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A 14TH CENTURY *SHĪ'Ī* GNOSTIC RAJAB BURSĪ AND HIS
*MASHĀRIQ AL-ANWĀR*¹

Introduction

Not far from the ancient site of Babylon, in the mid-fourteenth century, Rajab Bursī was born in a hamlet situated at the foot of a mountain near the Euphrates called Burs. Shi'ite authors often call him an “extremist/ exaggerator” (*ghālī*) because of his uncompromising view of the Prophet and the Imam as eternal principles even though many features of the venerable “extremist tradition” (*ghulūw*) seem to be absent from his work². What is clear is that his work, which pays ceaseless homage to the twelve Imams of *ithnā-‘asharī* Shi'ism, is suffused also with the themes and poetry of many Sufi authors and is heavily influenced by the logocentric ontology of Ibn ‘Arabī. This ontology would eventually make itself felt, four hundred years later, in, for example, the religio-political program of the *Bābī* movement of mid-nineteenth century Iran, whose literature also contains many references to the contents of the book under discussion. Between that time and the time of our author, his work has been quoted, commented upon, and noticed by a variety of different scholars.

Bursī's adoption of the Persianate *takhalluṣ* as a means of signing his poetry appears to be his only literary acknowledgment of specifically Persian culture. His move to Iran seems to have been motivated by an attraction to the probably somewhat less doctrinaire Shi'ite community there rather than an attraction for things Persian. The petty Sufi/Shi'ite dynasty in charge of Khurasan (which included *Ṭūs*, Bursī's eventual place of refuge), the Sarbadārīds (1337—1381), was tolerated by Timur for a while even after his conquest of the area. Rajab Bursī's book is written entirely in Arabic, and none of the other titles ascribed to Bursī indicate Persian

¹ This is a revised version of the article: «*The Dawning Places of the Lights of Certainty in the Divine Secrets Connected with the Commander of the Faithful*» by Rajab Bursī (d. 1411), first published in: *The Heritage of Sufism* / Lewisohn L. (ed.). 3 vols. Vol. II «The Legacy of Medieval Persian Sufism» (1150—1500). Oxford: Oneworld, 1992. P. 261—276.

² So: Henry Corbin. *Annuaire de la Section des Sciences religieuses de l'École pratique des hautes études*. Paris [*Annuaire*], (1968—69). P. 1—48. For example, there seems to be no excessive interest in the Return of the Hidden Imam (*raj'ā*), his Rising (*qiyāma*), or his Advent (*zuhūr*). See: Hodgson M.C.S. *Ghulāt // EI²*. See also the remark by Meier F. *The Mystic Path // Islam and the Arab World* / Bernard Lewis (ed.). New York, 1976. P. 124.

works, nor is he known to have written anything in Persian. Nonetheless, his words are often quoted by Persian authors from the Safavid period onward³. The book under discussion here was, for example, made the object of large Persian paraphrase and commentary, by order of Shah Sulayman Safavi (reg. 1666—1694), of over a thousand pages, by a scholar from Sabzivar living in Mashhad, al-Ḥasan al-Khatīb al-Qāri', dated 1090/1680⁴.

Bursī's affinity to Persianate thought may be ultimately traceable to the strong influence of Ibn 'Arabī in his work (together, of course, with his Shi'ism). As it is well known, the enthusiasm with which the Great Doctor's thought was received and embellished by Persian authors is a striking fact in the history of Islamic thought.

Rajab Bursī's *Mashāriq al-anwār* has been described as being of the first importance for the study of Shi'ite gnostic metaphysics. Corbin places our author in a distinct stream of thought within Islam extending from Sijistānī (d. ca. 360/972), and including such figures as 'Alā' al-Dawlā Simnānī (d. 736/1336), Ḥaydar Āmulī (d. after 787/1385), Shāh Ni'matullāh Walī (d. 834/1431)⁵, Rajab 'Alī Tabrīzī (d. 1080/1669—70), Qādī Sa'īd Qummī (d. 1103/1691—1692), Khwājah Muḥammad ibn Maḥmūd Dihdār (10th—11th / 16th—17th centuries)⁶, and Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsā'ī (d. 1241/1826). To this list of kindred thinkers may be added Ibn Abī Jūmhūr (d. towards the end of the 15th century)⁷ and Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī (d. 1091/ 1680)⁸.

