁹ Michael Ebstein, “The Organs of God: Hadīth al-Nawāfił in Classical Islamic Mysticism”, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 138, No. 2 (2018), 13-18.

Second, and from a theological perspective, the *Akbarian* theories of *wilāya* and *khatm al-wilāya*, as well as that of the Perfect Man and *wahdat al-wujūd*, seemed revolutionary and sometimes even alien to the Shī'a ethos, but accommodating jarring sets of ideas within the moderate framework of Twelver Shī'ism was not unprecedented among Shī'i scholars. Al-Shaybī shows how the extremist beliefs in the Abbasid era—and particularly those of Hishām b. Hakam (d. 199 Hegira/815-816)—were refined from their unconventional redundancy and became incorporated into the mainstream Shī'ism of the second century.¹⁰ Furthermore, as Amir-Moezzi discusses, after the fourth century (tenth century CE) and as a result of the establishment of the Buwaihids (also Buyids, 320 H/932 – 447 H/1055) and due to some political considerations, Twelvers tended to highlight the more “rational” (i.e., juridical and *kalāmi*) dimensions of their creed at the expense of its esoteric aspect. History repeated itself when in the mid-seventh/thirteenth century, Ibn ‘Arabī’s mysticism underwent the same experience and its different doctrines, including that of *wilāya*, the Perfect Man and *wahdat al-wujūd*, were customized according to the *Shī'a* creed. Therefore, and from this perspective, it is no exaggeration to say that the seventh century should also be called ‘the Shī'a century’.

Contextualizing Iranian Sufism: A Case Study of ‘Abdul Razzāq Kāshānī

‘Abdul Razzāq Kāshānī¹¹ in his *Majmū‘ah Rasā’il wa Muṣannafāt* (Collected Treatises and Writings), recounts that the first time scholarly circles in Shiraz became familiar with *Fuṣūṣ* dates back to 655 H/1257,¹² when two of his masters in Sufism,¹³ Shaykh Dīyā al-

¹⁰ al-Shaybī, *al-Ṣilah bayn al-Taṣawwuf wa al-Tashayū'*, Vol. 1, 150-151.

¹¹ For Kāshānī’s position in the line of immediate followers and disseminators of Ibn ‘Arabī, starting from Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī (d. 673 H/1274) and ending in Dāwūd Qayṣarī (d. 751 H/1350), See William Chittick, “The Five Divine Presences: From al-Qūnawī to al-Qayṣarī”, *The Muslim World*, Vol 72, Issue 2 (April 1982), 107-108.

¹² Ibn ‘Arabī had died seventeen years earlier in 638.

¹³ As ‘Abd al-Hussein Zarrīnkūb ascertains, Kāshānī’s masters were all Suhrawardī Sufis, and he had Suhrawardī training in Sufism, and that is why he cannot be regarded as a simple follower and commentator of Ibn ‘Arabī. He in fact merged *Akbarian* mysticism with the Suhrawardī teachings. See ‘Abdul Hussein Zarrīnkūb, *Dumbala-yi Justūjū dar Taṣawwuf-i Iran (Sequel to Inquiries into Persian Sufism)*, 5th edition (Tehran: Amīr Kabīr Publication, 2001), 130-131.

Dīn Abū al-Hasan al-Shīrāzī (d. 70 /1306)¹⁴ and Shaykh Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ah̄mad al-Hakīm Kīshī (d. 694 H/1295), had difficulty finding an expert in Shiraz with whom they could discuss *tawḥīd*, or who could answer their questions regarding the subject. Quoting Kīshī, Kāshānī writes:

“... and at that time, there was no one in Shiraz with whom I could discuss *tawḥīd*, and Shaykh Dīyā al-Dīn Abū Ḥasan did not have enough knowledge about it, and I [myself] was also perplexed, until *Fuṣūṣ* reached here.¹⁵

In consideration of the above-mentioned quotation as well as the time of the completion of the *Fuṣūṣ* in 627 H/1229,¹⁶ it seems that it only took twenty-eight years for the *Fuṣūṣ* to reach Shiraz and become accessible to Kāshānī's masters who lived during the Ilkhanid dynasty. We know much about the intellectual life of the seventh century Iran under the Mongol rule. As Lambton, Pfeiffer, Amitai-Preiss, and al-Shaybī,¹⁷ among others have discussed, while *Shī'ism* was an exception, Sunnism was the rule, and Sunni Sufism was particularly popular and vibrant. Ostensibly, the decline of the Abbasid caliphate, the impartiality of the Mongols in religious affairs, and the release of Sufism from Sunnism contributed to a rise in the status of Sufism. The two main Sufi *silsilas* of *Subrawardiyya* (to which Kāshānī was affiliated) and *Kubrawīya*, as well as lesser *tariqah*, such as *Kazirunīya* (also *Ishāqīya*)¹⁸ and *Rushdīya*, were active and prevalent at that time.¹⁹

¹⁴ With the full name of Naṣīr al-Dīn Abū Ḥāmid Maḥmūd b. al-Imām Dīyā al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan Maṣ'ūd b. Maḥmūd al-Shīrāzī. For the complete list of the names of Kāshānī's masters, I consulted with Fatemeh Tayefeh's doctoral thesis entitled “Concept of Chivalry (*Futūrīyah*) According to ‘Abdul Razzāq Kāshānī: Analysis on His *Tuhfat al-Ikhwān fi Khāṣa’iṣ al-Fityān* (Brethren Trove in Chivalry)” (Academy of Islamic Studies--University of Malaya, 2015).

¹⁵ Unfortunately, I did not have direct access to *Majmū'a Rasā'il wa Muṣannafāt* and my correspondence with the publisher was inconclusive.

¹⁶ Kamāl al-Dīn ‘Abdul Razzāq Kāshānī, *Sharḥ-i Fuṣūṣ al-Hikam* (Commentary on the *Fuṣūṣ al-Hikam*) Majīd Hādīzādih (ed.) (Tehran: Anjuman-i Āthār wa Mafākhir-i Farhangī, 2004), 44.

¹⁷ al-Shaybī, *Sufism and Shī'ism*.

