Looking for the Human: Sufism, Subjectivity, and Modernity in Iran

Looking for the Human: Sufism, Subjectivity, and Modernity in Iran

A dissertation presented
by

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to

The Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations

in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in the subject of

Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations

Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts
April, 2018

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Abstract

My dissertation proceeds from two related insights. The first of these is that Sufism in early modern Iran possessed a coherent theory of knowledge that reflected the period's culture more broadly. The second is that this *episteme* not only survived modernization, but actually proliferated and took on new literary forms throughout the Qajar period (1785-1925). Sufism achieved this influence in the modern era despite the fact that the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are usually figured as ruptures with the early modern intellectual life of the Timurid (1370-1501) and Safavid periods (1501-1722), when its role in intellectual life was more visible, if also controversial. Secondary sources usually frame modern Iranian reformism as quite unfriendly to mysticism, given the equation of the modern to the rational and the assumed opposition between mystical and the rational. However, my research into both reformism and mysticism demonstrates both that mystical rhetoric appeared regularly in supposedly anti-mystical modernist writing and that nineteenth- and twentieth-century Sufis actually addressed questions of intellectual and political reform in their writing, despite the common assertion that they were irrationally traditional and politically quietist.

My research opens by situating the early modern Sufism of Husayn Vā'iz Kāshifī (ca. 1436/7-1504-5) and Mu'azzin Khurāsānī (d. 1668). Unlike the usual approach to the study of Sufism, I compare Kāshifī and Khurāsānī's prose works on Sufism to contemporaneous works on literary theory and ethics rather than to earlier "classical" works on Sufism in order to illustrate that a common conception of knowledge was at work across these disciplines. It then proceeds to a comparison of the works of nineteenth-century reformists like Fath 'Alī

Akhundzādah and Mīrzā Malkum Khān to mystics from the same period including Mullā Hādi Sabzavārī and Mīrzā Hasan Safī ʻAlī Shāh. This portion of my project culminates in a comparison of the poetry of Alī Khān Zahīr al-Dawlah, who was both a Sufi and a reformist courtier who participated in Iran's constitutional revolution (1906-11), and the prose ethics of Mīrzā Hasan Amin al-Sharīʻah, who was both a cleric and a constitutionalist.

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Note on Transliteration

When transliterating Persian in what follows, I have used a simplified version of the Library of Congress system, the main simplification being that I have not used diacritics on consonants. This is also the system I use for most cases in which Arabic vocabulary appears; usually, despite their Arabic origins, I am transliterating these words as parts of Persian phrases. I therefore transliterate them using the Library of Congress' system for Persian rather than Arabic. There are a few exceptions to this rule, of course: in those few cases when I quote complete phrase that originally appears in Arabic, I use a similarly simplified version of the Library of Congress' system for Arabic, but, when an individual Arabic-derived word or expression appears in what would otherwise be a full Persian sentence (as is often the case), I transliterate it using the LoC system for Persian. The other major exceptions are those cases in which I quote secondary sources—when I am directly quoting a source that transliterates terms differently, I leave their transliteration unchanged. So, for example, what I render as *futuvvat* will appear as *futuwwa*, *fotovvat*, or *futuwa* when I quote an English source that uses that spelling.

Acknowledgements

At the start of graduate school, I thought that I might take a page from Heidegger and, as he did in *Being and Time*, submit a dissertation with a one-line dedication to a single faculty member "in friendship and admiration." Now that my dissertation is something more than a pipe dream, I'm in the fortunate position of having abandoned all hope of such brevity, having received far too much help from far too many people to limit myself to a single sentence.

I'll begin with the members of my dissertation committee, to each of whom I owe a tremendous debt. I must thank Ali Asani not only for supporting me and advising me over the course of this project, but really for making my graduate education possible. His willingness to meet with me when I was still only an undergraduate looking for advice about grad school, and his suggestion that I consider an MTS in Islamic Studies from Harvard Divinity School at that meeting, are really what brought me to Harvard in the first place. He's had comparably valuable advice at every step of the process since, from helping me apply to PhD programs once I was an MTS student to helping me hone my writing in this dissertation mere days ago. One such piece of advice was his suggestion that I ask Afsaneh Najmabadi, then my employer, to be one of my examiners when generals were approaching. I must confess that I've always found myself intimidated by her brilliance, but, as both an examiner, and, subsequently, as an advisor, I've only ever been inspired by her readings of my work, which have contained more insight than the work itself. I can't possibly thank Justine Landau enough; she was gracious enough to join my dissertation committee seemingly within minutes of her arrival on Harvard's campus, and ever since, she has not only been an attentive and encouraging reader of my work, but a tremendously warm voice of reason in matters both academic and personal.

My committee aside, my time at Harvard has afforded me the camaraderie and support of a number of faculty members and classmates who I must mention. Khaled el-Rouayheb not only provided valuable feedback on drafts of some of the chapters that follow, but, perhaps more importantly, his lectures and Islamic Intellectual History general exam never failed to keep me interested in the finer points of philosophical and theological argumentation. Indeed, without him, I'm unlikely to have noticed, let alone enjoyed, such nuances, but thanks to his influence, they renewed my interest in intellectual history. I owe Ahmed Ragab a similarly large amount; not only did he show me how cool History of Science can be as a discipline, but, he provided tremendous guidance while I was a doctoral fellow in the Science, Religion, and Culture program at Harvard Divinity School; he, along with the fellows in my SRC cohort, Khytie Brown, Heather McLetchie-Leader, and Eli Nelson, were not just simultaneously friendly and critical readers of the essay that eventually became Chapter Four of this work, but they were one of the warmest teams I've had the pleasure of working with under any circumstance. When serving as a Persian-language teaching fellow, I was lucky to work under a series of three lecturers who I'm much more comfortable calling friends than supervisors: Danny Rafinejad, Nicholas Boylston, and Sheida Dayani not only taught me Persian at a time when I was supposed to be teaching it to others, but they were also always tremendously understanding about the various personal and administrative difficulties that a TF will inevitably encounter in a given semester. I really must single Danny out for extra gratitude, though: my year with him was my first as a TF and was one of my most difficult in graduate school (the difficulty had nothing to do with him, of course—I would much more readily attribute it to the fact that it was the year of my general exams). Through it all, he was a great friend who never failed to help me keep things in perspective.

Working as a Persian TF also gave me the opportunity to make friends with a number of students who happened to appear in the discussion sections I led at one time or another. While I'm happy to have taught them, I'm much happier to have remained friends with them after our classes together ended. I'm particularly grateful for the good humor of Ari Schriber, Bronwen Gulkis, Joe Vignone, and Paul Anderson. I'm overjoyed to be able to borrow a phrase from the *adab* literature and describe these friends, alongside Sasson Chahonovich and Henry Bowles (who never had to suffer me as a TF), as boon companions. I hope to keep enjoying their company for years to come. I also owe Ari and Joe, along with Caitlyn Olson and Chloe Bordewich, my thanks for having served as respondents and/or hosts at workshops where I presented some of the following chapters.

My academic career is of course only one part of my life, and I must also thank my friends from outside of the academy. Aside from the fact that the time spent with them reminded me of what really matters, they've also all proven, at one time or another, to be receptive audiences for my work, even though they never signed up for the job. Ending up in the same apartment building as Richard McLaws when I first moved to Cambridge must be one of my life's happiest accidents; the transition from acquaintance to neighbor to close friend seems to have occurred in the blink of an eye. Adam Kohrman has been a warm presence in my life since we first ended up on the same trivia team; his razor-sharp wit has never gotten in the way of his obviously well-developed conscience, and that balance is just the tip of the iceberg, as far as his exemplary character and charitable spirit go. I am also thankful for the friendship of Eric Demafeliz, who has, since the beginning of our friendship as undergraduates, managed to strike a balance between the roles of partner in crime and intellectual interlocutor, and I am glad that we have been able to maintain our friendship despite living on other sides of the world at this point.

Having been friends since the age of three has meant that my and Owen Brady's paths have diverged and converged multiple times over the course of our lives. Though he's an ocean away now, I'm glad to say that as we've grown, he's been a good enough friend to take on the added role of serious interlocutor.

My family has been an unfailing source of support. I've always looked up to my older brother, John. Despite the fact that my studies have taken me away from our home state of Rhode Island, whenever I've returned, I've been able to count on my time with him to remind me to stay grounded. I owe an even bigger debt to my parents, Carol Landau and David Ames. Not only did they raise me in a home full of love, but, moreover, they taught me to value ideas. Their unfailing encouragement in all my endeavors has made me who I am and I can't think of a point in my life when they weren't doing something to help develop my intellectual curiosity. I would also like to thank my grandmother, Alice Landau, for supporting my education and for her willingness to turn some of her own abundant intellectual curiosity toward my work and academic interests. I'd also like to dedicate this work to the memory of my grandfather, Henry Landau, whose faith in education and readiness to discuss his lived experience of world history were probably two of the earliest factors leading to my own commitment to the study of the past.

Last but certainly not least, I need to thank my partner, Alice Rha, for her years of love. She's in a category all her own. I know that I could be quite difficult to be around over the course of my graduate education, but, her willingness to stand by me (or, frankly, put up with me) despite the strain I was putting on the relationship was probably the single biggest reason that I managed to keep going throughout the long and sometimes arduous trek toward a doctorate.

Introduction

On the twenty-seventh of Ramadan, 1206/1792, worshippers at the Friday mosque in Kirmān stoned an illiterate musician known as Mushtāq ʿAlī Shāh to death after a cleric, Mullā ʿAbd Allāh, ruled that his execution was a religious duty. The condemned was a devotee of one Maʿsūm ʿAlī Shāh, a follower of the Niʿmat Allāhī Sufi path who had been dispatched to Iran from India roughly twenty years prior. Based on this stoning and events like it, Leonard Lewisohn concludes that "the intrigues and animosities between Iranian clerics and mystics" are the defining feature "religious life in Iran today" just as they were at the time of the stoning or in 1795, when "the fanatical Shiʿite cleric Āqā Muhammad Bihbahānī" ("the chief villain of this drama," according to Lewisohn) "secretly poisoned" Maʿsūm ʿAlī Shāh, whose follower died in the 1792 stoning.[1] He thus frames today's conflicts between clerics and Sufis as perfectly continuous with those in the eighteenth century. A similar impulse has also operated in the wider scholarship on the development of modernism and reformism in Iran, which has also detached Sufism from its modern context. Scholarship like Lewisohn's separates the Sufis of a given period from their historical context and by framing competitions between them and clerics as "intrigues" that are the same in the twenty-first century as they were in the eighteenth. Similarly, claims that Sufi doctrine has undermined the development of properly modern senses of individuality or rationality in Iran also imply that such doctrine is unchanging and inescapably bound to pre-modern intellectual traditions assume that it must be so fundamentally separate from modernity as to stand in its way.

[1] Lewisohn, Leonard. "An Introduction to the History of Modern Persian Sufism, Part I: The Niʿmatullāhī Order: Persecution, Revival, and Schism," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* Vol. 61, No. 3 (1998). p. 441

Fereshteh Ahmadi's anthropological study *Iranian Islam: the Concept of the Individual* provides ready evidence of this second view. She claims, "any idea about individuality is meaningless in Persian Sufism," because "the philosophy of Ibn Arabi" affirms "the supremacy of the Universal Self over the individual self," which has caused Iranian artists to favor "conformity rather than individuality," while "the Sufi tradition of self-inhibition" has led to "Iranians' reluctance to speak of their personal life."[2] Ahmadi's claims reflect long-standing assumptions about Sufism's place in modern Iran. During the Constitutional Revolution, a jurist wrote that Iranians "have no wealth" because "they have no profession but begging, or being derwishes and wasting their time with Sufism."[3] The links this quote from a constitutionalist *ʿālim* draws between Sufism and begging speak to a wider opposition between Sufism and modern subjects of modern nation-states; such subjects would, presumably, know "the exact meaning of wealth" and pursue it industriously, living up to the spirit of capitalism at modernity's heart.

In the face of these claims that it is responsible for the underdevelopment of a properly modern sense of self, I follow Nile Green in conceiving of Sufism "as primarily a tradition of powerful knowledge, practices, and persons," but would add that in using the phrase "powerful knowledge," I mean that this knowledge has adapted to the particular arrangements of power at work in different period.[4] This tradition participated in periods' wider cultures of knowledge and the political and social influences that shaped intellectual authority in a given period. I would,

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[2] Ahmadi, Nader and Fereshteh, *Iranian Islam: The Concept of the Individual* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998). pp. 82-83, 89

[3] Khalkhālī, Sayyid ʿAbd al-ʿAzīm ʿImād al-ʿUlamā' and Hamid Dabashi (trans.), "Two Clerical Tracts on Constitutionalism" in *Authority and Political Culture in Shīʿism*, S.A. Arjmoand (ed.). Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988. p. 343

[4] Green, Nile. *Sufism: A Global History* (Chichester, West Sussex and Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012). p. 3

moreover, add that this model of knowledge, and in particular its hierarchical arrangement can incorporate the study of practices and persons into this model of Sufism. It can be understood, generally, as what Louis Brenner has termed an "esoteric *episteme;*" in such a system, knowledge transmission occurs "in an intiatic form" that is "closely related to devotional praxis," with the knowledge in question hierarchically arranged and progressively available to a decreasing number of more and more gifted, pious specialists, who themselves can become objects of devotion as models for this knowledge, as expressed in piety or charisma.[5]

To frame this conception of Sufism in Foucauldian terms, I position Sufism as a technology of the self. Foucault's "technologies of the self" are those practices upon subjects' "own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being," that allow them "to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality."[6] Moreover, as "the ways in which we relate ourselves to ourselves," these technologies "contribute to the forms in which our subjectivity is constituted and experienced, as well as to the forms in which we govern our thought and conduct."[7] It bears noting, though that these forms in which we govern our thought and conduct reflect specific periods' expressions of power and formulations of knowledge.

To paint in admittedly broad strokes, I will argue that the texts I study (including Timurid works by Husayn Vāʿiz Kāshifī, Safavid ones by Mullā Sadrā and Mu'azzin Khurāsānī, and Qajar ones by Mullā Hādī Sabzavārī, Safī ʿAlī Shāh, and his disciple Zahīr al-Dawlah) frame

[5] Brenner, Louis. *Controlling Knowledge* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), p.18
[6] Foucault, Michel. *Technologies of the Self* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988). p. 18
[7] Davidson, Arnold I. "Ethics as Ascetics: Foucault, the History of Ethics, and Ancient Thought" in *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994). p. 119

Sufism (or at least those elements of it that they endorse) as a discipline that offers subjects knowledge in exchange for adherence to the disciplinary practices and ethical transformations these texts take to lay the groundwork this discipline. Framing these texts as snapshots of discrete moments in Iranian history with particular expressions of power-knowledge addresses two lingering problems in Sufi studies: the definition Sufism as mysticism and its troubled relationship to modernity, a relationship usually expressed in narratives of decline.

Sufism and the Practice of Knowledge

Previous surveys of Sufism's history can already suggest a number of cases in which the subject's access to truth depends on their work on themselves. As a science (*ʿilm*), it claims to yield knowledge, but knowledge of a very particular sort: experiential knowledge of God and oneself, which results from adherence to its disciplinary system of self-formation. This treatment of knowledge as the result of adherence to a disciplinary regime appeared early in Sufism's development. This regime involved worship, contemplative techniques, and the stylization of personal behavior in reference to a spiritual director whose very person represented a connection to prophetic authority. In one of the earliest treatises explicitly dedicated to expounding Sufi doctrine, al-Qushayrī's *Risālah fī ʿilm al-tasawwuf* (*Epistle on the Science of Sufism)* the author quotes the *tābiʿī* (member of the generation of Muslims born after Muhammad but whose lifetime overlapped with that of the companions who survived him) Ibrāhīm al-Khawwās as saying "...the knower is rather he who follows up on his knowledge and employs it and follows the example of the *sunan*, even if he possesses little knowledge."[8] Knowledge depends on moral conduct, but conduct is not simply moral by virtue of acts themselves. Rather, acts are made good by their roots in another's behavior. Knowledge is to follow "the example of the *sunan*,"

[8] Rosenthal, Franz. *Knowledge Triumphant* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), p. 165

which is to say, it is to become like Muhammad—to act as he acted and thereby model oneself on him. Qushayrī also quotes the early ascetic Junayd of Baghdad's definition of knowledge as a "regimen" (*siyāsah*) independent of "the knowledge of scholars."[9] These quotes connecting knowledge to discipline and moral formation call to mind Foucault's technologies of the self.

Ibn ʿArabī (d. 1240), to whose "philosophy" Ahmadi attributes late twentieth century Iranians' supposedly underdeveloped individualism, fits in well with these other representatives of Islamic mysticism, as his epistemology also focused on subjects preparing themselves for experiential knowledge by assessing themselves by way of their behavior's similarity to a religious norm. He presented his system in opposition to the excessive dependence on discursive knowledge he found in both scholastic theology (*kalām*) and Greek-derived philosophy (*falsafah*) by terming it "the school of realization."[10] Ibn ʿArabi's own discussions of knowledge in his doctrinal works suggest that they occur within Brenner's esoteric *episteme*. His magnum opus, *Al-Futūhāt al-Makkīyah* ("The Meccan Openings") connects true knowledge to devotional praxis. He describes knowledge of worldly matters as rust on the heart of the believer, suggesting that in contrast, a heart free of rust is one possessed of otherworldly knowledge. And it is "remembrance" of God that polishes the mirror of the heart, thereby freeing it from its worldly rust.[11] We should remember here that in Sufism, "remembrance," *dhikr*, is a technical term for a meditative practice, rather than the simple recollection of a particular past moment. This is all to suggest that Sufism possesses a collection of techniques that supply a vocabulary in terms of which practitioners can come to regard themselves as subjects possessing knowledge, knowledge

[9] Rosenthal, p. 173
[10] Chittick, William. "Ibn Arabi", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2014 Edition). Available at http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2014/entries/ibn-arabi/. Accessed 20 February 2015
[11] Rosenthal, p. 189

as measured in moral and ethical transformation.

In contrast to this framing of Sufism as knowledge, a number of secondary sources have defined Sufism as mysticism, a definition that has made the study of Sufism as a historical phenomenon considerably more difficult than it need be, especially given the difficulty in defining "mysticism." Evelyn Underhill posited that mysticism was "the expression of the innate tendency of the human spirit towards complete harmony with the transcendental order; whatever be the theological formula under which that order is understood," but also recognized that it "had been freely employed as a term of contempt" applied to "every kind of occultism, for dilute transcendentalism, vapid symbolism, religious or aesthetic sentimentality, and bad metaphysics."[12] The notion that mysticism is properly individualistic (and therefore unconcerned with "external" matters like politics or social organization) is implicit in Underhill's definition, given that it restricts its focus to relationship between the human spirit and the transcendental order as opposed to relationships between different humans. So, because of Sufism's equation to mysticism, and the assumption that proper mysticism is individual-centered and apolitical, Sufism's postclassical and Early Modern popularity, political influence, and institutionalization appear in much secondary literature as symptoms of decline or deviation from true mysticism, while "real" Sufis are assumed to have been necessarily apolitical.

What We Talk About When We Talk About Mysticism

Nile Green argues that the "mystical" label was central to the "model of classicism and decline" by which many earlier scholars of Sufism conceptualized its history. For previous luminaries like A.J. Arberry, "the tension in the model of a 'mystical' and a 'popular' Sufism was

[12] Underhill, Evelyn. *Mysticism: a Study in the Nature and Development of Man's Spiritual Consciousness* (London: Methuen, 1912), p. *x*

resolved through a narrative of decline:" the earliest Sufis comprised "a genuinely 'mystical' movement of individuals seeking personal communion with God," which "was corrupted in the medieval period into a cult of miracle-working saints which had nothing in common with 'true' Sufi mysticism."[13] In Nicholson's *The Mystics of Islam*, the word "Sufi," represents "the word 'mystic,' which has passed from Greek religion into European literature."[14] Like Nicholson before him, J. Spencer Trimingham takes up the equation of Sufism to mysticism in 1971's *The Sufi Orders in Islam.* In Trimingham's usage, Sufism "embraces those tendencies in Islam which aim at direct communion between God and man," regarding it as "a sphere of spiritual experience which runs parallel to the main stream of Islamic consciousness deriving from prophetic revelation and comprehended within the *Sharīʿa* and theology." Mysticism, meanwhile, "is a particular method of approach to Reality," one which makes use "of intuitive and emotional spiritual faculties which are generally dormant and latent unless called into play through training under guidance."[15] Sufism is thus mysticism in that it emphasizes direct experience as given to emotion or intuition. In *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, Annemarie Schimmel calls Sufism "the generally accepted name for Islamic mysticism;" and notes that, being mystical, Sufism "contains something mysterious, not to be reached by ordinary means or by intellectual effort."[16]

Individual Ascent and Collective Decline

Trimingham presents Sufism as an individualist approach to religion: "Early Sufism was…an assertion of a person's right to pursue a life of contemplation, seeking the source of

[13] Green, p. 1
[14] Nicholson, Reynold Alleyne. *The Mystics of Islam* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1914). p. 1
[15] Nicholson, p. 1
[16] Schimmel, Annemarie. *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), p. 1

being and reality, over against institutionalized religion based on a one-way Master-slave relationship."[17] The departure from individualism represented by Sufism's popularization and institutionalization in the late medieval and early modern periods maps on to its decline. "The earlier groups had been linked by enthusiasm, common devotions, and methods of spiritual discipline, with the aim of stripping the soul and eliminating self to attain vision of Reality," while the members of later groups "ascribed themselves to their initiator and his spiritual ancestry, and were prepared to follow his Path and transmit it themselves to future generations."[18] According to this trajectory, (pre-eleventh century) Sufi groups were loose networks of mostly individualistic ascetics, but from the thirteenth century onward, they developed into more tightly organized networks based on the common origin of their method (*tarīqa*) in a founding personality, and finally, the *turuq*s developed into *tawā'if* (distinct orders in a "specialized sense," one more akin to parties or factions) in the fifteenth century. Following the Mongol conquests, and especially Ghāzān Khān's conversion to Islam (which returned Islam to its position as "the imperial religion in western Asia"), "the Sufis replaced the *ʿulamā'* class as the commenders of Islam to Mongols" and, as "the shrine, the dervish-house, and the circle of *dhikr*-reciters became the outer forms of living religion for Iranians, Turks, and Tatars alike," these locations also became central objects of state patronage—Tamerlane, "who swept away the remnant and successor states which had formed after the decline of Mongol power…showed a strong veneration for the saints and their shrines, many of which he built or restored."[19] With their development into *tā'ifah*s in the fifteenth century, the orders "attained their final forms of organization and spiritual exercises," forms characterized by: an "authoritarian principle"

[17] Trimingham, p. 2
[18] Trimingham, p. 13
[19] Trimingham, pp. 67-68

expressed in veneration for, and "utter subjection" to the shaykh, organization "embodying a hierarchical principle," a marked distinction between "adepts and lay affiliates," an "initiatory principle" expressed in ceremonies and uniform dress, systematized practices of discipline for adepts, ritualized, communal *dhikr*, and "a cult related to the tombs of holy men."[20] The development into this "final form" marks the end of Sufism's vitality: after this point, "no further development was possible and no further work of mystical insight which could mark a new point of departure in either doctrine or practice was to make its appearance."[21] So in this view, Sufism was the least vital when it was most fully organized because it was also at its least individualistic and most authoritarian.

Schimmel's history of Sufism follows a similar outline, and starts in earnest with Umayyad imperial expansion, which, combined with the perceived impiety of the Ummayyad rulers, shaped early theological controversies over the right to rule and the relationship of leadership to Divine Will; for Schimmel, these early examples of pious resistance to government is the reason that "the Sufis would often equate 'government' with 'evil;'" the "pious conservatives" of Medina and, especially, Iraq ("where the love for Muhammad's family was particularly strong and which was antagonistic to Syria, the country where the Omayyad rulers had set up their capital") offer the first examples of the ascetic and anti-government sentiments to which Schimmel attributes Sufism's origins. In this view, Hasan al-Basrī (d. 728), "the patriarch of Muslim mysticism," also serves as a symbol of early ascetic opposition to government.[22] Subsequent developments in early history serve as evidence of a progression from asceticism to mysticism. According to Schimmel, when the ʿAbbasid revolution (750) triggered a flourishing

[20] *Ibid*. p. 104
[21] *Ibid.* p. 104
[22] Schimmel, pp. 29-30

of intellectual life and led to the crystallization of the schools of jurisprudence, Sufis came to oppose the jurists' "spiritless legalism," favoring individual experience over textual scholarship.[23] When pointing out particular personalities as exemplars of early Islamic asceticism, she highlights Ibrāhīm ibn Adham (d. ca. 790) as an exemplar of the Khurāsānī school of asceticism's early period, noting that he was the first to classify *zuhd* according to stages.[24] She compares the preference for isolation of another Khurāsānī, Fudayl ibn ʿIyād (d. 803), to that of the famous Rābiʿah of Baghdad by way of a quote attributed to him in ʿAttār's *Tazkīrat al-awlīyā':* "When night comes I am happy that I am alone, without separation, with God, and when morning comes I get distressed because I detest the view of those people who enter and disturb my solitude."[25] However, she does not, in general, define Rābiʿah by her fondness for isolation. Instead, she introduces her as "the person who introduced the element of selfless love into the austere teachings of the early ascetics and gave Sufism the hue of true mysticism."[26] In Schimmel's view of history, Rābiʿah made Sufism mystical—early Sufism was "austere," "ascetic," and, lacking an emphasis on love, not truly mystical, since the above quote equates "selfless love" and "true mysticism."

To begin her chapter on the orders, Schimmel remarks that they are "one of the most pleasing aspects" of Sufism's history because their "fraternal love" makes visible the maxim *al-mu'min mir'at al-mu'min* ("the believer is the mirror of the believer").[27] This highlights the differences between Schimmel and Trimingham's approaches to Sufi communities. The populations of (proto-) Sufi communities, were, for Trimingham, "collections of individuals

[23] *Ibid.* pp. 31-32
[24] *Ibid.* p. 37
[25] Schimmel, p. 36
[26] *Ibid.* p. 39
[27] *Ibid.* p. 228

pursuing their own way," while for Schimmel, collective life is an expression of love rather than a support mechanism for an individualistic pursuit.[28] Hinting at her disinclination to lend worldly power any spiritual significance, Schimmel adds that hierarchy in these communities did not serve merely authoritarian ends, because hierarchies, where they existed, were hierarchies "of virtue, not of power."[29] However, she makes no such favorable assertions about the hierarchies within later Sufi orders; she frames their institutionalization as a movement away from "true spirituality;" as leadership positions became hereditary in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, a "deterioration of the office" of *sajjādah-nishīn* or *pūst-nishīn* occurred, following which, "not too many traces of true spirituality were left."[30] The orders' popularization of Sufism also contributed to the decline or dilution of its "spirituality" alongside the formation of hereditary offices; they "contributed to converting Sufism into a mass movement--a movement in which the high ambitions of the classical Sufism were considerably watered down."[31] Schimmel's understanding of the establishment hereditary offices as a watering down of true spirituality and Trimingham's statement that later orders' organization around a "hierarchical principle" prevented the expression of "mystical insight" both seem to be particularly spiritual expressions of a wider modern discomfort with master-disciple relationships in Sufism. As Howell and van Bruinessen explain in the opening of *Sufism and the 'Modern' in Islam*, reformists

> Have also been critical of the roles assumed by…Sufi orders. These reformists have strenuously condemned initiations in which, as they understand it, a spiritual director requires a student to surrender his or her judgment. They also criticize the reputedly extreme deference required by masters of Sufi orders and the masters' supposed secretiveness and exclusivity. These features attributed to the tariqa have been deemed

[28] Trimingham, p. 5
[29] Schimmel, p. 235
[30] Schimmel, p. 236
[31] *Ibid.* p. 239

> not only to violate basic religious doctrine but to be inappropriate to the personal autonomy proper to the modern subject.[32]

As we have seen, this quote's Islamic reformists are not alone in positioning Sufism as a threat to the modern subject's personal autonomy, but Howell and van Bruinessen's summary hightlights the particular criticism of the master-disciple relationship as a target of Islamic reformists.

Reform, Revival, and Early Modernity

The assumption that social or political influence is a deviation from true mysticism seems to inform presentations of the relationship between Sufis and the Safavid state. As we have seen, Lewisohn is quite ready to frame "the Sufi mystical vision in Persia" as a casualty of "the baleful influence of the *mujtahid* cult and the ideologization of religion to suit their particular political agenda," which takes up the aforementioned assumption that mysticism is properly a matter of personal experience and therefore ought to be apolitical.[33] In this, he operates under assumptions similar to those scholars who first conceived of neo-Sufism as an object of study. Lewisohn's contrast between Iranian Sufis of the eighteenth and nineteenth-century and their contemporaries in the Arabic world seems to rest upon long-standing assumptions about the proper role of Sufis in society. His survey of Sufism in modern Iran begins in 1750 and presents the period that began in 1750 was an attempt to restore the pre-Safavid "cultural and political glory" of Persian Sufism, which "had little to with the phenomenon of Neo-Sufism;" for Lewisohn, Sufism in eighteenth-century Iran contrasted with the "'neo-Sufi' trends in Arab-speaking Sufism" because

[32] Howell, Julia Day and Martin van Bruinessen. *Sufism and the 'Modern' in Islam* (London: IB Tauris, 2007. p. 7

[33] Lewisohn, Leonard. "Sufism and the School of Isfahan: *Tasawwuf* and *ʿIrfān* in Late Safavid Iran," in *The Heritage of Sufism, Volume III: Late Classical Persianate Sufism, 1501-1750*, Leonard Lewisohn and David Morgan (ed.) (Oxford: Oneworld Press, 1999). p. 132

of Iranian Sufis' resistance to clerical intolerance.[34] He thus takes up the assumption that the "alliance" between revivalist Sufis and legalists in the rest of the Muslim world was somehow novel. For Lewisohn "neo-Sufism" refers "to the discontinuity of 'neo-Sufi' doctrines with—and their reinterpretation along Wahhabite principles altogether hostile to—classical Sufism."[35] This reflects long-standing, colonially-informed understandings of Sufism's proper role in society. As Radtke and O'Fahey explain, "The neo-Sufi idea has its roots in the Western colonial encounter with Islam:" European colonial administrators and scholars needed to explain the fact that some Sufis led groups resisting colonization. One explanation "was the notion of a certain type of reformist Sufi leader embued with fundamentalist and pan-Islamic ideas who *consciously* created and led organizations whose *raison d'etre* was resistance to Christian invaders;" scholar-administrators contrasted these organizations with the Sufi groups organized around "localised, more ignorant and therefore more pliable marabouts," who fit into a picture of mystics more comfortable for these colonial administrators. Of course, even other sources that present a form of the decline narrative make claims that undermine the notion that Sufism is necessarily apolitical. It is difficult to see how Schimmel's claim that Hasan of Basrah was a "pious conservative" who saw government as evil could make sense without accepting that Hasan was situated within a decidedly political context that could make it possible to comprehend resistance to the Umayyads as a form of piety. However, by taking up the neo-Sufi model, Lewisohn thus seems to assume that it was Iranian Sufis' commitment to remaining properly mystical according

[34] Lewisohn, "An Introduction to the History of Modern Persian Sufism, Part I: The Niʿmatullāhī Order: Persecution, Revival, and Schism," p. 439
[35] Lewisohn, "An Introduction to the History of Modern Persian Sufism, Part I: The Niʿmatullāhī Order: Persecution, Revival, and Schism," p. 439, note #15

to this colonial definition (which is to say, apolitical and disinterested in legal questions) that kept them from taking an active role in the politics of Early Modern or Modern Iran.

We have seen that a great deal of scholarship equates Sufism to mysticism, which has in turn been taken to be apolitical and experiential (rather than rational). According to these associations, mystics can only do a few things upon their entry into the *polis*. They can: appear as victims innocent of the interests that shaped the politics of their day (as in Lewisohn), impede the development of rationality and individualism in their culture (as in Ahmadi), or they can stop being truly mystical by taking an assertive or even militant role in politics (as in both the neo-Sufi cliché and the framing of the Safavids as traitors to real Sufism).

Conclusion: Dissertation Outline

In what follows, in contrast to the decline narrative and other presentations of Sufism's modern history which have separated it from its social and political context, I aim to illustrate that Sufism did not merely survive the transition from tradition to modernity despite itself but was in fact one of modernity's moving parts. I devote many of the following chapters to the Qajar period, not only because it falls so neatly between the Safavid "then" and the apparently still-too-mystical "now," but also because it witnessed the rise of modern intellectual and literary movements in Iran, in light of which it seems reasonable to study the position of Sufism during that period. It is, after all, the era known in the secondary literature as the "gate of modernity;" if it is the beginning of modernity, it must also be the start of the opposition between modernity and mysticism. However, this study opens with an investigation of Safavid and Timurid texts, given the frequent appeals to Safavid Shiʿism in explanations of questions of religion and politics in subsequent periods, especially appeals to the treatment of Sufis under Safavid rule as evidence of a clerical fanatcisim that has gone unchecked in the centuries since. For example, Lewisohn

simultaneously glosses the entire history of the Safavid dynasty as anti-mystical and depicts post-1979 Iranian history as a function of the same "demise of religious tolerance" that inspired "the gag-orders and *fatwā*s issued by the late Safavid *mujtahids* against the Sufis."[36] In response to such claims, the next two chapters aim to illustrate the continuities between politics and mysticism in the Safavid era and the period that preceded it by discussing the *oeuvre* of the Timurid polymath Husayn Vāʿiz Kāshifī. The first of these (the second chapter overall) proposes that Sufi poetry and philosophical poetics, gave voice to comparable and authoritative claims to knowledge. It begins by venturing a comparative reading of the *Nay Nāmah* (the first book of Rumi's *Masnavī*) and contemporary works of literary theory like Tūsī's *Miʿyār al-ashʿār* and then proceeds to highlight Kāshifī's adoption of both Sufi poetry and philosophical poetics and his proximity to the Timurid court in order emphasize the close relationship between Sufi claims to knowledge, literary prestige, and political power. The second chapter, which also features Kāshifī aims to question the notion that the transition from the Timurid to Safavid periods was one in which fanatical Safavid Shiʿism displaced a tolerantly apolitical Timurid Sufism. To this end, it will compare Kāshifī's works on ethics to a late Safavid defense of Sufism, Mu'azzin Khurāsānī's (d. 1668) *Tuhfah-yi ʿAbbāsī*.

The next two chapters shift focus to the Qajar period. The first of these compares the use of Rumi by two different nineteenth-century figures: the Russian-educated Azeri *litterateur* Fath ʿAlī Ākhūndzādah, usually described as a reformist, atheist, or materialist (and, therefore modern) man of letters and the "traditional" cleric-philosopher Hādī Sabzavārī. The last chapter compares the prose of the late-nineteenth century Sufi Safī ʿAlī Shāh to the famous reformer

[36] Lewisohn, Leonard. "Sufism and the School of Isfahan: *Tasawwuf* and *ʿIrfān* in Late Safavid Iran," in *The Heritage of Sufism, Volume III: Late Classical Persianate Sufism, 1501-1750*, Leonard Lewisohn and David Morgan (ed.) (Oxford: Oneworld Press, 1999). p. 132

Mīrzā Malkum Khān in order emphasize the particularly modern Safī ʿAlī Shāh's formulation of knowledge, which I take to demonstrate a closer relationship to his courtly context and its culture of power-knowledge rather than to a supposedly transhistorical Sufism. Finally, the epilogue compares the writings of two Constitutional-era (1905-1911) figures, Sayyid Hasan Amīn al-Sharīʿah (d. 1937) and Safī ʿAlī Shāh's disciple Zahīr al-Dawlah (d. 1924). I argue that the fact that these authors appeal to common values despite writing in different genres can be attributed to their participation in their period's common political culture.

Chapter One: Listen to the *Nay:* Poetry, Mysticism, and the Knowing Subject

"The first of those is the science of the art of elixirs, which is a science of changing the virtues of rough stones so that little by little, gold is obtained by isolation from the other elements. That is called alchemy, about which many books and compositions have been written, like…the eternal poems and imperial seal of Hazrat Mawlavī and Sultān Valad."[37]

"It has been recounted that their masters, like the Mulla from Rum, and others used musical instruments in their *zikr*s, and up to this date in their cloister [*mawlavikhanah*] in Baghdad, this is being practiced. According to the religion [*mazhab*] of our Imams, these things are considered illegal [*haram*]."[38]

Less than two centuries separate the above quotes. The first comes from the *Asrār-i Qāsimī* of Husayn Vā'iz Kāshifī (d. 1503), a late Timurid treatise on the occult sciences. The second comes from Mullā Muhammad Tāhir Qummī's late Safavid (ca. 1664) *Rejection of the Sufis* (*Radd bar Sūfīyān*). So, it would seem that in the Timurid period, Rumi was highly regarded enough not only to be famous as a poet, but also, as a scientist. But the second quote, from the period of Shah 'Abbās II, suggests that he he had fallen so far out of favor as to be considered the founder of a band purveying *harām* entertainments.

To the untrained eye, discussions of Sufism, and especially Sufi poetry, could easily cast it as a sort of non-knowledge. Lines like verse 2128 of the first book of Rumi's *Masnavī* ("The leg of reasoners is wooden/a wooden leg is awfully unsteady") hardly seem high praise of reason.[39] For an audience that tends to assume that reason is the sole path to knowledge, this apparent dismissal of reason could easily remove knowledge from Sufi poetry's field of concern.

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[37] Kāshifī, Husayn Vā'iz. *Kitāb-i asrār-i Qāsimī: dar 'ilm-i kīmiyā va sīmiyā va rīmiyā va līmiyā va hīmiyā* (Tehran: Amir Kabir, 19--), p. 3

[38] Qummi, *Risalah-yi Radd bar Sufiyan*, f 81b. cited in Kathryn Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs: Cultural Landscapes of Early Modern Iran* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002). p. 449

[39] Chittick, William. "The Evolutionary Psychology of Jalal al-Din Rumi" in *Crafting the Intangible: Persian Literature and Mysticism*, Peter Chelkowsi (ed.), (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2013). p. 71

This line's original Persian is more specific, commenting upon practitioners of *istidlāl*, rather than "reasoners" more generally. Even so, the equation of Sufism to mysticism, and the apparent truism that, as Annemarie Schimmel puts it, "mysticism contains something mysterious, not to be reached by ordinary means or by intellectual effort" does little to bring knowledge into the picture.[40] A brief study of the *Masnavī* will, however, reveal that it does give voice to *a* knowing subject and assert authority as a function of that knowledge. In addition to claiming knowledge for its speaker, the *Nay Nāmah*'s literary devices map out a route to knowledge. This literary affirmation of experiential knowledge is, moreover, quite close to the "scientific" theorizations of poetry offered by (post-) Avicennan Persian philosophy. Taken together, these points suggest that Rumi's poetry both claimed knowledge and in so doing was more comparable to non-Sufi products of the intellectual life of the thirteenth century than is usually recognized. Similarly, as we shall see at this chapter's conclusion, early modern commentaries upon, and citations of, the *Masnavī* were also deeply engaged with their wider cultural context than their classification as Sufi texts usually recognizes.

Both Rumi's Sufi poetry and philosophical poetics present an experiential knowledge that must be disciplined into being. In both systems, subjects come to acquire a knowledge that the rhetoric of these sciences likens to sensory experience that results from a practical regime in light of which subjects have formed themselves. This disciplinary rhetoric can help fuse the apparently disparate trends of thirteenth-century philosophical poetics and Sufi poetry and reveal Rumi's Sufism to be as aesthetic as literary theory is ascetic. Timurid-era literati like Jami and Husayn Vā'iz Kāshifi, who wrote on both Sufism and literary theory, serve to illustrate that once-disparate genres were quite compatible in subsequent Persian literary history. This literary

[40] Schimmel, p. 4

fusion is a function of the larger pre-modern Islamic intellectual landscape that Shahab Ahmed conceives as the "school of love" (*mazhab-i 'ishq*) in *What is Islam?*

Entering the School of Love

Shahab Ahmed notes the importance of the fact that the *Dīvān* of Hāfiz is "the most widely-copied, widely-circulated, widely-read, widely-memorized, widely-recited, widely-invoked, and widely-proverbialized book of poetry in Islamic history:" it managed to configure and exemplify "ideals of self-conception and modes and mechanisms of self-expression in the largest part of the Islamic world for half-a-millennium" while taking "as its definitive themes the ambiguous exploration of wine-drinking and (often homo-) erotic love, as well as a disparaging attitude to observant ritual piety."[41] In starting from this observation, I will not set out to answer Ahmed's major question about Hāfiz (how he is Islamic?), but rather, I will explore his observation that this poetic register in which Hāfiz speaks, and the poetic tradition of which he, like Rumi, is a part, give voice to a manner of knowledge.[42] Ahmed argues that "*madhhab-i 'ishq*" is an "umbrella-term given to the paradigmatic ethos and aesthetic associated" not only with "Hāfizian discourse," but "with the composite discourse of other diverse pillars of the Balkans-to-Bengal Persian canon," including Rumi.[43] This means "precisely that love is *a way of going about being Muslim*," but moreover a way of access to ultimate knowledge, as "earthly love--the love for human beauty—is metaphorical love (*'ishq-i majāzī)* and is the experiential means by which to come to know Real-True Love, or love for/in Real-Truth."[44] Love is thus not just a feeling for another, but rather "a rigorous or far-reaching principle for knowing;" love

[41] Ahmed, Shahab. *What is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016). p. 32
[42] Ahmed pp. 41-42
[43] Ahmed, p. 38
[44] *Ibid.*

"*teaches* the lover how to identify value (i.e. what is valuable) and to constitute the human being—both as individual and as society—accordingly, in terms of those values" by way of experience.[45] I accept these claims, but will additionally propose that it is specifically poetry's characteristically figurative language that is central to its path to knowledge. We already see figuration at work in Ahmed's treatment of the school of love, as he frames it as a path from the metaphorical (*majāzī*) to the real (*haqīqī*); a parallel movement, from form to meaning, also appears in a *ghazal* of Rumi's that he cites: "Shams-i Tabrīz: your form [*sūrat*] is beautiful! And in meaning [*ma'nī*]: what a beautiful source!"[46] Part of poetry's centrality, then, is that poetic devices modeled and commented upon a collection of techniques by which the phenomenal objects could come to be known as symbols of more numinous ones.

An Authoritative Opening

The very first word of Rumi's *Masnavī* marks it as possessing unique authority. The *Nay Nāmah* does not begin with the standard introduction praising God, the prophet, and the poet's patron in verse, the extant introduction traditionally understood as a later addition. Instead, it begins with a command: "listen!" (*bishnaw*). Through this imperative, the poem speaks directly to its audience. The use of a command marks the speaker as a subject occupying a position of power over the audience; the speaker is a commander and the audience the commanded, or the speaker a teacher and the audience a student. This is a speaker who *knows*. The poem conveys this immediately—it begins from a position of knowledge and authority at the outset. It does not argue for this position point-by-point. It performs its position through the gesture of issuing a command. But how might a poem, and its speaker come to possess this authority?

