DEVOTIONAL WISDOM:
COMMENTARIES ON PRAYER AND SUPPLICATION IN IMAMI SHIʿI ISLAM

by

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Dedicated to my wife, Ameena Yovan, for her beautiful patience

And to the memory of Nabila Mango, *khayr al-nās* in the Prophet's tradition,

خير الناس أنفعهم للناس

إلهي فاجعلنا من الذين ترسخت أشجار الشوق إليك في حدائق صدورهم

وأخذت لوعة محبتك بمجامع قلوبهم

فهم إلى أوكار الأفكار يأوون

وفي رياض القرب والمكاشفة يرتعون

ومن حياض المحبة بكأس الملاطفة يكرعون

وشرائع المصافاة يردون

اللهم صل على محمد وعلى آل محمد

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the significance of supplication (*duʿāʾ*) in Imami Shiʿi Islam, exploring its meaning as deduced by four different scholar-commentators, using methods of hermeneutic reading. Supplication is inherently important for Shiʿi Muslims, not only as a species of the Imams' reported sayings, but also because of the meaning assigned to it. While the source's significance is inherent and universal to all Imamis, the meaning is rarefied, requiring special access to the productions of meaning and the understanding of their explanations. The featured commentators, Sayyid Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad Nayrīzī (d. 1173/1759), Sayyid Kāẓim Rashtī (d. 1259/1843), Mullā Hādī Sabzivārī (d. 1289/1873), and Sayyid Ruhollah Khomeini (d. 1409/1989), apply their own intra-Imami mode of thought to their hermeneutic discourse. They rely on linguistic, traditional (hadith), and theological evidence as indicators of their own overarching tradition. It becomes indispensable to have a tradition that allows one to coalesce what the focus of consensus over meaning ought to be, however obscure or error-prone it may appear. Their intended purpose is to produce the opposite effect: to provide a transparency of meaning based on a commentator's reasonable inferences, drawn from reliable sources of hadith, that prove the veracity of their interpretation and, by implication, improves their individual status as authorities of the Imams' traditions.

This dissertation consists of two parts that together constitute a study into a culture of devotional literacy and the authors who have made contributions towards it, most of whom remain unknown in Western academia. In Part 1, comprising three chapters, I begin with an

overview of the history of extant works counted under the genre of Islamic supererogatory prayer, including with regards to their context, structure, and sources. I then shift to the figure of Ibn Fahd al-Ḥillī (d. 841/1437–38) and his *ʿUddat al-dāʿī,* a watershed work on the resources and ethical import of Shiʿi devotion. This brief departure from the historical account expands upon the current scholarship on Islamic occultism, showing that the devotions featured in Ibn Fahd's work, subsequently standardized by the Safavids, have their origins in practices and identities that were concealed or rejected under the institutionalizing effects of the state. Part II, comprising four chapters, pivots to the focal case studies. I consider each author's method of investigation and their assimilation of a supplication's content to their tradition of Imami Shiʿism. Their commentaries are at once a demonstration of their incredible acumen and the social capital earned through authorial credentials. Based on this analysis, I affirm commentaries as a forum for varying perspectives on topics inspired by each supplication's pericopes. Finally, the appendix sections include a survey of the featured supplications (*Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ/al-simāt/al-saḥar*) and their historical provenance as imparted in the hadith collections, as well as an English translation of Nayrīzī's Persian commentary.

I posit that the commentators' hermeneutics are means of promoting diverse enterprises of thought, while refreshing the relevance of supplication as a devotional tradition for Shiʿi Muslims. Shiʿi supplication today possesses a lasting pietistic prominence because of this commentary tradition and the ritualistic importance attributed to it by clerical specialists. Although commentaries often reflect certain biases or preconceptions tied to commitments to religious tradition, they also offer valuable new insights, particularly in areas where tradition plays a significant role in the life of a Shiʿi Muslim. These contributions help preserve a community bound by rites and beliefs, repeatedly under historical attack by the dominant

sociopolitical order, while shaping the conceptual content of the community's worshipful performances and expressions. Commentaries are edifying by their demonstration of an ideal of wisdom and the enrichment of proper ethical emotions and intuitions. Here, habits of thought and of devotion dovetail to cultivate a more perspicacious Shiʿi—one who, as a partisan of the Imam, understands the deeper meanings behind their suppliant words

Introduction

For many Muslims, the faith's obligatory (*wājib*) acts of worship, such as the ritual prayer (*ṣalāt*), are an onerous responsibility on their own, part of a trial that is recognized in the Qur'an: "Seek help through patience and prayer, and this indeed is difficult except for the humble" (2:45). For others, however, these obligations are a minor manifestation of their devotional life. Observant Shiʿi Muslims by and large fall into this second category, with supererogatory supplication (*duʿāʾ*) forming a cultic fulcrum of everyday life. In congregational spaces worldwide, Shiʿi adherents can be found reciting *Duʿāʾ al-tawassul* and *Duʿāʾ al-Kumayl* on Tuesday and Thursday nights, respectively. For every day and every month of the Islamic calendar year, there is a supplication designated as ideal for spiritual benefit. The great majority of them are attributed to one of the fourteen "Infallibles" (*maʿṣūmīn*) that comprise the Prophet Muḥammad, his daughter Fāṭima, and the twelve Imams.

As indicated in the collections that preserve their prolific corpus, supplications feature various appeals for a variety of desiderata–for intercession, expiation of sin, alleviation of illness, averting evil, and gaining knowledge. For this reason alone, supplications form a crucial aspect of the pietistic practices of Shiʿis who rely on them for apotropaic and prophylactic means. But supplications also contain elaborate and astonishing descriptions of all manner of phenomena–of celestial activity, of sacred spaces, of the paraphernalia of prophets, of the animating faculties of the human body, of the graces of God's intimates, of the seraphim and their divinely-ordained duties, and of the metaphysical order of being–that testify to the power and glory of God and the smallness of a supplicant's appeal, in comparison. For many who read supplications and attend their public recitation, particularly those in Iran who are a language removed from the original Arabic, their depth of meaning is often an appreciation, secondary to the aesthetic and spiritual

value inherent in their passages of speech. In commentaries (*shurūḥ*) of Shiʿi supplications, the affective and cognitive dimensions converge to stimulate the embodied virtues and conceptual capacities of their readers.

In the subsequent chapters, I will explain supplication as a tradition of instilling piety and supplication commentaries as instilling perspicacity, showing how various themes, naturalistic accounts, and ethical and doctrinal criteria figure into the explications of their commentators. Each commentary is a mediatory document, possessing the meaning an author wishes to convey, that binds piety and perspicacity together. A simplistic formulation might read: for the laity, there is the utterance (*lafẓ*); for the scholar, there is the meaning (*maʿnā*). Although an elitist streak is evident in commentaries, their authors still appeal to a language that is not insuperable for readers. In this way, readers may benefit by knowing what they say when they say it, or alternatively, they may know what they ask when they ask for it in supplication, thereby fulfilling the felicity conditions for prayer's efficaciousness.

The purpose of this dissertation is two-fold: 1) to chronicle the collation and resulting compendia of supplication as an Islamic textual tradition, and 2) to determine the role of commentaries of supplication within the Imami Shiʿi scholarly corpus where supplication plays a greater devotional role than among its Sunni counterparts. The first part provides a basis for the development of supplication collections and commentaries across the Islamic confessional spectrum, before narrowing the field to Imami case studies in the second part, while offering historical and doctrinal grounds for the Sunni diminution of *duʿāʾ* and its Shiʿi ascendance. In short, this writing is about the history of supplication in Islam and the significance of interpretations of supplications in Imami Shiʿism.

The tradition of supplication commentaries emerges in the mid-Safavid period as an essential scholarly credential for its authors and a pedagogical resource for its readers to contemplate and absorb. Artifacts of this genre are not limited to the relics of museums or manuscript archives. They are readily available in every Shiʿi mosque and every shrine as a universal standard of prayer for its visitors to read. My dissertation shows how they arrived there. I make the case that Arabic and Persian commentaries of supplication, blossoming in the Safavid period and maturing in the Qajar period of Iran, are in part responsible for the enduring high status of supererogatory prayer in Shiʿi cultures worldwide today. For a community inspired by the "proof" (*ḥujja*) of the Imams, their speech is a guiding light for all times and places. Supplication is an essential part of the Imams' heritage, a liturgical body of formulas for forfending the universal experience of suffering and expressing gratitude when it has been averted. Commentaries become significant not only for the formulas' preservation, but for the renewed evaluation of their relevant meaning. Their accelerated production in the Safavid period would be important both for the state's permeation of a new religious social order and for the religious specialists, many of whom beneficiaries of this order, eager to persuade others of their interpretation of meaning and theological dispensations.

I conceive of commentators as promoting and preserving the Shiʿi tradition through applications of language whose features, recurring tokens and characteristics of a contextual schema, bear the "watermarks" of its appearance. The watermark was a late thirteenth century invention of Italian papermakers of Fabriano, Italy. It was developed by displacing fibers of paper sheets to produce patterns of varying thickness, resulting in a faint, nearly translucent image, evident when held against light.[1] While early use of watermarks was confined to

[1] Henri-Jean Martin, *The History and Power of Writing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 208–9.

indicating the provenance of paper makers, they soon became a way to assure the quality and authenticity of manufacturers–a way for something, an insignia or notice, to be recognized by some specialists when held in a certain light and elude the attention of others. This phenomenon is elicited by commentators of supplication featured in my dissertation. When the language of supplication is held in a certain light, thereby subject to intellectual scrutiny and conceptual pressures, these watermarks may be identified and arrayed in the ongoing Shiʿi tradition as scholars see it. Although separated by generations, each scholar is part of a commentarial chain, authors of an Imami tradition that stretches through time and echoes reiterant themes and priorities, while adjusting them to fit new circumstances and hermeneutical methods.

I survey four commentaries written by four different authors that offer interpretations assimilated to various Imami traditions that encompass doctrinal principles, ethical values, and theological reasoning. Each tradition understands and integrates the repository of traditions and reports (*akhbār*) of the *maʿṣūmīn*, its legal and ethical dimensions, and theoretical and practical modes of mysticism in their own vernacular, indicated by certain uses of language that are viewed as more correct than their alternatives. They include the following: the Ẕahabī tradition of Sayyid Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad Nayrīzī (d. 1173/1759), the Shaykhī tradition of Sayyid Kāẓim Rashtī (d. 1259/1843), the transcendent wisdom (*al-ḥikma al-mutaʿāliya*) tradition of Mullā Hājj Hādī Sabzivārī (d. 1289/1873), and the modern synthesis of *ʿirfān* of Sayyid Ruhollah Musavi Khomeini (d. 1409/1989).[2]

In terms of their scholarship, these figures are largely unknown (Nayrīzī; Rashtī) or poorly known (Sabzivārī; Khomeini). Perhaps as a result of the prevailing cultural and intellectual emphasis on what is perceived as innovation, they are dismissed as lesser literati. I

[2] I additionally address the notion of an Akhbārī tradition with Sayyid Niʿmat Allāh al-Jazāʾirī (d. 1112/1701) in the second chapter.

have chosen these four scholars for their legacy as commentators, indebted to established intellectual traditions. While they may not be known for producing "original" works, each expounds a set of doctrines and systematic arguments through a web of interpretation, debate, and critical engagement. Rashtī and Sabzivārī represent the clearest cases of this knowledge transmission, recognized primarily for explicating the philosophies of Aḥmad al-Aḥsāʾī and Mullā Ṣadrā, respectively. Khomeini also possesses extensive commentarial credentials.[3] Perhaps the only exception is Nayrīzī whose oeuvre may be located mostly in the realm of poetry. However, his connection to the other featured commentators runs deeper.

Nayrīzī, who was once known as the "second Ibn ʿArabī,"[4] inaugurates a spiritual, esoterically-bent Shiʿi heritage that passes through a chain of scholar-mystics based in the ʿAtabāt that include Āqā Muḥammad Bīdābādī (d. 1198/1783), Mullā ʿAlī Nūrī (d. 1246/1831), Mullā Ḥusayn Qulī Hamadānī (d. 1311/1894), and Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabāʾī (d. 1402/1981), the latter who included in his circle Khomeini.[5] Furthermore, Nayrizi is frequently cited in bio-bibliographies as a teacher of Rashtī's predecessor, al-Aḥsāʾī, and as an inspiration behind Sabzivārī's most recognized work, known as *Sharḥ al-manẓūma*. Most important are the continuities and breaks in the hermeneutics of the commentators, starting with Nayrīzī, as they undergo stylistic and conceptual morphology. We begin with Nayrīzī's commentary as poetry, accenting the rhetorical and aesthetic force of the Imams' devotions. The commentaries by

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[3] Khomeini's most known work is arguably *Taḥrīr al-wasīla*, a commentary on Sayyid Abū al-Ḥasan Isfahānī's (d. 1946) *Wasīlat al-najāt*, supplemented by Khomeini's own original fatwas. His other commentary works include *Taʿlīqāt* on Shams al-Dīn al-Fanārī's (d. 834/1431) *Miṣbāḥ al-Uns* [itself a commentary on Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī's (d. 673/1274) *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*], a *Hāshīya* on Ṣadrā's *al-Asfār al-arbaʿa*, and a gloss on Ākhūnd Khurāsānī's *Kifāyat al-uṣūl.*

[4] Sajjad Rizvi, "Whatever Happened to the School of Isfahan?: Philosophy in 18th-Century Iran," in *Crisis, Collapse, Militarism and Civil War: The History and Historiography of 18th Century Iran*, ed. Michael Axworthy (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2018), 89.

[5] For more on this lineage, see Sajjad H. Rizvi, "Hikma Muta'aliya in Qajar Iran: Locating the Life and Work of Mulla Hadi Sabzawari (d. 1289/1873)," *Iranian Studies* 44, no. 4 (2011): 489.

Rashtī, Sabzivārī, and Khomeini that follow embrace new phases of reassessment, ones that intertextually engage and synthesize an array of influences, such as Gnosticism, Platonism, alchemy, and lettrism, that aim to transform or transcend conventional understanding.

Each commentator will be shown to pursue a tradition of Imami Shiʿism that projects an underlying religio-philosophical picture, extending beyond any individual commentary author's cast of mind. This projection on the part of supplication commentators involves understanding the leaps involved in deducing meaning and comprehending the semantic character of each intellectual mode, synonymous with a particular tradition's language. If not for revealing this character, this writing's importance within Islamic studies lies in seeing where philosophical content, which may be otherwise abstract and normatively inert, becomes a direct and personal enterprise when revealed or "read into" devotional prayer.

The more general appreciation of this subject matter regarding religious studies relates to its study of religious language and its limits. My dissertation responds to the question as to how believers develop the best religious vernacular to gain access and, in the fortuitous event, nearness (*qurba*) to God. Acts of supplication, described by the Prophet Muḥammad as the "essence of worship,"[6] presume that what we think, do, or say is convertible into an awareness of God. By channeling our perceptual energies in certain directions, all of which supervene on language, believers may bring this awareness and its many benefits, indicated in prayer manuals, to bear. Language determines not only what speech is to be uttered, thought in the form of intention, or the psychological disposition thought to be auspicious (e.g., "presence of heart": *ḥuḍūr al-qalb*), but the overall correctness of religious expression. In this way, language confers access, not merely of the epistemic variety (e.g., on the essential nature or attributes of the

[6] *Al-duʿāʾ mukhkh al-ʿibāda*; Muḥammad Bāqir b. Muḥammad Taqī al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 110 vols. (Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1983), 90:300.

divine), but also with regards to God's fulfillment (*ijāba*) of an entreaty. My inquiry centers on exegetes of supplications who, in their commentaries, provide this access. These specialists judge what a supplication means and how a superordinate awareness might bring supplicants closer to religious verities, considered so from the faith's internal view. Important implications follow, including those concerning the nature of authoritative interpretation, the experience-versus-knowledge of religious phenomena, and the type of concepts given confessional priority. Commentaries give us a unique vantage point in religious studies for which to analyze or criticize these related issues when they are abstracted from pietistic sources.

Hermeneutic Methods

There is no categorical or conclusive way of reaching the essence of petitionary prayer in Islam, and the history of its origins are difficult to determine with any precision. The opaqueness shrouding supplication's historical provenance is either diminished or expanded by the influence of sympathetic contributors to Islam's ongoing story of itself. For some, this story is unreliable, having been embellished or fabricated for the purpose of preserving a tradition against intrareligious or outside detractors. It is my stance that the most essential insights on supplication are gained not from these voices, but from those that cherish the tradition's preservation. I hold this stance because supplication is not a technical or logical language, reducible to univocal meanings shared by a multitude. I see the interpretation of its language as instead part of a larger discursive practice of contemplating and negotiating the constituent terms of the Imami tradition, divided by various schools of thought and hermeneutical disciplines. Consensus over meaning is naturally a feature of commentaries without which very little reason would exist for their production and is an important aspect that I explore regarding the question of authenticity. But

the criteria for authenticity and consensus vary considerably from those inside and outside the tradition who try to get at its heart. Whether the person who reports that the Prophet Muḥammad spoke some combination of words was an actual historical figure or whether any material evidence shows that Muḥammad made the attested utterance is less significant, for my purposes, than the perfectly observable fact that millions of people have come to believe that the transmitter and the transmissions are authentic and have formulated attitudes, rites, and mores around these elements.

I make the assumption that commentators, qualified by their expertise, experience, and high estimation by Imami adherents, are competent expositors of the Imams' speech. To say that they possess these qualifications is to affirm both their specialized knowledge in the traditional religious sciences and their unique insights, born of the acculturation conferred by scholars of exceptional aptitude. Each one of the featured commentators, despite their divergent views of the faith's dimensions, meet these qualifications. Each is associated with a school of thought, imparted by its prior masters and inculcated in subsequent disciples. Their collective and individual works represent important advancements in the ongoing interpretation and instruction of Imami Shiʿism and within its corresponding institutions of learning. I would be remiss to not acknowledge, not only the power of their words, but also that of their charisma. Just as much as they are known for their ideas, they are known for their saintly character. Consequently, the authority or dominance of one author's commentary over another partially derives from the popular recognition of their exemplary pietistic station. Ayatollah Khomeini, for instance, certainly qualifies as among these figures, having achieved high-ranking clerical status in tandem with the public appreciation of his charismatic authority, decades before his involvement in politics. Qualification, combined with this popular acknowledgement, naturally leads to greater

accreditation toward one interpretation of a religious text over another. While another person may be comparable in their possession of the requisite educational and religious background, they may nonetheless be a voice uncounted, absent the wide recognition of their spiritual achievements.

Referring to the commentaries under review as simply commentaries is somewhat misleading, as their breadth of analysis extends well beyond assertoric or clarificatory notes. They more resemble interpretations or hermeneutics (*taʾwīl*), offering a treatment of the text that answers as to how readers ought to understand it for the purpose of grasping the original formulator's intended meaning (*murād*). As an explanatory discourse more than a mere descriptive one, commentators' absorption and scrutiny of supplication is clarified in reference to particular understandings that hinge on inferences of language, projecting various developments and modes of Islamic thought. These inferences have their bases in the intertextual claims and premises of other commentaries, scholarly personages, and learned traditions. I approach the subject of supplication through the wide lens of hermeneutics. This is a term that means many different things to many different people, requiring the following points of clarification.

Hans-Georg Gadamer's Hermeneutics and its Hermeneuts

By their explanations, I understand commentators of supplication to be attempting edification. Scrutiny of the German, *Bildung*, has produced a manifold of connotations in hermeneutic theory. I employ Richard Rorty's translation of *Bildung* as "edification," for which he reasons:

> I shall use 'edification' to stand for this project of finding new, better, more interesting, more fruitful ways of speaking. The attempt to edify (ourselves or others) may consist in the hermeneutic activity of making connections between our own culture and some exotic culture or historical period, or between our own discipline and another discipline

> which seems to pursue incommensurable aims in an incommensurable vocabulary. But it may instead consist in the 'poetic' activity of thinking up such new aims, new words, or new disciplines, followed by, so to speak, the inverse of hermeneutics: the attempt to reinterpret our familiar surroundings in the unfamiliar terms of our new inventions…Edifying discourse is supposed to be abnormal, to take us out of our old selves by the power of strangeness, to aid us in becoming new beings.[7]

In *Truth and Method* (1960), Gadamer traced the term, *Bildung*, back to (European) medieval mysticism, to suggest a self-formation and "guiding concept of humanism," i.e., the development of a human being's natural inner talents and capacities.[8] He additionally adumbrates a mystical relation of *Bildung* in the image of God that subsists within the human being, an image "that by which and through which one is formed becomes completely one's own."[9] Gadamer, via his reading of Hegel, describes *Bildung* as a discipline of the spirit for obtaining a universal consciousness that dispenses with all particularity and egocentricity, leading a person towards a complete freedom of the intellect that is unbridled by private self-interest. In this grandiose assessment, *Bildung* is an illuminative feature of the self, leading a person out of the self. It transforms a natural being into a spiritual one.[10]

Gadamer came to this understanding through Martin Heidegger. The latter saw hermeneutics differently at different stages of his writing, in ways non-linear and non-uniform.[11] Heidegger was consistent, however, in viewing hermeneutics as the ways that lived experience, historically and existentially grounded, was made meaningful one way or another and that

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[7] Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979), 360.
[8] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 9.
[9] Gadamer, 11.
[10] Gadamer, 9–13.
[11] Farin distinguishes three stages in the evolution of Heidegger's hermeneutics: "(1) the initial breakthrough to a 'hermeneutics of facticity' in the early Freiburg years (1919–24); (2) the argument for the foundational role of 'understanding' in *Being and Time* (1927), which lays the groundwork for a hermeneutical ontology; (3) the idea that language and poets are the original interpreters in his later works after 'the turn' in the 1930s"; Ingo Farin, "Heidegger: Transformation of Hermeneutics," in *The Routledge Companion to Hermeneutics*, ed. Jeff Malpas and Hans-Helmuth Gander (New York: Routledge, 2014), 107.

informed a person's relation to others that figure into it. The world in which a person is immersed is prior to any subject-object distinction; and one cannot dis-embody themselves from it, nor reach an independent plateau of consciousness where a neutral, universal language prevails over all private others. In sections 31–33 of *Being and Time* (1927), Heidegger presents the idea of *Being-towards-possibilities*, itself a *potentiality-for-Being*, where individual beings project their understanding out into the world so that it might develop according to its exposure and vulnerability. This development he refers to as interpretation (*Auslegung*), a "working out of possibilities" and not the yield of understanding in the form of mere information.[12] Through individual expressive capacities, things become explicit, as part of a process of provisional understanding (i.e., "something as something") from which assertions may be derived and assigned predication.[13] Things are never presuppositionless, but phenomenologically abide in an intuitional soft focus until understanding produces a more clear, definite character that may be communicated and shared with others.[14] Our being, hence, depends on hermeneutic activity, the constant circling of the hermeneutic circle, where the whole of experience is continuously checked according to its parts, and vice versa. Heidegger's hermeneutic ontology of life was inspired by the German philosopher, Wilhelm Dilthey (d. 1911), who popularized the modern study of hermeneutics in philosophy by his emphasis on lived experience. Heidegger, through Dilthey, comes to value "know-how," garnered by successful, habitual interpretation, that eclipses the merely theoretical.[15] Amongst Dilthey's exponents, there is no getting at the thing-in-itself to establish universal *validity*, a term Heidegger criticizes as an "idolized word,"[16] but

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[12] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), §32: 189.
[13] Heidegger, §33: 196-97.
[14] Heidegger, §33: 197-98.
[15] Theodore J. Kisiel, Alfred Denker, and Marion Heinz, *Heidegger's Way of Thought: Critical and Interpretative Signposts* (New York: Continuum, 2002), 179–82.
[16] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, §33: 198.

rather phenomenological approximations that may be more or less justified according to shared significations and contexts of reference.

On Gadamer's account, an interpreter must work past their fore-projections or fore-understandings, never erasing them, but consciously willing to check them against what is being put down by an author, and even make them vulnerable against information, whether novel or rooted in an established tradition.[17] There remains a sneaky unconscious projection of meaning in constant operation, and this prejudice of the self, or of subjectivity, creates a distorted effect with the potential to undermine the meaning of a text or person. Thus, Dilthey's emphasis on individual experience is somewhat inadequate because it often ignores the way it is framed in concrete, historically situated ways, such as within the family, society, state, and a primary language. As Gadamer puts it, "The self-awareness of the individual is only a flickering in the closed circuits of historical life."[18] As an alternative, he proposes thinking in terms of a historical consciousness. In such a manner, hermeneutics demands that we place ourselves within the historical "horizons" of another, or within their situation or standpoint, in order to better understand them. We do not have to agree with their ideas, their criteria, or prejudices, but understand their meaning, such as in the example of (constructive) conversation with another[19]; and in so doing, this dialogical interplay may reveal our own prejudices and potentially reach a standpoint which suffers from less incoherence and is more comprehensive and resourceful in one particular way, thus reaching a "higher universality."[20]

Paul Ricoeur brings Gadamer's hermeneutics into a religious arena of the biblical tradition to restore the "humus of meaning," i.e., the questions of origins and meaning,

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[17] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 280–82.
[18] Gadamer, 289.
[19] Gadamer, 313–16.
[20] Gadamer, 316.

irreducible to rationality.[21] He advocates a language of the existential and historical that speaks to the imagination, against the language of facts. In his essay, "The Language of Faith," he claims two tasks of hermeneutics: validation (or justification) and arbitration, which liberate the symbolic function ordinarily held in suspense, "saving the myth" from the tech-fueled presuppositions of modernity.[22] This, so as his thinking goes, would be an essential precondition for (re)engaging religious texts after having undergone modernity's desacralizing tendencies. Whereas logical or technical language struggles against equivocation and double meaning, aiming toward univocality, hermeneutics embraces allegory and multivocal significations. Ricoeur's hermeneutic tasks collaborate to offer new possibilities for man or what it means to be man, whose body, per Ricoeur, is "both himself and his aperture to the world."[23]

All of the aforementioned, from Dilthey to Ricoeur, wish to move away from any restricted scientific concept of objectivity and toward hermeneutics as an organon of human understanding. In all of these interventions of Euro-American philosophy of the twentieth century, there is a common thread of various possibilities of interpretation generated from self-understanding and reflection. I perceive this thread to be most elegantly spun by Richard Rorty, who borrows much from his hermeneutic forebears in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1979*, henceforth PMN*) and who too shares in a suspicion of any transparency of objects. Although his hermeneutic formulations have been met with criticism by those ensconced in the analytical tradition and were eventually abandoned by the author himself,[24] I hold out the promise in their resuscitation herein.

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[21] Paul Ricœur, Charles E. Reagan, and David Stewart, *The Philosophy of Paul Ricœur: An Anthology of His Work* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978), 227.
[22] Ricœur, Reagan, and Stewart, 235.
[23] Ricœur, Reagan, and Stewart, 227.
[24] See Joshua Knobe, "A Talent for Bricolage: An Interview with Richard Rorty," *The Dualist*, 2 (1995): 61.

Rorty sees hermeneutics as an appropriate replacement for epistemologically centered philosophy. It is not an alternative method or discipline, but instead "an expression of hope that the cultural space left by the demise of epistemology will not be filled."[25] Hermeneutics, in this idiosyncratic notion, has an irreducible social aspect that aims for agreement between a range of speakers who might otherwise share little or no common ground, nor perspectival cohesion.[26] Much of the *PMN* is influenced–aside from John Dewey–by Wilfrid Sellars (d. 1989).[27] According to Sellars, there are no semantic, uninterpreted givens. Concepts are instead synonymous with "the logical space of reasons" or a normative discourse involving justifications and assertions that may be shared with a community.[28] Rorty militates against the belief that the space of reasons is *commensurable* or "able to be brought under a set of rules which will tell us how rational agreement can be reached on what would settle the issue on every point where statements seem to conflict," conforming to a type of universal and ahistorical framework for understanding.[29]

Although Rorty's translation of *Bildung* as edification poses some shortcomings,[30] its close connection between the self's learning and its transformation appears most appropriate with regards to my dissertation's subject. It suits my purposes for its connection not to a purely

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[25] Rorty, *PMN*, 315.

[26] I will not review the consequences of hermeneutics' elevation for the state of epistemology, only to say that Rorty, underwriting Thomas Kuhn, claims no real distinction between the procedure for securing agreement about scientific issues, such as those that assume to correspond with reality, versus nonscientific ones, such as aesthetics. The key import is that there is no neutral scheme that makes the objects of phenomena universally commensurable. See Wilfrid Sellars, *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 322–33.

[27] Sellars was famously a critic of the "myth of the given," the foundationalist story of knowledge by acquaintance, where some basic, non-conceptual content, e.g., sense experience or intuition, forms a basis for propositions, serving beliefs or justifications about the world. Even the most basic cognitions, Sellars contends, must possess truth-evaluable propositional forms.

[28] Sellars, *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind*, §36: 76; Rorty, *PMN*, 182–85.

[29] Rorty, *PMN*, 316.

[30] Bouma-Prediger names a few of them, centered on Rorty's neo-pragmatist perversion of Gadamerian hermeneutics; Steve Bouma-Prediger, "Rorty's Pragmatism and Gadamer's Hermeneutics," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 57, no. 2 (1989): 313–24.

abstract impression of reality, but one that bears on human comportment and doxastic commitments. Supplication in Shiʿi societies is an ambient score, familiar and frequent to its residents and visitors. Commentaries set them into an intellectual framework that is rarefied in the way that architects discuss and debate the benefits of public spaces traversed by its many wayfarers. These are not the gnomic phrases of the spiritual elite, but have a strong normative valence of public value. Commentaries of supplication do not merely encourage the performative literacies of prayer, but also habits of mind. The Imam's hallowed speech becomes a canvas onto which interpreters project all manner of concepts–philosophical, theological, cosmological, ontological, and ethical. They are edifying because they transform words by the more vivid light thrown upon them and that inspires readers to both share and expand their understanding. Commentaries are not guided by institutions in the style of the breviary, but rather the development of an interactive vocabulary for responding to religious concerns, based on a language that, by its "impeccable" source and composition, simultaneously serves and transcends all of them.

My skepticism of the phenomenological basis of Gadamerian hermeneutics results from Rorty's (and Sellars's) defining critique of intentionality based on the raw perception of states of affairs. Rorty's influence, in particular, permeates my own hermeneutical evaluation, one that does not attempt to establish by demonstration the basis and truth conditions of my commentators' interpretations, but rather seeks to clarify their activity—their *Bildung*. However steep their flight of fancy appears, I pass no judgement on the verity of their ideas. I understand supplication commentaries as arguments that proceed according to rules, and not facts commensurable with epistemic verification. Their interpretations are relative to their communal paradigm and its inspiration in inferential responses, embedded in commentary.

There has been much debate in philosophy over whether hermeneutics is a method, a skill, or a mode of perception. I have no wish to wade into this debate, but rather set out to clarify my own position and explain why it may be useful in this context. While I might recognize hermeneutics to some extent as a kind of skill ("know-how") that involves some linguistic dexterity, I consider it primarily as a processual method for making sense of the multiple meanings of texts and according to certain systematic procedures. By surveying supplication commentary through a method-based hermeneutics, sensitive to scholarly and textual context, we may gain insight into the wider theological frameworks influencing interpretive choices. Hermeneutics is, in this sense, a tool for expanding and refining ideas, according to a norm of wisdom. In seeing hermeneutics as a practical method for producing useful and productive conversation, commentary is revealed to depend on a tradition of religious apprehension whose source-specific, inference-laden patterns provide the basis for why a commentator interprets and how he provides a mediatory role in deciphering meaning.

I look at how commentators interpret the supplication's major themes in relation to the details as they understand them, the above-mentioned watermarks, using their tradition of Shiʿism as an evaluative criterion. Perhaps from their individual authorial view, their accepted tradition is a mode of commensurability to which the language of supplication conforms. I see each authorial view in this dissertation as a pretense of commensurability, as commentators would surely say that they have found the intended meaning and not made it. From my own authorial view, these are various discourses that aim for intelligibility and assent but that have no universal, fail-safe foundations, whether or not commentators' beliefs indicate otherwise. Although the type of evidence mobilized by commentators may not be rationally resolved through recourse to an objective language, it still possesses integrity according to the underlying

rules of each tradition, guiding interpretation. These rules impart coherency and appropriateness by making meaning holistic, i.e., having a certain use or inferential role according to a privileged mode of thought. They are not invariable in every instance, but, per Sellars, are pattern-governed, "not only acquiring a propensity to exhibit uniformities…but also propensities of the kind which Wittgenstein describes as 'knowing how to go on.'"[31] This latter category of "going on" refers to a normative recursiveness of behavior, a conscious regularity, paired with confidence, in the application of rules.[32]

Thinking about commentaries in this way allows for the benefits of "fruitful conversation,"[33] seeing fresh perspectives offered, arguments shaped, and consensuses formed, as opposed to adjudicating a standard or theory of the highest empirical fitness–to think of "culture as a conversation rather than as a structure erected upon foundations."[34] It shows that commentators attempt socially-delineated representations of different possible meanings of prayer where the use of certain words binds one to others that share this use and its justification for use. These representations transpire within a field of intelligibility that answers as to the depth of a term or concept's convention, the kind of things to which a supplication's references refer, and the religious system into which a prayer's language breathes life. I intend to showcase this production of meaning with respect to supplications, observing how commentators marshal a theo-centric philosophical application of language to conjure a deeper perspicacity of religion.

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[31] Wilfrid Sellars, "Meaning as Functional Classification (A Perspective on the Relation of Syntax to Semantics)," *Synthese* 27, no. 3/4 (1974): 424.
[32] There remains debate about whether Wittgenstein's phrase refers to a conventional conception of abidance, endorsed by John McDowell, or a skeptical view where ostensive definitions may be failure-prone, endorsed by Saul Kripke. I have sided with McDowell, mostly for the sake of practical comprehension. For a comparison, see Hannah Ginsborg, "Wittgenstein on Going On," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 50, no. 1 (2020): 1–17.
[33] Chris Voparil, "Rorty and Dewey Revisited: Toward a Fruitful Conversation," *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 50, no. 3 (2014): 373–404.
[34] Rorty, *PMN*, 319.

Literature Review

The purposes and contexts of supplication vary across time. I do not wish to inventory the various methodologies or perspectives, but rather to show how they influence meaning-making in the greater role of commentarial texts. This role has been examined by several others in the field of Islamic Studies yet remains remarkably little-considered overall, in contrast to the profusion of study in the European Judeo-Christian tradition. The abundance of scholarly articles and books within the latter tradition covers a multitude of facets, including the efficacy of petitionary prayer interpreted by philosophers and theologians,[35] the historical evolution of prayer manuals within various European epochs,[36] the literary and rhetorical features of supplication,[37] the hermeneutics of prayer and liturgy,[38] and ambitious overviews of the subject.[39] Few critical analogues are available in relation to Islam; they are most often fragmentary and instance apologetic literature. Even fewer are the examples on the transmission, history, and cultural import of supplication in the lives of Shiʿi Muslims[40] in comparison to the

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[35] Scott A. Davidson, *Petitionary Prayer: A Philosophical Investigation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); ——, *God and Prayer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022); David Basinger, "Why Petition an Omnipotent, Omniscient, Wholly Good God?," *Religious Studies* 19, no. 1 (1983): 25–41.

[36] Rachel Fulton Brown, *Mary and the Art of Prayer: The Hours of the Virgin in Medieval Christian Life and Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017); Hans-Jürgen Feulner, "On the Liturgical Perspective of the Apostolic Constitution Anglicanorum Coetibus," in *A Treasure to Be Shared: Understanding Anglicanorum Coetibus* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2022), 89–152.

[37] Jeffrey H. Tigay, "On Some Aspects of Prayer in the Bible," *AJS Review* 1 (1976): 363–79; Morgan Reed, *Jacob of Sarug's Homily on the Lord's Prayer* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2016); Cynthia Garrett, "The Rhetoric of Supplication: Prayer Theory in Seventeenth-Century England," *Renaissance Quarterly* 46, no. 2 (1993): 328–57.

[38] Leon J. Weinberger, *Jewish Hymnography: A Literary History*, The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1998); Victoria Pedrick, "Supplication in the Iliad and the Odyssey," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 112 (1982): 125–40; Moshe Greenberg, "On the Refinement of the Conception of Prayer in Hebrew Scriptures." *AJS Review* 1 (1976): 57–92; Dov Schwartz and Edward Levin, "The Interpretation of Reading Shema and Its Blessings," in *Rabbi Joseph Dov Soloveitchik on the Experience of Prayer*, 193–222 (Brookline, MA: Academic Studies Press, 2019); Miriam Czock, "Medieval Latin Liturgical Commentaries," in *Prognostication in the Medieval World*, ed. Hans-Christian Lehner, Klaus Herbers, and Matthias Heiduk (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021), 884–88.

[39] Philip Zaleski and Carol Zaleski, *Prayer: A History* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 2006); D. Z. Phillips, *The Concept of Prayer* (London: Routledge, 2013).

[40] A recent exception is Vinay Khetia's Ph.D. dissertation that examines Shiʿi liturgy, *duʿāʾ* and *ziyāra*, as "performative theology"; Vinay Khetia, "A Study of The Textual History, Doctrinal Content And Philosophy of

profusion of works on other ritual facets of Shiʿism, such as the Ashura processions and other displays of public piety.[41]

The marginal study of prayer in Islam may stem from several reasons. As Cynthia Garrett (1993) puts the matter, "Those religiously inclined perhaps consider prayer beyond criticism, while students of intellectual and religious history may consider it somehow beneath criticism."[42] Although this observation is somewhat dated and critiques a different discipline altogether, it may nonetheless be relevant to those in Islamic Studies today. So too are supplications confined, in a sense, to Shiʿi interests. Whereas one may be convinced of the importance of studying Shiʿi (Qur'anic) *tafsīr* in relation to its Sunni counterpart (or vice versa), the supererogatory and sectarian nature of Imami supplication render this intra-faith application less appropriate and, as a result, increasingly dispensable as would-be academic inquiry.

I. European Sources

As per the contributions of Anglo-American scholars, Constance Padwick's *Muslim Devotions* (1961) remains preeminent. Although Padwick insists in her introduction that the work not be considered a scholarly one,[43] her examination of prayer manuals, providing an erudite account of the worship rites of Muslims, suggests otherwise. Padwick, an English Christian missionary of the early twentieth century who travelled throughout the Middle East, rarely allows her personal religious attitude to get in the way of her analysis. In addition to the

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Twelver Shīʿī Liturgy From The Period Of The Imāms to ʿAbbās al-Qummī (d.1359/1940)" (PhD diss., McMaster University, 2022).

[41] Works that cover such ground include Augustus Richard Norton, "Ritual, Blood, and Shiite Identity: Ashura in Nabatiyya, Lebanon." *TDR* 49, no. 4 (2005): 140-55; Peter J. Chelkowski, *Ta'ziyeh: Ritual and Drama in Iran* (NY: New York University Press, 1979); Waḍḍāḥ Sharārah, *Transformations D'une Manifestation Religieuse Dans Un Village Du Liban-Sud (Ashura)* (Beirut: Publications Du Centre De Recherches, 1968).

[42] Garrett, "The Rhetoric of Supplication: Prayer Theory in Seventeenth-Century England," 328.

[43] Constance E. Padwick, *Muslim Devotions: A Study of Prayer-Manuals in Common Use* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1996), xiii.

various iterations of prayer, including *ṣalāt*, *duʿāʾ*, *dhikr*, and *munājāt*, she covers several theological subjects that they raise, such as intercession and petitionary prayer's efficacy. Padwick's integration of Shiʿi supplications is limited to small samples from *al-Ṣaḥīfa al-Sajjādiyya*, a central collection of supererogatory prayers attributed to the fourth Imam, ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn Zayn-al-ʿĀbidīn (d. 95/713).[44] Still, she is able to integrate gems of knowledge that pertain to this collection, e.g., that the Imam's prayer of thanksgiving and supplication for protection under trial (originally amid the Umayyad general Muslim b. ʿUqba's onslaught of Medina) achieved a wider Sunni reception through the Khatmī Sufi order founder, Muḥammad ʿUthmān al-Mīrghanī (d. 1268/1852), and in his diwan, *Fatḥ al-rasūl*.[45]

On *al-Ṣaḥīfa al-Sajjādiyya*, whose importance for Shiʿis cannot be overstated, William Chittick's introduction and translation, published under the title *The Psalms of Islam* (2007), is an outlier among English works. In conjunction with several encyclopedia entries on the *Ṣaḥīfa* and its author,[46] *duʿāʾ* may be distinguished as the principal occupation and fruit of the fourth Shiʿi Imam (hence his honorific, *al-Sajjād*, "he who constantly prostrates") subsequent to the martyrdom of his father, al-Husayn b. ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 61/680), the world-shaking event of the Shiʿi weltanschauung. The *Ṣaḥīfa* establishes the link of mourning to the recitation of supplication among Shiʿis, honoring the sacrifices of the Imams by expressing individual and collective penitence for the wrongdoings and ignominies visited upon them. The *Ṣaḥīfa*'s

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[44] Chittick claims that *al-Ṣaḥīfa al-Sajjādiyya* is the earliest recorded compendium of *duʿāʾ* among Islamic sources; William Chittick, *The Psalms of Islam: Al-Ṣaḥīfah al-Kāmilah al-Sajjādiyyah* (London: The Muhammadi Trust, 2007), xiv.
[45] Padwick, *Muslim Devotions*, 79.
[46] Louis Medoff, "ṢAḤIFA AL-SAJJĀDIYA, AL-," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online*. Ed. Trustees of Columbia University in the City of New York. Brill Reference Online, accessed December 7, 2023, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2330-4804_EIRO_COM_12002; Etan Kohlberg, "Zayn Al-ʿĀbidīn," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, accessed December 7, 2023. http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_8144; Wilferd Madelung, "ʿALĪ B. ḤOSAYN B. ʿALĪ B. ABĪ ṬĀLEB," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online*, accessed December 7, 2023, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2330-4804_EIRO_COM_5159.

centurial transmission and standardization spurred the earliest commentaries of devotional materials in the Imami milieu. Particularly during the Safavid period, when copies became canonized and available to the laity, we see a boon in commentarial activity, including among luminaries Shaykh Bahāʾī (d. ca. 1031/1621), Mīr Dāmād (d. 1041/1631–32), and Fayḍ al-Kāshānī (d. 1091/1680). These commentaries and their wider influence will be considered in the ensuing chapter.

An extensive account of Muslim prayer (*ṣalāt*), informed by classical primary sources, can be found in Marion Holmes Katz's *Prayer in Islamic Thought and Practice* (2013). Katz succeeds in her stated aim–"restoring ritual to its proper place in the study of the sharia, and legal analysis to its proper place in our understanding of this category of ritual"[47]–by drawing on the broader issues of ethics, affect, intention, legitimacy, hermeneutics, and the socio-political ramifications for female participants. As for their various discursive modes and perennial legal debate, she views the interpretations of traditional Islamic scholars and Sufis as complementary and not adversarial groups. Like Padwick before her, Katz treats Shiʿi offerings in short shrift. Her commentary on Shiʿi supplication is limited to the recognition of the *Ṣaḥīfa*'s eminent status and to the general observation that "Shīʿites cultivate a rich tradition of petitionary prayers – often lengthy and elaborate – transmitted from the imāms," citing the example of the famous supplication ascribed to ʿAlī, *Duʿāʾ Kumayl*.[48] The work is nonetheless a rich resource on Islamic worship, focused on *ṣalāt* and the diverse range of commentary on its meaning.

[47] Marion Holmes Katz, *Prayer in Islamic Thought and Practice*, Themes in Islamic History 6 (Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 8.
[48] Katz, 31.

Among anthropological analyses, Niloofar Haeri has written on prayer in postrevolutionary Iran.[49] Her most recent book, *Say What Your Longing Heart Desires* (2020), is an ethnography of supplication practices among middle-class women in contemporary Tehran.[50] She reports on supplication as spontaneous prayer, recited often in Persian, and as a modality of female agency and exploration of ecstatic states (*ḥāl*) and poetic expression. As Haeri acknowledges, these practices are very different from those prescribed in the Imami collections and practiced by the majority of Shiʿis worldwide. It is these texts and teachings that this dissertation serves to explicate in full measure.

A small sample of articles address Shiʿi prayer specifically. Edmund Hayes (2024) surveys several petitions made to the Imams by their followers, emanating from the second/eighth to third/ninth centuries. Among the examples of petitions soliciting support, arbitration, and advice, Hayes includes requests for intercession (*shafāʿa*) in the form of the Imam's supplication on the petitioner's behalf. He considers petitioning as a social institution, centered on the Imam's intermediary authority in both mundane and extramundane affairs for the early Imami community.[51] The wider role of public prayer as a mechanism for Imami group identity formation has previously been studied by Lalani (2000)[52] and Haider (2009).[53]

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[49] Niloofar Haeri, "Notes on Ritual Prayer in Iran: Qunut Choices among a Group of Shiʿi Women," in *Approaches to the Qur'an in Contemporary Iran*, edited by Alessandro Cancian. Qur'anic Studies Series 18 (Oxford: Oxford University Press in Association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2019); ——, "La Salât et son langage: Prier en dehors de la mosquée," in *Le social par le langage: La parole au quotidien*, edited by Myriam Achour-Kallel (Paris: Karthala & IRMC: 2015; ——, "The Private Performance of 'Salat' Prayers: Repetition, Time, and Meaning," *Anthropological Quarterly* 86, no. 1 (2013): 5-34.

[50] Niloofar Haeri, *Say What Your Longing Heart Desires: Women, Prayer, and Poetry in Iran* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2020).

[51] Edmund Hayes, "Between Practical Petitioning and Divine Intervention: Entreaties to the Shiʿi Imams in the Ninth Century CE," in *Medieval Strategies of Entreaty from North Africa to Eurasia*, ed. Petra M. Sijpesteijn, The Medieval Globe (Leeds: Arc Humanities Press, 2024), 51–66.

[52] Arzina R. Lalani, *Early Shīʿī Thought: The Teachings of Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2000), 123–26.

[53] Najam Haider, "Prayer, Mosque, and Pilgrimage: Mapping Shīʿī Sectarian Identity in 2nd/8th Century Kūfa," *Islamic Law and Society* 16, no. 2 (2009): 151–74.

Mahmoud Ayoub (1986) has reviewed the Imami principle of *badāʾ* with regards to prayer and the alteration of divine decree. Within the *tafsīr* literature that he scours, Ayoub discovers lively discussion over the notions of God's immutability and the amendment of His decree. Prayer, herein, is seen as an extension of the contents of the archetypal "mother of the Book" (*umm al-kitāb*) and serving the practical purpose of inspiring hope and good deeds.[54] Closer to the subject of Shiʿi supplication and its uses, Matthew Melvin-Koushki (2022) has written an introduction for the Perso-Arabic manual of prayer, *Javāhir-i maknūna va laʾālī-yi makhzūna*, by the Shaykhi lettrist Mullā Muṣṭafā b. Muḥammad Khūʾī (d. 1225/1839).[55] Melvin-Koushki identifies some of the motivations, influences, and occult uses of invocation and supplication, including with respect to *Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ* which, elsewhere, undergoes commentary treatment by Khūʾī.[56] Touching on many of these issues as they interrelate, Sayeh Meisami (2015) presents Mullā Ṣadrā al-Shīrāzī's (d. 1045/1635–36) mystical interpretations of *duʿāʾ*, and primarily as they are influenced by Ibn ʿArabī. According to Meisami, Ṣadrā sees prayer as "a venue of change in the cosmos," an active means to ascend to the imaginal levels of being that interphase between the material and intellective realms.[57] Based on Ṣadrā's unique ontological theorems, a relational (*rabṭī*) nexus holds between all gradations of the one true being, allowing for the human soul to progressively realize its entelechy. Prayer, in this case, is a creative power of the soul as per its substantial motion (*ḥaraka jawhariyya*) toward accessing higher (or purer) states of being and, if of the echelon of *awliyā*, influencing states of affairs in the physical world.

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[54] Mahmoud Ayoub, "Divine Preordination and Human Hope a Study of the Concept of Badāʾ in Imāmī Shīʿī Tradition," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 106, no. 4 (1986): 623–32.
[55] Muṣṭafā b. Muḥammad Hādī Khūʾī and Matthew Melvin-Koushki, *Hidden Gems and Treasured: Occult Prayer from the Shii Mystical Tradition*, ed. Alireza Asghari and Muhammad Abdullahian (Leiden: The Islamic Manuscripts Press of Leiden, 2022), 7–27.
[56] Khūʾī and Melvin-Koushki, 9–12.
[57] Sayeh Meisami, "Mullā Ṣadrā on the Efficacy of Prayer (Duʿā)," *Journal of Sufi Studies* 4, no. 1–2 (2015): 61.

Perhaps the closest resemblance of this dissertation's interests in the historical and commentarial import of Muslim supplication is in a chapter by Guy Burak (2021), part of an edited volume, on devotional texts of the Ottoman empire from the tenth/sixteenth through the twelfth/eighteenth centuries.[58] The author finds a copious corpus of compilations and commentaries (*shurūḥ*) on prayer, supplication, and invocations, written in a combination of Turkish, Arabic, and/or Persian, from this period. Using several case studies of works that drew popular interest, including the *Duʿānāme* of the Ottoman chief mufti Ebū's-suʿūd Efendi (d. 982/1574) and *Dalāʾil al-khayrāt wa-shawāriq al-anwār* by the Maghribī Shādhilī, Muḥammad b. Sulaymān al- Jazūlī (d. 870/1465), Burak explores commentators' excavation of the "mental content" (*maʿnā*) of these collections' prayer practices for an Ottoman public. Commentators express hopeful assertations that their interpretations will benefit readers and guide them toward the ideals of proper Arabic recitation and comprehension.[59] Burak speculates that the plethora of commentaries, produced by the Ottoman administrative class and the non-affiliate alike, may have served the purpose of confession building and instilling proper religious conventions among an audience with a growing predilection for devotional works.[60] I explore similar practices and state prerogatives vis-à-vis the Safavids and the court-affiliated in the following chapters.

A comparable example to Burak is Richard McGregor's (2013) article on prayer compositions of Sufi saints during the Mamluk period.[61] McGregor views petitionary prayer commentaries (*shurūḥ*) in view of their reading communities, bound by ritual and institutional affinities. Commentaries discern mystical sensibilia and reinforce bonds with charismatic

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[58] Guy Burak, "Prayers, Commentaries, and the Edification of the Ottoman Supplicant," in *Historicizing Sunni Islam in the Ottoman Empire, c. 1450-c. 1750*, ed. Tijana Krstić and Derin Terzioğlu (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 232–52.
[59] Burak, 246–48.
[60] Burak, 249.
[61] Richard McGregor, "Notes on the Literature of Sufi Prayer Commentaries," *Mamluk Studies Review* XVII (2013): 199–211.

authorities. Those of Aḥmad Zarrūq (d. 899/1493) and Ibn Mākhillā (d. 733/1332) offer proof of insight and the revelatory dimensions of their authors, and also detail the spiritual benefits of prayer and its connection to miracles.[62] Commentaries also reflect on religious inquiries, such as in their examination of the notion of *ʿiṣma* in Abū al-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī's (d. 656/1258) litany *Ḥizb al-baḥr* that appears in the petition, *nasʾaluka al-ʿiṣma* ("we ask you for inerrancy"). Both Zarrūq and Ibn Mākhillā reconcile the issue by appealing to the status of inspired figures, calibrated according to degree of spiritual achievement, beginning from the shielding of sin and cresting in the station of infallibility, reserved for prophets.[63] The concept of *ʿiṣma* is naturally relevant to Shiʿism, given its extension to the prophets and Imams as a creed. I will address the challenge this concept poses to the Imams' entreaties for protection from sin, frequently located in their prayers. The introduction of extra-textual theological and philosophical investigations is also a strong feature that we will encounter in Shiʿi supplication commentaries, expanding as a genre trait in the Safavid period.

Remaining works on prayer in Islam published in English include: Henry Corbin's (2014) book, *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn Arabi*, translated from the original French, *L'imagination créatrice dans le soufisme d'Ibn'Arabî*,[64] which includes a section on "creative prayer," i.e., prayer as a mode of imaginative expression that, in Ibn ʿArabī's mystical impression, discloses God in theophanic forms (*maẓāhir*)[65]; Annemarie Schimmel's (1952) article on Sufi worship that views prayer as "intimate conversation" between God and humankind and that underscores some of the theological challenges posed by petitionary forms[66];

[62] McGregor, 208.
[63] McGregor, 209–10.
[64] Henry Corbin, *L'imagination créatrice dans le soufisme d'Ibn 'Arabi* (Paris: Flammarion, 1958).
[65] Henry Corbin, *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn Arabi*, trans. Ralph Manheim, Bollingen Series (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), 179–272.
[66] Annemarie Schimmel, "Some Aspects of Mystical Prayer in Islam," *Die Welt Des Islams* 2, no. 2 (1952): 112–25.

and Atif Khalil's (2011) analysis of classical expositions regarding the "transactional" nature between the human and divine in prayer, which draws mainly on Sufi commentators.[67]

The literature in European languages is mostly limited to the following French works. Eva De Vitray-Meyerovitch (2003) provides a primer on the modalities of Muslim prayer and its mystical and theological aspects, principally in light of Rumi.[68] A section within a French volume on Islamic prayer, edited by Évelyne Martini (2001), mentions the importance of *Duʿāʾ Kumayl* for Shiʿis and the practice of its communal recitation on Friday evenings and the eve of the fifteen of Shaʿbān.[69] In Guy Monnot's article, *Prières privées en islam traditionnel* (1989), he distinguishes "private prayer," including *duʿāʾ*, *dhikr*, and *wird*, as sites of Muslim spiritual life that differ in their tone, sense of intimacy, and depth of meaning from the ritual *ṣalāt*.[70] His French translation of passages from Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's (d. 606/1209) Persian, *Jāmiʿ al-ʿulūm*, integrate the supplications of various prophets and al-Rāzī's speculations as to the most favorable time for their recitation, based on various astrological patterns. Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi's French articles address the doctrinal importance of *duʿāʾ* and the closely related *ziyāra* texts for Shiʿis,[71] as well as the history of supplication collections and what he rightfully calls the "pillars" of the Shiʿi prayer tradition, Shaykh al-Tūsī (460/1067) and Ibn Ṭāwūs (664/1266).[72] In

[67] Atif Khalil, "Is God Obliged to Answer Prayers of Petition (Du'a)? The Response of Classical Sufis and Qur'anic Exegetes," *Journal of Medieval Religious Cultures* 37, no. 2 (2011): 93–109.
[68] Eva de Vitray-Meyerovitch, *La prière en Islam*, Spiritualités vivantes (Paris: Albin Michel, 2003).
[69] Évelyne Martini, ed., *La prière* (Paris: Ed. de l'Atelier, 2001), 84.
[70] Guy Monnot, "Prières privées en islam traditionnel. Autour d'un texte de Rāzi," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 206, no. 1 (1989): 41–54, https://doi.org/10.3406/rhr.1989.1855. See additionally Monnot's excellent encyclopedia article, covering the iterations of Muslim prayer; G. Monnot, "Ṣalāt," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition Online (EI-2 English)* (Brill, 2012), https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0983.
[71] Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, "Prière de pèlerinage englobant (al-ziyâra al-jâmi'a) (Aspects de l'imamologie duodécimaine XVII)," in *Raison et quête de la sagesse: Hommage à Christian Jambet*, Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes 188 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2020), 31–60. This article includes a French translation of excerpts of *al-Zīyāra al-jāmiʿa al-kabīra* and some of Amir-Moezzi's commentary on the supplication's major themes.
[72] Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, "Notes sur la prière dans le shī'isme imamite," in *Henry Corbin. Philosophies et sagesses des religions du Livre*, ed. Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, Christian Jambet, and Pierre Lory, Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes, Sciences Religieuses 126 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2005), 65–80. This article is

the latter article, Amir-Moezzi claims that prayer practices and texts helped bridge the traditionalist/rationalist theologico-legal divide between Qom (and Rayy) and Baghdad, respectively.[73]

The role that commentaries play in Islamic textual traditions is also relevant. Gilliot identifies the commentary (*sharḥ*) as a canopy, under whose texts' genres know no measurable limits. He sees commentaries as a crucial category of Arabic exposition and storehouse for the literary yield, observing, "Many of them are veritable museums, as if their authors feared the loss of whole sections of the patrimony."[74] He chronicles the earliest examples of *shurūḥ* on grammar and philology, such as those of Sībawayh's (d. 180/796) *Kitāb*, that gave way to commentaries on the Qur'an's unfamiliar terms (*gharīb*), the latter functioning as explanations rather than any systematic, critical gloss.[75] The *sharḥ* would also assimilate an array of interpretations of Islamic law (*sharīʿa*, *fiqh*, *furūʿ al-dīn*) and epitomes on logic, theology (*uṣūl al-dīn*, *kalām*), and philosophy. Gilliot finds a perennial ambiguity in the term, *sharḥ*, indicated by its frequent substitution for *taʿlīqāt, tafsīr, ikhrāj, nukat, tahdhīb, mukhtaṣar, tabnila, bayān wa-taqrīb, ḥāshiyya,* and *taṣḥīḥ*. Overall, the lines are blurred between these categories' expression, and in most cases, they are used interchangeably. Thus, in what follows, I will use *sharḥ* as a catch-all for an explanation of a text, without any attempt to refine or redefine the terminology.

Until recently, many Western Orientalist scholars viewed commentaries disparagingly, their proliferation precipitated by a post-seventh/thirteenth century intellectual stagnation,

translated into English and included in the volume: Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, *The Spirituality of Shiʿi Islam: Beliefs and Practices* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2011), 375–400.
[73] Amir-Moezzi, "Notes sur la prière dans le shī'isme imamite," 69–70.
[74] Gilliot, "Sharḥ,"
[75] Claude Gilliot, "Sharḥ," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, accessed December 15, 2023, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_1039.

marked by "stiff uniformity" (Snouck Hurgronje),[76] "ossification" (Rescher),[77] "little originality" (Watt),[78] and the "decline of Islamic literature" (Brockelmann).[79] Commentaries that were popularized in this period were seen retrospectively as a symptom of Muslim decline. This notion has been recently reassessed and challenged by El-Rouayheb (2006),[80] Ahmed (2013),[81] Saleh (2013),[82] and Opwis (2022).[83] L.W. Cornelis van Lit (2017) offers a compendious study of the modern theories of the Islamic commentary that belie the claim of stagnation.[84] These theories include commentary's overlapping roles of advocacy of certain views, akin to modern book reviews (Hodgson 1977); as "exegetical practices," part of a lineage of classical Arabic philosophy (Wisnovsky 2004; 2013) [85]; as expositions of novel ideas, akin to the modern journal article (Saliba 2007); and dialectical samples of larger scholarly debates and discussions (Ahmed 2015). Many of these views are compatible with one another. Together, they share the common

[76] Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, *Mekka in the Latter Part of the 19th Century*, trans. J.H. Mohahan, Brill Classics in Islam, Volume: 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 204.
[77] Nicholas Rescher, *The Development of Arabic Logic* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1964), 73.
[78] W. Montgomery Watt, *Islamic Philosophy and Theology* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1985), 134.
[79] Carl Brockelmann, *History of the Arabic Written Tradition*, trans. Joep Lameer, vol. II, Handbook of Oriental Studies (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 1.
[80] El-Rouayheb acknowledges that this claim is, per Ehsan Yarshater, "Arabocentric," and ignores the achievements of those of Turkish, Iranian, and Mughal Indian origins, but further pushes back against supposed Arab intellectual decline with the examples of Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī (d. 1101/1690) and ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (d. 1143/1731); Khaled El-Rouayheb, "Opening the Gate of Verification: The Forgotten Arab-Islamic Florescence of the 17th Century," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 38, no. 2 (2006): 263–81.
[81] Asad Q. Ahmed, "Post-Classical Philosophical Commentaries/Glosses: Innovation in the Margins," *Oriens* 41, no. 3/4 (2013): 317–48; Asad Q. Ahmed and Margaret Larkin, "The Ḥāshiya and Islamic Intellectual History," *Oriens* 41, no. 3/4 (2013): 213–16.
[82] Walid A. Saleh, "The Gloss as Intellectual History: The Ḥāshiyahs on al-Kashshāf," *Oriens* 41, no. 3/4 (2013): 217–59.
[83] Felicitas Opwis, "The Discursive Tradition of Commentaries (shurūḥ) – Lessons from Matn Abī Shujāʿ," *Islamic Law Blog*, September 8, 2022, https://islamiclaw.blog/2022/09/08/the-discursive-tradition-of-commentaries-shuruh%cc%a3-lessons-from-matn-abi-shuja%ca%bf/).
[84] L. W. C. (Eric) Van Lit, "Commentary and Commentary Tradition," *Mélanges de l'Institut Dominicain d'études Orientales*, no. 32 (2017): 3–26.
[85] Robert Wisnovsky, "The Nature and Scope of Arabic Philosophical Commentary in Post-Classical (ca. 1100-1900 Ad) Islamic Intellectual History: Some Preliminary Observations," *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies. Supplement*, no. 83 (2004): 149–91; Robert Wisnovsky, "Avicennism and Exegetical Practice in the Early Commentaries on the Ishārāt," *Oriens* 41, no. 3/4 (2013): 349–78.

denominator of commentaries as expansions of the literal or allegorical meaning of a text, whether or not genuine novelty is imputed.

An excellent analysis is provided by Brinkley Messick in his work, *The Calligraphic State* (1996). He defines a *sharḥ* as something that "opens up" a main text (*matn*), hinting at the term's etymological connection with dissection.[86] Messick finds that where the *matn* was designed historically to facilitate memorization of highly condensed content, the *sharḥ* served to unpack the content's implicit connections in a more comprehensible form, combining as a "pedagogical format" for learners.[87] In a common pattern, the *sharḥ* was grafted onto the *matn*, integrated into the text and indicated by various markings, such as ink colors or transitional phrases, e.g., "he said."[88]

The results of my study on Shiʿi supplication works are further proof that the prior Orientalist assessment does not do the commentary tradition justice. As I will show, they take part in a substantive genre of the early modern Islamic intellectual movement, preserving the unifying factors of the piety of worshippers and the continuous interpretation of modes of Islamic thought.

II. Arabic and Persian Sources

One finds a wide selection of popular sources in Arabic, and especially in Persian, on Islamic supplication. Many of them, such as Aḥmad (1997), Jilwa (1997), Māzandarānī (2002) and Bayātī (2006), take the form of guidebooks assisting in spiritual edification and self-

[86] Hence, while an anatomist (*musharriḥ*) dissects (*tashrīḥ*) a human body, a commentator (*shāriḥ*) dissects a textual one.
[87] Brinkley Messick, *The Calligraphic State: Textual Domination and History in a Muslim Society* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996), 30–31.
[88] Messick, 31. Messick's larger goal is to show the growth of the relationship between *matn* and *sharḥ* as fostering the growth of *sharīʿa*.

cultivation.[89] An adjacent sub-genre is made of ensuring the greatest possibility that supplicants receive a response, i.e., "fulfillment" (*ijāba* or *istijāba*) of their prayers. Others designed for specialized interests, such as al-Jawād (1978), Abū Zayd (1990) and al-Ṣabbī (1999), address the transmission of supplication and identify the most reliable and widely reported (*mutawātir*) conveyances attributed to the Prophet.[90] Yet others, such as Shariati (2007), Jafarian (1996) and Kermanshāhī (2009), expound the philosophy of supplication, including the virtues of its practice, the network of beliefs that it is connected to, and the attendant conditions and manners (*adāb*) elaborated by diverse thinkers.[91] These latter authors pool from a variety of post-classical sources, touchstone works on supplication for succeeding generations of scholars, that are the subject of the first part of this dissertation.

Dissertation Chapter Organization

Chapter 1: The Concept, Sources, and Early History of Supplication in Sunni Islam

The first chapter provides a broad overview of supplication in Islam. It begins with some of the etiological theories and philological explanations of petitionary prayer, including proto-linguistic expressions of pain and entreaties for divine support and assistance. From there, I address the "summoning" of supplication and the etymological examples of *duʿāʾ* in the Qur'an's terminology. In addition to Qur'anic examples, I survey others culled from the hadith

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[89] Muḥammad Maḥmūd Aḥmad, *al-Insān wa-l-duʿāʾ* (Cairo: Markaz al-Kitāb lil-Nashr, 1997); Abū al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad Jilwa, *Risāla fī bayān istijābat al-duʿāʾ* (Qom: Payām Imām Hādī, 1997); Muḥammad Ḥusayn Mukhtārī Māzandarānī, *Falsafat al-munājat wa-l-taḍarruʿ wa-l-duʿāʾ* (Qom: Mahdī Yār, 2002); Ṣabāḥ ʿAlī Bayātī, *Manhaj al-duʿāʾ* (Qom: al-Majmaʿ al-ʿĀlamī li-Ahl al-Bayt, 2006).

[90] Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Jawād, *al-Duʿāʾ al-mustajāb min al-ḥadīth wa-l-kitāb* (Jeddah: Dār al-Shurūq, 1978); Bakr b. ʿAbd Allāh Abū Zayd, *Taṣḥīḥ al-duʿāʾ* (Riyadh: Dār al-ʿĀṣima, 1990); Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥman Muḥammad b. Ghazwān al-Ṣabbī, *Kitāb al-duʿāʾ* (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Rushd, 1999). A compilation from classical sources includes Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-duʿāʾ al-mustajāb* (n.p, n.d.).

[91] Ali Shariati, *al-Duʿāʾ* (Beirut: Dār al-Amīr, 2007); Rasūl Jaʿfariyān, "Adab-i duʿā dar shīʿa," *Nāmeh-yi Mufīd* Spring, no. 5 (1996): 205–34; Ḥasan Mamdūḥī Kirmānshāhī, *Shuhūd va shinākht*, 4 vols. (Qom: Būstān-i Kitāb, 2009).

corpus, attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad, that are collated in Sunni collections. Several patterns of purported practice and function precede from a temperate use, eschewing rhyme and circumlocution, to a liberal Sufi application involving rhetorically rich passages. Although each tradition shares outstanding similarities with the others, they differ in the main with regards to stylistic emphases and sources. These differences become evident in the profuse supplication compendia in Islam, for which I provide a historical overview and account of their organization and content. I present the primary examples of al-Ṭabarānī's (d. 360/971) *Kitāb al-duʿāʾ* and Ibn Sunnī's (d. 364/974–75) *ʿAmal al-yawm wa-l-layla* and show their influence on al-Nawawī's (d. 676/1277) *Kitāb al-adhkār*. In addition, I review the Sufi examples of litany (*wird*) and *dhikr* and their social and institutional context, per the various Sufi orders. Supplication within Sunni milieus is focused on saying the right thing at the right time for propitious results, where the right thing is something that honors God and shows gratitude, and that can be discovered among the reliable sources of hadith.

Chapter 2: Supplication in Shiʿi Islam

Given my writing's emphasis on Imami Shiʿi supplication, I focus on several early developments in the faith's history in the second chapter. In particular, I show how Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī's (d. 460/1067) supplication collection, *Miṣbāḥ al-mutahajjid*, effectively functioned as a liturgical defense of the Imami community during a time of fervent intra-Shiʿi rivalry, between Imami, Ismaʿili, Zaydi, and Nusayri sects. I analyze the issues of efficaciousness, representation, and literary uses of devotional language, relevant to the Shiʿi activists of Karkh, that proved definitive for the Imami-inclined. I additionally show this pattern of building confessional affiliation and communal affinities with regards to prominent examples

in the succeeding centuries, including the supplication collections of Sayyid Ibn Ṭāwūs (d. 664/1266) and Ibrāhīm b. ʿAlī al-Kafʿamī (d. 905/1499–1500), among others.

I introduce the various forms of Shiʿi supplication (*ziyārāt*, *munājāt*, *ṣalawāt*) and some of the embodied practices correlated to specific prayer examples, such as the rituals of raising hands and acts of self-flagellation. Along the way, I address several matters pertinent to prayer as interpreted by scholars, including the issues of divine decree (*al-qaḍāʾ wa-l-qadar*), the infallibility (*ʿiṣma*) of the Imams, and the authenticity of reports of supplication and liturgy.

I additionally examine much overlooked practices, including the use of amulets and incantations (*ḥirz, taʿwīdh, ḥijāb*) and their talismanic benefits recorded in commentarial compendia, showing how their formulae originate in and express the supplications attributed to the twelve Shiʿi Imams. Far from the vestiges of folk superstition, these hallowed utterances persist in the practical manuals adorning the bookshelves of Shiʿi mosques everywhere and in the embodied practices of Shiʿi Muslims today. In summary, this chapter chronicles how they got there, showing how an overlooked commentary tradition laid the foundations for a Shiʿi culture of prayer that thrives until the present.

Chapter 3: A Short History of Shiʿi Supplication Commentaries

The third chapter addresses the history of commentaries of supplication, starting from an early age focused on *al-Ṣaḥīfa al-Sajjādīyya*, including what is widely considered its first commentary by Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Idrīs al-Ḥillī al-ʿIjlī (d. 598/1201-2). I review Ibn Idrīs al-Ḥillī's scholarly background and his *Ḥashiyyat* of the *Ṣaḥīfa*. Its narrow concentration on linguistic usages (*lugha*) of terms occurring in the *Ṣaḥīfa*'s fifty-four supplications are broadly

representative of the dominant pattern of commentary until the Safavid period's arrival, where emerges a transition toward the thematic and the discursive.

I present a thorough analysis of the Safavid epoch's devotional literature, revealing how court-affiliated scholars attempted to standardize the protective and healing techniques of prayer in manuals geared toward reaching a public audience with greater access to materials. Their antidotes to spiritual snares, seen and unseen, reveal the centrifugal forces unifying charismatic authorities and would-be adherents, committed to the Imami doctrine. The former produce the materials (commentaries, manuals) that foster a shared language and set of attitudes and commitments that the latter embrace and employ for their perceived efficaciousness. Their pious symbols and procedures, detailed by authors, provide a probative basis for Shiʿi creed and spiritual authority.

Among Safavid scholars, I spotlight two main supplication commentaries: Sayyid Niʿmat Allāh al-Jazāʾirī's (d. 1112/1701), *Nūr al-anwār* and Shaykh al-Bahāʾī's *Ḥadāʾiq al-ṣāliḥīn*. "Al-Muḥaddith" al-Jazāʾirī's *Nūr al-anwār*, a commentary on the entirety of the *Ṣaḥifa*, was composed during a period when the Akhbārī sway was in ascendance among the Safavid hierocracy. As *Shaykh al-Islām* of Shushtar, al-Jazāʾirī had a court-appointed interest in ensuring this movement's success. In *Nūr al-anwār*, al-Jazāʾirī intersperses his explanations of the *Ṣaḥifa*'s supplications with polemics countering groups perceived in non-conformity with Imami creed. On al-Jazāʾirī's account, these groups include all those that displace the Imams' spiritual and temporal authority (*walāya*) for any other, whether a Sufi shaykh or a Sunni madhhab founder. I present several examples of how he leavens his commentary, ostensibly of prayerful speech, with diatribes against Sunnis, Christians, and, foremost, Sufis. At times his criticism is subtle, in coded denunciations against advocates of analogical reasoning (*qiyās*) in jurisprudence,

and at other times trenchant, in castigations of Sufis who consort with the likes of the first three caliphs and even Satan himself. Shaykh al-Bahāʾī's *Ḥadāʾiq al-ṣāliḥīn*, alternatively known as *al-Ḥadīqa al-hilāliyya*, also contains much digressive discussion, however of a different variety. His commentary on one of the *Ṣaḥifa*'s supplications, *Duʿāʾuhu idhā naẓara ilā al-hilāl,* offers a penetrating analysis of astronomy that discovers in supplication details of the cosmos. Commentaries can be seen in both examples as providing a wide application of political, legal, and scientific insights. In particular, I position al-Bahāʾī's supplication commentary as a precursor to al-Sayyid ʿAlī Khān al-Madanī's (d. 1120/1708), *Riyāḍ al-sālikīn*, the latter modeled after the former.

Al-Madanī's *Riyāḍ al-sālikīn* remains the most renowned commentary of the *Ṣaḥīfa*, synonymous with its author, known as "Ibn Maʿṣūm." Al-Madanī is a prime example of a figure, established in the Arabic literary canon, whose literary influence is elevated above his religious one in the western academic field.[93] For those within the Shiʿi tradition, *Riyāḍ al-sālikīn* is a keystone exposition of the *Ṣaḥīfa*'s vernacular that contains numerous excurses on a range of theological, devotional, mystical, and exegetical subjects. I first review al-Madanī's background and his close affiliation with the Quṭb Shāhī dynasty (r. 1518–1687) of Golkonda, before analyzing several passages of *Riyāḍ al-sālikīn* under his commentarial light. I concentrate on a passage on the state of "uprightness" (*sawiyyan*) in God's creation of humankind, introduced in connection to the *Ṣaḥīfa*'s opening supplication, while offering comparison to previous Shiʿi commentators' interpretations in regard to their content and character. This passage, among others sampled, suggests a shift in al-Madanī's approach in commentaries on the *Ṣaḥīfa*, moving from a lexical focus to a more narrational one. This change reflects a broader transformation

[93] Al-Madanī is known primarily for his travelogue, *Salwat al-gharīb wa-uswat al-arīb*.

from the earliest hermeneutic idioms to a *tafsīr*-style method in Shiʿi supplication interpretation. *Riyāḍ al-sālikīn* is an ambitious work whose influence endures into the present and whose appreciation is significantly enhanced by knowledge of the adventurous background of its author. For this reason, I devote additional attention to it in this chapter.

Chapter 4: Orchestrating the Unseen: Conjuration, Supplication, and Devotion in Ibn Fahd al-Ḥillī's (d. 841/1437–38) ʿUddat al-dāʿī wa-najāḥ al-sāʿī

This chapter explores the figure of Abū al-ʿAbbās Aḥmad Ibn Fahd al-Ḥillī, author of the famous Imami Shiʿi treatise on the ethics of prayer, *ʿUddat al-dāʿī wa-najāḥ al-sāʿī*. Though revered and frequently cited among Shiʿi scholars, Ibn Fahd's history and legacy remains largely unknown today. His works, however, evince a deep insight into the Islamo-Persianate ethics of his era and provide a connective tissue to works on devotion in the subsequent Safavid period. *ʿUddat al-dāʿī* offers a blend of influences that blurs the confessional boundaries, reified during the time of the Safavids. Ibn Fahd is at once a Shiʿi traditionalist, who presents his arguments through the skilled selection, arrangement, and commentary of hadith, and a mystic who allegedly instructed several heresiarchs in the occult sciences. I reveal these influences as they feature in the bio-bibliographic information, as well as his epistles of renown, that together present a complex picture of a Muslim scholar, emblematic of an enigmatic time in Islamic history.

In my case study of *ʿUddat al-dāʿī*, I wish to discern the talismanic character and function of Shiʿi supplication, as a pre-modern thaumaturgical art, involving proper preparation and technique. The text's precepts reveal that if one transforms themself according to the ethical regimen prescribed by the Imams (and recapitulated by Ibn Fahd), their prayers may be so

efficacious as to alter or abrogate the divine will. Ibn Fahd's purpose is two tiered: He wishes to elucidate the hidden power of prayer but also hold his coreligionists to a higher ethical standard. He presents worship as a criterion for Shiʿi allegiance, where supplication is asserted, preponderantly, as a ritualistic art and thanks-offering, endowing the supplicant with good standing as a Shiʿi devotee. Like the *muʿjiza* that, per al-Ījī (d. 756/1355), "proves the sincerity of the one who claims to be a messenger of God,"[94] supplication, in this impression, proves the sincerity of the follower of the Imam, no matter its result. In *ʿUddat al-dāʿī*, Ibn Fahd harnesses the precedents of al-Ṭūsī, Ibn Ṭāwūs, and al-Kafʿamī, by yoking their prescribed formulae to a wider network of moral demands that preserve communal bonds and reliance on religious leaders. I explain Ibn Fahd as a link in the transition of prayer as quotidian magic to prayer as prosaic practice typifying "Imami Shiʿism" as conventionally understood in the present.

Chapter 5: "O You, whose light is a lantern for the soul": Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad Nayrīzī's (d. 1173/1759) Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-sabāḥ

This chapter, the first of the core case studies, offers an English translation of a Persian commentary on a Shiʿi supplication authored by Sayyid Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad Nayrīzī, thirty-second leader of the Shiʿi-Sufi Ẕahabiyya order. Nayrīzī's commentary on "The Morning Supplication" (*Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*), attributed to ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, presents another kaleidoscopic blend of influences, formulated in Persian poetry. I provide an overview of this little-studied figure's background and influences, before introducing the main themes of his commentary. I explore how Sufi significant subjects are introduced into a popular genre of Shiʿi devotion, subjects that center on the supplicant's ontological, cosmological, and temporal dependence of

[94] ʿAḍūd al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Ījī, *al-Mawāqif fī ʿilm al-kalām* (Beirut: ʿĀlam al-Kutub, 1981), 339.

God's mercy. Nayrīzī distinguishes *duʿāʾ* as "doors of entreaty," a portal to this mercy and bulwark against the individual self's caprice. In Nayrīzī's quatrains, prayerful utterances and mystical insight converge to convey a worldview that draws its inspiration from the locutions of a Shiʿi Imam.

Although, according to Nayrīzī, God's "howness" or "whyness" are beyond human comprehension, allusions to the active agent of creation, the divine names/attributes, appear in the world's visible events and representations. These are included in Nayrīzī's colorful depictions that extoll God's sanctified knowledge, where "all that was and never was are of the same kind," and appeal to the epiphanic moment of becoming captive to God's love. Nayrīzī describes this moment as crystalized in the instant a polo ball, the individual conscious, is struck by the divine mallet, setting it into an ascendant trajectory of tranquility (*khursandī*) from the base position of caprice. He speaks of a *tawḥīdī* reality symbolized in the words of *Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ* and juxtaposed with the dualist images and concepts of his commentary. Nayrīzī's language is paradoxical and poetic because it operates at the limits of intelligible ideas, stretching the definition of a commentary. His example shows that commentaries may be seen to contain both aesthetic and expositional value into pietistic practices, and comes at a time, starting in the mid-Safavid period, when writing on prayer gains prevalence among Shiʿi thinkers.

Chapter 6: Seeing the Signs: The Imamate in Sayyid Kāẓim Rashtī's (d. 1259/1843) Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt

The sixth chapter and second of the commentary studies introduces the second Shaykhī leader, Sayyid Kāẓim Rashtī, disciple of the Imami faction's (*firqa*) eponymous founder, Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsāʾī (d. 1241/1826). I review the facets of Rashtī's personal history, literary output,

and tenure as leader of a beleaguered movement and amid anarchic conditions in Karbala, exploited by criminal elements tied to Ottoman and Qajar statesmen. This history sets up the chapter's main focus on Rashtī's commentary of *Duʿāʾ al-simāt* that applies al-Aḥsāʾī's concepts to Imam Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Bāqir's words. Rashtī's bewildering text presupposes familiarity with these very concepts and the argot peculiar to the Shaykhiyya, designated to communicate the fundamental role played by the Imams in the story of the world's creation and the maintenance of its affairs. I review two major features of *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt*: 1) the Rummān Dome, cited in the supplication, as an alchemical occurrence of the descent of Imamate gnosis into sensory sites where ethereal elements transmute into physical forms, and 2) the Sinai narrative of Moses, reimagined to herald and save those initiated into the ranks of the Prophet's household (*ahl al-bayt*). These objects and events attain a level of profundity, according to the text's logic, because of the Imam's active agency in infusing them with paradigmatic and soteriological features of Shiʿism, prefigured in the Isrāʾīliyyāt narratives. Although there are novel aspects characteristic of Shaykhī thought in *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt*, Rashtī is skilled in his allocation and combination of Qur'anic verses and traditions to form a syncretic framework of thought that provides an orthodox remit for his exegesis.

Chapter 7: Metaphysics, Ethics, and Supplication in Mullā Hādī Sabzivārī's (d. 1289/1873) Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ

The penultimate commentary chapter examines one of the works of the Shiʿi philosopher and poet, Mullā Ḥājjī Hādī Sabzivārī. "Ḥakīm" Sabzivārī's Arabic commentary of *duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ* is a powerful vehicle for explicating the philosophy systematized in Sabzivārī's famous versified treatise and commentary, *Ghurar al-farāʾid*, otherwise known as *Sharḥ al-manẓūma*.

This philosophy, at once a vindication and corrective of Mullā Ṣadrā's "transcendent wisdom" (*al-ḥikma al-mutaʿāliyya*), blends the gnostical thought of Ibn ʿArabī and Suhrawardī with the Avicennan Peripatetic tradition. Both works, *Ghurar al-farāʾid* and *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, dovetail as discursive and pedagogical tools for absorption of Sabzivārī's philosophical system that differ with respect to their approach. The first uses prose as a mnemonic device for the rote memorization of this system's fundamentals, expanded in complementary commentary for each hemistich. The second interprets each line of *Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ* as various allusions to the very same system that Sabzivārī elucidates in detailed commentary, validating his exegesis through the infallible speech of the first Shiʿi Imam. Whereas in *Ghurar al-farāʾid*, he demonstrates his theorems through the power of his own rhetorical eloquence, in *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ* he assimilates them to the Imam's utterances, the most superlative form of eloquence for Shiʿi readers whose sympathetic attention he hopes to capture. Sabzivārī does not attempt to resolve Plato's "old quarrel between philosophy and poetry" in representing the facts of reality best, but to harness both powers of persuasion for his stock of ideas.

After assessing the structure of *Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, I turn to its mystically inclined interpreter whose pen name (*takhallus*) was *Asrār*, "Mysteries." Among the many themes infused in Sabzivārī's commentary, I draw attention to the reiterative interplay between being and non-being, appearances and reality, and good and evil. Sabzivārī's adaptation of *Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ* to these philosophical themes is no dry, theoretical affair, but one that impinges on the personal and in which discernment of certain axioms, the bases of the Ṣadrian ontological schema, produces concomitant ethical obligations. These include recognition of the good in all states of being, steadfastness in the ephemeral world and the goal of reacting to its events with equanimity (*al-istiwāʾ*). The basic Neoplatonic formula, merging ontology and ethics, that he embraces may be

stated: Things are more or less real, which is to say, interchangeably, that they are more or less good. To succeed in a world composed of gradations of being is to activate its higher emanations and avoid its obverse accidental (*ʿaraḍī*) shadows, mistaken for what is real, i.e., the quiddities (*al-māhīyāt*). All of this, for Sabzivārī, is hidden in the Imam's recorded oration of *Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*. It requires proper inferential assessment to make the content apparent, so his interpretations suggest in *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*.

Chapter 8: Conveyance and Unveiling: Sayyid Ruhollah Musavi Khomeini's (d. 1409/1989) Sharḥ duʿāʾ al-saḥar

The final commentary chapter brings us to the modern period, demonstrating the enduring influence of supplication commentaries within Shiʿi communities. It addresses the first known work authored by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Ayatollah Khomeini is known in the main for his political achievements in forming the ideological edifice for the current Islamic Republic of Iran, in opposition to styles of social organization conceived as Western-oriented. This disenchantment with Western, secularizing tendencies dates back long before his years as a septuagenarian, when the wider world became familiar with his name. Khomeini's *Sharḥ duʿāʾ al-saḥar* is part of a larger rebuke of anti-clerical intellectuals, such as Ahmad Kasravi (d. 1946), who discouraged practices that they associated with superstition and priestcraft. Khomeini was a strong enthusiast of supplication in private and public life, promoting the latter's practice in the courtyards of Iran and in the trenches of Iraq. It is easy for anyone to witness the success of his and his supporters' efforts in this regard today. Supplication as a non-obligatory religious practice is widely popular with Iranians, notwithstanding their view of Khomeini and the Islamic Republic.

Despite the wide recognition of influence of Khomeini in modern Iranian and Islamic history, his many intellectual contributions remain overlooked. This chapter highlights some of them, in view of the wider textual and intercessional traditions to which my dissertation attends. Khomeini's *Sharḥ duʿāʾ al-saḥar* is an inaugural mystical statement that becomes reiterated throughout Khomeini's body of works and speeches. Its affirmation of God's unitive principle can be seen in the commentary's excurses concerning *Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*'s alternative designation, "splendor" (*al-bahāʾ*). I focus on Khomeini's lettrist interpretations that commence with the rudiments of Arabic speech and resolve in a fully formed and articulated concept, starting with the diacritic dot (*nuqṭa*) and culminating in God's greatest name (*al-ism al-ʿaẓam*) as the splendorous plenum of divine attributes featured in the supplication's invocative repetitions.

Part 1: Supplication as Tradition of Islamic Devotion: A Textual History

Chapter 1: The Concept, Sources, and Early History of Supplication in Sunni Islam

Origin Stories

The contemporary Iranian scholar, Ḥasan Mamdūḥī Kirmānshāhī (b. 1939), begins his *Shuhūd va shinākht*, a Persian translation and commentary on *al-Ṣaḥīfa al-Sajjādiyya*, by exploring supplication's psychic origins. From this broad view, supplication (*duʿāʾ*) is as old as humankind's fear, a primal "calling out," externalizing an internal need through vocalization.[1] Insofar as the religious impulse has compelled humankind to conceive of a creator, he writes, this plane of reference has been petitioned for its needs and desires. The earliest recorded temples, Kirmānshāhī claims, are constructions whose communicatory relevance vis-à-vis the transcendental persists today, whether in church or mosque.[2] The special weight given to temples in the history of the sacred accords with the analysis of Mircea Eliade (d. 1986), who wrote, "The experience of sacred space makes possible the 'founding of the world': where the sacred manifests itself in space, the real unveils itself, the world comes into existence."[3] This world would never have come into existence, however, if not precipitated by need. In Eliade's famous work on the cultural-historical origins of religious man (Eliade's term), he provides an illustration of early humans facing the aboriginal terror of nature and the craving for "an absolute point of support" that may be evoked to relieve its anxiety and bewilderment.[4]

Eliade's example is apropos. Its basis of a demand to relieve fear is a starting point for one of the most famous Imami Shiʿi theological works. Jamāl al-Dīn b. Muṭahhar al-ʿAllāma al-

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[1] Kirmānshāhī, *Shuhūd va shinākht*, 1:58.
[2] Kirmānshāhī, 1:58.
[3] Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1987), 63. Italics his.
[4] Eliade, 27–28.

Ḥillī (d. 726/1325) begins his treatise on Shiʿi creed, *al-Bāb al-ḥādī ʿashar*, with the same set of incipient human circumstances. Al-Ḥillī's treatise was intended to clarify some theological issues undergirding his previous work, *Minhāj al-ṣalāḥ fī ikhtiṣār al-Miṣbāḥ*, a commentary on Shaykh Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī's (d. 460/1067) supplication manual, *Miṣbāḥ al-mutahajjid*, that evolved into a separate work called "The Eleventh Chapter." Al-Ḥillī had realized something crucial, neglected in his commentary's ten chapters–that his premises, on the inherent and earned benefits of supplication, rested on assumed and/or unarticulated foundations. *Al-Bāb al-ḥādī ʿashar* appends *Minhāj al-ṣalāḥ*, beginning by reasoning, according to Muʿtazilī logic, that a just God would never abandon His human creation to needless suffering and pain, intrinsic to the world that He created, without providing the knowledge to overcome these conditions. Al-Ḥillī divides the proof for this knowledge's necessity into two rational (*ʿaqlī*) classifications:

> (1) It guards against fear as the product of differences amongst people. Defense against fear is obligatory (*wājib*) because fear is a pneumatic pain (*alam nafsānī*), but that can be guarded against. Thus, reason commands this obligation.
> (2) The expression of gratitude to the benefactor (*munʿim*) is obligatory and cannot be reached without knowledge…Since religio-legal obligation (*taklīf*) is necessary according to wisdom, it is obligatory to know its bearer, the Prophet, and its protector, the Imam.[5]

Although many may not be persuaded by al-Ḥillī's proof that he treats as a self-evident precept, his vision is nonetheless clear. As the passage suggests, al-Ḥillī believes humankind, by nature, owes an ontological debt to their creator. God is gracious and deserves demonstrations of gratitude. Hence, knowing God and those that declare His message (the Prophet Muḥammad) and its meanings (the Imams), is a prerequisite for properly expressing this gratitude and removing the fear of humankind's original state.[6] Knowledge, in al-Ḥillī's estimation, imposes certain obligations on us, and the more the former accrues, so does the responsibility of the latter.

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[5] Abū Manṣūr Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ḥasan al-Ḥillī, *al-Nāfiʿ yawm al-ḥashr fī sharḥ al-Bāb al-ḥādī ʿashar* (Qom: Dhawi al-Qurbā, 2014), 18.
[6] al-Ḥillī, 18.

As he indicates, prayer provides the main opportunity for Muslims to express this commendation. Where obligatory prayer is expected of all Muslims, those engaged in supererogatory supplication earn special reward. A Prophetic hadith alludes to the benefit of knowledge in relation to the latter, "Had you recognized God with the recognition due to Him, your supplications would have moved mountains."[7] Al-Ḥillī asserts that *duʿāʾ* is urged (*ḥaththa*) by God in numerous instances in the Qur'an[8] and, echoing the words of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, fosters a "pure chest (*ṣadr naqī*) and pious heart (*qalb taqī*)."[9] He is not wrong, at least in the first instance regarding the Qur'an, as the following section will demonstrate.

Supplication in the Qur'an

At its core, *duʿāʾ* means "to call" or "to summon." This definition conforms with the original etymological meaning of *prayer*, from the Latin *precari*, "to ask, entreat, beg, pray," which in turn derives from the Proto-Indo-European root, *prek*, "to ask, entreat." The famous Kufan philologist and grammarian, Ibn Fāris (d. 395/1004), defines *duʿāʾ* as "attracting something's attention toward oneself through vocative speech."[14] In the Islamic appreciation of the term, supplication involves a caller in need, asking the one called upon, from an inferior station.[15] Al-Ḥillī provides a definition of its essence (*māhiyya*): "Supplication is the lower being's (*al-adnā*) verbal request for an occurrence from the highest being (*al-aʿlā*), from the

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[7] ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Muttaqī al-Hindī, *Kanz al-ʿummāl*, 18 vols. (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risāla, 1986), 3:142. In a hadith attributed to Imam al-Ṣādiq, satisfactory achievement of the daily obligatory prayers earns at least one supplication's fulfillment: "Those who perform their obligatory prayer (*farīḍa*) are granted a supplication answered by God"; Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad al-ʿUkbarī al-Shaykh al-Mufīd, *al-Amālī* (Beirut: Dār al-Tayyār al-Jadīd, 1983), 117–18.
[8] Abū Manṣūr Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ḥasan al-Ḥillī, *Minhāj al-ṣalāḥ fī ikhtiṣār al-Miṣbāḥ* (Qom: Maktabat al-ʿAllāma al-Majlisī, 2009), 73.
[9] al-Ḥillī, 74.
[14] Abū al-Ḥusayn Aḥmad Ibn Fāris, *Muʿjam maqāyīs al-lugha*, 7 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1979), 2:279.
[15] Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī al-Ṭūsī, *al-Tibyān fī tafsīr al-Qurʾān*, 4 vols. (Qom: Muʾassasat Āl-Bayt li-Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth, 2019), 4:424.

position of humility and submission."[16] The verbal attribute stems from an inborn reality, created exclusively within the human being. Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabāʾī calls this a "supplicative predisposition" (*duʿāʾ gharīzī*) and an "innate beseeching" (*suʾāl fiṭrī*) towards God.[17] He explains, "The reality of supplication and petitionary prayer is what the heart conveys and the tongue of [innate, human] nature (*lisān al-fiṭra*) asks for, not the [fleshly] tongue that is set in motion without concern for whether it propels a truth or a lie, a reality or a metaphor, something serious or a joke."[18] The latter instrument, alternatively "the apparent tongue," is only able to partially enunciate both the need and gratitude for God, bayed by the former tongue of "nature and existence (*wujūd*)."[19]

The Qur'an includes many morphological derivations of the Arabic root, *d-ʿ-w,* including the most conspicuous term *daʿwa* (pl. *daʿawāt*) a call or appeal (mostly to embrace Islam). The first supplication of the Qur'an occurs in the first chapter, *al-Fātiḥa*, in the sixth line, "Guide us upon the straight path" (1:6). It is an initiatory plea to avoid deviance and adhere to the course, consecrated by the Qur'anic contents that follow and their lived example in the Prophet. Petitionary reference to *duʿāʾ* in the Qur'an is copious. In one famous verse, God addresses the Prophet, "Say, 'What would my Lord care for you if not for your supplication?'" (25:77). Abū ʿAlī al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭabrisī (d. 548/1153-54) adopts previous interpreters' equation of *duʿāʾ* in this verse with faith (*īmān*) and worship (*ʿibāda*),[20] absent of which a person has "no

[16] al-Ḥillī, *Manhāj al-ṣalāḥ*, 73.
[17] Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *al-Mīzān fī tafsīr al-Qurʾān*, 20 vols. (Qom: Manshūrāt Jamāʿa al-Mudarrisīn fī al-Ḥawza al-ʿIlmiyya, n.d.), 2:34.
[18] Ṭabāṭabāʾī, 2:33.
[19] Ṭabāṭabāʾī, 2:33. Ṭabāṭabāʾī emphasizes that humankind's gratitude can never *fully* account for the bounties provided by God, most of which are not objects of supplication. He cites the verse, "And He gave you from all you asked of Him. And if you should count the favor [i.e., blessings] of God, you could not enumerate them. Indeed, mankind is most unjust and ungrateful" (14:34).
[20] The exegetes he cites include Mujāhid b. Jabr, Ibn ʿAbbās, Muqātil b. Sulaymān, and the grammarian, Abū Isḥāq al-Zajjāj.

measure vis-à-vis God" (*lā wazn lahu ʿinda Allāh*).[21] Al-Ṭabrisī adds a tradition from Imam al-Ṣadiq who, citing this verse, affirms supplication's value over Qur'anic recitation (*qirāʾa*), and explains that supplication is obligatory "according to wisdom" in the fostering of Islam.[22] Supplication's equation with faith is supported in Q. 40:60, "And your Lord says, 'Call upon Me; I will respond to you.' Indeed, those who disdain My worship will enter Hell, contemptible." The eminent Shiʿi complier and commentator of supplication, Ibn Fahd al-Ḥillī (d. 841/1437–38) glosses this verse: "Supplication is equivalent to worship, and the arrogant who avoid it are on an equal footing with disbelievers."[23] Although *duʿāʾ* is traditionally distinguished from ritual prayer (*ṣalāt*) in Islam by its supererogatory status, its Shiʿi apprehension suggests otherwise. Other differences, nonetheless, obtain.[24]

Perhaps the most cited verse in prayer manuals and commentaries is the verse, "When My servants ask you [O Prophet] about Me: I am truly near. I respond to one's prayer when they call upon Me. So let them respond with obedience to Me and believe in Me, perhaps they will be rightly guided" (2:186).[25] For al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923), the meaning of this verse is clear. He provides uncontroversial alternative words and phrases, such as "they accept as true (*yuṣaddiqū*)" for "they believe in me (*yuʾminū*)," and some clarification, such as the explanation for "respond in obedience to Me": "Truly, behind their obedience to Me is its reward (*thawāb*)

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[21] Abū ʿAli al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭabrisī, *Majmaʿ al-bayān fī tafsīr al-Qurʾān*, 10 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Murtaḍā, 2006), 7:231.
[22] al-Ṭabrisī, 7:230–31. This value hierarchy is opposite the one proposed by Ibn Taymiyyah who elevates *qirāʾa* over *dhikr* and *duʿāʾ*. See L. Gardet, "Duʿāʾ," in *EI, Second Edition*, accessed January 9, 2024, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0195.
[23] Abū al-ʿAbbās Aḥmad Ibn Fahd al-Ḥillī, *ʿUddat al-dāʿī wa-najāḥ al-sāʿī* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Islāmī, 1987), 18.
[24] Unlike *ṣalāt* that has requirements for the time and place of its performance, supplication may be offered at any time or place. However, *duʿāʾ* is encouraged at particular times, such as the birth and death anniversary days of the Prophet and Imams, and in particular places, such as the Imams' tomb shrines.
[25] These words echo those attributed to Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount: "Ask, and it will be given you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives. He who seeks finds. To him who knocks it will be opened" (Matthew 7:7–8).

and abundant favor (*karāma*) provided to them," promised by God.[26] Al-Ṭabarī interprets the supplicant who earns reward as someone who responds to God's command with action and who persists in faithfulness (*wafāʾ*) towards fulfilling their religious obligations.[27] For al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144), Q. 2:186 signifies something as to God's nature and our own, emphasizing divine omnipresence, the ease with which God may respond to a request, and the requirement of the supplicant's faith and obedience.[28] Shaykh al-Ṭūsī provides a fuller account of the verse's facets and fixes particular attention on the efficaciousness of prayer, answering the hypothetical reader who responds, "If God does not respond to the prayer of those who call upon Him, then what is this verse's meaning?"[29] Al-Ṭūsī answers that God's fulfillment of a prayer depends on precipitating conditions, such as a supplicant's own fulfillment of the religion's obligatory requirements,[30] and that whatever response God provides, even one interpreted as a non-response, is based on infinite wisdom. According to al-Ṭūsī, in what becomes a conventional explanation, many unwittingly ask for things that either lead to some form of corruption (*fasād*) or occurrence opposed to Islam (*ghayrī fī al-dīn*), and for this reason, God either does not positively respond or delays an occurrence until a time when what is asked benefits the supplicant.[31] Such a cause, leading to unbeknownst harm, is conveyed by Chaucer:

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[26] Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, 12 vols. (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risāla, 1994), 1:500–501.
[27] al-Ṭabarī, I:501.
[28] Abū al-Qāsim Maḥmūd b. ʿUmar al-Zamakhsharī, *Tafsīr al-kashāf*, 6 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifa, 2009), 2:113–14.
[29] al-Ṭūsī, *al-Tibyān fī tafsīr al-Qurʾān*, 4:330.
[30] The requirement of personal initiative is also counted in the traditions. To take one example from Imam al-Ṣādiq, "The supplication of five people will not be answered: a man who does not divorce his wife who bothers him, despite affording the expenses; a man whose slave has escaped three times, but he still does not sell him; a man who passes by a destroyed wall and does not take precaution, the wall falling upon him; a man who provides a loan to another, but does not take anyone as a witness; and a man who sits in his house and pleads, 'O God, provide me with my sustenance,' and who does not strive [to earn it himself]'"; Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad al-Qummī Ibn Bābawayh, *Kitāb al-khiṣāl*, 2 vols. (Qom: Jamāʿa al-Mudarrisīn, 1983), 1:299.
[31] al-Ṭūsī, *al-Tibyān fī tafsīr al-Qurʾān*, 4:330–31.

> Infinite are the harms that come this way; We little know the things for which we pray…Such is our world indeed, and such are we. How eagerly we seek felicity. Yet are so often wrong in what we try![32]

As Ṭabāṭabāʾī affirms 2:186 as a keystone verse, making other verses comprehensible. Ṭabāṭabāʾī explains each component of the verse, bringing to light several main issues that are further clarified in relation to the Imams' traditions, including the limitless power and ability of God, hope in His fulfillment of a request, humility and humbleness, sincere perseverance in prayer, remembrance of God, righteous deeds, faith, and manners for preserving a reverential disposition.[33]

Several prophets have supplications associated with them that occur in the Qur'an. Abraham expresses a series of supplications in *Sūrat al-Baqara*, including "My Lord, make this a secure city and provide its people with fruits - whoever of them believes in God and the Last Day" (2:126). Referring to the foundation of the Kaʿba with his son, Ishmael, Abraham supplicates, "Our Lord, accept this from us" (2:127). He prays for a righteous ancestry, "Our Lord, and make us submit unto Thee, and from our progeny a nation submitting unto Thee" (2:128), and prays for a future messenger (who would be Muḥammad), "Our Lord, raise up in their midst a messenger from among them who will recite to them Your verses and teach them the Book and wisdom and purify them" (2:129). Moses has several supplications that appear in the Qur'an, referring to Aaron's indiscretion with the Israelites and his own anger with his brother, "My Lord, forgive me and my brother and admit us into Your mercy, for You are the most merciful of the merciful" (7:151); the protection from Pharoah's forces, "My Lord! Deliver me from the wrongdoing people" (28:21); and strength and success in delivering God's message, in the often-recited supplication, "My Lord, expand for me my breast [with assurance]. And ease

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[32] Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales* (Baltimore, MD: Penguin Books, 1953), 51.
[33] Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *al-Mīzān fī tafsīr al-Qurʾān*, 2:35.

for me my task, and untie a knot from my tongue, that they may understand my speech" (20:25–28). Other examples include Adam (7:23); Noah (23:26, 23:29, 26:117–18); Lot (26:169, 29:30; 26:117–18, 51:26–28); Job (21:83); Solomon (38:35); David (2:250); Joseph (12:101), Shuʿayb (7:89); Jonah (21:87); Jesus (5:114); and Zechariah (3:38, 19:5–6, 21:89). Among this selection, the only prophetic prayer denied by God is that of Noah who pleas with God that his son be counted among the righteous, lest he succumb to the flood, "My Lord, indeed my son is of my family" (11:45). God, however, disabuses Noah of the claim of his son's fidelity to his father and his divine mission, responding in the next verse, "O Noah! Truly, he is not from thy family; surely such conduct was not righteous" (11:46).[34] It is a curious fact that one of the few prophetic exceptions to supplication include those of Muḥammad, entirely absent in the Qur'an. Rather, Muḥammad's prayers are found instead in the hadith corpus, which Muslims mine for vast selections of those designated for guidance, forgiveness, knowledge, and protection.

Other non-prophetic examples include the supplication of Ḥannah, mother of Mary and wife of ʿImrān (3:35–36); Āsiya, the wife of Pharoah (66:11); Saul (2:250); the apostles (*ḥawāriyyūn*) of Jesus (3:53); the Companions of the Cave (18:10); and the magicians of Pharaoh (20:73, 7:125–26). Supplication can also be seen implored by the high-ranking angels, the "bearers of the throne" (*ḥamlat al-ʿarsh*), up to eight in number,[35] who pray,

> Our Lord, You have encompassed all things in mercy and knowledge, so forgive those who have repented and followed Your way and protect them from the punishment of Hellfire. Our Lord, and admit them to gardens of perpetual residence which You have promised them and whoever was righteous among their forefathers, their spouses and their offspring. Indeed, it is You who is the Exalted in Might, the Wise. And protect them from the evil consequences [of their deeds]. And he whom

[34] Ṭabāṭabāʾī elaborates that Noah's plea was not based on the knowledge of his son's faithlessness, hence the following verse, "My Lord, I seek refuge in You from asking You about what I have no knowledge of, and unless You forgive me and have mercy on me, I will be one of the losers" (11:47); Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *al-Mīzān fī tafsīr al-Qurʾān*, 10:233–51.

[35] "And the angels are at its edges. And there will bear the Throne of your Lord above them, that Day, eight of them" (69:17).

> You protect from evil consequences that Day - You will have given him mercy. And that is the great attainment (40:7–9).