¹⁸ The *silsila* was founded by Shaykh Ibrāhīm Shahriyār Kāzirūnī (d. d. 426/1035), A. K. S. Lambton, FĀRS iii. History in the Islamic Period, Encyclopedia Iranica, 2012. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/fars-iii>, last accessed 11/20/18.

¹⁹ ‘Abdul Ḥussein Zarrīnkūb in *Dunbala-yi Justujū dar Taṣawwuf Iran* in his discussion of Iranian Sufism indirectly indicates the popularity of “Sunni mysticism”, though he never mentions the term and only refer to it as “*Sūfiya-yi Iran*” (lit. Iranian

Not only were they popular, but they were also attached to the court. It seems that the Ilkhanid policy was to invest in moderate and established mystics; figures such as Ṣafī al-Dīn Ardibīlī (735 H/1334),²⁰ the disciple of Shaykh Zāhid Gilānī, or the Kubrawī Shaykh, ‘Alā’ u-Dawlah Simnānī (d. 736 H/1336), rather than radical and *ghālibi* Sufis who seemed to be troublesome for the political stability of their territory. It is beyond the objectives of this paper to investigate the reasons for this policy. I can briefly say that by attaching themselves to moderate Sufis and recruiting them into their system, Mongols wanted to use their capabilities, including their knowledge and popularity, as valuable sources of legitimacy.

The Mongols' attachment to moderate mystics was a policy that had been started by Abū Sa‘īd's²¹ ancestors, Arghūn (d. 695 H/1316) and his son Uljeitū (d. 690 H/1291). The abovementioned ‘Alā’ u-Dawlah Simnānī, who was in the official service of Arghūn as well as Ṣafī al-Dīn, could successfully restrain many of the Mongols “from molesting the people”.²² As Al-Shaybī ascertains, this policy was based on the mutual need of the Mongols and the Sufis. The Mongols “needed a group of people who would calm the people and react towards the Mongol invasion in accordance with the Sufi doctrine of satisfaction and resignation”.²³ Non-moderate Sufism, such as *Nurbakhshiyā*, *Hurufiyyā*, *Musba‘sha‘iyyā*, and *Sarbidār*, with chiliastic orientation and *ghālibi* colorations, were active and operating,²⁴ and like the Abbasid era, had characteristics which resembled the Shī‘a extremist movements.²⁵ The collapse of the Abbasids was beneficial for moderate Shī‘ism as well, which was slowly but gradually rising to

Sufism), See Zarīnküb, *Dumbala-yi Justyūj*, 127; Judith Pfeiffer, “Conversion Versions: Sultan Öljeitü’s Conversion to Shi‘ism (709/1309) in Muslim Narrative Sources”, *Mongolian Studies*, Vol. 22 (1999), 10, Reuven Amitai-Preiss, “Sufis and Shamans: Some Remarks on the Islamization of the Mongols in the Ilkhanate”, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* (JESHO), Leiden, Vol. 42, No. 1 (1999); and al-Shaybī, *Sufism and Shi‘ism*, 112-115.

²⁰ Amitai-Preiss, *Sufis and Shamans*, 35.

²¹ Abū Sa‘īd Bahādūr Khān (d. 736 H/1335).

²² Mustawfi in Amitai-Preiss, *Sufis and Shamans*, 32, 35-36.

²³ al-Shaybī, *Sufism and Shi‘ism*, 112.

²⁴ William F. Tucker, *the Kufan Ghulat and Millenarian (Mahdist) Movements in Mongol-Turkmen Iran, in Unity in Diversity: Mysticism, Messianism, and the Construction of Religious Authority in Islam*, Orkhan Mir-Kasimov (ed.) (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 177-194.

²⁵ al-Shaybī, *Sufism and Shi‘ism*, 56.

prominence and recognition, due both to the conversion of a number of Ilkhanid *Khāns*, such as Ghāzān, to Shī'ism, and the adoption of a moderate attitude by Twelvers.²⁶

Tucker emphasizes that Twelvers, compared with extremist Shī'as who represented millenarian fervor, showed a “relatively moderate and frequently quiescent” attitude²⁷ because of their socio-political weaknesses.²⁸ Nevertheless, despite this passivity in politics, Twelver (or moderate) Shī'ism was not only gradually receiving social popularity and acceptance, but also Shī'a elements were infiltrating the Sufi system, and sometimes became a replacement for it. Maḥmūd Taqī Zādih Dāwārī observes how the Sufi *dhikr* recitation sessions became replaced by *Āshūrā* and lamentation for *imām* Ḥussayn.²⁹ Developments such as this prepared groundwork for the emergence of the Safawids, whose era was a landmark of the free reign of popular Shī'ism to a variety of expressions.³⁰

Earlier, I mentioned Kāshānī's quote about his masters' difficulty in finding an expert in Shiraz with whom to discuss *tawhīd* until the *Fusūṣ* reached the city and became accessible to them. Ostensibly, the *Fusūṣ* had gained popularity in Shiraz's Sufi circles almost immediately after its composition.³¹ So, too, did the theory of

²⁶ Ibid., 110-112, 139.

²⁷ Tucker, *the Kufān Ghulat*, 182.

²⁸ Amir-Moezzi believes that prior to the establishment of the Buyid dynasty, Shī'ism was esoteric and it was only after the Buyids that this differentiation between esoteric and moderate Shī'ism (here *kalāmi/juridical*) started. He also is reluctant to use the term “extremist” because what looked to be “extremism” in the post-Buyid era was not only the esoteric narrative of Shī'ism in pre-Buyid era, but also the sole tendency among Twelvers. In other words, Shī'ism was esotericism and vice versa. Therefore, the term “extremist”, according to Amir-Moezzi, is insufficient and does not reflect the reality of historical developments.

²⁹ Maḥmūd Taqī Zādih Dāwārī, *Sunat-i 'Aẓadari wa Manqibat Khāni dar Tarikh-i Shi'a-yi Emāmiya* (*The Lamentation Tradition and Mourning in the History of the Imāmi Shī'ism*) (Qum: Shī'a Shināsī, 1386 Shamsi).

³⁰ Momen's assessment of the “free reign” of Shī'ism not only explains the socio-religious developments of the Safavid era, but also sheds light on the pre-Safavid developments as well. He observes how “the devotion of ordinary people towards the Sufi saints, which had been a major factor in popular religiosity in previous centuries, was gradually transferred to the *Shī'i* Imams, who now became the spiritual intermediaries and intercessors of the masses”. See Moojan Momen, *Shī'i Islam: A Beginner's Guide* (London: Oneworld, 2016), 147.

