taliste Paul Geuthner, Paris, 1934–38; *al-Taʿrīf bi ibn Khaldūn wa Riḥlatuhu Gharban wa Sharqan* (Autobiography), ed. Muḥammad ibn Tāwīt al-Ṭanji *(Āthār ibn Khaldūn*, Vol. I), Lajnah al-Tālif, Cairo, 1370/1951; *Lubāb al-Muḥaṣṣal fi Uṣūl al-Dīn* (Extracts from Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's *Muḥaṣṣal*), ed. P. Luciano Rubio, Editori Marroquí, Tetuán, 1952; *Shifāʾ al-Sāʾil li Taḥṣil al-Masāʾil* (Answers to Questions on Mysticism), MS. No. 24299B, Dār al-Kutub, Cairo, edition in preparation by Ṭanji.

Part 5. The Middle-Roaders

Chapter XLVII

THE SCHOOL OF IṢPAHĀN

A

INTRODUCTION

It is one of the most curious aspects of the Western study of Muslim intellectual life that with one or two exceptions practically no serious research has ever been made into the spiritual and intellectual treasures of Twelve-Imām Shīʿism in any of the European languages.[1] As a result, not only Westerners but even the Muslims whose contact with the Shīʿah world is mainly through Western sources have remained totally ignorant of the remarkable intellectual life which has persisted to this very day in the centres of Shīʿism, especially in Persia. Inasmuch as it was mostly in the Shīʿah world that much of the intellectual life of Islam, especially in the sciences and traditional wisdom *(Ḥikmat)*,[2] took refuge after the seventh/thirteenth century, this ignorance has helped to strengthen the totally erroneous notion that Islam fell into complete decadence after the Mongol invasion. Just as a closer study of the Muslim world at large will show that in art, government, Sufism, and many other aspects of Muslim life there was anything but decadence until fairly recently, a study of the Shīʿah world will reveal that even in the sciences, philosophy, and gnosis the Muslims have, with one gap of a century and a half, continued to flourish up to the present century. It will reveal that just as Ṣafawid art is one of the high points of Muslim art, so is the intellectual life of Shīʿism in this period one of the apogees of Muslim history, producing

[1] A few authors like Gobineau, Donaldson, and E. G. Browne have touched upon certain aspects of Shīʿism in their writings; the only European author, however, who has delved with serious intention into the Shīʿah intellectual world, is Henri Corbin, who during the past twenty years has done much to introduce the rich heritage of Shīʿism, especially as it has developed in Persia, to the Western world.

[2] For the meaning of this word which denotes wisdom, refer to the chapter on Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardi Maqtūl.

sages like Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzi, usually known as Mulla Sadra. Perhaps one day histories of philosophy will not have chapters on Islam which end abruptly with ibn Rushd or possibly ibn Khaldūn but will trace the chain to the present century and end once and for all the dangerous illusion that the present-day Muslims are separated from their own tradition by centuries of intellectual "vacuum." Our aim in this chapter is hardly one of filling this lacuna; rather it is to give some of the background and intellectual perspectives of Ṣafawid Persia, where Twelve-Imām Shīʿism became for the first time a completely independent political and cultural entity, an entity which has dominated every phase of life in Persia ever since.

The coming to power of the Ṣafawids in Persia is one of the most fascinating chapters of Muslim history and marks one of the instances in which the influence of Sufism upon the social and political life of Islam is felt directly. Beginning as a Sufi brotherhood which traced its lineage as well as its name to the great saint Shaikh Ṣafi al-Dīn Ardibīli,[3] the Ṣafawids soon developed into a well-organized political force which was to conquer the whole of Persia and to weld it into a political unity for the first time since the fall of the Sāssānid Empire. The Sufi order continued under the spiritual direction of a series of descendants of Shaikh Ṣafi, and its members in the ninth/fifteenth century adopted a twelve-sided red hat for which they became known as the *qizil-bāsh* (red heads). The order grew in power in the politically disorganized Persia of the ninth/fifteenth century and under Ismāʿīl (892/1487–930/1523–24) succeeded in defeating the local rulers and unifying the whole of Persia.

Shāh Ismāʿīl was crowned in Tabrīz in 905/1499 marking the beginning of the reign of the Ṣafawids which was to last over two centuries until in 1133/1720 the Afghāns conquered Persia, sacked the Ṣafawid capital at Iṣpahān, and killed Shāh Ḥusain, the last of the Ṣafawid rulers. During this period Persia, which until now had been partly Shīʿah and partly Sunni, wavering between these two orthodox perspectives of the Islamic revelation, became completely Twelve-Imām Shīʿah, and Shīʿism, which had until now remained a minority creed, found itself as the official religion of an empire and had to face political and social issues it had never been forced to face before.[4]

[3] Shaikh Ṣafi (647/1249–735/1334), one of the most important of Shīʿah Sufi saints, is still greatly respected by the Sufis; his tomb in Ardibil has remained until today an important place of pilgrimage. Being the disciple of Shaikh Zāhid Gīlāni, he was already a significant figure in his own day as testified by the biographical works like the *Ṣafwat al-Ṣafā*' by ibn Bazzāz, and Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh's letters to the saint and to the governor of Ardibil in his *Munsha'āt-i Rashīdi*. See also, E. G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, Vol. IV, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1924, Chap. II.

[4] For a history of the Ṣafawid period, see E. G. Browne, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV; L. Lockhart, *The Fall of the Ṣafawid Dynasty and the Afghān Occupation of Persia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1958, and the traditional Persian sources of which some of the more important include the *Ṣafawat al-Ṣafā*' by ibn Bazzāz,

No longer molested by an external force and faced with a large number of practical social problems, Shī'ah theology, *Kālām*, which had always served as the walls of the citadel of the faith,[5] lost much of its earlier vigour while jurisprudence, *Fiqh*, having to face new situations, became highly developed. More important for our purpose is the fact that the predominantly Shī'ah culture of Persia prepared the background for the flourishing of the doctrines of *ishrāqi* gnosis (illuministic wisdom),[6] philosophy, and the sciences. The efforts of the chain of sages after Khwājah Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsi, who had kept the study of these subjects alive, suddenly found the necessary environment for the development of this form of wisdom.[7] We have connected this wisdom symbolically with the school of Iṣpahān, which spread throughout Ṣafawid Persia as well as in Iraq, Syria, and India with which the Persians had very close contacts. The centres of its life were not only Iṣpahān, the Ṣafawid capital, but also other cities like Shīrāz, Kāshān, Qazwīn, and Tabrīz. Furthermore, some of the most important figures like Shaikh Bahā' al-Dīn Āmili, and Sayyid Ni'matullah Jazā'iri, who played a vital role in the establishment of Shī'ism in Persia, were Arabs from Āmil near Damascus and Baḥrain, two centres which had been preserving the Shī'ah tradition for centuries.[8]

The Shī'ahs have developed the Ja'fari school of Law named after the sixth Imām, Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, as well as theology *(Kalām)* and other traditional studies, namely, language, history, Ḥadīth and commentary upon the Qur'ān, jurisprudence *(Fiqh)*, principles of jurisprudence *(Uṣūl)*,[9] theology,[10] and

Aḥsan al-Tawārikh by Ḥasan Baik Rumlū, *Zubdat al-Tawārikh* by Muḥammad Muḥsin ibn 'Abd al-Karīm, and the universal history *Nāsikh al-Tawārikh* by Mirza Taqi Sipihr.

[5] The purpose of theology is to protect the truths of a revelation against false reasoning; its role is, therefore, defensive. It is the shell which protects the inner spiritual life, not that life itself. If there were no danger of rationalism and false reasoning, there would be no need for theology. We, therefore, see theology coming into being with rationalistic philosophy, and where there is no tendency toward rationalism, there is no theology as this word is currently understood.

[6] For a discussion of the meaning of *ishrāqi* wisdom, refer to the chapter on Suhrawardi Maqtūl.

[7] The reason why the pre-Ṣafawid sages of Persia like 'Ali Turkah Iṣpahāni and ibn abi Jumhūr as well as the Ṣafawid authors themselves have been neglected in the Western world, is that the quality of their wisdom is primarily gnostic *('irfāni)* like that of Shaikh al-Akbar Muḥyi al-Dīn ibn 'Arabi by whose doctrines they were all influenced; that like him they can be understood neither by the rationalistic philosophers nor by the mystics as they have come to be understood since the Renaissance.

[8] For the name of some of these Arab Shī'ah scholars, see E. B. Browne, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, Chap. VIII.

[9] The science of *Uṣūl* as an independent science has grown into monumental proportions only in the past few centuries reaching its height in the hands of Shaikh Murtaḍa Anṣāri, the famous doctor of the Qājār period, who only a century ago made *Uṣūl* into a science matching *Kalām* in its logical subtleties.

[10] Shī'ah theology reached its height in the seventh/thirteenth century in the hands of men like Khwājah Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsi and 'Allāmah-i Ḥilli.

Ḥikmat, this last being a combination of gnosis, theosophy, and philosophy which forms the main subject of our present study.

B

ḤIKMAT

The form of wisdom which has survived until today in the Shī'ah world as *Ḥikmat* can neither be wholly identified with philosophy as currently understood in the West, nor with theosophy which has unfortunately become identified in the English-speaking world with pseudo-spiritualist movements, nor with theology.[11] As developed in the Ṣafawid period and continued to the present day, *Ḥikmat* consists of several threads knit together by the matrix of Shī'ism. The most important of these elements are the esoteric teachings of the Imāms, especially as contained in the *Nahj al-Balāghah* by the first Imām 'Ali, the *ishrāqi* wisdom of Suhrawardi which contains in itself aspects of ancient Persian and Hermetic doctrines, the teachings of the earlier Sufis. especially the gnostic doctrines of ibn 'Arabi, and the heritage of the Greek philosophers. It is, therefore, not too surprising if many of the treatises on *Ḥikmat* begin with logic and end with ecstasy experienced in the catharsis *(tajrīd)* and illumination of the intellect. They contain as a necessary basis some preparation in logic which they share with the Peripatetics (Mashā'iyūn), but instead of remaining bound to the plane of reason they use this logic as a springboard for their flight into the heaven of gnosis.

