

The Defence of Sufism among Twelver Shi‘i Scholars of Early Modern and Modern Times: Topics and Arguments

Mathieu Terrier

Introduction

From the pre-modern era to the present day, the Twelver Shi‘i or Imami world has been concerned with what one might call the ‘Sufi question’, a question rife with doctrinal, but also socio-political, issues: should Sufism be accepted as an essential dimension of the ‘genuine’ Twelver Shi‘i religion, or must it be rejected for being a ‘condemnable innovation’ (*bid‘a*) and/or an excrescence of Sunni Islam? It is currently said that during the reign of the Safawids in Iran (906–1134/1501–1722), the lawyers and theologians hostile to Sufism eventually prevailed and ultimately succeeded in wiping out most of the Sufi brotherhoods from their original birthplace.¹ However what is less known is that during the same period, within the Imami ‘*ulamā*’ community itself, an alternative discourse persevered which was apologist and concordist, promoting rapprochement, or even union, between Sufism and Twelver Shi‘ism. This discourse made the reinstatement of Sufism in 18th-century Iran theoretically possible, although it was actually established by an outside decision.² A series of interrelated works, from the pre-modern period to the modern era, which established this pro-Shi‘i Sufi discourse as an authentic intellectual and literary tradition, has been transmitted to the present day in certain Sufi circles and is still considered authoritative by certain historians and thinkers.³

Without claiming to be exhaustive, the present essay will introduce four great works and their authors as the main milestones of this

parallel tradition, which I will refer to as the 'tradition of reconciliation', a tradition revitalised century after century, from the Ilkhanate era to the end of the Safawid dynasty. These four works are *Jāmi' al-asrār wa manba' al-anwār* (The Sum of Secrets and the Source of Lights) by Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī (d. after 786/1385);⁴ *Kitāb al-Mujlī mir'at al-munji fī'l-kalām wa'l-ḥikmatayn wa'l-taṣawwuf* (Polishing the Mirror of the Saviour: About Theology, the Twin Wisdoms and Sufism) by Ibn Abī Jumhūr al-Aḥsā'i (d. after 906/1500–1);⁵ *Majālis al-mu'minīn* (Sessions of the Believers) by Nūr Allāh Shūshtarī (d. 1019/1610);⁶ and *Maḥbūb al-qulūb* (The Beloved of the Hearts) by Quṭb al-Dīn Ashkiwarī (d. between 1088/1677 and 1095/1684).⁷ Although other works could have been considered from writers such as Ḥāfiẓ Rajab Bursī (d. 813/1411) or Shams al-Dīn Lāhijī (d. 918/1512), to name but two,⁸ which state in an implicit manner such a rapprochement, these four works are particularly noteworthy in that they assume explicitly the ecumenist position, are linked by close intertextual relationships, the most recent substantially plagiarising the preceding ones, and thus lend themselves to the analysis of subtle variations within a unique and single discourse. In order to shed light on both the common purpose of these four works and some distinctive features of each of them, I have chosen to set out the main topics and arguments of these texts rather than give a linear and chronological description.

After a brief presentation of the four authors and their works, a threefold argumentation will thus be analysed: first a (mytho-) historical argumentation, showing the links of the original Sufi masters to the Shi'i imams; then a conceptual argumentation, systematising the relationships between *sharī'a* (religious law), *ṭarīqa* (spiritual path) and *ḥaqīqa* (essential reality or truth); finally a linguistic and 'phenomenological' argumentation, showing the analogy between specific locutions pronounced respectively by Shi'i imams and Sufis.

The Tradition of Reconciliation and its Representatives

Ḥaydar b. 'Alī b. Ḥusayn al-Ḥusaynī al-Āmulī, known as Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī, born in 719/1320,⁹ and died after 787/1385,¹⁰ can be considered the founder of this tradition of reconciliation between Shi'ism and Sufism.¹¹ Coming from a large family of *sayyids* from

Āmul, in the province of Tabaristan, he belonged to a subset of the Iranian population already converted to Twelver Shi'ism before the Safawid era, and he served as minister to Prince Fakhr al-Dawla Ḥasan b. Shāh Kay-Khusraw b. Yazdgird, who was assassinated in 750/1349.¹² According to his short autobiography, which recalls al-Ghazālī's *al-Munqidh min al-dalāl* in its apologetic tendency,¹³ Ḥaydar Āmulī relinquished his mundane career probably one year before this event, and at the age of thirty, donned the Sufi cloak (*khirqā*), took the road to Mecca in the company of a Sufi master called Nūr al-Dīn Ṭīhrānī, and from here returned to the Shi'i sacred places (*aṭābāt*) of Iraq.¹⁴ During this Iranian period he may have composed his theological treatise *Anwār al-ḥaqīqa wa aṭwār al-ṭarīqa wa asrār al-sharī'a* (The Lights of Truth, the Stations of the Path and the Mysteries of the Revealed Law), devoted to the conceptual triad studied in the third part of this essay.¹⁵ In Iraq, he was the pupil of Fakhr al-Muḥaqqiqīn al-Ḥillī (d. 771/1370), the son of al-'Allāma al-Ḥillī (d. 726/1326), from whom he was granted an *ijāza* (a permission from the teacher to teach books studied with him) in 761/1360–61, something which afforded him considerable legitimacy as a Shi'i scholar. Apparently under the command of Fakhr al-Muḥaqqiqīn, he wrote in 769/1367–8 a polemic and sectarian epistle entitled *Raf' al-munāza'a wa'l-khilāf* (The Resolution of Quarrel and Dispute) in order to justify, according to Shi'i tenets, the passive attitude of Imam 'Alī during the reigns of the three first caliphs.¹⁶ Ḥaydar Āmulī composed most of his works during his Iraqi period, the most important of which are *Jāmi' al-asrār wa manba' al-anwār*, which Henry Corbin dates around 752/1351; his commentary of the Qur'an, or more exactly, his treatise about Qur'anic *tafsīr* and *ta'wīl* (respectively 'exoteric' and 'esoteric' interpretation of the Qur'an), *al-Muḥīṭ al-a'ẓam wa'l-baḥr al-khiḍamm fī ta'wīl kitāb Allāh al-'azīz al-muḥkam* (The Vast Ocean and Fathomless Sea: An Esoteric Commentary on the Holy and Firm Book of God), completed in 777/1375–6; and *Naṣṣ al-nuṣūṣ fī sharḥ al-fuṣūṣ* (The Text of Texts: a Commentary on the Bezels [of Wisdom]), a commentary on Ibn 'Arabī's *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* (the Bezels of Wisdom) written in 782/1380. Both latter books go together as Ḥaydar Āmulī was considering the Qur'an as revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad (*al-nāzil 'alayhi*) and the *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* as proceeding from him (*al-ṣādir minhu*).¹⁷ Despite the fact that Ibn 'Arabī was probably not Shi'i, an issue that remains

problematic, Ḥaydar Āmulī strived to incorporate his theosophy into mainstream Twelver Shi'ism, something which can be regarded with Henry Corbin as Āmulī's foremost contribution to Islamic culture.¹⁸ Corbin edited his *Jāmi' al-asrār wa manba' al-anwār*, with his *Risālat Naqd al-nuqūd fī ma'rifat al-wujūd* (Criticism of the Criticisms, on the Knowledge of the Being), under the title 'Shi'i Philosophy.' This title remains somewhat enigmatic because of the minor part of 'philosophy' in the common meaning that it contains, but takes a full meaning in later developments of this line of thought.¹⁹ Actually, the *Jāmi' al-asrār* does not deal with philosophy, but with both Twelver Shi'ism and Sufism that the author intends to reconcile.

At the time of Ḥaydar Āmulī, under Ilkhanid rule (656–756/1258–1355) and the post-Ilkhanid/pre-Timurid semi-anarchic interregnum (756–807/1355–1400), Iran was predominantly Sunni. Nevertheless, Shi'i ideas also permeated throughout the empire, emanating from the residing Sufi brotherhoods which remained at least nominally Sunni. The *Jāmi' al-asrār* was thus written during an age when Shi'is and Sufis were two minority yet powerful groups in a double process of conflicting and coalescing within a state lacking any fixed religious policy.²⁰ Ḥaydar Āmulī himself states that his book is addressed to Sufis and Twelver Shi'as with the aim of establishing concord amongst them, and to lead each group to its own truth,²¹ respectively the esoteric part (*al-bāṭin*) and the exoteric one (*al-ẓāhir*) of the same superior Truth contained in the teachings of the Imams.²² In other words, Ḥaydar Āmulī's endeavour is to reunite two opposing groups, in conflict only through ignorance of their fundamental kinship. His most famous and bold theory identifies the 'true Sufis' (*al-ṣūfiyya al-ḥaqqā*) with the 'real' or 'true Shi'a' (*al-shī'a al-ḥaqīqiyya*), in other words the 'well-tested believer' (*mu'min mumtaḥan*) alluded to in a famous *ḥadīth* almost identically expressed by the first, fifth and sixth imams: 'Our Cause is difficult; the only ones able to bear it are a Prophet missioned by God, an angel of Proximity, and a faithful believer whose heart has been tested by God for faith (*mu'min imtaḥana Allāhu qalbahu li'l-īmān*).'²³

Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Abī Jumhūr al-Aḥsā'i (d. after 904/1499), author of the second work studied here, can be seen as the continuator and propagator of this tradition of reconciliation. His birthdate is not

certain,²⁴ nor the exact location of his homeland al-Aḥṣā', a Shi'i region in the north-east of the Arabian Peninsula or a city in Baḥrayn.²⁵ However, he certainly inherited a Shi'i traditional lineage dating back to the eighth imam. Compared to Ḥaydar Āmulī, he seems to have had a more conventional life of Shi'i medieval scholar. After he completed his scientific and religious formation in the Shi'i centres of Najaf and Karak Nūḥ in Jabal 'Āmil, he spent his life between the holy places of Iraq, the city of Tus in Iran, later called Mashhad, where the sanctuary of Imam Riḍā (d. 203/818) is, and his native country.²⁶ In 896/1490, he completed his *Mujlī mir'āt al-munjī fī'l-kalām wa'l-ḥikmatayn wa'l-taṣawwuf*,²⁷ a super-commentary of a previous theological work.²⁸ The explicit aim of the book is to integrate with Imami Shi'ism, on the one hand Ash'ari and Mu'tazili *kalām*, and on the other the philosophy of *Ishrāq* and Sufism.²⁹ Extensively borrowing the most esoteric *ḥadīths* of the imams from Ḥaydar Āmulī's *Jāmi' al-asrār*, he also professed the historical and ontological affiliation of Sufism with the 'True religion' that is Twelver Shi'ism.

It is particularly noteworthy that this work was written only ten years before the shaykh of the Ṣafawīyya, the young Shāh Ismā'īl, acceded to the throne in Tabriz and established Twelver Shi'ism as the official religion of Iran (906/1501), in other words on the eve of a new era for Shi'ism and Sufism. At the time of the *Mujlī*'s redaction, the foremost holy places and learning centres of Shi'ism, in Iraq and Lebanon, were under Sunni Ottoman rule, and although Iran was still predominantly Sunni, Persian Sufism had to a large extent completed its 'imperceptible transition from Sunnism to Shi'ism.'³⁰ Thus, Ibn Abī Jumhūr is one of the last witnesses of a time during which the two movements he principally aimed to approach or to re-approach, Sufism and Twelver Shi'ism, were on an equal social and political footing. He was also the last to be able to urge reconciliation without having to defend himself from attacks launched by the Shi'i or the Sunni orthodox party, therefore without having to 'write between the lines', to quote Leo Strauss. It is unsettling to note that his contemporary 'Alī al-Karakī (d. 940/1534), who had been a pupil of the same theologian 'Alī b. Hilāl al-Jazā'irī in Jabal 'Āmil, would become the official theologian of the Shi'i Safawid state and, within this remit, eventually define an orthodoxy which marginalised the mystical and

philosophical form of Shi'ism represented by Ibn Abī Jumhūr.³¹ The latter's call for a spiritual 'revolution' of Shi'ism, to quote Kāmil Muṣṭafā al-Shaybī, went mostly unheard by the *fuqahā* of his time.³² Moreover, the religious policy of the clergy and the Safawids would shatter his hopes for a sacred union between Shi'ism and Sufism. Ibn Abī Jumhūr was criticised for his 'extremist Sufism' by both Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī (d. 1111/1699) and his pupil Mīrzā 'Abd Allāh al-Iṣbahānī Afandī, author of *Riyāḍ al-'ulamā*.³³ His collection of *ḥadīths*, *'Awālī al-la'ālī*, was particularly censured for different motives such as quoting some of its traditions from Sunni sources, comprising traditions of 'mystical fragrance' (*tastashimmu al-maṭālib al-'irfāniyya*), and comprising traditions peculiar to 'exaggerating' or 'extremist' Shi'ism (*ghuluww*). This fact attests that Ibn Abī Jumhūr shared with Ḥaydar Āmulī both a radical Shi'i affiliation and an ambiguous ecumenist trend aiming not only to reconcile Shi'as and Sufis, but also to bring up the positions of Shi'as and Sunnis.³⁴ Although his works were held in esteem during the Safawid era by scholars with mystical leanings, such as Ashkiwārī and Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī (d. 1091/1680), the Shi'i-Sufi concordist discourse would thereafter continue under persecution, in both Sunni and Shi'i circles, as the two final actors of this intellectual tradition will show *nolens volens*.