The *Mashāriq* has attracted the attention of a steady stream of scholars from the late fifteenth century to the present, and the majority of these authors have been Persian. Most striking of all is the continued popularity this book enjoys amongst the generality of contemporary Shi'ites, about which a bit more later. Insofar as the work at hand preserves and transmits mediaeval Sufism, the understanding of twenty-first century Shi'ism and the heritage it enjoys from medieval times, may also be deepened through its study.

The cast of thought which characterizes this rich and complex heritage has been briefly summarized by Corbin as reflecting a metaphysics not content with

³ See: *Annuaire* 69—70. P. 233—235.

⁴ This commentary, entitled «Maṭālī' al-asrār» (Teh. Bib. de l' Univ., Cat. V. P. 1537) has been mentioned by Corbin in a number of places (e.g. «En Islam Iranien». 4 vols. Paris: Gallimard, 1971—2 [henceforth *EII*]. Vol. 4. P. 212) and parts of it are translated in: *Annuaire* 1968—69. Corbin used this and related texts as part of his courses during the academic years 1968—970 in Paris.

⁵ *Corbin H. Histoire de la philosophie islamique*. Paris, 1986 [henceforth *Hist.*]. P.63.

⁶ *Ibid.* P. 461.

⁷ On whom see: *Madelung W. Ibn Abī Ğūmhūr al-Aḥsā'ī's synthesis of kalām, philosophy and Sufism // La Significance du Bas Moyen Âge dans le Histoire et la Culture du Monde Musulman: Actes du 8^{ème} Congrès de l' Union Européenne de Arabisants et Islamisants, Aix-en-Provence, 1978. P. 147—56.*

⁸ On this figure and his mystical temperament see, for example: *Kohlberg E. Some Aspects of Akhbari Thought // Eighteenth-Century Renewal and Reform in Islam / N. Levtzion, J. Voll (eds.). Syracuse: Syracuse University Press 1987. P.133—160.*

identifying real being (*al-wujūd al-ḥaqq*) with absolute being (*wujūd mutlaq*), because if this being is absolute, that is to say “freed” of all condition, it presupposes a *mutliq* that frees it, and this *mutliq* is being in the real sense, so real that it transcends our category of being⁹.

Name

Āghā Buzurg Tihṛānī lists our author as al-Shaykh Raḍī ad-Dīn Rajab bin Muḥammad bin Rajab al-Hāfiẓ al-Bursī al-Ḥillī¹⁰. Brockelmann, following *Dharī‘a*, uses this latter name in one entry¹¹, where he also calls him an extreme Shi’ite. But in two other places Brockelmann lists him as (1) Rajab b. al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Brussawī¹² and (2) Raḍī al-Dīn Rajab b. Muḥammad b. Rajab al-Hāfiẓ al-Birsī al-Ḥillī¹³. Al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī (d. 1097/1682) lists his name as Rajab al-Hāfiẓ al-Bursī and adds that he was a “scholar, traditionist, poet, writer, and a man of culture”¹⁴. According to one scholar, there is some ground for suspecting that he was neither from Ḥilla nor originally a Shi’ite because the term ‘traditionist’ (*muḥaddith*) is not a typical designation for a Shi’ite scholar and it is unlikely that the qualification would be given to someone from Ḥilla¹⁵. The biographer Khwānsārī (d. 1313/1895—1896) refers to him in ornate fashion as the “learned master, the perfect Shaykh and Murshid, the Pole and the divine Gnostic”¹⁶. These titles, indicating his position in a Sufi hierarchy, need not be taken seriously because we have no knowledge of his social connections. As will be seen, however, that he is described in such a way is not due simply to the fulsome rhetoric of a late Qajar source.