The group of sages who between the death of ibn Rushd, the so-called terminating point of Muslim philosophy, and the Ṣafawids prepared the ground for the intellectual revival of the school of Iṣpahān are usually not much better known outside Persia than the Ṣafawid sages themselves. They include a series of philosophers and scientists like Khwājah Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsi, better known in the Western world as a scientist than a philosopher and theologian, Quṭb al-Dīn Rāzi, Mīr Sayyid Sharīf Jurjāni, Jalāl al-Dīn Dawwāni, and ibn Turkah Iṣpahāni,[12] all of whom sought to reconstruct Muslim intellectual life through a gnostic interpretation of the writings of ibn Sīna, Suhrawardi, and the Sufis, and who carried further the attempt already begun by al-Fārābi, extended by ibn Sīna in his Qur'ānic commentaries, and carried a step further by Suhrawardi, to correlate faith *(īmān)* with philosophy.[13] The precursors of the Ṣafawid sages include also a series of pure gnostics,

[11] See the chapter on Suhrawardi Maqtūl. Generally, *Ḥikmah* in Arabic or *Ḥikmat* in Persian means wisdom in addition to the particular sense given to it as a divine science.

[12] For the series of commentators and expositors of *ishrāqi* wisdom, see the chapter on Suhrawardi Maqtūl.

[13] It is unfortunate that in books treating of the relation between faith and reason in Islam like A. J. Arberry's *Revelation and Reason in Islam*, London, 1957, most of these authors are not taken into serious consideration.

both Shī'ah and Sunni, although this distinction is not essential in Sufism, who spread the doctrines of ibn 'Arabi, the Andalusian sage and the formulator of gnostic doctrines in Islam in the Eastern lands of Islam.[14] These Sufis include Ṣadr al-Dīn Qunawi, Fakhr al-Dīn 'Irāqi, 'Abd al-Razzāq Kāshāni, 'Ala al-Daulah Simnāni,[15] 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmi,[16] and two others who are especially important in introducing the gnostic doctrines of ibn 'Arabi into the Shī'ah world, ibn abi Jumhūr and Mulla Ḥaidar 'Ali Amūli.[17] One must also mention another great spiritual leader, Maulāna Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmi, whose influence has extended throughout Persia during the past seven centuries.

C

MAJOR FIGURES OF THE SCHOOL OF IṢPAHĀN

To write down even the mere names and works of all the important authors of the Ṣafawid period would in itself require a book because in nearly every field of religious science many notable figures arose during this period of great intellectual activity. In theology, jurisprudence, and related sciences it is enough to mention only a few names like that of Zain al-Dīn ibn 'Ali ibn Aḥmad Jaba'i (911/1505–966/1558), commonly known as the second martyr *(shahīd-i thāni)* because of his having been put to death by the Ottomans, the author of numerous treatises which still form a part of Shī'ah religious education, 'Ali ibn 'Abd al-'Ali 'Āmili known as Muḥaqqiq-i Karaki (d. 945/1538), the author of *al-Najmīyyah* in theology and many other treatises and commentaries, the two Majlisīs, Muḥammad Taqi (1003/1594–1070/1659), the author of *Rauḍat al-Muttaqīn*, and his son Muḥammad Bāqir (1037/1628–1110/1699), the greatest of the Ṣafawid theologians and scholars to whom we shall turn later.[18]

[14] For an account of the doctrines of ibn 'Arabi, see T. Burckardt (Tr.), *La sagesse des prophètes*, Paris, 1955; also *idem*, *Introduction to Sufi Doctrine*, tr. M. Matheson, Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore, 1959, which is an excellent general introduction to ibn 'Arabi's school of Sufism. See also Corbin, *L'imagination creatrice dans la soufisme d'Ibn 'Arabi*, Flammarion, Paris, 1958, which contains some useful chapters on his ideas and their spread in the East.

[15] See S. M. Ṣadr, *Shaikh 'Ala al-Daulah Simnāni*, Dānish Press, Teheran, 1334/1915.

[16] This great Persian Sufi poet and sage has written several well-known summaries of ibn 'Arabi's doctrine including the *Lawā'iḥ* translated by Whinfeld and Qazwīni, Luzac & Co., London, 1928, the *Ashi'at al-Lama'āt*, and the *Naqd al-Nuṣūṣ*.

[17] The *Kitāb al-Mujli* of ibn abi Jumhūr and *Jāmi' al-Asrār* and *Jāmi' al-Ḥaqā'iq* of Mulla Ḥaidar 'Ali Āmuli are among the most important sources of Shī'ah gnostic doctrines.

[18] The best traditional sources for these earlier Shī'ah authors are the *Rauḍat al-Jannāt* of Muḥammad Bāqir Khunsāri, lithographed edition, Teheran, 1306/1888; *al-Dharī'ah* of Āgha Buzurg Tihrāni, al-Gharra Press, Najaf, 1355/1936 on;

As for the *ḥukamā'*, those who cultivated this particular form of wisdom which they called *Ḥikmat*, they include Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzi, better known as Mulla Ṣadra, to whom a separate chapter has been devoted in the present work, Sayyid Aḥmad 'Alawi, Mīr Dāmād's son-in-law and the commentator of ibn Sīnā's *Shifā'*, Mulla Muḥammad Bāqir Sabziwāri (d. 1090/1669), the commentator of the *Ishārāt* and the metaphysics of the *Shifā'*, and of the *Dhakhīrat al-Ma'āfi*, Rajab 'Ali Tabrīzi (d. 1080 ?/1670), a thinker with nominalist tendencies and the author of *Risāleh-i Ithbāt-i Wujūd*, 'Abd al-Razzāq Lāhīji (d. 1071/1661), a student of Mulla Ṣadra and author of some of the most important books on *Ḥikmat* in Persian like the *Guhar Murād*, *Sarmāyeh-i Īmān*, and the *Mashāriq al-Ilhām*, glosses upon the commentary of Khwājah Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsi upon the *Ishārāt*, and a commentary upon Suhrawardī's *Hayākil al-Nūr*, and Qāḍi Sa'īd Qumi (1049/1640–1103 ?/1692), a gnostic and theologian, the author of the *Arba'īnāt*, *Kilīd-i Bihisht*, and a commentary upon the *Athulujīyya* attributed to Aristotle but now known to be a paraphrasis of the *Enneads* of Plotinus.

In addition to these authors, there are a few other major figures about whom we have chosen to speak somewhat more fully hoping that in this way we can depict the various aspects of the intellectual life of the Ṣafawid period. These figures include Shaikh Bahā' al-Dīn 'Āmili, Mīr Dāmād,[19] perhaps the central figure in the school of Iṣpahān, Mīr abu al-Qāsim Findiriski, Mulla Muḥsin Faiḍ Kāshi, and the second Majlisi whom we have already mentioned.

If space had allowed, we would have also considered the purely Sufi writings like the commentary upon the *Gulshan-i Rāz* by Muḥammad Lāhīji, which is one of the best books on Sufism in Persian, and the works by the masters of other Sufi orders like the *Tuḥfih-i 'Abbāsi* by the *dhahabi* shaikh, Shaikh Mu'adhdhin Khurāsāni.

Shaikh Bahā' al-Dīn 'Āmili.—The most colourful figure of the Ṣafawid period was without doubt Bahā' al-Dīn 'Āmili, better known as Shaikh-i Bahā'i.[20] His father was the leader of the Shī'ah community of 'Āmil and a student of Shahīd-i Thāni. After his teacher's death in 966/1559, he set out with his son towards Persia. Bahā' al-Dīn, who was born in Baalbek in 953/1546, was then only thirteen years old and well qualified to master the Persian language. In Persia he continued his studies in the religious sciences, poetry,

the *Tārikh-i 'Ālam Ārā-yi 'Abbāsi* of Iskandar Baig Munshi, Teheran, 1334/1915; and of more recent composition the *Raiḥānat al-Adab* of Muḥammad 'Ali Tabrīzi, Sa'di Press, Teheran, 1331–33 Solar; the *Qiṣaṣ al-'Ulamā'* of Mirza Muḥammad Tunikābuni, Islāmīyyah Press, Teheran, 1313 Solar; *Fihrist-i Kutub-i Ihdā'i-i Āqā-yi Mishkāt* by M. B. Dānish Pazhūh, University Press, Teheran, 1335/1916; see also H. Corbin, "Confession extatiques de Mīr Dāmād" in the *Melanges Louis Massignon*, Institut Français de Damas, Damas, 1956, pp. 331–78.

[19] See Corbin, *op. cit.*, pp. 333ff.

[20] His name should not in any way be connected with the heterodox Bahā'i movement of the thirteenth/nineteenth century.

and *Ḥikmat* and soon became the leading scholar of his day and the *Shaikh al-Islām* of Iṣpahān. Despite his nearness to the Court and necessary participation in worldly life he was a gnostic and spent many of the last years of his life travelling with the dervishes and visiting various Sufi masters. He finally passed away in 1030/1622 while returning from the *ḥajj*.[21]

Shaikh Bahā' al-Dīn was the leading theologian and jurist of his time and the leader of the *'ulamā'* of Iṣpahān. He was at the same time an outstanding Sufi, one of the best of the Ṣafawid poets who revived the 'Irāqi style and wrote poetry in the tradition of Rūmi and Ḥāfiẓ, the leading architect of the Ṣafawid period, whose masterpieces like the Shāh mosque of Iṣpahān still stand among the summits of Muslim architecture,[22] and the greatest mathematician and astronomer of his period.

In an age when the theologians, jurists, *Ḥakīms*, natural historians, sophists, logicians, and Sufis were well-marked groups, sometimes in external conflict with one another, Shaikh-i Bahā'i was respected by all these groups, from the wandering dervishes, the *qalandars*, to the Court *'ulamā'* each of which considered the Shaikh its own. His genius lay precisely in showing the nothingness of all sciences before divine gnosis, while at the same time having a mastery of each science. Yet each of Shaikh-i Bahā'ī's writings has become a standard source of reference in its own field. Some of his important works include *Jāmi'-i 'Abbāsi* on theology in Persian; *Fawā'id al-Ṣamadīyyah* on Arabic grammar which is still in wide use; a treatise on algebra, the *Khulāsah fi al-Ḥisāb*;[23] several treatises on astronomy including the *Tashrīḥ al-Aflāk*; a treatise on the astrolabe, *'Urwat al-Wuthqa*; general Qur'ānic commentaries; many works on various aspects of the *Sharī'ah*; the *Kashkūl*, a collection of Arabic and Persian writings which ranks among the most famous Sufi works; and a series of *mathnawīs* like *Bread and Sweet*, *Cat and Mouse*, *Milk and Sugar*, and the *Ṭūṭi-Nāmeh*.[24]

It is especially in the didactic poems, the *mathnawīs*, that the particular genius of Shaikh-i Bahā'i for expressing sublime truth in simple language and in witty anecdotes becomes manifest. In these poems his spirit is very similar

[21] For an account of the life and works of Shaikh-i Bahā'i, see *Tārikh-i 'Ālam Ārā-yi 'Abbāsi*, pp. 155–57; also Nafiey, *Aḥwāl wa Ash'ār-i Fārsi-i Shaikh-i Bahā'i*, Eqbāl Press, Teheran, 1316/1898.