[45] *Ibid.* pp. 42-43
[46] *Ibid.* p. 39

Situating Rumi and the *Masnavī*

Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad Balkhī was born in 1207 and died on December 17, 1273. His father, Bahā' al-Dīn Valad, was a religious scholar. According to legend, Bahā' al-Dīn came to settle his family in Qūnīyah, the capital of the Saljūq Sultanate of Rūm (formerly the Byzantine Iconium), after a long westward journey to escape the Mongol advance. However, closer scholarship suggests that Bahā' al-Dīn Valad more likely moved for the sake of his career rather than an attempt to avoid the Mongol conquest; in any case, these travels involved him (and his family, including Jalāl al-Dīn) moving to Baghdad in the 1210s, completing the Hajj in 1217, and living for a time in Malatya and Akshahr before finally, around 1229, settling in Qūnīyah.[47] It was there, after the death of Bahā' al-Dīn Valad, that Jalāl al-Dīn came to take up his father's teaching position, but only after training under his father's close friend and immediate successor, Burhān al-Dīn Muhaqqiq, who, as Safavi and Weightman put it, "trained him inwardly with a regime that would almost certainly have included fasting, seclusion (*khalwat*), and the intensive study of and meditation upon Bahā' al-Dīn's writings."[48] Textual scholarship was thus part of a program of embodied ascetic practice, and not simply an exercise in reading. By 1244, Jalāl al-Dīn had assumed his father's teaching position. Despite his previous "inner" training under Burhān al-Dīn, his esoteric training was not yet complete, but 1244 was the year of his legendary encounter with Shams al-Dīn of Tabrīz. Shams "could see that Mawlānā was not inwardly awakened to his station and a transformation was required…The revolution he effected in Mawlānā was to turn him from being an *'ālim*, a learned divine, into an *'āshiq*, a lover, and an

[47] Safavi, Seyed Ghahreman and Simon Weightman, *Rumi's Mystical Design: Reading the Mathanwi, Book One*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009). pp. 13-14
[48] Safavi and Weightman p. 15

ʿārif, a Gnostic who saw directly and received intelligence from the spiritual world."[49] This new pedagogy, then, aimed to lend Mawlānā a new kind of authority; the transition from *ʿālim* to *ʿārif* would make him a different kind of knowing subject. Here, Safavi and Weightman deploy two different terms that could be translated into "knowing subject:" *ʿālim* and *ʿārif* are both active participles, or subjects, of verbs that mean "to know." The details of Shams' particular manner of pedagogy remain largely unspecified and are at best shrouded in hagiography, but they appear to have been inhibitory: "Shams certainly forbade Mawlānā to read his father's writings, and may even have suggested that he stop reading altogether."[50] Training with Shams was, in this way, an emphatic departure from textual scholarship, as it specifically involved the rejection, at least temporarily, of the texts produced by other major influences. Taken together with his previous devotional study of his father's texts, though, it suggests that reading and the concerted effort not to read were both disciplinary techniques by which their practitioner was to be made into someone who knows.

The closest post-Shams relationships, those with Salāh al-Dīn Farīdun Zarkūb and Husām al-Dīn Chalabī, replicated the interpersonal contemplative training Rumi underwent with Shams of Tabrīz, but, they also expanded his social network: Salāh al-Dīn was "a conduit for the local Turkish- and Greek-speaking working classes" and Husām al-Dīn provided "a similar connection to the youth guilds and fraternities that were highly influential among the mercantile, artisan, and military classes in Anatolia."[51] It was in 1258, the same year as Salāh al-Dīn's death, that Rumi began composing the *Masnavī-yi Ma'navī* at the suggestion of Husām al-Dīn Chalabī, to whom it was dictated over the next fifteen years (1258-1273), the last of Jalāl al-Dīn's life. It also bears

[49] *Ibid.* p. 17
[50] *Ibid.* pp. 17-18
[51] Safavi and Weightman, p. 21

remembering that this poem was originally an oral text, the recitation of which occurred in a Sufi lodge, a space already dedicated to spiritual training, so its performance entailed a very different sensory engagement with the text than modern practices of reading.

Masnavī, as a genre, lends itself to narrative and didactic works because its rhyme scheme, which does not demand for a rhyme to persist beyond the unit of a single verse (*bayt*) allows poems to go on almost indefinitely without too much danger of violating the rhyme scheme, unlike *ghazal*s, which confine poets much more with their demands for the repetition of the *qāfīyah* and *radīf*. Mawlānā was not the first to write a didactic *masnavī* on Sufism; Sanā'ī of Ghaznah's *Hadīqat al-Haqīqah*, composed in the previous century, also offers the reader a spiritual education, and 'Attār's narrative *Mantiq al-Tayr* uses its plot to chart the stages of the Sufi path.

Rumi's *Masnavī* famously begins by commanding its audience to listen to the reedflute. Within the poem, the reed has a specific symbolic function, which also places it in dialogue with previous *masnavī*s. Before the *Masnavī-yi Ma'navī*'s reedflute, the wind in Sanā'ī's *Kār Nāmah* and *Sayr al-'Ibād ilā al-Ma'ād* and the sun in Khāqāni's *Tuhfat al-'Irāqayn* were similar introductory emblems "from which symbolic meanings relevant to the following poem are derived."[52]

Knowledge and the *Nay*

Through its opening imperative, the poem speaks directly to its audience. The use of a command marks the speaker as a subject occupying a position of power over the audience; the

[52] Bruijn, J.T.P. de; Flemming, B.; Rahman, Munibur. "Mathnawī." Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition. Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Brill Online, 2015. Reference. Harvard University. 15 November 2015 <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/mathnawi-COM_0709>

speaker knows something the audience needs to hear and can, on those grounds, command the audience to listen. In beginning with such a command, it also mimics the *iqrā'* ("recite!") of the Qur'an's revelatory moment. This replication of the scripture's authoritative beginning also suggests that the poem attempts to participate in the authority yielded by knowledge of scripture. It does not necessarily try to speak with God's voice, but it at least calls the to mind the Qur'an's very first enunciation. This intertextual gesture is *talmīh,* allusion, but, this kind of allusion specifically serves to connect the text of the poem to the very text on which all religious knowledge is based. I do not intend this as an affirmation of the *Masnavī*'s reputation as a "Qur'an in Persian." I do, however, mean to suggest, that the literary gestures through which the *Masnavī* establishes its own authority derive, in part, from Qur'anic precedents.

The rest of this first *bayt* explains to what readers or listeners should attend: the reedflute, the *nay*, "as it tells a tale bemoaning separation." Immediately after this verse, we witness a shift: the reedflute begins speaking for itself. "Ever since I was cut from the reedbed, men and women have cried from my moaning." After this very brief elaboration, though, the authoritative tone of the first line returns: "I want a chest torn apart by separation, if I am to explain the pain of longing." As in the opening line's imperative, the speaker here is making demands of the audience; specifically, it is dictating what audience it wants: it wants an audience capable of understanding its message by virtue of the fact that their hearts have been torn asunder by separation (*firāq*). The second hemistich, *tā bigūyam sharh-i dard-i ishtiyāq* dictates terms to its audience—it will not explain the pain of longing unless it meets a heart ripped apart by separation. This also speaks to the esoteric bent of the epistemic system in which the poem participates: not everyone can understand its message, and those who can understand do so by way of personal experience. Only those with experiential knowledge of the pain of separation,

those with a *sīnah sharhah sharhah az firāq*, can comprehend the poem's comments (*sharh*) on the pain of longing (*dard-i ishtiyāq*), which is the feeling associated with separation's rending of a heart. This line's structure reveals the close connection between experiential knowledge and poetic content: its rhyme pairs separation, *firāq*, the experience that makes it a listener properly receptive, and therefore capable of understanding the *nay*'s explanation, to the pain of longing (*dard-i ishtiyāq*). A visual pun also suggests an intersection at the level of content in this line. The chest/heart of the listener-disciple must be torn apart, *sharhah sharhah*, to understand the explanation, *sharh*. The poem is spoken by one knowing subject and aims to make of its audience other knowing subjects.

The Reed's Secret, the Reed's Wailing

The *Masnavī*'s poetic dimensions are not far from its authority; not only do these features demonstrate training in, and knowledge of, the poetic sciences, but, its figurative language also constitutes its poetic content by modeling an esoteric pedagogy; its material form is thus inseparable from its spiritual content. The text's self-description tells us as much in remarking, "My secret is not far from my wailing:" its inner content, *sirr* ("secret"), is not far (*dūr nīst*) from its outer expression, its wailing (*nālah*). This line is also significant because the subject of the poem speaks for itself in the first person, saying *my* secret (*sirr-i man*) is not far from *my* crying (*nālah-yi man*). These first-person pronouns and verbal conjugations mark a subject's speaking for itself.

The *Nay Nāmah*'s many pairs of opposites also play a role in its pedagogy. In *Rūmī and the Hermeneutics of Eroticism,* Mahdi Tourage offers a reading of the *Masnavī* inspired by Lacanian psychoanalytic theory. He reads the *Masnavī* as a commentary on mystical experience, a commentary in which "The Divine-human encounter…is aimed at dislodging the certitude of a

subjective position of interpretation that is entirely posited on a closed and literal reading of symbolic formations."[53] Just as Lacanian analysis aims "to disrupt the illusory positioning of subjectivity through which the human subjects create ("literalize") images of the self and the ideal object of desire that are no more than fantasy," Sufi poetry, in representing the mystical path's demand that disciples exert themselves to rend the veils of self and other that language constructs, similarly reveals, for Tourage, that the end result of the mystical path "is the attainment of knowledge of the self as a cultural construct and a subjective category. A favorite maxim of Sufis speaks to this state of self-knowledge: 'Whoever knows himself, knows his Lord.'"[54] Tourage focuses on questioning the opposition between the supposedly disembodied, spiritual message of the *Masnavī* and its ribald passages, with their explicit (and necessarily embodied) descriptions of transgressive sexual acts. He explains that because Mawlānā's "overall goal…is the communication of mystical knowledge," even the epic poem's bawdy, sexual passages, have an esoteric significance that should be taken seriously.[55] The disruption of common oppositions is a central feature of the knowledge offered by the *Masnavī*.

For Tourage, the inclusion of the explicitly "bawdy tales" disrupts the dualistic truisms of exoteric knowledge. To support this claim, he cites these lines:

> My bawdiness is instruction, listen to it in seriousness
> Do not be caught up in its exterior jest
> To jesters, every serious matter is a jest
> To the wise, all jests are serious.[56]

Tourage also quotes a passage from Rumi's *Dīvān* that similarly presents boundary-breaking as the center of its communicative function:

> All these are hints and the purpose is this:

[53] Tourage, Mahdi. *Rūmī and the Hermeneutics of Eroticism* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), p. 6
[54] Tourage, pp. 6-7
[55] *Ibid.* pp. 24-25
[56] *Ibid.* p. 24

That world continually comes into this world
Like fat in the midst of milk's soul
The "no-place" continually comes into this place[57]

These passages, however, serve a pedagogical goal that the *Nay Nāmah* already models. It also opens with lines suggesting that the questioning of conventional binaries is the key to an esoteric training:

Everyone became my friend from his own assumption
None sought my secret from within me
My secret is not far from my lament
But the ears and eyes lack that light
Body is not veiled from soul nor soul from body
Yet no one is allowed to see the soul[58]

These early lines of the *Nay Nāmah* question the division between body and soul: "Body is not veiled from soul nor soul from body" ("*tan zi jān u jān zi tan mastūr nīst*").[59] This hemistich seems to call everyday dualism into question by asserting that the separation between body and soul is, at the very least, incomplete--they are not *mastūr* ("veiled") from one another. But, as a function of its esotericism, the poem then goes on to deny the accessibility of the soul to the senses: *kas rā dīd-i jān dastūr nīst.* The phrasing of the Persian here, however, presents the problem as one of authority as well capability. An extremely literal (and therefore quite awkward) rendering into English would be something like "there is no permission to anybody to see the soul," or "nobody is authorized to see the soul." If we take "sight" to stand in for knowledge and perception in general, this seems to say that no one is allowed complete knowledge of soul, which suggests that the categorical affirmation of any definite conclusion to the previous line's reference to mind-body (or soul-body) dualism is impermissible. This, in turn,

[57] *Ibid.* p. 26
[58] Tourage, p. 27
[59] Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, Mawlānā, 1207-1273, *Masnavī-yi Ma'navī bih Tashīh-i Raynuld A. Nīkulsūn* (Tehran: Amīr Kabīr, 1984), p. 3

recalls Qur'an 17:85, "They ask you about the soul. Say 'the soul is among the affairs of my Lord, and you [humanity] have been given but a little knowledge." This is a literary device as well: just as the opening *bishnaw* references the Qur'anic *iqrā'*, this echo of Qur'an 17:85 is *talmīh*, allusion.

Body and soul are only one of many opposing pairs that appear in the *Nay Nāmah*. Its many pairs are a central device, which charts the course of the path to knowledge it enjoins: the questioning of convention, and especially conventional oppositions, much as Rumi had to, in Safavi and Weightman's example above, practice discipline by avoiding what he previously knew (by observing the injunction against reading his father's work) in order to learn from Shams. The poem's structure accomplishes something similar by bringing opposites together at the level of the *bayt*. Thus, among these many opposing pairs, *mard* and *zan* coincide in line two, *bad hālan* and *khush hālan* in line five, secret and lament in line seven, *tan* and *jān* in line eight, poison and antidote and *damsāz* and *mushtāq* in line twelve, fool and wisdom in line fourteen, *khām* and *pukhtah* in line eighteen, lover and beloved in line twenty-eight, and rust and mirror in line thirty-four.[60] Knowledge is union with objects, or the fusion of separate objects, so these oppositions, which mark the separateness of the objects, also marks the possibility of their fusion. This is especially true of the pairs brought together by rhymes, as rhyme emphasizes the similarity between two words by playing on the sounds they have in common, which, in the opening of *Masnavī*, serves as an additional means of combining opposites within a single verse. I take this combinatory gesture as a model for esoteric training, in which subjects must study, and work on, themselves in order to achieve knowledge of, or union with, others. We can see the poem making a similar move in line two ("*kaz nayistān tā marā bubrīdah and*/*zi nafīram mard u*

[60] Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, pp. 3-4

zan nālīdah and"): the crying (*nālīdan*) results from the cutting off (*burīdan*). Separation is a necessary precondition of lamenting about it—one cannot desire union without having first been separated, as the following line's end rhyme between *firāq* and *ishtīyāq* also shows. The knowledge offered by the *sharh-i dard-i ishtīyāq* can only follow the pain of *firāq*. Line four's rhyme between *asl-i khᵛīsh* and *vasl-i khᵛīsh* suggests something similar—one cannot search for (or find) the time of their reunion (*rūzigār-i vasl-i khᵛīsh*), without first remaining distant from their origin.

The modern *episteme* has founded knowledge on self-evidence, with all subjects being roughly equivalent to one another, provided they have access to the same data. However, this has not always been the case—in esoteric understandings of knowledge, it was not available to everyone in the same way. Esotericism arranges knowledge hierarchically, with different subjects having access to the truth of objects in different degrees according to their position in this hierarchy. The inaccessibility of certain levels of truth to some subjects relative to their station also implies that this knowledge will remain secret. The *nay* declares the *Masnavī*'s esotericism at the poem's beginning: "Everyone fancied themselves my friend, but no one sought my secret from within me." First, it implies that subjects' access to truth depends on their position; everyone believed that they knew the reed, but none of them actually did—specifically, because the reed's truth was secret, and they did not seek this secret from within it—what they could know depended on them, the would-be subjects of knowledge, not the *nay*, the object of their knowledge and the subject enunciating the poem.

The Subject in Classical Persian Literary Theory

Poetry is a science, or, it was at least an *'ilm,* according to a wide variety of authors writing in the intellectual and literary world of classical Persian, including Kay Kāvūs ibn

Iskandar. Dated to roughly 1080 AD, his *Qābūsnāmah,* an exemplary text in medieval *belles lettres*, dedicates a chapter to the practice of poetry. The office of poet laureate (*malik al-shu'arā*) was an important one at court, so it is not terribly surprising that a handbook on courtly life should aim to teach its audience something about poetry. After all, the *Qābūsnāmah*'s ostensible recipient, Kay Kāvūs' son and heir Gīlānshāh, would need to know the rules governing poetic composition; even if he was never interested in becoming a poet (though the chapter, like others, is written as if he were), he would one day be a ruler himself (or at least a courtier—despite the decline of the Zīyarids, he married into the Ghaznavid dynasty during its ascendancy), and his position at court would demand that he know how to judge the poets there. Kay Kāvūs therefore writes, "*va-lākin, 'ilm-i 'arūz nīk bidān, va 'ilm-i shā'irī va alqāb va naqd-i shi'ir*" ("But, know the science of prosody well, and learn the science of poetry, genres, and criticism of poetry").[61] What is especially noteworthy in this passage is its particular term for the science of poetry, *ilm-i shā'irī.* This particular formulation seems to say that this science is the science of being a subject. First, the phrase uses the word *'ilm*, which is generally translated as science or knowledge.[62] More noteworthy for my purposes, though, is *shā'irī*: I have rendered it as "poetry," but it means poetry in a very specific sense: the word has been formed by suffixing *–ī*, used, among other things, to make abstractions of nouns, to the active participle (or verbal subject) *shā'ir*. So, a more complete, if more unwieldy, translation of *shā'irī* would be something like "the state of being a poet." This means, though, that this is a science for subjects, as *shā'ir* is

[61] Kaykāvūs ibn Iskandar ibn Qābūs, 'Unṣur al-Ma'ālī. *Qābūsnāmah*. Tehran: Ibn Sina Bookstore, 1963. p. 190

[62] Ed. "'Ilm." *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition.* Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Brill Online, 2015.Reference. Harvard University. 05 October 2015 http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/ilm-SIM_3537

a participle referring to the subject (doer, in simpler English), rather than the object, of the verbal noun *shi'r*. Kay Kāvūs could just as easily have used *shi'r* for poetry—he even employs it at the end of this sentence in the expression for "criticism of poetry," *naqd-i shi'r*. But for poetic technique, rather than the criticism of it, he both calls it a science and uses the active participle, making it clear that this discussion concerns the formation of knowing subjects.

In the *Qābūsnāmah,* poets did not only need to know poetry; they needed to work on themselves and discipline their speech: "if you would be a poet, exert yourself that your speech would be inimitably simple" (*agar shā'ir bāshī, jahd kun tā sukhan-i tu sahl-i mumtani' bāshad*): the poet should avoid complex speech and not say things that they know but of which others would require an explanation. The explanation of this command appeals to something of an ethical obligation on the part of the poet: "poetry is spoken for people's benefit, not one's own" (*shi'r az bahr-i mardumān gūyand, nah az bahr-i khᵛīsh*).[63] The ability to speak poetry thus requires both knowledge of poetry as a technical craft and a keen sense of the poet's place within the social order.

The *Qābūsnāmah* lists a number of literary techniques and genres of which the poet should be aware. Metaphors, for example, should be believable: "if you want your speech to appear lofty, speak more in metaphor, and speak metaphors based upon possibilities" (*agar khwāhī kih sukhan-i tu 'ālī namāyad, bīshtar musti'ar gūī va isti'ārāt bar mumkināt gūī*); the appropriate use of figurative language is thus central to a poet's reputation.[64] In composing poetry "for the benefit of others," the poet should avoid using "heavy" meters, as such meters are, in general, the domain of someone "who possesses an unpleasant disposition" (*tab'-i*

[63] Kay Kāvūs p. 189
[64] Kay Kāvūs p. 189

nākhush dārad); if the patron demands it, composition in these meters is nonetheless acceptable (*ammā agar bikhwāhand bigūī, ravā buvad*).[65] Poets should know a variety of genres sufficiently well: "[as for] that which you say in poetry, in praise, satire, elegy and asceticism: fully give it its due, and never speak incompletely, and do not say in verse what is said in prose, for prose is like the commoners and poetry the king, and what does not befit the common does not befit the king, either."[66] The *Qābūsnāmah* does not only replicate its social hierarchy by likening poetry to a king, though. It also explicitly tells poets how to relate to the society of which they are a part: "it is incumbent upon the poet to be aware of their patron's nature, and to know what they like;" in part, this knowledge serves the poet's self-interest: "until you praise them according to what they want, they will not give you what you want," which is to say, the patron will not pay the poet until the poet speaks to the patron's interests.[67] In serving their patron, though, poets should not be too self-effacing: "do not be low-intentioned and call yourself a slave or servant unless the object of your praise merits it…be high-intentioned and recognize every person's value."[68] This recognition of a person's value involves, in part, knowing their place in the society's hierarchy—if, for example, one's patron is only a minor regional ruler, they do not merit the same praise as a great emperor. At the same time as it demands self-respect, though, this text also dictates that poets not be quick to insult others: "do not make a habit of satirizing;" this evasion of invective does not only arise from respect to the patron, though: the *Qābūsnāmah*'s injunction against frequent *hijā* also aims to preserve the poet's reputation. The passage continues, "the pitcher does not always return from the water intact;" overuse will break a vessel, and the poet's

[65] *Ibid.* p. 190
[66] *Ibid.*
[67] *Ibid.* p. 191
[68] *Ibid.*

reputation can, like the pitcher, break through the excessive use of *hijā*. Poets should also take care that their praise not be so unrealistic as to be taken for satire: "when you praise someone, know their value; do not bestow a sword upon someone who has never bound a knife to their midsection…and do not compare the horse of someone who has never ridden anything to Duldul, Burāq, Rakhsh, or Shabdīz."[69] This calls the directive to base poetic figures on believable comparisons to mind, but here it serves to protect the reputation of both poet and patron: it is not merely bad writing to compare something to the smell of a tulip (since tulips are scentless); praising a cowardly patron for their non-existent bravery could easily seem sarcastic and turn the audience (or, at least the patron) against either the poet (for the obviousness of their sycophantic tendencies or their disinterest in the details of their patron's personality) or the patron (by highlighting his faults through praise of a virtue he lacks).

In the *Qābūsnāmah*, one must properly stylize one's personal conduct as well as one's literary composition to become a poet. The chapter's closing advice illustrates the intersection of these two dimensions. It commands the reader not to plagiarize other sources without concealing one's plagiarism well: "in order for no one to know" the origins of plagiarized material, "if another's concept is in praise, use it to your own ends in satire…if you hear [it] in *ghazal*, use it in a *marsīyat.*"[70] Advice about one's personal bearing follows immediately: "if you are seeking a patron or are doing the work of the bazaar, do not be downcast or dirty-clothed; always be fresh-faced and smiling, and learn many entertaining and funny stories and rare expressions."[71] To be a poet is thus to be a disciplined professional; success in the science of poetry is not simply a

[69] Kay Kāvūs p. 192
[70] Kay Kāvūs p. 192
[71] *Ibid.*

matter of writing well. It is a matter of marketing oneself to a patron, not only through one's knowledge of poetry, but also through one's embodied conduct, affect, and appearance.

More theoretical sources in Persian also extended the Arabic traditions of linguistic and literary scholarship in subsequent centuries. Despite its many differences from mirrors for princes like the *Qābūsnāmah*, knowledge and discipline interacted in philosophical poetics as well. But more than this, philosophical accounts of poetic devices also sought to lend these devices' effects on their audience a positive epistemic status. In the twelfth century, Nizāmī 'Arūzī ventured an explanation of poetry's effects on audiences in his *Four Discourses* (*Chahār Maqālah*, in Persian). In keeping with the philosophical tradition best represented by Ibn Sīnā, Nizāmī 'Arūzī explains poetry's impact on its audience by describing its arrangement of "imaginary propositions" and blending of "fruitful analogies" as a kind of syllogism, by which the poet can act on the audience's imaginations and stir the "faculties of anger and concupiscence in such a way that by his suggestion men's temperaments become affected with depression or exaltation," which can in turn lead "to the accomplishment of great things in the order of the world."[72] So the *Chahār Maqālah* tells us that figurative language can work on the imagination so directly as to induce sentiments in its audience. It establishes distinct relationships between the hearing or reading subject and objects including both the signifying and signified terms contained in a given poem. The audience's access to the figures of poetry is just the tip of the *Four Discourses'* epistemic iceberg, though.

As elsewhere, in the *Chahār Maqālah*, poetry possesses the status of a science. Specifically, Nizāmi 'Arūzī declares, "the functions of the Scribe and the Poet" to be "branches

[72] Landau, Justine. "Nasir al-Din Tusi and Poetic Imagination in the Arabic and Persian Philosophical Tradition" in *Metaphor and Imagery in Persian Poetry,* Ali Asghar Seyed-Gohrab (ed.), (Leiden: Brill, 2012), p. 20

of the Science of Logic" when enumerating the various subdivisions of the "Science of Philosophy" with which the primary court functionaries (scribes, astrologers, physicians, and poets) concern themselves.[73] He maps these subdivisions on to the different levels of reality posited by philosophers, and according to this scheme, the purview of poets and scribes are the "internal senses" that mediate between physical perception and abstract reason: common sense, "retentive imagination" (*al-khayāl*), the "cogitative" (*mutafakkirah*) "imaginative faculty" (*al-mutakhayyilah*), the estimative faculty (*al-wahm*), and memory; the poet's activity pertains to the imagination, which "embraces all levels of the created world by means of images."[74] Though the *Four Discourses* reflects the Avicennan development of Aristotle's *Poetics*, it was the work of Nasīr al-Dīn al-Tūsī that more fully fleshed out the "how" of poetic logic in Persian.

With Nasīr al-Dīn al-Tūsī and Shams-i Qays-i Rāzī, we reach, roughly speaking, Rūmī's time, the thirteenth century. I am not, of course, suggesting that these authors were in conversation with one another, but, in the absence of common predecessor or a direct line of influence between Tūsī and Shams-i Qays, these texts help outline some of the contours of a common literary culture. They illustrate the spread of philosophical poetics in circles both philosophical (in the case of Tūsī) and literary (in the case of Shams-i Qays) within the Persian-speaking world of the thirteenth century. They can also serve as evidence of the thematic overlap between philosophical theorization about poetry's ability to provoke emotional reactions in an audience and the Sufi valorization of experiential knowledge. The persistence of philosophical poetics also demonstrates that discourses treating poetry as a science survived into the era of the Mongol conquests. Moreover, in these authors, as in the earlier examples, we see the science of

[73] Landau, p. 21
[74] *Ibid.* pp. 21-23

poetry demanding that subjects be made capable of participating in that science by intellectual exercise.

In the *Mu'jam* of Shams-i Qays, poetry is emphatically not prose, but it is, at its best, similar to prose in its delivery. "The wonderful poet and possessor of ingenious speech is he who, in his verses, does not display disobedience to the manner of eloquent prose;" obedience to these stylistic constraints means limiting one's vocabulary to the words current among "the people of virtue and lords of [good] disposition."[75] This suggests that an education in the poetic craft involves imposing certain restrictions on oneself, disciplining the poetic vocabulary in accordance with the lines laid down by virtuous models. Moreover, the composition of poetry demands that poets order their inner world by directing their imagination to certain ends—when beginning to write a poem, the poet must first "bring its prose before the mind and picture its contents on the sheet of the heart."[76] Preparing a poem thus occurs on the basis of prose, but, this preparatory work seems, at the same time, to be something of a contemplative exercise in its own right, given the demand that this prose version occur as a function of the "inner senses" of the mind (*khātir*) and the "sheet of the heart" (*sahīfah-yi dil*) rather than the actual sheet on which a successful poem would eventually be written.

In Tūsī's *Mi'yār al-Ash'ār*, poetry's compelling effects are the result of imaginative discourse's ability to stir "passions producing a slackening (*bast*) or a tightening (*qabz*) in the soul…whether the discourse is fit or not to induce assent."[77] Poetic utterances cannot be assessed in terms of their descriptive content; although their truth value cannot be judged in the same

[75] Shams al-Dīn Muhammad ibn Qays al-Rāzī, *Al-Mu'jam fī Ma'āyīr Ash'ār al-'Ajam*, S. Shamīsā, (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Firdaws, 1373/1995). p. 264
[76] Shams-i Qays, p. 385
[77] Landau, p. 42

terms as a constative utterance, poetry's ability to make objects present for subjects does possess a logic of its own: the figurative language of poetry operates through a syllogism that goes unspoken by the poets themselves. This syllogism operates, for example, whenever a poet likens the beloved to the moon. As described by Fārābī and developed by Ibn Sīnā, the metaphor operates along the following lines: "So-and-so is handsome (minor); everyone handsome is a moon (major); so-and-so is a moon (conclusion)."[78] But poetry, not being argumentative, tends to include only the conclusion of the syllogism, or even less of it, as when employing metonymy and simply using the term "moon" to refer to the object of comparison without even explicitly naming the object being likened to the moon. The employment of such syllogisms by way of metaphor and metonymy is in turn capable of inspiring wonder (*ta'ajjub*) in an audience because of the novelty of their imagery, which grants these syllogisms a power propositional descriptive claims cannot possess, since such statements possess "the pure reiteration of a discourse doomed to lose all freshness from the moment it is uttered," while the wonder inspired by more imagistic language can in turn lead the audience to greater knowledge, in accordance with the Aristotelian position that "wonder is the first step toward the acquisition of knowledge."[79] Tūsī was a philosopher, and thus represents a very different strain of Islamic intellectual life than Rumi, but despite Mawlānā's obvious dissatisfaction with rationalism, the impact of poetic objects on subjects in philosophical accounts of the poetic syllogism is, in its immediacy, comparable to the manner of subject-object relations articulated in Rumi's poetry.

Sciences are governed by distinct practical norms; participation in any discipline demands adherence to a limited set of techniques that alone can be said to yield knowledge. In

[78] *Ibid.* p. 43
[79] Landau, p. 53

the case of the *Masnavī-yi Ma'navī*, this operates at two levels. First, its use of literary devices demonstrate that its author was knowledgeable in the "science of poetry" discussed above, since such devices were among the major conventions that contributed to these definitions of poetry as a science. However, these devices also help the poem make knowers of its audience by presenting them with its objects.

Discipline and Poetic Wisdom

Hossein Ziai's "Persian Poetic Wisdom" provides a model of an epistemology that affirms the possibility of knowledge within both mystical and poetic frameworks. Ziai suggests that poetry possesses the status of wisdom literature in Persian-speaking cultures because it communicates the same intense experiences as treated in mystical epistemologies. Poetry, being a science dedicated more to evocation than explanation, could serve to conjure, for its audience, experiential knowledge of objects more powerfully than the knowledge offered by predication in prose. I would add that it is likely by specifically figurative language, training in the skillful use of which is part of poetic discipline, that these objects become accessible to the audience. This, in turn, involves the constitution of both poet and audience as subjects capable of accessing wisdom by way of "poetic experience." This process:

> Comprises four stages: 1- Praxis: asceticism and other forms of practice including the 'poetic' way of life, which serve as a preparation for: 2- Visionary experience: this is when the poet becomes existentially 'acquainted' with the whole of reality, which leads to: 3- Analysis: discussion, contemplation, and examination of the experience, which in turn finally leads to: 4- Expression: setting to writing the results of the first three stages through the use of language, employing philosophical construction, myth, and poetry. In the last stage, metaphors, signs and symbols are incorporated in a new mode of expression, which thus form, and so define a special language beyond simple, everyday discourse. [80]

[80] Ziai, Hossein. "Hāfez, *Lisān al-Ghayb* of Persian Poetic Wisdom" in *Gott ist schön und Er liebt die Schönheit*, Alma Giese and J. Christoph Bürgel (eds.) (Bern: Peter Lang, 1992). p. 467

Here, Ziai theorizes that Persian poetry expresses wisdom as voiced by a knowing subject because it reflects both embodied discipline and the knowledge yielded by it. The first stage in the above summary, praxis, can help explain how it is that the speaker in the *Masnavī* comes to possess the authority to command the poem's audience. Rumi's biography reveals him to be an author shaped by his religious training, and even if the biography or intent of the author should not serve as the final standard by which one interprets a text, Ziai's model of a mystical-poetic *episteme* can explain the kind of knowledge displayed and claimed in the *Masnavī-yi Ma'navi* and offer some preliminary suggestions as to how Sufi poetry and classical philosophical poetics might, despite their many differences, participate in a similar system of knowledge.

According to classical literary theory, poetry's status as a science depends on the poet, as a knowing subject, being formed by both ethical and technical training and, simultaneously, on poetry's status as "imaginative discourse," a status by which it imparts a kind of knowledge to its audience as well by means of the literary techniques that were part of the poet's training. The emotional response this discourse can elicit, then, also approaches, at least in its supposed intensity, the experiential knowledge to which Sufis have often appealed, and which is also founded upon ascetic training. For theoreticians like Nizāmī 'Arūzī, Nasīr al-Dīn al-Tūsī, and Shams-i Qays-i Rāzī, poets participate in a science governed by strict rules; these rules, however, do not merely govern the features that define poetry as a literary genre (like meter, which distinguishes it from prose); they also govern the conduct of poets in such a way as to dictate the conditions under which subjects may even be identified as poets, while, in Sufism, esoteric training aims to shape the very being of the aspiring Sufi according to an authoritative model. In both of these cases, though, it is through discipline that subjects gain a particular ethical identity, which in turn grants them the status of someone possessing knowledge. Moreover, both of these

disciplines also appeal to intense experience: in poetry, the practical application of acquired knowledge, the deployment of figurative language and poetic devices, can solicit a response to premises these devices introduce into the audience's imagination, while the revelatory knowledge at which Sufi training aims results from practical engagement in that training. Both manners of training, however, provide the means by which subjects participate in the world, which lends a particular order to their experience of objects. In the *Nay Nāmah*, these paths intersect: its poetic devices serve to teach the audience about this training by modeling it through figurative language that specifically appeals to emotional intensity when explaining this simultaneously religious and poetic *episteme*.

Sufism, Poetry, and Literary Theory in the Timurid Period

In Husayn Vā'iz-i Kāshifī (d. 1504/5), who the Sufi and *khātim al-shu'arā* ("the seal of the poets," the supposed last of the great Persian poets) 'Abd al-Rahmān Jāmī (d.1492) initiated into the Naqshbandīyah, philosophical poetics and Rumi's poetry intersect. Kāshifi wrote a treatise on literary theory (*Badāyi' al-Afkār fi Sanayi' al-Ash'ār*) and a commentary on the *Masnavī* (*Sharh-i Masnavī*), which he also anthologized twice (in *Lubab al-Ma'navī fī Inthkhāb al-Masnavī* and its abridgment, *Lubb-i Lubab-i Masnavī*). Much scholarship has dismissed Kāshifi's *Badāyi' al-Afkār* as a mere abridgment of earlier works, especially the *Mu'jam* of Shams-i Qays. But, even if its content were as unoriginal as these observers suggest, its adoption of this content was at least uniquely Timurid—the period's literati, like Kāshifī and Jāmī engaged in an early attempt to establish a Persian literary canon, or, at least, to assign "classic" status to thirteenth-century authors. This impulse to collect "the greats" mirrors Timur's impulse to monopolize Persian literary culture as part of his broader efforts at centralization.

Sufism, philosophy, and literature each contributed to a court culture in which rule was bound up with a "Timurid project of cultural education and assimilation."[81] That Sufism played a major role in this project should make it clear that it was as ideologically and politically committed in the "relatively free" Timurid period as the Safavid Shi'ism that Terry Graham claimed broke with the tolerance of the Timurid period.

Jāmī himself did not only compose verse; he also theorized about poetry and commented on earlier generations of philosophers' poetics. For example, the seventh chapter (or "garden," *rawzah*) of his *Bahāristān,* which comments on poetry, begins as follows: "poetry, in the custom of the ancients and the philosophers, is discourse composed of imaginative premises, meaning that it is of such a status that it casts concepts, which are the cause of either acceptance or aversion to a thing into the imagination of the listener…"[82] The moderns, meanwhile, add meter and rhyme to the ancients' definition of poetry as imaginative discourse, while "in the custom of the commoners, aside from meter and rhyme, there is no definition."[83] This way of introducing different definitions of poetry echoes Tūsī's definition of poetry in the *Mi'yār al-Ash'ār,* which begins similarly, by claiming that for "the close logicians," poetry is "metered imaginative discourse," while "in the custom of the commoners, it is metered rhymed discourse."[84] Thus, in Jāmī, and in the court at Herāt more generally, scientific poetics and Sufism were no longer merely thematically and rhetorically similar in their treatments of knowledge; by the fifteenth century, these different strands of intellectual life had come to meet in a courtly culture that both

[81] Losensky, Paul. *Welcoming Fighani: Imitation and Poetic Individuality in the Safavid-Mughal Ghazal* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda 1998), p. 136
[82] Jāmī, *Bahāristān* VII:I, p.122
[83] Jāmī, p. 122
[84] Nasīr al-Dīn al-Tūsī and Mohammad Fisharaki (ed.). *Mi'yār al-ash'ār* (Tehran: Miras-e Maktoob, 2011). p. 3

patronized Sufism and, further, sought to establish a Persian literary canon that could lend the court additional prestige.

An Introduction to Kāshifi

Kamāl al-Dīn Husayn Vā'iz Kāshifī was born in the province of Sabzavār in Khurāsān in 1436/7. Around the age of twenty, he experienced a dream, which he took to be a summons to Harāt by the Naqshbandī *pīr* Sa'd al-Dīn Kāshgarī. There, he met the aforementioned Jāmī, who, as Kāshgarī's successor, initiated Kāshifī into the Naqshbandīyah. By this period (the late 1450s), he was already enjoying close relations with the court; upon his return to Sabzavār, Sultān Abu Sa'īd (r. 1458-69) appointed him chief judge of Bayhaq, and Husayn Bāyqarā invited Kāshifī back to Harāt shortly after his rise to power in or around 1470. Kāshifī would stay there until his death in 1504, where, in addition to his pre-existing relationship to Jāmī, he would also enjoy the patronage of the courtier and poet Mīr 'Alī Shīr Navā'ī (d. 1501).

As his title, *vā'iz*, attests, Kāshifī was a preacher; his professional identity was thus bound up with moral guidance. Being a *vā'iz* rather than a *khatīb*, his preaching was not limited to a particular mosque's Friday prayer and he regularly delivered sermons and advice (*va'z va nasīhat*) in a variety of locations, including, Harāt's central market, 'Alī Shīr Navā'ī's congregational mosque, and the *madrasah-khānaqāh* complex of Sultān Husayn himself.[85]

Kāshifī as Literary Theorist

Kāshifī opens his discussion of poetry in the *Badāyi' al-Afkār* by establishing the limits of his inquiry into poetry. Rather than beginning, as Jāmī and Tūsī do, by offering the definitions of poetry used by modern, ancients, and commoners, Kāshifī notes that in his epistle, "That

[85] Subtelny, M.E. "Kāshifī," in *Encyclopedia Iranica* Vol. XV, Fasc. 6, pp. 658-661, available online at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/kasefi_kamal

which is well-known and current among the moderns which poets commonly deem valid will be selected."[86] *Tafvīf* is the first of the devices to appear, and his discussion of it employs the terms of his treatise's title. In this, Kāshifī's text mirrors the *Mu'jam* of Shams-i Qays, the first Persian text on *badī'* to discuss it, and where it also appears before any other device. The *Mu'jam* defines it as the maintenance of "a uniform style and manner throughout a qasida," which "requires a harmonious combination of all poetic elements (meter, rhyme, wording, ideas, poetic figures) both horizontally, i.e. within the bayt, and vertically, throughout the whole qaṣida to achieve a symmetrical structure."[87] The *Badāyi' al-Afkār* first classes *tafvīf* as "what is desired from all artifices [*sanāyi'*] and sought from all novelties [*badāyi'*]."[88] Moving on to defining it, rather than simply noting its importance, Kāshifī continues: "lexically, it is weaving a garment of colored threads such that there is no difference in their weave and the first and the last of it be upon one loom," but, "idiomatically, it is that the foundation of a poem be placed upon a good meter, a pleasant form, a sweet articulation, and firm figure, and that it be made free from unrealistic metaphors, outlandish comparisons, and irregular idioms."[89] In discussing the device he lists first, Kāshifī reveals a concern that figurative language be able to represent reality: the features that define *tafvīf* in the affirmative ("good meter, a pleasant form, a sweet articulation, and firm figure") do not have any necessary bearing on its descriptive merits, but those that define it in the negative (i.e. what a poem should not have) do all have some bearing on the realism of its figures, as these should not possess "unrealistic metaphors, outlandish

[86] Kāshifī, Husayn Vā'iz and Mīr Jalāl al-Dīn Kazzāzī (ed.), *Badāyi' al-Afkār* (Tehran: Nashr-i Markaz, 1369 [1990-91]. p. 84
[87] Chalisova, Natalia. "Rhetorical Figures," *Encyclopedia Iranica*, online edition, 2009, available at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/rhetorical-figures
[88] *Ibid.*
[89] Kāshifī, p. 84

comparisons, and irregular idioms." The aesthetic or rhetorical qualities of a poem are supposed to overlap with its ability to bridge the metaphorical and the real. This also extends to a concern for comprehensibility, as *tafvīf* also entails "speech being pronounced in such a way that in comprehension and perception of it, it stand firmly on its own and that terms and rhymes, in their location, be strong and fixed."[90] Although this definition of *tafvīf* does not reveal as strong a concern with uniformity or unity as the *Muʿjam*, the terms of these chapters' openings and conclusions do actually lend the treatise its own unity, which might reflect in prose what the same concern with unity that *tafvīf* evidences in reference to poetry. Immediately before its definition of *tafvīf,* the first chapter opens with an Arabic quote, *min Allāhi'l-aʿānatu*.[91] The chapter closes with another Arabic phrase, *wa't-tawfīq min walīhi*.[92] The conclusion of the second chapter brings these two expressions together, *wa'llāhu walīyyu'l-aʿānati wa't-tawfīq*.[93]

The second chapter of the *Badāyiʿ al-Afkār* frames criticism as a scientific discipline. It is entitled "On the Explanation of the Faults of Verse" (*Bayān-i ʿuyūb-i nazm*), which "is called the science of criticism and considered one of the literary sciences. Lexically, it is the removal of pure *dirham*s from impure *dirham*s, but idiomatically, it refers to that by which good poetry is distinguished from bad."[94]As any other, this science is distinguished by its practitioners' conduct: "Just as the *naqqād* of *dirham*s selects pure coins from false ones, here, the master of this science skillfully curates pure, faultless speech from among the inappropriate."[95] Likewise, a skillful practitioner must be distinguished from an incapable one if they are to know poetry: "as

[90] Kāshifī, p. 84
[91] *Ibid.*
[92] *Ibid*, p. 125
[93] *Ibid.* p. 176
[94] Kāshifī, p. 126
[95] *Ibid.*

long as someone is uninformed about the faults of poetry, they will not recognize poetry without fault."[96] Kāshifī explains this claim in specifically philosophical language, using the Arabic phrase *tabayyana'l-ashyā' bi-aḍdādihā* ("explaining things by their opposites"); based on this axiom, "the evidence of verification becomes firm."[97]

It does not employ the philosophical language of the *Badāyiʿ al-Afkār,* but Kāshifī's compilation of the verses of the *Masnavī* place the *Lubb-i Lubāb-i Masnavī*, and its conception of knowledge, in line with Ziai's model—here as well, ascetic discipline makes subjects capable of receiving the experiences that yield knowledge. The text rearranges the poem's verses so as to position them as graded instructions on the religious life—it makes the poem's role as a didactic text on virtue ethics explicit. The *Lubb-i Lubāb* is divided into three "springs" (*ʿayn*), each of which is arranged in explanation (*dar bayān*) of a different stage of the Sufi path. These repeat the standard tripartite division of the path into *sharīʿat, tarīqat,* and *haqīqat.* The first collects the modes of the exoteric path into seven "rivers" (*dar bayān-i javāmiʿ-i atvār-i sharīʿat dar haft nahr*), the second explains the particulars of the secrets esoteric path in six rivers (*dar bayān-i daqāyiq-i asrār-i tarīqat dar shish nahr*), and the third explains the illuminations of the light of the truth in three rivers (*dar bayān-i lavāmiʿ-i anvār-i haqīqat*). Extending the water metaphor, Kāshifī divides each river into drops (*rashhah*).