Sayyid Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Nūr Allāh b. al-Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Ḥusaynī al-Mar'ashī al-Shūshtarī, known as Nūr Allāh Shūshtarī and famous, among the Shi'a, by the title of the 'Third Martyr' (*al-shahīd al-thālith*), was born in 956/1549–50 in Shushtar, into a lineage going back to al-'Allāma al-Ḥillī. He became a *faqīh* and, following in his grandfather's footsteps, a member of the Nūrbakhsh Sufi fraternity which had converted to Shi'ism after the messianic claim of its eponymous founder.³⁵ In 992/1584–5, he emigrated from Mashhad to India in order to escape from the troubles in Khurasan, probably also with the aim to diffuse Twelver Shi'ism amongst the scholars of the Mughal court, where he shortly became an intimate of the young sovereign Shāh Akbar (r. 964–1014/1556–1605); thus, his case was different from that of many Sufis among his contemporaries, going incessantly back and forth between India and Iran.³⁶ He served as *qāḍī* in Lahore, applying *ijtihād* and issuing *fatwās* according to the four schools of Sunni jurisprudence (*fiqh*). After Shāh Akbar's death, at the beginning of the reign of his son, Jahāngīr (r. 1014–1037/1605–1627), Shūshtarī

ceased to conceal his Shi'i faith (*taqiyya*), or was denounced by his adversaries for having composed, in response to a Sunni refutation, his apology of Shi'i jurisprudence entitled *Iḥqāq al-haqq*.³⁷ He is said to have been the first scholar to openly profess Shi'ism in India,³⁸ for which reason he fell victim to the 'tragic confrontation between the Shi'i and Sunni *kalām*',³⁹ and was executed in 1019/1610.⁴⁰

The main work of Shūshtarī, *Majālis al-mu'minīn*, was written in India around 990/1582–3 and could also have played a role in the tragic end of its author.⁴¹ *A priori* it belongs to the *ṭabaqāt* genre, in other words 'categories' or 'generations' of illustrious men. Shūshtarī's intention was to bring together the companions of the Prophet, theologians, philosophers, princes, Sufis, poets, etc., who were secretly or notoriously Shi'is in the widest sense, as defined by the acknowledgment of the sacred right of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib to succeed the Prophet Muḥammad.⁴² The main justification of his large census is that many scholars and rulers of Islam had been forced to practise *taqiyya* or 'sacred concealment of the faith' in order to escape from the persecutions of the Sunni power; however, with the glorious reign of the Safawid Shāhs, the time of concealment was now over.⁴³ With this goal in mind, he endeavours to show, especially in the sixth *majlis* of the book, that the great spiritual leaders of Sufism were all Shi'is, although most of them were nominally Sunni.⁴⁴ For this reason, Shi'i authors of prosopographical works consider it unreliable for having 'exaggerated' its inventory, in other words to have classified as Shi'as men who were not.⁴⁵ The aim of the book has also determined its reception by modern scholarship: the text is still used as an historical trustworthy source by certain modern historians like al-Shaybī and Seyyed Hossein Nasr, while being denounced by others like Jean Calmard for its blatant bias.⁴⁶

Quṭb al-Dīn Ashkiwarī, also called Bahā' al-Dīn al-Lāhijī or al-Sharīf al-Lāhijī (d. between 1088/1677 and 1095/1684), is the final and least known of our concordist authors. He had been in his youth the student of Mīr Dāmād (d. 1040/1631), then inherited from his father the office of *shaykh al-islām* of the district of Lahijan, in Gilan. This position, although containing important prerogatives in justice and economy, reflects a relatively secondary rank in the Safawid hierocracy, compared to that of the *ṣadrāt* which is progressively established during the Safawid period, especially in

Lahijan where the central authority faced many difficulties in applying its politics. Due to his socio-historical situation, he was a solitary philosopher and a latecomer to the 'philosophical renaissance of Safawid Iran', being active during the reign of Shāh Sulaymān (1077–1105/1666–1694), in which anti-Sufi and anti-philosophical reaction intensified. Aside from Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī, his contemporaries included sworn opponents of philosophy and Sufism like al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī (d. 1104/1693) and Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī.

His foremost work, the *Maḥbūb al-qulūb*, written at the end of his life, takes resolute issue with this reactionary current. In this work appertaining to both universal history and the *ṭabaqāt* genre, he purposes no less than to assemble all the wise men, starting from the first of them, Adam, in three discourses (*maqālāt*): the first covers the sages predating Islam, in particular the Greek philosophers; the second savants (physicians, translators, astronomers) but also philosophers (*falāsifa*) and spiritual masters (*mashā'ikh*) of the Islamic era; and the third the twelve imams and twelve pre-eminent Shi'i authorities. In the second volume Ashkiwarī dedicates a series of entries to 'unitarian Sufis' (*al-ṣūfiyya al-muwahhida*). Discretely borrowing information as well as a number of allegations from Ḥaydar Āmulī, Ibn Abī Jumhūr and Nūr Allāh Shūshtarī, his aim is clearly to harmonise original Sufism with esoteric Shi'ism, but without explicitly maintaining that all the Sufi masters were Shi'is. Thus Ashkiwarī reactivated the tradition of reconciliation between Sufism and Shi'ism, but he did so between the lines, and with the concerns of his time: to save what could be of Sufism and philosophy in Safawid Iran. In contrast with Shūshtarī, the all-encompassing category of his encyclopaedia is not that of Shi'is, but of the sages; Sufis are not defended because they are Shi'is as such, but because they are wise, as are *a priori* the Greek philosophers and the imams themselves.

These four works transmit a number of rational (*ma'qūl*) and traditional (*manqūl*) arguments defending the idea that primitive Sufism is an essential dimension of the Imami Shi'i 'True religion'. This marginal yet stubborn discourse resisted the rising tide of anti-Sufism among Shi'i scholars during the Safawid era, whose exponents included such influential figures as 'Alī al-Karakī, al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī and Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī.⁴⁷ In the following pages, I will examine

the principal strategies of argumentation which inform the four works included.

History-Based Argumentation: The Masters of Sufism as Disciples of the Shi'i Imams

The first strategy is historical in approach, or rather pseudo-historical or even mytho-historical. It purports to show the fundamental identity or harmony that exists between Sufism and Shi'ism through the genealogy of Sufism, and more precisely by showing the affiliation of the founding great masters of Sufism (1st–3rd/7th–9th centuries) to the historical imams. Whereas our four authors are agreed that the first Sufis were disciples of the imams, they do not trace the origins of Sufism, and consequently of Shi'ism, to the same dates or to the same protagonists. As the historical validity of these arguments is generally rather weak, it is more rewarding to study the constants and the evolution of these different rewritings of the origins of Sufism, as of Shi'ism; if these works are not reliable for a history of Shi'ism and Sufism, they are primary materials for a 'history of the history' of both, that is to say a history of the representation of their historical origins and developments.

To Ḥaydar Āmulī 'the particular category of Shi'a is designated as the initiated or 'well-tested' believers – the term *mu'min* broadly meaning 'Shi'i' in the general sense – is that of the Sufis.'⁴⁸ He argues that if Sufis are commonly thought to be Sunni, it is because, like the Shi'is, they possess many branches, only one of which is the genuine or 'the true one.'⁴⁹ The true Shi'is, the 'believers' in the exoteric sense (*ẓāhir*) are the Twelvers, which excludes the Ismailis, who are 'exaggerators' (*ghulāt*),⁵⁰ and the Zaydis; the true Sufis, who are also the true Shi'is in the esoteric sense (*bāṭin*), are not those who bear this name among his contemporaries, but men such as Salmān the Persian (presumed to have died in 35/655–6 or 36/657),⁵¹ Uways al-Qaranī (presumed to have died in 37/657 at the battle of Ṣiffīn),⁵² and the 'men of the bench' (*aṣḥāb al-ṣuffa*) at the time of the Prophet; then came Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī (d. 32/653), 'Ammār b. Yāsir (d. 37/658 at the battle of Ṣiffīn) and al-Miqdād b. Aswad (d. 33/654), companions of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib; and 'after them' Kumayl b. Ziyād al-Nakha'i (d. 82/701–2?), Abū Yazīd Baṣṭāmī (d. 234/848 or

261/874) and Junayd al-Baghdādī (d. 298/911), who were 'pupils, disciples and repositories of the secrets of the Impeccable Imams'.⁵³ Thus there are three classes or generations of original Sufis and true Shi'is: first the 'companions' of the Prophet (*al-ṣaḥāba*), followed by the 'successors' (*al-tābi'ūn*), who accompanied the first imam, and finally the contemporaries and disciples of the subsequent imams. The paradox in this picture is that the 'particular Shi'is', who are the 'true Sufis', predate the 'Shi'is in the general sense' who are the Twelvers, since they came into being following the occultation of the twelfth imam (260/874 for the lesser one, 329/940–1 for the greater one). It is clear that differentiating between 'Twelver Imamis' and Ismailis, Zaydis or *ghulāt* before the end of the 3rd/9th century is near impossible, and that the boundaries between different Shi'i groups were porous during these ancient times.⁵⁴ It seems that in Āmulī's vision of history, for the Shi'is in the broadest sense, the true Sufis are not only a spiritual elite, but a genuine avant-garde testifying to the authentic and elemental character of Twelver Shi'ism.

The first Sufi mentioned by Ḥaydar Āmulī is Salmān the Persian, a companion of the Prophet and of Imam 'Alī, whose social status was modest since he was a non-Arab. He is an emblematic figure of Islamic Persia. Widely recognised as the founder of Sufism, he figures in the initiatory chains of a number of Sunni brotherhoods, where he is placed as a disciple of the first caliph Abū Bakr.⁵⁵ According to a prophetic *ḥadīth* currently quoted in the Shi'i sources, he is considered as a 'member of the Holy family' (*ahl al-bayt*), an adoptive familiar of the Fourteen Impeccables.⁵⁶ Moreover, certain traditions accredit him with having received spiritual and secret instruction from 'Alī, to the extent that he is said to have learned the 'Supreme Name' of God (*al-ism al-a'ẓam*).⁵⁷ Following Salmān are Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī, 'Ammār b. Yāsir and al-Miqdād b. Aswad, who are chiefly known for their physical and political engagement alongside 'Alī. These four figures are among the first Muslims of humble and non-Qurayshi origin and are associated with each other in numerous Imami traditions dating back to the Prophet.⁵⁸ They are celebrated as 'pillars of Shi'ism' (*arkān al-shī'a*) in Imami circles, for having always fought or resisted alongside Imam 'Alī, particularly in the critical times following the death of Muḥammad and the event of Saqīfa.⁵⁹ Whereas Salmān represents the esoteric face of proto-Shi'ism, the

other three characters represent the exoteric, ascetic and especially militant aspect. According to a tradition of al-Kulaynī's *Kāfī* related to the sixth imam:

One day, someone was mentioning pious dissimulation (*taqiyya*) in the presence of 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn [the fourth imam]. He said: 'If Abū Dharr had known what was in Salmān's heart, he would have killed him, although the Messenger of God had established a pact of fraternity between them. So what do you think all the people [would have done]? The knowledge of the [true] knowers ('*ilm al-'ulamā'*) is difficult and tough. No one can assume it except a Prophet, an angel of Proximity or a faithful believer whose heart has been tested by God for faith. Salmān became one of the knowers because he's a man from us, the People of the Holy Family (*li'annah minnā ahl al-bayt*).'⁶⁰

By identifying these 'pillars of Shi'ism' with the fathers of Sufism, Ḥaydar Āmulī purports to demonstrate the original kinship between these two movements.

In the works of the three succeeding authors, starting with Ibn Abī Jumhūr, the historical reconstructions include the same protagonists, but differ on an important point: the worthy companions of the Prophet, such as Salmān, are initiates, however they are not considered the fathers of Sufism; the particular science of Sufism goes back to certain 'successors' of the Prophet who are reputed to have sworn allegiance to 'Alī. Thus, according to Ibn Abī Jumhūr: 'Among the successors are Kumayl b. Ziyād al-Nakha'ī and Ḥasan al-Baṣrī; with these two begins the science of the insiders (*aṣḥāb al-bāṭin*) and that of the Sufis (*ahl al-taṣawwuf*); and similarly Uways al-Qaranī.'⁶¹ These three characters are very different both in historical status and also in their relations, according to the historiography, with Sufism and Shi'ism.

Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728) is well known in both Islamic and Western historiography. Sunni historians recognise that he was a disciple of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, and as such he is present in the initiation chains of numerous Sufi orders. However, this ascetic and author of sermons was claimed early on by all the emerging theological schools, starting with the *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jamā'a* and the Mu'tazilis.⁶² In early Shi'i sources, he appears sometimes as a pure supporter of 'Alī and the

ahl al-bayt, sometimes as a doctrinal adversary refuted by the fifth imam.⁶³ Before Ibn Abī Jumhūr, Ḥaydar Āmulī mentioned him as well as a disciple of Imam 'Alī.⁶⁴ Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406), a contemporary of Ḥaydar Āmulī, condemned these latter-day Sufis, influenced by Shi'i views, who portray Ḥasan al-Baṣrī as a Shi'i.⁶⁵ To be sure, the Sunni positions of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī are solidly established by traditionists and Sunni, or pro-Sunni, historians, and it can be noticed that Shi'i 'ulamā' tend to avoid him rather than try to claim him.⁶⁶ His presence in Ibn Abī Jumhūr's picture of history is another sign of the ecumenist trend of this thinker. Thus did he gradually disappear from the picture of the origins of Sufism described by our authors: after Ibn Abī Jumhūr, neither Shūshtarī, nor Ashkiwarī mention him in their works.