[22] Shaikh-i Bahā'i is said to have built a bath-house named *Gulkhan* which had always hot water without any fuel being used in it. When it was pulled down, people discovered a single candle burning under the water tank.

[23] This book on mathematics which helped greatly in reviving the study of the mathematical sciences in Persia was a standard text-book for centuries and has been commented upon several times and translated into Persian by Muḥammad Amīn Najafi Ḥijāzi Qumi and into German by G. H. F. Nesselmann who published the text and the translation in Berlin in 1843. Shaikh-i Bahā'i revived the study of mathematics and astronomy in Persia after one hundred years of neglect, having himself learnt these sciences in Herāt.

[24] For a list of the nearly ninety works attributed to him, see his *Kulliyāt-i Ash'ār-i Fārsi*, ed. M. Tauhīdipūr, Maḥmūdi Press, Teheran, 1336/1917, pp. 42–45.

to that of Maulāna Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmi whom he follows in spirit as well as in form. In the long poem the *Cat and the Mouse* in which the cat symbolizes exoteric and formal knowledge and the mouse esotericism, the theme is the danger of hypocrisy which the exoteric view always faces and the necessity in the religious and social structure for esoteric knowledge. Shaikh-i Bahā'i also emphasizes throughout the work the supremacy of intellectual intuition over discursive knowledge. As an example we mention below the story of a Mu'tazilite and a Sufi who appears in the guise of a madman named Buhlūl.

During the reign of one of the Caliphs, a Mu'tazilite was chosen as the Imām of a mosque. One day Buhlūl entered the mosque with a brick hidden under his dress and joined the congregation after the prayers to listen to the Imām's sermon. The Imām in the Mu'tazilite fashion mentioned that Satan is not harmed in hell because he is made of fire and since a thing cannot harm its own kind, the fire of hell cannot harm him. Upon hearing this, Buhlūl became infuriated but held back his anger. The Imām continued his sermon by saying that both good and evil are by divine consent. Again Buhlūl became angry but once again succeeded in remaining quiet. The Imām added that on the Day of Judgment man would be actually able to see God. Upon hearing this, Buhlūl took out the brick from under his dress, threw it at the Imām breaking his head and ran away. The Caliph raging with fury was about to call for Buhlūl when Buhlūl himself walked into the palace and without any greetings sat at the head of the Court. The Caliph asked him with great anger as to why he had attacked the Imām. Buhlūl answered by pleading to the Caliph to give him permission to explain how by his act he had done nothing discourteous, and when given the permission addressed the bleeding Imām and said that since according to his own words a thing cannot harm its own kind, a brick cannot harm the Imām's head since both are made of clay. Furthermore, he asked the Imām if he had felt any pain upon being hit on the head and if he could see the pain. Upon getting the reply that the Imām did not see the pain, Buhlūl asked how could a man unable to see pain, a creation of God, see the Creator. Finally, Buhlūl added that since all acts are done through divine consent, God must have given consent to his throwing the brick and so the Imām should not complain of an act to which God had consented. Upon hearing this, the Imām, the symbol of rationalism, had to remain silent before Buhlūl, the symbol of intellectual intuition.[25]

The writings of Shaikh-i Bahā'i are also replete with passages about the nothingness of all human knowledge as against divine gnosis. For example, in the poem *Nān wa Ḥalwah* (Bread and Sweet) he says:

> Formal science is nothing but altercation;
> It results in neither intoxication[26] nor contemplation.

[25] *Ibid.*, pp. 164–66.

[26] Intoxication symbolizes ecstasy and spiritual union.

It continually brings congelation to man's nature;
What's more, the Maulāna[27] does not believe in it.
If someone tells thee that of thy life,
There remains with certainty but a week,
Thou in this one week will busy thyself
With which science, O accomplished man!
There is no science but the science of love,[28]
The rest is the deception of the wretched Satan.
There is no science but the Qur'ānic commentary and Ḥadīth,
The rest is the deception of the perverse Satan.
The mysteries will never become known to thee,
If thou hast for student a hundred Fakhr-i Rāzi.[29]
All who do not love the face of the beautiful
The saddle and the rein are appropriate for them.[30]
That is, he who does not have love for the Friend,
Bring for him the saddle and the headstall.[31]
He who has not fallen in love with his beautiful Face,
Erase his name from the tablet of humanity.
A breast that is empty of the love of the Beautiful,
Is an old leather bag full of bones.
A breast if devoid of the Beloved,
Is not a breast but an old chest.
A heart which is empty of the love of that Beauty,
Count it as a stone with which the Devil cleans himself.
These sciences, these forms and imaginings,
Are the excrements of Satan upon that stone.
If thou allowest other than the science of love in thy heart,
Thou wilt be giving Satan the stone to clean himself.
Be ashamed of thyself, O! villain,
That thou carriest the Devil's cleaning stone in thy pocket.
Wash the tablet of the heart from the Devil's excrement;
O! teacher, give also the lesson of love.
How long wilt thou teach the wisdom of the Greeks?
Learn also the wisdom of those who have faith.[32]

[27] Maulāna Jalāı al-Dīn Rūmi is commonly referred to as Maulawi in Persian. This verse refers to Maulawi's well-known rejection of rationalism in favour of gnosis (The leg of the rationelist is a wooden leg . . .).

[28] Love symbolizes gnosis or the science which comes through contemplation and illumination rather than analysis and discursive thought.

[29] Reference is to the famous theologian Imām Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzi.

[30] This verse is in Arabic and is repeated immediately with only a little change in Persian.

[31] That is, he is like a beast of burden.

[32] Reference is to the wisdom of the Sufis as constrasted with that of the Greeks, the *Ḥikmat-i Īmāni* and the *Ḥikmat-i Yūnāni*.

How long with this jurisprudence and baseless theology,
Wilt thou empty thy brain? O! exuberant one,
Thy life is spent in discussing conjugation and syntax,
Learn also a few words about the principles of love.
Illuminate thy heart with resplendent lights,
How long wilt thou lick the bowl of Avicenna?
The Lord of the universe, the King of this world and the next[33]
Called the left-over of the believer a remedy, O! grieved one,
But the left-over of Aristotle and Avicenna,
When has the illuminated Prophet called it a remedy?
Go rip thy breast in a hundred places,
And clear thy heart of all these stains.[34]

Not only does Shaikh-i Bahā'i suggest that man should not busy himself solely with formal science and that he should seek to reach the divine gnosis hidden in the revelation, but he also reminds man that he should not become so accustomed to this world as to forget his original home. It has been a constant theme of the gnostics throughout the ages that the spiritual man being a stranger in this world must take the perilous journey to return to his original abode.[35] In the same *Nān wa Ḥalwah*, while commenting upon the Prophet's saying: "The love of the country comes from faith," he writes:[36]

"This country is not Egypt, Iraq, or Syria,
It is a city which has no name.
Since all these countries belong to this world,
The noble man will never praise them.
The love of this world is the source of all evil,
And from evil comes the loss of faith.
Happy is the person who, through divine guidance,
Is led in the direction of that nameless city.
O! son, thou art a stranger in these countries;
How wretched art thou to have become accustomed to it!
Thou hast remained so long in the city of the body,
That thou hast completely forgotten thy own country.
Turn away from the body and gladden thy soul,
And remember thy original home.

[33] The Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be peace).

[34] Shaikh-i Bahā'i, *Kulliyāt* . . ., pp. 18–19.

[35] This theme appears in certain Hermetic writings, the *Acts of Thomas*, the Grail story, as well as in Islam in the visionary narratives of ibn Sīna and many of Suhrawardī's gnostic tracts like *Qiṣṣah Ghurbat al-Gharbiyyah*; see H. Corbin, *Avicénne et le récit visionnaire*, Institut Franco-Iranien, Teheran, and A. Maisonneuve, Paris, 1952–54, Vol. I, Chap. 3, and Suhrawardi, *Oeuvres philosophiques et mystiques*, Vol. II, Institut Franco-Iranien, Teheran, and A. Maisonneuve, Paris, 1954, Prolégomène by H. Corbin.

[36] Shaikh-i Bahā'i, *Kulliyāt* . . ., p. 23.

How long wilt thou, O! victorious falcon,
Remain away from the sphere of the spirit?
It is a shame for thee, O! artful one,
To shed thy feathers in this ruin.
How long, O! hoopoe of the city of Saba,[37]
Wilt thou remain in estrangement with feet tied?
Seek to untie the cords from thy feet,
And fly where 'there is no space.'"[38]

Shaikh-i Bahā'i was one of those rare falcons who, while outwardly in the midst of this world, had flown to the "land of nowhere." He did not write in the technical sense so much about *Ḥikmat* as Mīr Dāmād or Mulla Muḥsin Faiḍ did, but he reached such a degree of spiritual realization above and beyond theoretical formulations that all of his writings are spiritually precious. Even his compositions in the various religious and natural sciences bear the perfume of his spirituality. His writings present a balance between the exoteric and the esoteric, the metaphysical and the cosmological, which serves as an example of what the relation between the various aspects of a tradition might be and could be when the principial integrating influence of gnosis is present.

Mīr Dāmād.—One of the most influential figures of the Ṣafawid school was Muḥammad Bāqir Dāmād, better known as Mīr Dāmād. He and his pupil, Mulla Ṣadra, must be considered to be the greatest *Ḥakīms* of the period. Being the grandson of Muḥaqqiq-i Karaki and descendant of a distinguished Shī'ah family, Mīr Dāmād received the best education possible in all branches of religious learning. His most famous teacher was Shaikh Ḥusain ibn 'Abd al-Ṣamad 'Āmili, the father of Shaikh-i Bahā'i, who later on became his most intimate friend and companion at the Ṣafawid Court.[39] Mīr Dāmād soon became a leading authority on *Kalām, Ḥikmat, Fiqh* and even in the occult and natural sciences.[40] In Iṣpahān he attracted numerous students to himself. His most famous disciples were Mulla Ṣadra, Sayyid Aḥmad 'Alawi, the commentator of the *Shifā'*, Mulla Khalīl Qazwīni whose commentary upon the *Uṣūl al-Kāfi* is very well known in Persia, and Quṭb al-Dīn Ashkiwāri, the author of a universal sacred history and several philosophical and gnostic

[37] A city in the south of Arabia with which the name of the Queen of Sheba is associated.