Finally, about his *nisba*, al-Bursī, there is some disagreement whether it refers to the town in Gīlān, or near Turshiz in Khurasan, or the Arab hamlet mentioned above. One opts for the Iraqi town because it was an important area of Shi’ism during this time and, apart from the employment in his poetry of a Persian style *takhalluṣ*, Bursī seems to have written nothing in Persian¹⁷.

⁹ EII. T. III. P. 319.

¹⁰ *Āghā Buzurg, Muḥammad Muḥsin al-Tihṛānī*. Al-Dharī‘a ilā taṣānif al-shī‘a. 25 vols. Tehrān and Najaf 1355/1936—1398/1978 [Dharī‘a]. Vol. II. P. 299.

¹¹ Brockelmann C. Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur [GAL]. Supp. II. P.204, under the category «Der Hadit».

¹² GAL. Supp. P. 660, under the category «Der Mystik»

¹³ GAL. Supp. III, 2. P. 1266.

¹⁴ A «Fāḍil», a «Muhaddith», a «Shā‘ir», a «Munsh’ā» and an «Adīb». See: *al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī*, *Amāl al-Āmil*. 2 vols. Najaf, 1380/1960. Vol. 2. P. 117—118.

¹⁵ *Kāmil Mustafā al-Shaybī*. Al-Fikr al-shī‘ī wa ‘l-naza‘āt al-sūfiya ḥattā matla‘ al-qarn al-thānī ‘ashar al-hijrī. Baghdād, 1386/1966 [henceforth *Fikr*]. P. 258.

¹⁶ Al-Mawlā al-‘Ālim wa ‘l-Shaykh wa ‘l-Murshid al-Kāmil wa ‘l-Qutb al-Wāqif al-Unsī wa ‘l-Anīs al-‘Ārif al-Qudsī Raḍī al-Dīn Rajab bin Muḥammad bin Rajab al-ma‘rūf bi ‘l-Ḥāfiẓ al-Bursī (*Muḥammad Bāqir Khwānsārī*, *Rawḍat al-jannat fī ahwāl al-‘ulamā’ wa ‘l-sādāt*. 8 vols. Tehrān: 1970—72. Vol. 3. P. 337—345). See also the brief notice in: *Muḥammad ‘Alī Mudarris Tabrīzī Khayābānī*. Rayḥānāt al-adab. Tehrān, 1967—70. Vol. II. P. 11.

¹⁷ *Fikr*. P. 254—55.

Life

Everything we know of his life we owe to the late Safavid biographies, especially the one by ‘Abdullāh Afandī al-Jīrānī (d. ca. 1718 c. e.), written between 1107/1695 and 1130/1718¹⁸. Rajab Bursī was born in the village Burs in ‘Irāq, a town famous for its sweet water, situated at the base of a mountain between Ḥilla and Kūfa, around the year 743/1342 and died in or after 843/1411. He grew up in Ḥilla and moved (*hajara*) to Khurasan at the age of twenty-six. Of his birth, his teachers, his associates, his students or his death we have no certain knowledge¹⁹. His tomb, however, is located in a garden in Ardestan near Isfahan. Bursī fled Ḥilla due to persecution by his fellow Shi’ites because of his ‘extreme’ beliefs about ‘Alī. This is indicated by our author himself in his poetry²⁰. It is likely Bursī fled from Ḥilla to Khurasan because of the promise of a freer atmosphere provided by the somewhat heterodox Shi’ite Sarbadārid state there. He withdrew to Ṭūs (present-day Mashhad) to be near the shrine of ‘Alī al-Riḍā. Here he remained, presumably occupied with his writing and other spiritual pursuits, until his death²¹. Other evidence suggests that his *hijra* did not save him from further persecution²². Indeed, one reference to him in an anonymous Sufi work states that he was killed in Ṭūs²³. The circumstances surrounding such a violent end are so far completely unknown. However, Timurīd authority in the region had by this time become more consolidated. It may be that Rajab Bursī’s example was thought to be contrary to the Timurīd political agenda. It is also quite possible that rumours of his execution or murder are just that. After all, by this time he had reached a rather advanced age.