Unlike Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Uways al-Qaranī is a semi-legendary figure who pertains more to sacred history than empirical and scientific history. Within the Sufi community, there are rival claims of his affiliation to both Sunnis and Shi'is. According to prevailing Islamic tradition, the Prophet designated this Yemenite without having ever seen him, like a hidden saint or an intercessor, and urged both 'Umar and 'Alī to seek him out in order to implore God's forgiveness. 'Umar is reputed to have found him during the final year of his caliphate; their conversation is related by Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār in his *Memorial of Saints (Tadhkirat al-awliyā')*.⁶⁷ We know that, in consequence, many Sufis are named, or name themselves, *Uwaysiyya*, since they do not have a visible and contemporary human guide (*murshid*) but rather receive initiation from the 'spiritual essence' (*rūḥāniyya*) of a deceased saint.⁶⁸

Amongst our philosophers of reconciliation, Ashkiwarī's treatment of Uways al-Qaranī is the most extensive and also the most significant in that he refers to him both as the first Sufi and as the first Shi'i. He derives his information from the *Majālis al-mu'minīn* of Shūshtarī who, for his part, did not classify Uways as a Sufi but as a believer among the immediate followers of the Prophet (*al-tābi'ūn*).⁶⁹ While Shūshtarī was quoting 'Aṭṭār's report as a testimony of Uways's disdain towards 'Umar,⁷⁰ Ashkiwarī, in the chapter dedicated to him, completely disregards the role of 'Umar, asserting implicitly that Uways was recommended by the Prophet solely to 'Alī and did not meet any caliph before him. Ashkiwarī's rejection of 'Umar is thus more radical than that of Shūshtarī; unlike the latter, the former did

not have to compromise with a Sunni milieu. The first tradition quoted by Ashkiwarī describes Uways as a famous ascetic, converted to Islam during the Prophet's lifetime, who appeared for the first time at the battle of Şiffin (37/657), dressed in rags and with his head shaven, in order to swear allegiance to 'Alī and fight until death for him.⁷¹ If the woollen coat (*şūf*) is a sign that identifies Sufis, and is probably the origin of the word 'Sufism' (*taṣawwuf*), and if the shaven head is associated with a certain kind of dervish, what defines Uways as the first Sufi ontologically, far more than these exterior signs, is his explicit designation by the Prophet and his complete allegiance to the Imam, until his death.

The third key figure in this reconstruction of the common origins of Sufism and Shi'ism is Kumayl b. Ziyād. His historicity is established, as is his affiliation to the first followers of Imam 'Alī. He is known to the Shi'a as the imam's closest companion and confidant, an ardent combatant for his cause and also as one of the first Shi'i martyrs. Many Sufi brotherhoods, such as the Nūrbakhshiyya, who wielded great influence under the Safawids, regard him as the first link of their initiation chain, following 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib.⁷² If one asks in what regard Kumayl may be considered to be a Sufi, the reply is that according to several authoritative traditions, he received esoteric instruction from the Imam: it is first of all Shi'i spirituality that underwrites the historical Sufism of Kumayl. The evidence of this rank amongst the insiders seems to be a dialogue concerning spiritual truth (*al-ḥaqīqa*) between the imam and his disciple, a dialogue that our four authors faithfully reproduce and that is typical of Shi'i esoterism.⁷³ 'It is said that ['Alī] (...) had taken Kumayl behind him on the camel he was riding. Kumayl said: 'O Prince of believers, what is Truth?' The imam answered: 'What care you about the Truth?' Kumayl said: 'Am I not a companion of your Secret?' 'Yes, [answered the imam], but what spills out from me penetrates into you.' There follows a brief series of symbolic and apophatic definitions of the Truth, at the end of which the imam cuts short his discourse and announces: 'Put out your lamp, dawn has come.' This tradition would seem to prefigure two major trends within Shi'i spirituality: the first part points towards a magical conception of the transmission of the sacred Science through the medium of the humours of the body – here sweat, elsewhere saliva; the latter part develops a philosophising or

spiritualistic discourse which culminates in an injunction to mystical silence.⁷⁴

Kumayl b. Ziyād personifies the deep-rooted kinship between Sufism and Shi'ism by virtue of his spiritual initiation on the one hand, but also because he died as a martyr for 'Alī's cause at the hands of Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf, the governor of Iraq and a sworn enemy of the Shi'is. The story, as related by Shūshtarī and Ashkiwarī is astonishing: appearing before him, Kumayl declared he had been forewarned by Imam 'Alī that his assassin would indeed be Ḥajjāj; in response Ḥajjāj accused Kumayl of having taken part in the murder of 'Uthmān, the third caliph, and ordered his decapitation.⁷⁵ The accusation made by Ḥajjāj is not contradicted, either by Kumayl in the text (*matn*) or by the reporter al-Mughīra in his account of the *khavar*.⁷⁶ When one is aware that the murder of 'Uthmān was at the origin of the great *fitna*, the rift that tore Islam apart during its early centuries, to let any degree of doubt subsist as to the responsibility of Kumayl is particularly significant: this original and most spiritual form of Shi'ism is revealed to be also the most militant, and it is this Shi'ism, as spiritual as it is political, that is at the root of Sufism.

Following Kumayl, who was the last disciple of the first imam, the next connections between Sufis and imams made by our authors are Abū Yazīd Baṣṭāmī, affiliated to the sixth imam Ja'far al-Šādiq (d. 148/765); Shaqīq al-Balkhī (d. 194/809–10) and Bishr al-Ḥāfi (d. 226–227/841), affiliated to the seventh imam Mūsā b. Ja'far al-Kāzim (d. 183/799); Ma'rūf al-Karkhī (d. 200/815), affiliated to the eighth imam 'Alī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā (d. 203/818). All were individual Sufis who predated the foundation of brotherhoods, but nevertheless belonged to numerous *silsilas*, whose traditions were strictly oral. Before we examine these affiliations more closely, one can already wonder why this initiation of Sufis by imams ceases between the first and the fifth imams, and conversely, why this transmission began again with the sixth, given that the initiation of Kumayl already included all the esoteric secrets? Our authors never answer the first question: everything is described as if Sufism went through an eclipse, a temporary occultation between Kumayl and Abū Yazīd Baṣṭāmī, even though Shūshtarī attempts to consider the Sufi Ibrāhīm b. Adham (d. 160–1/777) as a disciple of the fifth imam Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Bāqir (d. 115 or 119/732 or 737);⁷⁷ in modern times, Ma'šūm 'Alī Shāh, in his *Ṭarā'iq*

al-ḥaqā'iq, contends even that Ibrāhīm b. Adham is affiliated to the fourth imam 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn (d. 92 or 95/711 or 714).⁷⁸ To our second question, a more historical answer can be outlined: following the tragedy of Karbala, the Imami doctrine was rebuilt on new foundations by the fifth and especially the sixth imam, Ja'far al-Šādiq, which would imply, according to the logic of esotericism, a new initiation, all the more so given that Ja'far is famous even in Sunni sources for having dispensed a large body of instruction.

Abū Yazīd Baṣṭāmī died in 234/848 or 261/874, yet he is unanimously presented by our authors as the disciple and the water-supplier (*saqqā*) of Ja'far al-Šādiq, who died in 148/765. This hiatus is simply never questioned by either Ḥaydar Āmulī or Ibn Abī Jumhūr. Shūshtarī is the first among our thinkers to mention the objections that can be made to this affiliation, but only in order to better refute them. These objections, apparently originally formulated by Shi'i Sufis, are corroborated by reliable dates: the traditionist Shaykh Nūr al-Dīn Abu'l-Futūḥ deems it possible that Bāyazīd Baṣṭāmī served under the eighth imam, 'Alī b. Mūsā b. Ja'far, and that the scribes might have made a slip of the pen; while Mīr Sayyid Sharīf, author of *Sharḥ al-muwāfaq*, contends that Abū Yazīd received initiation from the 'spiritual essence' (*rūḥāniyya*) of Imam Ja'far.⁷⁹ Shūshtarī rejects these hypotheses and affirms that Baṣṭāmī was effectively affiliated to the sixth imam; to resolve the hiatus, he records from the *Mu'jam al-buldān* that there were two Abū Yazīds in Baṣṭām, 'the old one' (*al-kabīr*) and 'the young one' (*al-ṣaghīr*), the first being the disciple of the imam and the second who lived later and the date of whose death is known.⁸⁰ Following in the steps of Shūshtarī, Ashkiwarī makes extensive use of this counter-argument, showing just how important the affiliation of Baṣṭāmī to Imam Ja'far was to him but also that the historical objections to this affiliation were too important for him to ignore. Ultimately this counter-argument was attributed to Baṣṭāmī himself, as Shūshtarī reports: 'Had I not found my way to our Master al-Šādiq, I would have died apostate. He is among the friends of God as Gabriel is among the angels, as though his point of departure was that of arrival for the seekers of Truth (*al-sālikīn*).'⁸¹ Similarly, Ashkiwarī, refusing to make of Baṣṭāmī an insider having received initiation by the sole spiritual essence of the Imam, that is to say an Uwaysī, asserts on the authority of al-'Allāma al-Ḥillī that: 'The

greatest among the shaykhs prided themselves on having served the imams, and Abū Yazīd Baṣṭāmī prided himself on having served as water-supplier in the house of Ja'far al-Šādiq (. . .). This account and the others like it leave no room for allegoric interpretation (*ta'bā al-ta'wīl*), in other words, they are to be taken at face value.⁸² I will return later to the significance of Baṣṭāmī for our authors, which may shed some light on their obstinacy in repeating such a problematical assertion. Regardless of what Ashkiwarī might think, the meaning of this historical allegation might very well be symbolic: the described role of water-supplier suggests once more the need of a concrete, physical and 'humoral' medium for the transmission of the sacred science of the imam.⁸³

Two great Sufi masters are then presented by our authors as disciples of the seventh imam Mūsā b. Ja'far al-Kāzim (d. 183/799): Šhaqīq b. Ibrāhīm al-Balkhī (d. 194/809–10), an important link in the chain of transmission, and who, Shūshtarī argues, died as a martyr for having being accused of Shi'i heresy (*bih tuhmat-i rafḍ shahīd shud*);⁸⁴ and Bishr al-Ḥāfi (d. 227/841–2), who repented and was converted at the hands of the imam. While this latter account of conversion, borrowed from al-'Allāma al-Ḥillī's *Minhāj al-karāma*, might possess an element of historical truth, its literary and mythical character makes it somewhat difficult to believe for our rational minds, all the more so since it is neither mentioned in the great historical works, nor in the Sufi *ṭabaqāt*. One day, as the imam was passing by the house of Bishr in Baghdad, he is said to have heard the sound of merriment coming from within and asked the servant: 'The master of this house, is he a free man or a slave (*ḥurr aw 'abd*)?' – 'A free man, of course' – 'You speak the truth, since had he been a slave [of God], he would have feared his master (*mawlāhu*).' When told about the conversation by his servant, as he was sitting at table and drinking, the master went outside barefoot, from whence his sobriquet (*laqab*): *al-ḥāfi*, which means 'who goes barefoot'.⁸⁵

Ma'rūf al-Karkhī, another important figure in the origins of Sufism, is presented as the gatekeeper of the eighth imam 'Alī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā. Shūshtarī, followed by Ashkiwarī, reports a popular narrative in which the Sufi master is revealed to be the operator of the imam's theurgic powers, and the imam is revealed to be the source of the Sufi's charisma. A merchant, asking for protection during his travels at sea,

was given a talisman by the imam to be invoked in the event of a storm. It read: 'O sea! By the right of Ma'rūf al-Karkhī, gatekeeper of 'Alī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā, calm yourself!' Later, as a storm was raging, the distraught trader threw the talisman into the sea, and the storm immediately abated.⁸⁶ According to another tale quoted from 'Aṭṭār's *Tadhkirat al-awliyā*', Ma'rūf heroically defended the gate of the imam's audience chamber against the 'exaggeration' or 'extremism' (*ghuluww*) of a crowd of Shi'is, and this was the cause of his death.⁸⁷ The symbol behind this anecdote is powerful: the Sufi is seen as the rampart of the esoteric teaching of the imam against the extremism of his partisans claiming his divinity. Ironically, this story would itself be deemed an 'exaggeration' by the Shi'i *'ulamā*', who would criticise Shūshtarī for it.

According to the same report, the teachings were transmitted from Ma'rūf al-Karkhī to Sarī al-Saqatī (d. 253/867) and from him to Junayd al-Baghdādī, 'the master of the sect of the Sufis' (*shaykh al-ṭā'ifa*). The latter is included among the direct disciples of the imams, as are the previously mentioned masters, by Ḥaydar Āmulī, followed by Ibn Abī Jumhūr and Shūshtarī.⁸⁸ However, Junayd is a contemporary of the final imams, who are not credited with any links with the Sufis, and of the Minor Occultation of the twelfth imam (260–329/874–941). Moreover, he is widely considered to be Sunni, which Nūr Allāh Shūshtarī explains, as can be expected, by the necessary concealment of the faith (*taqiyya*).⁸⁹

Historians of Sufism and Shi'ism have stressed on many occasions that, following al-Riḍā, there is no evidence of contact between Sufis and the Shi'i imams.⁹⁰ This fact is acknowledged but never explained by the four authors here studied. We know that the ninth imam Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Jawād or al-Taqī (d. 220/835) died very young and that the following two – 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Hādī (d. 254/868) and al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī al-'Askarī (d. 260/874) – lived under house arrest in Samarra. An oral tradition, recorded by al-Shaybī, does exist, according to which Imam Riḍā transmitted the 'spiritual path' (*ṭarīqa*), the esoteric dimension of the religion, to Ma'rūf al-Karkhī and after him to the Sufis, while the letter, as opposed to the spirit, of the revelation (*sharī'a*) and its exoteric learning remained in the lineage of the imams, starting from al-Jawād.⁹¹ This would imply a first schism between exoteric and esoteric Shi'ism dating back to the time of the historical imams, and holding one of them responsible for it, although none of our authors seem ready to admit this. As for anti-Sufi Shi'is,

they rely on a *ḥadīth* of the tenth imam 'Alī al-Hādī: 'All Sufis oppose us, their way is contrary to ours, and they are but the Christians or the Mazdeans of this community.'⁹² This hostile tradition is never mentioned by our promoters of reconciliation, not even to refute it.