Before the first spring, though, Kāshifī introduces the text with both a preface and some of his own verse. Each chapter also begins with a prose explanation by Kāshifī. It opens,

> After the presentation of the obligatory praise and encomium for His Majesty the Necessary Existent for what he granted that flows from the Good, the kernel of the kernels of the *Masnavī*, which is the mirror of the two Highnesses and was selected from

[96] *Ibid.*
[97] *Ibid.*

> the *masnavī* of the worlds of the unseen and the ennobling wellspring, by which, 'verily we ennobled the children of Adam and beautified them on land and at sea.'[98]

It then positions knowledge as the resolution to the problems of ethical formation the poem poses. The *Lubb-i lubāb*'s first river is dedicated to matters of faith and the testimony thereto (*īmān* and *shahādat*) and worship (*ʿibādat*). Kāshifī similarly uses epistemic criteria to arrange the varieties of testimony of faith (*shahādat*) in a hierarchy: imitation (*taqlīd*) is the basis of "the testimony of ordinary people," reasoning (*istidlāl*) is the basis of "the testimony of theologians," and visionary experience (*shuhūd*) is the basis of "the testimony of gnostics and mystics."[99] Preliminarily, we can note the wordplay at work between the word for testimony, *shahādat*, and that for "visionary experience," *shuhūd*. Both share the same triconsonantal root in Arabic, and their similarity serves to suggest that the knowledge of mystics is the knowledge that comes the closest to accessing the reality of *shahādat*.

Conclusion: From Rum to Isfahan

In spite of the fact that a later Safavid scholar like Qummi (quoted at the opening of this chapter) held up "the Mulla from Rum" as an example of everything *harām* about Sufism in the eyes of the "the religion of our Imams," Rumi's influence survived the rise of the Shi'i clergy under the Safavids. Mullā Sadrā, despite his usual dismissal of "popular" Sufism, quotes the *Masnavī* in the eighth chapter of *Sih Asl* (*Three Principles*), his only book composed in Persian. The chapter, which discusses the way to God, quotes *Masnavī* III:3901-3 and 5-6.[100] The text begins, though, not by describing the way to God, but by framing itself as a warning to those

[98] Kāshifī, Husayn Vā'iz and Nasr Allāh Taqavī (ed.), *Lubb-i lubāb-i Masnavī*. (Qum: Chāpkhānah-yi Hikmat, 1388 [2009]). p. 17
[99] Kāshifī, *Lubb-i lubāb-i Masnavī,* p. 31
[100] Sadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, Muhammad ibn Ibrāhīm. *Risālah-yi Sih Asl.* Tehran: *Intishārāt-i Mawlā*, 1997 or 8. pp. 69

"malice-filled would-be scholars" (*dānishmand-namāyān-i pur sharr*) and illogical theologians (*mutakallimān-i khārij az mantiq-i savāb*) who exert themselves rejecting "wisdom, unity, knowledge of the way of God, and detachment, which is the path of the prophets and *awlīyā*."[101] To them, it recommends "knowledge of that self which is the truth of humanity" (*maʿrifat-i nafs kih ū haqīqat-i ādamīst*), ignorance of which is "the greatest cause of misfortune."[102] Moreover, Sadrā not only equates self-knowledge to knowledge of God by way of the famous hadith *man ʿarafa nafsahu faqad ʿarafa rabbahu*, he adds, "whoever does not know God is equal to an animal."[103] It is similarly toward the end of distinguishing true humanity that Sadrā quotes Rumi in Chapter Eight: "humanity is specified from all other possible existents in that its reality is composed of two spirits: one, an impermanent animal spirit, and the other, an eternal, angelic spirit."[104] By virtue of this spirit, humanity can pass from creaturely stations (*maqāmāt-i khalqī*) to the angelic abodes (*manāzil-i malakūtī*), travel in the divine names (*sayr dar asmā'-i ilāhī*), and self-qualify with God's virtues (*takhalluq bi-akhlāq Allāh*).[105] He then quotes the *Masnavī* to illustrate this capacity for change: just as his prose frames the passage from humanity to the angelic and divine stations as reaching the station of total annihilation and eternal subsistence (*maqām-i fanā-yi kullī va baqā-yi abadī*), Rumi writes, "When have I become less by dying? I would die again to humanity/To rise on an angel's wings/I would again be sacrificed an angel/to become that which is not in the imagination."[106] Sadrā concludes, "the result of this discourse is that a human is, by capacity, the vicegerent of God...and can be taught the Names."[107] Sadrā thus

[101] Sadr al-Dīn-Shīrāzī, p. 7
[102] *Ibid.* p. 15
[103] *Ibid*.
[104] Sadr al-Dīn-Shīrāzī, p. 68
[105] *Ibid.* pp. 68-69
[106] *Ibid.* p. 69
[107] *Ibid.*

quotes Rumi in support of his larger vision, according to which humanity is, at its best, its capacity for self-perfection.

This larger vision, in which philosophy is a form of self-fashioning, has parallels in conceptions of ancient Greek philosophy as a practice of care of the self. However, Fereshteh Ahmadi highlights Mullā Sadrā's role in "the non-separation of philosophy from religion in Islam," which she takes to have been "an important obstacle to the development of the concept of the individual in Iranian ways of thinking."[108] In her view, Sadrā (d. 1640) serves a counter-Descartes whose career kept philosophy excessively religious, and in so doing, prevented the arrival of the *cogito* on the Iranian intellectual scene: "the doctrine of Mulla Sadra played an opposite role to that of Descartes concerning the development of the concept of the individual…Cartesian dualism, by separating *res cogitans* (mind or consciousness) and *res extensa* (indivisible substance and matter)," not only divides thinking subject from thought object, but also "the realms of religion, of philosophy, and of science from each other."[109] Cartesian dualism thus "paved the way for the development of the concept of the individual by promoting a view that considered man as a separate entity, an object among other external objects."[110] In contrast, according to Ahmadi, Mullā Sadrā's attempt "to assert the idea of the Unity of Existence philosophically" resulted in God's remaining "a kind of authority, a creative agent" thanks to Whose will "man…could not effectuate his 'I,'" because man "remained an integrated part of the whole being;" moreover, "as a follower of religious laws," man was "bound to some principles that deprived him of the possibility to affirm his individuality."[111] So,

[108] Ahmadi, p. 33; 29
[109] Ahmadi, p. 31
[110] *Ibid.*
[111] *Ibid.* p. 32

in this case, it is Mullā Sadrā's particular use of "the Unity of Existence" (usually taken to derive from Ibn ʿArabi) that inhibited the development of a philosophy that prioritized the rational individual over the divine in Iran.

Ahmadi is certainly not alone in positioning Sadrā in opposition to philosophy as we in the West have come to define it in the centuries since Descartes, though. For Henry Corbin, Sadrā's *hikmah ilāhīyah*, which he takes to be equivalent to the Greek *theosophia*, is necessarily an interpretation of the fact of revelation and prophecy, since, in his view, all Islamic philosophy "takes the form of a 'prophetic philosophy.'"[112] As Sajjad Rizvi observes, this "emphasis on prophetic philosophy" led Corbin and his student Christian Jambet "to privilege the study of the esoteric, the Shii, the Neoplatonic" at the expense of attention to "the basic fact that thinkers like Mullā Sadrā claim to provide Aristotelian demonstrations for their mystical insights, and remain keen students of the history of their practice."[113] For Rizvi, Sadrā is, in total, best designated a philosopher in the same way that Socrates is in the late seminars of Foucault. This is to say that in both cases, philosophy involves the cultivation of a certain way of living rather than the application of logic alone. It is not the purely esoteric pursuit suggested by Corbin and Nasr, either. These commonalities between Foucault and Rizvi are no coincidence--they both draw heavily on Pierre Hadot, who introduced the notion that Ancient Greek philosophy was a way of life comprised of "spiritual exercises" to the twentieth-century study of philosophy's history. In Sadrā's case, Rizvi sees Sadrā's definition of *hikmah* as "perfecting the human soul (*istikmāl al-nafs al-insānīya*)" as a hint that Sadrā's project entailed the ascription of "a rational order" to the

[112] Corbin, Henry. *Histoire de la philosophie islamique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1986) p. 14
[113] Rizvi, Sajjad. "Philosophy as a way of life in the world of Islam: Applying Hadot to the Study of Mullā Sadrā Shīrāzī (d. 1635)," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 75:1, Feb 2012. pp. 35-36

world on the one hand and "the practice of theosis (*ta'alluh,* in Arabic)" on the other.[114] "The perfection of the human" consists of both "the perception of divine stations and partaking of divine intelligible knowledge," which come about through spiritual exercises: "guidance and learning and discipline and steadfastness."[115] This may, of course, seem quite mystical, but Sadrā couches this account of knowledge in language that borrows more heavily from the philosophical tradition than Sufism.

As Rizvi points out, much of the extant literature on Sadrā emphasizes his position as mystic or "theosopher." Sadrā uses *ʿārif* to refer to "the advanced among the *awliyā'*," which calls to mind the specialized Sufi usage of *maʿrifah* in contrast to *ʿilm*. However, Sadrā seldom uses "Sufi," was quite critical of the most visible aspects of the Sufism of his day, and much more regularly pairs *ʿārif* with philosopher (*hakīm*) than Sufi.[116] Sadrā's rejection of the music and mendicancy most closely associated with the dervishes of his day makes his quotation of Rumi in *Sih Asl* all the more noteworthy, given that only slightly later than Sadrā, Qummī rejected "the Mulla from Rum" because of his followers' indulgence in those same activities Sadrā rejected in *Kasr asnām al-jāhilīyah*.

None of this is to deny the influence of Sufism on the Sadrian corpus—I do aim, though, to simultaneously point out that philosophy was at least as influential on that corpus as Sufism, and, moreover, to follow Pierre Hadot (and Foucault's later lectures) in pointing out that Western philosophy, having its own origins in "spiritual exercises," has not always been as easy to distinguish from religion as it seems to be now. I use both of these points to propose that Mullā

[114] Rizvi, pp. 42-43
[115] *Ibid.* p. 43
[116] Anzali, Ata. *Safavid Shi'ism, the Eclipse of Sufism and the Emergence of 'Irfān*. (Dissertation: Rice University, 2013). p. 195

Sadrā is an emblem of his synthetic and dynamic intellectual context. I point to this context, in turn, to question the usefulness of the received associations between philosophy, rationality, and individualism on the one hand and religion, superstition, and conformity on the other, associations suggested by the claim that Sadrā's influence was uniquely responsible for the attachment of philosophy to religion in Iranian Islam from the Safavid era to the 1990s. Despite Fereshteh Ahmadi's claims that Ibn ʿArabi's Sufism and its Sadrian adoption regards individualism as meaningless or is responsible for fusing philosophy to religion in such a way as to render secularization impossible, the more plausible separation accompanying the Cartesian *cogito* was not that of philosophy from religion, but that between two different ways of knowing oneself.

Appendix: a *Nay Nāmah* Translation

Listen to the reed as it tells a tale
Bemoaning separation:
"Ever since I was torn from the reedbed,
Men and women have cried from my moaning.
I want a chest torn apart by separation,
If I am to explain the pain of longing.
Whoever remains far from their origin
Will seek again the time of union
I came crying to every assembly
Became the partner of the bad- and good-stated
Everyone fancied themselves my friend,
But no one sought my secret from within me
My secret is not far from my cry,
But the ears and eyes do not have that light
Body and soul and soul from body are not veiled
But no one has permission to see the soul
It is fire, this cry of the reed, and not wind.
As for whoever does not have this fire, may they not be!
It is the fire of love that fell upon the reed.
It is the roiling of love the fell upon the wine
The reed is the confidant of everyone who has been torn from a friend.
Its notes tore our veil
Who has seen a poison and antidote like the reed?
Who has seen a confidant and desirous one like the reed?

The reed gives a report of the way full of blood
It tells the stories of crazy love
The confidant of this wisdom is none other than the fool
The tongue's customer is none other than the ear
In our pain, the days grew late
The days went along with burning
If the days leave, tell them, 'go!' It is of no concern
You remain, oh you like unto whom none is pure
Whoever is not a fish is sated by its water
Whoever is without time, their days become long
The raw do not understand the state of the cooked
So, speech should be short—goodbye!"
Break your binds—be free, oh son
How long will you be bound to silver and gold?
If you pour the ocean into a cup
What will you gain? A day's share [of water]
Whoever's garment is ripped by love
Is freed from greed and all faults
Be happy, oh good-humored love of ours
Oh, doctor for all our ills
Oh, treatment for our boasting and pride
Oh you, our Plato and Galen
The body of dust reached the heavens from love
The mountain started dancing and became nimble
Love became the life of Sinai, oh lover
[When] Sinai was drunk, Moses swooned
Were I paired with the lips of a confidant
I would speak just like the reed
Whoever is separated from speakers of their native tongue
Loses language, even if they have a hundred voices
When the rose has left and the rose garden passed away
You will no longer hear the nightingale's story
The Beloved is all, the lover, a veil
The Beloved is alive, the lover, dead
When [the lover] no longer has love's affection
[The lover] remains like a bird without flight
How can I keep my wits about me?
When I no longer have the light of my friend?
Love wants this speech to come out
How can a mirror be, if it does not reflect?
Do you know why your mirror does not reflect?
Because the rust has not been removed from its face
Listen, oh friends, to this story
It is the unadulterated truth of our state

Chapter Two: Kāshifī's Late Timurid Ethics and Mu'azzin Khurāsānī's Shīʿī "Golden Chain"

In framing clerics as perennial oppressors of Sufis, much secondary literature frames the Safavid period as one of rupture with a more tolerant past. Lewisohn's studies paint a picture of a static religious landscape in which the Shīʿism of an essentially intolerant and fanatical hierocracy competes for prestige with a rotating cast of unchangingly open-minded and charismatic *pīr*s. His narrative argues that the Safavid adoption of Shīʿism as a state religion necessitated the suppression of Sufi orders by the ascendant *ʿulamā'*, after which Sufis, or even Sufi-seeming ideas, could persist only as much as they could be made acceptable to the clergy. He therefore frames his article "Sufism and the School of Isfahan" as "a dirge on the demise of religious tolerance and the consequent suppression of the Sufi mystical vision in Persia, namely the baleful influence of the *mujtahid* cult and the ideologization of religion to suit their particular political agenda."[117] Such a dirge is self-consciously ahistorical: for Lewisohn, it sounds "the *same* doleful tone" [emphasis mine] in describing both "the dominant characteristic of the Safavid dynasty" and "the contemporary Islamic [*sic*] Republic of Iran."[118] Terry Graham has made similar claims regarding the history of Sufism under the Safavids. He claims that before Shah Ismāʿīl "declared himself shāh of Iran," the "nearly two and a half centuries of Mongol Ilkhānid and Timurid rule" allowed religion to be "relatively free," while, in contrast, the Safavid dynasty was, from its inception, "one of the world's first ideological dictatorships."[119] In this

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[117] Lewisohn, Leonard. "Sufism and the School of Isfahan: *Tasawwuf* and *'Irfān* in Late Safavid Iran," in *The Heritage of Sufism, Volume III: Late Classical Persianate Sufism, 1501-1750*, Leonard Lewisohn and David Morgan (ed.) (Oxford: Oneworld Press, 1999). p. 132
[118] Lewisohn, "Sufism and the School of Isfahan," p. 132
[119] Graham, Terry. "The Ni'matullāhī Order Under Safavid Suppression and in Indian Exile" in *The Heritage of Sufism, Volume III: Late Classical Persianate Sufism, 1501-1750*, Leonard Lewisohn and David Morgan (ed.), Oxford: Oneworld Press, 1999. p. 165

view, ideology and Sufism are incompatible: "the Safavids' ideological zeal made them oblivious to their dervish origins, politicizing their once-mystical purpose to the point where, contrary to the Sufi principle of universal tolerance, they came to suppress any expressions which were different from their own extremist Shīʿite doctrinal position."[120] This, among other things, neglects the close relationship between Sufism and government in the Timurid period, a relationship no less ideological than that between clerics and the Safavids. It is, moreover, quite anachronistic to imagine life before the Safavids as somehow freer than the subsequent centuries of Iranian history, or that freedom even meant the same thing in the 1400s as it does today. However, a comparison of Kāshifi's works on ethics, both Sufi and philosophical, with a later Safavid defense of Sufism, Mu'azzin Khurāsānī's *Tuhfah-yi ʿAbbāsī*, can help challenge the notion that the Safavid period was a complete rupture with the Timurid. Moreover, I argue that these I study do not reflect Sufism alone, and, in fact, offer an account of humanity that was quite widespread in the Early Modern period and was not particular to Sufis or to the Persianate world alone. I point to the continuities between these sources, the periods of their composition, and the wider Early Modern period in order to respond the claims regarding the Safavid period seen above.

Kāshifi's writing on Sufism, among other things, sets the terms for the justification of one's lifestyle and trade—in the *Futuvvat nāmah-yi sultāni*, the Sufi interpretation of the customs and collective life of the period's urban trade guilds justifies those activities. When taken as a part of both the author's larger corpus and its period, it also reflects the prestige of Sufism in the Timurid period, the intersection of literary and organizational brands of Sufism, and especially, the role of Sufi ethics in governing individuals' conduct in such a way as to bind their status as

[120] Graham, p. 165

knowing subjects to their ability to make themselves productive members of Timurid society (rather than threats to the stability of that social order). Even accepting that *tarīqah* Sufism had lost much of its prestige by the later Safavid period, Mu'azzin Khurāsānī's *Tuḥfah-yi ʿAbbāsī* reveals that the *turuq* of the period were still eager to accommodate government and can help complicate the narrative in which a Sufism innocent of politics is the victim of a power hungry clerical establishment's politicized religion.

The *Futuvvat nāmah-yi sultānī* illustrates the depths of the entwinement of Sufism and government in the late Timurid period. By this I do not only mean that representatives of Sufi orders (especially the Naqshbandīyah and Khalvatīyah) had close relationships with the courts of the Turkic military elite. They certainly did, but, given the relative decentralization of pre-modern states, the text also attempts to govern the conduct of its audience by dictating norms of conduct articulated through the symbolism with which the text invests the social and professional identities it discusses. In this, it reflects Sufism's roles as a both a vector of political influence and a force for social stability in the Eastern Islamic world in the centuries after the Mongol conquests. It invests the customs of *futuvvat* guilds with a Sufi significance, reading these physical acts as rituals with a metaphysical significance, which in turn serves to endorse regulation of an aspirant's conduct. Though it does not appeal to the guild trades specifically, Mu'azzin Khurāsānī's *Tuḥfah-yi ʿAbbāsī* appeals to authority figures similar to those in the *Futuvvat nāmah-yi sultānī* and uses a comparable set of symbols when valorizing human life and worldly conduct. All this, of course, serves to challenge the notion that the Safavid period's religiosity was purely discontinuous with its past, and featured, in its Shīʿitization of Iranian religion, a uniquely irrational and anti-Sufi bent.

Sufi *Futuvvat* Before Kāshifi

As the *Encyclopedia Iranica* explains it, *javānmardī-futuvvat* "denotes a wide variety of amorphous associations with initiation rituals and codes in the Islamic world" and also refers to "an ethical system" endorsed by such associations and "dominated by altruism, magnanimity, liberality, and unquestioning loyalty to fellow members of the association"[121] Youthful masculinity is the thematic link between the Persian *javānmardī*, the Arabic *futuwwah,* and the ethical underpinnings of the associations grouped under either of these terms. *Javānmardī* is a composite of the Persian words for young (*javān*) and manliness (*mardī*), while *fatā*, the word from which the Arabic *futuwwah* derives, similarly relates to youthfulness in its Qur'anic attestations.[122] Kathryn Babayan stages early *futuvvat* guilds as counter-hegemonic loyalty networks. The bonds these groups led their members to conduct Robin Hood-style raids on the wealthy and upon officials who served central power. She presents Yaʿqūb ibn Layth and his movement as one example of early medieval *futuvvat*. In this light, the late ʿAbbasid caliph al-Nāsir's 1203 initiation into a *futuvvat* guild and subsequent attempt to monopolize leadership of all such guilds appears as an early example of chivalry's institutionalization, or, perhaps, even, a case of its co-optation by state power.[123] This project died alongside whatever else remained of ʿAbbasid power with the Mongol conquests of 1218-19. In light of the sociopolitical disruption accompanying the conquests, local bonds became much more central to social order. Later, these bonds became part of a moral-political apparatus Timur and his successors adopted. This second institutionalization, though, did not see rulers attempting to seize chivalry wholesale, but to incorporate chivalrous-Sufi networks into their circle of patronage in exchange for the legitimacy

[121] Zakeri, Mohsen. "Javānmardī," *Encyclopedia Iranica*, XIV/6, p. 594; available online at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/javanmardi (accessed 8 March, 2016)
[122] *Ibid.*
[123] Babayan, Kathryn. *Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs*

the masters of these networks could offer rulers. Erik Ohlander similarly argues that the attempts to incorporate *futuwwa* into dominant modes of religiosity started in the thirteenth century. He for example, argues that Abu Hafs ʿUmar al-Suhrawardī's Arabic treatises on *futuwwa* represent an attempt to co-opt Anatolian Akhī brotherhoods, since their publication coincided with his state visit to ʿAlā al-Dīn Kayqubād's court at Konya.[124]

After Suhrawardī, Najm al-Dīn Zarkūb Tabrīzī wrote a *Futuvvat-nāmah* later in the thirteenth century after Tabrīz had come under Il Khanid rule. In his article on it, Ohlander does not call Zarkūb's *Futuvvat-nāmah* a Sufi text, but rather argues that its "inner-world religiosity" reflects a broader "inward turn" in the religious life of Islamdom's late middle period, a turn that was similar, but not necessarily identical, to the Sufism of the period. Zarkūb's text "posits" that Muhammad's prophetic dispensation "inaugurated sainthood (*walāyat*) as the locus of the divine reality (*haqīqat*), to which the divine law (*sharīʿat*) and the mystical path (*tarīqat*) are situated as points of access and to which *futuwwa* relates as a whole."[125] This focus solely on the prophet is markedly different from Kāshifī's *Futuvvat nāmah*, where *walāyat*, and religious virtue more generally, appears not only in reference to Muhammad, but to previous prophets and ʿAlī, Hasan, Husayn, and other figures of ʿAlid devotion.

Government of the Self and Timurid Bureaucracy

In his *Futuvvat nāmah,* Kāshifī both casts *futuvvat* in a symbolic light by presenting it as a system of knowledge whereby one achieves their purpose as a human being and also assigns metaphorical importance to the practices associated with *futuvvat*. He takes these practices to

[124] Ohlander, Erik. *Sufism in an Age of Transition*. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2008. pp. 271–291
[125] Ohlander, Erik. "Inner-Worldly Religiosity, Social Structuring, and Fraternal Incorporation in a time of Uncertainty: The *Futuwwat-nāma* of Najm al-Dīn Zarkūb of Tabriz," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 40:1, p. 21

bind the identity of participants both to the social life of the group in which these practices occur and the norms of conduct in light of which Kāshifi explained them. The Persian literary bureaucracy of which Husayn Vāʿiz Kāshifī was a part did not only govern the popular classes whose professions his *Futuvvat nāmah* mentions, but also aimed to influence the rulers of the era. Given that Kāshifī was quite a prolific writer, it should not come as a surprise that the *Futuvvat nāmah-yi sultānī* was not his only prescriptive text. He also composed a treatise on virtue ethics (*akhlāq*) at Sultān Husayn's request and dedicated it to his son Abu al-Muhsin Mīrzā. This text, the *Akhlāq-i Muhsinī*, written under the influence of Tūsī's famous *Akhlāq-i Nāsirī*, enumerates the virtues that ought to govern the sovereign's conduct. In this, it participates in a long philosophical tradition in which *akhlāq* provides the terms in light of which subjects are to assess their conduct (and thus govern themselves), not only for the sake of their own well-being, but especially in order to be able to rightly exert authority over others. Nasirean Ethics were quite influential at courts across the Persianate world in the Timurid and post-Timurid period, with Muzaffar Alam citing the appearance in India of various recensions of the *Akhlāq-i Nāsirī*, including the *Akhlāq-i Muhsinī*, but more prominently the *Akhlāq-i Humāyūnī* and *Akhlāq-i Jalālī*, as influences upon a distinctly Mughal conception of *sharīʿah* that enabled the Mughal emperors to facilitate "conditions for their subjects (*jamhūr anām*) to appreciate each other's religion and traditions."[126] The religious demographics of Mughal India were quite different from the rest of the Persian-speaking world, but the Mughals were hardly the only court to serve as a ready audience for *akhlāq* literature.

[126] Alam, Muzaffar. *The Languages of Political Islam in India*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004. p. 65

Tūsī's *akhlāq* and the texts it inspired, including Kāshifī's, offered a vision of just rulership that, while Islamic, likely held special appeal at Timurid courts particularly because it endorsed a conception of *sharīʿah* that did not rely upon the authority of legal scholars, who tended not to number among the most influential thinkers at the courts of the period. *Akhlāq* set equipoise (*iʿtidāl*) as the path by which an individual could attain perfection and thereby be raised to kingship.[127] The "noble aim" of such a philosopher-king "was to help his subjects 'reach potential wisdom by the use of their mental powers;'" under the care of such a king, "peoples with diverse social and religious practices" could each "struggle to achieve perfection" while remaining "secure in the place best suited for him."[128] To this end, Tūsī equated *sharīʿah* to "the Divine Institute (*Nāmūs-i Ilāhī*)," which stood for a "universal metaphysical ideal" rather than the law as understood by jurists.[129] This model operates in Kāshifī's *Akhlāq* as well: there too, the main function of the sovereign is the preservation of justice (*ʿadālat*), equipoise (*iʿtidāl*), and equilibrium (*savīyat*) by way of the *sharīʿah*, to which end rulers should employ coercive force (*siyāsat*).[130]

Tamerlane's rule itself was highly personal and informally administered and tended not to rely on legal scholars. Of course, in the absence of stable institutions, personal rule can only survive as long as the ruler; Maria Subtelny has thus described the contest for rule of his domain after Timur's death in 1405 as a "free for all" because "the traditional Turko-Mongol concept that territory was held collectively by the patriarchal, agnatic clan and that all lineal male descendants shared the right to claim political sovereignty over it, reasserted itself;" as a result,

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[127] Alam, p. 47
[128] *Ibid.* p. 48
[129] Alam, p. 49
[130] Subtelny, M.E. "A Late Medieval Persian *Summa* on Ethics: Kashifi's *Akhlaq-i Muhsini,*" *Iranian Studies,* Volume 36, Number 4, December 2003, pp. 606-7

"individual members of the princely Timurid clan clamored to assert their claims to rule in the steadily shrinking territory under Timurid control."[131] Alongside the corporate rule claimed by the Timur's heirs, the rise of the Āq Quyūnlū and Qarā Quyūnlū confederations had, by the middle of the fifteenth century, divided Timur's domain. This led to an unstable political landscape, with loyalties shifting between various members of the Turkic military elite and rulers competing for these loyalties through land grants and tax exemptions. Privileges like *suyūrghal*s, which exempted their holder not only from taxation but even prohibited the entry of government administrators into the designated territory, may have helped aspiring rulers buy the loyalty of these exemptions' recipients, but they also made centralization quite difficult, as they reduced governments' administrative reach.[132] Alongside these economic dimensions of competition for rule within the Turkic military elite, this nomadic elite also found itself in need of a way to preserve its prestige and influence while ruling a settled, Persian-speaking subject population. Patronage of intellectual life was one such mechanism. Timur is himself well known for his interest in religious and literary performances despite his illiteracy.[133] This tendency persisted in the culture of the successor states that arose after his death, as well.

Kāshifī was far from the only intellectual supported by Husayn Bāyqarā, who "was famous for always granting the requests of the members of the religious and literary intelligentsia and bestowing upon them 'favors (*inʿāmāt*) and soyurghals;" in this, he kept with the precedent established by more immediate successors to Timur, including Shāhrukh, Abū al-Qāsim Bābur,

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[131] Subtelny, M.E. "Centralizing Reform and its Opponents in the Late Timurid Period," *Iranian Studies,* Vol. 21, No. 1/2 (1988). p. 123
[132] Subtelny, "Centralizing Reform and its Opponents in the Late Timurid Period," p. 124
[133] See, for example, Melvin-Koushki, Matthew. "Tamerlane," *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political Thought*, Richard Bulliet, Gerhard Bowering, David Cook, Patricia Crone, Wadad Kadi, and Roxanne L. Euben (eds.). Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012. p. 542

and Abū Saʿīd, all of whom extended the distribution of *suyūrghal*s to *tājīk* (sedentary, native Persian) administrators and intellectuals in addition to members of the Timurid house or Turkic military class.[134] This *tājīk* literary-intellectual class possessed a certain authority over their Turkic sovereigns, as well: ethical writing, like Kāshifī's *Akhlāq-i Muhsinī,* serves to demonstrate that moral and intellectual authority was not coterminous with state power. Maria Subtelny writes, 'mirrors for princes'…were composed by members of the indigenous Iranian religious and bureaucratic intelligentsia for Turko-Mongolian rulers to whom they wanted to communicate Perso-Islamic concepts of statecraft, administration, and social order."[135] In an ideal sense, at least, this Persian intelligentsia possessed a power that Turko-Mongol rulers did not; they could produce certain effects on these rulers by educating them in norms of rule. Sufism demonstrates the operation of a comparable moral power over a wider audience. In both cases, these texts assert the power-knowledge of their authors' class by promising the reader access to virtues, access that depends on the audience's obedience to the texts' directives and the similarity of their conduct to that of the figures praised in these texts.

The history of ethics serves as the meeting point of the history of governmentality and the history of subjectivity: "Our 'technologies of the self,' the ways in which we relate ourselves to ourselves, contribute to the forms in which our subjectivity is constituted and experienced, as well as to the forms in which we govern our thought and conduct."[136] These technologies operate in two directions at once in Kāshifī's *oeuvre*; on the one hand, his philosophical ethics, the *Akhlāq-i Muhsinī*, asserts a kind of intellectual authority over government officials by propounding the moral order in the name of which the sovereign should conduct himself, and on

[134] Subtelny, "Centralizing Reform and its Opponents in the Late Timurid Period," pp. 125-126
[135] Subtelny, "A Late Medieval Persian *Summa* on Ethics," p. 601
[136] Davidson, "Ethics as Ascetics," p. 119

the other, the *Futuvvat nāmah-yi sultānī* aims at governing the conduct of the laboring classes by assigning a Sufi significance to their professions and to their guilds' initiation ceremonies. In this, it makes religious symbols of everyday professional conduct and male bonding, the two factors it takes to define its audience's subject position.

A Broader Ethic

Although the *Futuvvat nāmah-yi Sultānī* offers a distinctly Sufi account of human origins by appealing to the primordial covenant, an appeal that does not appear in the *Akhlāq-i Muhsinī*, similar norms and assumptions pervade both texts, revealing that a common ethic is at work in both texts, despite the fact that one is a work in the philosophical tradition of Nasīr al-Dīn al-Tūsī and the other is, as we have seen, considerably more Sufi in its orientation. Both employ the same phrase when describing humans as social by nature. The introduction to the *Akhlāq-i Muhsinī* includes the phrase "people are civic by nature," *ādamīyān madaniyy bi-al-tabʿ and*, while the *Futuvvat nāmah-yi sultānī*'s chapter on the proper conduct of trade explains the necessity of working for a livelihood (and therefore not being a burden on others) with the phrase "the human is civic by nature," *insān madaniyy bi-al-tabʿ ast.*[137] As Maria Subtleny has pointed out, this is of course a rough translation of Aristotle's famous "political animal" remark, which made its way into Kāshifī's corpus by way of al-Tūsī.[138] The ethics of the *Akhlāq-i Muhsinī* appeal to similar figures as many treatises on *futuvvat*. For example, in the *Akhlāq*'s chapter on generosity, Kāshifī holds Hātim al-Tā'ī up as an exemplar of generosity and a number of other texts on *muruvvat-futuvvat* present him as the paragon of those virtues.[139]

[137] Kāshifī, *Akhlāq-i Muhsinī,* p. 6 and *Futuvvat nāmah,* p. 261
[138] Subtelny, "A Late Medieval Persian *Summa* on Ethics," p. 606
[139] Kāshifī, *Akhlāq-i Muhsinī,* p. 67

In addition to these more obviously prescriptive works, even Kāshifī's work on chancellery stylistics can be read as aiming to use literary-intellectual production to help integrate the social body the court he served hoped to govern; the *Makhzan al-inshā* "provides a model schema of Timurid society" by providing "model verses and prose phrases for all segments of society including rulers (sultans), nobles (amirs), chief administrators (*vazīr*s), administrators (*dıvānī*s), accountants (*mustawfī*s), bookkeepers (*kātib-daftar*s), ambassadors (*īlchī*s), sayyids, shaykhs, Qur'anic commentators (*mufassir*s), traditionists (*muḥaddith*s), painters (*naqqāshān*), poets (*shuʿarā*), musicians (*ahl-i müsīqī*), and Sufis (*zāvīya-dārī*s)."[140]

Sufism at Court

Sufis enjoyed positions of influence in both courtly and popular life in the century between Timur's death and the Safavid conquest of Iran. Jāmī and Kāshifī were intellectuals with both religious and literary significance, but, more than this, the influence of these and other Naqshbandīs extended far west of Harāt, and in fact reached the Āq Quyūnlū court at Tabrīz. In addition to the fact that *Salāmān va Absāl* was dedicated to Sultān Yaʿqūb, Jāmī also corresponded directly with Yaʿqūb and, Chad Lingwood proposes, may have been referring to Yaʿqūb and his court at Tabrīz when, in his *Dīvān*, he references Rūmī and his famed relationship with Shams-i Tabrīz: he calls "the sun of Tabrīz " his *qiblah*; Lingwood proposes that the sun represents Yaʿqūb, who ruled from Tabrīz.[141]

Over the same period, the prominent Naqshbandi *shaykh* Khvājah ʿUbayd Allāh Ahrār (d. 1490) enjoyed a close relationship with both Abū Saʿīd and Husayn Bāyqarā. Sultān Abū Saʿīd

[140] Mitchell, Colin Paul. "To preserve and protect: Husayn Va'iz-i Kashifi and Perso-Islamic chancellery culture," *Iranian Studies*, 36:4 (2003), p. 489
[141] Lingwood, Chad G. "'The *qebla of* Jāmi is None Other than Tabriz': ʿAbd al-Rahmān Jāmi and Naqshbandi Sufism at the Aq Qoyunlu Royal Court," *The Journal of Persianate Studies* Vol. 4 (2011), pp. 233-234.

invited Khvājah Ahrār, who was born to a family of wealthy landowners in Tashkent, to his court at Samarqand after Ahrār backed Abū Saʿīd against ʿAbd Allāh Khān in 1451. Shortly after arriving in Samarqand, Ahrār came into possession of a great deal of agricultural land, and his holdings seem only to have increased under Husayn Bāyqarā; when Kāshifī visited Ahrār, he quoted one of his overseers as reporting that Ahrār owned enough land that its maintenance required the work of three thousand laborers.[142] Jo-Ann Gross notes that much of this land was tax-exempt, as was the case for many other Timurid intellectuals, though she does admit that the administrative documentation, while not completely clear, does indicate that Khvājah Ahrār paid either *ʿushr* or *kharāj* on at least some of his holdings. His close relationship with the court at Harāt granted Khvājah Ahrār other benefits, as well—his friendship with Mīr ʿAlī Shīr Navā'ī, for example, facilitated his participation in trade between Samarqand and Harāt.[143] So the fates of a variety Naqshbandis, simply by virtue of their participation in the Timurid economy, were quite closely bound up with those of the Timurid state.

Mu'azzin Khurāsānī, the *Tuhfah-yi ʿAbbāsī,* and Sufi Subjects Under the Later Safavids

Although it did not enjoy the same patronage it did during the Timurid period, *tarīqah* Sufism persisted throughout the Safavid period, even during the ascendancy of the clergy at the expense of less scholarly Sufi institutions. During the reign of Shah ʿAbbās II, a *shaykh* of the Zahabīyah, Muhammad ʿAlī Mu'azzin Sabzavārī Khurāsānī, wrote a defense on Sufism, the *Tuhfah-yi ʿAbbāsī*, which he dedicated to the Shah (hence the use of *ʿAbbāsī* in the book's title). This text can serve as a snapshot of the state of Sufism under the rule of Shah ʿAbbās II, or as a particular stratum in the archaeology of Iranian Islam. Moreover, Ata Anazali has argued that it

[142] Gross, Jo-Ann. "The Economic Status of a Timurid Sufi Shaykh: A Matter of Conflict or Perception?" *Iranian Studies* 21, No. 2. pp. 94-95
[143] Gross, p. 97

was in fact only during the Safavid period that the term *Zahabī* came to designate a specific order started, suggesting that the period was, for all its tension, quite creative.[144]

Legend has it that the *Zahabī* order originated in the departure of ʿAbd Allāh Barzishābādī from the circle of Ishāq Khuttalānī, which led Khuttalānī to remark, in Arabic, "*dhahaba Abd Allāh!*"[145] The *Zahabī* title is, however, multivalent, as it also derives from the Arabic word for gold, *dhahab*, and this derivation reveals the breadth of the term's uses. The use of *silsilah-yi zahabīyah* to mean a chain of transmission that includes the first eight Shīʿī imams appears in ʿAlī b. ʿĪsā Bahā al-Dīn al-Irbilī's thirteenth-century *Kashf al-ghumma fī maʿrifat al-a'imma* when the author tells the story of a Samanid governor who had the chain written in gold as a demonstration of respect after hearing its recitation. The first of Jāmī's *Haft Awrang* ("Seven Thrones") also bears a similar title, *Silsilat al-Zahab.* Mīr Sayyid ʿAlī Hamadānī (d. 1385), a major figure in Kubravī history, uses gold's purity as analogy in his commentary on Qur'an 33:33, which mentions God's purification of the *Ahl al-Bayt*. This analogy also involves some wordplay, as the trilateral root of gold, *dh-h-b,* also appears in one of that verse's verbs, *li-yudhhiba*. The Naqshbandī Khᵛājah Muhammad Pārsā (d. 1419) also used the phrase to refer to the chain of transmission from the Prophet's household, but it was not until the time of Lāhījī, the famous commentator on Shabistarī's *Gulshan-i Rāz*, that *silsilah-yi Zahabīyah* came to refer to a Sufi order's whole initiatory chain rather than its ʿAlid origins.[146] However, the successors to Barzishābādī did not come to identify mainly as *Zahabī*s before the seventeenth century.[147]

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[144] Anzali, Ata. "The Emergence of the Zahabiyya in Safavid Iran," *Journal of Sufi Studies,* Vol. 2 (2013), p. 151
[145] Algar, Hamid. "Ḏahabīya," *Encyclopædia Iranica* (hereafter *EIr*), http://iranica.com/articles/dahabiya-sufi-order-of-shiite-allegiance
[146] Anzali, "The Emergence of the Zahabiyya in Safavid Iran," pp. 154-155
[147] Anzali, "The Emergence of the Zahabiyya in Safavid Iran," p. 156

Although the *Tuhfah-yi ʿAbbāsī* is not strictly a treatise on practical or professional ethics, its summary of Sufism is just as concerned with the norms of the Sufi life as it is with a defense of its conceptions of authority in explicitly Shīʿī terms. In this, it speaks to Sufism's mutability, as, unlike Kāshifī's Sufi work, it cites narratives from all twelve imams as the ideal figures on whom aspiring Sufis should base their conduct. In this, it also reflects the tremendous growth in Shīʿī hadith literature during the Safavid period. This again reveals the active participation of Sufis authors in the political life of their time, even during periods of apparent opposition between Sufism and government. The *Zahabī* designation, cemented by Khurāsānī's indirect successor, Najīb al-Dīn Rizā, even appears to have been a strategic appropriation of a more officially Shīʿī epithet for a *tarīqat*. Rather than the innocent avoidance of politics by a disinterested ascetic, this seems to be an effort to sell Sufism in a religious marketplace more thoroughly monopolized by clerical Shīʿism. The other side of this, of course, is that this same clerical establishment adopted or encouraged many of the functions previously performed by Sufis (for example, supplication-writing, astrology, and shrine visitation).

Defining Sufism in the *Futuvvat nāmah-yi sultānī* and the *Tuhfah-yi ʿAbbāsī*

Kāshifī's *Futuvvat Nāmah* concerns itself with the production of knowledge, but this knowledge is one that depends on the audience's shaping their conduct in accordance with an ethical ideal rather than with access to information. Kāshifī dedicates the beginning of this work, in which he justifies its composition, to "the nobility of this science" (*fasl-i avval: dar sharaf-i īn ʿilm*).[148] It begins, "know that the science of *futuvvat* is a noble science and is a branch of the science of Sufism and monotheism."[149] Foregrounding *futuvvat*'s link to Sufism in a chapter "on

[148] Kāshifī, Husayn Vā'iz and Muhammad Ja'far Mahjūb (ed.). *Futuvvat-nāmah-yi sultānī,* Tehran: Intishārāt-i Bunyād-i Farhang, 1971. p. 5
[149] *Ibid.*

the nobility of this science" suggests that it is the identification with Sufism that ennobles *futuvvat*. That the identification of these two disciplines with one another was still a live issue for Kāshifī would make sense, given that some scholars have argued that *futuvvat* guilds, rather than simply adopting Sufi ethics or serving as feeder organizations for Sufi *turuq*, actually competed for followers with Sufi orders.[150] Kāshifī cites the poetry of ʿAttār, who wrote, roughly two-and-a-half centuries prior, when linking *futuvvat* and Sufism: "Whoever found a share of *futuvvat* turned their face toward religion [and] turned away from the world/The sight of the heart is [made] bright from *futuvvat*, the meadow of the soul is by *futuvvat* [made] a rosebed/If you have *futuvvat*, every moment gives you another delight."[151] After this quote, Kāshifī lists a number of Sufi texts, including Suhrawardī's *ʿAwārif al-Maʿārif*, Najm al-Dīn Dāyah Rāzī's *Mirsad al-ʿIbād*, Sanā'ī's *Hadīqat al-Haqīqah*, and ʿAttar's *Tazkīrat al-Awlīyā'*, not as texts on Sufism, but as "epistles on the etiquette of *futuvvat*," which suggests another attempt to link popular ethics and literary Sufism.[152]

The Sufi ethic Kāshifī took to guide *futuvvat*, and toward which he enjoined his audience incentivized subjects to govern themselves; it staged the practices that define *futuvvat* as the price of admission to real knowledge and real humanity. To this end, the opening of the text emphasizes *futuvvat*'s status as moral knowledge. It cites a verse from the *Tabassurat al-Ziā'*, which declares, "the science of *futuwwah* is a light that shines through/in the darkness of ignorance, the blindness, and indolence."[153] Kāshifī then quotes ʿAbd al-Razzāq Kāshī (Kāshānī) to similar effect by including the following verse: "the science of *futuwwah* is a science no-one

[150] Safavi and Weightman, p. 21
[151] Kāshifī, *Futuvvat nāmah*, p. 5
[152] *Ibid.* pp. 5-6
[153] Kāshifī, *Futuvvat nāmah*, p. 5

knows/except for the one who possesses insight by way of the Real/and how can it be known when it is not witnessed? How can the blind know sunshine?"[154] Kāshifī additionally figures *futuvva*t's particular brand of knowledge as light (*nūr*) in the self (*nafs*), whose rays emanate (*partaw-yi fayz*) divine and angelic attributes (*sifāt-i mālikī va malakūtī*) into the interior (*bātin*) of the possessor.[155] Kāshifī also equates the coming to possess this knowledge to becoming fully human: the *fatā* (the youth, or one possessed of *futuvvat*) is, metaphorically, someone who has reached "the perfection of human virtues" (*kamāl-i fazā'il-i insānī*); with this perfection, their self (*nafs*) matures to the stage of the heart (*dil*), just as a child matures to the stage of being a young adult (*javān*).[156] Kāshifī additionally links *futuvvat* to humanity by equating chivalry to human nature; the chapter explaining *futuvvat* from a linguistic-terminological perspective (*bi-hasb-i lughat va istilāh*) begins, "*futuvvat*, in the custom of the commoners, is a term for describing praised attributes and acceptable morals…but according the designation of the elite, it is a term for the display of the light of human nature (*nūr-i fitrat-i insānī*)."[157] In addition to this reference to the *fitrah*, Kāshifī regularly alludes to human origins by mentioning the primordial covenant (*ʿahd-i azal*). These references specifically lend a transhistorical significance to the practices in reference to which they appear; the practice of *futuvvat* thus becomes a re-enactment of the moment the text takes to define both humanity's origin and its *telos*.