Supplication in Hadith-Based Sunni Islam

In Sunnism, supplication plays a more muted role than in Shiʿism. One of the most visibleʿ examples of this variance can be found in the supplicatory prayer of "humble obedience" (*qunūt*). Whereas Imamī Shiʿa pray the *qunūt* supplication, performed while standing with palms facing upward in the second unit (*rakʿa*) of each of the five obligatory prayers, Sunni Muslims differ over its incorporation. The Ḥanafī and Ḥanbalī schools generally discourage all *qunūt,* except in the optional *witr* prayer (between *ʿishāʾ* and *fajr* prayers) during the second half of Ramaḍān and during times of calamity (*nāzila*); and although much ambiguity is evidenced in the views Mālik b. Anas and Muḥammad b. Idrīs al-Shāfiʿī, Mālikī and Shāfiʿī scholars generally consider the *fajr qunūt* to be valid, while differing over its *witr* application.[36]

In terms of content, Sunni supplication is limited to selections attributed to the Prophet and there is generally greater overlap between *dhikr* (invocation) and *duʿāʾ*, compared to Shiʿi practices. Supplication is nonetheless emphasized in the most valued Sunni collections of hadith, where it is described as equivalent to worship[37] and the highest honor.[38] The Sunni traditions inform that the Prophet frequently recited supplication and offer samples, typically of shorter length, such as the widely memorized Qur'anic plea, "O God, grant us the good in this world and

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[36] Shāfiʿīs show greater consensus over the *witr qunūt* than Mālikīs. Other differences over ritual details of the *qunūt*, including its placement in the prayer cycle, the cursing of nonbelievers, and the introductory *takbīr*, persist among the Sunni schools. Haider traces the origins of the *qunūt*, beginning with the Prophet Muḥammad's ritualized cursing during *ṣalāt* that later became formalized as innovations to God, as part of ongoing confessional interpretations of verse 3:128 of the Qur'an; Najam Haider, *The Origins of the Shi'a: Identity, Ritual, and Sacred Space in Eighth-Century Kufah*, Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 95–137.

[37] "Supplication is worship" (*al-Duʿāʾ huwa al-ʿibāda*). *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Book 16, Hadith 1. Accessed September 6, 2023, https://sunnah.com/riyadussalihin/16/1.

[38] "There is nothing more honorable with God Almighty than supplication" (*laysa shayʾ akram ʿalā Allāh taʿālā min al-duʿāʾ*). *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Tirmidhī*, Book 48, Hadith 1. Accessed September 7, 2023, https://sunnah.com/tirmidhi/48/1.

the good in the hereafter and save us from the torment of hellfire (2:201)."[39] Moreover, as Lucas demonstrates, supplications and invocations were common in the Umayyad period. They are found in early hadith collections and, with regards to a hadith-derived three-clause invocation, in inscriptions on the oldest remaining Muslim monument, the Dome of the Rock.[40] Such data suggests supplication's early significance in the first hijri century of Islam.

Identifying the earliest examples of Sunni supplication works is difficult. Among them is Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥman Muḥammad b. al-Faḍīl b. Ghazwān al-Kūfī (d. 195/810–11). Al-Kūfī is cited by Ibn Manjuwayh (d. 428/1036)[41] and al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348)[42] as a compiler (*muṣannif*) of supplication and is identified as a trustworthy (*thiqa*)–however Shiʿi-inclined–transmitter. Additionally, the famous collector of Prophetic hadith, Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī (d. 275/888), is credited, by Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852/1449), as collating a book on supplication,[43] as is the ʿAbbasid court-affiliated traditionalist and writer on *adab*, Ibn Abī al-Dunyā (d. 281/894).[44] In one of his treatises, Ibn Abī al-Dunyā relates a supplication taught by the Prophet to ʿAlī, "O Being (*kāʾin*) before all things, O Creator (*mukawwin*) of all things, O Being after all things, provide for me [such and such, *kidhā wa-kidhā*]."[45] subsequently transmitted by the Imami traditionist, Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb al-Kulaynī (d. 329/941).[46] Possible

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[39] *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Book 48, Hadith 9. Accessed September 7, 2023, https://sunnah.com/muslim/48/9.
[40] Scott Lucas, "An Efficacious Invocation Inscribed on the Dome of the Rock: Literary and Epigraphic Evidence for a First-Century Ḥadīth," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 76, no. 2 (2017): 215–30.
[41] Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Aṣbahānī Ibn Manjuwayh, *Rijāl Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 2 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifa, 1984), 2:201–2.
[42] Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, 23 vols. (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risāla, 1982), 6:173–75.
[43] Aḥmad b. ʿAlī Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Tahdhīb al-tahdhīb*, 4 vols. (Cairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-Islāmī, 1993), 1:6.
[44] al-Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, 13:402. Al-Dhahabī shares a story of one of the ʿAbbasid princes that Ibn Abī al-Dunyā tutored who exclaims, "He [Ibn Abī al-Dunyā] was the first to acquaint me with the remembrance of God." Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Dhahabī, *Tadhkirat al-huffāẓ* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1958), 678.
[45] ʿAbdallāh b. Muḥammad b. ʿUbayd b. Sufyān Abū Bakr al-Qurashī, *al-Faraj baʿd al-shidda* (Cairo: Dār al-Rayyān lil-Turāth, 1988), 65.
[46] Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb b. Isḥāq al-Kulaynī, *Uṣūl al-kāfī*, 8 vols. (Beirut: Manshūrāt al-Fajr, 2007), 2:308–9. Although al-Kulaynī relates a different transmission chain than Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, they both include the narrator,

other early examples may include the non-extant *Kitāb al-adʿiya al-marwiyya min al-ḥaḍra al-nabawiyya* by the twelfth century Shāfiʿī scholar and biographer, Abū Saʿd ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Tamīmī al-Samʿānī (d. 562/1166). A potential casualty of the Mongol invasion of al-Samʿānī's native Merv in 618/1221, several references to the text are made in Shiʿi works, including as a source for Ibn Ṭāwūs.[47] Other examples follow suit, as non-extant sources mentioned by title in encyclopedic entries.[48]

Later supplication collections that were disseminated widely throughout the Islamic realm relied on Abū al-Qāsim Sulaymān b. Ayyūb al-Ṭabarānī's (d. 360/971) *Kitāb al-duʿāʾ*, one of few sources available today. The Damascene traditionalist and lexicographer, who toward the end of his life in Buyid Isfahan was suspected of harboring Shiʿi sentiments,[49] provides an archetypal early example of the supplication genre. The volume is divided into ten parts (*juzʾ*, pl. *ajzāʾ*) comprised of many chapters, the first of which addressing the merits (*faḍāʾil*) and etiquette (*ādāb*) of supplication. Succeeding chapters record the many instances when particular supplications and Qur'anic verses are appropriate to recite, based on a Prophetic precedent reported by al-Ṭabarānī.

Among chapters on prayerful prescriptions for various occasions (e.g., while prostrating, upon entering Mecca, on the day of ʿArafa) are others on various proscriptions. Many of them prohibit cursing of the world's vexations, including roosters and their dawn crow (#313), fleas (#314), the wind (#310), and the world itself (#312). Others include proscriptions against rhymed

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Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥman al-Kūfī. Al-Kulaynī's version includes the modified line, "O Everlasting (*bāqī*) after all things."

[47] al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 9:321; Mīrzā Ḥusayn Nūrī Ṭabrisī, *Mustadrak al-wasāʾil*, 18 vols. (Beirut: Muʾassasat Āl al-Bayt li-Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth, 1991), 5:190; Etan Kohlberg, *A Medieval Muslim Scholar at Work: Ibn Tawus and His Library* (New York: E.J. Brill, 1992), 100.

[48] Jafarian includes several examples, culled from the library records of Ibn Ṭāwus; Jaʿfariyān, "Adab-i duʿā," 227–28.

[49] al-Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, 16:124–5.

prose (*sajʿ*), haste in recitation (*istiʿjāl*), and certain "violations" (*iʿtidāʾ*) of supplication which include relying on non-Prophetic examples, petitioning for the unlawful, and reciting in an audible voice (*jahr*) when unauthorized in prayer.[50] In his introduction, al-Ṭabarānī reveals that the widespread disregard for these categories, and primarily the ban on *sajʿ*, spurred him to compose *Kitāb al-duʿāʾ*.[51] Its attempted rehabilitation of orthodoxy looks to the most authentic sources as a remedy against prevalent practices, criticized as impious by al-Ṭabarānī.

Kitāb al-duʿāʾ is essentially a compendium of hadith, each report containing full transmission chains, functioning as a manual on Islamic comportment. Its contents suggests that in any given situation, whether during an eclipse or when setting out to sea, the most propitious result for the participant depends on their voicing the proper utterance (*qawl*). To take the second example, upon boarding a vessel, in two variant traditions reported by Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī and Ibn ʿAbbās, the Prophet assures the safety of his community on the condition of reciting the following verses sequentially,

> They did not measure God with His true measure. The whole earth shall be but a handful to Him on the Day of Resurrection, and the heavens will be enfolded in His right Hand. Glory be to Him, exalted is He above the partners they ascribe (39:67).
>
> And he said, 'Embark upon it. In the Name of God be its coursing and its mooring. Truly, my Lord is Forgiving, Merciful' (11:41).[52]

The first verse addresses the idolators of Mecca, admonishing them for not honoring God in a manner that befits His honor or, per al-Tustarī (d. 283/896), for not "coming to know Him as He deserves to be known (*ḥaqq maʿrifatih*)."[53] In the second verse, Noah urges the few believers of

[50] In a repeated pattern amongst succeeding commentators, he cites evidence for the prohibition of *iʿtidāʾ* in the verse, "Call upon your Lord humbly and secretly. Surely He does not like the transgressors" (7:55); Abū al-Qāsim Sulaymān b. Ayyūb b. Muṭayyir al-Ṭabarānī, *Kitāb al-duʿāʾ* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1993), 37–38.
[51] al-Ṭabarānī, 22.
[52] al-Ṭabarānī, 255.
[53] Abū Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Yūnus b. Rafīʿ, *Tafsīr al-Tustarī* (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥaram lil-Turāth, 2004), 235.

his mission to board the ark and be saved from the impending flood. Although the connection between the two verses is not delineated by al-Ṭabarānī, an association may be ventured between recognition of God's broad purpose in evoking awe and the faithful's limited purpose in acts of obedience. The first encourages us to think in a particular way, i.e., to see the world in a particular light, and the other encourages us to act according to its discernment, i.e., to respond towards a sense of duty.[54] No matter the link between these verses or any others lacking commentary in *Kitāb al-duʿāʾ*, al-Ṭabarānī appeals to his readers to trust in the transmission and the instructional value of the Prophet's responses to the world and to emulate them when facing corresponding circumstances.

Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Isḥāq al-Dīnawarī (d. 364/974–75), known as Ibn al-Sunnī, produced one of the most ambitious early works of supplication, the single-volume, *ʿAmal al-yawm wa-l-layla*. Although it shares the same title of another of al-Nasāʾī's collections, in many ways it eclipses al-Nasāʾī's labor, containing additional hadiths of Prophetic utterances.[55] The vast majority of sections are adapted to various quotidian scenarios, arranged by the title convention, "Chapter on what to say when… (*Bāb mā yaqūl*)," e.g., "What to say when entering a mosque" (*Bāb mā yaqūl idhā dakhala al-masjid*); "What to say concerning a stubborn riding animal" (*Bāb mā yaqūl ʿalā al-dābba al-ṣaʿba*).[56] Other sections of *ʿAmal al-yawm wa-l-layla* address how to greet others (youths, elders, women, co-congregants, passersbys), enhancing the text's value as a practical guidebook for pious emulators of the Sunna.[57] The style and structure

[54] Here, I borrow the language of the Anglican bishop and scholar, Ian Ramsey (d. 1972). For more on the connection between religious discernment and commitment, see Ian T. Ramsey, *Religious Language: An Empirical Placing of Theological Phrases* (New York: Macmillan Publishers, 1963), 49–50, 86–90.
[55] Lucas, "An Efficacious Invocation Inscribed on the Dome of the Rock," 216.
[56] Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Isḥāq al-Dīnawarī Ibn al-Sunnī, *ʿAmal al-yawm wa-l-layla* (Beirut: Shirkat Dār al-Arqam b. Abī al-Arqam, 1998), 70, 305.
[57] Ibn al-Sunnī, 140–47.

of *ʿAmal al-yawm wa-l-layla* would be the inspiration, centuries later, for Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī's (d. 911/1505) work of the same name.[58]

Al-Ṭabarānī's *Kitāb al-duʿāʾ* clearly influenced the most widely accepted classical Sunni work on supplication, Shāfiʿī hadith scholar Abū Zakariyyā Yaḥyā al-Nawawī's (d. 676/1277) *Kitāb al-adhkār al-muntakhab min kalām Sayyid al-Abrār*.[59] Completed in 667/1268–69,[60] the work is broken up into a total of twenty books (*kutub*), each featuring numerous chapters and subsections, collected into a single volume available today. In the introduction, al-Nawawī assimilates the subject of his work under the category of "devotional acts (*ʿamal, pl. aʿmāl*) of the day and night." He characterizes the earlier offerings on the subject as containing long chains of transmission (*asānīd*) and redundancies that weaken the motivation of seekers of supplications.[61] He thus resolves, in the authorship of *Kitāb al-adhkār*, to make it easy for aspirants to access a concise text with condensed transmission chains.[62] Al-Nawawī states his aim succinctly: "Knowledge of the litanies and acting upon them and clarifying their proper place for those seeking guidance."[63] For this purpose, he limits the volume's selections to what he considers to derive from the most authentic sources, pooling from five of the canonical Sunni collections, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Sunan Abī Dāwūd, Ṣaḥīḥ al-Tirmidhī, and Sunan al-Nasāʾī*.[64] Indeed, these collections, as well as the *muṣannaf* of Ibn Abī Shayba al-ʿAbsī (d.

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[58] Abū al-Faḍl ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Bakr al-Suyūṭī, *ʿAmal al-yawm wa-l-layla* (Cairo: Sharikat Maktabat wa-Maṭbaʿat Muṣṭafāʾ al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1947). It would also serve as a source for al-Suyūṭī's famous *tafsīr* book, *al-Durr al-manthūr*. See S. R. Burge, "Scattered Pearls: Exploring al-Suyūṭī's Hermeneutics and Use of Sources in al-Durr al-Manthūr Fī'l-Tafsīr Bi'l-Maʾthūr," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 24, no. 2 (2014): 281.
[59] The editor of *Kitāb al-adhkār* explicitly identifies al-Ṭabarānī as one of its sources; Abū Zakariyyā Yaḥyā b. Sharaf al-Nawawī, *Kitāb al-adhkār* (Beirut: Dār al-Minhāj, 2005), 28, fn.3.
[60] W. Heffening, "Al-Nawawī," *EI, Second Edition*, Accessed September 13, 2023, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_5858.
[61] al-Nawawī, *Kitāb al-adhkār*, 28.
[62] al-Nawawī, 28.
[63] *Maʿrifat al-adhkār wa-l-ʿamal bihā wa-īḍāḥ maẓānnihā lil-mustarshidīn*. al-Nawawī, 29.
[64] al-Nawawī, 30–31. Al-Nawawī excludes Ibn Mājah, a source of early Sunni criticism, given his strict standards for reliability. On this issue, see Jonathan AC Brown, "The Canonization of Ibn Mâjah: Authenticity vs. Utility in

235/849), would contain substantial sections of Prophetic supplication, mined by succeeding generations.

Kitāb al-adhkār acts as a practical manual, expounding what is required of Muslims committed to God's purpose, indicated in the Qur'anic verse, "I did not create jinn and humans except to worship Me (51:56)," opening al-Nawawī's text.[65] Each section indicates the proper times, manners, and litanies for praising God in the daily life of a Muslim.[66] To take two examples from the text: Al-Nawawī narrates a prophetic tradition from Mālik b. Anas where one should remove their garments before going to sleep, after saying the *dhikr*, "In the name of God, besides Whom there is no god."[67] He relates another Prophetic tradition from Miqdād b. ʿAmr where the Prophet, after being offered a drink, voiced the *duʿāʾ*, "O God, feed the one who has fed me and provide drink to the one who has provided me drink."[68] These expressions, by Prophetic example, become normatively universalized, something that all believers *should* utter when preparing for sleep or when offered a beverage.

As its title suggests, al-Nawawī's work is ostensibly focused on *adhkār*, yet uses *duʿāʾ* interchangeably, with each section prescribing one or the other for different circumstances. At this early juncture, any sharp distinction between *dhikr* and *duʿāʾ* has yet to emerge. Al-Nawawī still assigns a plain purpose to *dhikr*: to induce a "presence of heart" (*ḥuḍūr al-qalb*) and stimulate those toward contemplation (*tadabbur*) and understanding (*taʿaqqul*) of its meaning.[69] Although this may have been clear to al-Nawawī, debates over supplication have persisted with

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the Formation of the Sunni Ḥadîth Canon," *Revue Des Mondes Musulmans Et De La Méditerranée* (2011): 169-81, https://doi.org/10.4000/remmm.7154.

[65] al-Nawawī, 28.

[66] Although mostly mundane circumstances, i.e., travel and fasting, there are some exceptions, such as "when Satan appears" or "when confronted by ghouls (*gīlān*)."

[67] *Bismillāh alladhī lā ilāha illā huwa.* al-Nawawī, *Kitāb al-adhkār*, 63.

[68] *Allāhumma aṭʿim man aṭʿamanī wa-asq man saqānī.* al-Nawawī, 392.

[69] al-Nawawī, 43.

regards to its potential contradiction with contentment (*riḍāʾ*) and surrender (*taslīm)* toward divine decree, as well as the concept of *tafwīḍ*, or the entrustment of one's affairs to God.[70] Al-Nawawī addresses some of this controversy, citing al-Qushayrī (d. 465/1072) who concedes that, at different times, silence is preferable to supplication.[71]

Another classical example of supplication, preceding al-Nawawī, is the ninth book of Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī's (d. 505/1111) opus *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*, called *Kitāb al-adhkār wa-l-daʿawāt*. Unlike al-Nawawī, al-Ghazālī does not include his sources. However, *Kitāb al-adhkār wa-l-daʿawāt*, like the other "Acts of Worship" (*ʿibādāt*) sections of the *Iḥyāʾ*, draws much of its inspiration from Abū Tālib al-Makkī (d. 386/998), who influenced its terminology and concepts related to devotion.[76] Al-Ghazālī's attention to supplication mainly concerns *ādāb*, "proprieties" that comprise the horizontal, practical conventions of a spiritually informed life. Al-Ghazālī specifies ten conditions of *ādāb* for *duʿāʾ*, including the preferred times of day, the requirement of a humble and contrite state, persistence (*ilḥāḥ*) in prayer, and the act of raising the hands upward "until the whiteness of the armpits can be seen."[77] The majority of these conventions mirror those of Shiʿi practices,[78] however there are exceptions particular to Sunnis. These include an avoidance of rhymed prose whose affection (*takalluf*) is said to detract from supplication's humbleness, and an emphasis on shorter supplication,

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[70] Hamid Algar, "DOʿĀ," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online* (New York: Trustees of Columbia University, 2020), http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2330-4804_EIRO_COM_8445.

[71] The rule of thumb, as attributed to al-Qushayrī, is that if a supplication has consequences or some "share" (*naṣīb*) for other Muslims, then it is preferred. If it is directed toward the self, then silence is preferable; al-Nawawī, *Kitāb al-adhkār*, 636–37.

[76] Kojiro Nakamura, "Makkī and Ghazālī on Mystical Practices," *Orient* 20 (1984): 83–91.

[77] Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *Al-Ghazali on Invocations & Supplications: Book IX of the Revival of the Religious Sciences*, trans. Kojiro Nakamura (Cambridge, UK: Islamic Texts Society, 2010), 36. These ten *ādāb* appear as five additions to ʿAbdallāh Anṣārī's (d. 481/1088) schema of five; Algar, "DOʿĀ."

[78] In *al-Maḥajjat al-bayḍāʾ*, al-Fayḍ al-Kāshānī includes the same ten conditions, qualifying their bases according to the traditions of the Imams. See Mullā Muḥammad b. Murtaḍā al-Fayḍ al-Kāshānī, *al-Maḥajjat al-bayḍāʾ fī tahdhīb al-iḥyāʾ*, 8 vols, (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Aʿlamī lil-Maṭbūʿāt, 1983), 2:285–301

confirmed by those among the saintly and erudite, who, per al-Ghazālī, confined their prayers to seven words or less.[79] In this way, they could be easily learned and transmitted to others.[80]

The insistence on Prophetic supplication, as opposed to those of the Prophet's family or companions, is reiterated across Sunni scholarship. While Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328) affirms that litany and supplication are among the best acts of worship, he cautions that many are mixed with elements of polytheism (*shirk*) and become forbidden to recite.[81] He adjures,

> It is not for anyone to prescribe for people any form of litany or supplication other than those prescribed as Sunna and establish them as worship for others to perform regularly, as they do the five daily prayers. Rather, this is an innovation (*bidʿa*) in religion that God has not permitted.[82]

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 751/1350), echoes Ibn Taymiyya, issuing the opinion: "Among the violations of supplication is when God is worshipped in a way that is inconsistent with His law, and when He is praised in a way that He has not praised Himself or has permitted."[83] The insinuation of prevailing supplication that blurs the line between innovation and self-expression is a polemical theme appearing in several Sunni commentaries. Devotional practices, seen as deviating from those of the Prophet, are a specter of heterodoxy that, for their denouncers, are identified by descriptions that lack the hallmarks of the Qur'an and Sunna. According to the Sunni traditionalists affiliated with a *madhhab*, how God describes Himself and is described by the Prophet is crucial for Muslims to reproduce *precisely* and rehearse frequently with their own speech. The Damascene Shāfiʿī exegete, ʿAlī b. Muḥammad Khāzin al-Baghdādī (d. 742/1341)

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[79] al-Ghazālī, *Al-Ghazali on Invocations & Supplications: Book IX of the Revival of the Religious Sciences*, 38–40.
[80] This impression coheres with several of the traditions related in Sunni collections, e.g., "The Messenger of God preferred comprehensive supplications (al-*jawāmiʿ min al-duʿāʾ*, i.e., supplications of few words but comprehensive in meaning), and discarded others"; *Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn*, Book 16, Hadith 2. Accessed September 7, 2023, https://sunnah.com/riyadussalihin/16/2.
[81] Taḳī al-Dīn Aḥmad Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmūʿ fatāwā Shaykh al-Islām Aḥmad b. Taymiyya*, 37 vols. (Medina: Mujammaʿ al-Malik Fahd, 2004), 22:510.
[82] Ibn Taymiyya, XXII:511.
[83] Shams al-Dīn Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Badāʾiʿ al-tafsīr*, 3 vols. (Dammam: Dār Ibn al-Jawziyya, 2006), 1:404.

urges strict adherence to the divine names as they occur in scripture, asserting proof that the names operate "by conformity [with tradition] and not convention"[84] He provides several examples distinguishing hallowed utterances from profane ones. For example, according to al-Baghdādī, when referring to God as generous in Arabic, it is permissible to refer to Him as *al-jawād* but not *al-sakhīy*.[85] Although they both mean the same thing, the first occurs in the traditions of the Prophet and is thus accepted as an authentic description. Accordingly, supplication, which often incorporates the divine names in the petitioner's address to God, becomes an indicator for conformance with established opinion.

In brief, the predominant Sunni view is that supplication must not be ostentatious or verbose. It is not poetry, but (ought to be) praise.

Sufi Litany and Supplication

Far more focus is placed on supplication by Sunnis of a mystical inclination than *sharīʿa*-minded Sunnis, and much of al-Nawawī and al-Ghazālī's writings on prayer are indebted to Sufi influences.[86] Many Sufi orders encourage supplication and have produced various collections of prayer, attributed to murshids, that are designed for spiritual occasion and inculcating visions or self-transcendence for initiates. Murshids arrogate a wide mandate for themselves to produce formulas of inspired phrases, called *awrād* (sing. *wird*) that frequently break from the austere diction and rhymed restraint of traditionalists.[87] Often translated as "litanies," *awrād* have a

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[84] *Asmāʾ Allāh tawfīqiyya lā iṣtilāḥiyya*. ʿAlī b. Muḥammad Khāzin al-Baghdādī, *Tafsīr al-Khāzin*, 4 vols. (Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 2004), 3:267.
[85] al-Baghdādī, 3:267.
[86] Katz, *Prayer in Islamic Thought and Practice*, 35.
[87] One example that complicates a consistent conception of *duʿāʾ* is *Qaṣīda al-Ghawthiyya*, authored by the founder of the Qādirī Sufi order, ʿAbd-al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (d. 561/1166). *Qaṣīda al-Ghawthiyya*, a 28-verse litany said to be inspired by a state of spiritual rapture (*wajd*), is central to Qādirī piety and daily practice. Although it contains much praise, it is mostly self-directed, emphasizing al-Jīlānī's own spiritual achievement and knowledge. For al-Jīlānī's followers, recitation of its various lines is believed to bring various benefits, such as increasing the power of

special connotation in the Sufi context that Algar describes as "pastiches of koranic verses, traditional prayers, and sentences composed by the Sufi masters themselves."[88] Abū al-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī's (d. ca. 656/1258) *Ḥizb al-baḥr* provides an archetypal example of litany, composed of Qur'anic verses and supplication, that its author claims was transmitted to him by the Prophet Muḥammad in a dream, while on route to perform his pilgrimage.[89] Its rhetorical style includes a three-fold repetition of lines, superlative descriptions of God, invocations attributed to the Prophet, and the *muqaṭṭaʿāt*, the "disjointed letters" beginning several chapters of the Qur'an, e.g.,

> O God, O Highest, O Great One, O Forgiver, O All-Knowing. You are my Lord and your knowledge is my sufficiency. How perfect, then, is my Lord, how perfect my sufficiency. You give victory to whom You will, and You are the Almighty, the Merciful.
> We ask for your protection in movement and in rest, in words, desires, and thoughts, from the doubts, suppositions, and fancies that veil hearts from beholding things unseen.
> …
> *Bismillāh* is our door.
> *Yā Sīn* is our roof (36:1).
> *Kāf Hā Yā ʿAyn Sād* is our sufficiency (19:1).
> *Hā Mīm ʿAyn Sīn Qāf* is our protection (42:1-2).
> (3X): 'God will be sufficient for you against them. And He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing' (2:137).
> The veil of the throne has been lowered upon us, and the eye of God is gazing upon us, by the power of God none shall overcome us.

Ḥizb al-baḥr is a standard of Shādhilī liturgical recital, believed to provide spiritual benefit and apotropaic protection, and is incorporated in individual and congregational prayer. A wide variety of commentaries have been produced in deducing the aims, benefits, recitation technique, and hidden meaning of its contents, among commentators of a variety of Sunni schools and Sufi orders. Perhaps the most significant contribution, in terms of its dissemination

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memory, relief from hardship, and the curing of sickness. See *Qasida ghousia*, https://www.ghousia.net/qasida-ghousia.php.

[88] Algar, "DOʿĀ."

[89] Muḥammad b. Abī al-Qāsim Ibn al-Ṣabbāgh, *Durrat al-asrār wa tuḥfat al-abrār* (Cairo: Al-Maktaba al-Azhariyya lil-Turāth, 2001), 67–68.

and integration in mystical instruction, is the commentary by the Mālikī scholar Aḥmad Zarrūq (d. 899/1494), *Sharḥ Ḥizb al-baḥr.* Zarrūq sets various conditions (*shurūṭ*) for its recitation, such as clear enunciation and the proper intentional state, against the lower self's whim and desire for externalities (*istiẓhār*).[90] He explains, "Every word is associated with the state of its speaker; and thus, a whimsical (*hawan*) state will produce the effect of whimsy, and whosover speaks whimsically will be guided by their whimsical words."[91] Among the various *muqaṭṭaʿāt*, he provides a spectrum of opinion regarding the five-letter sequence *Kāf Hā Yā ʿAyn Sād*, before settling on the interpretation, *Kāf:* sufficiency (*al-kifāya*); *Hā:* guidance (*al-hidāya*); *Yā:* sainthood (*al-wilāya*): *ʿAyn*: providence (*al-ʿināya*); and *Sād*: truthfulness (*al-ṣidq*).[92] Zarrūq comments that each of these aspects can be seen in the story of *Sūrat Maryam* that opens with the letter sequence and coalesce in the supplication of Zakariyya, "My Lord! Grant me a sign" (Q. 19:10), in the same chapter.[93] For Zarrūq, among many other commentators of al-Shādhilī's litany,[94] a space is opened for the elaboration of practice and ritual, as well as for the interpretation of arcane or ambiguous meaning in the Qur'an. The latter feature, as will be shown, permeates much of Shiʿi commentary on supplication.

The work of Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Ḥafṣ ʿUmar Suhrawardī (d. ca. 632/1234), *ʿAwārif al-maʿārif*, is another classic example, involving *awrād*, that was translated into Persian and spread throughout Iran and India in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, CE.[95] Much of *ʿAwārif al-maʿārif* is a spirited defense of Sufism that expounds the meaning of associated concepts and

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[90] Aḥmad al-Burnūsī al-Fāsī Zarrūq, *Sharḥ Ḥizb al-baḥr* (Cairo: Dār Jawāmiʿ al-Kalim, [n.d.]), 41.
[91] Zarrūq, 41.
[92] Zarrūq, 71.
[93] Zarrūq, 71–72.
[94] They include Shaykh Dawūd al-Bakhilī (d. 732/1332), Muḥammad al-Ḥanafī Ibn Duqmāq (d. 809/1407), Shāh Walīullāh Dehlawī (d. 1176/1762), and Imdād Allāh al-Muhājir al-Makkī (d. 1317/1899).
[95] Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 348.

practices, demonstrating their congruity with the Qur'an and hadith. Suhrawardī comments on prayer's performance:

> It is as if the one in prayer supplicates God Almighty with all their extremities. All their organs become tongues by which they supplicate, externally and internally. The hidden and manifest participate together–through entreaty (*taḍarruʿ*), spiritual transformation (*taqallub*) and noble forms (*hayʾāt*)–in humble, needy, and beseeching adoration (*tamalluqāt*).[96]

The numerous formulae of *awrād* and *adʿiya* enjoined by Suhrawardī for spiritual aspirants to recite are part and parcel of the discipline and institutionalization of *ṭarīqa* ritualization.[97] For lodgers of Sufi outposts (*ribāṭ*), Suhrawardī emphasizes holding fast to litanies and the proper times of their recitation, practices that he sees as an antidote to heedlessness.[98] Members of the Suhrawardī order, founded by Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī's uncle, Abū al-Najīb Abd al-Qādir Suhrawardī (d. 563/1168), that imbibed such practices, are not alone among those of other *ṭuruq*. Trimingham (1971) has chronicled the evolution of Sufi orders in relation to the development of ritual and ceremony. However idiosyncratic the formulae, the Naqshbandī, Mīrghanī-Khatmī, Shādhilī, and Qādirī orders, inter alia, all employ various combinations of litany conducive to the mystical experience.[99] Their murshids have produced systematic treatises standardizing them and their technique as a learning tool for murids. Given these treatises' attention to detail and their characteristic complexity, additional commentaries have been produced, such as Tāj al-Dīn b. Zakariyya Mahdī Zamān al-Rūmī's (d. 1050/1640)

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[96] Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Ḥafṣ ʿUmar Suhrawardī, *ʿAwārif al-maʿārif*, 2 vols. (Cairo: Maktaba al-Thaqāfa al-Dīniyya, 2006), 2:327.
[97] Erik S. Ohlander, *Sufism in an Age of Transition: 'Umar al-Suhrawardī and the Rise of the Islamic Mystical Brotherhoods* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 218–20.
[98] Suhrawardī, *ʿAwārif al-maʿārif*, 1:120.
[99] J. Spencer Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 198–207.

Risāla fī sunan al-ṭāʾifa al-Naqshbandiyya, in the hope of their comprehensive mastery, on the path of spiritual perfection (*kamāl*).[100]

One of the first major collections of Sufi prayers, *Dalāʾil al-khayrāt* ("Tokens of the Good Deeds (?)"), was written by the famous Moroccan Shādhilī, Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad al-Jazūlī (d. 870/1465). It stands today as one of the most ubiquitous works in the Islamic devotional genre. *Dalāʾil al-khayrāt* begins with a *duʿāʾ* for attaining the rank of righteous servitude and success in continuous recitation of what follows, a series of blessings and praises (*ṣalawāt*) for the Prophet Muḥammad. Each of the prayers is designed to be recited on different days of the week, bringing various blessings for reciters. In addition, lists are provided of the 99 names for God, followed by several short supplications for mercy and protection from divine punishment, and the 201 sobriquets (*alqāb*) of the Prophet found in the Qur'an and hadith literature. Cornell (2021) describes its objective, writing, "The purpose of the recitation of *Dalāʾil al-Khayrāt* was to instill in the Jazūlite disciple a love for the Prophet Muḥammad so strong and all-encompassing that the alchemy it created would transform the seeker and lead him directly to God."[101] Al-Jazūlī's work circulated widely throughout the Islamic world and became particularly popular in Southeast Asia where at least sixty-seven illustrated manuscripts of the *Dalāʾil* have been discovered and whose production peaked in the eighteenth to nineteenth century.[102] It stands as a touchstone for Sufis aspiring to the elevated stations (*maqāmāt*) of devotion, and is recited today during rites of marriage, fasting, circumcision, and burial, from Central and East Java to Marrakech.[103]

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[100] Trimingham, 202.
[101] Vincent J. Cornell, "Muḥammad Ibn Sulaymān Al-Jazūlī and the Place of Dalāʾil al-Khayrāt in Jazūlite Sufism," *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 12, no. 3–4 (2021): 258.
[102] Farouk Yahya, "Illustrated and Illuminated Manuscripts of the Dalāʾil Al-Khayrāt from Southeast Asia," *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 12, no. 3–4 (November 11, 2021): 529–81.
[103] Yahya, 539–41; Cornell, "Muḥammad Ibn Sulaymān Al-Jazūlī and the Place of Dalāʾil al-Khayrāt in Jazūlite Sufism," 255.

One of the forms of supererogatory prayer developed by Sufis contained under the umbrella category of *duʿāʾ* is *munāja* (pl. *munājāt*), called "intimate," "secret," or "whispered" supplications. The Qur'an's references to "secret talk" (*najwā*), a derivation of *munāja*'s root, is freighted with an ambivalence. *Najwā* is censured for its involvement in plotting and conspiracy in some verses and encouraged for its benevolent or charitable intentions in others.[104] For the mystically inclined, the latter, positive import is preserved over the others, doubtful or dishonest. The derived *munājāt* becomes a category of private, intimate converse with God–prayers for seeking closeness and consolation. Its distinction from *duʿāʾ* is slight, marked by this emphasis of close communion and a confessional style. Although the origins of its schematization as a separate species of *duʿāʾ* are obscure, there is little doubt that ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad Anṣārī al-Harawī (d. 481/1088) was one of the early contributors to *munājāt.* Among Anṣārī's most celebrated writings are the collections of *munājāt*, culled from his *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya* and Abū al-Faḍl Rashīd al-Dīn Maybudī's (d. 529/1135) *Kashf al-asrār*.[105] While Farhadi cautions that current texts in circulation often fail to correspond with the earliest extant manuals of Anṣārī, their literary style is similar enough to preclude dismissing them outright. Moreover, their influence among Persian-literate Sufis is profound and enduring.[106] The *munājāt* attributed to Anṣārī touch upon the stages of spiritual purification and wayfaring (*sulūk*), capturing in vivid language each epiphanic moment upon the path, while displaying Anṣārī's poetic abilities. One of Anṣārī's English translators comments on the *munājāt*'s form: "The concision of Anṣārī's style gives it a great simplicity, but within that simplicity there is a complex and elusive play of

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[104] See Q. 4:114–15 for a comparison of contrasts.
[105] Maybudī's twelfth century Qur'anic commentary, *Kashf al-asrār wa-ʿuddat al-abrār*, is based around a lost work of Anṣārī, adopting its literary style and containing *munājat* attributed to the latter. See Annabel Keeler, *Sufi Hermeneutics: The Qur'an Commentary of Rashīd al-Dīn Maybudī* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
[106] A. G. Ravan Farhadi, "The Hundred Grounds of ʿAbdullāh Anṣārī of Herat (d. 448/1056): The Earliest Mnemonic Sufi Manual in Persian," in *The Heritage of Sufism*, vol. 1, ed. Leonard Lewisohn (Boston, MA: Oneworld, 1999), 382.

rhythm, rhyme and assonance, as well as a richness of association peculiar to Persian."[107] A short sample may correspond with this description:

Ilāhī ẓāhirī dārīm bas shūrīdeh va	O God, outwardly we are frenzied with love,
bāṭinī bi-khᵛāb ālūdeh va	inwardly polluted with sleep;
sīneh dārīm pur ātash va-dīdeh pur āb	Our breasts are afire and our eyes are filled with water;
gāhī dar ātash-i sīneh mī sūzīm va	Sometimes we burn in the fire of our breasts,
gāhī dar āb-i dīdeh gharqāb.	Sometimes we drown in our tears.[108]

With a focus on Sunnism, Annemarie Schimmel has tracked some of the mystical trends running through supplication in Islam, bringing to light several issues that bear on theology. Schimmel quotes from the disciple of Junayd, Abū Bakr al-Shiblī (d. 334/946), to clarify the central dilemma of *duʿāʾ*, "Alas, if I pray I deny [the trust in God], and if I do not pray I am ungrateful."[109] Those at the extreme end of self-denial forbid any plea or petition that undermines a total reliance (*tawakkul*) on God. Yet, for most, the suggestion that the latter is incompatible with the Sunni doctrine of predestination is defeated by God's response or fulfillment (*ijāba*) of prayer as *also* predetermined, i.e., non-mutually exclusive. Such is the view expressed by Ibn Sīnā in the *Taʿlīqāt,* where he refines this concept in terms of causation, explaining,

> The causes for supplication's fulfilment are simultaneous (*maʿa*) with divine wisdom…The Creator generates (*jaʿl*) the cause of the existence of a thing by supplication, just as He causes the health of a sick person who has consumed medicine. If the person had not consumed it, they would not recover. The same applies to supplication and the fulfillment of the [supplicated] thing, for wisdom is fulfilled in accordance with divine decree and determination (*qaḍāʾ*). Thus, supplication is necessary (*wājib*).[110]

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[107] Lawrence Morris and Rustam Sarfeh, trans., *Munājāt: The Intimate Prayers of Khwājih ʿAbd Allāh Anṣārī* (New York: Khaneghah and Maktab of Maleknia Naseralishah, 1975), xxiv.
[108] Morris and Sarfeh, 25.
[109] Schimmel, "Some Aspects of Mystical Prayer in Islam," 113.
[110] Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥusayn Ibn Sīnā, *al-Taʿlīqāt* (Qom: Daftar-i Tablīghat-i Islāmī, 2000), 51.

Ibn Sīnā establishes the dictum, "Everything that originates from the Necessary Existent originates by way of its intellective substance,"[111] supplementing an ostensibly occasionalist argument that–isolated from other aspects of Ibn Sīnā's thought–would appeal to the likes of al-Ghazālī. To put the general view of Ibn Sīnā in condensed terms: Supplication is consistent with belief in determinism, and its results perpetually operate according to what he calls an "order of the whole" (*niẓām al-kull*), where the occurrence of everything in the universe is synonymous with the omnipotent divine will.[112] Schimmel identifies this position as the dominant one, among Sufis, that contains conditions, such as the aforementioned *ādāb*, and exceptions, such as requests for worldly possessions. It is these aspects that commentators have attempted to work out, while preserving theological dogmas. As notes Katz (2013), "In general, classical Muslim scholars were sanguine about the practical efficacy of prayer [*duʿāʾ*]."[113] While theological challenges may have been posed with respect to theory, they hardly impeded supplication's common practice.

Although supplication's efficacy was never seriously undermined by scholarly interventions, debate over its maximization has had a lasting influence. With regard to supplication's efficacy, Sufis tend to emphasize prayer of the heart and not merely of the tongue, i.e., prayer as careless habit, and the intrinsic motivation of prayer over external reward. This is to say that supplication should be substantive, a prayerful need that is demonstrative and not merely demonstrated. Union with God, as opposed to attainment of paradise or avoidance of perdition, is estimated by many mystical virtuosi as the most ennobling outcome of prayer. Here,

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[111] *Kull mā yaṣdir ʿan wājib al-wujūd fa-innamā yaṣdir bi-wāsiṭa ʿaqliyyatuhu lahu*; Ibn Sīnā, 52.
[112] Whether causes can be indirect or secondary, and thus oppose a strict Occasionalism, is another debate altogether. For a complete account of Ibn Sīnā's view of determinism and predestination that highlights friction with Ashʿarism, see George F. Hourani, "Ibn Sīnā's 'Essay on the Secret Of Destiny,'" *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 29, no. 1 (1966): 25–48.
[113] Katz, *Prayer in Islamic Thought and Practice*, 36.

one reaches the highest stage of unification, however broadly or narrowly defined, through the perfection of praise, wherein fear and hope are sublimated into a self-less expression of "God alone."[114] Borrowing from Carmelite mysticism, Schimmel calls this end goal *oratio infusa*, where absorption into the divine dissolves the self so that God may be heard in the (ordinarily silent and secret) "grace of prayer."[115] Another version of the *oratio infusa* reverses the addressee, seeing prayer as God recollecting or calling upon Himself, using man as affirmative instrument of the unity ringing throughout the cosmos.

[114] Schimmel, "Some Aspects of Mystical Prayer in Islam," 115–16.
[115] Schimmel refers to a story from Book 3, Part 7, of the *Masnavī* where a persistent petitioner is encouraged by Khiḍr, who reveals that each call of "Allāh!" is equal to God's call, "Here I am!" (*labbayka*); Schimmel, 124.

Chapter 2: Supplication in Shiʿi Islam

Not unlike for Sufis, supererogatory prayer plays a major role in the devotional practice of Shiʿi Muslims. A common formula, between Sufi and Shiʿi supplication, begins with the vocative (*nidāʾ*) calling of one of God's names or attributes, followed by a description–a reflection of divine attributes or something over which the attribute has dominance or mastery, and concluding with a plea for the resolution of some need. Often there is some acknowledgment of the supplicant's culpability or an admission of sin or weakness, and a description of others that have fallen prey to similar vice or imprudence. Unlike their Sunni-Sufi counterparts, Shiʿi supplication can be long, filling several pages worth of these descriptions that make ample allusion to cosmology, aspects of monotheism and divine justice, the miracles and nonpareil knowledge of prophets and Imams, the need for repentance, and a smattering of philosophically significant subjects that are addressed in subsequent chapters on commentaries. The abridged opening lines of *Duʿāʾ Kumayl* [b. Zīyād al-Nakhaʿī, d. 82/701–2], taught by ʿAlī to his companion, provide an example of this template:

> O God, I ask You by Your mercy, which embraces all things; And by Your strength, through which You dominate all things, And toward which all things are humble; And before which all things are lowly…And by Your face, which subsists after the annihilation of all things, And by Your Names, which have filled the foundations of all things; And by Your knowledge, which encompasses all things; And by the light of Your face, through which all things are illumined!
> …
> O God! Forgive me my such sins as would affront my contingency, O God! Forgive me my such sins as would bring down calamity, O God! Forgive me my such sins as would change divine favors (into disfavors), O God! Forgive me my such sins as would hinder my supplication, O God! Forgive me such sins as bring down misfortunes (or afflictions), O God! Forgive every sin that I have committed and every error that I have erred.

A major distinguishing feature also includes the Shiʿi attribution of supplication to one of the fourteen *maʿṣūmīn*. Whereas parts or whole supplications are authored by Sufi masters, no amount of Shiʿi supplication, according to dogma, is edited or amended by a non-*maʿṣūm*. The Imams themselves insist on this rule. In one narration, Imam al-Ṣādiq attempts to teach the supplication known as *Duʿāʾ al-gharīq* to his companion, ʿAbd Allāh b. Sinān (d. ca. 200/816). He recites it, "O God, O Beneficent, O Merciful, O Transformer of hearts (*muqallib al-qulūb*), make my heart steadfast in Your religion." Ibn Sinān then repeats the formula, adding the word, "[O Transformer of hearts] and vision (*al-abṣār*)." The Imam promptly corrects him, "Indeed God Almighty transforms the hearts and vision, but say it as I have said."[1] As I will address subsequently in the section on authenticity, this rule sometimes has its exceptions. It nonetheless is important for Shiʿa to, by default, rely on and have recourse to the transmitted prayers as the inimitable words of an Infallible.

The supplications of the Imams raise the immediate question: Why would an Infallible confess to sin and seek repentance in their supplication? Several explanations are provided by Shiʿi scholars. Some, including Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274), appeal to the maxim, "good deeds of the righteous are sins to the intimates of God" (*ḥasanāt al-abrār sayyiʾāt al-muqarrabīn*).[2] This maxim conveys that prophets and Imams are held to a different standard, where, because of their elevated rank, the slightest negligence toward an action that diverts attention toward the world and away from God, is viewed as a lapse or indiscretion, compelling repentance. Accordingly, if an act that is recommended (*mustaḥabb*) for an ordinary believer is

[1] Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad al-Qummī Ibn Bābawayh, *Kamāl al-dīn wa-tamām al-niʿma*, 3 vols. (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Aʿlamī lil-Maṭbūʿāt, 1991), 2:330.
[2] Muḥammad b. Ḥasan Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, *Awṣāf al-ashrāf* (Beirut: al-Maʿārif, 2011), 35. See also Ṭabāṭabāʾī's discussion of the issue; Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *al-Insān wa-l-ʿaqīda* (Qom: Bāqiyyāt, 2005), 217–20.

abandoned by a *maʿṣūm*, it is counted as a dereliction of religious obligation, on a level with disobedience (*maʿṣiya*).[3] A related principle applied to this matter is the "abandonment of the preferred" (*tark al-awlā*), where, given an option set–all producing a spectrum of good outcomes–a prophet or Imam elects an inferior option over the better one. Although the preferable choice was forsaken, the one chosen nonetheless remains good, and hence, actual sin may not be imputed to the agent. This principle becomes the primary means for vindicating an Infallible's asking of forgiveness (*istighfār*) in their supplication. Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī uses such an argument for the oversight of David in Q. 38:22–24 when David judges hastily in the dispute between two brothers, reasoning, with reference to a hadith from Imam al-Riḍāʾ, that *tark al-awlā* had occurred in the form of David's adjudication without having heard the second plaintiff's testimony.[4] This rationale is not unusual among exegetes in other cases of apparent sin in the Qur'an's prophetic narratives. The other common, more straightforward, explanation for the profession of sin is that prophets and Imams, in seeking supplicative forgiveness, are providing instruction in proper devotional practice for initiates to emulate.[5]

Supplication's wider place in Shiʿi belief and practice is clearly indicated in the Imams' traditions, a subject to which I turn.

Supplication in the Shiʿi Traditions

The sixth chapter (alternatively, book) of *Uṣūl al-kāfī* is divided into sixty subsections on supplication. Like other chapters in Kulaynī's collection, it contains traditions from the Imams

[3] al-Ṭūsī, *Awṣāf al-ashrāf*, 31–35. Such is how al-Ṭabrisī interprets Adam's fall in the Qur'an. He explains Adam's disobedience in the verse, "And Adam disobeyed his Lord and erred" (20:121) as neglect in performing a supererogatory act (*tārik al-nafl*); al-Ṭabrisī, *Majmaʿ al-bayān*, 7:46–47.
[4] Muḥammad Bāqir b. Muḥammad Taqī al-Majlisī, *Ḥayāt al-qulūb*, 2 vols. (Qom: Intishārāt-i Surūr, 2005), 2:923–24.
[5] Jaʿfar Murtaḍā al-ʿĀmilī, *Khalīfāt maʾsāt al-Zahrāʾ*, 6 vols. (Isfahan: al-Qāʾimiyya, 1997), 3:192–93.

that foreground a major subject of belief. The 424 total traditions cover the full ambit of supplication, including what, when, and how to pray, in addition to the causes of its efficacy and fulfillment. The full range of themes and instructions cannot possibly be covered in this space, but several principal concepts merit mention and help answer the question as to supplication's elevated importance among the Shiʿa.

Supplication, Imam al-Ṣādiq states, is the "best of worship" (*afḍal al-ʿibāda*) and particularly for its practice of beseeching (*suʾāl*).[6] A person who does not engage in supplication suggests that they imagine themselves self-sufficient or above asking, examples of arrogance and superciliousness (*al-istikbār*). According to Imam al-Ṣādiq, nothing is more hated (*abghaḍ*) than this hubris, displacing God for the lordship and worship of the self,[7] and leading to the fate of the those in the verse, "Surely those who are too proud to worship Me will enter Hell, fully humbled" (40:60).[8] Expression of need through vocalization is a human ability that God commands His creation to use to their unique advantage. It is a demonstration of humble submission (*istikāna*)[9] and virtuous probity (*ʿafāf*) in the style of Imam ʿAlī.[10] From Imam al-Ṣādiq, we learn that supplication for something precipitates its granting, like "clouds precipitate rain."[11] There is no door that cannot be opened through sincere entreaty[12] and there is no need, big or small enough for God's response.[13] Supplication is a cure for all disease (*shifāʾ min kull dāʾ*),[14] and even protects against death by lightning strike.[15] In numerous traditions, supplication

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[6] Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb b. Isḥāq al-Kulaynī, al-Kāfī, 15 vols. (Qom: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 2013), 4:297.
[7] al-Kulaynī, 4:298. A tradition from Imam al-Bāqir complements this one, announcing that God dislikes people insisting (*ilḥāḥ*) upon each other, over Him, for what they require; al-Kulaynī, 4:315.
[8] al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 4:299.
[9] al-Kulaynī, 4:323.
[10] al-Kulaynī, 4:300.
[11] al-Kulaynī, 4:307. Precipitate: *ḥaff*, lit. "encompass."
[12] al-Kulaynī, 4:302.
[13] al-Kulaynī, 4:305–6.
[14] al-Kulaynī, 4:307.
[15] al-Kulaynī, 4:369–70.

is called both "the weapon of the believer" (*silāḥ al-muʾmin*), fighting affliction that has already occurred, and the shield of the believer (*turs al-muʾmin*), rebelling affliction before it occurs.[16] This latter concept has important implications for what God wills via the divine decree (*al-qaḍāʾ*) in Shiʿi belief.

On Supplication and Divine Decree

The larger issue of divine decree and human freewill, beyond the remit of this writing, cannot here be adequately addressed. In general, the Imams strongly advise their supporters against investigating the matter of *qaḍāʾ* and *qadar*.[17] In one account, a man comes to ʿAlī, petitioning the Imam three times. He responds, in the sequence: "It is a deep sea. Do not embark upon its fathomless depths"; "It is a dark path. Do not traverse it"; and finally, "It is a secret of God. Do not undertake it."[18] However, insofar as the issue of divine decree impinges on supplication, the traditions are far more forthcoming. The subject of *qaḍāʾ* explicitly occurs in a section of *Uṣūl al-kāfī*'s sixth chapter, titled, "Supplication averts affliction and divine decree" (*al-Duʿāʾ yarudd al-balāʾ wa-l-qaḍāʾ*). It begins with the following traditions, that will be subsequently explained:

> From Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765): 'Supplication before God averts and breaks the divine decree like a thread that is severed, after having been tightly wound.'[19]
> From ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Hādī (d. 254/868): 'Supplication averts what has and has not been decreed.' His audience responds, 'I understand what is meant by the decreed, but what is the meaning of something that

[16] al-Kulaynī, 4:301–3.
[17] Shaykh al-Ṣudūq samples several traditions on divine decree in his book on Imami creed. He begins with one from Imam al-Ṣādiq: "When God gathers all the creatures on the Day of Resurrection, He will ask them concerning what He has commanded of them, and not what He has decreed for them. He interprets Imam al-Ṣādiq's tradition to refer to the actions (*aʿmāl*) of human beings; Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad al-Qummī Ibn Bābawayh, *Kitāb al-iʿtiqādāt* (Qom: Muʾassasat al-Imām al-Hādī, 2010), 75–79.
[18] Ibn Bābawayh, 75.
[19] al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 4:303.

> has not been decreed?' The Imam responds, 'It is what will not come into being.'[20]

These traditions, and others alike in the indicated section of *al-Kāfī*, are puzzling because they imply that God's will changes or is temporalized. In order to be comprehensible, their theological foundations require some clarification.

In a notion that appears frequently in philosophical treatises, God's will, at the stage of His essence, is equal to His knowledge.[21] Although God knows events before they occur–that is to say, interchangeably, that God wills events–He does not compel them to occur. In the traditional Imami impression, human beings act "between the two positions of freewill (*al-tafwīḍ*) and compulsion (*al-jabr*)."[22] Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's theorem on *qaḍāʾ* and *qadar* holds that if what is implied by it is the creation of the act (*khalq al-fiʿl*), such as is constituent to the Ashʿarī creed, then this results in absurdity (*muḥāl*), i.e., something that exists only in the mind; and that an act becomes compulsory (*ilzām*) only in the sense that it is rendered obligatory (*wājib*) and only insofar that it has been communicated (*iʿlām*) to be universal and unqualified (*muṭlaq*).[23] Based on al-Ṭūsī's explanation, ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī glosses that the most satisfactory interpretation, required for consensus, is that God knows all actions by their inscription upon the comprehensive record of the Preserved Tablet (*al-lawḥ al-maḥfūẓ*).[24] God's knowledge (or

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[20] al-Kulaynī, 4:303–4.
[21] ʿAlī Rabbānī Gulpāyigānī, *ʿAqāʾid-i istidlālī*, 2 vols. (Qom: Hājar, 2014), 1:73.
[22] al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 5:17.
[23] Naṣīr al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-Jahrūdī al-Ṭūsi, *Tajrīd al-iʿtiqād*, ed. Muḥammad Jawād al-Ḥusaynī al-Jalālī (Qom: Maktab al-Aʿlām al-Islāmī, 1987), 200. On al-Ṭūsī's passage, al-Ḥillī is careful to distinguish between God's actions and human ones. In the former case, when the Qur'an informs, "So He decreed (*qaḍāhunna*) that they be seven heavens in two days" (41:12), the *qaḍāʾ* is equivalent to creation (*khalq*) and completion (*itmām*). See Abū Manṣūr Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ḥasan al-Ḥillī, *Kashf al-murād fī sharḥ Tajrīd al-iʿtiqād*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥasanzāda Āmulī (Qom: Muʾassasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī, 1987), 315.
[24] al-Ḥillī, *Kashf al-murād*, 316.

alternatively, willing) of the act's creation is not equal to the responsibility of its occurrence, predicated on human deliberation.[25]

In this view, broadly representative of Imami Shiʿis, God is protected from injustice or capriciousness by imparting to human beings the best way to act responsibly through His commands and so long as the commands are clear and accessible, liability shifts to humans who are exhorted to adjust themselves in accordance with them. It is with this theological conceit in mind that Imam al-Hādī's tradition may be properly understood, where God knows what is to occur, whether in the efficacious event of supplication's fulfillment the resulting act does or does not occur. Even if the precipitating conditions toward an event have been set in motion and the act seems sure to occur, i.e., what is "tightly coiled" in Imam al-Ṣādiq's tradition, supplication may avert its occurrence.

Much of the Imami commentary on supplication apropos of causation fixes on notions of metaphysical relata. The modern Iranian exegete and philosopher Muḥammad Taqī Miṣbāḥ Yazdī (d. 2021) prefaces his commentary of several Shiʿi supplications with an apologetic analysis of causation that asks, "Does supplication deny the law of causation?"[26] He answers that, whereas laws of causation accessible to the intellect are an indisputable fact and fundamental to science, not all causes can be deduced through experience, the basis for the laws. Yazdī provides the example: Although it is perfectly observable that fire produces heat, one cannot safely deduce from this experience that heat cannot be generated by any other means, natural or otherwise.[27] The Arabic *tajriba*, carrying the dual meaning of experience and

[25] This view is summarized by Ayatollah Makārim Shīrāzī, "God's knowledge never obliges anyone to commit any action"; Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī, *Dah dars-i ʿadl-i ilāhī* (Qom: Intishārāt Nasl-i Javān, 2011), 87.
[26] Muḥammad Taqī Miṣbāḥ Yazdī, *ʿAlā bāb al-ḥabīb*, trans. al-Sayyid Ḥaydar Ḥaydarī (Beirut: Dār al-Walāʾ, 2018), 15.
[27] Yazdī, 19.

experiment, can only affirm what is in the domain of human perception, but cannot deny what is beyond. As such, what appears as extraordinary, above measurable *tajriba*, such as supplication's efficacy (*taʾthīr al-duʿāʾ*), does not contravene divine decree which has no known cause.

Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabāʾī glosses a series of traditions that begin with the Prophetic example, "Verily, supplication is a matter of divine foreordainment."[28] He avers that the source of common confusion lies in intermediary or apparent causes ascribed the real, essential role of the Creator. Like Yazdī after him, he adopts a capacious concept of causes (*asbāb*) of change, unconfined to the limits of what appear normal or ordinary (*ʿādiyya*). When one properly recognizes God's station, what may be impossible by reason becomes a reality. Many of the miracles of prophets recorded in the scriptures, he adds, were the result of their supplications' fulfillment, having acquired the superior knowledge of monotheism.[29] According to Ṭabāṭabāʾī, this concept is communicated in the Qur'an's aforementioned verse, 2:186, "I respond to one's prayer when they call upon Me. So let them respond with obedience to Me and believe in Me." Ṭabāṭabāʾī quotes Imam al-Ṣādiq's hadith from al-Ṭabrisī's *tafsīr*, "'And believe in Me' means 'I may realize for them [anything], for I have the power to give them what they ask.'"[30]

Varieties of Supplication

Ṣalawāt

The most common phrase repeated in Shiʿi supplication is the invocation of blessings (*ṣalawāt*), "O God, grant peace upon Muḥammad and his household" (*Allāhumma ṣalli ʿalā*

[28] *Anna al-duʿāʾ min al-qadar*; Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *al-Mīzān fī tafsīr al-Qurʾān*, 2:41.
[29] Ṭabāṭabāʾī, 2:43.
[30] al-Ṭabrisī, *Majmaʿ al-bayān*, 2:16; Ṭabāṭabāʾī, 2:43.

Muḥammad wa-āli Muḥammad).[31] Containing the same trilateral Arabic root as *ṣalāt* (*ṣ-l-w*), the *ṣalawāt* phrase occurs in the Qur'an, "Truly God and His angels invoke blessings upon the Prophet. O you who believe! Invoke blessings upon him, and greetings of peace" (33:58). This verse is one of the most important in instilling awareness of the Prophet's exalted status and with regards to the most basic method of expressing this status in liturgical formulae. Al-Ṭabrīsī glosses that when God and the angels invoke their blessings, they venerate the Prophet with commendation (*thanāʾ*) by "calling upon him with the purest supplication."[32] In a widely disseminated tradition,[33] several companions ask the Prophet, concerning the verse, "We know how to grant thee greetings of peace, but how may we invoke blessings upon thee?" The Prophet responds,

> Say: 'O God, grant peace upon Muḥammad and the family of Muḥammad as Thou has granted peace upon Abraham and the family of Abraham, and bless Muḥammad and his family as Thou has blessed Abraham and the family of Abraham. Truly Thou art Praised, Glorious.'[34]

The centrality of the "*Allāhumma*" *ṣalawāt* in Shiʿi devotion and culture cannot be overemphasized. The phrase is uttered in Imami and Zaydi *ṣalāt* during the "testimony" (*tashahhud*) portion and afterward in the final *rakʿa* in Sunni rites in the *Ṣalāt Ibrāhīmiyya*. A call (Q:33:56: "Truly God and His angels invoke blessings upon the Prophet. O you who believe! Invoke blessings upon him, and greetings of peace") and response (*Allāhumma ṣalli ʿalā Muḥammad wa-ālī Muḥammad*) between congregates can be heard after prayers, and its recitation is enjoined in the Imams' traditions for blessings, both apparent and hidden from

[31] Padwick credits Imam Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn with a common *ṣalawāt* for the Prophet among Sunni and Shiʿis; Padwick, *Muslim Devotions*, 164.
[32] *Yadaʿūn lahu bi-azkā al-duʿāʾ*; al-Ṭabrisī, *Majmaʿ al-bayān*, 8:136.
[33] See *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 3370 (Book 60, Hadith 44), https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3370.
[34] al-Ṭabrisī, 8:136; al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, 6:198-99; Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 32 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1981), 25:228–29.

perception.[35] The *Allāhumma ṣalawāt* can also be heard before, during, and after sermons and speeches, celebratory occasions (religious or otherwise), and generally as an acknowledgement of or plea for fortune in various Shiʿi settings.

Numerous traditions emphasize the benefits of *ṣalawāt*, including several collated together in *al-Kāfī*'s chapter of *Kitāb al-Duʿāʾ*, "Blessings on the Prophet and His household." They promise tenfold reciprocal blessings offered by God and the angels[36] and indicate *ṣalawāt* as a precondition of supplication's fulfillment[37] whose omission results in hypocrisy (*al-nifāq*).[38] They additionally suggest that shortening of the *ṣalawāt* to exclude that of the Prophet's household amounts to injustice against the Imams' natural rights (*taẓlimnā ḥaqqanā*).[39] Many Shiʿa add to the *ṣalawāt* derivations of the phrase, "And may God hasten his advent" (*wa-ʿajjil farajahum*), referring to the reappearance of Imam al-Mahdī. This phrase is not a required component of the common *ṣalawāt*, reserved for the Prophet and his household, but is recorded in several early collections as being encouraged.[40]

Ḥirz, taʿwīdh, ḥijāb

In addition to *munājāt* and *ṣalawāt*, there is another important variety of supplication that appears in the compendia. Stemming from the original etymological sense of "a fortified place"

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[35] E.g., "Those who say *ṣalawāt* after *ṣalāt al-fajr* and *al-ẓuhr* will not die until they directly perceive al-Qāʾim [Imam al-Mahdī]"; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 83:77.
[36] E.g., "For those who offer ten blessings upon Muḥammad and his household, God and His angels will reciprocate with one hundred blessings. For those who offer one hundred blessings upon Muḥammad and his household, God and His angels will reciprocate with one thousand blessings"; al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 4:353-4.
[37] E.g., "Supplication is rejected [lit. concealed: *maḥjūb*] until one invokes blessings on the Prophet and His household"; al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 4:348.
[38] al-Kulaynī, 4:351.
[39] al-Kulaynī, 4:359.
[40] E.g., "O Lord, grant blessings upon Muḥammad and His household and may God hasten his advent, spirit, comfort, and delight"; al-Kulaynī, 4:557. Al-Shaykh al-Mufīd (d. 413/1022) enjoins that worshippers recite the phrase while in the *sajda* position; Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad al-ʿUkbarī al-Shaykh al-Mufīd, *al-Muqniʿa* (Qom: Muʾassasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī, 1990), 108.

or "sanctuary" for valuables, this meaning of *ḥirz* still holds in matters of law.[41] Over time, *ḥirz* (pl. *aḥrāz*) has also come to denote both protected sites and/or objects and the prayers and items preserving them, in the form of incantations and talismans respectively. They are additionally referred to as *taʿwīdh* (pl. *taʿāwīdh*), a term used interchangeably with *ḥirz*. The Sunni scholar al-Muttaqī al-Hindī (d. 975/1567) narrates several traditions that contain *aḥrāz*, including a *ḥirz* of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib for prophetic protection against pharaohs, and others narrated by Mālik b. Anas, from the Prophet for protection against tyrants.[42] With few other examples of *ḥirz* available in Sunni sources, its religio-historical significance is much greater in Shiʿi Islam, and flourished during the Safavid period when several important works on the talismanic sciences were authored.[43]

Among the *aḥrāz* associated with the *ahl al-bayt*, the most recited in the Shiʿi world is the *ḥirz* of the ninth Imam, Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Jawād (d. 220/835). There are two versions available, *al-ṣaghīr* and *al-kabīr*. The short (*al-ṣaghīr*) version of *Ḥirz Imam Jawād* reads: "O Light, O Proof, O Evident One, O Enlightening One, O lord, protect me from the evils and calamities of time. I beseech You for salvation on the Day of Judgement."[44] The longer version (*al-kabīr*), begins with a verse from *Sūrat al-Ḥajj*.[45] In mystically tinged terminology, the supplication implores God by His Greatest Name (*al-ism al-aʿẓam*), inscribed on the "pavilion of

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[41] "Ḥirz," in *EI, Second Edition*, Glossary and Index of Terms. Accessed August 5, 2023, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei2glos_SIM_gi_01605.

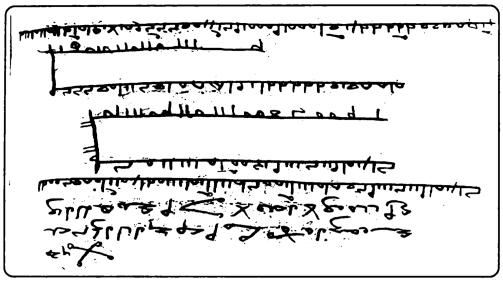
[42] Muttaqī al-Hindī, *Kanz al-ʿummāl*, 2:666–69. Al-Majlisī includes a modified version of the *ḥirz* of Imam ʿAlī; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 91:194.

[43] See Maria Subtelny, "Kāshifī's Asrār-i Qāsimī: A Late Timurid Manual of the Occult Sciences and Its Safavid Afterlife," in *Islamicate Occult Sciences in Theory and Practice*, ed. Liana Saif et al., vol. 140, Handbook of Oriental Studies (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 267–313.

[44] *Yā nūr, yā burhān, yā mubīn, yā munīr, yā rabb, akfinī al-shurūr wa-āfāt al-duhūr wa-asʾaluka al-najāt yawm yunfakhu fī al-ṣūr*; ʿAlī b. Mūsā b. Jaʿfar Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Muhaj al-daʿawāt wa-manhaj al-ʿināyāt* (Tehran: Intishārāt Shams al-Ḍuḥā, 2000), 66.

[45] "Do you not see that God has subjected to you whatever is in the earth as well as the ships that sail through the sea by His command? He keeps the sky from falling down on the earth except by His permission. Surely God is Ever Gracious and Most Merciful to humanity" (22:65).

secrets" (*surādiq al-sarāʾir*), and unspecified "sacred, honorable Names, stored in the knowledge of the unseen" possessed by God alone. Imam Jawād addresses God, "by the eye that never sleeps, the life that never dies, the light of Your Face that never extinguishes," and mentions various creative acts instantiated through the Name, e.g., "by which the sun was shone, the moon illuminated, the seas' ebb and flow, and the mountains erected." The *ḥirz* implores God for protection for those who read its words and offers blessings for the Prophet's household. It provides a pictorial representation of what it describes as the attributes (*ṣifāt*) and forms (*ṣuwar*) of the Names in the cryptic cipher[46]:



In the various traditions and estimations of Shiʿi notables, *Ḥirz Imam Jawād* protects one against physical and non-physical attacks. Ibn Ṭāwūs quotes a long tradition, on the authority of Ibn Bābawayh, that functions as an origin story. In it, al-Maʾmūn appeals to Imam al-Jawād, after the latter survives his assassination attempt. The caliph requests that the Imam provide him with the same protection before an important battle with the Byzantine army. In response, Imam al-Jawād offers several instructions, including ablution, prayer of several verse-specific cycles (*rakʿāt*), *dhikr*, and the wearing of a silver reed (*qaṣaba*), i.e., an amulet case, containing the words of his supplication, written on gazelle hide and wrapped around the upper arm.[47] Against all odds, the caliph is victorious in battle, proving the promise of the Imam, as stated:

[46] Ibn Ṭāwūs reproduces this image in one of his supplication collections. See Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Muhaj al-daʿawāt*, 64. See also Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār,* 91:360.
[47] Ibn Ṭāwūs, 61.

> By its means [the *ḥirz*], you will be protected from evils, afflictions, hardships, vexations, and infirmities, just as God protected me from you yesterday. And if you confront the armies of the Romans and Turks, and if they unite against you along with all the people on earth, they would still not be able to mobilize against you.[48]

Just why the Imam would wish to save the life of his oppressor and his father's killer is a mystery. The hidden power of al-Maʿmūn's rescue, however, survives in the *Ḥirz Imam al-Jawād*, preserved by Shiʿa everywhere today. Many parents in Iran will fasten by pin, or sew into, their newborns' shirts a small handwritten sheet of the *ḥirz* for warding off the evil eye and protection from sorcery. Others wear silver pendants around their necks or (mostly agate) gemstone rings around their fingers, etched with the supplication, while others still wrap a small scroll of its words, held together by a strap, around their upper arms. The modern mystic and religious authority (*marjaʿ*) of Qom, Ayatollah Muḥammad-Taqī Bahjat Fūmanī (d. 2009), is recorded commending the wearing of *Ḥirz Imam al-Jawād* to repel all manner of misfortune.[49]

Such tokens of protection are not limited to these particular objects and supplications. To take another example, *Duʿāʾ al-sayfī*, known by several other names, including *Ḥirz al-yamānī*, is a popular supplication,[50] attributed to Imam ʿAlī, that begins, "O God, You are the master of the Reality (*malik al-ḥaqq*)."[51] For its reciters who perform the prescribed preconditions, *Ḥirz al-yamānī* has the properties of revealing secrets (*kashf al-asrār*)[52] and protection from enemies,[53] among a variety of proven benefits (*fawāʾid mujarraba*), according to al-Majlisī .[54] Nor are *aḥrāz*

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[48] Ibn Ṭāwūs, 61.
[49] "Shaykh Taqī Bahjat ḥirz al-Imām al-Jawād wa-l-qalāqil al-arbaʿa," Ya Mahdī Madad, YouTube video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ND_IPBSKHfY. Accessed August 6, 2023.
[50] Several different versions of the supplication exist. See al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 92:252–66; Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Muhaj al-daʿawāt*, 147–53.
[51] Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Muhaj al-daʿawāt*, 147–53.
[52] Majid Daneshgar, "A Sword that becomes A Word. A Supplication to Dhū'l-Faqār/Nad-e Ali (in the Middle East and the Malay-Indonesian World)," *Mizan*, January 9, 2017, https://mizanproject.org/a-sword-that-becomes-a-word-part-1/#_ftnref30.
[53] al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 92:247.
[54] al-Majlisī, 252.

limited to one geographic region. Varieties of amulets (*ḥijāb* in Egypt; *ḥimāla, ḥāfiẓ, ʿūdha, miʿwadha* in Arab North Africa; *yafta, nuskha* and *ḥimāla* amongst the Turks, and *tilism* amongst Persians)[55] serve myriad talismanic purposes. Special forms of periapts, magic cups, and talismanic shirts, decorated with Qur'anic and supplicative writing (*kitāba*), act as thaumaturgic resources and form part of a tradition of the "science of the (occult) properties of the Qur'an" (*ʿilm khawāṣṣ al-Qurʾān*).[56] In Shiʿi cultures, it is common to carry soil (*turba*; *ṭīn*) from Karbala, likened to the purest clay (*ʿilliyyīn*) of the seventh heaven,[57] as a *ḥirz* for safety, especially during travel.[58] In the traditions, it is said to contain curative properties and may be ingested in small quantities to prevent sickness and hasten healing (*shifāʾ*).[59] Although the practice of wearing or hanging *aḥrāz*/*taʿāwīdh* has become incorporated into a larger practice of ritual incantation (*ruqya*) in Islam, its permissibility is somewhat ambiguous in the Shiʿi traditions.[60] This has not stopped many in Iran from their ongoing employment for protection from sundry forces, known and unknown.[61] A special coterie of scribes in contemporary Iran called *duʿāʾ-navīsān* write personalized supplications for those seeking prayer-facilitated solutions to their personal problems.[62]

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[55] "Ḥirz," *EI*.
[56] Giovanni Maria Martini, "The Occult Properties of the Qurʾān (Ḫawāṣṣ al-Qurʾān): Notes for the History of an Idea and Literary Genre between Religion and Magic in Islam," *Oriente Moderno* 100, no. 3 (2021): 322–77, https://doi.org/10.1163/22138617-12340233.
[57] Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad Ibn Qūlawayh, *Kāmil al-ziyārāt* (Qom: Muʾassasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī, 1997), 281.
[58] Ibn Qūlawayh, 473–74.
[59] Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Mahdī al-Narāqī, *Mustanad al-Shīʿa fī aḥkām al-sharīʿa*, 19 vols. (Beirut: Muʾassasat Āl-Bayt li-Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth, 2008), 15:162. Al-Majlisī notes that the *turba* must be limited to the size of a chickpea; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 57:161–2.
[60] The practice of wearing/hanging *taʿwīdh* is generally permitted, so as long as it contains Qur'anic verses or *dhikr*. However, there is the repeated caution, "Indeed, many incantations (*ruqan*) and amulets (*tamāʾim*) are accessories of idolatry (*ishrāk*)." See the chapter in the *Wasāʾil,* "On the permissibility of *taʿwidh*, *ruqya*, and *nashra*"; Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī, *Wasāʾil al-shīʿa*, 30 vols. (Qom: Muʾassasat Āl-Bayt li-Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth, 1993), 15:236–39.
[61] For examples, see Mahmoud Omidsalar, "CHARMS," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online*, accessed August 9, 2023, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2330-4804_EIRO_COM_7668.
[62] Haeri, *Say What Your Longing Heart Desires*, 128.

The final category of supplication, synonymous with *ḥirz*/*taʿwīdh*, is known as *ḥijāb* (*ḥujub*), distinguished from the former only by its brevity. Each of the fourteen Infallibles has a *ḥijāb* attributed to them, of varying but short lengths.[63] Although its designation, *ḥijāb*, derives from Q. 17:45–46,[64]–the *ḥijāb* of Imam ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Hādī (d. 254/868) begins with the verse–its nomenclature is idiosyncratic. In this regard, Chelhod writes, *ḥijāb* is "a supra-terrestrial protection, in fact an amulet which renders its wearer invulnerable and ensures success for his enterprises."[65] This signification is indicated in the frequent use of the *ḥ-j-b* root-derived term, *iḥtajab* ("to conceal" or "elude attention from someone or something"), such as in the *ḥijāb* of Imam al-Mahdī, beginning, "O God, conceal me from the sight of my enemies."[66] Amid danger in whatever shape, *ḥujub* become practical counteractants. For a *ḥijāb* that begins, "O God, I beseech He who is concealed (*iḥtajaba*) by the rays of His light from the perceptive among His creation," al-Majlisī ascribes assorted benefits, including the restoration of sanity from a state of madness and successful birth after a pattern of miscarriage.[67] The focus on protection from assailants in the form of actual enemies or medical ailments is consistent with the purpose of the aforementioned categories of supplication.

Embodied Practices

Several of the Shiʿi supplications include performative specifications by their transmitters. These liturgical postures invite a deeper dialogue with God that go beyond features

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[63] Ibn Ṭāwūs records these *ḥujub*, in addition to several from his memory (*khāṭir*), unattributed to any figure; Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Muhaj al-daʿawāt*, 363–71.
[64] "And when you recite the Qur'ān, We put between you and those who do not believe in the Hereafter a concealed partition. And We have placed over their heart's coverings, lest they understand it, and in their ears deafness. And when you mention your Lord alone in the Qur'ān, they turn back in aversion."
[65] J. Chelhod, 'Ḥiḏjāb,' *EI*, Second Edition, accessed August 17, 2023, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_2855.
[66] *Allahuma iḥjubnī ʿan ʿuyūn aʿdāʾī*; Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Muhaj al-daʿawāt*, 370.
[67] al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 91:403.

of speech. Supplication associated with certain positions of *ṣalāt*, and especially prostration (*sujūd*), is not rare in Islam.[68] However, Shiʿis may combine them with movements and gestures so as to enhance the power and effectiveness of prayer. One popular practice is to wipe the place of prostration, i.e., the clay *turba* or *muhr*, with the right hand before wiping the face with the same hand after prayers. In the *Wasāʾil*, al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī (d. 1104/1693) devotes a section to traditions that promote this practice.[69] Some of the examples involve this wiping motion conducted in accordance with a supplication recommended by Imam al-Ṣādiq, preventing affliction and disease. Another prescribes the wiping motion, then using the same hand to press on the site of bodily pain while reciting seven times the supplication:

> O He who pressed the earth to the water, blocked the air with the sky, and chose for Himself the best of names, bless Muḥammad and his household and grant me 'such and such' [*kidhā wa-kidhā*, i.e., whatever specified cure] and protect me from 'such and such' [i.e., whatever specified ailment].[70]

The famous *al-ʿAhd* supplication, recommended for forty successive mornings, ends with the reciter slapping their right thigh with a flat palm.[71] After each of the three required repetitions, they recite, "[We pray for the hastening of] the advent, the advent, O Master, O Patron of the Age!" (*al-ʿajal, al-ʿajal, yā mawlāya, yā ṣāhib al-zamān*).[72] Speculation over the purpose of this act of flagellation in *Duʿāʾ al-ʿahd* is varied in the accounts of clerical authorities. According to the Najafi *marjaʿ*, Ayatollāh Muḥammad al-Yaʿqūbī (b. 1960), its multiple meanings may include an exclamation of grief in the separation of Shiʿis from the

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[68] Al-Ṭabarānī has a section in *Kitāb al-duʿāʾ* entitled, "Sayings in prostration" (*al-Qawl fī al-sujūd*) where he relates several Prophetic supplications while in the position; al-Ṭabarānī, *Kitāb al-duʿāʾ*, 190–95.
[69] The section is titled, *Bāb istiḥbāb masḥ al-yad ʿalā mawḍiʿ al-sujūd thuma masḥ al-wajh bihā wa-l-duʿāʾ bi-l-maʾthūr*; al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī, *Wasāʾil al-shīʿa*, 4:1077.
[70] al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī, 4:1077.
[71] ʿAbbās b. Muḥammad Riḍā al-Qummī, *Mafātīḥ al-jinān* (Beirut: Dār al-Aḍwāʾ, 2014), 545.
[72] Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar al-Mashhadī, *al-Mazār al-kabīr* (Qom: Nashr al-Qayyūm, 1999), 663–66.

twelfth Imam, living in occultation[73]; a signal of urgency, hastening the Imam's reappearance, and the pain of societal corruption's extent; and as a potent expression of worship and obedience, combining bodily and spiritual motions.[74] The Bahrani cleric, Muḥammad Ṣanqūr (b. 1968) sees it as stimulating zeal (*al-himma*) among believers and connective interaction (*tafāʿul*) with the Imam.[75] In each of these explanations, the physical act that accompanies its speech counterpart has an implicit aim of connection with Imam al-Mahdī. The ritual act is no form of disciplinary penance in the Christian mold of self-mortification, but rather an affirmation of "the allegiance" that the supplication's title designates and a demonstration of communion with the faith's redeemer.

Yet other acts of performative supplication are more mysterious. These include the motions of the supplication for the month of Rajab, attributed to Imam al-Ṣādiq. The supplication, often referred to by its opening line, "O He from whom I hope for every good,"[76] reaches a passage that begins with the address, "O Majestic and Munificent One" (*yā dhā al-jalāl wa-l-ikrām*), during which the reciter is enjoined to grasp their beard with the left hand and, in the motion of a windshield wiper, rotate the forefinger of their right hand, until finishing the supplication.[77] So too does one of the Fajr *taʿqībāt*–supererogatory prayers that follow *ṣalāt*–enjoin a similar posture, where the supplicant grasps their beard with the right hand while raising the left hand toward the sky and reciting a specific *ṣalawāt* seven times.[78] In a hadith, Imam al-

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[73] The Iranian cleric, al-Shaykh Mohsin Qara'ati (b. 1945), affirms this meaning. Mohsin Qara'ati, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ʿahd* (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿārif al-Islāmiyya al-Thaqāfiyya, 2020), 141.
[74] "Maʿnā taḥrīk baʿḍ al-aʿḍāʾ fī al-adʿiya," Samāḥat al-Marjaʿ al-Dīnī al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Yaʿqūbī, published June 17, 2011, https://yaqoobi.com/arabic/index.php/news/2122.html.
[75] "al-Ḍarb ʿalā al-fakhidh fī Duʿāʾ al-ʿahd," *Alhoda Center*, published March 7, 2016, https://www.alhodacenter.com/question/10395.
[76] *Yā man arjūh li-kull khayr*.
[77] al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 95:390; ʿAlī b. Mūsā b. Jaʿfar Ibn Ṭāwūs, *al-Iqbāl bi-l-aʿmāl al-ḥasanat fī mā yuʿmal marra fī-l-sana* (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Aʿlamī lil-Maṭbūʿāt, 1997), 143.
[78] al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 83:45. ʿAbbās al-Qummī reports that this was a prayer that Joseph was taught by the angel Gabriel while in prison; al-Qummī, *Mafātīḥ al-jinān*, 2014, 38.

Ṣādiq provides an explanation for some of these movements. A companion Abū Baṣīr (al-Asadī?) asks the Imam as to the reason for the raising of the arms during supplication. He responds, interpreting five customary prayerful gestures:

> 1) As for [a demonstration of] taking refuge in God (*taʿawwudh*, it is when the bottom of the palms face the qibla; 2) As for supplicating for God's provision (*rizq*), it is when the palms are spread, facing the sky; 3) As for [a demonstration of] worldly retreat and detachment (*tabattul*), it is when you point with your forefinger; 4) As for [a demonstration of] complete devotion (*ibtihāl*), it is when you raise your hands until the height of your head; 5) As for [a demonstration of] submissive entreaty (*taḍarruʿ*), it is when you move your forefinger near your face, and that is secret (*khafiyya*) supplication.[79]

For each movement, Imam al-Ṣādiq assigns a moral value. Each verbal expression becomes co-constituted by physical movements and postures that represent the object of supplication in one of a variety of spiritual virtues. In the relevant hadiths, the Imam provides a universal standard for categories that may appear less obvious, connecting movement with cognitive content, including concepts, judgements, and beliefs. However, the precise connection between the words and movement is unimportant for the common practitioner whose ritual performance is only dependent on its correct application provided by a *maʿṣūm*, and not its inner meaning. In other words, the Imams' transmissions, in this case regarding embodied practices, are orthopraxic and not orthodoxic. Of course, this has not impeded others from speculating about the meaning and intended purpose of pious motions. On these traditions, Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabāʾī comments, "All bodily acts of worship are the bringing down (*tanzīl*) of inner meaning and attention upon the locality of the form (*mawṭin al-ṣūra*) and the appearance of transcendent realities assuming a material form in the molds of embodiment."[80] He specifies the performance of supplication, including the raising of the hands, as an externalized inner state of existential

[79] The following hadith specifies wagging the right forefinger from right to left; al-Ḥillī, *ʿUddat al-dāʿī*, 196–97.
[80] Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *al-Mīzān fī tafsīr al-Qurʾān*, 2:38.

need, each supplicant the "poor, indebted pauper" petitioning, with outstretched hands, "a rich and powerful supreme being."[81]

The Development of the Shiʿi Supplication Canon: An Overview

The modern Iranian historian and cleric, Rasul Jafarian (b. 1964), divides the historical development of Shiʿi supplication literature (*adabiyyāt*) into four distinct phases: 1) From the beginning of the composition of books of supplication until the period of Shaykh al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067), coinciding with the invasion of the Sejluks in Baghdad in 447/1055 and the burning of the Buyid Shāpūr library,[82] marking the end of the so-called "Shiʿi century" from the mid-tenth to mid-eleventh centuries CE; 2) From the time of Shaykh al-Ṭūsī until that of Sayyid ʿAlī b. Mūsā b. Jaʿfar Ibn Ṭāwūs (d. 664/1266); 3) From the time of Ibn Ṭāwūs until that of Taqī al-Dīn Ibrāhīm b. ʿAlī al-Kafʿamī (d. 905/1499–1500); and 4) From the time of al-Kafʿamī to that of Shaykh ʿAbbās b. Muḥammad Riḍāʾ al-Qummī (d. 1359/1941) and the composition of the current, most common collection of supplication, *Mafātīḥ al-jinān*.[83]

Jafarian's schema elides the time of the Imams, the original orators of supplication for Shiʿis, and the notation and collection of *al-Ṣaḥīfa al-Sajjādīyya*, attributed to the fourth Imam, ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn "al-Sajjād" (d. 95/713). This is likely due to the absence of extant references. Ascertaining the provenance of any supplication is a formidable task that, in much of the Shiʿi literature, is hindered by apologetics, post-facto attributions, and mythical explanations. For

[81] Ṭabāṭabāʾī, 2:38.
[82] The Shāpūr library, located in the Shiʿi stronghold of Karkh in Baghdad, was established in 381/991 by Abū Naṣr Shāpūr, son of Ardishīr Shīrāzī, vizier of the third generation Buyid ruler, Bahāʾ al-Dawla. Known as *Dār al-ʿIlm* ("House of Knowledge"), it housed great works of Shiʿi scholarship, featuring over 10,400 manuscripts, and for a time was administered by the great rationalist scholar, al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā (d. 436/1044); Mahmud Ramyar, "Shaykh Tusi: The Life and Works of a Shiite Leader" (PhD diss., University of Edinburgh, 1977), 16; Nassima Neggaz, "Al-Karkh: The Development of an Imāmī-Shīʿī Stronghold in Early Abbasid and Būyid Baghdad (132-447/750-1055)," *Studia Islamica* 114, no. 3 (2019): 293–94.
[83] Jaʿfariyān, "Adab-i duʿā."

instance, despite assurances by al-Majlisī that the transmission of the *Ṣaḥīfa* is as certain as the Qur'an,[84] it is near impossible to substantiate the plethora of transmission chains (*isnād*) that he records in the *Biḥār*. He relates the story of his father, Muḥammad Taqī (d. 1070/1660), miraculously stumbling upon pages of the *Ṣaḥīfa* after receiving an oneiric vision (*ruʾya*) of Imam al-Maḥdī informing him of the text's existence,[85] a similar vision that he describes personally experiencing.[86] Nonetheless, the information al-Majlisī presents more than suffices to establish the *Ṣaḥīfa*'s broad and continuous transmission (*tawātur*), a status valued as authentic for traditionalist scholars. The task of the person committed to sorting out its provenance would necessarily involve tracking how the *ṣuḥuf,* collected by several highly esteemed individuals in Imami history, including Shams al-Dīn b. Makkī al-ʿĀmilī (d. 786/1384) and Shaykh Bahāʾī, became a single *Ṣaḥīfa* containing fifty-four supplications, fourteen addenda, and fifteen *munājāt*. In other words, this undertaking involves determining how the disparate source materials coalesce as coherent bodies by the twelfth century, reaching five recensions by the Safavid period that chronologically increase in their content.[87]

Supplication was likely inserted among the earliest examples of the Imami literary tradition that make up the *uṣūl* (sing. *aṣl*), the traditions written and loosely collated by disciples of Imams al-Bāqir and al-Ṣādiq, no longer extant.[88] There are commonly reported to be 400 *uṣūl* that were transmitted to Shiʿi classicists of subsequent generations, such as Abū al-Qāsim Ḥumayd b. Ziyād (d. 310/922–23), Mūsā al-Talaʿukbarī (d. 385/995–96), and others catalogued

[84] al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār,* 107:59.
[85] al-Majlisī, 107:45.
[86] al-Majlisī, 107:60–1. For Chitticks's translation of al-Majlisī II's vision, see Chittick, *The Pslams of Islam*, 15–16.
[87] The recently published dissertation work of Vinay Khetia probes the puzzling early period and significantly enhances understanding of the early sources of supplication and proto-*Ṣaḥīfa* examples. Khetia views supplication during this period as one of the means for preserving the legacy of the Imams and a likely protest against ʿUmar b. Khaṭṭāb's ban on writing hadith. See Khetia, "Twelver Shīʿī Liturgy," 29–61.
[88] For the fullest English account of the *uṣūl*, see: Etan Kohlberg, "Al-Uṣūl al-Arbaʿumi'a," in *Ḥadīth*, ed. Harald Motzki (New York: Routledge, 2004), 109–48.

by Shaykh al-Ṭūsī in his *Rijāl*.[89] Much of the *uṣūl* would later be copied and arranged according to subject matter in al-Kulaynī's *al-Kāfī*, the first of four collections that are referred to today as the canonical "Four Books" (*al-kutub al-arbaʿa*) of Shiʿi hadith. Among the tenth century narrators of the *uṣūl* is Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad Ibn Qūlawayh al-Qummī (d. 368/978–89), author of one of the earliest surviving liturgical works, *Kāmil al-ziyārāt,* who is buried beside the tombs of the seventh and ninth Imams in the Kāẓimayn shrine.

Kāmil al-ziyārāt records the proper rites, supplications, and liturgies, involved in visiting the shrines of the *maʿṣūmīn*, based on 843 total cited traditions, many culled from the *uṣūl.* Although Ibn Qūlawayh assures readers, in the introduction to his work, that he narrates hadith solely from the most trustworthy companions, omitting reports of unknown, inexpert, or unreliable sources,[90] much evidence lies on the contrary.[91] Despite these issues, problematic mostly for later scholars, Ibn Qūlawayh's stated objective is clear and consistent with contemporary compilers of *ziyārāt* and *duʿāʾ*: "To inform people of that which God has chosen for His friends (*walī*), among those who visit the grave of Ḥusayn and the descendants [of the Prophet], and to increase the desire [to gain nearness] towards them and their visitation, seeking the great rewards and victory which God Almighty has offered."[92]

Shaykh al-Ṭūsī and Miṣbāḥ al-mutahajjid

Ibn Qūlawayh's goal in the development of Shiʿi piety through consecrated acts of speech is shared with Shaykh al-Ṭūsī in his authorship of *Miṣbāḥ al-mutahajjid.* In the

[89] This is under the section, "Those who did not transmit from the Imams" (*Man lam yaraw ʿan wāḥid min al-aʾimma*); Kohlberg, 133–34; Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī al-Ṭūsī, *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī* (Qom: Muʾassasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī, 2009), 405–54.
[90] Ibn Qūlawayh, *Kāmil al-ziyārāt*, 37.
[91] Khetia, "Twelver Shīʿī Liturgy," 229–31.
[92] Ibn Qūlawayh, *Kāmil al-ziyārāt*, 38.

introduction, al-Ṭūsī describes two types of readers that may benefit from the work: those eager to engage in ritual practices without understanding (*tafaqquh*)[93] of their higher purpose or meaning and those eager to combine worshipful performance with deeper comprehension.[94] He mentions the exclusion of matters of jurisprudence (*masāʾil al-fiqh*), except for what is absolutely necessary, and suggests instead his other works, such as *al-Mabsūṭ* [*fī fiqh al-Imāmiyya*] and *al-Nihāya*, for reference to legal study.[95]

Shaykh al-Ṭūsī of course was not operating in a vacuum. His *Miṣbāḥ* was compiled sometime after he arrived in Baghdad in 408/ 1017–18, where he studied under al-Shaykh al-Mufīd (d. 413/1022) and al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā (d. 436/1044), starting at the age of twenty-three.[96] Khetia proposes al-Ṭūsī's *Miṣbāḥ* effectively functioned as a defense of the Imami community during a time of Shiʿi rivalry, between Twelvers, Ismāʿīlīs, and Zaydīs,[97] that promoted bonds toward the Twelve-Imam doctrine through shared worship and liturgical practices.[98] This was also a time in Baghdad of bitter Sunni-Shiʿi feuding, particularly at the literary level.[99] One story involves Shaykh al-Mufīd's disciple, al-Ṭūsī. When accusations of Shiʿi excesses, including the insulting of the first three caliphs, were brought to the attention of the ruling Abbasid caliph, the latter summoned for al-Ṭūsī and the *Miṣbāḥ* as evidence. While questioned as to the insults that the book supposedly contained, al-Ṭūsī responded in his defense,

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[93] Al-Azharī defines the etymological root of *tafaqquh* (*f-q-h*): "subtle and penetrating discernment and comprehension, particularly of speech"; Ahmed El Shamsy, "Fiqh, Faqīh, Fuqahā," *EI, THREE*. Accessed July 27, 2023, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_27135.
[94] Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī al-Ṭūsī, *Miṣbāḥ al-mutahajjid wa-silāḥ al-mutaʿabbid* (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Aʿlamī lil-Maṭbūʿāt, 1998), 20.
[95] al-Ṭūsī, 20.
[96] Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī al-Ṭūsī, *al-Iqtiṣād* (Qom: Markaz Nūr al-Anwār, 2009), 6.
[97] One may also add the *Nuṣayrī* sect (today called ʿAlawī) as competitors, including the founder of the Nuṣayrī sect, Abū ʿAbd-Allāh al-Ḥusayn ibn Ḥamdān al-Khaṣībī (d. 346/957), who originally resided in al-Karkh, before moving to Aleppo; Neggaz, "Al-Karkh," 284.
[98] Khetia, "Twelver Shīʿī Liturgy," 71–72.
[99] See Shaykh al-Mufīd's sharp critiques of Abū Ḥanīfa and his legal methods. Devin J. Stewart, *Islamic Legal Orthodoxy: Twelver Shiite Responses to the Sunni Legal System* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1998), 106–7.

> I indeed insulted four persons in my book [*Miṣbāḥ al-mutahajjid*]: the first is Cain, who killed his brother Abel; the second is Qaydār of Thamūd, who cut the hamstring of the Thamūd camel; the third [the Israelite king, Josiah], who murdered Yaḥyā b. Zakariyyā; the fourth was the killer [Ibn Muljam al-Murādī] of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib.[100]

Despite earning al-Ṭūsī's exoneration in this instance, the *Miṣbāḥ* may have still served as a vindication for the Shiʿi activists of Karkh against Sunni styles of worship, unfounded on the traditions of the Prophet's household. In this way, the *Miṣbāḥ* might have served as a coded criticism, that, although raising Sunni suspicion, spared its author state violence.[101] A close look into al-Ṭūsī's seminal, *Tahdhīb al-aḥkām*, the third of the Four Books, exhibits such a polemical impetus. In his introduction to the work, al-Ṭūsī reveals his sectarian anxieties. He refers to unnamed opponents (*mukhālifūn*) that have accused the Shiʿa of contradictions within their hadith, so much so as to cause some of them to abandon their faith and instill doubt in others.[102] A clear polemic is thus revealed in the attempted refutation of these accusations, made by those that al-Ṭūsī accuses "lack insight" and whose tenuous grasp on the *madhhab* relies on blind imitation (*taqlīd*).[103] It is his task, in *Tahdhīb al-aḥkām*, to reconcile the (ostensibly) contradictory statements of the Imams. His adept apologia relies on al-Mufīd's *al-Muqniʿa*, the earliest extant Imami book of jurisprudence, as a commentarial pad to launch his defense. As has been shown by Gleave (2001), al-Ṭūsī's elucidation of *al-Muqniʿa* reveals an emerging *fiqhī* streak to the classical Imami compendia, beginning with Kulaynī's *al-Kāfī* and culminating in al-Ṭūsī's *al-Istibṣār*.[104] The credal pronouncements and rulings (*aḥkām*) that *al-Muqniʿa* contained,

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[100] Ramyar, "Shaykh Tusi," 37.
[101] Al-Ṭūsī's reverential standing among the Shiʿa, however, still made him vulnerable to non-state violence. He would eventually be forced to abandon Baghdad for Najaf, before his house in Karkh was plundered in a fit of local sectarian violence in the year 449/1057–58; Āqā Buzurg Muḥammad Muḥsin al-Ṭihrānī, *Ṭabaqāt aʿlām al-Shīʿa*, 17 vols. (Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 2009), 9:161.
[102] Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī al-Ṭūsī, *Tahdhīb al-aḥkām*, 10 vols. (Tehran: Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyya, 2007), 1:1–2.
[103] al-Ṭūsī, 1:1.
[104] Robert Gleave, "Between Ḥadīth and Fiqh: The 'Canonical' Imāmī Collections of Akhbār," *Islamic Law and Society* 8, no. 3 (2001): 350–82.

supported by al-Ṭūsī's careful arrangement of *ḥadīth* and *isnād* criticism, further developed in *al-Istibṣār*, helped form a basis of law for the formative, post-*ghayba* Imami community of Baghdad. Far from being the dry, dense tomes of a dispassionate author, al-Ṭūsī's compositions aided in the confessional association and fraternity of Imamis, in opposition to their multi-sectarian detractors. It is in this sense that the works of al-Ṭūsī, such as *Miṣbāḥ al-mutahajjid* and *Tahdhīb al-aḥkām*, provided a basis for his honorific, *shaykh al-ṭāʾifa*, "Chief of the [Shiʿi] Sect." Indeed, Amir-Moezzi (2005) claims that prayer was an area of entente between the traditionalist Qom (and Rayy) and rationalist Baghdad schools of thought.[105] The allusive language of prayer allowed both traditions the versatility to touch on aspects of Imamology and interpret their content differently, while promoting shared practices and sources.[106]

For all supplication collections that would follow, the *Miṣbāḥ* establishes an imprimatur for the form and function of Imami worship. It would become a prototype for the organization of supplication collections, arranged according to the twelve lunar months of the Islamic calendar and their various devotional acts (*aʿmāl*). It additionally contains insights and directions on preserving ritual purity (*ṭahāra*), the categories and requirements of alms (*zakāt*), and the conditions for prayer. The *Miṣbāḥ*'s designation of specific times and occasions for supererogatory prayer adjusts the work according to a didactic purpose of instruction and inculcating piety, over mere collation of content. It is a practical guidebook, intended for the laity, for which al-Ṭūsī compiled a summary companion work, known as *Mukhtaṣar Miṣbāḥ al-mutahajjid* (or alternatively, *al-Miṣbāḥ al-ṣaghīr*).

Ibn Ṭāwūs and Iqbāl al-aʿmāl

[105] Amir-Moezzi, "Notes sur la prière dans le shī'isme imamite," 69.
[106] Amir-Moezzi, 69–70.

After al-Ṭūsī, the most influential compiler of Shiʿi supplication is Sayyid Ibn Ṭāwūs, a figure of enormous consequence in the history of Shiʿi scholarship. Jafarian has characterized Ibn Ṭāwūs's life project as completing the task of his forefather, al-Ṭūsī, in the *Miṣbāḥ*, a work with which the former was "enamored" (*shīfteh*).[107] Although his biography goes beyond my intended purpose of chronicling supplication works, a few details deserve mention for their connection to Ibn Ṭāwūs's dedicated mission of manuscript preservation.

For most of his life, Ibn Ṭāwūs lived the quiet life of a *muḥaddith*, seeking *ijāzāt* from leading religious authorities and evading frequent caliphal entreaties to issue legal opinions (*fatāwā*). This scholastic quietude was disturbed by the violent defeat of the Abbasid caliphate. When the Mongols captured Baghdad in the month of Muḥarram, 655/1258, Ibn Ṭāwūs watched with bated breath from his hamlet of Miqdādiyya, northeast of the capital. He, along with several *ʿulamāʾ*, were soon summoned to Mustanṣiriyya to provide a *fatwā* for an inquiry put forth by their new suzerain, Hulagu. The question–whether a just infidel (*al-kāfir al-ʿādil*) or an unjust Muslim (*al-muslim al-jāʾir*) was a preferable (*afḍal*) ruler–was met with fearful hesitation, until Ibn Ṭāwūs, hitherto most reluctant to lend counsel, finally endorsed the former alternative in writing.[108] As a result of the favor that he earned with Hulagu, aided in part by this alleged *fatwā*, Ibn Ṭāwūs secured his own protection and the safe relocation of 1,000 Baghdadi denizens to al-Ḥilla.[109] Much was at stake in these critical circumstances, not merely with regards to the preservation of a revered individual, but of the immense body of works that he held in his private library. Ibn Ṭāwūs's library is said to have contained some 1,500 titles, including seventy

[107] Ibn Ṭāwūs was a descendent of al-Ṭūsī through his father's mother; Jaʿfariyān, "Adab-i duʿā," 215.
[108] Ṣafī al-Dīn Muḥammad b. ʿAlī Ibn al-Ṭiqṭaqā, *al-Fakhrī* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1966), 17; Kohlberg, *A Medieval Muslim Scholar at Work*, 10.
[109] Ibn al-Ṭiqṭaqā, *al-Fakhrī*, 17.

volumes of supplications.[110] Although few of these volumes have survived, those that remain have had the greatest impact on the history of compilation and ritualized practice of *duʿāʾ*.

A five-volume collection of supplications that Ibn Ṭāwūs authored to supplement the *Miṣbāḥ*, called *Kitāb al-muhimmāt wa-l-tatimmāt*,[111] is qualified by the famous jurist and bibliographer, Āqā Buzurg al-Ṭihrānī (d. 1389/1970), as a watershed for which all Shiʿa owe a large debt.[112] Those who arrived after Ibn Ṭāwūs to produce works of supplication are described by al-Ṭihrānī as mere "dependents (*ʿiyāl*) who ladle from his basin [of knowledge]."[113] Today, the *Muhimmāt* represents the supreme contribution of Ibn Ṭāwūs's library's heritage. Each volume is oriented around various time schemes, propitious for certain supplication. They include: *Falāḥ al-sāʾil*, containing daily supplication; *Zahrat al-rabīʿ*, encompassing weekly supplication; *Kitāb al-shurūʿ*,[114] consisting of monthly supplication; *Iqbāl al-aʿmāl*,[115] containing yearly supplication; and *Asrār al-ṣalawāt*, a commentary on the esoteric meaning of various supplications and exhortations.[116]

The most important work of the *Muhimmāt* is *Iqbāl al-aʿmāl*. Completed on 13 Jumādā al-Awwal 650/1252, when Ibn Ṭāwūs was sixty years of age, *Iqbāl al-aʿmāl* is an opus that maps an entire Islamic calendar year in the life of a Muslim in terms of recommendable (*mustaḥabb*) devotional acts (*aʿmāl*) and prayer.[117] According to Ibn Ṭāwūs, the original edition of *Iqbāl al-*

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[110] Kohlberg, *A Medieval Muslim Scholar at Work*, 77.
[111] Full title: *al-Muhimmāt li-ṣalāḥ al-mutaʿabbid wa-l-tatimmāt li-miṣbāḥ al-mutahajjid*.
[112] The *Muhimmāt* series is alternatively divided into a ten-volume edition, of which vols. 1, 4-6, and 8-9 are extant. The additional volumes included in this addition add additional supplications for the Islamic holidays. Muḥammad Muḥsin Āqā Buzurg al-Ṭihrānī, *al-Dharīʿa ilā taṣānīf al-Shīʿa*, 25 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Aḍwāʾ, 1983), 265; Kohlberg, *A Medieval Muslim Scholar at Work*, 2:51.
[113] al-Ṭihrānī, *al-Dharīʿa*, 1983, 2:265.
[114] Full title: *Kitāb al-shurūʿ fī ziyārāt wa-ziyādāt ṣalawāt wa-daʿwāt al-usbūʿ fī al-layl wa-l-nahār wa-durūʿ wāqiyya min al-akhbār fīmā yastimiruʿilmihi fī kull yawmʿalā al-tikrār*.
[115] Full title: *al-Iqbāl bi-l-aʿmāl al-ḥasanat fī mā yuʿmal marra fī-l-sana*.
[116] al-Ṭihrānī, *al-Dharīʿa*, 1983, 2:264–65.
[117] al-Ṭihrānī, 2:264.

aʿmāl was split into two volumes, the first containing supplications for the months of Muḥarram until Shaʿbān and the second containing those for the months of Ramaḍān until Dhū al-Ḥijja.[118] Ibn Ṭāwūs later produced a separate work, titled *Miḍmār al-sabq fī maydān al-ṣidq*, appending the many acts and prayers designated for the month of Ramaḍān, which he added to the beginning of *Iqbāl al-aʿmāl*.[119] Given that the Islamic calendar typically begins with Muḥarram, Ibn Ṭāwūs felt it necessary to defend this arrangement on the basis of Ramaḍān's unique significance that he justifies with recourse to the traditions in a separate section (*faṣl*).[120] In addition to the Arabic editions, there have been several Persian translations of *Iqbāl al-aʿmāl*, one of which commissioned on the order of Shāhzāda Āghā-Begum, daughter of Shāh ʿAbbās I (r. 1588-1629),[121] providing a glimpse into the pious preoccupations of Safavid urbanity.