As a conclusion to this first analysis, one could say that the 'historical' arguments of our authors would hardly be considered so in the modern sense of the word: dates are ignored or rejected; the accounts are readily fabulous or hagiographic; moreover, Shūshtarī's paradigmatic use of the notion of *taqiyya* has to be considered as an 'unfalsifiable' argument in the negative sense of the term in Karl Popper's epistemology. It is conceivable that our authors were well aware of this fact and that the significance of these historical allegations resided first and foremost in their symbolism. The chronology of events remains paradoxical nevertheless, as the first 'true' Sufis and 'true' Shi'is predate not only the brotherhoods, which is undoubtedly intentional, but the emergence of Sufism and Shi'ism in the general sense. Finally, it is notable that this (pseudo-)historical argumentation is not defended with the same zeal by the four authors: the manner in which Ḥaydar Āmulī and Ibn Abī Jumhūr repeat these allegations is dogmatic, and their approach to the reconciliation of Sufism with Shi'ism, or the identification of the one with the other, is essentially conceptual. Shūshtarī argues the historical link with the most fervour, at times deliberately exaggerating the Shi'i genealogy of the Sufis. Ashkiwarī is more restrained, and refrains from explicitly 'Shi'itising' a number of Sufi masters to whom he pays tribute, while nevertheless affirming the affiliation of Baṣṭāmī to Imam Ja'far.

The Conceptual Argumentation: The Triad of the Law, the Path and the Truth

Over and above the historical perspective, our four Shi'i authors share the same underlying theory: the convergence a priori between *sharī'a*, the 'revealed' Law, i.e. the exoteric part of the religion; *ṭarīqa*, the mystical and spiritual 'Path', term also used for 'brotherhood'; and *ḥaqīqa*, the spiritual 'Reality' or 'Truth', i.e. the object that the gnostic philosophers, sometimes known as the *muḥaqqiqūn*, are searching for. This conjunction is based on, and introduced by, a prophetic *ḥadīth* which seems not to be present in the 'classical' or 'orthodox' collections

of *ḥadīths*, be they Sunni or Shi'i, but rather to be specific to our heterodox tradition of thought: 'The Law is my speeches (*aqwālī*); the Path is my actions (*af'ālī*); the Truth is my [spiritual] states (*aḥwālī*).'⁹³

Ḥaydar Āmulī develops this conceptual triad in his *Anwār al-ḥaqīqa wa aṭwār al-ṭarīqa wa asrār al-sharī'a* ('The Lights of Truth, the Stations of the Path and the Mysteries of the Revealed Law'). He considers the Law, the Path and the Truth, to be three degrees of the same reality, the highest being the Truth, the medium being the Path and the lowest being the Law. The Law, he says, is true without the Path, but the Path is not true without the Law; just as the Path is true without the Truth, but the Truth is not true without the Path; because each higher level is the perfection of that below. Consequently, the people of the Truth (*ahl al-ḥaqīqa*) are superior to the people of the Path (*ahl al-ṭarīqa*) and the latter are superior to the people of the Law (*ahl al-sharī'a*).⁹⁴ In this early work, composed before Āmulī relinquished his mundane career and donned the Sufi cloak (*khirqā*), he identifies the people of the Law with the jurists (*al-fuqahā'*), the people of the Truth with the Gnostics (*al-'ārifūn*) and, more surprisingly, the people of the Path with the scholars and philosophers (*al-'ulamā' wa'l-ḥukamā'*), avoiding open mention of the Sufis. For this he quotes a saying of Imam 'Alī: 'The Law is a river and the Truth is a sea. The jurists (*al-fuqahā'*) are making circumambulations around the river, the wise (*al-ḥukamā'*) are plunging into the sea in search of pearls, and the Gnostics (*al-'ārifūn*) are wandering on the ships of salvation (*sufun al-najāt*). From a universal perspective, he identifies the people of the Law with the community of Moses, the people of the Path with that of Jesus, and the people of the Truth with that of Muḥammad.⁹⁵

While emphasising the hierarchy between these three dimensions of the Revelation (*shar'*), Ḥaydar Āmulī and Ibn Abī Jumhūr, the latter quoting the former, both stress their harmony and complementarity, with the implicit aim to solve the conflict between jurists, Sufis and gnostic philosophers:

Know that the exoteric Law (*sharī'a*), the mystical Path (*ṭarīqa*) and the spiritual Truth (*ḥaqīqa*) are synonymous terms for the single Truth, which is the Truth of the Muḥammadan Revelation (*ḥaqīqat al-shar' al-aḥmadī al-muḥammadī*), but viewed from

different standpoints and at different levels. There is, on examination, no contradiction between these standpoints and these levels. The Revelation (*shar'*) is like the complete almond, which contains the shell (*qishr*), the kernel (*lubb*), and the kernel of kernels (*lubb al-lubb*): the shell may be likened to the Law, the kernel to the Path, the kernel of kernels to the esoteric Truth of the Innermost (*al-ḥaqīqa al-bāṭina li'l-bāṭin*), and the almond is the union of all.⁹⁶

The symbolism of the kernel and the shell refers partly to the Qur'an where the word *albāb* (plural of *lubb*) is frequently used for 'spirit' in the expression *ūlū'l-albāb*, and partly to the *Theology* of Pseudo-Aristotle where the shells (*qushūr*) appear as the material clothes of the soul.⁹⁷ The dual couple of the kernel and the shell seems to have been attributed first to Empedocles (d. ca 424 BC) in *Kitāb al-Milāl wa'l-niḥāl* of al-Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153) and is defined as follows: '[Empedocles] often expressed the body and the spirit by the shell and the kernel'; it also takes part of the doctrine of the Neoplatonist Proclus (d. 485 AD) in the same source.⁹⁸ For what concerns the notion of 'kernel of kernels', it is defined in the *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyya* (Terminology of the Sufis) of 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Qāshānī (d. 730/1330), the famous disciple of Ibn 'Arabī, as the matter of the divine sacred Light which assists intellect so that it purifies itself from the shells.⁹⁹ To my knowledge, this symbolism is absent in Imami *ḥadīth* and thus must be of philosophical and Sufi-mystical origin.¹⁰⁰

By taking up this symbolism in its triadic form (*qishr*, *lubb*, *lubb al-lubb*) and not in its dualistic one (*qishr*, *lubb*), Ḥaydar Āmulī, Ibn Abī Jumhūr and Ashkiwarī after them, make it correspond to the triad of Law, Path and Truth, and thus argue that there is an essential harmony between exoteric religion, the initiation of the Sufis, and the gnosis of the philosophers. There is here a subjacent and authentic philosophical theory. This 'pre-established harmony', in Leibniz' terms, between *sharī'a*, *ṭarīqa* and *ḥaqīqa*, is justified by a conception of reality which comprises varying degrees of depth, from the material to the spiritual and from the apparent to the concealed. This conception, which distinguishes between, and articulates, both an outside and exoteric (*zāhir*) and an inside and esoteric (*bāṭin*) aspect in all things, is axial in the teachings of the imams.¹⁰¹ It is developed in Shi'i philosophy which accepted and reactivated the strong influence of Neoplatonic ideas, as it

had already appeared in the *Theology* of Pseudo-Aristotle.¹⁰² In the triadic scheme defended by our authors, the intelligible Truth (*ḥaqīqa*) functions as the dialectic synthesis of the traditional opposition between the exoteric Law (*sharī'a*) and the mystical Path (*ṭarīqa*): here the innermost dimension, that of the Truth, contains the outermost, that of the Law, and the outer facet of the innermost, that of the Path.

The Sufis have often made use of this triadic theme for defensive purposes, arguing that the initiatory Sufi Path (*ṭarīqa*) is the necessary link between the religious Law (*sharī'a*) and the divine Truth (*ḥaqīqa*).¹⁰³ However it would appear that the meaning of the terms and the general conception are different in the case of our Shi'i authors. First of all, they consider the spiritual Truth (*ḥaqīqa*) as the object of a direct contemplation (*mushāhada*) which may coincide with gnosis (*'irfān*), something which enables a certain philosophy to become the ultimate science and arbiter between exoteric religion and the different forms of Sufism. For example, Ibn Abī Jumhūr wrote:

Upon examination (*'inda'l-taḥqīq*), Law is the expression of assent to the teaching of the prophets and the messengers and action according to their obligations by conformism and obedience. Path is the expression of realisation of the acts and manners of the prophets and messengers by the way of certitude and ornamentation. Truth is the expression of contemplation of their spiritual states and stations by the way of the faculties of unveiling and tasting, followed by their abiding by the way of the spiritual state and the ecstatic consciousness (*mushāhadat aḥwālīhim wa maqāmātihim kashfān wa dhawqan wa'l-qiyām bihā ḥālan wa wijdānan*).¹⁰⁴

This system of the Law (*sharī'a*), the Path (*ṭarīqa*) and the Truth (*ḥaqīqa*), is related by analogy to another conceptual triad, the one of the legislative Mission (*risāla*), the Prophecy (*nubuwwa*) and the divine Alliance (*walāya*), the latter being identified by our authors with the exclusive dignity of the imams in a Shi'i sense. As Ḥaydar Āmulī asserts: 'In reality, the exoteric Law is part of the necessity of the legislative Mission; the mystical Path is part of the necessity of the Prophecy; and the spiritual Truth is part of the necessity of the divine Alliance.'¹⁰⁵ The same thinker criticises those, including al-Shaykh al-Akbar himself, who say that the seal of the saints in the absolute meaning (*khātam al-awliyā' muṭlaqan*) is Jesus son of Maryam and that the seal of the

saints in the determined meaning (*khātam al-awliyā' muqayyadan*) is Ibn 'Arabī, by asserting that the former is no one but 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib and that the latter is no one but Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan, the awaited Mahdi.¹⁰⁶ However, the definition given for the divine Alliance does not exclude its possession by the Gnostic or the Sufi: 'The divine Alliance is the expression for the direct contemplation of His Essence, His attributes and His actions, in the *loci* of manifestation of His perfections (*maẓāhir kamālātihi*), the *loci* of self-disclosure of His pre-eternal and post-eternal definitional characters (*majālī ta'ayyunātihi al-azaliyya wa'l-abadiyya*); this is the essence of the Truth.'¹⁰⁷ Ibn Abī Jumhūr infers that no supporter of the Law, the Path or the Truth – meaning no Shi'i *faqīh*, Sufi or Gnostic – can deny any other without denying the three together and thereby without being impious (*kāfir*).¹⁰⁸

Concerning the *notion* of *ṭarīqa*, it should be noted that both Ḥaydar Āmulī and Ibn Abī Jumhūr take it in a purely spiritual meaning, that of the inner journey through the different states (*aḥwāl*) or stations (*maqāmāt*), without its social meaning as 'brotherhood', suggesting that the social brotherhood is excluded *a priori* from the spiritual Path. It is this metaphoric use of the notion of *ṭarīqa* that will enable Ashkiwarī to put forward this theory two centuries later, during a time when the Sufi brotherhoods, bearing the same name of *ṭarā'iq* (sing. *ṭarīqa*), were publicly held in contempt.

According to Ibn Abī Jumhūr's sayings, the reason he recalls this fundamental unity is not only to protect the Sufis from serious accusations made against them, but also to protect these very accusers, the Shi'i *fuqahā'*, against their own guilty ignorance. In the writings of Ashkiwarī, composed during the reign of Shāh Sulaymān when the authority of al-Majlisī was rising, the plea of Ibn Abī Jumhūr, written two centuries earlier, seems all the more topical, something which points to what one may call the historicity of concepts:

The reason for the accusation of impiety and heresy (*al-kufr wa'l-zandaqa*) aimed at this sect [that of the Sufis who testify to God's uniqueness], from what has been said among our [Shi'i] doctors, by Ibn Abī Jumhūr in his book *al-Mujlī*, is only a reflection of the ignorance of [Sufi] principles and rules (*bi-uṣūlihim wa qawānīnīhim*). Indeed, if [the doctors of the Law] knew the founding principles [of the Sufis], if they realised that the Law, the Path and the Truth are truly synonyms to designate

a sole reality (*ḥaqīqa wāḥida*), that of the Revelation (*ḥaqīqat al-shar'*), they would not use such language, and would leave aside this intolerance (*ta'aṣṣub*), this polemic, this rejection and opposition, they would strip their hearts of these envious and thoughtless words, and would free their souls from the abyss of sophisms and doubt.¹⁰⁹

Ibn Abī Jumhūr also bestows a symbolic and spiritual meaning on the term *khirqā*, the coarse garment worn by the first ascetics and symbol of the spiritual initiation of the disciple by the master. The transmission of the *khirqā* is mentioned in ancient sources as the earliest form of initiatic lineage, dating back to the prophet Muḥammad, and constituted the 'pedestal for the edification of the Sufi orders' from the 6th/12th century onwards.¹¹⁰ The theme of the *khirqā* is without doubt one in which the Shi'is recognise in Sufism their own inheritance, to quote Henry Corbin.¹¹¹ S.H. Nasr considers that the wearing and the transmission of the cloak as symbols of the spiritual teachings they have received find their origin in the Shi'i *ḥadīth* of 'The Five of the Cloak' which relates how Muḥammad covered with his cloak his daughter Fāṭima, his cousin 'Alī, and their two sons al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, as well as himself.¹¹² Ibn Abī Jumhūr maintains that the original cloak, given to the Prophet by the archangel Gabriel during his ascent to heaven (*mi'rāj*), was transmitted to 'Alī on God's order, and henceforth from imam to imam down to the Mahdi. This archetypal and transcendental cloak gave rise to three others, and three paths of initiation, transmitted from the imams to the Sufis: from Imam Mūsā al-Kāẓim to Shaqīq al-Balkhī; from Imam Ja'far al-Šādiq to Abū Yazīd Baṣṭāmī; from Imam 'Alī al-Riḍā to Ma'rūf al-Karkhī, who initiated Sarī al-Saqatī, who in turn initiated Junayd, 'the Master of the sect of the Sufis.'¹¹³ Following a Neoplatonic schema, Ibn Abī Jumhūr perceives the physical cloak transmitted from Sufi to Sufi as an image pertaining to the archetypal cloak held by the imam.¹¹⁴ Once more this is a dialectic of integration and overtaking of the social dimension of Sufism within Shi'i spirituality. This spiritualisation of the notion of *khirqā* was not, however, as successful as the analogous operation on the notion of *ṭarīqa* as seen before: the notion of *khirqā* will remain associated with Sufi brotherhoods, the latter remaining considered as incompatible with Twelver Shi'ism. Thus, this argument is not used by Ashkiwarī within the contemporary context of extreme

hostility of the Shi'i political and theological establishment towards the Sufis.