³¹ As Caner Dagli explains, *Fusūṣ* “was an important starting point for the centuries of philosophical elaboration” which had begun by Qūnawī and reached its

wahdat al-wujūd, which “was in ultimate widespread” by Ibn ‘Arabī’s disciples.³² Tayefeh’s analysis is similar to that of Dagli who ascertains that by the time of Kāshānī, Ibn ‘Arabī’s mysticism had “already started to become a kind of meta-order, not itself providing spiritual initiation, but existing as a special dimension within existing orders”.³³

The teachings of Ibn ‘Arabī facilitated the shaping of the three intellectual tendencies in Muslim societies, including the philosophical school of Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī (with figures such as Kāshānī, the aforementioned Ḥaydar Āmulī and ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Jilī (d. 826/1424 ?) as its members), the mystical poetry of Nūr al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Rahmān Jāmī (d. 871/1492), and Fakhr al-Dīn Ḥirāqī (d. 688/1289), and finally the philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā (d. 1045/1635-36?) and his successors (known as *ḥikma/ḥikmat* discourse).³⁴ At the beginning of its development, the first school had “extremely close interaction”³⁵ with “the separate intellectual traditions of Avicennan *falsafa*”³⁶ and later *kalam*,³⁷ and it is due to this close contact that Morris rightly believes that *Ta’wilat Qur’ān-i Ḥakīm* of Kāshānī, to which I will return shortly, is not so much a *ta’wil* in its Sufi meaning and usage, but is rather “based on elements from both Ibn ‘Arabī’s writings and the prevalent Avicennan school of philosophy in which Kāshānī himself was originally trained”.³⁸

culmination at the time of Dāwūd al-Qaysarī. Besides, “it was precisely because it was brief, difficult, and controversial that the *Fuṣūṣ* became a kind of template for the philosophical speculations and elaborations of his school”. See Caner K. Dagli, *Ibn ‘Arabī and Islamic Intellectual Culture: from Mysticism to Philosophy* (London and New York: Routledge Sufi Series, 2016), 5. Kamāl al-Dīn ‘Abdul Razzāq Kāshānī, *Sharḥ-i Fuṣūṣ al-Hikam*, Majid Hādīzādīh (ed.) (Tehran: Anjuman-i Āthār wa Mafākhir-i Farhangī, 1383 *shamsī*), 46-47.

³² Tayefeh, “Concept of Chivalry (*Futūwwah*) According to ‘Abdul Razzāq Kāshānī”, 30.

³³ Zarrīnkūb indicates that the encounter of Iranian Sufis with *Akbarian* mysticism could not have been easy and comfortable. See Zarrīnkūb, *Dunbālā-yi Justujū*, 127. Though he does not bring any evidence to prove it. Dagli, *Ibn ‘Arabī and Islamic Intellectual Culture*, , 105.

³⁴ James W. Morris, “Ibn Arabī and His Interpreters, Part II-B”, *Journal of American Oriental Society* (JAOS), Vol. 107 (1987), 101.

³⁵ James W. Morris, “Ibn Arabī and His Interpreters, Part II-A”, *Journal of American Oriental Society* (JAOS), Vol. 106 (1986), 33.

³⁶ Ibid., 33.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Morris, “Ibn Arabī” 1987, 3-4.

Regarding Kāshānī's contribution to the first school, I should mention “his eminence in the field”³⁹ as well as his significant role in publicizing *Akbarīan* mysticism in the Ilkhanid court. Through the lens of his commentary on the *Fuṣūṣ*, the later generations of Sufis familiarized themselves with the highly sophisticated and erudite metaphysics of Ibn ‘Arabī. So, his role was that of “formalization” of the language and the technical terms and concepts of the *Fuṣūṣ*⁴⁰ by putting together three lexicons (among many other writings), which eventually helped novices to navigate their way around the often-bumpy terrain of the intricacies of Ibn ‘Arabī’s terminology. On the other hand, Kāshānī’s “guidebook style approach for autodidacts”,⁴¹ for those who were excluded from law colleges and *madrasas*, was useful for “public debates that were enduringly popular at the riyal Mongol court”.⁴²

Pertinent to Kāshānī’s intellectual genealogy as well as his contribution to the legacy he inherited from the past, is his “legal and theological affiliation”,⁴³ which, according to Lala, “seems premature, as it is not even known whether he was Sunni or Shi‘ite”.⁴⁴ Several scholars have shed light on it and considered him a Shī‘ī Sufi.⁴⁵ Others simply call him an Iranian Sufi,⁴⁶ and Zarrīnkūb and Dagli believe that because of his Suhrawardī masters and training, he cannot be Shī‘ī.⁴⁷ Lala also believes that Kāshānī’s respect for the *ahl al-bayt* and his visits to Najaf and Karbala should not make us conclude that he was a *Shi‘a*, because pilgrimage to the tombs of Ali and his sons is “de

³⁹ Ismail Lala, *Knowing God: Ibn ‘Arabi and ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Qashāni’s Metaphysics of the Divine* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2019), 28.

⁴⁰ Lala, *Knowing God*, 28-31.

⁴¹ Ibid., 31.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., 22.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Nasr, *Sufi Essays*, 116; Fātemeh ‘Alāqah, “*Muri’ bar Fityan wa Futuwwat Namihā*: A Review on Chivalrous and Books of Chivalry”, *Farhang*, No. 25-26 (Spring and Summer 1377 Shamsī/1999), 11; Alī Ashraf Imāmī, “Nigāhī bi Iṣṭilāhāt-i Šūfiyya Shaykh ‘Abdul Razzāq Kāshānī: A Glimpse at Kāshānī’s Lexicon of the Sufi Terminology”, *Majalla-yi Danishkada-yi ‘Ulūm-i Insānī*, No. 1 (Spring 1381 Shamsī/2001), 62-63.

⁴⁶ Tayefeh, “Concept of Chivalry (*Futuwwah*)”, 36.