In his introduction to the work, Ibn Ṭāwūs says the following words:

> Know that the months arrive with the reminder of worship, and the setting-forth of blessings are like the phases and stations whence the human being emerges from their mother's belly and into the farthest reaches of their life's world. At every stage, their Master has honored them with as many provisions, treasures, and jewels as they are able to combine upon their travel and this manifest path. However, the distance to the realm of ultimate happiness (*dār al-saʿāda*) is great, no matter the amount of provisions won by the traveler; for even if they have an abundance to spare, before those honored with this obligation [of travel/worship] lies a large expanse under the earth.[122]

The grave, as Ibn Ṭāwūs indicates at the end of this passage, is a memento mori, marking a decisive time when people lose true intimacy (*al-uns*) found in the presence of the sacred, amid which transpires the "sweetness of communion (*mujālisa*) between the servant and his master,

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[118] Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Iqbāl al-aʿmāl*, 12.
[119] This three-volume edition is available today with annotations. See ʿAlī b. Mūsā b. Jaʿfar Ibn Ṭāwūs, *al-Iqbāl bi-l-aʿmāl al-ḥasanat fī mā yuʿmal marra fī-l-sana*, vols. 1–3 (Qom: Markaz al-Nashr al-Tābiʿ li-Kutub al-Iʿlām al-Islāmī, 1997. All quotations from *Iqbāl al-aʿmāl* cited in this dissertation are from the single-volume edition.
[120] The section is titled, "On whether the year begins with the month of Ramaḍān or Muḥarram"; Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Iqbāl al-aʿmāl*, 249–54.
[121] This manuscript, according to Jafarian, is dated, Shawwāl 1089/1678, and is housed in the Ayatollah Marashi Najafi Library in Qom, MS 1344; Jaʿfariyān, "Adab-i duʿā," 216.
[122] Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Iqbāl al-aʿmāl*, 13.

the Lord."[123] Worship is an occasion where communion is still possible, though fleeting in time. This time is fraught and full of distractions. As a bulwark against life's vagaries and constant calamities, supplication, according to Ibn Ṭāwūs, is a hidden treasure stored within the months of the year and the best resource with which believers may rely.[124] For each month of *Iqbāl al-aʿmāl*, Ibn Ṭāwūs records their virtues (*faḍāʾil*) with reference to various traditions and important events in the lives of the *maʿṣūmīn*. Every month has a unique set of meaningful associations and actions in the historical relation between a person and God, and provides an opportunity to seek divine presence, repentance, petition, and insight into God's Book and the Imams' elucidations of its meanings.

Among the other supplication collections of Ibn Tāwūs, still popular today and deemed reliable by *ʿulamāʾ*, is the single-volume *Muhaj al-daʿawāt wa-manhaj al-ʿināyāt*. According to al-Ṭihrānī, it was completed on 7 Jumādā al-Awwal, 662/1264.[125] Unlike *Iqbāl al-aʿmāl*, *Muhaj al-daʿawāt* is not organized according to particular times.[126] Ibn Tāwūs eschews arrangement by chapters and sections so that the text may act as a "garden" (*rawḍa*) for people to enter and benefit from its harvest of various fruits at any access point.[127] *Muhaj al-daʿawāt* focuses on previously-fragmented *aḥrāz*, *qunūtāt*, *ḥujūb*, *munājāt*, and *daʿawāt* that Ibn Tāwūs merged into a single work, designed for practical reference. Many of its supplications are labeled for specific purposes, e.g., safe travel, the maintenance of health, and obtainment of various needs. Like *Iqbāl al-aʿmāl*, *Muhaj al-daʿawāt* was also translated into Persian at the request of a Safavid

[123] Ibn Ṭāwūs, 13.
[124] Ibn Ṭāwūs, 13.
[125] al-Ṭihrānī, *al-Dharīʿa*, 23:287.
[126] It does, however, enumerate the most efficacious times of the day for supplication in one of the last chapters.
[127] Alī b. Mūsā b. Jaʿfar Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Muhaj al-daʿawāt wa-manhaj al-ʿināyāt* (Tehran: Intishārāt Shams al-Ḍuḥā, 2000), 16.

royal, the ninth and last independent ruler of the dynasty, Shāh Sulṭān Ḥusayn (r. 1694 to 1722).[128]

It appears that Ibn Tāwūs conceived of worship as an individual obligation that he did not deign to combine with community. He not only loathed the company of rulers, but apparently people in general. Although enjoining hospitality consistent with Prophetic *adab*, he advises one of his sons against mixing with others as much as possible,[129] describing it as an intractable malady (*dāʾ muʿdil*) that distracts attention away from God towards the ignorance of those preoccupied with idols.[130] Hence, for Ibn Tāwūs, worship is a personal affair, adulterated by communal or administrative association. Herein lies a marked contrast between him and his forefather, al-Ṭūsī, who communicated his task in terms of strengthening communal bonds against detractors both from within and outside the Shiʿi fray. It is the great irony of Ibn Tāwūs's life that the severe disruption of the Mongol invasion and subsequent reign elevated him to the appointed position of Chief of the ʿAlids (*naqīb al-nuqabāʾ*), a position that he came to enjoy and even see to augur a messianic significance.[131]

al-Kafʿamī and the Miṣbāḥ

Perhaps the greatest fruit of Ibn Tāwūs's legacy came two centuries after his death with Taqī al-Dīn Ibrāhīm al-ʿĀmilī al-Kafʿamī. Like the Shiʿi harbingers of supplication before him, al-Kafʿamī came from a distinguished family, tracing his lineage back to the famous Kufan companion of Imam ʿAlī, al-Ḥārith b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Hamdānī (d. 65/684).[132] According to the

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[128] *Tarjumeh-yi Muhaj al-daʿawāt wa-manhaj al-ʿibādāt*, trans. Muḥammad-Taqī b. ʿAlī Ṭabasī (Tehran: Rāʾiḥa, 1379), 8.
[129] ʿAlī b. Mūsā b. Jaʿfar Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Kashf al-maḥajja* (Qom: Būstān-i Kitāb, 2009), 157.
[130] Kohlberg, *A Medieval Muslim Scholar at Work*, 18.
[131] Kohlberg, 12.
[132] Sayyid Muḥsin b. ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Amīn al-ʿĀmilī, *Aʿyān al-Shīʿa*, 12 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Taʿāruf lil-Maṭbūʿāt, 1983), 3:185. Many of the al-ʿĀmilī family trace their ancestry back to Yemeni tribes, and specifically the tribe of

biographical sources, al-Kafʿamī descended from the village of Kafr ʿĪmā, near today's Jibshīt in Jabal ʿĀmil. Sayyid Muḥsin al-Amīn (d. 1371/1952) describes Kafr ʿĪmā–whose only surviving vestiges today are its ruins, including remnants of a mosque–in idyllic terms, as located "at the foot of a mountain, overlooking the sea…and containing fresh water, healthy air, and quality fruits."[133] The land of Jabal ʿĀmil was lush not only with vegetation, but with Imami learning. In accounting for his family's extensive scholastic heritage in the bio-bibliographical (*rijāl*) work, *Amal al-āmil fī ʿulamāʾ Jabal ʿĀmil*, al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī describes his forebear, al-Kafʿamī, as "an erudite, reliable authority" and "an ascetic, pious literatus and poet."[134] Like all other biographers, al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī recognizes al-Kafʿamī foremost for his supplication collection, *Junnat al-amān al-wāqīya wa-jannat al-īmān al-bāqiyya*, known as *Miṣbāḥ al-Kafʿamī*, that, he says, contains "a great many virtues."[135]

According to al-Amīn, al-Kafʿamī's *al-Miṣbāḥ* was authored in the year 895/1489–90.[136] Its sources, cataloged by al-Kafʿamī, are exhaustive, totaling 180 works.[137] Although it was inspired by the *Miṣbāḥ* of al-Ṭūsī, al-Kafʿamī's single-volume, fifty-chapter collection supplements the former with numerous excursuses on the proper conditions, preparations, and manners of prayer. Unlike the clear organization of the former, al-Kafʿamī's *al-Miṣbāḥ* is arranged in an unusual manner, roaming, at the start, from the subjects of (*Faṣl* 1) burial rites to (*Faṣl* 2) ablution and hygienic procedures when attending a mosque. Each extent is elaborated

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ʿĀmila b. Sabaʾ that relocated from Yemen to southern Lebanon sometime before the eleventh century. Rula Jurdi Abisaab, "Shīʿite Beginnings and Scholastic Tradition in Jabal ʿĀmil in Lebanon," *The Muslim World* 89, no. 1 (1999): 4.

[133] Presumably al-ʿĀmilī is referring to the Līṭānī River. He speculates that the name of the village, Kafr ʿĪmā, derives from Syriac; al-Amīn al-ʿĀmilī, *Aʿyān al-Shīʿa*, 3:185.

[134] Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī, *Amal al-āmil fī ʿulamāʾ Jabal ʿĀmil*, 2 vols. (Baghdad: Maktabat al-Andalus, 1966), 1:28.

[135] al-ʿĀmilī, 1:28.

[136] al-Amīn al-ʿĀmilī, *Aʿyān al-Shīʿa*, 3:185.

[137] Ibrāhīm b. ʿAlī al-ʿĀmilī al-Kafʿamī, *Miṣbāḥ al-Kafʿamī* (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Aʿlamī lil-Maṭbūʿāt, 1994), 105–8.

with reference to relevant supplication, e.g., one should always enter the toilet with their left foot, supplicating "In the name of God, by God, protect me against the wicked impurities and filth of the cursed Satan."[138] It proceeds, from section to section, to inventory a vast array of *aʿmāl* for various times of day, corresponding to the dates of birth and death of the Imams. Each is marked by the customary supplication and adjuration of divine power, and frequently interposed with poetry and the associated speech and sermons of the Imams. The *Miṣbāḥ* additionally contains the popular selections of supplication, *al-Jawshan al-kabīr* (and *al-ṣaghīr*), *al-Kumayl*, *al-Faraj*, and *al-Tawassul*, among many others.

Al-Kafʿamī's introduction describes supplication in exalted terms, as "a ladder by which one ascends to the highest ranks of honor and a means to the acquisition of the blazes of praise (*ghurar al-maḥāmid*) and pearls of mercy (*durar al-marāḥim*)."[139] He claims that the Prophet, among his household and closest companions, commanded adherence to the practice and made it a place of refuge for believers.[140] For al-Kafʿamī, the essential path toward God-fearing piety (*taqwā*) is in supplication, an idiom of communion with God. Al-Kafʿamī appears to have practiced what he preached. His prayer manual, the *Miṣbāḥ*, is said to have been so much a part of his own everyday devotion that when time failed to accommodate the demand of its abundant supplication, his wife would perform the remaining selections on his behalf.[141] So too did it catch on among its Shiʿi audience who made it a fixture of their private libraries and as a guidebook for the commemoration and lamentations of religious gatherings.[142] The work became the standard bearer of Shiʿi supplication collections, replacing Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's *Miṣbāḥ al-*

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[138] Ibrāhīm b. ʿAlī al-ʿĀmilī al-Kafʿamī, *Miṣbāḥ al-Kafʿamī*, (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Naʿmān, 1992), 18.
[139] al-Kafʿamī, 9.
[140] al-Kafʿamī, 9.
[141] al-Amīn al-ʿĀmilī, *Aʿyān al-Shīʿa*, 3:185.
[142] ʿAbd al-Karīm Pāknīyā Tabrīzī, "Āshināyī bā manābiʿ-i muʿtabar-i Shīʿa: Kafʿamī wa-Miṣbāḥ Kafʿamī," *Muballighān* Esfand-Farvardīn, no. 126 (1389): 114.

mutahajjid, until the publication of Shaykh ʿAbbās al-Qummī's *Mafātīḥ al-jinān* in the twentieth century.[143]

It is strange to consider the *Miṣbāḥ*'s popularity, in view of al-Kafʿamī's collection, *al-Balad al-amīn*,[144] compiled before the former.[145] Of the two, *al-Balad al-amīn* is the more comprehensive work, featuring 258 sources and greater content, including the supplications of *al-Ṣaḥīfa al-Sajjādiyya*. Like the previously mentioned collections of al-Ṭūsī and Ibn Ṭāwūs, it proved valuable for a Safavid audience. Al-Ṭihrānī cites two Persian translations from the period, commissioned under Shāh Sulṭān Ḥusayn.[146] *Al-Balad al-amīn* still holds special weight among Shiʿi scholars for al-Kafʿamī's expansive commentary, such as on the *khawāṣṣ* of the names of God and on the variations of words and phrases of supplication. Perhaps, as one might speculate, the *Miṣbāḥ*, stripped of the commentarial features of *al-Balad al-amīn*, proved more effective for its easy practical use and accessibility.

Safavid Supplication Manuals: Shaykh al-Bahāʾī's Miftāḥ al-falāḥ & al-Majlisī's Zād al-maʿād

For their lasting influence and the proliferation of related commentaries, I wish to call attention to two other principal texts of Shiʿi supplication, authored during the late Safavid period (907–1135/1501–1722): *Miftāḥ al-falāḥ*[147] by Muḥammad b. ʿIzz al-Dīn al-Ḥusayn al-ʿAmilī (d. ca. 1031/1621), known as Shaykh al-Bahāʾī, and *Zād al-maʿād* by Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī (d. ca. 1110/1699). Persian works designed for laypersons would prove an effective weapon, wielded by state appointed specialists, against the main enemy of heretical innovation

[143] Pāknīyā Tabrīzī, 112.
[144] Full title: *al-Balad al-amīn wa-l-dirʿ al-ḥaṣīn min al-adʿiya wa-l-aʿmāl wa-l-awrād wa-l-adhkār*.
[145] al-Amīn al-ʿĀmilī, *Aʿyān al-Shīʿa*, 3:185.
[146] One of the translations is credited to Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir al-Zawārī al-Iṣfahānī; al-Ṭihrānī, *al-Dharīʿa*, 4:84.
[147] Full title: *Miftāḥ al-falāḥ fī ʿamal al-yawm wa-l-layla min al-wājibāt wa-l-mustaḥabbāt.*

(*bidʿa*) and other syncretic cultural practices.[148] Safavid examples of supplication manuals were assimilated to a program of sacralizing the polity, imbuing its private and public life with a Shiʿi character defined by the hierocracy.[149] Like the sites of pilgrimage built by Safavid dynasts to assert their religious legitimacy, the works of Shaykh al-Bahāʾī and al-ʿAllāma al-Majlisī would construct the attitudes and habits of their visitors. Each text explicates the beau ideal for Imami Shiʿa in practical terms, in relation to collections of devotional acts, and in abstract conceptual terms, in relation to their commentaries.

Al-Bahāʾī was a dedicated Imami scholar known for his erudition and prolific writings. In the wake of increasing Ottoman oppression that would culminate in the execution of Zayn al-Dīn al-ʿĀmilī (d. 965/1558), he and his family left Jabal ʿĀmil for the newly established Shiʿi state around 958/1551, one of the first members of the ʿĀmilī family to immigrate to Safavid Iran.[150] For a time, he occupied the highest religious position in the Safavid realm, appointed *Shaykh al-Islām* of the capital of Isfahan by Shāh ʿAbbās I, before abandoning the position, amid obscure circumstances, to wander with Sufi dervishes for a period of thirty years.[151] His great historical importance cannot be summarized in this writing. It suffices to say that al-Bahāʾī, before leaving on his extended journey outside of Iran, was actively involved in fortifying the Shiʿi foundations

[148] Brunner comments, "In his capacity as šayk̲ al-Eslām, Majlesi is generally described as fighting everything considered heresy and innovation (*bedʿa*) by the traditionalist ulema, being incessantly intent on reviving the *šariʿa*, and enforcing the principle of enjoining the good and prohibiting the bad (Ar. "al-amr be'l-maʿruf wa'l-nahy ʿan al-monkar." Brunner, Rainer. "MAJLESI, MOḤAMMAD-BĀQER," *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online*, accessed August 31, 2023, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2330-4804_EIRO_COM_10783.

[149] I follow Saïd Arjomand's example in the use of the Weberian term, hierocracy, to refer to the institutionalized body of religious authorities in Safavid Iran; Said Amir Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam: Religion, Political Order, and Societal Change in Shi'ite Iran from the Beginning to 1890* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 6–8. Weber defines a ruling organization as hierocratic "where it guarantees its order through the employment of psychic coercion through the distribution or denial of religious benefits (hierocratic coercion)"; Max Weber, *Economy and Society: A New Translation*, trans. Keith Tribe (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019), 136.

[150] Ḥusayn b. ʿAbd al-Ṣamad al-Ḥārithī al-ʿĀmilī, *Wuṣūl al-akhyār ilā uṣūl al-akhbār* (Karbala: Majmaʿ al-Imām al-Ḥusayn al-ʿIlmī li-Taḥqīq Turāth Ahl al-Bayt, 2015), 34–35; al-Amīn al-ʿĀmilī, *Aʿyān al-Shīʿa*, 8:369

[151] al-Amīn al-ʿĀmilī, 1:147. See also Etan Kohlberg. "BAHĀʾ-AL-DĪN ʿĀMELĪ," *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online*, accessed September 3, 2023, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2330-4804_EIRO_COM_6379.

of Safavid Iran at the behest of the Shāh. Many of his works are textual testaments to this patronage, including al-Bahāʾī's famous Persian *fiqhī* epistle, *Jāmiʿ-i ʿAbbāsī*, and his anthology, *al-Kashkūl*, both of which enjoyed wide reception in the Safavid and Mughal domains. His contributions were not limited to the traditional Islamic sciences and encompassed an array of subjects such as astronomy (*Fī tashrīḥ al-aflāk, Usṭurlāb*), arithmetic (*Khulāṣat al-ḥisāb, Tuḥfa-yi hātamī*), and divination and bibliomancy (*Fāl-nāma, Risālat jafr*).

Al-Bahāʾī is credited with several commentaries of supplication, including a marginal gloss (*ḥāshiyya*) on *al-Ṣaḥīfa al-Sajjādiyya*; *al-Ḥadīqa al-hilāliyya*, a separate commentary on *Duʿāʾuhu idhā naẓara ilā al-hilāl* (alternatively, *ruʾyat al-hilāl*), contained within the *Ṣaḥīfa*; and a commentary (*sharḥ*) on *Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*. His most known work on supplication is his collection, *Miftāḥ al-falāḥ.* Although originally written in Arabic in the month of Ṣafar 1015/1606,[152] several Persian translations were composed shortly after, including by al-Bahāʾī's disciple, Muḥibb al-Dīn ʿAlī Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Tabrīzī (d. ca. 1013/1604), and later by the eighteenth century jurist, Āqā Jamāl al-Dīn al-Khwānsārī (d. 1125/1713).[153] In addition to the Shiʿi settings of Iran and Lebanon, lithographs of *Miftāḥ al-falāḥ* were published in Mumbai in 1304/1886–87 and in Egypt in 1324/1906–7.[154] Maḥmūd Malakī (2008) has identified 300 manuscripts of *Miftāḥ al-falāḥ* in the libraries of Iran alone, 137 of which from the eleventh/seventeenth century, 70 from the twelfth/eighteenth century, 34 from the thirteenth/nineteenth century, 9 from the fourteenth/twentieth century, and an additional 48 remaining without dates.[155] Its numbers and wide circulation speak to its enduring importance.

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[152] al-Ṭihrānī, *al-Dharīʿa*, 21:34.
[153] Al-Ṭihrānī catalogs six Persian translations; al-Ṭihrānī, *al-Dharīʿa*, 4:138.
[154] Maḥmūd Malakī, "Kalīd-i rastagārī (Kitābshināsī-yi Miftāḥ al-falāḥ)," *Ḥadīth va andīsha* Fall-Winter, no. 4 (2007): 93.
[155] Malakī, 91.

In *Miftāḥ al-falāḥ*'s opening address (*khutba*), al-Bahāʾī explains that he was urged by a group of believers to compile an abridged volume on the proper performance of daily worship and excellent manners. He describes his answer to this call, the contents of *Miftāḥ al-falāḥ*, as "the best provisions for Judgement Day (*yawm al-dīn*)."[156] On this fateful day, "a short supply [of provisions] is a great help."[157] In the eschatological view of Muslims, every instant of the near abode (*al-dunyā*) culminates in the singular one of Judgement Day, before they are delivered to the last abode (*al-ākhira*). Al-Bahāʾī tasks himself in *Miftāḥ al-falāḥ* with making clear the best use of each diurnal and nocturnal hour spent in the *dunyā.*

The current Arabic edition of al-Bahāʾī's supplication manual is approximately 300 pages. It consists of six chapters, each expounding the practices and liturgies in the sequence of a day, in the following order: (Ch. 1) the period "between the two rises" (*bayn al-tuluʿayn*) of dawn and sunrise; (Ch. 2) from sunrise until sunset (*zawāl al-shams*); (Ch. 3) from sunset until astronomical twilight (*ghurūb*); (Ch. 4) from astronomical twilight until bedtime; (Ch. 5) from bedtime until midnight; and (Ch. 6) from midnight until sunrise. A closing address, enjoining careful attention in prayer, proper Arabic pronunciation, and comprehension of meaning, is followed by a short exegesis of *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa*. Although he does not say so explicitly, it is reasonable to assume that al-Bahāʾī chose the opening chapter of the Qur'an for exegetic treatment, given its recurrence in each obligatory prayer (at least ten times/day) and its crucial status as "the mother of the book" (*umm al-kitāb*). He prefaces his exegesis by stressing: "The remembrance, supplication, and recitation of the worshipper should not be the mere movement of the tongue without observation of their intended meanings, like the state of an Arab who utters

[156] Muḥammad b. ʿIzz al-Dīn al-Ḥusayn al-ʿĀmilī al-Bahāʾī, *Miftāḥ al-falāḥ* (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Aʿlamī lil-Maṭbūʿāt, n.d.), 2.
[157] *Qalīl al-muʾna kathīr al-maʿūna*. al-Bahāʾī, 2.

the words of a Persian without awareness of these utterances' meanings."[158] Al-Bahāʾī compares such a state to inebriety, where a disconnect may occur between intention and speech.[159]

Throughout the text, al-Bahāʾī interpolates several *fiqhī* debates and presents a clear, conclusive determination that he endorses without the details of other positions, denied or otherwise omitted. In one example, he mentions the differences of scholarly opinion over the occasion and repetition of the *dhikr*, *tasbīḥ [Fāṭīma] al-Zahrāʾ*, typically recited by Shiʿa after their obligatory prayers, often with the help of prayer beads. Here the issue emerges from a tradition of Imam al-Ṣādiq where, upon lying down to sleep, he recites a series of supplications, followed by the *tasbīḥ al-Zahrāʾ* without indicating the precise sequence of its locutions. This sequence is inconsistent across the reported traditions and is expressed as the repeated *dhikr* of *al-takbīr* (*Allāhu akbar*), *al-taḥmīd* (*al-ḥamdu lillāh*) and *al-tasbīḥ* (*subḥān Allāh*), or the reverse of the latter two. The main question concerns whether one sequence is preferred over the other generally, e.g., following prayers, or on the occasion of going to bed. Al-Bahāʾī settles on the predominant position in the sequence, *al-takbīr* (34X)–*al-taḥmīd* (33X)–*al-tasbīḥ* (33X), no matter the occasion, i.e., whether after prayer or before going to sleep. He makes a technical grammatical argument–the Arabic *wāw* in the weaker tradition, suggesting the alternative sequence, does not indicate order but rather a general plurality (*muṭlaq al-jamaʿ*).[160]

Knowing the precise moment when one duration commences and expires is a special preoccupation of al-Bahāʾī in *Miftāḥ al-falāḥ*. He takes painstaking efforts to determine the precise *sharʿī* time for each stage of a day. For example, he distinguishes what is known as "the false dawn" (*al-fajr al-kādhib*), when the glow of zodiacal light extends across the eastern

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[158] al-Bahāʾī, 281.
[159] Al-Bahāʾī references Q. 4:43: "O believers! Do not approach prayer while intoxicated until you are aware of what you say"; al-Bahāʾī, 281.
[160] al-Bahāʾī, 216–17.

horizon vertically, from "the true dawn" (*al-fajr al-ṣādiq*), when the first band of horizonal twilight can be seen visibly and when the obligatory dawn prayer commences.[161] He suggests a plethora of supplication for each stage of daybreak, including during the required ablution and recommended pre and post-*fajr* selections (*nāfl*, pl. *nawāfil*). When the morning finally arrives, e.g., al-Bahāʾī encourages the following supplication transmitted by Imam al-Ṣādiq and attributed to the prophet Noah:

> O God, I bear witness to You that whatever blessing and well-being I have in religion or in this world is from You alone, without any partner. Praise and thanks be to You, until and beyond Your complete satisfaction (*riḍāʾ*).[162]

Offering the right prayer at the right time is essential whether it is obligatory or supererogatory. What may seem like fussy minutia for those outside the tradition is of crucial importance for those within it, as the passage from one stage to the next marks the lawful from the unlawful and the efficacious from the unavailing. Accordingly, offering dawn prayer before or after the *fajr al-ṣādiq*–without the intention of missed prayer (*qaḍāʾ*) in the latter case–invalidates it. This awareness of believers renders their worship meaningful in multiple ways, affirmed by the traditions recorded by al-Bahāʾī. As he suggests in *Miftāḥ al-falāḥ*, the heedlessness of a faulty faith can best be overcome through diligent liturgical practices, informed by the devotional techniques of the Imams.

Al-Majlisī's *Zād al-maʿād*–not to be confused with Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's work of the same name–is a single volume work, originally written in Persian.[163] According to al-Ṭihrānī, it was completed in the year 1107/1695–96 and was yet another supplication collection

[161] See al-Bahāʾī, 4–13.
[162] al-Bahāʾī, 9.
[163] The current Arabic edition totals approximately 600 pages.

commissioned by Shāh Sulṭān Ḥusayn.[164] Assuming this date's accuracy, *Zād al-maʿād* was authored toward the end of al-Majlisī's life, while he, like al-Bahāʾī before him, served as *Shaykh al-Islām* of Isfahan. Under this title, al-Majlisī was heavily invested in promoting Shiʿi rites, customs, and pilgrimage in the Safavid domain and produced several Persian works for this purpose. In addition to al-Majlisī's most important Arabic work, the 110-volume collection of hadith, *Biḥār al-anwār*, his Persian works include *Ḥilyat al-muttaqīn*, explaining the ideal comportment and manners regarding the everyday activities of eating, sleeping, dress, conversation, etc., and *Tuḥfat al-zāʾir*, explaining the proper method of *ziyāra* to sites associated with the Prophet's household. Among these examples concerning canon-conforming practices, *Zād al-maʿād* is al-Majlisī's major work.

In his introduction to *Zād al-maʿād*, al-Majlisī is unshy of communicating his purpose in terms of politics and is effusive in his praise of the Shāh, "the drawn sword of courage, whose sharp blade never wavered in severing the heads of the disbelievers," and an embodiment of the "flames of fire and molten copper (55:35)" set against those rendered defenseless, heralded in the Qur'an.[165] Among the achievements of Shāh Sulṭān Ḥusayn counted by al-Majlisī are his revival of the protocol of *sharīʿa* and his building of monumental edifices for the faithful (*al-milla*).[166] Al-Majlisī could just as well be lauding himself, given that the enforcement of *sharīʿa* was part of his very own demands for presiding over the Shāh's coronation.[167] For his own part, al-Majlisī was emboldened under the monarch, first under Shāh Solaymān (r. 1076–1105/1666–94) and subsequently under Shāh Sulṭān Ḥusayn, to use all the levers of power at his disposal and punish

[164] al-Ṭihrānī, *al-Dharīʿa*, 12:11.
[165] Muḥammad Bāqir b. Muḥammad Taqī al-Majlisī, *Zād al-maʿād* (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Aʿlamī lil-Maṭbūʿāt, 2003), 9–10.
[166] al-Majlisī, 10.
[167] Rudi Matthee, "SOLṬĀN ḤOSAYN," *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online*, accessed August 30, 2023, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2330-4804_EIRO_COM_11706.

those who professed a different worldview, whether by destroying Indian idol temples or persecuting the Sufis and philosophers for alleged heresies.[168]

Although, as al-Majlisī mentions in the introduction, most of the supplications in *Zād al-maʿād* can be found in the *Biḥār*, they are scattered and not easily accessible together. He avers that acting upon them is not easy for most people, "absorbed in the preoccupations of worldly concerns."[169] It is al-Majlisī's stated hope that the work be a guide for the daily devotion of commoners (*ʿāmmat al-nās*), who are assured only authentic and reliable transmission chains,[170] and thus "may not be deprived of its blessings."[171] *Zād al-maʿād* divides its chapters, according to the sequence of the Islamic months of the year, detailing their *fadāʾil* and *aʿmāl*. Additional chapters contain information on the rulings, conditions, and associated devotional acts of funerals, alms payments (*zakāt* and *khums*), spiritual retreat within a mosque (*iʿtikāf*), and the various penalties (*kaffāra*) imposed for committing *ḥarām* acts.

Like other devotional works before it, *Zād al-maʿād* extends beyond the bounds of prayer, seeing it as one substantive expression of a believer's faith among others. It is in this respect that supplication is calibrated to the general, overall comportment of Muslims and gains efficaciousness from the latter's optimization, according to the traditions explained in the collections. Despite their seeming simplicity, collections such as those of al-Majlisī presuppose a complex moral scheme, distilled into a carefully arranged mélange of prayerful imperatives. A reader of one of its supplications is given an assortment of words, venerated by their attribution

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[168] Matthee, "SOLṬĀN ḤOSAYN."
[169] al-Majlisī, *Zād al-maʿād*, 9.
[170] Khetia correctly distinguishes a *ṣaḥīḥ* from a *muʿtabar* transmission chain as originating from a *maʿṣūm and* possessing a trustworthy chain of reporters. Whereas outstanding questions with regards to these qualifications may remain with a *muʿtabar* chain, it is nonetheless found trustworthy among reputable scholars; Khetia, "Twelver Shīʿī Liturgy," 127.
[171] al-Majlisī, *Zād al-maʿād*, 9.

to a *maʿṣūm*. They are not given reasons for their reliability nor their depth, a task that would fall instead to supplication commentators.

If the scant information available on lay piety in Safavid Iran is in any way accurate, then al-Majlisī and his class of jurisconsults (*fuqahāʾ*) would have had their work cut out for them.[172] One of the few sources available, Jamāl al-Khwānsārī's commentary, *ʿAqāʾid al-nisāʾ* (or *Kulthūm Nana* in Persian), parodying women's supposed superstitions, provides a rare glimpse into the folk practices and beliefs of seventeenth century Safavid society, and particularly those of Isfahan. Although screened through humorous exaggeration, al-Khwānsārī's anecdotes reveal the appeal of talismanic objects and occult rituals, those deviating sharply from the direction of *sharīʿa*-minded exponents. Babayan (1999) shows that the proscriptions promulgated by al-Majlisī would attempt to check many of the freedoms offered to women by the practices satirized in *ʿAqāʾid al-nisāʾ*.[173] Its author's individual desire to rid pervasive superstitions from his society, would be won by replacing them with orthodox standards for Imami Shiʿism shaped by the official clergy. To a large degree, the hierocracy was successful in this regard, securing widespread recognition of prayer/ethical manuals as authoritative paradigms of religious instruction, which coincidently helped secure the legacy of their authors in the popular Shiʿi imagination as devout, trustworthy expositors of the faith. Much of the heterodox elements of popular ritualistic observances, demonstrated in the use of amulets and charms, were sublimated into the anodyne precepts and formulae of various manuals still in use today. Among them,

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[172] Matthee notes the value of European travelogues, including those of Don García de Silva y Figueroa, Pietro Della Valle, Raphaël du Mans, Jean Chardin, and Engelbert Kaempfer, in illuminating aspects of life in early modern Iran, disregarded by courtiers and clerics in their accounts. Popular religious practices were nonetheless a neglected category. Rudi Matthee, "Safavid Iran through the Eyes of European Travelers," *Harvard Library Bulletin* 23, no. 1–2 (2012): 10–24.

[173] Kathryn Babayan, "The 'ʿAqāʾid al-Nisāʾ': A Glimpse at Safavid Women in Local Iṣfahānī Culture," in *Women in the Medieval Islamic World: Power, Patronage, and Piety*, ed. Gavin Hambly, The New Middle Ages, v. 6 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 369–70.

liturgical texts were of paramount importance. By their demonstrations of "orthodox" devotion, they propagated the idealized religious coding of Safavid society. As we will see shortly in the example of al-Qummī, the cultivation of correct practices (i.e., orthopraxy) by scholars remains a predominant factor in how the wider community of Shiʿa emulate and learn from one another.

Shaykh ʿAbbās al-Qummī and Mafātīḥ al-jinān

The most popular supplication collection among Shiʿa today is undoubtedly *Mafātīḥ al-jinān*, compiled by ʿAbbās b. Muḥammad Riḍā al-Qummī. Al-Qummī was a figure revered for his asceticism and sincerity. He is characterized by a habit of evading public attention and his commitment to the quiet life, as an author of texts promoting Imami devotion.[174] His early studies in Najaf, under the tutelage of the celebrated *muḥaddith*, Mīrzā Ḥusayn Nūrī al-Ṭabarsī (d. 1320/1902), produced in him a strong interest in hadith sciences that blossomed into authoritative knowledge by adulthood. The *Mafātīḥ*, first published in 1346/1927–28,[175] is the most famous of his works, and perhaps the most famous of all Shiʿi devotional literature today, second to the *Ṣaḥīfa*. Originally a Persian translation of Arabic source materials, numerous translations of *Mafātīḥ al-jinān* are available today, and various editions can be found in most Shiʿi mosques and centers around the world.[176] A recent two-volume English translation was prepared by Ali Quli Qarai (b. 1947) to enhance the previously available English edition, translated by Badr Shahin and published by Ansariyan Publications in Qom.[177]

[174] al-Ṭihrānī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 15:999.
[175] al-Ṭihrānī, *al-Dharīʿa*, 21:301.
[176] Al-Ṭihrānī, by the mid-twentieth century, counts over ten published editions; al-Ṭihrānī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 15:1001.
[177] See ʿAbbās b. Muḥammad Riḍā al-Qummī, *Mafatih al-Jinan: A Treasury of Islamic Piety*, 2 vols., trans. Ali Quli Qarai (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2018).

The Arabic *Mafātīḥ al-jinān* is currently available in a single volume of approximately 575 pages. It is divided into three main sections, devoted to the following subjects, in the order: 1) supplication,[178] 2) periodic observances,[179] and 3) pilgrimage rites and associated supplication.[180] The most popular edition of *Mafātīḥ al-jinān* includes the addition of a separate volume of supplication, originally al-Qummī's *Mafātīḥ* marginalia, called *Baqiyyāt al-ṣāliḥāt*.[181] Its addendum, comprising six chapters, stretches the *Mafātīḥ*'s length to approximately 760 pages.

The *Mafātīḥ*'s introduction states al-Qummī's main motivation for the work: The (plural) *Mafātīḥ* would be a corrective of a previously prevalent collection known as the (singular) *Miftāḥ al-jinān* that, according to al-Qummī, was adulterated with untrustworthy content. The widespread circulation of a collection, containing interpolated (*madsūs*) and fabricated (*majʿūl*) supplication, was something al-Qummī could not tolerate.[182] He was joined in his skepticism of the *Miftāḥ* by his teacher, Mīrzā Ḥusayn Nūrī, who assailed its presumed credibility, likening the narrations of the Imams' martyrdoms to "ugly lies."[183] Little is known of *Miftāḥ al-jinān*'s provenance. Al-Ṭihrānī cites the claim of Mashhad's former Friday prayer leader, al-Sayyid Yaḥyā, that the original author was al-Shaykh Asad Allāh al-Ṭihrānī al-Ḥāʾirī (d. 1333/1914–15) who supposedly was one of the students of the great *marjaʿ* and *faqīh*, Shaykh Murtaḍā al-Anṣārī (d. 1281/1864).[184] No available evidence supports this claim, however.

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[178] Full title: *Fī taʿqīb al-ṣalawāt wa-daʿawāt ayyām al-usbūʿ wa-aʿmāl laylat al-jumʿa wa-nahārihā wa-ʿiddat adʿiya mashhūra wa-l-munājiyyāt al-khamsʿashara wa-ghayrihā wa-yaḥtawīʿalāʿiddat fuṣūl.*
[179] Full title: *Fī aʿmāl ashhur al-sana al-ʿarabiyya wa-faḍl yawm al-nayrūz wa-aʿmālahu wa-aʿmāl al-ashhur al-rūmiyya wa-fīhiʿiddat fuṣūl.*
[180] Full title: *Fī al-ziyārāt wa-taḥtawīʿalā muqaddima wa-fuṣūl wa-khātimat al-muqaddima.*
[181] al-Ṭihrānī, *al-Dharīʿa*, 3:11.
[182] al-Qummī, *Mafātīḥ al-jinān*, 2014, 8.
[183] Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad Taqī Nūrī, *Luʾluʾ wa-l-marjān* (Beirut: Dār al-Balāgha, 2003), 135.
[184] al-Ṭihrānī, *al-Dharīʿa*, 21:324.

Al-Qummī's strategy to counter the dubious texts in his midst was to return to the reliable sources. In addition to those previously mentioned (al-Ṭūsī, Ibn Ṭāwūs, al-Kafʿamī), his sources include al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī, Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī, ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn b. Bāqī al-Qurashī al-Ḥillī (d. ca. 653/1255), Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Ṭabrīsī (d. 548/1153), and Mīr Dāmād (d. 1041/1631-2). Among myriad others, this list of notables can be regarded as some of the most reliable Shiʿi traditionalists (*muḥaddithun*). As Khetia observes, it was al-Qummī's close association with Mīrzā Ḥusayn Nūrī and access to the latter's vast library, that brought him closer, in terms of interest, to liturgical material.[185] It also provided him a sizable repository of resources to access for the purpose of developing a corpus.

In conformity with a tradition that promotes a supplication collection's practical use, the chains of transmission (*isnād*) are kept to minimum in *Mafātīḥ al-jinān*. A shortened transmission record is typically followed by any preferred days/times for recitation and any benefits attested by the original orator, i.e., one of the *maʿṣūmīn*, or a compiler. The following example of the "Supplication of the Age of Occultation" (*Duʿāʾ zaman al-ghayba*), is typical of al-Qummī's arrangement:

> It has been narrated, based on a reliable chain of authority, that Shaykh Abū ʿAmr [Uthmān b. Saʿīd al-Amrī, d. ca. 267/880], the first Deputy (*nāʾib*) of the Imam of the Age [Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī], dictated the following supplication to Abū ʿAlī Muḥammad b. [Abī Bakr] Hammām [al-Kātib al-Iskāfī, d. 336/947] who was ordered to recite it. This supplication is cited by Sayyid Ibn Ṭawūs in his book, *Jamāl al-usbūʿ*, following several other supplications recited after the obligatory afternoon prayer (*ṣalāt al-ʿaṣr*) on Fridays. And he [Ibn Ṭawūs] said: If one takes upon themselves what we have mentioned, be careful not to neglect this supplication. I have come to understand its merit through God's grace that He has bestowed upon me; therefore, may you come to rely upon this supplication: [Beginning,] '*O God, make me perceive You, for if I fail to perceive You, I will fail to perceive Your messenger…*'[186]

[185] Khetia, "Twelver Shīʿī Liturgy," 131.
[186] al-Qummī, *Mafātīḥ al-jinān*, 2014, 91.

The advantage of this organization is clear. It does not overburden the reader with information on the transmission of what amounts to a hadith, and instead foregrounds the supplication's text. It operates with clear assumptions: If a tradition is transmitted by the likes of Ibn Ṭāwūs, then it may be considered trustworthy, no matter the gaps of information in the supplication's conveyance, as in this example from al-Iskāfī to Ibn Ṭāwūs. If the reader were so inclined, they may easily determine in the *rijāl* sources that al-Iskāfī is reputed as a trustworthy narrator of a great many traditions, an ardent supporter of Imam al-Mahdī, and a teacher of several classical Imami grandees, such as Ibn Bābawayh and Ibn Qūlawayh.[187] Al-Iskāfī's high status (*manzila ʿaẓīma*)[188] among the foremost scholars, combined with the supplication's genesis in the prayer of an Imam, assures readers of the integrity and benefit of its words.

In unique cases of supplication with questionable origins, al-Qummī presents the relevant information in crisp and concise fashion. In the example of *Duʿāʾ al-ʿadīla*, he poses the question as to whether the supplication was composed by a *maʿṣūm* or one of the *ʿulamāʾ*. He suggests the latter possibility, citing Mīrzā Ḥusayn Nūrī, who affirmed that *Duʿāʾ al-ʿadīla* cannot be found in any of the reliable hadith sources and derives from an unknown scholar among "the people of knowledge."[189] Despite al-Qummī's seeming accord with Nūrī, he includes an important precedent, an abridged version of *Duʿāʾ al-ʿadīla* [*al-ṣaghīr*], transmitted by al-Ṭusī, that contains word-for-word content attributed to Imam al-Ṣādiq.[190] Although al-Qummī elides any overt conclusion, whether based on the evidence of Nūrī's stance or al-Ṭūsī's

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[187] al-Ṭūsī, *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī*, 438–39; Abū al-ʿAbbās Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī* (Qom: Muʾassasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī, 1997), 379–80.
[188] al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, 379.
[189] al-Qummī, *Mafātīḥ al-jinān*, 2014, 116.
[190] al-Qummī, 116. Al-Ṭūsī's abridged version can be found here: al-Ṭūsī, *Tahdhīb al-aḥkām*, 2:116. It is further transmitted without attribution by al-Majlisī II; al-Majlisī, *Zād al-maʿād*, 424–25. Although he does not cite Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ḥillī (d. 771/1369-70), it is likely that al-Qummī also considered al-Ḥillī's approval of the supplication, contained in the latter's treatise, *Irshād al-mustarshidīn*. See Sayyid Hashim al-Baḥrānī, *Maʿālim al-zulfā fī maʿārif al-nashʾat al-ūlā wa-l-ukhrā*, 3 vols. (Qom: Muʾassasat Anṣāriyyān, 2003), 1:314–15.

precedent, *Duʿāʾ al-ʿadīla*'s inclusion in *Mafātīḥ al-jinān* evinces his warrant of authenticity. In this instance, the absence of any objectionable content in an already popular supplication, combined with its virtuous stated purpose of forfending Satan in the presence of death, provides enough benefit to defeat any demand for an Imamate source. Such entries hint at a pragmatic approach that minimizes the potential for controversy over provenance and are consistent with others in *Mafātīḥ al-jinān*, oriented in such a way as to assist Shiʿi supplicants in the proper conventions of daily devotion.

Although al-Qummī's *Mafātīḥ al-jinān* is the latest, it is certainly not the final authoritative supplication collection. Since its publishing, several supplementary and revised versions have been made available by leading *ʿulamāʾ* in Iran. These include Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī's (b. 1927) *Mafātīḥ-i nuvīn* that revises the *Mafātīḥ*'s contents to add more context and aid overall understanding of supplication as a subject of intellectual and historical inquiry; ʿAbd Allāh Jawādī Āmulī's (b. 1933) *Mafātīḥ al-ḥayāt* that stipulates the idealized engagements (*taʿāmul*) among people, beyond religious obligations and worship, explaining how Muslims should interact with each other, animals, their environment, and their government, based on the Imams' traditions; and Muḥammad Yusufī Gharawī's (b. 1948) *Minhāj al-ḥayāt* which provides the full *isnād* of the *Mafātīḥ*'s supplications, while eliminating certain entries that, in the author's account, lack authenticity.

Time has repeatedly shown Shiʿi devotional materials to be part of an ongoing historical tradition of preserving and promoting the prayerful speech of the Imams. From al-Ṭūsī to al-Qummī, there is no homogeneous set of supplications, but various texts containing internal variation whose main consistency is the purpose of influencing the cultural norms and practices of Shiʿi life.

Adāb and *Akhlāq*: Ethics and Shiʿi Supplication

In a tradition, Imam al-Ṣādiq enjoins, "Observe the etiquette (*adāb*) of supplication, and consider to whom, how, and why you supplicate."[191] But what are the *ādāb*, in consideration of these purposes? Al-Kulaynī's book on supplication contains several chapters that pertain to manners, methods, and psychological standards with regards to the recitation and efficaciousness of supplication.[192] Their titles–e.g., "Certainty in [the Efficacy of] Supplication," "Supplicating Attentively" (*Iqbāl ʿalā al-Duʿāʾ*), "On Weeping"–yield important indicators of a practice, involving constituent elements of conduct and technique. The fourteenth chapter expresses the main emotional and behavioral desiderata, "Longing, God-Fearing, Pleading, Constant Devotion, Earnest Prayer, and Entreaty,"[193] vocabulary that frequently appears in supplication and in the Imams' directives for supplicants.

Supplication mobilizes language and choreographs individual temperaments in such a way as to instill ideal patterns of behavior and sustain spiritual appetites. In the Shiʿi tradition, it is not a practice of rote memorization and recitation. In its capacity to express the recognition of God and thankfulness for the sustenance (*rizq*) provided to His "vicegerents," supplication links humanity to God in a fundamental way. The first supplication of Imam al-Sajjād in the *Ṣaḥīfa*, called "In Praise of God" (*Duʿāʾ taḥmīd Allāh*), is a reminder of the uniquely human privilege of speech and its capacity to glorify God. Lines 29–37 read:

> Praise belongs to God, for, had He withheld divine knowledge (*maʿrifa*)
> from His servants,
> to praise Him for the ceaseless kindnesses with which He has tried them,
> and the manifest favors which He has lavished upon them,
> they would have moved about in His kindnesses without praising Him,

[191] al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 93:322.
[192] See al-Kulaynī, *Uṣūl al-kāfī*, 2007, 2:256–329.
[193] *Bāb al-Raghba wa-l-Rahba wa-l-Taḍarruʿ wa-l-Tabattul wa-l-Ibtihāl wa-l-Istiʿādha wa-l-Masʾala*; al-Kulaynī, 2:262–64.

> and spread themselves out in His provision without thanking Him.
> Had such been the case, they would have left the bounds of humanity
> (*ḥudūd al-insāniyya*)
> for that of beastliness,
> and become as He has described in the firm text of His book,
> "They are only like cattle–no, more than that, they are astray from the
> Path!" (25:44).

In these lines, Imam al-Sajjād equates ingratitude with the ineluctable fate of beasts and gratitude with the chosen fate of humans. Animals, despite possessing limited faculties of estimation and imagination, are thoughtless in terms of the sublime mental processes of which humans are capable.

Attentiveness to God and His commands, denoting Islamic "ethics" (*akhlāq*), stands as the properly attuned mode of the psyche. In Islamic philosophy, *akhlāq* realized is commensurate with eudaimonia (*saʿāda*), where an earned excellence of character is rewarded with the achievement of a good life. Here, the "good" of a good life is defined by various virtues emphasized in the Qur'an and the traditions. They include maintaining a physical and mental state of purity (*ṭahāra*) and exercising forbearance (*ḥilm*), virtues allied in their expression of obedience to God's will. Many of these virtues are synonymous with the middle position between two extremes, i.e., Aristotle's "golden mean" expounded in Book II of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. In *al-Madīna al-fāḍila*, al-Fārābī recapitulates this notion within an Islamic ethos, bringing to the fore the microcosmic maintenance of the body's temperaments, the macrocosmic maintenance of a society's polis, and the logic that obtains between them. The ideal of either category's concomitant virtues is dependent on a telos, assumed as natural by al-Fārābī and myriad other Muslim thinkers. Here, the ends of human action, predicable insofar as sanctified sources lead a believer to assume, sustain a derived system of ethics that, according to its champions, is far from arbitrary. When one strives with sincerity in purposive action prescribed by a *maʿṣūm*, no matter the seen or felt outcome, they make progress towards the soul's

entelechy or realization of (previously merely possible) perfection. This progress occurs in stages, depending on the assortment of moral traits mastered by the individual, between over and under-zealousness. For example, one may come to embrace humility over self-loathing and under self-pride.[194]

In his supplication commentary, *al-Ḥadīqa al-hilāliyya*, Shaykh al-Bahāʾī speaks of several stages (*marātib*), each epitomizing standards of ethics and mysticism (*ʿirfān*) that bear on God's reception.[195] He quotes a prophetic tradition, "God does not respond (*yastajīb*) to a supplication from a heedless heart (*qalbin lāhin*)," and stresses qualities such as purity of intention (*ikhlāṣ*) and sincerity (*ṣidq*) whose refinement earns the supplicant a higher spiritual rank.[196] Al-Bahāʾī underscores the many challenges related to the efficaciousness of prayer, be they among the negative category of sins, defective intentions, and hypocrisy, or among the positive category of optimally-delayed fulfillment or God's granting even greater reward. His is one example of systematic thinking on ethics that brings to bear the activity of prayer and that represents its achievements and failures in gradated stages. Several other would follow.

Muḥaqqiq Narāqī's (d. 1209/1795) Jāmiʿ al-saʿādāt

Muḥammad Mahdī "Muḥaqqiq" Narāqī's *Jāmiʿ al-saʿādāt fī mūjibāt al-najāt*, also known as *Akhlāq Narāqī*, is a major modern Imami work on the science of ethics (*ʿilm al-akhlāq*). In the *hawza* curriculum, it has far eclipsed its precursors, works such as Ibn Miskawayh's *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq* and Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Tūsī's *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī*. Its author lived a

[194] Atif Khalil, "Humility in Islamic Contemplative Ethics," *Journal of Islamic Ethics* 4, 1-2 (2020): 223–52.
[195] Muḥammad b. ʿIzz al-Dīn al-Ḥusayn al-ʿĀmilī al-Bahāʾī, *al-Ḥadīqa al-hilāliyya: Sharḥ Duʿāʾ hilāl min al-Ṣaḥifa al-Sajjādiyya* (Qom: Muʾassisat Āl al-Bayt, [n.d]), 11.
[196] al-ʿĀmilī, *al-Ḥadīqa al-hilāliyya*, 11–13.

purposefully penury life in Kāshān, a region devoid of religious specialists at the time.[197] He would later immigrate to the Iraqi shrine cities (*ʿAtabāt*) where he studied under both al-Shaykh Yusūf al-Baḥrānī (d. 1186/1772) and Muḥammad Bāqir al-Bihbahānī (d. 1205/1791), supporters and critics of Akhbārism respectively.[198] His influence would spread quickly as a philosopher, a poet, and a moral exemplar, capable even of working wonders (*karamāt*).[199]

Jāmiʿ al-saʿādāt appears among Narāqī's compendium series, indicated by *Jāmiʿ*, that figure as instructional treatises for students.[200] It is described by Pourjavady as "the seemingly most comprehensive ethical work ever written by a Muslim author."[201] Narāqī borrows heavily from his predecessors who wrote on the subject, including, inter alia, the Aq Qoyunlu-associated theologian, Jalāl al-Dīn Dawānī (d. 908/1502), and his treatise on ethics, *Lawāmiʿ al-ishrāq*, as well as Mullā Muḥsin al-Fayḍ al-Kāshānī's (d. 1091/1680) *al-Maḥajja al-bayḍāʾ*, a Shiʿi adaptation of Ghazālī's *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*.[202] Narāqī's moral philosophy is Aristotelian, but bent according to a heavily revised (Mullā) Ṣadrian ontology, per the criticism of Narāqī's instructor, Mullā Ismāʿīl Khwājūʾī Māzandarānī (d. 1173/1759–60).[203] Whereas Narāqī retains the concept of the golden mean in *Jāmiʿ al-saʿādāt*, he develops a complex system for avoiding various vices

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[197] *Kānat khāliyya min al-ʿulamāʾ*. Narāqī was originally from the village of Narāq, near Kāshān; al-Amīn al-ʿĀmilī, *Aʿyān al-Shīʿa*, 10:143.
[198] Muḥammad Mahdī b. Abī Dhar Fāḍil Narāqī, *Jāmiʿ al-saʿādāt*, 2 vols. (Qom: Intishārāt Ismāʿīliyyān, 2007), 1:10.
[199] For a popular story of Narāqī's conversation with the dead of the Wādī al-Salām cemetery, see Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ḥusaynī Ṭihrānī, *Maʿād-shināsī*, 10 vols. (Mashhad: Nūr-i Malakūt-i Qurʾān, 2006), 2:222–27.
[200] Reza Pourjavady, "Mullā Mahdī Narāqī," in *Philosophy in Qajar Iran*, vol. 127, Handbook of Oriental Studies (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 43.
[201] Pourjavady, 47.
[202] Pourjavady, 48.
[203] Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, *Muntakhabātī az āsār-i ḥukamā-yi illahī-yi Irān*, 4 vols. (Qom: Daftar-i Tablīghāt-i Islāmī-yi Ḥawza-yi ʿIlmiyya, 1999), 4:224; Pourjavady, 51–52. Khwājūʾī authored the supplication commentary, *Miftāḥ al-falāḥ wa-miṣbāḥ al-najāḥ fī sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*. See the edition: Mullā Ismāʿīl Khwājūʾī Māzandarānī, *Miftāḥ al-falāḥ wa-miṣbāḥ al-najāḥ,* ed. Sayyid Mahdī Rajāʾī (Mashhad: Muʾassasat al-Ṭabʿ wa-l-Nashr al-Tābiʿa li-l-Āstāna al-Riḍawiyya al-Muqaddasa, 1993). For more Narāqī's critical view of Ṣadrā, see Sajjad H. Rizvi, "An Avicennian Engagement with and Appropriation of Mullā Ṣadrā Šīrāzī (d. 1045/1636): The Case of Mahdī Narāqī (d. 1209/1795)," *Oriens* 48, 1–2 (2020): 219–49.

and engaging the powers of the soul for the purpose of its purification. Narāqī comprehends the human being as a hylomorphic portmanteau of body and soul, each possessing unique pleasures and pains and causes of destruction and salvation (*munjiyyāt*). The latter categories of the soul's pleasures and salvation hinge on cultivation of the virtues that "transport the soul into close proximity to the people of God and His intimates."[204] *Jāmiʿ al-saʿādāt* is based around comprehension of the soul's features and relation to the body, a wisdom that produces in the aspirant stages of "felicities" (*saʿādāt*). Narāqī's elaborate treatment of the various vices (*radhāʾil*) of the soul, their essential characteristics, and remedies deserves fuller explication in prospective studies focused on Islamic ethics.

Narāqī adumbrates supplication among the most effective means for heeding obedience (*iṭāʿa*) towards God, the Prophet, and Imams, those "vested with authority" in the Qur'anic verse known as *Ūlū al-amr* (4:59).[205] Among other categories, such as purity, prayer, *dhikr*, and pilgrimage, *duʿāʾ* is a form of worship that opposes obedience's obverse, i.e., *fisq*. Like all other forms of piety, *duʿāʾ* has context-specific conditions and cannot be performed haphazardly. Narāqī names a few of these conditions related to time, place, and (inner) state. A prerequire, "main condition" is that their food and clothing be permissible (*ḥalāl*).[206] A supplicant should open with *dhikr* and words of glorification (*tamjīd*); avoid reading in an affected manner; suspend their voice between audibility (*jahr*) and non-audibility (*ikhfāt*); read with humility; and beseech with urgency (*ilḥāḥ*), repeating their supplication three times.[207]

Muḥaqqiq Narāqī concludes his section on supplication with a tradition attributed to Imam al-Ṣādiq. A group approach the Imam with the question, "Why are our supplications

[204] Narāqī, *Jāmiʿ al-saʿādāt*, 1:19.
[205] Narāqī, 2:462.
[206] Narāqī, 2:512.
[207] Narāqī, 2:512.

unanswered?" He responds, "It is because you call upon someone whom you do not know."[208] To al-Ṣādiq's tradition, Narāqī adds commentary that first appears in al-Fayḍ al-Kāshānī's *Tafsīr al-ṣāfī*, per interpretation of Q. 27:62: "He, Who answers the one in distress when he calls upon Him."[209] He adds the following gloss, retroactively integrated into the original tradition:

> It is because you call upon someone whom you do not know and you beseech someone whom you do not comprehend. Distress (*iḍṭirār*) is the essence of religion, while abundant supplication coupled with blindness toward God is a sign of [God's] abandonment (*khidhlān*). For whoever does not testify to the baseness of their ego (*nafs*), their heart, and inner secret, [subordinate] under the power of God, commands God to answer their demand, supposing that their demand is a supplication. This command dares against (*jurʾa ʿalā*) God Almighty.[210]

What appears in the passage, combining *ḥadīth* and *sharḥ*, is an explanation of the characteristics and consequences of the aforementioned "heedless heart," recalled by Narāqī.[211] In the Islamic theological tradition, the opposite of *khidhlān*, an urge toward evil, is "accord," (*tawfīq*), a grace inspiring receptivity toward God and an urge toward righteousness.[212] Narāqī advances the idea that anyone who has not prepared themselves appropriately does not succeed in attaining *tawfīq*: "If you have not fulfilled the conditions of supplication, do not expect a response."[213] He additionally alludes to the positive benefits of anxiety, referenced in Imam al-Ṣādiq's tradition, in recognizing one's humble station, remaining reliant on God, and staying organized according

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[208] Only the first line of the tradition appears originally in Shaykh al-Ṣudūq's *Tawḥīd*. See Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad al-Qummī Ibn Bābawayh, *al-Tawḥīd* (Qom: Muʾassasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī, 2009), 281–82.
[209] "He, Who answers the one in distress when he calls upon Him" (27:62).
[210] Narāqī, *Jāmiʿ al-saʿādāt*, 2:513; Mullā Muḥammad b. Murtaḍā al-Fayḍ al-Kāshānī, *al-Ṣāfī*, 7 vols. (Tehran: Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyya, 1999), 1:341.
[211] Narāqī, 2:512.
[212] Ibn Qayyim: "Consensus has been established among the learned experts (*al-ʿārifīn*) that every good thing has its origin in the *tawfīq* of God towards the servant; and every evil thing has its origin in His *khidhlān* towards His servant. They have agreed that *tawfīq* is that God does not entrust you to yourself; and *khidhlān* is that God abandons you to your self (*yukhlī baynak wa-bayn nafsik*)…The key to *tawfīq* is supplication, neediness (*iftiqār*), sincere refuge [in God], and yearning and awe for Him"; Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *al-Fawāʾid* (Mecca: Muʾassasat Sulaymān Ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Rājiḥī al-Khayrīya, 2008) 141. See also Wensinck's comparison of the terms: A.J. Wensinck, *The Muslim Creed* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 213.
[213] Narāqī, *Jāmiʿ al-saʿādāt*, 2:513.

to prescribed manners. Supplication in Narāqī's schema provides a beneficial role, critical to a salubrious soul, that counteracts the vice of *fisq*.

Spurious Supplication?: The Issue of Authenticity

The question over the authenticity of *duʿāʾ* has more recently emerged among Shiʿi scholars. Most still avoid the question altogether, however some, in recent times, have risked questioning the authenticity of various supplications and the origin and development of their historical transmission. The main issue regards attribution to a *maʿṣūm*, when supplication can be attributed to a sanctioned provenance. The following examples spotlight two intertwined problems of supplications regarding their transmission and content, the second feature often indicating dilemmas with the first.

Transmission Problems: The Case of Duʿāʾ al-tawassul

Some supplication is acknowledged by a wide consensus as authored by *ʿulamāʾ*, and not one of the *maʿṣūmīn*. *Duʿāʾ al-tawassul*, recited on Tuesday evenings after the obligatory evening prayer (*ʿishāʾ*) in congregational settings, is one of those supplications. It nonetheless is included in *Mafātīḥ al-jinān* whose compiler, al-Qummī, is of the view that *Duʿāʾ al-tawassul* was partially authored by Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī.[214] The first full version, consistent with the one contained in the *Mafātīḥ*, appears in al-Majlisī's *Biḥār al-anwār*. He relates the following:

> I found an old facsimile among the works of our companions with the words, 'This supplication was narrated by Muḥammad Ibn Bābawayh on the authority of the Imams.' He ([Ibn Bābawayh] remarked, 'Everything for which I have supplicated was fulfilled quickly [by this *duʿāʾ*].' It reads, 'O God, I beseech You and turn my face toward You…'[215]

[214] al-Qummī, *Mafātīḥ al-jinān*, 2014, 138–39.
[215] al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 2:247–49.

Al-Majlisī does not give the supplication any designation. He provides no transmission chain, nor does he cite his source among Ibn Bābawayh's oeuvre. The closest resemblance to *Duʿāʾ al-tawassul* in Ibn Bābawayh's works occurs in a supplication that he narrates from Imam al-Ṣādiq, recommended for the night prayer. It begins "O God, I turn my face toward You by the right of Your prophet, the prophet of mercy, and his household, and I present them [as intermediaries] for the settlement of my needs,"[216] a line whose only distinction is the singular form, versus the plural version ("We present…) in *Duʿāʾ al-tawassul.*

Determining *Duʿāʾ al-tawassul*'s historical conveyance is complicated by the remnant passages and lines that bear its strong semblance, appearing in early sources. In possibly the earliest extant example, in al-Kulaynī's *al-Kāfī*, Abū al-Qāsim Muʿāwīya b. ʿAmmār al-Kūfī (d. 183/799), companion and hadith transmitter of Imams al-Ṣādiq and al-Kāẓim, requests a special supplication from al-Ṣādiq. The Imam provides two sets of lines. The first set, addressing God, employs various superlative attributes, "O singular One, O the most generous, O self-sufficient," etc.; and the second set, addressing the Prophet, includes the entreaty (*tawassul*), "by the right of Muḥammad and his inheritors (*bi-ḥaqq Muḥammad wa-bi-ḥaqq al-awṣiyāʾ baʿd Muḥammad*)."[217] A similar format is expanded in *Duʿāʾ al-tawassul* to include the following formula directed at the Imams for their intercession,

> O Abū al-Ḥasan,
> O Commander of the Believers,
> We turn our faces toward you, seeking your intercession,
> and your entreaty for us before God,
> and we present you [Imam ʿAlī], as intermediary, for the settlement of our needs.
> O [you] distinguished by God,
> intercede for us before God.

[216] Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad al-Qummī Ibn Bābawayh, *Man lā yaḥḍuruh al-faqīh*, 4 vols. (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Aʿlamī lil-Maṭbūʿāt, 1986), 1:324.
[217] al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1:558–59.

The consequent descriptions change when addressing each of the fourteen Infallibles, yet the supplicative formula, starting with "We turn our faces toward you…," repeats as a lyrical refrain for each figure. Among other early sources, Shaykh al-Ṭūsī narrates from Imam al-Jawād a supplication, designated for the first night of Rajab, that carries an analogous pattern, including the main convention of *Duʿāʾ al-tawassul*, "I turn my face toward you…by the right of the Prophet Muḥammad and the Imams of his household (*ahl baytih*)."[218]

Portions of what is recognized today as *Duʿāʾ al-tawassul* appear elsewhere, in sources closer to al-Majlisī's time. Ibn Ṭāwūs includes an account involving Abū Ḥamza al-Thumālī (d. 150/767), companion of Imam al-Sajjād. While Abū Ḥamza applies a bandage to his son's broken hand, he suddenly recalls a supplication of the Imam that, post-recitation, miraculously mends the break. After a suspicious observer demands to know what variety of "sorcery" Abū Ḥamza exercised to heal the hand so quickly, he relates the supplication he was taught, featuring the lines reminiscent of *Duʿāʾ al-tawassul*, "I turn my face towards you, and your entreaty for me before God, seeking your intercession, by the right of the prophet of mercy and his household."[219] A variation also occurs in al-Kafʿamī's *al-Balad al-amīn*, under the name, *Duʿāʾ al-faraj*, that he specifies as *taʿbiqāt*, i.e., supererogatory prayer following obligatory prayers.[220] This version, that al-Kafʿamī attributes to Imam al-Riḍāʾ, includes opening and concluding sets of lines absent in the current *Duʿāʾ al-tawassul*, and is also unattributed to any transmission chain.

Although many ambiguities remain, these contributions help narrow the over-seven century gap between al-Kulaynī and Majlisī, where the supplication was transmitted in

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[218] al-Ṭūsī, *Miṣbāḥ al-mutahajjid*, 553.
[219] Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Muhaj al-daʿawāt*, 218–19.
[220] Taqī al-Dīn Ibrāhīm b. ʿAlī al-Kafʿamī, *al-Balad al-amīn* (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Aʿlamī lil-Maṭbūʿāt, 1997), 449–53.

fragments. They also give compelling reason to regard today's *Duʿāʾ al-tawassul* as a combination of several other supplications that preceded it, whether compiled by Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī or others.

Duʿāʾ al-tawassul's reappearing convention, "by/in the name of," is a staple of supplication. However, we find few other examples of its oath toward the Imams, nor to their intercession, outside of *Duʿāʾ al-tawassul*. Muḥammad Yusufī Gharawī omits *Duʿāʾ al-tawassul* from his compendium of supplications, *Minhāj al-ḥayāt*, for this reason. Gharawī describes the supplication as "devised" (*inshāyī*) by Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, and questions whether it should even be qualified as supplication, given its authorship at the hands of later scholars. Even worse for Gharawī, its problem lies in its entreaties toward the Imams and not toward God for intercession, an unsanctioned practice in the Qur'an[221] that, as far as he is concerned, provides further ammunition to Salafi detractors of Shiʿism.

Several questions remain: If the intercessory contents of *Duʿāʾ al-tawassul* were directed toward God, instead of the Imams, would its authenticity ever be questioned? Is the fragmentary historical transmission of *Duʿāʾ al-tawassul* exceptional among other supplications contained in *Mafātīḥ al-jinān*? We turn to the following cases for insight.

Content Problems A: The Case of Ziyārat ʿĀshūrāʾ

Certain Shiʿi supplications are used to settle sectarian scores and launch polemics, usually in concealed fashion. The twenty-sixth supplication of *al-Ṣaḥīfa al-Sajjādiyya* references the divine right of the Imamate and encourages prayer for neighbors who share in this recognition. It begins with the words,

> O God, bless Muḥammad and his household

[221] "Do not invoke anyone besides Him" (72:18).

> and attend to me with Thy best attending
> in my neighbors and friends (*walī*, pl. *awliyāʾ*)
> who recognize our right
> and war against our enemies (*munābidhīn li-aʿdāʾinā*) [222]

In his famous commentary of *al-Ṣaḥīfa al-Sajjādiyya*, Sayyid ʿAlī Khān al-Madanī (d. ca. 1120/1708) interprets the recognition of this right as "an expression of firm conviction (*iʿtiqād*) in their Imamate, the binding obligation towards their obedience, and the necessity of following and submitting to them."[223] The enemy of the *walī* opposes this special perception and deserves the active repudiation or "casting off" (*nabdh*) in the form of combat (*qitāl*).[224] In another coded example from *al-Ṣaḥīfa al-Sajjādiyya*, the forty-ninth supplication, called "Supplication in Repelling the Trickery of Enemies" (*Dafaʿ kayd al-aʿdāʾ*), alludes to Karbala and the first-person experience of Imam al-Sajjād, "left alone before the great numbers of him who is hostile toward me."[225] It contains the following lines, hinting at the preparations of hostile Umayyad schemers and his murder by poisoning, attributed to al-Walīd I in Shiʿi sources,

> How many an enemy has unsheathed the sword of his enmity toward me,
> honed the cutting edge of his knife for me,
> sharpened the tip of his blade for me,
> mixed his killing potions for me,
> pointed toward me his straight-flying arrows,
> and secretly thought of visiting me with something hateful
> and making me gulp down the bitter water of his bile.[226]

These examples from *al-Ṣaḥīfa al-Sajjādiyya* are mild compared to *Ziyārat ʿĀshūrāʾ*, a supplication that has faced challenges over its authenticity and its series of maledictions (*laʿnāt*) in its second half. These maledictions are explicitly directed at figures perceived to have impeded or harmed the Prophet's household. Their series begins,

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[222] Chittick, *The Pslams of Islam*, 98.
[223] Ṣadr al-Dīn ʿAlī Khān b. Aḥmad al-Madanī, *Riyāḍ al-sālikīn fī sharḥ saḥīfa Sayyid al-Sājidīn*, 7 vols. (Qom: Muʾassasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī, 2014), 4:153.
[224] al-Madanī, 4:153. Harnessing al-Zamakhsharī's definition, al-Madanī explains that *nabdh* is synonymous with *ramy*, a "throwing off" of the enemy.
[225] Chittick, *The Psalms of Islam*, 202.
[226] Chittick, 202–2.

O God, pour special curses on the foremost oppressor
and begin with him first,
and then pour curses on the second, the third, and the fourth.
O God, curse Yazīd fifthly,
and curse ʿUbayd Allāh b. Ziyād, the son of Marjanah,
ʿUmar b. Saʿd [b. Abī Waqqāṣ], Shimr [b. Dhī al-Jawshan],
the family of Abū Sufyān, the family of Ziyād, and the family of Marwān
until the Day of Resurrection.

While the first set of lines do not name those that they curse, referring instead to an ambiguous "first" and "second," by the time it reaches the "fifth," names are specified to include the combatants of Ashura on the side of Yazīd b. Muʿāwiya. The distinguished scholar of Qom's hawza, Sayyid Muḥammad ʿIzz al-Dīn Ḥusaynī Zanjānī (d. 2013) explains in his commentary of *Ziyārat ʿĀshūrāʾ* that this section exemplifies one of the ancillaries (*furūʿ*) of Shiʿi faith, the *tawallī* tenet of association and fraternity with those sharing in recognition of the Imams' *walāya* and the coincident *tabarrī* tenet of dissociation with their adversaries.[227] To help identify the unspecified first set of persecutors, Zanjānī introduces a letter, purportedly written by Muʿāwiya in response to one originally sent by Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr.[228] In his letter, Muʿāwiya rebuts the accusations of his oppression by explaining to his audience that Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr's father and his "Furūq," ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, were the first to deprive ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib of what "rightfully belonged to him." He further informs that Abū Bakr and ʿUmar coordinated their efforts to usurp what was designated to ʿAlī and, when ʿAlī hesitated in swearing allegiance to them, they plotted to kill him. Muʿāwiya confesses that he only followed the deeds and conduct of Abū Bakr, and so if his own behavior counts as oppression, then he is Abū Bakr's accomplice in oppression, emulating the first caliph's purest form.[229]

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[227] Muḥammad ʿIzz al-Dīn Ḥusaynī Zanjānī, *Sharḥ Ziyārat ʿĀshūrāʾ* (Qom: ʿUrūj-i Andīsheh, 2009), 139.
[228] This letter can be found in al-Masʿūdī. See ʿAlī b. Ḥusayn al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab wa-maʿādin al-jawhar*, vol. III (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-ʿAṣriyya, 2005), 17–19.
[229] Zanjānī, *Sharḥ Ziyārat ʿĀshūrāʾ*, 139–41.

Rather than identify by name the first and second caliph, Zanjānī suggests that the supplication leaves these out in the spirit of unity (*waḥda*) with Sunnis, those more likely to be offended by their names' inclusion than subsequent others, such as Shimr, executioner of Imam Ḥusayn. At the time of the supplication's authorship, anonymity, or at least dissimulative metonymy, would have been necessary for preserving "public welfare" (*maṣlaḥa*).[230] Hasan Farhang Ansari supports Zanjānī's thesis, averring that the supplication's content indicates a late Umayyad vintage. In particular, its notions of *walāya* and *barāʾa* are consistent with the general atmosphere of the first half of the second Islamic century. Its emphasis on the disassociation of the Umayyads captures the dominant Shiʿi sentiment and speaks to the supplication's authenticity. A later period, Ansari reasons, would not have placed such an emphasis on the families of Umayyad founders, described as accursed. The supplication would be a useful reminder for those of its time, one or two decades before the Abbasid revolution, that the first Umayyad generation's children participated actively in the same variety of oppression towards the Prophet's household as their predecessors. It is for this reason that Ansari characterizes *Ziyārat ʿĀshūrāʾ* as part of a propagandistic (*tablīghī wa-mubārizātī*) campaign, delivering the emotional message of the Shiʿa of Kūfa.[231]

Other scholars counter that the second, cursing section of *Ziyārat ʿĀshūrāʾ* is a later addition to an otherwise authentic tradition. Sayyid Murtaḍa Sharīf Askarī (2007) provides a literary (*adabiyyātī*) and textual (*matanī*) critique.[232] His literary critique concerns what he identifies as an inconsistency in the Arabic grammar. Askarī, together with Gharawī,[233] claims

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[230] Zanjānī, 141.
[231] Hasan Farhang Ansari, "*Darbāra-yi iṣālat-i zīyārat ʿĀshūrāʾ*" Barrasīhā-yi tārīkhī, accessed September 29, 2022, http://ansari.kateban.com/post/1640.
[232] "ʿAllāma Askarī va zīyārat ʿĀshūrāʾ," Markaz-i Muṭāliʿāt-i Islāmī-yi ʿAllāma ʿAskarī, accessed September 29, 2022. https://fa.alaskari.org/دیدگاه-علامه-عسکری/زیارت-عاشورا/.
[233] "Sukhanrānīhā, muṣāḥibahā," Ayatollah Muḥammad Yusufī Gharawī, accessed September 30, 2022. http://yousofi.info/fa/ArticlePrint_446.htm.

that the "first" in the line, "O God, pour special curses on the foremost oppressor (*awwal ẓālim*), and begin with him first (*awwalan*)," is indefinite, which, they point out, is inconsistent with the oppressors named second, third, and fourth that are definite, e.g., *al-thānī*. For those who count the "fragrance" of an Infallible's speech as verification, the inelegance and clumsy rhetorical structure of this passage cannot be countenanced. This critique, however, appears to fail under scrutiny. The "first" in this passage serves as a circumstantial adverb (*ḥāl*), viz. "firstly," and *awwal ẓālim* is a definite possessive case (*iḍāfa*), viz. "the first of oppressors." Askarī's *matanī* critique is far more effective. He specifies that Ibn Qūlawayh's version of *Ziyārat ʿĀshūrāʾ* in his authoritative *Kāmil al-zīyārāt*, the first collection of its inclusion, does not feature the second, problematic section. Such criticism, in regard to the former category of transmission, is mitigated by several strategies, such as can be seen employed by Ayatollah Jaʿfar Subḥānī (b. 1929). Subḥānī provides a thorough study of the *rijāl*-related info, per the *isnād* of Ibn Qūlawayh and Shaykh al-Ṭūsī. He finds that both chains share certain transmitters, such as Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl b. Bazīʿ, who is considered a sound narrator and from whose book the supplication was supposedly obtained, however likely.[234] Furthermore, Subḥānī appeals to authority, upholding the view of Sayyid Muḥammad Mahdī Baḥr al-ʿUlūm (d. 1212/1797) that the narrators cited by Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, included in the *isnād* of *Ziyārat ʿĀshūrāʾ*, because of their firm Shiʿi convictions and promotion of the faith, possess praiseworthy (*mamdūḥ*) attributes, qualifying them as reliable.[235] Subḥānī appeals to the consensus of a tradition's wide use and reliability by immanent jurists and the "principle of leniency" (*al-tasāmuḥ* [alternatively, *tasāhul*[236]] *fī adillat al-sunan*) in requiring stringent proof for weak traditions, expounded by the likes of Muḥammad

[234] Jaʿfar Subḥānī, *Rasāʾil wa maqālāt*, 11 vols. (Qom: Muʾassasat al-Imām al-Ṣādiq, 2002), 3:416.
[235] Subḥānī, III:405–6.
[236] Zayn al-Dīn b. Nūr al-Dīn ʿAlī b. Aḥmad al-ʿĀmilī, *Sharḥ al-Bidāya fī ʿilm al-dirāya* (Qom: Manshūrāt Ḍiyāʾ al-Fayrūz Ābādī, 2012), 29–30.

b. Makkī al-ʿĀmilī, Zayn al-Dīn al-ʿĀmilī, and Shyakh al-Anṣārī, features that compensate for transmission vulnerabilities.[237] They typically rely on the hadith of the Prophet, and its variations attributed to al-Ṣādiq, that instructs those to act in accordance with what is reported to provide reward (*thawāb*) [or the good (*khayr*)] which a person shall receive, whether the report turns out to be false.[238] Other Shiʿi authorities, such as al-Khūʾī, contest the principle of leniency as a legal standard of proof for determining recommended acts, although they preserve the merit of acting upon narrations in the hope (*rajāʾ*) of the attainment of benefit.[239]

Content Problems B: The Case of Duʿāʾ ṣanamay Quraysh

The most blatant example of sectarian polemics occurring in supplication is *Duʿāʾ ṣanamay Quraysh* that castigates the "two idols," a euphemism for Abū Bakr and ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, as well as their respective daughters, ʿĀʾisha and Ḥafṣa. It makes a number of accusations against them, including disobeying the Prophet Muḥammad, altering (*qallaba*) the religion, willfully distorting (*taḥrīf*) the Qur'an, and plundering public wealth and the inheritance intended for the Prophet's family; and it relishes in the public flogging of these "tyrants" at the hands of Imam al-Mahdi upon his messianic return, events alluded to in several Imami traditions.[240] *Duʿāʾ ṣanamay Quraysh* advocates for both open and concealed cursing of these

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[237] Jaʿfar Subḥānī, *Irshād al-ʿuqūl ilā mubāḥith al-uṣūl*, 4 vols. (Qom: Muʾassasat al-Imām al-Ṣādiq, 2003), 3:434–43. Shaykh Muhammed Ali Ismail of the contemporary Islamic College of London supports this scholarly imprimatur, supplementing *Ziyārat ʿĀshūrāʾ*s transmission chains with various standards of verification, such as the principle of leniency when applied to a tradition of recommended (*istiḥbābī*) acts (versus those of obligation or prohibition) that encourage piety, reinforcing the disputed chain of al-Ṭūsī; Mohammed Ali Ismail, "Is Ziyārat ʿĀshūrāʾ Authentic? A Discussion in ʿIlm al-Rijāl," *The World Federation of Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Muslim Communities*, Shia Theology: Beliefs and Methodologies, 2022, https://www.world-federation.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Is-Ziyarat-%CA%BFAshura%CA%BE-Authentic-M.-A.-Ismail-1.pdf.
[238] For these hadiths, see al-Ḥillī, *ʿUddat al-dāʿī*, 12–13.
[239] Abū al-Qāsim Amīn al-Sharīʿa Khūʾī, *Miṣbāḥ al-uṣūl*, ed. Muḥammad Surūr al-Wāʿiẓ, 2 vols. (Qom: Maktabat al-Dāwarī, 2000), 2:318–20. See the article, "Approaches to Supplication (duʿāʾ)" by Arif Abdulhussain and Hashim Bata of the Al-Mahdi Institute, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/362226935_Approaches_to_Supplication_dua.
[240] E.g., al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, LXXXVII:315-16.

figures, a preview of their eternal chastisement for all manner of treacheries, enumerated in its formulations.

Duʿāʾ ṣanamay Quraysh first appears in Ḥasan b. Sulaymān al-Ḥillī's (d. ca. 801/1399) *al-Muḥtaḍar*. Al-Ḥillī provides no transmission chains, nor original source, and only mentions that Imam ʿAlī would recite the supplication during his *qunūt* prayer.[241] It reappears around a century later in al-Kafʿamī's *Miṣbāḥ*. As previously stated, few doubt al-Kafʿamī's reliability, and, despite the lack of narrators for *Duʿāʾ ṣanamay Quraysh*, the supplication has been endorsed by a wide variety of religious scholars with diverging views on much larger issues.

In the account narrated by al-Kafʿamī, ʿAbd Allāh Ibn al-ʿAbbās witnesses ʿAlī reciting an unknown supplication during his prayer. When Ibn al-ʿAbbās later inquires as to the supplication, ʿAlī identifies it as *Duʿāʾ ṣanamayy Quraysh*, adding, "Indeed, the reciter [of *Duʿāʾ ṣanamayy Quraysh*] is equal to the marksman participating with the Prophet in [the battles of] Badr, Uḥud, and Ḥunayn, having shot thousands of arrows."[242] Al-Majlisī includes the same supplication and repeats these benefits.[243] He further includes portions of the most famous commentary of the supplication, *Rashḥ al-walāʾ fī sharḥ al-duʿāʾ*, authored by "Abū al-Saʿādāt" Asʿad ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Gharawī (d. ca. 640/1242), that generalizes the two idols as those of obscenity (*al-faḥshāʾ*) and the reprehensible (*al-munkar*), before parsing each term out and assimilating them to the tyrant (*al-ṭāghūt*) opposed to Islam.[244] Harnessing al-Gharawī's commentary, al-Majlisī dispels any remaining ambiguities as to the adversaries of the Prophet's household, implied in the supplication.[245] He explains that the line "Those who rejected the

[241] Ḥasan b. Sulaymān al-Ḥillī, *al-Muḥtaḍar* (Najaf: Intishārāt al-Maktaba al-Ḥaydariyya, 2003, 111.
[242] al-Kafʿamī, *Miṣbāḥ al-Kafʾamī*, 2:644.
[243] al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 25:260–61.
[244] al-Majlisī, 25:262.
[245] Just why al-Gharawī is mentioned by al-Majlisī, but not al-Kafʿamī and the *Miṣbāḥ*, is a mystery.

proof…climbing the mountain pass" refers to *aṣḥāb al-ʿAqaba*, a group of companions who, in a famous incident,[246] conspired to kill the Prophet, and who reputedly included Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmān, Ṭalḥa, Zubayr, Abū Sufyān, among others.[247] Furthermore, in the original commentary of al-Gharawī, he identifies the two idols as Abū Bakr and ʿUmar by dint of several traditions he provides, where the pair are referred as either *ṣanamayy Quraysh* or *ṣanamayy al-ʿarab*.[248]

Al-Gharawī's commentary presents a separate transmission problem: He predeceases al-Ḥillī by roughly one and a half centuries. Who, then, are *his* sources? Al-Gharawī provides few clues. In his introduction, he assures readers, "There is no doubt in the soundness of the narrations [of *Duʿāʾ ṣanamayy Quraysh*] that come from the most trustworthy narrators," while providing no evidence for the supplication's appearance before his own writing.[249] For al-Gharawī, its reliability is self-evident and unassailable, and any proof of which lies not in its transmission, but rather in its content. Following his confident statement as to the supplication's authenticity, he supplies several variations of a Prophetic tradition, related by the companion Salmān al-Fārsī, foretelling the evolution of three factions after the Prophet's demise: those of truth, likened to gold metal, those of falsehood, likened to a "slag of iron" (*khabath al-ḥadīd*), and those led astray (*ahl al-ḍalāla*), who waver between them.[250] In exhaustive fashion, al-Gharawī provides thorough transmission chains for each tradition, the irony apparently lost in their total absence with respect to the supplication under his commentarial scrutiny. The main import of the traditions' focus in the commentary's introduction is the Prophetic proof indicating division of the early Muslim community into different groups, with Imam ʿAlī positioned as the

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[246] For some commentators, this incident, when the Prophet was returning from the Expedition of Tabūk, is implied in the verse, "They swear by God that they never said anything blasphemous, while they did in fact utter a blasphemy, lost faith after accepting Islam, and plotted what they could not carry out" (9:74).
[247] al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 25:267.
[248] Asʿad b. ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Gharawī, *Rashḥ al-walāʾ fī sharḥ al-duʿāʾ* ([n.i.]: [n.i.], 2001), 206.
[249] al-Gharawī, 63.
[250] al-Gharawī, 64–71.

first category's exemplar, and those of the second category, "kindling the fires of hell," described in acrid detail in *Duʿāʾ ṣanamayy Quraysh*.[251] In short, al-Gharawī adopts a *matn-contra-isnād* logic where suspicion stirred by a dearth of information related to transmission and historicity is defeated by textual conformity to primary Imami creedal principles.

Extant manuscripts of *Rashḥ al-walāʾ*, either as independent treatises or part of *majmūʿa* collections, are revealing. Of the five listed by the editor of al-Gharawī's commentary, they date between 1069–1333/1658–1915, four of which are from the twelfth *hijrī* century.[252] If the dating of these manuscripts is accurate, we have evidence that al-Gharawī's commentary was circulating among the Safavid literati at a time contemporaneous with al-Majlisī, a crucial historical juncture, when sectarian polemic would prove useful against a Sunni Ottoman enemy.[253] We might be persuaded to speculate that both the supplication and its commentary are artifacts of this Safavid state project; and yet, the evidence is too flimsy to make this assertion confidently.

Transmission complications aside, *Duʿāʾ ṣanamayy Quraysh*'s attribution to ʿAlī is curious. Certain qualities provoke doubt due to their incongruities with his reported character and speech. Namely, the naked, artless chastisement of others has few precedents in the collected speeches and sermons of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib.[254] *Duʿāʾ ṣanamayy Quraysh*'s severity is unusual, against the canonical record of attributed sayings of the Imam. Its variety of slander is explicitly discouraged elsewhere, in Sermon 206 of *Nahj al-balāgha*, where ʿAlī rebukes a group among

[251] al-Gharawī, 67.
[252] al-Gharawī, 38–42.
[253] On this transition, see Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 122–59.
[254] Although, in the sermon known as *al-Shiqshiqiyya*, Imam ʿAlī is critical of the caliphs, his criticism is always measured and non-reactionary, yielding no slander against them, and encourages patience; Abū al-Ḥasan Muḥammad b. al-Mūsawī al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha* (Mashhad: al-ʿAtba al-ʿAlawiyya al-Muqaddasa, 2015), 83–89.

his battalion, fighting in the Battle of Ṣiffīn, for insulting those on the Syrian side. He instead advises the pacific supplication:

> O God, save our blood and their blood. Produce reconciliation between us and them and lead them out of their misguidance so that he who is ignorant of the truth may know it, and he who inclines towards rebellion and aggression may turn away from it.[255]

The popular, and often controversial, cleric Ayatollah Kamāl al-Ḥaydarī (b. 1956) has called *Duʿāʾ ṣanamayy Quraysh* false (*bāṭil*), devoid of any legitimate basis, and opposed to the sophistication and beauty of the Imams' speech.[256] As in other areas of scholarly interest, he is an outlier in his view. Another popular modern preacher, Yāsir al-Ḥabīb, strongly supports its authenticity and has produced a commentary on the supplication, exulting its language.[257] Despite the controversy al-Habib has generated in association with Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's critique of "British Shiʿism," aligned with Western interests and causing sectarian schism, al-Habib holds a majority opinion among clerical scholars. In other words, where outstanding differences obtain between their cadres otherwise, there is overwhelming concord over the authentication of supplication. This leads to the following conclusions concerning the issue.

A spectrum of opinion is represented in the views of Shiʿi scholars, yet a dominant perspective holds. This is that transmission is favored over content when discrepancies appear among the latter. In the court of *mujtahids*, authenticity–with strict regard to supererogatory prayer–can be inferred from the credibility of the transmitters. Even when content seems crude or inapposite for its original orator, its inclusion in reliable books (*al-kutub al-muʿtabara*), composed by widely trusted (*mawthūq*) authors, signals verification, unless otherwise specified.

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[255] al-Raḍī, 495.
[256] "Mā yusammā bi-Duʿāʾ ṣanamayy Quraysh bāṭil jazman |Sayyid Kamāl al-Ḥaydarī," April 28, 2013, Ṭarīq al-Salām, YouTube video, 0:56, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4VpvLMoUyws.
[257] Yassir al-Habib, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ ṣanamayy Quraysh* ([n.p.]: Al-Qaṭra, [n.d.]).

And even in the case of attribution to a non-*maʿṣūm*, such as *Duʿāʾ al-tawassul*, the sanction for a supplication's recitation by an authority, whether of the classical period (e.g, Shaykh al-Ṭūsī) or the post-classical period (e.g., al-Kafʿamī) is, for the *mujtahid* majority, sufficient evidence for its devotional benefit. In essence, the principle of leniency, based on the precipitating conditions of established use and favorable expected outcomes,[258] overcomes the challenges of narrational or content issues.

The thrust of this stance derives from several related traditions, the pithiest example from Imam al-Ṣādiq: "One who learns something of the divine reward (*al-thawāb*) of an act and consequently performs the act is eligible for that reward, even if the report proves inauthentic."[259] In other words, if someone acts in good faith, based on the word of a trustworthy person, they earn reward from God, whether the person or the information promising reward is later discovered to be unreliable. The probative burden does not fall on a person to question or examine the motives or sources of trustworthy claimants, nor does an *ex post facto* outcome take effect where reward is denied or that punishes retroactively.

Concluding Remarks

In this chapter on supplication in Shiʿi Islam, we have reviewed the primary sources and theological concepts undergirding this main supererogatory form of worship for Shiʿis. Shiʿi supplications have been shown to combine theological depth with emotional and poetic expression, containing elaborate and rhetorically rich descriptions of all manner of natural and metaphysical phenomena. The storehouses of these lyrical, expressive formulas, chiefly *al-*

[258] In this case, the anticipated strengthening of the cause of, and sympathetic connection towards, the *ahl al-bayt*, would be considered positive from the perspective of Imami creed. Subḥānī, *Rasāʾil wa maqālāt*, 3:421.
[259] al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī, *Wasāʾil al-shīʿa*, 1:97.

Ṣaḥīfa al-Sajjādiyya and Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's *Miṣbāḥ al-mutahajjid*, were seminal in shaping the Shiʿi prayer tradition and in vindicating confessional norms and practices of the Imamis over their detractors, whether real or imagined. So far, we have depicted supplication from the emic view, serving as a means for attaining *qurba* between God and His vicegerents, the Imams, and from the etic view, as a bridge between the Imams and their adherents via the *ʿulamāʾ*.

This pattern of group consolidation and source standardization continues with the proliferation of commentaries of supplication in the Safavid era when a mass conversion process was instituted by a newly formed Shiʿi state. In the next chapter, I consider several commentary examples, which transform raw devotional contents into theological, philosophical, and ethical insights and even polemical diatribes. These commentaries, from the Safavid to the Qajar periods, became pedagogical tools, emphasizing the various thematic dimensions of prayer and that foster a unified Shiʿi sense of belonging, rooted in shared scriptural traditions and pietistic aspirations.

Chapter 3:

A Short History of Shiʿi Supplication Commentaries

The early history of Shiʿi supplication commentaries may be characterized as concerned with the linguistic aspects of the Imams' devotional traditions and later take on an interest in the theological, mystical, and ethical facets of prayer. As commentaries grow in their depth and sophistication, they retain their prototypical role in safeguarding the legacy of the Imams' traditions, while clarifying their layered meanings and ambiguities of language for those centuries removed from their original audience. This chapter provides a concise textual chronicle of works by Shiʿi scholars engaged in the transmission of a shared framework for practice and belief. It begins with commentaries of *al-Ṣaḥīfa al-Sajjādiyya* whose supplications are ascribed to the fourth Imam ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn (d. 95/713), known by his honorifics *Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn* ("adornment of the worshippers") and *al-Sajjād* ("he who constantly prostrates").

The *Ṣaḥīfa* and its Early Commentators

Al-Ṣaḥīfa al-Sajjādiyya is without question the most important collection of Imami supplications. Its alternative designations–"The Sister of the Qur'an" (*Ukht al-Qurʾān*), "The Gospel of the Prophet's Household" (*Injīl Ahl al-Bayt*), and The Psalms of the Family of Muḥammad (*Zabūr Āl Muḥammad*)[1]–speak to its centrality in the Imami canon. Its subjects reveal those most essential to the Shiʿi lifeworld and concern the scope and features of *wilāya*, the railhead of the faith's social, spiritual, and legal principles.

[1] al-Madanī, *Riyāḍ al-sālikīn*, 1:44.

A select group of scholars have authored introductions to the *Ṣaḥīfa*, including the modern jurist and exegete of Najaf, Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr (d. 1400/1980), who penned an introduction, common to the version published in Arabic today. In this introduction, al-Ṣadr summarizes the larger historical appreciation of Imam Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn shared by Shiʿis. He speaks of the Medinan community's trust and veneration of Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn and the Imam's versatility in matters of law and deep spiritual knowledge, creating natural affinities between himself and others.[2] Al-Ṣadr further claims that, in the wake of the Muslim military ascendence and wider embrace of Islam among conquered peoples during the reign of ʿAbd al-Malik (r. 65–86/685–705), the Imam paved the way for Islam's spiritual horizons, as part of a "diligent intellectual movement" (*ḥarakat fikriyya ijtihādiyya*) toward the religion's teachings.[3] This success had its perils, including the community's growing wealth and prosperity, risking what al-Ṣadr identifies as the faith's contamination with worldly desires and concerns. To serve the true interests of the movement and safeguard its dangerous effects, Imam al-Sajjād promulgated supplication as a remedy (*ʿilāj*), promoting moral values and duties through eloquent prayer formulas.[4] As he puts it, the *Ṣaḥīfa* "represents a profound social achievement of the time" that has remained throughout the ages as "a source of giving, a torch of guidance, and a school of ethics and refinement."[5]

Āqā Buzurg al-Ṭihrānī lists approximately fifty commentaries of the *Ṣaḥīfa* in either Arabic or Persian.[6] Hardly any have survived the ages. The purpose of the following sections is

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[2] ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, *al-Ṣaḥīfa al-Sajjādiyya al-Kāmila* (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Aʿlamī lil-Maṭbūʿāt, 2001), 8–9.
[3] Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, 12.
[4] Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, 14–15.
[5] Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, 15–16.
[6] al-Ṭihrānī, *al-Dharīʿa*, 13:345-59.

to chronicle the most prominent examples of *Ṣaḥīfa* commentaries, based on their availability and impact, insofar as can be determined by the bio-biographical and historiographical accounts.[7]

Ibn Idrīs al-Ḥillī's Ḥāshiyya

The earliest recorded supplication commentary is the *ḥāshiyya of al-Ṣaḥīfa al-Sajjādiyya al-Kāmila* by Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Idrīs al-Ḥillī al-ʿIjlī (d. 598/1201–2).[8] Ibn Idrīs lived during a transitional period in the history of Imami scholasticism, marked by its stagnation amid fraught political circumstances.[9] Many of the late sixth/twelfth century *ʿulamāʾ* were reluctant to criticize al-Ṭūsī, whose impact in developing the Imami legal tradition cannot be overstated.[10] Ibn Idrīs was the first critic of al-Ṭūsī to be taken seriously. He is known for being an outlier in his field–"he was unparalleled in *fiqh*…there was no one else like him in his time," remarks the Mamluk historian al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363).[11]

Many of Ibn Idrīs's viewpoints are formulated in his famous jurisprudential work*, al-Sarāʾir al-ḥāwī li-taḥrīr al-fatāwī*, that offers a robust critique of the utility of non-renowned traditions (*al-khabar al-wāḥid*), promoting in its stead consensus (*ijmāʿ*) as an indication of the occulted Imam's assent. Ibn Idrīs's regard for al-Ṭūsī, permeating the *Sarāʾir*, has been characterized as invidious.[12] However, it is more accurately ambivalent, delivered in a critique of

[7] For more on the *Ṣaḥīfa*'s reception and transmission among Imami scholars, see Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Ḥusaynī al-Jalālī, *Dirāsāt ḥawl al-Ṣaḥīfa al-Sajjādiyya* (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Aʿlamī li-l-Maṭbūʿāt, 2000).
[8] Majīd Ghulāmī-Jalīsa, "Ḥāshiyyat Ibn Idrīs bar Ṣaḥīfa Sajjadiyya," *Safīna* Fall, no. 8 (1384): 96.
[9] These circumstances include the dispersal of al-Ṭūsī's disciples, competition with Fāṭimid institutions and propaganda, and the violence instigated against Imamis by the Seljuks. Jawdat al-Qazwini, "The Religious Establishment in Ithna'ashari Shi'ism" (PhD diss., University of London, 1997), 28–29.
[10] So too can be said about al-Ṭūsī's foundational contributions to devotional works, most apparent with regards to his supplication collection, *al-Miṣbāḥ al-mutahajjid.*
[11] Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl b. Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī bi-l-wafayāt*, 29 vols. (Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ lil-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 2000), 2:129.
[12] Ali writes, "Criticism of al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī is so pervasive in *al-Sarāʾir* that one wonders whether it was written expressly for that purpose"; Aun Hasan Ali, *The School of Hillah and the Formation of Twelver Shiʿi Islamic Tradition* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2023), 97.

sources and methodology for deriving legal rulings. In this fashion, the *Sarāʾir* aimed at rebalancing the legal ledger of the Imami tradition through a reassessment of al-Ṭūsī's outsized role.

The textual culture in which Ibn Idrīs participated extended well beyond the debates surrounding hadith and its role in *fiqh*. Coinciding with the time of his original commentary on law was Ibn Idrīs's commentary on supplication. Unlike the *Sarāʾir*, his elucidation of the *Ṣaḥīfa* is not meant to stimulate dialectical discussion and argumentation among specialists, but rather to reinforce understanding of a language, shared by a confessional multitude. The difference may be put: Both authorial efforts share in developing the communicative contents of a community that impinge on ritual practice; but whereas the first is focused on a narrow set of uses of language, the second is broad and seeks to make clear eloquent speech (*balāgha*). Ibn Idrīs's commentary concerns not facts but topoi.

The *Ḥāshiyyat* focuses on the linguistic usages (*lugha*) of liturgical language, examining the ambiguous (*ghāmiḍ*) syntax and semantic meanings of various locutions of the *Ṣaḥīfa*. Among Imam al-Sajjād's supplications, Ibn Idrīs describes "linguistic expressions that not everyone understands and words whose meanings require translation."[13] The *Ḥāshiyya* scrutinizes approximately 600 words or phrases, among fifty-four supplications.[14] For each lemma, the commentator indicates an infinitive and/or a verbal or nominal form (*shakl*), relying singularly on the famous lexicon of al-Jawharī's (d. ca. 393/1003) *al-Ṣiḥāḥ fī al-lugha*, for reference. He aims for brevity, providing a pithy definition or a word alternative, as the following examples show:

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[13] Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Idrīs al-Ḥillī, *Ḥāshiyyat Ibn Idrīs ʿalā al-Ṣaḥīfa al-Sajjādiyya*, Mawsūʿat Ibn Idrīs al-Ḥillī, 14 vols. (Qom: Dalīl-i Mā, 2008), 6:99–100.
[14] Ghulāmī-Jalīsa, "Ḥāshiyyat Ibn Idrīs bar Ṣaḥīfa Sajjadiyya," 102.

1) For the fifth line of the first supplication, known as "In Praise of God" (*Duʿāʾ taḥmīd Allāh*), "Describers' imaginations are not able to depict Him" (*wa-ʿajazat ʿan naʿtih awhām al-wāṣifīn*),[15] he glosses the terms:

   On *naʿt*: *ṣifa* [n., a description; characteristic]
   On *wahm* (pl. *awhām*): An action of one of the internal faculties of the memory, the imagination, and estimation.[16]

2) The fourteenth line of "His Supplication in Asking for Water during a Drought" (*Duʿāʾuh fī al-istisqāʾ*) reads, "[And let Your angels - the noble scribes - be witness to (line 6)] the lightning's flashes not without fruit!" (*wa-lā khullab barquh*):

   On *khullab*: A person who is deceptive (*rajul khallāb wa-khulūb*): i.e., *khaddāʿ* [deceptive] *kadhdhāb* [deceitful]; and *barq khullab* is lightning without a downpour (*ghayth*), as if it were deceptive. And it is said, "It won't amount to anything, nor be accomplished. You're nothing but lightning without a downpour (*barq khullab*)." And *khullab* is a cloud without rain.[17]

3) A line from "His Supplication for Acquiring Noble Traits" (*Duʿāʾuh fī makārim al-akhlāq*) reads, "[Oh God,] Shade me in Your shelter" (*wa-aẓillanī fī dharāk*):

   On *dhar*: *Dhar* –with the vowel point *fatḥa*–is everything that is concealed by it. It is said, "I'm in the protection and shelter of someone," i.e., under their protection (*kanaf*) and cover (*sitr*); and *dhurw* of something–with the vowel point *ḍamma*–is its uppermost point; [e.g.,] *dhurwa* is a camel's hump (*aʿlā al-sanām*).[18]

Many of the *Ḥāshiyya*'s lemmata ring of an indexical reference, a meaning that is context-sensitive and demographically determined, such as in this case in reference to the Bedouin Arabic dialect. This is evident in examples 2 and 3, where Ibn Idrīs reproduces supposed sayings (*aqwāl*) of Bedouin speech, reported by al-Jawharī. In example 3, depending on the diacritic, one may derive varying meaning for the radicals *dharā* (or *dharū*). While they both may reproduce original nomenclature, only the first definition of "shelter" is appropriate for the supplication, according to the commentator.

Ibn Idrīs's exclusive reference to *al-Ṣiḥāḥ* points to his assent to the trope of its author, a common one among classical Arabic grammarians and lexicographers, that their definitions derive from replications of pure Arab Bedouin speech. The notion is that there is an original, "ur-

[15] Chittick, *The Pslams of Islam*, 9.
[16] al-Ḥillī, *Ḥāshiyyat Ibn Idrīs ʿalā al-Ṣaḥīfa al-Sajjādiyya*, 6:104.
[17] al-Ḥillī, 6:170.
[18] al-Ḥillī, 6:180.

meaning" that may be gleaned by the native inhabitants of the Ḥijāz, those closest to the location and lifestyle of the Prophet and his companions. Like Abū Zakariyyāʾ Yaḥyā al-Farrāʾ (d. 207/822) and Ismāʿīl b. Ḥammād al-Azharī (d. 370/980) before him, al-Jawharī sojourned to the *bādiya* (desert) to imbibe a colloquial language that, in the grammarians' imagination, epitomized Arabic in its original state, unadulterated with sedentary dialects.[19] This analysis naturally flattens the etymological evolution of Arabic and elides regional dialects, such as those spoken in the settled city of Medina where Imam al-Sajjād is reported to have lived for most of his life.

Safavid Commentaries

This section analyzes some of the first examples of supplication commentary produced during the Safavid period. This is a critical moment in Imami Shiʿi history, where religious works become more accessible to the public and during which the state-appointed clergy attempted to consolidate the Shiʿi orientation of Iran, against Sufi and Sunni influences. The Safavid era's cut and thrust of religious debate, between various poles claiming the superior picture of Shiʿism, prefigures the terms of criticism recognizable in Shiʿism today among various camps. At the risk of posing reductive caricatures, two poles can broadly be distinguished as between a traditional position, emphasizing the traditions of the Imams and their maximally-literalist interpretation, and Sufi and philosophical orientations, given to mysticism and gnostic persuasions.

[19] Ramzi Baalbaki, "al-Jawharī, Ismāʿīl b. Ḥammād," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*. http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_32780.

The printing press was introduced in Iran in 1629, a gift presented to Shāh ʿAbbās I by John Thaddeus, a Carmelite priest and ambassador of the Vatican.[20] As in Europe, where its use was originally designated to promote Christian orthodoxy, so the printing press in Iran served the mission of the Carmelite covenant in Isfahan. It did so, however, unsuccessfully, with few surviving accounts of the press' actual use. Despite the Safavid court's interest, the press fell into disrepair, possibly on account of its faulty function in a dry climate.[21] Its wide use, in the dissemination of Islamic works, did not occur until the succeeding Qājār period. Before this time, a strong scribal tradition reigned as the dominant site of learning, as in other Islamicate realms of the early modern period. Hand-scripted texts served as an effective pedagogical tool. Their circulation occurred through the habitual collating, copying, and authoring of manuscripts in urban centers.[22] Physical construction of their folios' paper (*kāghaz*) from the period involved a variety of techniques, including hammer-beaten (or mill-ground) bast fibers and recycled linens that were wet dampened, including flax rags and hemp.[23] The availability of materials and ease of paper production allowed for the wider consumption of literature and, per Babayan, laid "the foundation of a new culture of literacy" in Safavid Iran.[24]

The dissemination of Muslim prayer and its associated ritual practices, manners, and meanings, as interpreted by clerical scholars, would be a vital way of maintaining state authority,

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[20] Azam Fooladi-Panah and Ahmadreza Khezri, "A Review of Fr. John Thaddeus of S. Elisaeus's Mission in Safavid Iran," *Iranian Journal for the History of Islamic Civilization* 53, no. 1 (2020): 219–37; W. M. Floor, "The First Printing-Press in Iran," *Zeitschrift Der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 130, no. 2 (1980): 369–71.
[21] Floor, "The First Printing-Press in Iran," 371.
[22] Codicological practices in Safavid Iran are vastly understudied by Western academics. A rare exception is Bhalloo and Rezaai's article on religious and administrative authority as transmitted through the scribal and archival practices associated with the *misḡal*, a type of administrative decree; Zahir Bhalloo and Omid Rezai, "Inscribing Authority: Scribal and Archival Practices of a Safavid Decree," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 62, no. 5/6 (2019): 824–55.
[23] Penley Knipe et al., "Materials and Techniques of Islamic Manuscripts," *Heritage Science* 6, no. 1 (2018): 17. For additional papermaking techniques such as sizing with starch, see Hend Mahgoub et al., "Material Properties of Islamic Paper," *Heritage Science* 4, no. 1 (2016): 1–14.
[24] Kathryn Babayan, *The City as Anthology: Eroticism and Urbanity in Early Modern Isfahan* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2021), 10.

as well as winning over the recently converted Shiʿi populace. Babayan has analyzed the medium of manuscripts, with a focus on the anthology (*majmuʿa*), in the production and transmission of knowledge and urbanity in Safavid Isfahan. She has shown that such materials, transmitted to laypersons who embraced the epistolary and ethical teachings as part of their socio-religious cultivation, originated in private libraries and seminaries. The madrasa, in particular, became a repository for religious works whose materials were copied by students and scribes and further propagated in the bazaars. Knowledge would travel, in this pattern, from institutional spaces of learning to the merchant's bazaars, and eventually their homes, by way of learned readers and interpreters.