This argumentation, based on the triad of Law, Path and Truth, stands side by side with a series of antinomies opposing 'true' and 'false' Shi'is, 'true' and 'false' Sufis, 'true' and 'false' savants. This antonymic schema is characteristic of Shi'i spirituality, as shown by M.A. Amir-Moezzi and Ch. Jambet.¹¹⁵ To our four authors, the reconciliation of true Shi'ism and true Sufism necessarily implies dissociation from the forms of Shi'ism and Sufism considered to be false. These false forms of Shi'ism are Ismailism and 'exaggeration' (*ghuluww*), the latter notion including any and all forms of heterodoxy (anti-Sunni positions, messianism, divinisation of the imam, pretension to the vision of God), especially those from whom our authors intend to dissociate themselves. These false forms of Sufism comprise the organisational aspect of the brotherhoods, the *ṭarīqa* as a social and historical institution, and antinomianism (*ibāḥiyya*), in other words the rejection of the obligations of Law (*shari'a*) by those who claim having acquired the knowledge of the ultimate Truth (*ḥaqīqa*).¹¹⁶

It is well known that Shi'i scholars have for the major part prevented mystical schools of thought from organising themselves into brotherhoods or congregations: probably, as Corbin affirms, because Imami Shi'ism considers itself the spiritual path;¹¹⁷ and probably also because the doctors of Shi'i law, whose organisation was comparable to that of a veritable clergy during the Safawid era, were intent on maintaining total hegemony over Shi'i society. It is noteworthy that while none of our defenders of reconciliation explicitly condemns the materialisation of the *ṭarīqa* in brotherhoods, they all, with the notable exception of Shūshtarī, denominate as 'true Sufis' – who are by this definition also 'true Shi'is' – only spiritual masters who predate the foundation of the first brotherhoods. The exclusion is thus implicit.

In contrast, the explicit condemnation of licentious and antinomian Sufis was commonplace, and even a compulsory exercise for the gnostic philosophers of Safawid Iran, the latter always being suspected of deviant sympathies.¹¹⁸ The formulation of Ashkiwarī is interesting in that it combines philosophical speculation with traditional arguments, from both Shi'i and Sufi authorities. Thus, he quotes

Junayd in order to assert that the connection with the divine (*wiṣāl*) does not spare one from respecting social and cultural obligations, that knowledge of the Path (*ṭarīqa*) does not exempt anyone from obeying the Law (*sharī'a*), and that believing otherwise is tantamount to satanic imagination. Then, in his own words, Ashkiwarī develops the idea that the exterior forms (*ṣuwar*) of the cult are the 'loci of manifestation' (*maẓāhir*) of the 'spiritual realities' (*al-ma'ānī*). The dualist schema opposing true to false is here converted into a twofold schema which articulates the apparent with the hidden, the exoteric outermost (*ẓāhir*) with the esoteric innermost (*bāṭin*). Finally, he quotes a *ḥadīth* of Imam Ja'far taken from the *Kitāb al-Kāfi* of al-Kulaynī: 'God only approves an action made with knowledge, and only approves knowledge with action. Thus, to him who knows God, knowledge shows the action. He who does not act has no knowledge. However, in faith, the one comes from the other.'¹¹⁹ The correlation between knowledge and action is also an axial principle of philosophy or wisdom (*ḥikma*) in the sense of the ancient Greeks that Ashkiwarī reactivates in the first part of his *Maḥbūb al-qulūb*.¹²⁰ It is the correlation between the apparent and the hidden, the physical action and the spiritual state of being, that appears to Ashkiwarī as the common vocation of Imami Shi'ism, Sufism and philosophy.

This principle of the unity of knowledge and action leads Ashkiwarī to distance himself both from legalist or literalist lawyer-theologians on the one hand and from licentious or passive mystics on the other. Both criticisms echo one another: as he expresses in his notice devoted to Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī (d. 587/1191), 'the murdered master' (*al-shaykh al-maqtūl*), just as antinomian dervishes do not deserve the title of Sufi, doctors of the law condemning rational sciences and the spiritual Path usurp the title of *fuqahā'*.¹²¹ Expounding an original exegesis of the last verse of the sura *al-Fātiḥa*, Ashkiwarī identifies 'those who earned [God's] anger' (*al-maghḍūb 'alayhim*) with Sufis discarding exoteric religious law in the name of their knowledge of spiritual truths (*ḥaqā'iq*), and 'those who went astray' (*al-ḍāllīn*) with the doctors who reject spiritual Truth and esoteric science in the name of the letter of the Law.¹²²

To conclude this second analysis, it seems that for our thinkers the transcendental unity between the Law, the Path, and the spiritual

Truth implies the conciliation of Shi'ism and Sufism under the auspices of philosophical gnosis. The more the defence of this thesis appears marginalised and of little account, the more the issue becomes all important, since ultimately the survival of Sufism depends on it, as does the place of philosophy in a Shi'i state.

The Linguistic Argumentation: The Analogy of Imams' and Sufis' 'language-games'

Our authors employ a further, and noteworthy, mode of argument. It is founded neither on traditional authority, nor indeed on rigorous conceptions, but on the similarities or the analogies between certain types of discourse, Shi'i or Sufi, which I will refer to, borrowing Ludwig Wittgenstein's expression, as 'language-games'.¹²³ The strategy is to highlight parallels and consonances between certain particularly esoteric declarations made by the imams and some of the most paradoxical statements of the Sufis. The first language-game pertains to certain sermons during which the imam proclaims his own divinity and goes so far as to verbally identify himself with God, which M.A. Amir-Moezzi technically qualifies as 'theo-imamosophical' sermons.¹²⁴ These declarations have played a crucial role within Shi'ism: on the one hand they may well have given rise to the branches of Shi'ism associated with 'extremism' or 'exaggeration' (*ghulāt*) – the exaggeration residing not in *what* is said regarding the divine status of the imam, but in that *it is* said, and hence implies a break with the discipline of the arcane, or *taqiyya* –; and on the other hand, the preservation or the censorship of these sermons distinguishes the Shi'is who have remained attached to this original tradition from the rationalist Shi'i scholars. The second language-game is that of the *shaṭaḥāt*, or 'paradoxes of the Sufis', those famous ecstatic utterances in which the Sufi speaks in the name of God, or God speaks through the mouth of the Sufi, and which Louis Massignon translates as 'theopathic locutions'.¹²⁵ Baṣṭāmī and Ḥallāj are two of their most illustrious authors. These phrases have been the object of countless condemnations, emanating from both Sunnis and Shi'is, and even from certain Sufis such as al-Hujwīrī (d. 465/1071), Ibn 'Arabī or al-Jurjānī (d. 816/1413).¹²⁶ Yet, in a bold gesture, Ḥaydar Āmulī identifies the *shaṭaḥāt* with the theo-imamosophical sermons of Imam 'Alī:

An individual, when he contemplates True-God (*al-ḥaqq*) in the light of True-God, knows only one station which is the station of his extinction within Him, called 'extinction of the knower in the known', or 'extinction of the contemplator in the contemplated', or 'extinction of the servant in the Lord', etc. This can only proceed from lifting the duality of the simple point of view, the disappearance of creational multiplicity, and the vanishing of egoity which prevent true connection. As one of them [Ḥallāj] declared regarding this spiritual station (*maqām*): 'Between You and I, my I holds me back/ By your grace, remove my I from the interval!' As says another: 'When poverty is perfected, he is God.' As says another [Bastāmī]: 'Glory to you, how great is my cause!' As says another [Ḥallāj]: 'I am True-God' (*anā'l-ḥaqq*). As says our Guide and Master, the Pole of the lords of divine unicity, the Prince of the believers, [Imam 'Alī]: 'I am the face of God, I am the flank of God, I am the hand of God, I am the proof of God, I am the First and the Last, I am the Manifest and the Concealed.'¹²⁷

For Ḥaydar Āmulī, a Shi'i first and foremost, Sufi masters and imams are doubtless not on an equal footing: the Sufi momentarily attains identity with God at the culmination of the contemplative exercise whereas the imam is the actual manifestation of the Science and of the Power of God.¹²⁸ The semantic and phenomenological comparison between the ecstatic verbalisations of the Sufis and the self-glorifying sermons of the imams does not imply that they are ontologically equivalent, but suggests that, through his own effort and then only intermittently, the Sufi can say what the imam says, the latter by virtue of his very essence. The fact remains that the interpretation proffered by Ḥaydar Āmulī with regard to these utterances, and which was subsequently echoed by Ibn Abī Jumhūr and Ashkiwarī, bestow qualities on the Sufi that Imami orthodoxy normally attributes exclusively to imams.

Our thinkers Ḥaydar Āmulī and then Ibn Abī Jumhūr, also record certain mystical *ḥadīths* of Imam 'Alī, on the topics of love (*ḥubb*, *'ishq*), intoxication (*sukr*) and ecstasy (*ṭarab*, *wajd*). For example:

God has a potation for His friends. When they drink it, they become intoxicated. When they are intoxicated, they go into a trance. When they go into a trance, they better themselves. When they better themselves, they melt. When they melt, they purify

themselves. When they purify themselves, they seek. When they seek, they find. When they find, they join. When they join, they connect themselves. When they connect themselves, there is no difference between them and their loved one.¹²⁹

Here also, these conceptions are frequently taxed with exaggeration (*ghuluww*) in Shi'i circles.¹³⁰ The analogy which this tradition suggests between esoteric Shi'ism and ecstatic or 'intoxicated' Sufism is probably the reason why it is rejected by most traditionalists – since it does not appear in the authoritative literature –, but it is probably also the reason why it is adopted by Ḥaydar Āmulī, Ibn Abī Jumhūr or even Fayḍ al-Kāshānī. It enables Ibn Abī Jumhūr to justify the ecstatic discourse of the Sufis Baṣṭāmī and Ḥallāj. His philosophical exegesis is reiterated word for word by Ashkiwarī in his apology of Ḥallāj:

Ibn Jumhūr (sic), hallowed be his secret, declared, in his book *al-Mujlī*, that the soul, when it is united to certain immaterial lights during certain furtive occasions and is stripped of its body, through the power of intellectual delectations and spiritual elations which adhere to it, through the intensity of the shining auroras, retires from its essence and from the conscience of its essence. The sovereign of the immaterial and intellectual lights takes hold of it and it then disappears from its own essence (*tafnā 'an dhātihā*). They describe this state as 'unification' (*ittiḥād*). When the traveller towards God reaches this station, that the weaker light is extinguished in that which is more powerful and intense, that [traveller] is drunken from the pleasures of the victorial lights, that these immaterial lights became the *loci* of manifestation where rational minds unite, then this soul is in such a state that it only sees the *locus* of manifestation, and speaks only with the language of this *locus* of manifestation. Till the point where al-Ḥusayn al-Ḥallāj, who had reached this station, prayed to God and said to Him: 'O Lord, my "I" is holding me back, lift hence through your "It is I" my "it is I"?' God granted his prayer and said: 'I am True-God'.¹³¹

For Ashkiwarī, the defence of Sufi *shaṭaḥāt* in the name of the ascendancy of mystical states of being can justify certain forms of antinomianism. In this state of mystical intoxication, he writes, 'the pilgrim on the path of God leaves the sphere of prescription and the domain of reason (*az dā'ira-yi taklīf wa tūr-i 'aql bīrūn uftād*); his

heart can no longer respect the seemingly practices prescribed by the Saint [the Prophet]; however in this state, the abandonment of right behaviour is the right behaviour in itself (*tark-i adab 'ayn-i adab bāshad*).¹³² The apparent antinomianism, on the exoteric level, could mask, on the esoteric level, an inner comprehension and a superior respect of the Law. Ashkiwarī concludes with a call for tolerance with regard to the ecstatic utterings of the Sufis, quoting a verse in Persian of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (d. 672/1273):

If men, drunk from the pure beverage of union, express themselves, in this drunkenness and this spiritual state, in such a way that, if compared to the learned and lucid people of the schools, they might appear a wrong behaviour (*sū'-i adab*), one must nevertheless not admonish them. In consideration of the place and the state from which they speak, one must be accepting and seek no quarrel.

Forgive him, whom You have intoxicated and then deprived, if he strays due to his drunkenness (*mastī*).¹³³

This is without a doubt our Shi'i authors' boldest defence of Sufism, for this 'intoxicated Sufism' hailed by Ḥallāj was generally abhorred by their lawyer-theologians. This is in all likelihood the reason why all four support, regardless of the overwhelming evidence, the historical affiliation of Abū Yazīd al-Baṣṭāmī to Imam Ja'far, since Baṣṭāmī is the father of this form of ecstatic Sufism, which reached its climax with Ḥallāj. The two later thinkers of our study, Shūshtarī and Ashkiwarī, are also eager to show that Ḥallāj was Shi'i. My hypothesis is that the pseudo-'Shi'itisation' of these historical figures is a tactic which aims to defend ecstatic Sufism and its theopathic locutions, and this defence is itself devised in order to ultimately pave the way for the new experiences and new ecstatic utterances of the Gnostics ('*urafā'*') like Ashkiwarī's first master Mīr Dāmād.¹³⁴ It is worth noting that the specialist *par excellence* of the Ḥallāj dossier, Louis Massignon, classifies Ashkiwarī as 'pro-Ḥallājīan' and isolated in the midst of the rationalist (*uṣūlī*) clergy.¹³⁵ This begs the following question: could one be both pro-Ḥallājīan and *faqīh uṣūlī*? It seems rather that this defensive stance was emblematic of the resistance of the original, non-rational and esoteric form of Shi'ism, against the rise in power of the rationalist *uṣūlī*, without ever becoming an *akhbārī* discourse.