⁴⁷ Zarrīnkūb, *Dumbāla-yi Justujū*, 127-133; Dagli, *Ibn ‘Arabī and Islamic Intellectual Culture*, 105.

rigueur for Sunnis also".⁴⁸ Al-Shaybī surprisingly skips him and mentions him only once when discussing Kāshif Wa‘izī's (910 H/1504)⁴⁹ work *Rawdat al-Shuhadā* (the Rose Garden of Martyrs).⁵⁰ With regard to the minor status of Shī‘ism in the Ilkhanid era as well as Kāshānī's training in Suhrawardī Sufism, it is obvious that his Shī‘ism, as al-Shaybī puts it well, was a *Shāmī* one; i.e., he shows love and respect to the household of the Prophet without necessarily being a Shī‘ī Sufī or cursing the first three caliphs and/or companions of the Prophet.⁵¹ Kāshānī not only benefited from the wide variety of Sufi authorities such as Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Junayd, Bisṭāmī, Fudayl b. ‘Iyād (d. 187/803) and al-Ḥallāj (d. 309/922),⁵² but also, as we will observe in the following, utilized the treasury of Shī‘a *ḥadīth* to read and interpret Ibn ‘Arabī's teachings.

Shī‘itization of *Akbarīan* Mysticism: The Beginning of an Era

Kāshānī's books⁵³ have been discussed in a number of sources.⁵⁴ For our purpose here, I briefly read and analyze his three

⁴⁸ Lala, *Knowing God*.

⁴⁹ Kamāl al-Dīn Ḥusseyn ibn ‘Alī Sabziwārī, known as Mawlānā Kāshif Wa‘izī, Iranian polymath of the Timurid era. He was a Sunni *Hanafī ‘alīm* and preacher, whose book *Rawdat al-Shuhadā* eventually became one of the most important compilations on *Karbalā* tragedy.

⁵⁰ al-Shaybī, *Sufism and Shī‘ism*, 275.

⁵¹ Al-Shaybī categorizes many Sunni Sufis and philosophers of the medieval period as such. Another prominent example is Shāh Ni‘matullāh Walī (d. 834 H/1430), who clearly stated he was not a Rāfidhī (the enemy of Abū Bakr and other companions), and in fact he was the lover of them and a “comrade of Sunnis” (Shāh Ni‘matullāh Walī, *Diwān*, Vol. 2, 484 in al-Shaybī, *Sufism and Shī‘ism*, 217-218).

⁵² Lala, *Knowing God*, 24.

⁵³ From among the lengthy list of his books, I only had access to the few following: Kāshānī, *Sharḥ-i Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*; *Mu‘jam Iṣṭilāḥat al-Ṣūfiyya* (*Lexicon of the Sufi Terminology*), ‘Abd ‘Āl Shāhīn (ed.) (Cairo: Dār al-Manār, 1343 H/ 1992). *Ta‘wīlat Qur‘ān Karīm* (*Tafsīr-i Ibn ‘Arabī*), translated into Persian: Seyyed Jawād Hāshimī ‘Ulyā, *Mahnāz Ra’is Zādih* (Tehran: Mawlā, 1393 *shamsī*).

⁵⁴ Here is a short list of works having been done on Kāshānī, on his key texts and his contribution to *Akbarīan* mysticism: Tayefeh, “Concept of Chivalry (*Futūrūwah*) According to ‘Abdul Razzāq Kāshānī”; Nasr, *Sufi Essays*, 116; ‘Alāqah, “*Muriūrī bar Fityān wa Futūrūwat Nāmīhā*”, 295-317; Zarrīnkūb, *Dunbāla-yi Justujū dar Tāṣawwuf-i Iran*; Imāmī, “Nigāhī bi Iṣṭilāḥāt-i Ṣūfiyya-i Shaykh ‘Abdul Razzāq Kāshānī”, 57-80; ‘Abdul Ridhā Maẓāhirī, “Ta‘līqahāy-i Shī‘a bar *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam-i* Ibn ‘Arabī: Shī‘a Commentaries on *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* of Ibn ‘Arabī”, *Mahnāma-yi Pažnūbīshī-yi Iṭṭilā‘at-i Ḥikmat wa Ma‘rifat*, No. 1 (1387 Shamsī/2008), 76-81; Sachiko Murata, *The Tao of*

key texts including *Ta'wilat al-Qur'an al-Hakim* (The Interpretation of the Qur'an),⁵⁵ *Tuhfat al-Ikhwān fī Khaṣāṣ al-Fityān* (Brethren Trove in Chivalry) and *Sharḥ Ḥadīth al-Haqīqat* (Commentary on the Ḥadīth of Truth).

Ta'wilat, as scholars such as Lory and Morris have discussed, cannot be regarded a mystical interpretation, because Kāshānī was a shift from Ibn 'Arabī's attitude in the sense that "while the Shaykh al-Akbar bases his commentaries on the Qur'an on a spiritual perception of its metaphysical senses (*ḥaqāiq*), Kāshānī tries to introduce the verses in a rather simple, pedagogical frame of (philosophical) interpretations".⁵⁶ Furthermore, I will argue in the following that Kāshānī's reading of sainthood, not only in *Ta'wilat*, but also in the two other texts, is very close to the Shī'a understanding of the office of *wilaya*, which is endorsed by Lory's investigation of the two possible models of sainthood in *Ta'wilat* as well.

Lory argues that Kāshānī comes up with two types of sainthood: the first type of saint/*wāli* is the one who "tries to attain the truth (*ḥaqīqa*) by imitating the Prophet. This imitation does not mean simply following the *shari'a* of Muhammad's deeds and conduct, as often occurs in Sunni Islam. It implies that the Prophet's holiness, the prophetic light, is the source and root of all human sainthood and that the Sufi should try to join this source. The second type of saint refers to direct divine inspiration by a journey to God solely by means of divine grace and love".⁵⁷ As we will observe in the following, Kāshānī's conception of *wilaya* is similar to its Shī'i reading.