Arley Loewen takes references to the primordial covenant (*ʿahd-i azal* or *rūz-i alast*) as signs of the influence of Ibn ʿArabī's ideas on fifteenth-century Naqshbandīs by way of Khᵛājah

[154] *Ibid.* p. 7
[155] *Ibid.* pp. 8-10
[156] *Ibid.* p. 17
[157] Kāshifī, *Futuvvat nāmah*, p. 9

Muhammad Pārsā.[158] What strikes me as more significant than this possible influence, though, is the way the text uses the appeals to the primordial covenant: these references serve to valorize the customs of *futuvvat* guilds by taking them to represent a moment of cosmic significance, one which the text makes recur by means of the very practices it uses references to this "pre-eternal" moment to endorse. In this, Kāshifī's *Futuvvat nāmah* participates in a process of symbolization that assigns value to social bonds and professional conduct by making them symbols of the events by which human life was taken to have acquired value to begin with. This serves to valorize a sociopolitical order that might otherwise appear as a deviation from its divine origin by presenting the customary life comprising that order as a symbolic repetition of that divine origin.

The chapter continues by attributing the definition of chivalry as "being faithful to the *ʿahd-i azal*" to Husayn and then explains that the command in Qur'an 5:1 ("Oh you who believe, be faithful to [your] obligations") refers to "the commitment of the day of the covenant (*ʿahd-i rūz-i mīsāq*), the obligation of the time of 'am I not your Lord?' (*ʿaqd-i zamān-i alast*), and being faithful to the work of the chivalrous."[159] Similarly, a later formulation directs, "If they ask, 'what is the reality of *futuvvat*?' say, '[it] is preservation (*muhāfizat*) of the covenant with God (*ʿahd Allāh*),' meaning being mindful of God (*nigāh dāshtan*)."[160] The section explaining the meaning of *tarīqat* closes by explaining, "the profit of the *sharīʿat* is loyalty, meaning being loyal to the covenant of *alast*," while adding, in an even more explicitly Sufi formulation, "the

[158] Loewen, Arley. "Proper Conduct (*Adab*) is Everything: The *Futuwwat-nāmah-i Sultānī* of Husayn Vafiiz-i Kashifi," *Iranian Studies* Vol. 36, No. 4 (December 2003), pp. 548-553
[159] Kāshifī, *Futuvvat nāmah*, p. 11
[160] *Ibid.* p. 23

profit of the *tarīqat* is *fanā*, meaning passing from the self and its states, and the profit of *haqīqat* is *baqā*, meaning being cut off from error and bound to the Real."[161]

Just as Kāshifī calls *futuvvat* an *ʿilm*, Khurāsānī's definition of Sufism also presents it as a system of knowledge. This science, however, depends upon humans living up to their *telos*: the seeker must become properly human to obtain it. In the introduction, Khurāsānī instructs the reader: "Know that the purpose of creation of all engendered things is the existence of the human being, and the purpose of [the existence] of the human being is acquiring, in accordance with one's ability, knowledge of the Divine Essence and Attributes."[162] This knowledge is what most separates humanity from the rest of creation, as well: "True love and *maʿrifah* do not emanate except from the human being. Although the angels and *jinn* share servanthood [toward God] with the human being, nevertheless, man is superior to all engendered things in carrying the weight of the trust of *maʿrifah*."[163] As this passage continues, it fuses self-knowledge and knowledge of God. Before citing the famous hadith "whosoever knows himself knows his Lord," Khurāsānī employs the image of the heart as a mirror, used frequently in Sufi writing and ancient philosophy alike, to explain how the human heart can reflect the Divine Attributes. Knowledge of these Attributes requires work on the self, though: "Since man's soul is supposed to be a mirror and can be trained to reach perfection, it can observe the manifestation of all the divine attributes within itself and can realize for what purpose they have brought him to this world."[164] The end of humans' being, then, is their becoming; humanity was created to know God, but one must be trained to achieve this knowledge.

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[161] *Ibid.* p. 38
[162] Sabzawari and Faghfoory, p. xxxviii
[163] Sabzawari and Faghfoory, p. xxxix
[164] *Ibid.* p. xxxix

The *Tuḥfah-yi ʿAbbāsī*'s first chapter sets out to define Sufism and begins by affirming that the *sharīʿah* is the sole basis for knowledge. It opens, "know that the path to the Truth, after the appointment (*biʿthah*) of Muhammad al-Mustafa is exclusive to his clear religion that encompasses all religions of the former prophets and abrogates the paths of all the Friends of God and the purified ones."[165] The chapter continues by explaining that *sharīʿah* is a term with multiple references: just as "almond" refers to the nut's shell, its kernel, and the kernel's kernel, so too is *sharīʿah* "applied to a truth that contains hierarchical levels:" these are *sharīʿat*, *tarīqat*, and *haqīqat*. *Sharīʿat* is "the level of religion that forms the shell," while under the heading of this "general term," *tarīqat* is "the level that corresponds to the kernel of the almond" and that which "corresponds to the kernel of the kernel is called the Truth and Sufism (*haqīqat va tasavvuf*).[166] Rather than establishing a correspondence between *tasavvuf* and *tarīqat*, Khurāsānī equates *tasavvuf* and *haqīqat*. This suggests that Sufism is a state of being equivalent to access to the truth, rather than the path (*tarīqat*) leading to the truth. This makes some sense in light of the fairly common assertion that the term "Sufi" applies to realized practitioners rather than aspirants, but, that, in turn, suggests that when the text defines "the Sufi," it is outlining a set of ideals rather than describing the conduct of actual individuals; it furnishes a goal toward which subjects ought to aim their conduct.

Though knowledge appears in the early portions of the *Tuhfah*, a chapter dedicated to knowledge opens its second half. Knowledge, "the most precious flower that blossoms in the garden of human reality," adorns the forehead of "every rational soul" with "the mark of eternal felicity."[167] Knowledge also makes humans most fully human: "A human action that is not

[165] *Ibid.*, p. 1
[166] Sabzawari and Faghfoory, p. 1
[167] *Ibid.* p. 95

adorned with the gift of knowledge is like a body that does not have a soul, and a heart that has not reached the treasure of knowledge essentially has no spirit."[168] Khurāsānī hastens to distinguish knowledge, which entails the fulfillment of humanity's purpose, from mere textual scholarship. Unlike "the formal sciences" to which some "think that knowledge is just limited," "true knowledge is that which detaches you from your '*self*' and guides you toward your true destination."[169] The process of coming to possess knowledge is also the process of becoming truly human, since knowledge is humanity's true purpose and the key to its felicity. Living up to one's purpose by acquiring this knowledge, however, depends on action, just as, in the above quote, knowledge lends action meaning.

In framing Sufism as a science of purification, Khurāsānī appeals to alchemy and the occult sciences. Alongside the basics of religious-legal scholarship, "the most fundamental sciences and the essence of all types of knowledge are the science of the truth and the occult sciences."[170] All such sciences entail work on the self: one who possesses this knowledge "has reached the station of certainty and knows the reality of things."[171] The measure of this station, however, is the ability to exert oneself, rather than access to data—its practitioner must commit to "setting aside his sexual appetite, severing attachments, and seeking companionship with silence, hunger, night vigil, and contemplation."[172] Khurāsānī subsequently cites the *Usūl al-Kāfī*; its chapter on intellect and ignorance quotes Jaʿfar al-Sādiq as remarking, "ʿ*ulamā* are those whose deeds support their words. One whose acts do not support his words, indeed, he is

[168] *Ibid.*
[169] *Ibid.* p. 97
[170] Sabzawari and Faghfoory, p. 103
[171] *Ibid.*
[172] *Ibid.* p. 97

not a scholar."[173] The acts that support a true scholar's words include states such as "repentance (*tawbah*), asceticism (*zuhd*), abstention (*waraʿ*), patience (*sabr*), fear and hope (*khawf va rajāʾ*), witnessing (*mushāhadah*), and contentment (*tumaʾnīnah*)," contemplative practices such as "remembrance of God (*dhikr*), and reflection (*fikr*), meditation (*muraāqabah*), taking heed (*iʿtibār*)," and "glorification of the Divine (*taʿzīm wa ijlāl*)," all of which drive toward "knowledge of the self (*maʿrifat al-nafs*)" by way of "spiritual combat (*mujāhadah*) and the ascetic practice on the soul (*rīyāzāat*)."[174] This moral-psychological work thus promises a more complete brand of knowledge: "it is prudent to say that by relying on intellectual knowledge based on reason one cannot attain the station of *maʿrifah*, which is the abode of those who are brought nigh to the Lord. One cannot witness the beauty of the true Beloved by any means other than the light of the sun of divinely inspired knowledge."[175] Knowledge, to be worth anything, depends upon a subject's ethical formation.

Both Kāshifī and Khurāsānī cite similar sources to define Sufism. Kāshifī explains that when asked what each letter of the word *tasavvuf* represents, one should respond as follows: "the *vāv* of *tasavvuf* refers to *vafā*, meaning, being loyal to the covenants of divine love (*ʿuhūd-i mahabbat-i ilāhī*)."[176] The other letters have the following references: the *tā* to *tajrīd* (detachment), which "means outwardly taking leave of attachments," the *sād* to *sidq* (veracity) and *safā* (purity), which "means making the interior clear for the Light of the Truth," and the *fā* refers to *fanā*, which "means drowning oneself in the sea of witnessing the Lights of Beauty."[177] The *Tuhfah* offers further evidence of its continuity with Kāshifī's Timurid Sufism by making a

[173] *Ibid.* p. 101
[174] Sabzawari and Faghfoory, p. 101
[175] *Ibid.* p. 107
[176] *Ibid.* p. 47
[177] Kāshifī, *Futuvvat nāmah,* p. 47

similar appeal to letter symbolism to define Sufism; it cites an acronymic explanation of *tasavvuf* attributed to ʿAli, which it sources from the *Ghawālī al-laʿālī* and according to which, the four letters comprising *tasavvuf* (*ta'*, *sad*, *vav*, and *fa'*) represent the following: "The *T* stands for abandoning sins, redemption, and the fear of God (*tark, tawbah,* and *tuqā'*), the *S* stands for patience, honesty, and purity (*sabr*, *sidq*, and *safā'*), and the *W* stands for friendship, formulae of remembrance, and loyalty (*wudd, wird,* and *vafā'*), and *F* stands for Divine oneness, spiritual poverty, and annihilation (*fard, faqr*, and *fanā'*)."[178] Both texts explain Sufism by the virtues it offers, but both also use the term *tasavvuf* itself to encode these virtues according to the symbolic associations with letters comprising that term.

The rest of the chapter on Sufism continues similarly, by explaining it in light of ideal conduct. For example, it quotes "prominent sages" as having defined Sufism as "sincerity in turning your face [heart] to God, Exalted is he," "acquiring virtues and obliterating vices," and "abandoning the desires of the soul and persistence in piety and steadfastness in fear of God."[179] As if to emphasize the size of the gulf separating real-ideal Sufism from its numerically-greater appearances in social life and to support the claim "that among the people a [real] Sufi is very rare," Khurāsānī quotes Rumi's *Masnavī*, declaring, "from among thousands, only one is a [real] Sufi/And others live under his fortune" and, immediately afterward, cites the *Usūl al-kāfī*, in which Kulaynī attributes the following to the sixth Shīʿī Imam, Jaʿfar al-Sādiq: "A *woman* of faith is more precious and more glorious than a *man* of faith, who is more precious than red Sulphur. Has anyone among you ever seen red Sulphur?"[180] Thus, in order to define Sufism by its rarity, Khurāsānī appeals to the authority of the predictably Sufi *Masnavī* alongside a not

[178] Sabzavari and Faghfoory, p. 1
[179] *Ibid.* p. 3
[180] *Ibid.* p. 5

explicitly Sufi section from Kulaynī's decidedly Shīʿī *Kāfī*. Leaving aside the alchemical-esoteric mention of red Sulphur, the text seems to use the *Kāfī* for the sake of appealing to authoritatively Shīʿī hadith collections, even if the content of the quotes from these collections does not treat Sufism *per se*.

All the World's a Stage

The *Futuvvat nāmah* frames craft and economic activity as spiritually symbolic. This reflects Timurid Naqshbandīs' world-affirming approach to Sufism, which construed economic life as a moral domain in such a way as to maximize social stability by valorizing participation in the economy as it is (or was in the present of the text), rather than excluding certain trades. It thus aims to govern the conduct of actors and other public performers (*ahl-i bāzī*) just as any other urban trade; it instructs, "know, oh dear one, that in the work of the theatrical performances of heart-possessing dervishes, considerations have been commanded and many truths have been revealed by them."[181] As with much of the phenomenal world, the text assigns theatrical work value by deeming it a symbol of the noumenal realm: "first, it should be known that everything that appears in the world of form, even if it is in the costume of mockery, is serious in reality."[182] Thus, the *fatā* must simultaneously play the role of gnostic and whatever role they play as an actor: "that great one has said that frivolous play with the implements of amusement is serious in relation to a soul undergoing the unveiling of Divine secrets. The *ʿārif* should, in play and form, display that and struggle in order to find seriousness in it."[183] Every physical trade serves to illustrate metaphysical truths, and the theatrical arts "are a sign of the unity of acts, which is the first degree of the degrees of unity, which is also called the self-disclosure of acts. This reveals to

[181] Kāshifī, *Futuvvat nāmah*, p. 340
[182] *Ibid.*
[183] *Ibid.*

the wayfarer the concept that no act appears in external forms except by designated capability."[184] Kāshifī ties this manner of knowledge to human power alongside Divine Will. He appeals to the Sufi master when elaborating: "In such examples, one knows that appearances of the world in play, the details of which the perfect teacher brings to the attention of the imagination from within, are several."[185] To further illustrate the attitude a disciple ought to adopt, he quotes Rumi's *Masnavī*: "In craft, He is Azar and I am the idol/I become the thing He is making/If He makes of me a cup, a cup I become/and if He makes of me a dagger, I become a dagger/If he makes of me a spring, I give water/If he makes fire from me, I give light."[186] Quite tellingly, each of these examples possesses a clear practical utility—given that these verses liken God to an artisan, this makes some sense. But, Kāshifī's use of the poem seems to reverse the metaphor, as he cites it in a passage that treats the work of actual craftsmen rather as well as the metaphorical Craftsman.

Kāshifī also includes jugglers (or, literally, those who play with cups—*huqqah bāzān*) among performers whose work he takes to possess cosmic significance. Cup and ball games originate in "the revolution of the spheres, which the shine of the sun and moon sometimes hide with the other stars and sometimes make visible."[187] The reality of *huqqah bāzī*, then, "does not rely upon the revolution of time, for at every moment the ball of the firmament absents another *muhrah* of precious life and displays another image of whatever you are."[188] Kāshifī thus incorporates entertainment, as a trade, into the text's moral economy, by presenting it as a means

[184] Kāshifī, *Futuvvat nāmah*, p. 341
[185] *Ibid.* p. 341
[186] *Ibid.*; Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, Mawlānā, 1207-1273, *Masnavī-yi Ma'navī bih Tashīh-i Raynuld A. Nīkulsūn*, *Daftar-i Panjum* (Tehran: Amīr Kabīr, 1984), verses 1685-1688
[187] Kāshifī, *Futuvvat nāmah*, p. 343
[188] *Ibid.*

of illustrating religious truth. He continues, "all of these [performances] show a thing that in reality is not thus, so one ought to spend time in one's heart on the imagination-play of performers…and be neglectful of the eternal subsistence by means of the cycle of life."[189] Thus, performances have value as long as their unreality can communicate the unreality of the worldly life.

Khurāsānī also cites the performing arts in explaining the relative unreality of the phenomenal world. The chapter on asceticism (*zuhd*) and spiritual exercises (*riyāzat*) closes with a report from the *Kāfī*, narrated by Jābir ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Ansārī, in which the fifth Imam, Muhammad Bāqir, instructs Jābir, "see the world like wealth that you find in your dream, but is not there when you wake up…for before the people of the intellect and those who possess divine knowledge the world is like the shadow of a reality."[190] Just as Kāshifī explains the value of the theatrical arts by their use of fiction's ability to illustrate the unreality of worldly life, Khurāsānī likens the life of the world to a shadow play by way of the *Usūl al-Kāfī*.

Aside from public performance (*maʿrakah-bāzī*), Kāshifī uses hand-held tools (*qubzah*) as the other major category by which he groups trades and dwells upon the symbolic value of these implements when discussing the virtues of these professions. The blade (*tīgh*) is the first of the tools in this portion of the book. Kāshifī writes that the blade "is the mirror of battle, which has great honor," honor which derives from its role as a symbol of the relationship between Muhammad and ʿAlī: "in this *ummat*," the handle of the blade was taken up "by the lord of *vilāyat* (*hazrat-i shāh-i vilāyat*, i.e. ʿAlī), who took it from the ruler of the palace of the message (*sultān-i sarāpardah-yi risālat*, i.e. Muhammad), who gave him Zū al-Fiqār on the day of the

[189] Kāshifī, *Futuvvat nāmah*, p. 343
[190] Sabzawari and Faghfoory p. 128

Battle of Uhud."[191] Kāshifī proceeds by personifying the blade—he calls its back "the arms of the man who can raise the blade," says that its face is "placing it forward to repel the enemy of God," claims that its tongue speaks "by way of explaining" Qur'an 3:169 ("Think not of those killed in the way of God as dead. Rather, they are alive, with their Lord"), that its relatives are the rose and sweet basil, "for it would have blossomed whenever in the garden of the battlefield," its head its "being raised with manly skill," its essence is "specific intent for making [holy] war," and its joints are "being raised with chivalry and being preserved in manliness."[192]

The Fashion of *Futuvvat*

Kāshifī appeals to humanity's mythic origin by defining both Sufism and *futuvvat* as the means of preserving the primordial covenant, which in turn defines humanity's purpose by binding humans' existence to their recognition of God's lordship. Clothing and accessories play a central role in the text's appeals to mytho-historical accounts of human origins and serve to link *futuvvat*'s origins to those of the mystical path. For example, Kāshifī relates that, upon his descent from the peak of Serendib, Adam continuously tried to clothe himself with leaves, but they so irritated him and fell off so regularly that he cried out to God, who after three days, sent the Archangel Gabriel to Adam: "At the command of the Lord of Glory, Gabriel went out, brought a grape vine with him from heaven, and, in the Name of the Lord, conveyed instruction to Adam and bound his midsection with the vine. Adam thus found relief from this trial."[193] Kāshifī claims that story of Adam's girding is, in fact, inescapably bound up with the story of the covenant between God and humanity: while Adam was still bemoaning his inability to cover himself with leaves, Gabriel came to Adam and said "Adam, God, be He exalted, commands that

[191] Kāshifī, *Futuvvat nāmah*, pp. 350-351
[192] *Ibid.* p. 351
[193] Kāshifī, *Futuvvat nāmah*, p. 113

a covenant (*ʿahd-nāmah*) must be written for you and your progeny [testifying] to Our unity and your nobility and the nobility of the prophetic spirits from your lineage."[194] This strikes me as an interesting origin story in its own right--it seems to say that civilization, or at least the use of technology here represented by the ability to use a vine to fasten leaves over one's private parts, depends upon the compact between God and Adam, as the binding of Adam's midsection follows the covenant in the story. Kāshifī references Adam's son Seth when highlighting *futuvvat*'s laudable origins and close relationship to mysticism in the text's introduction: "In the time of Seth, there was no separation between the path (*tarīqat*) and *futuvvat*. From that time until the time of Abraham, the path was the same as *futuvvat* and *futuvvat* was the same as the path."[195] This passage also identifies both *tarīqat* and *futuvvat* by their common garment: "the garment (*libās*) of the people of the path and *futuvvat* was the cloak (*khirqah*)."[196]

Kāshifī also appeals to more recent Islamic history when explaining the events to which the *shadd* refers. "If they ask from what the midsection-binding has come in this *ummat*, say it came from the prophet [Muhammad], who bound the midsection of the *valī* [*ʿAlī*];" Kāshifī relates that after the sermon at Ghadīr Khumm, upon the return to Fātimah's tent, after praying over a cloth, Muhammad "bound that cloth to the midsection of the commander of the faithful and tied three knots: the first knot in the Name of God, the second in the name of the archangel Gabriel, and the third in his own name."[197] This story serves to introduce the major themes that also arise in Kāshifī's description of the guilds' midsection-binding ritual: the transfer of authority from teacher to student (as evidenced by the famous *man kuntu mawlā* declaration,

[194] *Ibid.* p. 114
[195] *Ibid.* pp. 6-7
[196] *Ibid.* p. 7
[197] Kāshifī, *Futuvvat nāmah,* p. 23

which immediately precedes the belt-fastening in the text), the use of the fastening to provide physical evidence of the bond between two men, and the framing of *futuvvat* as the repetition of prophetic examples.

Binding (*bastan*), the infinitive for the verbs these and other passages use to describe the girding, plays a broader role in the text's instructions governing its readers' conduct. Kāshifī proclaims *futuvvat* to possess twelve pillars, six external and six internal, all of which also use *bastan* to describe the practices of restraint comprising these pillars. In general, for this section, it might make sense to render *bastan* and its derivatives as "restraint;" the instruction that the first external pillar is "restraining the tongue from gossip, slander, lying, and vain speech (*band-i zabān ast az ghībat va bahtān va kazb va sukhan-i bīhūdah*)."[198] However, this translation might lead us to lose sight of the thematic links between *bastan*-as-restraint (i.e. what we see in these general ethical imperatives) and *bastan*-as-girding, which we saw in the myth of Adam's *shadd* by Gabriel, an act that Kāshifī binds to the primordial covenant. He calls each pillar a *band* (which is of course a substantive made from the present stem of *bastan*), but, immediately before this enumeration of the pillars of *futuvvat*, he explains that the reality of chivalry is maintaining the *ʿahd,* which Kāshifī defines as the pillars of the law (*arkān-i sharʿ*), which he in turn declares to consist of accepting "the command of…the master of the initiation (*shadd va bayʿat*), whose every custom will accord with the rules of the *sharīʿat*."[199] The *shadd* ritual, in which the initiate's waist is bound, appears in the lead-up to these twelve pillars, but, a whole *band* of the *arkān* is dedicated to governing the midsection and genitals: the sixth pillar is "restraint of the stomach and genitals from eating the impermissible or committing adultery, since an adulterer's

[198] *Ibid.* p. 24
[199] Kāshifī, *Futuvvat nāmah*,.p. 23

covenant (*ʿahd*) of *futuvvat* would certainly not be right, nor would a *harām*-eater's compact (*ʿaqd*) of *futuvvat*, as expressed in the verse: 'purity of the genitals and stomach is necessary/if your heart is to be adorned with chivalry."[200] Thus, the physical act of binding the midsection, as enacted in ritual, and the moral-symbolic binding of the midsection, as maintained by refraining from eating forbidden food or having illicit sex, exist along a continuum established by the word *bastan*, a continuum along which an ethic of government travels, from the obedience due the "master of the *shadd*" to the self-control expected of someone who would refrain from eating anything *harām* or committing *zinā*.

Belts symbolize control of one's conduct, but, additionally, the belts the texts associates with different classes represent the values associated with those classes. These belts differ in shape, but Kāshifī assigns each shape "an esoteric meaning, and links it to angels who were exemplars of virtue and self-sacrifice."[201] "If they ask what the silent *shadd* is, say that it is not casting the secret of one's heart or religion before any ignorant person and inwardly preserving love with friends, brothers, lovers, and trusted people while outwardly showing charity,"[202] Thus, even in its inward dimensions, the girding refers outward, to the initiate's interpersonal relations. Moreover, the different styles of looping the band during the girding also relate the initiate to everyone with whom they share a trade, vocation, or economic status. The *alif* girding is shaped like that letter and "is related to panegyrists and those related to them, and it is the most upright of the bindings," the *lām-alif* knot (i.e. the way of fastening the belt shaped like the combination of those letters) "is the binding of commoners and the poor," the *mīm* binding is reserved for "people of science and wisdom, like surgeons," and the "prayer-niche binding (*shadd-i mihrābī)*

[200] *Ibid.* 25
[201] Loewen, p. 561
[202] Kāshifī, *Futuvvat Nāmah,* p. 106

is the binding of water-bearers."[203] The text assigns each of these a symbolic meaning, as well: "the *alif* girding is a reference to rectitude, uniqueness, and uprightness, all of which are (attributes) of the *alif*, meaning that the possessor of this girding must be right in his heart, be a person of solitude in his interior, and in his exterior, to be constant in obedience."[204] The *lām-alif* refers to "the leaving of calling anything equal to God and lifting the sword of *lā* over the imaginary others in order for the Sultan of *illā* to manifest on the throne of the heart," and the explanation of the *mīm*-shaped band is similarly psychologizing: its meaning is "tying a knot around the ego (*nafs*) and impulses (*havā*); some have said it is attracting blame, for without blame, one does not reach the goal, as without teaching, one does not find the degree of the miraculous."[205] So he takes the belts' physical dimensions and the act of tying them to refer beyond themselves to angels and the virtues befitting a *fatā*. Knowledge of these virtues, however, is also a deployment of human power: for the belts to be meaningful, they need a master to fasten them around the disciple.

The transfer of virtues symbolized by the tying of these knots and the associated ceremony requires an elder to instruct the initiate and conduct the ritual investiture. This ceremony's terms reflect the text's wider attempt to associate *futuvvat* with human development: this chapter calls the initiate a "child" (*farzand*) and thus frames the teacher-student relationship in familial terms: "when they recite the sermon which enumerates the pillars that are mentioned in this *futuvvat nāmah*, they take the proof of the child ['s commitment] three times."[206] The deeds accompanying the initiation speech also set the pace the activities of the ceremony, which

[203] *Ibid.* pp. 106-107
[204] *Ibid.* p. 108
[205] *Ibid.*
[206] Kāshifī, *Futuvvat nāmah,* p. 136

the master punctuates by invoking various Divine Names: "the master places the band on the midsection of the child three times. He first puts it in his right hand and says '*Yā Hayy Yā Qayyām*,' and then puts it in his left hand and says, '*Yā Zā al-Jalāl wa al-Ikrām*,' and then a third time places it on the midsection of the child and says, 'Oh He, oh He Who is, Oh He other than Whom there is no God." [207] The initiate is to receive moral instruction from this ritual: "If they ask why they place it in the disciple's right hand at the time of the midsection-binding, say 'In order to accustom him to right and for him to know that he must be bound to right and not to play.'"[208] The next passage answers a similar question about the left hand: "it refers to the fact that everything the child does, they do to their heart, and the heart is on the left side."[209] This attention to the heart, and the notion that all actions are actions upon one's own heart, reflect an interiorizing approach to ritual.

Loewen observes, "Kashifi's detailed discussion of the *shadd* part of the initiation ceremony is unique in that, prior to him, no one had built such a strong spiritual and theological premise on which to interpret the ceremony of investiture."[210] To explain this apparent uniqueness, I would add that the "spiritual and theological premise" in light of which Kāshifī interprets the *shadd*, or girding ritual, speaks to the currency possessed by Sufi norms in the Timurid period: the moral authority possessed by a popular Naqshbandī and preacher like Kāshifī was, as we have seen central to the period's social order.

The *kamarband,* the band binding the midsection (from which, incidentally, the English word cummerbund derives) is one major physical dimension of the *Futuvvat nāmah*'s ethics, but

[207] *Ibid.,* p. 136
[208] *Ibid.* p. 140
[209] Kāshifī, *Futuvvat nāmah*, p. 140
[210] Loewen, p. 558

whole outfits, and not just belts, actually possess a spiritual significance. These appeals also lend symbolic value to the most seemingly mundane features of life as a *fatā*/*javānmard*, including one's clothing. Indeed, Kāshifī both reads the sartorial customs of the guilds as repetitions of prophetic examples and markets them by comparison to the Sufi *khirqah*. "Just as the *tarīqat* has specified dress, the clothes of *futuvvat* have been specified."[211] "Ibrāhīm, peace be upon him, specified the trousers (*sarvāl*) known as underclothes (*zīr jāmah*) for them [the clothes of *futuvvat*], and they are a part of the cloak (*khirqah*), just as *futuvvat* is part of the *tarīqat*."[212] Such a cloak, basically a Sufi uniform, actually receives a multiple-page treatment.

Brothers of Bread and Salt

Food and drink also acquire a spiritual significance in the *Futuvvat nāmah-yi sultānī*. They serve to incorporate the initiate into communal life, and the text explains these acts by reference to prophetic examples, but, such valorizations of these activities also direct the reader to the collective life of which the initiate becomes a part. These elements of the ritual represent the bonds between guild members. The emphasis on brotherhood suggests that homosociality is a central enough value that it governs the ritual's inclusion of what would otherwise be the mundane acts of eating and drinking. The expression *safā-yi nazar* represents the ethic that should govern relationships between brothers. Of the four pillars holding up disciple-taking, the fourth is "assuming the best of the master (literally, 'looking on him by the right hand,' *pīr bi-dast-i rāst nigāh kunad*) and having *safā'-i nazar*[213] for the brothers of the path;" the second of the manners of the midsection-binding is that the initiate's "comporting himself with *safā-yi*

[211] Kāshifī, *Futuvvat nāmah*, p. 7
[212] *Ibid.* p. 7
[213] In this case, the text (at least as edited by Mahjub) preserves the *hamzah* at the end of *safā'*, and thus marks the *izāfah* with a *kasrah*, though the other examples drop the *hamzah*, in which cases *safā'-i nazar* becomes *safā-yi nazar*.

nazar for the brothers," and, during the initiation ritual, the master "places his left hand on the head of the child and convenes the assembly with s*afā-yi nazar* ."[214] Loewen translates *safā-yi nazar* as "purity of insight," which, though basically accurate, misses some nuance.[215] *Nazar*, more than insight, refers to the gaze or view, and among things, appears in the compound *nazar-bāzī*, which refers to some Sufis' practice of gazing upon beautiful youths. *Safā*, meanwhile, is not only purity, but also joy or contentment as, for example, in the expression *bā safā'-i khātir*, "with cheerfulness of mind."[216] *Safā-yi nazar* therefore alludes not just to the purity of one's assumptions about one's fellows, but also to pleasure in gazing upon them.

The *halvā* served at the conclusion of the ritualized bonding that is the initiation ceremony, then, symbolizes this pleasure in the bonds formed in the assembly. After the presentation of the belt and the recitation of a number of supplications, the master "makes those present taste the saltwater and, if there is any *halvā*, distributes it."[217] The text lends this specific kind of *halvā* significance by taking it as a reference to the events of Ghadīr Khumm: "if they ask who made this *halvā*, say 'the Prophet, at Ghadīr Khumm...after he descended from the *minbar*, he went to Fātimah's house and bound the section of the Commander [of the faithful, ʿAlī], and asked what food was in the house;'" upon learning that the food available consisted of bread, oil, and dates, he commanded that these be combined and a piece distributed "to every one of those with bound midsections who were present, and, since the princes, Hasan and Husayn (may God be pleased with them), were not there, that a portion be set aside to be sent to

[214] Kāshifī, *Futuvvat nāmah*, p. 85, 99, 133
[215] Loewen, p. 562
[216] Steingass, Francis Joseph. *A Comprehensive Persian-English dictionary, including the Arabic words and phrases to be met with in Persian literature*. London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1892. p. 788
[217] Kāshifī, *Futuvvat nāmah*, p. 137

them."[218] In Persianate culture more generally, sweets serve a similar function as good omens in weddings and other celebrations. The references to Ghadīr Khumm here are also telling, given how central the event is in Shīʿī mytho-history.

Kāshifī, the "Shīʿitization of *Futuvvat*," and Sufism After the Safavids

Sufi *futuvvat* did not suddenly die out with the establishment of the Safavid state. Indeed, citing Taeschner and Golpinarli, Riza Yildirim argues that the Shīʿī leanings of al-Razavī's 1524 *Futuvvat-nāmah-yi kabīr* derive from its relationship to "Safavid propaganda in Anatolia."[219] However, Yildirm modifies the previous claims by arguing that Kāshifī's *Futuvvat-nāmah*, with its ʿAlid sympathies, reflects pre-Safavid Shīʿī leanings within *futuvvat* literature. In the introduction, Kāshifī defines *futuvvat* as "the science whose source is Abraham, whose pole is ʿAlī, and whose seal is the Mahdī."[220] Khurāsānī makes similar appeals to Shīʿī figures in the *Tuhfah-yi ʿAbbāsī*, though the differences in the appeals made in the *Futuvvat nāmah-yi sultānī* and the *Tuhfah-yi ʿAbbāsī* reflect the different political cultures of the Timurid and Safavid period; Kāshifī certainly betrays ʿAlid loyalties, but tends not to cite Shīʿī imams other than ʿAli or Husayn as sources for the practices he describes. It is, however, worth noting that the *sultān* of the *Futuvvat-Nāmah-yi Sultānī*'s title is the eighth Shīʿī imam, whose tomb in Mashhad was already something of a spiritual landmark in the Khurāsān of Kāshifī's time. The *Tuhfah-yi ʿAbbāsī*, meanwhile, draws heavily on the Shīʿī hadith collections that were produced and widely circulated in the seventeenth century.

[218] *Ibid.* pp. 128-129
[219] Yildirim, Riza."Shīʿitisation of the Futuwwa Tradition in the Fifteenth Century," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 40:1 (2013), p. 54
[220] Kāshifī, *Futuvvat nāmah*, p. 6

The *Tuḥfah-yi ʿAbbāsī* thus mainly uses quotes from these collections to define asceticism. It defines the asceticism of the common (*ʿavvām*) as "avoiding that which is forbidden (*harām*)" on the basis of a statement from Imam al-Sādiq quoted in the *Kāfī*, "beware! Avoid that which is declared forbidden (*harām*) for you in the world."[221] He also uses a quote from Jaʿfar al-Sādiq when defining the asceticism of the elite (*khāss*), this time citing Ibn Bābūyah's *Man lā yahdarahu al-faqīh*, which defines this elite asceticism as "avoiding that which is forbidden for fear of punishment and abandoning that which is permitted out of fear of reckoning."[222] To define the third level of *zuhd*, that of the elite of the elite, Khurasani uses another quote of Jaʿfar al-Sādiq's from the *Kāfī*, "When a man of faith (*mu'min*) empties himself of the world, he achieves an exalted position and eminence in the world and experiences the sweetness of God's love…such a man of faith will not mingle with anyone except through the sweetness of Divine love," suggesting that the ultimate level of asceticism is one in which love for God stands in for mundane phenomena in the believer's worldly experience.[223] The verse from Shaykh Bahā'ī that Khurāsānī selects to explain the preceding quote suggests this. It reads: "What is asceticism? To leave the world and the people for Him/To lose all one has in the first round of the game of love."[224] The *Tuhfah* thus begins its discussion of asceticism not by defining it in terms of discrete, practical, characteristics, but rather in terms of the values it reflects as endorsed by the representations of the Shīʿī imams that appear in Safavid hadith scholarship. However, it does also explain the practical significance of *zuhd* and *riyāzat*.

The subsequent chapters cite similar sources when treating a number of practices and

[221] Sabzawari and Faghfoory, p. 128
[222] Sabzawari and Faghfoory, p. 122
[223] *Ibid.* p. 123
[224] *Ibid.*

qualities that we can take to make up *zuhd* and *riyāzat*. These include silence (*samt*), hunger (*jawʿ*) and night vigils (*sahar*), solitude and retreat (*ʿuzlat* and *khalvat*), remembrance of God (*zikr*), trust in God (*tawakkul*), contentment (*rizā*) and submission (*taslīm*), forty-day worship, music, and ecstasy and swooning (*wajd* and *ghashīyat*). All of these, of course, had already figured in both Sufis' own descriptions of their practices and, in some cases (like that of music), in rejections of Sufism, before the *Tuhfah*. In the *Tuhfah*, though, the author defends them as specifically Shīʿī, referencing the aforementioned hadith collections, and defines them not only by their association with Sufism, but by their association with the virtues that distinguish "real" scholars from those who only claim knowledge for the sake of self-aggrandizement. This, by extension, identifies "real" Sufis with "real" scholars, by saying that they both possess the same knowledge, which itself derives from the same practices and virtues.

Among the other benefits these exercises and attitudes offer, the *Tuhfah*, invests them with particular epistemic value. The chapter on silence cites a quotation from Imam Rizā in the *Kāfī*: "the signs of the science of the Hereafter are patience, knowledge, and silence. Indeed, silence is one of the gates of wisdom. It attracts love and is the guide toward all good."[225] When discussing hunger, it cites Tabarsī's *Makārim al-akhlāq*, which includes a hadith that calls hunger "the light of wisdom."[226] Its chapter on *ʿuzlat* and *khalvat* includes a selection from the *Kāfī*'s chapter on intellect and ignorance, in which Jaʿfar al-Sādiq declares, "patience in loneliness is the sign of the strength of the intellect."[227] This same chapter of the *Kāfī* also furnishes the quote that concludes the *Tuhfah*'s chapter on *zikr*, as it declares, "If you see a group of people who invoke God, sit with them. If you are a learned man you shall benefit more from your

[225] Sabzawari and Faghfoory, p. 133
[226] *Ibid.* p. 137
[227] *Ibid.* p. 151

knowledge, and if you are ignorant they shall teach you."[228]

The *Tuḥfah-yi ʿAbbāsī* does not specifically concern itself with a wide variety of professions, but, in casting knowledge as a domain of moral concern, it also turns its attention to the conduct of religious scholars and preachers and offers commentary on their moral status and the varieties of knowledge to which they have access. In this particular concern for the value of different classes of *ʿulamā*, it participates in a particularly Safavid (or, more specifically, post-ʿAbbās I) contest over the political status of religious scholarship. Although the Safavid period is often understood as a triumph for a homogenous Shīʿī clerical hierarchy, there is little pre-ʿAbbās I evidence to support such a narrative. However, by the era of ʿAbbās II when Muʿazzin Khurāsānī was writing, scholars had acquired considerable power, which seems to have influenced the *Tuhfah*'s concern for the moral status of scholarship itself. This commentary on knowledge and the practices that make it truly worthwhile specifically targets scholars who limit themselves to exoteric concerns or use their scholarship to indulge their greed, vanity, or prejudice. The text's frequent citation of hadith collections like the *Usul al-kāfī* and its de-valuation of *qīyās* further reflect the religious atmosphere of their period by speaking to the prominence of Akhbārism in the second half of the seventeenth century. In this, the *Tuhfah* adopts what was, at the time, a dominant mode of religiosity in service of Sufism, binding the text's authority to the authority of the Shīʿī imams as represented in the then-new hadith collections.

Mu'azzin Khurāsānī's adoption of Akhbārī scholarship speaks to a more religious flexibility within the milieu of seventeenth-century Iran than is recognized in scholarship that frames the late Safavid period as one of Shīʿī fanaticism, or, in Graham's terms, "ideological

[228] Sabzawari and Faghfoory, p. 169

dictatorship." To return to the wider Safavid case, Nile Green's more recent scholarship strikes a considerably different pose from Lewisohn or Graham in explaining what appears in other sources as the fanaticism of the Safavids' followers. When discussing the early Safavid period, he concedes that the *qizilbāsh* "were fiercely loyal to their masters;" and notes that in the absence of "their side of the story," it is only based on the poetry of Shah Ismāʿīl himself that we can conclude that they "venerated him as a living incarnation of God."[229] This need not mean that the *qizilbāsh* were simply irrational or superstitious: this veneration may instead have been a function of a political theology comparable to that of Marc Bloch's *rois thaumaturges* in early modern Europe. Such a theology was "perpetuated by ritual performance as much as written doctrine, disseminated through rumours of the miraculously curative powers of the royal touch, and rendered permanent through the building of religio-dynastic mausolea;" such monarchs "were not unique to the European experience and emerged from common political demands on the leaders of the more complex societies emerging across Eurasia in this period."[230] This model of charismatic monarchy could thus have been quite handy in addressing the "emotional and logistical" challenges arising from "founding a new state and binding its peoples together."[231] The Safavid house arose in an "unregulated religious environment" that "allowed such intellectual resources of Sufi tradition as the idioms of the master's authority and the powers of God's Friend to be deployed towards such self-aggrandizing ends" as the establishment of a new monarchy "without effective challenge."[232] The Safavid shahs' realization that "the framework of a Sufi brotherhood was ultimately insufficient to hold together an entire population," however,

[229] Green, p. 175
[230] *Ibid.* p. 138
[231] *Ibid.* p. 138
[232] *Ibid.* p. 139

brought about "the gradual demotion" of the *qizilbāsh*'s role at court and the "gradual implementation of Shīʿī Islam as a 'state religion.'"[233] While the early agents of this "gradual implementation" were drawn from Jabal ʿAmil in modern-day Lebanon, their labor in Iran consisted mostly of "attracting students and writing legal guidebooks in simple Persian."[234] Sources like Lewisohn and Graham claim that the Safavid royal house was indiscriminate in its suppression of Sufi orders, including those who, like the Niʿmat Allāhīyah, were willing to adopt Shīʿism, but Green takes a more nuanced view. He points out that their influence waned not as a result of outright aggression, but because "their masters were either co-opted as provincial governors or retired to country estates."[235] Thus, "even in the major case in which Sufism was suppressed in Safawi Iran, the chief factor was the replacement of an older fissiparous tribal Sufism with a standardized, legalistic model of Shīʿī Islam which, unlike even the largest brotherhoods, could unite an entire population."[236] For Green, it was specifically under Shāh ʿAbbās I, who ruled from 1587 to 1627, and not the preceding Safavid monarchs, that the court came to see Sufi orders as having outlived their usefulness. By that time, new slave forces had sidelined the "Sufi-affiliated" *qizilbāsh*, who had previously furnished the bulk of the Safavid military. Thus, "matters came to a head" in 1593 when the Nuqtavīyah (a millenarian movement with a large Qizilbāsh following) rose against the crown.[237]

Kathryn Babayan's *Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs* opens with a considerably more detailed discussion of this same event. She selects Shāh ʿAbbās I's three-day abdication from the throne (starting on August 5, 1593) as an emblematic moment for the shifts that occurred in

[233] Green, p. 141
[234] *Ibid.* p. 161
[235] *Ibid.* p. 161
[236] *Ibid.* p. 175
[237] Green, pp. 161-162

Iran's cultures of rule and religion over the course of Safavid period. His departure from the throne was a symbolic gesture that figured as part of the campaign to put down the Nuqtavī rebellion. On August 8, 1593, the man who had replaced Shah ʿAbbās on the throne, a Nuqtavī named Ustād Yūsufi Tarkishdūz, was executed and Shah ʿAbbās returned to his seat of power. This Ustād Yūsufi Tarkishdūz was a Nuqtavī who had disclosed a number of the group's "secrets" to the shah while under the impression that the king had befriended him as a function of his service to the court as a quiver-maker (*tarkishdūz*). One of these secrets was a belief that the turn of the Islamic millennium would condition the rise of a new "Persian (Ajami) dispensation" that would displace "Arab (Muslim) rule. This Persian cycle of rule was to be inaugurated by a Nuqtavi master who had attained truth and would conjoin his spiritual authority with temporal sovereignty."[238] In reaction to this prediction, Shah ʿAbbās consulted his own astrologer, and, having concluded that the astrological conditions were indeed suited to a change in rule, had the quiver-maker enthroned, and then, when the hour was deemed auspicious, had him executed and inaugurated his own new cycle of rule.[239] Whatever their Sufi influences, the Nuqtavīs massacred following their rebellion did not die at the hands of a fundamentally anti-Sufi "ideological dictatorship" (as Graham would have it), nor did they die for Sufism; the killings occurred to preserve one absolute monarch's rule in the face of a rival's equally absolutist claim to the throne.