Conclusion

The works of these four authors thus form a coherent intellectual system, which serves a cause both spiritual and political: the peaceable and fertile coexistence between Twelver Shi'ism, Sufism and gnostic philosophy. Notwithstanding the apparent repetition of the same discourse, the originality of each work in its particular historical context is apparent, both in the differing emphasis placed on particular modes of argumentation and in the development or elision of different elements of information. Whereas the first authors in this tradition of reconciliation were confident of its own true orthodoxy, later authors had progressively to come to terms with its minority status and marginality. Given subsequent history, from a contemporary perspective the reconciliation attempted by our thinkers is between the most esoteric forms of Shi'ism and Sufism, the first frequently accused of exaggeration by the Shi'is themselves, and the second equally repudiated by a great number of Sufis. In other words, and not least paradoxically, it is a synthesis of heterodoxies which has been elevated here to a veritable intellectual tradition.

NOTES

- 1 Concerning the 'Sufi question' in Imami Shi'ism, see Nasrollah Pourjavady, 'Opposition to Sufism in Twelver Shiism', in Frederik de Jong and Bernd Radtke, ed., *Islamic Mysticism Contested. Thirteen Centuries of Controversies and Polemics* (Leiden, 1999), pp. 614–623; during the Safawid era specifically, see Said Amir Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam* (Chicago and London, 1984), pp. 112–119; 'Abd al-Ḥusayn Zarrīnkūb, *Dunbālah-yi justujū dar taṣawwuf-i Irān* (Tehran, 1389 Sh./2010), in particular pp. 223–266; Leonard Lewisohn, 'Sufism and the School of Iṣfahān: *Taṣawwuf* and *ʿIrḡān* in Late Safavid Iran ('Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī and Fayḍ-i Kāshānī on the Relation of *Taṣawwuf*, *Hikmat* and *ʿIrḡān*)', in Leonard Lewisohn and David Morgan, ed., *The Heritage of Sufism* (Oxford, 1999), vol. 3, pp. 67–77; Kathryn Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs, Cultural Landscapes of Early Modern Iran* (London, 2002), pp. 403–437.
- 2 Concerning the reinstatement of the Ni'mat Allāhī in Iran in the 12th/18th century, see Fabrizio Speziale, 'À propos du renouveau *ni'matullāhī*. Le centre de Hyderabad au cours de la première modernité', *Studia Iranica* 42 (2013), pp. 91–118, and his chapter in this volume.
- 3 One can find a revived version of this discourse, with references to the works and authors mentioned in this article, in the historical encyclopaedia of Sufism written by an eminent member of the Ni'mat Allāhī order, Ma'ṣūm 'Alī Shāh (d. 1344/1925–6), *Ṭarā'iq al-ḥaqā'iq* (Tehran, 1387 Sh./2008). This discourse is also recurrent in the works of Seyyed Hossein Nasr; e.g. S.H. Nasr, 'Le shi'isme et le soufisme. Leurs relations principales et historiques', in Toufic Fahd, ed., *Le shi'isme imāmīte* (Paris, 1970), pp. 215–233. See also Shahrām Pāzūkī, 'Bāz kāwī-yi tārikhī-yi nizā'-i ṣūfiya wa fuqahā', in his *ʿIrḡān wa hunar dar dawra-yi mudīrī* (Tehran, 1393 Sh./2014–15), pp. 216–232.

- 4 Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī, *La philosophie shī'ite*, 1. Somme des doctrines ésotériques (*Jāmi' al-asrār*). 2. Traité de la connaissance de l'être (*Fi ma' rifat al-wujūd*), ed. H. Corbin and O. Yahia (Tehran and Paris, 1347 Sh./1968). On this thinker, see Khanjār 'Alī Ḥamiya, *'Irfān-i shī'ī. Pazhūhishī dar bāb-i zindigī wa andishah-yi Sayyid Ḥaydar-i Āmulī* (Tehran, 1392 Sh./2013); Mathieu Terrier, 'Āmulī, Sayyid Ḥaydar', in Henrik Lagerlund, ed., *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy* (Dordrecht, 2018), online: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-024-1151-5_585-1. In this paper, I will also take into account two other works of this thinker: *al-Muḥīṭ al-a'zam wa'l-baḥr al-khiḍamm fi ta'wil kitāb Allāh al-'azīz al-muḥkam*, ed. S.M. al-Mūsawī Tabrizī (Qumm, 1414/1994-5), also ed. unknown (Beirut, 1433/2012); and his *Anwār al-ḥaqīqa wa aṭwār al-ṭarīqa wa asrār al-sharī'a*, ed. S.M. al-Mūsawī Tabrizī (Qumm, 1436/1394 Sh./2015-16); also known as *Asrār al-sharī'a wa aṭwār al-ṭarīqa wa anwār al-ḥaqīqa*, ed. M. Khājawi (Tehran, 1362 Sh./1983). See below for their introduction.
- 5 Ibn Abī Jumhūr al-Aḥsā'i, *Mujlī mir'at al-munjī fi'l-kalām wa'l-ḥikmatayn wa'l-taṣawwuf*, ed. R.Y. Fārmad (Beirut, 2013). This is the first critical edition of the book, thanks to a foundation devoted to the diffusion of the works of Ibn Abī Jumhūr, based on three manuscripts in addition to the earlier lithographic edition by Aḥmad al-Shirāzī, reprinted with an introduction by Sabine Schmidtke (Tehran, 2009), and completed by references to the author's sources. On this thinker, see Mathieu Terrier, 'Ibn Abī Jumhūr al-Aḥsā'i', *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*, online: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-024-1151-5_588-1. For the appointing of Ibn Abī Jumhūr's death date, see Fārmad's introduction to his edition of the *Mujlī*, p. 67.
- 6 Qāḍī Nūr Allāh Shūshtarī, *Majālis al-mu'minīn*, ed. I. 'Arabpūr, M. Sitāyish, M.R. Muḥammadyān et al. (7 vols., Mashhad, 1393 Sh./2014). This new edition is the first critical one, based on ten manuscripts, augmented and corrected by references to Shūshtarī's sources. The earlier, confusing edition from Intishārāt Islāmiyya (Tehran, 1335 Sh./1955; re-ed. 1391 Sh./2012) should also be mentioned.
- 7 Quṭb al-Dīn al-Ashkiwārī, *Maḥbūb al-qulūb, al-maqālat al-'ulā*, ed. I. al-Dibājī and H. Šidqī (Tehran, 1378 Sh./1999); *Maḥbūb al-qulūb, al-maqālat al-thāniya*, ed. I. al-Dibājī and H. Šidqī (Tehran, 1382 Sh./2003). The third part has not been published yet. On this work, see M. Terrier, 'Le *Maḥbūb al-qulūb* de Quṭb al-Dīn Ashkevarī, une œuvre méconnue dans l'histoire de la sagesse en islam', *J. Asiat.*, 298 (2010), pp. 345-387; 'Quṭb al-Dīn Ashkevarī, un philosophe discret de la renaissance safavide', *Studia Iranica*, 40 (2011), pp. 171-210; *Histoire de la sagesse et philosophie shī'ite. « L'Aimé des cœurs » de Quṭb al-Dīn Aṣkevarī* (Paris, 2016).
- 8 Ḥāfiẓ Rajab Bursī, *Mashāriq anwār al-yaqīn*, ed. A. al-Māzandarānī (Qumm, 1426/1384 Sh./2005-6); Shams al-Dīn Lāhijī, *Mafātīḥ al-i'jāz fi sharḥ Gulshān-i rāz*, ed. M.R. Barzigar Khālīqī and I. Karbāsī (Tehran, 1391 Sh./2012-13).
- 9 In the introduction of his *Naṣṣ al-nuṣūṣ*, ed. H. Corbin and O. Yahia (Tehran and Paris, 1988), and now ed. M. Bidārfar (Qumm, 1394 Sh./2015), p. 537 (C-Y), 853 (B), Ḥaydar Āmulī writes that he finished it in 782/1380 at the age of sixty-three. See Ḥamiya, *'Irfān-i shī'ī*, p. 8.
- 10 The date of his last work, *Risālat al-'ulūm al-'aliyya*. See Corbin, introduction to Āmulī, *La philosophie shī'ite*, p. 20.
- 11 Ibid., pp. 5-76; Kāmil Muṣṭafā al-Shaybī, *al-Šila bayna'l-taṣawwuf wa'l-tashayyū'*, (2nd ed., Beirut, Baghdad and Freiberg, 2011), vol. 2, pp. 104-115. See also Ḥamiya, *'Irfān-i shī'ī*, pp. 38-41.
- 12 Corbin, introduction to Āmulī, *La philosophie shī'ite*, p. 17.
- 13 Āmulī, *Naṣṣ al-nuṣūṣ*, pp. 535-537 (C-Y), 851-853 (B); Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl* (Deliverance from Error), ed. F. Jabre (Beirut, 1969). In both reports one can find the same claim of a split from the mundane world for a purely spiritual purpose, and the same silence on the possible political-mundane motives of this decision.

- 14 Corbin, introduction to Āmulī, *La philosophie shi'ite*, pp. 18–23; Corbin, *En Islam iranien* (Paris, 1971–1972), vol. 3, pp. 162–167.
- 15 See above, n. 4. Its composition was prior to that of the *Jāmi' al-asrār* as it mentions the latter, pp. 88 and 367.
- 16 *Raf' al-munāza'a wa'l-khilāf*, ed. H. Kalbāsī Ashtarī (Tehran, 1396 Sh./2017).
- 17 *Naṣṣ al-nuṣūṣ*, p. 3 and 148 (C-Y), 3 and 216 (B). Ibn 'Arabī says that the *Fuṣūṣ* had been given to him in a dream by the Prophet. See Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikām*, ed. A. 'Afifi (Beirut, 1423/2002), pp. 47–48.
- 18 Corbin, *En Islam iranien*, vol. 3, p. 155; and his *Histoire de la philosophie islamique* (Paris, 1986), *passim*.
- 19 See Daniel De Smet, 'Introduction to Part VIII: "Philosophy and Intellectual Traditions"', in Farhad Daftary and Gurdofarid Miskinzoda, ed., *The Study of Shi'i Islam* (London, 2104), pp. 545–562, and my *Histoire de la sagesse et philosophie shi'ite*, pp. 731–735.
- 20 See Jean Calmard, 'Le chiisme imamate sous les Ilkhans', in Denise Aigle, ed., *L'Iran face à la domination mongole* (Tehran, 1997), pp. 261–292, esp. p. 282; Monika Gronke, 'La religion populaire en Iran mongol', in *L'Iran face à la domination mongole*, pp. 205–207; Marijan Molé, 'Les Kubrawiyya entre sunnisme et shiisme aux huitième et neuvième siècles de l'hégire', *Revue des Études Islamiques* (1961), pp. 61–142; Alessandro Bausani, 'Religion under the Mongols', in John A. Boyle, ed., *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 5, *The Saljuq and Mongol Periods* (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 538–549.
- 21 Āmulī, *Jāmi' al-asrār*, p. 254; Corbin, Introduction, p. 25.
- 22 Āmulī, *Jāmi' al-asrār*, pp. 41 and 222.
- 23 Ibid., pp. 32–33, 36–37, 39 and 600; Corbin, Introduction, pp. 27–29. On this *ḥadīth*, see Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, *Le guide divin dans le shi'isme originel* (Paris, 1992–2007), pp. 144, 278 and 328–330.
- 24 al-Shaybī proposes 838/1435.
- 25 The first option has the favour of Fārmad in his introduction to Ibn Abī Jūmhūr, *Mujlī*, vol. 1, p. 65; the second one has those of al-Shaybī, *al-Ṣila*, vol. 2, p. 312, of Šamad Mowāḥḥed, 'Ibn Abī Jūmhūr', in Kāzīm Mūsawī Bujnūrdī, ed., *Da'irat al-ma'ārif-i buzurg-i islāmī*, (Tehran, 1367 Sh./1988), vol. 2, p. 635, and of Todd Lawson, 'Ebn Abī Jūmhūr Aḥsā'ī', *EIR*, vol. 7, p. 662.
- 26 Fārmad, Introduction to *Mujlī*, vol. 1, pp. 65–67.
- 27 On this work, see Āqā Buzurg al-Tīhrānī, *al-Dharī'a ilā taṣnīf al-shi'a* (25 vols., Tehran and Najaf, 1353–1398/1934–1978), vol. 20, p. 13, n.1726; Wilferd Madelung, 'Ibn Abī Jūmhūr al-Aḥsā'ī's Synthesis of Kalām, Philosophy and Sufism', in *La signification du Bas Moyen Âge dans l'histoire et la culture du monde musulman* (Aix-en-Provence, 1978), pp. 147–156; Sabine Schmidtke, *Theologie, Philosophie und Mystik im zwölfterschiitischen Islam des 9./15. Jahrhunderts. Die Gedankenwelten des Ibn Abī Ġūmhūr al-Aḥsā'ī (um 838/1434–35 – nach 906/1501)* (Leiden, 2000).
- 28 Ibn Abī Jūmhūr composed a first epistle entitled *Maslak al-afḥām fī 'ilm al-kalām* in 886/1482; then in the margins of it, a commentary entitled *al-Nūr al-munjī min al-ḡalām* in 893/1488; and finally a commentary on this commentary, the *Mujlī mir'āt al-munjī*, achieved in 896/1490. See S. Schmidtke, introduction to the lithographic edition of the *Mujlī*, pp. iv–v, and Fārmad, introduction to Ibn Abī Jūmhūr, *Mujlī*, vol. 1, pp. 85–86.
- 29 Ibn Abī Jūmhūr, *Mujlī*, vol. 1, pp. 134–135.
- 30 Bausani, 'Religion under the Mongols', p. 546.
- 31 Al-Shaybī, *Ṣila*, vol. 2, p. 313. About the role of al-Karakī, see Arjomand, *Shadow of God*, pp. 133–137 and 140–142; Rula Jurdi Abisaab, *Converting Persia. Religion and Power in Safavid Empire* (London and New York, 2004), pp. 15–20; Andrew J. Newman, *Safavid Iran* (London and New York, 2006), *passim*.
- 32 Al-Shaybī, *Ṣila*, vol. 2, p. 319.
- 33 Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī, *Bihār al-anwār*, ed. J. al-'Alawī et al. (111 vols., Tehran, 1376–1405/1957–1985), vol. 10, pp. 183–184; Mīrzā 'Abd Allāh al-Iṣbahānī Afandī,