Islam: A Sourcebook on Gender Relationships in Islamic Thought, Foreword by Annemarie Schimmel (New York: State University of New York Press, 1992), 96-99; D. B. Macdonald, "ABD al-Razzak Kashani", *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, New Edition, Volume I, A-B (Leiden and London: Brill, 1960), 88-90; Pierre Lory, "Eschatology and Hermeneutics in Kāshānī's *Ta'wilat al-Qur'an*", in Annabel Keeler and Sajjad Rizvi (eds.), *the Spirit and the Letter: Approaches of the Esoteric Interpretation of the Quran* (Oxford: Oxford University Press in Association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2016), 325-343; and the most recent one, Lala, *Knowing God*.

⁵⁵ I use the two-volume copy entitled Muhy al-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī, *Tafsīr Ibn 'Arabī* (*Ta'wilat 'Abdul Razzaq*), edited and annotated by Samīr Muṣṭafā Rabāb (Beirut: Dār al-Iḥyā al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 2000).

⁵⁶ Lory, "Eschatology and Hermeneutics", 328 & Morris, "Ibn Arabī and His Interpreters" Part II-A, 33.

⁵⁷ Lory, "Eschatology and Hermeneutics", 329.

Pertinent to this is his extensive utilization of the *Shī‘ī ḥadīths*, particularly from the first *imām*, to show how in these initial steps, *Akbarīan* mysticism came to be read and scrutinized from a Shī‘a perspective. Furthermore, Ali’s presence is bold and outstanding throughout the text and is saluted in the Shī‘ī style of “peace be upon them” (*‘alayha al-salām*), rather than the Sunni phrase of “God be pleased with him” (*raḍiya Allāh ‘anhu*). Interpreting the verse twenty-nine of the sūrah al-Baqarah (the Cow), “He it is Who created for you all that is on the earth. Then He turned to Heaven and fashioned it into seven heavens, and He is Knower of all things”,⁵⁸ Kāshānī maintains that the “*sab‘a samāwāt*” indicates the seven levels of the spiritual world (*marātib ‘ālam-i rawḥānīyāt*), starting from *‘ālam al-malakūt al-ardīyya wa al-qurwā al-nafsāniyya wa al-jinn* down to *‘ālam al-nafs* to *‘ālam al-qalb* to *‘ālam al-‘aql* to *‘ālam al-sirr* to *‘ālam al-rāwī* to *‘ālam al-khafā’*.⁵⁹

Obviously, Kāshānī here refers to microcosm, *insān*, and his description of the journey “means taking the outward expression back to the inner world of the microcosm, and “seven” is a favorite number for enumeration of the *lata’if* (lit. intricacies), for example. After all, the *mi‘rāj* went through the “seven heavens” in the outside world, so the internal *mi‘rāj* of the adepts must also go through “seven heavens” on the inside, not outside”.⁶⁰ Following his esoteric reading of this verse, Kāshānī brings a ḥadīth from *imām* Ali saying that “*salūnī ‘an ḫuruq al-samā’, fa innī a‘lam bibā min ṭuraq al-ard*” (ask me from the paths of the Heaven because I am more learned about it than the paths of the earth), and maintains that the paths of the Heaven, whose knowledge is in Ali’s possession are but [mystical] states and stations (*al-ahwāl wa al-maqāmat*), such as *zuhd*, *tawakkal*, *riḍā*, and alike.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Others (eds.), *the Study Quran: a New Translation and Commentary* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2015), 66.

⁵⁹ Kamāl al-Dīn ‘Abdul Razzāq Kāshānī, *Ta‘wīlāt al-Qur‘ān Ḥakīm*, Samīr Muṣṭafā Rabāb (ed.), Vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār al-Iḥyā al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 2000), 25.

⁶⁰ For this part, I am very grateful to Professor William Chittick, who clarified on the issue in my email correspondence with him (dated 10/03/2020), and explained that Kāshānī here points to microcosm and seven heavens (or the allegory of seven stations of spiritual journey), must be understood in light of *mi‘rāj*.

⁶¹ Ibid.

Interpreting verse one-hundred and sixty-eight of the same *surah* “O mankind! Eat of what is lawful and good on the earth and follow not the footsteps of Satan. Truly he is a manifest enemy unto you”,⁶² Kāshānī emphasizes the importance of moderation (*i'tidāl*) in the body and the soul of the Sufī. Moderation, Kāshānī ascertains, is the fourth shadow, which alongside the shadow of enmity (*'adāwat* belongs to the world of *nafs*), of friendship (*ulfat* belongs to the world of *qalb*), and of affection (*muhabat* belongs to the world of *rūḥ*), reflects unity (*wahdah*).⁶³ Kāshānī brings another *hadīth* from the same *imām* stating that “you do not see an ignorant (*jāhil*), unless he goes to two extremes; either exaggeration or understatement (*lā tara al-jāhil illā mufrāṭan aw mufarriṭan*) to support his all-mystical reading of the above-mentioned verse.⁶⁴

But probably the most outstanding section of *Ta'wilat*, which goes beyond narrating *hadīth* and eventually serves to prove the right of the *wilāya* of Ali and his progenies against the right of the *khilāfa* of their adversaries, is Kāshānī's interpretation of the verses seventy-two and seventy-three of the *Sūrah al-Anbīyā'* (the Prophets): “And We bestowed upon him Isaac and Jacob as an added gift. And each of them We made righteous. And We made them imams, guiding according to Our Command. And We revealed unto them the doing of good deeds, the performance of prayer, and the giving of alms. And they were worshippers of Us”.⁶⁵ He narrates a *hadīth* from the Prophet saying that “Ali and I were two lights (*nūrāyn*), which are praised and glorified by God and His angels. And when He created Adam, we were transmitted to his forehead (*jibba*) and from his forehead to his loins (*sullb*) until we were transmitted to Seth”.⁶⁶ Although the *hadīth*, known as *hadīth nūrāyn* (lit. of two lights), is narrated in different ways by the *Shī'i* sources, Kāshānī's key point in this text is to prove the right of the *khilāfa/wilāya* of Ali and his sons as a divine one and their office as divinely assigned.

Clarifying the term *sadaqa* (almsgiving/charity) and the philosophy behind it in verses twelve and thirteen of the *Sūrah al-Mujādilah* (She Who Disputes): “O you who believe! When you

⁶² Nasr and Others (eds.), *the Study Quran*, 80.

⁶³ Kāshānī, *Ta'wilat al-Qur'an*, Vol. 1, 64.

⁶⁴ Ibid., Vol. 1, 65.