Questioning Safavid Persecution

The fate of Sufism and of the title "Sufi" remained uncertain even at the height of Safavid power under Shah ʿAbbās I. This should help offer a preliminary challenge to the myth of

[238] Babayan, Kathryn. *Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs: Cultural Landscapes of Early Modern Iran* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002). pp. 3-4
[239] Babayan, pp. 4-5

constant oppression of Sufis by a monolithic Shīʿī clergy from the Safavid period to the present. At first glance, the sidelining of the Qizilbāsh with a new officer corps of Georgian and other slaves may seem to have removed Sufi charisma from the empire's lexicon of political authority, but, even a full century after the completion of the transition from *pīr* to *shāh*, "Sufi" retained favorable valences when used to refer to loyal subjects. Iskandar Baig Munshī discusses the 1614-15 massacre of a group of dervishes in Lāhījān in his chronicle of the reign of Shah ʿAbbās I. He explains that the act distinguished the "real" Sufis (which is to say, the shah's loyal subjects) from non-Sufis (which is to say, the apparently disloyal members of a group that those of us on the outside might also describe as "Sufi").[240] The case of these massacred and officially non-Sufi dervishes of Lāhījān should complicate the picture of high Safavid religiosity by demonstrating that Shah ʿAbbās I's persecutions were not necessarily suppressions of Sufism in and of itself; "Sufi" could refer, in the parlance of Shah ʿAbbās I's court, to a loyal subject, which, if nothing else, meant that there were still some positive resonances associated with the term, and that Sufis were therefore not objects of Safavid persecution merely because they were identified by the term "Sufi."

There were undeniably a number of Safavid scholars who opposed both the Sufism of the orders and the intellectualized Sufi-philosophical synthesis of the school of Isfahan, especially in the seventeenth century and onward. That being said, many of the criticisms contained in the anti-Sufi polemics composed during the period of Shah ʿAbbās II, like the *Hadīqat al-Shīʿah* and *Salwat al-Shīʿah* were also previously voiced by Sufis themselves (and would in fact be repeated by later Sufis as well). Rizvi notes that although the *Hadīqat* condemns the pantheism of the

[240] Rizvi, Sajjad. "A Sufi Theology Fit for a Shi'i King" in *Sufism and Theology*, Ayman Shihadeh, ed. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007. p. 85

"Sufi" doctrines of incarnation (*hulūl*) and union (*ittihād*), "even the Sufi al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) seems to have had reservations" about such notions.[241] Mīr Lawhī condemns Sufis for a variety of deviant acts and beliefs in the *Salwat al-Shīʿah*, but again, earlier Sufis actually echo many of his attacks: even if "the so-called Hallājiyya are the particular object of condemnation because of their indulgence in music and dancing," Sufi support of music has never been unanimous; Sufis and anti-Sufis were even sometimes similar in their criticisms of what I will call "popular religion" for lack of a better term. I mainly point this out to question a narrative that would position Safavid Shīʿism as perennially responsible for Iranian Sufis' misfortunes. It is especially noteworthy that Shah ʿAbbās II, under whom the *Hadīqat* and *Salwat* were composed, was a prolific enough patron of dervishes to be nicknamed *darvīsh-dūst* ("dervish-lover"). Even if the name were meant as an insult, it is difficult to see the entire Safavid dynasty, or even just its later monarchs, as rabidly anti-Sufi in light of such a reputation for friendliness to dervishes.

Conclusion: Ethics and Governmentality

Tavernier records dervishes holding "plays" in the bazaars of major Safavid cities as late as the period after the years of Isfahani absolutism.[242] The plays Tavernier describes featured pairs of dervishes, one older and one younger, wandering the bazaar and eventually taking up a corner and attempting to articulate their values to the gathered shoppers and craftsmen by conducting scripted question and answer sessions. To bring this discussion full-circle, we should remember that Kāshifī's *Futuvvat nāmah* is structured as a collection of questions and answers. In light of that fact, it seems reasonable to conclude that it is a literary artifact of a similar

[241] Rizvi p. 86
[242] Babayan, p. 443

practice under the Timurids. If that were the case, it would suggest that a similar style of Sufism survived in Iran's urban popular culture well into the seventeenth century, even after the exile of many of the Sufi orders that were most prominent in the Timurid period. Given that Kāshifī was an itinerant preacher as well as a *litterateur*, he would be especially likely to have had firsthand experience with such bazaar plays. Thus, even with the Safavid monopolization of guilds on the one hand and antipathy to popular Sufism on the other, Sufism seems to have remained central to a popular urban ethic. In this way, it continued to govern subjects' conduct even without state support, though, of course, the authors of texts on which I have focused were, whether in the Timurid or Safavid period, quite implicated in the affairs of state.

In "Governmentality," Foucault noted that the long transition from the Renaissance to the nineteenth century in Europe witnessed a profusion of texts attesting to a "double movement" of "state centralization on the one hand and of dispersion and religious dissidence on the other," a movement which "raises the issue of how one must be spiritually ruled and led."[243] State centralization involves both the promulgation of new laws and the spread of a bureaucracy capable of enforcing them. But, the nation-state's law is just one way of governing—without the centralizing side of this double movement, spirituality, the practice of the self, plays a much larger role in governing by requiring subjects to govern themselves. This reflects a point Foucault makes in his later seminar *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*: the transition to the legalism of the disciplinary state has led modern westerners, "to take law…as the general principle of every rule in the realm of human practice," but, despite this, "law itself is, rather, part of a much more general history of the techniques and technologies of practices of the subject

[243] Foucault, Michel, Rosi Braidotti, and Colin Gordon (trans. and ed.). "Governmentality" in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991). p. 88

with regard to himself, of techniques and technologies which are independent of the form of the law and which have priority with regard to it."[244] I would propose that Kāshifī's literary *oeuvre* attests to the fact that Sufism was, in the Timurid period, one of the major vehicles for such technologies, as it endorsed practices by which individuals could shape themselves as ethical agents, both by articulating these practices in relationships of personal power through their contact with a teacher or master and other such formalized interpersonal bonds. Given the distance of the sovereign in the pre-modern world, power was distributed throughout various social networks, through which power caused "the production or enhancement of various 'goods,' such as knowledge, health, wealth, or social cohesion."[245] Sufi orders and urban guilds (whose rhetoric appealed to *futuvvat* or *javānmardī*) were among the social networks through which power produced and distributed knowledge, wealth, and social cohesion.

As can be argued for much pre-modern ethical writing, Sufi writing on normative conduct was also a form of managing individuals' conduct in the absence of a state with a strong judicial apparatus. Kāshifī's Sufism seems to aim to foster social ties and offer a symbolic vocabulary that lends ethical weight to the daily life of its participants. This proposal is admittedly a slightly modified take on older presentations of Islamic history: Marshall Hodgson already proposed long ago that Sufism was the glue holding many parts of Islamic societies together. Interpersonal relationships and daily life "were conditioned by local groupings, such as town quarters and guilds and men's societies, in which an individual's special status in the group, as apprentice or master or client or notable, mattered as much as his universal status as a

[244] Foucault, Gros, and Burchill p. 112
[245] Rouse, p. 102

Muslim."[246] That being the case, Sufism's moral vocabulary and structure of authority helped deepen personal bonds and ethical commitments: "the spiritual authority of the Sûfî pîrs and the ethic they preached proved able to relate the conscience of ordinary men to the institutions they needed, but in a way that allowed an individualized status to particular personal and group relationships."[247] This quote describes Islamdom's "Early Middle Period," which according to Hodgson lasted from 945 to 1273, but, Sufi networks played a central role in the distribution of power and knowledge throughout the Timurid period.

Pre-modern society operated in the absence of states bureaucratized or centralized to any meaningful degree. In the absence of a government capable of monopolizing violence fully enough to apply the coercive force necessary for the preservation of social order without ideological reinforcement, local guilds and other such loyalty networks could regulate members' conduct on a smaller scale. Thus, for Hodgson, Sufi orders and the "futuwwah men's clubs," which were "permeated with a Sûfî spirit," helped "carry a larger part of the burden of maintaining social order."[248] The "burden of maintaining social order" was a likely a heavy one, in general. Despite having been composed, respectively, shortly before and well into the Safavid period, Husayn Vāʿiz Kāshifī's Timurid *Futuvvat nāmah-yi sultānī* and Mu'azzin Khurāsānī's Safavid *Tuhfah-yi ʿAbbāsī* both appeal to common rhetorical devices and intellectual disciplines suggests that they participate in a common culture of ethics and knowledge, suggesting a greater continuity in the claims made in support of effort to maintain

[246] Hodgson, Marshall. *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization, Volume Two: The Expansion of Islam in the Middle Periods* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1977), pp. 220-221
[247] Hodgson, pp. 220-221
[248] Hodgson, p. 221

social order than is generally accepted in studies of the transition between the Timurid and Safavid periods.

Chapter Three: Sufism Beyond Itself: Two Nineteenth-Century Responses to Rumi's *Masnavī*

In 1931's *Rāz Gushā*, Kayvān Qazvīnī, a preacher and former disciple of multiple Sufi *pīr*s, including Safīʿ Alī Shāh and later Sultān ʿAlī Shāh, who went on to criticize Sufism, listed five features all Sufis have in common. The list includes a preference for esotericism, a bent toward moral refinement and universal peace (*sulh-i kull*), and the ascetic avoidance of worldly pleasure (*khush-guzarānī*), and the acceptance of "Rumi's *Masnavī* in their hearts, even if they deny that in front of people."[249] So, by the early Pahlavi period, the *Masnavī* had come to occupy such an authoritative position that, even in the eyes of some critical observers, it helped to define Sufism itself. Well before Kayvān Qazvīnī's Pahlavi-era use of the *Masnavī* to define Sufism, two figures representing divergent strains of Qajar intellectual culture, Hādī Sabzavārī (1797-1873) and the Russian-educated Azeri *litterateur* Fath ʿAli Ākhūndzādah (1812-1878) both commented upon Rumi's *Masnavī*. Sabzavārī, who was also a poet in his own right, authored a commentary (*sharh*) on it. Ākhūndzādah, meanwhile, quotes the *Masnavī* in his correspondence.

Given Ākhūndzādah's reputation as a materialist and opponent of religion, one might assume that his writing on Rumi would treat him with unconcealed scorn. Farzin Vahdat claims that Ākhūndzādah specifically rejected "Rumi, Shabestari, Jami, and other Sufi thinkers before him" as "ineffective" communicators with positions incompatible with his ontology, through which Ākhūndzādah attempted "to create a human subjectivity through his radical views on Islam."[250] Similarly, a biographical pamphlet that Soviet Azeribaijan published in praise of Ākhūndzādah says that his contributions to materialist philosophy were so great as to shake "the

[249] Anzali, Ata. *Safavid Shiʿism, the Eclipse of Sufism, and the Emergence of ʿIrfan*. Dissertation: Rice University, 2012. p. 272

[250] Vahdat, Farzin. *God and Juggernaut: Iran's Intellectual Encounter with Modernity.* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2002). p. 47

very ground" of "mysticism and all kinds of devilry."[251] Neither Sabzavārī and Ākhūndzādah can neatly be identified as Sufis, so their recognition of Rumi as an intellectual authority suggests that the Qajar period gave Sufism a life outside of the master-disciple structure, in that two major thinkers of the period both adopted Rumi in service to their own projects. When making this claim, I should add that I am not arguing that Ākhūndzādah was really sympathetic to Sufis or had more mystical aspirations than has been previously recognized. I am instead arguing that Sufism's cultural influence need not be measured by the number of people who would identify themselves as followers of a particular master, nor even by the number of people who would identify as sympathetic readers of Rumi. I would argue that the presence of apparently Sufi-derived vocabulary in outwardly non-Sufi or anti-Sufi writing is quite a telling marker of its influence, as it suggests that it can shape the rhetoric of writers who fall well beyond its traditional boundaries

Background on Reform

Though contemporary scholarship (like that of Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi) has come to question the equation of modernization to Westernization, interest in reform (*tanzīmāt*) did, early in the nineteenth century, result in Iranians' pursuit of education in Europe. The Qajar dynasty's early efforts at state building and the attempt to mobilize new technology in service of the nation-state involved the importation of a "mathematical-scientific apparatus" from Europe. Iranians first received Western-style educations in scientific disciplines because "the Qajars found themselves powerless before the onslaught of modernity," which arrived at Iran's borders "in its most traumatizing and therefore most awakening form, militaristic imperialism:" in response to the humiliation of the 1813 treaty of Gulistān, which concluded the first Russo-

[251] Jafarov, J. *Mirza Fathali Akhundov*. (Baku: Azerbaijan State Publishing House, 1962). p. 23

Persian war, the crown prince, ʿAbbās Mīrzā, dispatched five students to England to study firearms manufacture, artillery, engineering, chemistry, and European languages.[252] Mīrzā Sālih, the group's language scholar, expressed early enthusiasm for the more idealistic dimensions of European (specifically British) political thought: "the Magna Carta, 'freedom of the people,' the House of Commons, and the concept of representative democracy."[253] Despite Mīrzā Sālih's interests, Vahdat argues that much nineteenth-century sociopolitical thought was so strongly positivist because of the scientific and technical bent of the disciplines that the Qajar state prioritized when exposing Iranians to modern education, both when dispatching scholars to Europe and with the establishment of Iran's first polytechnic institute, the *Dār al-Funūn*, in 1848.

Vahdat introduces *God and Juggernaut,* his work on the modernity in Iran, by describing subjectivity and universality as the "two pillars of modernity" and arguing that Kant and Hegel were the philosophers whose sociopolitical thought first affirmed the centrality of these two pillars.[254] Vahdat follows Hegel in defining these pillars as follows: subjectivity is "the property characterizing the autonomous, self-willing, self-defining, and self-conscious individual agent," which, closely tied to the premium placed on freedom in Enlightenment liberalism, affirms the capacity for "positive action on the world" that arises from the individual's basic freedom and knowledge. Universality, "the mutual recognition among the plurality of subjects of each other's subjectivity," has "the bourgeois principle of formal equality before the law" as its practical correlate.[255] For Vahdat, as for Hegel, civil society is the arena of modern social life in which

[252] Vahdat, p. 27
[253] *Ibid.* p. 28
[254] *Ibid.* p. 1
[255] Vahdat, pp. 1-2

these principles meet. To fully grasp the subject as constructed in modern social thought, though we must extend our gaze further back in history, to the "Cartesian moment."

Vahdat argues that Descartes' conception of subjectivity entered Iran by way of its objectification of the world, which gave "human subjectivity its concrete and practical aim—the mathematical-scientific apparatus." This indirectly introduced the political dimensions of this newfound emphasis on subjectivity to Iranians by way of their exposure to the technical sciences they started studying in Europe during the era of ʿAbbās Mīrzā's reforms.[256]

While Descartes, Kant, and Hegel are all certainly central to the history of European philosophy these men, despite their prominence, did not found modernity in Iran; modernity was not simply invented by Europeans and then exported to the Middle East without any input from the people actually living there. Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi's *Refashioning Iran* illustrates the very important point that "the dialogical relations between the West and the Rest" were just as "essential to the formation of the ethos of modernity" in Europe as they were in Iran and India.[257] Tavakoli-Targhi specifically cites the career of the aforementioned language scholar, Mīrzā Sālih, as evidence of the dependence of self-consciously modern European scholars (and the disciplines they founded) upon "native" (in this case Iranian) intellectuals. Mīrzā Sālih not only acted as Sir Gore Ouseley's guide when he visited Iran in 1811-1812, but also wrote a collection of Persian dialogues that would appear in English as part of William Price's *Grammar of the Three Principal Oriental Languages*. This is of course just one small example illustrating a much larger point, that the knowledge of those Europeans who cast themselves as the representatives of "Occidental rationality" by virtue of their innovation in contrast to non-Europeans' supposed

[256] *Ibid.* p. 2
[257] Tavakoli-Targhi, Mohamad. *Refashioning Iran: Orientalism, Occidentalism, and Historiography* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave, 2001). p. 34

reliance upon tradition in fact depended upon their "non-Western contemporaries" when establishing "Orientalism as a field of academic inquiry."[258] Mīrzā Sālih can thus symbolize the coevality of modern intellectual life in Iran and England.

Tavakoli-Targhi also notes that it was specifically in the nineteenth century that *Iran* itself took on a distinct meaning as a term designating territory to which occupants were expected to feel a bond, which is to say that it came to be figured as a nation-state as represented by the Persian term *vatan*, which also acquired its specifically nationalist connotations in the nineteenth century. These developments depended upon earlier trends--specifically, the notion that Iran was an entity distinct from the rest of the Islamic world, which made its way into the nationalism of the nineteenth century by way of frequent appeals to pre-Islamic mythology (for example, it became much more common to name princes after characters from the *Shāhnāmah*). This arose from a historiography that originated in an Early Modern Mazdean revival movement: according to Tavakoli-Targhi, the *dasātīrī* epistles of Āzar Kayvān (1533-1618) and his followers "provided a master-narrative well suited to the needs of nineteenth-century nationalists" by presenting an Iran-centered "mythistorical narrative inaugurated by the pre-Adamite Mahabad."[259] These texts supposedly first appeared in a "celestial language" (*zabān-i āsmānī*), which was subsequently rendered into a Persian devoid of Arabic loanwords. From the circle of this Zoroastrian-*Ishrāqī* philosopher, these texts made their way into a prominent 1651 dictionary of Persian published in Tabriz, and from there, inspired the efforts of the nationalist, historian, and jurist Ahmad Kasravī (1890/1-1946) "to purge from Persian any 'alien' Arabic lexicons."[260] Thus, the "secular nationalist" treatment of the nation itself as the source of one's

[258] Tavakoli-Targhi, pp. 32-33
[259] Tavakoli-Targhi, p. 87
[260] *Ibid.* p. 88

identity and moral status, and the perception of Iran as a nation with a distinct historical trajectory privileged more than that of Islam both originated in a context that would likely seem religious to most contemporary observers, given Āzar Kayvān's incorporation of "the terminology of Islamic Illuminationism into a manifestly Mazdean perspective."[261]

Vahdat proposes that Ākhūndzādah's emphasis on culture, as expressed in his focus on literary and linguistic issues, arose from his observation that three or so decades of exposure to the purely technical dimensions of European sciences had not, by themselves, hastened progress in Iran. Indeed, Ākhūndzādah presented linguistic reform as a necessary precondition for scientific progress: "How can we translate European books into Arabic, Persian, or Turkish when our three languages lack scientific terminologies? We have no choice but to adopt those terms into our language."[262] Ākhūndzādah is perhaps best known for his proposals to reform the Perso-Arabic alphabet or replace it in favor of hybrid Latin-Cyrillic alphabet. In this, he participated in the same effort to reduce the Arabic influence on Persian that Tavakoli-Targhi frames as originating in Āzar Kayvān's work. He, for example, praised a children's book on Iranian history, Jalāl al-Dīn Mīrzā's *Nāmah-yi khusravān* by telling the author, "Your Excellency has freed our tongue from the domination of the Arabic language."[263] Aside from his proposals for language reform, Ākhūndzādah also wrote a number of plays, a novel, and letters, both as personal correspondence and as a correspondence between two fictional princes, most of which reflect his broader concern with reform. This reformism was an ethos; properly modern subjects were to fashion themselves into the agents and representatives of a reformed culture. More than

[261] *Ibid.*
[262] Tavakoli-Targhi, p. 110
[263] Vahdat, p. 100

this, though, Ākhūndzādah's reformist interests still organized themselves around religious objects, despite his reputation for atheism and rejection of Islam.

Ākhūndzādah's Atheism and Nationalism

Ākhūndzādah's concern with creating a culture independent of Arabic influence certainly seems to have extended to an attempt to distance Islam from Iranian identity. He did, after all, write a letter of complaint to the editor of the newspaper *Millat-i sanīyah* because of that newspaper's use of the image of a mosque as a logo: "if by *millat-i Iran* you mean the specific connotation prevalent today, the mosque, which is a general symbol for all Muslims, is not an appropriate logo;" a combination of pre-Islamic and Safavid iconography struck Ākhūndzādah has more distinctly Iranian (and therefore preferable).[264] This distaste for a "a general symbol for all Muslims" is among many features of Ākhūndzādah's thought that have led observers like Vahdat and Hamid Algar to cast him as an atheist or materialist; Algar begins his entry on Ākhūndzādah in the *Encyclopedia Iranica* by calling him "one of the earliest and most outspoken atheists to appear in the Islamic world."[265] When rejecting the Arabic script, though, Ākhūndzādah did explicitly deny religion; he concluded, "the old alphabet should be used for the affairs of the hereafter, and the new alphabet for the affairs of this world."[266] The dismissive tone of this remark is unmistakable, but nonetheless, even if it did not grant any particular value to either "the old alphabet" or "the affairs of the hereafter," such a remark reveals that Ākhūndzādah was at least not so completely committed to an atheist position (or linguistic

[264] Tavakoli-Targhi, p. 101
[265] Algar, Hamid. "Akundzada," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, I/7, pp. 735-740; an updated version is available online at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/akundzada-playwright (accessed on 13 May 2014).
[266] Tavakoli-Tarhi, p. 110

purification) as to attempt the wholesale removal of either the Arabic script or the mention of the hereafter even from his own vocabulary.

Ākhūndzādah's 1850 plays do, however, have a number of religious targets when they satirize the apparently irrational features of life in the Caucuses and Iran. His *Hikāyat-i Mullā Ibrāhīm Khalīl Kīmīyāgar* mocks the titular alchemist, "the credulity and ignorance of those who allowed themselves to be exploited by the alchemist," and "a dervish and a mollā," who are "secondary targets of satire" in the portrayal of "religion as equivalent to superstition." His second play similarly attacks a religion and the superstition he associated with it. Its title is *Hikāyat-i Musyū Zhurdān Hakīm-i Nabātāt va Darvīsh Mastʿ Alī Shāh Jādūkun-i Mashhūr*, and in it, Ākhūndzādah targets "magic and the superstitious women that have recourse to it."[267] In addition to the designation of the magician character as "darvīsh," the name Mastʿ Alī Shāh also calls to mind the titles common in the Niʿmat Allāhī *silsilah*.[268] According to Hamid Algar, "Neʿmat-Allāh Walī and Sufis of his line" came to equate their *darvīsh* status to kingship by including "'shah' in their Sufi names" and, starting with Niʿmat Allāh Valī himself, pioneered the use of the term *tāj (crown) in reference to* "dervish headgear."[269] The play juxtaposes these superstitious figures to a European scientist, which at first glance, seems a ready endorsement of Westernization and science at the expense of religion and tradition.

Though Ākhūndzādah wrote the above-mentioned plays in Azeri (and of course, lived much of his life outside of Iran's borders after Russian expansion into Armenia and Azerbaijan),

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[267] Algar, "Akundzada"

[268] The portrayal of women as the gullible consumers of the magic in which the play's dervish traffics should also raise (admittedly as yet underdeveloped questions) about the performances of gender that Sufi ethics prescribed in the second half of the nineteenth century.

[269] Shaki, Mansour and Hamid Algar, "Darvīš," *Encyclopedia Iranica, VII/1, pp. 72-76, accessible online at:* http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/darvis *(accessed 13 July 2016).*

he was born in Nūkhah in 1812, when it still fell within Iran's borders. Although his birthplace came under Russian rule in 1828, Ākhūndzādah spent his adult life deeply invested in Iranian affairs and corresponded in Persian with Iranian courtiers and intellectuals. Despite the fact that his fictional letters between the princes Kamāl al-Dawlah and Jalāl al-Dawlah make his distaste for Islam clear, some of their vocabulary and Ākhūndzādah's personal correspondence do together suggest that his rejection of religion was perhaps less complete than it appears at first glance.

Fictional Correspondence

The first of Ākhūndzādah's fictional letters between Kamāl al-Dawlah and Jalāl al-Dawlah opens by simultaneously praising Iran's mythical past and bemoaning its present: "O Iran, your happiness was in the period of Kayūmars, Jamshīd, Gushtāsb, Anūshīrvān, and Khusraw Parvīz. Though that type of happiness is, alongside the happiness of Europe and America today, like that of a candle next to the sun, in relation to the Iran of today, it is like moonlight next to darkness."[270] As this praise continues it also employs religious language: "Oh Iran, when your rulers preserved culture, they were for several thousand years an example of greatness and felicity and the people under their shadow received *divine blessings* [emphasis mine] and lived in glory and comfort."[271] In contrast to its mythic past, Iran's present is considerably grimmer: "Woe unto you, oh Iran…your land is ruined; your people are ignorant, know nothing of the civilization of the world, and are deprived of the blessing of freedom, and your king is a despot."[272] This passage repeats the same word for blessing, *niʿmat*, as the previous passage. Taken together, these passages' sense of moral decline and simultaneous

[270] Ākhūndzādah, Fathʿ Alī. *Maktūbāt*. (Tehran?: Intishārāt-i Mard-i Amrūz, 1364 [1985]). p. 16
[271] Ākhūndzādah, p. 16
[272] *Ibid.* p. 21

valorization of western modernity and Iran's pre-Islamic past serve as early examples of characteristic features of Iranian nationalism that would persist throughout the twentieth century.[273]

The second letter from Kamāl al-Dawlah to Jalāl al-Dawlah similarly links moral, national, and intellectual reform while attributing Iran's apparently fallen state to Islam. It opens, "Oh my dear Jalāl al-Dawlah, in this letter I will describe the preaching session of the *ākhūnd* Mullā Sādiq to you in such a way as to astonish you and make your hair stand on end. But, what good will come of these described topics when publicizing them is impossible?" He attributes the impossibility of spreading this description publicly to the majority's illiteracy: "The people of Iran are mostly illiterate, at it is from nothing but the inattention of the despot and injustice of the clergy that only one in a thousand of them is able to read foreign languages."[274] The letter goes on to stage the learning of foreign languages as the key to national restoration: "The state of Iran is incapable of its ancient strength, power, and greatness, and will not reclaim it without national education, and national education will not be quickly or easily obtained without the acquisition of literacy, but, because "common people cannot acquire literacy without reform of the present script, and reform of the present script will not become possible unless by effective, wise regulations," such a program "would not occur with the passage of less than fifteen years."[275] This paragraph concludes, "…without wise reform, the people of Iran will not awake from the sleep of heedlessness in thousands of years."[276] So here as well, Ākhūndzādah adopts what

[273] See: Tavakoli-Targhi, *Refashioning Iran* and Zia-Ebrahimi, Reza. *The Emergence of Iranian Nationalism: Race and the Politics of Nationalism*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016)
[274] Ākhūndzādah, p. 61
[275] *Ibid.* p. 62
[276] *Ibid.* pp. 62-63

terminology with a long religious history: the expression "sleep of heedlessness" (*khᵛāb-i ghaflat*) appears in Persian poetry as early as Manūchihrī, while *ghaflat* carries with it particular Qur'anic resonances: though it can sometimes "refer to innocent unawareness," it more commonly appears in the Qur'an in reference to "culpable negligence of the unseen world, the day of judgment, or the signs of God."[277] Ākhūndzādah thus equates illiteracy to "culpable negligence" of religious matters.

The appearance of some religious vocabulary in these fictional letters does not, of course, mean that Ākhūndzādah was particularly fond of Islam, least of all as it was practiced in his immediate environment. The first letter of Kamāl al-Dawlah to Jalāl al-Dawlah concludes with this story: "yesterday, I was sitting in the *Jāmiʿah* mosque in the preaching session of the *ākhūnd* Mullā Sādiq. Would that you had also been there, so that you could have heard the absurdities he was speaking, which were worse than the fables of *the Thousand and One Nights.*"[278] These fables (*afsānah-hā*) do not only leave their audience ignorant, but ignorant of their ignorance, especially relative to Europeans: "Helplessly, those people full of absurdities who were subjected to his explanations assumed themselves to be possessed of insight, and considered the people of Europe [*Farangistān*] to be in darkness."[279] Even this critique of religion, however, deploys religious rhetoric: "I swear to God [*qasam bi-Khudā*] that a twelve year-old European child would not believe in this manner of absurdity." This phrase also suggests that Ākhūndzādah might have been less dedicated to the rejection of religion in general than to that of Islam in particular, as it uses the Persian *Khudā* in place of the Arabic *Allāh*. *Khudā* is the much more

[277] Shepard, William E., "Ignorance," *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, Jane Dammen McAuliffe (ed.), Georgetown University, Washington DC. Consulted online on 29 November 2016
[278] Ākhūndzādah, p. 59
[279] *Ibid.* p. 60

common word for God in everyday Persian, but, given that *qasam bi'llāh* is usually a fixed expression, the use of *qasam bi-Khudā* seems quite pointed.

Personal Correspondence

Ākhūndzādah of course satirized Sufis in his plays, but in his correspondence, he did not reject Rumi (as Vahdat suggests he did) as much as he appropriated him: according to Hamid Algar, Ākhūndzādah "grotesquely depicts Rūmī as a fellow believer in the eternity of matter and the nullity of all teachings of an afterlife" in his letters.[280] Ākhūndzādah's use of Rumi reveals his poetry's eminence, even within what would appear to be decidedly anti-Sufi territory. Ākhūndzādah's willingness to use the "religious" Rumi for his own "atheist" project illustrates the broad influence of Sufi poetry: its eminent texts could be used to in service of claims made by writers normally understood to be disinclined to mysticism.

One December 1870 letter references Rumi, Shabistari, and Jami. "I was made happy by the news to which you alluded, that one of our friends and Persians, who is a confidant of the secret, became part of the compact of edition 1714, 7301 in Bombay."[281] He directs his correspondent to tell this friend, "if I also wrote subtly, moderately, and in a veiled way, then my work would become like that of Mullā Rūmi, Shaykh Mahmūd Shabistarī, ʿAbd al-Rahmān Jāmī, and our other gnostics."[282] He subsequently makes clear this is a fate he hopes to avoid, asking, "has any profit come from the compositions of these individuals?"[283] He attributes this lack of profit to their esotericism: although these poets "accorded themselves the station of a philosopher," "in their expression, they acted cowardly toward the commoners of the nation and

[280] Algar, "Akundzada"
[281] Ākhūndzādah, Fathʿ Alī. *Alifbā-yi Jadīd va Maktūbāt*, p. 184
[282] *Ibid.*
[283] *Ibid.*

the common type of people;" because of this "veiling" and "concealment," "nobody has benefitted from their works."[284] In contrast, "those like the French Voltaire and…the other *hukamā* of Europe have also been understood to possess the station of philosophers," but they "beat the drum of greatness in the world" by addressing "themselves to common people according to their own comprehension…without veiling or concealment."[285] In this same letter, Ākhūndzādah expresses admiration for one Mānak-jī Sāhib, "an experienced and civilized sage and guide to the Zoroastrians," directing the letter's recipient, "tell him 'Mīrzā Fathʿ Alī sends his regards and admires you from afar.'"[286] He also directs the recipient to circulate his writing on language reform, calling it "the booklet of the majestic holy spirit about the necessity of changing the alphabet."[287] Between its framing of Rumi as a would-be philosopher whose major fault was his indirect writing style, the admiration expressed for a Zoroastrian priest, and the use of the term "holy spirit" in reference to Ākhūndzādah's own writing, this letter makes clear that Ākhūndzādah was less fully opposed to religion than is normally understood.

In a letter dated June 22, 1876, Ākhūndzādah quotes the references to Moses and the Pharaoh that appear in the first book of Rumi's *Masnavī* in its story of the poor Arab and his wife: "When the colorless was bound in color/Moses fought against Moses/Should colorlessness return to how it was/Moses and Pharaoh would make peace with one another."[288] This occurs in a letter to one Mīrzā Mustafā. Its opening address features the Arabic benediction, "May God lengthen your life [*Atāl Allāh ʿumrakum*]."[289] This illustrates another case in which

[284] Ākhūndzādah, *Alifbā-yi Jadīd va Maktūbāt*, p. 184
[285] *Ibid.*
[286] *Ibid.* p. 185
[287] *Ibid.* p. 186
[288] Ākhūndzādah, *Alifbā-yi Jadīd va Maktūbāt*, p. 344
[289] *Ibid.* p. 343

Ākhūndzādah was willing to appeal to Islamic language in his writing. Of course, one could easily argue that Ākhūndzādah was simply obeying convention, or that he was just being polite, and that this greeting is not a measure of his convictions. But, if we simultaneously restrict our focus to his vocabulary and bracket out our assumptions about Ākhūndzādah's position on metaphysics, his willingness to use such obviously Islamic language suggests that what we conventionally call religion operates as much in communicative norms as it does in theological ones.

After its greeting, the letter offers with some advice: "Firstly: you have disregarded your own affairs for three years; without rest, and by all means possible, busy yourself with completing your study of the French language. After that, you will see the world and enjoy your life."[290] "You are still young. Learning this language perfectly within the year is possible, if your resolution is manly."[291] "Secondly: write to your kind brother ʿAlī Naqī that you know me, have a correspondence with me, and that I have sent you a picture of me. Send him my regards, as well, and pass his response on to me whenever it arrives."[292] "Third: do not fix upon yourself, infidelity in, or ignorance of, religion and faith. 'Unbeliever' means 'denier of the truth.' 'Ignorant' means 'negligent.'"[293] "Both of these are opposed to my inclination and temperament," Ākhūndzādah says, before quoting the seventeenth-century poet Sā'ib-i Tabrīzī, who wrote in a *ghazal*, "the world of the clueless was a heavenly wonder."[294] This, according to Ākhūndzādah, "is an absurd expression."[295] This, however, does not necessitate the wholesale

[290] *Ibid.*
[291] *Ibid.*
[292] *Ibid.*
[293] *Ibid.*
[294] Ākhūndzādah, *Alifbā-yi Jadīd va Maktūbāt*, p. 344
[295] *Ibid.*

rejection of religion: "It is also not necessary withdraw from the religion of [one's] forefathers. We should outwardly be brotherly with our co-religionists and internally be wayfarers in the way of truth."[296] Ākhūndzādah here refers to himself in the same language that many Sufi texts use for disciple, telling Mīrzā Mustafā that they should inwardly [*dar bātin*] be wayfarers [*sālik*] in the way of truth [*rāh-i Haqq*]."[297]

He appeals to additional Sufi language when introducing the selection from the *Masnavī*: he proposes to examine this correspondent by seeking his "explanation of these two verses of Mullā Rūmī," after which the above-quoted about Moses and the Pharaoh lines follow.[298] Rumi is thus more than someone to quote for Ākhūndzādah. He is central to Ākhūndzādah's pedagogy, as he uses a quote from the *Masnavī* as a teaching tool, and a way of testing a correspondent's knowledge.

He also uses this letter to advocate for language reform by saying, "the Islamic alphabet" is "without guidance" for "the Islamic nation" and because of this oppressive alphabet, most of the Islamic nation, except for the elite, are without benefit."[299] What is particularly telling in this selection is that the "Islamic nation," and neither Azerbaijan nor Iran as distinct states, is the unit of political meaning to which Ākhūndzādah appeals when advocating for alphabet reform. This again suggests that *an* Islamic identity was still central to Ākhūndzādah's thought.

In another letter, Ākhūndzādah reminds its addressee that when Ākhūndzādah informed him that most Islamic philosophers believed in the unity of being, he [the addressee] asked if that meant that pharaoh was also God. He then cites the same verses of the *Masnavī* and explains

[296] *Ibid.*
[297] *Ibid.*
[298] *Ibid.*
[299] *Ibid.*

their meaning as follows: "Moses and Pharaoh were of one being, but when they were separated from their origin and entered the world of instantiation, they fell into war with one another. When they return to their origin, they will again be of one existence, as they once were."[300] He elaborates by saying that the origin in question can be found in a Qur'anic verse: "Verily we are from God and to him we are returning," though he hastens to add that he is no advocate of pantheism: "God forbid that this all be my belief! I separate myself from the relations and expressions of the philosophers," who he takes to be the chief exponents of such pantheism. [301]

Background on Sabzavārī

Hādī ibn Mahdī was born in Sabzavār, Khurāsān in 1797. His study of the religious sciences started in his hometown, which he would leave to pursue further training, first in Mashhad (the nearest major city) and then later in Isfahan. Although he received a broad religious education, he is most prominently identified with philosophy in most secondary sources, just as he is by Ākhūndzādah. His entry in the *Encyclopedia Iranica* begins by calling him "the most famous philosopher of the Qajar period,"[302] Sajjad Rizvi presents him as "the most important traditional philosopher of the Qajar period,"[303] and Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī introduces him as "one of the great Iranian philosophers after Sadr al-Dīn Muhammad ibn Ibrāhīm Shīrāzī, of whose philosophical views and thoughts he was a follower and on whose words he was a commentator."[304] In the same volume, Ahmad Gulchīn-Maʿānī calls him a

[300] Ākhūndzādah, *Alifbā-yi Jadīd va Maktūbāt,* p. 347
[301] *Ibid.*
[302] Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. "Hādī Sabzavārī," *Encyclopedia Iranica* XI/4, pp. 437-441; available online at: http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/hadi-Sabzavārī
[303] Rizvi, Sajjad. "*Hikma mutaʿaliya* in Qajar Iran: Locating the Life and Work of Mulla Hadi Sabzawari (d. 1289/1873)," *Iranian Studies* 44:4, p. 475
[304] Āshtiyānī, Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn. "*Hakīm-i Muhaqqiq Hāj Mullā Hādī Sabzavārī,*" in *Yādbūd-i ṣadumīn sāl-i Ḥakīm Sabzavārī*/ (Mashhad: *Dānishkadah-yi ʿUlūm-i Maʿaqūl u Manqūl,* 1970). p. 9

"divine philosopher and orthodox mystic."[305] Indeed, even Ākhūndzādah identifies him most closely with philosophy: in the letter in which he disavows the pantheism he attributes to Islamic philosophers, he takes comfort in the fact that in his day and age such philosophers only numbered, "in total, Mullā ʿAbd al-Samad Hamadānī and Mullā Hādī Sabzavārī."[306] Despite their emphasis on his status as a philosopher, these sources also note his poetic talents. Nasr declares, "Sabzavāri was a fine poet and his *divān* of over 1,700 verses, consisting of *ġazals, robāʿis, maṯnawis*, etc., written under the pen name (*taḵallos*) *Asrār*, is well-known in Persia."[307] Rizvi calls the philosophical poem *Ghurar al-afraid* Sabzavāri's *magnum opus* and takes his prose work to offer additional evidence of its author's "mystical and poetic taste."[308] However, this poetic taste was not necessarily best expressed in Sabzavārī's own verse: Gulchīn-Maʿānī quotes Sayyid Muhammad Riza Dā'ī Javād as judging Sabzavārī's poetry as, "from a literary point of view, average," despite the fact that "Sabzavārī possessed a subtle and philosophical taste and expressed many philosophical and mystical points in verse."[309] In response to this review of Sabzavārī's *Dīvān*, Gulchīn-Maʿānī argues, "the poetic technique of philosophers should not be considered their poetic composition, for the great aim of this group is the explanation of philosophical ideas in a poetic medium."[310]

Sabzavārī's *Sharh*

[305] Gulchīn-Maʿānī, Ahmad. "*Shiʿr va shāʿirī-yi 'Asrār' Sabzavārī*" in *Yādbūd-i ṣadumīn sāl-i Ḥakīm Sabzvārī*, (Mashhad: *Dānishkadah-yi ʿUlūm-i Maʿqūl u Manqūl,* 1970). p. 51
[306] Ākhūndzādah, *Alifbā-yi Jadīd va Maktūbāt,* p. 347
[307] Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. "Hādī Sabzavārī," *Encyclopedia Iranica* XI/4, pp. 437-441; available online at: http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/hadi-Sabzavārī
[308] Rizvi, "*Hikma muta'aliya*," pp. 479-486
[309] Gulchīn-Maʿānī, p. 51
[310] *Ibid.*

Rather than being an exercise in literary criticism, Āshtiyānī calls the *Sharh-i Asrār* "an important intellectual and mystical work," from which "the philosopher's comprehension of Qur'anic verses, reports, commentaries, and both prose and poetic works on mysticism becomes known."[311] He continues, "Hāj Mullā Hādī has a special attraction to and intimacy with this book of *Mawlānā*, which he has given endlessly careful consideration. It is clear that the commentator had numerous transcriptions and copies of the *Masnavī* at his disposal and some of these transcriptions were among the most reputable."[312] In the only English work to date on the *Sharh*, John Cooper (the late scholar of Islamic philosophy and Persian literature) calls Sabzavārī's *Sharh* "a summa of the knowledge of this nineteenth-century theosopher put to the use of exegesis on the *Mathnawī*," and, indirectly, "a kind of exegesis of the Koran through an explanation of Rūmī's own commentary on the Holy Book."[313] As befits a *summa*, the *Sharh-i Asrār* synthesizes the many disciplines with which Sabzavārī was conversant, including philosophy (both peripatetic and Illuminationist), Arabic and Persian poetry, *Akbarī* Sufism, and, of course, the Qur'an and Hadith. The book combines these contents within a structure that follows a fairly simple format, in which each substantive passage is framed as a response to a term, phrase, or hemistich of the *Masnavī*.

Given the rich variety of sources with which it engages, we can take Sabzavārī's *Masnavī* commentary "as an act of patching, weaving, or knotting" together "a Muslim's *Weltanschauung*," the product of an effort "by the individual human subject…to do *islām*-to make him/herself a Muslim" in conversation "with that received external something that s/he

[311] Āshtiyānī, p. 14
[312] *Ibid.*
[313] Cooper, John. "Rūmī and *Hikmat*" in in *The Heritage of Sufism, Volume I: Classical Persian Sufism from its Origins to Rumi, 700-1300*, Leonard Lewisohn (ed.) (Oxford: Oneworld Press, 1999). p. 429

recognizes as Islam."[314] So, in the first instance, accepting Ahmed's characterization of *islām* as a synthetic act of self-making, Sabzavārī's use of these various sources is in itself, an act that gives voice to an Islamic subjectivity. More than this, though, the text's description the human spirit and its origins and its affirmation of human capacities for knowledge and agency, the *Sharh* also affirms subjectivity in the broader philosophical sense. Thus, although Ākhūndzādah's version of subjectivity might have been closer to the Hegelian understanding of it that Vahdat takes to be one of modernity's pillars, it was neither the only one at work in nineteenth-century Iran nor the only one in that period to cite Rumi.

The *Sharh*'s discussion of humanity begins as early as its commentary on the *bishnaw az nay* of the *Masnavī* (its first words in verse): "The intended meaning [*murād*] of the reedflute is the holy spirit of humanity in the absolute sense."[315] Ākhūndzādah also appeals to the holy spirit (*rūh-i quds*) in one of the passages quoted above: he referred to his proposal for alphabet reform as "the booklet of the majestic holy spirit about the necessity of changing the alphabet."[316] That being said, Sabzavārī does examine the term in considerably more depth than Ākhūndzādah. He reiterates returns to his equation of the holy spirit and the reed a few pages later: "The spirit of humanity in its absolute sense is the desired, whether a wayfarer or non-wayfarer and whether advanced or inexperienced, though the complaint of separation is more fitting for one other than the advanced."[317] Sabzavārī repeats this point deeper in his commentary as well: "The writer says that particularity is not the path to perfection. The absolute human spirit is what is desired,

[314]Ahmed, Shahab. *What is Islam?* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016. pp. 101-3
[315] Sabzavārī, Hādī ibn Mahdī. *Sharh-i asrār-i Masnavī-yi Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad Balkhī*. (Tehran: Kitābkhānah-yi Sanā'ī, 1980) p. 6
[316] Sabzavārī, p. 186
[317] *Ibid.* p. 9

whether a wayfarer or non-wayfarer, experienced or novice."[318] This should again remind us of Ākhūndzādah's adoption of mystical language—he also appealed to the notion of being a wayfarer (*sālik*) above, writing that he and his correspondent should "internally be wayfarers in the way of truth."[319] This illustrates that despite their many differences, Ākhūndzādah and Sabzavārī could and did appeal to the same the concepts, which, though drawn from Sufism, did not remain limited to it.