[38] *Lā makān*, meaning beyond the world of cosmic manifestation. Suhrawardi refers to this point which is the top of the cosmic mountain *Qāf*, as *nā kuja ābād*; see Suhrawardi, "Le bruissement de l'aile de Gabriel," tr. H. Corbin and P. Kraus, *Journal Asiatique*, Juillet-Sept., 1935, pp. 41–42.

[39] For an account of the life and writings of Mīr Dāmād, see M. Tunikābuni, *Qiṣaṣ al-'Ulamā*, pp. 333–35; *Raiḥanat al-Adab*, Vol. IV, pp. 117–21; *Rauḍat al-Jannāt*, pp. 114–16; *Tārīkh-i 'Ālam Ārā-yi 'Abbāsi*, pp. 146–47; Dānish Pazhūh, *Fihrist . . .*, Vol. III, 1, p. 152 and the good Introduction to his life and thought by H. Corbin, "Confessions extatiques de Mīr Dāmād," pp. 340ff.

[40] It is said that he had much interest in the life of the bees and had accumulated a good deal of observational data about them.

treatises.[41] Mīr Dāmād more than anyone else was responsible for the revivification of ibn Sīnā's philosophy and *ishrāqi* wisdom within the context of Shī'ism and for laying the ground for the monumental work of Mulla Ṣadra. Mīr Dāmād did much to revive what he referred to as the Yamani wisdom *(falsafih-i Yamani)*, the wisdom of the prophets, in contrast to the more rationalistic philosophy of the Greeks.[42] He has been entitled the Third Teacher *(Mu'allim-i Thālith)* after Aristotle and Fārābi.

The writings of Mīr Dāmād, both in Arabic and Persian, many of which are incomplete, are written in a very difficult style which adds to the difficulty of understanding their contents. These writings include several treatises on *Kalām*; works on *Fiqh* like *Shāri' al-Najāt*; *al-Ufuq al-Mubīn* on Being, time, and eternity; *al-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm* on the relation between the created and the eternal; *Taqwīm al-Īmān* on Being, creation, and God's knowledge; several other major treatises on *Ḥikmat* including the *Qabasāt*,[43] *Taqdīsāt*, *Jadhawāt*, and *Sidrat al-Muntaha*;[44] several Qur'ānic commentaries like *Amānat-i Ilāhi*; commentaries upon the *Istiḥṣār* of Khwājah Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsi and the metaphysics of the *Shifā'*; the *Khalsat al-Malakūt* on gnosis;[45] and a collection of poems in Persian and Arabic including the *Mashāriq al-Anwār*, written under the pen name, *Ishrāq*. After a life-time spent in writing, teaching, and reading the Qur'ān to which he was much devoted, and having prepared the ground for the whole group of sages, especially Mulla Ṣadra, who were to carry his ideas to their ultimate perfection, Mīr Dāmād died on the way between Najaf and Karbala in Iraq in 1041/1631.

The thought of Mīr Dāmād is marked by two features which distinguish him from the other *Ḥakīms* of the period, the first the organization of his treatises and the second the notion of eternal creation, *ḥudūth-i dahri*, which is the central and ever-recurring theme in his writings. As for the organization of his works, like the *Qabasāt* and *Taqdīsāt*, it differs for the most part from

[41] For an account of these and other students of Mīr Dāmād, see H. Corbin, *op. cit.*, pp. 345–46.

[42] The "Yamani philosophy" means the wisdom revealed by God to man through the prophets and through illumination; Yaman (Yemen) symbolizes the right or oriental *(mashriqi)* side of the valley in which Moses heard the message of God. It is, therefore, the source of divine illumination in contrast to the Occident, the source of Peripatetic philosophy, the Occident symbolizing darkness and being on the plane of philosophy, i.e., rationalism. See H. Corbin, "Le récit d'initiation et l'hermétisme en Iran," *Eranos Jahrbuch*, Vol. XVII, 1949, pp. 136–37. For the symbols of the Orient and Occident in *ishrāqi* wisdom see the chapter on Suhrawardi Maqtūl.

[43] This major work has been commented upon several times. One of its most curious commentaries is that of Muḥammad ibn 'Ali Riḍa ibn Āqājāni, one of the students of Mulla Ṣadra; it runs over a thousand pages.

[44] These last two works are among the important books on *Ḥikmat* in Persian, the others being in Arabic. Some manuscripts attribute *Sidrat al-Muntaha* to Mīr Dāmād's student, Sayyid Aḥmad 'Alawi, although in the *Jadhawāt* Mīr Dāmād refers to this work as being his own. In any case it is a product of his school.

[45] For a translation and discussion of this work, see H. Corbin, *op. cit.*, pp. 350ff.

that of the traditional Muslim books on philosophy and *Ḥikmat* which usually begin with logic and then proceed to natural philosophy *(ṭabī'īyyāt)*, mathematics *(riyāḍīyyāt)*, and theology *(ilāhīyyāt)*.[46] For example, in the *Qabasāt* the ten chapters of the book concern the various meanings of creation and the division of Being, kinds of anteriority, multiplicity, appeal to the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth, nature, time, and motion, criticism of logic, divine omnipotence, intellectual substances, chain of Being, and finally predestination.[47]

The second marked feature of Mīr Dāmād's exposition of *Ḥikmat* concerns the notion of time. It is well known that the question whether the world is created *(ḥādith)* or eternal *(qadīm)* has been one of the major points of dispute between the philosophers and theologians in both Islam and Christianity as well as among the Greeks.[48] Mīr Dāmād seeks a solution to this question by dividing reality into three categories: *zamān* or time, *dahr*, and *sarmad*; the latter two are kinds of eternity. This division is ontological and not just logical or theoretical.[49]

The divine essence or ipseity *(dhāt)* is above all distinctions and qualities; yet it is also the source of the divine names and attributes which are both one with the essence and yet distinct from it. This immutable relation between the essence and the attributes, which cannot be changed from either side, the attributes being a necessary determination *(ta'ayyun)* of the essence to Itself by Itself, Mīr Dāmād called *sarmad*. It is an eternity in the absolute sense, above all contingencies. The names and attributes, which are the same as the archetypes, Platonic ideas, or the lords of the species *(rabb al-nau')* as the Ishrāqīs call them, in turn generate the world of change. They are the immutable intelligences of this world, and each species in this world is a theurgy *(ṭilism)* for its archetype. The relation between the immutable archetypes and the world of change is like the reflection of the moon in a stream of water in which the image of the moon remains unchanged while the substance in which it is reflected, i.e., water, flows on continually. This relation between the immutable and the changing, Mīr Dāmād calls *dahr*. Finally, the relation between one change and another is called time *(zamān)*, in the sense of quantity and measure of change as Aristotle had already described it.[50]

Since this world was brought into being through the intermediate world of

[46] See for example the *Shifā'* or *Najāt* of ibn Sīna and the *Kitāb al-Mu'tabar* of abu al-Barakāt al-Baghdādi. In some cases as in the *Dānish Nāmeh-i 'Ala'i* of ibn Sīna and many later *ishrāqi* writings, the book begins with metaphysics and then proceeds to natural philosophy in the manner of Plato rather than Aristotle.

[47] See Mīr Dāmād, *Qabasāt*, Shaikh Maḥmūd Burūjirdi, Shīrāz, 1315/1897.

[48] For a general discussion of this question, see L. Gardet, *La pensée religieuse d'Avicenne*, J. Vrin, Paris, 1951, pp. 38ff., and A. K. Coomaraswamy, *Time and Eternity*, Artibus Asiae, Ascona, 1947, Chap. IV.

[49] Mīr Dāmād, *Qabasāt*, pp. 1–10.

[50] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

the archetypes, its creation is *dahri* not *zamāni*, i.e., the world was not created in a time which existed before the world came into being but with respect to a *dahr* which stands above the world.[51] The creation of this world is, therefore, *ḥudūth-i dahri*, *ibdā'*, and *ikhtirā'* and not *ḥudūth-i zamāni*, *waḍ'*, and *takwīn*. Time has a reality in its own plane of being, but in the world of *dahr*, the world of the archetypes, time does not even exist. Moreover, the changing physical world *('ālam-i jismāni)* depends for its existence upon non-existence *('adam)* in the world of the archetypes. While it exists in time *(zamān)*, it is non-existent in *dahr* and has no share in the angelic mode of being, proper to the world of *dahr*, of which it is no more than a coagulation. Likewise, the world of *dahr*, of the archetypes, is non-existent in the divine essence, in the world of *sarmad* (the eternal world). In the divine essence *(dhāt)* there is neither *dahr* nor *zamān*, neither archetype nor body; God is alone in His majesty.[52] Yet, *dahr* exists on its own level and *zamān* on its own. *Sarmad* is the cause of *dahr* and *dahr* the cause of *zamān*,[53] so that ultimately the divine essence is the cause of all things, while in its essence nothing may even be said to exist.

The *Jadhawāt*, the contents of which we will now briefly survey, is one of the works in which Mīr Dāmād presents the complete cycle of his metaphysical ideas combined as usual with the Qur'ānic text, the Ḥadīth, and his own verse.[54] In the first *judhwah* or particle of fire, of which the word *jadhawāt* is the plural, Mīr Dāmād divides the "book of divine existence," of the chain of Being, into two parts, one in which there is an effusion or theophany *(tajalli)* away from the divine essence and the other in which there is a return to the origin:

[51] Mīr Dāmād argues that time itself is the measure of the movement of the heavens and a condition for the existence of this world so that one cannot speak of a time before the creation of the world; *Qabasāt*, p. 20.

[52] For a comparison and affinity of these ideas with those of ibn 'Arabi, see *La sagesse des prophets*, Chapters I and II.

[53] In presenting this view of creation, Mīr Dāmād draws heavily on earlier writings from Plato's *Timaeus* and the so-called *Theology of Aristotle* to the *Shifā'* of ibn Sīna and the *Kitāb al-Mu'tabar* of abu al-Barakāt. In each case he also criticizes the view of the previous writers who considered the world either to be eternal in itself or created in time from outside. Mīr Dāmād's *Risālah fi Madhhab Aristaṭālis* is devoted to a discussion of the difference between the views of Plato and Aristotle on the question of time and eternity drawing on Fārābi's *Kitāb Jam' bain al-Rā'yain*. Mīr Dāmād's treatise is published on the margin of the *Qabasāt*, pp. 140–57.