⁶⁵ Nasr and Others (eds.), *the Study Quran*, 1471.

⁶⁶ Kāshānī, *Ta'wilat al-Qur'an*, Vol. 2, 45.

converse in secret with the Messenger, offer charity before your secret converse. That is better for you and purer. But if you do not find [the means], truly God is Forgiving, Merciful. Are you apprehensive about offering charity before your secret converse? If you do not do so and God relents unto you, then perform the prayer, give the alms, and obey God and His Messenger. God is Aware of whatsoever you do”,⁶⁷ in which believers are recommended to give charity before they want to converse with the Prophet, Kāshānī explains that the first and foremost to do to approach the Prophet and eventually reach spiritual attachment to him is to alienate (*insilākh*) self from any worldly connection.

For Kāshānī, obviously, this is the real meaning of *sadaqa*. When the station (*maqām*) of *tajrīd* is achieved, the believer will share the Prophet's divine secrets. In the following, Kāshānī mentions a statement from the second caliph, ‘Umar b. Khattāb (d. 23 H/644), where Ali is praised for his sole and unique status due to giving charity before conversing with the Prophet and instead of benefitting from three things that ‘Umar (and obviously no one else) never had: marriage with Fatemeh, the endowment of the flag of Khaybar and *Ayat al-Najwā* (*al-Najwā* or *al-Munājāt* verse).⁶⁸ In all probability, *Ta’wilāt* is the first text among similar works wherein Shī‘a *hadiths* are frequently mentioned and *imams* are introduced as role models, ideal exemplars, of a mystical lifestyle. Kāshānī’s initiative in reading the teachings of Ibn ‘Arabī, of which he was a full defender and disseminator, in the shadow of the Shī‘a *hadiths*, paved the way for figures such as the aforementioned Sayyid Haydar Āmulī to claim that Sufism is Shī‘ism and vice versa.⁶⁹ Furthermore, Āmulī’s inspiration from Kāshānī is well-documented.⁷⁰

Tuhfat al-Ikhwān fī Khayṣiṣ al-Fityān is written on the request (order?) of his *shaykh*, *al-Shaykh al-Kabīr*, Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar b. ‘Abd Allāh Shahāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī (d. 620-632? H/1234), the

⁶⁷ Nasr and Others (eds.), *the Study Quran*, 2463.

⁶⁸ Kāshānī, *Ta’wilāt al-Qur’ān*, Vol. 2, 326.

⁶⁹ Haydar Āmulī, *Jamī‘ al-Asrār wa Manba‘ al-Anwār* (*the Comprehensive of Mysteries and the Source of Lights*), translated into Persian by Muḥammad Riḍā Jūzī (Tehran: Hermes, 1391).

⁷⁰ This inspiration was so great that it encouraged Āmulī to write “a fervent panegyric”. See Lala, *Knowing God*, 23, footnote 120, on Kāshānī.

Suhrawardī *qutb* of the time.⁷¹ At the beginning of the text, Ali is praised as the “generous chivalrous of the Arab” and “the ever-conqueror Lion of God”.⁷² Defining chivalry as the appearance of the natural disposition (*fatrāh*) via its attributes and faculties ... in order to actualize the potentials of the natural disposition and prepare it for perfection (*kamāl*),⁷³ because perfection is a requirement for the sincere and truthful Abrahamic *fatrāh*, Kāshānī argues that chivalry and achieving perfection are a foundation for *wilāya*, which only belongs to Ali.⁷⁴ It belongs to him because his natural disposition is at its paramount of perfection because the appearance of *wilāya* in a servant causes the perfection of chivalry in him.⁷⁵ Therefore, he is called *fatā* (chivalrous), because he has used his *isti'dād* (preparedness) to actualize his potentials.⁷⁶

Abraham is the primal point of *wilāya* (*awwal nuqta*), it's beginning (*mufattih*) and the first *ḥanif* (monotheist), though the culmination, the *qutb* (pillar) of *wilāya* is Ali, because he rectifies every

⁷¹ Kāshānī, *Sharḥ-i Fusūs al-Hikam*, 11.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ For a long time, and until Ibn ‘Arabī, the popular belief among the mystics was that God is manifested in conformity with the preparedness (*isti'dād*) of the servant, but according to Ibn ‘Arabī and his students including Kāshānī, this preparedness of the servant, *isti'dād*, “is rather the servant’s preparedness to conform to a particular form of God’s phenomenal appearance. Indeed, this *isti'dād* is given by God to His servant [italic is in the text] (Ronald L. Nettler, *Sufi Metaphysics and Qur'anic Prophets: Ibn Arabī's Thought and Method in the Fusus al-Hikam* (Cambridge: the Islamic Texts Society, 2003), 124-125. Thus, when this preparedness comes to the heart, the heart sees Him in the form in which He is revealed to it. Therefore, the heart of the ‘ārif is the only thing that sees God in everything and worships him in the infinite shapes of His manifestations (Masataka Takeshita, “Ibn Arabī’s Theory of the Perfect Man and Its Place in the History of Islamic Thought” (Ph.D. Thesis--University of Chicago, 1986), 117-118. Furthermore, according to Ibn ‘Arabī. A mystic should use her/his *isti'dād* to actualize things in the external world. Kāshānī, as the true student of this school and its defender, uses this new conception of *isti'dād* and ties it to *fatrāh* and to *futurwa*, as the actualization of the hidden attributes and faculties integral of *fatrāh*. *Fatā* is the one who has been successful in nurturing, or rather, actualizing these intact faculties. In this worldview, servant is not passive in receiving emanation (*fayd*) in his quest for perfection. She/he has agency and subjectivity.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 13-14.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 15.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 17.

distortion or imperfection (*i'wajā*).⁷⁷ Ali occupies a far higher position than Abraham, because Ali's *futuwwa* is about renouncing Self, and not just a son, to deity and has been inherited by his progenies until his *wilāya* finally rests in his son al-Mahdi, who is the seal of *wilāya* (*khātam*) and his status being equal to the status of the sealing of the *nubuwwa* of the Prophet.⁷⁸ To conclude, Ali's *wilāya* is equal to the Prophet's *nubuwwa*, while Abraham's *wilāya* is equivalent to Adam's *nubuwwa*.⁷⁹ In the following, Kāshānī lists the virtues of chivalry as well as its four pillars, including chastity ('*iffat*), courage (*shujā'at*), wisdom (*hikmat*), and justice ('*idālat*), which are all put together in the personality of Ali.⁸⁰