He explains, that "the attribution of the *nay* to the human spirit is a simile by way of a simile," as, "it is clear that the *nay* could be a *nā'ī* (i.e. a reed-tube), or the reed of the Pen [*nay-i qalam*, the Pen of the Qur'anic Tablet and Pen], of which the gnostic Jāmī believed every rational spirit to be possessed."[320] Sabzavārī thus summarizes the opening couplet of the *Nay Nāmah* as follows: "Listen to my words about how the pen, which is the human spirit, has stories of the Divine attributes, whether it knows them or not, and listen to what complaints it has about its separation from the holy world, which it has forgotten and ignored!"[321] The commentary on the second book of the *Masnavī* explains that the verse, "O you whose attributes are the sun of knowledge, while the sun of the firmament is bound to one attribute [*ay sifātat āftāb-i maʿrifat/va āftāb-i charkh bandah-yi yik sifat*]" is actually a commentary upon the spirit's ability to manifest all of the divine attributes "because the spirit is the locus of the manifestation of all the attributes of the Truth and it is acquainted with all of the Divine Names, its attributes are the sun of knowledge of the Truth, which is the temple of Divine Unity and comprehensive site [of

[318] *Ibid*
[319] *Ibid.*
[320] *Ibid.* p. 6
[321] Sabzavārī, pp. 6-7

the manifestation of divine attributes], in contrast to the sun of the firmament, which is the site of some attributes."[322]

Given that Sabzavārī defines the *nay* as the absolute human spirit, he recognizes that a reader or might ask why it would complain of separation, if the spirit, in its absolute state, has already returned to its original Unity. He proposes this answer: "they say it in order for the humanity that is in worldly creation, for whom the reality of extinction is difficult, and to whom there is a remnant of existence."[323] He elaborates further on the question of separation when explaining the "everyone" of the *Nay-nāmah*'s "everyone who remains far from their origins" (*har kasī kih dur mānad az asl-I khᵛīsh*): "although everything returns to its origin, this is an allusion to everything with perception, as said God, be He exalted, 'And there is not a thing except that it exalts by its praise' in reference to a person."[324] He elaborates in light of progress both toward and in humanity: taking it as a given that perfection is a universal *telos*, he writes, "the movement toward perfection of minerals, vegetables" is "toward the gate of the station of humanity."[325] Human development replicates this process, as well, in that "minerals, vegetables, and animals are stopped on the bridge of humanity, which, because of these threefold darknesses counts a third in those darknesses." Regarding these darknesses, "there is a Hadith, 'verily, God created humanity in His darkness and then sprinkled upon them from His light,'" which explains how "the matter of the fetus becomes substituted from mineral to vegetable and from vegetable to animal, and the animal becomes a human in potential, and the potential human becomes an actual human and the holy spirit."[326] This again addresses the question of human origins.

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[322] *Ibid.* p. 97
[323] *Ibid.* p. 9
[324] *Ibid.* pp. 10-11
[325] Sabzavārī, pp. 10-11
[326] *Ibid.* pp. 10-11

Sabzavārī also discusses human capacities and, specifically the capacity for action and decision. He first notes that the body's capacity are linked to those of the soul when explaining the "body from soul," of "body and soul and soul from body are not veiled" (*tan zi jān u jān zi tan mastūr nīst*), which he takes to be "a reflection upon the previous verse on the form of human unity: although the body and its capacities are not at the level of the soul, they are not separate from the soul, and are rather stations and illuminations of it."[327] In explaining "Its notes tore our veil (*pardah-hāyash pardah-hā-yi mā darīd*), Sabzavārī glosses *pardah-hāyash* as "its notes, as in: 'a note is not more than the eloquent voice of ardor/Our ear takes heed, for below it is the knot and the lowest note" and *pardah-darīdan* as "a metonym for coming to honor, the intent of which is, here, escape from fetters," which suggests that the spirit (the notes of the *nay*) can play a liberating role in one's life.[328] He explains, "'*rūzhā, gar raft*:' the intent of 'days' [*rūzhā*] is the partial lights that diffuse the light of the Universal Light," and, given that that hemistich concludes by telling the audience to let the days go, this seems to enjoin detachment from the "partial lights" of relative beings.[329] Finally, his explanation of 'Do not be a slave' (*band bugsal*) is that it "means to step to the station of freedom from the enchantments of the two worlds, which broadens your capacity," which affirms the human ability to exert oneself on the spiritual path by enjoining the reader toward that decision. [330]

This commentary on the *Masnavī*'s opening injunction continues by linking the passage to Qur'anic verses, framing it as "Confirmation of 'and I breathed into him of my spirit' and 'the spirit is from the matters of my Lord,'" which Sabzavārī takes to reference the fact that "the holy

[327] *Ibid.* p. 11
[328] Sabzavārī, p. 11
[329] *Ibid.*
[330] *Ibid.*

spirit is from the world of the command and incorporeal beings and is the best part of the world of the command, while the natural body is from the world of creation and the elements and is the best of the elements."[331]

The passage continues by linking the question of status of the spirit to that of the status of knowledge. It proceeds from the assumption that "the holy spirit is first in creation," before shifting its focus to the question of access to truth, claiming, "the speech of the Truth and the people of religion [*ahl-i sharʿ*] is not hidden from the followers of the Book and the custom [*mutatabbiʿīn-i kitāb va sunnat]*."[332] They, however are not the only people capable of knowledge: "the speech of the Gnostics [*ʿārifān*] is similarly full, to the extent that a gnostic is called a gnostic because his is final knowledge that, whatever may have been passed up in ignorance, he knew God's status as knower."[333] This explanation strikes themes familiar to readers of the *Nay Nāmah*'s disavowal of knowledge as bound by language:

> When this has come to the knower and become a companion to nature, he becomes ignorant, and when, with God's help, he corrects his reason and he ripens by the heat of love and, from particulars, turns toward the heart, finds nearness to God and again becomes a knower by God's teaching.[334]

This passage anticipates the tone verses slightly later in the *Nay Nāmah* strike, but, unlike the source text, Sabzavārī's *Sharh* frames the images of love's progress in terms of the process of acquiring knowledge. Sabzavārī explains the journey from knowledge to ignorance and then back to knowledge in terms of heat (or motion—*harārat*) and passion (or intensity—*jur'īyat*). This passage's "companion" (*hamnishīn*) seems to anticipate the nay's role as "companion" (*harīf* and *damsāz*, respectively) in such verses as "The reed is the confidant of everyone who

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[331] *Ibid.* p. 6
[332] *Ibid.*
[333] Sabzavārī, p. 6
[334] *Ibid.*

has been torn from a friend" (*nay harīf-i har kih az yārī burīd*) and "Who has seen a confidant and desirous one like the reed?" (*hamchaw nay damsāz u mushtāqī kih dīd*). Similarly, the "heat" of this passage takes on a tone similar to such lines as "it is the fire of love that fell upon the reed" (*ātish-i ʿishq ast k'andar nay futād/jūshish-i ʿishq ast k'andar may futād*). All of the themes Sabzavārī references here meet in lines like *mahram-i īn hūsh, juz bī-hūsh nīst*, which not only employs vocabulary related to companionship (*mahram*—confidant), but, also marks off a special variety of knowledge (*hūsh*) that only the ignorant (*bī-hūsh*) can possess, which speaks to a paradox comparable to that in the passage above. It is likely in reference to this passage that Sabzavārī likely explained that the knower (*ʿālim*) becomes ignorant (*jāhil*) when he acknowledges God's superiority in knowledge (*ʿālimīyat*), only to have his reason corrected and completed by Love's heat. "The wise Lord, having, like a king, delegated, to existents, ardor, desire for perfection, and attention to goals, not in vanity and folly…but rather to convey them to the goal in order that they become mature and reach the goal of goals."[335]

Even if knowledge of God is the goal of human development, Sabzavārī also takes selections from the *Masnavī* to speak to differences the capacity for comprehension, as when explaining the line, "everyone fancied themselves my friend" (*har kasī az zinn-i khawd…*)," which Sabzavārī takes to make the same point as the *hadith qudsi* "I am as my servant expects me to be," in that both mean that "everyone's heart accepts according to its level and in proportion to its acumen and capacity, and denies much according to their own ease."[336]

> It is because of this that Shaykh *Muhyī al-Dīn* says, 'on the day of the assembly [the final judgment], when God discloses Himself as He is to the defective and veiled, be they fettered by kataphasis [*tashbīh*] or apophasis [*tanzīh*], it will be disagreeable to them

[335] Sabzavārī p. 11
[336] *Ibid.*

> unless it is in the form in which they had believed in His perfectly incomparable presence.'[337]

These citations refer to the attempt in Ibn ʿArabi (the *Muhyī al-Dīn* of the above passage)'s eschatology "to represent one side of a many-sided endeavor to prove the literal accuracy of the revealed data" by opposing the apparent demythologization of "traditional data" (the Qur'an and the Hadith) by way of either *tashbīh* or *tanzīh*.[338] Either of these two approaches will shape the believer's afterlife, because such beliefs will have a bearing on the imagination, and

> God is with the servant within imagination in everything that the servant wills, and, like in imagination, in the next world, God does not reveal Himself in theophany within a form without the servant's becoming colored by it; so he undergoes a transformation within forms because of God's transformation, while God undergoes in bestowing existence because of the transformation of the servant's will…in all things within the Garden in the next world.[339]

The ability to comprehend and embody these many Names is thus the mark of human perfection: "the perfect man accepts God in all His self-disclosures and stations, so he is the real servant of God, and he is the Greatest Name."[340] This connection between perfection, servitude, and the manifestation of the Divine Names again draws heavily on Ibn ʿArabī, who writes, in his *Meccan Revelations (al-Futūhāt al-Makkīyah*), that servitude (*ʿubūdīyah*), has ninety-nine parts, corresponding to the Divine Names while also claiming that when one reaches the level of pure servitude, *ʿubūdīyah mahdah*, "the difference of usage between names appropriate to God and names specific to the creation is abolished."[341]

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[337] *Ibid.*
[338] Chittick, William C. "Death and the World of Imagination: Ibn al-ʿArabī's Eschatology," *The Muslim World* 78/1 (1988), pp. 52-53
[339] Chittick, pp. 71-72
[340] Sabzavārī, p. 11
[341] Addas, Claude. "The Paradox of the Duty of Perfection in the Doctrine of Ibn ʿArabi," *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn ʿArabi Society* XV, 1994. pp. 43-46

Poetic Canon-Building

As we have seen, much of the secondary scholarship on Sabzavārī's *Sharh* highlights the breadth of the sources it uses. Though its discussion is often quite technical and metaphysical, it also makes use of a variety of poetic sources. Sabzavārī quotes Imru' al-Qays when commenting upon the use of the Light Verse in the *Masnavī*'s introduction: "Oh long night, dawn will come, but will be no brighter without my love," after which he returns to the text of *Masnavī*'s introduction itself, following the Imru' al-Qays quote with Rumi's phrase, *huwa jinān al-janān*, "it is the paradise of hearts."[342] Given the ambiguity in the vowels of the first syllable of *jinān/janān*, Sabzavārī explains that the word means "heart or soul when marked with a *fathah* and is the plural of *al-jannah* [paradise] when marked with a *kasrah*, but, "each one is permissible, meaning the phrase could either be 'paradise of the spirit' or 'spirit of paradise,' but in this affair, either is possible depending on the perspective from which you look at the literary devices."[343] Later, when elaborating on the use of distance and separation in the *Nay Nāmah*, he quotes the verses Jami composed as a commentary on the *nay*.[344] In Jami's poem, we see the tale of the reed mapped onto a more systematic cosmology: it discusses necessity and possibility, the separation of body from spirit, the body reaching its final form in humanity, making humanity the locus of the names and essences, and, finally the spirit's desire to return to its origin as expressed in the love of homeland that is "the secret of the cry of man and woman."[345] Sabzavārī also quotes ʿAttār when explaining that the intent of the pun between

[342] Voweling according to Nicholson edition. c.f. Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, Mawlānā and R.A. Nicholson and Nasrollah Pourjavady (eds.) *Masnavī-yi Maʿnavī, Jild-i Avval*. Tehran, Mu'assassah-yi Intishārāt Amīr Kabīr, 1984-5. p. 1
[343] Sabzavārī, p. 4
[344] *Ibid.* pp. 8-9
[345] *Ibid.*

sharh and *sharhah* in "*sharh-i dard,* or in some manuscripts, *sūz-i dard*:" he quotes ʿAttār when discussing "the excitement of the pain" referenced in "'unto the unbeliever, unbelief and unto the religious [people], religion/unto the heart of ʿAttār, a mote of your pain.'"[346] He again cites ʿAttār in his discussion of body and soul: "As Shaykh ʿAttār says, 'No member of the body is separate from the soul, and some of the divine philosophers have said: 'The soul, bodily in novelty, is spiritual in eternity.'"[347] These citations speak to the synthetic impulse at work in Sabzavārī's commentary; rather analyzing one particular work of poetry in light of other philosophical sources he endorses, he instead cites a variety of other poetic sources alongside doctrinal prose sources as part of his analysis, treating both as constituents of his own larger project.

Cosmological Elements

Sabzavārī draws quite heavily on Ibn ʿArabī throughout his *Sharh*, both in his discussion of human perfection and in his discussion of cosmology. He explains the *nayistān* (reedbed) of the *Nay Nāmah* as "the realities of existents [*haqāyiq-i mawjūdāt*], which are, from the position of subsumption and absorption in the unseen realm of the identity of the essence [*huvīyat-i zāt*], called 'essential matters' [*shu'ūn-i zātīyah* and 'supreme letters' [*hurūf-i ʿālīyah*], are neither distinct from the Presence of the Holy Essence [*Hazrat-i Zāt-i Muqaddasah*] nor from one another, in either knowledge or entity [*lā ʿilman va lā ʿaynan*]" because the reedbed is the place where reeds are collected together and in which they share a common origin.[348] This passage, therefore, speaks to the notion that, "from the perspective of Unity and multiplicity, the Divine Presence appears as a circle whose center is the Essence and whose full deployment is the acts in

[346] *Ibid.* p. 10
[347] Sabzavārī, p. 11
[348] *Ibid.* p. 8

their multiple degrees and kinds."[349] "The second level, which is the second unseen and second determination, is the level at which the realities are called the fixed entities [*aʿyān-i sābitah*]; although there is no entified distinction [*imtiyāz-i ʿaynī*] to the realities, there is distinction in knowledge."[350] This passage refers to the fact that the term *ʿayn thābitah* refers to a non-manifest object of God's knowledge: "the 'nonexistent things' are objects of knowledge, also called the 'immutable entities.' These things or entities are immutable because they never change, just as God's knowledge never changes."[351] Thus, at this level, realities have distinction within that knowledge, since their entified distinction would not be possible until these entities took on a worldly reality: "distinction in knowledge" can be taken to correspond to "'mental existence' *(al-wujūd al-dhihnī),* i.e., the existence of a thing as a concept in the mind, whether or not it is found in the cosmos," while entified distinction corresponds to the contrast case, existence "'among the entities' (*fi'l-aʿyān*)," which refers to objects possessing a manifest existence within the cosmos.[352] Thus, for Sabzavārī, "it is fitting that Hazrat Mawlavī would have chosen 'reedbed' for this level or the level preceding it," because, "at this level, the fixed essences, multiple in relative multiplicity, are devoid of an external existence."[353] After this, "the third level is the level of spirits, the fourth is the imaginal world, the fifth is the world of bodies, and the sixth is the encompassing level, which collects all levels. It is the reality of the perfect human [*insān-i kāmil*]."[354] This sixth level refers to the fact that within Ibn ʿArabī's schema, "man enters into the corporeal world where the differentiated attributes of Being begin their

[349] Chittick, William C. *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989). p. 25
[350] Sabzavārī, p. 8
[351] Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, p. 12
[352] *Ibid.* p. 83
[353] *Ibid.* p. 8
[354] *Ibid.*

reintegration into an all-comprehensive unity, since he is created upon the divine form even as an infant."[355]

The *aʿyān thābitah* appear in his commentary upon the next verse, as well: "'Man and woman' [the *mard u zan* of *zi-nafīram mard u zan nālīdah ʿand*] refer to the Names and fixed entities which are a part of man and woman, as 'man and woman' are 'intellect and soul.'"[356] This references "the terminology of the gnostics," according to whom "the intellect is the father, the soul is the mother, and the heart is the child," an interpretation, which as Sabzavārī adds, the *Masnavī* itself supports: "Mawlavī said at the beginning of the sixth book: 'The mother is the soul and the father the intellect' and in a part, discussed the soul and nature: 'Its poverty is what is praised about you, oh half-hearted one/Listen little to the mother of this seductive nature.'"[357] All of these terms have cosmological valences:

> A part [discussed] the active forces like natures and the categorical forms [*suwar-i nawʿīyah*] and the acted-upon forces, like the receptive essences and predispositions, and a part [discussed] the forms and humors, and a part [discussed] the seven fathers and four mothers [the seven planets and four elements known to classical science][358]

In these passages, Sabzavārī continues to draw heavily upon the cosmology of Ibn ʿArabi and his successors, according to which, the father-intellect referenced above is the "supreme Spirit, known as the 'Universal Intellect' and the 'Pen," the first creation.[359] As we have seen, Sabzavārī interprets the *nay* as both the Spirit and the Pen. In *Akbarī* cosmology, God next creates the mother-soul of the above passage: through the agency of the first Spirit, He produces "a second Spirit, known as the 'Universal Soul' and the 'Tablet.'"[360] The Universal Soul then

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[355] Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, p. 25
[356] Sabzavārī, p. 9
[357] *Ibid.*
[358] *Ibid.*
[359] Chittick, "Death and the World of Imagination," p. 74
[360] Chittick, "Death and the World of Imagination," p. 74

"throws down its own shadow, which is called Nature and which displays within itself, though it has no actualized existence, four fundamental ontological tendencies, the four 'natures' (*al-tabāʿī*): heat, cold, wetness, and dryness," which, "at the level of the seven spheres ["the seven fathers" of Sabzavārī's passage]," generate "the four elements]…in their simple, intelligible form (*al-basīt al-maʿqūl*)."[361] In addition to their cosmological references, though, these terms are also anthropologically significant: Sabzavārī adds, "all of these [the natures, forms, humors, etc.] are encompassed in the perfect man [*insān-i kāmil*] and others, as 'In him there is a thing like the firmament and a thing like the kingdom.'"[362] In the *Akbarī* cosmology that pervades Sabzavārī's *oeuvre*, the perfect man is the person who manages to actualize all of the Divine Names in the appropriate relationship to one another.[363] This, of course, leads back to the opening, which explains that the *nay* is the perfect man.

Conclusion

Sabzavārī's *Masnavī* commentary exerts considerable effort in explaining the poem as one describing the human soul, its capacity for knowledge, and its place in the cosmos—in short, affirming human subjectivity. Meanwhile, quoting Rumi is one part of a larger Islamic vocabulary at work in Ākhūndzādah's project. Taken alongside his interest in Zoroastrianism, this suggests that his project's affirmation of human subjectivity had a more complicated relationship to religion than Ākhūndzādah's usual reputation as an atheist suggests. Admittedly, Sabzavārī's account of humanity is not Hegelian subjectivity as Vahdat presents it, but taken alongside the religious language in Ākhūndzādah, the *Sharh-i Asrār-i Masnavī* can help complicate the standard assumptions about the intellectual life of nineteenth-century Iran. Putting

[361] *Ibid.* pp. 74-75
[362] Sabzavārī, p. 9
[363] Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, p. 15

Ākhūndzādah and Sabzavārī side by side, we can see that a secular modernism that affirms human subjectivity and a traditional religiosity that denies it might not be the only philosophical choices available.

Chapter Four: Humanity and/as Modern Religion: *Ādamīyat*, *Insānīyat*, and *Qānūn* in Mīrzā Malkum Khān and Safīʿ Alī Shāh

By 1908, humanity had come to be a central principle around which political discourse in Iran was organized; in response to that year's Russian incursions, the editor of one newspaper (*Habl al-Matīn*) wrote: "In this new, bright age of humanism... in which the protection of fellow human beings is considered a requisite of humanity…our northern neighbor [Russia] has sent a military expedition to our soil without any right or grounds;" this editorial reflects the extent to which the Qajar public sphere had embraced "humanism and patriotic thinking," coming to celebrate "nationhood and the rule of law" and to expect "international recognition of its national sovereignty" in return for such celebration.[364] Much like the Constitutional Revolution (which conditioned the particular round of Russian aggression mentioned above), this emphasis on "humanism," Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet's rendering of two Persian terms, *insānīyat* and *ādamīyat*, had been brewing in Iranian intellectual life for decades before the 1905-1911 period: "humanism became the catchphrase for pursuing progressive reforms aimed at restoring what was seen as Iran's pride and former grandeur" and, in the period's political discourse, "often went hand in hand" with the theme of civilization.[365]

In his *Sih Maktūb*, the nationalist Āqā Khān Kirmānī (d. 1896) writes that civilization not only "means 'a nation saving itself from hardship and savagery,'" but also, the "refinement of the manners and habits of humanism and the promotion of humanity."[366] An 1894 article in the semi-official newspaper *Nāsirī* stressed that it was education that defined humanity by separating humans from animals, "since human beings, unlike other creatures, could better themselves

[364] Kashani-Sabet, Firoozeh. "Hallmarks of Humanism: Hygiene and Love of Homeland in Qajar Iran," *American Historical Review* 104/4, Oct. 2000, p. 1171
[365] Kashani-Sabet, p. 1174
[366] *Ibid.*

through education."[367] As her article's title suggests, Kashani-Sabet takes the position that hygiene and patriotism were key features of late Qajar humanism, but, I argue that in the three decades preceding the Constitutional revolution, humanity was more closely paired to law and nationhood than hygiene. Like Kashani-Sabet, I take the position that "humanity" was bound closely to "progressive" projects. However, I propose that it is their fusion of "humanity" (*insānīyat* and *ādamīyat*), "law" (*qānūn*), and "nation" (*millat* and *vatan*, among other terms) that most characterizes the period's texts as modern.[368] The centrality of these terms in both the corpus of both the reformist diplomat and publisher Mīrzā Malkum Khān (1833-1908) and the Sufi Safīʿ Alī Shāh (1835-1899), an Isfahānī merchant who enjoyed close relations with the court in Tehran, illustrates just how widespread these concepts had become even before the Constitutional Revolution.

Much of the research on both Safīʿ Alī Shāh and Mīrzā Malkum Khān dwells on the question of how "really" religious they were. Hamid Algar (whose *Mīrzā Malkum Khān: A Study in the History of Iranian Modernism* remains the major work on Malkum Khān in English), casts a suspicious eye upon the religious convictions of both Mīrzā Malkum Khān and his father, Mīrzā Yaʿqūb, an Armenian convert to Islam. He notes, "Mīrzā Yaʿqūb is recorded outwardly to have professed Islam," but Algar definitely places the emphasis on the outward element of this profession: "the sparse information that is available suggests strongly an opportunistic

[367] Kashani-Sabet p. 1175

[368] In this, I must of course cite Shahab Ahmed's observation that because "the modern human condition is more thoroughly pervaded by the technology and force of the structures of law," the central assertion "of Muslim modernism of every stripe is the assertion of the unilateral normative supremacy of something called *sharīʿah* identified with the law" as organized in and through the nation state, which is "the fundamental organizational unit of modern human society to which all human subjects *belong*." see: Ahmed, Shahab. *What is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic*. (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016). p. 125. The sources I investigate deviate from this observation mainly in their preference for *qānūn* over *sharīʿah*.

conversion," through which, Mīrzā Yaʿqūb's "skeptical and utilitarian view of religion was transmitted to Malkum, who elaborated upon it and made of it an effective weapon for the promotion of westernization in Iran."[369] Algar concludes that Malkum Khān's project failed because "Malkum lacked the moral seriousness which alone could have made his thought cohesive and convincing," as his "equation of Islamic and Western values and concepts…rested neither upon personal conviction nor upon adequate argumentation."[370] Although he does not go as far as Algar in questioning the sincerity or "moral seriousness" of Malkum's religiosity, Farzin Vahdat also emphasizes the ambiguity of religion's position in Malkum's wider goals, which Vahdat also summarizes as an essentially "westernizing" project, which he summarizes as Malkum Khān's having "advocated the wholesale importation of European bureaucracy."[371]

Just as Algar dwells on the question of how "really" Muslim Malkum Khān was, much of the English research on Safī ʿAlī Shāh questions on how "really" Sufi he was by attending more closely to his relationship to Sufism (viewed transhistorically) than his relationship to the period of his texts' composition. For example, in summarizing Safī ʿAlī Shāh's *ʿIrfān al-Haqq*, Nile Green remarks, "traces of Islamic modernism are engulfed within a mystical reading of Islam," despite the fact that, "in classic modernist form," the text plays down "the importance of miracles" and instead presents "Muhammad's mission as one aimed at the advancement or progress of mankind."[372] Green also argues that his literary career pursued a program of "deliberate conformity with tradition," which in a "direct context of the adaptation of European

[369] Algar, pp. 6-9
[370] *Ibid.* pp. 262-263
[371] Vahdat, pp. 31-34
[372] Green, Nile. "A Persian Sufi in the Age of Printing: Mirza Hasan Safi Ali Shah" in *Religion and Politics in Modern Iran,* Lloyd Ridgeon, ed. (London: IB Tauris, 2005).

ideas makes the traditionalist tone of Safi's travels and writings all the more striking."[373] When Lewisohn's "Introduction to the History of Modern Persian Sufism" comes to Safī ʿAlī Shāh, the article also questions Safī ʿAlī Shāh's consistency with Sufi values more than it does his relationship to the wider context of the Nāsirī era (1848-1896). For example, he alleges that Safī ʿAlī Shāh's "doctrine of Sufi elitism…is out of keeping with the tolerance of those classical Persian mystic masters and poets whose mantle he otherwise wore."[374] In all of these cases, the central question is Safī ʿAlī Shāh's consistency with an imagined core of essential Sufi values. I would propose, though, that by dwelling on the question of either Mīrzā Malkum Khān or Safī ʿAlī Shāh's sincerity, we lose sight of their participation in those elements of Nāsirī culture that, as Green concedes, constituted their "direct context." Closer attention to this context (modernization in nineteenth-century Iran), however, allows us to better understand the centrality of a common set of terms (humanity, law, and nation) at work in both figures' writing.

In their focus on the sincerity of Mīrzā Malkum Khān and Safī ʿAlī Shāh's religiosity, the works cited above also assume that modernization was necessarily a kind of Westernization, one which could not be consistently endorsed alongside Islam.[375] But, in an address delivered in London in 1891, Mīrzā Malkum Khān equated Islam to both progress and knowledge, rather than citing European models as the sole path to political or intellectual development. Encompassing "the whole science of Asia," Islam "offers all kinds of facilities, not in the Khoran [*sic*] alone,

[373] Green, Nile. "A Persian Sufi in British India: A Persian Sufi in British India: The Travels of Mīrzā Hasan Safī ʿAlī Shāh (1251/1835-1316/1899)," *Iran* 42 (2004), p. 213
[374] Lewisohn, p. 455
[375] Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi convincingly demonstrates the errors of the equation of modernization to Westernization in *Refashioning Iran*, where, among other things, he illustrates this by citing a number of original studies of modern science composed in Persian in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

but in the traditions, for the progress of the people."[376] This equation of Islam to progress is particularly significant because Malkum Khān opens this address by asking why Persians and other "Asiatic races, who were the first promoters of civilisation, have lagged so far behind" Europeans, who "have made such wonderful progress."[377] Must we assume that such statements were somehow insincere or inconsistent? And what if we leave aside the questions of sincerity and consistency, and instead simply focus on the language our authors used, rather than questioning their motivation? The terms for humanity and law that, as we shall see, are quite central in Safīʿ Alī Shāh's *Mīzān al-Maʿrifah* (*ādamīyat* and *qānūn*, respectively), were also central to Mīrzā Malkum Khān's reformist projects. These terms, and their relationship to one another, thus illustrate the extent of reformist-nationalist discourse's influence on a variety of levels of Qajar society.

About the Author: Mīrzā Malkum Khān

Malkum Khān was born the son of one Mīrzā Yaʿqūb at (New) Julfā in 1833. As with most of the residents of this suburb of Isfahan, the family was Armenian, and therefore Christian, in its origins. New Julfā was established under Shah ʿAbbās specifically to house those Armenians (upon whose mercantile activities the Safavid economy in part depended) that were displaced by the 1603-05 campaign against the Ottoman Empire, which destroyed the original Julfā. Although New Julfā suffered the same fate as Isfahan with its conquest by Ghilzai Afghans in 1722, when the establishment of the Qajar state brought relative stability back to Iran, the fortunes of this second Julfā also improved, as Armenian merchants came again to occupy a central place not just in Iran's economy, but in global trade, from the Mediterranean to the Indian

[376] Prince Malcom Khan, "Persian Civilization" *Contemporary Review* 59 (February, 1891). p. 239
[377] Prince Malcom Khan p. 238

Ocean. Malkum Khān's father, Mīrzā Yaʿqūb, was born in Julfā in 1815, educated among the Armenian residents of India, and, reputedly, traveled as far as Indonesia for trade.[378] His travel served him well on his return to Iran, as his having learned French enabled him to acquire positions as an interpreter at the Russian embassy in Tehran and as a tutor to Qajar princes.[379]

Like his father, Malkum Khān also parlayed an education in Europe into positions as both a teacher and a translator. He studied in Paris for seven years, returning to Iran in 1850. Upon his return, he took up a position as an interpreter for the European instructors at the newly established *Dār al-Funūn* (Iran's first modern educational institution) and also served as Nāsir al-Dīn Shāh's personal translator. He returned to Paris and also traveled to London on an 1856 diplomatic mission. This voyage led to two major developments in his career as a reformist: upon his return to Iran, he wrote his first treatise on reform, the *Kitābchah-yi ghaybī* ("The Booklet from the Unseen") and founded the first quasi-Masonic lodge in Iran, the *Farāmūsh-khānah* (literally "the house of forgetting," because members were told to respond to any questions about their activities with *farāmūsh kardam*, "I forgot;" the name was also likely chosen for its similarity to *Franc-maçonnerie*, though). Fearing republican agitation, Nāsir al-Dīn Shāh ordered Malkum Khān's exile and the dissolution of the *Farāmūsh-khānah* in 1861. First exiled to Iraq, Malkum Khān traveled from Baghdad to Istanbul, where he entered the service of the Iranian ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Mīrzā Husayn Khān, and made the

[378] Algar, Hamid. *Mīrzā Malkum Khān: A Study in the History of Iranian Modernism.* (Berkeley; London; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973). pp. 1-6; though Algar's account supplies a sound historical narrative, Amitav Ghosh furnishes a beautiful, if fictional, illustration of the centrality of Armenian merchants in the global market of the mid-nineteenth century through the character of Zadig Bey in his *Ibis* trilogy.
[379] Algar, p. 6

acquaintance of the Azeri reformist and author Fath ʿAlī Ākhūndzādah, with whom he shared an interest in alphabet reform.

The Principles of Humanity

Mīrzā Malkum Khān founded the second of his two quasi-Masonic societies in or around 1890.[380] It was named the "League of Humanity" (*Majmaʿ-i Ādamīyat*), and its foundation was accompanied by the publication of a treatise, *The Principles of Humanity* (*Usūl-i Ādamīyat*). Though *ādamīyat* is the titular humanity of both the organization and the treatise, the section on the meaning of humanity (*fasl-i avval—dar bayān-i maʿnī-yi ādamīyat*) uses *insān* rather than *ādam* in its actual points (rather than its title). It declares, "The *insān* is the most noble of the creatures on the earth" and attributes "the nobility of the *insān* over other animals" to the fact "that other animals are incapable of progress (*taraqqī*) or decline (*tanazzul*) and the human is."[381] As these points proceed, it becomes clear that *ādamīyat* is, unlike *insānīyat*, a goal rather than a starting point: because "there are three worlds for the progress and decline of the *insān*," the animal, the inanimate, and that of humanity (*hayvānī, jumādī*, and *ādamīyat,* respectively), "whenever one (*ādam*) maintains the degree of their own *ādamīyat* at a fixed state, they belong to the world of the animals," but when one "descends from the position they possess, they enter the inanimate realm" and "whenever a person reaches a higher degrees (*darajāt-i bālātar*) than the position they possess, they enter *ādamīyat*."[382] Humanity is thus both a capacity for progress, in that Malkum Khān distinguishes the *insān* from other animals by the fact that it can either

[380] Algar, p. 228
[381] Mīrzā Malkum Khān and Hujjat Allāh Asīl (ed.), *Risālah'hā-yi Mīrzā Malkum Khān Nāzim al-Dawlah* (Tihrān: Nashr-i Nay, 1381 [2002]). p. 327
[382] Mīrzā Malkum Khān, p. 327

progress and decline, and the actual achievement of that progress, in that people reach *ādamīyat* by leaving their original position for degrees higher than it.

Ādamīyat is not only the act of departure from a given station, but also the motivation for departure and the process subsequent to the departure. This section's ninth point strikes a decidedly religious note toward that end, declaring, "the Almighty Lord has entrusted the duties of *ādamīyat* to the human heart (*qalb-i insān*)," while its tenth explains, "worldly ignorance has erased the duties of humanity from its [humanity's] memory. The lights of knowledge can establish perception of the duties of humanity in human vision anew."[383] The duties are, according to Mīrzā Malkum Khān: avoiding bad, resolution toward good, removing tyranny, harmony, seeking knowledge, valuing *ādamīyat*, and preserving order.[384] Each of these points receives is own explanatory section. That on "avoiding bad" (*ijtināb-i badī*) begins by defining the bad as "that which you do not want others to do to you," and continues, "a [real] person (*ādam*) should do no bad to another in word, or deed, or any other category." The next two points justify this position, first by appealing to intellect: "human reason (*ʿaql-i insān*) has given this as the first duty of the duties of humanity," and second, by appealing to revelation: "all of the prophets have, in the interest of proof and confirmation, been charged with this duty."[385] This explanation concludes with a point that makes clear that *ādamīyat* is used to describe humanity as a moral end, and not as a category for classifying a species: "whoever does bad to another is not *ādam*," which is to say, not fully human.[386]

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[383] *Ibid.* p. 327
[384] *Ibid.* pp. 327-328
[385] Mīrzā Malkum Khān, pp. 327-328
[386] This last point is, of course, not in and of itself unique to the nineteenth century—one need look no further than the conclusion to Saʿdī's most famous poem (*ay tu kih az mihnat-i dīgarān bī-ghamī, nashāyad nāmat nihād ādamī*) for a pre-modern example of the moralizing use of *ādam*.

Being truly human requires more than avoiding bad, though: "one must be an enemy of oppression, and wherever one may see oppression, one must stand up to it to the fullest extent of one's ability…manliness (*mardānagī*) means solidarity with everyone oppressed, and struggle against every oppressor."[387] Humanity thus carries with it political responsibilities: it demands active opposition to tyranny: "'I do not oppress' is not the speech of a [real] *ādam*. One [*ādam*] should say, 'I do not allow oppression to occur.'"[388] Makum Khān did not outline these criteria by which the reader should judge humanity simply to offer a philosophy of the human, though. This document was, after all, written to outline the foundation of a new organization, one that happened to have "humanity" in its name.

The treatise's second section enumerates "the rules of the order," which "mean the senses of the capability of *ādamīyat;*" these senses refer to different capacities for knowledge, as they each relate to a progressive degree of comprehension: "however much you go higher in the world of *ādamīyat*, more senses of the rules of the order will, along with their necessity, be revealed to you."[389] The humanity in which the reader is to progress is specifically that of the organization Makum Khān founded: "The league of *ādamīyat* is a structure that has been built on top of these rules. Every adduction you make about a point of these rules will be like your destroying a side of this building, without being able to produce a point to replace what you destroyed."[390] Knowledge specifically relates to one's conduct vis-à-vis the league and its rules: "Do not be hasty in your adductions, and know that you will, at some time, know more than what you currently know, and that sometime you will see beyond whatever you see now."[391] This

[387] *Ibid*. p. 329
[388] *Ibid.* p. 329
[389] Mīrzā Malkum Khān, p. 332
[390] *Ibid*.
[391] *Ibid.*

passage also concludes by binding learning to these rules of order: "Unless you see, you will not understand. Unless you arrive, you will not see, and you will not arrive except by the rules of the order."[392]

This particular equation of humanity with progress, and especially progressively increasing knowledge, appears specifically as an endorsement of one particular association's code of conduct: "Humanity, in the world of the order, has three conditions: relationship (*irtibāt)*, acknowledgment, and commitment."[393] Although this moral teleology is specifically related to a member's conduct in the League of Humanity, it does cohere with the valorization of progress Malkum Khān expressed elsewhere, as in the previously quoted London address.

Qānūn

Alongside the League of Humanity, Malkum Khān also founded a newspaper, *Qānūn* (*Law*) in 1890. By then, Malkum Khān had given up on attracting royal support for reform, and instead appealed directly to the public; as suits its title, "the journal pinpointed lawlessness as the source of Iran's misfortunes," with law, of course, being the remedy to such misfortunes.[394] In the second issue, he commands his audience to demand law in the face of most social ills: "If you are detained by the state, demand *qanun*! If your home is destroyed, demand *qanun*! If your salaries have been plundered, demand *qanun*! If your positions and rights have been sold to others, demand *qanun*!"[395] However, on either side of this passage's instructions that the reader demand law in the face of particular problems, it appeals to much broader moral sensibilities. It opens, "If you have a religion, demand *qanun!*" and concludes, "If you have a family, demand

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[392] *Ibid.*
[393] *Ibid.*
[394] Kashani-Sabet, Firoozeh. *Frontier Fictions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999). p. 75
[395] Tavakoli-Targhi, p. 136

qanun! If you possess something, demand *qanun*! If you are poor, demand *qanun*! If you are human, demand *qanun*!"[396]

About the Author: Safī ʿAlī Shāh

Before focusing upon Safī ʿAlī Shāh and his *Mīzān al-Maʿrifah* specifically, a preliminary survey of the *Niʿmat Allāhī silsilah*'s position in the period leading up to the text's composition seems appropriate. The term *Niʿmat Allāhī* designates a collection of Sufi orders claiming a common lineage originating with Nūr al-Dīn b. ʿAbd Allāh Valī, better known as Shāh Niʿmat Allāh Valī (1330-1431), who was born in Aleppo and studied Sufism under ʿAbd Allāh Yāfiʿī.[397] Upon Yāfiʿī's death, he undertook a retreat in Egypt before traveling east, as a result of which it was in Transoxiana that he first took up a public role as a spiritual guide (*murshid*).[398] After running afoul of Tīmūr, he moved on to Tūs and Harāt in 774/1372-3, where he married and took up agriculture, a pursuit in which he would continue to engage after leaving Harāt for Kirmān and its environs the following year, and he would go on settle in Māhān (a suburb of Kirmān), which would serve as a base for his teaching and writing (which included prose and, more famously, poetry).[399] After Shāh Niʿmat Allāh Valī's death in 1431, his son Shāh Khalīl Allāh succeeded him and, in 1436, relocated to India at the invitation of Ahmad

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[396] *Ibid*.
[397] See: Algar, Hamid and Burton-Page, J., "Niʿmat-Allāhiyya" in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition,* Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 22 November 2017 http://dx.doi.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0865; Royce, pp. 59-62; van den Bos, Matthijs. *Mystic Regimes: Sufism and the State in Iran from the late Qajar Era to the Islamic Republic* (Leiden: Brill, 2002). pp. 55-6; and Zarrīnkūb. *Dunbālah-yi justujū: dar tasavvuf-i Iran* (Tehran: *Chāpkhānah-yi* Sipihr, 1369/1990). pp. 189-195
[398] Algar and Burton-Page
[399] *Ibid.*

Shāh Bahman, the ruler of the Deccan, where the order's leadership would remain until the end of the eighteenth century.[400]

Maʿsūm ʿAlī Shāh reached Iran from the Deccan in 1776, having been dispatched there by the then-*qutb*, Rizā ʿAlī Shāh (d. 1799/1800), who had held that position since 1748-9 and is recognized in secondary Niʿmat Allāhī literature as the path (*tarīqat*)'s renewer (*mujaddid*).[401] Maʿsūm ʿAlī Shāh was born in Hyderabad in 1734-5, and, after spending years in Rizā ʿAlī Shāh's service, received both his title (Maʿsūm ʿAlī Shāh) and an *ijāzah* for spiritual guidance (*irshād*) from him.[402]

In the decades before the Qajar dynasty's rule was cemented, the absence of a strong central government led Usūlī clerics to aim to guarantee their power by targeting potential religious competitors, first by suppressing Akhbārīs. Vahīd Bihbihānī, the father of Āqā Muhammad ʿAlī, was a major advocate for the suppression of Akhbārism, and his son earned the "Sufi-killer" title as a result of his similar attempt to eliminate potential competitors in the religious market.[403] These rivalries also operated along both sectarian and more conventionally socio-political lines: the late Zand and early Qajar period saw local officials' and religious leaders' loyalties shifting between dynasties, which, alongside the doctrinal elements, created a context of violent contestation. This environment of dynastic combat greeted Maʿsūm ʿAlī Shāh when he tried to re-establish an Iranian foothold for *Niʿmat Allāhī* Sufis in Iran after the leadership of the order's centuries-long sojourn in India.

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[400] *Ibid.*
[401] Royce, William. *Mīr Maᶜsūm Alī Shāh and the Ni'mat Allāhī Revival 1776-77 and 1796-97* (Dissertation: Dept. of Near Eastern Studies, Princeton University, 1979), pp. 81-2
[402] *Ibid.* pp. 89-90
[403] Bayat, Mangol. "Anti-Sufism in Qajar Iran" in *Islamic Mysticism Contested: Thirteen Centuries of Controversies and Polemics* (Leiden: Brill, 1999). p. 627; Shīrāzī, Muhammad Maʿsūm. *Tariq Al-Haqā'iq*, Vol. III (Tehran: Sanā'ī Publications, 1966). p. 171.