- Riyād al-‘ulamā’*, quoted by Muḥsin al-Amin in *A‘yān al-Shi‘a* (Beirut, 1406/1986), vol. 9, p. 434; see also al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī, *al-Risāla al-ithnā‘ashariyya fi’l-radd ‘alā al-ṣūfiyya*, ed. A. al-Jalālī (Qumm, 1390 Sh./2011), p. 32.
- 34 *‘Awālī al-la‘ālī* (Qumm, 1404/1983), preface by Ayatollah Shihāb al-Dīn al-Ḥusaynī al-Mar‘ashī al-Najafī, pp. 4–5; al-Shaybī, *Ṣila*, vol. 1, p. 314; Muwaḥḥid, ‘Ibn Abī Jumhūr’, pp. 635–636. Even Ma‘ṣūm ‘Alī Shāh, in the laudatory notice he devotes to him, criticises his lack of reliability as a traditionist: see Ma‘ṣūm ‘Alī Shāh, *Ṭarā‘iq al-ḥaqā‘iq*, vol. 1, p. 249.
- 35 Shūshtarī, *Majālīs*, vol. 1, introduction of the editors, pp. 195–198; vol. 3, p. 456 for the account of his grandfather’s affiliation; vol. 4, pp. 374–388, for a hyper-eulogistic notice on Muḥammad Nūrbakhsh (d. 869/1464) and his son Shāh Qāsim. See also Zarrinkūb, *Dunbālah-yi justujū*, p. 186.
- 36 Ma‘ṣūm ‘Alī Shāh, *Ṭarā‘iq al-ḥaqā‘iq*, vol. 1, p. 254; Arjomand, *Shadow of God*, p. 115.
- 37 Shūshtarī, *Majālīs*, vol. 1, introduction of the editors, pp. 156–173.
- 38 al-Amin, *A‘yān al-Shi‘a*, vol. 10, pp. 228–229, quoting from al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī, *Amal al-‘Āmil*.
- 39 Corbin, *Histoire de la philosophie islamique*, p. 441.
- 40 On this title, see Ma‘ṣūm ‘Alī Shāh, *Ṭarā‘iq al-ḥaqā‘iq*, vol. 2, p. 253.
- 41 Ṭihirānī, *Dharī‘a*, vol. 19, n.1652, pp. 370–371.
- 42 Shūshtarī, *Majālīs*, vol. 1, p. 29; Tehran ed., vol. 1, p. 10.
- 43 Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 8–9; Tehran ed., vol. 1, pp. 4–5.
- 44 This includes, among cases less contested, Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī and Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ‘Arabī. See Shūshtarī, *Majālīs*, vol. 4, pp. 480–503; Tehran ed., vol. 2, pp. 191–201, for the former; ibid., vol. 4, pp. 196–212 for the latter; Tehran ed., vol. 2, pp. 61–69.
- 45 Mīrzā ‘Abd Allāh al-Isbahānī, quoted by al-Amin, *A‘yān al-Shi‘a* (Beirut, 1406/1986) vol. 10, p. 229.
- 46 Al-Shaybī, *Ṣila*, vol. 1, pp. 224–246, on the historical relations between Sufi masters and Shi‘i imams, refers to Ma‘ṣūm ‘Alī Shāh, *Ṭarā‘iq al-ḥaqā‘iq*, himself quoting Shūshtarī’s *Majālīs*; Nasr, ‘Le shī‘isme et le soufisme’, notably p. 226 where the author does not quote his source; Calmard, ‘Le chiisme imamite sous les Ilkhans’, p. 261, n.1 and *passim*.
- 47 Among the anti-Sufi treatises from this period: attributed to the chief of the Akhbāriyya, Aḥmad al-Ardabīlī (d. 993/1585), *Ḥadiqat al-shi‘a*, ed. S. Ḥasanzādah (Qumm, 1377 Sh./1998); al-Hurr al-‘Āmilī, *al-Risāla al-ithnā‘ashariyya* (Qumm, 1390 Sh./2011); Muḥammad Ṭāhir b. Muḥammad Ḥusayn Qummī, *Tuḥfat al-akhyār* (Qumm, 1973).
- 48 Āmulī, *Jāmi‘ al-asrār*, p. 40.
- 49 Ibid., p. 41.
- 50 On *ghuluww* and the *ghulāt* (‘exaggerators’), see Marshall G.S. Hodgson, ‘Ghulāt’, *EI2*, vol. 2, pp. 1119–1121; Amir-Moezzi, *Guide divin*, pp. 313–317.
- 51 See Giorgio Levi Della Vida, ‘Salmān al-Fārisī’, *EI2*, vol. 12, Supplement, pp. 701–702.
- 52 See Julian Baldick, ‘Uways al-Ḳaranī’, *EI2*, French ed., vol. 10, p. 1035.
- 53 Āmulī, *Jāmi‘ al-asrār*, pp. 614–615.
- 54 On the technical meaning and the late appearance of the appellation Twelver Shi‘i, see Etan Kohlberg, ‘Early attestations of the term “ithnā ‘ashariyya”’, *JSAI* 24 (2000), pp. 343–357; Amir-Moezzi, *Guide divin*, pp. 247–248.
- 55 Levi Della Vida, ‘Salmān al-Fārisī’, al-Shaybī, *Ṣila*, vol. 1, pp. 29–37.
- 56 Majlisī, *Bihār al-anwār* (henceforth: Beirut 1403/1983), vol. 10, p. 123; vol. 17, p. 170; vol. 18, p. 19; vol. 22, p. 326. Āmulī, *Jāmi‘ al-asrār*, pp. 25 and 500. On this *ḥadīth*, see Louis Massignon, ‘Salman Pak et les prémisses spirituelles de l’Islam iranien’, in *Opera minora* (Paris 1969), vol. 1, pp. 453–455, esp. 443–483.
- 57 Amir-Moezzi, *Guide divin*, p. 232, n.478. Bursī, *Mashāriq anwār al-yaqīn* (Qumm, 1384/2005–6), p. 428, records that Salmān was the man with greatest knowledge of God (*a‘raf bi’llāh*) because he was the man with greatest knowledge of ‘Alī.
- 58 A whole chapter of the *Bihār al-anwār* is devoted to them: vol. 22, *bāb* 10, pp. 315–355.

- 59 al-Shaybī, *Sila*, vol. 1, pp. 37–50 and 55–57; James Robson, 'Abu Dharr al-Ghifārī', *EL2*, French ed., vol. 1, p. 118; Hermann Reckendorf, 'Ammār ibn Yāsir', *EL2*, French ed., vol. 1, p. 461; G.H.A. Juynboll, 'al-Mikdād ibn 'Amr', *EL2*, French ed., vol. 7, pp. 32–33. Their loyalty to 'Alī after the death of the Prophet and the 'coup d'état' of Saqifa is stressed in *Kitāb Sulaym b. Qays al-Kūfī* or *Kitāb al-saqifa* (Beirut, n.d.), esp. pp. 75–76, 81 and 128. On this book expressing the genuine Shi'i perception of history, see Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, *Le Coran silencieux et le Coran parlant* (Paris, 2011), chapter 1, pp. 27–61; see also Maria Massi Dakake, 'Writing and Resistance: The Transmission of Religious Knowledge in Early Shi'ism', in *The Study of Shi'i Islam*, pp. 181–201.
- 60 Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb Kulaynī, *Uṣūl al-Kāfi* (Beirut, 1426/2005), *Kitāb al-ḥujja, bāb fī mā jā'a anna ḥadīthanā ša'b mustaṣ'ab*, pp. 238–239; Āmulī, *Jāmi' al-asrār*, p. 34; Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 22, p. 343.
- 61 Ibn Abī Jūmhūr, *Mujlī*, p. 1245.
- 62 Hellmut Ritter, 'al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī', *EL2*, French ed., vol. 3, pp. 254–255.
- 63 E.g. Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 35, p. 59; vol. 38, pp. 101–102, quoted from Shaykh Ṣadūq's *Āmālī*, for the first case; *ibid.*, vol. 6, pp. 65 and 91; vol. 24, p. 232, quoted from al-Ṭabarsī's *Ihtijāj*, for the second.
- 64 Āmulī, *Jāmi' al-asrār*, pp. 4, 223–224.
- 65 Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima* (Beirut, 1426/2005), pp. 282–283; *Le livre des exemples* (Paris, 2002), p. 671. Al-Shaybī, *Sila*, vol. 1, pp. 86–87, and Nasr, 'Le shī'isme et le soufisme', p. 217, quote this passage as a confirmation of the historical link between Shi'ism and Sufism, something which obviously distorts Ibn Khaldūn's intention.
- 66 On Ḥasan al-Baṣrī's Sunni positions, see Louis Massignon, *La Passion de Husayn ibn Mansūr Hallāj* (4 vols., Paris, 1975, vol. 1, pp. 195, 376, 520; vol. 3, pp. 172, 203, 223).
- 67 Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār, *Tadhkirat al-awliyā'*, ed. R.A. Nicholson (Tehran 1378 Sh./1999), pp. 81–85; 412–413.
- 68 J. Baldick, 'Uwaysiyya', *EL2*, French ed., vol. 10, pp. 1035–1036; Corbin, *En islam iranien*, vol. 1, p. 264; *ibid.*, vol. 4, pp. 453–454; H. Corbin, *L'imagination créatrice dans le soufisme d'Ibn 'Arabi* (2d ed. Paris, 2006), pp. 32–33. Abū Yazīd Baṣṭāmī and Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār may be considered as Uwaysī, according to traditions expressed by 'Aṭṭār.
- 69 Shūshtarī, *Majālis*, vol. 2, pp. 408–419, Tehran ed., vol. 1, pp. 279–283.
- 70 *Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 412–414; Tehran ed., vol. 1, pp. 280–281. It is notable that Shūshtarī also considered 'Aṭṭār to be a Shi'a practising *taqiyya* under duress.
- 71 Ashkiwārī, *Mahbūb*, vol. 2, pp. 493–494; Shūshtarī, *Majālis*, vol. 2, pp. 417–418; Tehran ed. vol. 1, pp. 282–283.
- 72 About Kumayl in Shi'i traditions, see 'Abbās al-Qummī, *Safinat al-bihār* (8 vols., Tehran, 1373 Sh./1994), vol. 7, pp. 538–539, referring to numerous *loci* of the *Biḥār al-anwār*. About the *silṣila kumayliyya*, see Ma'sūm 'Alī Shāh, *Ṭarā'iq al-ḥaqā'iq*, vol. 2, pp. 83–108. About Kumayl for the Nūrbakhshiyya, see Shūshtarī, *Majālis*, vol. 2, p. 11.
- 73 Āmulī, *Jāmi' al-asrār*, pp. 28–29; see the translation and the commentary on this tradition by Corbin, *En Islam iranien*, vol. 1, pp. 110–112. Ibn Abī Jūmhūr, *Mujlī*, pp. 481, a fragment only; Shūshtarī, *Majālis*, vol. 4, pp. 28–30; Tehran ed., vol. 2, pp. 10–11; Ashkiwārī, *Mahbūb*, vol. 2, pp. 497–498. See also Lāhijī, *Mafātiḥ al-i'jāz*, pp. 247–248.
- 74 For a famous modern formulation of the latter idea, see Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*, French trans. by G.-G. Granger (Paris, 1993), prop. 7, p. 112.
- 75 Shūshtarī, *Majālis*, vol. 4, p. 31; Tehran ed., vol. 2, p. 12; Ashkiwārī, *Mahbūb*, vol. 2, p. 498.
- 76 The relater of the *ḥadīth* could be al-Mughīra b. Sa'īd al-Ijlī (d. 119/737), one of the most famous disciples of the fifth imam considered as *ghulāt*. See Abū 'Amr Muḥammad al-Kashshī, *Rijāl al-Kashshī*, ed. S. Aḥmad al-Ḥusaynī (Beirut, 1430/2009), pp. 164–167.