Bursī states in an autograph manuscript of one work, possibly the *Mashāriq*, that he finished it 518 years after the birth of the Mahdī, that is in 768/1367, if we accept that in Bursī’s view the Mahdī was born in the year 250/864²⁴. This means it was completed during the reign of the last Sarbadārid ‘Alī Mu’ayyad. Al-Jīrānī states that he wrote another work, the *Mashāriq al-amān*, in 811/1398—1399, having seen with his own eyes a copy of this work and others in Māzandarān.

¹⁸ This biographical dictionary has been recently edited and published: ‘*Abdullāh Ibn ‘Īsā Afandī al-Jīrānī*. Riyād al-‘ulamā’ wa ḥiyād al-fuḍalā’. 6 vols. Qum, 1981.

¹⁹ Fikr. P. 253.

²⁰ E.g. «Mashāriq». P. 246. The Sarbadārids existed in the region from 737/1337 to 788/1386. They were one of a number of dynasties that replaced the Il-Khānids and were eventually conquered by Ṭīmūr in 782/1380. But the great ruler’s Shi’ite sympathies allowed the last Sarbadārid, ‘Alī Mu’ayyad, to remain as governor until his death in 788/1386. See: *Moojan Momen*. Introduction to Shi’i Islam. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985. P.93. See also: *Ibid*. P. 99—104 for a useful summary of Shi’ism and its increasing appropriation of Sufism in the middle period, 1000—1500 c.e.

²¹ Fikr. P. 257.

²² Cited in: Fikr. P. 256.

²³ Fikr. P. 255. The work was discovered by ‘Abbās Qummī.

²⁴ Fikr. P. 255 and notes.

Although Bursī was a contemporary of Haydar Āmulī, the latter seems not to take any notice of him²⁵. Apparently, the first to mention him or quote his work was al-Kaf'amī, (d. 9th/15th cent.) in his collection of prayers entitled the *Miṣbāḥ*, written in 895/1490²⁶. Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī (d. 1091/1680), the influential Sufi Shi'ite of the later Safavid period, mentions Bursī in his *Kalimāt-i maknūna*²⁷. Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī (d. 1110 or 1111/1699 or 1700), a student of the former, who seems to have been the first to revile Bursī's "extremism" (*ghulūw*), and who because of his great prestige influenced later attitudes towards him, cited Bursī in his *Bihār al-anwār*²⁸.

For a list of Bursī's works we are indebted to al-Sayyid Ni'matullāh al-Jazā'irī (d. 1111/1700)²⁹. Of these twelve titles, only one is printed, namely the *Mashāriq al-anwār*.

Mashāriq al-anwār

By far the best known of his works is the *Mashāriq al-anwār*. It exists in a number of manuscripts³⁰. The first printed edition is that of Bombay dated 1883. In 1959 it was edited anonymously and printed in Beirut. Its popularity is attested by the fact that between that year and 1967 the book went through ten printings. The edition used for this discussion is designated as the tenth printing, but it bears no date³¹. This publication history indicates rather persuasively that the book is important in popular Shi'ite piety. Because, as will be shown, the book teaches a number of gnostic and mystical doctrines it affords a strong insight into the durability of mediæval Sufism's legacy as it continues to be felt in contemporary Shi'ism. The text as we have it in the printed edition is divided into three distinct parts: the 'Introduction' (pp. 5—13) which is possibly a separate work of Bursī's entitled *Lawāmi'* (see item #7 in the *Appendix*) affirming the unity of God and the sanctity of the Imams; the *Mashāriq* proper (pp. 14—224); and a *Majmū'a* of his poetry derived from the *Mashāriq* and other sources (pp. 225—247)³². The *Mashāriq al-anwār* proper con-

²⁵ I have been unable to confirm whether or not he is mentioned by Ibn Abī Jumhūr (d. at the end of the 9th/15th century). The likely place for such a reference would be his «Kitāb al-Mujlī», on which see the reference to Madelung above.