[54] The *Jadhawāt* (Bombay, lithographed edition, 1302/1884, pp. 203) begins with a poem in praise of 'Ali ibn abi Ṭālib the first lines of which are as follows:

> O herald of the nation and the soul of the Prophet,
> The ring of thy knowledge surrounds the ears of the intelligences.
> O thou in whom the book of existence terminates,
> To whom the account or creation refers
> The glorified treasure of the revelation,
> Thou art the holy interpreter of its secrets.

the first extending from the divine essence to prime matter or *hyle* and the other from the *hyle* back to the origin of all existence. Moreover, each chain is divided into a longitudinal *(ṭūli)* order and a latitudinal *('arḍi)* order.[55] The longtudinal order of the chain of effusion includes five essential degrees: —

1. The degree of pure intelligences, the victorial lights *(anwār-i qāhirah)* the first member of which is the universal intellect *('aql-i kull)*, i.e., the first light to issue forth from the Light of lights *(nūr al-anwār)*.
2. The degree of heavenly souls *(nufūs-i falakīyyah)*, the governing lights *(anwār-i mudabbirah)*, the first member of which governing the first heaven is called the universal soul *(nafs-i kull)*.
3. The degree of the natural souls *(nufūs-i munṭabi'ah)* and the archetypes of the heavens, the planets, the four natures, the elements, and compounds.[56]
4. The degree of bodily form *(sūrat-i jismīyyah)*, i.e., the Aristotelian form, which is an extended substance and is of one species.
5. The degrees of *hyle*, from the matter of the highest heaven to that of the world of generation and corruption.[57]

As for the longitudinal order of the chain of return to the divine essence, it too includes five stages: —

1. The degree of the absolute body *(jism-i muṭlaq)* and bodies comprising the elements and the heavens.
2. The degree of composed bodies which come into being from the combination of the elements and have a species of their own, e.g., minerals.
3. The degree of plants possessing the vegetative soul.
4. The degree of animals possessing the animal soul.[58]
5. The degree of men possessing the intellectual soul which is of the same substance as the intelligences of the descending chain, above both of which there is nothing but the Truth *(Ḥaqq)* Itself.[59]

Each of these degrees, both in the descending and the ascending chains, have their several members that constitute the latitudinal extension of each degree.

The world of the intelligences *(mujarradāt)* is called the world of the invisible *(ghaib)*, or command *(amr)*, or *malakūt*, or intellect *('aql)*, or life

[55] Suhrawardi also divides the angelic world into the longitudinal and the latitudinal orders, a division the influence of which upon Mīr Dāmād is easy to discern. On the question of angelology the Ṣafawid sages remained faithful to the *ishrāqi* scheme combined with that of ibn Sīna. See the chapter on Suhrawardi Maqtūl.

[56] The natures refer to the warm and cold, wet and dry, and the elements to the four traditional ones, fire, air, water, and earth.

[57] Mīr Dāmād and Mulla Ṣadra, unlike Aristotle and his followers, posit some form of matter in every degree of formal manifestation.

[58] Mīr Dāmād mentions that there are 1,400 species of animals, 800 belonging to sea and 600 to land.

[59] *Jadhawāt*, pp. 2–13.

(ḥayāt), or light *(nūr)*, while the world of bodies is called the world of creation *(khalq)*, vision *(shahādat)*, or dominion *(mulk)*, or death *(maut)*, or darkness *(ẓulmat)*. Man's nature is composed of these two worlds in such a way that he contains the whole world in himself; he is the microcosm as the world is the macrocosm. His intellect is like the sun, his soul like the moon, and his body like the earth; and as is the case with the heavens, man can also have an inner eclipse, i.e., the earth of his body can prevent the light of the sun of the intellect to shine upon the moon of the soul. The purpose of the two chains of descent and ascent is to bring into being man, who contains both the chains within himself and who can, therefore, ascend to heaven as well as descend to the lowest depths of existence.

The macrocosm is a conscious being whose head is the highest heaven, whose heart is the sun, and whose other organs correspond with those of man. It is compared symbolically to a man whose head is pointed towards the North Pole, the right side towards the west, the face towards heaven, the feet towards the south, and the left side towards the east.

The totality of these degrees, the macrocosm and the microcosm together, is the book of God, in which each being is a word or rather a letter.[60] These words and letters are written by the divine Pen *(qalam)* which symbolizes the intellect. The Pen writes the truth of things upon the human soul which is called the *ispahbad* light *(nūr-i ispahbadi)*. More specifically, the Pen writes the truth of things upon the soul of the prophet who in turn "writes" the knowledge of things upon the soul of man and, through the intelligences, upon the pages of creation and existence. The intelligences are not limited to the nine heavens, but as the Ishrāqīs have asserted, in number they equal the fixed stars in addition to the heavens and extend all the way down to the heaven of the moon. The intelligence of this heaven is called "the giver of forms" *(wāhib al-ṣuwar)* or the active intellect *('aql-i fa"āl)* which gives being as well as form to the sublunary region.[61]

The heaven of the fixed stars is the meeting place of the corporeal and intellectual lights, the boundary between formal and formless manifestation. This heaven has its own soul and intelligence but, in addition, each star in it is also a possessor of an intelligence and a soul proper to itself. As to the other heavens, they also have their general intelligence and soul as well as particular intelligences and souls all of which cast their illuminations upon the sublunary region. The intelligence of the heaven of the sun is Gabriel whose grace is spread throughout the heavens and the earth.

Having considered the chain of Being, Mīr Dāmād turns to a discussion of unity *(tauḥīd)* starting from "there is no divinity but God" *(la ilāha illa-Allah)* to "there is no being but He and no truth but He" *(la maujūdun illa Huwa wa la ḥaqqun illa Huwa)*.[62] For the real gnostic every being is

[60] *Ibid.*, pp. 13–18.

[61] *Ibid.*, pp. 18–28.

[62] *Ibid.*, pp. 28ff.

nothing but Being. Mīr Dāmād compares the relation of Being to existence with that of the number one to other numbers, which runs through all numbers without entering into them, which relation neither the soul nor the intellect can understand, yet its effect is felt everywhere.[63] The Divine Being by His essential unity encompasses all things; His unity is before, with, and after both *dahr* and *zamān*. His unity before *dahr* is the unity of His command; with *dahr*, the unity of the universal intellect; after *dahr*, the unity of the universal soul, unity with time *(zamān)*, and unity of the elements and compounds.

As for the generation of multiplicity from unity, Mīr Dāmād rejects the Peripatetic view of authors like ibn Sīna who consider that the first intellect brings multiplicity into being by the three relationships possible for it: necessity by something other than itself, the intellection of the divine essence, and the intellection of its own essence. For Mīr Dāmād just as the number of intelligences is unlimited so are their possible relationships beyond the number determined by the Peripatetics.[64] Likewise, the intelligences have a great many illuminations and effusions beyond the categories set forth by the Aristotelians, one intelligence being victorial *(qāhir)* and the other passive and receptive *(maqhūr)*. Each heaven as well as each body, simple or composed, has its archetype *(rabb al-nau')* in the world of divine command *('ālam-i amr)* which is changeless and is to its species what the soul of man is to his body.

Between the world of intelligences and the physical world there is an intermediary world, the so-called eighth climate which Mīr Dāmād, following the ancient Ishrāqi sages calls *hūrqalya*,[65] the world of separated imagination *(khayāl-i munfaṣil)*, or the purgatory *(barzakh)*. Human imagination is itself regarded as a gulf extending from this vast cosmic ocean. This world contains the forms or Platonic ideas of all physical bodies without being in a specific place. The mythical cities of Jābulqa and Jābulsa[66] are located in it, and bodily resurrection on the Last Day, miracles, and the passage of great distances in a short time, all take place in this intermediary world which is a bridge to be crossed before reaching the spiritual world.

In order to cross this bridge and make the return journey through the ascending chain, man must become familiar with the divine names, especially the Great Name *(ism-i a'ẓam)* which contains all the others. All the prophets

[63] In discussing *tauḥīd*, Mīr Dāmād draws not only on ibn Sīna and Suhrawardi but even on the *Nahj al-Balāghah* of the first Shī'ah Imām, the *Ṣaḥīfih-i Sajjādīyyah* of the fourth Imām, and other Shī'ah sources. He regards Pythagoras as the Imām of the Semitic sages *(Ḥukamā'-i Sāmi)* and one who received his wisdom through revelation. This view going back to Philo is held among the great majority of the Muslim sages and historians of philosophy.

[64] *Jadhawāt*, pp. 38ff.

[65] This intermediary region plays an important role in the thought of Mulla Ṣadra and even more in the writings of Shaikh Aḥmad Aḥsā'i, the founder of the Shaikhīs who still survive in Kermān.

[66] These are two famous mythical cities through which initiates pass in their journeys and they appear often in initiatic narratives in Persian.

and saints derive their being from these names, and the creatures are their effects. The spiritual world is called the world of invocation *('ālam-i tasbīḥ)* because the realities of that world are the divine names. Man, therefore, can regain that world only by invoking the names and becoming unified with them.[67] The gnostic who has achieved this end sees the whole world through the intelligible world; in fact, he sees nothing outside the Divine. As long as man lives in this world, no matter how much he has separated his soul from his body and achieved *catharsis (tajrīd)*, he is still in time and space. It is only when he dies and leaves the world of darkness for that of light that he becomes completely free from the conditions of terrestrial existence, of *zamān*, and it is only then that he enters into eternity *(dahr)*.

The inner constitution of man forms a bridge between the worlds of time and eternity, the sensible and the intelligible. Man possesses four degrees of perception: sensation *(iḥsās)*, imagination *(takhayyul)*, apprehension *(tawahhum)*, and intellection *(ta'aqqul)*, the degrees which stretch between the visible world and the invisible world. The soul *(nafs)* is the link between these two worlds; on the one hand, it abstracts perceptions from the sensible world and, on the other, receives the illumination of the intelligible world which it clothes in the forms of the sensible, i.e., words and names which are the external dress of truths.[68]

Mīr Dāmād echoes earlier Sufi and Pythagorean doctrines in assigning a particular significance to the numerical symbolism of letters. He writes: "The world of letters corresponds to the world of numbers, and the world of numbers to the world of Being, and the proportion of the world of letters to the proportion of the world of numbers and the proportion of the world of numbers to the combinations and mixtures of the world of Being."[69] He calls the science of the properties of letters and their combination divine medicine and says that letters have come into being from the conjunction of planets with the signs of the Zodiac, for example *alif* has come into being by Mars crossing the first degree of Aries. He establishes correspondence between the twenty-eight letters of the Arabic alphabet and the equal number of the stations of the moon and works out this correspondence in great detail.[70]

[67] *Jadhawāt*, pp. 54–63.