The number of translations and commentaries of supplication produced during the Safavid period, and particularly on the *Ṣaḥīfa*, is staggering.[25] The list of commentators is a who's who of Safavid scholars that includes, inter alia, Shaykh al-Bahāʾī, Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī, al-Muḥaqqiq al-Karakī (d. 940/1534), and Fayḍ al-Kāshānī. Others would gain notoriety single-handedly *because* of their commentaries, such as ʿAlī Khān al-Madanī "Ibn Maʿṣūm" (d. 1120/1708). This compilation of contributors suggests a certain authorial demand of the period–that if a scholar wished to make their mark, a supplication commentary was a compositional desideratum. The medium of commentaries (*shurūḥ, ḥāshiyyāt*) provided for the participation in privileged sites of religio-cultural learning through imbibing their literary and scholastic fruits. Unlike treatise subjects of narrow theological interest, prayer is required of all Muslims and the supererogatory variety is strongly encouraged in the Shiʿi traditions. The benefit then of knowing their multi-layered meanings is practical and immediate. Commentaries deepen the bonds toward

[25] The *Fankhā* catalog records an abundant amount of supplication commentary works that appear to peak in the Qajar period. Their full scope deserves further study. See Muṣṭafā Dirāyatī, *Fihristgān: nuskhahā-yi khaṭṭī-i Īrān* (*Fankhā*), 45 vols. (Tehran: Sāzmān-i Asnād va Kitābkhāna-i Millī-i Jumhūrī-i Islāmī-i Īrān, 2012), 19:643–91.

religious practices by increasing prayer's profundity and the bonds between other practitioners that share physical spaces and communal affiliations. The following case studies show how these aspects intertwine.

Shaykh al-Bahāʾī's Ḥadāʾiq al-ṣāliḥīn

Among the writings credited to al-Bahāʾī under the category of supplication commentary, only one has survived. This work, *Ḥadāʾiq al-ṣāliḥīn fī sharḥ Ṣaḥīfat Sayyid al-Sājidīn*, known as *al-Ḥadīqa al-hilāliyya*, is unique among other commentaries of the *Ṣahīfa*. For one, it limits its entire scope to only one of its supplications, the forty-third entry, "When He Looked at the New Crescent Moon" (*Duʿāʾuhu idhā naẓara ilā al-hilāl*). The commentary interprets it in such a way as to foreground the concerns of its author related to astronomy and cosmology. It is no wonder that al-Bahāʾī chose the Crescent Moon supplication, in light of its descriptions of the lunar phases and religious allegories. *Al-Ḥadīqa al-hilāliyya* is naturally replete with this imagery. It begins with the brief *tamḥīd*, "We praise You, O He who brought forth the sun of prophecy [Muḥammad] and the moon of authority [ʿAlī] within the sphere of guidance. We offer blessings to the axis of its orbit and his family, crescents of the heaven of guidance."[26]

According to al-Ṭihrānī, al-Bahāʾī completed *Ḥadāʾiq al-ṣāliḥīn* in Jumādā al-Thānī, 1003/1595, during his stay in Kadhimiya.[27] He also notes that this was preceded by al-Bahāʾī's authorship of a commentary, *al-Ḥadīqa al-akhlāqiyya*, named after the twentieth supplication of the *Ṣaḥīfa*, *Duʿāʾuhu fī makārim al-akhlāq*.[28] Although al-Bahāʾī hints at this predecessor in one of the *Ḥadāʾiq*'s chapters, quoting a passage from the absent work–"And we presented in *al-*

[26] Muḥammad b. ʿIzz al-Dīn al-Ḥusayn al-ʿĀmilī al-Bahāʾī, *al-Ḥadīqa al-hilāliyya* (Qom: Muʾassasat Āl al-Bayt li-Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth, 1989), 65.
[27] al-Ṭihrānī, *al-Dharīʿa*, 6:288.
[28] al-Ṭihrānī, 6:288.

Ḥadīqa al-akhlāqiyya words regarding what helps one guard against evils"[29]–no other evidence survives of its existence. The following presents some basic background and information on al-Bahāʾī's commentary, highlighting several of his interpretations as they bear on celestial phenomena and that follows some of the recent interest in the letterist and occult dimensions of al-Bahāʾī's astronomy.[30]

The crescent of the new moon is one of many celestial symbols possessing an ancient religious import. The calendrical significance of the new moon is evident in the yearly events and holidays of the Muslim faithful, and the crescent moon is today universally recognized as a symbol of Islam. However, al-Bahāʾī explains that the supplication's title, *Duʿāʾuhu idhā naẓara ilā al-hilāl,* derives from *ihlāl*, "to raise one's voice."[31] It is an expression of awe and exaltation when glimpsing the moon, among other epiphanic moments that al-Bahāʾī cites, such as the utterance of the *talbīya* prayer during the Ḥajj pilgrimage and the child's cry upon birth.[32] He reviews several astrological conundrums over the precise time and duration of the crescent moon, the point at which it transitions from a crescent to a gibbous moon, and even the origin of the designation itself, previously causing confusion and inciting debate among the likes of al-Jawharī and al-Aṣmaʿī (d. 216/831). These details aside, al-Bahāʾī affirms the connection between reverence and the crescent moon's occurrence, established by the Prophet and Imams' inspired supplication upon its sighting. Much like the "prayer of the signs" (*ṣalāt al-āyāt*) required for various natural phenomena, he also affirms this same supplication as an obligatory (*wājib*) act, comparing it to the Prophet's precept (*ḥukm*) that well water does not become impure

[29] al-Bahāʾī, *al-Ḥadīqa al-hilāliyya*, 131.
[30] Matthew Melvin-Koushki, "World as (Arabic) Text: Mīr Dāmād and the Neopythagoreanization of Philosophy in Safavid Iran," *Studia Islamica* 114, no. 3 (2019): 378–431.
[31] al-Bahāʾī, *al-Ḥadīqa al-hilāliyya*, 65.
[32] al-Bahāʾī, 65.

merely by contact with impurities (*najāsāt*).[33] Although perhaps a peculiar analogy, al-Bahāʾī is suggesting here that certain precautions require observance in these events, whether or not they are rationally intelligible to Muslims, as he concludes, "And no one among our companions knows about it [the precept] except him (the Prophet)."[34] He seems to concur with Jamāl al-Dīn b. Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī (d. 726/1325) who is quoted as suggesting that this specific application of supplication becomes obligatory only for knowledgeable notables (*al-aʿyān*).[35] For those mindful of the traditions, al-Bahāʾī suggests the supplications endorsed by Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, and Ibn Ṭāwūs, as well as the associated manners in recitation.[36] This introduces further *fiqhī* argument over the beginning of the lunar month, as well as debate over the spherical shape of the moon, affirmed by al-Bahāʾī who takes umbrage with the legal traditionalists (*ahl al-sharīʿ*) who claim the moon's flatness.[37] We see, even before his commentary on *Duʿāʾuhu idhā naẓara ilā al-hilāl*, that the title puts into words a visual stimulus, provoking both reverence toward God and scientific inquiry (however tethered to the interests of religion). These merge in an adjustment toward certain habits of prayer in various supplications and rites, such as fasting during Ramaḍān.

Sayyid ʿAlī Khān al-Madanī's Riyāḍ al-sālikīn

According to a popular account, one of Iran's most distinguished modern scholars, Sayyid Shihāb al-Dīn Marʿashī Najafī (d. 1990), led an ongoing correspondence with Shaykh Ṭanṭāwī Jawharī (d. 1940), a leading Sunni Egyptian thinker and famous exegete of the Qur'an.

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[33] al-Bahāʾī, 69.
[34] al-Bahāʾī, 70.
[35] al-Bahāʾī, 80.
[36] al-Bahāʾī, 76.
[37] Al-Bahāʾī points to the evidence of the moon's curvature, allowing the crescent to be seen by some and not others in distant lands; al-Bahāʾī, 78–90.

In one of their exchanges, Najafī provided his counterpart a copy of a commentary of the *Ṣaḥīfa* called *Riyāḍ al-sālikīn*. Shaykh Ṭanṭāwī wrote back approvingly, responding that this was precisely the type of book capable of fostering understanding and affinity between the different Islamic sects.[38]

Najafī's gift, *Riyāḍ al-sālikīn fī sharḥ Ṣaḥīfat Sayyid al-Sājidīn*, was written by Sayyid ʿAlī Khān Ṣadr al-Dīn Ibn al-Amīr Niẓām al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Shīrāzī al-Madanī (d. 1120/1708), a figure known alternatively as Ibn al-Maʿṣūm. It remains the most renowned commentary of the *Ṣaḥīfa*, synonymous, among Shiʿi scholars, with its author.[39] In terms of its importance and influence as a commentarial text within the tradition, al-Madanī's *Riyāḍ al-sālikīn* may be compared to Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd's (d. ca. 650/1252) *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāgha*. Given his unfamiliarity among a western audience outside the Shiʿi tradition,[40] a few notes on al-Madanī's life are essential to properly situate *Riyāḍ al-sālikīn* in its historical circumstances.

Al-Madanī was born in Medina in the late summer of 1052/1642.[41] He was the descendant of the Prophet Muḥammad, through Zayd b. ʿAlī,[42] and a noble scholarly lineage, the son of al-Amīr Niẓām al-Dīn Aḥmad (d. 1086/1675), a literary poet famous for his collections of odes (*qaṣīda*) and treatises on Islamic theology, who lived in Hyderabad and was patronized by

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[38] Ghulām Riḍāʾ Gulī Zavvārah, *Jāmiʿ faḍl wa-faḍīlat* (Qom: Kitābkhāna-yi Buzurg-i Ḥaḍrat Āyat Allāh al-ʿUẓmā Marʿashī Najafī, 2011), 85–86.

[39] Al-Madanī's *Riyāḍ al-sālikīn* should not be confused with the other two *Riyāḍ*s, also commentaries on the *Ṣaḥīfa*: the Persian *Riyāḍ al-ʿābidīn* by Badīʿ al-Zamān Quhpāʾī (d. 1049/1639–40) and the Arabic *Riyāḍ al-ʿārifīn* by Mawlā Shāh Muḥammad Dārābī (d. ca. 1130/1718). For a comparison between them, see Bāqir Qurbānī Zarrīn, "Seh «Riyāḍ» dar sharḥ Ṣaḥīfa Sajjādiyya," *Safīna* 6 (1384): 116–29.

[40] Two notable exceptions are Joseph E. Lowry and James White; see Joseph E. Lowry, "IBN MAʿṢŪM," in *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography*, ed. Joseph E. Lowry and Devin J. Stewart, vol. 2, Mîzân 17 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2009); James White, *Persian and Arabic Literary Communities in the Seventeenth Century: Migrant Poets Between Arabia, Iran and India*, I. B. Tauris Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Persian Literature Series (London: I. B. Tauris, 2023). See also Lowry's *Encyclopedia of Islam* entry of al-Madanī. Joseph E. Lowry, "Ibn Maʿṣūm," *EI, III*, accessed November 18, 2023. http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_30639.

[41] al-Amīn al-ʿĀmilī, *Aʿyān al-Shīʿa*, 3:152; Lowry, "IBN MAʿṢŪM," 175.

[42] ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿIsā b. Muḥammad Ṣālih al-Iṣfahāni al-Afandī, *Riyāḍ al-ʿulamāʾ wa-ḥiyāḍ al-fuḍalāʾ*, 7 vols. (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Tārīkh al-ʿArabī, 2010), 1:363.

ʿAbd Allāh Quṭb Shāh (r. 1626-1672).[43] At the age of fifteen, al-Madanī was escorted by a member of the Quṭb Shāhī court to southern India in 1068/1657.[44] The details of his journey from Mecca to the Yemeni coast of Mokha and then over sea to the Indian Jaitapur port, a secret voyage with political implications, are chronicled by al-Madanī in his travelogue, *Salwat al-gharīb wa-uswat al-arīb*.[45]

Once he arrived in the fortified Quṭb Shāhī capital of Golconda, al-Madanī quickly ingratiated himself to the sultanate's notables, marrying into the royal family and promoted as both state official (*amīr*) and religious authority (*ṣadr*).[46] Under Quṭb Shāhī auspices, al-Madanī was provided the most learned teachers in the Indian realm, including the Jabal ʿĀmil émigré, Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. Yūsuf al- ʿĀmilī al-Shāmī, under whom he mastered a variety of traditional subjects including Arabic grammar, rhetoric, poetry, and religious law.[47] Al-Madanī soon produced a vast corpus of Arabic treatises and commentaries, primarily on Arabic grammar and poetry. This literary outpouring was connected to a larger political impetus, beyond an aesthetical or rhetorical appeal, that included the promotion of Arabic among a Hyderabadi populace unlearned in the language, and, per White (2023), "to link the Qutbshahi sultanate into an international Twelver discourse."[48] If the sultanate of Golkonda was to establish a sturdy influence among the other Deccan sultanates and Islamic realms beyond, they would need to bolster their contributions to the literary canon. In the early period of the sultanate's existence, it

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[43] al-Amīn al-ʿĀmilī, *Aʿyān al-Shīʿa*, 3:154; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 107:29. Al-Madanī was also a descendent of Ghiyāth al-Dīn Manṣūr b. Ṣadr-al-Dīn Dashtakī (d. 948/1541), the leading philosopher of the late Timurid and early Safavid period, and al-Amīr Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Dashtakī al-Shīrāzī (d. 903/ 1497-8), a late fifteenth-century Shāfiʿī jurist; al-Afandī, *Riyāḍ al-ʿulamāʾ*, 3:365; al-Amīn al-ʿĀmilī, *Aʿyān al-Shīʿa*, 9:60.
[44] Lowry, "IBN MAʿṢŪM," 176.
[45] See Salati's Italian study of al-Madanī's travels: Marco Salati, *Il passaggio in India di 'Ali Khan Al-Shirazi Al-Madani (1642-1707)*, Eurasiarica 54 (Padova: CLEUP, 1999).
[46] al-Afandī, *Riyāḍ al-ʿulamāʾ*, 1:365; White, *Persian and Arabic Literary Communities in the Seventeenth Century*, 53.
[47] Lowry, "IBN MAʿṢŪM," 177.
[48] White, *Persian and Arabic Literary Communities in the Seventeenth Century*, 55–56.

would pin its hopes on scholars like Niẓām al-Dīn Aḥmad and his son, al-Madanī, in this pursuit. These scholars happily obliged the sultanate in this project, those among a shifting network of literati, promoting Arabic erudition in a Persian-dominant cosmopolis.[49] Al-Madanī was especially prolific, contributing to a corpus of Arabic works, including *al-Ḥadāʾiq al-nadiyya fī sharḥ al-Ṣadamiyya*, a commentary on Shaykh al-Bahāʾī's work on the science of grammar; *Mawḍiʿ al-rashād*, on Arabic syntax (*naḥw*); *al-Darajāt al-rafīʿa fī ṭabaqāt al-imāmiyya min al-Shīʿa*, an unfinished *rijāl* work on eminent Shiʿi scholars; and *Anwār al-rabīʿ fī anwāʿ al-badīʿ*, on the use of Arabic rhetoric and figures of speech (*badīʿ*) in praise of the Prophet.[50]

Before the Quṭb Shāhī dynasty came to an official end in 1098/1687, during a period of its gradual absorption into the wider Mughal realm, al-Madanī faced many unpleasantries that stymied his literary output. After the death of ʿAbd Allāh Quṭb Shāh in 1083/1672–73, al-Madanī and his father, Niẓām al-Dīn Aḥmad, were imprisoned. These circumstances are murky, involving the regime turnover from ʿAbd Allāh to ʿAbū al-Ḥasan Quṭb Shāh and some undisclosed plot of Niẓām al-Dīn's adversaries (*khuṣūm*).[51] Niẓām al-Dīn was executed sometime during this imprisonment, while al-Madanī managed to escape after a period of seven years.[52] He adjusted his loyalties appropriately upon landing in Burhanpur, a haven that the Mughals counted as their main garrison base.[53]

Al-Madanī found favoritism under Aurangzeb, serving in some capacity under his rule and somehow overcoming the latter's animosity towards non-Sunnis. The Mughal emperor is said to have given al-Madanī his title, Khān, and installed him as commander of a middle-

[49] For more on this network's members and activities, see White, 59–66.
[50] al-Amīn al-ʿĀmilī, *Aʿyān al-Shīʿa*, 8:152–3.
[51] al-Madanī, *Riyāḍ al-sālikīn*, 1:9.
[52] White, *Persian and Arabic Literary Communities in the Seventeenth Century*, 73.
[53] al-Madanī, *Riyāḍ al-sālikīn*, 1:9.

ranking battalion and eventually as chancellery at Burhanpur.[54] Al-Madanī's request to relocate to the Hijaz was formally granted by the Mughal sultan, and after forty-six years in India, he returned to his hometown.[55] There, he spent several years composing his commentary on the *Ṣaḥīfa*, *Riyāḍ al-sālikīn.* He later traveled to Iran, visiting the pilgrimage sites of the ʿAtabāt, before finally settling in Shīrāz where he lived and taught at the Madrasa-yi Manṣūriyya, an institution originally founded by his distant ancestor, Ghiyāth al-Dīn Manṣūr Dashtakī. In Shīrāz, he lived out his final days and was interred in the shrine of Shāh Cherāgh upon his death.[56]

Al-Madanī is a prime example of a religio-literary figure, established in the Arabic literary canon, whose literary influence is elevated above his religious one in the current Western academic field. This is a strange scenario, given the deep and lasting influence of al-Madanī in regard to Shiʿi thought and history and not Persian or Arabic prose. Whereas for Western academics, *Salwat al-gharīb* is al-Madanī's most studied work,[57] *Riyāḍ al-sālikīn* remains the most read and celebrated of his works among Shiʿi circles.

According to its author, *Riyāḍ al-sālikīn* took twelve years to complete, starting from 1094/1682 until 1106/1694,[58] after he had relocated back to the Hijaz. It today comprises seven volumes, covering each of the *Ṣaḥīfa*'s fifty-four supplications. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿIsā al-Afandī (d. 1130/1717–18), claims that al-Madanī originally presented the work to the Safavid Shāh Sulṭān Ḥusayn in the latter's name, a claim reproduced by subsequent bibliographers, including al-Amīn al-ʿĀmilī and Āqā Buzurg al-Ṭihrānī.[59] *Riyāḍ al-sālikīn* is known for its breadth and its high

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[54] al-Madanī, 1:9; al-Amīn al-ʿĀmilī, *Aʿyān al-Shīʿa*, 8:152; White, *Persian and Arabic Literary Communities in the Seventeenth Century*, 73.
[55] al-Madanī, *Riyāḍ al-sālikīn*, 1:10.
[56] al-Madanī, 1:11.
[57] White, *Persian and Arabic Literary Communities in the Seventeenth Century*, 53; Annemarie Schimmel, *A History of Indian Literature*, ed. Jan Gonda (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1973), 8.
[58] al-Madanī, *Riyāḍ al-sālikīn*, 7:452.
[59] It remains unclear whether al-Madanī sent the work to Sulṭān Ḥusayn during his year of accession or offered it to him in person afterward; Lowry, "IBN MAʿṢŪM," 182.

pedigree of commentary. Its praise is unanimous among Shiʿi *ʿulamāʾ*. Al-Afandī characterizes it as "the best and most extensive of commentaries" and summarizes it as a "detailed treatment (*basṭ al-kalām*)," containing all the important insights of previous commentators, and a "thorough examination of most sciences, and especially the Arabic [linguistic] sciences."[60] Other scholars, until the present, share in this appraisal, including Sayyid ʿAbbās al-Musawī al-Makkī (d. 1179/1765),[61] Shaykh ʿAbbās al-Qommī (d. 1359/1941),[62] Sayyid Muḥsin al-Amīn (d. 1371/1952),[63] and ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn Amīnī (d. 1390/1970).[64]

Al-Madanī's commentary begins with a lengthy introduction, divided at irregular times into sections designated "elucidations" (*tawḍīḥāt*). It addresses the *Ṣaḥīfa*'s transmission, its high estimation among the Shiʿa, its demonstration of Arabic eloquence, and the potent influence of its previous commentary by Shaykh al-Bahāʾī, *Ḥadāʾiq al-ṣāliḥīn*. Al-Bahāʾī's influence comes as no surprise, given al-Madanī's entrenchment in a scholarly community that included poets, panegyrists, and religious authorities affiliated with both Safavid and Deccan courts. In some ways, *Riyāḍ al-sālikīn* is an intertextual work, offering some criticism of *Ḥadāʾiq al-ṣāliḥīn* while adapting the latter as a template for a comprehensive treatment of the *Ṣaḥīfa*.[65] Al-Madanī comments on this relation:

> As for the commentary of our Shaykh, al-Bahāʾī, called the "Gardens of the Righteous" (*Ḥadāʾiq al-ṣāliḥīn*) and referred to as the "Crescent Garden" (*al-Ḥadīqa al-hilāliyya*), it is a metaphor, not a reality, as no

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[60] al-Afandī, *Riyāḍ al-ʿulamāʾ*, 1:366.
[61] "It is a sublime book, incomparable (*lā lahu mathīl*)"; ʻAbbās b. ʻAlī Ḥusaynī al-Mūsawī al-Makkī, *Nuzhat al-jalīs wa-munyat al-anīs*, 2 vols. (Najaf: al-Maktaba al-Ḥaydariyya, 1967), 1:322.
[62] "The Commentary reveals its mastery (*ṭūl al-bāʿ*), extensive insight, and comprehensive knowledge of the sciences"; ʿAbbās b. Muḥammad Riḍā Qummī, *al-Kunā wa-l-alqāb*, 3 vols. (Tehran: Maktaba-yi Ṣadr, 1977), 2:412.
[63] It is a "famous work…no other commentary has been composed like it since"; al-Amīn al-ʿĀmilī, *Aʿyān al-Shīʿa*, 8:152.
[64] "It is a precious book whose knowledge overflows from its corners and whose virtue gushes forth between its two covers"; ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn Amīnī, *al-Ghadīr*, 11 vols. (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Aʿlamī lil-Maṭbūʿāt, 1994), 11:404.
[65] Al-Madanī's appropriation of al-Bahāʾī in *Riyāḍ al-sālikīn* is not exceptional. It has been noted that the influence of the latter's celebrated *al-Kashkūl* can be felt in al-Madanī's *al-Tadhkira fī al-fawāʾid al-nādira*, and with regards to *al-Mikhla* on al-Madanī's own version, sharing the same name; Murtaḍā Raḥīmī, "Pizhūhishī darbāra-yi Sayyid ʿAlī Khān Madanī va Āṯār-i Vay," *Rahyāft-i Farhang-i Dīnī* Summer, no. 4 (2019): 19–20.

> gardens of his have ever appeared other than that Garden. And I swear on my life that if he had completed it in that manner [i.e., completed the task on the whole of the *Ṣaḥīfa*], it would have been sufficient for those after him to be so astonished by the power [of the *Ṣaḥīfa*], but perhaps these aspirations will bear fruit and I will be its flagbearer in my own time.[66]

By recognizing the fragmentary nature of past commentarial efforts, al-Madanī underscores the enormity of his task in interpreting the entirety of "The Gospel of the Prophet's Household." He confesses at his commentary's onset that he "trembles" at this task's responsibility while seeking the blessings of the *ahl al-bayt* for a successful mission.[67] As the first to undertake the (complete) task, al-Madanī establishes his aim: "To provide commentarial remarks (*taʿlīqāt*) that include explanations for some of its [the *Ṣaḥīfa*'s] words and an interpretation (*tafsīr*) that makes easy its purposes, an interpretation that 'does not cool a burning thirst, nor heals the sick.'"[68] In other words, al-Madanī wishes to enrich understanding of the *Ṣaḥīfa*'s unique phraseology and instill sustained interest in Shiʿi liturgy among his readers.

While introducing the first supplication of the fifty-four of the *Ṣaḥīfa*, al-Madanī explains his concept of *duʿāʾ*, initially with an anodyne analysis, proposing general synonymy with *nidāʾ*, a "calling out," and the conventional (*ʿurfī*) meaning of a yearning for God and the request of His mercy in the form of humble submissiveness.[69] He describes *duʿāʾ* as a form of glorification (*tamjīd*) and sanctification (*taqdīs*), and speaks of it in lofty terms, writing,

> Know that supplication is among the greatest forms of worship, capable of warding off evil and seeking the good. Its obligation and benefit are known through reason (*ʿaql*) and legislation (*sharʿ*) as indicated by the Almighty [in the verse], "Your Lord has proclaimed, 'Call upon Me, I will respond to you. Surely those who are too proud to worship Me will enter Hell, fully humbled.'" (Q. 40:60).[70]

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[66] al-Madanī, *Riyāḍ al-sālikīn*, 1:45.
[67] al-Madanī, 1:44.
[68] *Lā tubrid ghalīlan wa-lā yubriʾ ʿalīlan*; al-Madanī, 1:44.
[69] al-Madanī, 1:225.
[70] al-Madanī, 1:225. Al-Madanī narrates from Imam al-Bāqir, through Zurāra [b. Aʿyan al-Shaybānī al-Kūfī (d. 148/765-6)], that worship in this verse refers to *duʿāʾ*.

After this foreword, al-Madanī switches to a polemical register, marshaling a defense against what he calls "the illusions and corrupt speculations of the exoteric (*ẓāhirī*) theologians."[71] These are they who, in his understanding, claim that there is no benefit in supplication. They assume that what is asked is already foreknown by God and either must occur or otherwise does not occur, given that predestination cannot change, and thus conclude that supplication does not increase or decrease the potential for something's occurrence.[72] Al-Madanī reacts to this view with incredulity, characterizing it as a ridiculous statement, uttered only by the ignorant.[73] He instead reasons that God commanded His servants to supplicate (e.g., 7:55, 40:60) and therefore must necessarily be a part of, and means (*asbāb*) for fulfilling, the divine decree (*qaḍāʾ*). This introduces a digression on the nature of divine decree and its misconceptions, influenced by the failure to understand the position (*mawḍiʿ*) of God in the order of His command (*amr*).[74]

Al-Madanī then describes the practical philosophy of *duʿāʾ*. He quotes from Niẓām al-Dīn al-Naysābūrī (d. 850/1446) who explains that reason requires the servant to be suspended between hope (*al-rajāʾ*) and fear (*al-khawf*), a "position between the positions" (*bayn al-amrayn*), through which true and faithful servitude may be accomplished.[75] Supplication achieves this by inspiration of both psychological modes, no matter the outcome. Al-Madanī, via al-Naysābūrī, introduces a more central distinction. He compares a person who is facilitated (*muyassar*), i.e., one who is prepared or disposed in preparation for receiving the good, or, closer to the Qur'anic conception, one who is habituated to the conduct which leads to ease, including

[71] al-Madanī, 1:226.
[72] al-Madanī, 1:226.
[73] al-Madanī, 1:227.
[74] al-Madanī, 1:227–28.
[75] al-Madanī, 1:227.

with regard to entering paradise (e.g., Q. 92:7), and a thing in a state of subjugation (*musakhkhar*) under natural constraints, unfounded by desire or initiative.[76] These things, such as stars, planets, and trees, passively acquire (*kasb*) the attributes that God assigns them and are unlike people who are granted sustenance (*rizq*) based on their deeds and devotions.[77] A person may nonetheless run the risk of their thingification (?), becoming a *musakhkhar* that does not receive any recompense or reward for their actions. And so it may be summarized that supplication, for al-Madanī, is essential to Islamic orthopraxy and consistent with divine decree. Its persistent application situates the believer in the proper position vis-à-vis the divine, suspended between hope and fear. It ennobles individuals and prepares them as *muyassar*s, elevating the individual to receive divine compensation, whether in this world or in the hereafter.

For each of the *Ṣaḥīfa*'s fifty-four supplications, al-Madanī provides a brief sermon (*khutba*), introducing the supplication, and a laudatory prelude (*taḥmīd*), offering blessings for the *maʿṣūmīn*. This is followed by a precis on the supplication's name, including the titular word's Arabic form and morphological conditions, its reference in the Qur'an, and its definitions in light of the grammarians and exegetical specialists such as Sībawayh, al-Jawharī, al-Zamakhsharī, al-Fayrūzabādī, al-Khalīl b. Aḥmad al-Farāhīdī, Niẓām-ad-Dīn Nīsābūrī, and al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī. He then explains the vocabulary animating each line of the supplication, with a focus on obscure (*gharīb*) and polysemous words. While word-level input is generally privileged, the sentential and subsentential meaning of supplicative expressions are additionally scrutinized for their content, character, or context. In these cases, al-Madanī often appeals to hadith from both Sunni and Shiʿi collections,[78] poetry, and the opinion of Muslim scholars, too

[76] al-Madanī, 1:228.
[77] al-Madanī, 1:228.
[78] E.g., the Sunni Muttaqī al-Hindī's *Kanz al-ʿummāl* and the Shiʿi al-Kulaynī's *al-Kāfī*.

numerous to name.[79] Under several headings, including annotations (*tanbīhāt*), instructions (*tabṣirāt*), supplementations (*tatimmāt*), and reminders (*tadhkirāt*), numerous excurses are introduced on a range of theological, devotional, mystical, and exegetical subjects, comprising the Islamic sciences. A short sample of subjects includes the levels of divine oneness (*tawḥīd*),[80] a Qur'anic and hadith-based survey of the meaning of "works" (*al-aʿmāl*) and its degrees in accordance with Muslim worship,[81] an investigation of the cause for Iblīs's enmity toward Adam,[82] the mystical dimensions of the Islamic testimony of faith (*al-shahāda*) in the science of wayfaring (*ʿilm al-sulūk*),[83] and supplication useful for the practice of resolving indecision (*istikhāra*).[84] Given the broad thematic field of relevant literature and topics, it is difficult to identify the precise genre of *Riyāḍ al-sālikīn*. It is at once a commentary on supplication, the Qur'an, and the traditions, that reaches beyond a narrow sectarian selection of sources. The following section, on the opening line of the fiftieth supplication of the *Ṣaḥīfa*, titled "His Supplication in Fear" (*Duʿāʾuhu fī al-rahba*), offers a typical example of al-Madanī's commentary in *Riyāḍ al-sālikīn*.

"His Supplication in Fear" begins, "O God, verily thou created me without fault, nurtured me when small, and provided me with sufficiency."[85]

Al-Madanī starts with the term, *al-rahba*, designating the supplication. To understand its central meaning, the commentator defers to the famous Arabic literary scholar, al-Rāghib (d.

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[79] Among Shiʿi scholars, extensive reference is made to Abū ʿAlī al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭabrisī's (d. 548/1153–54) *Majmaʿ al-bayān* and Kamāl al-Dīn Maytham al-Baḥrānī's (d. ca. 699/1281) *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāgha*. Sunni scholars include Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209) and Maḥmūd b. Masʿūd Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (d. 710/1311).
[80] al-Madanī, *Riyāḍ al-sālikīn*, 1:321–24.
[81] al-Madanī, 5:30-36.
[82] al-Madanī, 4:110–12
[83] al-Madanī, 2:286.
[84] al-Madanī, 5:142–45
[85] *Allāhuma innaka khalaqtanī sawiyyan wa-rabbaytanī ṣaghīran wa-razaqtanī makfiyyan*. Translation adapted from William Chittick; Chittick, *The Pslams of Islam*, 206.

502/1108). While reproducing al-Rāghib's interpretation, "fear and reverence is fear with wariness and perturbation,"[86] al-Madanī enlarges this concept to include sundry semantic dimensions–per the gnostics (*al-ʿārifīn*), the contractive movement of the heart, marked by discomfort and an urge of flight[87]; dreadfulness, as what might be inspired by sight of the tip of the dog's tongue[88]; an expression of humility and helplessness before God[89]; and, per Imam al-Ṣādiq, the physical indicators of sincere worship.[90] Based on this past commentarial input, al-Madanī interprets various physical motions of the supplicant, indicative of *rahba*, as conducive to supplication's efficaciousness, including, in the cited tradition of Imam al-Ṣādiq, "the shuddering of skin (*iqshaʿrr jilduk*) and shedding of tears."[91]

Al-Madanī proceeds by speculating about the particle, *inna*, that introduces the main clause, as a form of emphasis signifying either wholehearted belief (*ṣamīm al-qalb*), complete solicitude and attention, or simply a popularly accepted style of address towards God.[92] His rendering of "creation" (*al-khalq*) appears straightforward: "the bringing-into-existence of something according to [its] measuring out (*ījād al-shayʾ ʿalā taqdīr*)" (Ibid). However, the particular created quality, "without fault" (*sawiyyan*), is ambiguous and offers the opportunity for more extensive interpretation. After determining that it is an object of a verbal clause derived from the Arabic root, *s–w–y*, al-Madanī refers to the elucidative record. He quotes al-Jawharī ["a good-natured person (*sawīy al-khulq*) or upright (*mustawin*)"] (ibid.) and al-Zamakhsharī, who cites a common saying, "May God grant you a perfectly proportioned (*sawīy*) child, free of

[86] *Al-rahba wa-l-rahab makhāfa maʿ taḥarruz wa-iḍṭirāb*; Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Mufradāt alfāẓ al-Qurʾān* (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 1992), 204; al-Madanī, *Riyāḍ al-sālikīn*, 7:301.
[87] al-Madanī, 7:301.
[88] al-Madanī, 7:301.
[89] al-Madanī, 7:302.
[90] al-Madanī, 7:302.
[91] al-Madanī, 7:302–3.
[92] al-Madanī, 7:303.

disease and blemish (*ʿayb*)" in reference to his interpretation of Q: 19:17[93] describing the angel Gabriel's appearance to Mary. Al-Madanī combines his words with those of Zamakhsharī: "The perfection of [Gabriel's] nature and physical frame 'did not detract from the human image in the slightest. Good appearance is a balanced nature (*ḥasan al-ṣūra mustawīy al-khulq*).'"[94] Accordingly, "a balanced nature" is a virtuous nature–flawless, upright, and unsullied. This moral implication is accented in al-Rāghib's definition of *al-sawīy*, duplicated by al-Madanī: "That which is protected from exaggeration (*al-ifrāṭ*) and negligence (*al-tafrīṭ*) by way of destiny and nature, and a well-balanced person (*rajul sawīy*) whose ethics and character are equal between exaggeration and negligence." [95] Al-Rāghib here refers to the golden mean between two extremes producing the position of virtue, an Aristotelian concept taken up by Muslim scholars of ethics.

Having reviewed accounts of the foremost experts in Arabic grammatical terminology, al-Madanī adds his own gloss:

> In the supplication's phrase ["You created me without fault"], the intransitive, circumstantial adverb (*ḥāl lāzima*) of the first-person pronoun is evidence of its causative Agent (*ʿāmil*) [i.e., God], indicating the coming-to-be (*tajaddud*) of its [the faultless'] possessor and its temporal origination (*ḥudūth*), as in God's saying, "for humankind was created weak (*ḍaʿīfan*)" (Q. 4:28). Weakness then is an intransitive, circumstantial adverb describing humankind, as the Agent's creation indicates the coming-to-be of the creature and its temporal origination. And some say, "In the supplication, it [the pronoun] is the secondary object of [the verb] creation, because it means the act of becoming (*ṣayr*) and it is not permissible to put it in the accusative case because 'faultlessness' (*istiwāʾ*) comes after creation"; and this is clear. So the creation that precedes the state of uprightness (*al-taswiya*) is only creation in the sense of measuring out (*al-taqdīr*), not creation in the sense of bringing-into-existence (*al-ījād*), which is what is meant here. And *al-taswiya* is a comparison to it in this sense, specifying the entity by its state.[96]

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[93] "Then We sent to her Our angel, Gabriel, appearing before her [Mary] as a man, perfectly formed (*sawiyyan*)."
[94] al-Madanī, *Riyāḍ al-sālikīn*, 7:304; Abū al-Qāsim Maḥmūd al-Zamakhsharī, *Tafsīr al-kashshāf* (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifa, 2009), 633.
[95] al-Madanī, *Riyāḍ al-sālikīn*, 7:304.
[96] al-Madanī, 7:304.

Through grammatical argument, al-Madanī explains the meaning of *sawiyyan* as it relates to divine creation. In his conception, God measures out (*qaddara*) the human being, fixing its precise constitution so that it is perfectly proportioned, whereas creation (*ījād*) itself is something separate. As he indicates, God fashions the human being, *then* creates it, its temporal instantiation expressing this pre-temporal fashioning. In this sense, *sawiyyan* (or alternatively, *istiwāʾ*) is not merely equipoise between contrasting elements, but rather a state of uprightness, antecedent to time itself and primordial to human birth.

Niʿmat Allāh al-Jazāʾirī's Nūr al-anwār

At the onset of the Safavid revolution, Sufi associations, however connected to an established order (*ṭarīqa*), held sway in the Iranian plateau, including among the Turkoman Qizilbāsh tribes that brought the Safavids to power. The Qizilbāsh were later considered a political liability by the Safavid court and were systematically marginalized, partially by way of empowering a coterie of clergy with formal knowledge of Imami traditions and practices.[97] In the early Safavid period, we witness minor industries of refutation, set against the Sufi influence, that blossom into major ones by the late seventeenth century.[98] My third Safavid commentary example per this section was authored by Sayyid Niʿmat Allāh al-Jazāʾirī (d. 1112/1701), known as "al-Muḥaddith al-Jazāʾirī." Al-Jazāʾirī was a student of al-Majlisī II and Aghā Ḥusayn al-Khawānsārī (d. 1098/1687), the latter the first person to translate the *Ṣaḥīfa* into Persian,[99] and a

[97] "An integral part of the Safavid imposition of Shiʿism was the eclipsing or suppressing of the Sufi orders, most of them Sunnite in their orientation." Hamid Algar, "IRAN ix. RELIGIONS IN IRAN (2) (2.3) Shiʿism in Iran Since the Safavids," *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online*, ed. Trustees of Columbia University in the City of New York. Accessed October 5, 2020, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2330-4804_EIRO_COM_3478.
[98] See Andrew J. Newman, "Sufism and Anti-Sufism in Safavid Iran: The Authorship of the "Ḥadīqat Al-Shīʿa" Revisited," *Iran* 37 (1999): 95-108.
[99] Babayan, *The City as Anthology*, 82.

hadith compiler and jurist, known primarily for his anthology, *al-Anwār al-nuʿmāniyya*. Al-Jazāʾirī's commentary of the *Ṣaḥifa*, titled *Nūr al-anwār*, was produced during a middle period when the consolidating movement of the state was in fruition. It is a commentarial paradigm of the Akhbārī sway that gained ascendance in the mid to late Safavid period, under the state-appointed hierocracy.

Al-Jazāʾirī's commentary of the *Ṣaḥīfa* figures into a larger pedagogical project in developing the state religious identity of Safavid Iran. As the *Shaykh al-Islām,* or chief jurist, of Shushtar in the Khuzestan Province, his role included ministering services, settling local civil disputes, and appointing lower jurists, but foremost involved educating city inhabitants in the practices and principles of the Twelver faith.[100] This regulation of behavior and thought upheld combined state prerogatives and the sacred law, while simultaneously diminishing Sunni and Sufi vestiges in Iranian society.[101]

In the introduction, al-Jazāʾirī speaks generally of clarifying the *Ṣaḥīfa*'s meanings, "revealing its innermost contents (*al-lubāb*) without prolixity (*al-iṭnāb*) and tedium (*al-imlāl*)."[102] In *Nūr al-anwār*, he is focused less on words, such as in the style of Ibn Idrīs's precedent, and more on sentences, determining the fundamental thought that the latter express. A supplication's lines produce referents that vary widely. There is no rigorous analysis of meaning in *Nūr al-anwār*, where morphological and syntactical issues are interrogated, but rather series of inferences that occur to the commentator as natural or apparent.

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[100] Stewart, "The First Shaykh Al-Islām of the Safavid Capital Qazvin."
[101] Sajjad H. Rizvi, "Sayyid Niʿmat Allāh Al-Jazāʾirī and His Anthologies: Anti-Sufism, Shiʿism and Jokes in the Safavid World," *Die Welt Des Islams*, New Series, 50, no. 2 (2010): 227.
[102] Sayyid Niʿmat Allāh al-Jazāʾirī, *Nūr al-anwār fī sharḥ al-Ṣaḥifa al-Sajjādiyya* (Beirut: Dār al-Maḥajja al-Bayḍāʾ, 2000), 5.

Al-Jazāʾirī's commentary is a clear exhortation to persist in observance of the words of the Prophet's legatees (*awṣiyāʾ*), the Imams. He imagines the *Ṣaḥīfa* as a reservoir of transmitted and rational proofs for their authority and with regards to various issues that impact belief and practice. For instance, he includes the *sharʿi* necessity for offering the complete blessing (*ṣalawāt*) for the Prophet *and* his household, chastising Ashʿarīs and Muʿtazilīs alike for conceiving ʿAlī as a mere companion of the Prophet.[103] At another juncture, in reference to *Duʿāʾ al-tamjīd*'s phrase, "Praise belongs to God, who chose for us the good qualities of creation," he begins an excursus on "the good" (*ḥasan*) and its recognition in creation. The Imams are the highest good in creation and may be recognized so by allusions (*ishārāt*), including by their outer beauty.[104]

The Imams are also the most dependable collective source of knowledge. In subtle jabs at the Sunni school, al-Jazāʾirī reproaches those who make use of analogical reasoning (*qiyās*), a practice strictly forbidden by the Imams in their traditions, and who see it as equivalent to the knowledge of the *ahl al-bayt*. Al-Jazāʾirī sees *qiyās* as an infernal instrument, originally employed by Iblīs when he compared (*qās*) the elements of fire and earth, claiming the former superior to the clay (*ṭīn*) of humans.[105] Referring to Sunnis as among the "madhhab of Satan," rooted in the principles (*uṣūl*) of al-Ashʿarī, he claims that they are those guilty of idolatry (*shirk*), referred to in the Qur'an's verse, "They have taken their rabbis and monks as well as the Messiah, son of Mary, as lords besides God" (9:31).[106] Al-Jazāʾirī relates the common *tafsīr* on this verse as referring to all who take as an authority those who interpret what is legally prohibited and permitted based on their individual whim. For al-Jazāʾirī, this includes the Sunni

[103] al-Jazāʾirī, *Nūr al-anwār,* 60–61.
[104] al-Jazāʾirī, 42–43.
[105] al-Jazāʾirī, 392.
[106] al-Jazāʾirī, 391.

legal school founders, and principally, Abū Ḥanīfa, who authorized a wide mandate for the use of *qiyās* in deriving such legal rulings.[107] He goes further still to suggest that Sunnis are guilty of apostacy (*ilḥād*), narrating an alleged debate between Shaykh al-Ṣadūq and a group of Sunni scholars in which al-Ṣadūq pointedly tells his audience that the God that Imamis worship would never assign Abū Bakr as caliph after the Prophet that He sent to lead the umma.[108] Al-Jazāʾirī cites approvingly Shaykh al-Ṣadūq's insistence on the *walāya* of the Imams, after the *nubuwwa* of the Prophet that initially announces the *tawḥīd* of God, that, hence, completes the three-part *uṣūl*, "suspending [rightful] faith and religion."[109] In the Akhbārī view that al-Jazāʾirī espouses, there can be no equivalence or comparison worth making to the spiritual, moral, and legal authority of the Imams.[110] Associating partners with the Imams he likens to associating partners with God.

In the opening supplication of the *Ṣaḥīfa,* several pericopes depict the proper praise, worthy of God. Among the descriptions, line 45 reads, "A praise through which He will illuminate for us the shadows of the interworld (*barzakh*)." Al-Jazāʾirī provides one prospective meaning for the term *barzakh*, referring to the existence of the phenomenal "world of witnessing" (*ʿalām al-shuhūd*) where souls rise up after their bodies' annihilation (*fanāʾ*) and conjoin with pure existence (*al-wujūd al-baḥt*).[111] He promptly denies this possible signification, relating,

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[107] al-Jazāʾirī, 391. A famous debate is reported by al-Mufīd between Abū Ḥanīfa and Imam al-Ṣādiq over *qiyās* that ends in tears for the former. See Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad al-ʿUkbarī al-Baghdādī, *al-Ikhtiṣās* (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Aʿlamī lil-Maṭbūʿāt, 2009), 187–88.
[108] al-Jazāʾirī, *Nūr al-anwār,* 292–93.
[109] al-Jazāʾirī, 293.
[110] The directive of exclusive reverence towards the Imams is revealed in numerous supplications, e.g., in the supplication of Imam al-Riḍāʾ, "I am loyal to the last of them [the Imams] in the same way as I am loyal to the first, and I disavow adherence to any intimate (*walīja*) other than them"; Ibn Bābawayh, *Man lā yaḥḍuruh al-faqīh*, 2:382.
[111] al-Jazāʾirī, *Nūr al-anwār,* 38. The *barzakh*'s shadows, according to this interpretation, are those of contingency (*al-imkān*) and need (*al-iḥtiyāj*). These are features that Ibn ʿArabī describes as bereft of the presence of God's

> As for this application of the *barzakh*, it is against what is well-known (*maʿhūd*) and is neither [according to] the understanding of the religiously lawful, nor the understanding of the legal authority, but rather derives from the common terminology (*iṣṭilāḥāt*) of Sufis…and the discourse (*akhbār*) found among their slander (*dhamm*).[112]

With regards to the *barzakh*'s true meaning, he is emphatic: It is not what the Sufis say, but rather what is conventionally imparted as an eschatological stage of the grave, between death and the Day of Resurrection, during which the questioning (*suʾāl* [*al-qabr*]) of the angels Munkar and Nakīr transpires.[113] The "shadows" are then the postmortem hardships *(shadāʾid*) of the soul within the *barzakh*. Such is how his teacher, al-Majlisī II, understands it.[114] The consequences of interpreting the term according to the Sufis are dire and, in al-Jazāʾirī's reading, breach sectarian limits, limits that the Safavids at this time were eager to impose. Al-Jazāʾirī cautions, "Whoever inclines (*zār*) toward one of them (Sufis), it as if they incline toward Satan; it is if they incline toward idol worshippers; it is if they incline toward Abū Bakr, ʾUmar, and ʾUthmān!"[115]

One of the *Ṣaḥīfa*'s addenda is a short supplication, known as *Duʿāʾuhu fī al-tadhallul*. It contains the line, "My master, my master! Thou art the Subsistent (*al-bāqī*) and I the perishing (*al-fānī*)." Its mystically conspicuous vocabulary lends al-Jazāʾirī the occasion to expound his interpretation of the unity of existence (*waḥdat al-wujūd*). He proposes two prevailing interpretations, one true and the other false. To be perishing, in al-Jazāʾirī's true claim, is to be non-existent (*al-maʿdūm*); or alternatively, to be contingent (*al-mumkin*) is to be merely possible.

"nondelimitated" (*mutlaq*) being. See Muḥyī al-Dīn Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad Ibn ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya*, 14 vols. (Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1997), 3:126.

[112] al-Jazāʾirī, *Nūr al-anwār,* 38.

[113] Al-Jazāʾirī confirms the "correct" interpretation elsewhere, in commentary of the *Ṣaḥifa*'s third supplication, *Ṣalāt ʿalā ḥamlat al-ʿarsh wa-kull malak muqarrab*. He affirms the traditional account, where the interworld's angels greet the believer as Mubashshir and Bashīr or the unbeliever as Munkar and Nakīr, depending on their answers to questions on the principles of religion (*uṣūl al-dīn*). al-Jazāʾirī, 94.

[114] al-Jazāʾirī, 37–38.

[115] al-Jazāʾirī, 38.

He endorses the ontological view of the Persian philosopher Jalāl al-Dīn Davānī (d. 908/1502), explaining his understanding of it as follows:

> The contingent does not possess existence, and existence is not relative (*muḍāf*) to contingency as its aspect (*ḥaythiyya*). Rather, contingency is one of the [*in divinis*] aspects of the non-delimited existent (*al-wujūd al-muṭlaq*), i.e., the necessary existent (*al-wājib al-wujūd*), because the necessary existent requires its emanative bestowal (*ifāḍa*) of existence on everything other, as it realizes within its receptacle (*maḥal*). And so all [delimited] existents derive from aspects of the primary and secondary effects (*āthār*) of the non-delimited existent, and contingencies in themselves are free from existence. Thus, there is no existent except God, and this is the true meaning of the unity of existence.[116]

The sublime, ineffable reality of God does not countenance the false view that al-Jazāʾirī characterizes:

> As for the Sufis, however they busy their tongues with this speech–aside from a few–they do not understand its authentic meaning. And when those who claim to have understood these concepts are asked about the unity of existence, they answer that it is the transformation of the First Principle into different likenesses (*mithāl*)…This meaning's corruption is apparent, as is the heresy (*zandaqa*) of its claimant. And even more corrupt than that is the saying of some of their shaykhs, "There is nothing in my cloak but God."[117]

The simple contrast between the words, *al-bāqī* and *al-fānī*, provides al-Jazāʾirī ample opportunity to launch polemics against what he views as a counterfeit spirituality that abuses scriptural language. He chastises Sufis for their misapprehension of the unity of existence, while additionally disparaging other associated speech acts deemed transgressive, such as Ḥallāj's famous proclamation. This abuse of language, al-Jazāʾirī suggests, is connected to a larger recusant attitude redolent of heterodoxies at best and heresies at worst.

In his commentary, al-Jazāʾirī is reminding his readers that his grammar, which, he claims, happens to be the most consistent with sound Imamate reports,[118] excludes the possibility

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[116] al-Jazāʾirī, 373.
[117] al-Jazāʾirī, 373–4.
[118] He writes, "My claim is [based in] what is conveyed from the words of the Infallible"; al-Jazāʾirī, 38.

of signification espoused by the Sufis who reason according to their own misguided whims. In the first example, he refers directly to their terminology (*iṣṭilāḥāt*), linguistic tokens of their worldview, in leveling his case against what Rizvi (2010) calls "decadent Sufism."[119] The Sufis are playing the wrong language game, deviant by dint of its Sunni-associated origin that plays by a different set of rules than those seen as correct. By breaching the conceptual parameters that al-Jazāʾirī views as the most authentic, a person reaches beyond the pale of acceptable religion. And yet, his shading of opinion occurs in greys. There is little to distinguish the above favored ontological view and that of Ibn ʿArabī. His outline recapitulates the exact idioms, developed by Ibn ʿArabī in the *Futūḥāt* and subsequently systematized by Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī. Here, God, the non-delimited existent, figures as an absolute, unique reality from which the contingent, perceptible realities are derived–whereas the only observable difference in al-Jazāʾirī's account, distinguishing the true from false claim, is the mechanism by which this occurs, with al-Jazāʾirī taking umbrage with the transmutation of the One to the many. An ambiguous apprehension of Sufism, suggestive in the last passage's exception of a few non-reprobate Sufis, conforms to a larger pattern of al-Jazāʾirī's ambivalence in his writings. In broad commentarial strokes, he wishes to separate the practical (*al-ʿamalī*) chaff from the theoretical (*al-naẓarī*) wheat of mysticism.[120]

Elsewhere in his commentary, in reading into the phrase, "My God, before Thee tremble the pious tremblers (*mutarahhibūn*),"[121] part of the *Ṣaḥīfa*'s addendum "Supplication of Magnification" (*Duʿāʾ wa-tamjīd lahu*), al-Jazāʾirī connects Christian monasticism with examples of Sufi folly:

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[119] Rizvi, "Sayyid Niʿmat Allāh Al-Jazāʾirī and His Anthologies," 228.
[120] Rizvi, 236–38.
[121] From the Arabic root, *r-h-b*, derives both fear/reverence as well as reference to Christian monks and members of monastic orders.

> They [Sufis] invent litanies (*adhkār*) that contain clapping, singing, and ecstatic (*al-wajd*) and fugue states (*al-ghishyān*)…Their calamity that is visited upon the Muslims is more severe than that of their Christian brothers. They [Sufis] were first among the generations of the Imams opposed to them, passing from that generation to this current moment of their opposition to the scholars of Islam (*ʿulamāʾ al-dīn*).[122]

Sufis in Safavid Iran came to be associated with rebellion, heterodox spiritualisms, and aberrant behavior.[123] Pushing back against this activity, using both physical and ideological force, became a priority for the Safavid court who appointed powerful clergy such as al-Jazāʾirī with the design of reigning them in. In *Nūr al-anwār*, al-Jazāʾirī affirms this religious desideratum of the state that mirrored his own convictions, in part by interpreting it into a collection of supplications that gained in popularity during the period.[124] By reshaping language in this way, al-Jazāʾirī responds positively to this effort, during a watershed moment in Imami history.

Qajar Commentaries and Beyond

The Qajar period enlarges the trend of works on prayer, established under the Safavids. Numerous collections and Persian translations attest to the continued interest, between society and state, in promoting diligent worship practices.[125] Commentaries by eminent scholars feature prominently among this literature. Several of the case studies that follow, in respect to Sayyid Kāẓim Rashtī (d. 1259/1843) and Mullā Hādī Sabzivārī (d. 1289/1873), fall within the Qajar

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[122] al-Jazāʾirī, *Nūr al-anwār,* 371. In polemical anti-Sufi literature of al-Jazāʾirī's time, Sufis were often equated with Christians. See Alberto Tiburcio, *Muslim-Christian Polemics in Safavid Iran* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), 154–78.

[123] See Rula Jurdi Abisaab, *Converting Persia: Religion and Power in the Safavid Empire* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 24–5, 123; Kathryn Babayan, "The Safavid Synthesis: From Qizilbash Islam to Imamite Shi'ism," *Iranian Studies* 27, no. 1/4 (1994): 135–61; Newman, "Sufism and Anti-Sufism in Safavid Iran."

[124] Rizvi, "Sayyid Niʿmat Allāh Al-Jazāʾirī and His Anthologies," 231.

[125] For a list of works from the time of Kafʿamī until Shaykh ʿAbbās al-Qummī, see Jaʿfariyān, "Adab-i duʿā," 219–25. For an overview of the published translations and commentaries of the *Ṣaḥīfa* during the Qajar period, see Majīd Jalīsa, "Nigāhī ijmālī bar chāphā-yi Ṣaḥīfa-yi Sajjādiyya dar dawra-yi Qājār va Pahlavī (tarjumahā, takmilahā va shurūḥ)," *Āyīna-yi Pizhūhish* 32, no. 1 (2021): 297–336.

period. A few prominent others that may be mentioned include Sayyid ʿAbd Allāh Shubbar (d. 1242/1827, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt*),[126] Mīrzā Muḥammad b. Sulaymān Tunikābunī (d. 1302/1885, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ Rajab/al-saḥar*),[127] Shihāb al-Dīn Muḥammad Mūsā Buzchallūʾī Arākī (d. 1313/1895–96, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-iftitāḥ*),[128] Mīrzā Muḥammad ʿAlī Mudarris Chahārdihī (d. 1334/1915, *Sharḥ al-Ṣahīfa al-Sajjādiyya, Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-Kumayl/al-ṣabāḥ*),[129] Sayyid Abū al-Qāsim Dihkurdī Isfahānī (d. 1353/1935, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt*),[130] Āqā Najafī Qūchānī (d. 1363/1944, *Sharḥ-i Duʿā-yi ṣabāḥ*),[131] Ḥaydar Qulī Khān Sardār Kābulī (d. 1372/1952, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*),[132] and Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥusaynī "Muḥaddith" Urmawī (d. 1399/1979, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-nudba*).[133]

Among the latter entries, bringing us into the mid fourteenth/twentieth century, Dihkurdī Isfahānī's commentary stands out, given his status as one of the most distinguished jurists of the Qajar period. Dihkurdī Isfahānī divides [*al-Lumaʿāt fī*] *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt* into forty-two chapters, called "brilliant flashes" (*lumʿa*), that fluctuates between Arabic and Persian. While all the hadiths are preserved in Arabic, there is no detectible basis for his choice of one language over the other in the commentary passages. According to the contemporary editor of *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt*, in a clever use of wordplay, Dihkurdī Isfahānī's mixing of languages was in the style of "macaronic" (*mulammaʿ*) prose.[134] Like Sayyid Kāẓim Rashtī's commentary of the same

[126] al-Ṭihrānī, *al-Dharīʿa*, 13:250.
[127] al-Ṭihrānī, *al-Dharīʿa*, 13:248.
[128] al-Ṭihrānī, *al-Dharīʿa*, 11:99.
[129] al-Ṭihrānī, *al-Dharīʿa*, 4:112; al-Amīn al-ʿĀmilī, *Aʿyān al-Shīʿa*, 9:443–44.
[130] al-Ṭihrānī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 13:61.
[131] Muḥammad Ḥasan Najafī Qūchānī, *Sharḥ-i Duʿā-yi ṣabāḥ* (Tehran: Nashr-i Haft, 2000).
[132] al-Ṭihrānī, *al-Dharīʿa*, 13:253
[133] al-Ṭihrānī, *al-Dharīʿa*, 13:260.
[134] He adds that it was Dihkurdī Isfahānī's way of preserving the signs and secrets (*rumūz*, *asrār*) of a mystical text; Abū al-Qāsim Dihkurdī Isfahānī, *Lumaʿāt fī sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt*, ed. Muḥammad Riḍā Zādhūsh (Isfahan: Mihr-i Qāʾim, 2008), 13.

supplication, analyzed in a later chapter of this dissertation, Dihkurdī Isfahānī's main influence is al-Kafʿamī's remarkable rendition, titled *Ṣafwat al-ṣifāt* [*fī sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt*].[135]

A piquant interest in the *ijāba* genre, explaining the benefits of supererogatory prayer and the correct methods for guaranteeing a petitionary prayer's positive outcome, can be detected among the literature of the time. The great Qajar thinker, Mīrzā Abū al-Ḥasan Jilwa Ṭabāṭabāʾī (d. 1314/1896–97), one of the "Four Philosophers of Tehran" (*ḥukamāʾī arbaʿa-yi Tihrān*) of the era, wrote the epistle, *Risāla fī al-bayān istijābat al-duʿāʾ*. It offers a short but dense philosophical treatment that considers the conditions (*sharāʾiṭ*) for prayer and categorizes the taxonomies of essences or natures (*māhiyyāt*) that have associations with different psychological states, such as felicity (*al-saʿāda*) and misery (*al-shaqāwa*).[136] Each nature is more or less prone to accepting divine guidance and, consequently, more or less receptive to efficacious supplication. Throughout the commentary, Jilwa introduces subtle points, reflective of his Peripatetic worldview, such as God's foreknowledge of the universals of things before their creation[137] and the potentiality or preparedness (*istiʿdād*) of the human intellect for knowing the causes (*asbāb*) of phenomena.[138]

Beyond the profusion of commentaries, Persian translations, and edited volumes of supplications lies a marked fascination amongst the Qajar public with the prophylactic and talismanic benefits of supplicative spells, amulets, and incantations.[139] While clerical specialists authored written works on the meanings of supplications, the laity promoted their practical use through oral transmission and direct council. The occult dimensions of the latter were likely

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[135] Isfahānī, 13–14.
[136] Abū al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad Jilwa Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *Risāla fī al-bayān istijābat al-duʿāʾ* (Qom: Muʾassasat al-Imām al-Hādī, 2003), 68–71.
[137] Ṭabāṭabāʾī, 66–68.
[138] Ṭabāṭabāʾī, 73–75.
[139] For the role of *duʿāʾ* and *dhikr* in Qajar folk medicine, see Zaynab Karīmī and Shahrām Rahnimā, "Barrasī-yi naqsh-i adʿiya va adhkār dar ṭibb va ṭibābat-i dawra-yi Qājār," *Tārīkh-i Pizishkī* 13, no. 46 (2021): 1–14.

taboo among the former, especially as they were encouraged by socially marginalized groups, such as Jews, Dervishes, and the Romani (*Kūlī*) people, many of whom were solicited as *duʿāʾ-navīsān*.[140] Much research is yet to be done with regards to these developments, especially as they touch on the issues of social class and cultural reproduction. The ambiguous status of supplication in terms of its use and import, between notions of orthodoxy and heterodoxy, continues to ebb and flow with the times.

[140] For an excellent Persian article on the use of talismans in the Qajar period among these societal elements, see Zahrā Ḥātimī, "Ṭilismāt dar dawra-yi qājāriyya," *Jāmiʿi Shināsī-yi Tārīkhī* 11, no. 1 (1398): 65–90.

Chapter 4: Orchestrating the Unseen: Conjuration, Supplication, and Devotion in Ibn Fahd al-Ḥillī's (d. 841/1437–38) *ʿUddat al-dāʿī wa-najāḥ al-sāʿī*

Introduction

One of the most important exponents of supplication in the Imami Shiʿi tradition is Jamāl al-Dīn Abū al-ʿAbbās Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Ibn Fahd al-Ḥillī (d. 841/1437–38). His famous disquisition on supplication, *ʿUddat al-dāʿī wa-najāḥ al-sāʿī* ("Provision for the supplicant and salvation of the striver"), is a meditation on Islam as optative mood. In the writing of Ibn Fahd, comprehension and application of supplication combine to form a practical science of Islam. At its core lies a patterned internal logic where the success or failure of prayer's fulfillment depends on the learned attunement to its operational rules, delineated in the various traditions of the *maʿṣūmīn*. It takes effort and discipline to master this science, the craft's application demanding perspicacity, gradated to various levels. It is the primary objective of Ibn Fahd in *ʿUddat al-dāʿī* to encourage spiritual edification–from the Latin, aedificationem: "building up (of the soul)"[1]–as well as influence everyday life, the tacit assumption being that one is intertwined with the other. Within each and every moral sphere of life lies an edifying power that bears on the pneumatic substance of a human being. Accordingly, reaching a high level of this awareness is a condition for felicity (s*aʿāda*) in this life and the next.

This chapter is organized in the following manner. First, I describe Ibn Fahd's background, with a focus on his written works and the scholarly networks in which he was immersed, before surveying some of the principal concepts contained within his famous work on supplication, *ʿUddat al-dāʿī*. These concepts fall under two broad categories: 1) the manners and

[1] Thomas J. Heffernan, *The Passion of Perpetua and Felicity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 139–40.

conditions of successful supplication, and 2) the proper lifestyle for the maintenance of piety, reinforcing the former category. I then introduce the issue of Ibn Fahd's association with Sufism and the occult[2] and how this bears on the subsequent standardization of Shiʿi devotional practices in the Safavid epoch.

Ibn Fahd's Life and Times

Although little is known of Ibn Fahd's life, the available information outlines a typical trajectory for a Muslim scholar. He was born in the city of al-Ḥilla in contemporary Iraq in the year 757/1356,[3] a region known as a center for Shiʿi scholarship since the sixth/twelfth century.[4] The rich intellectual character of al-Ḥilla impressed itself in Ibn Fahd at a young age, inspiring him to seek out the esteemed scholars of his time. He made several important journeys, first traveling to Karbala. There, he studied the traditional Islamic science of jurisprudence (*fiqh*) under the tutelage of Zayn al-Dīn ʿAlī b. al-Ḥasan al-Khāzin al-Ḥāʾirī (d. ca. 793/1390–91) who eventually granted Ibn Fahd a certificate (*ijāza*), authorizing transmission of his teachings, in 791/1389.[5] Al-Ḥāʾirī himself was the student of several traditionalist masters, including Fakhr al-Muḥaqqiqīn Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ḥillī (d. 771/1369–70) and Muḥammad b. Makkī al-ʿĀmilī al-Jizzīnī (d. 786/1384).[6]

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[2] Matthew Melvin-Koushki provides the definition of occult: "In the premodern Greco-Arabo-Perso-Latin scholarly tradition, those sciences routinely designated *occult* (Ar. and Per. *khafī*, Gr. *apókruphos*, Lat. *occultus*) were theorized and practiced as precisely that subset of the Hellenic (and Egyptian, Persian and Indic) natural and mathematical sciences designed to marry spirits to bodies and bodies to spirits, which is to say, to extrapolate from visible data (*ẓāhir*) to nonvisible (*bāṭin*), from matter to mind, human or otherwise"; Matthew Melvin-Koushki, "Is (Islamic) Occult Science Science?," *Theology and Science* 18, no. 2 (2020): 304.
[3] al-Ḥillī, *ʿUddat al-dāʿī*, 10; Muḥammad Mahdī Baḥr al-ʿUlūm, *al-Fawāʾid al-Rijāliyya*, 4 vols. (Najaf: Maṭbaʿat al-Ādāb, 1965), 2:111.
[4] Aun Hasan Ali, *The School of Hillah and the Formation of Twelver Shi'i Islamic Tradition*, Early and Medieval Islamic World Series (London: I. B. Tauris & Company, Limited, 2023), 21.
[5] Ali, 39; Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī, *Amal al-āmil fī ʿulamāʾ Jabal ʿĀmil*, 2 vols. (Baghdad: Maktabat al-Andalus, 1966), 2:21.
[6] Muḥammad Bāqir b. Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn Khwānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt fī aḥwāl al-ʿulamāʾ wa-l-sādāt*, 8 vols. (Tehran: Muʾassasat Ismāʿīliyyān, 1971), 1:72.

Further travel followed, including to Jabal ʿĀmil in historic Syria, another major site of Shiʿi learning that maintained close links and networks of scholars with al-Ḥilla. It is perhaps in Jabal ʿĀmil where Ibn Fahd studied under Muḥammad b. Makkī, known as the "First Martyr" (*al-Shahīd al-Awwal*) in the Imami tradition.[7] Ibn Fahd is additionally recorded in the annals as traveling to Bahrain, a sojourn about which little is known.[8] Several collections of question-and-answer correspondences with Ibn Fahd's local interlocutors evince strong connections between him and the scholars where he traversed.[9] At some time, after becoming a full-fledged *mujtahid*, he taught large groups of students at the famous al-Madrasa al-Zaynabiyya in his native al-Ḥilla.[10] Eventually he returned to Karbala whereupon he helped reinvigorate the Shiʿi intellectual movement, training close circles of pupils.[11] He died in 841/1437–38 at the age of 84.[12]

Although there is some dispute over the location of his resting place, the vast majority agree that Ibn Fahd is buried in Karbala, in what was once a grove, in the southwestern vicinity of the shrine of Imam al-Ḥusayn.[13] A visitation tomb (*mazār*) remains there today, facing the shrine's Bāb al-Qibla entrance, adjacent the Battle of Ashura's tent ground (*mukhayyam*).

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[7] The Safavid biographer, al-Afandī (d. 1130/1717–18), claims that he saw a note in the handwriting of Ibn Fahd, contained in the treatise, *al-Arbaʿīn*, indicating that al-Shahīd al-Awwal narrated certain traditions, cited in the work; al-Afandī, *Riyāḍ al-ʿulamāʾ*, 1:64.

[8] Abū al-ʿAbbās Aḥmad Ibn Fahd al-Ḥillī, *Mawsūʿat al-Shaykh al-Faqīh Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Fahd al-Ḥillī al-Asadī*, ed. Mushtāq Ṣāliḥ Ḥusayn al-Muẓaffar, 14 vols. (Karbala: Majmaʿ al-Imām al-Ḥusayn al-ʿIlmī li-Taḥqīq Turāth Ahl al-Bayt, 2019), 0:68.

[9] For Ibn Fahd's responses to the scholars of Bahrain and Syria, see: al-Ḥillī, *Mawsūʿat Ibn Fahd al-Ḥillī*, vol. 12. Several of these responses were reproduced in al-Majlisī II's *Biḥār al-anwār*; al-Ṭihrānī, *al-Dharīʿa*, 5:215.

[10] The different sources refer to the madrasa as either al-Zaynabiyya, al-Zayniyya, al-Raʿiyya, or al-Sharʿiyya; Khwānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt*, 1:72; Muḥammad Bāqir b. Muḥammad Taqī al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 0:232; Abū al-ʿAbbās Aḥmad Ibn Fahd al-Ḥillī, *al-Muhadhdhab al-bāriʿ fī sharḥ al-Mukhtaṣar al-nāfiʿ*, 5 vols. (Qom: Muʾassasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī, 1987), 1:12; Yūsuf Karkūsh al-Ḥillī, *Tārīkh al-Ḥilla*, 14 vols. (Najaf: al-Maktaba al-Ḥaydariyya, 1965), 1:105.

[11] al-Ḥillī, *Mawsūʿat Ibn Fahd al-Ḥillī*, 0:76. Some of Ibn Fahd's notable students include ʿAlī b. Hilāl al-Jazāʾirī (d. ca. 900/1495), ʿAbd al-Samīʿ b. Fayyāḍ al-Asadī (d. ca. 918/1512), Mufliḥ b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṣaymarī (d. ca. 900/1495), and Raḍī al-Dīn Rāshid al-Qaṭīfī (d. ca. 900/1495); Nūr Allāh al-Ḥusaynī al-Shūshtarī, *Majālis al-muʾminīn*, 4 vols. (Najaf: Intishārāt al-Maktaba al-Ḥaydariyya, 2012), 2:370; al-Ḥillī, *al-Muhadhdhab al-bāriʿ*, 1:21–30.

[12] al-Amīn al-ʿĀmilī, *Aʿyān al-Shīʿa*, 3:148; Yūsuf b Aḥmad al-Baḥrānī, *Luʾluʾat al-baḥrayn* (Manama: Maktabat Fakhrāwī, 2008), 151.

[13] A minority claim that Ibn Fahd is buried in al-Ḥilla. For the details of this debate, see al-Ḥillī, *Mawsūʿat Ibn Fahd al-Ḥillī*, 0:61–64.

Alongside the tomb is a madrasa in his name, containing a mosque and living quarters for its students, that underwent major renovation in 1384/1965.[14]

Ibn Fahd lived on a historical precipice, his death occurring approximately a half-century before the establishment of the Safavid dynasty. During his life, the Iranian plateau was the scene of major political and religious realignments whose outcome would bring Ismāʿīl I and the Safavids to power. In the wake of the siege of Baghdad in 656/1258, his native al-Ḥilla was saved from the excesses of Mongol destruction when a delegation of Shiʿi scholars were able to convince Hülegü (d. 663/1265), grandson of Genghis Khan, to spare the city.[15] The region nonetheless became a locus of competing tribes in the subsequent century. It was ruled by the descendants of the Turco-Mongol leader Timur, known as Tamerlane in the western world, after the latter's death in 807/1405. Timurid supremacy over Baghdad and greater Mesopotamia (*ʿIrāq-i ʿArab*), was sundered by the Turkman tribal confederation of "Black Sheep," Qara Qoyunlū. Under Qara Yusuf (r. 792–823/1390–1420), a multiethnic soldiery wrestled the remaining Mongol Jalayirid forces, breaking their tenuous alliance, and fortifying Qara Qoyunlū control over the Shiʿi heartlands.[16] Qara Yusuf's sons, Ghiyāth al-Dīn Shāh Muḥammad and Ispend Mīrzā, struggled for power over the region before the latter was victorious, capturing Baghdad in 836/1432 and ruling over it until his death in 849/1445.[17] The Qara Qoyunlū,

[14] al-Ḥillī, 0:76. While visiting Karbala in February–March 2024, I documented the visitation tomb's large renovation, including its tiled façade and dome.
[15] Andrew J. Newman, *Twelver Shiism: Unity and Diversity in the Life of Islam, 632 to 1722*, New Edinburgh Islamic Surveys (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 123.
[16] ʿAbbās ʿAzzāwī, *Mawsūʾat tārīkh al-ʿIrāq bayna iḥtilālayn*, 8 vols. (Beirut: al-Dār al-ʿArabiyya lil-Mawsūʿāt, 2004), 3:85–86.
[17] Kāmil b. Muṣṭafā al-Shaybī, *al-Ṣila bayn al-taṣawwuf wa-l-tashayyuʿ*, 2 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Andalus, 1982), 2:257–58; Roger M. Savory, "The Struggle for Supremacy in Persia after the Death of Tīmūr," *Der Islam* 40, no. 1 (1964): 37–38.

spurned by the native populace for the city's destruction,[18] were eventually defeated by their enemies, the "White Sheep," Āq Qoyunlū.[19]

John Woods (1999) has chronicled what he characterizes as the "Islamization of [Turko-Mongol] nomadic ideology by the end of the fifteenth/ninth century,"[20] syncretic in its fusion of Mongol and Islamic traditions. Amid shifting religio-political fealties, the oral Yasa code of Genghis Khan mixed with Jamāʿī-Sunni legal doctrines, Sufi-centric notions of charismatic authority (e.g., *al-insān al-kāmil*, "the Perfect Human Being"), and the Shiʿi creed of divinely appointed leadership of, and devotion toward, the Imams. The combination of these forces, in conjunction with shamanistic beliefs,[21] animated the Safavid (*Ṣafawiyya*) clan, originally a Sufi order (*ṭarīqa*), likely Kurdish in ethnic origin, that arose in a series of military conquests during the ninth/fifteenth century. Their capture of the northwestern Iranian territories, aided by the rallying of zealous, mostly Turkic, Qizilbāsh troops, culminated in the victory of Tabriz over the Āq Qoyunlū in 907/1501. Ismāʿīl's founding of a state that would last over two centuries (907–1135/1501–1722) began with the proclamation of Imami Shiʿism as its official religion. With his atavistic reclamation of Persian kingship (*khvārenah*), harkening back to ancient Iran, and his claim to be the representative of the occulted twelfth Imam, channeling Shiʿi chiliastic belief, Ismāʿīl espoused a multivalent sense of authority.[22] In his poetry, Ismāʿīl wrote about his ascent as synonymous with Imam al-Mahdi's parousia (*ẓuhūr*):

> A man (has become) a manifestation of Truth. Prostrate thyself!

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[18] ʿAzzāwī, *Mawsūʾat tārīkh al-ʿIrāq bayna iḥtilālayn*, 3:60.
[19] A definitive victory came with the Āq Qoyunlū's leader, Uzun Ḥasan (d. 882/1478), and his rapid territorial expansion in Iraq and Azerbaijan during the years 872–73/1467–69; John E. Woods, *The Aqquyunlu: Clan, Confederation, Empire*, Revised and Expanded Edition (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1999), 87.
[20] Woods, 9.
[21] Rula Jurdi Abisaab, *Converting Persia: Shiʾa Islam and the Safavid Empire* (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 4; Shahzad Bashir, "Shah Ismaʿil and the Qizilbash: Cannibalism in the Religious History of Early Safavid Iran," *History of Religions* 45, no. 3 (2006): 234–56.
[22] Kathryn Babayan, "The Safavid Synthesis: From Qizilbash Islam to Imamite Shi'ism," *Iranian Studies* 27, no. 1/4 (1994): 135–61.

Pander not to Satan! Adam has put on new clothes, God has come.[23]

Subsequent kings, succeeding Ismāʿīl, sought greater alignment with traditional Shiʿism and, in their eagerness for a theocratic government that could ideologically challenge the Sunni Ottomans, recruited authorities in Shiʿi sacred law that descended from Jabal ʿĀmil. In the tenth/seventeenth century, the religious establishment, attendant to Safavid patronage, fostered an orthodox Shiʿi orientation that attempted to erase the vestiges of Sufism and religious extremism (*ghulūw*). The origins and beliefs of the Safavids were retroactively revised to conform to the desired, contemporaneous sentiment, affirming exclusive reference toward the Imams over any other spiritual authority. This shift, drawing on earlier Kufan tendencies, represents what Rizvi (2021) terms the "maximalist conception of Imamology."[24] Accordingly, the mystical impulses of Sufism were sublimated under ambiguous terms derived from the Arabic root of "knowledge" (*ʿ–l–m*), including "sapiential knowledge" (*maʿrifa*) and "gnosis" (*ʿirfān*).[25] Much of the early to mid-Safavid period's intellectual production acted as a centrifuge, preserving certain elements of Shiʿi religiosity, while discarding non-conforming remnants from the preceding times. We know little about the effect of anti-Sufi polemics on the wider Safavid public[26]; but among the literary high culture, the effort was only partially successful, the mystical

[23] V. Minorsky and Shāh Ismā'īl I, "The Poetry of Shāh Ismā'īl I," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 10, no. 4 (1942): 1049a.

[24] Sajjad Rizvi, "Esoteric Shiʿi Islam in the Later School of Al-Ḥilla: Walāya and Apocalypticism in al-Ḥasan b. Sulaymān al-Ḥillī (d. after 1399) and Rajab al-Bursī (d. c. 1411)," in *Reason, Esotericism, and Authority in Shiʿi Islam*, ed. Rodrigo Adem and Edmund Hayes, Shii Islam: Texts and Studies, Volume 2 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2021), 193.

[25] *ʿIrfān* is often also translated as "mysticism." My above translations are mere approximations of unsettled, centuries-long debates by Muslim scholars over these terms' signification. For more on this transition of religious culture and language, see Ata Anzali, *Mysticism in Iran: The Safavid Roots of a Modern Concept* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2017).

[26] Sufi ideals, along with a variety of heterodox spiritualisms, persisted among small merchants, artisan guilds and rural peasantry and were a magnet for the disenfranchised. Although occasionally these factions created disturbances against the Safavid authorities, we know little of their details and extent; Abisaab, *Converting Persia*, 25–26, 123.

residue still unmistakable in the thought of Bahāʾ al-Dīn al-ʿĀmilī and Mullā Ṣadrā al-Shīrāzī, and even when anti-Sufism reached a peak during the time of Mullā Muḥsin al-Fayḍ al-Kāshānī.

Ibn Fahd's Major Works and Legacy

Throughout his lifetime, Ibn Fahd authored an abundance of works whose keystone aspect is *fiqh*, Ibn Fahd's major field of expertise. His body of work consists mainly of treatises and commentaries on law that attempt to cover the fullest range of affairs in a Muslim's life, those religious, social, political, and commercial. These texts primarily base their interpretations on the legislative contents of the Qur'an and the traditions of the *maʿsūmīn*. To specialize in *fiqh* is, hence, to specialize in hadith; and Ibn Fahd is no exception to this general demand. His numerous *ijāzāt* are a testimony to a time-honored tradition of imbibing and sharing the sayings of the *maʿṣūmīn*, the raw religious ingredients leavening legal interpretation. It appears that one of his works was inspired by a dream vision (*ṭayf*), wherein Imam ʿAlī, together with al-Sayyid al-Murtaḍā (d. 436/1044), greeted him as a supporter of the *ahl al-bayt* and requested that he compose a practical treatise on the matters of law.[27]

Over his lifetime, Ibn Fahd produced numerous Arabic epistles, treating various points of law with great specificity. A collection of ten of these epistles is available today in a single volume.[28] Each contains explanations and instructions of the requirements of the faith, including the proper intention (*niyya*), necessary for all obligatory acts of worship;[29] the provisions and rites per the *ḥajj* (and *ʿumra*) pilgrimage;[30] and the legal opinions (*fatāwā*) regarding ritual purity

[27] al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 1983, 0:233–34.
[28] Abū al-ʿAbbās Aḥmad Ibn Fahd al-Ḥillī, *al-Rasāʾil al-ʿashr*, ed. al-Sayyid Mahdī al-Rajāʾī (Qom: Maktabat Āyat Allāh al-ʿUẓmā al-Marʿashī al-Najafī al-ʿĀmma, 1988).
[29] *al-Lumʿa al-jaliyya fī maʿrifat al-niyya*. al-Ḥillī, 229–75.
[30] *Kifāyat al-muḥtāj ilā manāsik al-ḥājj*; *Risāla wajīza fī wājibāt al-ḥajj*; al-Ḥillī, 317–37.

(*ṭahāra*), prayer (*ṣalāt*), and alms payments (*zakāt*).[31] Many of these short epistles function as practical guidebooks for worshippers. They aim for a brevity, ideal for the practical use of non-specialists, those without the need to examine and debate the rulings' derivation. By contrast, Ibn Fahd's commentarial works navigate a broader corpus of jurisprudential literature and analyze the (often divergent) opinions of other legal authorities. His most famous commentaries include *al-Muhadhdhab al-bāriʿ* and *Muqtaṣar min sharḥ al-Mukhtaṣar*, both companion pieces to *al-Mukhtaṣar al-nāfiʿ* by the seventh/thirteen-century Shiʿi sage, Jaʿfar b. Ḥasan al-Muhaqqiq al-Hillī (d. 676/1277).[32] While each, according to Modarressi, adhered to the legal school of al-Shahīd al-Awwal,[33] they also explored the often tacit, finer details of its contents, granting Ibn Fahd certain authorial license for further analysis. On the implications for the role of the legal experts in Shiʿi society in Ibn Fahd's commentaries, Sachedina observes:

> What strikes an investigator as the hallmark of the *ijtihad* of Ibn Fahd is the inferences he makes about the position of a jurist in the community. His rulings on this question leave no doubt that he saw the Imamite jurist as the functional imam of the Imamite community during the [twelfth Imam's] occultation.[34]

Ibn Fahd's knowledge of hadith, undergirding his *fiqh* works, served also as basis for his expounding of Islamic devotion and ethics. A smattering of surviving works on the subject matter can be found in a recently published five-volume collection, a sample of which includes, *al-Taḥṣīn fī ṣifāt al-ʿārifīn* ("Fortifying the way of the gnostics"), on isolation (*ʿuzla*) and self-

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[31] *Al-Mūjaz al-ḥāwā li-taḥrīr al-fatāwā*; *Muḥarrar fī al-fatwā*; al-Ḥillī, 33–228.
[32] Abū al-ʿAbbās Aḥmad Ibn Fahd al-Ḥillī, *al-Muhadhdhab al-bāriʿ fī sharḥ al-Mukhtaṣar al-nāfiʿ* (Qom: Jamāʿat al-Mudarrisīn fī al-Ḥawza al-ʿIlmiyya, 1987); Abū al-ʿAbbās Aḥmad Ibn Fahd al-Ḥillī, *Muqtaṣar min sharḥ al-Mukhtaṣar* (Mashhad: al-Āstāna al-Raḍawiyya al-Muqaddasa, 1990). Al-Muhaqqiq al-Hillī's *al-Mukhtasar al-nāfiʿ* is itself an epitome of his voluminous work on Imami jurisprudence, *Sharāʾiʿ al-Islām fī masāʾil al-ḥalāl wa-l-ḥarām*.
[33] Hossein Modarressi, *An Introduction to Shīʿī Law: a bibliographical study* (London: Ithaca Press, 1984), 49–50.
[34] Abdulaziz Abdulhussein Sachedina, *The Just Ruler (al-Sultān al-Adil) in Shīite Islam* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 18.

effacement (*khumūl*) as essential ascetic modes[35]; *Fuṣūl fī al-taʿqībāt wa-l-daʿawāt* ("The Rites of supererogatory observances and supplications"), on the spiritual benefits of the supererogatory prayers that follow those obligatory, prefaced by an introduction on self-refinement (*tahdhīb al-nafs*) and attaining felicity[36]; *al-Adʿiya wa-l-khutūm* ("Supplications and incantations"), on the virtues of supplication, including several selections for seeking forgiveness (*istighfār*)[37]; and *Faḍl ṣalāt al-jamāʿa* ("The Virtue of congregational prayer"), on the individual and societal benefits of congregational prayer.[38] Foremost of works within the devotional genre is *ʿUddat al-dāʿī wa-najāḥ al-sāʿī*, a single-volume text that elucidates the normative ways supplication and liturgy is to be understood and practiced. An abridged manual of *ʿUddat al-dāʿī*, titled, *Nubdhat al-bāghī* ("Tract of the striver") was subsequently composed by Ibn Fahd,[39] along with several Persian translations by various authors.[40]

For Ibn Fahd, the explication of these subjects was not a passive affair, confined to his literary output, but was also expressed in public doctrinal debate (*munāẓara*).[41] In one fabled account, Ibn Fahd is known for prevailing over a group of Sunni scholars in a debate that took place in Baghdad in 840/1436–37, proving the truth of the Imami doctrine and winning over the Qara Qoyunlū-loyal governor, Ispend Mīrzā b. Qara Yūsuf, to Shiʿism.[42] According to the

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[35] Abū al-ʿAbbās Aḥmad Ibn Fahd al-Ḥillī, "al-Taḥṣīn fī ṣifāt al-ʿārifīn," in *al-Rasāʾil*, 5 vols. (Karbala: Majmaʿ al-Imām al-Ḥusayn al-ʿIlmī li-Taḥqīq Turāth Ahl al-Bayt, 2019), vol. 5. See also: Abū al-ʿAbbās Aḥmad Ibn Fahd al-Ḥillī, *al-Taḥṣīn fī ṣifāt al-ʿārifīn*, ed. ʿAlī Jabbār Gulbāghī (Qom: Intishārāt-i Lāhījī, 1998). On this work, see: Rizvi, "Esoteric Shiʿi Islam in the Later School of Al-Ḥilla," 212.
[36] al-Ḥillī "*Fuṣūl fī al-taʿqībāt wa-l-daʿawāt*," in *al-Rasāʾil*, vol. 5.
[37] al-Ḥillī "*al-Adʿiya wa-l-khutūm*," in *al-Rasāʾil,* vol. 5.
[38] al-Ḥillī "*Faḍl ṣalāt al-jamāʾa*," in *al-Rasāʾil,* vol. 2.
[39] al-Ṭihrānī, *al-Dharīʿa*, 24:36.
[40] See the currently available Persian translation: Abū al-ʿAbbās Aḥmad Ibn Fahd al-Ḥillī, *Āyīn-i bandagī va niyāyish*, trans. Ḥusayn Ghaffārī Sāravī (Qom: Bunyād-i Maʿārif-i Islāmī, 1996).
[41] On the history and role of *munāẓara* in the Islamic intellectual tradition, see Larry Benjamin Miller, *Islamic Disputation Theory: The Uses & Rules of Argument in Medieval Islam*, Logic, Argumentation & Reasoning 21 (Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2020).
[42] Khwānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt*, 1:73; al-Shūshtarī, *Majālis al-muʾminīn*, 2:368. This account echoes the famous debate of Ibn Fahd's ancestor, Abū Manṣūr Jamāl al-Dīn b. Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī (d. 726/1325) that resulted in the

account, Ispend Mīrzā would go on to promulgate Shiʿism throughout his realm and mint gold coins bearing the names of the twelve Imams.[43] A similar debate is narrated between Ibn Fahd and group of Jews over the proper interpretation of the Prophetic tradition, "The scholars of my nation are like the prophets of the Children of Israel (*banū Isrāʾīl*)." Once again, Ibn Fahd proves the victor whose powers of persuasion, including a demonstration of thaumaturgy, replicating Moses's transmutation of staff into snake, compel his challengers to become brothers in the Shiʿi faith.[44]

Much of Ibn Fahd's charisma, however, would come not from a disposition towards disputation, but a superior state of piety and asceticism (*zuhd*).[45] In the accounts of renowned Shiʿi personages (*rijāl*), Ibn Fahd is described, often repeatedly, as an ascetic (*zāhid*), a specialist in ethics (*akhlāq*), a religiously-scrupulous worshipper (*ṣāliḥan ʿābidan wariʿan*), and a trustworthy transmitter (*thiqa*), possessing God-fearing devotion (*taqwā*) and a capability of working marvels (*karamāt*).[46] Ibn Fahd's legacy is predominately defined by his written elucidation on the value of these qualities as they relate to supplication in *ʿUddat al-dāʿī*. It is to this writing that we turn our attention.

The Science of Supplication: ʿUddat al-dāʿī wa-najāḥ al-sāʿī

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conversion of the Il-Khan ruler, Öljeitü, subsequently known as Muḥammad Khudābanda (r. 1304–1316), to Shiʿism. See al-Shūshtarī, 2:354–56.

[43] The claim that this debate converted Ispend Mīrzā to Shiʿism is legendary. Bosworth writes, "As to the religious affiliations of the Qara Qoyunlu, although some of the later members of the family had Shī'ī-type names and there were occasional Shī'ī coin legends, there seems no strong evidence for definite Shī'ī sympathies beyond possible influences from a general climate of such sympathies among many Türkmen elements of the time"; Clifford Edmund Bosworth, *The New Islamic Dynasties* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 274.

[44] Muḥammad Riḍā al-Ḥakīmī, *Adhkiyāʾ al-fuqahāʾ wa-l-muḥaddithīn* (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Aʿlamī lil-Maṭbūʿāt, 1998), 8–9; al-Ḥillī, *Mawsūʿat Ibn Fahd al-Ḥillī*, 0:92.

[45] For a comprehensive list of Ibn Fahd's pious credentials, see al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī, *Amal al-āmil*, 2:71; Khwānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt*, 1:73–74.

[46] al-Ḥillī, *Mawsūʿat Ibn Fahd al-Ḥillī*, 0:61.

Completed in Jumādā al-Ūlā 801/January 1399,[47] *ʿUddat al-dāʿī* remains the most thorough Imami treatise on the intersection of ethics and supplication. It is credited by Amir-Moezzi (2005) as a major contributor to the development of prayer literature, comparable to Ibn Ṭāwūs's (d. 664/1266) *Iqbāl al-aʿmāl* ("Inclining toward acts of worship") and al-Kafʿamī's *al-Balad al-amīn* ("The Secure City").[48] In this celebrated work, quoted by countless subsequent Shiʿi scholars, supplication is depicted as an indispensable part of a Muslim's life. By humankind's natural "cognizance of supplication" (*ʿilm al-duʿāʾ*), Ibn Fahd claims, God provided the "keys to [His] gifts" and a "means for salvation."[49] *ʿUddat al-dāʿī* contains six chapters and an epilogue on God's Names. The author's comprehensive analysis begins with defining the subject of *duʿāʾ*, and then proceeds to lay out the conditions for its fulfillment, its proper procedures and manners, and concludes with the benefits and requirements of the recitation of litany (*dhikr*) and the Qur'an.

ʿUddat al-dāʿī elevates supplication from the ceremonial to the ethical and from the personal to the communal. It depicts prayer as an exercise of faith which fortifies certain dispositions, characteristic of Islamic ethics. In an early section of the text, Ibn Fahd describes supplication as recommended not only by the traditions that he provides in profusion,[50] but by the intellect (*al-ʿaql*):

> The intellect obligates defense against harm of the self, as much as it is within one's power. And yet the incidence of harm is necessary to occur for every human being dwelling in the world's abode, for they can never be detached from what disturbs the soul and preoccupies and harms the mind. Whether internally, such as with an accidental affection (*ʿāriḍ*) that overwhelms one's mind, or externally, such as with the harm wrought by an oppressor or the noisomeness of a neighbor, no matter if any of these experiences actually arise, the mind nonetheless may admit their occurrence–and how could it not? For people abide in a realm of

[47] al-Afandī, *Riyāḍ al-ʿulamāʾ*, 1:65.
[48] Amir-Moezzi, "Notes sur la prière dans le shī'isme imamite," 71.
[49] al-Ḥillī, *ʿUddat al-dāʿī*, 11–12.
[50] See al-Ḥillī, 16–20.

> events that do not remain stable and from whose calamities no human being can escape, whether by action or will. Thus, harm is either already occurring or expectant to occur, and both [circumstances] necessitate their removal by the power to do so. Supplication provides this yield (*muḥaṣṣil*), an outcome of destiny that must be directed toward this end.[51]

Ibn Fahd introduces several traditions where supplication is described as both "the weapon of the believer" (*silāḥ al-muʾmin*), fighting affliction that has already occurred, and "the shield of the believer" (*turs al-muʾmin*), rebelling affliction before it occurs.[52] The introductory chapters present a systematic study of supplication as an enterprise, essential for human flourishing. For the author, it is a science–a system of knowledge by which the activity of prayer may yield successful outcomes. Although God promises in the Qur'an, "I respond to one's prayer when they call upon Me," He follows with the felicity conditions, "So let them respond with obedience to Me and believe in Me, perhaps they will be rightly guided" (2:186). In this verse that connects prayer's response to the condition of obedience and the result of guidance, Ibn Fahd sees the supplicative equation in its bare form. Prayer has its broad conditions of virtue, foremost humility toward God (*al-khushūʿ lil-maʿbūd*),[53] and its cause of non-fulfillment in the breach of these conditions (*ikhlāl bi-shurūṭihā*).[54] It has prerequisites *and* postrequisites, indicated in Ibn Fahd's admonition (*tanbīh*):

> If you should see the effects of fulfillment, do not be impressed with yourself and think that your prayer has been answered due to your piety and soul's purity, for perhaps you are among those despised by God Himself, where the fulfillment will be proof against you on the Day of Resurrection when God will say, 'Were you not among those whose supplication I fulfilled, yet who turned their back on Me?'… Upon you is the increase of praise (*ḥamd*) and forgiveness (*istighfār*): To offer praise, in case the fulfillment of a supplication is the result of His blessing (*niʿma*) and benevolence (*minna*); and to offer forgiveness, in case it is

[51] al-Ḥillī, 15.
[52] al-Ḥillī, 16; Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb b. Isḥāq al-Kulaynī, *Uṣūl al-kāfī*, 2 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Murtaḍā, 2005), 2:716–17.
[53] al-Ḥillī, *ʿUddat al-dāʿī*, 29.
[54] al-Ḥillī, 20.

> the result of His gradual destruction (*istidrāj*) and antipathy (*bughḍ*) [of sinners].[55]

In the main, fourth chapter, "On the Manners of Supplication" (*Fī kayfiyyat al-duʿāʾ*), Ibn Fahd specifies the recommended preparatory conditions, including observance of ritual purity, the application of perfume, facing the direction of prayer (*al-qibla*), and wearing the proper agate ring. He offers several suggestions to increase supplication's advantages. The supplicant should avoid the moral vices of ostentation (*riyāʾ*) and self-conceit (*ʿujb*) in their worship that, in a Prophetic tradition, manifests "hidden idolatry."[56] They should additionally encourage weeping and if unable to do so, mimic the mien of the sorrowful (*al-tabākī*) and perhaps induce a tear that, according to the tradition of Imam al-Ṣādiq, is the size of "the head of a fly" (*raʾs al-dhubāb*).[57] Ibn Fahd offers advice for conjuring tears, including remembering one's major sins and imagining the Day of Judgment when the darkest recesses of a soul are revealed.[58]

Ibn Fahd is insistent that supplicants avoid sin (*dhanb*, pl. *dhunūb*) at any cost. The Qur'an's verse, "Truly God changes not what is in a people until they change what is in themselves" (13:11), is evidence, for Ibn Fahd, of change (*taghyīr*) as a double-edged sword. Just as God provides His favor to those who commit to worship and perform righteous acts, when the soul is directed toward evil, whether by the infringement of others' rights (*baghy al-nās*), the abandonment of good deeds, or ingratitude towards blessings, God withholds His favor.[59] Sin, he concludes, reverts (*tabdīl*) supplication, causing the reversal of fortune for those undeserving of what they ask.[60] Here, change may have positive and negative consequences, depending on its application of moral rules. Ibn Fahd identifies worldliness as the main cause of sin, depriving

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[55] al-Ḥillī, 31.
[56] al-Ḥillī, 218.
[57] al-Ḥillī, 173–74.
[58] al-Ḥillī, 174–75.
[59] al-Ḥillī, 212–13.
[60] al-Ḥillī, 213.

one of meaningful worship. He quotes from the Prophet Jesus, "In truth, I say to you: Just as an ailing individual desires food, but, because of the intensity of their ailment, takes no pleasure in it, so does the companion of the world take no pleasure in worship to the extent that they find sweetness in the world."[61]

A notable shift from individual conditions to communal interests occurs in chapter four. One should have affection for their brothers in faith and infuse their supplication with sincere, heartfelt regard and well wishes,[62] Ibn Fahd exhorts. The indicated traditions attest that supplication for others is fulfilled swifter than any other[63]; that cursed are those who deceive or abandon their brother in faith[64]; that a hundred mercies are provided for believers when they shake hands[65]; that a bad death is prevented by charity;[66] and that the abandonment of kinship (*qaṭīʿat al-raḥim*) is a cardinal sin which hastens death (*tuʿajjil al-fanāʾ*).[67]

Ibn Fahd advises that believers keep company with the righteous and avoid the impious. He offers the negative example of Muʿāwiya b. Abī Sufyān (d. 60/680), founder of the Umayyad caliphate, the first dynasty in Islam, against the positive example of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, the cousin/son-in-law of the Prophet Muḥammad and the first Shiʿi Imam. For those like Ibn Fahd with Shiʿi affinities, ʿAlī is a paragon of virtue. Unlike Muʿāwiya, a figure not known for his religious scruples, ʿAlī kept in constant nearness to God, as "a man of prayer."[68] In one long passage, Muʿāwiya forces one of ʿAlī's deputies, Ḍirār b. Ḍamra al-Laythī, to describe the Imam's character in front of an assembled audience. His extensive enumeration of ʿAlī's virtues

[61] al-Ḥillī, 106.
[62] al-Ḥillī, 175.
[63] al-Ḥillī, 183.
[64] al-Ḥillī, 187.
[65] al-Ḥillī, 186.
[66] al-Ḥillī, 69.
[67] al-Ḥillī, 213.
[68] al-Ḥillī, 205.

concludes with a supplication, overheard by Ḍirār while ʿAlī was praying alone during the night. In it, ʿAlī addresses the *dunyā* directly, exulting in his irrevocable divorce (*ṭalqa thālitha*) from it and cursing its incorrigible deception and abjectness.[69] Ḍirār's recollection of ʿAlī's supplication leaves Muʿāwiya weeping. Afterwards, when Ḍirār departs, Muʿāwiya announces to his audience, "When I die, there will be no one among you to offer such commendation," leading a member to solemnly conclude, "The worth of a person is equal to that of their company (*al-ṣāhib ʿalā qadr ṣāhibih*)."[70] At least two lessons are provided in this passage, that one should be weary of the *dunyā*'s deceptions and avoid others deceived by it. As Ibn Fahd suggests, supplication is most efficacious when it functions as a commitment to others, sharing in faith and virtue, and privileged over individual interests.

Where supplication is in most instances a solidary practice, the communal thrust, emphasized by Ibn Fahd, impinges on its efficacy. Many sections of *ʿUddat al-dāʿī* delineate the virtues of certain behaviors with little ostensible relation to private acts of petitionary prayer. His exhortations toward noble living appear in sections headed, "On the virtue of earning wealth and its manners,"[71] "On the virtue of honoring one's parents,"[72] and "On the rights of the wife over her husband."[73] These sections disabuse their readers of the notion that iniquitous or immoral conduct can ever be compatible with effective piety. Ibn Fahd surveys a wide array of behavior to show its consequence with regard to the potency of a person's devotions, separating mere performance from an embodied, pure worship.

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[69] This account derives from one of the wisdom sayings (*ḥukm*) contained in the *Nahj al-balāgha*. al-Sharīf Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Mūsawī al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnānī, 2004), 480–81.
[70] al-Ḥillī, *ʿUddat al-dāʿī*, 208–9.
[71] *Fī bayān faḍīlat al-takassub wa-ādābuh*. al-Ḥillī, 82–85.
[72] *Fī bayān faḍīlat ikrām al-wālidayn.* al-Ḥillī, 85–86.
[73] *Fī bayān faḍīlat al-zawja ʿalā al-zawj.* al-Ḥillī, 91.

ʿUddat al-dāʿī integrates many features conspicuous of Sufism, evinced by either theme or reference. One section, titled, "On the commendation of poverty, its virtues, and the love of the poor," addresses "poverty" (*faqr*), a word denoting actual indigence as well as one of the mystic's stations (*maqāmāt*), enjoining detachment and the emptying of the ego to make room for the divine presence. Ibn Fahd describes Jesus's station as leader (*imāman wa-qāʾidan*) of the poor who he takes as companions and successors [of the companions].[74] He cites the Prophet: "My poverty is my pride," and references ʿAlī and Fāṭima's chronic state of material scarcity as a token of their spiritual abundance.[75] He quotes from Uways al-Qaranī (d. 37/657), one of the Successors (*tābiʿūn*) and reported members of the Eight Ascetics (*al-Zuhhād al-Thamāniya*) celebrated by Sufis, who speaks of his relinquishing of riches, "As per the rights of God, we leave nothing left of gold or silver."[76] Most curiously, Ibn Fahd concludes the subject of *faqr* with a legendary account of Muʿāwiya. After overhearing a conversation between two maidservants about the infernal fate awaiting oppressive rulers, Muʿāwiya experiences an epiphanic moment and renounces his title in favor of Imam Ḥasan. He subsequently dies after having spent twenty-five nights in seclusion. When his mother hears of his course of action, she denounces him, "I wish you had been menses!" The son responds with contrition, "I wish I had been as you say. I had not known that either heaven or hell awaits people."[77] Before Ibn Fahd might suggest a redemptive quality emerging in the last moments of Muʿāwiya's life, he abruptly ends the account, cryptically noting, "Verily, in this section, we have departed from the

[74] al-Ḥillī, 123.
[75] al-Ḥillī, 123–24.
[76] al-Ḥillī, 124.
[77] al-Ḥillī, 124–25.

relevance of the book [*ʿUddat al-dāʿī*] on account of the suggestion of an associate who saw the beginning of the book and desired to emphasize this point; however we thought otherwise."[78]

Elsewhere in the text, Ibn Fahd highlights the various Sufi virtues of patience (*ṣabr*), contentment (*riḍāʾ*), sincerity (*ikhlāṣ*), certainty (*yaqīn*), dependence on God (*tawakkul*),[79] and the importance of discipleship for knowledge seekers,[80] with recourse to the example of other reported members of the Eight Ascetics, including Ibrāhīm b. Adham (d. 161/777–78) and Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 161/778).[81] He also addresses the virtues' antitheses in the matter of the vices that feature in the theological works of figures identified with Sufism, including al-Muḥāsibī (d. 243/857) and al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111). For example, Ibn Fahd describes *ʿujb*, following al-Ghazālī, as "among the vices leading to perdition (*muhlikāt*)," a spiritual contamination that undoes pious acts[82]; and he divides *riyāʾ* into the same five categories as contained in the third *rubʿ* of the *Iḥyāʾ*.[83]

In perhaps another allusion to Sufism, he positively depicts the austerity of the prophets, noting that Abraham and Jesus wore woolen garments (*ṣūf*),[84] the garb of the mystics and the supposed etymological origin from which derives, *Sufism* (*taṣawwuf*).