Dagli is right when maintains that the Book of Chivalry is written “in keeping with his background in the Suhrawardiyyah order and its emphasis on *futuwwah*”,⁸¹ though it is not contradictory to assume that for Kāshānī, the *imāms* ought to be modeled as the prototype of chivalry, fraternity, and sincere servitude. Narrating a *hadīth* from *imām* Ali,⁸² Kāshānī maintains that fraternity (lit. *ikhwāniyya*) is one of the most significant dimensions of *futuwwa* and “its foundation and fundamental principle”,⁸³ because the love between people is dependent on fraternity. Since chivalry is the best and most beautiful lifestyle (lit. *absan tara'iq al-nās wa ajmalahā*) man

⁷⁷ Ibid., 16.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Kāshānī's discussion of the four pillars of *futuwwa* is in fact a Platonic subject, which has been an inseparable part of Islamic philosophy and ethics since the beginning. We know that the main concern of Plato in the book Republic was justice in the soul and in the city, the polis, and it will be actualized when balance or harmony between the three miniature personalities (i.e., three parts of the soul including courage, wisdom and moderation) is realized. When this task is done, justice will be achieved (A. C. Grayling, (ed.), *Philosophy 1: A Guide through the Subject* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 370-371). The only difference is that for Kāshānī, justice is not singled out as the main virtue, or the climax of the three miniature virtues, it is just one of them. Ibid., 18-51.

⁸¹ Dagli, *Ibn 'Arabī and Islamic Intellectual Culture*, 105.

⁸² *A'jaza al-nas man 'aja'za an iktisab al-ikhwān, wa a'jaza min-hu man dhuyyi'a min zafar-i bib-i minhum.* [The most incapable of Man is the one who is disabled to earn friendship and even more incapable of him is the one who spoils the assistance of his brothers]. See 'Abdul Razzāq Kāshānī, *Rasa'il-i Falsafi wa 'Irṣāni* (*Philosophical and Mystical Treatises*) (n.d, n.p.), 548, Tayefeh, “Concept of Chivalry (*Futuwwah*)”, 288.

⁸³ Kāshānī, *Sharḥ-i Fusūṣ al-Hikam*, 36.

can adopt, Ali is the *qutb* and *imām* of all chivalrous.⁸⁴ Kāshānī's innovation is not just his abundant use of narrations from the first and the fourth *imāms*,⁸⁵ which is most probably the first of its kind among Iranian Sufis, but also his contrast to Ibn 'Arabī's reading of the virtue of chivalry, which is more egalitarian and gender-neutral. Sa'diyya Shaikh shows how some Sufis, including Ibn 'Arabī, used *futūrwa* and/or *fityān* "to describe a number of exemplary female Sufi practitioners",⁸⁶ but Kāshānī's description, on the other hand, is all-masculine and patrimonialistic.

The last text which is our concern here is *Sharḥ Ḥadīth al-Haqīqat*, which along with *Tuhfah* is published in a collection entitled *Ādab ul-Tariqah wa Asrār ul-Haqīqah fī Rasā'il al-Shaykh 'Abdul Razzāq al-Qāmishānī* (the Ethics of the Path and the Secrets of the Truth in the Treatises of Shaykh 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Qāmishānī). The text revolves around Kāshānī's reading of the famous *hadīth* of *imām* Ali, when his loyal friend and disciple, Kumayl b. Zīyād an-Nakha'ī (d. 82-83 H/702) asks him about the meaning of the Truth. The *hadīth* is not documented in any *hadīth* compilation, but its mystical connotations have been narrated by several Sufi authorities and is commented upon by many 'ārifīs. Interestingly, as much as the clarification of the meaning of *wilāya* is important for Kāshānī, the meaning of the main problem of this *hadīth*, i.e., *haqīqah*, is not. Ali is the holder of the station (*maqām*) of completion (lit. *takmīl*), endurance (lit. *istiqāmat*, i.e., or the backbone of strength and power) and obedience (*tamkīn*), while Kumayl's status is that of the heart (lit. *maqām-i qalb*) and quest (lit. *talab*).

But why is Ali's status that of completion? Because it contains *sirr* (secret) and Ali is its cognizant ('ārif), and therefore *maqām al-sirr* is the same as *maqām al-wilāya*. Defining *wilāya* as the status of self-annihilation (*fana*), Kāshānī argues that Kumayl was only at the beginning of a path which eventually ends in Ali, who has stood at the peak of it. However, like any other beginner, Kumayl must use his *isti'dād* should he want to actualize his potentials and realize his ideal,

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Was Kāshānī familiar with *Nahj ul-Balāghah* and *Sahifat al-Sajaadiyya* of the fourth *imām*? In all probability yes, because the ethics of both treasures is the spirit of *Tulfa*.

⁸⁶ Sa'diyya Shaikh, *Sufi Narratives of Intimacy: Ibn 'Arabī, Gender and Sexuality* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 52.

i.e., the status of *wilāya*, in the real world.⁸⁷ Kāshānī's choice of this *Shī'a ḥadīth* itself indicates his devotion to the first *imām* and his teachings, because *maqām al-sīr*, according to another famous *ḥadīth*, is but *Imāmī Shī'ism*.⁸⁸

Concluding Remarks

Kāshānī's role in disseminating, formalizing, and systematizing the teachings of Ibn 'Arabī, and particularly the challenging terrain of his technical terms, is undeniable.⁸⁹ Based on a master-disciple relationship, he obtained his education from Mu'ayyid al-Dīn Jandī, who, along with Sa'īd al-Dīn Faraghānī (both d. 700/1300), was an important student of Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī. Qūnawī's place as the first expositor and spokesman of Ibn 'Arabī is well-attested. Furthermore, he had a profound impact on his famous student, Sharaf al-Dīn Dāwūd Qayṣarī (d. 751 H/1350), another influential commentator of the *Fusūṣ*, entitled *Sharḥ-i Fusūṣ al-Hikam* (the Commentary on *Fusūṣ al-Hikam*). These last two figures' commentaries on the *Fusūṣ* "have been studied perhaps more than any others by serious seekers of knowledge up to modern times".⁹⁰ So, we have a one-hundred-year direct and uninterrupted line of teaching and training, which contributed to the robust tree of the theoretical mysticism of Ibn 'Arabī in the eastern part of the Muslim world. This specific line, revolving around Kāshānī and his student, has continued to exist up to the present time, when we see how they

⁸⁷ Kāshānī, *Sharḥ-i Fusūṣ al-Hikam*, 119-123.