[68] *Ibid.*, p. 100.

[69] *Ibid.*, p. 103. In the same work, p. 92, the last part of which is wholly devoted to the important traditional Muslim science of *jafr*, he considers numbers to be the principles of beings, the illumination from the intelligible world, the "Michael of the degree of existence" and adds that if a person acquires all the knowledge of numbers he will gain complete knowledge of the physical world. This view is very close to that of Pythagoras and his school. See Aristotle, *Metaphysica*, Book V. In both cases number is not just the quantity of modern mathematics, but a "personality," an entity which possesses a definite qualitative aspect. For the notion of the Pythagoreans, see H. Keyser, *Akroasis*, Verlag Gert Hatje, Stuttgart, 1947.

[70] For a profound study of this subject as developed before Mīr Dāmād, see S. T. Burckhardt, *La clé' spirituelles de l'astrologie musulmane d'apres Ibn 'Arabi*, Éditions Traditionelles, Paris, 1950.

In establishing a relation between numbers, letters of the alphabet, and the heavens, Mīr Dāmād, like many sages before him, seeks to point out the common ground between the book of revelation and the book of nature, as well as the relation between the sensible world and the intelligible world. In his writings it is quite clear that both metaphysics and cosmology are to be found in the esoteric *(bāṭini)* meanings of the Qur'ān and that through the understanding of the symbolism of letters and numbers and the sapiential exegeses of sacred books one can come to know not only the Qur'ān which corresponds to the world of creation, the *Qur'ān-i tadwīni*, but also the Qur'ān which is the archetype of all manifestation, the *Qur'ān-i takwīni*, i.e., the *logos* or the reality of Muḥammad *(ḥaqīqat al-Muḥammadīyyah)*.

Mīr Abu al-Qāsim Findiriski.—The third of the famous triumvirate of sages from Iṣpahān,[71] Mīr Findiriski, spent much of his life travelling outside Persia, especially in India where he was highly respected by most of the princes and where he made the acquaintance of many Hindu sages. He became well acquainted with Hinduism and even wrote a commentary upon the Persian translation of the *Yoga Vasiṣṭha* by Niẓām al-Dīn Pānīpati, which is one of the major works on Hinduism in Persian. In the Muslim sciences he was a master in philosophy *(Ḥikmat)*, mathematics, and medicine, and taught the *Shifā'* and the *Qānūn* of ibn Sīna in Iṣpahān where he died in 1050/1640.

The most interesting aspect of Mīr Findiriskī's life is his complete detachment, even externally, from the world. As a Sufi, in spite of his having advanced very far upon the Path and having reached the state of pure contemplation and illumination, he mingled with the common people and wore the coarsest wool, and yet he was one of the most respected men in the Ṣafawid Court.[72] His manner resembled that of the Hindu Yogīs with whom he had had so much contact. He was a real man among men and one of the most striking Sufis of his time. While completely detached from the world and even from purely formal learning, he composed several important treatises including one on motion *(al-ḥarakah)*, another on the arts and sciences in society *(ṣanā'īyyah)*, the book on Yoga already mentioned, *Uṣūl al-Fuṣūl* on Hindu wisdom, and a history of the Ṣafawids. Moreover, he, like Mīr Dāmād and Shaikh-i Bahā'i, was an accomplished poet showing the development in him of the gnostic element which is the only possible common ground between traditional philo-

[71] The other two are Shaikh-i Bahā'i and Mīr Dāmād who were close friends of Mīr Findiriski and shared with him the respect and honour of the Ṣafawid Court. For an account of the life of Mīr Findiriski whose complete name is Mīr abu al-Qāsim ibn Mirza Baik Ḥusain Findiriski, see *Raihānat al-Adab*, Vol. III, pp. 231–32.

[72] The story is told of him in most biographies that one day Shāh 'Abbās, trying to admonish him for mixing with the common people, said, "I hear some of the leading scholars and sages have been attending cock-fights in the bazaar." Mīr Findirski, knowing that the remark was meant for him, replied, "Your majesty, rest assured, I was present but I saw none of the *'ulamā'* there." See *Riyāḍ al-'Ārifīn*, p. 276.

sophy and poetry. The most famous of his poems is a *qaṣīdah*, based upon that of Nāṣir ibn Khusrau Dehlawi, which is one of the best known poems on *Ḥikmat* in Persian. It has been taught and commented upon many times since its composition, the more famous commentaries on it being those of Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ Khalkhāli and Ḥakīm 'Abbās Dārābi. Because of the importance of this poem in summarizing some of the basic elements of *Ḥikmat* as it was revived during the Ṣafawid period, English translation of some of the verses is given below.

"Heaven with these stars is clear, pleasing, and beautiful;
Whatever is there above has below it a form.[73]
The form below, if by the ladder of gnosis
Is trodden upward, becomes the same as its principle.
No outward apprehension can understand this saying,
Whether it be that of an abu Naṣr or of an abu 'Ali Sīna.[74]
If life were not an accident under this ancient heaven,
These bodies would be forever alive and erect.
But whatever is an accident must first have a substance;
The intellect is our loquacious witness to this claim.
If one can obtain these qualities[75] from the sun,
The sun is itself light and shines upon all things while keeping its unity.
The intellectual form which is endless and immortal
With or without all things is a totality and unity.
Of the life of the universe, I say that if thou knowest the relation of the soul and the body,
In the heart of every particle, then life becomes both evident and hidden.
God has placed seven heavens above us,
And seven others on the other side of the world in the life to come.
Thou canst reach heaven by their means,
Be true and walk the straight path for there is no falsehood there.
He who worships the world, the door of heaven will never open to him,
The doors will not open even if he stands before them.
He who is annihilated in Him finds eternal life;
He who is busy with himself, his affair is doubtless a failure.
The jewel is hidden in the mysteries of the ancient sages,
Only he who is wise can discover the meaning of these mysteries.
Pass beyond these words for they are forsaken by the people of the world;
Find the Truth and tread its path, if thou art righteous.

[73] The text of this *qaṣīdah* and the commentary by Khalkhāli have been published in Teheran, lithographed edition, 1325/1907. This verse means the celestial archetypes of Platonic ideas and their earthly reflections or shadows.

[74] Reference is to Fārābi and ibn Sīna, the two early masters of *mashshā'i* philosophy in Islam.

[75] "Qualities" means multiplicity of forms which become evident only when light shines upon them.

Whatever is outside thy essence will do thee no good,
Make thyself harmonious whether it be today or tomorrow.
The Being that is pure has no limit or description;
It is neither outside of us, nor with us, nor without us.
A beautiful thought is only beneficial when combined with virtuous deeds;
A thought with virtuous action is competent and beautiful.
To talk of goodness is not like doing good,
The name of sweetmeat on the tongue is not like sweetmeat itself . . . .
In this world and the next, with the world and without it,
We can say all these of Him, yet He is above all that.
The intellect is a ship, passion a whirlpool, and knowledge the mast,
God is the shore and the whole cosmos the sea.
The shore is reached with certainty; the sea of the possible has become the necessary. . . .[76]
How good it would be if the sages before us had said everything completely,
So that the opposition of those who are not complete[77] would be removed.
Desire keeps the soul in bondage in this world;
While thou hast desire, thy feet are tied.
Each wish in this world is followed by another wish;
The wish must be sought beyond which there is no other."

Mīr Findiriski occupied himself not only with metaphysics and the theoretical sciences but also with the sciences of society, of traditional society in which the social structure itself has a direct bearing on metaphysical principles. In his treatise on arts and sciences *(ṣanā'īyyah)*,[78] he distinguishes twelve vocations or arts and sciences in society depending upon the subject with which each one deals. The subjects of the arts and sciences he enumerates are as follows: (i) The subject is universal and the discussion concerns knowledge as well as action from both of which there comes only good; (ii) the subject is universal and the discussion concerns both knowledge and action from both of which there comes evil; (iii) the subject is universal and the discussion concerns knowledge from which there comes only good; (iv) the subject is universal and the discussion concerns knowledge from which there comes only evil; (v) the subject is universal and the discussion concerns action from which there comes only good; and (vi) the subject is universal and the discussion concerns action from which there comes evil. To this list Mīr Findiriski adds a series of arts and sciences the subject of which is no longer universal. These include (vii) those arts and sciences the subject of which is particular and the discussion

[76] The later Muslim authors following ibn Sīna divide reality into the Necessary Being *(wājib al-wujūd)*, the possible being *(mumkin al-wujūd)* and the being that is impossible *(mumtani' al-wujūd)*.

[77] All arguments begin because each side considers only one aspect of the Truth. But those who are "complete," that is, have a vision of the totality of the Truth, never enter into arguments.

[78] Mīr Findiriski, *Risāleh-i Ṣanā'iyyah*, Sa'ādat Press, Teheran, 1317 Solar.

concerns knowledge and action from which there comes only good; (viii) the subject is particular and the discussion concerns knowledge and action from which there comes evil; (ix) the subject is particular and the discussion concerns only knowledge from which there comes only good; (x) the subject is particular and the discussion concerns only knowledge from which there comes evil; (xi) the subject is particular and the discussion concerns only action from which there comes only good; and, finally (xii), the subject is particular and the discussion concerns only action from which there comes evil.[79]

The first of the twelve categories listed above concerns the prophets, saints, and sages, the most exalted of men, who maintain the order of the universe, there being a prophet for each cycle of history and each people. The second concerns those who oppose the prophets and sages, those who are the deniers of truth, and the sophists and agnostics who are the lowest of men. The fourth class is the opposite of the first, i.e., that of the enemies of *Ḥikmat* and theology, of those who, seeing differences in the expressions of the various sages, have denied the one truth which lies behind this diversity.[80] The fifth category is that of the jurists *(fuqahā')* who cultivate the practical sciences, and the sixth is that of their opposites like Mazdak,[81] who concern themselves only with their bodies and remain oblivious of the order of both this world and the next.