²⁶ Fikr. P. 262. *Muḥammad b. Ṣāliḥ al-Āmilī al-Kaf'amī*. Al-Miṣbāḥ. Qum, 1405/1984. See P. 176, 183, 316, 363—4.

²⁷ «Fayḍ wrote this during his youth when he was inclined towards *taṣawwuf*». Fikr. P. 262. See: *Mullā Muḥsin al-Fayḍ al-Kāshānī*. *Kalimat-i maknūna min 'ulūm ahl al-ḥikma wa 'l-ma'rifa*. Tehrān, 1383/1963. P. 196 ff. The title of Bursī's work given by Kāshānī is slightly different: «*Mashāriq anwār al-yaqīn fī kashf asrār Amīr al-Mu'minīn*».

²⁸ Vol. 8. P. 202 (Iran ed. 1302 l. h.).

²⁹ In his *Al-Anwār al-nu'mānīya* (written in 1098/1687).

³⁰ See the references to «GAL» and «Dharī'a» above.

³¹ It is possible that it is older than another edition seen by me dated 1399/1978 printed by the Dār al-Andalus, but this is doubtful. I have been told of an 11th edition dated 1978.

³² *Majmū'at min shi'r al-Shaykh Rajab al-Bursī* (P. 225—247). This is a collection of his poetry from a variety of sources, mainly «*Shu'arā' al-Ḥilla*, «*Ayān al-shi'a*, *Al-Ghadīr*»; and the «*Mashāriq*» itself.

sists of 204 chapters (*fuṣūl*) introduced with a brief introduction and concluded with a short *khātima*. In both the 'introduction' and the *khātima*, Bursī refers to the persecution he suffered at the hands of those whose belief is corrupt (*tashayyu' fāhisha*) and specifies the *fuqahā'* as being particularly culpable.

"Know that when I chanted to the envious, those who know nothing of true religion from the Glorious Book...they drove me away. And when I unfolded to them some of the traditions and expounded to them their inner meanings...they became envious of me and slandered me...though I did nothing wrong. Most of what I said had to do with a hidden matter and a mysterious secret. He who is disturbed by such things has a sickness in his heart while the peaceful heart is gladdened [by such things].

Some thought I was an ignorant one, but they condemn what they understand not... These were the brothers from among the *fuqahā'* ...their minds were obscured by transmitted knowledge...God specializes for his mercy whomever He will and separates him from the envier. 'And in their hearts is a sickness which God will increase' [Koran II: 10]"³³.

An indication of the Sufi nature of this work is also given quite early in the text. In relation to the topic of selflessness as a prerequisite for true knowledge Rajab Bursī cites the following Tradition.

When God created the soul, He called to it with the question "Who am I?" The soul [insolently] responded: "But who am I?" Then God cast it into the depths of the sea until it came to the Extended Alif³⁴ (*al-alif al-mabsūt*) and [then] it was purified of the depravities of referring to its self and it returned to its proper development. Then God called to it again with the question: "Who am I?" The soul responded this time with: "Thou art the One, the Vanquisher!" [Koran XL: 16]. For this reason He said: "*Kill your souls*" [Koran II: 43 and IV: 66] because they will never recognize their stations except through vanquishing³⁵.

The connection here would seem to be that Rajab Bursī sees his difficulties with his fellow Ḥillīs as a spiritual trial which in the end will be of benefit to him. Thus the allusion to the oft-quoted (in Shi'ite literature) *hadīth*: "The knowledge of the People of the House is exceedingly difficult (*sa 'b mustaṣ'ab*), none can bear it except a sent prophet, an angel brought nigh to God or a believer whose heart has been tested for faith"³⁶.

In the *khātima* he also refers to his *hijra* due to the censure and blame directed against him and cites a tradition from the Prophet extolling the virtues of retreat: "All good is in seclusion (*'uzla*), and good and well-being are found in solitude (*waḥda*), and there is blessing in abandoning people"³⁷.

³³ Mashāriq. P. 14—15.