Ibn Fahd al-Ḥillī, between Heterodoxy and Orthodoxy

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[78] al-Ḥillī, 125.
[79] al-Ḥillī, 94–98.
[80] al-Ḥillī, 75–81.
[81] al-Ḥillī, 96–97. In addition to these figures, in *al-Taḥṣīn fī ṣifāt al-ʿārifīn*, al-Ḥillī quotes from the Sufi saints, Maʿrūf al-Karkhī (d. 200–1/815–6) and Dhū al-Nūn al-Miṣrī (d. ca. 248/862). al-Ḥillī, *al-Taḥṣīn fī ṣifāt al-ʿārifīn*, 1998, 19, 29.
[82] al-Ḥillī, *ʿUddat al-dāʿī*, 235–36.
[83] The categories comprise the body (*al-badan*), outward appearance (*al-ziyy*), speech (*al-qawl*), action (*al-ʿamal*), and emulating the cant and presentation of others (*al-ittibāʿ wa-l-ashyāʾ al-khārija*); al-Ḥillī, 216; Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*, 10 vols. (Jeddah: Dār al-Minhāj, 2011), 6:336. See also Muḥāsibī's *Kitāb al-Riyāʾ*: Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī, *al-Riʿāya li-ḥuqūq Allāh* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, n.d.), 153–306.
[84] al-Ḥillī, *ʿUddat al-dāʿī*, 118–19.

Several of the bio-bibliographic writers report a non-extant treatise of Ibn Fahd, called *Istikhrāj al-ḥawādith* ("Educing the occurrences").[85] Its title somehow relates to future events that Imam ʿAlī foresaw in a speech made during the Battle of Ṣiffīn, after the death of his companion, ʿAmmār b. Yāsir, in 37/657, events that included the massacres (*malāḥim*) that would occur with the rise of Genghis Khan and the coming of the Safavid imperium.[86] Al-Ṭihrānī describes its contents as containing "secrets of the occult [lit. 'unusual'] sciences" (*asrār al-ʿulūm al-gharība*), without providing any details.[87] Others describe it as including "astonishing virtues and occult mirabilia (*gharāʾib khafiyya*)," and having the power to conjure the physical reaction: "If it is thrown into the river's shores, [the waters] become disturbed and emanate a great smoke."[88] Apropos of this account, Sayyid Muḥsin al-Amīn al-ʿĀmilī (d. 1371/1952) deflects any criticism of Ibn Fahd as practicing magic (*siḥr*) by his possession and potential authorship of the book, in his defense of the latter's legacy. Others are quick to make false assumptions about such a person, he reasons, so absorbed in worship and asceticism.[89]

Ibn Fahd's reputed relationship with Muḥammad b. Falāḥ al-Mūsāwī al-Wāsiṭī (d. 866/1461), founder of the Mushaʿshaʿ Shiʿi dynasty based in Ḥuwayza in southwestern Iran, offers an illuminating lesson on Islamicate practices and the occult during an enigmatic century in the history of Islam. In his youth, Muḥammad b. Falāḥ was sent by his father to al-Ḥilla to study under Ibn Fahd and master Qur'anic recitation, something he achieved by the age of

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[85] al-Amīn al-ʿĀmilī, *Aʿyān al-Shīʿa*, 3:148; al-Ṭihrānī, *al-Dharīʿa*, 2:21; Khwānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt*, 1:73–74; Muḥammad ʿAlī Mudarris al-Tabrīzī, *Rayḥānat al-adab*, 8 vols. (Qom: Kitābfurūshī-yi Khayyām, 1995), 7:145–46; Baḥr al-ʿUlūm, *al-Fawāʾid al-Rijāliyya*, 2:109; Hādī Ḥamad Kamāl al-Dīn, *Fuqahāʾ al-fayḥāʾ aw taṭawwur al-ḥaraka al-fikriyya fī al-Ḥilla*, 2 vols. (Baghdad: Maṭbaʿat al-Maʿārif, 1962), 1:301.
[86] al-Amīn al-ʿĀmilī, *Aʿyān al-Shīʿa*, 3:148. Cf. Sachedina, *The Just Ruler (al-Sultān al-Adil) in Shīite Islam*, 18.
[87] al-Ṭihrānī, *al-Dharīʿa*, 2:21.
[88] Kāmil b. Muṣṭafā al-Shaybī, *al-Ṭarīqa al-Ṣafawiyya wa-rawāsibuhā fī al-ʿIrāq al-muʿāṣir* (Baghdad: Maktabat al-Nahḍa, 1967), 27.
[89] al-Amīn al-ʿĀmilī, *Aʿyān al-Shīʿa*, 3:148.

seventeen.[90] Muḥammad b. Falāḥ quickly developed a close relationship with Ibn Fahd, marrying one of his two daughters.[91] Eventually, however, some confusion over doctrine (*takhlīṭ*) would emerge in Muḥammad b. Falāḥ's views that would disturb his instructor.[92] After falling ill, Ibn Fahd gave his book, *Istikhrāj al-ḥawādith,* to one of his trusted associates, ordering him to throw it into the Euphrates and drown away its theurgic powers, dangerous in the wrong hands. This companion, however, was pursued by Muḥammad b. Falāḥ who intercepted the former's mission, ingratiating himself enough to acquire the book. Upon learning of its new owner, Ibn Fahd expelled Muḥammad b. Falāḥ from his circle and then ordered his execution. Muḥammad b. Falāḥ would flee to Khuzestan and openly proclaim himself to be the incarnation of the Mahdī's (re)appearance. According to the narrative, Muḥammad b. Falāḥ would apply the book's divination to his political advantage, successfully capturing western Khuzestan and establishing a dynasty in 840/1436.[93] He would be forewarned by his former instructor in a letter. In it, Ibn Fahd displays some of his own prognosticative powers, forecasting the advent of the first Safavid Shāh, Ismāʿīl I, a leader who "will manifest the truth and glory of his triumph."[94] He advises Muḥammad b. Falāḥ to obey the Qara Qoyunlu rulers of Ḥuwayza and hence, abandon his imperial ambitions.[95] Apparently, Muḥammad b. Falāḥ was unpersuaded by Ibn Fahd's exhortations. His movement was eventually subdued by Shāh Ismāʿīl I, its independence effectively sacrificed to Safavid suzerainty by 920/1514.[96]

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[90] al-Amīn al-ʿĀmilī, *Aʿyān al-Shīʿa*, 10:38; Tetsuro Sumida, "Cancelling the Apocalypse: Refracted Anticipation for the Awaited Mahdī in Sayyid Muḥammad al-Mushaʿshaʿ's Discourse," in *Knowledge and Power in Muslim Societies: Approaches in Intellectual History*, ed. Kazuo Morimoto and Sajjad Rizvi (Berlin: Gerlach Press, 2023), 149.
[91] al-Ḥillī, *Mawsūʿat Ibn Fahd al-Ḥillī*, 0:60.
[92] al-Amīn al-ʿĀmilī, *Aʿyān al-Shīʿa*, 10:38. For more on *takhlīṭ*, see Hossein Modarressi Tabataba'i, *Crisis and Consolidation in the Formative Period of Shi'ite Islam* (Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 1993), 22–3.
[93] al-Amīn al-ʿĀmilī, *Aʿyān al-Shīʿa*, 3:148.
[94] Khwānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt*, 1:74.
[95] Khwānsārī, 1:73–74.
[96] Bosworth, *The New Islamic Dynasties*, 174.

There is ample reason to be skeptical of the story of *Istikhrāj al-ḥawādith*. The modern compilers of Ibn Fahd's epistles provide several arguments against the incidence of its sway, including the dearth of reliable evidence of Muḥammad b. Falāḥ's going astray from the influence of a book, the implausibility of the productions of such a pious personality leading to deviation, and general disregard for the actual political circumstances that led to the rise of the Mushaʿshaʿ dynasty.[97] Of course, these may be sound reasons for doubting the historical existence or influence of *Istikhrāj al-ḥawādith*, but the compilers' evaluation crucially ignores aspects of its import. The account, recapitulated by trusted Shiʿi bibliographers, possesses a capacity to incite wonder over the saintly abilities of Ibn Fahd and his illustrious character. In this way, the story of the text proves the power of the mystagogue and the occult technology that he wields, a power that may lead to propitiousness or catastrophe, depending on its use or abuse.

Istikhrāj al-ḥawādith's narrative bears a striking resemblance to the topos of God's Greatest Name (*al-ism al-aʿẓam*) recurring in Islamic literature, including in *ʿUddat al-dāʾī*. In the prototypical case of Balʿam of ʿAmmān, we discover a once righteous follower of Moses, led astray.[98] His major transgression occurs after receiving God's Greatest Name, whose secret invocatory letters hold the miraculous powers of prophets, including by which, in the Shiʿi traditions, Jesus raised the dead and healed the blind.[99] Balʿam is soon compelled by the king, Bānūs, to curse Moses with the Name. Under penalty of crucifixion, Balʿam complies, but is thwarted when God grants Moses's petition for the Name's removal from Balʿam's memory. He

[97] al-Ḥillī, *Mawsūʿat Ibn Fahd al-Ḥillī*, 0:104–5.
[98] Balʿam Bāʿūrā, originally featured in the Hebrew sources, is alluded to in the Qur'an (7:175–76) and is the subject of early Qur'anic exegesis; Fred Leemhuis, "Bal'am in Early Koranic Commentaries," in *The Prestige of the Pagan Prophet Balaam in Judaism, Early Christianity and Islam*, ed. George H. van Kooten and Jacques van Ruiten (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 304.
[99] Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb b. Isḥāq al-Kulaynī, *Uṣūl al-kāfī*, 8 vols. (Tehran: Maktabat al-Ṣadūq, 1961), 1:230; Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṣaffār al-Qummī, *Baṣaʾir al-darajāt*, 10 vols. (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Aʿlamī lil-Maṭbūʿāt, 2010), 4:245.

is left cursed in perpetuity for following the whims of a profane king. In the view of Muslim commentators, Balʿam's parable illustrates the fate of those who renounce the truth.[100] If one is heedless and uses God's graces for worldly purposes, they will be disgraced and enter perdition.[101] Several other renegade heresiarchs, armed with the Name, follow in Balʿam's footsteps, including Abū al-Khaṭṭāb al-Asadī, al-Mughīra b. Saʿīd al-Bajalī, and Bayān b. Samʿān al-Tamīmī.[102] In all of these cases, the protagonist represents a cautionary tale about the power of the Name and the consequences of its misapplication. Muḥammad b. Falāḥ reaffirms their moral lesson in that he too, with the aid of a supernatural instrument, is able to attain temporal success, but not the spiritual variety. In Islamic terminology, he is met with divine forsaking (*khidhlān*) and not the facilitating grace (*tawfīq*), originally sought under Ibn Fahd's guidance.

Given that the reports of Ibn Fahd's life were penned starting in the Safavid period, there would be an obvious incentive to diminish any patterns of association and behavior, deemed aberrant by the emerging standards of Shiʿism. An ingenious strategy would be to remind people of the folly of someone like Muḥammad b. Falāḥ, a deviant (*bāṭil*) claimant of religio-political power, in light of the form of authority, legitimated and authorized by Safavid court-affiliated clerics and the affinities that bound the latter to forebearers like Ibn Fahd. As reported by al-Qāḍī Nūr Allāh al-Shūshtarī (d. 1019/1610), Ibn Fahd's tutelage of Mahdī claimants extended also to

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[100] Fred Leemhuis, "Bal'am in Early Koranic Commentaries," in *The Prestige of the Pagan Prophet Balaam in Judaism, Early Christianity and Islam*, ed. George H. van Kooten and Jacques van Ruiten (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 303–4.

[101] Ṭabāṭabāʾī glosses that even those with powerful means cannot achieve salvation except by divine will; Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *al-Mīzān fī tafsīr al-Qurʾān*, 8:332.

[102] See Wilferd Madelung, "Khaṭṭābiyya," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition* (*EI2*), edited by P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, et al., http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_4241; Wilferd Madelung, "Al-Mughīriyya," *EI2*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_5322; Marshall Hodgson, "Bayān B. Samʿān Al-Tamīmī," *EI2*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_1299; William Frederick Tucker, *Mahdis and Millenarians: Shi'ite Extremists in Early Muslim Iraq* (Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 36.

Sayyid Muḥammad Nūrbakhsh (d. 869/1464), another messianic proclaimer within the ninth/fifteen century Persianate world to lead a rebellion against the prevailing ruler.[103] Although there may be doubts over this encounter's occurrence,[104] Ibn Fahd's alleged contact with the founder of the Sufi Nūrbakhshiyya order, as well as Muḥammad b. Falāḥ, would certainly raise concern over his image and legacy.

The biographical reports, including Ibn Fahd's dealings with Muḥammad b. Falāḥ and Muḥammad Nūrbakhsh, speak to the notorious confessional ambiguity of his time, wherein Ibn Fahd is remembered in multiple sources as a Shiʿi and a Sufi,[105] before the founding of a state that developed an impetus to disaffiliate one category from the other. Mazzaoui (1972) describes Ibn Fahd as having "entertained unconventional *ṣūfī* ideas of folk-Islamic nature which later *iṯnā' ašarī*s questioned."[106] This association, repeated in other modern works,[107] was first asserted by al-Shūshtarī who describes Ibn Fahd as "Sufi-trained (*wa-kān ṣūfiyyan murtāḍan*) and an adept in direct experience and spiritual states (*ṣāhib dhawq wa-ḥāl*)."[108] He would not be the last, however. Al-Afandī writes that Ibn Fahd had an "inclination (*mayl*) towards the school of Sufism that was expressed in some of his works."[109] The famous Akhbārī jurist, Yūsuf b. Aḥmad al-Baḥrānī (d. 1186/1772), who wrote an anti-Sufi tract,[110] affirms Ibn Fahd's bona fides, while

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[103] al-Shūshtarī, *Majālis al-muʾminīn*, 2:369. In this case, Nūrbakhsh agitated against the third Tīmūrid ruler, Shāhrukh Mīrzā (r. 811–850/1409–1447).
[104] Bashir speculates that al-Shūshtarī wished to legitimize the Nūrbakhshiyya among the Shiʿi establishment. Bashir's claim that al-Shūshtarī was a member of the order is unsubstantiated; Shahzad Bashir, *Messianic Hopes and Mystical Visions: The Nūrbakhshīya Between Medieval and Modern Islam* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), 55.
[105] Ibn Fahd is described by a descendent of Ibn Maʿṣūm (d. ca. 1120/1708) as "among the most eminent Sufis and one of the greatest Twelver mujtahids"; al-Amīn al-ʿĀmilī, *Aʿyān al-Shīʿa*, 10:38.
[106] Michel M. Mazzaoui, *The Origins of the Ṣafawids; Šīʿism, Ṣūfism, and the Ġulāt* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1972), 68.
[107] Sumida describes him as a "well-known-Shiʿi Sufi and jurist"; Sumida, "Cancelling the Apocalypse," 149.
[108] al-Shūshtarī, *Majālis al-muʾminīn*, 2:368.
[109] al-Afandī, *Riyāḍ al-ʿulamāʾ*, 1:64.
[110] *al-Nafaḥāt al-malakūtiyya fī al-radd ʿala al-ṣūfiyya* ("The divine fragrances in reply to Ṣūfism"); Andrew J. Newman, "al-Baḥrānī, Yūsuf b. Aḥmad," *EI III*, doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_com_23990.

adding al-Afandī's comment as a caveat, "…even though he had an inclination towards the school of Sufism."[111] In attempting to set the record straight, the biographer, Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥāʾirī (d. ca. 1216/1801–2), writes:

> Sufism was imputed to Ibn Ṭāwūs, al-Khwājah Naṣīr al-Dīn [al-Ṭūsī], the Second Martyr [Zayn al-Dīn Aḥmad al-ʿĀmilī], Ibn Fahd, al-Bahāʾī, and other eminent figures. And it is well known that the harm in Sufism includes the corruption of the [Islamic] creed, such as the doctrines of divine indwelling (*ḥulūl*), the unity of existence (*waḥdat al-wujūd*), and godlessness (*ilḥād*), or the corruption of acts that are against the divine law, committed by many Sufis in the place of practice and worship. It is no secret for those acquainted with the status of these eminent individuals that they are absolutely free of both corruptions [of orthodoxy and orthopraxy].[112]

Al-Amīn al-ʿĀmilī mentions the same set of scholars, challenging what he refers to as innuendo (*ghamz*) arousing doubt in their character. In grandiose terms, he concludes that Ibn Fahd's form of piety is "nothing other than devotion (*inqiṭāʿ*) to the Creator and abandonment (*takhallī*) of creation, asceticism toward the temporal world, and self-effacement in the love of the Exalted One, and things of this nature. This is the goal of glorification, and not the Sufism attributed to some."[113] The association remains controversial for some today, including among the aforementioned editors of Ibn Fahd's *Rasāʾil* who argue for his Shiʿi-defined mysticism in forceful terms, discrediting any alleged correlation with the Sufi form.[114] Yes, he was an ascetic and a mystic of the highest degree, but no Sufi, they aver.[115]

The lasting oscillation between censure and approval, reflected in Ibn Fahd's *rijāl* accounts, can be traced back to the incipient anti-Sufi program of the Safavid period and its

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[111] al-Baḥrānī, *Luʾluʾat al-baḥrayn*, 150.
[112] Muḥammad b. Ismāʾīl b. ʿAbd al-Jabbār al-Ḥāʾirī, *Muntahā al-maqāl fī aḥwāl al-rijāl*, 7 vols. (Qom: Muʾassasat Āl al-Bayt li-Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth, 1995), 1:347.
[113] al-Amīn al-ʿĀmilī, *Aʿyān al-Shīʿa*, 3:147.
[114] Another defense is marshalled by the modern Iranian researchers, Dihaqqī and Maẓaffarī-zād, who accuse various Sufis, including the followers of Muḥammad b. Falāḥ, of attempting to acquire legitimization by attaching themselves to an ascetic of great "social influence"; ʿAlī Ghulāmī Dihaqqī and Amīr Ḥasan Muẓaffarī-zād, "Ibn Fahd al-Ḥillī: Ṣūfī yā faqīh-i ʿārif?," *Tārīkh dar Āyene-ye Pazhūhish* 7, no. 4 (Winter 2011): 110–11.
[115] al-Ḥillī, *Mawsūʿat Ibn Fahd al-Ḥillī*, 0:85.

aftermath. This anxiety over the image of Shiʿi scholars of a mystical penchant can be further found in the trenchant debates over Fayḍ al-Kāshānī and Muḥammad Taqī al-Majlisī (d. 1070/1660).[116]

Beyond Sufism, Ibn Fahd's image is further complicated by his dabbling in the occult, a phenomenon that does not appear to be rare in his time.[117] The ability to penetrate the levels of meaning nestled within the interior of texts and within the natural world would be a distinctive preoccupation of the early modern Persianate world, whose stigmatization would occur at a later, tenth/seventeenth century stage.[118] Occult technologies, particularly those to influence the future, fascinated Safavid regals and their clerical affiliates who were frequently assigned the tasks of letter divination (*jafr*), bibliomancy (*al-fāl*), and geomancy (*ʿilm al-raml*).[119] Among the additional specialties traditionally comprising this broad category are the science of supplication and litany (*awrād*), availing supplicants of the alteration of the laws of causation (*qānūn al-ʿilliyya*) and divine decree/destiny (*al-qaḍāʾ wa-l-qadar*).[120] Insofar as the vagaries of life produce anxiety, supplication, provides a therapy. Problems are supplied solutions; and maladies, treatments.

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[116] Andrew J. Newman, "Sufism and Anti-Sufism in Safavid Iran: The Authorship of the Ḥadīqat al-Shīʿa Revisited," *Iran* 37 (1999): 95–108. Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī offered the famous apologetic of his father, Muḥammad Taqī: "If you think that my father was a Sufi, he only appeared as one of them in order to turn them away from their false beliefs"; Robert Gleave, "Muhammad Taqi Al-Majlisi and Safavid Shiʿism: Akhbarism and Anti-Sunni Polemic During the Reigns of Shah ʿAbbas the Great and Shah Safi," *Iran* 55, no. 1 (2017): 25.
[117] Melvin-Koushki indicates that approximately two to fifteen percent of the most prestigious religious scholars, appearing in the Arabic and Persian biographical dictionaries of the early modern period, are identified as specialists in the occult sciences; Melvin-Koushki, "Is (Islamic) Occult Science Science?," 304. Cf. Matthew Melvin-Koushki and James Pickett, "Mobilizing Magic: Occultism in Central Asia and the Continuity of High Persianate Culture under Russian Rule," *Studia Islamica* 111, no. 2 (2016): 263–64.
[118] Matthew Melvin-Koushki, "The Occult Sciences in Safavid Iran and Safavid Occult Scientists Abroad," in *The Safavid World*, ed. Rudi Matthee (London: Routledge, 2021), 403.
[119] Matthew Melvin-Koushki, "Pseudo-Shaykh Bahāʾī on the Supreme Name, a Safavid-Qajar Lettrist Classic," in *Light upon Light*, ed. Jamal J. Elias and Bilal Orfali, Essays in Islamic Thought and History in Honor of Gerhard Bowering (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2020), 260; Melvin-Koushki, "The Occult Sciences in Safavid Iran and Safavid Occult Scientists Abroad."
[120] Sayyid ʿĀdil ʿAlawī, *Mādhā taʿrifʿan al-ʿulūm al-gharība* (Qom: Muʾassasa-yi Islāmī-yi Tablīgh wa-Irshād, 2015), 14–15.

An expert in the occult sciences with the capability to control the hidden properties of reality would possess a valuable skill for anyone with the desire to manipulate them to their advantage. Several examples of this skill's application, via supplicative formulae, are narrated in *ʿUddat al-dāʾī*. Many involve the invocation of *al-ism al-aʿẓam* or other permutations of divine designations, associated with gematric values. After mentioning several possibilities for the Name, Ibn Fahd affirms, *Allāh*, as having special properties (*khawāṣṣ*) over all other attributes.[121] Its talismanic repetition, either threefold or tenfold, produces special reception of the divine and the fulfillment of need.[122] In the traditions recalled by Ibn Fahd, the Name, in whatever form, is recited by the Prophet Muḥammad during the Battle of Badr and by Imam ʿAlī during the Battle of Ṣiffīn, affording them divine victory over their enemies.[123] From al-Kalbī, Ibn Fahd relates the story of Āṣif Ibn Barkhiyā,[124] an enlightened vizier of the Prophet Sulaymān. By the Name's invocation, Āṣif caused the land between him and the throne of Bilqīs (the Queen of Sheba) to condense, such that he was able to take up the throne, before the land returned to its original state, "faster than a blink of an eye."[125] Ibn Fahd offers some speculation as to the Name, spoken by Āṣif. He identifies one possible variation, *yā Ḥayy, yā Qayyūm* ("O Living One, O Self-Subsisting One"), as having an original basis in the Hebrew phrase that he transliterates, *ihyā sharāhiyā*, "I Am that I Am," and that features in the supplicative "amulet" (*ḥirz*) of Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir.[126]

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[121] al-Ḥillī, *ʿUddat al-dāʿī*, 59.
[122] al-Ḥillī, 61.
[123] al-Ḥillī, 278–79.
[124] He appears in Q. 27:38–42.
[125] A tradition from Imam al-Ṣādiq relates that Āṣif Ibn Barkhiyā possessed only one letter of the Name by which the vizier caused the land between him and the throne to collapse. al-Qummī, *Baṣaʾir al-darajāt*, 2010, 4:246.
[126] al-Ḥillī, *ʿUddat al-dāʿī*, 60. The more approximate transliteration of אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה reads *'ehye 'ăšer 'ehye*. For the full *ḥirz* of Imam Bāqir, see Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Muhaj al-daʿawāt*, 35–36.

In other examples in *ʿUddat al-dāʾī*, various incantations are uttered to produce mirabilia. In one passage, Ibn Fahd recounts the story of the companion of ʿAlī, Juwayriyya b. Mushar al-ʿAbadī. It begins with the journey of the two, on their way to Kufa. Because of an encounter with a lion, miraculously tamed by the Imam, the sun sets and they become late to pray the afternoon (*ʿaṣr*) prayer. Just when Juwayriyya begins to worry that maybe his master has forgotten the prayer, ʿAlī dismounts his horse and recites the preparatory *adhān* and *iqāma*, before whispering God's name(s) and making a small gesture with his hands. At that moment, the sun recedes to its position, marking the *ʿaṣr* time. They pray *ṣalāt al-ʿaṣr* and at its conclusion, at the blink of an eye, the sun returns to its twilight position, whereupon they pray the *maghrib* prayer. After, the Imam explains to the stunned Juwayriyya that this was no trick of sorcery, but rather the faithful response to God's command, "And to God belong the best names, so invoke Him by them" (7:180). ʿAlī concludes by referencing the famous "return of the sun" (*radd al-shams*) narrative of the Prophet, where the latter saves him from missing the *ʿaṣr* prayer through revelation of the Name that the Prophet would impart to him to use on this occasion involving Juwayriyya.[127] Perhaps the inspiration of al-Ḥillī's narration of this story was the presence of Masjid Mashhad Radd al-Shams ("Mosque of the Place of the Sun's Return") in northeastern al-Ḥilla where ʿAlī's miracle was said to occur and that, according to some sources, was partially constructed during the Seljuk period.[128]

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[127] al-Ḥillī, *ʿUddat al-dāʿī*, 97–98. For the *radd al-shams* narratives, including the likely inspiration of Juwayriyya's account, see: al-Shaykh al-Mufīd Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. al-Nuʿmān al-ʿUkbarī, *al-Irshād*, 2 vols. (Beirut: Muʾassasat Āl-Bayt li-Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth, 2008), 1:345–47; Abū Manṣūr Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ḥasan al-Ḥillī, *Kashf al-yaqīn fī faḍāʾil Amīr al-Muʾminīn* (Tehran: Muʾassasat al-Ṭabʿ wa-l-Nashr al-Tābiʿa li-Wizārat al-Thaqāfa wa-l-Irshād al-Islāmī, 1991), 112–13.

[128] ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Aḥmad al-ʿĀnī, *al-Mashāhid dhāt al-qibāb al-makhrūṭa fī al-ʿIrāq* (Baghdad: al-Muʾassasa al-ʿĀmma lil-Āthār wa-l-Turāth, 1982), 58–62.

Although few secondary academic sources are available on the occult sciences as it relates to the category of prayer,[129] a whole genre of Shiʿi hadith literature indicates a clear passion for its mobilization for variegated ends–to vanquish an enemy, to protect from the evil eye, to perform wonders (*ʿajāʾib*), to defend against disease and sickness, and to provide means of sustenance and wealth.[130] These traditions, among myriad others, would form the source material for the form and content of supplications in *ʿUddat al-dāʿī* and that provide a special power for altering (*badāʾ*) or abrogating (*naskh*) the divine destiny (*qadar*).[131] In one example among the traditions that Ibn Fahd quotes,[132] Imam al-Kāẓim attests, "It is incumbent upon you to recite supplication, for those who beseech God Almighty are spared affliction, even when it has been destined and decreed (*wa-qad quddira wa-quḍiya*), except after its passing."[133] In view of the traditional evidence, al-Ḥillī confirms the efficacy of supplication in altering the course of causes and events.[134] He sees the Qur'an, from which many of the supplicative formulas are culled, as a kind of litany (*dhikr*) itself,[135] also containing hidden powers. In mystically rich language, he attests,

> Know that within the Qur'an lies the greatest antidote (*al-tiryāq al-akbar*), the red sulfur (*al-kibrīt al-aḥmar*), the occult properties (*al-khawāṣṣ al-gharība*), and the wonderous miracles (*al-muʿjizāt al-ʿajība*). It cannot be compared to a towering mountain, for it is more sublime, nor an immense ocean, for it is more vast.[136]

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[129] A noteworthy exception: Francesca Leoni, "A Stamped Talisman," in *Islamicate Occult Sciences in Theory and Practice*, ed. Liana Saif et al., vol. 140, Handbook of Oriental Studies (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2020), 527–71.
[130] These supplications/incantations (*aḥrāz*) and their prescribed purposes are contained in the self-published work of the modern Iraqi occultist, Shaykh Ḥabīb al-Najafī. See Ḥabīb b. Mūsā al-Riḍā al-Afshārī al-Najafī, *al-ʿUlūm al-gharība* (Self-published, 1981), 9–15. An updated edition of this work was published in Beirut. See al-Najafī, *al-ʿUlūm al-gharība* (Muʾassasat al-Balāgh: Beirut, 2002).
[131] For more on the Imami principle of *badāʾ* with regards to prayer and the alteration of divine decree, see Ayoub, "Divine Preordination and Human Hope a Study of the Concept of Badāʾ in Imāmī Shīʿī Tradition."
[132] Many of these traditions are sourced from the sixth chapter of al-Kulaynī's *Uṣūl al-kāfī*, titled, "Supplication averts affliction and divine decree" (*al-Duʿāʾ yarudd al-balāʾ wa-l-qaḍāʾ*). See al-Kulaynī, *Uṣūl al-kāfī*, 2005, 2:717–18.
[133] al-Ḥillī, *ʿUddat al-dāʿī*, 17.
[134] al-Ḥillī, 18.
[135] al-Ḥillī, 285.
[136] al-Ḥillī, 291.

With this prescription comes an immediate caution that the most sublime and vast powers of hallowed orisons are activated only by the spiritually adept. He continues,

> From it [the Qur'an], the eloquent orators and preachers derive admonishments and forbidden actions (*zawājīr*); And from its deep penetration [lit. ocean], the skillful jurist and sincere mufti derives the rulings and features (*maʿālim*) of what is permissible and forbidden; And the eloquent derive their purity and eloquence of speech.[137]

Just as the most eloquent are a source of eloquence, the most devout are a source of devotion. While allowing access to the technology capable of reaching the deepest profundities and realizing auspicious ends, Ibn Fahd reminds that the most achieved in its application are the *ʿulamāʾ*. In *ʿUddat al-dāʿī*, he standardizes some of this technology that would be further refined and organized according to a valid basis, i.e., from the sound Imami traditions and the reliable scholars who narrate them. Supplication would effectively function as a quotidian magic (or, alternatively, science), predicated on procedural and ethical rules that would additionally instill adherence to Shiʿism.

As Arjomand has shown, the promotion of prayer and pilgrimage resources in Safavid Iran, aiding the general conversion of the public to Shiʿism, ensured the intercessory role of the Imams and their representatives, the *ʿulamāʾ*.[138] Babayan describes the effect of this ministry, with reference to the corpus of one of the revered Safavid scholars of Isfahan, Aghā Ḥusayn al-Khawānsārī (d. 1098/1687):

> As revealed by these different textual productions, Aqa Husayn was both reproducing state power and employing practices that competed with those of Sufis. For residents of Isfahan, the implications are profound: Instead of consulting with a Sufi master about the auspiciousness of a daughter's wedding, the circumcision of a son, or a commercial transaction, the believer had the option of consulting Aqa Husayn.[139]

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[137] al-Ḥillī, 291–92.
[138] Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 160–75.
[139] Babayan, *The City as Anthology*, 82.

The therapeutic technique of Ibn Fahd would similarly enhance reliance on pious representatives of the Imams, rechanneling reliance on competing Sufi adepts toward those supported by the Safavid state. Furthermore, this would put the onus on the application of an antidote on the individual, its efficaciousness dependent on their own lifestyle and religious commitments. The inner spiritual mechanisms, explained in *ʿUddat al-dāʿī* and other works alike, would displace any outer political ones in the order of bodily maintenance and social discipline.

Conclusion

In the writing of Ibn Fahd, we see that every action of a believer co-operates in the work of edifying–of building–the soul. How a believer thinks about God and their relation to Him informs their every action. Righteous conduct overall, not limited to the mandated prayer times, separates a sacred performance of devotion from a profane one. In one of the many traditions quoted by Ibn Fahd, one of the Prophet's companions, the emancipated African slave, Bilāl, is ridiculed for his inability to pronounce certain Arabic syllables. After overhearing this, Imam ʿAlī cautions Bilāl's tormentor, "O servant of God! The proper Arabic formation of speech is desired for the formation of actions and their rectification. Of what benefit will the most eloquently formed speech be to the person whose actions are composed in an ugly melody?"[140] Inferring from the tradition's word play,[141] Ibn Fahd glosses that just as words can be "ill-formed," so too can be actions, but that "the real harm is due to an occurrence in action, and not utterance."[142] As he affirms repeatedly in *ʿUddat al-dāʿī*, through extensive recourse to the traditions of the prophets and Imams, a person who indulges in ugly behavior, e.g., who does not

[140] al-Ḥillī, *ʿUddat al-dāʿī*, 27.
[141] The Arabic, *laḥn*, can mean both ill-formed/solecist Arabic and tone/melody.
[142] al-Ḥillī, *ʿUddat al-dāʿī*, 27.

offer charity, abandons their kin relations, or is abusive towards their spouse, will not have their prayers answered.

ʿUddat al-dāʿī is a compendious study of the science of supplication, discerning acts and behavior by which efficacious devotion is achieved. It has its axioms (God is selective in His answering of prayer), its theorems (worship is yoked to everyday actions), and its methods (altruism, humility, material austerity, weeping). Its cure for superciliousness involves vigilant sincerity and the avoidance of sin, moral criteria most conducive for the fulfillment of supplication. The writing, in combination with his other epistles, shows signs of Sufi influences that have led biographers to identify him explicitly as a Sufi in the early bio-bibliographic compendia and as a gnostic and/or ascetic in modern equivalents.[143]

Although little is made of Ibn Fahd's connection with the occult, its influence should not be ignored. While his association with Muḥammad b. Falāḥ and Muḥammad Nūrbakhsh may be explained as wishful or exaggerated thinking on the part of their supporters, a mystical sway, increasing his charismatic status, is evidenced in the pages of his works. In particular, Ibn Fahd's preoccupation with supplication, crystallized in his most famous work, *ʿUddat al-dāʿī*, reflects an element of what may be termed "occult" today. In each of the Imams' prayers, impeccable by virtue of their station as *maʿṣūmīn*, is thought to lie an inherent sacred quality. Believing, reciting, and abiding by their example is the surest way to activate this quality's potential. The Shiʿi *ʿulamāʾ* attest that these locutions of speech, in tandem with their orator's abiding virtue, prevent or give cause to certain occurrences. According to this line of thought, with spiritual accomplishment comes a powerful agency capable of working wonders and influencing the

[143] This impression of Ibn Fahd as an ascetic survives in the contemporary *ḥawza*. See Rizvi, "Esoteric Shiʿi Islam in the Later School of Al-Ḥilla," 212.

future. It would prove useful for the prosaic prophylactic and apotropaic purposes of the laity and for the extraordinary political stratagems of messianic claimants during Ibn Fahd's time.

In the Safavid period that followed Ibn Fahd's life, the techniques of prayer were harnessed by the religious notables who claimed the heritage of Shiʿi scholars of centuries prior. However, this assimilation would pose challenges that the Safavid revisionist program of de-Suficization was designed to confront. Among the promoted works were prayer manuals, disseminated in pursuit of a standardized Shiʿi canon for devotion and religious law. Part of the high status assigned to supplication by Shiʿa today is a result of the elevation of collections such as *ʿUddat al-dāʿī* in this crucial period in the faith's history. They provided the "provision" for believers, as guides to Shiʿi piety and grimoires containing consecrated formulae for ensuring *tawfīq*. Modern examples of supplication books stashed in mosques and madrasas worldwide today owe much to their predecessors, those that leave certain impressions of their time, including the trace of the post-Timurid Persianate world's blurry line between heterodoxy and orthodoxy.

Part 2: Shiʿi Commentary Case Studies

Chapter 5: "O You, whose light is a lantern for the soul": Sayyid Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad Nayrīzī's (d. 1173/1759) *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-sabāḥ*

Among the rare few men who have emerged to attain prominence from Nayrīz, a town located in the Fars province of southern Iran, is Najm al-Dīn Maḥmūd al-Nayrīzī (d. ca. 933/1526), a Safavid philosopher writing during the time of the Imami Shiʿi state's founding, under Shāh Ismāʿīl I.[1] Around two centuries later emerged another Nayrīz native, Sayyid Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad Nayrīzī (d. 1173/1759), who would become the thirty-second leader (*quṭb*, pl. *aqṭāb*) of the Shiʿi-Sufi Ẕahabiyya order. Where the first Nayrīzī saw the revolutionary effloresce of the Safavid dynasty, the second witnessed its disintegration. The second (Quṭb al-Dīn) Nayrīzī and his supplication commentary, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-sabāḥ*, are the subjects of this chapter. I provide an overview of his life, works, and thought, before turning to his commentary whose contents I have translated in the addendum and whose themes and allusions are explained in this section.[2] I have chosen this work over others for its unique social utility, as a text promoting Shiʿi devotion in Arabic and guiding its Sufi understanding in Persian. It is at once a manual, containing a popular supplication, attributed to ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib,[3] and a treatise, assimilating the Imam's words to the commentator's worldview, rooted in twelfth/eighteenth century Iran. In this manner, Nayrīzī temporalizes the language of the Imam by interpreting it

[1] See Reza Pourjavady, *Philosophy in Early Safavid Iran: Najm al-Dīn Maḥmūd al-Nayrīzī and His Writings* (Leiden: Brill, 2011).
[2] A printed version of *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-sabāḥ* was published by Mahmoud Tavousi in the *Journal of Social and Human Sciences of the University of Shiraz* Vol. 5, Issue 1 (Fall 1368/1989): 94-106. I have not been able to access this publishing.
[3] On the provenance of *Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, see Appendix A: The Traditional Provenance of the Featured Supplications.

according to his own religious idiom so that it may be more easily accessible and taught to others who wish to benefit from the knowledge of their faith's pietistic resources.

Up until recently, there has been rare mention of Quṭb al-Dīn Nayrīzī in western academic sources.[4] Reasons for this scarcity might include Nayrīzī's historical period, marked by violence and disorder, lasting from the Afghan invasions in 1722–30 until the establishment of the Qājār court in 1789. This was a period when Shiʿi scholasticism suffered not only from the circumstances that made sustained study difficult but also by the extensive looting and destruction of scholarly materials. For these reasons, philosophy took an intermittent form where works found an audience a half century after their initial composition. As an example, Henry Corbin describes the delayed appreciation of Mullā Ṣadrā, suspected of a heretical Sufi sway during his lifetime, that occurred with the stability of the Iranian state after this turbulent period, whereupon the dominant school of philosophy shifted from Isfahan to Tehran, established as the new Iranian capital by Āqā Muḥammad Khān in 1786. Among some of the thinkers of the time, Corbin mentions Nayrīzī as a "true ishraqi" and cites a quote of Nayrīzī suggestive of his elevation of the gnostic (largely Platonist) path over the Peripatetic one, the latter, per Nayrīzī, "a source of delusion."[5] Indeed, in the surviving sources, Nayrīzī is critical of Ibn Sīnā and, in the style of Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī, emphasizes intuitional or "presential" (*ḥuḍūrī*) knowledge as a guide to reaching life's deepest profundities.

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[4] The main exceptions include Ata Anzali's analysis of Nayrīzī within a greater survey of the Ẕahabī order and Leonard Lewisohn's two-part article on the history of early modern Sufism in Iran. See Ata Anzali, *Mysticism in Iran: The Safavid Roots of a Modern Concept* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2017); Leonard Lewisohn, "An Introduction to the History of Modern Persian Sufism, Part II: A Socio- Cultural Profile of Sufism, from the Dhahabī Revival to the Present Day," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London 62, no. 1 (January 1, 1999): 36–59. See additionally the article by Mehrabani on aspects of Nayrīzī's political philosophy: Mahdi Fadaei Mehrabani, "The Concept of the Social Contract in the Shi'a Gnostic Tradition: A Case Study of Quṭb al-Dīn Nayrīzī," *Journal of Shi'a Islamic Studies* 13, no. 3 (2020): 457–88.
[5] Henry Corbin, *History of Islamic Philosophy* (New York: Kegan Paul International, 1993), 349.

The fraught political circumstances of Nayrīzī's time mirror those of the state of religion, having shifted away from Sufi guides, with the help of court-favored *ʿulamāʾ*, in favor of a "revisionist agenda"[6] of exclusive reverence for the Shiʿi Imams and hostility towards any other mystical authority. In the aftermath of this Akhbārī-centric consensus, stressing the study of the Imams' traditions (*aḥādīth*),[7] Nayrīzī adopted the coded language of his teacher, Mawlā Shāh Muḥammad Dārābī (d. ca. 1130/1718), including supplanting Sufism for *ʿirfān* or the favored, "people of indigence" (*ahl al-faqr*).[8] Nayrīzī's ambivalence toward mysticism can be detected both in his criticism of it *and* its opponents. He counts only four authentic spiritual chains (*silsila*) of *ahl al-faqr* that preserve the "Muḥammadan reality" and link back to Imam ʿAlī, including the Ẕahabiyya, Rifāʿiyya, Naqshbandiyya, and Shaṭṭāriyya orders, the first the "purest" among them.[9] At the same time, Nayrīzī militates against the "exoteric clerics" (*ʿulamā-yi ẓāhir*) who, in his view, stifle the inner religious experience that supersedes all rational-discursive knowledge.[10]

Nayrīzī's Life and Times

Sayyid Quṭb al-Dīn Nayrīzī inherited his ancestral title of honor through both parents, his father a descendent of the family of Imam Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī and his mother a descendent of the family of

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[6] Anzali, *Mysticism in Iran*, 109.
[7] Etan Kohlberg, *In Praise of the Few: Studies in Shiʿi Thought and History*, ed. Amin Ehteshami, Shii Islam: Texts and Studies 1 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2020), 523–24.
[8] Rasūl Jaʿfariyān, *Ṣafaviyya dar ʿarṣa-yi dīn, farhang va siyāsat*, 3 vols. (Tehran: Pizhūhishkada-yi Ḥawza va Dānishgāh, 2000), 2:532–37; Anzali, *Mysticism in Iran*, 127–28, 152.
[9] Sayyid Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad Nayrīzī, *Munẓūmeh-yi anvār-i valāyat*, ed. Ustād Muḥammad Khawājawī (Shiraz: Intishārāt Daryā-yi Nūr, 2004), 23. This four-fold configuration derives from the thirtieth *quṭb*, Najīb al-Dīn Riḍā Jawharī Tabrīzī Iṣfahānī (d. ca. 1108/1697). See Ata Anzali, "The Emergence of the Ẕahabiyya in Safavid Iran," *Journal of Sufi Studies* 2, no. 2 (2013): 172–73.
[10] Leonard Lewisohn, "An Introduction to the History of Modern Persian Sufism, Part II: A Socio-Cultural Profile of Sufism, from the Dhahabī Revival to the Present Day," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 62, no. 1 (1999): 36.

Imam Mūsā b. Jaʿfar.[11] He was born around the year 1100/1689 and spent his childhood among the venerable elders of Nayrīz, learning the preliminaries (*muqaddamāt*) of Arabic and the Islamic sciences. After this period of adolescence, Nayrīzī left for Shiraz where he gained recognition in his erudition of hadith, *fiqh*, *kalām* and philosophy.[12] There, he benefited from the spiritual direction of several mystics, including Mullā al-Ṣādiq Ardistānī (d. 1134/1721)[13] and most consequently, the Sufi master-instructor, Shaykh ʿAlī Naqī Iṣṭahbānātī (d. ca. 1129/1717), becoming the latter's disciple and eventual successor.[14] This environment and association accelerated Nayrīzī's spiritual enculturation, and spurred a series of migrations, first to Isfahan, the major center of philosophical learning during the mid-part of the Safavid dynasty, and then to Najaf where Nayrīzī spent a considerable time teaching *fiqh* to the best and brightest.[15] By this point, however, Nayrīzī had abandoned most of his madrasa-styled commitments for the Sufi's spiritual path (*sulūk*). This was reflected in his instruction which began to combine traditional seminary sciences with the teaching of Ibn ʿArabī's *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya*.[16] Eventually his path would foreground the manner and customs of the *ahl al-faqr* whose fold, according to the doubtful claims of Ẕahabī exponents, included other mystically minded scholars such as Mullā Ṣadrā, Shaykh al-Bahāʾī, and Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī. Nayrīzī's later life involved several

[11] Muḥammad ʿAlī Abū al-Ḥasanī, "Nigāhī Ijmālī bar Aḥvāl va Āṯār-i ʿĀrif Rabbānī ʿAllāma Sayyid Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad Ḥusaynī Nayrīzī," *Dānishkada Adabiyyāt va ʿUlūm-i Insānī-yi Dānishgāh-i Tehran* 1, no. 2 (1381): 249; Asad Allāh Khāvarī, *Ẕahabiyya: Taṣavvuf-i ʿIlmī, Āṯār-i Adabī*, vol. I (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Danishghāh-i Tehran, 1983), 299.
[12] Khāvarī, *Ẕahabiyya*, 1:300. Nayrīzī is claimed to have studied hadith under Dārābī. The circumstances, however, are uncertain. See Khāvarī, 1:301; Anzali, *Mysticism in Iran*, 127.
[13] Anzali, *Mysticism in Iran*, 144.
[14] Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Quṭb Al-Dīn Nayrīzī," in *From the School of Shiraz to the Twentieth Century*, An Anthology of Philosophy in Persia 5 (London; New York: I.B.Tauris Publishers, 2015), 379. Nayrīzī describes submitting himself to his era's "most knowledgeable of knowers" and the "most mystic of mystics" in the figure of Iṣṭahbānātī; Umm Salama Begum Nayrīzī, *Jāmiʿ al-kulliyyāt*, ed. Mahdī Iftikhār (Qom: Bakhshāyish, 2007), 7.
[15] Khāvarī, *Ẕahabiyya*, 1:308–9.
[16] Nayrīzī, *Jāmiʿ al-kulliyyāt*, 7. This was not, however, without criticism and some refutation on Nayrīzī's part, indicating several of Ibn ʿArabī's "mistaken interpretations"; Abdulḥusayn Zarrīnkūb, *Dunbāleh-yi justujū dar taṣavvuf-i Īrān* (Tehran: Muʾassasa Intishārāt-i Amīr Kabīr, 1983), 334.

excursions of various lengths in locations such as al-Aḥsāʾ, the Fārs region of south Iran, and Khārk Island where he sought seclusion (*khalvat*) in the mountains of Bushehr, and where, according to some, the son of ʿAlī b. Abī Tālib, Muḥammad Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya, is buried.[17] This period also included a stint in Isfahan where his despair over Safavid disintegration eventually led to his return to Najaf. In Najaf, he completed his most renowned work, *Faṣl al-khiṭāb*, before his death and burial in the Wādī al-Salām cemetery in the month of Shaʿbān, 1173/1759.[18]

Nayrīzī was succeeded by his son-in-law and protégé, Āqā Muḥammad Hāshim Shīrāzī (d. 1199/1785). More than any other family member, however, it was his daughter, Umm Salama Begum (d. 1163/1749–50), who helped secure her father's legacy by collating his treatises and correspondences. Umm Salama's *Jāmiʿ al-kulliyyāt*, the product of fifteen years of learning under her father, expounds the mystical foundations of Nayrīzī's thought and contains important details about his life's journey. Although some of these details remain obscure, many of Nayrīzī's works have survived in libraries in Iran and Iraq and many of his pupils[19] make ample mention of his influence.

The Ẕahabī historian, Asad Allāh Khāvarī (d. 2012), provides an assessment of each stage of the order's history in terms of its flux of thought and its defining figures. He counts the era, from the second half of the ninth to the end of the twelfth hijri centuries, bookended by Nayrīzī's death, as marked by Sufi stagnation (*rukūd*). On Khāvarī's account, this was a turbulent time, spawning dubious factions and internecine conflict between them. At the nadir of Sufism's decline, when "imposter dervishes" (*shayyādān*) gained public favor by their use of

[17] Zarrīnkūb, *Dunbāleh-yi justujū dar taṣavvuf-i Īrān*, 334.
[18] Khāvarī, *Ẕahabiyya*, 1:326; al-Ṭihrānī, *al-Dharīʿa*, 13:255.
[19] These include "Baḥr al-ʿUlūm" Sayyid Mahdī Ṭabāṭabāʾī (d. 1212/1797), credited with authoring *Risāla-yi sayr va sulūk*, Mawlānā Miḥrāb Gīlānī (d. 1217/1802–3), Āqā Muḥammad Bīdābādī (d. ca. 1197/1782–83), and reportedly, Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsāʾī (d. 1241/1826), the first leader of the Shaykhī school, although this appears unlikely; Nayrīzī, *Jāmiʿ al-kulliyyāt*, 7–8; Anzali, *Mysticism in Iran*, 143–44.

magic, new figures emerged, reanimating the wayfarers' movement, those including the twenty-ninth Ẕahabī *quṭb*, Muḥammad ʿAlī Muʾadhdhin Khurāsānī (d. before 1082/1672), the thirtieth Ẕahabī *quṭb*, Sayyid Najīb al-Dīn Ridāʾ Tabrīzī (d. 1080/1669), and foremost, Nayrīzī, who anticipates the succeeding era of "the elevation (*iʿtilāʾ*) of *walāya*" in Khāvarī's schema.[20]

An Overview of the Ẕahabiyya Order

The Ẕahabiyya order has its origins in the (retrospectively assigned) founder, Abū al-Jannāb Aḥmad b. ʿUmar Najm al-Dīn Kubrā (d. 618/1221), a Sufi master from the Khwārazm heartland of Central Asia. The order was originally named after his namesake, thus called the Kubrāwiyya. Much of Najm al-Dīn Kubrā's life was spent sojourning for the knowledge that would quench his inner craving for the realization of insight, at first of the mind and later of the heart. His ecstatic experiences among dervishes and under the supervision of various Sufi adepts produced in him personal realizations that eclipsed these cravings and that took the form of various austerities, such as seclusion, prolonged fasting, limited speech and sleep, and the practice of continuous remembrance (*dhikr*) of God.[21] Najm al-Dīn Kubrā would pass on the lessons of these experiences to many others, including among members of the Khwārazm court, in the process anointing an extraordinary number of initiates and earning him the honorary moniker, *shaykh-i walī-tarāsh* ("the saint-carving shaykh").[22] The pattern of Najm al-Dīn Kubrā's life

[20] Khāvarī, *Ẕahabiyya*, I:409–10. Khāvarī characterizes this post-Nayrīzī era as featuring an outpouring of published materials and defined by the harmonious coalescence of Sufism and Shiʿism when "Shiʿism perceives, from the outward practice, the inward practice of true *walāya*" (*tashayyuʿ az ādāb-i ẓāhir bi-ḥaqīqat-i valāyat va az ẓāhir bi-bāṭin rū-yi nahād*); Khāvarī, 1:110.
[21] Hamid Algar, "KOBRAWIYA," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online* (Brill, 2021), https://doi.org/10.1163/2330-4804_EIRO_COM_362498; Henry Corbin, *L'homme de lumière dans le soufisme iranien*, Le soleil dans le coeur (Paris: Éditions Présence, 1971), 72–108.
[22] Hamid Algar, "KOBRAWIYA." Some of the well-known disciples of Kubrā include Majd al-Dīn al-Baghdādī (d. 616/1219), Raḍī al-Dīn ʿAlī Lālā (d. 642/1244), Saʿd al-Dīn Muḥammad Ḥamūya (d. 650/1252), Najm al-Dīn Dāya Rāzī (d. 654/1256), Sayf al-Dīn Saʿīd Bākharzī (d. 658/1260), and Bābā Kamāl-i Jandī (d. 672/1273); Aḥmad ibn ʻUmar Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrá and Fritz Meier, *Die Fawāi'iḥ Al-Ǧamāl Wa-Fawātiḥ Al-Ǧalāl Des Naǧm Ad-Dīn Al-*

would mirror that of the *aqṭāb* that would follow, including our subject, Sayyid Quṭb al-Dīn Nayrīzī.

It is difficult to pinpoint precisely when the pivot from Sunni to Shiʿi allegiance occurred,[23] but likely a confessional interpenetration persisted until the Safavid ascent.[24] The Ẕahabiyya *silsila* is projected to originate with Maʿrūf Karkhī (d. 200–1/815–6), an early Islamic mystic known for his association with Kufan ascetics such as Dāwūd al-Tāʾī (d. 165/781–2).[25] In Sufi hagiographies, Karkhī is described as having been initiated into the path directly by the eighth Shiʿi Imam, ʿAlī b. Mūsā al-Riḍāʾ.[26] The Shiʿi imprint of Karkhī's discipleship under Imam al-Riḍāʾ is likely a fictive embellishment,[27] including the literal imprint of Imam al-Riḍāʾ's teachings, allegedly written in gold ink and provided to incipient members of the order,[28] along with other explanations. Algar associates the Ẕahabī development of a Shiʿi identity with the diffusion of Imami Shiʿism in Khorasan, promulgated by the Safavids.[29] That is, out of the regional political pressures of the early tenth/sixteenth century emerged a new orientation for a

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Kubrā: Eine Darstellung Mystischer Erfahrungen Im Islam Aus Der Zeit Um 1200 N. Chr. (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1957), 40–43.

[23] For the proto-Shiʿi elements of the Kubrāwiyya, see Marijan Molé, *Les Kubrawiya entre sunnisme et shiisme aux huitième et neuvième siècles de l'hégire* (Paris: Libr. Orientaliste P. Geuthner, 1961). These elements were not rare among other *ṭarīqa*s of Sunni allegiance, including the Naqshbandiyya; Hamid Algar, "Some Observations on Religion in Safavid Persia," *Iranian Studies* 7, no. 1/2 (1974): 288–90.

[24] Anzali, "The Emergence of the Ẕahabiyya in Safavid Iran," 165.

[25] Khāvarī, *Ẕahabiyya*, I:94.

[26] Aiyub Palmer, "Al-Karkhī, Maʿrūf," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam Three Online* (Brill, 2019), http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_35378.

[27] Imam al-Riḍāʾ is not known to have set foot in Baghdad nor Kufa. His fateful route to Marv deliberately avoided bastions of anti-ʿAbbasid rebellion.

[28] The thirty-sixth Ẕahabī *quṭb*, Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Majd al-Ashrāf Shīrāzī (d. 1913), claims to have retained the recorded work of Imam al-Riḍāʾ, *Ṭibb al-Riḍāʾ*, known as the "Golden Treatise" (*Risāla al-dhahabiyya*), originally composed at the behest of Maʾmūn; Khāvarī, *Ẕahabiyya*, 1:100–101. The "golden" designation associated with the eighth Imam likely derives from his famous *Ḥadīth silsilat al-dhahab*, whose *sanad*, al-Riḍāʾ narrates, originated with the angel Gabriel and was passed down from the Prophet Muḥammad to the Imams. Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad al-Qummī Ibn Bābawayh, *Kitāb al-tawḥīd* (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifa, 1981), 25. For an analysis on the Ẕahabī's "corporate" identification with gold and wider Sufi thematic employment, see Anzali, "The Emergence of the Ẕahabiyya in Safavid Iran," 153–56.

[29] Hamid Algar, "ḎAHABĪYA," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online* (Brill, 2020), https://doi.org/10.1163/2330-4804_EIRO_COM_7953.

pre-existing Sunni order identified as Kubrāwī. Anzali maintains that the Ẕahabiyya's Shiʿi identity was informed by the influence of competitiveness with the Nūrbakhshiyya that attempted to incorporate Kubrāwī figures into its own sacred lineage and possibly reflects a schism-forming debate about Sayyid Muḥammad Nūrbakhsh's (d. 869/1464) messianic identification with the Mahdī.[30] Contra Algar, Anzali claims this identity as the primary product of ex post facto projections on the part of an order that initially established itself *after* the Safavid revolution, when the impetus for compliance with perceived Imami orthodoxies dovetailed with Safavid political ambitions. Its Shiʿi identity was thus, in Anzali's view, an attempt to distinguish itself from other claimants of an Imamate-originated order, as well as a flag-planting gesture of conformity with the Safavid Shiʿi standard. Whatever the real story, the Ẕahabiyya's Shiʿi pulse is emphatically asserted by authors connected to the order and corresponds with the self-identity of their inspired–and however apocryphal–history.

In terms of ideological outlook, the Ẕahabiyya affirm the traditions of the Imams that characterize a faithful believer (*muʾmin*) by their asceticism (*zuhd*) and abstinence (*waraʿ*) from worldly concerns.[31] A true Sufi is equal to such a believer and, according to the negative definition of Muḥammad ʿAlī Muʾadhdhin Khurāsānī, is unlike the Malāmatiyya who sought to incur "blame" (*malāma*) to temper the ego.[32] In contrast, the Ẕahabiyya stress *sharīʿa* and *taklīf* as the basis for their group's *faqr* praxis, as Khurāsānī affirms in the Persian quatrain,

> The rulings of *sharīʿa* are a universal road (*shāriʿ*).
> Whoever refuses the ruling,
> diverting one step from the *sharīʿa*,
> loses their place entirely among the people of divine knowledge (*maʿrifa*).[33]

[30] Anzali, "The Emergence of the Ẕahabiyya in Safavid Iran," 151–53.
[31] Khāvarī, *Ẕahabiyya*, 1:51–52.
[32] Khāvarī, 1:51.
[33] Khāvarī, 1:69.

Here, Khurāsānī reminds readers that his tradition conforms with the religious conventions, cherished by the Safavid hierocracy. By exceeding their bounds or falling short of them, one "misses the mark," to use the ancient Greek translation of sin.

The general Ẕahabī outlook is distinguished not by beliefs that run parallel to those of other Imami Shiʿis, but by its ethics. Although its full extent cannot be reviewed herein with any thoroughness, it is nonetheless important to specify some desiderata, recurring in Ẕahabī literature. Ẕahabī ethics may be seen as synonymous with a version of phronesis or practical wisdom, gradated by training in the nature of goodness or love (*ʿishq*). The recognition of beauty in the macrocosm (*al-ʿālam al-kabīr*) of the universe leads to a self-effacing beautification of the microcosm (*al-ʿālam al-saghīr*) of the human being or soul. God projects Himself, in the form of divine names and attributes, into the world, and creation reflects God to various degrees of its capacity and realization. A steadfast love of constant yearning (*shawq*) for the Beloved is likened to an unalloyed gold retaining its purity when subjected to a kiln whose fires incinerate "all the bad behavior and pneumatic destruction (*muhlikāt-i nafsānī*)."[34] The fires symbolize the preparedness (*istiʿdād*) of the spiritual seeker who attains degrees of perfection that culminate, if successful, in the formation of the Perfect Human (*al-insān al-kāmil*). This is not a love marked by impetuousness or unfettered passion, but a responsible love of forbearance and focus, and hence one possessing an ethical import of prescribed attitudes and responses. These ideas, among others evincing Sufi conventions and Persian literary motifs,[35] are widely diffused in Ẕahabī works. Sufi techniques (*fann*), such as ritual exhortation (*waʿẓ*) and invocation (*dhikr*), as well as Persian poetry, are recognized as the main conduits for Ẕahabī "lovers" (*ʿāshiqān*), absorbed in

[34] Khāvarī, 1:15.
[35] Anzali, "The Emergence of the Ẕahabiyya in Safavid Iran," 153.

divine contemplation.[36] These aspects share an emphasis on the aesthetics of prosody and the goal of expanded states of God-consciousness.

One notable factor, distinguishing the Ẕahabiyya from those promoted among Safavid clerical cadres, is *samāʿ*, the "listening" of chanting, music, and/or song, incorporated in gatherings to induce ecstatic states.[37] Khāvarī posits the centrality of *samāʿ* for the Ẕahabiyya, quoting from the Nīshāpūrī ascetic and spiritual mentor of al-Qushayrī (d. 465/1072), Abū ʿAlī Daqqāq (d. 405/1015), "Listening is the present moment, so whoever does not have listening does not have hearing (*samʿ*), and whoever does not have hearing does not have religion."[38] Al-Qushayrī, who promoted *samāʿ* based on the precedents of poetry, melodious voices (*al-ṣawt al-ḥasan*), and the spirited chanting (*ḥudāʾ*) of caravan leaders, sanctioned in various Prophetic traditions, speaks of it as a form of nourishment for the souls of the spiritually accomplished.[39] In a similar way, the Ẕahabiyya strongly endorse *samāʿ* on the basis of avowedly sound traditions and against accusations of heretical innovation. Like al-Qushayrī,[40] the Ẕahabiyya also make the connection between *samāʿ* and *wajd* (ecstasy, lit. "finding"), discovering the Real (*al-ḥaqq*) in the throes of *samāʿ*'s effects, including "intoxicated" dance, spinning, and shouting.[41] In this way, *samāʿ* may be considered the acting or performative expression of poetry, the most privileged expository mode of Ẕahabī writing. Nayrīzī makes copious reference to *samāʿ* in his poetry, such as in his *Qaṣīda ʿishqiyya*,

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[36] Khāvarī, *Ẕahabiyya*, 1:16.
[37] This should be distinguished from singing/song (*ghināʾ*), although both *ghināʾ* and *samāʿ* were at times conflated in the denunciations of Sufis. See Andrew J. Newman, "Clerical Perceptions of Sufi Practices in Late Seventeenth-Century Persia: Arguments over the Permissibility of Singing (Ghināʾ)," in *The Heritage of Sufism Volume III, Late Classical Persian Sufism (1501-1750) the Safavid & Mughal Period*, ed. Leonard Lewisohn and David Morgan (London: Oneworld Publications, 2007), 135–64.
[38] Daqqāq cites as evidence the Qur'anic verse, "And they will lament: If only we had listened and reasoned, we would not be among the residents of the blaze!" (67:10); Khāvarī, *Ẕahabiyya*, 1:21.
[39] Abū l-Qāsim ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Qushayrī, *al-Risāla* (Cairo: Muʾassasat Dār al-Shaʿb, 1989), 542–60.
[40] He includes the saying, "Listening is a calling (*nidāʾ*), and ecstasy is its response"; al-Qushayrī, 550.
[41] Khāvarī, *Ẕahabiyya*, 1:22–23.

Arise, O singer, for life is slipping away.
Without *samāʿ*, there can be no love (*ʿishq*).
Sing a song in praise of the Beloved
without which, my life's hours are left undelighted.[42]

Major Themes and Works

Among Nayrīzī's many writings, Umm Salama arranges her father's intellectual concerns into several major categories: 1) Hadith, and particularly Shiʿi hadith; 2) clarifying the role of the Imams as it pertains to gnostical knowledge; 3) the denial of equivocal and univocal being (*ishtirāk lafẓī/maʿnawī wujūd*) with respect to God;[43] 4) the words and lessons of poets such as Mahmūd Shabistarī, Rumi, and ʿAṭṭār; and 5) disputation over the influence of philosophy, and particularly Greek philosophy, in Islam.[44] On this last note, it is Nayrīzī's claim that the adulteration of *ʿaql-i falsafī*, marked by material desires (*havāhā-yi māddī*), with the preferred *ʿaql-i Muḥammadī*, marked by presential knowledge and intuitional insight (*baṣīra*), diminishes the latter.[45]

A major commentarial preoccupation in Quṭb al-Dīn's works is the relation of God and the other-than-God, whether creation, the world, or being. In Umm Salama's *Jāmiʿ al-kulliyyāt*, she explains her father's view on the subject, relying on the much-cited hadith of the debate between Imam al-Riḍāʾ and ʿImrān Ṣābī.[46] As recorded in the exchange, Imam al-Riḍāʾ is asked

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[42] Sayyid Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad Nayrīzī, *Qaṣīda ʿishqiyya*, ed. Muḥammad Riḍāʾ ʿAbbās ʿAlī (Tehran: Anjuman-i Āsār va Mafākhir-i Farhangī, 2004), 78.
[43] This is the much-debated notion over whether the being or existence (*wujūd*) of contingent entities shares either semantic form (*lafẓī*) or content (*maʿnawī*) with [the Necessary] Being. Although Nayrīzī denies both possibilities, he is more concerned with the idea of a shared meaning of *wujūd*. He vigorously defends a view of God's *wujūd* as metaphorical and used to indicate the superabundant (*ghanīy*), eternal (*ṣamadī*/*azalī*), and self-subsistent essence (*qāʾima bi-l-dhāt*) of God; Abū al-Qāsim Amīn al-Sharīʿa Khūʾī and Sayyid Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad Nayrīzī, *Mīzān al-ṣavāb dar sharḥ-i Faṣl al-Khiṭāb*, ed. Muḥammad Khājavī, 3 vols. (Tehran: Intishārāt Mawlā, 2004), 1:505–36.
[44] Nayrīzī, *Jāmiʿ al-kulliyyāt*, 5.
[45] Nayrīzī, 5. Nayrīzī disputes Aristotelian logic that divides knowledge into conceptualization (*taṣawwur*) and assent (*taṣdīq*) which he argues are both constructed (*sākhta*) by the mind and not actual knowledge.
[46] This was a debate, organized by Maʾmūn, between Imam al-Ridāʾ and several theologians of various religious confessions. Its main subjects, raised by ʿImrān Ṣābī, a distinguished member of the Ḥarrān Sabian community,

the question by his debate partner, "Is God in the world or is the world in God?" The Imam replies, "Are you in the mirror or is the mirror in you?" For the Imam, this is not a rhetorical question. He denies that either can be in the other, explaining that, rather, it is the unseen light that produces the image of the self in the mirror and that reveals one to the other.[47] Light makes beings appear, though it is of a separate category itself. This plays into a larger mythos of creation (*ibdāʾ*) where, by the "light" of God's names that have their origination in God's occulted essence, the manifest world appears and is sustained.[48] Umm Salama quotes from the Indo-Persian poet, Naẓīrī Nīshāpūrī (d. ca. 1022/1613),

> With the slightest attention [of God], the people of the world live,
> and with the slightest inattention, their forms crumble.[49]

Any claim of *unio mystica* is hence, illusory; and the suggestion that one can be annihilated (*fanāʾ*) in God is absurd, since, according to this impression, there can be no mergence or ontological overlap between He and not-He, i.e., between unity and plurality.[50] In this view, everything in existence participates in a *pros hen* relation to God–or more precisely, His names/attributes–that is purely causal, and not existential. Corbin believes that, for Ibn ʿArabī, this is not a realization gained through mystical experience, but rather a "philosophical postulate" of apodictic resonance.[51] Whether Ibn ʿArabī would formulate it in these terms, given his staunch

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concern creative origination (*ibdāʿ*); the semantic synonymy between God's will (*mashīʾa*), intention (*irāda*) and *ibdāʿ*; God's relation to His creation; and the limitations of mind in conceiving God other than through His creations; Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. ʿAlī Ibn Bābawayh, *ʿUyūn akhbār al-Ridāʾ*, 2 vols. (Qom: Intishārāt al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, 1999), 1:150–58.

[47] Umm Salama switches the original hadith's comparison between God and creation (*al-khalq*) for God and the world (*al-ʿālam*); Nayrīzī, *Jāmiʿ al-kulliyyāt*, 31–32.

[48] For the details of the process of world-origination and the mechanism of actional/essential attributes and Arabic letters, see Nayrīzī, 23–28, 70–76; Khūʾī and Nayrīzī, *Mīzān al-ṣavāb*, 2004, 1:266–70, 307–17.

[49] Muḥammad Ḥusayn Naẓīrī Nīshāpūrī, *Divān*, https://ganjoor.net/naziri/divan/ghazal/sh8; Nayrīzī, *Jāmiʿ al-kulliyyāt*, 31.

[50] In trenchant terms, Nayrīzī chastises some of the Sufis for their misapprehensions of God's unity, equating them with unbelief (*kufr*); Khūʾī and Nayrīzī, *Mīzān al-ṣavāb*, 2004, 1:36–37.

[51] Henry Corbin, *Creative Imagination in the Sūfism of Ibn ʿArabī*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019), 318–19.

resistance to philosophy, is beyond the point. Yet for Ibn ʿArabī and Nayrīzī alike, religious experience is clearly informed by and animates conveyable, publicly accessible terms. Wittgenstein's famous claim of mysticism that "whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent," imagines language running out, utterly unable to impart mysticism's experience. In the contrasting, Sufi-centric appreciation of language, speech is both a means–mostly of figurative language such as simile (*tashbīh*), metaphor (*istiʿāra*) and analogy (*tamthīl*)[52]–for conveying mystical experience *and* a cause of it, involving repetitious and/or ritual use of sacred speech.

Nayrīzī's most famous treatise, *Faṣl al-khiṭāb*,[53] comprised of a single *qaṣīda*, spans over six thousand verses of Arabic poetry. It is a dense text, incorporating nearly a thousand traditions of the Imams[54] and covering a vast array of subjects, including divine oneness (*tawhīd*), God's attributes, the unity of being (*waḥdat al-wujūd*), the equivocity and univocity of being, and a sharp criticism of philosophers and their methodologies.[55] The character of Nayrīzī in *Faṣl al-khiṭāb* is described by Anzali as "that of a maverick, a mystically minded, erudite, Akhbari-leaning scholar who has been marginalized."[56] Anzali notes the conspicuous absence of Safavid founding fathers, typifying Sufi writings of the eleventh/seventeenth century, and the inclusion of positive reference to figures such as Fayḍ Kāshānī in their revisionist assimilation into the

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[52] Ali Asghar Seyed-Gohrab, "Persian Rhetorical Figures," in *Metaphor and Imagery in Persian Poetry*, vol. VI, Iranian Studies (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 1–14.
[53] Alternatively titled, *Ḥikmat al-ʿārifīn* and/or *Ḥikmat al-ʿalawiyya*; al-Ṭihrānī, *al-Dharīʿa*, 16:229. Today, the *Faṣl al-khiṭāb* is published in a three-volume set, with extensive commentary by Shaykh Abū al-Qāsim Amīn al-Sharīʿa Khūʾī, and titled *Mīzān al-ṣavāb*; Abū al-Qāsim Amīn al-Sharīʿa Khūʾī and Sayyid Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad Nayrīzī, *Mīzān al-ṣavāb dar sharḥ-i Faṣl al-Khiṭāb*, ed. Muḥammad Khājavī, 3 vols. (Tehran: Intishārāt Mawlā, 2004).
[54] Nayrīzī, *Jāmiʿ al-kulliyyāt*, 12.
[55] Nayrīzī's view of philosophy may be described overall as ambivalent. According to Khāvarī, the inspiration for Mullā Hādī Sabzivārī's (d. 1289/1873) major philosophical work *Sharḥ al-manẓūma* partially derived from the *Faṣl al-khiṭāb* in terms of its poetic scheme and even its concepts of *wujūd*; Khāvarī, *Ẕahabiyya*, 1:551–52.
[56] Anzali, *Mysticism in Iran*, 146.

Ẕahabī orbit.[57] That is, Nayrīzī attempts an accommodation of Sufi genealogies, negating the dubious elements while affirming others that conform to the reformed Sufi-Shiʿi ideal.

An ancillary interest of Nayrīzī, revealed in *Faṣl al-khiṭāb*, was political theology. Such concerns he saw urged in the Qur'an's verse, "God would not change a favor which He had bestowed upon a people until they change what is within themselves" (8:53).[58] Most of his interest in sociopolitical affairs, indicated in his writing, occurs as a consequence of their degradation. In the introduction to *Faṣl al-khiṭāb*, Nayrīzī outlines the circumstances for Safavid decline that he sees as synonymous with spiritual decay. Among the reasons for state decline, he includes the Safavid failure to reach full conformity with Shiʿi creed, negligence in "commanding right and forbidding wrong," the promotion of the pejorative *ashbāh ahl al-ʿilm* ("pseudo-*ʿulamāʾ*")[59] over the *ahl al-ʿirfān*, and the social friction among his countryfolk leading to disunity–circumstances proving ripe for Afghan exploitation. His underlying argument for this situation is encapsulated in the Prophet Muḥammad's dictum, "Worldly love lies at the head of every sin" (*ḥubb al-dunyā raʾs kull khaṭīʾa*),[60] whose final outcome of upheaval, in conformity with the Ibn Khaldūn political cycle, eventually reaches the tribe wielding power. Nayrīzī is alleged to have previsioned the Afsharid invasions and to have warned the last Safavid Shāh, Sultān Ḥusayn (r. 1105–1135/1694–1722), of their menace.[61] Nayrīzī is also said to have produced an independent treatise called *Ṭibb al-mamālik*,[62] detailing his political ideology and

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[57] Anzali, 147.
[58] Nayrīzī, *Jāmiʿ al-kulliyyāt*, 10.
[59] Anzali, *Mysticism in Iran*, 152.
[60] Khūʾī, *Mīzān al-ṣavāb*, 3:1249.
[61] Khāvarī, *Ẕahabiyya*, I:312. Nayrīzī's counsel to Safavid royalty was not unprecedented. Muʾadhdhin Khurāsānī was known to associate with the political nobility, including Shāh ʿAbbās II for whom he wrote a collection of Persian poems on the attributes and teachings of Sufis, called *Tuḥfa-yi ʿAbbāsī*; Muḥammad ʿAlī Muʾadhdhin Khurāsānī, *Tuḥfa-yi ʿAbbāsī*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAlī Sabzivārī (Tehran: Uns-i Tak, 2002); Anzali, *Mysticism in Iran*, 79–88.
[62] Jaʿfariyān, *Ṣafaviyya dar ʿarṣa-yi dīn*, 3:1204–6. Jaʿfariyān has edited, from an anonymous manuscript discovered in the Āyat Allāh Marʿashī Najafī Library, what he claims to be Nayrīzī's political treatise. It has been published

providing solutions to avoid impending catastrophe, including requiring, by clerical facilitation, favored princes to commit to and put into practice the Treaty of Mālik al-Ashtar.[63]

The second of Nayrīzī's most renowned works is the *Qaṣīda ʿishqiyya*, comprising 400 Arabic couplets, divided into ten sections according to the metaphysical origin and development of *ʿishq*.[64] Like *Faṣl al-khiṭāb*, the subjects of Nayrīzī's prose run the gamut, including the creation of Adam, the generative Muḥammadan light, the resurrection, the stages of the gnostics (*ʿārifīn*, lit. "knowers"), egoism and its connection with worldliness (*dunyā-parastī*), and the annihilation of the self. All are absorbed and organized under stages (*aṭwār*), marking the progress of the cosmic effusion of *ʿishq*,[65] that occur in a series of theophanies (*tajalliyāt*). Nayrīzī finally arrives at the plane of the natural world where love manifests in each individual's heart, transforming the soul of its possessor. The people of love (*ahl al-maḥabba*) evince certain agape qualities resulting from their wisdom and world renouncement, foremost peace and forbearance (*mudārā*) toward all, including their enemies.[66]

The *Qaṣīda ʿishqiyya* additionally presents polemics against philosophers, and in particular Mīr Dāmād (d. 1040/1631) who once wrote a response, denouncing Rumi's famous quip about philosophers: "The legs of those who espouse logical inference (*istidlāliyān*, i.e., the philosophers) are wooden and unstable."[67] Nayrīzī levels his criticism against Mīr Dāmād, in

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with Arabic and Persian sections; Sayyid Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad Nayrīzī, *Risāla-yi siyāsī*, ed. Rasūl Jaʿfariyān (Qom: Kitābkhāna-yi Buzurg-i Ḥaḍrat Āyat Allāh al-ʿUẓmā Marʿashī Najafī, 1992).

[63] Nayrīzī, *Jāmiʿ al-kulliyyāt*, 10–11. Mehrabani explores Nayrīzī's concept of the social contract that stresses the omnipresence of God and the inextricable role of gnostics in organizing temporal affairs; Mehrabani, "The Concept of the Social Contract in the Shi'a Gnostic Tradition."

[64] A lithograph of *Qaṣīda ʿishqiyya* was first printed in Shiraz in 1908; Abū al-Ḥasanī, "Nigāhī Ijmālī bar Aḥvāl va Āṯār-i ʿĀrif Rabbānī ʿAllāma Sayyid Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad Ḥusaynī Nayrīzī," 255.

[65] Nayrīzī divides *ʿishq* into three categories, a relational (perhaps philia) love, love inspiring flattery (*chāblūsī*), and love in/by which one is killed. He supports the third category as the most substantive, emphasizing its sacrificial aspect in the poetic verse, "Love comes from ivy (*ʿashiqa*). If its young branches become tangled in it, they become dry and withered"; Nayrīzī, *Qaṣīda ʿishqiyya*, 15–16.

[66] Nayrīzī, 34.

[67] Rumi, *Masnavī-yi maʿnavī*, 1:2135, https://ganjoor.net/moulavi/masnavi/daftar1/sh105.

support of Rumi, by clarifying the inherent weakness of the intellect (*ʿaql*). Faith animated by the love of God, Nayrīzī asserts, is immeasurably superior to an intellect subject to whim, error, and decay. In unsparing terms, Nayrīzī censures the philosopher whose reliance on demonstrative proof (*burhān*) renders their mind as crooked (*aʿwaj*) as Rumi's table.[68]

The variety of subjects in *Faṣl al-khiṭāb* and *Qaṣīda ʿishqiyya* can be seen reiterated in other works of Nayrīzī, a short survey of which include *Miṣbāḥ al-walāya*,[69] containing around 5,200 Arabic couplets centered on Nayrīzī's interpretation of the hadith of ʿImrān Ṣābī and its theological and cosmogonical significance; *Risāla ifāḍa rūḥiyya*, an Arabic treatise written at the behest of Nayrīzī's associates that explains the human spirit's derivation from the Prophet's universal spirit (*al-rūḥ al-kullī*) and the Perfect Human as God's vicegerent on earth; *Ṣafīr al-ʿārifīn*, an Arabic ode of roughly 200 couplets devoted to divine rapture (*jadhba*), written during an episode of intense spiritual immersion (*sukr*, lit. "intoxication")[70]; *Kanz al-ḥikma*, a versified Arabic commentary that treats issues related to the Qur'an and the fundamental principles of Islamic faith, such as prophethood (*nubuwwa*) and the resurrection (*maʿād*), and offers a critique of materialist philosophers; *Munẕūmeh-yi anvār-i valāyat*, a Persian essay on *maʿrifa* and the quintessential Shiʿi concept of *walāya*, the love and devotion towards the *ahl al-bayt*; *Manhaj al-taḥrīr*, an incomplete mystical treatise, composed in Persian, on *tawḥīd* and its allusive evidence in the world of creation; among numerous tracts on theology, mysticism, and divine love that would be of interest to those either of a Shiʿi or Sufi persuasion.[71]

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[68] Nayrīzī, *Qaṣīda ʿishqiyya*, 127–32.
[69] Sayyid Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad Nayrīzī, *Manẕūmat miṣbāḥ al-wilāya wa-baḥr al-manāqib*, ed. Muḥammad Khawājawī (Tehran: Intishārāt Mawlā, 2004).
[70] This poem was added by later compilers and translators to the *Qaṣīda ʿishqiyya*; Abū al-Ḥasanī, "Nigāhī Ijmālī bar Aḥvāl va Āsār-i ʿĀrif Rabbānī ʿAllāma Sayyid Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad Ḥusaynī Nayrīzī," 255.
[71] A sample selection includes *Qaṣīda ibdāʿiyya, Risāla fī bayān waḥda ḥaqīqiyya, Munẕūmeh dar adabiyyāt-i ʿarab*, *Mufriḥ al-qulūb, Nūr al-hidāya, Kitāb al-mawāʿiẓ wa-l-naṣāʾiḥ,* and *Miʿrāj al-kamāl*. For a complete list, see al-Ṭihrānī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 2009, 9:598–602; Khāvarī, *Ẕahabiyya*, 1:528–48.

Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ

Nayrīzī's *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ* is a natural extension of *Faṣl al-khiṭāb* and *Qaṣīda ʿishqiyya*, applying a similar format while using instead ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib's prayerful speech as a medium for Nayrīzī's interpolation of Sufi content. Among his oeuvre, Nayrīzī's commentary stands out for its eclectic influences and Nayrīzī's claim that he was working from the original script of the first Shiʿi Imam. Its Arabic introduction[72] points to Nayrīzī's bona fides in the koiné of the Islamic intellectual tradition. Its Persian translation of the supplication's lines and his commentary in the form of quatrains speaks to Nayrīzī's Persian-literate audience and their high poetical pedigree. For each line of the supplication, Nayrīzī supplies his own Persian poetry. His prose is suffused with references to a wide variety of Sufi and Shiʿi themes, figures, and concepts, many of which are made apparent in his marginalia, punctuating the outer borders of the main text.

Nayrīzī's *Sharḥ* poetry preserves the spirit of desperation that typifies Shiʿi supplication's content and form, featuring numerous pleas of repentance and solicitations for compassionate assistance. His style of address denotes an intimacy with God. Like other Persian poets, when he addresses God, he employs the non-formal singular Persian form, ordinarily reserved for close friends and family. A tension persists, however, in the descriptions of God, above all personification, and in the contractual styles of exchange with His creation that imply personal closeness and communion.

Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ's confessional form is matched by affirmative attestations of God's oneness, mercy, and majesty. In Nayrīzī's paean, all expectation, hope, and dependency hinges

[72] A manuscript, MS 207625, contained in the Majlis Library, contains the same introduction written in Persian.

on God's mercy that is inexhaustible yet is shared unequally among supplicants. In this impression, one needs to be deserving of mercy; and sincere, ardent supplication is one means of putting the supplicant in a position of being worthy of what they petition. This method of beseeching (*ibtihāl*) and pleading (*taḍarruʿ*) can be seen emphasized in the traditions of the Imams.[73] The contemporary Shiʿi philosopher Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabāʾī, in his famous lecture series on spiritual wayfaring (*sayr wa-sulūk*), enjoins sincere supplication as a method for gaining God's guidance. As Ṭabāṭabāʾī explains, God, the only true sustainer and provider, would "never abandon His desperate and helpless servant who is in search of the Truth and the Reality."[74] Such an idea is transmitted by Nayrīzī who expresses, "O God, how can you drive away the sorrowful who comes seeking refuge in Your grace from neediness, and, from the fear of sin, flees toward You? If not in Your service, they have no recourse [*āyīn*, lit. 'path']"[75] In this account, an internal adjustment identified with the prescribed proper intent may catalyze auspicious occurrences, including the acquisition of special knowledge. These benefits are confirmed by Nayrīzī who writes in his commentary's introduction that he saw, in an unnamed book of supplication, a hadith from Imam al-Riḍāʾ concerning *Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ* that read,

> Did I not inform you of the great and honorable treasure that becomes your fortress? For whosoever persists in reciting this supplication, the afflictions of the world will never harm them; they will be glorified and honored in the eyes of creation; and their enemy will never gain the upper hand. Anyone directing hostility at them will be returned this very hostility. They will be protected from sudden death, and their life's sustenance will be enlarged.[76]

A Note on the Structure of *Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*

[73] See al-Kulaynī, *Uṣūl al-kāfī*, 2007, 2:262–64.
[74] Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ḥusaynī Tihrānī, *Kernel of the Kernel: Concerning the Wayfaring and Spiritual Journey of the People of Intellect* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), 72.
[75] Sayyid Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad Ḥusaynī Nayrīzī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ* [1130/1717], Majlis Library MS 78096, fol. 32r.
[76] Nayrīzī, fol. 4v-5r.

Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ spans approximately 100 lines that form a tripartite structure. The beginning section provides descriptions of various celestial phenomena, including the motion of the stars and moon, followed by a middle section imputing the cause of this phenomena to the unity and mercy of God, and concludes with pleas for divine guidance and patience in successfully traversing the moral landscape, culminating with praise to ensure that these pleas are heard. Its structure resembles many Shiʿi supplications whose basic pattern passes from a narrational *fāʿil* to *mafʿūl* where, by bearing active witness to the divine, the supplicant becomes a passive receiver of God's benediction. Shiʿi supplications typically feature versified recognition of the superlative qualities of God and petitions by the supplicant to receive a small portion of grace or some other desirable attribute. *Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ* departs little from these petitionary formulae, and incorporates a confessional-style coda, enumerating sundry spiritual defects, and an appeal to the sanctity (*ḥurma*) of the Prophet and his household for intercessory succor.

The Introduction of *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*

In Nayrīzī's *taḥmīd*, he references the supplication's titular morning (*ṣabāḥ*) and its light of wisdom offered to properly attuned intellects, foremost the Prophet Muḥammad and his "friends" (*awliyāʾ*). Nayrīzī includes traditions and Qur'anic verses that allude to the spiritual and biological bond of the Prophet and the Imams. He extends specific praise to the author of the supplication, Imam ʿAlī, who, among many descriptions sourced from other supplications, is described as he who "summons creation to the truth (*al-ḥaqq*), by the truth," and whose Imamate was secured by authoritative designation (*naṣṣ*).[77]

Nayrīzī prefaces his Arabic introduction by informing readers of the circumstances of his commentary's composition, written in Qazvin during the year 1130/1717. In his introduction, Nayrīzī says that he transcribed *Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ* using two source versions. The first version,

[77] Nayrīzī, fol. 1v.

Nayrīzī claims, was copied by Sayyid Najīb Mīr Ibrāhīm al-Qazwīnī who writes that he transcribed it from the handwritten Kufic script of Imam ʿAlī who originally composed the supplication on the eleventh of Dhū al-Ḥijja in the year 25/646. Al-Qazwīnī, in turn, transcribed Imam ʿAlī's handwritten script from ʿAwaḍ Khān, the latter providing the Arabic inflexion (*iʿrāb)* for each line.[78] The second version of *Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ* in Nayrīzī's possession was also authored by Imam ʿAlī in Kufic script and includes a note from the Imam that the prayer was taught to him by the Prophet Muḥammad who recited it every morning. Nayrīzī does not offer any information on its transmission but affirms that this second version accords with the first one, despite its absence of *iʿrāb*. Nayrīzī goes on to highlight *Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*'s special place among the pantheon of Shiʿi scholars, including its mention by Sayyid ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn Ibn Bāqī al-Ḥillī (d. ca. 655/1257) in *Ikhtiyār al-miṣbāḥ al-kabīr* and Fayḍ Kāshānī in *Dharīʿa al-ḍarāʿa*. Despite their eminent standing as scholars, these transmitters' versions of *Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ* still differ from those received by Nayrīzī, written by the hand of the Imam, who suggests that his versions are the most authentic and trustworthy.[79]

At the request of many of Nayrīzī's peers and as a personal undertaking to set the record straight, Nayrīzī writes that he finally decided to bring existing versions of the supplication into conformity with the two trustworthy versions at his disposal, while providing commentary to clarify some of its obscure terms. Despite the differences in the copies disseminated during his time, Nayrīzī assures us that the same realities (*ḥaqāʾiq*) expressed by the Imam in his prayer are perceptible to all scholars firmly rooted (*rāsikhūn*) in knowledge. In response to the concerns of some of the students who came to Nayrīzī, seeking allegorical interpretation (*taʾwīl*) of the

[78] I could not discover any information on the figures of al-Qazwīnī and Khān.
[79] Nayrīzī notes that Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī would cite Ibn Bāqī al-Ḥillī as the source of the latter's version of *duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ* contained in the *Biḥār*; Nayrīzī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, Majlis Library MS 78096, fol. 2v-3v.

supplication, he resolved to translate the supplication's text, providing quatrains of edifying phrases either authored by himself or culled from the sayings of unnamed gnostics. Such a commentary, he hopes, "will create familiarity with its meanings, proportional to the [stages of the] hearts of supplicants."[80]

Main Motifs of *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*

For several lines of his commentary, Nayrīzī simply recapitulates those of the supplication, rephrasing content in subtle ways; while for others, he adds supplemental specification and detail. His poetic commentary is packed with supplicative words and phrases that signal a mystical impression of faith, these terms abound in an allusive richness. This section is dedicated to their attention.

Nayrīzī repeatedly evokes dualist constructions in his commentary, including those of light/darkness, beauty/majesty (*jamāl/jalāl*), body/soul, the Real/creation (*ḥaqq/khalq*), and the "two realms" (*sarā*) of *dunyā* and *ākhira*.[81] At other times, however, the dualist pattern is abandoned for a unifying principle, foregrounding God's absolute oneness. Nayrīzī is hardly unique in promoting this ambiguity among his Sufi brethren. He nonetheless preserves a vision of *tawḥīd* that negates all ontological and numerical attribution to God, something that he associates with misguidance (*ḍalāla*), as captured in *Faṣl al-khiṭāb*'s formula,

> The misguidance of polytheistic numerical unity (*shirk al-waḥda al-ʿadadiyya*) was exchanged for the guidance (*hidāya*) of His oneness. And nothing remained of the claim of association (*shirāka*) between God and creation.[82]

[80] Nayrīzī, fol. 4v.
[81] Nayrīzī, fol. 31v.
[82] Khūʾī and Nayrīzī, *Mīzān al-ṣavāb*, 1:36.

Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ promotes fluency in the language game of affirmation and negation. It involves the playful confluence of unity and manyness, perceived as perplexity (*ḥayra*),[83] where ratiocination fails to access what Nayrīzī designates God's "whyness" (*chūn*) or "howness" (*chegūneh*).[84] Andrey Smirnov explains that *ḥayra* "treats the truth as an entwining of two opposites that would ordinarily be considered mutually exclusive."[85] God's "comprehensive reality"[86] appears then as paradoxical, confronting the intellect as an unsurmountable ignorance. So much is suggested by the words of Imam Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, "You assigned to Your creatures no way to know You, save the incapacity to know You."[87] But even this level of awareness counts as knowing, hence Chittick is able to say that *ḥayra* is "one of the highest stages of knowledge. It is the realization of the incapacity to know."[88]

Nayrīzī's "koans" in the style of Bābā Afḍal al-Kāshānī (d. ca. 654/1256) enjoin nearness to God, a nearness that extends felicity (*saʿāda*) over mere knowledge.[89] The self, as the locus of the macrocosm reflecting God's attributes, becomes the most immediate center for

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[83] Ibn ʿArabī encourages perplexity as a condition for God-centeredness, citing the supplication, "My Lord, increase my perplexity (*al-ḥayra*) concerning You"; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *The Bezels of Wisdom*, trans. R. W. J. Austin, Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), 79.

[84] Nayrīzī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, Majlis Library MS 78096, fol. 26r. Nayrīzī here channels one of several of ʿAlī's sermons from the *Nahj al-balāgha*, e.g., "Whoever asks 'how' seeks His description; whoever asks 'where' enquires about His confines"; See Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Mūsawī al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāgha* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnānī, 2004), 211–12.

[85] Andrey Smirnov, "Dualism and Monism: How Really Different Are the Two Versions of Sufi Ethics?," ed. Marietta T. Stepanyants, vol. 30, IVA, Eastern and Central Europe (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2007), 272.

[86] Nayrīzī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, Majlis Library MS 78096, 26V.

[87] *Wa-lam tajʿal lil-khalq ṭarīqan ilā maʿrifatik illā bi-ʿajz ʿan maʿrifatik*; "The Whispered Prayer of the Knowers" (*Munājāt al-ʿārifīn*), *al-Ṣaḥīfa al-Sajjādiyya*.

[88] William Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn al-'Arabi's Cosmology* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998), 64.

[89] Sajjad Rizvi rightly emphasizes, with regards to Mullā Ṣadrā's oeuvre, the purpose of philosophy as a vehicle for the soul's cultivation or what he describes as a "therapy of the rational soul and its perfecting and development on its path of return to its origins in the One." The same emphasis should be applied to Nayrīzī's output. See Sajjad Rizvi, *Mullā Ṣadrā and Metaphysics: Modulation of Being* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 2.

"introspection" (*khud-shenāsī*), a knowledge of the self's horizons.[90] However, as often acknowledged, the self is prone to whim and heedlessness. Nayrīzī's frequent reference to caprice or alternatively vain desire (*hawas*) spells a barrier to spiritual benefit, and the cause of his own sense of bewilderment (*sargashteh*).[91] His commentary prompts the urgent necessity of "unlocking the heart"[92] towards mercy and grace. Nayrīzī recommends supplication, what he refers to as "the doors of entreaty,"[93] as most conducive to the self's refinement. To receive generosity, mercy and praise, the supplicant must become, in *Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*'s formula, "generous, merciful and praiseworthy." Only the superlative of these qualities (e.g., the most merciful), God, can offer this, and only can the individual actualize the ethical preparedness for His reception. This is why fulfilling all the obligatory conditions, including everyday etiquette and manners vis-à-vis others, is stressed as a precondition for supplication's efficaciousness in Shiʿi prayer manuals.[94] One of many Prophetic traditions on the subject relates, "One who recites *duʿāʾ* without doing good is like one who shoots an arrow without a bow."[95] Nayrīzī references this wider engagement of ethical requirements with regards to *jihād al-nafs*,[96] the inner struggle directed against the self that, without God's help, is "doomed to pass into hardship and

[90] Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Afdal Al-Din Kashani and the Philosophical World of Khwaja Nasir al Din Tusi," in *Islamic Theology and Philosophy: Studies in Honor of George F. Hourani*, ed. Michael E. Marmura (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1984), 260.
[91] Nayrīzī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, Majlis Library MS 78096, fol. 33r.
[92] Nayrīzī, fol. 28v.
[93] Nayrīzī, fol. 32v.
[94] In *ʿUdda al-dāʿī*, Ibn Fahd al-Ḥillī (d. 841/1437-8) includes sections, under the heading, "Causes for [Supplication's] Fulfillment (*Asbāb al-ijāba*)," related to giving alms, duties toward one's teachers, and rights of one's spouse, whose implementation is a prerequisite for all successful supererogatory prayer. al-Ḥillī, *ʿUddat al-dāʿī*. On the philosophy of supplication, see additionally Mathieu Terrier, "La Défense Philosophique de La Prière Votive (Duʿāʾ) et de La Visite Pieuse (Ziyāra), d'Ibn Sīnā à La Renaissance Safavide (XIe/XVIIe Siècle)," *Studia Islamica* 116, no. 2 (2021): 304–45, https://doi.org/10.1163/19585705-12341443.
[95] Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī al-Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī* (Tehran: Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyya, 2006), 786.
[96] Nayrīzī, fol. 30r.

deprivation."[97] By petitioning God, the "fulcrum of support and hope,"[98] supplication becomes a shield. Nayrīzī makes this connection in the hemistiches,

> Then, by [Your] generosity, make my evening a shield.
> Do not let the thought of the enemy affect me.
> Do not abandon me to the dangers of the caprice of the carnal self.
> Do not leave me to my self, nor to any other.[99]

Here the evening carries the metonymic function as the most efficacious time for prayers, whereupon supplication follows those obligatory. Many of the traditions of the Imams conceive of *duʿāʾ* as both a weapon and a shield.[100] As a weapon, *duʿāʾ* helps remove afflictions during their occurrence, and as a shield, it fends off their possible future occurrence. Even in the latter's case, as we learn from these traditions, *duʿāʾ* can revert potential misfortune in circumstances where it has been divinely decreed, so long as God is sincerely beseeched.[101] Only Nayrīzī's avowed "enemy," Satan, can hinder this effort by his spiritually enervating whisperings, causing heedlessness of worship and loss of its virtues (*faḍāʾil*).

Among the Sufi allusions, Nayrīzī's mention of the game of polo (*chawgān*)[102] is a curious cultural mention that recalls Maḥmūd ʿĀrifī of Herat's (d. 853/ 1449) *Gūy va chawgān* ("Ball and polo stick").[103] What appears as a topical reference to leisure activity that originated

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[97] Nayrīzī, fol. 30r.
[98] Nayrīzī, fol. 31v.
[99] Nayrīzī, fol. 33v.
[100] Some examples: From the Prophet Muḥammad, "Did I not indicate to you a weapon which will protect you from the evils of enemies and increase your sustenance?" After his audience responds in the affirmative, he replies, "Call upon (*tadʿūn*) your Lord, day and night, for *duʿāʾ* is the weapon of the believer." From Imam ʿAlī, "*Duʿāʾ* is the shield of a believer. If you knock repeatedly on the door of divine mercy, it will be opened for you." From Imam al-Ṣādiq, "*Duʿāʾ* penetrates better than a steel spear"; al-Ḥillī, *ʿUddat al-dāʿī*, 16–18.
[101] From Imam al-Kāẓim, "It is incumbent upon you to recite *duʿāʾ*, for those who beseech God Almighty are spared affliction, even when it has been destined and decreed (*wa-qad quddira wa-quḍiya*), except after its passing. If you ask God to prevent it, He will do so"; al-Ḥillī, 17. On the doctrinal importance of *duʿāʾ* and the closely related *ziyāra* texts, including a French translation of excerpts of *al-Zīyāra al-jāmiʿa al-kabīra*, see Amir-Moezzi, "Prière de pèlerinage englobant (al-ziyâra al-jâmi'a) (Aspects de l'imamologie duodécimaine XVII)." See additionally, Amir-Moezzi, "Notes sur la prière dans le shī'isme imamite."
[102] Nayrīzī, fol. 26v.
[103] See the English translation of Thackston and Ziai; W. M. Thackston, Hossein Ziai, and ʿĀrifī, *The Ball and Polo Stick, or, The Book of Ecstasy* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 1999). Jāmī quotes six lines from this work that describe a polo horse; Franklin Lewis, "To Round and Rondeau the Canon: Jāmī and Fānī's Reception of the Persian

in Iran as a horseback game played by the nobility becomes, in Nayrīzī's commentary, a metaphor for self-transformation. When one becomes entranced, or, per Nayrīzī, "captive" (*darband*) by/to God's love,[106] its epiphanic moment sets off a sequence of cosmic consequences. This spark of inspiration, when the "polo ball meets Your mallet,"[107] signifies the instant when the external impinges on the internal, forever altering its trajectory. Nayrīzī's marginal note for this quatrain makes the connection to time, between the antecedence (*taqdīm*) and posteriority (*taʾkhīr*) of passing moments, indicated in the supplication's relevant line,[108] by which one is transformed. In Ibn ʿArabī's tract *Sharḥ risāla rūḥ al-quds*, the author witnesses a rank of the spiritually elect called *abdāl* (sing. *badal*) as being "in a state of pure witnessing (*mushāhada*)."[109] In such a state, the *abdāl* never blink their eyes, unable to spare the passing instant away from the vision of God's face, and, through their regimen of the "four pillars" (silence, seclusion, hunger, wakefulness), overcome any physical need to do so.[110] It is the desire of Nayrīzī that this state of constant praise be permanent, so that contentment (*khursand*)[111] can be achieved.[112] His reference to the Prophet and his household's praise, exhorted at every respiration (*har dam*), carries this sense of constancy that earns God's special mercy (*raḥmat-i khāṣṣ*).[113]

Lyrical Tradition," in *Jāmī in Regional Contexts*, ed. Thibaut d'Hubert and Alexandre Papas (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 548; ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī, *Bahāristān va rasāʾil-i Jāmī*, ed. Aʿlā Afṣaḥzād (Tehran: Mīrāth-i Maktūb, 2000), 151.

[106] Nayrīzī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, Majlis Library MS 78096, fol. 26v.

[107] Nayrīzī, fol. 26v.

[108] "O He who is near to all passing thoughts, and distant from the glimpses of eyes."

[109] Muḥyī al-Dīn Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad Ibn ʿArabī, *Sharḥ risāla rūḥ al-quds fī muḥāsabat al-nafs* (Damascus: Maṭbaʿa Naḍir, 1993), 130.

[110] Muḥyī al-Dīn Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad Ibn ʿArabī, "Ḥilyat al-abdāl," in *Rasāʾil Ibn ʿArabī*, 7 vols. (Beirut: al-Intishār al-ʿArabī, 2005), 5:133–55.

[111] Nayrīzī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, Majlis Library MS 78096, fol. 26v.

[112] A tradition from Imam al-Ṣādiq emphasizes supplication's persistence: "Supplicate constantly, for there is nothing like it to take you nearer [to God]"; al-Shaykh al-Mufīd, *al-Amālī*, 20.

[113] Nayrīzī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, Majlis Library MS 78096, fol. 36v.

The supplication's following line, "[O He who] knows what will be before it comes to be," complements the former's allusion to God's simultaneous immanence and transcendence, aware (of all thoughts) yet invisible (to physical eyes), calling further attention to the theme of time and the God-world relationship. Nayrīzī's stanza, "In Your knowledge that subsists eternally and is sanctified from perishing, 'all that was' and 'never was' are of the same kind,"[114] recalls God's eternal knowledge. God is unlimited not only by time, but by the effects of time, the contingent forms. He envelops both the immutable entities (*aʿyān thābita*) subsisting in the divine ipseity (*huwiyya*), "all that never was," and the engendered, mutable entities propagated over the universe, "all that was."[115] Like much of *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*'s content, Nayrīzī's indication of the objects of God's knowledge, the *aʿyān*, are by allusion. One example may be gleaned from the supplication's opening lines,

> O God, O He who extended the morning's tongue in the speech of its dawning,
> [Who] dispatched the fragments of the dark night into the gloom of its stammering.

God's dispatch of the supplication's "fragments of the dark night," Nayrīzī explains, "renews the world through the morning."[116] Night and morning become figurative representations, the night a metaphor for the timeless realities, the *aʿyān thābita*. By the morning's light, they become manifest and subject to time's organizing principle, which creates mutable conditions and relations necessary for experience. Whereas the occluded content, or "darkness," of night appears as unintelligible "stammering," the morning's "tongue" introduces articulatable and, as reported in Nayrīzī's gloss, "enlightening speech (*guftār-i rūshanāʾī*)."[117] A broader appreciation of this passage might suggest the emergence of God's will (*mashīʾa*) in the

[114] Nayrīzī, fol. 26v.
[115] Nayrīzī, fol. 36v.
[116] Nayrīzī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, Majlis Library MS 78096, fol. 25r.
[117] Nayrīzī, fol. 25r, bottom marginalia.

story of the world's appearance, where shadows of divine light appear in the theosophy of the terrestrial world, within an unfolding sequence of stages that gain in materiality.

Many more Sufi and Shiʿi-specific valences saturate Nayrīzī's *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ* and allow for multiple readings of the supplication, a small sample of which I have here underscored. The emphasis he lays on the values of devotion, mercy, forgiveness, and beauty, also bears on the active promotion of certain traditions of Shiʿism, not just canonical sources and embodied acts of worship. *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-sabāḥ* fits within a general trend, starting in the Safavid period, of writing by Shiʿi thinkers on prayer,[118] offering a window into the stabilization of meaning during a time of great social and political disintegration. It is an attempt to draw out aspects of the Imam's supplication that provide a haven of order and permanence from the vicissitudes of time.

[118] Amir-Moezzi, "Notes sur la prière dans le shī'isme imamite," 71–72.

Chapter 6: Seeing the Signs: The Imamate in Sayyid Kāẓim al- Rashtī's (d. 1259/1843) *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt*

Introduction

This chapter discusses a supplication commentary written by Sayyid Kāẓim b. Qāsim al-Rashtī (d. 1259/1843), the second leader of the Shaykhi Imami Shiʿi movement (*al- Shaykhiyya*) that emerged in nineteenth-century Iran. Al-Rashtī's name has yet to reach a broader audience, and not without reason. It is easy to see how the first Shaykhi leader, Aḥmad b. Zayn al-Dīn al-Aḥsāʾī (d. 1241/1826), could overshadow his successor given the former's charisma and influence, as well as the great abundance of his writings. However, al-Rashtī's marginality obscures a key stage in the movement's history and development when the Shaykhi cause gained wider purchase within Qājār Shiʿi society and when the ideas of al-Aḥsāʾī took on growing urgency in fervent expectation of Imam al-Mahdī's (re)appearance (*ẓuhūr*). The main purpose of this chapter is to highlight the role of interpretation in al-Rashtī's *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt* ("Commentary on the supplication of signs") in articulating Shaykhi thought. Al-Rashtī's commentary is a deeply considered expression of the Imams' influence in sacred history. It interprets the speech of a *maʿṣūm* to indicate how God interacts with creation through prophetic and imamic archetypes, designating supplicative words and phrases to express this relationship. Given the paucity of information on al-Rashtī, the value of this enterprise will require some appreciation of his background and motivations. In the first section, I chronicle al-Rashtī's fundamental role in Shaykhi history within the anarchic scene of the ʿAtabāt region of the mid-Qājār period and catalogue some of his main works. The first section lays the groundwork for the second, main section, which analyses al-Rashtī's commentary and his interpretive procedure.