⁸⁸ Kāshānī, as I mentioned earlier in this paper, was well-aware of the *Shī'a ḥadīth* sources, and his analysis of the status of *wilāya* and its nexus to *sīr*, is based on a famous *ḥadīth* by the sixth *imām*, Ja'far al-Ṣādiq which is related by Abū Ja'far Mohammad b. al-Ḥasan b. Farrukh al-Ṣaffār al-Qumī in *Baṣā'ir al-Darajat fi Faṣa'il Al-i Muḥammad* (Clear Proofs in the Sciences of the Household of the Prophet and on Whatever is Designated to Them by God), in which the *imām* says "innā amrinā sīr o fī sīr, wa sīr o muṣṭatar, wa sīr u lā yafidu illā sīr, wa sīr 'alā sīr wa sīr o muqannā bil sīr". Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. Farrukh al-Ṣaffār al-Qumī, *Baṣā'ir al-Darajat fi 'Ulūm-i Al-i Muḥammad wa Mā Khāṣabum ul-llāh Bibi* (Insights into the Degrees, on the Knowledge of the Family of Muḥammad and That with which Allah Endowed Them), Mirzā Muhsin Kūchih Bāghī Tabrīzī (ed.) (Qum: Manshūrāt-i Maktabat Ayatollah al-'Uzma Mar'ashī Najafī, 1404 H), 28. According to this reading, *wālī* is a treasurer (*khażīn*) of whatever God has created in the cosmos, but specifically a treasurer of His *sīr*. Ibid.

⁸⁹ Lala, *Knowing God*, 31.

⁹⁰ Chittick, "The Five Divine Presences", 107.

considerably shape the metaphysical outlook of contemporary individuals such as Rūhullāh Khomeini (d. 1368 H/1989).⁹¹

Kāshānī also extensively wrote about all the elements of *Akbarīan* mysticism, from *wahdat al-wujūd* to the Perfect Man (when he discusses chivalry), and to the Five Divine Presences (*al-ḥaḍarāt al-ilāhiyat al-khamṣ*). However, as far as we are concerned, his innovation rests in benefiting from the Shī'a authorities to both elucidate the key terms of Ibn ‘Arabī's mysticism, such as *tajallī*⁹² (lit. theophany), *wilāya* and *khatm al-wilāya*, and to shed light on the intricacies of his teachings; because for him there was no contrast between these two and the former fully supported the latter. Even when he is not discussing the central *Akbarīan* terms, he still refers to the Shī'a authorities and cites the *imāms* as the role models, the ideal exemplar, the *wālī*, and the only owner of the true knowledge (*ma'rīfa*). For him, the seals of the prophets and of the *awliyā* are the rightful owners of *ilm*, and other prophets and *walīs* gain light from their *mishkāt* (lamp), and the seal of the Mohammedan *wilāya* is but al-Mahdi from the household of the Prophet,⁹³ who is the “mine of the divine knowledge” and shares the name, title and characteristics of the Prophet.⁹⁴

In the case of *wilāya* and *khatm al-wilāya*, as well as that of *futuwwa*, he had a divergent outlook from Ibn ‘Arabī, which eventually came to be regarded as the predominant reading among Shī'a commentators in subsequent generations. Thanks to Haydar Āmulī and his *Jāmi‘ al-Asrār wa Manba‘ al-Anwār* (the Comprehensive of Mysteries and the Source of Lights), which indeed is the culmination

⁹¹ I have discussed this tradition and its continuation to our time elsewhere. For more information see Leila Chamankhah, *The Conceptualization of Guardianship in Iranian Intellectual History (1800–1989): Reading Ibn ‘Arabī’s Theory of Wilāya in the Shī'a World*, Chapter 5 (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 171–200.

⁹² The ḥadīth of *imām* Ali stating that “Baṣīrun ‘idh lā manzūra ilayb-i min al-khalqib” (lit. He does not need any manifestation to reflect Himself in) is used to both explain the meaning of this term and why Deity does not need to see Himself and His face in anything because He is *Baṣīr* (lit. Insightful) and therefore self-explanatory without need for a mirror to reflect Himself. See Kāshānī, *Sharḥ-i Fūṣūṣ al-Hikam*. Kāshānī, in this text, uses *Shī'a ḥadīth* in this text pervasively and when brings a ḥadīth from *Imām* Ali praises him as “Karram Allāh wajhab” (lit. may God bless his face), which leaves no doubt that Kāshānī, as mentioned above, is a Sunni scholar in the Syrian definition.

⁹³ Kāshānī, *Sharḥ-i Fūṣūṣ al-Hikam*, 126–127.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 127.

of such a union between Sufism and Shī‘ism. Pertinent to this, is Kāshānī’s conception of *hunyāya*, which as Ismail Lala discusses, contradicts that of his master too.⁹⁵ Given this, Kāshānī was definitely more than a commentator and student of the school of Ibn ‘Arabī and should be treated as an independent and innovative mystic who, by offering different readings of the main teachings of his master, left his imprint on *Akbarian* mysticism indefinitely.

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⁹⁵ As Lala ascertains, *hunyāya* plays a central role in the “Sufis’ semantic Weltanschauung and often incorporates other terms within it (such as *anāniyya* whose existence is implied by *hunyāya* ...)”. Lala, *Knowing God*, 29. It also plays an important role in the mystics’ account of God, though it is defined differently by Ibn ‘Arabī and Kāshānī. For Ibn ‘Arabī, *hunyāya* denotes God’s absolute unknowability, “a state in which He is truly non-manifest”, but Kāshānī “deploys it principally to connote the second emanatory stage in which there is a prefiguring of creation within the divine consciousness”. Lala, *Knowing God*, 64-179.

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