³⁴ This is defined by Bursī elsewhere in: Mashāriq. P. 20—21; see also: *Corbin*. Annuaire 68—69. P. 149.

³⁵ Mashāriq. P. 16. 'Alī is also associated with the attribute «vanquisher» (*al-Qaḥhār*) because of his heroic military prowess at the conquest of Khaybar.

³⁶ Mashāriq. P. 16; see also P. 197—198.

³⁷ Mashāriq. P. 222.

The many chapters of the *Mashāriq* vary greatly in length and subject matter. The first 22 are devoted to an exploration of the numinous content or status of letters of the alphabet which also have numerical value³⁸. In any case, it should not be inferred from this that such concerns are absent from the rest of the book. Bursī was, it may be noted, a contemporary of Faḍlullāh Astarābādī (740/1339—803/1401), the founder of the Ḥurūfī sect. And it may be also that the work contains a number of cryptic references to the latter, such as the one found at the beginning of the book³⁹. As is well known, however, Bursī would have required no such contemporary validation for his letter and number speculations. By his time, such sciences had become common coin and were practiced by a wide variety of authors. Indeed, to the extent that such movements as the Ḥurūfīyya were successful or posed a serious threat to the status quo, it seems reasonable to suppose that the movement spoke a language that struck a responsive cord in the general population.

The chapters are not given topic headings and are designated merely by the word *faṣl*. It is sometimes difficult to know how these chapters were conceived as separate elements. The majority of the material consists of *ḥadīths* and Bursī's commentary on them. These *ḥadīths* are derived from a number of sources, displaying the interest in both Sunni and Shi'ite works common in this period. Thus several are related from Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, Abū Ḥanīfa, Ibn 'Abbās, and other sources for the Sunni tradition, while numerous traditions are taken from such basic Shi'ite works as the *Kitāb baṣā'ir al-darajāt*⁴⁰.

Logos

Beyond the somewhat literalistic conception of Logos implied by a preoccupation with the "science of letters", there is a related theme in the work which expresses the Logos quite independent of the practice of *jafr* or letter speculation. This motif consists in establishing Muḥammad and 'Alī as pre-eternal elements of creation. This doctrine is repeatedly asserted through the *ḥadīths* that Bursī has chosen for his collection, his commentary on these *ḥadīths*, and his poetry. It is also this doctrine and its implications which have caused Bursī to be condemned not only by his fellow Ḥillīs, but also by such later critics such as Majlisī and Nūrī⁴¹ (notwithstanding that most appear to be impressed by the quality of his poetry)⁴².

In this connection, the *Mashāriq* has preserved certain material not found elsewhere in the books of traditions whether Sunni or Shi'ite. Some of this material,

³⁸ It is of some interest that the Persian commentary by Mashhadī, mentioned above, neglects this material.

³⁹ Where he refers to one «who is gladdened by what God has bestowed upon him and opened for him» (*mubtahij bimā faḍalahu Allāh [sic!] wa faḍḍa lahu*), *Mashāriq*. P. 15.

⁴⁰ Of Muḥammad al-Ḥasan al-Ṣaffār (d. 902).

⁴¹ *Yahyā Nūrī*. «Khātamiyat-i payambar-i Islām dar ibtāl-i taḥlīlī Bābīgarī, Bahāīgarī, Qādiyānīgarī», bilingual Persian and English edition. Iran 1360/t981. P. 20 (of the English text).

⁴² E.g. Khwānsārī. Vol. 3. P. 341.

according to Corbin, was left out of compilations like the *Nahj al-balāgha* because the implied view of the Imam had certain ‘resonances’ with Ismaili thought⁴³. This hypothesis has recently been confirmed. The Ismaili author, Mu’ayyad Shīrāzī, included the *Khutba al-taṭanīyya* (on which see below) in his *Majālis*⁴⁴. Another typical example, included here, has been described by Corbin as one of those *hadīth* most characteristic of Shī’ite gnosis. It is the “recital of a visionary interview between [‘Alī’s] *lāhūt* (his divine, spiritual, celestial element) and his *nāsūt* (his terrestrial humanity)”⁴⁵. It is presented without *isnād*:

To the First Imam is posed this question: “Have you seen in this world below a certain man?”