Sayyid Kāẓim Rashtī introduces his *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt* by relating the inspiration for its writing. He explains that another scholar, Ākhūnd Mullā ʿAlī Aṣghar al-Nishāpūrī, had asked him to clarify some of the undisclosed signs (*rumūz*) and intimations (*ishārāt*) underpinning the supplication, ascribed to Imam Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Bāqir (d. 114/733).[1] Mullā ʿAlī Aṣghar would be forgiven for his bewilderment of *Duʿāʾ al-simāt*. The supplication's rich and often esoteric contents have long puzzled readers, unfamiliar with its aggadic references.[2] Divided by Rashtī into eighty-two passages, *Duʿāʾ al-simāt* shows a preoccupation with the favour, miracles, and praise of the prophets of *banū Isrāʾīl* as prefiguring those of the Shiʿi Imams, the original bearers of the salvific promise. After reviewing some of the information related to *Duʿāʾ al-simāt*'s transmission, Rashtī concludes his brief introduction with a variant of a hadith attributed to Imam ʿAlī b. Mūsā al-Riḍāʾ (d. 203/818): "Those who possess intellect (*dhawū l-albāb*)[3] know that inference (*istidlāl*) by what is *there* can only arrive by what is *here*."[4] This chapter explores how Rashtī gets from one point to the other–a *here/there* passage that carries the multifold import of signifier (*dāll*)/signified (*madlūl*), exoteric (*ẓāhir*)/esoteric (*bāṭin*), and impression (*athar*)/"impressor" (*muʾaththir*).

I examine two instances in the *Sharḥ* in which Rashtī traverses between these stations in *Duʿāʾ al-simāt*: first, his discussion of the dome known as Rummān, and second, his treatment of Moses's Sinai narrative. Under Rashtī's scrutiny, objects, places, and figures become sacred because each involves some essential relation to the Imams who, in this worldview, are the

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[1] Sayyid Kāẓim b. Qāsim al-Ḥusaynī Rashtī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt wa-yalīh sharḥ Ḥadīth al-qadr*, ed. Raḍī Nāṣir al-Salmān (Damascus: Muʾassasat Fikr al-Awḥad, 2003), 39–40.
[2] Modarressi recalls previous Shiʿi scholars' perplexity, "no one in the entire Shīʿite community had the slightest idea what all of those references to concepts and events in the history of the Jewish community that formed the entire text of that *duʿāʾ* were about"; Hossein Modarressi, *Tradition and Survival: A Bibliographical Survey of Early Shīʾite Literature* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2003), 336, n. 86.
[3] This phrase is repeated in the Quran, such as in 3:190: "Truly in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the variation of the night and the day are signs for the possessors of intellect."
[4] Rashtī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt*, 45–46; Ibn Bābawayh, *Kitāb al-tawḥīd*, 438.

embodied locus of the divine will (*mashīʾa*). The consequences of this view impinge on meaning-making in various observable ways; I focus here on the chapter's topics and Rashtī's representational strategy. In addition, I show how Rashtī finds an application for words using probative criteria, some in the form of hadiths or Qur'anic verses and others in the form of hermeneutical techniques such as metonymy, metaphor, and embedded narrative. In this way, I anchor my chapter's analysis on two interrelated aspects: Rashtī's specific interpretations–that is, what he claims that the imam means with the words of *Duʿāʾ al-simāt*–and his way of making these claims–that is, what evidence and inferences he marshals for them. The two aspects are interrelated insofar as they constitute the topoi and reinforce the rules of the Shaykhi domain of thought.

The Life of Sayyid Kāẓim al-Rashtī

Sources and Challenges

Tracing the life of Sayyid Kāẓim Rashtī poses a challenge. Few primary resources and even fewer secondary sources are available on his background. Beyond scattered encyclopaedic entries,[5] there are no works dedicated to Rashtī, who is often ignored as a shambolic transitional figure between al-Aḥsāʾī and the third Shaykhi leader, Ḥājj Muḥammad Karīm Khān Kirmānī (d. 1288/1871). There are several Arabic works on the Shaykhi school in general that contain information on its leaders and the spread of its influence in Iran. A few reliable examples include ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn al-Qazwīnī's *ʿAqāʾid al-Shaykhiyya* (2002), Muḥammad Zakī Ibrāhīm's *al-Madrasa*

[5] Hamid Algar, "Kāẓim Rashtī," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition* (Brill, 2012), https://referenceworks.brillonline.com:443/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/kazim-rashti-SIM_4084; Denis Martin MacEoin, "Rashtī, Sayyid Kāẓim," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition* (Brill, 2012), https://referenceworks.brillonline.com:443/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/rashti-sayyid-kazim-SIM_6244; Armin Eschraghi, "KĀẒEM RAŠTI," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online*, 2020, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2330-4804_EIRO_COM_11221.

al-Shaykhiyya (2004), and most notably Muḥammad Ḥasan Āl al-Ṭāliqānī's chapter on Rashtī in *al-Shaykhiyya* (2007). Rashtī's own work *Dalīl al-mutaḥayyirīn*, which analyses al-Aḥsāʾī's thought and defines Shaykhi doctrine, offers important information related to its author's life. Completed in 1258/1842, *Dalīl al-mutaḥayyirīn* provides an account, oriented to an already initiated audience, that borders on hagiography. Among other sources, the two-volume Persian *Fihrist-i kutub-i mashāyikh-i iʿẓām* of Abū l-Qāsim b. Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn Khān Kirmānī (d. 1969) provides one of the more comprehensive accounts of Rashtī's life, including a thorough bibliographic inventory of his writings. The *Fihrist* reportedly contains collected remnants of two lost biographies written by Rashtī's students.[6] Although hardly impartial, its account has proven useful for Shaykhi partisans and critics alike in delineating a historical sequence of developments.

The majority of the relevant secondary sources in English were produced by those whose primary interest lies in drawing connections between Shaykhism and the Bahá'í religion, and they include Denis MacEoin,[7] Todd Lawson,[8] Vahid Rafati,[9] Moojan Momen,[10] Juan Cole,[11]

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[6] Denis Martin MacEoin, *The Messiah of Shiraz: Studies in Early and Middle Babism*, Iran Studies, III (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 107.

[7] MacEoin, *The Messiah of Shiraz*; Denis Martin MacEoin, "Early Shaykhí Reactions to the Báb and His Claims," in *Studies in Bábí and Bahá'í History*, ed. Moojan Momen, vol. 1 (Los Angeles: Kalimat Press, 1982), 1–47; Denis MacEoin, "Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy in Nineteenth-Century Shiʿism: The Cases of Shaykhism and Babism," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 110, no. 2 (1990): 323–29.

[8] Todd Lawson, "Shaykh Aḥmad Al-Aḥsāʾī and the World of Images," in *Shiʿi Trends and Dynamics in Modern Times (XVIIIth-XXth Centuries)*, ed. Denis Hermann and Sabrina Mervin, Beiruter Texte Und Studien 15 (Beirut, Würzburg: Orient-Institut, Ergon Verlag, 2010), 19–31; Todd Lawson, "Being Human: The Shaykhiyya," *Baha'i Studies Review* 18 (June 2012): 83–94; Todd Lawson, "Interpretation as Revelation: The Qur'án Commentary of the Báb," *The Journal of Bahá'í Studies* 2, no. 4 (December 1990): 17–43.

[9] Vahid Rafati, "The Development of Shaykhí Thought in Shí'í Islam" (PhD diss., Los Angeles, UCLA, 1979).

[10] Moojan Momen, *The Works of Shaykh Ahmad Al-Ahsá'í: A Bibliography*, 1 (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Bahā'ī Studies Bulletin Monograph, 1991); Moojan Momen, "Usuli, Akhbari, Shaykhi, Babi: The Tribulations of a Qazvin Family," *Iranian Studies* 36, no. 3 (2003): 317–37.

[11] Juan R. I. Cole, "The World as Text: Cosmologies of Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsa'i," *Studia Islamica*, no. 80 (1994): 145–63; Juan Cole, "Casting Away the Self: The Mysticism of Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsa'i," in *The Twelver Shia in Modern Times*, ed. Ral Brunner and Werner Ende (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2001), 25–37; Juan Cole, "Individualism and the Spiritual Path in Shaykh Ahmad Al-Ahsa'i," in *Shiʿite Heritage: Essays on Classical and Modern Traditions*, ed. L. Clarke (Binghampton, NY: Global Publications, 2001), 345–58; Juan Cole, "Shaykh Ahmad Al-Ahsa'i on the

Abbas Amanat,[12] and Stephen Lambden.[13] Although Shaykhis themselves view Bahá'ísm in hostile terms and deny any affiliation with the faith, these authors have produced several secondary accounts of the connection. Foremost in this category is MacEoin's *Messiah of Shiraz* (2008), which collates the author's numerous writings on Shaykhism and Bábism. Rafati's 1979 PhD dissertation, "The Development of Shaykhí Thought in Shí'í Islam," is also an exceptional contribution to the academic study of the Shaykhi school, setting the school's evolution against the backdrop of religious and social developments of nineteenth-century Iran. Rafati summarizes the complex Shaykhi worldview and the circumstances of its inception, and he demonstrates the continuities between the Shaykhi and Bábí movements. Amanat, in *Resurrection and Renewal* (1989), makes similar links, tracing the connections of Rashtī's vision of the imamate and preoccupation with the messianic occurrence of the Return (*rajʿa*) with early Bábí theosophic theory.

Idris Samawi Hamid's PhD dissertation, "The Metaphysics and Cosmology of Process according to Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsāʾī," provides a unique, sympathetic overview of al-Aḥsāʾī's process metaphysics, which Hamid distinguishes from the substance variety embraced by Shiʿi scholars indebted to Avicennan Peripateticism.[14] Although focused on al-Aḥsāʾī, Hamid's monograph, which features a translation of the treatise *al-Fawāʾid al-ḥikmiyya*, offers a valuable investigation of al-Aḥsāʾī's schema of thought, which Rashtī subsequently expounded further. Leila Chamankhah's well-researched articles on the juridico-theological formulations of al-

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Sources of Religious Authority," in *The Most Learned of the Shi`a: The Institution of the Marja` al-Taqlid*, ed. Linda Walbridge (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 82–93.

[12] Abbas Amanat, *Resurrection and Renewal: The Making of the Babi Movement in Iran, 1844-1850* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989), 48–69.

[13] See Lambden's online webpage, "Hurqalya Publications: Center for Shaykhī and Bābī-Bahā'ī Studies," https://hurqalya.ucmerced.edu.

[14] Idris Samawi Hamid, "The Metaphysics and Cosmology of Process According to Shaykh 'Ahmad al-'Ahsa'i: Critical Edition, Translation, and Analysis of 'Observations in Wisdom,'" PhD diss., State University of New York at Buffalo, 1998.

Aḥsāʾī and Rashtī also merit mention.[15] Shaykh ʿAbd al-Hakeem Carney's (d. 2007) articles, many of which are unpublished, are noteworthy for their insights into Shaykhi epistemology and the knowledge imparted by "unveiling" (*kashf*).[16]

Although we remain in need of a critical study on Rashtī, the French scholarly literature on Shaykhism includes rigorous secondary studies that incorporate examples of his influence and teachings. Henry Corbin has produced the bulk of this literature. In writings such as " L'École shaykhie en théologie shiite" (1959) and the fourth volume of his magisterial *En Islam iranien* (1971–1973), which covers, inter alia, the Shaykhi school, he offers a penetrating analysis of Shaykhi intellectual periodization and metaphysical doctrines; and in *Terre céleste et corps de resurrection de l'Iran mazdéen á l'Iran shîʿite* (1977),[17] he provides an invaluable critical edition and partial translation of al-Aḥsāʾī's *Sharḥ al-Ziyāra al-jāmiʿa al-kabīra.* However quick he is to assimilate eschatological and mystical symbolism in Shaykhi thought to perennial philosophy and Jungian psychology, ignoring its important connections to a hadith-centred discursive tradition, Corbin succeeds in illuminating some of the most elusive phenomena in Shaykhi thought, including the function of the imaginative faculty and its interdependent relation with the immaterial theophanic realm, or what he calls the *mundus imaginalis*. He was not the first French scholar to study Shaykhism in a systematic way, however. This recognition goes to A. L. M.

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[15] Leila Chamankhah, "Persianization of Shaykhīsm: The Doctrine of Rukn-i Rābiʿ from Aḥmad al-Aḥsāʾī to Karīm Khān Kirmānī," *The Muslim World (Hartford)* 111, no. 3 (2021): 299–335; Leila Chamankhah, "Conflicting Worldviews: Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsāʾī's Risālat al-Rashtīyah and the Problematic of Akbarīan Mysticism," *Iranian Studies* 54, no. 3–4 (2021): 521–47; Leila Chamankhah, "Tafsīr or Taʾwīl? The Shaykhī Contribution to the Qurʾānīc Tradition of Nineteenth Century Iran," *The Muslim World* 113, no. 3 (2023): 228–41.

[16] One way to approximate the complex concept of *kashf* is with the Greek term *apokalypsis*, from which the word *apocalypse* derives. For the Greeks, the term denoted not the end of the world but rather a "laying bare" or "unveiling," i.e. the revelation of a truth hitherto hidden. Many Shaykhi notions depend on *kashf*, including those that informed the initiatory dreams of al-Aḥsāʾī and became a mode of accessing the intellective guidance of the Imams, secured by several preparatory conditions.

[17] This work was translated into English. See Henry Corbin, *Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth: From Mazdean Iran to Shīʿite Iran* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989).

Nicolas (d. 1939), who was born in Sayyid Kāẓim's native city of Rasht as the son of a diplomat in the French Consular Service stationed in Iran, and who went on to serve in the same capacity. While translating the Báb's writings, Nicolas became captivated by Rashtī's words and published several works on the Shaykhi movement, which he considered the spiritual precursor of Bábism.[18]

More recently, Denis Hermann's *Le shaykhisme à la période qajare* (2017), a published edition of his doctoral dissertation supervised by Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi,[19] studies the emergence and mobilization of the various Shaykhi schools in the nineteenth century. Hermann's attention to the networks of Shaykhi exponents and the shaping of their identity is a boon to the study of Shaykhi social and intellectual history.

A Brief Biography

A few scattered facts, consistent with the above sources, are discoverable about al-Rashī's family and childhood. His father, Āqā Sayyid Qāsim b. Aḥmad, was the first in his family to settle in Rasht on Iran's Caspian coast, having escaped the plague in his native Medina.[20] There, Āqā Sayyid Qāsim became known as a scholar while working as a silk merchant.[21] His religious influence on his son, Sayyid Kāẓim, who was born sometime in the last decade of the eighteenth century,[22] is uncertain. In the sources, Sayyid Kāẓim is portrayed as possessing an innate

[18] The second volume of his collection *Essai sur le Chéïkhisme* (1914) focuses on al-Rashtī.
[19] Amir-Moezzi is another expositor of Shaykhism. See Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, "Al-Aḥsāʾī, Aḥmad," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Three*, Brill, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_SIM_0320; Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, "The Twelver Shia in Modern Times. Religious Culture and Political History," in *An Absence Filled with Presence: Shaykhiyya Hermeneutics of the Occultation*, ed. Rainer Brunner and Werner Ende (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2001), 38–57.
[20] Muḥammad Zakī Ibrāhīmī, *al-Madrasa al-Shaykhiyya* (Beirut: Dār al-Maḥajja al-Bayḍāʾ, 2004), 149.
[21] MacEoin, *Messiah of Shiraz*, 108.
[22] The dates given for Rashtī's birth vary. Algar indicates a birthdate of 1213/1798 in "Kāẓim Rashtī." For five other dates, ranging from 1198/1784 to 1214/1799, see MacEoin, *Messiah of Shiraz*, 107–108.

yearning for spirituality and, in a feature characteristic of hagiographical accounts, shunning adolescent amusements for religious retreat and reflection. This impulse blossomed into a serious commitment to seek religious knowledge and the experts capable of imparting it.

Like the first shaykh, Rashtī was aided by oneiric visions of the Infallibles. In one fateful vision, the figure of the Prophet's daughter, Fāṭima, informed him of the presence of a great teacher in Yazd.[23] This was al-Aḥsāʾī, and when they finally met, Rashtī quickly garnered the trust and confidence of his new teacher to absorb al-Aḥsāʾī's lessons and propagate them among receptive parties. Their master–apprentice affiliation grew into a deep personal relationship, with al-Aḥsāʾī becoming a father figure to al-Rashtī.[24] Attesting to Rashtī's virtues as a student, al-Aḥsāʾī once remarked, "Sayyid Kāẓim understands where others do not."[25] When asked by his students who they should turn to if he himself could not be reached, the shaykh responded, "Receive knowledge from Sayyid Kāẓim, for he has received it directly from me, and I have received it directly from the Imams, and they have received it directly from God."[26] In addition to al-Aḥsāʾī's tutelage, Rashtī studied the traditional Islamic sciences with several esteemed scholars of his time, acquiring certificates (*ijāzāt*) from Jaʿfar Kāshif al-Ghiṭāʾ al-Najafī (d. 1228/1813), his son Mūsā b. Jaʿfar (d. c. 1242/1826), and Sayyid ʿAbd Allāh Shubbar al-Kāẓimī (d. 1242/1827).[27]

Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsāʾī's teachings aroused strong reactions among audiences in his time and after it. In his famous supplication commentary, *Sharḥ al-Ziyāra al-jāmiʿa al-kabīra*, al-Aḥsāʾī attributed the four Aristotelian causes (material, formal, efficient, and final) to the

[23] Rafati, "Development of Shaykhí Thought," 127.
[24] Al-Aḥsāʾī even referred to Rashtī as his son (*waladī*); Eschraghi, "Kāẓem Rašti."
[25] Mīrzā Muḥammad Karīm Khān al-Kirmānī, *Hidāyat al-ṭālibīn*, ed. Mahmūd Mūsawī Iṣfahānī (Najaf: Maṭbat al-Nuʿmān, 1958), 28.
[26] al-Kirmānī, 28.
[27] Āl al-Ṭāliqānī, *al-Shaykhiyya*, 124.

Imams, asserting, "God creates His creation from the rays of their [the Imams'] light. God has taken them as aids (*aʿḍād*) in His creation because the material cause (*ʿilla māddiyya*), in the totality of creation, is their lights' rays."[28] His most consequential concept concerning bodily resurrection (*al-maʿād al-jismānī*), a perennial issue among Muslim thinkers, involved a quadripartite assemblage of bodies.[29] The main substance of the critiques levelled against al-Aḥsāʾī concerned this redefining interpretation, as well as his views on the Prophet's ascension (*miʿrāj*) and the delegation (*tafwīḍ*) of divine powers to the Imams.[30] For a combination of reasons beyond the remit of this chapter, al-Aḥsāʾī was drawn into the larger Akhbārī/Uṣūlī clash, and over time his views became unacceptable to several leading clergy.[31] Around the year 1238/1822, the prominent Qazvini cleric Mullā Muḥammad-Taqī Baraghānī (d. 1263/1847) became the first to accuse al-Aḥsāʾī of apostasy (*takfīr*), forcing al-Aḥsāʾī eventually to flee to Mecca; he died en route and was buried in the al-Baqīʿ cemetery of Medina.[32]

Rashtī's early discipleship under al-Aḥsāʾī produced a practice and habituation of learning that Rashtī transmitted to subsequent generations. He became a prolific writer already at a young age. In his twenties and thirties, he authored several commentaries, including *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt*, and he kept busy translating al-Aḥsāʾī's Arabic works into Persian and writing responses to questions concerning al-Aḥsāʾī's thought on behalf of his shaykh. Given al-Aḥsāʾī's many detractors, the task of expounding his ideas also entailed defending them. Rashtī provided this defence with great gusto, explaining in detailed epistles (*rasāʾil*) the intricacies of al-

[28] Aḥmad b. Zayn al-Dīn b. Ibrāhīm al-Aḥsāʾī, *Sharḥ al-ziyāra al-jāmiʿa al-kabīra*, 4 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Mufīd, 1999), 1:44.
[29] Although this concept appears enigmatic, its constituents have precedents in Suhrawardī's theory of bodies built on magnitude (*miqdār*) and Mullā Ṣadrā's use of the "imaginal world" (*ʿālam al-mithāl*) to explain eschatological phenomena.
[30] MacEoin, *Messiah of Shiraz*, 99; Āl al-Ṭāliqānī, *al-Shaykhiyya*, 283–298.
[31] See Moojan Momen, "The Struggle for the Soul of Twelver Shiʿism in Qajar Iran," *Die Welt Des Islams* 60, no. 1 (2020): 31–55.
[32] MacEoin, *Messiah of Shiraz*, 609.

Aḥsāʾī's controversial concepts. Many of his surviving works consist of responses to queries on theological or philosophical issues submitted by curious parties inside and outside the Shaykhi fold, seeking clarification on or rebutting the views of Rashtī's predecessor. Kirmānī divides the 170 works that he attributes to Rashtī into seven categories by topic: (1) divine wisdom and virtue; (2) Islamic creed (*iʿtiqādāt*) and responses to certain objections; (3) spiritual wayfaring (*sayr wa-sulūk*); (4) principles of Islamic jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*); (5) Islamic jurisprudence; (6) hermeneutical commentaries (*tafsīr*); and (7) responses to various enquiries.[33] Each of these categories contains manifold others, covering a remarkable expanse of conceptual ground. Much of this output was originally written in Arabic, with a few exceptions in Persian.

Al-Aḥsāʾī's death in Dhū l-Qaʿda 1241/June 1826 presented a problem in the future of his ideas, given their undefined relationship with the conventional Akhbārī/Uṣūlī creedal camps. However, this problem was met with an immediate solution: the near unanimous agreement on Rashtī as his successor on the basis of al-Aḥsāʾī's recommendation to his followers to rely on Rashtī's expertise when he was temporarily absent and to consider Rashtī his heir once he was gone for good.[34] It is because of Rashtī's stewardship that "Shaykhism" became a distinct mode of thought within Shiʿism, however much it owed to the shaykh's theoretical formulas. In *Dalīl al-mutaḥayyirīn*, Rashtī defines the Shaykhiyya, also called the Kashfiyya, as a faction (*firqa*) in reference to a hadith from Imam Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq:

> And he who distinguished (*faraqa*) between you is your shepherd whom God entrusted over His creation. And he is the most knowledgeable of his sheep's welfare amid the corruption of their affairs. He separates them so that they may submit, then gathers them together so that they may be safe from their corruption and the fear of their enemy.[35]

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[33] Rafati, "Development of Shaykhí Thought," 132; Abū al-Qāsim b. Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn Khān Kirmānī, *Fihrist-i kutub-i mashāyakh-i iʿẓām*, vol. I (Kerman: Chāpkhāna-yi Saʿādat, n.d), 141.
[34] MacEoin indicates that two influential followers of al-Aḥsāʾī, Mullā Muḥammad Māmaqānī and Mullā ʿAbd al-Khāliq Yazdī, felt a certain degree of resentment about Rashtī's appointment; MacEoin, *Messiah of Shiraz*, 119.
[35] Rashtī, *Dalīl al-mutaḥayyirīn*, 24; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 2:247.

It is clear that Rashtī believes that the Shaykhiyya are this faction, shepherded by al-Aḥsāʾī toward salvific aims that are synonymous with the "true path" (*al-ṭarīqa al-ḥaqqa*) of the Prophet and Imams.[36] For Rashtī, Shaykhi thought constitutes a corrective to the many deviant detours that this path accumulated over time, with al-Aḥsāʾī positioned as the original "denier of the inventions of the Sufis and repudiator of the delusional fallacies of the ancient philosophers (*al-ḥukamāʾ al-awwalīn*)."[37] In this definition, Rashtī reveals two important features of Shaykhi doctrine: hostility to Sufism and an (at best) sceptical attitude toward Hellenistic thought. Under his watch, the Shaykhiyya would develop an increasing antagonism toward these influences while consolidating their own distinct views.

In contrast to the peripatetic pattern of al-Aḥsāʾī's life, Rashtī's was mostly sedentary. At al-Aḥsāʾī's suggestion, Rashtī settled in 1240–1241/1824–1825 in the shrine city of Karbala, in convenient proximity to other Shiʿi pilgrimage cities in today's Iraq, including Najaf, Kazimayn, and Samarra.[38] His popularity there soon reignited the accusations of apostasy that had once been directed at al-Aḥsāʾī. Rashtī's most fervent opponent was Sayyid Muḥammad Mahdī Ṭabāṭabāʾī (d. 1260/1844), a cleric from a prestigious family.[39] Ṭabāṭabāʾī, along with a few other notables, persuaded Rashtī to attend a debate where they pressured him to denounce the views of resurrection promulgated by al-Aḥsāʾī. Rashtī demurred, providing an insipid response that condemned only the outer form of his teacher's belief but not its inner content, which, Rashtī maintained, was perfectly compatible with the Quran and with the Imams' traditions.[40] At first, public opinion remained mostly aloof from the score-settling and petty rivalries between

[36] Rashtī, *Dalīl al-mutaḥayyirīn*, 25.
[37] Rashtī, *Dalīl al-mutaḥayyirīn*, 25.
[38] Denis Hermann, *Le shaykhisme à la période qajare: histoire sociale et doctrinale d'une École chiite*, Miroir de l'Orient Musulman 3 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2017), 54.
[39] Ibrāhīmī, *al-Madrasa al-Shaykhiyya*, 152.
[40] Hamid Algar, *Religion and State in Iran, 1785-1906: The Role of the Ulama in the Qajar Period* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 149.

competing religious authorities into which Shaykhi leaders were occasionally dragged.[41] The threats and insults continued, however, and old rivals were replaced with new, more confrontational ones, forcing ʿAtabāt visitors and inhabitants out of their position of neutrality.

Eventually, the threats against Rashtī and his followers turned into various forms of psychological and physical violence. These included a dagger attack on Rashtī and a shooting that left one of his disciples with an injured hand, the pillaging of his home on two occasions and the arson of his library, the disruption of his classes and harassment of his students, and numerous summonses to participate in public doctrinal debate (*munāẓara*), sometimes involving imprecation (*mubāhala*) between the disputing parties.[42]

Rashtī and his partisans reacted to their perilous situation with efforts to defend and spread their doctrines in various responsa and apologia, which doubled as an opportunity to systematize what had been, up to that point, fragmentary ideas. It was at this critical juncture that the support of the provincial Qājār governor Sulaymān Khān Afshār Qāsimlū (d. 1309/1891) proved especially useful. Qāsimlū was a patron and advocate of Rashtī who financially supported the publication of Shaykhi writings and the building of Shaykhi-affiliated mosques in Tabriz under the leadership of Rashtī's successor, Muḥammad Karīm Khān Kirmānī.[43] Qāsimlū married his son to Rashtī's daughter, bolstering their relationship and, as a result, Rashtī's reputation at the Iranian court.[44] The connections between Qājār royalty, including several princes of the ʿAtabāt region, and Shaykhi leaders provided protection for the latter.[45] Rashtī's position was

[41] MacEoin, *Messiah of Shiraz*, 122–123.
[42] Hermann, *Le shaykhisme à la période qajare*, 55–58.
[43] MacEoin, *Messiah of Shiraz*, 128.
[44] Rashtī's affiliation with Qājār royals caused him some pangs of conscience, and in letters written to Karīm Khān Kirmānī, he recommended avoidance of "the administers of justice" as much as possible; MacEoin, *Messiah of Shiraz*, 130.
[45] For more on the financial and ideological nexus between Qājār functionaries and Shaykhis, see Denis Hermann, "Dispositions testamentaires et financement de la transmission religieuse," *Studia Iranica* 44, no. 2 (2016): 275–301.

further secured by the support of the Zaʿfarānī family and its local forces, who competed with rival crime syndicates to extract fees from pilgrims visiting the semiautonomous shrine cities in the 1830s, when they were under nominal Ottoman control.[46] In 1842, the Ottoman authorities, determined to end the reign of the "brigands" (*lūṭī*), commissioned the governor of Baghdad, Najīb Pasha, to reassert Ottoman control in the area. In Dhū l-Qaʿda 1259/November 1843, Najīb Pasha laid siege to Karbala, which had become a bastion for fugitives fleeing Ottoman and Qājār law.[47] Despite stiff resistance mustered by Karbala's rebel forces, the city eventually fell to Turkish soldiers, who massacred its inhabitants–a scenario repeated in Najaf a decade later in 1269/1852 under the leadership of another Ottoman statesman, Mehmed Namık Pasha (d. 1892).[48] Before these events, Rashtī had secured the firm backing of Ibrāhīm al-Zaʿfarānī, a leader and powerbroker (*zaʿīm*, pl. *zuʿamāʾ*) of the Zaʿfarānī clan,[49] against his chief rival at the time: Sayyid Ibrāhīm al-Mūsawī al-Qazwīnī (d. 1264/1847–8), a leading *faqīh* who militated against the Shaykhis with the support of his own *zaʿīm* backer, Sayyid Mīrzā Ṣāliḥ.[50] Rashtī was better placed, however, and he used his affiliation with Zaʿfarānī in negotiations leading up to the conflict between the *zuʿamāʾ* and Najīb Pasha, quickly earning the latter's trust for his conciliatory advocacy.[51] Although these negotiations failed to stop the massacre of Karbala,

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[46] MacEoin, *Messiah of Shiraz*, 131; ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Sulaymān Nawwār, *Tārīkh al-ʿIrāq al-ḥadīth* (Cairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1968), 89. MacEoin refers to these criminal bands as *girāmī*. In other Arabic sources they are called *al-yarmāziyya*, from the Turkish *yāramāz*, meaning "good-for-nothings." See Stephen Hemsley Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925), 288; Sayyid Kāẓim b. Qāsim al-Ḥusaynī Rashtī, *Risālat as-sulūk fī l-aḫlāq wa-l-aʿmāl*, ed. Vaḥīd Behmardī, Beiruter Texte und Studien 93 (Beirut: Orient-Institut, 2004), 23.
[47] Aboul-Enein, *Iraq in Turmoil*, 32–33.
[48] Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq*, 288.
[49] Nawwār, *Tārīkh al-ʿIrāq al-ḥadīth*, 89.
[50] ʿAbbās al-ʿAzzāwī, *Tārīkh al-ʿIrāq bayn iḥtilālayn*, 8 vols. (Baghdad: Sharikat al-Tijāra wa-l-Ṭibāʿa, 1955), 7:66–67; Muḥammad b. Sulaymān Tunukābunī, *Qiṣaṣ al-ʿulamāʾ* (Qom: Dhawī al-Qurbā, 2005), 14–15.
[51] This episode, and Rashtī's affiliation with the Zaʿfarānīs, is recounted in full by Āl al-Ṭāliqānī in *al-Shaykhiyya*, 154–160.

Rashtī's residence near the sanctuary of Imam Ḥusayn was spared, as were the throngs of people who had sought refuge in his home.[52]

When the smoke cleared, Rashtī warmly received Najīb Pasha, who had made sure to safeguard Shaykhi spaces in advance of the attack.[53] Rashtī ultimately preferred the rule of Sunni sultans over that of anarchic gangs, however Shiʿi or even Shaykhi in sentiment the latter may have been.[54] His diplomatic overtures paid off, and his standing in the community–as well as at the Ottoman court–rose to such an extent that he was granted the right to appoint the "keeper of the keys" (*kalīd-dār*) to Imam Ḥusayn's shrine, a privilege passed down to his son, Sayyid Aḥmad.[55] After the Ottoman attack, Rashtī interpreted the disastrous event as divine retribution visited upon Karbala's inhabitants for failing to embrace his millenarian teachings.[56] Shaykhism subsequently surged in popularity, spreading far and wide throughout Iran, including among royal members of the Qājār court, as well as in eastern Arabia and north India.[57] It is for this reason that the Shaykhis' quietist disavowal of politics is paradoxical.[58] At crucial junctures in the history of Shaykhism, Rashtī took advantage of his connections to an assortment of political leaders, Qājār and Ottoman statesmen and local toughs alike. Had Rashtī sided with other Karbala-based *mujtahid*s and their affiliates, agitating for jihad against the Sunni Ottoman

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[52] According to the Shaykhi sources, a thousand people were provided a safe haven by al-Rashtī; Hermann, *Le shaykhisme à la période qajare*, 59.
[53] Algar, "Kāẓim Rashtī."
[54] Juan R. I. Cole and Moojan Momen, "Mafia, Mob and Shiism in Iraq: The Rebellion of Ottoman Karbala 1824-1843," *Past & Present*, no. 112 (1986): 133.
[55] MacEoin, *Messiah of Shiraz*, 134. Sayyid Aḥmad would eventually be assassinated in 1295/1878 while returning from evening prayers, outside the very shrine whose gate keys he held; Āl al-Ṭāliqānī, *al-Shaykhiyya*, 170; al-ʿĀmilī, *Aʿyān al-Shīʿa*, 3:68.
[56] Cole and Momen, "Mafia, Mob and Shiism," 139.
[57] Hermann, *Le shaykhisme à la période qajare*, 61; Juan R. I. Cole, *Roots of North Indian Shīʿism in Iran and Iraq* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988), 186–89.
[58] Hermann notes that the Arabic and Persian terms used by Shaykhis to denote quietism include "love of power" (*ḥubb-i riyāsa*) and references to people aspiring to power as those "who look for this world" (*dunyā dārān*); Denis Hermann, "Political Quietism in Contemporary Shīʿism: A Study of the Siyāsat-i Mudun of the Shaykhī Kirmānī Master ʿAbd al-Riḍā Khān Ibrāhīmī," *Studia Islamica* 109, no. 2 (2014): 278.

enemy, it is unlikely that he and the Shaykhis would have overcome the challenges that they faced. They may thus have felt that the situation required concessions. One could see these instances of political activism as the exceptions that prove the general rule of Shaykhi quietism.

The Shaykhis' triumph was curtailed by Rashtī's death on 11 Dhū l-Ḥijja 1259/1 January 1844 and the emergence of Bábism as another, and more forceful, alternative to the dominant strands of Shiʿism.[59] Rashtī had failed to designate a successor before his death, and the Shaykhi community subsequently split into factions led by various members of his circle. Shaykhism endured in two main trends: the so-called Kirmānī school, led by Muḥammad Karīm Khān Kirmānī, and the so-called Tabrīzī school, led by Mullā Muḥammad Māmaqānī (d. 1269/1852).[60] Others gravitated towards the charismatic authority of Sayyid ʿAlī Muḥammad Shīrāzī (d. 1266/1850), who attended several of Rashtī's lectures and would go on to claim the legacy of the first two Shaykhi masters as the third appointed "gate" (*bāb*) of the hidden imam.[61]

Notable Works

Rashtī is credited with authoring more than 400 works, fewer than half of which are extant.[62] In addition to *Dalīl al-mutaḥayyirīn*, Rashtī's major treatises include *Sharḥ al-Qaṣīda al-lāmiyya*, an Arabic commentary on an ode attributed to the Baghdadi poet ʿAbd al-Bāqī Afandī al-Mawṣilī (d. c. 1278/1861), which Rashtī dedicated to the Ottoman governor of Baghdad, Ali

[59] The Shaykhi sources claim that Rashtī was summoned to Baghdad and fed poisoned coffee by Najīb Pasha, perishing several days later; Rashtī, *Dalīl al-mutaḥayyirīn*, 14–15. Eschraghi suggests that this account of Rashtī's death is likely a fabrication to mask his cooperation with a Sunni Ottoman statesman who was viewed as an inveterate enemy of the Shiʿa; Eschraghi, "Kāẓem Rašti."
[60] Hermann, *Le shaykhisme à la période qajare*, 61–66.
[61] MacEoin, *Messiah of Shiraz*, 196–198. Much has been made of this association, as well as the warm correspondence between Rashtī and Qurrat al-ʿAyn "Ṭāhira" al-Barghānī (d. 1269/1852), an early exponent of the Báb and martyr of the faith. Rashtī died before they could meet in person. ʿAlī Muḥammad Shīrāzī's acquaintance with Rashtī was also very limited, confined to Shīrāzī's attendance at three of Rashtī's lectures; Amanat, *Resurrection and Renewal*, 299, 141.
[62] Hermann, *Le shaykhisme à la période qajare*, 55.

Riza Pasha. Written in 1258/1842,[63] Rashtī's commentary addresses a broad range of theological topics, beginning with the descriptive signs of the coming Redeemer (*al-qāʾim*) that many Bahá'ís believe to be subtle references to the Báb.[64] *Sharḥ al-Qaṣīda al-lāmiyya* is especially notable for its cyclical story of revelation. In ways reminiscent of Ismāʿīlī cyclical theory, Rashtī posits two cycles (*dawra*), the first including the Prophet and the first eleven Imams and the second initiated by al-Aḥsāʾī, followed by an unknown set of possible precursors to the reappearance of the occulted imam.[65] Attention to this aspect has overshadowed other recursive features of the commentary, including lettrist and gematrical exegesis; the emanation of being through the "eternal light and primary entification (*taʿayyun*)"[66] of divine vicegerency (*walāya*);[67] astrology and the relation of the seven planetary spheres (Sun, Mercury, Venus, Moon, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn) to the faculties of spirit and body;[68] the principle of eternity in relation to temporality in the tripartite designation of time (*zamān*), perpetuity (*dahr*), and sempiternity (*sarmad*);[69] and the loci (*maḥallāt*) of the world's appearance, starting from the ineffable "stage of exclusivity" (*maqām al-tafrīd*) to the celestial spheres, of which Rashtī records thirty-one out of the thousands that, according to him, the Imams have shown to exist.[70] Although it displays much originality, the work also at times appears derivative, with echoes of,

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[63] Although the *Sharḥ al-Qaṣīda*'s original manuscript, spanning 16,509 lines, was lost according to Kirmānī, a later version was printed in Tabriz in 1853; Kirmānī, *Fihrist*, vol. II:158.
[64] Rafati, "Development of Shaykhí Thought," 181–182.
[65] Amanat, *Resurrection and Renewal*, 58–59.
[66] Sayyid Kāẓim b. Qāsim al-Ḥusaynī Rashtī, *Sharḥ al-qaṣīda al-lāmiyya*, n.d., 11, https://www.alabrar.info/library/QASIDE.
[67] Amir-Moezzi defines *walāya* as possessing two constitutive, interdependent meanings: (1) the vicegerents' "ontological status or their sacred-initiatory mission" and (2) the "unfailing love, faith, and submission that the initiated owe to their holy initiating guide"; Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, *The Divine Guide in Early Shiʿism: The Sources of Esotericism in Islam* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1994), 159, n. 151.
[68] Rashtī, *Sharḥ al-Qaṣīda al-lāmiyya*, 71–73.
[69] Rashtī, 173–178.
[70] Rashtī, 228–270. As an example, the twenty-second *maḥall* contains a lengthy list of the lords of the various underworlds, with a non-Arabic name, a vault (*ʿaqd*) designating their authority, and some irregular descriptions, such as "The vault of a man who wears a crown on his head and a ring of camphor on his hand, who stands over turbulent waters, and whose name is Kshghyʿyʿywyl"; Rashtī, *Sharḥ al-Qaṣīda al-lāmiyya*, 240.

for example, Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī's (d. c. 787/1385) formulations of the disclosure of the divine via primordial notation, Ibn al-ʿArabī's theophanic "presences" (*ḥaḍrāt*) of exclusive unity (*al-aḥadiyya*) and inclusive unity (*al-wāḥidiyya*),[71] and Mullā Ṣadrā's (d. 1045/1635–6) classification of the four journeys of the intellect (*al-asfār al-arbaʿa*).[72] The positive attention to themes and concepts associated with Sufis or Sufi-influenced Shiʿa in Rashtī's *Sharḥ al-Qaṣīda* is an extraordinary suspension of the Shaykhis' usual hostility towards Sufism. This intellectual promiscuity is not uncommon, but mostly latent, in other sources.

Rashtī is also known for his three-volume Arabic *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba al-ṭutunjiyya*,[73] a partial commentary on a sermon attributed to Imam ʿAlī introduced by the Shiʿi gnostic and lettrist Rajab al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Bursī (d. 814/1411) in his *Mashāriq anwār al-yaqīn*.[74] The commentary is filled with cryptic content focused on the *walāya* of the *ahl al-bayt* and allusions to it both in ʿAlī's speech and in the Qur'anic verses interwoven throughout the dense text, a feature acknowledged by al-Rashtī: "It contains secrets of God's family that only a pure-hearted and enlightened person could bear [to comprehend]."[75] In the introduction to the commentary, Rashtī excoriates those who would deny the authenticity of the sermon's transmission on the basis of its non-renowned status (*khabar al-wāḥid*) or its arcane language, blaming the hubris of those who

[71] Rashtī, 33–34. Here Rashtī surprisingly refers to Ibn ʿArabī as "al-Shaykh al-Akbar"; Rashtī, 33.
[72] Rashtī, 7–10.
[73] The quadrilateral consonantal root of the sermon's name, whether *ṭatunj* or *ṭutunj*, refers to a "gulf" or "bay" between two locations, and it occurs in the line "I am the one standing over the two gulfs." Rashtī outlines an inner and an outer meaning of *ṭutunj*, synonymous with *khalīj*, representing the two opposing spheres of existence. The interior of the gulf is the sweet water of the Euphrates, and its exterior is the salty, brackish water. The first is a "healing and mercy to the believers" (Q. 17:82) and the second is a torment and a punishment for the disbelievers; Sayyid Kāẓim b. Qāsim al-Ḥusaynī Rashtī, *Sharḥ khuṭba al-ṭutunjiyya*, 3 vols. (Kuwait: Lijnat al-Nashr wa-l-Tawzīʿ Jāmiʿ al-Imām al-Ṣādiq, 2001), 1:39–40. For more on *al-ṭutunjiyya* in Bahá'í writings, see Omid Ghaemmaghami, "'He Who Stands on the Ṭutunjayn' and the Return of Ḥusayn: The Bāb and Jināb-i Bahāʾ in the Prose Writings of Tahirih," *Hawwa (Leiden)* 21, no. 4 (2023): 335–57.
[74] The sermon is absent from al-Sharīf al-Raḍī's (d. 406/1015) *Nahj al-balāgha*, and al-Bursī gives no indication of its provenance in the *Mashāriq*; Raḍī al-Dīn Rajab b. Muḥammad Ḥāfiẓ al-Bursī, *Mashāriq anwār al-yaqīn fī asrār amīr al-muʾminīn* (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Aʿlamī lil-Maṭbūʿāt, [n.d.]), 166–170.
[75] Rashtī, *Dalīl al-mutaḥayyirīn*, 155; Rafati, "Development of Shaykhí Thought," 133.

dare elevate their own independent reason (*ʿaql*) and opinion (*ẓann*) over trust in the words of the Imams. So as long as the words of a transmitted report do not plainly contradict the Quran, the Sunna, or the consensus of the Shiʿa, Rashtī asserts, they must be acted upon and constitute sufficient proof of an Infallible's determination (*taqrīr*).[76] Rashtī also claims that rejecting traditions on the basis of seeming obscurity would entail jettisoning reports that are widely seen as reliable, including traditions transmitted by Jābir b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Anṣārī (d. 79/698), Aṣbagh b. Nubāta (d. c. first/seventh century), al-Mufaḍḍal b. ʿUmar al-Juʿfī (d. before 179/795), and other associates of the Imams.[77] Rashtī fulminates against Sufis who, ignorant of the inward content of ambiguous traditions, rely on the outward content to make exaggerated claims about their abilities, succumbing to the most egregious form of polytheism (*shirk*).[78] *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba al-ṭutunjiyya* covers an eclectic array of topics inspired by some of the most enigmatic and etymologically elusive Arabic speech ever attributed to an imam.[79] These topics include knowledge of the Imams, eschatology and signs of the end times, the creation of the universe and events that occurred in pre-eternity (*qidam*), angelology and the hierarchy of seraphic realms, the atmospheric and elemental conditions of the world as allusive evidence of divine action, and

[76] Rashtī, *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba al-ṭutunjiyya*, 1: 29.
[77] Rashtī, 28–29. While most Shiʿi scholars would accept the narrations of Nubāta, a close companion of Imam ʿAlī, they would be cautious of those of al-Mufaḍḍal and al-Bursī, given their widely reported tendency towards exaggeration (*ghuluww*). Both al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī and al-Majlisī accused al-Bursī of *ghuluww*. See Sajjad Rizvi, "Some Notes on Rajab Al-Bursī [d. 1411]," *Hikmat* (blog), August 24, 2014, http://mullasadra.blogspot.com/2014/08/some-notes-on-rajab-al-bursi-d- 1411.html.
[78] According to Rashtī, when Ibn ʿArabī (whom Rashtī calls "Mumīt al-Dīn") says in the *Futūḥāt*, "Glory be to Him who made apparent all things, Himself their very essence (*wa-huwa ʿaynuhā*)," he reveals his disbelief (*kufr*) in profane, pantheistic statements. Only ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib could utter, as he does in the *Khuṭba al-ṭutunjiyya*, a statement such as "I am the first Adam and the first Noah. I am the creator of the heavens and earth, by the command of my lord." This is because, Rashtī asserts, only an imam is fully consumed (*istihlāk*) in or by the essence of monotheism (*tawḥīd*), whereas the Sufis are only pretenders; Rashtī, *Sharḥ al-Khuṭba al-ṭutunjiyya*, I:36–37.
[79] It is possible that Rashtī ended his commentary at the point he did, less than halfway through the sermon, to avoid its most impenetrable terms, which appear in its second half. Many of the mysteries of the text remain unexplored, and they include a line featuring a sequence of Syriac terms: "I am Ṭaybūthā. I am Jaynūthā. I am al-Bārḥalūn. I am ʿAliyyūthūthā. I am the one enslaved on the sea within the swelling dreams of the orchards, until what is prepared for me is finally revealed."

sundry phenomena related to celestial activity. A translation and critical edition of the work remains a desideratum.

Rashtī's letters, written in response to various enquiries from other scholars, outnumber his treatises.[80] Although these epistles, which follow a question-and-answer format, help clarify his major works and illuminate key aspects of his thought, they may also foster confusion. Because of Rashtī's occasional deployment of precautionary dissimulation (*taqiyya*), understanding his writing requires careful attention to coded terms of communication, which may appear inconsistent and abstruse. It may also have been his intent, as Eschraghi speculates, to reserve some information for the elect and to withhold it from those whom he deemed ideologically unprepared or unworthy–that is, to avoid "casting pearls before swine."[81]

Rashtī's *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt*

Introduction

Āqā Buzurg al-Ṭihrānī records around twenty commentaries of *Duʿāʾ al-simāt* mentioned in the historical annals.[82] Among the titles that he lists, two are preeminent: *Ṣafwat al-ṣifāt fī sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt* by al-Kafʿamī (d. 905/1499) and *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt* by al-Majlisī (d. c. 1110/1699), contained in the ninetieth volume of his *Biḥār al-anwār*.[83] The *Ṣafwat al-ṣifāt* of al-Kafʿamī is the first independent commentary on *Duʿāʾ al-simāt* that offers a complete interpretation of each of its lines. Its exhaustive exposition relies heavily on the lexical analyses of classical Arabic grammarians such as al-Jawharī (d. c. 393/1003) and Muṭarrazī (d. 610/1213),

[80] Āl al-Ṭāliqānī, *al-Shaykhiyya*, 133.
[81] Eschraghi, "Kāẓem Rašti."
[82] Al-Ṭihrānī, *al-Dharīʿa*, 8:251.
[83] Al-Majlisī's commentary (*tawḍīḥ wa-tibyān*) on *Duʿāʾ al-simāt* is found in the section "Bāb al-aʿmāl wa-l-daʿwāt baʿd ṣalāt al-ʿaṣr yawm al-jumʿa"; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 90:101–126.

as well as analogous language found in the Quran and hadith literature.[84] Al-Majlisī's commentary is, in essence, a partial summary of *Ṣafwat al-ṣifāt*, recapitulating many of al-Kafʿamī's interpretations while adding an additional gloss. Perhaps its greatest asset is the information regarding the supplication's provenance and transmission provided by al-Majlisī in the introductory sections.[85] Rashtī, too, borrows extensively from his predecessors in his commentary. At the same time, he supplements the previously deduced apparent meanings with their hidden counterparts, discovering subtle layers of signification embedded in the text.[86]

The sources place Rashtī's completion of the *Sharḥ* in either 1237/1822 or 1238/1823.[87] Several manuscript witnesses of the commentary are available in various archives, and three of these are documented by the editors of the current edition, published by Muʾassasat Fikr al-Awḥad, the press of the Damascus-based Tabrīzī/Iḥqāqī branch of the Shaykhi community.[88] Only one version of this miscellany was written by Rashtī himself; the others were copied by scribes and collated with Rashtī's various epistles.

In his introduction, Rashtī speaks of the enormity of the task of interpreting *Duʿāʾ al-simāt*. He affirms that the supplication's contents are difficult to grasp (*ṣaʿb al-manāl*), commenting, "What can be understood from its passages is something that cannot be encompassed in any notebook. Rather, its [meaning's] receptable and location lies in one's

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[84] The work's contemporary editor lists approximately 234 sources utilized by the commentator; Ibrāhīm b. ʿAlī al-ʿĀmilī al-Kafʿamī, *Ṣafwat al-ṣifāt fī sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt*, ed. al-Sayyid Ḥusayn Hādī al-Mūsawī (Karbala: al-ʿAtaba al-Ḥusayniyya al-Muqaddasa, 2018), 476–486.
[85] Al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 90:102.
[86] The editors of *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt* assert that whereas al-Kafʿamī and al-Majlisī provided the apparent (*ẓāhirī*) elements for the commentary, Rashtī added "an explanation of what lies behind the apparent, secured by hidden and allegorical interpretation (*taʾwīl*)"; Rashtī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt*, 20.
[87] Rashtī concludes the work by stating that he completed it on the third day of Dhū l-Ḥijja 1237 (21 August 1822); Rashtī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt*, 285. Others indicate that the commentary was completed either on the fifth or fifteenth day of Shaʿbān 1238 (April 1823). See al-Ṭihrānī, *al-Dharīʿa*, 13: 251; Kirmānī, *Fihrist*, 2:246.
[88] Rashtī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt*, 18. This published version, consulted for this chapter, is paired with a short commentary, *Sharḥ Ḥadīth al-qadr*, on a tradition attributed to Imam ʿAlī. See Rashtī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt*, 287–298.

innermost heart (*al-ḍamāʾir*)."[89] Rashtī expresses confidence in the "sublime comprehension" of the interlocutor Mullā ʿAlī Aṣghar, whose request had prompted the work's composition, and declares his intention to clarify *Duʿāʾ al-simāt*'s enigmatic passages to the extent he can through allusion (*ishāra*) and summarizing its literal language (*ʿibāra*).[90] He hints at precarious circumstances, including frequent travel, anxiety (*tashwīsh al-bāl*), divided attention (*tafarruq al-ḥawās*), and a disordered state (*ikhtilāl al-aḥwāl*), that further compel him to be brief.[91]

There is a stark contrast in style and organization between the supplication commentaries of Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsāʾī and those of Sayyid Kāẓim al-Rashtī. Whereas al-Aḥsāʾī's *Sharḥ al-Ziyāra al-jāmiʿa al-kabīra* contains frequent excursuses and spans four volumes, Rashtī's *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt* is compendious and confined to a single volume. Whether the latter's form is due to the anathematic consequences of al-Aḥsāʾī's exegesis, the esoteric nature of *Duʿāʾ al-simāt*, or Rashtī's turbulent circumstances during this time we cannot say for certain. It is no coincidence, however, that both al-Aḥsāʾī and Rashtī authored commentaries on Shiʿi supplications, a genre based on a transmittable body of reports about the nature of reality. Although their words may be challenging to decode, prompting extensive hermeneutical intervention on the part of scholars, Shiʿi readers (regardless of their interpretive acumen) trust that the language of these texts is perfectly constructed and reflects true correspondence between distinct ideas and external realities. This is because the Imams, who are the supplications' original sources, are believed to be beyond reproach, invulnerable to sin and inadvertent errors (*sahw*). Through their speech, the Imams thus articulate an authoritative standard for what is real, what is good, and what is true, in harmony with previous divine dispatches sent to prophets. This character of the Imams' speech

[89] Rashtī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt*, 40.
[90] Rashtī, 40.
[91] The causes of these circumstances are unspecified. Rashtī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt*, 40.

as encased in supplications allows commentators to leverage themes and concepts concerning ultimate reality that push the bounds of thought beyond the contents of the Quran and the Sunna. By assimilating the terms of *Duʿāʾ al-simāt* to the overall Shaykhi belief framework, Rashtī is able to connect ordinarily disparate materials and establish a relationship to knowledge that constitutes a relationship with the imam–a central theme that I address in the following sections.

Zāʾ for* Rāʾ*: Two Letters, Two Interpretations of the Dome

A series of lines in *Duʿāʾ al-simāt* that addresses the story of Moses becomes grist for Rashtī's mill, conforming to his vision of sacred history:

> [I beseech You] by Your Glory, which appeared to Moses, the son of
> ʿImrān, in the dome (*qubba*) of al-Rummān,
> and by Your Signs, which appeared in the land of Egypt,
> with great might and victory,
> with powerful signs,
> with the display of full command,
> great power,
> the affair of the perfect word.

Rashtī provides two different readings of the reference to "the dome of al-Rummān." For the first reading, he condenses information found elsewhere, such as in Ḥusayn al-Ḥusaynī al-Bīrjandī's *Gharīb al-ḥadīth fī Biḥār al-anwār*. He offers several possible explanations, suggesting, for example, that the *rāʾ* in "Rummān" has replaced an original *zāʾ*, thus obscuring the intended *qubbat al-zamān*, "the Dome of Time."[92] Although Rashtī, citing al-Bīrjandī, claims that the term also occurs in the Torah, he is likely referring to the firmament (Hebrew: *rāqîaʿ*), created by God on the second day in Genesis.[93] By contrast, he describes the dome mentioned in the supplication as a temple built by Moses and Aaron during the Exodus on God's command. In

[92] This suggestion is based on manuscripts that feature this substitution, within the supplication's scholia, as in al-Kafʿamī's *Miṣbāḥ* and *al-Balad al-amīn* as well as in al-Majlisī's *Biḥār*. See al-Kafʿamī, *Ṣafwat al-ṣifāt*, 249.
[93] Ḥusayn al-Ḥusaynī al-Bīrjandī, *Gharīb al-ḥadīth fī Biḥār al-anwār* (Tehran: Muʾassasat al-Ṭibāʿa wa-l-Nashr, 2000), 629.

addition, Rashtī proposes that the temple is Bayt al-Muqaddas (or Maqdīs) in Jerusalem, an idea originally propounded by al-Kafʿamī.[94]

After describing the dominant interpretations, Rashtī introduces considerable novelty. He reports from al-Aḥsāʾī that this temple was that of an antediluvian sage named Balṣiyāl b. Jūd/Ḥūr/Jūr, whom Rashtī dubs "the master of the herbaceous philosophers" (*ṣāḥib al-ḥashīshiyya al-falsafiyya*)[95] for his association with an alchemic recipe concocted from a sacred tree growing on Mount Sinai.[96] As Rashtī relates from al-Aḥsāʾī, when Balṣiyāl[97] heard that Noah had plans to destroy his people after unsuccessfully calling upon them to abandon idol worship, he erected a dome protected by an orbital shield and consecrated by concatenations of spells (*ʿazāʾim*) and invocations of God's names.[98] The dome allowed air and light to penetrate but kept out water, shielding shelter-seekers from drowning. God, however, made it invisible to all of creation save the prophets, the messengers, and the purest few, selected for salvation (*ṣafwat al-muntajīn*). When Imam al-Mahdī reappears at the eschatological hour, Rashtī adds, all will be able to see this dome, which is called the Dome of Time because of its survival through the flood and its persistence until the anticipated reappearance of the Master of Time (*ṣāḥib al-zamān*) himself.[99] The same divine names that protected the dome also appeared to Moses and manifested through him, embodying heat and dryness. For this reason, Moses was the "bearer of

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[94] Rashtī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt*, 173; al-Bīrjandī, *Gharīb al-ḥadīth*, 626; al-Kafʿamī, *Ṣafwat al-ṣifāt*, 249, 252.
[95] Rashtī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt*,174.
[96] Aḥmad b. Zayn al-Dīn b. Ibrāhīm al-Aḥsāʾī, "al-Risāla al-Tawbiliyya," in *Jawāmiʿ al-kalim*, 9 vols. (Basra: Maṭbaʿat al-Ghadīr, 2009), 8:136–138.
[97] In Rashtī's commentary on al-Mawṣilī's *qaṣīda*, he adopts a lettrist interpretation for the inner (*bāṭinī*) meaning of the name Balṣiyāl: the *bāʾ* denotes the *basmala*; the first *lām* refers to the forty nights (*layla*) that Moses spent on Mount Sinai; the *ṣād* refers to the appearance of the unseen, the first light of the eternal morning of existence; the *yāʾ* is the elucidation (*tafṣīl*) of the *hāʾ*, which represents the station of oneness and appears in the visible modes of existence; the *alif* alludes to the unity that obtains in the Quran; and the final *lām* is the culmination of the *mīm* that follows it in the alphabet, *lām* representing the Prophetic station and *mīm* representing the station of the imam. This interpretation is summarized in an editorial footnote in Rashtī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt*, 177–179.
[98] Rashtī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt*, 175. At p. 177 Rashtī compares the dome's hidden, metaphysical orientation to other such realms, including Jābulqā, Jābulsā, and Jabal Qāf.
[99] Rashtī, 177.

the pillar of fire," witnessing a theophany revealing the features of heat and dryness (i.e. fire) that, in the Book of Exodus, guide Moses and the Israelites through the desert in the night towards the promised land.[100] Rashtī thus distinguishes Moses from Noah, the "bearer of the pillar of water"; Abraham, the friend (*khalīl*) of the destitute, as the "bearer of the pillar of earth"; and Jesus, on account of his ethereal spirit, as the "bearer of the pillar of wind," covering the four classical elements.[101]

The second interpretation for *qubbat al-rummān* offered by Rashtī is no less unique, involving initiatory knowledge, alchemic transmutation, and Shaykhi cosmology. Preserving the *rummān*'s *rāʾ*, it initially duplicates, verbatim, an unattributed interpretation embedded in al-Kafʿamī's commentary that is derived from Exodus 28:33–35. According to this interpretation, the dome of Rummān refers to a tabernacle where Moses and Aaron would perform their worship. On one occasion, two of Aaron's sons, identified in the Bible as Nadab and Abihu, entered the dome in a drunken state, offending the space's sanctity. A spontaneous fire engulfed them, striking terror among the Children of Israel. As a result, a sacred garment (*jubba*)–or, alternatively, a "covering" (*qamīs*)–was assembled. From its hem hung bells (*jalājil*) and a pomegranate, made of gold, fastened to which were chains, extending from the temple's inside to its outside. Those who entered the space wore the garment, striking the bells and pomegranate against one another and tugging the chain.[102] Al-Kafaʿmī ends the account simply with the phrase "And God Almighty knows best," alluding to its apparent inscrutability.[103]

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[100] Rashtī, 180.
[101] Rashtī, 181.
[102] Al-Kafʿamī, *Ṣafwat al-ṣifāt*, 254–256; Rashtī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt*, 181.
[103] Al-Kafʿamī, *Ṣafwat al-ṣifāt*, 256.

This narrative, whose meaning until this point is unclear,[104] lays the groundwork for Rashtī's novel interpretation. He explains that *al-rummān* refers to the pomegranate, a metaphor for knowledge and specifically knowledge of divine guardianship (*ʿilm al-walāya*).[105] Proof of this exegesis lies within a hadith narrated by al-Kulaynī[106] in which Gabriel provides two pomegranates of paradise to the Prophet Muḥammad. The Prophet consumes one of the pomegranates and splits the other into two halves, eating one and offering the remaining half to ʿAlī. He explains that the first pomegranate is that of prophecy, in which ʿAlī has no share, and the second pomegranate is that of knowledge, of which ʿAlī receives a portion. As for the *qubba*, Rashtī explains that it is the divine throne (*al-ʿarsh*) that floated above the waters before God created the heavens and the earth, as revealed in the verse "And His Throne was upon the waters" (Q. 11:7), and that is why it could survive the flood.[107] What appears upon the divine throne is God's glory (*majd*), "the All-encompassing Name" (*al-ism al-kullī al-jāmiʿ*), which animates all being and sustains the cosmos.[108]

In this second hermeneutic formulation, then, the *qubbat al-rummān* is the Throne of Knowledge. Whereas Moses is the master of the throne, its guardian is Aaron,[109] who regulates those who enter and exit and who wears the abovementioned *qamīṣ*, given to him by Moses on

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[104] Jewish commentators explain that the ephod's bells would alert the divine presence (*kâbôd*) to Aaron's yearly appearance to conduct the atonement rituals of Yom Kippur, so as not to disturb the space's sacred repose and incur divine punishment. They differ in the interpretation of Nadab and Abihu's transgression, described in Leviticus 10:1–2: "Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu took their censers, put fire in them and added incense; and they offered unauthorized [alternatively, 'foreign'] fire before the Lord, contrary to his command. So fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord." Some commentators affirm al-Kafʿamī's interpretation of Nadab and Abihu's state of drunkenness.
[105] Rashtī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt*, 184.
[106] Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1:263.
[107] Rashtī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt*, 183.
[108] Rashtī, 183. Rashtī presents the *al-ism al-kullī al-jāmiʿ* as equivalent to God's Greatest Name (*al-ism al-aʿẓam*), "the universal, comprehensive name, absorbing all others"; Rashtī, 54.
[109] Rashtī quotes two famous Prophetic traditions, "You [ʿAlī] are to me as Aaron was to Moses" and "I am the city of knowledge and ʿAlī is its gate," before connecting this relation to the cosmic phenomena of his interpretation; Rashtī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt*, 185.

divine instruction,[110] which is made of the stuff of the World of Souls (*ʿālam al-nufūs*).[111] Upon the dome hang bells whose resonances emit frequencies of knowledge, including its various modes (*aṭwār*) and its essential and accidental qualities.[112] The *rummān*, Rashtī elaborates, is a composite of the detailed sciences (*al-ʿulūm al-mufaṣṣala*),[113] descending in the form of pure heat (*kamāl al-ḥarāra*) from the divine throne to the divine footstool (*al-kursī*) and arriving at the latter's station of wetness and coldness. At this second stage of descent, red seeds (*ḥabbāt*) form as a result of the combination of heat and cold, "like the compound cinnabar (*shanjarf*), formed of sulfur and mercury."[114] Similarly, each drop descending from the World of Souls combines at the lower level, where the drops congeal to form one seed, producing the sciences for acquiring "coolness" (*al-barūda*) or, in other words, the contents of the knowledge derived from the divine footstool. Recalling the abovementioned hadith, the pomegranates that Gabriel offers to the Prophet originate from the higher realms and contain the seeds of various quanta and forms of knowledge for the latter to divide between himself and his *walī*, ʿAlī.[115]

Rashtī does not indicate any preference for the first, Dome of Time interpretation over the second, Throne of Knowledge one. Instead, he demonstrates their complementarity. He begins by citing one of the most reliable Shiʿi scholars of his generation, al-Kafʿamī. Al-Kafʿamī, too, declines to endorse any one interpretation and merely presents various perspectives, mostly without attribution, prefaced with "it is said" (*qīl*) or "some say" (*qāl*

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[110] Rashtī, 181. Rashtī is here quoting from al-Majlisī's interpretation of the narrative; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 87:119.
[111] Rashtī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt*, 185.
[112] Rashtī, 185.
[113] Rashtī refers readers to his commentary on *al-Khuṭba al-ṭutunjiyya*, where he compares the station of the Prophet as the "station of generality and simplicity" (*maqām al-ijmāl wa-l-basāṭa*) with the station of the Prophet's heir and executor (*al-waṣī*), the "station of particularity and plurality" (*maqām al-tafṣīl wa-l-kathra*); Rashtī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt*, 187.
[114] Rashtī, 186.
[115] Rashtī, 186.

baʿḍuhum). This format allows Rashtī to combine several previous interpretations while significantly supplementing his commentary with his and al-Aḥsāʾī's mediations. His originality is evident in, for example, his introduction of Balṣiyāl, for whom I was unable to discover any precedent, and his discussion of the features of alchemical transformation and supernal knowledge. However arcane his account may appear, Rashtī is meticulous in laying out its details and engaging with its influences, including Isrāʾīliyyāt glossed in the Shiʿi exegeses of al-Kafʿamī and al-Majlisī, imamic traditions and Qur'anic verses, and the occult sciences and distinctive religious philosophy of the Shaykhis. Still, Rashtī signals an awareness of the limits imposed by fear of accusations and rumour. In discussing the Dome of Time, he mentions other aspects that he must refrain from explaining so as to protect himself from the gossipmongers (*aṣḥāb al-qāl wa-l-qīl*).[116] At another point, Rashtī resists revealing the true nature (*ḥaqīqa wa-bāṭin*) of Balṣiyāl and invokes the verse "And do not give the weak-minded your wealth, which God has made a means of sustenance for you, but provide for them with it and clothe them and speak to them words of appropriate kindness" (Q. 4:5), hinting at his audience's potential for misinterpretation.[117]

Allusions to the Imamate in Moses's Journey

Duʿāʾ al-simāt features a series of passages describing some of the sacred paraphernalia and locations associated with biblical prophets. It links them, as part of a sequence of symbols of divine favour towards biblical patriarchs, in a genealogical line extending from the prophets to the Imams. The supplicative sequence dedicated to the prophets begins with Moses:

> I beseech You, O God, in the name of Your glory

[116] Rashtī, 184.
[117] Rashtī, 177.

> with which You addressed Your servant and messenger, Moses the son of ʿImrān, while he was in the company of angels;
> an address even the favourite cherubim could never hear,
> above the clouds of light,
> above the box of evidence,
> within the pillar of fire on Mount Sinai,
> and on Mount Hūrīth,
> in the Holy Vale,
> in the sacred tract of land,
> to the right of Taurus Mountain through a tree.

Traditionally, interpreters identify the *ṭūr sinīn* mentioned in the Quran as Mount Sinai. Rashtī proposes two other interpretations of the words *ṭūr* and *saynāʾ* (pl. *sinīn*), one more standard than the other. The first is that the *ṭūr* is a mountain located somewhere in the Levant (*Shām*) where God spoke to Moses, while the *saynāʾ* is a tree, possibly, according to Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, an olive tree.[118] The second interpretation posits the *ṭūr* as the site of Najaf, based on a tradition from Imam al-Ṣādiq: "Verily, Najaf is the mountain where God spoke to Moses and took Abraham as his friend, Jesus as His spirit, and Muḥammad as His beloved."[119] The *saynāʾ*, in the second account, is the "tree of manifest *walāya*" that grew upon the *ṭūr*, located "neither in the east, nor the west," but rather somewhere in the middle (*wasaṭ*).[120] The *wasaṭ* is a key term for Rashtī, and he connects it further with the Qur'anic verse "Thus We have appointed you a middle community (*ummatan wasaṭan*), that ye may be witnesses against mankind, and that the messenger may be a witness against you."[121] Rashtī incorporates the interpretation of ʿAlī b. Ibrāhīm al-Qummī (d. c. 307/919), who argues that *ummatan wasaṭan* should be read instead as *aʾimmatan wasaṭan*, "middle Imams," carrying the dual meaning of the Imams as mediating

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[118] Rashtī, 127.
[119] Sayyid Kāẓim b. Qāsim al-Ḥusaynī Rashtī, *Asrār al-shahāda* ([n.p.]: Muʾassasat Bint al-Rusūl, 2001), 128. Al-Majlisī also confirms *ṭūr sinīn*'s identity as Najaf, narrating from Imam Ḥasan: "As for the verse 'By the fig and the olive, and Mount Sinai, and this safe town' [Q. 95:1–3], the fig is Medina, the olive is Jerusalem (*bayt al-maqdīs*), Mount Sinai is Kūfa, and the safe town is Mecca." Al-Majlisī explains that Imam Ḥasan identifies Mount Sinai as Kūfa because the city's rear side (*ẓahr*) is Najaf, where Moses conversed with God; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 57:204–205.
[120] Rashtī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt*, 128.
[121] Q. 2:143.

between the Prophet and the people as well as their possession of the quality of justness or righteousness.[122] In this understanding, which is based on a combination of exegetical nodes,[123] the mountain of Moses stands for the Imams' *walāya*, a fountainhead from which sprang a sequence of prophets and messengers whose own divine light is derivative of the Imams' generative spark.

The supplication's subsequent lines revisit one of the most familiar prophetic narratives:

> And on the day You split the sea for the Children of Israel,
> and caused springs to flow [from a stone], thereby creating wonders of
> Your might in the Sea of Reeds (*baḥr sūf*).[124]

Rashtī upholds the *ẓāhirī* reference to Moses's safe crossing of the Sea of Reeds and the drowning of Pharaoh's troops, confirming the identification of *baḥr sūf* as the Yam Suph, the body of water mentioned in Exodus and elsewhere in the Bible.[125] He then turns to the *bāṭinī* meaning, concentrating on four main locutions: sea (*baḥr*), Children of Israel (*banū Isrāʾīl*), the verb "to split" (*faraqa*), and the stone (*ḥajar*) implied in the line "caused springs to flow" (*al-munbajisāt allatī ṣanaʿta bihā*). He declares that the first "sea" in the passage stands for the world (*al-dunyā*), as indicated in the tradition of Imam Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī, "The world is a deep sea in which many a realm was drowned."[126] The *baṭinī* interpretation further glosses the "Children of Israel" as the "Children of ʿAlī," suggested by a line in the supplication of Ṣafwān al-Jamāl,[127] "Peace be upon the nation of Israel (*Isrāʾīl al-umma*)."[128] Rashtī then explains that

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[122] Rashtī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt*, 127–128.
[123] Additional evidence includes the Imams as "witnesses (*shuhadāʾ*) over humanity" (Q. 22:78); Rashtī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt*, 128.
[124] The biblical Hebrew *yām sûp̄* is often mistranslated as the Red Sea. James K. Hoffmeier, *Ancient Israel in Sinai: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Wilderness Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 81–85.
[125] Rashtī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt*, 141.
[126] *Al-dunyā baḥr ʿamīq qad ghariqa fīhā ʿālam kathīr*; Rashtī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt*, 135.
[127] Ṣafwān b. Mihrān al-Asadī "al-Jamāl" was a companion of Imams al-Ṣādiq and al-Kāẓim who narrated several well-known supplications, including *Duʿāʾ al-ʿalqama* and *Ziyārat al-arbaʿīn*.
[128] Rashtī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt*, 135. For reasons unknown, Rashtī omits the lines that follow: "Peace be upon the Nation of Israel, the gate of mercy, and father of the Imams (*abī l-aʾimma*)"; Al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 77:330.

the one who parts the sea (*mufarriq al-baḥr*) is the Prophet Muḥammad, who "apportions (*qassama*) all of the world for them [the Imams]," an event that culminates in the reappearance of the Mahdī upon the Return (*al-rajʿa*).[129]

The *ẓāhirī* meaning of this part of the supplication also refers to Q. 7:160, fecund with Shiʿi imagery: "We divided them into twelve tribes, each as a community. And We revealed to Moses, when his people asked for water, 'Strike the rock with your staff.' Then twelve springs gushed out." Rashtī shifts his attention to this Qur'anic allusion, reading Moses's staff as a metaphor for ʿAlī. He describes the Prophet as the "master of the greater guardianship who circumambulates the majesty of divine power in [its] primary state" and ʿAlī as the "bearer of the absolute guardianship who circumambulates the majesty of divine power in [its] secondary state."[130] ʿAlī "strikes" the stone, "the locus of *walāya*, its substrate (*maḥall*), its origin, and the landing site (*mahbiṭ*) of its stars, who is Fāṭima."[131] The "striking" then produces the conjunction (*iqtirān*) of bearer (that is, ʿAlī) and substrate (Fāṭima), initiating the imamic cycle.[132] Here Rashtī engages in wordplay, as the *iqtirān* also denotes the moon's phasal conjunction with the sun, producing the effect of a new moon. The apogee of this cosmic event is an "eruption" (*infijār*),[133] derived from the etymon *fajr*, the cleaving of darkness and the emergence of a new day–in this case, a messianic dawn that ends with the reappearance of the Redeemer. Rashtī reasons that if this conjunction had never occurred, creation itself would not have come into being, infused as it is with *walāya* in its various modes of appearance, including as earth and sky. As Rashtī previously notes in his commentary, the sky (*samāʾ*), a metonym for Muḥammad, is

[129] Rashtī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt*, 136.
[130] Muḥammad: *ṣāhib al-walāya al-kubrā wa-l-ṭāʾif ḥawl jalāl al-qudra bi-l-aṣāla*. ʿAlī: *ḥāmil al-walāya al-muṭlaqa wa-l-ṭāʾif ḥawl jalāl al-qudra bi-l-farʿayya*; Rashtī, 138.
[131] Rashtī, 138.
[132] Rashtī, 139.
[133] Rashtī, 139.

the progenitive possessor of *walāya*, and the earth (*arḍ*), a metonym for Fāṭima, is what receives the substance of *walāya*, passed through ʿAlī and his progeny.[134]

At this point, Rashtī pauses to express his hesitance to interpret the supplication further, writing, "What I have said here is what nobody has said before me, [spoken] out of love and compassion for the inquirer"[135]–referring, presumably, to Mullā ʿAlī Aṣghar. He coyly remarks, "Whosoever does not exceed the limits of my words and is attentive to their linguistic arrangement and bounds will be freed of all their doubt."[136] Just what kind of reading between the lines he expects of the reader is unclear. However, the suggestion that the Imams are generative causes of creation is exactly the belief that landed Rashtī's teacher in trouble. It is no wonder, then, given the heavy scrutiny that Rashtī was under, that he finishes his exposition at this point and returns to the supplication's vocabulary.

As for the wonders (*ʿajāʾib*) produced by ʿAlī and Fāṭima's union, Rashtī claims that they transcend comprehension, let alone explanation. He provides the analogy of Moses's witnessing of the theophany of Sinai as just one of the hundreds of thousands of grains that make up a head of barley, a fragment of the untold arcana that only the spiritual elect can glimpse.[137] He asks rhetorically, "Is there anything more wonderous?"[138] The events of Moses's witnessing appear in the supplication in a series of lines:

> And by the light of Your face which, when You revealed it to the mountain, caused it to crumble into pieces, whereby Moses fainted and fell.

[134] Rashtī, 82.
[135] Rashtī, 139.
[136] Rashtī, 139.
[137] Rashtī, 139.
[138] Rashtī, 139.

These lines, which incorporate a portion of the Qur'anic verse 7:143,[139] receive extensive metonymic treatment. Rashtī interprets "face" (*wajh*) as the Prophet and his Household, citing the extraneous lines of *al-Ziyāra al-jāmiʿa al-kabīra*:

> Whoever desires God begins with you [the Imams],
> whoever professes His oneness yields to you,
> and [whoever] aims for Him turns towards (*tawajjah*) you.[140]

The light (*nūr*) is construed as the Shiʿa, who, in the cited hadith, are identified as a "ray (*shuʿāʿ*) of [the Imams'] light";[141] hence their designation *shīʿa*, defined as "those who become scattered or dispersed."[142] This ray appeared to Moses at Mount Sinai in the form of a luminous cherub. Here, Rashtī's interpretation of the Sinai event draws on the mystical exegesis of al-Aḥsāʾī, appearing as a supercommentary on the latter's reading of a tradition from Imam al-Ṣādiq:

> The cherubim are a people from among our Shiʿa created in primordial times. God established them behind the Throne. If the light of only one of them should be distributed among the people of the earth, it would surely suffice them. . . . When Moses asked his Lord what he asked ["My Lord, show me, that I might look upon Thee" (Q. 7:143)], He commanded one of the cherubim and it appeared upon the mountain, reducing it to dust.[143]

The cherub's ray represents an infinitesimal quantity of light.[144] Rashtī claims that if the ray's source, the absolute light of the Infallibles, had appeared to Moses instead, it would have

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[139] Q. 7:143: "When Moses came at the appointed time and his Lord spoke to him, he asked, 'My Lord, show me, that I might look upon Thee.' God answered, 'You cannot see Me! But look at the mountain. If it remains firm in its place, only then will you see Me.' When his Lord appeared to the mountain, He levelled it to dust and Moses collapsed, unconscious."
[140] Rashtī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt*, 237–238.
[141] Al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 25:21.
[142] Rashtī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt*, 238.
[143] Al-Aḥsāʾī, *Sharḥ al-Ziyāra al-jāmiʿa al-kabīra*, 4: 169–170; al-Ṣaffār al-Qummī, *Baṣāʾir al-darajāt*, 2:102. Compare Lambden's translation in Stephen Lambden, "The Sinaitic Mysteries: Notes on Moses/Sinai Motifs in Bābī and Bahā'ī Scripture," in *Studies in Honor of the Late Hasan M. Balyuzi*, ed. Moojan Momen, Studies in Bábí and Bahá'í Religions, V (Los Angeles: Kalimát Press, 1988), 29.
[144] Al-Aḥsāʾī describes the precise quantity of light, the "light of divine majesty" (*nūr al-ʿaẓama*), beaming from the cherub, as equivalent to the weight of a dirham and the measure of the eye of the needle; al-Aḥsāʾī, *Sharḥ al-Ziyāra al-jāmiʿa al-kabīra*, 4:170.

annihilated Moses by immolation.[145] Rashtī casually interjects a subtle philosophical point at this hermeneutical juncture, explaining that the impression (*al-athar*) is destroyed by the appearance of its agent or "impressor" (*al-muʾaththir*), "just as the Children of Israel were destroyed by the light's manifestation."[146]

The *athar*/*muʾaththir* distinction is fundamental to Shaykhi epistemology. In response to the question of God's knowability, al-Aḥsāʾī lays out the following view: Nobody, not even prophets, can know the true nature (*kunh*) of God's essence. Instead, one can know the descriptions (*ṣifa*)–the actional quality–that God provides to His creatures within their own nature. The impression (*athar*) of these descriptions that lies within us is proof of their impressor. The impression is the ray of light to which Rashtī refers, and it allows one to know its luminous source (*al-munīr*), the Imams, as guides to the ultimate flame (*al-nār*), which is the sign of God. We can ascertain reality only by these means, or what al-Aḥsāʾī calls the "designation" (*ʿunwān*) of the fourteen Infallibles. He provides the following example:

> When you call out to Zayd, 'O seated one (*yā qāʿid*)', you mean the person of Zayd, but you reach him only through his description (*waṣf*). The *qāʿid* is the visage (*wajh*), the indication (*dalīl*), the designation (*ʿunwān*), [all] compounded from an act through its impression. . . . One who knows the description knows the described. One who knows the impression infers from it the agent.[147]

Moses was different from the Israelites who perished from the emanation of the *muʾaththir* thanks to his heightened spiritual state in "apprehension of divine oneness."[148] Although saved

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[145] Rashtī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt*, 238.
[146] Rashtī, 238.
[147] Al-Aḥsāʾī, *Jawāb al-Shaykh Aḥmad b. Ṣāliḥ b. Ṭawq*, 6–8. This "causal principle" is reiterated by al-Aḥsāʾī in the formulation "Every impression resembles the actional quality of its proximate agent" (*kull athar yushābih ṣifat muʾaththirihi al-qarīb*). See Idris Samawi Hamid, "The Metaphysics and Cosmology of Process According to Shaykh 'Ahmad al-'Ahsa'i: Critical Edition, Translation, and Analysis of 'Observations in Wisdom'" (PhD diss., New York, State University of New York at Buffalo, 1998), 132.
[148] Rashtī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt*, 239. Rashtī culls this description from the cryptic *Ḥadīth al-ḥaqīqa* conveyed from Imam ʿAlī to Kumayl b. Ziyād. See Sayyid Ḥaydar b. ʿAlī Āmulī, *Jāmiʿ al-asrār wa-manbaʿ al-anwār*, ed. Henry Corbin and ʿUthmān Ismāʿīl Yaḥyā (Tehran: Institū Irān wa-Farānsa-yi Pizhūhishhā-yi ʿIlmī, 1969), 28–29.

from certain death, Moses was stunned by the flash of light to the point of swooning.[149] Rashtī explains;

> Moses could not refrain from keeling over, falling into a position resembling prostration under the throne of his lord, for it has been made apparent to you that the cherubim are the realities (*haqāʾiq*) of the prophets. In other words, their [the cherubim's] faces, directed towards their lord in willing submission, are the brilliant emanations (*al-fayūḍāt*) amounting to 124,000 [prophets].[150]

What appeared to Moses on the mountain was the reality of himself (*ḥaqīqat Mūsā*),[151] the animating element of all the prophets, originated through the Imams' light. The supplication's line "By the light of Your face" thus means, in Rashtī's exegesis, "By the proto-Shiʿa rays, manifested in the cherub."[152]

In this passage and others sharing its vocabulary, Rashtī makes the case that only through the Imams can one know the light of God. Their light resides in all prophets and all people to greater or lesser degree, depending on the depth of their devotion and cognizance. He infuses deeper meaning into conventional words, such as "face" and "light," to express the centrality of the Imams in the cosmic design on which his interpretation rests. He does not do so arbitrarily, assigning meaning without evidence. Rather, he ensures that his semantic determinations are consistent with the foundation of Shiʿi discourse, including the Quran's depiction of Moses's epiphany on Mount Sinai, the traditions of the Imams, and the relation of prophets and Imams that this concatenation helps expose as evident. Rashtī's *bāṭinī* interpretation contains multiple sources and levels and produces a far-reaching realignment of meaning. In it, Mount Sinai is swapped for Najaf; Moses is replaced with the Prophet, who consigns the terrestrial world to the

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[149] Rashtī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt*, 238.
[150] Rashtī, 239.
[151] Rashtī, 238.
[152] I borrow "proto-Shiʿa" from Lambden's phrase "proto-Shiʿa cherub"; Lambden, "Sinaitic Mysteries," 83.

cycle of Imams; and the joining of ʿAlī and Fāṭima occurs as a cosmogonical event, the source of the observable universe's expansion in the manner of the Big Bang.

Rashtī's style of interpretation steers clear of any mathematical clarity of basing exegetical calculi on clearly delineated axioms. His explanations can be elliptical, even when concise, and they are often presented non-sequentially and must be stitched together. Although Rashtī provides a wealth of hadith citations and verses from the Quran, their wider context is often ignored, in a manner characteristic of early Shiʿi exegesis.[153] The overall effect is one of thin textual correspondence and a general sense that the correct meaning of any text cannot be established without a network of word associations. So far, this is uncontroversial. The problem with Rashtī's approach lies in his word associations, which are often far from obvious, prompting questions about his interpretation that I pursue in the following concluding section.

On Interpretation

Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsāʾī and his initiates, first and foremost Rashtī, vigorously defended their positions by appealing to hadiths attributed to the Imams. However seriously we take al-Aḥsāʾī's defence–"I do not say anything they [the Imams] would not say"[154]–he nonetheless used as his proofs the same sources as his detractors did. Deciphering the hidden meaning of the supplication in its apparent form grants Rashtī extensive latitude for assimilating it to Shaykhi knowledge claims. His commentary, in its format and approach, elevates hadiths as the primary basis of interpretation, above all techniques of ratiocination.

[153] Meir M. Bar-Asher, *Scripture and Exegesis in Early Imāmī Shiism* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 19.
[154] Mangol Bayat, *Mysticism and Dissent: Socioreligious Thought in Qajar Iran* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 38.

In *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt*, Rashtī wishes not merely to stimulate the imagination for aesthetic effect but to mine the words of the Imams for the edifice of reality itself. Nothing in the supplication's descriptions of this edifice seems to him rarefied or lacking veracity. The descriptions are nonetheless *radical*, in the word's original etymological sense of rootedness, as they possess a depth of meaning far beyond surface-level apprehension. To avoid the snags of shallowness, Rashtī draws on special resources of knowledge, obtained through the lessons he imbibed from al-Aḥsāʾī, to make revelatory claims about the supplication's terminology that others, because uninitiated or inexpert, cannot make.

As the American philosopher Stanley Cavell puts it, these kinds of judgements over meaning are rooted in "'criteria for something's being so', not in the sense that they tell us of a thing's existence, but of something like its identity, not of its *being* so, but of its being *so*."[155] Although Cavell's ultimate goal is a distinction between Cartesian scepticism and other varieties (those of J.L. Austin and Wittgenstein), his point is nonetheless useful for understanding the type of interpretive activity in which Rashtī engages in his commentary. Rashtī is similarly focused on the identities of things, assessing language and making claims about the things' being *so.* He does not fixate on the potential incorrectness of any of his hermeneutic judgements, nor on whether or why a sceptic would doubt them. Neither does he specify the purpose of this project or its benefit for readers. The spirit animating his examination of words, however, is one of Shiʿi edification, a project fuelled by Rashtī's equation of supplication with his standards of interpretation. By casting a believer's relationship to the imam as one of knowing, Rashtī leads the believer out of nescience towards sagacity. They may then access the gnosis of the "perfect

[155] Italics are Cavell's. He continues, "Criteria do not determine the certainty of statements, but the application of the concepts employed in statements"; Stanley Cavell, *The Claim of Reason: Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality, and Tragedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 45.

Shiʿi" (Arabic: *akmal al-Shīʿa*; Persian: *shīʿa-yi kāmil*), establishing an indirect connection with the secret vicegerents of Imam al-Zamān–a doctrine that became known as the Fourth Pillar (*al-rukn al-rābiʿ*) in Shaykhism, after monotheism (*tawḥīd*), prophecy (*nubuwwa*), and the imamate (*imāma*).[156] Through this form of mediation, a believer becomes not merely a person reading the words of the Imam but someone who knows the words' meanings when they read them, merging the benefit of devotion with that of cognizance. This combination produces a knowledge synonymous with enlightened recognition (*maʿrifa*), whereby the imam's devotee comes to grasp the luminous material from which they originate and that inheres within them. Consequently, it is not merely an intellective connection but a vital one that is, according to Rashtī's most successful successor, Muḥammad Karīm Khān Kirmānī, "the source of the emanation of life (*fayḍ-i ḥayāt*)."[157] Attaining this perception through edification, a believer reaches knowledge, mediated by the imam, that is essential for accessing the divinity within.

Like all scholars, Rashtī held a constellation of commitments that figured into a larger network of beliefs, and his meaning-making was circumscribed by these commitments. By virtue of his close association with al-Aḥsāʾī, he was seen by Shaykhis as exercising hermeneutical privilege. For him, the reliability and appropriateness of meaning were rooted in a psychological experience rather than epistemic categories appealing to some universal, neutral language. Something's being *so*, and hence immune to doubt, was not determined by a thorough procedure of investigation, verification, and assent. Rather, such knowledge resulted from attunement to rules of language use by a certain group of language users. Rashtī learned the art of interpretation

[156] The concept of a hierarchical order of secret vicegerents or "men of the unseen" (*rijāl al-ghayb*)–in basic order: *nāṭiq al-wāḥid* (the unique speaker), the *bāb* (the gate), *nuqabāʾ* (the chiefs or guides), and *nujabāʾ* (nobles)–was first introduced by Rashtī in his treatise *Risālat al-Ḥujja al-bāligha* and significantly developed by Muḥammad Karīm Khān Kirmānī. See Hermann, "Shaikhism"; Chamankhah, "Persianization of *Shaykhīsm,*" 304, 312–313.
[157] Chamankhah, "Conflicting Worldviews," 537.

from his master, whose training imparted to him certain rules that reinforced the overall Shaykhi doctrine–that is, the shared language game assigning particular meanings to particular words. Steeped in this knowledge regarding the use of language, Rashtī possessed certainty in the reliability of his claims. He was certain, for example, about the soundness of his interpretation of Moses's Sinai theophany as involving not God Himself but the light of the Imams, given the Shaykhi precept of God's total transcendence and the systematic relation between *athar* and *muʾaththir*. This precept underpins the distinction between what is epistemically prior (the text) and what is derivative (the interpretation), or *here* versus *there*, in the terms discussed earlier. Comprehending *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-simāt* hence requires comprehending the Shaykhi language game, which marks the difference between understanding and an impression of apparent arbitrariness on the part of the reader.

For the Qājār-era juristic authority Ayatollah Muḥammad Ibrāhīm al-Karbāsī (d. 1260/1844), who was al-Aḥsāʾī's student and received *ijāzāt* from him,[158] it was al-Aḥsāʾī's language that his opponents failed to understand and that led to the accusations of apostasy. These antagonists, al-Karbāsī argues, "did not know his [al-Aḥsāʾī's] claims and terminology (*muṭālibuhu wa-iṣṭilāḥātuh*)."[159] They did not, he charges, grasp the first shaykh's grammar and instead ascribed to him what they associated with heresy. Sayyid Kāẓim Rashtī's commentary on the supplication of *Duʿāʾ al-simāt*, like al-Aḥsāʾī's *Sharḥ al-Ziyāra al-jāmiʿa al-kabīra*, is a prime example of the perceptual grammar associated with Shaykhi Shiʿism. Given the potential risks of its misapprehension–internally, ignorance of the Imams and their soteriological associations, and externally, suspicion and charges of heresy–there was a great deal at stake.

[158] Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Hādī al-Muḥammad al-Ṣāliḥ, *Ijāzāt al-ʿAllāma al-Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsāʾī lil-Shaykh Ibrāhīm al-Kalabāsī* (Beirut: Dār al-Maḥajjah al-Bayḍāʾ, 2010), 136.
[159] Habībullah al-Sharīf al-Kāshānī, *Lubāb al-alqāb fī alqāb al-aṭyāb* (Shiraz: Chāpkhāna-yi Muṣṭafavī, 1999), 54.

Chapter 7: "In your hand is the good": Metaphysics, Ethics, and Supplication in Mullā Hādī Sabzivārī's (d. 1289/1873) *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*

Introduction

This chapter examines another commentary of *Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ* authored by Mullā Hājjī Hādī Sabzivārī during the mid-Qājār period. "Asrār" Sabzivārī was a philosopher, poet, and mystical theologian of the first rank.[1] Despite his commitment to an ascetic life on a small farm in the Khorasan province of Sabzivār, Iran,[2] Sabzivārī was well-known in his time for his intellectual feats, including by the Qājār monarch Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh (r. 1848–96) who once paid Sabzivārī a personal visit in spite of the scholar's protests. Sabzivārī's philosophy is broadly representative of an intellectual movement within Imami Shiʿism, systematized by Mullā Ṣadrā al-Shīrāzī that joins gnostic and mystical thought with the Peripatetic tradition, and known as *al-ḥikma al-mutaʿāliyya* or "transcendent philosophy." As he clarifies in the introduction to his most renowned treatise of this philosophy, *Ghurar al-farāʾid*, Sabzivārī was concerned with the shallow depth of knowledge among his co-religionists, a phenomenon that he aimed to remedy by composing a rigorous philosophical opus.[3] He likely viewed commentaries such as *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*[4] as part of the same goal, bearing in mind the centrality of supplication in Shiʿi devotional life and its rich content. Supplication commentaries would naturally occur to a respected clergy scholar with a sizable stake in promoting correct belief as an important vehicle for transmitting knowledge of the sacred.

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[1] For more on Sabzivārī's background and thought, see Fatemeh Fana, "Haji Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī (d. 1878), Ghurar al-farāʾid," in *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Philosophy*, ed. Khaled El-Rouayheb and Sabine Schmidtke (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2016), 560–85; Sajjad H. Rizvi, "Hikma Muta'aliya in Qajar Iran: Locating the Life and Work of Mulla Hadi Sabzawari (d. 1289/1873)," *Iranian Studies* 44, no. 4 (2011): 473–96.
[2] Muḥammad ʿAlī Mudarris al-Tabrīzī, *Rayḥānat al-adab*, 8 vols. (Qom: Kitābfurūshī-yi Khayyām, 1995), 2:423.
[3] Fana, "Haji Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī (d. 1878) Ghurar al-farāʾid," 563.
[4] Additionally known as *Miftāḥ al-falāḥ wa-miṣbāḥ al-najāḥ fī sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ.*

Whereas Nayrīzī uses Persian poetry and prosodic cues to sway readers toward reaching an emotional connection with *Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, Sabzivārī appeals to philosophical reflection as a mode of comprehending the devotional text. Sabzivārī's commentary of *Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, composed in Arabic, presents a summa of intellectual influences that complement those of *Ghurar al-farāʾid*. It can be read as a summary of Sabzivārī's more extensive commentary, *Sharḥ asmāʾ*, on a longer Imami supplication known as *al-Jawshan al-kabīr*, and includes many of the latter's sources, subjects, and passages.[5] *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ* also retains the fecund philosophical reflection on existence (*wujūd*), cosmology, the nature of good and evil, the attributes of God, and the position of the Shiʿi Imams. It has been called by Nasr, "one of Sabzavāri's most esoteric works."[6]

Although the subjects of Sabzivārī's commentary are many, together they help distill an ontological view of how God manifests Himself and introduces plurality into the world. Approximating this view becomes as much of an abstract intellectual pursuit as a personal spiritual one, in the former case in terms of an adequate representation of the world and in the latter case in terms of the personal consequences involved in abiding within it. In this chapter, I examine three interdependent themes resonant in Sabzivārī's commentary: the interplay between being and non-being, appearances (viz., quiddities) and reality, and good and evil. After summarizing Sabzivārī's interpretations of these themes and their sources of inspiration, I will show how they fit together to form a worldview that connects ontology and ethics. I conclude by examining the role of supplication commentaries in achieving this theo-philosophical exposition,

[5] *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ* was composed in 1267/1850–51, after *Sharḥ asmāʾ*. However, additional glosses, some referencing *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, were later added to *Sharḥ asmāʾ*; Mullā Hādī Sabzivārī, *Sharḥ asmāʾ*, ed. Najafqalī Ḥabībī (Tehran: Dānishgāh-i Tihrān, 2006), 30–31.
[6] Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "HĀDI SABZAVĀRI," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online*, Brill, 2020, https://doi.org/10.1163/2330-4804_EIRO_COM_2581.

specifically with regards to how Sabzivārī relates the tradition of "transcendent philosophy" to the words of the Shiʿi Imams, assimilating their unique vernacular to his exegesis.

On the Stages of the World's Appearance

"The universe is expression and Thou art its meaning."[7]

In his introduction, Sabzivārī evinces his Ibn al-ʿArabī-inspired metaphysical foundation. He writes, "God's essence manifests by itself, within itself. It is clothed in the cloak of His attributes' grandeur (*taraddā bi-ridāʾ kibriyāʾ ṣifātih*), then wrapped in a shawl of the forms of His names and signs...whose commendation[s] (*thanāʾ*) no human can possibly count."[8] Within this passage, there are at least two important points at play: that God's essence cannot be perceived, while His names and attributes are perceptible; and that gratitude, enjoined in devotional acts and appropriately modified intentions and attitudes, depends on awareness of God through these signs. If there were no levels of awareness, then there would be no cause for gratitude. Hence, knowing God and those that declare His message (the Prophet Muḥammad) and its meanings (the Imams), is the sine qua non for properly expressing commendation. Although, as Sabzivārī indicates, God's praise knows no bounds,[9] His manifestations occur as various discernible modes. He indicates two of these modes in marginalia of this excerpt, identifying the primary "Stage of Exclusive-Unity" (*al-martaba al-aḥadiyya*) and the "Stage of

[7] Mullā Hādī Sabzivārī, *Ghurar al-farāʾid* (Tehran: Gulshan Press, 1981), 58; Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ḥusaynī Tihrānī and Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *Kernel of the Kernel: Concerning the Wayfaring and Spiritual Journey of the People of Intellect* (Albany, NY: State Univ. of New York Press, 2003), 1.
[8] Mullā Hādī Sabzivārī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ* (Beirut: Dār al-Maḥajja al-Bayḍāʾ, 1997), 7.
[9] This is also a sentiment reflected by the fourth Shiʿi Imam, ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn al-Sajjād, who begins his supplication, *Munājāt al-ʿārifīn*, "My God, tongues fall short of attaining praise (*thanāʾ*) of Thee, proper to Thy majesty"; William Chittick, *The Psalms of Islam (Al-Sahifat Al-Sajjadiyya)* (London: The Muhammadi Trust, 2007), 270.

Inclusive-Unity" (*al-martaba al-wāḥidiyya*),[10] designations culled from Ibn al-ʿArabī.[11] The first stage, he describes, "has no definition (*ḥadd*) and no description (*rasm*), no other, no exception, as the appearance of His essence is [of] His essence (*li-dhātih*)."[12] In his most celebrated work, *Ghurar al-farāʾid,* Sabzivārī imparts Ṣadrā's logic of this inexplicability by relating it to being (*wujūd*), recapitulating Ṣadrā's fundamental ontological theorem that being has no genus (*jins*) and no differentia (*faṣl*).[13] This he explains in reference to the supplication's line, "O He who...transcends likeness (*mujānasa*) with His creatures," adducing that God, like being, has no genus,[14] which would imply differentia, and in turn, involve the contingent properties of quiddities. This outcome Sabzivārī cannot countenance, given the Avicennan principle that "God has no quiddity other than His own singular ipseity (*al-iniyya*)."[15] The Stage of Exclusive-Unity is a mode where the undifferentiated divine essence subsists, before being "wrapped" in layers that we give various names and distinctions that are, in this account, ontologically specious. That is, the logic that we impose on the world that breaks things down into units, indexing essential

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[10] William Chittick, "The Five Divine Presences: From Al-Qunawi to Al-Qaysari," *The Muslim World*, 72: 116.
[11] See Ibn ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya*, 10:394–95, 7:275.
[12] Sabzivārī*, Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, 7. This quotation, particularly its use of *li-dhātih,* requires some explanation. Sabzivārī is saying that the Stage of Exclusive-Unity, the source of all divine names and attributes, is ineffable because it cannot be known by engendered beings. Our knowledge of its existence relates to the lower stages, such as the sensible realm (*ʿālam al-ḥiss*) where names and attributes are no longer manifest to Him alone.
[13] To this, Sabzivārī adds another proof that existence neither can have a description because it cannot be conceived through anything that is more manifest or better known than it; Sabzivārī, *Ghurar al-farāʾid*, 41. These two proofs originate with Mullā Ṣadrā. See Mullā Ṣadrā, *Kitāb al-Mashāʿir: The Book of Metaphysical Penetrations*, trans. Seyyed Hossein Nasr (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 2014), 7.
[14] *Jins* is also the Arabic etymon of *mujānasa.*
[15] Sabzivārī*, Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, 56. Richard Frank looks at several early examples, principally from the *Theology of Aristotle*, dated from the 9th-10th century, of Arabic translations of the interchangeable, *iniyya/aniyya,* against Greek equivalents. Numerous challenges result, including Greek versus Syriac significations of the term, the wide semantic range of the Arabic *iniyya*, and lasting ambiguities between Aristotle's use in *De Anima*/*Metaphysics* and its use in the (first six) *Enneads* whose author, Plotinus, is the real source of the Arabic translation of the *Theology of Aristotle*. Frank settles on the Greek (roughly, τὸ ὅτι) to Syriac to Arabic translation of *iniyya*, "the unique essence/being of something." This work, among others, is a crucial reminder that these terms took on new possibilities of meaning and linguistic references under the influence of translation. See Richard M. Frank, "The Origin of the Arabic Philosophical Term ʾannīya," in *Philosophy, Theology and Mysticism in Medieval Islam Texts and Studies on the Development and History of Kalam*, Vol. i. ed. Dimitri Gutas (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), 181-201.

differences, is illusory. Although these units may serve a practical purpose in helping us understand and speak of an extended world, they prevent us from perceiving reality as it (truly) is, in its undifferentiated form.

Little can be said at all about the Stage of Exclusive-Unity, except, as Sabzivārī indicates, its negative properties, which put apophatic emphasis on its absoluteness. Yet even saying this much appears hazardous, and there is an observable effort on Sabzivārī's part to say as little as possible about the Stage of Exclusive-Unity. As its manifestations descend into modes of apparent expression, the Stage of Exclusive-Unity produces lower analogues within the secondary Stage of Inclusive-Unity where occurs "the appearance of His essence by way of the *kiswa* (the Kaʿba's covering) of names and attributes."[16] In other words, the divine essence moves downward from a stage of the divine attributes' unification to difference and manyness. He epitomizes the Stage of Inclusive-Unity, quoting from unnamed gnostics (*al-ʿurafāʾ*): "'the multitude occurs as much as you will [it]' (*jāʾt al-kathra kam shiʾta*), i.e., the multitude of conceptual names and attributes by the singular criterion that is the essence."[17] The operative word here is concept(ual), bringing to bear perceiving bodies and minds that interpret the world in fragments of sensation and thought. In this introduction, Sabzivārī contrasts two different realms, one possessing an irreducibly absolute integrity, a Oneness unto itself, that produces a second realm of names and attributes, existentially refracted through the prism of the divine essence's descent. The one becomes many in various loci of manifestation, while remaining one at the most perfect Stage of Exclusive-Unity. Lower modes mean more distinction and, by extension (literally and figuratively), increasingly finite and determinate ontologies.

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[16] Sabzivārī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, 7.
[17] Sabzivārī, 7. Mullā Ṣadrā references the same quote by the unnamed gnostics; Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad Shīrāzī (Mullā Ṣadrā), *al-Ḥikma al-mutaʿālīya fī al-asfār al-ʿaqlīyya al-arbaʿa*, 9 vols. (Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ Turāth al-ʿArabī, 2013), 2:326.

In this introduction, Sabzivārī deals with some conceptual precursors, introducing aspects that can be known and articulated and others that preclude any act of speech or indication. This will be an important distinction for the way he interprets parts of the supplication, testing terms for correspondences and consistencies with this model that borrows much from Ibn al-ʿArabī and Mullā Ṣadrā.

On Quiddities

The first line of *Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ* is enigmatic, providing a perfect opportunity for Sabzivārī's mystically tinged exegesis, beginning:

> O He Who extended the morning's tongue in the speech of its dawning,
> and dispatched the fragments of the dark night into the gloom of its stammering.

Sabzivārī focuses on the phrase "fragments of the dark night" as an allusion to quiddities. His interpretation of the line indicates the fragments' various forms, including "prime elemental matter" (*al-mādda al-ʿunṣuriya al-ūlā*) and the secondary variety that attains corporeity (*al-mādda al-mujassama*); while light, he interprets, allows us to conceive of forms and apprehend their state of being, i.e., their quiddity.[18] In order to better understand this relation, Sabzivārī contrasts an active source of light to its passive receivers. Luminosity (*al-anwār*) emanates from "the agent's [extensive] region" (*ṣuqʿ al-fāʿil*) while darkness emerges in the "receiver's [limited] section" (*nāḥiya al-qābil*).[19] This is to emphasize that God, who is this agent, is the unlimited source of being and appearance. When light appears, i.e., when light makes beings appear, these beings do not retain the measureless luminosity commensurate with its source. Sabzivārī sees objects of manifestation as receptacles of light, and all receptacles, by their

[18] Sabzivārī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, 22.
[19] Sabzivārī, 22–3.

containment, are circumscribed, bound, or confined in some way. All that appears receives some share of being whose potency is limited and hence, privative. Sabzivārī explains, using rhymed Arabic wordplay, "The relation between a thing and its agent is by necessity and discovery (*wijdān*), and [the relation between a thing] and its receptacle is by possibility and privation (*fiqdān*)."[20] In this analysis, the direction between the source and the receptacle (*qābil*), such as a body that receives from this source, is unilateral. God, the source of all being, who, according to doctrine, is by His nature eternally subsistent, cannot be said to receive anything, while His creation cannot *but* depend on its source for being.

Sabzivārī's allusory use of light echoes a frequent theme of Hellenistic philosophy where light yields perception, but more precisely, perception of the ideal of unity found in Plato's *Republic*.[21] Like the good that Plato's philosopher comes to grasp by interpreting the form in *The Republic*, Sabzivārī concludes that those with the proper attainment of perception gleaned from the emanations of light will see the latter's source in God.[22] Per this account, the Platonic form makes objects the types of things they really are, but most are only able to see shadows (Sabzivārī's quiddities) that the intellectually unaccomplished assume possess an independent existence and fail to perceive as projections of the sun.