The last six categories concern particular arts and sciences. The first of them, or the seventh in our list, is that of professionals in particular arts, like physicians, engineers, and astronomers; and the eighth is that of their opposites, i.e., those who misuse each of these arts. The ninth category is like the particular sense of an organ of the body and concerns people who have only a theoretical knowledge of various arts and sciences, like music, medicine, or the principles of jurisprudence. The tenth is its opposite and in it are included those who make a false claim to know these sciences theoretically. The eleventh category concerns arts and sciences which are limited to a particular subject, and the twelfth its opposite which concerns the rejection of these same arts and sciences.

In this classification we can already see the hierarchic structure of society at the top of which stand the prophets and saints in whom knowledge and action are combined, below them the *ḥukamā'* and the theologians, then those concerned with practical arts and the particular sciences. The nobility of a vocation in each case depends upon the nobility of the subject-matter treated.

[79] *Ibid.*, pp. 13–54.

[80] Mīr Findiriski adds that all the Greek philosophers before Aristotle were saying the same thing in different languages and that if one is instructed in the secrets *(rumūz)* of *Ḥikmat*, Hindu wisdom, and the *Theology of Aristotle* (i.e., the *Enneads* of Plotinus), all the different expressions will have the same meaning for him.

[81] Mīr Findiriski mentions Mazdak as the person who by a false interpretation of the Avesta preached the communization of women and property. He also mentions the Carmathians *(Qarāmiṭah)* as belonging to this group.

Likewise, the degree of degradation of a person or group depends upon the truth that has been denied; the higher the degree of a truth, the baser is he who denies it. The categories outlined by Mīr Findiriski reflect the hierarchy within *Ḥikmat* itself. In both cases the religious sciences like theology are considered to stand above the natural sciences, *Ḥikmat* above theology, and the wisdom of the prophets and saints above all the other categories.

Mulla Muḥsin Faiḍ-i Kāshi.—Muḥammad ibn Shāh Murtaḍa ibn Shāh Maḥmūd, better known as Mulla Muḥsin or Faiḍ-i Kāshi, is the most famous of the sages of the generation following that of Mīr Dāmād, Shaikh-i Bahā'i, and Mīr Findiriski. Born in Kāshān in 1007/1600, he spent some years at Qum and then came to Shīrāz to complete his studies with Mulla Ṣadra whose daughter he later married. He also studied with Mīr Dāmād and Shaikh-i Bahā'i but was more closely associated with Mulla Ṣadra. Just as Mīr Dāmād produced a series of outstanding students, the best known of whom was Mulla Ṣadra—the greatest of the Ṣafawid Ḥakīms to whom we shall turn in a separate chapter—Mulla Ṣadra in turn produced a galaxy of famous students among whom Faiḍ-i Kāshi and Mulla 'Abd al-Razzāq Lāhīji, both his sons-in-law, are the most important.[82]

The genius of Mulla Ṣadra consisted largely in unifying the three perspectives of formal revelation or *shar'*, purification of the soul leading to illumination *(kashf)*, and rational demonstration *(falsafah)* into a single universal vision in which all these paths lead to the same truth. All of his followers sought to preserve the unity established by their master, each emphasizing some one aspect of it. For example, later sages like Qāḍi Sa'īd Qumi, Mulla 'Ali Nūri, and Āqa 'Ali Zunūzi sought to correlate revelation and reason, and Āqa Muḥammad Bīdābādi and Āqa Muḥammad Riḍā' Qumshihi, reason and gnosis. Others continued the path trodden by Mulla Ṣadra himself and emphasized the harmony of all the three paths mentioned above. Mulla Muḥsin Faiḍ and Ḥāji Mulla Hādi Sabziwāri, the most famous Persian thinker of the last century, belong to this last group. Mulla Muḥsin's writings display a harmonious integration of reason, revelation, and gnosis with lesser emphasis upon reason. He succeeded perhaps more than anyone else in the Shī'ah world to bring about a complete harmony between Law and spiritual life, *Sharī'ah* and *Ṭarīqah*.

In many ways Mulla Muḥsin may be considered to be a Shī'ah Ghazāli, not only because of his preoccupation with harmonizing the exoteric and the esoteric views, but also for his treatment of a spiritualized ethics which forms

[82] Mulla-i Lāhīji, known as Fayyāḍ, author of several important treatises on *Ḥikmat* in Persian and Arabic mentioned already, deserves a separate study as one of the major figures of this period. There are brief accounts of him in E. G. Browne, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, pp. 408–09, 435. See also the introduction by Sayyid Muḥammad Mishkāt to the new edition of *al-Maḥajjat al-Baiḍā'*, Vol. I, Islāmiyyah Press, Teheran, 1380 Solar, in which the significance of Faiḍ's doctrines and in particular the present work on ethics is discussed.

the requirement for following the Path. He even re-wrote the well-known *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* of Ghazāli under the name of *al-Maḥajjat al-Baiḍā' fi Iḥyā' al-Iḥyā'*, substituting traditions (Ḥadīth) from the Shī'ah sources for those from the Sunni ones given by Ghazāli.[83]

The writings of Mulla Muḥsin both in Arabic and Persian are too numerous to mention here.[84] Among the more famous, one may name *Ḥaqq al-Yaqīn*; *'Ain al-Yaqīn*, and *'Ilm al-Yaqīn* on *Ḥikmat*; *al-Ṣāfi*, *al-Wāfi*, and *al-Shāfi* on Qur'ānic commentary and Ḥadīth; *Mafātiḥ al-Sharāyi'* on jurisprudence; *al-Taṭhīr* on ethics; *Jalā' al-'Uyūn*, *Zād al-Sālik*, and *Kalimāt-i Maknūnah* on Sufism; numerous treatises on the esoteric meaning of acts of worship, on various invocations, on particular sciences including astronomy; selections from and commentaries on the *Rasā'il* of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafa, the *Futūḥāt al-Makkīyyah* of ibn 'Arabi, and the *Maṭhnawi* of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmi; and a large collection of poems consisting mostly of verses of Sufi inspiration. His works both in poetry and prose have remained very popular in Persia and his ethical and social teachings have attracted particular attention in the past decades.

Mulla Muḥsin's thought marks the final integration of *Ḥikmat* into Shī'ism. *Ḥikmat* in Persia had been moving in this direction for many centuries from the time of al-Fārābi and ibn Sīna. Suhrawardi Maqtūl took the decisive step in regarding knowledge as personal illumination by the heavenly guide or "guardian angel." Mulla Ṣadra following him made the universal intellect the criterion of knowledge. Mulla Muḥsin took a further step in this direction in identifying this intellect with the Shī'ah Imāms, in whom the light of Muḥammad *(al-nūr al-Muḥammadīyyah)* is manifested and who are called the innocent *(ma'ṣūm)* intellects.[85] Only by union with them, with the pure intellects, can one gain ultimate knowledge.

One of the important treatises of Mulla Muḥsin, in which gnosis, *Ḥikmat*, and *Shar'* are blended in characteristic fashion, is the *Kalimāt-i Maknūnah* written in a mixture of Arabic and Persian.[86] It treats of a complete cycle of theoretical gnosis so that its discussion gives a fair example of the totality of Mulla Muḥsin's general perspective.

The work begins by assuring the reader that there is no way of reaching the essence of the Truth because the Truth encompasses all things. Everything is Its manifestation, but only the *élite (khawāṣṣ)* know what they see. Being is like light, but since its opposite does not exist in this world as in the case of light which stands opposed to darkness, one cannot come to know

[83] See Mulla Muḥsin Faiḍ-i Kāshi, *al-Maḥajjat al-Baiḍā' fi Iḥyā' al-Iḥyā'*, 4 Vols., Islāmiyyah Press, Teheran, 1380–81 Solar, in which in ten sections he deals with Sufi ethics based on Shī'ah sources but following closely the model of the *Iḥyā'*.

[84] The *Raiḥānat al-Adab*, Vol. III, pp. 242–44, mentions 120 works by him. For the account of Mulla Muḥsin's life and writings, consult also *Qiṣaṣ al-'Ulamā'*, pp. 322–33, and *Riyāḍ al-'Ārifīn*, pp. 388–89.

[85] Mulla Muḥsin Faiḍ, *Ā'īnih-i Shāhi*, Mūsawi Press, Shīrāz, 1320/1902, p. 5.

[86] *Kalimāt-i Maknūnah*, Teheran, lithographed edition, 1316/1898. Henceforth our reference to this work will be to this edition.

it so easily. God is hidden because of the excess of His light; no veil can cover Him because every veil is a limitation and God is above all limitations.[87] Being *is* the Truth which subsists by Itself, while everything else subsists by It. Being is not just a mental concept, the meaning of Being in the mind consisting only of a reflection of Being Itself.

The divine attributes and names are identical with the divine essence, while in themselves they are distinct. Likewise the forms of all beings in the divine intellect, i.e., the quiddities or essences, the *māhiyāt* or *a'yān al-ṯābitah*,[88] are in one respect identical with and in another distinct from essence. Each being subsists by one of the divine names and its very existence consists in the invocation of that name. The archetypes, *a'yān al-ṯābitah*, have two aspects; on the one hand, they are the mirrors in which Truth is reflected, in which case they are hidden and Truth is manifest; and, on the other hand, Truth is the mirror in which they are reflected, in which case truth is hidden and they are manifest. These two aspects correspond also to two states of contemplation: one of Truth *(Ḥaqq)* and the other of creation *(ḵẖalq)*. The perfect gnostic contemplates both mirrors; he sees the cosmos as a mirror in which Truth is reflected, and his own essence as a mirror in which both the cosmos and Truth are reflected. Mulla Muḥsin advises the sage to take a further step in eliminating himself also so that there remains nothing but Truth.[89]

Mulla Muḥsin follows certain earlier Sufis in considering the world to be re-created at every instant,[90] so that its continuity is only apparent. The real continuity is "vertical," i.e., between Truth and its manifestations, not "horizontal" and "substantial," i.e., between parts and instances of the created world. The world is like a flowing stream which, although apparently a continuous and subsistent body, changes at every instant, each particle of it perishing at every instant and a new particle coming to take its place.

The creation of the world or the effusion of unity into multiplicity does not take place immediately but through the divine names, each creature being the theophany *(tajalli)* of a particular name. The name Allah is the supreme master *(rabb al-arbāb)* of all the names, the theophany of which is the universal man *(al-insān al-kāmil)*. Although the stages in which creation

[87] *Ibid.*, p. 15.