The Imam responds to the anonymous questioner: “Yes, I have seen a certain man, and until now I have been asking him questions. I ask him: “Who are you?”

He answers: “I am clay”.

“From where?”

“From clay”.

“Towards where?”

“Towards clay”.

“And me, who am I?”

“You, you are Abū Turāb (“earth dweller”)⁴⁶.

“Therefore I am you?”

He shot back: “God forbid, God forbid! This is from *al-dīn* in *al-dīn*. I am I and We are We. I am the Essence of essences and the Essence in the essence of the Essence”. Then he said: “[Do you] understand?”

I said: “Yes”.

Then he said: “So cling [to this understanding]”.

Rajab al-Bursī then comments on this *hadīth* to the effect that it represents a conversation between the divine and human worlds (*lāhūt/nāsūt*)⁴⁷. This discus-

⁴³ EII. T. 3. P. 150.

⁴⁴ I have been informed that some of the material which follows below may be found also in the Gujarati Ginān literature of the Ismailis.

⁴⁵ Annuaire 69—70. P. 234. The commentaries are by: Mirzā Aḥmad Ardikānī Shīrāzī (who wrote in 1810 in Shīrāz), Mullā ‘Alī Ibn Jamshīd Nūrī (d. 1245/1830), Sayyed Kāzīm Rashī (d. 1259/1843), Ja’far Kashfī (1267/1851) and Muḥammad Karīm Khān Kirmānī (d. 1288/1870).

⁴⁶ A pun that evokes the tradition of ‘Alī having been given this nickname by the Prophet. On the name, see: *Etan Kohlberg*. ‘Abū Turāb’ / BSOAS, (1978). P. 347—52.

⁴⁷ Corbin observes that the later commentators have used all the resources which Shī’ite theosophy and Neoplatonism have put at their disposal. For example Mirzā Aḥmad Ardikānī Shīrāzī petitions the Hermetic idea of the Perfect Man (*insān kāmil*) as Perfect Nature who is the angel of every being and of whom Hermes had his vision. All agree in recognizing the extreme difficulty of this *hadīth*: it is certain that this particular one is one of a number of texts which are the most significant for theosophic Imamology, those which evoke the problem of the “two natures” posed also in Christology (Annuaire 68—9).

sion elucidates the difference between the body ('the temple of man's holiness') and the soul, or essence of this holiness (*sirr*):

Thus his statement, "I have seen a certain man, and until now I have been asking him questions", is because the spirit is always attached to the body and considers it the house of its exile... And secondly, that the gnostic ('*ārif*') should ever know the difference between the station of dust and the holiness (*sirr*) of the Lord of lords, namely that when he knows himself he knows his Lord. That is, he knows his self, its generated-ness, its poverty, its wretchedness, and thus knows of his Lord's might, greatness and majesty. So his statement: "I am clay" is an allusion to this gnostic, ever in the station of poverty and affirming his generated-ness and weakness... And his statement "You are Abū Turāb" alludes to two meanings, one particular and the other general. The first of its meanings is the allusion to Father Educator (*al-āb al-murabbī*), the Guide (*al-murshid*) and the Spirit (*al-rūh*) Custodian and Trainer of this body. The second is that Abū Turāb is 'water', and the meaning is that 'Thou art the father of all existing things and their point of origin and their reality and their true meaning because he is the Most Great Word from which appear the existent things (*mawjūdāt*), and it is the holy essence (*sirr*) of all engendered things (*al-kā'ināt*)...'

And his statement "I am the Essence of essences. and the Essence in the essences of the Essence" clearly refers to the Hidden Secret (*al-sirr al-maknūn*) on which depends the two phases of "Be thou! and it is". [*kun fa yakūn*; Koran II: 117] He is the Greatest Name of God (*ism Allāh al-a'zam*) and the reality of every engendered thing (*kā'in*). The essence of every existent belongs to the essence of the Necessary Existent (*wājib al-wujūd*) because it is his holy essence (*sirr*), his word (*kalima*), his command/ cause (*amr*) and his guardian (*walī*) over all things.