Despite the difficulties that accompanied this return to Iran, subsequent *Niʿmat Allāhī* masters did manage to establish themselves on the intellectual and political scene by the early nineteenth century. Majzūb ʿAlī Shāh (d. 1239/1823) and Mast ʿAlī Shāh (d. 1253/1837) made contributions to the literary-intellectual milieu of their day, among which were numerous apologia in defense of Sufism in response to condemnations like Āqā Muhammad ʿAlī Bihbihānī's *Risālah-yi Khayrātīyah*.[404] Some *Niʿmat Allāhī*s also enjoyed privileged positions at court. Famously, Muhammad Shāh (r. 1250-1264 A.H./1834-1848 C.E.) was himself an initiate of the order and named his spiritual director Hāj Mīrzā Āqāsī prime minister.[405] He also appointed the *Niʿmat Allāhī pīr* Rahmat ʿAlī Shāh the deputy chief (*Nāyib al-sadr*) of religious endowments (*awqāf*) for Fārs province.[406] Although succession to Rahmat ʿAlī Shāh's position of leadership within the *Niʿmat Allāhī* order was claimed by multiple figures upon his death, Nāsir al-Dīn Shāh bestowed this same title (*Nāyib al-Sadr*) upon Rahmat ʿAlī Shāh's son, Mīrzā Muhammad Maʿsūm Shīrāzī (d. 1344 A.H./ 1925 C.E.).[407] Later, a disciple of this article's main subject, Mīrzā Hasan Safī ʿAlī Shāh, ʿAlī Khān Zahīr al-Dawlah was both a son-in-law of Nāsir al-Dīn Shāh and a minister at his court and that of his successor, Muzaffar al-Dīn Shāh. Given that he was Safī ʿAlī Shāh's successor, a courtier, and the founder of the quasi-Masonic "Society of Brotherhood" (*Anjuman-i Ukhuvvat*), which played a prominent role in the Constitutional Movement, Zahīr al-Dawlah is a particularly important figure for the study of the relationship

[404] Cf. Majẕūb ʿAlī Shāh, *'Aqā'id-i majzūbīyah.* Available online at: http://sufism.ir/books/download/farsi/aghayede_majzobie.pdf; Mast ʿAlī Shāh, *Rīyāz al-Sīyāhah*. Available online at: http://sufism.ir/books/download/farsi/shirvani/riazosiyahe.pdf

[405] Amanat, Abbas. *Pivot of the Universe: Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar and the Iranian Monarchy, 1831-1896* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: UC Berkeley Press, 1997). pp. 28-9

[406] Humayūnī, M. *Tārīkh-i silsilah-hā-yi tarīqat-i Niʿmat Allāhīyah dar Irān* (London: Bunyād-i ʿIrfān-i Mawlānā, 1992). p. 192; Ma'sūm 'Alī Shāh, Muhammad Ma'sūm Shīrāzī, 1853-1926. *Tarā'iq al-haqā'iq*, vol. III (Tihrān: Kitābkhānah-yi Bārānī, 1960) p. 391

[407] van den Bos, p. 77; Shīrāzī, *Tarā'iq al-haqā'iq*, Vol. III, pp. 509

between Sufism and modernism in Iran. As such, he will receive closer consideration in this dissertation's epilogue

Mīrzā Hasan Isfahānī was born to a merchant family in Isfahān in 1835. He became a disciple of the Sufi master Rahmat ʿAlī Shāh (d. 1861) in his youth and spent much of the 1860s and early 1870s in India, where he enjoyed close relations with the Āqā Khān of the Ismāʿīlīyah and published his first work, a collection of poetry entitled *Zubdat al-Asrār*, in 1872. He settled in Tehran later in the 1870s, and it was in this period that he published his *Tafsīr-i Qur'ān*. The controversy surrounding the publication of this *tafsīr* demonstrates that he was already enjoying close relations with the Qajar court: the *tafsīr*'s poetic style (it is also known as the *Tafsīr-i manzūm*, or "the versified *tafsīr*") raised the ire of many clerics, but, it was after the intervention of Nāsir al-Dīn Shāh himself that the *marjaʿ-i taqlīd* Mīrzā Shīrāzī issued a ruling in favor Safī ʿAlī Shāh's poetic commentary. His *ʿIrfān al-Haqq* first appeared in 1880. He was profiled in the official gazette, *Sharaf*, in 1890-91 and died in 1899, after which a number of his followers, most prominently the courtier Zahīr al-Dawlah claimed to be his sole legitimate successor.[408]

On Knowledge

Two of Safī ʿAlī Shāh's prose works, *ʿIrfān al-Haqq* and *Mīzān al-Maʿrifah*, use terms derived from the same Arabic root for knowledge (*ʿ-r-f*), in their titles. Nile Green summarizes *ʿIrfān al-Haqq* as an entry into "the domain of philosophical discussions of the ontological

[408] For a more detailed profile, see: Bos, Matthijs van den. *Mystic Regimes: Sufism and the State in Iran, from the Late Qajar Era to the Islamic Republic.* Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2002. pp. 91-95; Green, Nile. "A Persian Sufi in the Age of Printing: Mirza Hasan Safi Ali Shah" and "A Persian Sufi in British India: the Travels of Mirza Hasan Safi ʿAli Shah (1251/1835-1316/1899)," and Lewisohn, Leonard. "An Introduction to the History of Modern Persian Sufism, Part I: The Niʿmatullāhī Order: Persecution, Revival, and Schism," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* Vol. 61, No. 3 (1998), pp. 453-456

qualities of being (*vujūd*) and divine reality (*haqq*)."[409] These texts, however, are not only treatises on ontology, nor does their presentation of Sufism dwell on metaphysics. These texts concern themselves with knowledge; *ʿirfān* did not only (and not primarily) designate mysticism as a genre until later. It and *maʿrifah* both mean knowledge, and their appearance in a text's title indicate that the text has epistemic concerns, especially since these texts call Sufism *tasavvuf*, and not *ʿirfān*, which indicates that *ʿirfān* does not merely stand in for *tasavvuf* in these texts. Ata Anzali's research demonstrates that Persian and Persian-English dictionaries mainly defined *ʿirfān* and *maʿrifah* as "knowledge" or "insight" and not "mysticism" or "Sufism" throughout the nineteenth century, though, in more recent periods, *ʿirfān* has indeed come to be used to refer to mysticism in general.[410] The use of *maʿrifah* in *Mīzān al-Maʿrifah* is thus likely in keeping with a longer history of using *ʿarafa* and the nouns derived from it (*maʿrifah* and *ʿirfān*) to refer to "knowledge" rather than "mysticism."

Based on its title, we can take *the Scale of Knowledge* (*Mīzān al-Maʿrifah*) as an attempt to assess or weigh a brand of knowledge with a long history of particular uses, especially in the particular context of earlier Sufism. This reflects earlier attestations recorded by lexicographers. In his *Lisān al-ʿArab,* Ibn Manzūr (d. 1312) takes *maʿrifah* to be a synonym of *ʿilm* or that "which causes recognition and which thereby gives knowledge," while, in his eighteenth-century *Dictionary of Technical Terms,* al-Tahānawī defines *maʿrifah* most broadly by identifying it with perception (*idrāk*), "whether in the form of a concept, or in the form of a judgment."[411] Earlier

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[409] Green, "A Persian Sufi in British India," p. 201

[410] Anzali, *Safavid Shīʿism, the Eclipse of Sufism and the Emergence of ʿIrfan*, p. 269

[411] Arnaldez, R. "Maʿrifa", *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs (ed.). Consulted online on 14 July 2016 <http://dx.doi.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0686> First published online: 2012

Sufi sources also identify *maʿrifah* with *ʿilm*; for al-Qushayrī, "every *ʿilm* was a *maʿrifah*, and every *maʿrifah* an *ʿilm*," while "the special use of *maʿrifah* as referring to certain metaphysical and ethical insights and practices was due to Sûfî theorizing."[412] Reflecting this special, Sufi-theoretical use, al-Tustarī, asserts, "knowledge (*ʿilm*) is established by gnosis (*maʿrifah*)...while gnosis is established by its own essence."[413]

The Scale of Knowledge (*Mīzān al-Maʿrifah*) presents an epistemology wherein subjects come to possess knowledge by becoming fully human, which entails, simultaneously, the full exercise of capacities for rational thought and the shaping of personal conduct in accordance with norms proffered by a religious exemplar. The treatise's complete title is *Risālah-yi Mīzān al-Maʿrifah va Burhān al-Haqīqah dar Sharh va Maʿnā-yi Insānīyat, kih Dānistan va ʿAmal Kardan-i ān bar har Insānī Farz Ast*, or, in English, *The Epistle on the Scale of Knowledge and the Demonstration of Reality in the Commentary [upon] and Meaning of Humanity, Knowing and Practicing Which is Obligatory Upon Each Human Being*. This title demonstrates that the text is one that concerns itself with assessing knowledge: "scale of knowledge" already suggests this, given that scales are used to weigh commodities and thereby assess their value in the market, but, additionally, *burhān*, can be used to mean demonstrative proof. The subtitle suggests that the knowledge in question is morally weighted. It, for example, uses *farz*, a term used to refer to religious obligations. It also directs this knowledge toward a particular end: it is not knowledge of just any academic discipline. The title tells us it will weigh and prove knowledge of humanity's meaning (*maʿnā-yi insānīyat*). In these disciplines, epistemology and ethics intersect, as both knowledge (*dānistan*) and the practice (*ʿamal kardan*) of humanity are

[412] Rosenthal, Franz. *Knowledge Triumphant*, Leiden: Brill, 2007. p. 166
[413] Rosenthal p. 168

"obligatory upon each human being" (*bar har Insānī farz ast*). The *Mīzān* assimilates knowledge production to ethical practice, but both of these operate through performances of authority and respectability, through which subjects can take on humanity by volitional acts.

Safīʿ Alī Shāh's use of *mīzān* is just one example of his use of a wider vocabulary of commerce in making ethical judgments. This vocabulary, and *mīzān* in particular, has a strong precedent in the Qur'an and exegetical literature. Andrew Rippin notes that *mīzān* appears sixteen times in the Qur'an, reflecting the way in which its language "is imbued with the vocabulary of the marketplace both in practical, day-to-day applications and metaphorical applications."[414] Most prominently, the scale figures centrally in Islamic eschatology, as in Qur'an 101:6-11, "As for the one whose scales [*mawāzīnuhu*] are heavy [with good works] he will live a pleasant life. But as for the one whose scales are light…[his fate will be] raging fire;" balance is thus "also the coordination of justice in this world with the measuring of human responsibility justly in the next."[415] Based on this Qur'anic precedent, *mīzān* went on to appear in a number of titles, including al-Ghazālī's first work on ethics, *Mīzān al-ʿamal.*

Governing Speech

The *Mīzān al-Maʿrifah* begins by outlining the specific rules by which discourse should be produced. The text begins with the standard exordium in praise of God, but this preface itself is a commentary on humanity's station and faculties, and especially the faculty of speech. "I praise the Creator of the world for every blessing, and especially the blessing of speech, and seek aid from the veracious ones of the court of his glory." Though speech is a blessing for which one

[414] Rippin, Andrew, "Trade and Commerce," *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, Jane Dammen McAuliffe (ed.), Washington DC: Georgetown University. Consulted online on 04 December 2016

[415] Smith, Jane I., "Eschatology," *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, Jane Dammen McAuliffe (ed.), Washington DC: Georgetown University. Consulted online on 04 December 2016

should be grateful, humanity must be disciplined in its exercise: "He gave humanity a tongue to speak correctly and speech to speak for the Creator's contentment and correct and true discourse does not seek prolongation or possess division. The wise language-user (*zabān-dān-i khiradmand*)[is] mostly silent, and, when speaking, speaks with correct awareness, brevity, and propriety to the moment."[416] Language is clearly a high-priority topic for this text; it is an essential enough quality that the text's opening thanks God for endowing humans with it without mentioning any other faculties. But, just one sentence later, the preface begins to elaborate something like an ethics of speech in which the use of language is, at best, questionably virtuous: the wise are mostly silent (*khiradmand aghlab khāmūsh*) and, when they do speak, do so with brevity. This suggests that speech is also an epistemic problem—silence, rather than verbosity is a sign of wisdom. To know might not be to speak.

If lack of speech correlates with knowledge, then excessive discourse demonstrates ignorance. A wise person "does not seek increase through elegance of speech," for "the multiplicity of words casts people into confusion and is the cause of deficiency at every level because it proceeds from vexation and not from balanced views of speech that flow from the heart and settle on the heart and influence it." A direct command follows this description of wise and unwise speech: "You, oh dear one, [must] comprehend every [expression of] speech and if the proof of its veracity follows with it and if a sound intellect spoke testimony of its wisdom and it has come from a lofty station." In this passage, the author sets out to position himself as a teacher with authority over the reader, whom it treats as a student: it addresses the reader in the second-person singular (*tu*) instead of the more deferential second-person plural (*shumā*) and

[416] Safī ʿAlī Shāh, Hasan. *Mīzān al-Maʿrifah* (Tehran: Kitābfurūsh-i Islāmīyah, 1317 [1937 or 38], p. 2

employs an imperative (*taʿaqqul kun*), which demonstrates that the reader is in a position to take orders from the subject enunciating this text. It is, of course, a bit ironic that the text commands readers to exercise their own intellectual authority, but, this is exactly what it does, commanding the audience to question if statements possess rational demonstration (*burhān-i ʿaqlī*), making acceptability to a healthy intellect (*ʿaql-i salīm*) the major standard of an enunciation's value.

It goes on to reject the value of statements without such demonstrative proof, saying, "if it is without demonstration, it is [merely] semantic, and a narration holds no weight and does not yield a benefit."[417] This marks the first appearance in the body of the treatise of a word related to its title: the term used for weight, *vazn*, comes from the Arabic *wazn*, as does the titular *Mīzān*. This figure of speech also serves to relate Sufism to trade: scales obviously measure the amount of a commodity being sold in a market. The next expression used to dismiss claims lacking in a rational demonstration is also decidedly economic: in addition to having no weight, they yield no result (*hāsilī nabakhshad*).

Even if the wise are normally silent, a certain elite can and do speak about anything: "Knowledgeable people [*arbāb-i maʿānī*] speak about everything, and that is outside of the acceptance and rejection, praise and blame, and verification and falsification of any single person or group."[418] The passage thus shifts tone suddenly: from suggesting that the reader avoid giving undue consideration to unproven speech, it moves to commenting exactly on expressions that cannot be judged by their content alone, as the status of the subject making the statement plays a role in the statement's meaning. Safī ʿAlī Shāh also opposes meaning to self-interest.[419] He

[417] Safī ʿAlī Shāh, p. 3
[418] Safī ʿAlī Shāh, p. 3
[419] I have translated *arbāb-i maʿānī* as "knowledgeable people," but it could also be rendered "possessors of meanings" or "lords of concepts." This group speaks universally [*bi-kullīyat sukhan guyand*] because of their status as lords [*arbāb*] of meanings [*maʿānī*], in contrast to

continues by replicating the classical opposition between meaning or spirit [*maʿnā*] and form or appearance [*sūrah*]: spiritual people can speak meaningfully without need of anyone's acceptance and rejection or verification and falsification, "in contrast to the speakers of form who have made speech follow their own desires and claims and have cast it at people's hands and feet, which, when you look well at it, has nothing in it other than their praise for their likes and reproach for their dislikes."[420] Spirituality and knowledge thus intersect in their objectivity, in that this passage presents statements by "possessors of meaning" as true by virtue of their opposition to statements based on the preferences of commoners.

From Knowledge to Humanity

After dedicating itself to language in its introduction, the *Mīzān al-Maʿrifah* shifts its focus to humanity (*ādamīyat* or *insānīyat*, which it uses more or less interchangeably). This passage also begins with an imperative toward knowledge: "Know that the alleviation of faults and the arrival at perfect knowledge is a human duty, and the comprehension of humanity is the original point of the creation of the world [*khilqat-i ʿālam*] and possibility [*imkān*];" "humanity" is thus not a given—it is something that must be comprehended. People must learn how to be human, and Safī ʿAlī Shāh binds the acquisition of this knowledge to Sufism. "The achievement of this lofty station [*ādamīyat*] is comprised of two things: one is outer discipline [*ādāb-i zāhir*], which is termed *sharīʿat*, and the other is inner purification [*tanzīh-i bātin*], which is called Sufism."[421] Humanity is thus something that must be cultivated by these two processes, which

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others. However, in his translation of Hujvīrī's *Kashf al-mahjūb*, Nicholson renders *arbāb-i maʿānī* into English as "spiritualists." See: al-Hujwīrī, ʿAlī ibn ʿUthmān al-Jullābī and Reynold Alleyne Nicholson (trans. and ed.). *The Kashf al-Mahjūb*: the Oldest Persian Treatise on Sufism, (Leiden: Brill, 1911). p. 59

[420] Safī ʿAlī Shāh p. 3

[421] Safī ʿAlī Shāh, p. 8

feature the conventional pair of *zāhir* and *bātin*. Of these processes, the *Mīzān* treats outer discipline first.

The text holds up the *sharīʿah* as the exoteric dimension of the process that creates "humanity" as an ethical status particular to one kind of subject. Its appeal to this outer discipline also replicates the introduction's appeal to the "universal" speech of spiritual people; in both cases, Safī ʿAlī Shāh presents the position he advocates as the one that offers objective knowledge, and he specifically opposes this knowledge to self-interest. *Arbāb-i maʿānī* can speak on any topic without need of verification or falsification, but when others speak, they only give voice to their own preferences. Similarly, every nation (*har millat*) possesses religious and civil laws (*qānūn-i sharʿ* and *zākūn-i mulk*, respectively), through which the intelligent will oppose the arbitrariness of "the dissolute and materialistic," whose beliefs the rational will generally consider hideous.[422] Here again, we see problems of knowledge and ethics overlap: intelligence demands law and religion, while the text equates ignorance to materialism, the supporters of which cannot find an objective basis for their position, instead only being able to "intend their own arbitrariness," much like those whose speech, in the book's introduction, depends on form, rather than meaning, and through which they can only voice personal preferences, and not objective truths.[423] People need an authority beyond themselves to which they can appeal, and Safī ʿAlī Shāh grounds this appeal in a universalistic conception of religious authority and natural order.

Knowledge carries with it certain entitlements, and it is a religious duty to maintain these: "the argument in the sending of the messages and the descent of the books is, in total, this:

[422] Safī ʿAlī Shāh, pp. 8-9
[423] *Ibid.* p. 9

creation is inevitably oriented toward good order and honor," and because "the position of honor is the right of whoever knows the soundness and corruption of the servants [*ʿubbād*] in both their inner and outer dimensions." As a result of accepting these premises, the text posits that honor, then, belongs to God, because "the Lord is more aware than the servants of every condition." This deference to the station of the divine has particular legal consequences: "it is not the right of created beings to lay down a *sharīʿat* or pass a *zākūn* for themselves."[424] If people were, by creating such rules for themselves, to decide upon right and wrong, "they would not persist or remain permanent, because intellects are different and in disagreement, and it is easy for intellects to disagree as to the rightful order."[425] This appeal to revelation may, to contemporary eyes, reflect a "fundamentalist" (or, to employ the language of latter-day Iranian politics, "principlist," *usūl-garā*) impulse to insist that a nation-state's legal code reproduce the injunctions of a particular religion's scriptures as literally as possible. However, as this passage goes on, it avoids referring to the injunctions of a particular *sharīʿah*; revealed law seems to stand in for any code that appeals to objective standards rather than personal preferences.

This portion of the *Mīzān*'s equation of *ādāb-i zāhir* to *sharīʿah* continues by citing the laws of modern, ostensibly secular, European states to support its assertion that humanity cannot make its own laws and instead needs outside help to decide the rules governing subjects' conduct. "It must therefore be indubitable that judgments [*ahkām*] be made between people on the basis of veracity [*sidq*], which comes from the Creator, in order to be free of creaturely prejudices, since creatures should also be certain that this judgment had come about fairly [*bi-tusāvī shudah*]" and did not arise from "the tyranny of an equal over them."[426] This is as true in

[424] Safī ʿAlī Shāh, p. 9
[425] *Ibid.*
[426] *Ibid*. pp. 10-11

Europe as Iran: "You see this: the new rules in distant kingdoms have come in place by means of the empowerment of the state and government, like the law of Europeans, still have not violated national principles, inasmuch as the name of religion [*sharīʿat*] and nation [*millat*] are upon them, unless the cause of order is considered to be in those bold rules; but those too are from among the universal rules that came from the Cause of the world by means of the prophets, which can hold for a few days and sustain actual order and honor."[427] The active legislative programs of European states are thus also capable of sustaining social order, so long as they uphold the same injunctions and prohibitions as religion. Mīrzā Hasan explains this by analogy. It is as if "a proficient doctor called something a special cure and described the purpose of its use and consumption and then someone else came and also put it to other uses;" in such cases, benefit could still come to the second person: "because the intellects of creatures are a ray of the lights of the Universal Intellect, they can certainly find benefits from their origin."[428]

The rise of the nation-state is one of the most characteristic features of the transition to modernity, but, in the Iranian case, nationalists also found themselves in need of a new vocabulary to define their territory as a nation to which citizen-subjects belonged and in light of which subjects' status as humans was defined. Thus, the use of *millat* above, where it appears as one of the key sources of the values determining human obligations, may well reflect the adoption of *millat* in to refer to "nation" as the simultaneously territorial and moral source of subjects' identity. It appears earlier, to similar ends, in the modern newspaper *Ruznamah-yi*

[427] Safī ʿAlī Shāh, p. 11
[428] *Ibid.* pp. 10-11

ʿ*ilmiyah-yi dawlat-i Iran*, where, for example, its January 11, 1864 issue, uses *millat* to gloss the French *nation*.[429]

This passage goes on to strike quite an optimistic note about created beings' intellectual capabilities and the compatibility of religious rulings and modern legal codes: "if intellects agree on and advise in favor of the comfort of the creation and the [sound] arrangement of the realm, it is no surprise that these are all traces that remain from the prophets and have come to commoners from the ruler of the realm, and if it is frequently experienced, it would not be strange for it to give benefits."[430]

The section also explains divine and human rule in terms of one another simultaneously—these rules "are all traces that remain from the prophets," which is to say that God sent them, but, they have also "come to commoners from the ruler of the realm." I also take this to be referring to the divine origin of these traces, but, this also suggests a permeability between metaphysical and historical hierarchies, as it explains the divine origin of these rules in specifically worldly terms of rule and possession, wherein the creation is the common folk and the ruler of the realm (*sāhib al-mulk*) is the divine. Of course, even if the innovative legislation of European states is a ray from the same sun as adherence to the revealed law, there would still "be more goodness and less corruption" if "they acted according to the same original order in all matters…powerful drugs may relieve pains, but they cannot prevent illness."[431] Safī ʿAlī Shāh

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[429] Kashani-Sabet, Firoozeh. "Fragile Frontiers," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 29: 2, p. 234, note 150. Kashani-Sabet also notes that the same paper continued to use *millat* as "[religious] community" as late as 1869. However, either use calls to mind a collective entity with a moral claim on its members, and I would argue that in either case, the term serves to appeal to a communitarian sensibility. The shift toward national community did not entail *millat* shedding its earlier religious connotations. Indeed, these probably helped the term retain its moral weight.

[430] Safī ʿAlī Shāh, p. 11

[431] *Ibid.*

thus shows restraint in his approbation of modern legal codes. In keeping with generally modernist impulses, though, he does valorize novelty, and favors the present over the past. A decreased reliance on the strictures of the revealed law is part of this valorization of the present relative to the past.

The passage entitled "On the Level of Humanity Consisting of the Wayfaring of Sufism," the first to explicitly treat Sufism, begins, "as it has become known, people's duty [*taklīf-i insān*], is, generally, the achievement and perfection of humanity [*tahsīl va takmīl-i ādamīyat*]," which consists of "of the preservation of external manners and internal wayfaring;" this "internal wayfaring" "is the practice of the customs of Sufism and the path," which constitutes the distinction between humans and animals: Sufism "means shedding animalistic qualities from the self and acquiring human virtues."[432] It is thus through their work on themselves that a subject becomes human. This cultivation of virtue is so necessary because "a human with the characteristics of animals cannot be called human or counted as different from other animals." These human virtues are supposed to be self-evident, as "the reality of the human is virtue [*ihsān*], which is based on its own example," but despite its apparent self-evidence, the text does explain *ihsān* in contrast to vice: "the truth of the human is veracity and sincerity, not lying, treachery, and the like."[433] This "reality of the human" [*haqq-i insān*] is what is most essential to humans, but the rhetoric around this essence is just is pragmatic as it is idealistic: this passage first explains that "humanity is a root [*asl*] in humans, and the bad qualities that oppose humanity are a branch [*farʿ*] and an accident [*ʿaraz*], meaning that they occur secondarily," which calls to mind a Platonic return to a more abstract and ideal essence. This opposition, and its subsequent

[432] Safī ʿAlī Shāh, p. 13
[433] *Ibid.* p. 14

elaboration, can also be read as employing language more practical than abstract. As with much of the text's language, like its title's *mīzān*, the pair of *asl* and *farʿ* also have a commercial overlay, *asl* being an investment's principal and *farʿ* being its interest. The explanation of humanity's purpose continues along practical lines as well: just as a horse that "does not have skill in running" is a mere pack animal, "a sword that cannot slash does not have any special qualities beyond those of a kitchen knife, and wine that does not give drunkenness is just foul water," "a person that does not have a human's special qualities is a useless beast whose status is lower than cattle."[434] Humanity is its honesty, just as a hammer is its for-hammering.

This teleology simultaneously valorizes novelty: "In all ages, people have mostly been savage and distant from the levels of humanity, perfect souls have preferred the establishment of the rules of civilization and the perfection of the degrees of its form on the basis of their intent and desire for the education/training of servants/worshippers and, to the extent of the capacity of the era and people's condition, placed law in order for everyone to be comfortable in the security of that law and for them to come together as a nation/sect and simultaneously advise the elite of that nation toward their origin on that basis." "In earlier times, because people were not educated to the same extent as people today and were more savage, spiritual people kept their states more concealed, and on the rare occasion that someone spoke (openly) about Sufism, it would be trampled by the animals and savages, but in this age, there are many intelligent people who can comprehend meanings and realities, the individuals who can speak meaningfully meet more, and the speech of *ʿārifān* has, in the way that it is widespread among people, never been in any age."

The *Mīzān*'s section in praise of the sovereign continues to link the humanity and virtue to knowledge, but it links all three to the era of its composition. It thus esteems its present as

[434] Safī ʿAlī Shāh, pp. 13-14

especially moral, and links this exceptional morality to knowledge's increased accessibility, while simultaneously responding to reformist criticism of the monarch of the period. "Iran has always been a land of great, just kings," but its current king "is the king of universal refuge, the monarch whose dignity is like Jamshīd, the heaven of whose court is the aid to the Islamic nation, Nāsir al-Dīn Shāh," who has "cultivated the kingdom of Iran to the extent of forty universe-turning, world-seeing, intellect-having, knowing, active, perfect, virtuous, and just kings."

The text continues by attributing people's increased access to knowledge in the present to the virtue of his rule, under which "most people have come to possess knowledge and craft and have found the manners of humanity, except for a rare, exception from among the savage who have still not found education." This knowledge is as praiseworthy as it is modern, for those who oppose it "set fire to the steam carriage that is the cause of their comfort."[435] This responds to those intellectuals who enjoyed the progress (exemplified by the "steam engine") over which Nāsir al-Dīn Shāh ruled while criticizing his rule, while the comparison to the legendary Jamshīd reflected the historical sense of the nationalist fascination with great kings of Iran's past. Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet notes that the Comte de Gobineau, having observed "that the Persians perceived their country as 'very ancient, and as they say themselves, perhaps the most ancient in the world that had a regular government,'" concluded that Qajar Iran met his criterion of nationhood" by virtue of the fact that "Qajar historians were captivated with ancient Persian emperors, if not always with their contemporary kings."[436] "Iranians' love for their past, as demonstrated by their twin loyalty to Anushirvan and ʿAli, persuaded this Frenchman, himself an

[435] Safī ʿAlī Shāh, p. 35
[436] Kashani-Sabet, "Fragile Frontiers," p. 234, note 150

offspring of the 1789 revolution (albeit a reluctant one), to refer to Iran as a 'nation' as early as the 1850s," but contemporary historians tended to compare Nāsir al-Dīn Shāh unfavorably to Anushirvan.[437] This being the case, Jamshīd's appearance in the *Mīzān al-Maʿrifah*'s praise of the Shāh likely served as a rejoinder to this disappointed nationalist comparison to Iran's past imperial glories. As Kashani-Sabet notes, that Qajar Iran's "historians vaunted the exploits of earlier royal heroes" rather than their current rulers, who by virtue of their "failed territorial intrigues, could not always boast of heroic feats,"[438] So, Safī ʿAlī Shāh could have been responding to these historians by saying that Qajar kings were still as heroic as those of legend. The *Mīzān* comments on these territorial anxieties as well, but it praises the king's ability to preserve security in Iranian territory, rather than claiming that he could not protect it as well as Anushirvan or Jamshid.

This modern king's government, then, safeguards knowledge itself by preserving order: "…the king, in the interest of preserving religion and the worldly progress of the people of this kingdom, has provided guidance, so that people may find insight, be united, and tend to overlook their differences." Because of his ability to preserve order, "violent dealings would rarely occur, and these would result from the unreliability of your self-knowledge, not the deficiency of the state." As in its opening, the text attributes moral failures to ignorance, and credits the modern state with reducing both ignorance and violence. The text also credits Nāsir al-Dīn Shāh with raising Iran's international profile by making "the sublime *Ithnā-ʿAsharī mazhab* glorious and strong all over the earth without [the use of] war and turbulence and, having represented all the people of Iran to great kings and states, made them respected."[439] This passage not only

[437] *Ibid.* p. 226
[438] *Ibid.* p. 226
[439] Safī ʿAlī Shāh, pp. 35-36

associates Shīʿism with Iranian identity by giving the king responsibility for preserving the reputation of both; it claims that Nāsir al-Dīn Shāh's diplomacy had served their international image, thereby casting his travel to Europe (which started in 1873), for which he was often resented, in a positive light.

In addition to praising him for raising Iran's international station, Safī ʿAlī Shāh also praises that Nāsir al-Dīn Shāh's ability to preserve Iran's territorial security. In the past, "there was not a single *farsang* of Iranian soil without a thief or dishonest person," but now, "security is now at such a point that unaccompanied young children could carry gold and jewels from city to city."[440] Even from his exile in London, Malkum Khān praised the shāh in similar terms: "it is to the honour of the present Shah that he has felt and recognised the situation. He has done what he could to guarantee security of life and property to his subjects, by inviting the signature of all the great powers to a liberal proclamation to that effect."[441] Praise of the sovereign is of course a fairly standard feature of classical Persian literature, as well, but both of our authors are particularly modern in their common focus on the relationship between the territorial security of the nation-state (for example, the reference to soil as a territorial marker in Safī ʿAlī Shāh) and diplomacy (as in Safī ʿAlī Shāh's reference to the king's ability to "represent" Iran to great powers and Malkum Khān's mention of the shah's having sought the signature of these same great powers). As Firoozeh-Kashani Sabet has established, soil was a central motif in the development of Iranian nationalism: between 1850 and 1896, "a nationalist rhetoric based on land emerged to emphasize the need to guard the frontiers;" as Mīrzā Mahdī Khān Mumtahin al-Dawlah claimed with especially patriotic zest, "the people of the country of Iran…in bravery and

[440] *Ibid.* p. 35
[441] Prince Malcom Khan, p. 240

courage were superior to all the people on earth;" training in "the military principles of present-day Europe" would enable them to retrieve "the whole world" from "the sprawling empires of Europe," which "had redefined the touchstone of greatness."[442]

The *Mīzān* explains its open advocacy of Sufism by contrasting the intellectual culture of the present age with that of the past. Because people were less educated in earlier times, "spiritual people kept their states more concealed, and on the rare occasion that someone spoke openly about Sufism, it would be trampled by the animals and savages," but, "in this age, there are many aware people who can comprehend intelligibles and realities," as a result of which, "the individuals who can speak meaningfully meet more, and the speech of gnostics [*ʿārifān*] is widespread among people as never before."[443] Sufism, and its particular brand of knowledge (this passage's *idrāk-i maʿārif va haqāyiq*) thus acquired a unique currency thanks to the education made available by modernity. This quote, however, concludes a passage that treats humanity as a station of moral development that depends specifically on the education Sufism makes available.

Sufism at Work: Ethical and Economic Practice

In trying to make Sufism respectable, the *Mīzān al-Maʿrifah* presents a limited collection of professional and spiritual activities as acceptable. It offers professional advice to government officials, religious scholars, military officers, and merchants, and emphatically rejects both mendicancy and occultism. Sufi ethical writing has a long history of tying its pedagogy to supererogatory spiritual exercises; however, alongside this ascetic bent, as Sufism developed into distinct, institutionalized lineages, it came, more and more, to construe professional and

[442] Kashani-Sabet, Firoozeh. *Frontier Fictions: Shaping the Iranian Nation, 1804-1946*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999. pp. 74, 47
[443] *Ibid.* p.17

associational life, rather than isolation, as domains in which subjects could practice the exercises by which they would constitute themselves as moral agents. *The Scale of Knowledge*, however, does not treat as wide a variety of urban professions as some early modern Persian texts that treat the professional ethics of the guild trades in Sufi terms (for example, Kāshifī's *Futuvvat Nāmah-yi Sultānī*). I take this to suggest that the *Mīzān*'s restricted scope serves to comment not only on how a subject could practice their trade most virtuously, but also on what trades were particularly respectable in the urban life of late nineteenth-century Iran.

The effort to market Sufism as a practice by which modern subjects can be made properly human is also an effort to demonstrate Sufism's compatibility with practical, worldly life. This effort begins with a narrative account of Sufism's origins, which explains the relative secrecy in which its knowledge was preserved and transmitted: "the people of intelligence and understanding do not treat" the topic of Sufism, "except in person, because in the past, this matter was not the means of ordering a person's livelihood and worldly credit; they consumed the wages of the path, bore its burdens, and survived disappointment" in private.[444] However, "gradually, unemployed people found their way to this path" because they fell into envy for "the possessors of station who, with desire for this group, applied themselves to it" and, from envy, "clothed themselves with the garments of Sufism. The name of 'solitary Sufism' [*tasavvuf-i khalvat*] was put on this group for them to became famous in the world." So, ironically enough, according to Safī ʿAlī Shāh, solitude served a thirst for fame, as some from this "became a reference-point [*marjaʿ*] for place-seekers," and "because no commodity goes long without a buyer, some consumers gathered around them and mixed essence with appearance and confused the matter [so] sedition became widespread," which the text attributes to the devil himself: "Iblīs

[444] Safī ʿAlī Shāh, pp. 17-18

also came in human garb and displayed himself with a thousand virtues, and distinguishing this matter became so difficult as to cause all ignorance of the call of Sufism. He made himself famous in the name of *qutbīyat*."[445] This seems to respond to criticisms that specifically targeted the deference extended to Sufi masters (termed, among other things, *qutb*) by dissociating the Sufism that Safīʿ Alī Shāh endorses from the grandiosity of claims made by, or on behalf of, those Sufi masters deemed exploitative and dishonest by critics of Sufism. This passage also continues the text's frequent use of commercial language when it explains false Sufis as merchandise (*matāʿ*) that did not go without a buyer (*kharīdār*). Additionally, though, this passage seems to comment on human fallibility and the uncertainty of moral judgment—when it says that Iblīs came in human clothing, it uses the term *Ādam,* from which the "humanity" that is so central to *The Scale of Knowledge*, *ādamīyat*, derives. This, in turn, seems to suggest that even if *ādamīyat* is a moral *telos*, someone's appearing to have achieved it or seeming to possess "a thousand virtues" can obscure their actual corruption.

Solitude and mendicancy, however, are just two of many practices that have come to be associated with Sufism. "Common people," who concern themselves with "property, position, acquisition, and labor," who dispute "over something about the very being of which they have no comprehension," have come to apply to "the name of Sufism [*ism-i darvīshī*]" a "snare" by connecting it to "alchemy, spirit-summoning, amulets, and others like these, the intent of all of which is entrapment." This association has made people "incapable of doubting that Sufism is like these things and has no point other than this: that poverty [*faqr*], Sufism, and guidance [*irshād*] are nothing other than pretexts for someone's making a living."[446] Later, in its section

[445] *Ibid.* p. 18
[446] Safīʿ Alī Shāh, p. 19

offering specific advice [*nasīhat*], the text specifically advises against fusing Sufi practice and the aforementioned occult sciences. It commands, "do not make yourself famous for occult sciences like alchemy and spirit-binding."[447]

The advice directed to practitioners of Sufism specifically seeks to dissociate them from the exploitative and irrational reputation of the occult sciences. The *Mīzān* tells aspirants, "if you, oh friend, are of the line of gnostics, guides, and hermits, first, believe correctly, then take hold of guides with good beliefs, and encourage the *sharīʿah*." This would, among other things, protect the practitioner from accusations of heterodoxy and could reassure non-Sufi readers that this text's Sufism does not threaten the legal-religious order. From here, the passage goes on to speak to more supernatural-seeming topics: "do not guarantee people's death or sickness, and do not boast of unveiling or miracles; because of this, reject disciples who speak boastfully on your behalf, and do not depart from reflection [*murāqabah*] in assemblies."[448] In advising against claiming certainty or responsibility for another's death or sickness, the passage engages with modern understandings of causality, which deny the possibility of action at a distance. The text does not comment on a theory of causality; it simply suggests that would-be Sufis not claim to be able to ensure another's death or illness, likely for the sake of their own reputations, especially when paired with the command against attempting to practice the occult. This advice against bragging and claims to having violated natural law by way of causing sickness from afar or having made miracles [*karāmāt*] is part of the passage's advice against making practitioners' reputations as ascetics central to their professional or public lives: "do not 'spend' sanctity and piety more than the necessities of civilization demand and do not 'sell' asceticism."

[447] *Ibid.* p. 37
[448] Safī ʿAlī Shāh, p. 19

Its advice regarding the use of authority also aims to preserve Sufis from allegations of exploitation or abuse of disciples and their resources: "do not involve yourself in disciples' exoteric matters, do not make disciples' families your concern, do not unnecessarily request disciples' possessions…support indigent disciples to an appropriate extent and do not complain of poverty in front of anyone."[449] Given that they appear in the relatively open medium of a printed text, these norms governing master-disciple relationships seem not only directed at would-be teachers, but would-be students as well, as they would also guide non-Sufi readers' judgment of the supposed Sufi masters with whom they might consult. Sufi teachers, then, should not threaten their students' prosperity, and should, if anything, help to stabilize economic relations in terms of both the larger economy (trade and the professional sphere) and in terms of the smaller economy (the household, to which *oikonomia* originally referred).

The Sufi and the New Man

This treatise's concern with the preservation of a "natural" domestic order also extends to a concern with governing gender relations and limiting the range of acceptable sexual activity. In articulating its claims, the *Mīzān* appeals to a gender hierarchy it takes for granted. Many of its least programmatic remarks reveal the operation of assumptions that position its treatment of ethics and rationality as functions of a patriarchal and heteronormative order on which it offers little explicit commentary, simply taking this order as so natural as to be able to explain other remarks without being explained itself. As Afsaneh Najmabadi and Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi's research has illustrated, the refiguring of the Iranian nation in gendered terms was, along with the shifting meanings of *millat* and *vatan*, one of the defining elements of Iranian nationalist discourse.

[449] *Ibid.* pp. 37-38

I have, up to this point, aimed to illustrate the *Mīzān al-Maʿrifah*'s participation in this rearticulation by reading its treatment of (religious) knowledge in light of ethical norms it binds specifically to the relationship between the knowing subject, the nation (*millat*) and its political and economic life. However, because "these reconceptualizations" also, in general, "depended on notions of gender," it also bears pointing out that the knowing subject aimed at in Safī ʿAlī Shāh's treatise is a gendered subject—the ethical code it dictates specifically tells the aspiring Sufi how to be a man and how, as a man, one should interact with women and *amrad*s, the genders the text (and its brand of modernity) excluded.[450]

Within the *Mīzān*'s imagination, patriarchy is natural enough to explain the text's other claims without needing any explanation itself. In the aforementioned argument in favor of the necessity of a divinely-ordained law, the treatise argues that reducing legal decision-making to human deliberation would have a dire effect on the domestic order: because "everyone has self-interest, interests are inescapably the cause of disagreements, to such an extent that no rational person would be satisfied that he could impose limits or punishments on his own wife and child."[451] This passage's language assumes that rational subject [*ʿāqil*] is necessarily not a woman, as it opposes *ʿāqil* to the word for woman/wife [*zan*] at the outset; but this passage also suggests that the fact that the law enables rational subjects to impose limits and punishments upon their wives and children is somehow evidence of this law's rationality.

A similar "throwaway" line concluding a passage on the slander of Sufism also assumes that women are less capable of participating in intellectual exchange. "In the past, the ignorant, masquerading as scholars, would mislead the public about the state of *fuqarā* and *ʿurafā*, writing

[450] Najmabadi, Afsaneh. *Women With Mustaches and Men Without Beards*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005. p. 16
[451] Safī ʿAlī Shāh, p. 9

and speaking about with much hideousness, lest anyone find out about the laudable qualities and virtues of this group, [for] sales would slow in their bazaar." The privileged present, however, has made public discussions of Sufism's reality more possible and undermined clerical obfuscation of this reality. "In these days, the topic has become public," disproving the allegations against Sufis to all "except for an old woman who could be misled about this matter," aside from whom, only another selfishly exoteric cleric, "a man of their station" would accept such claims. The passage concludes by pointing out such a man's station "is less than [that of] old women in every regard."[452] In praising the age of Nāsir al-Dīn Shāh as one of increased public rationality (or at least reduced gullibility), the text not only casts old women as holdouts in their uncritical acceptance of clerical propaganda, but then also uses women as the basis of an unfavorable comparison, specifically insulting Sufis' clerical accusers by placing them below women, which, to be an insult, must assign women a low position at the outset.

When advising the aspiring Sufi how to relate to disciples, the text directs the reader, "do not converse with strange women in private."[453] Its advice to merchants also aims to limit the participation of women or "beardless youths" in the economy. The text advises merchants, "do not sell to women and *amrad*s on credit, for that is distant from caution and near to sedition, especially because if they do not pay it back, your request would seem severe."[454] Thus, to preserve the reputation of merchants from the allegations of callousness or cruelty that might follow from demanding that a woman or *amrad* repay a debt, *The Scale of Knowledge*

[452] Safī ʿAlī Shāh, p. 17
[453] *Ibid.* p. 38
[454] *Ibid.* p. 56

recommends that merchants avoid doing business with them in the first place, which, in effect, advises in favor of their exclusion from the economy, or at least from the credit economy.[455]

The treatise also constructs military life as a domain of particular moral concern, which, given the military's role as the guarantor of the nation-state's territorial integrity seems particularly modern. After all, the first acts of modernization in Iran were military reforms carried out by ʿAbbās Mīrzā following Iran's defeats (and subsequent losses of territory) in the Russo-Persian wars. The *Mīzān al-Maʿrifah*'s concern with the moral integrity of the military seems to parallel the wider Qajar period's concern with the territorial integrity of the nation state. In casting a concerned gaze on the army's virtue, the text makes military life a domain of moral concern, but it also reflects nineteenth-century transitions in sexual norms. After declaring that military officers should be brave and morally upright, Safī ʿAlī Shāh elaborates, "he who is not pious has no share of bravery and the king should not make him the head of an army, especially if he is an *amrad-bāz* [literally, someone who "plays" with *amrad*s], a gambler, a glutton, or [someone] impure."[456] This passage continues by advising generals or other high-ranking officers to support one another and thus develop and maintain bonds within their ranks: "When an officer displays excellence in war, make it known and send word of it to the king, and even if you may internally have unkind thoughts about him, do not conceal his excellence."[457] The text thus values military men's mutual support quite highly; even if a general dislikes a fellow officer, he should support him by publicizing the officer's accomplishments.

[455] Although there is a much broader body of literature on merchant ethics that advises against extending credit to a number of classes alongside women and *amrads* (like princes and paupers), in this text, the only groups mentioned are women and *amrads*.
[456] Safī ʿAlī Shāh, p. 48
[457] *Ibid*. p. 56

The same bonds that an officer can preserve by refraining from voicing unkind thoughts or speaking favorably about someone he dislikes, however, should not be extended to anyone who might be perceived as a corrupting influence, like, for example, a man who inclines to sexual contact with "beardless youths," though the fear of "corruption" extends beyond sex and also to general questions of piety. Safī ʿAlī Shāh commands, "do not allow the worldly, heretical, or irreligious into your camp and do not befriend them, and if you find someone without religion in your army, expel them;" male bonding can only go so far, "for someone without religion has no bravery, and by keeping company with them [*suhbat-i ān*], they would deplete the heart of the army and hold it back with their ugly actions."[458] The virtues of the ties between officers are as valuable as they are fragile—they must be preserved from a variety of threats that includes not only ignorance and irreligion, but also involvement with beardless youths.