Sabzivārī, in reference to the line, "[O God, who] beamed forth the brightness of the sun through the light of its blazing," equates the sun with the universal intellect (*al-ʿaql al-kullī*). The universal, first intellect is a long-standing topos in the Islamic intellectual tradition, also inherited from Hellenistic predecessors. It corresponds with Plotinus's concept of nous as the first

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[20] Sabzivārī, 23.
[21] See David Hitchcock, "The Good in Plato's Republic," *Apeiron* 19, no. 2 (1985): 65-92; James A. Notopoulos, "The Symbolism of the Sun and Light in the Republic of Plato. I," *Classical Philology* 39, no. 3 (1944): 163–72.
[22] After these formulations, Sabzivārī concludes that "it will become apparent to the critical perceiver and expert, lively mind that the lord is God Almighty" (*ḥattā yaẓhar lil-nāqid al-baṣīr wa-l-mutawaqqid al-khabīr anna al-malik Allāh taʿālā*); Sabzivārī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, 23.

foundation emanating from God, responsible for all possible entities and manifestations of multiplicity. Ibn Sīnā's use of the term varies from this Neoplatonic conception of the first principle to the consequent collective sequence of celestial intellects that culminates in the active intellect.[23] Sabzivārī's account is equally ambiguous in his description that includes the universal intellect as two vessels of light, the "lamp of the Realm of Dominion" (*miṣbāḥ al-ʿālam al-malakūt*) in reference to the intelligences of metaphysical beings, including angels and jinn, and the "lantern for the generation of humankind" (*nibrās li-nashʾa al-nāsūt*), in reference to the exclusively-human possessors of the rational intellect.[24]

Sabzivārī concludes the opening passages of his exegesis by asserting the actions of the "agent," God, as occurring within the "World of Lordship" (*ʿālam al-rubūbiyya*).[25] Where this world fits into the overall theophanic scheme is unclear, considering this is Sabzivārī's sole mention of it in his commentary. When compared to Mullā Ṣadrā's descriptions, including that the World of Lordship "comprises the totality of realities, including what is in the world and its forms,"[26] it appears synonymous with Ibn al-ʿArabī's interpretation of the "World of Witnessing" (*ʿālam al-shahāda*) that features in the Qur'an.[27] In positing such a sphere, no matter its designation, these parties establish a terrestrial repository for God's manifestations and bridge

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[23] Michael E. Marmura, "Some Questions Regarding Avicenna's Theory of the Temporal Origination of the Human Rational Soul," *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy: A Historical Journal* 18, no. 1 (2008): 121–38.
[24] Sabzivārī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, 36.
[25] Sabzivārī, 23.
[26] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Asfār,* 5:222.
[27] In *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya*, there is a strong correlation between witnessing and a divine presence. Ibn ʿArabī observes, "When we mention 'Lord of the worlds' [in *al-Fātiḥa*], in our hearts is the presence of lordship (*ḥadra al-rubūbiyya*), and this is the station of the knower, of an indissoluble soul, and the place of the Attribute"; Ibn ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya*, 2:193. In a cosmological account, Ibn ʿArabī locates the presence of lordship within the soul. He describes the soul as a product of the divine command (*amr rabbī)*, manifesting the perceptible real, or the face (*wajh*) of God, by which "every existent has a cause and the latter, a cause"; Ibn ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya*, 7:194. In *Sharḥ asmāʾ*, Sabzivari compares the lower World of Witnessing to the higher World of the Unseen (*ʿālam al-ghayb*). He explains the cascading sequence of worlds as stages of manifestation where the higher stages' realities are veiled from those of lower ones, comparing the perception of the imagination that is unknown (lit. unseen) to sensory perception. At the lowest rung is the World of Witnessing within which, "whatever is in its realm is unseen in the other [=higher] realm"; Sabzivārī, *Sharḥ asmāʾ*, 733–34.

the chasm between the sensory realms of fragmentation and corporeality and the non-sensory realms of unity and nondelimited being. Sabzivārī reinforces this point by placing The World of Lordship just above the final, most base realm, the *dunyā,* that is temporally renewed (*mutajaddada ḥāditha*) at every moment and whose quiddities bear the mark of its ephemerality.[28]

We may reformulate Sabzivārī's interpretation of the supplication's first line as an explication of quiddities, fragments of God's being that retain their undelimited form at the highest stage. Emanations of being, corresponding to the allegory of light, depend on their source, corresponding to the allegory of the sun. In a gloss that recalls Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā Suhrawardī (d. 549/1191), Sabzivārī states, "Sensible light subsists by another (*qāʾima bi-ghayrih*) and the light of being subsists by His essence (*qāʾima bi-dhātih*)."[29] The first case applies to all entities that are existent by virtue of another, and the second only to God who is existent by virtue of Himself alone. His explanation ties together the speculative cosmology of Ibn al-ʿArabī, in reference to theophanic stages, and the metaphysics of Ṣadrā that favors the primacy of being (*aṣālat al-wujūd*) over all posited essences, using the symbols of light and darkness as oblique references to Hellenistic themes. Sabzivārī supplements his view with Qur'anic evidence. He refers to a verse where the Prophet Yusuf incredulously asks his fellow prisoners "(I ask you): are many lords differing among themselves better, or the One God, Supreme and Irresistible?"[30] In this extract, there is only one, substantive truth, that of God, so alludes Sabzivārī, while all other lords have no efficacious, active reality; that is, they are not real. Neither are quiddities real, possessing a similar standing as the "lords" of Yusuf's prison

[28] Sabzivārī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, 23.
[29] Sabzivārī, 308.
[30] Q. 12:39.

mates. As Sabzivārī formulates it, they are "neither good nor evil, having no [extensive] occurrence except by accident (*laysa majʿūla illā bi-l-ʿaraḍ*)."[31]

The Perspective of the *Mutaʾallihīn*

"The generative reality of existence is illuminative, efficient and good, and possesses congruence (*sinkhiyya*) with a necessary, peaceful good."[32]

The seventh line of the supplication, "O He who demonstrates His essence by His essence," inspires Sabzivārī's scrutiny of similes that, by their resemblances or allusions, make things minimally intelligible. He suggests that the allegorical interpretation of proof (*taʾwīl al-dalīl*) helps confer higher, foundational truths, not incidentally using an analogy: "Just as he (the Prophet Muḥammad) provides verbal indicative proof (*dalāla lafẓiyya*) of God by His exalted words, similarly God's essential, attributive, and active existence provides rational proof (*dalāla ʿaqliyya*) for His essence, attributes, and acts."[33] In the supplication's relevant line, Sabzivārī concentrates on "likenesses" (*amthāl*) for God's sublimity which can only be intimated from the "narrow confines of being."[34] So initiates a series of *ṭuruq* (sing. *ṭarīqa*), a commonly used term for sections of texts on the foundational arguments for God's existence, that detour from the immediate task of commentary. While they appear as philosophical digressions, Sabzevārī makes sure that his readers recognize these sections, detailing the implications of the seventh line, as keystone features of the supplication. Each section, or *ṭarīqa*, is dedicated to proving the necessity (*wujūb*) of God from various perspectives.

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[31] Sabzivārī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, 262.
[32] Sabzivārī, 261.
[33] Sabzivārī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, 98. In support of this method, Sabzivārī cites a Prophetic hadith from the Sunni collections, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*: "Whoever saw me, saw the truth"; Sabzivārī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, 98. This tradition recalls John 12:45, "And whoever sees me, sees Him who sent me."
[34] Sabzivārī, 29.

Out of the perspectival taxonomy he provides, Sabzivārī grants special priority to the view espoused by the "divine sages" (*al-ḥukamāʾ al-mutaʾallihīn*), distinguished from the theologians (*al-mutakallimīn*) and the natural scientists (*al-ṭabīʿīn*) by their special set of sapiential convictions and priorities. These include their belief in the primacy of existence (over essence), that he interprets as a simple, luminous reality opposed to the *concept* (*mafhūm*) of existence, embraced by others.[35] He avers, "Reality (*al-ḥaqīqa*) comprises a breadth (*saʿa*) from which nothing eludes its providential encompassment (*ḥīṭa*)."[36] This simple, though all-encompassing, reality may be ascertained by demonstrative proof (*burhān*), but also by direct intuition or the "taste" (*dhawq*) of its immediate expression of being. He mentions unnamed resources, philosophical (*kutub ḥikmiyya*) and mystical (*kutub dhawqiyya*), that attest to the primacy and reality of existence.[37] Every contingent entity can be viewed from two perspectives, the first category a luminous perspective (*jiha nūrāniyya*) via the face of God, or reality as it is, and the second a shadowy perspective (*jiha ẓulmāniyya*), via the face of the lower self (*wajh al-nafs*), through quiddities and pure contingency.[38]

After establishing the primacy of existence as the best theoretical mode, confirmed by the *mutaʾallihīn,* Sabzivārī connects this perspective that he describes as a "sacred view" (*jiha muqaddasa*)[39] with concomitant levels of understanding and comportment. On the first aspect, Sabzivārī associates the will of God with His justice. He infers, "God grants everything according to what is appropriate and in consideration of its receptive capacity (*qābiliyya*)."[40] This perception, in the realization that God's justice is baked into every state of being, has an ethical

[35] Sabzivārī, 39–40.
[36] Sabzivārī, 40.
[37] Sabzivārī, 40.
[38] Sabzivārī, 250.
[39] Sabzivārī, 250.
[40] Sabzivārī, 251.

consequence, the second aspect. According to Sabzivārī, one should always be content with their lot. Sabzivārī sees this indicated in the supplication's passage, "You give sovereignty to whom You will and You take sovereignty away from whom You will. You honor whom You will and You humble whom You will."[41] Sabzivārī provides a torrent of Qur'anic citations and traditions (*hadith*) for this lesson on virtue, including an exchange between the fifth Shiʿi Imam, Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Bāqir (d. 114/733), and his companion, Jābir b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Ansārī (d. ca. 68/687):

> Jābir was in a state of sickness, when Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Bāqir asked about his condition. Jābir replied, 'I have experienced life and I prefer old age (*shayb*) over youth, sickness over health, and death over life.' Al-Bāqir replied, 'As for me, if God almighty made me old, then I prefer old age; and if He made me ill, I prefer illness; and if He made me healthy, then I prefer health; and if He grants me death, then death; and if life, then life.'[42]

Sabzivārī concludes, "Jābir was in a station of patience, while he [Imam al-Bāqir] was informing him of the station of contentment (*riḍāʾ*)"[43] in accepting any outcome that God wills. This secondary station of patience, Sabzivārī determines, is that of esteem and forbearance (*al-tarjīḥ*), while the superior station of contentment is that of equanimity (*al-istiwāʾ*).[44]

On Good and Evil: *wujūd* and *ṭīna*

Sabzivārī repeatedly relates ethics to ontology. In regard to a line occurring midway through *Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, "In your hand is the good" (*bi-yadika al-khayr*),[45] he draws a sharp distinction between the good that is ontologically gradated to one degree or another, and its absence as evil

[41] This same passage can be found in the Qur'an, 3:26.
[42] Sabzivārī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, 250–51; Zayn al-Dīn b. Nūr al-Dīn ʿAlī al-ʿĀmilī, *Musakkin al-fuʾād ʿinda faqd al-aḥibba wa-l-awlād* (Kuwait: Maktabat al-ʿIrfān, 1995), 82.
[43] Sabzivārī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, 251.
[44] Sabzivārī, 251.
[45] This continues the above Qur'anic verse, 3:26.

(*sharr*). He states pithily, "The good is existence and existence is the good, and evil is nonexistence (*ʿadam*) and nonexistence is evil."[46] Sabzivārī appeals to a theodicy bearing Mullā Ṣadrā's mark. In this understanding, no sentient being desires to be a secondary intelligible or any product of pure mental positing, but rather desires the fullness of being.[47] Ṣadrā and his proponents take for granted that existence always indexes some calibration of the good, ruling out the possibility that nonexistence may ever be favorable to existence, however wretched and insufferable the latter. The antinatalism of the fifth/eleventh century Aleppan pessimist Abū al-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī (d. 449/1058), for instance, would appear to Ṣadrā and company not merely as an aberration, but more so as a non sequitur. In their estimation, not only is existence axiomatically (*badīhī*) good, but a condition for experience itself, from the depths of misery to the heights of elation and everything in-between.

One of the perennial theological issues related to felicity (*saʿāda*) and progress towards the individual end of perfection is the natural capacity for its attainment. In the Ṣadrian world, degrees of being are pitched up toward the purest, superlative concentration of existence or down toward non-existence by the influence of intensity (*al-ashaddiyya*), priority (*al-aqdamiyya*) and/or precedence (*al-awwaliyya*).[48] For Ṣadrā, each emanation of *wujūd* indexes the real, or, as Christian Jambet puts it, "the reality of an existent is more or less intense, that is, more or less real."[49] Nothing is subtracted from any existing thing considered evil or baneful, but rather natural and moral evils exist as such by their specific gradation of a weak or less potent state of existence. Satan, Sabzivārī claims, was created satanic and not by a negative attribute (*salb*)

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[46] Sabzivārī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, 261.
[47] On the principle that "existence is the source of all glory" (*al-wujūd manbaʿ kull sharaf*), Sabzivārī states in *Ghurar al-farāʾid* that "no glory, nor good, can be derived from a mentally posited concept"; Sabzivārī, *Ghurar al-farāʾid*, 43.
[48] Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Asfār,* 1:36.
[49] Christian Jambet, *The Act of Being: The Philosophy of Revelation in Mullā Sadrā* (Cambridge, MA: Zone Books, 2006), 194.

superadded to his being, in the same way that the lumens of a candle's light are not the result of a combination of luminescence and darkness.[50] This framework becomes deterministic, however, once humans are involved, in consideration of their material constitution of base clay (*ṭīna*). In several traditions ascribed to the Imams, humans are described as being constructed out of various kinds of clay, affecting their cosmic standing.[51] The Imams' forms, they impart, are made of the most pure, unadulterated clay, called *ʿilliyyīn* (Q. 83:18–20). Their followers, the Shiʿa, by their primordial covenant in accepting the Imams' *wilāya* or "authority," are depicted as being made of much of the same variety of clay, albeit adulterated by admixtures of a lesser quality called *sijjīn* (Q. 83:7–9).[52] While an analysis of the many scholarly views around the *ṭīna* traditions extends beyond this article, Sabzivārī provides a compatibilist solution upheld by the recent likes of Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabāʾī.[53] He pushes back against an overly deterministic view by emphasizing a processual constitution of the self, combining aspects of predeterminism and free-will. By our temporality, Sabzivārī explains, our *ṭīna* is being "leavened" (*takhmīr*) by angels, tempered by our changing actions and knowledge.[54] This leavening process, like *wujūd*, occurs by degree or gradation (*bi-tadrīj*), throughout the course of a person's lifetime.[55] He substantiates this view by including a Prophetic tradition, "The pen's ink

[50] Sabzivārī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, 253.
[51] In one of his tracts (*rasāʾil*), Sabzivārī clarifies that every created being's *ṭīna* relates to the influence of God's pre-eternal decree (*qaḍāʾ*, *qadar*), and will (*mashīʾa*); Mullā Hādī Sabzivārī, *Rasāʾil-i Ḥakīm Sabzivārī*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtīyānī (Qom: Intishārāt-i Osveh, 2009), 320.
[52] Sabzivārī specifies in a gloss on matter (*mādda*) that *ṭīna* is one of its names. When the soul's matter activates its intellect, the *ṭīna*'s disposition (*malaka*) becomes praiseworthy in thought and action. When it becomes activated by ignorance, the *ṭīna*'s disposition becomes contemptible and malicious. The first is ennobled by knowledge-bestowing *ʿilliyyīn* and the second is degraded by ignorance-producing *sijjīn*; Sabzivārī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, 145.
[53] For analyses on *ṭīna*, see Cyrus Ali Zargar, "The Imām's Ethical Body: Embodied Virtue and the Human Constitution in Shīʿī Philosophy," *Philosophy and the Intellectual Life in Shīʿah Islam* 2017: 208-240; Amir-Moezzi, *The Spirituality of Shiʿi Islam,* 150–58.
[54] Sabzivārī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, 253.
[55] Sabzivārī, *Rasāʾil-i Ḥakīm Sabzivārī*, 320.

will only dry on the Day of Judgement,"[56] that suggests that God's pen, a metonymy for God's decree or *qadar*, perpetually writes. Much like genetic or phenotypic factors, *ṭīna* establishes a propensity or predisposition that is altered by the individual human will and environmental conditions. A believer's state of grace, as this account suggests, is a combination of nature and nurture, depending on a range of both causally social and deterministic variables, unique to each individual.

At points in his commentary, Sabzivārī resists a purely impersonal understanding of *wujūd*, yet draws a clear line of separation between ontological degrees of origin and modes of manifestation. He discusses two kinds of experience, mercy and prosperity, referenced in the twenty-first line, "Open for us, O God, the leaves of the morning's door with the keys of mercy and prosperity," as intimately related to God's mode of being. Sabzivārī writes, "The mercy in what follows from God is not the tenderness of the heart...but rather is the deployed existence[57] (*al-wujūd al-munbasiṭ*) over all quiddity commensurate with it and over all matter in proportion to it, so that God's abounding mercy makes what is in the intellect, an intellect; what is in the self, a self; and what is in nature, nature."[58] Existence is convertible into the experience of events and objects that may be perceived conceptually by their "deployed" degrees that take on accidental and contingent properties.

As Sabzivārī explains, mercy is not some kind of compassionate treatment. It is not an act, but rather the presence of God's outward forms, everything in the universe, that can be known by an adept perceiver. This presence can be felt and described in various ways. In

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[56] Sabzivārī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, 253; Muḥammad Sāliḥ al-Māzandarānī, *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-kāfī*, 12 vols. (Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʻArabī, 2008), 8:17.
[57] I use Chittick's term, "deployed existence," that he defines, per Ibn ʿArabī's use in the *Futūḥāt*, as "the ontological substratum of the cosmos"; William Chittick, "Ibn al-ʻArabi's 'Myth of the Names'" in *Philosophies of Being and Mind: Ancient and Medieval,* ed. J.T.H. Martin (Delmar, NY: Caravan Books, 1992), 210.
[58] Sabzivārī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, 119.

underscoring the importance of inward spirit, or Suhrawardī's "presential knowledge" (*ʿilm ḥuḍūrī*),[59] over outward modes of expression, Sabzivārī here finds an opportunity to involve, in addition to the obligatory Qur'anic support, Persian poetry. He includes Rūmī's famous example of Moses and the shepherd in the *Masnavī*. In the parable, after hearing the illiterate shepherd's *duʿāʾ* that he be able to mend God's socks, wash His clothes, comb and pick the lice from His hair, sweep a bedroom clean for Him to sleep, and other fanciful desires that smack of anthropomorphism, Moses chastises the shepherd and accuses him of blasphemy. Yet Moses is then swiftly rebuked by God for turning His servant away from Him.[60] Sabzivārī quotes God's reminder to His prophet in Rūmī's rendition, "I did not create in order to derive profit (*sūdī*), but only to provide my servants with abundant good (*jūdī*)."[61] Sabzivārī avoids the more problematic passage that follows where Rumi places the praise of followers of various religions on an equal pedestal, and instead underscores that God's goodness is without any attachment to outward purpose or aim (*ghāya*) and is equivalent with His essence's eternal effluence.[62] His interpretation walks a fine line between a personal and unknowable God, finding resolution in presential knowledge as opposed to accounts in language, rooted in mental concepts.[63]

On Good and Evil: The Angel and the Devil

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[59] Sabzivārī, 311.
[60] Jawid Mojaddedi, *The Masnavi, Book Two* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 101–6.
[61] Sabzivārī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, 311.
[62] Sabzivārī, 313–15.
[63] This presents a serious epistemological dilemma that I have not yet seen explored in Mullā Ṣadrā's writings. This is that if presential knowledge, as the true substance of the soul, offers the most real projections of reality, then language, possessing an intrinsically accidental, contingent character, cannot account for it. The very concepts that form the building blocks of Ṣadrā's metaphysics and those endorsed by Sabzivārī, such as the primacy of existence, as a result of being qualified through language, become mere figments.

At times, Sabzivārī breaks with the unitive theme that dominates his commentary yet sits uncomfortably beside the dualist valences of the Qur'an and traditional theology. This becomes apparent in a line of the supplication,

> If Your help should forsake me in the battle against the soul and Satan, then Your forsaking will have submitted me to where there is hardship and deprivation.

Sabzivārī's resulting commentary on the angel and the devil and the fight between their soldiers in the "battle of human existence"[64] reveals some friction between the unitive and dualist poles. In his detailed explanation (*bayān tafṣīlī*) of this cosmic conflict, he delineates several foundations:

1. The world of form (*ʿālam al-ṣūra*) is not confined to the natural world, but has two divisions, one that subsists by prime matter culminating in oblivion, and another that does not.[65]
2. The human soul, by its essence, possesses ten senses (*al-mashāʿir*),[66] each corresponding to the three worlds of nature (*al-ṭabʿ*), the imagination (*al-khayāl*), and the intellect (*al-ʿaql*). Each sense in the lower realm has a corollary in the higher realm yet multiplies in their upper analogues. For instance, if there are ten senses in the world of nature, then there are a hundred senses in the world of imagination and a thousand in the world of the intellect.[67]

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[64] Sabzivārī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, 155.
[65] Sabzivārī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, 155.
[66] Rumi's influence on Sabzivārī, who would write a separate commentary on Rumi's *Masnavī*, is clearly visible here. Rumi divides the ten senses into five that are external/physical and five that are internal/spiritual, controlled by the heart (*qalb*) "like Moses' rod, held in his right hand"; Mojaddedi, *The Masnavi, Book One*, 218. The heart is distinct from both types of senses as their isthmus. See Mohammed Rustom, "The Metaphysics of the Heart in the Sufi Doctrine of Rumi," *Studies in Religion* 37, no. 1 (2008): 3-14.
[67] Sabzivārī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, 155–56. Whether or not this ratio is standard is unspecified.

3. The human soul has two essential aspects: the universal sacred one that internally subsists in the *ʿālam al-malakut* or, per Corbin, the "mundus imaginalis," and the lowest one (*al-janba al-sāfila*) that outwardly subsists in the phenomenal world of *ʿālam al-mulk*. Sabzivārī provides a classic example of a mirror projecting the outward content of an inward sense. Just as the outward aspect has the impression of everything elicited by the apparent senses, so the internal aspect bears the impression of the "subtle hidden realities" (*al-bāṭin raqāʾiq al-ḥaqāʾiq*).[68] The imagination uses the source material gleaned from the images of the eye and sounds of the ear, etc., becoming a storehouse for the senses' yield. The higher the perception of the senses, the higher the awareness of the imagination and intellect, whereby the individual becomes a witness to realities whose physical form dissolves in the active, imaginative space of the soul's intellectual activity.[69]
4. What Sabzivārī calls unveiling (*al-kashf*) has two divisions, the form (*ṣūra*) and meaningful concept (*maʿnā*). The first category pertains to the five senses, including what is derived from the sense of vision, such as the visionary unveiling extracting the (Platonic) paradigm of the forms of souls; what is derived from hearing (*samāʿ*), such as what is "inscribed in the ears (*naqran fī al-asmāʿ*)"[70] of the Prophet Muḥammad, i.e., the auditory aggregate obtained by the "unveilers"

[68] Alternatively, Chittick calls the *raqāʾiq* (sing. *raqīqa*) tenuities. In his analysis, they are the connections or metaphysical "ladders" between things in the world and their true archetypal realities. See William Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge Ibn Al-ʿArabi's Metaphysics of Imagination* (Albany, NY: State Univ. of New York, 1989), 406.
[69] Sabzivārī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, 156–57.
[70] Sabzivārī references a hadith of Imam Mūsā al-Kāẓim: "Our knowledge is of three kinds: relating to the past, relating to the future, and relating to what is emergent (*ḥādith*). Knowledge relating to the past is interpreted; knowledge relating to the future is written (*mazbūr*); and knowledge relating to what is emergent is cast in our hearts and inscribed in our ears. This last category is the most eminent of our knowledge, and no prophet will come after the most eminent Prophet"; al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1:264.

(*al-mukāshifīn*); what is derived from smell, such as the divine winds (*nafaḥāt*)[71] contained in the Prophet's tradition, "Your Lord blows winds [of beneficence] in the days of your lifetimes, so take benefit from them"; and what is derived from touch, such as indicated by another tradition of the Prophet cited in the *Musnad* of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, "God placed His hand between my shoulders until I found the coolness of His fingers between my breasts." All of these senses, Sabzivārī holds, are a manifestation of the hidden reality of *hūrqalyā*, an interworld that Corbin calls the "world of celestial earth"[72] which acts as a bridge between the visible and invisible registers of reality.[73] In short, the higher worlds cast their pure, incorporeal *maʿnā* into particular forms of matter, whose perception impresses itself in the human mind. The mind, having activated its latent potentialities per this perception, subsequently discerns the forms' pure, universal content, secured by assent (*taṣdīq*).[74] With regard to the *maʿnā* of *kashf*, meanings are liberated (*mujarrad*) from temporal influences,[75] becoming presential knowledge, where

[71] The Arabic, *nafaḥāt*, contains the dual meaning of wind/breeze and scent/odor.
[72] Corbin, *Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth*, 73, 118–19. *Hūrqalyā* is a concept developed by Suhrawardī that later became a major theme of Shaykh Aḥmad Aḥsāʾī (d. 1241/1826) and the eponymous Shaykhī school, where it was configured as a paradisical topography that Imam al-Mahdī may access during his *ghayba* and where is located the emerald cities of Jābulqā and Jābulsā. See Omid Ghaemmaghami, "To the Abode of the Hidden One: The Green Isle in Shīʿī, Early Shaykhī, and Bābī-Bahāʾī Sacred Topography," in *Unity in Diversity*, ed. Orkhan Mir-Kasimov (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 137–173.
[73] Given Suhrawardī's championing of Plato over Avicennan Peripateticism, it seems possible that the inspiration for possible transcendent worlds, such as *hūrqalyā* and the *ʿālam al-mithāl*, derive from his reading of the *Phaedrus* and other Platonic dialogues. In the *Phaedrus*, the forms, "the subject of all true knowledge," are located in the "place beyond heaven (*topos hyperuranios*)" (*Phaedrus* 247c–e). Such a realm, accessible to the intellect, would prove useful as a locus of universals (*kulliyyat*) that take no shape and subsist outside of time. It would also appear to accommodate various forms featured in Islamic eschatology that, like these worlds, exist between the physical and spiritual.
[74] Sabzivārī is clearly channeling the Avicennan influence with regards to the qualia's processual contribution to the entelechy of the soul, however modified by Suhrawardī's Ishrāqī philosophy where pure light, in place of the active intellect, irradiates physical forms into the terrestrial realms by the lights' descent.
[75] This is a subtle, but important concept. Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭihrānī (d. 1995) provides an excellent explanation of *tajarrud* in *Rūḥ-i mujarrad*, applying the core theme of "peeling off" everything that prevents the soul's liberation. He writes, "Being *mujarrad* or reaching *tajarrud* means transcending temporal boundaries, being freed from the shackles of the past and future…*Mujarrad* is one who has become naked from the determinations of

unveiling is marked by light and its intensity of presence. Light proffers perspicacity whose various levels provide certain supersensory abilities, such as "insight" (*al-ḥads*).[76]

5. The fifth aspect, in reference to the supplication's line, "O He Who is near to the passing notions of thoughts,"[77] includes notions of the mind (*al-khawāṭir*) that are of four possible kinds: principles of illumination and desires; "fruits" (*al-thamarāt*), including the principles of movement, based on intention and will, that activate the body's muscles; and notions based on temporal causes, originating in matter and its concomitants with regards to their distinctive nature and in active causes with regards to their type. Sabzivārī further specifies that when we consider these notions' standing with regards to good and evil, their foundations are essential (*dhātī*). He provides the example of the fire's light illuminating the space of a room and its smoke darkening the roof and walls as producing the knowledge that what causes illumination is not what causes its darkening. Likewise, the causes of the heart's illumination or darkening, in the latter's form of black spots (*nuqāṭ sawdāʾ*), differ. Sabzivārī contrasts what he terms "blessed notions of inspiration" that lead to facilitating grace (*tawfīq*) and "reprehensible notions of delusion" that lead to defeat (*khidhlān*), where the first is caused by our

existence, who has taken off the garment of particularity to enter universality, and whose skin of personal attributes and attachments has been peeled off"; Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ḥusaynī Ṭihrānī, *Liberated Soul: In Memory of Sayyid Hāshim Ḥaddād*, trans. Tawus Raja (London: ICAS Press, 2017), xxvii–xxviii.

[76] Sabzivārī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, 157–60. In the Avicennan tradition, one of the unique powers of deduction possessed by the person of *ḥads* is immediate access to the middle term (*ḥadd awsaṭ*) of a syllogism that affixes two premises as a logical proposition. From the previous cogitation of the terms "man" and "mortal," using Davidson's example, a new image is formed by the active intellect, the middle term "animal," and, sans any faulty resistance, is emanated to the soul; Herbert A. Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes on Intellect: Their Cosmologies, Theories of the Active Intellect, and Theories of Human Intellect* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1992), 98.

[77] *Yā man qaruba min khaṭarāt al-ẓunūn*.

angelic nature and the second is caused by the lower self. These are mutually opposing agents, with Satan, wielding defeat, opposing the angel, wielding success. He emphasizes the dualist presence inhering in all quiddities, quoting the verse, "And We created pairs of all things" [Q. 51:49].[78]

Sabzivārī summarizes his *bayān* by observing the angel as possessing both a liberated spirit and a bodily form, internal and external. The external spirit comprises the liberated intellects, while the internal spirit is the practical and theoretical intellect. The external body is the outer form, including the angel's wings, while the internal body is the bodily faculty outside of time and connected to the angels' luminous agency through God. The combinations of external/internal spirit/body produce the holy spirit (*rūḥ muqaddas*) of the Prophet that receives the universal intellect, corresponding to the heights of unveiling and conjoining the intellect's perceptive faculties of forms to the forms' subtle counterparts (*raqāʾiq*). The devil also possesses these features, yet their inverse qualities. For instance, Satan possesses the universal ignorance (*al-jahl al-kullī*) whose tokens include contingencies and quiddities that drive manyness, opposed to unity.[79] Sabzivārī concludes with a moral lesson. The heart of the believer, he stresses, is precious and must be protected from satanic influences. In the battle between the forces of good and evil, the heart that prevails over the ten senses is a safe refuge, becoming the "most noble dwelling" (*ashraf al-baqāʿ*) through spiritual exercise.[80] Anger carried within the heart, Sabzivārī says, is a satanic trait whose seduction holds no power over a heart that has reached an angelic summit.[81]

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[78] Sabzivārī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, 160–65.
[79] Sabzivārī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, 165. Sabzivārī depicts Satan as spinning a quern (*raḥan al-siwāʾiyya*) indiscriminately and without purpose. This purposelessness opposes God, as indicated in the verse, "Our Lord, You have not created all of this without purpose. Glory be to You! Protect us from the torment of the fire" [Q. 3:191], a supplication frequently recited by Shiʿi Muslims during *qunūt*, while in the standing (*qiyām*) position of prayer.
[80] Sabzivārī, 166.
[81] Sabzivārī, 168.

On the Modes of Appearance

Sabzivārī adds an addendum (*dhayl*) concerning the complementarity between the various scholastic ways of studying natural phenomena. From the method of the legalist, he says, one sees the actions of angels, and from the method of the transcendent philosopher, one sees the actions of God and His power. By the latter view, towards which Sabzivārī leans, the demonstration and modes of God's existence can be perceived, from whence "shadowy dimensions are converted, via natural and physical forces, into radiant dimensions."[82] He affirms the insight of the natural scientists, submitting that there is no other mode that allows us to see the true reality behind nature's extensions, insofar as they are observable. A deeper, underlying metaphysical reality still persists, he claims, where natural forces and physics together have a soul, and this soul too possesses a soul. Sabzivārī does not say when this series of souls terminates but seems to suggest that they elude empirical inquiries into nature. Presumably they may be perceived by mystical intuition or experience, or otherwise may only be certified through scripture and hadith reports. He nonetheless presents a view that reconciles metaphysics informed by religion and natural science philosophy, affirming the latter's reliable proofs (*isnād*) for natural and physical forces.[83]

Sabzivārī's comments on naturalism occur in a short passage, summarizing a sequence of the supplication's vivid descriptions of nature (lines 61–67), that convey the overarching view presented in his commentary of *Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*. According to this view, we may perceive reality in fragments or in its unified form. Within various educational settings, learners' perceptions are

[82] Sabzivārī, 321.
[83] Sabzivārī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, 321. Both views are valid, he claims, but the metaphysical one is better for its deeper intuition.

typically geared toward the granular, breaking things down into pieces of data in order to see how the whole functions and fits together. In the *Phaedrus*, Plato famously described this metaphorically as carving nature at its joints (*Phaedrus* 265e). Whether the subject is jurisprudence or chemistry, styles of education most often demonstrate this form of applied or "practical philosophy" where different aspects of reality, when subject to certain reflective habits of mind, become manifest. Before this empirical butchery, a primary, integrated picture combining these pieces into an a priori whole obtains. That is, the unified picture is given ahead of time. For Sabzivārī, this is *wujūd*, the medium projecting God's simple essence in variegated existential stages.

Concluding Remarks

In his commentary, Sabzivārī equates expressions of being with value-laden terms such as the good, mercy, and justice, suggesting that once they are grounded in God ontologically, moral imperatives become more lucid. If, as the tacit logic suggests, one can present such a representation–in harmony with canonized sources–of how something *is*, then one may derive reliable *oughts* for the foundation of moral, objective values. Thus, Sabzivārī depicts the order of things as necessary reflections of God's *ʿināya* or "providence," an Arabic word etymologically related to care and solicitude. This becomes apparent in regard to his interpretation of lines 61–2 of the supplication that include references to God's generosity (*karam*) and grace (*luṭf*). "By these terms (*luṭf, karam*)," he writes, "the Imam is indicating...that the action of God is purely good...and purely providential (*maḥḍ al-ʿināya*)."[84]

[84] Sabzivārī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, 310.

Here, semantic judgements are conceptual judgements. By interpreting *Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ* in this way, reading his system of thought into the words of the Imam, Sabzivārī is socializing and rationalizing his concepts. Sabzivārī's exegesis brings into dialogue the likes of Ṣadrā, Suhrawardī, and Ibn al-ʿArabī, among many others, hence aligning his concepts with a sequence of historically rooted Islamic intellectual movements and their associated spokespersons, while also bringing them to bear on the supreme test of their consistency with the speech of the Imams, who are viewed by Imami Shiʿis as infallible recipients of the Prophet's knowledge. The language of both strands, between the bringers of wisdom and their interpreters, when synthesized and refined by Sabzivārī, imparts the functional rules within an acceptable conceptual game. Rules that distinguish a game could always be different or otherwise, as other commentaries produced by other interpreters belonging to other discursive traditions make evident. But insofar as they are followed and used as a guide for making inferences and conclusions do they regulate concepts, and through revising beliefs and attending to misapprehensions, yield a model of sapience. Any subsects of beliefs may be called into question or abandoned altogether, but others necessarily must be retained in order to alter others and that allow a person to adjudicate between good and bad beliefs or reasons for particular beliefs.[85]

Because prayer supplications, unlike the Qur'an, are ascribed to the Shiʿi Imams, their interpretation provides a different function than a Qur'anic one. In mining information from their speech, an interpreter participates in making assertions anchored in the knowledge of the Imam that, from the emic view of Shiʿis, provides the strongest form of veracity and reliability. The Imam, the "the gate of the city of knowledge,"[86] offers the truest interpretation, but it, in turn,

[85] For instance, a belief in monotheism does not preclude the belief that God is a composite or that He possesses quiddities, but this first foundational belief is still required, per Sabzivārī, when the latter is repudiated.
[86] This comes from a famous hadith of the Prophet Muḥammad: "I am the city of knowledge and ʿAlī is its gate."

requires proper interpretation and hence, reference to scholarly interpreters who marshal their own exegetical findings (and entitlement to exegesis) from the same wellspring of knowledge. Aligning one's interpretation to an Imam who has been graced with divine inspiration (*ilhām*) and occupies a unique seeing place in terms of their perception of reality,[87] is to infuse it with this inspiration and authority.

An interpreter of Imami prayer supplications makes apparent what is hidden or presupposed in the Imam's overt speech. In Robert Brandom's language, exegetes, such as Sabzivārī, participate in a process of making explicit implicit inferential commitments and premises. By resolving outstanding theological or philosophical questions based on the Imams' words, an interpreter not only reveals the Imams' tacit meanings but tethers these meanings to reasons in the form of publicly accessible theoretical arguments, buttressing their own religious worldview vis-à-vis or contra a different interpreter, perceptually disposed to assert one thing over another. Brandom outlines the advantage of such activity:

> Formulating as an explicit claim the inferential commitment implicit in the content brings it out into the open as liable to challenges and demands for justification, just as with any assertion. In this way explicit expression plays an elucidating role, functioning to groom and improve our inferential commitments, and so our conceptual contents–a role, in short, in the practices of reflective rationality or 'Socratic method'.[88]

By bringing propositionally contentful attitudes into the open, a commentator exposes their interpretations to further scrutiny and refinement, a process essential to mastering understanding and bringing new beliefs and features into discursive play. Although Sabzivārī does not describe his motivations in such a way, his commentary evinces a social-pragmatic practice to explicating religious concepts and answering the philosophical questions that they

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[87] See Ja'far Sobhani, *Doctrines of Shi'i Islam: A Compendium of Imami Beliefs and Practices* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2001), 179–80.
[88] Robert Brandom, *Articulating Reasons: An Introduction to Inferentialism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 2000), 71.

raise. Sabzivārī's *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ* provides a framework for how to think, how to interpret, and how to assimilate the received and speculative meanings underlying a form of Shiʿi devotion and acquire new horizons of aesthetic and spiritual interest. His doxastic commitments lean on collateral knowledge claims or premises, some that are explicit in his commentary and others that are tacit. In attempting to bring to light both instances in this chapter, we see the intricate, often knotty, construction of Sabzivārī's system, combining ordinarily disparate intellectual components among myriad points of commentarial departure. Sabzivārī frequently runs up against the limits of articulable language while operating at a high echelon of expository creativity. Although the reader may not be persuaded by Sabzivārī's synthesis, they may nonetheless benefit from knowing if and how it misses its mark.

Chapter 8: Conveyance and Unveiling: Sayyid Ruhollah Khomeini's (d. 1409/1989) *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*

Introduction

In 1945, Ayatollah Rohullah Khomeini would publish what would become his most renowned work, *Kashf al-asrār* ("The Unveiling of secrets"). It was an inspired undertaking, breathlessly written in forty-eight days.[1] Khomeini had a purpose that he viewed as urgent: repudiating another book, published around the same time, *Asrār-i hazār sāleh* ("The Secrets of a thousand years"), authored by ʿAlī Akbar Ḥakamī-zādeh (d. 1987), a lapsed member of the Qom-based clergy who embraced a version of religious "reformism." Ḥakamī-zādeh interrogated the practices and beliefs of Shiʿi Islam, using as his sources Muḥammad Ḥasan Sharīʿat Sangelajī (d. 1944) who was influenced by Wahhabism and Aḥmad Kasravī (d. 1946), another ex-seminarian who renounced conventional religion in an epiphanic moment while witnessing Halley's Comet and who later embraced secular constitutionalism. For Ḥakamī-zādeh, the constituent beliefs of Shiʿism, beyond reproach for most adherents, were false and harmful. He considered the emulation of a religious authority (*taqlīd*) to be senseless and belief in the Imams' invulnerability to sin (*ʿiṣma*) to be a form of idolatry. *Asrār-i hazār sāleh* was a provocation that Khomeini could not ignore, nor could its arguments, grounded in both a secular-modernist and Salafi-Wahhabist appraisal, be countenanced.

Among the creedal aspects marked as irrational superstition by Ḥakamī-zādeh and his supporters was the efficaciousness of intercession (*shafāʿa*). Petitioning for the intercession of the Prophet Muḥammad and Imams is typical of Shiʿi prayer supplications, particularly while visiting the Imams' ʿAtabāt, the locations of their tombs and sites of pilgrimage in contemporary

[1] Hamid Algar, *Imam Khomeini: A Short Biography* (Tehran: The Institute for the Compilation and Publication of the Works of Imam Khomeini, 2015), 16.

Iraq. In his response in *Kashf al-asrār*, Khomeini vigorously defended the practice on rational grounds, buttressed by various Qur'anic passages and the traditions of the fourteen *maʿṣūmīn*. Khomeini was a strong proponent of supplication and, after the triumph of the Islamic revolution, promoted its recitation in mosque courtyards and in the trenches during the war with Iraq.[2] In one of his speeches, he claimed that supplications "contribute to the making of true human beings" and bemoaned the influence of Kasravī who he accused of encouraging the public burning of books of supplication.[3] The depth of Khomeini's religious convictions, that not only informed his rejoinders in *Kashf al-asrār* but decisions that would make global news, hearken back to the very beginning of his clerical commitments. His first written work, composed in 1928,[4] was a commentary on a prayer supplication that is the subject of this chapter.

Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-saḥar ("Commentary on the dawn prayer") is Khomeini's earliest interpretive essay on the gnostic path of Shiʿi Islam, rehearsing a mode of thought that would blossom in his later works. It was written when Khomeini was twenty-seven years old, coinciding with the beginning of his discipleship under Mīrzā Shaykh Muḥammad ʿAlī Shāh-Ābadī (d. 1950).[5] The main features of his commentary on *Duʿāʾ al-saḥar* that are the focus of this chapter reveal much about his religious worldview, sustained throughout the subsequent stage of his leadership in the Islamic Republic of Iran. This earlier stage of Khomeini's life, marked by contemplative practices and intellectual engagement, is, with rare exception,[6] ignored by Western scholars. Although many historians and other academics have shown interest in the

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[2] Hamid Algar. "DOʿĀ," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online*, ed. by Trustees of Columbia University in the City of New York, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2330-4804_EIRO_COM_8445.
[3] Hamid Algar, *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini* (Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1981), 400–401.
[4] Alexander Knysh, "'Irfan' Revisited: Khomeini and the Legacy of Islamic Mystical Philosophy," *The Middle East Journal* 46, no. 4 (1992): 636.
[5] Christian Bonaud, *L'Imam Khomeyni, un gnostique meconnu du XXe siecle: metaphysique et theologie dans les oeuvres philosophiques et spirituelles de l'Imam Khomeyni* (Beirut: Editions al-Bouraq, 1997), 104.
[6] These exceptions include Knysh, "'Irfan' Revisited"; Algar, *Islam and Revolution.*

religious pulse of Khomeini's life, its significance is often limited to how it informs politics in the Islamic Republic and the ideological edifice for an Islamic government, represented in the "guardianship of the jurist" (*wilāyat al-faqīh*) doctrine.[7] This is unfortunate, not only for the blinkered view this angle sustains, but for the mischaracterizations that endure into the present[8] and that may prevent any fair apprehension of a religious thinker whose contributions mark a watershed in the modern history of Islam.

What follows is an analysis of Khomeini's commentary of a supplication, typically read by Shiʿi Muslims during the early dawn mornings of the holy month of Ramadan, before fasting commences. *Duʿāʾ al-saḥar* ("The Supplication of dawn"), alternatively known as *Duʿāʾ al-bahāʾ* ("The Supplication of splendor"), features several terms linked to Islamic spirituality. After examining the structure and salient features of the supplication, I introduce its prior commentary by Khomeini's teacher, Sayyid Abū al-Ḥasan Rafiʿī Qazwīnī (d. 1975), before turning to Khomeini's own rendition.

For all Muslims, God's oneness or *tawḥīd* is the Real that undergirds all theological claims in Islam.[9] The challenge that Khomeini faces in elucidating the knowledge of *tawḥīd*, that involves the acquisition and warrant for its belief, is not unique. It lies with human experience

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[7] Multi-author volumes, *Khomeinism* (1994) and *A Critical Introduction to Khomeini* (2014), are a testament to the political-economic focus on Khomeini. Article titles include "Perceptions of Private Property, Society, and the State," "The Paranoid Style in Iranian Politics," "Wilayat al-Faqih and the Meaning of Islamic Government," "Ayatollah Khomeini's Rule of the Guardian Jurist: From Theory to Practice." The sole exception is "Hidden Khomeini: Mysticism and Poetry" by Lloyd Ridgeon in the latter volume. Ervand Abrahamian, *Khomeinism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Arshin Adib-Moghaddam, *A Critical Introduction to Khomeini* (Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

[8] For a still-relevant inventory and analysis of these mischaracterizations, see Edward Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981). Some of the residual hallmarks of this Islamophobic and Iranophobic view include the buzzwords "radical Islam," "clerical regime," "anti-democratic," "antisemitic," and an "international community" (the United States and its allies), set against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

[9] For example, McGinnis and Reisman translate "the knowledge of God's unity" (*ʿilm al-tawḥīd*) as "theology"; Jon McGinnis and David C. Reisman, *Classical Arabic Philosophy: An Anthology of Sources* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2007), 78.

itself that is plural and temporal and that undercuts the singular, eternal foundation of *tawḥīd*, a challenge only magnified by language. The central question involves how one may arrive at the absolute through the relative. As Morteza Motahhari (d. 1979) characterizes the conundrum, thought tends to "stumble" when reflecting on the horizons of meaning "in the world and in (our)selves" by its engrained and presumptive patterns.[10] In dealing with these challenges, Khomeini employs a primary strategy that I will show as recurring in his commentary. Despite the many subjects Khomeini treats and his extemporaneous style, his commentary can be distilled into two main points about the way the world hangs together, irrespective of our individual influence, and the way we, because of our individual influence, may perceive it. The two components are as follows: 1) God's signs (*āyāt*) in the world and in revelation, at the higher registers of reality, are united in His light or splendor (*bahāʾ*), the supreme emblem of God's creative power in *Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*; 2) These signs may be witnessed by the self through its embodiment of each of the attributes of God and its transformation into the highest degree of this very luminescence.

Structure and Features of *Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*[11]

Duʿāʾ al-saḥar takes the following generic form, a three-part stanza:

> O God, I ask Thou to grant me from Your Quality(Q) at Q[superlative].
> And all of Your Qs[plural noun][12] are Q[adjective].
> O God, I beseech you, in the name of all of Your Q.

For example, the opening stanza reads:

[10] Ayatullah Murtaza Mutahhari, *Fundamentals of Islamic Thought*, trans. R. Campbell (Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1985), 57. Mutahhari here quotes from Q. 41:53, "We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth."
[11] See Bonaud's French translation of *Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*; Bonaud, *L'Imam Khomeyni*, 112–13.
[12] Certain exceptions to the plural form occur, such as God's will (*mashīʾa*) whose form, as a singular noun, does not undergo morphology in its relevant stanza.

> O God, I ask Thou to grant me from Your splendor (*bahāʾ*) at its utmost splendor (*bi-abhāhu*).
> And all Your splendors (*bahāʾika*) are splendorous (*bahīy*).
> O God, I beseech You in the name of all Your splendor (*bahāʾ*).

In this word play, the pattern moves from the central quality or feature, followed by its highest degree in an elative noun, possessed by God alone. The second stanza then includes an example or expression in the form of plural nouns, followed by a descriptive adjective. The third stanza returns back to the core contemplation for the supplicant, invoking an oath (*qasam*) in the name of all that is–by its divine fountainhead–holy. Supplicating by God's various names draws attention to the sacredness of the particular quality or feature and emphasizes the dependence of all beings on God. Each stanza is a journey of sorts in recognizing the degrees of awareness of God who reveals Himself through these various modes, modes that can be experienced and, in terms of their superlative degree, stimulate the imagination.

The twenty-three total qualities and/or features in this supplication occur in the following order: splendor (*bahāʾ*), beauty (*jamāl*), majesty (*jalāl*), sublimity (*ʿaẓama*), luminosity (*nūr*), mercy (*raḥma*), logos (*kalimāt*), perfection (*kamāl*), names (*asmāʾ*), might (*ʿizza*), divine will (*mashīʾa*), power (*qudra*), knowledge (*ʿilm*), speech (*qawl*), "matters" (*masāʾil*), nobility (*sharaf*), authority (*sulṭān*), dominion (*mulk*), exaltedness (*ʿulūw*), bounties (*mann*), signs (*āyāt*), and "that by which Thou engages Your rank and Your omnipotence."[13] Some are further qualified, such as *āyāt*, which are described as the most noble of signs (*bi-akramihā*), and *masāʾil* that are the most cherished matters (*bi-aḥabbihā*). The final stanza breaks slightly from the format. It reads,

> O God, I ask You to give me whereby You exercise absolute authority and power.

[13] *Bi-mā anta fīhi min al-shaʾn wa-l-jabarūt.*

> I beseech Thou by that which engages Your rank and Your omnipotence,
> by the rank and omnipotence, in its absolute oneness.
> O God, I beseech You by that whereby You will answer my supplication,
> so answer me, O God.

Interpreters of *Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*

Duʿāʾ al-saḥar has inspired several commentaries, including by Muḥammad b. Sulaymān al-Tankābnī (d. 1885), Shaykh Ḥabīb Allāh al-Sharīf Kāshānī (d. 1921–22),[14] Shaykh Muḥammad Qāsim al-Khalkhālī (ca. 17th century),[15] and the third leader of the Kirmānī Shaykhī movement, Muḥammad Karīm Khān al-Kirmānī (d. 1871),[16] among others.

The most significant commentary influencing Khomeini's exposition was authored by one of his teachers, Sayyid Abū al-Ḥasan Rafiʿī Qazwīnī.[17] Some of the most prominent gnostic oriented Iranian scholars of the twentieth century studied under Qazwīnī, including Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Mīrī Āshtīyānī (d. 2005), Ḥasan Ḥasanzāda Āmolī (d. 2021), and Mīrzā Muḥammad Thaqafī Tihrānī (d. 1985), the latter the father-in-law of Khomeini. Khomeini's commentary is saturated with Qazwīnī's influence, harnessing his teacher's interpretive blueprint. In Qazwīnī's version, he construes each of the attributes that the supplication features as modes of God's perfection, existentially refracted in the visible world, at various stages of intelligibility. They are "creations of the Real, the rays of His beauty and the shadows of His perfection."[18] In this understanding, light establishes the very grounds for knowing, but its source (God) cannot be apprehended either through perceptual experience or cognitive penetration. This will be the

[14] Shaykh Ḥabīb Allāh al-Sharīf Kāshānī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-saḥar* (Qom: Chāpkhāna-yi ʿIlmiyya, 1985).
[15] Al-Khalkhālī's commentary is unpublished. Its manuscript is housed in the Majlis Library of Tehran, IR36547, dated 1323/1905.
[16] Muḥammad Karīm Khān al-Kirmānī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-saḥar* (Qom: Dār Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, 2023).
[17] Qazwīnī's commentary is today contained in a collection of his philosophical writings. See Sayyid Abū al-Ḥasan Rafīʿī Qazwīnī, *Majmūʿa rasāʿil wa-maqālāt falsafī* (Tehran: Muʾassasa-yi Pizhūhishī-i Ḥikmat va Falsafa-yi Īrān, 1989), 87–118.
[18] Qazwīnī, 90.

conceptual spine of Khomeini's own commentary of *Duʿāʾ al-saḥar* and a basis for Qazwīnī's recurring interposition in the following pages.

Ayatollah Khomeini's *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*: Themes and Philosophical Extensions

In this chapter, I focus on the general character of how Khomeini sees religious language and its interpretation's bearing on pious discernment. In the Islamic cosmogonic narrative, God speaks creation into existence by His command, "Be" (Q. 36:82). The articulation of divine speech, encoded in the language of revealed sources, expresses this relationship between God and His creation. Knowing what one says when reproducing the utterances of the Prophet and Imams is, hence, to know one's own origin and preserve a providential connection with their creator.

Khomeini's commentary produces several converging points analyzed in this chapter, including the meanings of Arabic vocables, the illusory perception of dualism, and the will of God, the last leading to a secondary treatment on God's acts and essence. All are signs indicating Khomeini's understanding, his religious apprehension that suffuses his commentary, bent by a Shiʿi reconciliation of the "unity of being" (*waḥdat al-wujūd*) with *tawḥīd*. I make visible some of the ways in which centripetal aspects of the unitive principle are brought to bear on Khomeini's implicit claims and his explication of the contents that comprise *Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*. These aspects include several articles of the supplication's language, including the Arabic diacritic dot, the name(s) of God, and centrality of the word splendor (*bahāʾ*). While recognizing their role in the configuration of Khomeini's commentary, I locate their broader place in Islamic thought and the gnostic application of devotional texts.

The Role of Supplication

In his introduction to *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*, Khomeini describes supplications as "transmitted by the treasure houses of revelation and divine law, the conveyance (*ḥamla*) of knowledge and wisdom, and the spiritual connection between creator and creation."[19] *Duʿāʾ al-saḥar* is one manifestation of this conveyance whose gnomic phrases Khomeini's commentary aims to expound. When fed through the commentarial centrifuge, the supplication's expressions are converted into various assertions, deducing the semantic or propositional content of the Imam's prayerful utterances. Khomeini understands the verities communicated in the Imam's prayers as given an apparent reality through language. He offers a glimpse of his special regard for language in a subsection titled, "Conveyance and Unveiling": "The world of letters is a world receiving all others, and its arrangement corresponds with the arrangement of all those worlds."[20] In his assessment, letters are not self-contained entities, but, when combined, denote a providential order beyond things in the sensible world. Each letter and each word have a relation designating metaphysical dynamics, hidden layers of meaning communicated in allusions but also in "plain language" that may not appear to warrant hermeneutic scrutiny.

For Khomeini, grasping the supplication's terms is not intended to merely stimulate the intellect and produce an investigative procedure of static concepts, but rather to produce a reception in the self. Readers are invited to not only survey the landscape of religious language but participate actively in traversing it, so that they, in imbibing the sacred, become what they know. Commentary is a discourse but more crucially in terms of how Khomeini sees it, it is a means for the enlargement of the spiritual self. In his introduction, he hints at a tension in the rational apprehension of this endeavor in explaining hallowed language through limited faculties and awareness. He states his overall intention, with a modest caveat, "I wanted to clarify some of

[19] Ruhollah Mūsawī Khomeini, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-saḥar* (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-ʿAlamī lil-Maṭbūʿāt, 2006), 7.
[20] Khomeini, 26.

the aspects, by measure of preparedness (*istiʿdād*),[21] and despite [my] trivial acknowledgment [of *Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*] and the shortcomings of insight. Such is like the chameleon that strives to describe the color white or a bat that aims to view the illuminations of light."[22] Here, Khomeini does not merely display his humility but reveals that there are levels of understanding attained by actualizing the potential for self-edification. He refers to supplication as having many aspects whose comprehension depends on the progressive, earned attunement of its readers, and that otherwise, sans attunement, appear purely enigmatic. This is a salient feature of Khomeini's measure of spirituality whose basic formulation is stated by the Andalusian mystagogue Ibn al-ʿArabī who exercises a paramount influence over Khomeini: "The beauty of all things correlates to what is appropriate and necessary for them."[23] Reformulated by Khomeini, God's manifestations are received in the individual soul "according to their state (*ḥāl*)."[24] The goal of the spiritual seeker is to attain the closest divine proximity such as that reached by the "friends of God" (*awliyāʾ*) and wayfarers (*sālikīn*) "whose Beloved is manifest at every time and place, in accordance with their state."[25]

In providing directions to sharpen awareness and avoid the snares of earthly life, Khomeini positions himself among a sequence of religious scholars concerned with "practical mysticism" (*ʿirfān ʿamalī*), alternatively designated as poverty (*faqr*), an existential neediness

[21] "Preparedness," in the Sufi apprehension that Khomeini invokes, refers to the individual receptivity to receive divine bounty. Just like the chameleon and the bat that Khomeini subsequently mentions, each living entity has a different capacity to receive this bounty and that defines its existence. Through learning and the development of our spiritual faculties, human beings are uniquely able to develop this capacity or preparedness. See Ismail Lala, *Knowing God: Ibn ʿArabī and ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Qāshānī's Metaphysics of the Divine* (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 40–42.
[22] Khomeini, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*, 7. The example of the bat likely derives from one of Khomeini's main influences, Mullā Ṣadrā, who compares their eyes' inability to bear the sun's light to the human body's inability to retain existential intensification (*quwwat al-wujūd*) over time; Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad Shīrāzī, *al-Asfār*, I:69.
[23] Ibn ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya*, 9:409.
[24] Khomeini, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*, 32.
[25] Khomeini, 32.

and total dependence on God.[26] Reading and comprehending supplications is a reliable means for learning the ethics of wayfaring and gaining the closeness to God, central to practical mysticism. In a separate treatise on Sufism, Khomeini writes,

> The supplications and 'whispered prayers' (*munājāt*) received from the Infallibles are the greatest guides to the knowledge of God (*maʿrifa*), known as the keys to servanthood (*mafātīḥ al-ʿubūdiyya*)…They represent a paradigm for the state of the Companions of the Heart (*aṣḥāb al-qulūb*) and the masters of the spiritual path.[27]

Khomeini's regard for mysticism also informs his mode of interpretation. His methodology constitutes a middle way, between self-conceived interpretations (*tafsīr bi-l-raʾy*) and strictly narrative exegesis (*tafsīr bi-l-maʾthūr*). For some,[28] his style falls under the category of allusive exegesis (*tafsīr bi-l-ishāra*) that construes semantically ambiguous words as esoteric (*bāṭinī*) indicators. Proponents of this approach ground their interpretation with ample reference to reliable sources, such as the main four Shiʿi hadith collections, to avoid accusations of arbitrariness and intemperate or otherwise unqualified opinion. Much evidence of allusive exegesis is visible in *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*, including the extensive poetic license and many detours of a philosophical and mystical nature. Khomeini always, however, connects his symbolic or esoteric interpretations with the plain, apparent (*ẓāhir*) language of the supplication

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[26] This influence can be traced to the classical tradition starting with the traditions attributed to ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib. His close association with the Prophet Muḥammad is often depicted in mystical terms. Khomeini references several traditions to this effect, e.g., "ʿAlī and I (Muḥammad) were created from the same tree," indicating for Khomeini the primordial "union of their light"; Khomeini, 84. Sufi-conspicuous *ʿirfan* becomes absorbed into Shiʿism explicitly, beginning in the eighth/fourteenth century with Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī (d. 787/1385) and Raḍī al-Dīn Rajab b. Muḥammad Ḥāfiẓ al-Bursī (d. ca. 813/1411) whose works (*Asrār al-sharīʿa* and *Jāmiʿ al-asrār wa manbaʾ al-anwār* and *Mashāriq al-anwār*, respectively) expound the natural harmony between Sufism and Shiʿism. This was a crucial time, between the Mongol invasions and the Safavid revolution, where Imami Shiʿism developed additional messianic and/or hitherto heterodox doctrines. See Todd Lawson, "The Dawning Places of the Lights of Certainty in the Divine Secrets Connected with the Commander of the Faithful by Rajab Bursī (d. 1411)," in *The Heritage of Sufism*, ed. Leonard Lewisohn, vol. II (Oxford: Oneworld, 1999), 261–76. For *ʿirfān*'s influence in the speech of ʿAlī see Hajj Muhammad Legenhausen, "The 'Irfan of the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (a)," *Religious Inquiries* 3, no. 5 (2014): 5–20.

[27] Ruhollah Mūsawī Khomeini, *Waṣāyā ʿirfāniyya* (Beirut: Markaz Baqīyyatullāh, 2001), 21.

[28] Mohammad Ali Rezaʾi Isfahani, *A Textbook on the Methods of Qurʾanic Exegesis*, trans. Abbas Jaffer (London: ICAS Press, 2018), 90.

and with abundant reference to hadith. This produces an artful interplay between explaining outward terms and their hidden metaphors and similes.

What's in a Name?

In the introduction to his commentary, Khomeini makes his reasons for choosing this particular supplication clear. He remarks of *Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*, "It is by rank, the most lofty of supplications that raises the degree of God's unity (*ishtimāl*) by way of the divine attributes and exalted parables (*amthāl*), among which include the greatest name (*al-ism al-aʿẓam*) and the most complete and sempiternal (*al-aqdam*) theophanies."[29] *Al-ism al-aʿẓam*,[30] a name known only to God but, according to various traditions, encompassing all others, is a distinguishing feature of *Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*. Several other Shiʿi supplications make reference to *al-ism al-ʿaẓam*, including *al-Jawshan al-kabīr* and *Duʿāʾ al-simāt,* but none are so focused on the very motif of naming, the descriptivist range of reference to divine designation, as *Duʿāʾ al-saḥar.* This much is clear, given the metrical and elegiac pattern of the repeated refrain, "in the name of all Your (quality, e.g, mercy, or feature, e.g., signs)."

God's greatest name has been a matter of centuries-long debate in the history of Islam, particularly in *tafsīr* literature. The subject has traditionally been attached to the previously mentioned figure of Balʿam b. Bāʿūrāʾ of ʿAmmān who appears unnamed in the Qur'an:

> And recite to them, [O Muḥammad], the news of him to whom We gave [knowledge of] Our signs, but he cast them off; so Satan pursued him, and he became one of the deviators. And if We had willed, We could have elevated him thereby, but he adhered [instead] to the earth and followed his own desire (Q. 7:175-76).

[29] Khomeini, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*, 7.
[30] I alternatively refer to the greatest name as the "Name." Khomeini interchangeably uses "all-comprehensive name" (*al-ism al-jāmiʿ*).

Although there is some debate about the identity of the verse's "deviator," many, starting with Mujāhid b. Jabr (d. 104/722) and Muqātil b. Sulaymān (d. 150/767), have identified him as Balʿam.[31] Subsequent interpreters add details culled from the Isrāʾīliyyāt narratives, such as al-Ṭabarī who proposes that, out of several possibilities, the "signs" in the verse likely refer to God's greatest name.[32] Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabāʾī also affirms Balʿam's identification. He cites a tradition from Imam al-Riḍāʾ that refers to Balʿam's story as a parable (*mathal*) where the verse's "casting off" (*insalakha minhā*) alludes to that of God's greatest name.[33]

The Name's *ne plus ultra* potency is forcefully iterated in several sayings of the twelve Imams, spilling over into their supplications and relevant traditions. In the collection of supplications attributed to the fourth Imam, ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn al-Sajjād, Constance Padwick finds a kabbalistic "preoccupation" with *al-ism al-aʿẓam.*[34] Padwick references a tradition narrated by Imam al-Sajjād in which, after a twenty year span supplicating for the knowledge of the Name, he is finally visited by the Prophet Muḥammad in a dream state, before the dawn prayer, and granted a short supplication containing the Name.[35] From the early traditions, we learn that the five law-bearing arch prophets in Islamic creed, called *ulū al-ʿazm*, received the

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[31] Fred Leemhuis, "Bal'am in Early Koranic Commentaries," in *The Prestige of the Pagan Prophet Balaam in Judaism, Early Christianity and Islam*, ed. George H. van Kooten and Jacques van Ruiten (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 304.
[32] Leemhuis, 303–8; Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, 16 vols. (Cairo: Maktabat Ibn Taymiyya, 1969), 13:257–61.
[33] Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *al-Mīzān fī tafsīr al-Qurʾān*, 8:337–38; ʿAlī b. Ibrāhīm al-Qummī, *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, 3 vols. (Qom: Muʾassasat al-Imām al-Mahdī, 2014), 1:371. In the tradition, Balʿam, hurrying to curse Moses, mercilessly beats his donkey who resists and miraculously replies, "Woe unto you! Why do you beat me? Do you want me to come along with you so that you may curse (lit., 'invoke [the Name] against') God's prophet and the community of believers?" Balʿam reacts by beating the donkey to death, prompting the Name's "casting off from his tongue." Because of the donkey's protests, Imam al-Riḍāʾ assures that it will be one of three beasts (*bahāʾim*) received in heaven; al-Qummī, 1:371.
[34] Constance E. Padwick, *Muslim Devotions: A Study of Prayer-Manuals in Common Use* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1996), 105–6.
[35] Padwick, 105–6; ʿAlī b. Mūsā b. Jaʿfar Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Muhaj al-daʿawāt wa manhaj al-ʿibādāt* (Tehran: Intishārāt Shams al-Ḍuḥā, 2000), 394. Such an account is reminiscent of the Jewish divinatory practice of She'elat Halom or the "dream question," in which the spiritual aspirant, reaching a high state of purity, earns a response to a question of deep contemplation. See Henry Abramovitch, "Daniel: Psychological Development of a Master Biblical Dream Interpreter," *Journal of Analytical Psychology* 66, no. 1 (2021): 99..

Name in various quantities of divisible letters. Imam al-Ṣādiq reveals that God's Name consists of seventy-three total letters, twenty-five of which were given by God to Adam, fifteen to Noah, eight to Abraham, four to Moses, two to Jesus, and seventy-two to Muḥammad.[36] This tradition, cited by Khomeini in his commentary,[37] informs that the final letter is possessed by God alone and present in His unseen knowledge. The other letters enable certain miracles of prophets, such as Jesus's two letters, by which he raised the dead and healed the blind.[38] Another tradition, also quoted by Khomeini,[39] attributed to Imam al-Ṣādiq, relates the story of Āṣif Ibn Barkhiyā,[40] an enlightened vizier of the Prophet Sulaymān: "Āṣif Ibn Barkhiyā possessed one letter [of the Name] by which he caused the land between him and the throne of Bilqīs (the Queen of Sheba) to condense, such that he [Sulaymān] was able to take up the throne, before the land returned to its original state, faster than a blink of an eye."[41] Additional traditions[42] relate that the Imams themselves know the Name, as part of their special knowledge of the Book (*ʿilm al-kitāb*) referred in the Qur'an (13:43). The gematric speculation as to the numerical value of the letters is partially informed by the Imams' traditions that admit enough ambiguity to leave open the final word on the letters. In interpreting the clues that lie in *Duʿāʾ al-saḥar,* many interpreters focus on the relationship between the Name and other names attributed to God.

In *Lawāmiʿ al-bayyināt fī asmāʾ Allāh wa-l-ṣifāt*, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209) comments that the *al-ism al-aʿẓam* contains all the divine names, lower in rank, within it.[43]

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[36] al-Qummī, *Baṣaʾir al-darajāt*, 4:244. It is likely not a coincidence that in the Jewish mystical tradition, God is interpreted as possessing a seventy-two part name, consisting of seventy-two triads of letters derived from the Book of Exodus.
[37] Khomeini, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*, 82.
[38] al-Qummī, *Baṣaʾir al-darajāt*, 4:245; al-Kulaynī, *Uṣūl al-kāfī*, 1961, 1:230.
[39] Khomeini, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*, 82.
[40] He appears in the Qur'an, Q. 27:38–42.
[41] al-Qummī, *Baṣaʾir al-darajāt*, 4:246; al-Kulaynī, *Uṣūl al-kāfī*, 1:230.
[42] See al-Qummī, *Baṣaʾir al-darajāt*, 5:249–57.
[43] Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Lawāmiʿ al-bayyināt fī asmāʾ Allāh wa-l-ṣifāt* (Cairo: al-Maṭbaʿa al-Sharafiyya, 1905), 62–64.

Khomeini appropriates this concept in his commentary. In relation to *Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*'s line, "O God, I beseech You by that whereby You will answer my supplication; So answer me, O God," he affirms, "all divine names are manifestations of the greatest name of God, encompassing them. It [*al-ism al-aʿẓam*] is the plenum of their multitude, and their master (*ḥākim*)."[44] In this sense, the supplication's objects of entreaty, such as beauty, light, glory, and splendor, are all allusions to the supereminent source of all of these properties. Khomeini acknowledges that this understanding derives from one of his most influential teachers in mysticism, Mīrzā Shaykh Shāh-Ābadī. On the object of the supplication's "splendor" (*bahāʾ*), Khomeini imparts Shāh-Ābadī's lesson that "all of the manifestations of splendor are exhausted (*mustahlak*) in God's essence. When one reaches this station and place of return, [progressing] from multiplicity to unity, any remnant among the manifestations vanishes."[45] By this meaning, *bahāʾ* has a force and priority that all others refer to, as their quintessence.

In various dictionaries, *bahāʾ* is rendered as "beauty, magnificence,"[46] "goodliness, beauty of external state or condition, and a beautiful aspect that excites admiration and satisfies the eye."[47] Its descriptions of external objects, e.g., "the glistening of the froth of milk, and an epithet applied to a she-camel,"[48] corresponds to direct perceptual experience. Although some equivocation is present in these definitions, the tangible qualities and desirable appearances that *bahāʾ* manifests holds significance for Khomeini with regard to what can be deduced from God's existence. He states, "Splendor is goodness (*al-ḥasan*), and goodness is existence (*al-wujūd*)."[49] This is to suggest that everything in existence expresses Oneness, or alternatively, per Chittick,

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[44] Khomeini, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*, 105.
[45] Khomeini, 13.
[46] Hans Wehr, in *Arabic-English Dictionary: The Hans Wehr Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, ed. J. Milton Cowan (Ithaca, NY: Spoken Language Services, 1993), 97.
[47] Edward William Lane, in *Arabic-English Lexicon* (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1968), 270.
[48] Lane, 270; Muhammad b. Muḥarram Ibn Manṣūr, in *Lisān al-ʿarab* (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿāraf, 1981), 380.
[49] Khomeini, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*, 22.

"God as *wujūd* manifests Himself in each thing and through each thing."[50] The ontological projections of the One are not the One Himself, but their features, dimensions, and other attributes are multiples that possess "One-like" relationships as shadows of their most simple form. Concreta, such as a table or ball, are not a vision of God, but their universal and general properties, such as rectangularity or sphericalness, betoken the existence of their creator who is utterly unique in His perfection and originates the perfection of the circular or the spherical. We "see" the divine in the ideal existence of a thing's perfection, not in its form or matter.[51] Qazwīnī provides an excellent elucidation of this concept in reference to Mullā Ṣadrā's well-known formulation, "The simple [i.e., uncompounded/noncomposite] reality is all things" (*basīṭ al-haqīqa kull al-ashyāʾ*), controversial for its resemblance to pantheism. Qazwīnī writes,

> In God's being exists every perfection and beauty that can be found within the world of contingency, but in a way that is more sublime, noble and holy. Hence, it has been appropriately proven, with respect to existence and causal efficiency (*haythiyyāt al-fiʿliyya*), that 'the simple reality is all things' in a manner more sublime. Not one aspect of goodness and perfection can be isolated from the encompassing scope of God's existence.[52]

"All things," in this impression, are contingent and have a limited, dependent being, having no share in an unlimited essence identified with God.[53] Accordingly, when the supplication reads,

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[50] William Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn al-ʾArabi's Cosmology* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998), 172.

[51] Sabzivārī provides several proofs for the generality and universality of existence that may be perceived by the mind. The most relevant proof is that once the particulars and accidental features are removed from any reality, it is reduced to simplicity. He uses the example of whiteness that takes on the accidentality of time, place, and direction in snow, ivory, or cotton. Whiteness, shorn of their external adulterations (*shawāʾib*) that are multiple and mixed, is one; Sabzivārī, *Ghurar al-farāʾid*, 58–9.

[52] Qazwīnī, *Majmūʿa risāʿil wa maqālāt falsafī*, 91.

[53] Legenhausen shows how existents instead share in a relational or relative (*rābiṭī*) existence by their absolute dependence on the continued renewal of creation at every instant. The existence of a thing, in this Ṣadrian schema, is an emanation of this divine act of creation, without essence or substance, helping defeat the pantheist association; Hajj Muhammad Legenhausen, "Mullā Ṣadrā's Critique of Apophatic Mysticism and Pantheism," in *Gott – Jenseits von Monismus Und Theismus?*, ed. Bernhard Nitsche, Klaus von Stosch, and Muna Tatari, vol. 23, Beiträge Zur Komparativen Theologie (Paderborn: Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh, 2016), 309–21.

"And all Your splendors are splendorous," the extended manifestations of *bahāʾ* do not reflect an independent existence, but only allude to the splendor of the most splendorous (*abhāʾ*).

The greatest name has an inward and outward facing aspect. At its most splendrous level, it is turned away from creation and without outer appearance. In a unique phrase captured by Khomeini, the greatest name is the "instantiating essence" (*muqqadim bi-l-dhāt*) that he compares to a tree's kernel, enlivening its branches, twigs, and leaves.[54] The human being, however, may receive its outward form, termed the Muḥammadan reality (*al-ḥaqīqa al-Muḥammadiyya*).[55] Khomeini refers to this special honor in the names' reception in Adam in Q. 2:31–33. The names taught to Adam in the Qur'anic cosmogonical story of humankind provide a bridge between the absolute and the relative, i.e., the individuated delimited entities (*taʿayyunāt*). Human beings, the children of Adam, possess the potential for actualizing their full splendor by their unique composition of material (*mādī*), ideal (*mithālī*) and intellectual (*ʿaqlī*) elements that have their origins in various worlds (*ʿawālim*) that accommodate the elements.[56] Receiving the all-comprehensive name (*al-ism al-jāmiʿ*) is the highest privilege earned by the Perfect Human (*al-insān al-kāmil*), a favorite theme of Ibn ʿArabī that Chittick has compared to the Logos in the Christian tradition.[57] On the Perfect Human, Khomeini explains, "the true human form is the sum form of all worlds and is the vassal (*marbūb*) of this name [the greatest name]."[58] Held in such a state of divine thrall (*maʾlūh*), each name acts as the lord (*rabb*) of the *marbūb*, reflecting a

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[54] Khomeini, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*, 83.
[55] "The Muḥammadan reality manifested in the cosmos from the [first] intellect to matter, and the world is its appearance and theophany. And every atom from the stages of being is a remnant of this form, and this is the greatest name. Its external reality is an expression derived from the appearance of His non-entified (*lā taʿayyun*) will"; Khomeini, 84.
[56] Khomeini, 9.
[57] William Chittick, "Ibn 'Arabî," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2020 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2020/entries/ibn-arabi. Khomeini alternatively calls this person the "all-comprehensive human," by their encompassment of God's names and attributes.
[58] Khomeini, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*, 83.

partial image of the divine reality. The Perfect Human hence becomes the active locus of all the names to achieve *kamal* or the most complete range of possibilities for reaching perfection.[59]

The Unitive Principle

The foregoing analysis might suggest an acceptance of *waḥdat al-wujūd* on the part of Khomeini. I instead refer to this concept's presence in Khomeini's writings as the unitive principle; and I do so for the following reasons: Khomeini does not use the term, *waḥdat al-wujūd*, in his commentary, nor is there any apparent affirmation of God as a monad.[60] Calling it a principle, and thus a guiding theorem, also allows exception, elision, or interpretation diverging from convention, instances that occur in Khomeini's commentary. In spite of Khomeini's deliberate ambiguity, it is clear that he endorses the concept's Ṣadrian reworking that expresses some convertibility of multiplicity and unity. This is not a sophist trick, and Ṣadrā spends a considerable amount of time explaining its bases in the *Asfār*. Here we cannot review them with any satisfaction, but I may mention the following precursory points as they relate to Khomeini.

In *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*, Khomeini treats two separate traditions as denoting two themes, central to his commentary: (1) the unitive principle and (2) its perception among the spiritually adept who enter a state of self-effacement (*fanāʾ*; *istihlāk*). The first is a hadith, absent from the reliable Shiʿi collections, that al-Fayḍ al-Kāshānī attributes to Imam al-Ṣādiq: "We have modes (*ḥālāt*) with God in which He is He and we are we; and [modes in which] He is us and we are

[59] Khomeini quotes from Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī, bringing this concept back into relation with prayer: "When a person becomes *kāmil*, in their supplications and other works is a balance distinguished by perfection and realities that stand alone from any likeness (*mushārak*)"; Khomeini, 137. Khomeini glosses that this is why most supplications include pleas for *kamal*, including in *Duʿāʾ al-saḥar* ("O God, I ask Thou to grant me from Your perfection at its utmost perfect"); Khomeini, 138.

[60] For the controversies related to *waḥdat al-wujūd*, see Alexander Knysh, *Ibn ʿArabi in the Later Islamic Tradition: The Making of a Polemical Image in Medieval Islam* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999).

Him."[61] The subsequent phrase inserted by Khomeini, "multiplicity is in the essence of unity and unity is in the essence of multiplicity," is borrowed from Mullā Ṣadrā.[62] Both of these utterances, Khomeini claims, converge and are embodied in a tradition of the Prophet Muḥammad: "My brethren Moses had a blind right eye and Jesus had a blind left eye, and I am the possessor of both [seeing] eyes (*dhū al-ʿaynayn*)."[63] He provides no further explanation, but it is clear from its context and based on the tradition's use by Ibn ʿArabī[64] that Khomeini suggests two ways of perceiving the world, from the view of immanence and transcendence; the multiple and the unitive; from equivocity and homonymy; and *Deus absconditus* and *Deus revelatus*. The true gnostic, in the Sufi determination, perceives through both forms of vision simultaneously. They occupy a unique seeing place, removed from the veils preventing illumination. Khomeini calls this "the station of suspended closeness" (*maqām al-tadallī*), a term culled from Q. 53:8, "Then he approached and hung suspended," that he characterizes,

> The suspended closeness in His essence has no circumstantial mode (*ḥaythiyya*) except closeness and has no essentiality that exhibits closeness except poverty which is absolute poverty–the absolute will expressed by way of the holy effusion, the encompassing mercy, the greatest name of God, and the absolute Muḥammadan guardianship (*walāya*).[65]

Whereas Muslim philosophers have typically emphasized God's remoteness, and the mystical tradition has emphasized God's intimacy, Khomeini is accenting their convertibility. In this sense, the unity of being's relation to existents can be both affirmed and denied. As regards their

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[61] Khomeini, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*, 111. This tradition occurs in a Persian work by al-Fayḍ al-Kāshānī, in a section titled, "Indication of the Meaning of Annihilation in God and Subsistence in God"; Mullā Muḥammad b. Murtaḍā al-Fayḍ al-Kāshānī, *al-Kalimāt al-maknūna* (Tehran: Madrasa-yi ʿĀlī-yi Shahīd Muṭahharī, 2008), 147.
[62] Khomeini, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*, 111–12. This phrase is peppered throughout Ṣadrā's *Asfār* in various permutations. In a relevant passage, he writes, "Those who say that the unity of existence and the existent merge in the essence of their multiplicity are those of the doctrine (*madhhab*) of the author [Mullā Ṣadrā] and the lofty gnostics (*al-ʿurafāʾ al-shāmikhīn*)"; Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Asfār*, I:71.
[63] Khomeini, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*, 112.
[64] See William Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1989), 361–64.
[65] Khomeini, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*, 20.

correspondence, the example of an Arabic etymon provides an illustration of the relation between both instances. To take one example, the dawn caller (*musaḥarātī*) during Ramadan, who announces the time of the early morning meal before fasting begins, is derived from *saḥar* (dawn). However *musaḥarātī* may be uncorrelated with the verbal term conveying the action of the agent, i.e., the bringing or creating of dawn, its import derives from this received action.[66] So, from the perspective of nearness, the thing affiliated (*muntasib*), *al-musaḥarātī*, derives its perception from the agent of its creation, and from the perspective of remoteness, it is only accidentally affiliated.

First the *alif*, then the *bāʾ*: A Dot's Cosmic Significance

One of the constant grammatical features of *Duʿāʾ al-saḥar* is the Arabic particle *bi*. Depending on the contextual position, the *bi* may offer different meanings–in many instances, indicating being in or at some time or place, and in others, conveying agency, as in, "by means of/through something." It may also designate an oath or plea, "by such-and-such or so-and-so." All of these senses are not lost on Khomeini who explores how the use of a simple particle, *bi*, and the Arabic letter, *bāʾ*, relate fundamentally to God. In the first instance, indicating a state of being, Khomeini stresses the ontological position of God's "being found," represented in the Arabic root *wa-ja-da*, the core of *wujūd* or being/existence. He refers to the *bāʾ*'s cosmic relation to the Imams' *walāya* in the often-cited tradition of Imam ʿAlī, "Verily, what is in the Holy Qur'an is

[66] Another example, from Mullā Ṣadrā, is where water becomes related to the sun by being heated by its rays, becoming the "thing heated" (*al-mushammas*). Ṣadrā comments on this example's ontological significance, "Being, which is the source of the existent's derivation (*ishtiqāq al-mawjūd*), is a matter subsistent by its own essence, the necessary reality of the Exalted; and the being of anything other [i.e., the existent] is an expression of that other's relation to it [the necessary being]"; Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Asfār,* 6:64–5. This is restated elsewhere in the *Asfār*, "Being is one reality, without any embedded multiplicity in the manner of its most simple form. The existent is many–it is the quiddity and being-ness (*al-wujūdiyya*) of the totality [of being] by way of its relation to real existence"; Mullā Ṣadrā, 1:71. Ṣadrā goes on to say that the existent becomes generalized or abstracted from existence as a mental concept (*amr iʿtibārī*), a secondary intelligible mistakenly perceived as primary; Mullā Ṣadrā, 6:65.

in [the first chapter] *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa*; and what is in *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa* is in [the first verse] *Bismillāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm*; and all that is therein is in [its first letter] *bāʾ*; and I am the dot (*nuqṭa*) below the *bāʾ*."[67] The *nuqṭa* gives the term a reality, an intelligible form. Without the diacritic dot, the empty placeholder cannot manifest the meaningful import or recognizable sense of a letter or word. This sense relates intimately to the greatest name, as a tradition narrated by Imam al-Riḍā reports, "The *basmala* is closer to *al-ism al-aʿẓam* than the black of the eye is to its white part."[68] In another tradition quoted by Khomeini, Imam al-Ṣādiq reveals the meaning of the *basmala*, "The *bāʾ* is the splendor (*bahāʾ*) of God. The *sīn* is the resplendence (*sanāʾ*) of God. The *mīm* is the glory (*majd*) of God."[69]

Khomeini assimilates his interpretation to the ontological principle that the one absorbs the many in their lower states of being. In the style of the Russian Matryoshka doll, not only are the lesser layers of reality hidden within the most capacious cast, but the form is presented as a recurring image that resembles the others. Khomeini comments, "Within the hidden *bāʾ* is a thousand essences by way of the unification of all multiplicity."[70] Here, the *basmala* that begins all but one of the Qur'an's 114 chapters explains the whole, in the way that the One contains all the particulars in their most complete form, the latter the limit point to which everything other stands in privative relation.

The *bāʾ* additionally articulates an intellectual premise for commentators of *Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*. The Arabic alphabet of course begins with the *alif*, followed by the *bāʾ*. In Khomeini's schema, the absolute One represents the *alif* from which precedes the intelligible *bāʾ*. "The *alif*

[67] Khomeini, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*, 96.
[68] Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Muhaj al-daʿawāt wa manhaj al-ʿibādāt*, 388.
[69] Khomeini mentions that in some traditions, the *mīm* is instead said to denote dominion (*mulk*); Khomeini, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*, 26; al-Kulaynī, *Uṣūl al-kāfī*, 1:114.
[70] Khomeini, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*, 96.

alludes to the necessary being (*wājib al-wujūd*),[71] and the *bāʾ* alludes to the first creation which is the first intellect and light that, in its essence, is the light of our Prophet."[72] This intellectual relation (*nisba ʿaqlī*) can be observed in Qazwīnī's commentary, who concludes in regards to *jamāl*, "The most beautiful of His acts is the first point (*al-nuqta al-ūlā*), the stage of His will and the station of knowing the Exalted Real by the most complete of His manifestations. This is the first emanation and the Muḥammadan seal of reality."[73] His explanation conforms to a larger pattern of Muslim renderings of Plotinus, where God creates the first reality or principle of nous, the initial emanation in a hierarchical sequence. The intelligible dimension of the epiphenomenal *bāʾ* represents an important connection to its primary originator, the *alif*. The *bāʾ* as *ʿaql* is the first light (*nūr*) or presence (*ḥadra*) of God. In Khomeini's words, the *bāʾ* and the *ʿaql* constitute "the appearance of the Real's beauty."[74]

We arrive at another synthesis in the *bāʾ*'s confluence of meanings, including the first light/intellect/emanation/presence/effluence and divine will. To accomplish this interpretation, Khomeini avails himself of a variety of sources, reaching back to some of the first Imami thinkers forging the Sufi-Shiʿi nexus, including Rajab al-Bursī. He quotes a tradition of Imam ʿAlī, recalled by al-Bursī–"the *bāʾ* makes present being, and the dot below the *bāʾ* distinguishes the worshiper from the worshiped"[75]–and repeats much of al-Bursī's account of the Name in the

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[71] Per Ṭabāṭabāʾī, who channels Ibn Sīnā, the necessary being has at least four hallmarks: it is necessary by its essence, sans all quiddity; it is simple, and not a compound composed of parts, whether concrete or mental; it is singular, having no partner in terms of necessity of being (*wujūb al-wujūd*) or lordship; and all of its attributes dissolve in an all-comprising purport, the transcendental essence (*ʿayn al-dhāt al-mutaʿāliyya*); Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *Nihāyat al-ḥikma* (Qom: Aṣdārāt Muʾassasat al-Imam Khomeini lil-Taʿlīm wa-l-Baḥath, 2016), 292–305.
[72] Khomeini, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*, 26.
[73] Qazwīnī, *Majmūʿa risāʿil wa maqālāt falsafī*, 92. He further comments, "the relation between intellectual beauty and divine lordship is like the relation of the fine particles to the reality, and shadow to light. The first beauty is the essential existential attributes [of the necessary being], including knowledge, life, and power, and the goodness that necessitates spiritual expansion (*basṭ*, contra contraction, *qabd*) in the servant and becomes the source of love, proximity, and intimacy with their lord"; Qazwīnī, 91.
[74] Khomeini, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*, 27–28.
[75] Khomeini, 27–28. This hadith cannot be discovered in any of the early Shiʿi collections.

Imams' traditions and its esoteric import, reflective of al-Bursī's fascination with lettrism.[76] Khomeini's attention to the supplication's words and grammatical features indicates the mystical-allegorical assimilation of sympathetic others. His *sharḥ* is part of a wider tradition of interpretation, a discipline of applying inferences consistent with predecessors and an art in its contemplation of motifs. To summarize the outcome of these influences in Khomeini's commentary on the supplication's *bahāʾ*, the *bāʾ* that begins every attestation (*bi*) of the supplication's qualities/features symbolizes God's initial effluence. Its inscribed dot complements its seat in the way that Imam ʿAlī's *walāya* complements the *nubuwwa* of the Prophet Muḥammad, completing it and holding it out for others as luminous knowledge. The *bāʾ* in the first letter of the *basmala* and *bahāʾ* that, in its pure, simple essence, assimilates the contents of the Qur'an or the other names featured in *Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*.

So far, the features of *Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*'s language have been shown to possess powers of awareness. Even letters possess an indwelling symbol system, nestled into other more apparent, delineated expressions or signs (*āyāt*). In various traditions, when letters and names are granted to the spiritual elect, they contort the world in ways felicific (such as in the case of Moses) or otherwise (such as in the case of Balʿam).[77]

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[76] Al-Bursī formulates a significatory pattern that anticipates Khomeini's explanations, "And nothing exists without the *bāʾ*s inscription on it. If you say 'Allāh,' you have pointed [literally, "dotted": *faqad naqaṭta*] to all of the divine names, and if you write the *alif*, you have written all of the letters…And if you say 'light of lights,' you have pointed to the *ism al-aʿẓam*"; Raḍī al-Dīn Rajab b. Muḥammad Ḥāfiẓ al-Bursī, *Mashāriq anwār al-yaqīn fī asrār amīr al-muʾminīn* (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-ʿAlamī lil-Maṭbūʿāt, [n.d.]), 38.

[77] This association between the Name and miraculous acts has been criticized by Ṭabāṭabāʾī for its break from Aristotelian laws of causality. He asserts that the accidental qualities of letters and utterances cannot possibly instantiate realities. Rather, God Himself, through His divine effusion, is the only effectuating power in all of the cosmos. Ṭabāṭabāʾī views the above traditions as communicating, not the miraculous ability to effect change through letters, but the ability, through supplication to God, to completely cut oneself off from everything other than attention to God (*ṭarīq al-inqiṭāʿ ilayhi taʿālā*). The names of God are thus efficient means for communion, he stresses, and do not have the power to change reality itself; Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *al-Mīzān fī tafsīr al-Qurʾān*, 8:355–57.

Khomeini emphasizes that knowing the names is not simply a mental procedure of associating or combining other names, but establishing a connection in making the divine present. The reality of God's unity, he says, is "revealed in the heart of the wayfarer, the verifier of the truth (*al-muḥaqqiq*), upon reaching the station of the efficient, greatest name (*al-ism al-aʿẓam al-fiʿlī*), they who see that their Responder (*al-mujīb*), in reality, is the *al-ism al-ʿaẓam*, first [witnessing] by its outward manifestations, and then within their inner selves at the wayfaring's end."[78] Khomeini explains that this staged awareness is the import of *Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*'s last line, "O God, I beseech You by that whereby You will answer my supplication. So answer me, O God." Recognition of God as the Responder, or the One who answers prayer, is here recognition that only God can effect change. Thus, this concept for Khomeini is closely connected to the act of supplication itself.

The Heart's Dimensions

Whereas the *ʿaql* projects the rational intellect, the heart encompasses other forms of knowing, including the dimension of intuition and inner witnessing. The heart can abide in various states, resembling psychological ones, that condition the soul, either aiding or hindering its progress in reaching perfection. According to this view that has precedents amongJunayd of Baghdad, Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī, Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī, and al-Ghazālī, ensouled beings contain inborn capacities, activated by their engagement with the world, that spur *nafs* towards refinement and purification. What a person thinks can be just as consequential to the soul as the body's sources of nutrition (hence the Islamic legal purview over a Muslim's diet and food practices). Khomeini expounds two of the main modes of the heart, in reference to the supplication's two stanzas that begin, "O

[78] Khomeini, 156.

God, I ask Thou to grant me from Your beauty (*jamāl*) at its utmost" and "O God, I ask You to give me from Your majesty (*jalāl*) that gives majesty at its most magisterial." In a section of these lines' interpretation, titled *lumʿa*, Khomeini writes, "The hearts of the friends of God and the wayfarers are mirrors for the manifestations of the Real (*al-haqq*) and the place of His appearance."[79] Two states of the heart project these illuminations:

> The heart of love and direct experience (*dhawqī*) manifests its Lord by beauty, goodness, and splendor, and the heart of fear manifests its Lord by majesty, grandeur, and awe. The heart [combined] of these directions manifests beauty, majesty, and the mutually-opposing attributes. In conjunction, they manifest God's greatest name, and this station pertains to the Seal of the Prophets (Muḥammad) and his guardians (the Imams).[80]

Khomeini provides two exemplars for both states: Yaḥyā ibn Zakarīyā (John the Baptist) who witnesses by the heart of *jalāl*, via subjugation (*qahr*) and power (*sulṭa*); and ʿĪsā b. Maryam (Jesus) who witnesses by the heart of *jamāl*, via grace (*luṭf*) and mercy (*raḥma*).[81] All of these terms, excluding subjugation, feature in *Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*. The mutual opposition or antinomy of mercy and power turn out to be anything but natural and proves illusory from the viewpoint of divine capaciousness (*iḥāta*), absorbing any one thing and its opposite. From the perspective of the unitive principle, this much may be intellectually grasped, but from the *dhawqī* one, it can be confirmed through personal experience. This is not an easy thought to absorb, nor is its assent secured in one moment. Committing it to one's self is part of a process, a regimen, earned through the wayfarer's journey.

Khomeini envisions being at its most simple state in grandiose terms as "God's encompassment of all opposites (*mutaḍāddāt*) at their most complete; and all disparate entities

[79] Khomeini, 32.
[80] Khomeini, 32.
[81] Khomeini, 33–34.

within the realm of time, combined in the realm of eternity; and the opposites in the vessel of the external world becoming convenances (*mulāʾamāt*) within the vessel of the mind."[82] In other words, the unitive principle of being is a *coincidentia oppositorum.* It reconciles all components of the cosmos that oppose or contradict one another, shedding all difference and paradox produced by the human mind. This understanding is shared with al-Qazwīnī in his interpretation of the same lines of *Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*, which he glosses: "Know that hope and fear, from the effects of apprehension (*al-qabḍ*) and the extension (*al-basṭ*) of the heart, derive from the manifestations of beauty and majesty, and both are modes of the Real's appearance…Beauty and majesty are unified in God."[83] Its notion does not start with Islamic thinkers, but has its corollaries in Taoist thought, Taiji philosophy (yin/yang), and apophatic theology. William James regards *coincidentia oppositorum* to be an essential part of mystical experience.[84] In the Islamic context, it neither starts with al-Qazwīnī, nor Khomeini. Both channel an enduring concept in the works of Muslim thinkers with a mystical penchant, foremost of whom is Ibn ʿArabī.

Ibn ʿArabī's tract, *Kitāb al-jalāl wa-l-jamāl*, one of many possible influences on Khomeini's interpretation of *Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*, conceives of majesty/beauty and the analogical mercy/wrath as two modalities of intimacy with God. Ibn ʿArabī imputes this meaning from Q. 38:75: "God asked, 'O Iblīs! What prevented you from prostrating to what I created with My own hands?'," each hand clasping two "handfuls" (*qubḍatayn*), a duality propagated across the universe.[85] He infers, "there is nothing in existence, unless it contains its opposite."[86] It becomes

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[82] Khomeini, 29.
[83] Qazwīnī, *Majmūʿa rasāʿil wa-maqālāt falsafī*, 93.
[84] James writes, "Not only do they [opposites], as contrasted species, belong to one and the same genus, but one of the species, the nobler and better one, is itself the genus, and so soaks up and absorbs its opposite into itself." William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1985), 388.
[85] Ibn ʿArabī, *Rasāʾil Ibn ʿArabī*. 1:26.
[86] Ibn ʿArabī, 26.

apparent, however, that the ostensibly dualist structure quickly collapses. Ibn ʿArabī explains that, while absolute majesty (*al-jalāl al-muṭlaq*) on its own is inaccessible to anything other than God, its relational modality, called "the majesty of beauty" (*jalāl al-jamāl*), is what touches the hearts of the spiritually superior, despite their occasional confusion in assigning experiences to absolute majesty.[87] In other words, from a lower perception, they are intertwined, but from a higher awareness, they refer to God's *jamāl*, which has priority (*sabq*) over the derivative *jalāl al-jamāl*.[88] The same holds for God's mercy, predominating over His wrath, as Khomeini affirms, quoting from another of the supplication's line, "O He whose mercy predominates over his wrath."[89]

Khomeini is again hinting at the illusoriness of distinction, here between *jalāl* and *jamāl,* where the former is a second-order derivative. From the perspective of ordinary experience, or what Khomeini calls plurality (*kathra*), the inconsistency between terms is indefensible according to the norms standardly governing classical logic. Against this is the superordinate vision of the Perfect Human who comes to view the world through God's binomial majesty and beauty. This vision is part of larger embodiment in the Sufi imagination, where the wayfarer's heart receives and reflects the light of God through its polishing, i.e., spiritual refinement. Just as their lower desires become subordinated to a higher principle, so too does beauty in the wayfarer absorb the wrathful and dominative tendencies. Khomeini writes,

> The contradictory attributes abide in their presence (*ḥaḍra*) in a united state of being, sanctified from concrete and theoretical plurality, free from mental and external entification. In their [the contradictory attributes'] appearance is the hidden, and in their hiddenness is the apparent; in their mercy is wrath, and in their wrath is mercy.[90]

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[87] Ibn ʿArabī, 25–26.
[88] Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God*, 175.
[89] Khomeini, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*, 34.
[90] Khomeini, 30.

In a convention of Sufism, the degree of spiritual actualization eventually reaches a state of permanence with God where, by beautifying one's self, one sees only beauty. Khomeini, who draws extensively on the Sufi tradition, sees intellectual acuity as only a springboard for practical mysticism. At the level of the absolute, contradictions are embraced in the sense that there is no relative distinction. Whereas things are originally discerned through their opposites, through the embodiment of the names, perception eliminates all but the Name.

What Does God Will?

Duʿāʾ al-saḥar features another key term associated with Shiʿi creed, *mashīʾa*, in the following lines,

> O God, I ask You to give me from Your will (*mashīʾa*) at its utmost effectualness and all Your willing is effectual.
> O God, I beseech You by all Your will.

In the traditions of the Imams, there is overlap between the concepts of *mashīʾa* and *irāda* that typically appear among a bundle of other terms whose exact relation to one another is unclear. The section, *Bāb al-Mashīʾa wa-l-irāda*, in *al-Kāfī*, contains six traditions that feature the terms, *mashīʾa, irāda*, *shāʾ* (intention), *qaḍā* (accomplishment), and *qadar* (decree),[91] locutions that converge in conveying the divine will and the process or details of its determination. A puzzling interplay is raised in these traditions, where God commands something, yet does not will it. For instance, Imam al-Riḍā reports:

> God has two intentions (*irādatayn*) and two wills (*mashīʾatayn*), a sealed volition (*khatamun*) and intended volition (*ʿazmun*). He wills and commands something, and He commands and does not will it. Have you not seen when He denied Adam and his spouse to eat from the tree, yet willed it? Had He not willed (*yashaʾ*) them to eat from it, the will (*mashīʾa*) of God would have overcome their will. And he commanded Abraham to slaughter Issac but He did not will it, for if He had willed

[91] For example, from Imam al-Ṣādiq, "Nothing comes to be without the intent of God, the will, the decree, and divine accomplishment"; al-Kulaynī, *Uṣūl al-kāfī*, 1961, 1:150.

> the slaughter, the will of Abraham would have overcome the will of God.[92]

This perplexing tradition, and others like it, are read by commentators to make oblique references to two modes of creation, generative (*takwīnī*) and legislative (*tashrīʿī*). In devising the generative/legislative connection, Khomeini presents the *mashīʾa* from *Duʿāʾ al-saḥar* in relation to the unfolding of God's will: "The series of existence, from the world of the unseen to the world of witnessing, is [made] of the entifications of God's will (*taʿayyunāt al-mashīʾa*)."[93] Khomeini refers to a popular tradition from Imam al-Ṣādiq, "God created the will itself and then created things through the will."[94] All of these "things," or manifestations of being, in accordance with the stages of creation, are given a reality through God's will, without which no possible mode (*shaʾn*) or state (*ṭawr*) in or of the world occurs.[95] God's will, however, retains its absolute otherness or freedom from all entifications: "As for the entifications, they do not bear the fragrance of being, but rather are 'like a mirage in a desert, which the thirsty perceive as water' (Q. 24:39)."[96] Elsewhere, Khomeini describes this phenomenon as "the permeation of the exoteric by the esoteric."[97]

The will of God is enigmatic insofar as it is not the result of a time-bound process, such as deliberation, nor precipitated by preponderating conditions, as is the human will. Khomeini supports this assertion with a tradition attributed to Imam al-Riḍā, "The volition of those among creation is what occurs in the conscience (*ḍamīr*) and its manifestation in action. As for the volition of God, it is His origination (*iḥdāth*) and nothing else."[98] There are no accidental

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[92] al-Kulaynī, 1:151.
[93] Khomeini, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*, 106.
[94] Khomeini, 107.
[95] Khomeini, 107.
[96] Khomeini, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*, 106.
[97] Khomeini, *The Mystery of Prayer*, 1:137.
[98] Khomeini, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*, 115. This view harmonizes with the traditional one of al-Kulaynī who provides a rule of thumb, explaining that any attribute that produces two concurrent consequences, such as God's

psychological qualities, such as God's liking or desiring, involved in the way the generative power is expressed.[99] Although God may not love or wish for an outcome, Mullā Ṣadrā holds that His generative yield, reflects God's singular "face" (Q. 2:115) that is love itself.[100] From this perspective, to which Khomeini adheres, matter produced by the heavenly souls obeys God, and although God does not love, He is love. The visible aspect of beauty reveals God's will. This "face" Khomeini describes as one of witnessing the Beloved, creating conditions of happiness (*saʿāda*) for the witness (*shahīd*) who overcomes their vain whims (*hawā*) and carnal desires (*shahawāt*) to perceive the divine will.[101] Its appearance is prevented by what Khomeini calls the ego's veils (*ḥujub*) that direct love away from the Beloved, toward a self that believes its will to be independent and self-sufficient.

Shiʿi scholars understand *mashīʾa* as one of divine attributes but differ as to whether they are attributes of essence, such as knowledge (*ʿilm*), or action, such as creation (*khalq*). In other words, they are divided over whether these attributes manifest His will in action or whether they are the principle by which He acts. Mullā Ṣadrā perceives *mashīʾa* as equivalent to God's knowledge.[102] However, in accordance with his claim of the attributes as not superadded (*zāʾid*) to God's essence, any real distinction (e.g., between divine power, knowledge, or will) turns out

willing/desiring/liking one thing and not another, must be of His action. This is in contrast to an attribute that can be affirmed and its opposite negated, such as knowledge and ignorance, that must be of His essence; al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1961, 1:111–12.

[99] This also can be substantiated in the Imams' traditions. In one instance, Imam al-Ṣādiq's companion, Abū Baṣīr al-Asadī (d. 150/ 767–68), asks whether or not God wishes (*shāʾ*), wills, decrees and accomplishes. The Imam responds in the affirmative. Abū Baṣīr then asks, "Does He love?" Imam al-Ṣādiq's negative response prompts Abū Baṣīr's follow-up inquiry, "How can He intend, will, decree, and accomplish, but not love?" The Imam responds, "This is what has been revealed to us" (*hākadhā kharaja ilaynā*); al-Kulaynī, 1961, 1:150.

[100] Ṣadrā writes, "In the totality of everything lies the essence of the will of God and His generative love folded up within it…And this same will and love that occurs as a thing has one root (*sinkh*), while the [existential] differences are only in appearance and not otherwise"; Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Asfār*, 2:238.

[101] Khomeini, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*, 105–6.

[102] This is only one conceptual component of a wider criticism that Ṣadrā levels against Ashʿarism where the idea of God either choosing something or not introduces the untenable feature of contingent possibility that he counters with real necessity or eternal divine willing. See Fazlur Rahman, *The Philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1975), 167–74.

to be illusory. Khomeini preserves Ṣadrā's premise of the attributes' non-additionality, but instead sees *mashīʾa* as "created among the attributes of divine action (*muḥdatha wa-min ṣifāt al-fiʿl*), whereas knowledge and power are two eternal entities derived from the attributes of essence."[103] Accordingly, disobedience does not reflect God's generative command that cannot be altered and that explains the state of affairs as it is, at any moment. Whereas the human free will can never impinge on the generative will, the legislative will extends choice, between accepting or rejecting the guidance of prophets. People are not forced to accept what God determines is best for them and may exercise their volition in the liminal space "between the two positions" of determinism (*jabr*) and delegated freewill (*tafwīḍ*), as Shiʿi creed establishes, yet the consequences of violating God's legislative command are made clear in His speech. Khomeini affirms that people earn whatever befalls them: "Whatever bad results from bad preparedness and a deficiency of being are both the fair measure [earned] of the servant."[104] In a tract on freewill written twenty-four years after *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*, Khomeini subsumes this argument under a broader ontological premise where all deficiency and misfortune are cases of non-existence that, against pure existence (*ṣirf al-wujūd*), indexes composition and contingency.[105]

From this notion, demarcating the generative and legislative, God wills disobedience in the sense of having foreknowledge of it, despite intending and commanding against it. This would explain Adam's fall in the aforementioned tradition of Imam al-Riḍāʾ which would have

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[103] Khomeini, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*, 115.
[104] Khomeini, 113.
[105] In this work, he writes that all evils "derive from non-existence or existence's non-perfection. And non-existence is absolute, lacking cause for its instauration (*jaʿl*). Rather, its correlativa [*muḍāfa*, between cause and effect] derives from the necessary concomitants of the caused entity (*lawāzim al-majʿūl*) and the limitations of the realm of perishing and the impact of those imprisoned within the prison of nature and chains of time, all of which derive from contingency"; Ruhollah Mūsawī Khomeini, *al-Ṭalab wa-l-irāda* (Qom: Muʾassasat Tanẓīm wa-Nashr Āthār al-Imām al-Khomeini, 2000), 17.

been prohibited by God by His intention (*irāda/mashīʾa ʿazma*), yet known or willed (*irāda/mashīʾa khatama*) by Him as ineluctably inevitable.[106] This understanding accords with Shaykh al-Ṣadūq's position on the martyrdom of Imam Ḥusayn that he posits was the cause of God's displeasure, a decision of Yazīd and his army that God commanded against, but that was nonetheless foreknown by God.[107] Perforce, this idea challenges the view that God's will relates exclusively to His actions, while affirming Mullā Ṣadrā's position that likens *mashīʾa* to God's unchanging, eternal knowledge, and thus to His essence. While leaving certain ambiguities unsettled, Khomeini provides a partial resolution, informed by his interpretation of the supplication's attribute of divine speech (*qawl*) in the lines:

> O God, I ask You to grant me from Your most pleasing of speech (*min qawlika bi-arḍāhu*),
> and all Your speech is pleasing (*raḍī*).
> O God, I beseech You by all Your speech.