- 77 Shūshtarī, *Majālis*, vol. 4, p. 58; Tehran ed., vol. 2, p. 24.
- 78 Ma'šūm 'Alī Shāh, *Ṭarā'iq al-ḥaqā'iq*, vol. 2, p. 109; al-Shaybī, *Šila*, vol. 2, pp. 472–473. This Sufi master is also said to have been affiliated to the sixth imam Ja'far al-Šādiq. See Ma'šūm 'Alī Shāh, *Ṭarā'iq*, vol. 2, p. 109; Nasr, 'Le shī'isme et le soufisme', p. 226.
- 79 Shūshtarī, *Majālis*, vol. 4, pp. 53–54; Tehran ed., vol. 2, p. 22.
- 80 Ibid., vol. 4, pp. 55–56; Tehran ed., vol. 2, p. 23.
- 81 Ibid., vol. 4, p. 50; Tehran ed., vol. 2, p. 21. Shūshtarī quoted it from a mysterious Nūr al-Dīn Ja'far al-Badakhshānī's *Kitāb al-aḥbāb*.
- 82 Ashkiwarī, *Mahbūb*, vol. 2, pp. 517–518, for all the historical argumentation.
- 83 Amir-Moezzi, *Guide divin*, pp. 190–195.
- 84 Shūshtarī, *Majālis*, vol. 4, p. 57; Tehran ed., vol. 2, p. 24. See also al-Shaybī, *Šila*, vol. 1, p. 235, quoting al-Ya'qūbī's *Ta'rikh*, ed. M.S. Bahr al-'Ulūm (Najaf, 1384/1964).
- 85 Shūshtarī, *Majālis*, vol. 4, pp. 32–33; Tehran ed., vol. 2, p. 12; Ashkiwarī, *Mahbūb*, vol. 2 p. 511. Al-Shaybī, *Šila*, vol. 2, p. 31, expresses his doubts about the authenticity of this event.
- 86 Shūshtarī, *Majālis*, vol. 4, pp. 65–67; Tehran ed., vol. 2, pp. 27–28; Ashkiwarī, *Mahbūb*, vol. 2 p. 499; also resumed by Ma'šūm 'Alī Shāh, *Ṭarā'iq*, vol. 2, p. 290.
- 87 Shūshtarī, *Majālis*, vol. 4, p. 67; Tehran ed., vol. 2, p. 28; 'Attār, *Tadhkirat al-awliyā*, p. 365.
- 88 Āmulī, *Jāmi' al-asrār*, pp. 225, 431 and 614–615; Ibn Abī Jūmhūr, *Mujlī*, pp. 1246 and 1262; Shūshtarī, *Majālis*, vol. 4, pp. 70–71; Tehran ed., vol. 2, p. 30.
- 89 Shūshtarī, *Majālis*, vol. 4, p. 71; Tehran ed., vol. 2, pp. 30–31.
- 90 al-Shaybī, *Šila*, vol. 1, p. 245; Nasr, 'Le shī'isme et le soufisme', p. 226.
- 91 al-Shaybī, *Šila*, vol. 1, pp. 244–245.
- 92 al-Ḥurr al-'Āmilī, *Ithnā'ashariyya*, p. 27.
- 93 This *ḥadīth* is quoted by Āmulī in the opening of his Qur'anic *Ta'wīl al-Muḥīṭ al-a'zam*, I, p. 195 (Qumm, 1414/1994–5), p. 17 (Beirut, 1433/2012); also in his *Anwār al-ḥaqīqa* (Qumm, 1436/1394 Sh./2015–16), pp. 21 and 70, or *Asrār al-sharī'a* (Tehran, 1362 Sh./1983), pp. 8 and 24; also in *Jāmi' al-asrār*, p. 346. It appears in Ibn Abī Jūmhūr's controversial collection of *ḥadīths*, '*Awālī al-la'ālī*', 4, pp. 124–125, §212; also in his *Mujlī*, p. 1073. But this is absent from the *Bihār al-anwār*, something which suggests that it is not related by a Shi'i imam but rather appeared in a Sufi-Sunni milieu.
- 94 Āmulī, *Anwār al-ḥaqīqa* (Qumm, 1394 Sh./2015), pp. 99–100; or *Asrār al-sharī'a* (Tehran, 1362 Sh./1983), pp. 31–32.
- 95 Āmulī, *Anwār al-ḥaqīqa*, pp. 106–107; or *Asrār al-sharī'a*, pp. 35–36; the saying of 'Alī is also quoted in *Jāmi' al-asrār*, p. 358–359.
- 96 Ibn Abī Jūmhūr, *Mujlī*, p. 1072; Āmulī, *Jāmi' al-asrār*, pp. 14, 41 and 344; quoted by Ashkiwarī, *Mahbūb al-qulūb*, vol. 2, p. 486.
- 97 e.g. Q 2:179, 197 and 269; 3:7 and 190; and *Aflūṭīn 'ind al-'arab*, ed. A. Badawī (Cairo, 1955; second ed. Kuwait, 1977), pp. 32, 99–100.
- 98 al-Imām al-Shahrastānī, *Kitāb al-Milal wa'l-niḥal*, ed. M. Badran (Cairo, 1375/1956), vol. 2, p. 74 for Empedocles, p. 160 for Proclus.
- 99 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Qāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyya*, ed. 'Āṣim al-Kayālī (Beirut, 2005), p. 68.
- 100 The couple *qishr, lubb* is at least absent from al-Majlisī's *Bihār al-anwār*.
- 101 Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi and Christian Jambet, *Qu'est-ce que le shī'isme?* (Paris, 2004), pp. 31–35.
- 102 *Aflūṭīn 'ind al-'arab*, p. 84.
- 103 See Ignaz Goldziher, *Le dogme et la loi dans l'islam* (Paris, 1920–2005), p. 146; Corbin, *Histoire de la philosophie islamique*, p. 264; Éric Geoffroy, *Le soufisme. Voie intérieure de l'islam* (Paris, 2003), pp. 95–104.
- 104 Ibn Abī Jūmhūr, *Mujlī*, p. 1078.
- 105 Āmulī, *Jāmi' al-asrār*, p. 346.
- 106 Ibid., pp. 384–385.

- 107 Ibid., pp. 346–347.
- 108 Ibn Abi Jūmhūr, *Mujlī*, pp. 1080–1081.
- 109 Ashkiwārī, *Mahbūb*, vol. 2, p. 486; Ibn Abi Jūmhūr, *Mujlī*, p. 1081.
- 110 É. Geoffroy, 'L'apparition des voies: les *khirqā* primitives (XII^e siècle – début XIII^e siècle)', in Alexandre Popovic and Gilles Veinstein, ed., *Les Voies d'Allah* (Paris, 1996), p. 45.
- 111 E.g. *En islam iranien*, vol. 3, pp. 153 and 156.
- 112 Nasr, 'Le shī'isme et le soufisme', pp. 220–221.
- 113 Ibn Abi Jūmhūr, *Mujlī*, pp. 1245–1246; this passage is quoted by Ma'sūm 'Alī Shāh, *Tarā'iq*, vol. 1, pp. 525–526.
- 114 Ibn Abi Jūmhūr, *Mujlī*, pp. 1257–1258; Nasr, 'Le shī'isme et le soufisme', pp. 221–222.
- 115 Amir-Moezzi and Jambet, *Qu'est-ce que le shī'isme?* pp. 36–40.
- 116 On this topic, see Hamid Algar, 'Ebāḥiyya (or Ebāḥatīyya)', *EIR*; Alexandre Papas, 'Antinomianism (ibāḥa, ibāḥiyya)', *EI3*.
- 117 To summarise one of Corbin's arguments in *Histoire de la philosophie islamique*, pp. 55–58; *En islam iranien*, vol. 2, p. 11.
- 118 E.g. Ashkiwārī, *Mahbūb*, vol. 2, pp. 489–490, and vol. 1, p. 73, in his autobiography. See M. Terrier, 'Apologie du soufisme par un philosophe shī'ite de l'Iran safavide. Nouvelles remarques sur le *Mahbūb al-qulūb* d'Aṣkevarī', *Stud. Islam.*, 109 (2014), pp. 248–252, for the first part; *Histoire de la sagesse et philosophie shī'ite*, pp. 77–78 and 98, for the second part.
- 119 Ashkiwārī, *Mahbūb*, vol. 2, p. 490. Kulaynī, *Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, *Kitāb faḍl al-'ilm, bāb man 'amila bi-ghayr 'ilm*, p. 29.
- 120 See Terrier, *Histoire de la sagesse et philosophie shī'ite*; Pierre Hadot, *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie antique?* (Paris, 1995).
- 121 Ashkiwārī, *Mahbūb*, vol. 2, p. 349.
- 122 Ibid., p. 492. It is worth pointing out that Rajab Bursī interprets the former as the Sunnis and the latter as the *ghulāt*. See Ḥāfiẓ Rajab Bursī, *al-Durr al-thāmin fī khamṣami'a āya nuzilat fī mawlānā amīr al-mu'minīn*, ed. A. 'Ashūr (Beirut, 1424/2003), pp. 29–30.
- 123 This notion of language-game refers to the existence of practical rules, not to a lack of seriousness: L. Wittgenstein, *Investigations philosophiques*, French trans., F. Dastur et al. (Paris, 2004). On this, see P. Hadot, *Wittgenstein et les limites du langage* (Paris, 2004).
- 124 M.A. Amir-Moezzi, 'Aspects de l'imamologie duodécimaine I. Remarques sur la divinité de l'Imām', *Studia Iranica*, 25 (1996), pp. 193–216, in *La religion discrète* (Paris, 2006), pp. 89–108; (in English) 'Some Remarks on the Divinity of the Imām', in *The Spirituality of Shi'i Islam* (London, 2011), pp. 103–131, see p. 105.
- 125 On the *shaṭaḥāt*, see L. Massignon, *Essai sur les origines du lexique technique de la mystique musulmane* (Paris, 1922); *idem*, *Passion*, p. 319, Index, s.v. 'shath', 'shathīyāt'; Corbin's introduction to Rūzbihān Baqlī Shīrāzī, *Sharḥ-i shathīyyāt*, ed. H. Corbin (Paris and Tehran, 1962, 2nd ed. 2004); Paul Nwyia, *Exégèse coranique et langage mystique* (Beirut, 1970); Carl Ernst, *Words of Ecstasy in Sufism* (New York, 1995).
- 126 Massignon, *Passion*, vol. 1, pp. 431–432; vol. 3, pp. 359–367; see the definition of *shaṭh* in 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī, *Kitāb al-Ta'rīfāt*, ed. G. Flügel (Leipzig, 1845), p. 132; on Ibn 'Arabī's position, see Pierre Lory, *La science des lettres en islam* (Paris, 2004), pp. 129–131.
- 127 Āmulī, *Jāmi'* *al-asrār*, pp. 364–365. See also p. 172, where Āmulī traces the parallel between a sermon of Imām 'Alī addressed to Kumayl and an ecstatic speech by Ḥallāj. Rajab Bursī, *Mashāriq anwār al-yaqīn*, pp. 309–321, records these sermons in extensive versions.
- 128 Amir-Moezzi, *Guide divin*, p. 314.

- 129 Āmulī, *Jāmi' al-asrār*, pp. 363–364 and 676; *Anwār al-ḥaqqīqa* (Qumm, 1436/1394 Sh./2015–16), pp. 86–87; or *Asrār al-sharī'a* (Tehran, 1362 Sh./1983), p. 28, where Āmulī brings this tradition together with the *shaṭaḥāt* of the Sufis under the station of 'extinction in the assumption of God's unity' (*al-fanā' fi'l-tawḥīd*); Ibn Abī Jumhūr, *Mujlī*, p. 1682. al-Shaybī, *Ṣila*, vol. 1, p. 241, makes an analogy with a passage in al-Ḥallāj's *Kitāb al-Ṭawāsīn*, ed. L. Massignon (Paris, 1913), see pp. 32–33.
- 130 Fayḍ Kāshānī, *Kalimāt maknūna*, ed. 'A. al-Ḥ. Ḥājji Abū'l-Ḥasanī (Tehran, 1390 Sh./2011), pp. 185–186, quotes these traditions from *al-Mujlī*. In a footnote, the editor denounces the 'corruption' of these *ḥadīths* and the influence of 'extremist Sufism' on Ibn Abī Jumhūr.
- 131 Ashkiwarī, *Maḥbūb*, vol. 2, p. 540; Ibn Abī Jumhūr, *Mujlī*, p. 649. This interpretation is resumed from Shams al-Dīn al-Shahrazūrī, *Rasā'il al-shajara al-ilāhiyya*, ed. N. Ḥabībī (Tehran, 1385 Sh./2006), vol. 3, pp. 474–475.
- 132 Ashkiwarī, *Maḥbūb*, vol. 2, p. 542. On this notion of 'ascendancy' (*ghalaba*), see Abū Bakr Muḥammad al-Kalābādhi, *al-Ta'arruf li-madhhab ahl al-taṣawwuf*, ed. Y. al-Jayb Ṣādir (Beirut, 1427/2006), p. 82; Kalābādhi, *Traité de soufisme*, French trans., R. Deladrière (Paris, 1981), p. 126.
- 133 Ashkiwarī, *Maḥbūb*, vol. 2, pp. 542–543. Jalāl al-Dīn Mawlawī (Rūmī), *Mathnawī ma'nawī*, ed. R. Nicholson (Tehran, 1390 Sh./2011), p. 194. See also Lāhijī, *Mafātīḥ al-i'jāz*, p. 252.
- 134 Those ecstatic reports have been related by Ashkiwarī himself in the last notice of the third volume of the *Maḥbūb*. The text is edited in Mīr Dāmād, *Kitāb al-qabasāt*, ed. T. Izutsu and M. Mohaghegh (Tehran, 1977), pp. 31–53. See a French translation and a commentary in H. Corbin, 'Confessions extatiques de Mīr Dāmād, maître de théologie à Ispahan (ob. 1041/1631–2)', in H. Massé, ed., *Mélanges offerts à Louis Massignon* (3 vols., Damascus, 1956), vol. 1, pp. 331–378; and in *En Islam iranien*, vol. 4, pp. 9–53.
- 135 Massignon, *Passion*, vol. 1, p. 87; vol. 2, pp. 23 and 44–45.

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