The construction of Iranian national identity in the Qajar period involved the making of a masculine state subject capable of defending the homeland, which came to be feminized. Therefore, it was precisely in the era of the *Mīzān al-Maʿrifah*'s composition that honor (*nāmūs*) "was reclaimed as a national concern;" because "its meaning embraces the idea of a woman's purity (*ʿismat*) and the integrity of the nation, *namus* was constituted as subject to male possession and protection in both domains; gender honor and national honor intimately informed each other."[459] But, as Safī ʿAlī Shāh charges the military with defense of the nation's honor, the honor of the military itself must be defended, and this defense consists of the regulation of the officer corps' conduct in religion and sexuality.

[458] Safī ʿAlī Shāh p. 49
[459] Najmabadi, pp. 1-2

Reflecting what Afsaneh Najamabadi has termed the "closeting" of the male beloved and the elision of *amrad-bāzī* and pederasty, the *Mīzān al-Maʿrifah* not only seeks to exclude *amrad*s from the sphere of acceptable interactions, but, it additionally seeks to exclude the *amrad-bāz* from this domain, specifically in the name of the homosocial bonds between military men that uphold the nation-state. In the restrictions it places upon social (and, implicitly, sexual) intercourse, the *Mīzān al-Maʿrifah* does not only, or even mainly, cast the regulation of sexual appetites and conduct as part of an ascetic program, its regulatory injunctions instead serve the cultivation of a state subject. In this, Safīʿ Alī Shāh's text stands in contrast to some earlier Sufi literature, in which the beardless youth figured as an aesthetic-erotic ideal. Everett Rowson argues that as early as the ninth century, "some Muslim mystics claimed to see in the beauty of adolescent boys a 'testimony' to the beauty and goodness of God, and initiated the practice of gazing at such a boy as a form of spiritual exercise."[460] Such practices, known, among other things, as *nazar-bāzī* and *shāhid- bāzī*, and the literature referencing them, persisted throughout well into the nineteenth century.

The Scale of Knowledge reflects its period's newfound emphasis on the disavowal of desire for young men, a desire which had organized the erotic-aesthetic universe of earlier eras of Islamicate (and especially Perso-Islamic) history. Afsaneh Najmabadi explains, "heteronormalization of eros and sex became a condition of 'achieving modernity,' a project that called for heterosocialization of public space" as well.[461] The *Mīzān al-Maʿrifah* is a snapshot of

[460] Rowson, Everett. "Homosexuality in the Medieval Islamic World: Literary Celebration vs. Legal Condemnation," Paper presented at the conference "Gender and Alterity in Near Eastern Societies, 6 April 1995. p. 24
[461] Najmabadi, pp. 1-2

Iranian life as these projects took place over; thus, in it, we can glimpse the heteronormalization of eros at play alongside an attempt to resist the heterosocialization of economic life.

Conclusion

Safī ʿAlī Shāh's treatments of knowledge in the Nāsirī period were not composed independent of the period's circumstances, as a result of which, the defense of Sufism and its model of knowledge is closely related to the cultivation of virtues and the adherence to norms of gender and class. The *Scale of Knowledge,* for example, demands that Sufis position themselves as aids in their disciple's moral formation without making supernatural claims or demanding payment and thereby distinguish themselves from the exploitative or irrational occultism on which grounds nineteenth-century reformists condemned Sufism's role in Iranian life. In elaborating its view of rationality and moral order, though, the text takes pains to exclude women and *amrad*s. Knowledge is neither neutral nor asocial, and the Sufism of the Qajar era found itself displaying knowledge by displaying its respectability through demands to moral formation, ethically conducted interpersonal relations, and the preservation of class and gender hierarchies. The text makes clear that these demands, and the defense of Sufism of which they are a part, belong to their time and place; comparisons to constitutional European states, praise of the present as especially rational, and of Nāsir al-Dīn Shāh's rule as uniquely capable of preserving public rationality and Iran's territorial integrity situate the Sufism of the *Mīzān al-Maʿrifah* within a specifically Qajar context in which mysticism and modernity commingled. Mīrzā Malkum Khān's work on humanity and law illustrates another side of this context: assumed to be full of westernizing zeal, his appeals to religion and deployment of a vocabulary similar to Safī ʿAlī Shāh's suggests that both figures participated in a complex, interrelated conversation, one which was independent of either author's convictions.

Epilogue
Successions: Ethics, Knowledge, and the Constitutional Revolution

Successors to the figures studied in the preceding two chapters were involved in constitutional movement of the early 20th century: Safā ʿAli Shāh/Zahīr al-Dawlah used his position as a courtier to advocate for political reform while at the same time also enacted organizational and ceremonial reforms within his order, transforming it into the para-Masonic *Anjuman-i Ukhuvvat* ("Society of Brotherhood"), one of many *anjuman*s that employed Masonic themes in the Muzaffarī period and can therefore be figured as thematic successors to the organizations founded by Mīrzā Malkum Khān, if not interpersonal ones. Mirza Hasan Amin al-Sharīʿah, a student of a student of Hādī Sabzavārī, also supported the constitutional movement and, later still, dedicated a treatise on *Akhlāq* to Ahmad Shah.

Though clerics (like the *Akhlāq-i Amīnī*'s author) and the "new intellectuals" are often cast as the main characters in the story of the Constitutional movement, nobles also found themselves involved. The courtier ʿAlī Khān Qājār was one such noble. The son-in-law of Nāsir al-Dīn Shāh (who granted him the title *Zahīr al-Dawlah*) and Minister of Ceremonies under both Nāsir al-Dīn Shāh and Muzaffar al-Dīn Shāh, is remembered as a faithful disciple of Safī ʿAlī Shāh, under whom he took on the sobriquet Safā ʿAlī Shāh. A perhaps-apocryphal story tells that Zahīr al-Dawlah was originally sent to Safī ʿAlī Shāh's *khānaqāh* to observe activities there and report them to Nāsir al-Dīn Shāh; however, this visit had such a great impact on Zahīr al-Dawlah that he later "came to the *khanaqah* having walked slowly in a 'female fashion' through the streets of Tehran in dervish clothing, carrying the Sufi *kashkul* and axe and praising ʿAli" upon Safī ʿAlī Shāh's instructions to do so.[462] When asserting his right to succeed Safī ʿAlī Shāh after

[462] Ridgeon, Lloyd. *Sufi Castigator: Ahmad Kasravi and the Iranian Mystical Tradition* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006). p. 16

the latter's death in 1899, Zahīr al-Dawlah rebranded Safā ʿAlī Shāh's branch of the Niʿmat Allāhī *silsilah*, adopting the name "the Society of Brotherhood" (*Anjuman-i Ukhuvvat*).

As with many of the *anjuman*s of the Muzaffarī period, the *Anjuman-i Ukhuvvat* was simultaneously egalitarian in its rhetoric and largely aristocratic in its membership. Its slogan was "brotherhood, equality, and service to the people," while many of its members or supporters were members of the royal family or court officials: its 1909 donors included ʿAyn al-Dawlah, Qavām al-Dawlah, and the ministers of war and the interior. One story, which is quite telling, reports that Muhammad Hasan Mīrzā, the crown prince under Ahmad Shāh, not only visited the society's Tehran headquarters but was initiated in 1911, and, moreover, that Zahīr al-Dawlah used that occasion as an opportunity to declare "it was the Society of Brotherhood that smashed the face of the arrogant ones, and made the contemporary leaders and the sons of the rulers of the age sit on their knees with the poor (*foqara'*) and tradespeople."[463] This example of Safā ʿAlī Shāh's method of training royal disciples also appears to reflect his training at the hands of Safī ʿAlī Shāh, who once directed Zahīr al-Dawlah to beg for coins in the streets of Tehran and then explained, "I wanted to make you fall from the peak of grandeur that the pride of royal connection has brought about in you."[464] Even if these events did not actually take place (a distinct possibility, given that the story only appears in this form in sources sympathetic to the *anjuman*), the spread of the story and others like it speaks to the society's very real reputation as an order which, on the one hand, drew aristocrats as members, but on the other, sought humility from them.

[463] Ridgeon, p. 35
[464] *Ibid.* p. 16

Among the *anjuman*'s activities were a number of publications. In Tehran, it published the *Majmūʿah-yi akhlāq*, which ran for eighteen issues starting in 1905, and in Kermanshah, published a journal (also named *Ukhuvvat*), which "explored current, worldly affairs and in many cases related them to patriotic or nationalist themes."[465] The Shiraz *Anjuman-i ukhuvvat* also published a newspaper, whose first issue appeared in May, 1908.[466]

When the Constitutional movement began in 1905, Zahīr al-Dawlah was, serving as the governor of Hamadan, and in 1906, helped to establish its regional parliament. Constitutionalism, moreover, seems to have run in his family, as one of Zahīr al-Dawlah's sons was arrested during Muhammad ʿAlī Shah's crackdown on constitutionalism.[467] The 1908 bombardment of the *majlis* is of course the most famous example of the counter-revolution, but Muhammad ʿAlī Shah also ordered Zahīr al-Dawlah's house destroyed: like the parliament, the Cossack brigade shelled it in June of 1908. Both Zahīr al-Dawlah and his wife, Tūrān Āghā Furūgh al-Dawlah, composed poems in reaction to this event and corresponded between themselves in prose about the matter, as well.[468] In one letter to her husband, Furūgh al-Dawlah reported responding as follows to her nephew the shah's attempt to make amends for the destruction of their house: "if you gave me rule over all the world, it would not make amends for

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[465] Ridgeon, p. 38

[466] See Vusūqī, Muhammad Bāqir. *Nigāhī bih taḥavvulāt-i Fārs dar āstānah-yi istibdād-i saghīr: hamrāh bā muʿarrifī-yi rūznāmah-yi anjuman-i ukhuvvat-i Shīrāz* (Shīrāz: Sitād-i Kungrah-yi Buzurgdāsht-i Āyat Allāh Sayyid ʿAbd al-Husayn Lārī; Bunyād-i Fārs′shināsī, 1377/1998). p. 35

[467] van den Bos, pp. 66-67

[468] Handwritten copies of poems by both Zahīr al-Dawlah and Furūgh al-Dawlah are available through *Women's Worlds in Qajar Iran*. "Poem by Zahir al-Dawlah," *Women's Worlds in Qajar Iran;* last edited 26 February, 2016. Available online at: http://www.qajarwomen.org/en/items/1261A14.html, viewed 3 October 2016.
"Poem by Turan Agha Furugh al-Dawlah," *Women's Worlds in Qajar Iran;* last edited 26 February, 2016. Available online at: http://www.qajarwomen.org/en/items/1261A15.html, viewed 3 October 2016.

the suffering that has befallen me."[469] Zahīr al-Dawlah himself made a dire prediction in response to the shelling: "You have destroyed my house, [therefore], God will destroy yours."[470] That the political and personal lives of Tūrān Āghā Furūgh al-Dawlah and Safā ʿAlī Shāh were intertwined should not be terribly surprising; the life of an aristocrat is necessarily a political one. However, the supposedly esoteric (and thus private and apolitical) Sufism also made its way into the society's public life.

The Shiraz *anjuman*'s newspaper deployed an increasing amount of Sufi iconography above its masthead: its May 16, 1908 issue displayed an image of two hands grasping each other.[471] As commonplace as a handshake may seem to be, it is actually an act and image of particular significance within Sufism—it does not only mark a social bond or mutual recognition, but can also mark a relationship of guidance or participation in a master-disciple lineage connecting participants, at least ideally, to the Prophet Muhammad.[472] On its May 23 issue, a pair of crossed axes (*tabarzīn*) and begging-bowl (*kashkūl*), both features of the stereotypical dervish costume, had come to appear above the image of crossed hands.[473] Furūgh al-Dawlah and her daughters were also photographed in such costumes.[474] Ridgeon takes the fact that they appeared "virtually bareheaded" in such photos to be especially significant as public deployment of Sufism to "modernizing" ends. He concedes that "it could be argued that this photograph of

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[469] Āl-i Ahmad, Āsīyah, "*Zanān-i hunarmand: Tūrān Āghā Furūgh al-Dawlah*," *Institute for Iranian Contemporary Historical Studies*; available online at: http://iichs.org/index.asp?id=864&doc_cat=9 (accessed 3 October 2016)
[470] van den Bos, p. 67
[471] Vusūqī, p. 35
[472] For more on handshakes, see: Bashir, Shahzad, *Sufi Bodies: Religion and Society in Medieval Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011). pp. 1-8
[473] Vusūqī, p. 39
[474] See: "Furugh al-Dawlah and her two daughters," *Women's Worlds in Qajar Iran*. Last edited 16 September 2016. http://www.qajarwomen.org/en/items/14138A3.html, accessed 3 October 2016.

bareheaded ladies was intended for private viewing," but notes that Furūgh al-Dawlah's role in the order was quite public: "she used to go to the meetings of the *Anjoman-e Okhovvat* unveiled, and moreover, she used to address the members of the order which included both men and women."[475]

In addition to his role heading an organization that published periodicals, Safā ʿAlī Shāh was an author in his own right. He wrote memoirs and travelogues and composed poetry. Though the bulk of the poetry collection *Majmaʿ al-atvār* is dated to 1317 AH and speaks to mythical or moral subjects (as we shall see in the discussion of friendship below), the 1929 *Saʿādat* edition closes with verses dated Rajab 1331 (or 1913 AD), and these verses take a decidedly more political tone. They open, "from the agitation and ignorance of this afflicted nation, neither king nor clime nor country remain in place" (*az junbish-u-nādānī-yi īn millat-i muztarr/nah shāh bi-jā mānad nah iqlīm nah kishvar*).[476]

In keeping with convention, the introduction to the *Majmaʿ al-atvār* begins by praising God, Muhammad, and ʿAlī (in that order). As with his master Safī ʿAlī Shāh's *Mīzān al-maʿrifah,* Safā ʿAlī Shāh's text also begins by praising God for bestowing language upon humanity: "Praise, oh heart, that pure One/That gave language and wisdom to the dust" [*hamd kun, ay dil, Ahad-i pāk rā/ānkih zabān dād u khirad khāk rā*]. [477] This leads to additional praise of God for sending prophets: "The One that sent messengers/especially the messenger of the last time."[478] Before praising Muhammad in greater depth, the poem cites Adam as proof of God's praiseworthiness, calling Him "the One from whom Adam found nobility/from that One nobility

[475] Ridgeon, p. 37
[476] Zahīr al-Dawlah, ʻAlī Khān Qājār. *Majmaʻ al-atvār*. Kirmānshāh: *Sa'ādat*, 1929. p. 30
[477] Zahīr al-Dawlah, p. 2
[478] *Ibid.*

took the pearl from the shell."[479] Because of its placement following two lines after a reference to Moses and immediately after a verse that mentions prophets, I have translated this verse as if it refers to Adam, the first human and first prophet, but I think it simultaneously refers to humanity more broadly: first, because, as we have seen, the poem itself praises God for giving language and wisdom to the "dust" in which Adam and humanity in general are taken to have their origins, and second, because *Ādam* also serves as an impersonal pronoun in Persian and therefore refers to humanity in general. The elaboration on the pearl of the preceding verse, however, transitions the poem to its praise of Muhammad: "the singular pearl of the eternal sea/is he who is famed as a large and precious pearl/the sent Ahmad who is Mustafā/who found the religion of God from his pure vision."[480] From here it moves on to praise of ʿAli, takes love of ʿAli as a way of commenting on humanity in general, and then begins to explain the occasion of poem's composition, a dream-vision of Nizāmī Ganjavī Zahīr al-Dawlah claims to have experienced. Even if this report is a work of fiction, it serves a noteworthy function, in that it presents the Sufi-poet as a subject empowered to speak by his experience, which connects thematically to the previous section of the poem, as we can take this empowering experience as the means by which the poet can position him as a recipient of the language and wisdom he praised God for bestowing upon the dust from which humanity would be made.

The *Akhlāq-i Amīnī*

The cleric and constitutionalist Mīrzā Hasan Amīn al-Sharīʿah dedicated a treatise on ethics, the *Akhlāq-i Amīnī*, to Ahmad Shah Qajar (r. 1909-1925). The book is only four chapters long, and at first glance does not seem particularly concerned with its titular ethics (*akhlāq*). Its

[479] *Ibid.*
[480] Zahīr al-Dawlah, *Majmaʿ al-atvār*, p. 2

first two chapters discuss knowledge-science (*ʿilm*) and its different varieties, and its last discusses friendship (*dūstī*). But why might a text, which, according to its title, focuses on ethics, dedicate so much of its content to friendship, especially given the scientific tone of its opening half on knowledge?

I propose that the *Akhlāq-i Amīnī*'s emphasis on friendship reflects a commitment to social bonds that arose in the nationalist-reformist milieu of the nineteenth century; although classical works on *akhlāq* also discuss friendship, relative to the total number of chapters, friendship receives considerably more attention in the *Akhlāq-i Amīnī* than, say, in the *Akhlāq-i Nāsirī* or *Akhlāq-i Muhsinī*; the *Akhlāq-i Nāsirī* 's chapter on friendship is one of thirty and *Akhlāq-i Muhsinī*'s one of forty. The *Akhlāq-i Amīnī*'s is one of four, and it was composed of a milieu that had come to treat the state as a national community (*millat*) that generated bonds of responsibility for its members, who, by virtue of their newly conceived status as citizens of a nation-state, were responsible for their mutual wellbeing within that state. By arguing that this ethic was central to late Qajar cultures of literature and politics, I suggest that the *Akhlāq-i Amīnī*'s later chapters on friendship, which reflect the dominant themes of these cultures of literature and politics, shaped the text's opening treatment of science-knowledge, and can thus explain it, rather than needing to be explained by it.

Mīrzā Hasan Amīn al-Sharīʿah was born in Sabzavār, Khurāsān in 1870 and died in Gurgān in 1937. He studied Islamic law and philosophy under three students of the famous philosopher and mystic Mullā Hādī Sabzavārī (1798-1873), Iftikhār al-Hukamā' Tāliqānī, Hāj Mīrzā Husayn Sabzavārī, and Hāj Fāzil Khurāsānī and was granted the title Amīn al-Sharīʿah by Muzaffar al-Dīn Shāh in 1899.[481] He participated in the *bast* at the British embassy in 1906, was

[481] Amīn al-Sharī'ah, *Akhlāq-i Amīnī* (Tehran: Vahid Publications, 1989). p. 13

exiled to Astarābād (now Gurgān) during Muhammad ʿAlī Shāh's crackdown, and, once there, took to preaching against absolutism and in favor of the Constitutionalist cause.[482] He similarly agitated against the 1919 Anglo-Persian Agreement, and following the foundation of the Pahlavī dynasty, preached in favor of Rizā Shāh's National Service Act.[483]

The opening chapter of the *Akhlāq-i Amīnī* concludes by dividing knowledge into three categories: "religious (*sharʿī*), literary (*adabī*), and convention-governed (*hukmī*)."[484] Each division (*qism*) also possesses further subdivisions: "the religious sciences (*ʿulūm-i sharʿ*) are seven: exegesis (*tafsīr*), reading (*qirā'at*), recitation (*tajwīd*), the principles of jurisprudence (*usūl al-fiqh*), positive law ('the branches of jurisprudence'—*furūʿ al-fiqh*), theology (*kalām*), and ethics (*akhlāq*)."[485] The religious sciences thus not only include ethics, but also culminate in it. Unlike ethics, however, philosophy more generally (*falsafah*) numbers among the convention/rule-governed sciences, which "have many divisions, but include all the crafts that would be considered useful from either an intellectual or practical point of view, like philosophy, medicine, accounting, engineering, blacksmithing, carpentry, and others."[486] At one level, this grouping makes sense: given the long association between *falsafah* and *hikmah*, it might at least make etymological sense to list philosophy among the *hikmī* sciences. There are also some historical connections between philosophy and the other sciences listed, and *hikmah* was the term by which these connections were established.

Shahab Ahmed begins his monumental *What is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic* with six questions, the first of which asks, "What is Islamic about Islamic Philosophy?"

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[482] Amīn al-Sharīʿah, pp. 16-17
[483] *Ibid.* pp. 22-26
[484] Amīn al-Sharīʿah, p. 70
[485] *Ibid.*
[486] *Ibid.*

His answer explains much of the relationship between *falsafah* and *hikmah*. Because "philosophy became not only textually-tied, but also semantically- and cosmologically-tied to the Revelatory Truths of the Universally-Wise God (the *al-Hakīm* of the Qur'an)," philosophy became, by way of *hikmah,* "both the identification of the *theoretical rules* or values operative in the universe, as well as the enactment and application of *practical rules* or values consonant with those theoretical rules."[487] *Hikmah* thus encompassed both philosophy and other trades, such as medicine: "the same term," *hukamā'*, designated philosophers and physicians alike, as both "applied reason to identify universal truths practically applicable for individual and collective human well-being."[488] In this light, it of course makes sense that a figure like Ibn Sīnā and indeed, most thinkers like him, would be physicians and philosophers simultaneously, in that they were *hakīm*s in both senses of the word. Reflecting its simultaneously theoretical and practical orientation, Ahmed cites Mullā Sadrā, who explained, "*hikmah* is made more capacious in measure of building up the two potentials by cultivating the two capacities towards two skills: theoretical abstraction, and practical attachment."[489] Despite this background information, though, one might still ask: how is philosophy more similar to carpentry than ethics? How is ethics more similar to Qur'an-recitation than philosophy?

The next chapter does not answer either of those questions. Instead, it treats "the excellence of knowledge and learning" (*fazīlat-i ʿilm va savād*), which it praises as "inner adornments" (*zīnat-i bātin*), while at the same time praising the poet who compared the common (*ʿāmī*) to cattle (*ka'l-anʿām*), for being "unaware from beginning to end" (*āgah nīst az āghāz va*

[487] Ahmed, Shahab. *What is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016). p. 16
[488] Ahmed, p. 16
[489] *Ibid.* p. 17

anjām).[490] This poem goes on to present ignorance as carrying with it specifically religious consequences. Those who "know nothing beyond eating and sleeping" (*burūn az khᵛurdan u khuftan nadānad*) will possess "no share of felicity in post-eternity" and get nothing out of religion "other than form and custom."[491] Just as this poem at the chapter's opening denies eternal felicity to the ignorant, the chapter's conclusion praises knowledge as the key to a long afterlife: "The knower is one whose name remains on the page of time upon departure from the world;" though "it has been years since Hāfiz, Saʿdī, Nāsir-i Khusraw, Firdawsī, ʿAttār, and Khayyām left life among people, their fame increases."[492] After citing this wide variety of poetic luminaries, the paragraph concludes with a quote from the *Nahj al-Balāghah*, "the knowers are those who remain when time does not" (*al-ʿulamā' bāqūn mā baqiya al-dahr*).[493] The use of these classical poet-intellectuals (both Sufi and non-Sufi) as exemplary possessors of knowledge reflects values that are, in their own way, quite particular to modern Iran, in that they valorize those poets most readily incorporated into the canon by the period's literati.

The neoclassicists of the *bāzgasht-i adabī* valorized Persian poetry from its earliest two periods of Muhammad Taqī Bahār's four-period history of Persian poetic style, the Khurāsānī and ʿIrāqī, in rejection of the Early Modern "Indian Style" (*sabk-i Hindī*). Given that the "literary return movement" took place alongside an increasingly nationalist political culture, it is not a coincidence that this movement privileged the earlier poets, who wrote either within or closer to the borders of the contemporary Iranian nation-state, over those who, writing a few centuries more recently, found more receptive markets further afield at the Mughal court. Hāfiz (d. 1390)

[490] Amīn al-Sharīʿah p. 71
[491] Amīn al-Sharīʿah, p. 70
[492] *Ibid.* p. 78
[493] *Ibid.*

thus became the last poet worthy of imitation for nineteenth-century poets, and though the *bāzgasht*'s neo-archaism "imitated the poetry of Saʿdī and Ḥāfeẓ," both writers of the ʿIrāqī style, it placed an even greater emphasis on "that of Farroḵī, ʿOnṣorī, Ferdowsī, and Manūčehrī" from the Khurāsānī period/style.[494] By the *Akhlāq-i Amīnī*'s 1918 composition, nationalism and neoclassicism had had nearly a century to grow together, but the poets generally recognized as neoclassicists had begun their imitative art even before the development of nationalism and reformism under the Qajars. The use of two rhetorical devices that most reference poetry of the past, *istiqbāl* ("literary emulation") and *tazmīn* ("direct quotation of a line or half-line from another poet") began to increase markedly with the work of Mushtāq (d. 1757), but it was in the nineteenth century that an ever-widening circle of poets employed such devices.[495]

The chapter concludes with commentary on a poem that enjoins the reader to acquire knowledge. Specifically, it directs the reader toward self-knowledge as opposed to what might be most easily summed up as hearsay: "Acquire knowledge, oh you who speak much--'it was said' and 'she said' have no way to value/struggle to have some news of yourself; knowledge is necessary for this, if you [would] have a report."[496] Thus, in this poem, we see the reader told that hearing about something from someone else ("'it was said' and 'she said,'" *qīla* and *qālat*) is not enough to know it; readers must know by and for themselves. In his commentary on these verses, Mīrzā Hasan Amīn al-Sharī'ah writes, "what is intended by *maʿrifat-i nafs* is self-knowledge (*khawd shināsī*), and whoever knows himself will never go wanting, but whoever does not know will go astray."[497] So, the by-now familiar injunction to self-knowledge here

[494] Hanaway, William L. "*Bāzgašt-i Adabī*," *Encyclopedia Iranica*, IV/1, pp. 58-60; available online at: http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/bazgast-e-adabi (accessed 25 September 2016)
[495] *Ibid.*
[496] Amīn al-Sharī'ah, p. 79
[497] Amīn al-Sharī'ah, p. 80

serves a new purpose: it stands in opposition not only to ignorance of the self, but also to knowledge founded upon another's report.

One of the most distinctive features of this chapter's position on knowledge, however, is its emphasis on the identity of knowledge with reason. Citing a hadith (*inna al-ʿaql maʿa al-ʿilm*), the final paragraph of the chapter notes, "reason is identical to knowledge and knowledge is united with reason, and the proof of this union with reason is that, in general, the rational [person] (*ʿāqil*) is opposed to the ignorant (*jāhil*), even though the opposite of 'ignorant' is 'knowing' (*ʿālim*)."[498] To illustrate the prophetic origin of this definition-by-opposition, he notes the following narration from Mufazzal ibn ʿUmar, who reports being told: " 'O ibn ʿUmar, he that does not reason does not prosper, and he that does not know does not reason….' (until he said) 'the one with reason is forgiving and the ignorant is small [-minded].'"[499] Thus, the chapter concludes by presenting knowledge as the safeguard for virtuous interpersonal conduct.

Continuing the conclusion of the second chapter of the *Akhlāq-i Amīnī*'s interpersonal concerns, the third chapter shifts focus—rather than praising knowledge, it concerns the ethics of its transmission—it is entitled, "the Manners of Teaching and Education" (*Ādāb-i taʿlīm va tarbīyat*), and it opens by enumerating the duties of a teacher: "the teacher should speak to students of the class every day so that they may master [a subject]" *(muʿallim hamah rūz bih shāgirdhā-yi kilās bi-gūyad tā ānkih malikah shavad*).[500] The use of *kilās* reveals the *Akhlāq-i Amīnī*'s engagement with education reform; a French loanword and obvious cognate to the English "class," *kilās* entered Persian along with much other French vocabulary as a function of the efforts at modernizing education inaugurated by Amīr Kabīr's founding of the *Dār al-Funūn*

[498] *Ibid.*
[499] *Ibid.*
[500] Amīn al-Sharī'ah, p. 81

in 1851, efforts which developed further as the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries progressed. As with many other points in the text, Amīn al-Sharī'ah punctuates this injunction with exhortatory poetry: "[As for] whoever is unmannered in his childhood: in adulthood, happiness will depart from him/You can bend moist wood however you want, [but] it will not dry except by direct fire" (*har kih dar khurdī ash adab nakunad, dar buzurgī falāh az ū bar khāst/chūb-i tar rā chinān kih khᵛāhī pīch; nashavad khushk juz bih ātish-i rāst*).[501] This chapter concludes with a similar exhortation: "If you know, teach, so that they develop mastery [*tā malikah shavad*], that [knowledge] not leave the mind, and so that they endlessly ascend in the station of teaching in order that it reach a high station."[502] This passage uses much of the same vocabulary as the chapter's opening—for example, both employ the phrase *tā malikah shavad*. However, the conclusion features a new reason to purse and spread knowledge: "Human advancement occurs by knowledge, wealth is one of the resources it yields, and knowledge and reason without acquisition or an instructor are impossible."[503] Thus, it calls upon norms of human development and wealth to endorse teaching and learning, rather, than, for example, simply saying that knowledge is worthwhile because the Prophet and the Imams said so (though the previous chapter does precisely that, praising knowledge by citing hadith and *akhbār*). The paragraph closes with a particularly pragmatic vision of knowledge: "Knowledge is like the hammer of copper- and ironsmiths when it can be struck upon copper and iron and meet the space and width of those two things: if the hammer does not collide with them, they will remain unchanged."[504] Knowledge must thus be used, and brought into contact with a target-object for it

[501] *Ibid.*
[502] *Ibid.* p. 118
[503] *Ibid.* p. 118
[504] Amīn al-Sharī'ah, p. 118

to have an impact. The very last lines, again poetry, shift from teaching as a general theme to a direction to close attention to every moment of one's life: "As long as you can scream and scratch/until your dying breath, do not be heedless for a single breath-moment."[505]

The Science of Friendship

Both the *Akhlāq-i Amīnī* and Zahīr al-Dawlah's *Majmaʿ al-atvār* treat friendship in some detail. In praising knowledge, the *Akhlāq-i Amīnī* presents it as the only meaningful source of hierarchy and specifically rejects the notion that one's lineage take knowledge's place as a source of pride. The third point of its third chapter directs, "boast of whatever you have of knowledge and craft, not of the nobility of your parents or grandsires. Mother and father are the vessels of egotism and suitable to genealogy, not glory."[506] To support this injunction, he cites a verse by Nizāmī Ganjavī: "let us suppose your father was virtuous/what has your father's virtue yielded you?"[507] Even if various forms of pre-modern Islamic intellectuality espoused comparable positions (it is, after all, a classical poem that serves as a proof-text in this passage), given that it was written by a constitutionalist in the decade following the Constitutional revolution, this portion of the *Akhlāq-i Amīnī* can be read as possessing a particularly democratizing tone. This seems particularly likely to be the case in light of the fact that this chapter, ostensibly dedicated to education, also offers advice about one's bearing more generally: its fifth point instructs, "whenever possible, show yourself to be pleased with your countrymen, brothers, and the servants of God."[508] This line's combination of countrymen (*ham-vatanān*) and brothers (*barādarān*) reflects its period's nationalist culture, in which *vatan, "*homeland," came

[505] *Ibid.*
[506] *Ibid.* p. 81
[507] *Ibid.* p. 82
[508] Amīn al-Sharī'ah, p. 82

to be equated with the nation-state, which itself came to be figured as the source of a familial bond between its natives. This, of course, is also apparent in the aforementioned activities of the Society of Brotherhood (the examples of initiations being used to teach humility to courtiers, and indeed, even its use of 'brotherhood," which echoes the *fraternite* of the French revolution) also illustrate the more egalitarian bent of the period's ethical rhetoric, if not its actual on-the-ground social life.

The *Akhlāq-i Amīnī*'s fourth chapter, which is focused on friendship, opens, "After coming to possess learning, seven pieces of advice, which are the conditions of friendship and companionship, should be mentioned by the teacher to the student so that he prefer friendship and companionship."[509] So we see here a text on ethics culminate by presenting a fondness for conviviality as education's central mission, which speaks to an ethical sensibility that quite closely related to the rise of nationalism: the valorization of a public life as a member of the nation-state.

The relationship between friendship and intelligence makes sense, given how the *Akhlāq-i Amīnī* defines the conditions under which friendship should occur: the companion (*rafīq*) should "first be intelligent, as intellect is the principal sum of all laudable attributes and there is nothing other than detriment in companionship with the ignorant."[510] In support of this claim, Amīn al-Sharī'ah cites verse from Saʿdi and Rumi, noting, "Shaykh Muslih al-Dīn declares, 'you devoted yourself to ignorance/when you selected an ignorant person for companionship.'"[511] The Rumi verse he cites, however, do not explicitly comment on ignorance, but rather on badness more generally, which implies that ignorance is equivalent to it: "Mulla Rumi says…'a

[509] *Ibid.* p. 119
[510] Amīn al-Sharī'ah, p. 119
[511] *Ibid.*

bad friend is worse than a snake/escape from a bad friend while you can/a bad snake will strike only at your life/a bad friend strikes at your life and your faith."[512] Indeed, the shift from ignorance to bad that parallels the shift from Saʿdi to Rumi seems to anticipate the text's second condition, that a friend not have bad ethics.[513] The *Akhlāq-i Amīnī*'s twentieth condition is that one "befriend [those who are] brave, courageous, skilled, possessed of ability and thought, and are sympathetic for their countrymen, as that is what has been shown to accrue virtue and has arranged the necessities of one's own livelihood and that of the people of the homeland."[514] This fusion of the virtues of friendship and patriotism seems quite particular to the period surrounding the Constitutional Revolution, where those same elements coincided in the work of Zahīr al-Dawlah.

Zahīr al-Dawlah's poetry reflects a similar concern for friendship. One section of the verse collection *Majmaʿ al-atvār,* "On Friendship, Companionship, and the Considerations Thereof" (*Dar bayān-i dūstī, rafāqat, va mulāhazāt-i ān*), begins "listen, oh heart, how good is one smattering of the friendship of friends!" (*shammah-ī az dūstī-yi dūstān/gūsh dih ay dil kih chih nīkūst ān*).[515]The poem goes on to declare, with a fair bit of wordplay, that *dūstī* is what makes men: "friendship is that which men do, such that they do what is suitable for a man" (*dūstī ān ast kih mardān kunand/kānchih buvad lāyiq-i mard ān kunand*).[516] The manliness of such conduct involves a willingness to risk one's life and thus harkens back to the early modern rhetoric *futuvvat-javānmardī* rhetoric seen earlier: "when [the members] of this group swear to

[512] *Ibid.*
[513] *Ibid.*
[514] *Ibid.* p. 131
[515] Zahīr al-Dawlah, p. 25
[516] *Ibid.* p. 26

one another, they traverse the path of renouncing heart and soul" (*chūn bi-ham īn tāyifah paymān kunand/dar rah-i tark-i dil-u-jān kunand*).[517]

Conclusion

The *Akhlāq-i Amīnī*'s instructions, its author's involvement in nationalist and constitutionalist activism, and the life and career of Zahīr al-Dawlah as a Sufi, a government minister, and a reformist, all reflect the dynamism of the decades immediately surrounding the Constitutional Revolution, a period in which mysticism, ethics, and knowledge were re-articulated in light of new, nationalist norms. This period was indeed quite generative for mysticism, even beyond Zahīr al-Dawlah's use of Sufi symbolism and organizational life in his Constitutionalist activism or Amīn al-Sharīʿah's citations of Sufi poetry in his work on *akhlāq*. The period's creativity is perhaps best represented by the process by which *ʿirfān* came to mean "mysticism" in the early twentieth century. That process illustrates the currency of the simultaneous valorization of rationality and personal experience on the Iranian religious-intellectual scene among a wider body of texts than the *Akhlāq-i Amīnī*. According to Ata Anzali, *ʿirfān* provided "an amenable discursive and spiritual space" in which both "*ʿulama* whose mystical proclivities did not allow for a wholesale rejection of Sufi ideas and ideals" and "mystically-minded modernist intellectuals who shared the former group's disdain for popular manifestations of Sufi practice, belief, and social institutions, viewing them as remnants of a backward looking social malady that had kept the nation from progressing towards the Promised Land of modernity" to "talk about their spiritual experiences and aspirations in an individualistic and personal manner without contradicting philosophical, rationalist, and modernist modes of

[517] *Ibid.*

thinking and/or the fundamentals of Shiʿi belief and practice."[518] As recorded in dictionaries, this particular use of *ʿirfān* (as "mysticism" rather than "knowledge") did not occur widely before the end of the nineteenth century: the 1826 *Ghiyās al-lughāt* defines it as "knowledge" or "knowledge of God," as do the ca. 1888 *Anandraj* and the *Farhang-i Nafīsī* published by the physician Nāzim al-Attibā (d. 1923), and the 1892 Steingass Persian-English dictionary offers "Knowing, discerning...knowledge, learning, science" as definitions of *ʿirfān*, but does use "mysticism" as a definition of *tasavvuf*.[519]

Anzali suggests that the career of ʿAbbās Kayvān Qazvīnī (1861/2-1938) was a central factor in the spread of the new, "mystical" use of *ʿirfān*: as both a "disillusioned" former Sufi and a popular preacher and teacher within the *madrasah* system, he possessed a unique combination of first-hand experience with Sufism and a public vocation that allowed him access to a wide audience.[520] Although Anzali presents Kayvān Qazvīnī's works as having a largely constructive role (in that they contributed to the spread of a new concept), the secondary literature has not been universal in regarding these publications as constructive. For example, in 1970's "Persian Sufism in Its Historical Perspective," Abdol-Hosein Zarrinkoob termed him "a renegade of the Gunabadīs," and noted that "his books…have caused irreparable damage to the prestige of Sufi shaykhs" because these texts accuse them of "rapacious and ambitious intentions."[521] Zarrinkoob's brief summary thus limits Kayvān Qazvīnī's role to that of a dissident Sufi, rather than that of a propagator of a new brand of mysticism. And, indeed, he did

[518] Anzali, Ata. *Safavid Shi'ism, the Eclipse of Sufism, and the Emergence of 'Irfān*, pp. 268-269
[519] Anzali p. 269
[520] Anzali, p. 270
[521] Zarrinkoob, Abdol-Hosein. "Persian Sufism in Its Historical Perspective," *Iranian Studies* 3:3/4, 1970. p. 209

spend enough of his life in Sufi circles that it makes sense to define Kayvān Qazvīnī, at least in part, by his relationship to Sufism.

Born in 1861/2 (in Qazvīn, as his name suggests), Kayvān Qazvīnī received his first permission to teach (*ijāzah-yi irshād*) from Safīʿ Alī Shāh, who appointed him a traveling shaykh (*shaykh-i sayyār*), after which he traveled to the *ʿatabāt* to study under various *marājiʿ-i taqlīd*.[522] After six years of itinerant service, he traveled to Bīdukht, where, shifting his allegiances, he joined the path of Sultān ʿAlī Shāh Gunābādī, re-acquired a position as a shaykh, and was given the title Mansūr ʿAlī; however, by 1926, he had also departed from the Gunābādīyah.[523] Van den Bos compares his subsequent output to that of Ayatollah Sangalajī: "the modernist ayatollah" sought to "do away with the belief in sacred intermediaries" and to replace "the 'emulation' (*taqlīd*) of *mojtaheds*" with the "everyman's direct 'interpretation' (*ejtehād*) of the sacred sources," while Qazvīnī "objected to Sufism in its outer structure, with poles, sheikhs, and disciples," developing "his own teaching for 'real/true' (*haqīqī*) Sufism, against the 'formalist' (*rasmī*) Sufism of Sufi orders."[524] Central to the project of "real Sufism" was the notion "that mysticism could be a modern scientific enterprise," but, more than this, their common claims that religious knowledge was accessible to the individual believer without the mediation of living human authority figures (*marājiʿ-i taqlīd* in Sangalajī's case and *aqtāb* in Kayvān Qazvīnī's) and their distrust of official hierarchy or divine appointments to leadership (*nass*) bound their projects to one another.[525] Their approaches are also quite comparable to the Protestant (and therefore inescapably modern) belief in the priesthood of all believers and the

[522] van den Bos, Matthijs. *Mystic Regimes: Sufism and the State in Iran from the late Qajar Era to the Islamic Republic* (Leiden: Brill, 2002) p. 81
[523] van den Bos, p. 81
[524] *Ibid.* pp. 82-83
[525] *Ibid.* pp. 83-84

importance of the believer's unmediated relationship to scripture. This is no coincidence—Kayvān Qazvīnī, in fact, explicitly compares his reform of Sufism to the Reformation in Early Modern Europe: he writes, in the *Rāz-gushā*: "I want to distinguish between two kinds of *tasavvuf* as Protestants made a distinction between two aspects of Christianity and said we do accept the essence of Christian religion as sacred and necessary to abide by, but refuse the Pope's arbitrary interference in matters of dogma."[526]

In the *Rāz-gushā*, Kayvān Qazvīnī uses *ʿirfān* in place of Sufism when replicating the traditional distinction between *tasavvuf-i ʿilmī* and *tasavvuf-i ʿamalī*, and, further, "elevates ʿirfān such that tasavvuf becomes a subcategory that can be discussed under the former."[527] Moreover, when discussing the opposition between his "genuine" (*haqīqī*), reformed Sufism and the traditional, formal (*marsūm*) Sufism of the orders, he declares *ʿirfān* to be the correct term for the former, cementing its position as *the* term for mysticism in his corpus.[528] This "real Sufism" is universal, and his claims of its universality are, in turn, quite modern: the Theosophical Society (a most particularly Victorian brand of Western esotericism) is thus a vehicle for "universal *ʿirfān*;" this universal mysticism "is an all-encompassing way of knowledge that can turn to any science, religion, and philosophy and take benefit from them;" it "is not only the basis of science and religion but also their ornament and perfection, and it is the means by which they resolve their differences and reconcile their hostilities."[529] For Anzali, this universalizing tendency is most noteworthy for its role in dissociating *ʿirfān* from Sufism, thereby leading to *ʿirfān*'s use to mean "mysticism" in a much wider sense. This dissociation originated with Mullā

[526] Anzali p. 281
[527] Anzali p. 275
[528] *Ibid.* p. 276
[529] *Ibid.* pp. 276-277

Sadrā's use of *ʿirfān* and related terms with the same root (for example, his deployment of *ʿārif* in place of Sufi), and these Sadrian origins, in turn, go to show that the individualist and rational-philosophical valences of *ʿirfān* latter-day use need not be seen as external impositions upon Iranian Shiʿism. However, these developments in and around *ʿirfān*'s new meaning were closely related to modernization within Kayvān Qazvīnī's more immediate context; he recognizes the global dimensions of the modernization of religion through his references to the Theosophical Society and the Protestant Reformation in the *Rāz-gushā*.

Within the wider Iranian context of Kayvān Qazvīnī's period (1861/2-1938), the spread of *ʿirfān* was closely related to the spread of philosophy more generally, which itself derived in part from a growing interest in the study of mathematics and the natural sciences. In his autobiography, the scholar Sayyid Hasan Mishkān Tabasī (d. 1949) recalls that "modernization (*tajaddud*) was already in or close to the *madāris* of Isfahan" by the time he started studying there (1896), which led to an interest in technology, starting with demand for "knowing how to use the astrolabe…and the principles upon which it was built."[530] In turn, students' "ears became somewhat accustomed to the type of arguments offered by mathematicians and philosophers, so much so that after three years, Jahāngīr Khān [Qashqā'ī, a philosopher; d. 1910] came out of his cell in the Sadr Madrasah and taught the *Sharh-i Manzūmah* to almost a hundred and thirty people in the courtyard of the Jārchī Madrasah, and no one complained."[531] The *Sharh-i Manzūmah* is one of Hādī Sabzavārī's most famous works; it is a versified (*manzūm*) presentation of Sadrian philosophy, one of *ʿirfān*'s key ingredients. That a scholar from this period would frame this philosophy's increased accessibility and acceptability as a function of

[530] Mishkān Tabasī, Sayyid Hasan. "*Naql az Kitāb-i Gulzār,*" *Armaghān-i Sāl-i Bīst-u-Chahārum* 1 (March-May 1949). p. 23
[531] *Ibid.*

tajaddud is a particularly clear example of the close relationship between mysticism and modernization, a relationship also reflected in the works of Sayyid Hasan Amīn al-Sharīʿah and Zahīr al-Dawlah.

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