Khomeini explains,

> No amount of displeasure (*sakhṭ*) enters into God's contentment (*riḍāʾ*). What is meant by His generative speech is a guidance for quiddities towards the straight path of existence and perfection. What is meant by his legislative speech is a guidance for the preparedness of spirits, so that they may proceed from potentiality to actuality, with regard to knowledge and action.[108]

By legislative command, God lays out the terms in His speech, another attribute of action. In receiving this act of generative guidance, human beings use the resources of their knowledge and volitional actions to realize (hopefully efficacious) results. Khomeini compares two forms of speech:

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[106] This explanation leaves out the more problematic would-be slaughter of Abraham's son because, as a consequence of this argument, we cannot say that God's *irāda/mashīʾa ʿazma* intended against it. However, if we keep to the non-psychological premise, then we may hold that God commanded the sacrifice, yet did not want or desire for it to occur.
[107] Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. ʿAlī Ibn Babāwayh, *Kitāb al-ʿitiqādāt* (Qom: Muʾassasat al-Imām al-Hādī, 2014), 73–74.
[108] Khomeini, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*, 132–33.

> The most pleasing of speech, with regards to generation, is the essential speech that appears in the divine names within the knowledgeable presence…and as regards the legislative, it [the most pleasing speech] is the knowledge of *tawḥīd* which pours upon His servants by way of His angels and prophets, followed by the knowledge of refining the soul by which it receives its ultimate happiness.[109]

Like the will of God, speech has two components, one in the generative eternity of God's effusion and the other in the legislative creation of His speech by which believers are guided and attain felicity. Certain questions remain unanswered, a fact that Khomeini concedes in a gesture that honors his prevailing commentarial view and concludes his commentary on God's will, "As to the question over the will's connection with things in external existence, the answer depends on the measure of comprehending the One addressed (*al-mukhāṭab*) and the level of their mystical perception (*maqām ʿirfānihi*)."[110]

These outstanding questions aside, the point of Khomeini's hermeneutical activity here is to facilitate and promote his own understanding of *mashīʾa* and divine command theory. Otherwise known as theological volunteerism, this involves thorny questions over God's nature and will, such as to the dilemma of Euthyphro posed by Socrates, "Is the holy loved by the gods because it is holy, or is it holy because it is loved by the gods? (*Euthyphro*, 10a–11b)." Khomeini's apparent answer may be put: God–perfect, immutable, and hence, lacking all dependency and need–does not love. The holy is holy because it is the love–the ultimate source upon which all things depend and from which they derive their need–that is God. God has eternal knowledge of the perfect calibration of reality, synonymous with His providential solicitude (*ʿināya*), and creates optimized conditions, both for volitional moral action and the background where these acts may transpire. Khomeini achieves this explanation by harnessing the words of

[109] Khomeini, 132–33.
[110] Khomeini, 116.

Imam al-Bāqir's prayer, bringing about some transparency of their meanings. To say that the word, *mashīʾa*, confers the sense of generative/legislative modes of divine command is an intuitive leap, predicated on Khomeini's preconceptions of the latter. But this is not to suggest that Khomeini's interpretations are simply speculative. Rather, they are the syncretic outcome of other interpretations that come value-freighted with rules for proper comprehension. According to these rules, *mashīʾa* must be an attribute of either essence or action, and interpreting it either way is to honor one set of rule-oriented reasons over another. Is this interpretation unassailable? Of course not. There would otherwise be no use in holding it out for others to interpret and judge for themselves. Khomeini's commentary echoes other comments, explanations, annotations, and criticisms. It does not represent a solitary voice, but rather a collective of spiritual aspirants who share a common language and who are committed to a path that does not require Shiʿi partisanship but is nonetheless availed by it.

Concluding Remarks

Khomeini's commentary presents a language in extremis, collapsing the supplication's spectrum of names and attributes into an all-embracing, unifying term. Language becomes a steppingstone, but ultimately proves inadequate in designating the divine. Imam al-Ṣādiq alludes to this gulf, between the name and named. In a tradition, he overhears someone professing God's magnification: "God is the greatest" (*Allāhu akbar*). The Imam queries, "greater than what?" [lit, "greater than what thing?"], to which the unnamed person ventures, "greater than everything." The Imam expresses his disappointment, responding, "you have limited Him"; prompting his audience's entreaty, "How should I say it?" Imam al-Ṣādiq replies, "Say: God is greater than all

description (*min an yūṣaf*)."[111] While magnifying the mystery of God, language is here put in a bind. If we take Imam al-Ṣādiq's admonition seriously, what then can we say about God at all? How can a person determine the identity of divine attributes if language cannot make contact with the truth values that pertain to God? Most answers reflect a via negativa, and in many ways Khomeini cherishes this gnostic response. In contemplation of *Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*'s "names," he writes,

> The divine beautiful names (*asmāʾ al-ḥusnā*) and the exalted divine attributes are veils of light according to some of the wayfarer's stations and are otherwise idolatry in relation to the stages of others. For the 'good deeds of the righteous are sins to the intimates of God (*ḥasanāt al-abrār sayyiʾāt al-muqarrabīn*).' Thus, the reality of pure belief, against idolatry, is the firm conviction that 'He is the Outer, the Inner, the First, and the Last' (Q. 57:3). No name nor attribute is a veil (*ḥijāb*) of His noble countenance (*wajh*), and no command nor creation is a veil (*niqāb*) of His exalted light. Such is expressed in *Duʿāʾ al-ʿarafa*:
>
> 'How can You be revealed through that whose existence depends on You? Can anything other than You appear as a presence that You do not possess, while acting as an appearance for You? When have You ever been absent so that You may need something to point to You? When have You ever been distant so that traces may lead to You? Blind be the eye that cannot see You watching it.'
>
> And so the true knower and believer free from all the stages of idolatry, those general and particular, is one who is not wanting, not witnessing, not appearing, and not hiding, except through Him and with Him.[112]

This revealing passage associates divine names and attributes as a potential veil for seekers and even as idolatry for some who have reached a high station. It also emphasizes the importance of preparatory conditions and moral training necessary for the recognition of divine simplicity that Khomeini advances in his commentary. This recognition informs that a believer may use language to bring them out of language and become aware of something incommunicable. From this perspective, knowing the attributes is discovering their coalescence, negating the differences between them. By removing the constituents that make up a composite

[111] al-Kulaynī, *Uṣūl al-kāfī*, 1961, 1:118.
[112] Khomeini, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*, 75.

entity, one realizes that there are no constituents outside of the mind. In this way, the attributes refer to the same entity, the necessary being, knowledge of Whom is dissimilar to other forms of knowledge, imparted by language. This is not a unique perspective that cannot be discovered in other religious traditions. For example, D. T. Suzuki points to the apophatic mode of Zen that bears some striking similarities:

> According to the followers of Zen, its apparently paradoxical statements are not artificialities contrived to hide themselves behind a screen of obscurity; but simply because the human tongue is not an adequate organ for expressing the deepest truths of Zen, the latter cannot be made the subject of logical exposition; they are to be experienced in the inmost soul when they become for the first time intelligible. In point of fact, no plainer and more straightforward expressions than those of Zen have ever been made by any other branch of human experience. 'Coal is black'– this is plain enough; but Zen protests, 'Coal is not black.' This is also plain enough, and indeed even plainer than the first positive statement when we come right down to the truth of the matter.[113]

In *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*, God's greatest name is His being that is pure and unlimited. From the first principle of God's necessary being, represented by the Arabic *alif*, emanates the divine effusion, represented by the succeeding *bāʾ*. Extensions of the absolute, emerging in the series of worlds produced by God's effusion, are a collective manifestation of His splendor (*bahāʾ*), otherwise known as the "comprehensive name" (*al-ism al-jāmiʿ*).[114] It is the task of the spiritual elite–the intimates, the wayfarers, the knowers–to separate out the quiddities mixed in the mind from being, to achieve the superlative state of awareness indicated in the supplication's repeated refrain, "at the utmost of X." Khomeini interprets two modes of God's will (*mashīʾa*), generative and legislative. By being wholly attentive to God's legislative order of command, one abides in the best possible way within God's generative order of creation. Khomeini discusses various dualities of perception (*tanzīh/tashbīh*, unity/multiplicity) and experience (*jalāl/jamāl*,

[113] Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, *An Introduction to Zen Buddhism* (New York: Grove Press, 1964), 33.
[114] Khomeini, 72.

mercy/wrath), featured in the supplication's terms. These are the "two eyes" which Khomeini wishes his readers peer through. Their unifying principle of *kamāl* or completeness presents a conceptual challenge in knowing what one says when "calling out" the words in supplication and a spiritual purpose in receiving a response.

Conclusion

Throughout this dissertation, I have shown supplication (*duʿāʾ*) as a standard lexicon of devotion in Shiʿi Islam. Although it is also part the heritage of Sunni Islam and continuously valued by its faithful, supplication occupies a pride of place in Shiʿi piety. I have argued that this high status can be explained by the strong normative value ascribed to *duʿāʾ* by Shiʿi scholars, those who, starting in the mid fourth/tenth century, compiled volumes of prayer, described its virtues, and offered commentaries as to its contents. Works such as Ibn Qūlawayh's *Kāmil al-zīyārāt*, demonstrating the proper pilgrimage rites when visiting the tombs of the *ahl al-bayt*, and Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's *Miṣbāḥ al-mutahajjid*, detailing the supererogatory prayers in the course of a day, are reliable manuals on the diligent practices of prayer and ritual. Throughout the centuries that followed, touchstone works, such as those of Ibn Ṭāwūs, al-Kafʿamī, al-Majlisī II, and Shaykh ʿAbbās al-Qummī, provided augmentations and rearrangements of their predecessors to serve new generations of Shiʿi worshippers. Others, such as Ibn Fahd al-Ḥillī and Muḥaqqiq Narāqī tied these practices into a wider application of spiritual discipline, where everyday speech acts and behavior bear on the efficaciousness of those consecrated.

Whereas other forms of the Imams' traditions are pithy, supplication encompasses the most extensive form of their recorded speech. It is only natural that it should receive extensive commentary treatment. Supplication commentaries are explanatory conduits of the Imams' most cherished legacy, their prayers. Although tempting to overlook as a medium confined to the interests of personal religious devotion, commentaries articulate and defend the most relevant, defining themes and concepts in the life of a Shiʿi Muslim, while bringing to light difficult philosophical questions about moral responsibility and the nature of reality. Whether about belief, metaphysics, or epistemology, the evidence of supplication has been indispensable to

Shiʿi scholars for making their case. Numerous examples can be found in the classical works of Shiʿi creed (*iʿtiqād*) and theology (*kalām*). When Shaykh al-Ṣadūq in *al-Iʿtiqādāt* argues against extremism (*ghuluww*), he cites the supplication of Imam al-Riḍāʾ, repudiating (*barāʾa*) those who claim the Imams' command over matters of life and death.[1] When Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī in *Tajrīd al-iʿtiqādāt* defends the Imams' preeminence, he affirms the favor of God in answering their supplications,[2] a favor proving for al-ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī, in *Kashf al-murād*, the superiority of the Imams over the Companions.[3] In his annotations of the latter commentary, the contemporary philosopher-mystic, Ḥasan Ḥasanzāda Āmulī (d. 2021), substantiates his position of the non-numerical value of the One through recourse to the supplication of Imam al-Sajjād.[4]

This purpose of discovering the extra-semantic import of texts is most clearly exhibited in commentaries that are specific to various supplications. In the preceding chapters, we have seen appeal to *Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ/al-simāt/al-saḥar* for vindicating arguments regarding historically disputatious issues, including the problem of evil, divine command theory, and the divine attributes and their relation to the ontology of God. In these instances, supplication becomes a means of establishing correspondence between thought and states of the world through the rules, meanings, and uses of language, detailed in commentaries. Commentators discover in supplication a criterion for the meaningfulness of concepts that may either refine or open new horizons of theocentric understanding. They also demonstrate their own interpretive acumen and bolster their status as authorities in the traditions of the Imams.

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[1] The relevant portion reads, "O God, I repudiate those who claim that we [the Imams] have the power of creation and sustenance, a repudiation similar to that of Jesus in respect of the Christians. O God, we have never called upon them to claim what they claim, so do not punish us for what they say and forgive us for what they claim"; Ibn Bābawayh, *Kitāb al-iʿtiqādāt*, 320–22.
[2] al-Ṭūsi, *Tajrīd al-iʿtiqād*, 284–85.
[3] al-Ḥillī, *Kashf al-murād*, 391.
[4] Āmulī quotes from the twenty-eighth supplication of the *Ṣaḥīfa*: "To You, my God, belongs the Unity of number"; al-Ḥillī, 495.

The Philosophy of Supplication in Shiʿism

By and large, Shiʿi clergy and laity alike perceive supplication as an active agency for human flourishing and positioning oneself in correct relation to the order of the divine. In the traditional Shiʿi understanding, supplication is a powerful counteractant of bad fortune. It does not merely deflect affliction and disease but is an attainable means for the fulfillment of desires, beliefs, and intentions. As amulets, incantations, invocations, and–in the hands of the special elect–conjurations of the Beautiful Names (*al-asmāʾ al-ḥusnā*), one discovers an instrument for exerting influence over the causal relations of things. Their arrangement of words by a *maʿṣūm* symbolize the power and glory of God and possess the inherent ability to actualize powers and mirabilia granted from God to (a devout) humankind.

The precise concatenation of words that make up a supplication is itself a crucial matter of authenticity and efficacy for Shiʿa. Supplication cannot be formulated willy-nilly. Its syntax and phraseology are unique and, according to Shiʿi creed, expressed in an impeccable form that cannot be replicated by anyone, whether shaykh, murshid, pīr, or quṭb.[5] Even the mere suggestion of inauthenticity of particular supplications has invoked the ire of members of the religious establishments in Iran and Iraq; and often the principle of leniency (*al-tasāmuḥ/ tasāhul fī adillat al-sunan*) is marshalled as a defensive legal mechanism toward protecting a supplication's alleged assailability.

Supplication involves a form of reciprocity that, where sincere and humble recognition is paired with a plea, hinges on a philosophical argument that may be stated: one must be aware

[5] There are several exceptions, widely acknowledged to have been composed by Shiʿi authorities, including *Duʿāʾ al-tawassul* and *Duʿāʾ al-ʿadīla*. Other minor examples, particularly those located outside the canon of trusted compendia, are a subject of debate, limited to a few specialists.

and demonstrate that they need God in order for Him to answer *a* need. Whereas the first need is absolute and existential, the second is limited and contingent, a relationship essential towards understanding worship practices and their values assigned by Shiʿi scholars. Much of the latter revolve around acknowledgement of a person's existential privation, juxtaposed often to the material privation of the indigent. In the Catholic tradition, the Catechism (#2559) states that "Man is a beggar before God." Indeed, Islam too emphasizes this point, particularly in the supplication tradition that frequently contrasts God's superabundance (e.g., *ghanīy*) with humankind's poverty (*faqr*). The figure of ʿAlī offers the supreme example as both beggar and one who serves the beggar. In the famous gesture, alluded to in the Qur'an (5:55), ʿAlī, while bowing in prayer, gives his ring to a man requesting his charity. As a paragon of virtue for Shiʿis, he shows how a "man of prayer" (*rajul al-duʿāʾ*)[6] behaves, one whose moral conduct is not limited to the time of obligatory prayer and who, even during these brief intervals, is doubly responsive to God's commands in terms of worship and charity.

By testifying that ʿAlī indeed gave charity in the Qur'anic account, such as included in the lines of *Ziyārat Amīr al-Muʾminīn*, read on the day of Ghadīr, one affirms the desiderata for the Shiʿa.[7] To acknowledge and honor such civil acts in supplication is to hope that readers imitate them and in doing so, emulate the Imams' speech *and* their deeds. When the various supplications testify as they often do that the Imams "strove for the sake of God, acted upon His Book, and followed the tradition of His Prophet,"[8] or that they "performed the prayers, gave alms, enjoined the right, and forbade the wrong,"[9] these affirmative attestations act as a general invitation to piety and obedience. We are reminded, at the same time, of the high stakes of sinful

[6] al-Ḥillī, *ʿUddat al-dāʿī*, 205.
[7] al-Qummī, *Mafātīḥ al-jinān*, 2014, 389.
[8] From *Ziyārat Amīn Allāh*; al-Qummī, 373.
[9] From *Ziyārat al-Imām al-Ḥusayn*; al-Qummī, 441.

rebellion, such as in the lines of *Duʿāʾ al-ʿadīla*: "To pattern after them [the Imams] will definitely achieve salvation, but to oppose them will definitely bring about destruction."[10] Indeed, the *ziyārāt* for each day of the week, dedicated to one or several of the *maʿṣūmīn*, concludes with the supplicant's plea that they be honored among the *maʿṣūm*'s guests (*ḍayf*) for the day, and earn their worth as faithful servants of the Prophet's household.[11]

Like many other concepts that feature in the Islamic intellectual tradition, the devotional station that one can reach is tiered. In commentaries, one encounters the distinction: The lower rungs assume that their spirituality is substantive and expect its expressions to yield results, and the higher rungs always assume their spirituality is wanting and expect nothing in return. Per the high ethical pedigree, exemplified in Imam ʿAlī and enjoined by ethicists such as Ibn Fahd al-Ḥillī, a true devotee simultaneously serves God and others. They perform religious deeds while in a state of humility, extend kindness to their kin and community, offer charity, and pray for others. Only then, as a result, can supplicants hope that their prayers may be answered. Ibn Fahd still advises out of caution that one always offer praise (*al-ḥamd*) and forgiveness (*al-istighfār*) to ward off the delusion of self-sufficiency and the "gradual destruction" (*istidrāj*) suffered (eventually) by the supercilious.

The Role of Commentaries

In the preceding chapters, commentators have been shown to put supplicative formulae to use, interpreting them to conform to various modes of thought to which they are partisan. They provide translations of a sort, converting raw contents into statements and assertions voicing various enterprises of thought. In other words, a commentator applies a kind of language, viewed

[10] al-Qummī, 115.
[11] al-Qummī, 77–83.

as more perspicuous, to voice that of another. In doing so, they clarify the relations and allusions hidden in the surface symbols of the original text. Accepting any interpretation as a criterion of truth gets cashed out in various ways. Commentaries extend a revisable religious inheritance, based on group consensus and linguistic norms. The small consensuses over explanations play into a larger picture of confessional unity. Whereby supplication connects adherents by sectarian ritual, its commentaries reinforce connections by the intra-sectarian meaning of its vocables. In orienting readers to texts, the authorship of commentaries additionally expresses a political will. Prayer resources direct worship and emphasize faithfulness to the Imams and the jurist scholars, granted authority in the Major Occultation. Participation in worship not only transforms the individual, but their relationship to others, generating social recognition and approval. As guides to ritual participation and summoners to acceptable practices, supplication collections and commentaries simultaneously conserve and augment the essential social, religious, and normative values which take form under the dominant forces of influence.

Each of the commentators draws from the same fount from which interpretation flows (e.g. Qur'an and hadith), but there is no neutral, transparent way to ensure correct interpretation. And although it may be tempting to confine the interpretative differences of commentators to the appearance of ambiguity in hallowed sources, this is plainly not so.

Since a *maʿṣūm* is unavailable to us to affirm the positive epistemic status of a belief (and entitlement to the belief), one may suggest instead that it be checked according to symmetry with revelation and reason. Whether and how an interpretation can be justified by accord with revelation and reason, however, ultimately depends on an individual, steeped in the knowledge of these categories, who says if and why they are so. Belief and justification over the meaning of a supplication report is consequently inherited from religious authorities in the same way that the

authenticity of a legal report of non-renowned status is "repaired" (*injibār*) by recourse to early authorities of the law (*qudamāʾ*). To be sure, there are different goals whether regarding, in the first instance, assigning certain signification to the content of a report and, in the second instance, regarding the reliability of the transmission of the report. Meaning and authenticity both still require the imprimatur, however institutionally official, of a person whose expertise is acquired through experience, training, and social recognition. Short of their warrant, there is no logically necessary proof for any one interpretation over another. This does not imply arbitrariness on their part, however. A consistent, underlying semantic character must reveal itself for any denotational order to be derived and leveraged by an interpreter, beholden to one tradition over another. That is, there are certain commonalities that must obtain in order for differences to occur, and these commonalities are essential for any point of commentarial departure as well as for preserving the broader category of group affiliation, whether, Muslim, Shiʿi, or Imami. More than this, interpreters draw from the same pool of traditional resources to help prove and guide the explication of texts, resources that include the classical hadith books and those of the "three Muḥammads" of the Safavid period.[12] In doing so, they establish themselves as part of a continuum, an interpretive community, spanning centuries, grounded in the rational convergence of opinion over authoritative sources.

Commentary as Tradition: Four Case Studies and a Summary

We have previously stated that a commentator's interpretation depends on the tradition to which they ascribe and described how social practice may be localized in language. While most would agree that a person's group background shapes their view of reality, the way that this shared

[12] These are Muḥammad al-Fayḍ al-Kāshānī's *al-Wāfī*, Muḥammad al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī's *Wasāʾil al-shīʿa*, and Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī's *Biḥār al-anwār*.

background is expressed in (rules of) language use has rarely been applied to the theological frameworks of understanding in religious commentary traditions. Yet, as I have shown, these commentaries are useful localized expositions of religious belief, behavior, and attitudes. They draw upon the resources of knowledge and experience to give expression to a view of religion that possesses, in the mind of the commentator, the highest epistemic virtues, and that is acquired through the transmission of scholarly forebearers. A kind of conceptual triangulation occurs where norm-governed commentary that proves itself consistent, non-contradictory, and rooted in reliable sources may appeal to an audience, already convinced of the inherent benefits of a supplication's recitation. Commentary improves and expands understanding, and, in this sense, is therapeutic.

Our case studies have included four main commentators and three supplications. Each commentator belongs and adheres to a tradition of Shiʿism that obtains a normative status for its bearer and comprises a constellation of doxastic commitments. A commentator models a regulatory framework in hopes that the reader may be persuaded or reconstituted in a way, by relying on particular uses of language that convey this stock of ideas. They participate in assertional practices and the justifications undergirding them, common to a group. Many connections and throughlines may be discovered between commentators. The full extent of their overlap cannot be here explicated, however some general observations among those featured in this dissertation merit mention.

Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ by Sayyid Quṭb al-Dīn Nayrīzī shows a strong tendency to underscore God's transcendence, becoming a guiding principle of commentary. Many of the supplication's passages conjure the aspects of *jamāl* and *jalāl* in the poetical responses of Nayrīzī. The supplicant/commentator reacts with hope that they may earn God's grace through

pious acts and with fear in the potential rejection and absolute will of the same God who, on this account, is fundamentally ineffable.

Nayrīzī's commentary examples a playful ambiguity between the dual notions of Real and creation and between God's unknowable essence and names/attributes that stand for His imminence. Designations of the divine in *Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ* become essentially acts of divine mercy whose ritualized combination in prayer and liturgy transform worshippers into people worthy of this mercy. However circuitous the transmission–possibly through his master, Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsāʾī, the alleged student of Nayrīzī–Rashtī exhibits this concept's warm reception in his commentary of *Duʿāʾ al-simāt.* In the latter case, Rashtī also precludes such talk of God's essence. Designations of the divine, featured in *Duʿāʾ al-simāt*, are instead reframed as those of the Imams; and the rabbinic content of the supplication is reconfigured to tell their cosmogonical narrative. Rashtī, like al-Aḥsāʾī before him in *Sharḥ al-Ziyāra al-jāmiʿa al-kabīra*, assimilates the supplications of the Imams to his apprehension of Shiʿism, what would become known as Shaykhism (*al-Shaykhiyya*), that includes ample allegorical and alchemical dimensions integrated in both commentaries.

The second commentary of *Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ* by Mullā Hādī Sabzivārī makes apparent the influence of Mullā Ṣadrā and *ḥikma mutaʿāliya*, and by extension, Ibn ʿArabī. Whereas Nayrīzī turns to Persian poetry, distilling strong psychological responses in few words in his commentary of *Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, Sabzivārī leverages philosophy as a means for deducing its meaning. Being (*wujūd*) becomes a recognizable object of his interpretation in *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, otherwise known as *Miftāḥ al-falāḥ wa-miṣbāḥ al-najāt*. In its pages, insight with regards to being, its difference from quiddity (*māhiyya*), and the mode of its differentiation via *tashkīk* reflects more than propositional content. It envisions a telos of eudaimonia for humankind and shapes the ideal

character traits (*akhlāq*) of a Muslim, particularly patience and gratitude. Here, the soul's progressive transcendence from matter is occasioned by levels of perspicacity, these traits a natural consequence of commitment to the mystically inclined path. As Sabzivārī underscores, quiddities–coded as "fragments of the dark night" in *Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*–lack the extra-mental reality of being and unnecessarily encumber human attention. With this recognition of being, one may unburden the soul and recover its pure form. All being, he maintains, is good to greater or lesser degree, while quiddities leach puissance from being, driving its privation. Goodness lies in *potentia*, dependent on the intensity and priority realized of being *in esse*. In *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, Sabzivārī applies this very concept to supplication. The supplications of the Imams are guiding lights whose potency also depends on the supplicant's variable state of being.[13] The human being, described by Sabzivārī as the "temple of Oneness" (*haykal al-tawḥīd*) in his introduction to *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, is the theophany of God's Beautiful Names, who attains perfection in the Prophet and his *walī*, the Imam.[14] This perfection of the Perfect Man is reflected in their inimitable speech. Thus, the common speaker is enjoined to learn from the superlative *nāṭiq*, "the speaker of God's words,"[15] and realize the hidden potential of perfection that lies within. Doing so hinges on the comprehension of the hidden meaning of the text, for, as Sabzivārī avers, "exoteric interpretation without esoteric interpretation is like morning without brightness, or rather still, like a body without a soul."[16]

The language of supplication, for Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, contains hidden powers of awareness. As a partisan of *ḥikma mutaʿāliya*, Khoemini applies its patterns of thought to his commentary of *Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*, known also as *Duʿāʾ al-bahāʾ*. He submits a modern rendition of

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[13] Mullā Hādī Sabzivārī, *Sharḥ asmāʾ*, 43.
[14] Mullā Hādī Sabzivārī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, 8.
[15] Sabzivārī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, 8.
[16] *Idh al-tafsīr bi-lā taʾwīl ka-ṣabāḥa bi-lā malāḥa, bal ka-shabaḥ bi-lā rūḥ*; Sabzivārī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, 9.

this tradition, inspired by the close influence of his teachers, including centrally Sayyid Abū al-Ḥasan Rafiʿī Qazwīnī (d. 1975), who also wrote a commentary of *Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*. Khomeini uses light as a primary metaphor for *wujūd*, where the titular "splendor" (*bahāʾ*) offers an imagistic token of God's creative power. Light becomes a ground for knowing the divine in the way it is reflected in the attributes of perfection, featured in the supplication, and including the individual letters that constitute the attributes. Although each attribute may be explicated further and discovered to produce myriad references to images and sensible forms in embodied existence, they all are aspects of the same divine creative force. In the words of Khomeini, rephrased from Mullā Ṣadrā, each attribute reveals "the unity in the essence of multiplicity" and vice versa.[17] Khomeini's exploration of "the world of letters," of Arabic dots and diacritics, shows the appearance of the Real in its many attributive modes, e.g., those of beauty, glory, mercy, and others in *Duʿāʾ al-saḥar.* This point is demonstrated also in the parallelism of the supplication's poetical patten, in the morphology that the attribute (e.g., *bahāʾ*, *abhāʾ*, *bahīy*) undergoes in each stanza which produces a framing effect, stylistically and conceptually, each reinforcing the other. The structure is the temple, the stable context of utterance, for the divine call (*duʿāʾ*) that emphasizes and intensifies the various aspects of God's being and that requires the repetition of ritual recitation. Whereas the first presents sameness, the other (re)presents this sameness in difference.

Khomeini's *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-saḥar* provides a clear window into his religious influences at an early stage of his clerical calling. On its own, it is not a great work of commentary and recapitulates many of the themes and allusions that appear elsewhere. More important than the notion of this work's originality, however, it helps reveal the enduring value of commentaries as

[17] Khomeini, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*, 111–12.

a vehicle for the exposition of Shiʿi prayer. Commentaries of supplication, such as Khomeini's, explain the sense of Imamate speech and aid the primarily Arabic-literate laity in overcoming the potential differences in language, the arcane subject matter and rhetoric, and the distance, historical and presential, between themselves and the Imam. Supplicative passages are converted into sacral conceptions of mythological and tangible imagery. They provide insight into the intra-Imami modes of thought and discourse, among groups that promote a tradition of the faith to which they subscribe. Their many excurses into the realms of cosmology and natural phenomena additionally provide insight into the way God, the upholder of all reality, upholds this reality.

There is much work that may be considered for future studies in Islamic supplication and commentaries on devotion, areas of critical neglect in the Western academic realm. The study carried out in this dissertation that appertains to hermeneutics may pave the way for further analysis to encompass the methods of historical inquiry and literary criticism. In the four main case studies, the choice of commentator was preferred over the sources of commentary, i.e., the supplication. This approach was designed to showcase the rhetorical and interpretive techniques of commentators in the detail that they deserve and emphasize diversity of thought against any perennial theme or idea, uniting commentators. As a consequence, the authors' discursive modes, in their application to texts, have been elevated over the historical factors in which the modes developed. This leaves out the challenge of identifying the kinds of social and political participation that influence the value of religious materials and the perspectival attitudes of those reading them, especially as they are shaped by the institutionalizing effects of the state.

A Final Note

According to Sabzivārī, all the world's living creatures subsist in a state of supplication, what he calls a "pre-dispositional appeal" (*istidʿā-yi istiʿdādī*), i.e., a request with the power to manifest

what is potential, granted immediately.[18] In his example, as soon as water spills and is spread unto an outside surface, it reflects the sun. God is constantly granting pre-dispositional appeals with regards to the things of nature (*ṭabīʿiyyāt*). The nature of humans is different, however, and so is the nature of their entreaty (*duʿāʾ*). Unlike plants and animals, humans make false intellectual leaps and assumptions. In the examples of Sabzivārī, they ask for heat during winter, and they ask for temporal power without any of its required means. Humans ask for what they do not understand and for things that are impossible, things like treasure and riches that, if they were granted, would cause their own destruction.[19] God, who is solicited for such things, knows what the supplicant does not, and this factor, the knowledge of what is best for creation, is one related to the unfulfillment of their entreaty.[20] The onus, as Sabzivārī concludes, is then for people who wish to have their prayers answered to discern what God demands in terms of the preparations required to receive the best possible reception of the divine. In short, prayer accomplishes God's will, but this will makes conditional demands on the intellect and on conduct.

Most Shiʿi commentators with concern for supplication and its efficaciousness would agree with Sabzivārī and his reasoning. Within Shiʿi creed, a believer has a measure of free will. Each choice on the part of the individual is a manifestation of personal responsibility and a chance at earning dignity. The constant refreshment of the now is not something completely out of the believer's hands, but dependent on their thoughts and actions. Supplication is an act that sentient creatures perform that is further informed by the sapience of which words people choose to utter, what these words tabulate in terms of meaning, and the reasons for their utterance. Commentary of Shiʿi supplication is an inextricable aspect of generating and reforming this

[18] Sabzivārī, *Rasāʾil-i Ḥakīm Sabzivārī*, 337.
[19] Sabzivārī, 337–38.
[20] Other reasons concern religious law, such as the failure to honor legal obligations.

sapience, a way to explain and expand the petitionary content transmitted by God's most eloquent vicegerents.

Appendix A: The Traditional Provenance of the Featured Supplications

On *Duʾāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*

Although its provenance is uncertain, *Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ* survives in the most ubiquitous of Imami prayer collections, Shaykh ʿAbbās al-Qummī's *Mafātīḥ al-jinān*, as its first selection under the category of *duʿāʾ*.

In *Biḥār al-anwār*, al-Majlisī records that Imam ʿAlī composed *Duʾāʾ al-ṣabāḥ* on the eleventh of the Islamic month, *Dhū al-Ḥijja*, 25/646.[1] He mentions that *Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ* cannot be found among reliable (*muʿtabar*) texts, except for Sayyid ʿAlī b. Husayn b. Hasan b. al-Bāqī al-Qurashī's *Ikhtiyār al-miṣbāḥ,* an abridgement of al-Ṭūsī's *al-Miṣbāḥ al-mutahajjid*, that features certain prayer additions unrecorded in al-Ṭūsī's work, including *Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*. Al-Qurashī's preface to the supplication does not indicate its provenance, only revealing that Imam ʿAlī would read the supplication after the Fajr prayer.[2]

Al-Majlisī appeals to the authority of others who accepted and taught *Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*. He mentions his great grandfather and the student of Zayn al-Dīn al-ʿAmilī al-Jubaʿī (d. 965/1557), Kamāl al-Dīn Darwīsh Muḥammad al-Aṣbahānī, who provided the *ijāza* for ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn al-Muḥaqqiq al-Karakī (d. 940/1534) to narrate the supplication in the year 939/1532–33.[3] He supplements this account with other evidence, including an alternative text bearing the *sanad* of al-Sharīf Yaḥyā b. al-Qāsim al-ʿAlawī (d. ca. 753/1353), the latter claiming to have copied the supplication from an original source, inscribed on a long parchment scroll by Imam ʿAlī, dated

[1] al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 91:247.
[2] Sayyid ʿAlī b. Husayn b. Hasan b. al-Bāqī al-Qurashī, *Ikhtiyār al-miṣbāḥ* (Qom: Maktabat al-ʿAlāma al-Majlisī, 2011), 276. There is little information available about Qurashī other than Sayyid Muḥsin al-Amīn's citation of *Ikhtiyār al-miṣbāḥ* being composed in the year 653/1255; al-Amīn al-ʿĀmilī, *Aʿyān al-Shīʿa*, 8:191.
[3] al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 91:247.

11 Dhū l-Ḥijja, 25/646.[4] Other scholars of the Safavid era would follow al-Majlisī in transmitting *Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, including Mullā Muḥsin al-Fayḍ al-Kāshānī[5] and al-Shaykh ʿAbd Allāh b. Ṣāliḥ al-Samāhījī al-Baḥrānī (d. 1135/1723).[6]

Al-Majlisī follows his *isnād* reporting of *Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ* with his own commentary of the supplication, spanning roughly fifteen pages,[7] one among approximately twenty-five such commentaries cataloged by Āqā Buzurg al-Ṭihrānī.[8] In addition to the commentaries analyzed herein (those of Mullā Hādī Sabzivārī and Sayyid Quṭb al-Dīn Nayrīzī) is *Miftāḥ al-falāḥ*[9] by the philosopher jurist and teacher of Muḥaqqiq Narāqī, Mullā Ismāʿīl b. Muḥammad Māzandarānī Khwajūʾī (d. 1173/1759–60), and the more recent works, *Aḍwāʾ ʿalā Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*[10] by the Najafi Shiʿi scholar, Sayyid ʿIzz al-Dīn Baḥr al-ʿUlūm (d. ca. 1991), executed under Saddam Hussein's Baʿathist regime, and *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*[11] by the modern Saudi cleric, Shaykh Haṣan Makkī al-Khuwaylidī (b. 1960).

The problem of *Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*'s absence in classical *muʿtabar* texts, for some scholars, is mitigated by its distinct feature of language, indicative of the inimitable speech of Imam ʿAlī. In the introduction to his commentary, Khwajūʾī acknowledges that he was unable to discover a sound *sanad*, but argues that the supplication's "sublime contents, marvelous prose, and astonishing style" reveal the "blessed source" of the Imam.[12] He agrees with those that hold the

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[4] al-Majlisī, 91:247.
[5] Muḥammad b. Murtaḍā b. Maḥmūd al-Fayḍ al-Kāshānī, *Dharīʿat al-ḍarāʿa* (Tehran: Madrasa-yi ʿĀlī-yi Shahīd Muṭahharī, 2008), 426–32.
[6] ʿAbd Allāh b. Ṣāliḥ al-Samāhījī al-Baḥrānī, *al-Ṣaḥīfa al-ʿAlawiyya wa-l-Tuḥfa al-Murtaḍawiyya* (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Balāgh, 1988), 106.
[7] al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 91:247–63. A separate, annotated version is available. See Muḥammad Bāqir b. Muḥammad Taqī al-Majlisī, *Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ* (Beirut: Dār al-ʿUlūm, 1989).
[8] Many are indicated by Tihrānī to be composed in Persian prose (*naẓm fārsī*); al-Ṭihrānī, *al-Dharīʿa,* 8:252–56.
[9] Mullā Ismāʿīl b. Muḥammad Ḥusayn Māzandarānī Khwajūʾī, *Miftāḥ al-falāḥ wa-miṣbāḥ al-najāḥ fī sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, ed. al-Sayyid Mahdī al-Rajāʾī (Mashhad: Mujamaʿ al-Buḥūth al-Islāmiyya, 1993).
[10] Sayyid ʿIzz al-Dīn Baḥr al-ʿUlūm, *Aḍwāʾ ʿalā Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ* (Beirut: Dār al-Zahrāʾ, 1991).
[11] Haṣan b. ʿAlī Makkī al-Khuwaylidī, *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ* (Beirut: Dār al-Muṣṭafā li-Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth, 2002).
[12] Khwajūʾī, *Miftāḥ al-falāḥ*, 11–12.

standard criterion, articulated by Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd (d. ca. 605/1258): "The Imam's speech is higher than that of creatures and lower than that of the Creator."[13] The twentieth century Najafi *marjaʿ*, Muḥammad Ḥusayn Kāshif al-Ghiṭaʾ (d. 1373/1954), defends the supplication's authenticity on a similar basis. He reasons that each Imam possesses a "special style (*uslūb khaṣṣ*) of commendation of God," apparent to all who immerse themselves in their traditions and supplications, that operates at the highest levels of eloquence (*al-faṣāḥa wa-l-balāgha*).[14] He further claims a consistency between the style of *Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ* and the most famous supplication attributed to Imam ʿAlī, *Duʿāʾ al-Kumayl*, that eliminates any doubt as to their matching author, despite not divulging any method of comparative analysis.[15]

On *Duʿāʾ al-simāt*

Shaykh al-Ṭūsī is first among supplication compilers to include *Duʿāʾ al-simāt*, also known as *Duʿāʾ al-shabbūr*, in *Miṣbāḥ al-mutahajjid*. In what is repeated in all subsequent entries of the supplication, he notes that it should be read in the "last hours of Friday afternoon" and that it was narrated by [Muḥammad b. ʿUthmān b. Saʿīd] al-ʿAmrī (d. 305/917), the second deputy (*nāʾib*) of the twelfth Imam.[16] In his supplication manual, *Jamāl al-usbūʿ*, al- Ibn Ṭāwūs claims to have narrated *Duʿāʾ al-simāt* according to three separate chains, all on the original authority of Imam al-Ṣādiq.[17] In the work, Ibn Ṭāwūs reproduces the supplication's text, copied by the early scholar of *rijāl* and mentor of Shaykh al-Mufīd, Hārūn b. Mūsā al-Talʿukbarī (d. 385/995), which he describes as the most complete (*atamm*).[18] This version contains several

[13] Khwajūʾī, 12.
[14] Muḥammad Ḥusayn Kāshif al-Ghiṭaʾ, *al-Firdūs al-aʿlā* (Qom: Anwār al-Hudā, 2005), 90.
[15] al-Ghiṭaʾ, 90.
[16] al-Ṭūsī, *Miṣbāḥ al-mutahajjid*, 297.
[17] ʿAlī b. Mūsā b. Jaʿfar Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Jamāl al-usbūʿ bi-kamāl al-ʿamal al-mashrūʿ*, ed. Javād Quyyūmī al-Jazaʾī al-Iṣfahānī (Qom: Muʾassasat al-Āfāq, 1993), 321.
[18] Ibn Ṭāwūs, 321.

textual variants that differ from the versions of al-Ṭūsī and al-Majlisī, including the addition of several short phrases, prepositions and conjunctions, indicated by *Jamāl al-usbūʿ*'s editor.[19] Shaykh ʿAbbās al-Qummī, in *Mafātīḥ al-jinān*, preserves al-Ṭūsī's original version, commenting that it was one of the famous supplications read by the scholarly predecessors (*ʿulamāʾ al-salaf*) and narrated through reliable *isnād* that trace back to Imams al-Bāqir and al-Ṣādiq.[20]

Al-Majlisī, in the *Biḥār*, provides a more thorough account that additionally includes his own commentary (*tawḍīḥ wa-tibyān*).[21] He offers the transmission line, whose last link, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ʿUbayd Allāh al-Jawharī b. ʿAyyāsh, relates the chain: Abū al-Ḥusayn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Ḥasanī → Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. al-Ḥasan al-Rāshidī → al-Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad b. al-Ṣabāḥ → Muḥammad b. ʿUthmān b. Saʿīd al-ʿAmrī, the first deputy of Imam al-Mahdī. Al-Majlisī follows with the following account, beginning with a group of Shiʿi faithful who ask al-ʿAmrī:

> "O master, how can you explain that a lot of people have come to trust in [*Duʿāʾ*] al-*shabbūr* of the Jews against those who have stolen from them,[22] despite ʿĪsā b. Maryam and Muḥammad, the Messenger of God, uttering imprecations against them [the Jews]?" He [al-ʿAmrī] responded, "This [the efficaciousness of the supplication] has two causes, an apparent one and a hidden one. As for the apparent one, it [*Duʿāʾ al-shabbūr*] contains the names of God and His praise, despite the fact that it [the supplication] is poorly and incompletely transmitted (*mabtūr*) by them [the Jews], while with us [the Shiʿa], it is accurate and perfectly intact, transmitted by the Masters of the People of Remembrance, from each generation to the next, until reaching us. As for the hidden one, we have narrated from the Knower (*al-ʿālim*, i.e., the Imam) who spoke, 'If a believer supplicates, God says: This is a voice that I love to hear. [He commands:] Fulfill their need, but suspend it, between heaven and earth, so that, out of My desire for it, they increase their supplication. And if the unbeliever supplicates, God says: This is a voice that I hate to hear. [He commands:] Fulfill their need, hastening it

[19] Ibn Ṭāwūs, 321–24.
[20] al-Qummī, *Mafātīḥ al-jinān*, 2014, 98.
[21] al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 90: 101–26. Aghā Buzurg al-Ṭihrānī estimates there to be at least twenty commentaries (*shurūḥ*) on *Duʿāʾ al-simāt*; al-Ṭihrānī, *al-Dharīʿa*, 8:190.
[22] The *Shabbūr* supplication was apparently recited by Jews as a curse against thieves and brigands. Hossein Modarressi, *Tradition and Survival* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2003), 336.

> so that I no longer hear their voice, and they become occupied by what they request, opposite humble submission (*khushūʿ*).'"
>
> They [the assembled faithful] said, "We would like you to dictate for us *Duʿāʾ al-simāt* that is the [authentic] *shabbūr* so that we may supplicate from it against our oppressors, tyrants, deceivers, and those that rule over us (*al-mutaʿazzizīn*)." He [al-ʿAmrī] spoke, "Abū ʿAmr ʿUthmān b. Saʿīd al-ʿAmrī narrated to me [through the chain: Muḥammad b. Rāshid → Muḥammad b. Sinān → al-Mufaḍḍal b. ʿUmar al-Juʿfī], 'Some of the elite among the Shiʿa asked this question [concerning the efficacity of the Jewish supplication] to Abū ʿAbd Allāh [Imam al-Ṣādiq] who answered with the same response [as above], quoting [his father] Abū Jaʿfar Bāqir al-ʿIlm: If people knew what we know–the knowledge concerning these matters [of supplication], the greatness of their station before God, and the speed of God's response to the supplicant, together with what God has stored for them in terms of divine reward–they would have slayed each other with swords over it. God, however, favors those out of His mercy whom He wills.'" He [Imam Bāqir] then said, "As for myself, if I were to swear that the Greatest Name (*al-ism al-aʿẓam*) is mentioned in it [*Duʿāʾ al-simāt*], then I would not have lied [lit. sinned]. Thus, if you supplicate, make intense efforts (*ijtahidū*) to plead for permanency (*al-bāqī*) and abandon the ephemeral (*al-fānī*). 'Indeed, what is with God is far better and more lasting [42:36].'" He then said, "This [*Duʿāʾ al-simāt*] is one of the secrets of knowledge and treasured matters to which God Almighty responds, 'In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful…[providing the supplication in full].'"[23]

Al-Majlisī's account substantiates *Duʿāʾ al-simāt* as originally a Jewish supplication, however, as claimed, fragmentarily transmitted. This evidence leads Modarressi to speculate that the supplication's traditional Arabic pronunciation, *al-samāt*, originates from the Hebrew, *shammetha*, which derives from the term *sham-mithah*, "death is there" (Arabic: *thamma al-mawt*).[24] Among several degrees of Jewish execration, *shammetha* was an irrevocable

[23] al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 90: 96–7.

[24] Modarressi cites the following relevant sections of the Mo'ed Katan, the eleventh tractate of the Mishnah and Talmud, as proof of the *samāt*'s Arabicized adaptation of *shammetha*: The Gemara [Talmud] proceeds with a discussion that explains the severity of the punishment of excommunication: What is the meaning of the word excommunication [*shammetha*]? Rav said: This word is a contraction of the expression there is death [*sham-mithah*], alluding to the deathly aspect of excommunication. And Shmuel said: *Shammetha* means that he will be a desolation, and it is effective upon him like fat smeared on an oven. Just as some of the fat will always remain absorbed in the walls of the oven, so too some aspect of the curse contained in the excommunication will continue to adhere to him even after the excommunication has been nullified [Talmud, Mo'ed Katan, 17a: 21]; Modarressi, *Tradition and Survival*, 336, fn. 85.

excommunicative act directed against heinous offenders of the faith.[25] Such would appear to correspond with the original request of al-ʿAmrī's audience who seek anathemas against their adversaries. While the prayerful formulas of supplication can be a curse against an enemy, they may also be a blessing for believers, as the example of the Israelite's fate shows. So much, in terms of thaumaturgic utility, is consistent in the transition from *Duʿāʾ al-shabbūr* to *al-simāt.*

Modarressi further claims that later Shiʿi scholars, in an effort to make *al-samāt* conform to common Arabic meanings, swapped the *fatḥa* for the *kasra* diacritic, producing the plural form (*simāt*) of *sima*, "sign." Al-Kafʿamī confirms the latter's diacritic construction, suggesting the synonym *al-ʿalāmāt*, "marks" or "signs," and the connotation *ʿalāmat al-ijāba*, "sign of the fulfillment [of the supplication]."[26]

Majlisī provides an additional account related to *Duʿāʾ al-simāt*, narrated from Imam al-Bāqir:

> When Joshua (Yūshaʿ b. Nūn), the successor of Moses, confronted the Amalek (*al-ʿAmālīq*),[27] their vast configuration struck fear into the hearts of the Children of Israel, who complained to God. In response, God commanded Joshua to order each of those that formed their elite to join forces and receive this supplication which some of the demons, jinn, and humans were unable to overhear. After learning it, they launched a massive attack on the Amalek camp right before dawn, breaking through their ranks. The Amalekites became like "uprooted palm trunks" (Q. 54:20), their hollows blown up and dead. So receive it [*Duʿāʾ al-simāt*] against those who transgress against you, for it derives from the deepest treasures of hidden knowledge. Supplicate from it and do not waste it on foolish women, children, the wrongdoers, and hypocrites.[28]

Pairing the mythic with the mystical, Imam al-Bāqir's tradition augments the Jewish pulse of *Duʿāʾ al-shabbūr*, re-rendering an episode of the Isrāʾīliyyāt to affirm the power of Muslim

[25] Henry Hart Milman, *History of the Jews*, 2 vols. (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1913), 2:163.
[26] al-Kafʿamī, *al-Balad al-amīn*, 134.
[27] The ʿAmālīq were an ancient nomadic tribe. They were inveterate enemies of the Israelites and appear in several stories of the Hebrew Bible. They are unmentioned in the Qurʾān.
[28] al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 90:102.

prayer.[29] Its adaptation of Jewish sacred history is typical of early Shiʿi exegesis that borrowed from Jewish mythology more liberally than Sunni counterparts.[30]

Although most Shiʿi scholars accept the authenticity of *Duʿāʾ al-simāt*,[31] it has its detractors from within the tradition. In response as to the reliability of the supplication, al-Sayyid al-Khūʾī (d. 1992) gave the following pithy response, "The strength of its *sanad* is not evident to us."[32] Although he neglects to corroborate his claim, there appears to be two apparent problems with its chain of transmission: 1) Several of the transmitters are unknown, including all of those in al-Majlisī's chain, up until al-ʿAmrī. 2) Several of those in al-ʿAmrī's chain are recorded as possessing *ghuluww* tendencies, including Muḥammad b. Sinān (d. 220/835), accused of lying and inventing hadith,[33] and al-Mufaḍḍal b. ʿUmar al-Juʿfī (d. 145/762), follower of the infamous Abū al-Khaṭṭāb al-Asadī (d. 138/755), who was excommunicated by Imam al-Ṣādiq.[34] The prominent Iraqi *marjaʿ*, Sayyid Kāẓim Ḥusaynī al-Ḥāʾirī (b. 1938), holds an intermediate, though affirmative, position, qualified by an oblique appeal to leniency (*tasāmuḥ*) in his suggestion that *Duʿāʾ al-simāt*'s recitation be permissible on the condition of "intent of closeness [to God]" (*niyyat al-qurba*).[35]

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[29] While the Pentateuchal Hebrew prophets, including Abraham, Isaac, Moses, and Jacob, are repeatedly mentioned in the supplication, Ishmael is conspicuously absent.

[30] Reuven Firestone, *Journeys in Holy Lands: The Evolution of the Abraham-Ishmael Legends in Islamic Exegesis* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1990), 113.

[31] Sayyid ʿAlī al-Ḥusaynī Sistānī affirms the supplication's narration from the Imāms and encourages its recitation that earns reward for its reciters; "al-Istiftāʾāt: al-Duʿāʾ," Mawqiʿ Maktab Samāḥat al-Marjaʿ al-Dīnī ʿAlī al-Ḥusaynī Sistānī, accessed May 4, 2023, https://www.sistani.org/arabic/qa/0474.

[32] Abū al-Qāsim al-Mūsawī al-Khūʾī, *Munyat al-sāʾil* (Qom: Mūsā Mufīd al-Dīn ʿĀṣī al-ʿĀmilī, 1991), 236.

[33] Abū al-Ḥusayn Aḥmad Ibn al-Ghadāʾirī, *Rijāl Ibn al-Ghadāʿirī* (Qom: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 2001), 92. Abū ʿAmr Muḥammad al-Kashshī relates from early scholar of *rijāl,* Ḥamdawayh b. Naṣīr al-Kashshī (d. ca. 340/ 952), that it is impermissible to transmit traditions from Sinān. This view is supported by Shaykh al-Ṭūsī; Abū ʿAmr Muḥammad b. ʿUmar al-Kashshī, *Ikhtīyār maʿrifat al-rijāl*, 3 vols. (Tehran: Muʾassasat al-Ṣādiq, 2019), 2:433.

[34] Ron P. Buckley, "The Imām Ja'far al-Sādiq, Abū'l-Khattāb and the Abbasids," *Der Islam* 79, no. 1 (2002): 118–140.

[35] "al-Fatāwā al-Muntakhaba," al-Masʾala 21, Mawqiʿ Samāḥat al-Sayyid Kāẓim Ḥusaynī al-Ḥāʾirī, accessed May 3, 2023, https://alhaeri.org/pages/book-detail.php?bid=4&pid=295.

On *Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*

The earliest known source for the supplication that would become known as *Duʿāʾ al-saḥar* is Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's *Miṣbāḥ al-mutahajjid.*[36] There is no mention, however, of the supplication's present designation as *Duʿāʾ al-saḥar.* It is instead presented as *Duʿāʾ yawm al-mubāhala*. The "Day of *Mubāhala*" refers to the event occurring on the 24th of Dhū al-Ḥijja, 631, when the Prophet Muḥammad and his family members that make up the "companions of the cloak" (*aṣḥāb al-kisāʾ*)[37] convened with several Najrānī Christians of Yemen for a debate over the divinity of Christ and the nature of prophethood, where the latter were won over by the sanctity of the Prophet's household.[38] Shaykh al-Ṭūsī offers a transmission chain for the supplication's origination–Muḥammad b. Sulaymān al-Daylamī → al-Ḥusayn b. Khālid → Abū ʿAbd Allāh (Imam al-Ṣādiq)–whose reference is subsequently divorced from entries of *Duʿāʾ al-saḥar* in supplication compendia.

The most cited source for *Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*, that additionally offers evidence for its name, is recorded in Ibn Ṭāwūs' *Iqbāl al-aʿmāl*. *Duʿāʾ al-saḥar* occurs in the ninth chapter, dedicated to supplications and works during the month of Ramaḍān. Ibn Ṭāwūs reveals that he received the supplication from al-Ṭūsī, who, according to this account, received the supplication through ʿAlī b. al-Ḥasan al-Faḍḍal.[39] Another figure, Muḥammad Ibn Abī Qurra,[40] is also counted as a

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[36] al-Ṭūsī, *Miṣbāḥ al-mutahajjid*, 529–32.
[37] These includeʿAlī, Fāṭima, Ḥasan, and Ḥusayn..
[38] This event is referred to in the Qurʾān, 3:61: "Should anyone argue with you concerning him (Jesus), after the knowledge that has come to you, say, 'Come! Let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, our souls and your souls, then let us pray earnestly and call down God's curse upon the liars."
[39] al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī b. Faḍḍāl al-Taymulī al-Kūfī (d. 224/838–39) is widely reported, and praised for his reliability and piety, in Shiʿi biographical accounts. While originally a follower of ʿAbd Allāh al-Afṭaḥ, the second son of the sixth Imam al-Ṣādiq, he later repented and became a close companion of Imam al-Riḍā. Shaykh al-Tūsī considers him among the *aṣḥāb al-ijmāʿ*, transmitters considered the most reliable and usually numbering eighteen persons; Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī al-Ṭūsī, *Ikhtīyār maʿrifat al-rijāl*, 3 vols. (Tehran: Muʾassasat al-Ṣādiq, 2019), 3:225–26; Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī al-Ṭūsī, *al-Fihrist* (Qom: Muʾassasat Nashr al-Faqāha, 2001), 97–98.
[40] Ibn Ṭāwūs mentions that al-Faḍl b. Abī al-Qurra al-Tiflīsī included *Duʿāʾ al-saḥar* in his book, *Kitāb al-ṣawm*, that is no longer available; Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Iqbāl al-aʿmāl*, 345. Little information is otherwise available about al-Qurra other than his Azerbaijani origins and transmission of several traditions ascribed to Imām al-Ṣādiq; Abū al-ʿAbbās

transmitter of the supplication. Ibn Ṭāwūs reports that one of the Imam's followers, Ayyūb b. Yaqṭīn,[41] wrote Imam al-Riḍā, inquiring as to the authenticity of *Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*.[42] The Imam wrote back, affirming its authenticity and relating that the supplication originally derives from the fifth Imam al-Bāqir, who read it at dawn (*suḥūr*) throughout Ramaḍān. Imam al-Riḍā reports that his father quoted his grandfather (al-Bāqir) as saying,

> Swearing by it (*Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*) encourages piety, for it contains God's greatest name (*al-ism al-aʿẓam*). If you recite its invocations, you will have strived in supplication, for it contains hidden knowledge. And keep its contents hidden except from its people [Shiʿi devotees], for it is not intended for the hypocrites, liars, and deniers.[43]

The most noticeable difference between al-Ṭūsī's *Duʿāʾ yawm al-mubāhala* and Ibn Ṭāwūs' *Duʿāʾ al-saḥar* is the former's extended length, including an entire section, almost double the span of the latter. Many of the approximately 100 additional phrases retain some of the patterns of *Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*, including its conspicuous three-part stanza, while interweaving excluded others. Additionally, the phrase, "O God, I am calling out to You (*adʿūka*) as You have ordered me, so respond to me as You have promised," later omitted in *Duʿāʾ al-saḥar*, is interspersed in nine separate repetitions throughout *Duʿāʾ yawm al-mubāhala*. How this second section and the additional phrases of *Duʿāʾ yawm al-mubāhala* came to be excluded, to form a separate supplication, *Duʿāʾ al-saḥar,* by Ibn Ṭāwūs is unclear. Our incredulity is tested by the

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Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-najāshī* (Qom: Muʾassasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī, 1997), 308. Despite this, and against Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn Ibn al-Ghadāʾirī's determination of him as a weak (*ḍaʿīf*) transmitter, al-Sayyid al-Khūʾī sees him as reliable (*thiqa*), based on his presence among transmission chains related by Ibn Bābawayh and Muḥammad b. Mūsā b. al-Mutawakkil; Sayyid Abū al-Qāsim al-Mūsawī al-Khūʾī, *Muʿjam rijāl al-ḥadīth wa-tafṣīl ṭabaqāt al-ruwāt*, 24 vols. (Najaf: Maktabat al-Imām al-Khūʾī, [n.d]), 14:299–301.

[41] Shaykh ʿAbd Allāh al-Māmaqānī finds only one tradition with Ayyūb b. Yaqṭīn's name among the transmitters, from Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's *Tahdhīb al-aḥkām*. Otherwise, his mention in *rijāl* works elicits neither positive nor negative judgment (*muhmal*); ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad Ḥasan Māmaqānī, *Tanqīḥ al-maqāl fī ʿilm al-rijāl*, 42 vols. (Qom: Muʾassasat Āl-Bayt li-Aḥyaʾ al-Turāth, n.d.), 14: 400–401.

[42] Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Iqbāl al-aʿmāl*, 345.

[43] In the report's conclusion, Imam al-Bāqir adds that the supplication is also known as *Duʿāʾ al-mubāhala*, without specifying its relation; Ibn Ṭāwūs, 345.

claim of mere resemblance between the two supplications, considering much of their shared, verbatim content.

Ibn Ṭāwūs's account is restated in Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī's *Zād al-maʿād*, with a slightly modified version of the tradition attributed to Imam al-Bāqir.[44] In al-Majlisī's amended version, Imam al-Bāqir suggests an optimized state for reading the supplication, concluding, "If one swears that the greatest name of God is in this supplication, they will be proven sincere (*ṣadaqa*). If one reads this supplication, they should read it a state of humble pleading (*taḍarruʿ*) and complete attention (*ihtimām tāmm*). And hide it from those for whom it is not intended (*ghayr ahlihi*)."[45] Most Shiʿi Muslims today read *Duʿāʾ al-saḥar* in Shaykh ʿAbbās al-Qummī's ubiquitous collection of supplications, *Mafātīḥ al-jinān*. Al-Qummī abridges the relevant information, simply stating that the supplication, herein referred as the alternative *Duʿāʾ al-bahāʾ*, was transmitted by Imam al-Riḍā from Imam al-Bāqir who recited it at dawn during Ramaḍān and includes Ibn Ṭāwūs's recension of the supplication.[46] *Duʿāʾ yawm al-mubāhala* is also included as a separate supplication in *Mafātīḥ al-jinān*, culled from al-Ṭūsī's *Miṣbāḥ al-mutahajjid*.[47]

[44] In al-Majlisī's *Biḥār al-anwār*, we find the same tradition, word-for-word, included by Ibn Ṭāwūs; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 98 :93–5.
[45] al-Majlisī, *Zād al-maʿād*, 90.
[46] ʿAbbās b. Muḥammad Riḍā al-Qummī, *Mafātīḥ al-jinān* (Beirut: Dār wa-Maktabat al-Rusūl al-Akrām, 1997), 259–61.
[47] al-Qummī, 382.

Appendix B: A Translation of Sayyid Quṭb al-Dīn Nayrīzī's *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*

Notes on the Source and Translation of *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*

Several versions of Nayrīzī's *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ* survive in various libraries in Iran, and possibly in Iraq. Of those located in Iran, two versions, MS 78096 and MS 207625, written in the Naskh script, are contained in the Majlis Library in Tehran. A copy, numbered 2/4092 is located in the Library of Ayatollah Marʿashī Najafī in Qom. Another copy, 2/44, row 261, is housed in the Library of Shāhcherāgh in Shiraz. And a fifth copy, numbered 7499, lies in the Central Library of the University of Tehran.

For my translation, I have relied on copies of the two manuscripts (MS 78096/207625) acquired from the Majlis Library. There are several notable differences between them. The MS 78096 recension of *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ* is contained within a larger *duʿāʾ-nāmeh* or supplication anthology, containing various supplications, including several *munājāt* ("whispered prayers"), and some commentary, compiled and written by Nayrīzī. Aside from *Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, there is a Persian translation and extensive commentary on *Junnat al-asmāʾ*, an uncommon supplication also ascribed to Imam ʿAlī, for which Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) produced his own interpretation.[1] Nayrīzī's commentary on *Junnat al-asmāʾ* addresses the stages of God's world-originating effusion (*ifāḍa*), a subject of importance in his figurative interpretations of *Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*, and begins with the same, verbatim descriptions of Imam ʿAlī as in the introduction to *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*.[2] The MS 78096 version of the *Sharḥ* also

[1] *Junnat al-asmāʾ* remains a text of dubious authenticity, excluded from major supplication compendia. Sayyid Muḥsin al-Amīn (d. 1952) mentions inconsistencies between extant versions of *Junnat al-asmāʾ*. He suspects that the version employed by al-Ghazālī is an example of the distortion (*taḥrīf*) of Imam ʿAlī's speech; al-Amīn al-ʿĀmilī, *Aʿyān al-Shīʿa*, 3:539.

[2] The MS 78096 inclusion of *Junnat al-asmāʾ*, combined with the enigmatic *Duʿāʾ al-sayf al-ṣaghīr* (alternatively *Duʿāʾ al-qāmūs*), indicates Nayrīzī's connection with the thaumaturgical value of supplication, treasured by mystically inclined Shiʿi scholars. In some instances, supplication has historically held more value as talismans and with respect to lettrism (*ʿilm al- ḥurūf*), practices of bibliomancy and wish fulfillment, and the occult sciences (*al-*

features a lengthy section, following the introduction, on the *basmala* that, according to Nayrīzī, begins the Imam's original supplication and is absent in other versions.[3] The MS 207625 version does not contain additional sections or articles. It features the introduction in Arabic, followed by Nayrīzī's commentary where the supplication's Arabic lines, written in black ink, precede his Persian translation and commentary, written in red ink. It concludes with more words of praise for the Imam and various short supplications, including *Duʿāʾ nād ʿAlī* that begins, "Call upon ʿAlī, the manifestation of wonders," popular among Sufis.[4]

I have included Nayrīzī's additional gloss in the appended translation, which switches often from Arabic to Persian, only when it impacts the meaning and grammatical morphology of the supplication's terms. In repeated marginal notes, Nayrīzī claims that the existing versions are inconsistent with the Imam's words, indicated by the annotation, "not corresponding/incongruous" (*ghayr muṭābiq*). Because of this note's repetition and the lack of corrective specificity, however, I have excluded it.

Nayrīzī's *Sharḥ Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ*

بِسْمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

O You whose name originated in the pre-eternal essence, mentioned in the beginning of the Holy Qur'an. Show us Yourself through Your signs, O You who is divine, the Merciful, the Compassionate.	ای اسم تو حادث شده از ذات قدیم مذکور در ابتدای قرآن کریم خود را به نشان تو نمائیم نشان ای آنکه تو اللّهی و رحمن و رحیم

اللَّهُمَّ يَا مَنْ دَلَعَ لِسَانَ ٱلصَّبَاحِ بِنُطْقِ تَبَلُّجِهِ

ʿulūm al-gharība). These functions of supplication that apply to *Duʿāʾ al-ṣabāḥ* should not be ignored and deserve more research attention.

[3] In avoiding superfluous content, I have not translated this section.

[4] *Nād ʿAlī maẓhar al-ʿajāʾib*. Majlisī writes that the Prophet Muḥammad heard this supplication's heavenly transmission during the Battle of Uḥud. Its chain of transmission is obscure; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 87:73.

O God, O He who extended the morning's tongue in the speech of its dawning,

O You for whom the Sun is dancing like a dust mote, Your Sun irradiates the hearts of the people of hope. The dark dwellers of the night of deprivation are granted the promise of Your grace by the morning's tongue.	ای رقصکنان چو ذرّه بهرت خورشید مهر تو ضیابخش دل اهل امید تاریک نشینانِ شب حرمان را لطفت به زبان صبح در داده نوید

وَسَرَّحَ قِطَعَ ٱللَّيْلِ ٱلْمُظْلِمِ بِغَيَاهِبِ تَلَجْلُجِهِ

[Who] dispatched the fragments of the dark night into the gloom of its stammering.*

O You who sent the dark night into non-existence, who renews the world through the morning. O You whose attributes are beauty and majesty, whose divine effusion combines light and darkness.	ای آنکه شب تیره فرستی به عدم وز صبح کنی روی جهان را خرّم آنی که صفات تو جمال است و جلال وز فیض تو است نور و ظلمت با هم

* The fragments' gradual, sporadic disappearance contrasts with the emerging (*bīrūn āvardan*) of the morning's tongue, appropriate to the latter's enlightening speech. The "fragments of the night," by its "darkness" of [unintelligible] speech, makes the meaning of "stammering" apparent.

وَاتْقَنَ صُنْعَ ٱلْفَلَكِ الدَّوَّارِ فِي مَقَادِيرِ تَبَرُّجِهِ

[Who] made firm the structure of the turning spheres in the measure of its display,

O You who sparks the minds of philosophers (*ahl al-naẓar*), illuminating the highest domes, O You, whose craft has bestowed ornament and glory on the sphere, decorating it like a king's crown.	ای آنکه زبهر خاطر اهل نظر افروخته این گنبد اعلی منظر ای صنع تو داده چرخ را زینت و فر آراسته چون افسر شاهان به کمر

وَشَعْشَعَ ضِيَاءَ ٱلشَّمْسِ بِنُورِ تَاجُّجِهِ

And beamed forth the brightness of the sun through the light of its blazing!

O You, from whom the face of the Sun is shining, O You, from whom the celestial light derives, who lit the flames of candle and sky, O You, from whom the light of the existence of "Be and it was" derives.	ای چهره مهر شعشعانی از تو ای نور چراغ آسمانی از تو افروخته [ای] زبانه شمع و سپهر ای نور وجود کن فکانی از تو

يَا مَنْ دَلَّ عَلَىٰ ذَاتِهِ بِذَاتِهِ

O He Who demonstrates His Essence by His Essence,

O You who is a guide to the servant, whose essence is a guide unto Himself, The sun is the eternal proof Your own essence. From You, the rays of the Sun are radiant.	ای آنکه خودش راهبر بنده شده ذاتش به خودش راهنماینده شده خورشید دلیل ذات خود هست مدام ای از تو شعاع مهر تابنده شده

وَتَنَزَّهَ عَنْ مُجَانَسَةِ مَخْلُوقَاتِهِ

[Who] transcends all likeness with His creatures,

In that place where Your soul-increasing love is found, the Sun turns to an atom out of desire for You. How is it possible that Your being is necessary, and Your creation is contingent, so who among Your creation is of the same kind [as You]?	آنجای که مهر جانفزای تو بود خورشید چو ذره در هوای تو بود تو واجب و خلق توست ممکن، پس کی هم جنس تو آفریده‌های تو بود

وَجَلَّ عَنْ مُلائَمَةِ كَيْفِيَاتِهِ

and is exalted beyond conformity with His qualities!

O You who is majestic, exalted, and sublime, You, without "whyness" or "howness," O noble Lord. We, temporal, and Your essence, eternal. Never may we reach your hidden nature.	ای آنکه جلیلی و علیّی و عظیم بی‌چون و چگونه‌ای تو ای ربّ کریم ما حادث و ذات تو قدیم ازلی هرگز نتوان به کنه ذات تو رسیم

يَا مَنْ قَرُبَ مِنْ خَطَرَاتِ ٱلظُّنُونِ
وَبَعُدَ عَنْ لَحَظَاتِ ٱلْعُيُونِ

O He who is near to all passing thoughts,
and distant from the glimpses of eyes,*

O You for whom hearts are captive in the sorrow of love, like the polo ball that meets Your mallet. Although nobody has breached the limit of glimpsing Your face, everybody who has thought of You becomes content.	ای دل به غم عشق [تو] دربند شده چون گوی به چوگان تو پیوند شده چون دیدن رویت نبُوَد حدّ کسی هرکس به گمانی ز تو خرسند شده

* This line refers to instances of antecedence (*taqdīm*) and posteriority (*ta'khīr*) between two passing moments and visual glimpses.

وَعَلِمَ بِمَا كَانَ قَبْلَ ان يَكُونَ

and [who] knows what will be before it comes to be.

O You whose knowledge has been manifest from pre-eternity, upon Your most comprehensive reality (lit. face), a domain encompassing all things. In Your knowledge, that subsists eternally and is sanctified from perishing, all that was and never was are of the same kind.	ای علم تو از ازل هویدا بوده بر وجه اَتَم، محیط اشیا بوده در علم تو کان هست مقدس ز زوال هم رنگِ هم است بوده و نابوده

يَا مَنْ ارْقَدَنِي فِي مِهَادِ امْنِهِ وَامَانِهِ

O He who has put me at ease in the cradle of His security and sanctuary,

O You whose kindness has generously created me, and made me manifest in the worlds of body and soul. In my dreams, this physical origination finds a safe and salubrious place.	ای لطف توام به فضل انشا کرده در عالم جسم و جان هویدا کرده در خواب من این نشئه جسمانی را در بستر امن و عافیت جا کرده

وَايْقَظَنِي إِلَىٰ مَا مَنَحَنِي بِهِ مِنْ مِنَنِهِ وَإِحْسَانِهِ

[who] awakened me to the favors and kindness that He has bestowed upon me,

O You who awakened me from the slumber of heedlessness, and who made Your light my companion, If in thanks for which I give my life, it is a mere pittance, for He has given support and grace to meet all of my desires.	ای آن که ز خواب غفلت آگاهم کرد نوری ز جمال خویش همراهم کرد گر جان دهمش به شُکر این، کم لطفی است کاحسان و عطا به وجه دلخواهم کرد

وَكَفَّ اكُفَّ السُّوءِ عَنِّي بِيَدِهِ وَسُلْطَانِهِ

and held back from me the claws of evil with His hand and His authority.

O You whose authority gave me refuge and gazed upon me with the eye of generosity, In dangerous passes, the evil of wicked hands have been prevented from reaching me, by His mighty hand.	ای آن که مرا سلطنتش داده پناه در حال من از چشم کَرَم کرده نگاه در مهلکه دست های بد را از من کرده است به دست قدرت خود، کوتاه

صَلِّ اللَّهُمَّ عَلَىٰ ٱلدَّلِيلِ إِلَيْكَ فِي ٱللَّيْلِ ٱلالْيَلِ

*Bless, O God, the guide to You in the darkest night,**

Pour out Your mercy, goodness, and perfection upon the soul of the Prophet, the auspicious leader. Just as He was the leader in the dark night of ignorance,	از رحمت خود افاضه کن خیر و کمال بر روح نبی، رهبر فرخنده خصال چون راهنما در شب ظلمانی جهل خورشید جمال او بُوَد در همه حال

may the Sun of His beauty forever shine.	

* What is intended by the "darkest night" (lit. the dark night of nights) is a darker night (*shab-i tārīktar*), that of the dark night of ignorance and folly, a stage darker than any night of this world.

وَٱلْمَاسِكِ مِنْ اسْبَابِكَ بِحَبْلِ ٱلشَّرَفِ ٱلاطْوَلِ

who, of Your ropes, clings to the cord of the longest nobility,*

The one who, while taking the hand of every nation, hung the rope of nobility from the peak of generosity, He Himself whose love brought about the world in which world, His hold is firm.	آن کز پی دستگیری کلّ اُمم آویخته از اوج عطا حبل کَرَم خود هم که جهان به مِهرش آمد ز عدم در آن می بود اعتصامش محکم

* The interpretation of "rope of God" is the guidance revealed in the Verse of the Covenant, "And hold firmly to the rope of God" (Q. 3:103), that appears in several traditions related to the divine guardianship of the Prince of Believers (ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib) and others in the Qur'an. Both [Qur'anic and hadith elements] are referred in the context of the hadith, "Indeed, I am leaving two weighty things (*thaqalayn*) among you." They [the weighty things: the Qur'an and the *ahl al-bayt*] are necessary and obligatory [to follow], however there is a difference between their consideration.

وَٱلنَّاصِعِ ٱلْحَسَبِ فِي ذِرْوَةِ ٱلْكَاهِلِ ٱلاعْبَلِ

*whose pure lineage evident at the summit of stout shoulders,**

Because purity of the essence is His possession, so the children from the loins of the Pure Ones (*aṣfiyāʾ*) are His foundation. He is a trunk of the heavenly tree (*ṭūbā*), exalted, the denizens of paradise, together under its shade.	چون پاکی اصل ذات، سرمایه اوست پس ذِروه صُلب اَصفیا پایه اوست او قامت طوباست که از رفعت قدر سُکّان بهشت، جمله در سایه اوست

* The meaning of "stout shoulders" refers to the strong, eminent lineage of the Imam (ʿAlī).

وَٱلثَّابِتِ ٱلْقَدَمِ عَلَىٰ زَحَالِيْفِهَا فِي ٱلزَّمَنِ ٱلاوَّلِ

*and whose step was firmly planted, in spite of slippery places in ancient time.**

That veil of infallibility, freed from the tethers (*qimāṭ*) that are thrown off, encompassing all that is. Many are those who slip within this ancient fortress, yet he was the one who stayed firm on the path.	آن پرده عصمت ز ازل کرده قِماط وآن گه ز همان قماط افکنده بساط لغزنده بسی کسان در این کهنه رباط آن بود که داشت استقامت به صراط

* I.e., the Imam's "step" of perfect intellect and comprehensive understanding, in terms of eternal providence, remains fixed [despite] the slippery positions of the steps of the intellects in pre-eternal time.

وَعَلَىٰ آلِهِ ٱلاخْيَارِ ٱلْمُصْطَفَيْنَ ٱلابْرَارِ

And [bless] his household, the good, chosen, and pious.

Blessings be upon the family of the Prophet, guides to the path of the people who arrive [at God]. To the chosen intellects, let there be, each morning, thousands of our blessings accepted.	صلوات اِله باد بر آل رسول آن راهبران راه اصحاب وصول از ما بادا به مصطفایان عقول هر صبح، هزاران صلوات مقبول

وَٱفْتَحِ اللَّهُمَّ لَنَا مَصَارِيعَ ٱلصَّبَاحِ بِمَفَاتِيحِ ٱلرَّحْمَةِ وَٱلْفَلاَحِ

Open for us, O God, the leaves of the morning's door with the keys of mercy and prosperity.

O You, whose light is a lantern for the soul, whose grace forever unlocks the heart, open, for our sake, the morning's grace, O Lord, by the keys of mercy, victory, and prosperity.	ای آن که بود نور تو جان را مصباح فیض تو همیشه قفل دل را مفتاح بگشای به روی ما درِ فیضِ صباح یا رب به کلید رحمت و فوز و فلاح

وَالْبِسْنِي ٱللَّهُمَّ مِنْ افْضَلِ خِلَعِ ٱلْهِدَايَةِ وَٱلصَّلاَحِ

Clothe me, O God, with the most excellent robes of guidance and righteousness.

O almighty creator of bodies and souls, open the morning's doors to Your mercy. Then, by your mercy, clothe us with the most excellent robes of guidance and righteousness.	ای خالق اجساد و بدیع أرواح بگشای به رحم خویش درهای صباح آن گاه ز رحمتت بپوشان ما را افزون تر خلعت هدایات وصلاح

وَٱغْرِسِ اللَّهُمَّ بِعَظَمَتِكَ فِي شِرْبِ جَنَانِي يَنَابِيعَ ٱلْخُشُوعِ
وَاجْرِ ٱللَّهُمَّ لِهَيْبَتِكَ مِنْ آمَاقِي زَفَرَاتِ ٱلدُّمُوعِ

Plant, O God, through Your tremendousness, the springs of humility in the watering place of my heart.

Cause to flow, O God, through fear of You, tears of moaning from the corners of my eyes.*

From fear of Your majesty, O Lord, reveal in my heart, from humble waters, abundant springs. Then, from ceaseless fear and awe of You, make my eyes pour like a flowing stream.	یا رب بنشان در دلم از بیم جلال از آب خشوع، چشمه ها مالامال آن گاه ز خوف و هیبتت در همه حال چون نهر روان، چشم مرا کن سیّال

* *Zafarāt* in all the supplications' different versions has a *fatḥa* on the *zāʾ* and *fāʾ*, the plural of *zafra*, with either a *fatḥa* or a *ḍamma* on the *zāʾ*, but with *sukūn fāʾ*. *Zafra* means to draw out water, producing the meaning, "O God, make the teardrops flow from the corners of my eyes (or make flow the sound of crying tears)." Adding an adjective to the thing described (*mawṣūf*) produces, "Cause to flow, O God, from the corners of my eyes, that of abundant water (*dhawāt al-zafarāt*)," as is mentioned in *Biḥār al-anwār*. And the possibility that the plural of *zifar*, with *kasra* on the *zāʾ*, produces the meaning, "a container of water," is a possibility better than the first. However, does the term *zifar* produce the plural *zafarāt* with *fatḥa zāʾ*? This is the source of contemplation and the belief of the author (*faqīr*), because the voweling (*iʿrāb*) was not contained in the blessed manuscript of the noble Murtaḍāʾ [Imam ʿAlī]. Therefore, the author's trust, according to his knowledge in the science of lexicography (*lugha*) and *iʿrāb*, lies more with the books of lexicography. As observed in the dictionary, if *zufarāt* is read with *ḍamma zāʾ* and *fatḥa fāʾ*, it is better, with regards to the term and its meaning, that it be considered the plural of *zufar*, meaning "a river full of water," especially considering that it does not contradict the original meaning in the *Biḥār* as it does with the

dictionary's definition of *zufra*: "Exhaling; breathing that produces a sound." Because it is inappropriate in this sense, for this reason the author has provided both *ḍamma* and *fatḥa* readings in his manuscript, while recognizing the *ḍamma* version as better, according to its meaning. This is despite the version, *zafarāt al-damūʿ*, "the tears of moaning," mentioned by the great scholar, Mullā Muḥsin al-Kāshānī in his book, *Dharīʿa al-ḍarāʿa*, which does not conform to his [Imam ʿAlī's] noble script. And God knows best.

وَادِّبِ ٱللَّهُمَّ نَزَقَ ٱلْخُرْقِ مِنِّي بِازِمَّةِ ٱلْقُنُوعِ

Chastise, O God, the recklessness of my folly with the reins of contentment.

O You, the One subduer and almighty forgiver, from my bad character, I come seeking refuge. Bring this camel, drunk on my crude soul, to heel with the rope of contentment.	ای واحد قهّار و عزیز غفّار از خوی بد خود آمدم در زنهار این اشتر مست نفس بدخوی مرا از حبل قناعتش درآور به مهار

إِلٰهِي إِن لَمْ تَبْتَدِئْنِي ٱلرَّحْمَةُ مِنْكَ بِحُسْنِ ٱلتَّوْفِيقِ
فَمَنِ ٱلسَّالِكُ بِي إِلَيْكَ فِي وَاضِحِ ٱلطَّرِيقِ

My God, if mercy from You does not begin with fair success for me,
then who can take me to You upon the evident path?

O You whose mercy has made traces to lead me to You, Your favor (*tawfīq*) is my feathers and wings on the path to You. If Your mercy had not first shown me the way, who would be my guide to You?	ای ساخته ز ابتدا به رحمت اثرم توفیق تو گشته در رهت بال و پرم گر رحمت تو نکرد ز اول خبرم آن کیست که باشد سوی تو راهبرم؟

وَإِنْ اسْلَمَتْنِي انَاتُكَ لِقَائِدِ ٱلامَلِ وَٱلْمُنَىٰ
فَمَنِ ٱلْمُقِيلُ عَثَرَاتِي مِنْ كَبَوَاتِ ٱلْهَوَىٰ

If Your deliberateness should turn me over to the guide of hope and wishes,
then who will annul my slips from the stumbles of caprice?

If your forbearance passes over me, in my caprice, in place of Your forgiveness, who would come to my aid? As I fall on my face, the result of my caprice, I place my hope in nobody but You.	گر حلم تو واگذاردَم در هَوَسَم ز عفو تو لطف کیست فریاد رسم؟ از دست هوس ها چو بیفتم بر رو غیر از تو امید نیست از هیچ کسم

وَإِنْ خَذَلَنِي نَصْرُكَ عِنْدَ مُحَارَبَةِ ٱلنَّفْسِ وَٱلشَّيْطَانِ
فَقَدْ وَكَلَنِي خِذْلَانُكَ إِلَىٰ حَيْثُ ٱلنَّصَبِ وَٱلْحِرْمَانِ

If Your help should forsake me in the battle against the soul and Satan,
then Your forsaking will have submitted me to where there is hardship and deprivation.

If I did not have Your help, O merciful One, in the battle of the *jihād al-nafs* and [against] Satan, Your abandonment would have left me in rebellion, doomed to pass into hardship and deprivation.	گر یاری تو نباشدم ای رحمان اندر معرکه جهاد نفس و شیطان خذلان تو واگذارَدم در عصیان ناچار رفتم به سوی رنج و حرمان

إِلٰهِي اتَرَانِي مَا اتَيْتُكَ إِلاَّ مِنْ حَيْثُ ٱلآمَالِ
امْ عَلِقْتُ بِاطْرَافِ حِبَالِكَ إِلاَّ حِينَ بَاعَدَتْنِي ذُنُوبِي عَنْ دَارِ ٱلْوِصَالِ

My God, do You see that I have only come to You from the direction of hopes,
or clung to the ends of Your cords when my sins have driven me from the house of union?

Do You see that I have not taken any stride toward You, save for the aim of hope? O You whose means of (re)union I cling to, except during [moments of] detachment and disquietude.	آیا بینی که من زدم یك گامی سوی تو مگر به آرزوی کامی یا آن که زدم دست در اسباب وصال الاّ هنگام هجر و بی آرامی

فَبِئْسَ ٱلْمَطِيَّةُ الَّتِي ٱمْتَطَتْ نَفْسِي مِنْ هَوَاهَا
فَوَاهاً لَهَا لِمَا سَوَّلَتْ لَهَا ظُنُونُهَا وَمُنَاهَا
وَتَبّاً لَهَا لِجُرْاتِهَا عَلَىٰ سَيِّدِهَا وَمَوْلاهَا

So what an evil mount upon which my soul has mounted its caprice!*
*Woe upon it for being seduced by its own opinions** and wishes.*
Destruction be upon it for its audacity toward its Master and Protector.

This soul of mine is a stubborn camel from desire, O woe, from this soul, O woe, how strange! Woe upon my tongue and hand because they have become insolent towards God's command.	بد راحله ای است نفس من را ز هوا وا حسرت از این نفس من و واعجبا از دست زبان و نفس خود، وا اسفا زان رو که دلیر گشته در امر خدا

* *Al-maṭiyya*: A creature traversing a path. *Imtaṭat*, i.e., The caprices of my soul were taken on a ride that goes wherever they desire. This is an unruly mounted creature that plunges its rider into hell's abyss (*al-ḥāwiyya*), according to Mullā Hādī Sabzivārī in his commentary of this supplication. *Maṭā*: By His saying, "walking back to his people with a conceited swagger" [Q. 75:33], from *al-tamaṭṭī*, to strut, extending the hands outward while walking. It is said, in *Majmaʿ al-baḥrayn*, that the shortened *al-tamaṭṭī* derives from, *jāʾ al-muṭīṭī*, someone walking ostentatiously, from the root, *yatamaṭṭaṭ*.
** *Ẓunūnha*: In different versions, there is a second *fatḥa nūn* [*ẓunūnaha*], making it the affected persons (*maf'ūl*) being seduced (*sawwalat*). And the agent (*fāʿil*) of the seduction, by the feminine pronoun, refers to the soul (*nafs*). This [configuration of] *iʿrāb* relates to the context of the phrase and is in accordance with the verse, "No! Your souls must have seduced you to do something evil" [Q. 12:83]. It is thus the author's belief that *ẓunūn[u]ha*, with a second *ḍamma nūn* and the nominative joining the agent, as per *sawwalat*, is incorrect, even though all the versions, save one, take this form.

إِلٰهِي قَرَعْتُ بَابَ رَحْمَتِكَ بِيَدِ رَجَائِي
وَهَرَبْتُ إِلَيْكَ لاَجِئاً مِنْ فَرْطِ اهْوَائِي
وَعَلَّقْتُ بِاطْرَافِ حِبَالِكَ انَامِلَ وَلائِي

My God, I have knocked upon the door of Your mercy with the hand of my hope,
fled to You seeking refuge from my excessive caprice,
and fixed the fingers of my love to the ends of Your cords.

O You who is generous, merciful, and praiseworthy, I knocked upon the door of Your mercy with the hand of hope, fled to You from the lower soul and its caprice,	ای آن که کریمی و رحیمی و حمید بر درگه رحمتت زدم دست امید سوی تو گریزان شدم از نفس و هوا دست من و دامان تو ای ربّ مجید

I beseech you, O glorious Lord.	

فَٱصْفَحِ اللَّهُمَّ عَمَّا كُنتُ اجْرَمْتُهُ مِنْ زَلَلِي وَخَطَائِي
وَاقِلْنِي مِنْ صَرْعَةِ رِدَائِي

So pardon, O God, the slips and errors I have committed,
*and release me from the foot-tangling of my robe.**

O You of many graces and gifts, by [Your] munificence, absolve [us of] misdeeds and mistakes. By my soul's caprice, I fell into perdition. By Your forgiveness and munificence, cover me [from sin].	ای آن که نموده ای بسی لطف و عطا از روی کَرَم در گذر از جرم و خطا افتاده ام از هوای نفسم به هلاک از عفو و کَرَم مرا بپوشان تو غِطا

* The supplication that the author obtained, copied from Imam ʿAlī's script, does not contain the word, *ridāʾī*. In extracting the meanings from the dictionary, the word, *radan*, meaning "destruction," has not been recorded. So, it is either a case of negligence on the part of the copiers of the original version written by Imam ʿAlī, or the lexicographers have not included the meaning *halāk* [destruction] for the word, *ridāʾ*.

فَإِنَّكَ سَيِّدِي وَمَوْلايَ وَمُعْتَمَدِي وَرَجَائِي
وَانتَ غَايَةُ مَطْلُوبِي وَمُنَايَ فِي مُنْقَلَبِي وَمَثْوايَ

For You are my Master, my Protector, my Support and my Hope,
and You are the object of my search and my desire in my ultimate end and stable abode.

O generous, praiseworthy, glorious Lord, You are my master, my fulcrum of support and hope. O object of my desire within the two realms [of *dunyā* and *ākhira*], through You, I have the hope of eternal paradise.	مولای کریمی و حمیدی و مجید آقای منی و تکیه گاهی و امید ای غایت آرزوی من در دو سرا دارم ز تو امید بهشت جاوید

إِلٰهِي كَيْفَ تَطْرُدُ مِسْكِيناً ٱلْتَجَا إِلَيْكَ مِنَ ٱلذُّنُوبِ هَارِبا

My God, how could You drive away a poor beggar who seeks refuge in You from sin, fleeing?

O God, how can you drive away the sorrowful who comes, seeking refuge in Your grace from neediness, and from the fear of sins, flees toward You? If not in Your service, they have no path.	یا رب، به چه سان دور کنی غمگینی کآید به پناه لطفت از مسکینی وز بیم گناهان بگریزد سویت جز خدمت تو نباشدش آیینی

ام كَيْفَ تُخَيِّبُ مُستَرْشِداً قَصَدَ إِلَىٰ جَنَابِكَ سَاعِياً

*How could You disappoint those seeking guidance who hurry, pursuing Your threshold?**

And how can you disappoint the one who recognizes You as the emblem of guidance, who sets out towards Your threshold, sings Your praise, until throwing themselves upon Your threshold?	یا آن که تو بی بهره چه سان خواهی ساخت او را که تو را به وصف ارشاد شناخت آهنگ جناب تو نمود از سرِ سعی تا آن که به درگاه تو خود را انداخت

* In the original copy, the words "starving" (*sāghiban rāghiban*) appears in place of *sāʿiyan*. God Almighty says, "Or to give food in times of famine (*masghaba*)" [Q. 90:14]. This makes the words [*sāghiban rāghiban*] appropriate with regards to its rhyme and its meaning.

امْ كَيْفَ تَرُدُّ ظَمْآناً وَرَدَ إِلَىٰ حِيَاضِكَ شَارِباً

How could You reject someone thirsty who comes to Your basins to drink?

O bounteous sea that gives to all, the nine spinning spheres are a bubble in the sea of perfection, How can You reject the thirsty lip of those who come to Your abundant seas, begging [for a drink]?	ای بحر نوالت همه را داده نوال نُه چرخ، حبابی است از آن بحر کمال لب تشنه چه سان دور نمایی آن را کآمد سوی بحرهای جودت به سؤال؟

كَلاَّ وَحِيَاضُكَ مُتْرَعَةٌ فِي ضَنْكِ ٱلْمُحُولِ

Never! For Your basins are full in the throes of drought,*

God forbid I become deprived of the effluence of perfection, despite Your overflowing basins. The sea of Your munificence flows in abundance, without diminution nor cessation, whether in difficult seasons or dry years.	حاشا که کنی دورم از آن فیض کمال با آن که تو راست حوض ها مالامال بحر کرمت پُر است بی نقص و زوال در تنگی روزگار و در خشکی سال

* *Mutraʿa* is the passive participle of the verb form *ifʿāl*, meaning "filled," while *muttaraʿa* is the passible participle of the verb form *iftiʿāl*, meaning "full." Both of their readings of *iʿrāb* are appropriate with regards to their meaning.

وَبَابُكَ مَفْتُوحٌ لِلطَّلَبِ وَٱلْوُغُولِ

Your door is open for seeking and deep penetration,

You have forever opened the doors of entreaty for seekers of attaining hope, so that whoever enters Your court, out of generosity, You bestow grace on them in the order of perfection.	درهای طلب گشاده ای در همه حال بر اهل طلب بهر حصول آمال تا هر که شود داخل درگاه وصال از لطف به او فیض رسانی به کمال

وَانتَ غَايَةُ ٱلْمَسْؤُولِ وَنِهَايَةُ ٱلْمَامُولِ

And You are the goal of entreaties and the object of hope.

The gate of Your grace remains eternally open for the weary and the needy. You are the goal of entreaties and high hopes.	دروازه لطف تو بوَد دایم باز از بهر دل خسته ارباب نیاز تو غایت مطلبی و امید دراز کار من سرگشته غمگین تو بساز

Resolve the problems of this bewildered self, longing for You.	

إِلٰهِي هٰذِهِ ازِمَّةُ نَفْسِي عَقَلْتُهَا بِعِقَالِ مَشِيئَتِكَ
وَهٰذِهِ اعْبَاءُ ذُنُوبِي دَرَاْتُهَا بِعَفْوِكَ وَرَحْمَتِكَ

My God, these are the reins of my soul I have bounded with the ties of Your will.
These are the burdens of my sins I have averted with Your pardon and mercy.

These are the reigns of my soul, O almighty, that I have bound to Your will in every affair. These burdens of sin which I carry on my shoulders I have thrown off with Your mercy, O Veiler [of sins].	این است مهار نفس من ای جبّار بر خواهش تو بسته امش در همه کار این بار گناهان که به دوشم دارم انداخته ام به رحمتت ای ستّار

وَهٰذِهِ اهْوَائِيَ ٱلْمُضِلَّةُ وَكَلْتُهَا إِلَىٰ جَنَابِ لُطفِكَ وَرَاْفَتِكَ

These are my misleading caprices I have entrusted to the threshold of Your grace and compassion.

These are my caprices, O noble Lord, that leads this blameworthy soul astray, that I have entrusted to the threshold of Your grace. O You who is the most forgiving, loving, and merciful.	این است هوس های من ای ربّ کریم گمراه کنِ مقصد این نفس لئیم بگذاشتمش سوی جناب لطفت ای آن که غفوری و ودودی و رحیم

فَٱجْعَلِ ٱللَّهُمَّ صَبَاحِي هٰذَا نَازِلاً عَلَيَّ بِضِيَاءِ ٱلْهُدَىٰ
وَبِٱلسَّلاَمَةِ فِي ٱلدِّينِ وَٱلدُّنْيَا

So make this morning of mine, O God, descend upon me with the radiance of guidance and protection in religion and in this world.

O Lord, make this morning of mine descend, with the radiance of guidance, to the eternal abode. Grant me protection both in religion and in this life, by Your grace, O Forgiver.	یا رب ز کَرَم ، صبح مرا نازل دار بر روشنی هدایت دارِ قرار بخشای سلامتی مرا هم در دین هم در دنیا ز لطف خود ای غفّار

وَمَسَائِيَ جُنَّةً مِنْ كَيْدِ ٱلْعِدَىٰ
وَوِقَايَةً مِنْ مُرْدِيَاتِ ٱلْهَوَىٰ

And [make] my evening a shield against the deception of enemies
and a protection against the destructive blows of caprice

Then, by [Your] generosity, make my evening a shield. Do not let the thought of the enemy affect me.	آن گه ز کَرَم، شام مرا کن سپری بر من نرسد ز فکر دشمن، اثری در مهلکه هوای نفسم مگذار مگذار مرا به نفس خود یا دگری

Do not abandon me to the dangers of the caprice of the carnal self. Do not leave me to my self, nor to any other.	

إِنَّكَ قَادِرٌ عَلَىٰ مَا تَشَاءُ
تُؤْتِي ٱلْمُلْكَ مَنْ تَشَاءُ
وَتَنْزِعُ ٱلْمُلْكَ مِمَّن تَشَاءُ

"Verily, You have power to do what You will.
You give the kingdom to whom You will,
seize the kingdom from whom You will

You are the king of every dominion. You have power over everything that You will. You grant and take back kingship. Over all things, You are divinely powerful.	آنی تو که بر کلّ ممالك شاهی قدرت داری بر آنچه آن را خواهی شاهنشاهی ببخشی و بستانی بر هر چیزی تو قادری اللّهی

وَتُعِزُّ مَنْ تَشَاءُ
وَتُذِلُّ مَنْ تَشَاءُ

Exalt whom You will,
and abase whom You will.

O You, from whom emanates both kingdom and rule, effluence of the two worlds flows from You to creation. For the faithful, strength and glory are from You. For the tyrants, humiliation and disgrace are from You.	ای حشمت مُلك و مُلکداری از تو فیض دو جهان به خَلق ساری از تو در اهل وفا عزّت و یاری از تو بر اهل جفا ذلّت و خواری از تو

بِيَدِكَ ٱلْخَيرُ
إنّك على كلّ شيء قدير

In Your hand is the good
and You are powerful over all things.

O You who is King above all kings, in Your care [lit. lap] lies our good, O God. You are powerful over all things, O Friend, with the eye of generosity, cast a glance upon this servant!	ای آن که تویی بر همه شاهان، شاه در دامن توست خیر ما یا الله بر هر چیزی تویی توانا ای دوست از چشمِ کَرَم نما به این بنده نگاه

تُولِجُ ٱللَّيْلَ فِي ٱلنَّهَارِ وَتُولِجُ ٱلنَّهَارَ فِي ٱللَّيْلِ
وَتُخْرِجُ ٱلْحَيَّ مِنَ ٱلمَيِّتِ وَتُخْرِجُ ٱلْمَيِّتَ مِنَ ٱلحَيِّ
وَتَرْزُقُ مَنْ تَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ

He causes the night to enter the day and causes the day to enter the night, bring forth the living from the dead, bring forth the dead from the living, and provide whomsoever You will without measure" (Q. 3:26-27).

At times, You cause the day to enter the night. At times, in the dark night, the world-illuminating day. At times, You bring forth the living from the dead, and the dead from the living. The world succeeded because of Your power.	گاهی شب را در آوری اندر روز گه در شب تار، روزِ گیتی افروز گه زنده ز مرده، گاه آری بر عکس ای بوده ز نیروی تو عالم فیروز

لاَ إِلٰهَ إِلاَّ انتَ
سُبْحَانَكَ ٱللَّهُمَّ وَبِحَمْدِكَ
[جلّ ثناؤك]
مَنْ ذَا يَعْرِفُ قَدْرَكَ فَلاَ يَخَافُكَ

There is no god but You.
Glory be to You, O God, with all Your praise.
Who knows Your omnipotence and yet does not fear You?

Oh, aside from You, nothing is worthy of worship nor noble, I praise and worship You with glorification. Who can know the attribute of Your omnipotence yet not fear You, O generous Lord?	ای آن که بجز تو نیست معبود و کریم تسبیح و ستایشت کنم از تعظیم آن کیست که داند صفت قدرت تو آن گاه نترسد از تو ای ربّ کریم؟

وَمَن ذَا يَعْلَمُ مَا انتَ فَلاَ يَهَابُكَ

Who knows what You are and yet does not stand in awe of You?

O Lord, my heart raised the banner of [Your] glorification. My intention is fixed on the threshold of Your praise. Who can know Your majesty yet not fear Your awe-inspiring dominance?	یا رب، دل من لوای تسبیح افراشت همّت به سوی جناب حمد تو گماشت آن کیست که اجلال تو را چون دانست از هیبت قهّاری تو ترس نداشت

الَّفْتَ بِقُدْرَتِكَ ٱلْفِرَقَ وَفَلَقْتَ بِلُطْفِكَ ٱلْفَلَقَ
وَانَرْتَ بِكَرَمِكَ دَيَاجِيَ ٱلْغَسَقِ

Through Your power, You have joined disparate things, and through Your grace, You have cleaved apart the daybreak.
Through Your generosity, You have illumined the dark shrouds of night.

O You who gives grace and beneficence to all creation, who has joined together disparate things, who has cleaved apart the daybreak,	ای بر همه خلق، لطف و احسان از تو ای الفت فرقه پریشان از تو ای فالق اصباح، شکافنده صبح ای ظلمت شب به صبح رخشان از تو

who has brought out the radiant dawn from the dark of night.	

وَانْهَرْتَ ٱلْمِيَاهَ مِنَ ٱلصُّمِّ ٱلصَّيَاخِيدِ عَذْباً وَاجَاجاً
وَانزَلْتَ مِنَ ٱلمُعْصِرَاتِ مَاءً ثَجَّاجاً
وَجَعَلْتَ ٱلشَّمْسَ وَٱلْقَمَرَ لِلْبَرِيَّةِ سِرَاجاً وَهَّاجاً
مِنْ غَيْرِ ان تُمَارِسَ فِيمَا ٱبْتَدَاتَ بِهِ لُغُوباً وَلاَ عِلاَجاً

You made waters, sweet and salty, spring forth from solid hard rock,
and sent down cascading rain by the clouds' wringing,
and appointed the sun and the moon a blazing lamp for the creatures,
without exercising weariness nor effort by that which You originate.

O You who, from hard stone, made rivers spring forth, who, from gentle clouds, sent down abundant rain, who, upon the heavenly sphere, lit a blazing lamp for the sun and moon, whose acts were accomplished without effort.	ای کرده ز سنگ سخت، جاری انهار وز ابر کَرَم، فشانده بارانْ بسیار افروخته بر چرخ، چراغ از مَه و مهر بی آن که مشقّتی کشی در کردار

فَيَا مَنْ تَوَحَّدَ بِٱلْعِزِّ وَٱلْبَقَاءِ
وَقَهَرَ عِبَادَهُ بِٱلْمَوْتِ وَٱلْفَنَاءِ
صَلِّ عَلَىٰ مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ ٱلاتْقِيَاءِ

O He Who is alone in power and subsistence,
and dominates His slaves with death and annihilation,
bless Muḥammad and his family, the God-fearing.

O You who is alone in power and subsistence, and dominates all creation with death and annihilation, by their favor, send blessings upon the Prophet and his family, by [Your] granting.	ای آن که یگانه ای تو در عزّ و بقا وز قهر تو کلّ خلق در مرگ و فنا بفرست به فضل خویش صلوات و سلام بر حضرت پیغمبر و آلش ز عطا

وَٱسْمَعْ نِدَائِي وَٱسْتَجِبْ دُعَائِي
وَحَقِّقْ بِفَضْلِكَ امَلِي وَرَجَائِي

Answer my supplication, hear my call,
and actualize through Your favor my hope and desire.

Then, by Your munificence, listen to my cries, and, by Your grace, accept my supplications, fulfill my hope by favor and benevolence, secure my place in the garden of paradise.	آن گه ز کَرَم شنو نداهای مرا بپذیر به لطف خود، دعاهای مرا امّیدم را روا کن از فضل و کَرَم در جنّت فردوس نما جای مرا

يَا خَيْرَ مَنْ دُعِيَ لِكَشْفِ ٱلضُّرِّ
وَٱلْمَامُولِ فِي كُلِّ عُسْرٍ وَيُسْرٍ

O best of those who are called upon to remove affliction,
and object of hope in difficulty and ease.

O best of those who are called upon to remove affliction among the helpless. O He who, in every difficulty or ease, my heart is enlivened by the hope of His offering.	ای خوب ترین کسی که او خوانده شده در رفع بلا ز هر که درمانده شده ای آن که به هر سختی و هر آسانی ز امید عطای او دلم زنده شده

بِكَ انزَلْتُ حَاجَتِي فَلاَ تَرُدَّنِي مِنْ سَنِيِّ مَوَاهِبِكَ خَائِباً
يَا كَرِيمُ يَا كَرِيمُ يَا كَرِيمُ

I have revealed my need to You, so do not reject me, despairing of Your splendid gifts,
O all-generous One!

You are my hope in every hardship and fear. I have brought my need to You, O merciful Lord. Do not despair me of Your mercy, O You who is most generous.	امید، تویی در همه دشواری و بیم حاجت به تو آورده ام ای ربّ رحیم نومید مکن مرا ز بخشش هایت ای آن که کریمی تو کریمی تو کریم

بِرَحْمَتِكَ يَا ارْحَمَ ٱلرَّاحِمِينَ

By Your mercy, O most Merciful of the merciful.

For Your mercy, we have great hope. Do not turn me away from Your mercy, abjectly. Have mercy on me, for the sake of your mercies, O most merciful Forgiver.	در رحمت تو امید داریم بسیار از رحمت خود باز مگردانم خار رحمی بنما بحق رحمتهایت ای ارحم راحمان که هستی غفار

وَصَلَّىٰ ٱللَّهُ عَلَىٰ خَيْرِ خَلْقِهِ
مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ اجْمَعِينَ

May God bless the best of His creatures,
Muḥammad and his entire household.

O most Merciful, send Your special mercy upon the master forebearer of his noble heirs. Let there be a thousand praises, every moment, for Aḥmad and his household, with the fullest sincerity.	ای ارحم راحمان از ان رحمت خاص بفرست سوی سید سادات خواص هر دم بادا هزار صلوات و سلام بر احمد و آل او بصدق و اخلاص

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