[88] For an explanation of these terms see Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Being and Its Polarisation," *Pakistan Philosophical Journal*, Vol. III, No. 2, October 1959, pp. 8–13. In the general discussion among the Ḥakīms as to whether these essences (or Being) are principial, Mulla Muḥsin sides with the school of *iṣālat-i wujūd*, the principiality of Being, and considers the *māhiyāt* to be the accidents of Being. This question has been dealt with in the chapter on Suhrawardi Maqtūl.

[89] *Kalimāt-i Maknūnah*, pp. 31ff. Mulla Muḥsin describes these stages also as the *'ilm al-yaqīn*, in which one "sees" nothing but the divine essence, names, and acts; the *'ain al-yaqīn*, in which one "sees" nothing but the essence and names; and the *ḥaqq al-yaqīn* in which there remains only the divine ipseity.

[90] See T. Burckhardt, *Introduction to Sufi Doctrine*, pp. 64ff.

comes into being are numerous, Mullah Muḥsin names five degrees which mark the main steps. In the first degree is the divine essence which is above all distinctions and determinations; in the second are the names which are the manifestations of Truth in the world of divinity, *ulūhīyyah*; in the third are the divine acts and world of spirits which are the manifestations of Truth in the world of Lordship, *rubūbīyyah*; in the fourth is the world of the "ideas" and imagination *(ḵẖayāl)*[91] which is the manifestation of Truth in the world of varying forms; and in the fifth is the world of the senses which is the manifestation of Truth in determined forms.[92] Everything in the physical world has its archetype in the world of imagination, while everything in the world of imagination has its archetype in the world of lordship, and everything in the world of lordship is a form of one of the divine names, each name an aspect of the divine essence.

Man alone among creatures is able to cast aside these veils and reach the divine origin of things. He has a particular soul brought into being with his body, which soul is independent of matter, and also a universal soul which exists before the body and is manifested only in the spiritual *élite*. Moreoever, man has a vegetative soul consisting of the faculties of attraction, repulsion, digestion, growth, and retention originating in the liver; an animal soul consisting of the faculties of the five senses originating in the heart; a sacred rational soul *(nafs-i nāṭiqah-i qudsīyyah)* with the faculties of meditation *(fikr)* and invocation *(ḏẖikr)*; and the universal divine soul *(nafs-i kullīyyah-i ilāhīyyah)*, not possessed by all men, with the faculty of reaching the station of annihilation *(fanā')* in the Divine.[93]

The goal of each man should be to awaken the potential faculties within him until all the accidential obstacles are removed and he becomes identified with the universal man, the theophany of the supreme name. Then he will be able to contemplate Absolute Being and thereby fulfil the purpose of all creation and sustain the whole universe.

The universal man is either a prophet or a saint. Absolute prophethood *(nubuwwat-i muṭlaq)* is the supreme station, the perfect "form" of unity, the first pen, and the Pole of Poles, *quṭb al-aqṭāb*, upon which all the prophets and saints depend. The inner *(bāṭin)* dimension of this prophecy is absolute sainthood *(wilāyat-i muṭlaq)*. Mulla Muḥsin identifies absolute prophethood with the light of Muḥammad, and absolute sainthood with the light of 'Ali. The prophethood of all prophets depends upon absolute prophecy as the sainthood of all saints depends upon absolute sainthood. Prophethood began with Adam and found its completion in the Prophet Muḥammad. Sainthood will reach its completion gradually until it culminates in the twelfth Imām, the Mahdi.

[91] This term should not be taken in its negative connotation; it has a positive meaning in Sufi cosmology and marks an intermediate stage between the sensible world and the spiritual world. See H. Corbin, *Imagination créatrice . . .*, Chap. II.

[92] *Kalimāt-i Maknūnah*, p. 61.

[93] *Ibid.*, pp. 74–75.

Absolute prophethood is the treasure of all possible perfections and the whole cosmos is the expansion and manifestation of its inner qualities.[94]

Gnosis and illumination are themselves the fruit of the tree of prophethood. Mulla Muḥsin insists that the source of *Ḥikmat* was originally the sacred spirit of the prophets; this wisdom, however, was misunderstood and misinterpreted by men of the later period, i.e., the Peripatetics and other later schools of Greek philosophy, and was revived only in the light of the revelation of the Prophet of Islam and his family. He who wishes to be initiated into it must, therefore, seek the aid of the prophets and saints and this can be achieved only by invocation and meditation and the purification of the heart. Only he who has trodden this path and become a true Ḥakīm can be considered the real heir to the saints and the prophets.[95]

Mulla Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisi.—One cannot terminate a study of the intellectual life of the Ṣafawid period without mentioning the two Majlisīs, father and son, especially the son Muḥammad Bāqir who stands as one of the outstanding figures of the period. The first Majlisi, Muḥammad Taqi (1003/1594–1070/1659), was one of the students of Shaikh-i Bahā'i and an outstanding theologian and Sufi of his time.[96] His son, the second Majlisi (1037/1628–1110/1699), however, surpassed his father in fame and power and became the most dominant figure of Shī'ism. Having studied with his own father, Mulla Khalīl Qazwīni, and Mulla Muḥsin Faiḍ, he in turn became the master of over a thousand disciples including Sayyid Ni'matullah Jazā'iri, well known for his many writings, especially the account of his own life as a student.

The second Majlisi is especially famous for revivifying the various branches of the Shī'ah sciences and for assembling the writings of the earlier doctors of Shī'ism and prophetic *ḥadīth* into encyclopedias which have henceforth become the main reference for all who undertake religious education in the Shī'ah *madrasahs*. The most important and famous of these is the *Biḥār al-Anwār* summarized in the *Safīnat al-Biḥār* of Shaikh 'Abbās Qumi, the lithographed edition of which occupies twenty-four volumes; *Ḥaqq al-Yaqīn* in *Uṣūl*; *Ḥayāt al-Qulūb*, a commentary upon the *Tadhhīb al-Aḥkām* of Khwājah Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsi; and the *Mir'āt al-'Uqūl*, a twelve-volume commentary upon the *Uṣūl al-Kāfi* of Kulaini in which Majlisi for the only time in his writing career enters into purely intellectual *('aqli)* questions and treats of many essential religious subjects, especially eschatology and the conditions before the appearance of the Mahdi, from an intellectual rather than a purely "confessional" point of view.[97]

[94] *Ibid.*, pp. 167ff.

[95] *Ibid.*, pp. 214–19.

[96] *Raiḥānat al-Adab*, Vol. III, pp. 460–62. The *Mir'āt al-Aḥwāl-i Jahān Numā'* by Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Bāqir Iṣpahāni Bihbahāni is devoted to his life and works.

[97] For the writings and life of the second Majlisi, see *Raiḥānat al-Adab*, Vol. III, pp. 455–60; Dānish Pazhūh, *Fihrist . . .*, Vol. V., p. 1137. The *Faiḍ-i Qudsi* by

Of special interest in the religious life of Persia is Majlisi's opposition to Sufism and even the denial that his own father, the first Majlisi, was a Sufi.[98] Furthermore, supported by the Court and many of the theologians and doctors, he opposed the intellectual method of the Ḥakīms and philosophers with the result that both the Sufis and the Ḥakīms fell into disgrace and had much difficulty in official religious circles. The dynasty which had begun as the extension of a Sufi order ended by opposing all Sufism and gnosis itself. It was not long after the death of the second Majlisi in fact that the Ṣafawid dynasty itself fell before the onslaught of the Afghāns, and Iṣpahān, the historic as well as the symbolic centre of this period of great intellectual activity, was sacked and its libraries burnt.

D

CONCLUSION

This form of wisdom or *Ḥikmat*, some features of which we have sought to outline here, did not die with the termination of the Safawid dynasty. In the thirteenth/eighteenth century Sufism was revived in Persia by Ma'ṣūm 'Ali Shāh and Shāh Ṭāhir Dakāni, two Ni'matullāhi masters sent by Riḍā' 'Ali Shāh from Deccan to Persia. It was persecuted for a period but began to expand with the establishment of the Qājārs. Likewise, the school of *Ḥikmat* continued through the students of Mulla Ṣadra and others from one generation to another until it produced Shaikh Aḥmad Aḥsā'i, the founder of the Shaikhi movement,[99] Ḥāji Mulla Hādi Sabizwāri, and several other outstanding figures in the Qājār period, the light of whose teachings has not yet disappeared from the horizon of Persia. One can hardly understand the intellectual life of Islam in its totality without taking into account this last major period of Muslim intellectual activity, lasting from the Ṣafawid period to the present, to the understanding of which we hope this chapter will serve as an introduction and as an incentive for further exploration.

Mirza Ḥusain Nūri is devoted completely to his life and writings. Majlisi wrote thirteen Arabic and fifty-five Persian books which altogether occupy nearly a million and a half lines.

[98] He devoted a treatise, the *I'tiqādāt*, to rejecting Sufism.

[99] Shaikh Aḥmad is responsible for the last important religious movement within Shī'ism and should be studied separately as a founder of a particular sect. The leaders of this sect called the Shaikhīs claim to have knowledge of all things, and so each of them from the time of Shaikh Aḥmad to the present has composed a large number of treatises on all the sciences. For a list of the works of Shaikh Aḥmad and the other leaders of the Shaikhīs, see abu al-Qāsim ibn Zain al-'Ābidīn ibn Karīm, *Fihrist-i Kutub-i Marḥūm-i Aḥsā'i wa Sā'ir-i Mashāyikh-i 'Iẓām*, 2 Vols., Sa'ādat Press, Kermān, 1337 Solar.

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Chapter XLVIII

ṢADR AL-DĪN SHĪRĀZI (MULLA ṢADRA)[1]

A

LIFE AND WORKS

The intellectual activity revived in Persia during the Ṣafawid period, some features of which we have discussed in the previou schapter, "The School of Iṣpahān," found its culmination in Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzi known to his compatriots as Ākhūnd Mulla Ṣadra and to his disciples as simply Ākhūnd or as *Ṣadr al-Muti'allihīn*, i.e., the foremost among the theosophers. This figure, about whom the whole intellectual life of Persia has revolved in the past three centuries and a half and who is one of the major expositors of Islamic intellectual doctrines in the Shi'ah world, has remained until today

[1] This chapter has been written with the invaluable help of Ḥājj Muḥammad Ḥusain Ṭabāṭabā'i, one of the leading authorities on the school of Mulla Ṣadra in Iran today, the author of the twenty-volume Qur'ānic commentary *al-Mīzān* and the editor and commentator of the new edition of the *Asfār*.