Thus through the solution of this riddle the disbelief of the exaggerator (*ghālī*) has been distinguished from the one who speaks properly (*qālī*) [as has] the struggle on the path of the slackard (*tālī*) [been distinguished from the true striving] of the one who has accepted 'Alī as guardian (*mawālī*). The method of attainment to the Exalted 'Alī of the true knower ('*ārif al-ālī*) has thus been indicated⁴⁸.

'Alī is the connecting mystery (*sirr*) of God in all [things and circumstances], His guardian (*walī*) over all because the [actual] Lord is mightily exalted above what He has existentiated through His purpose (*irāda*) or created through His power (*qudra*) or His will (*mashiyya*)... to 'Alī all allusions (*ishārāt*) refer by virtue of his statement "There is no difference between them and between Thee except that they are Your servants and Your creation"...

About his statement to him, "Do you understand?" and 'I said, "Yes". And he said "Cling to this!" — this alludes to the fact that when a man understands that 'Alī is the hidden secret it is incumbent upon him to cling to this so that the Intellect may accept this apperception⁴⁹.

⁴⁸ The pun in the Arabic clearly indicates that 'Alī and God may be confused.

⁴⁹ Annuaire 69—70. P. 233—235; Mashāriq. P. 31—32.

Khutba al-ṭaṭanjīya

Another tradition of a similarly gnostic flavour is called *Khutba al-ṭaṭanjīya*. This *hadīth* does not appear in *Nahj at-balāgha*, but is preserved in other Twelver Shi'ite sources⁵⁰. It is related in the 144th chapter of the *Mashāriq* without *isnād* and introduced by Bursī as one of 'Alī's sermons about which one should be particularly careful in interpreting because of its style and content which elevate 'Alī. This is so to such a degree that one could be tempted to class the statements below as ecstatic sayings (*shath*). Bursī says that the sermon contains that which establishes the transcendence of the Creator in a way none can bear.

The Commander of the Faithful delivered this sermon between Kūfa and Medīna. He said:

“O People!...I am hope and that which is hoped for. I preside over the twin gulfs (*Anā wāqif 'alā al-ṭaṭanjayn*). And my gaze beholds the two wests and the two easts [Cf. Koran LV: 171]. I have seen the mercy of God and Paradise clearly through direct [physical] vision. And it is in the seventh sea... and in its swells are the stars and the orbits. And I saw the earth enwrapped as by a garment... I know the wonders of God's creation as no one but God knows them. And I know what was and what will be, and what occurred at the time of the primordial covenant (*al-dharr al-awwal*) (*viz.* the *yawm al-mīthāq*; cf. Koran VII: 172) before the First Adam. It has been disclosed to me by my Lord... and this knowledge was hidden from all prophets except the Master of this *Sharī'a* of yours. He taught me his knowledge and I taught him my knowledge. We are the first warning and the warning of the first and the last and the warning for all times and periods. Through us perishes him who perishes and through us is saved whoever is saved. And you are incapable of what is in us. By him who breaks the seed and drives the winds!...Indeed, the winds and air and birds are made subservient to us. The world below was given me and I shunned it. I am the dome of the world... I know what is above the highest Paradise and what is below the lowest earth and what is in the highest heavens and what is between them and what is under the dust. All this is comprehensive knowledge, not related knowledge. I swear by the Lord of the Mighty Throne! If you desired I could tell you of your forefathers, where they were and what they were and where they are now and what they will be... If I reveal to you what was given in the first eternity and what is of me in the End then you would see mighty wonders and things great... I am the Master of the first creation before the first Noah. And were I to tell you what transpired between Adam and Noah, the wonders of those arts and the nations destroyed [in that time] then the truth of the statement “evil is what they have done” would be established. I am the Master of the first

⁵⁰ See: *Corbin*. Annuaire 69—70; Dharrī'a. Vol. 7, # 989 (where this sermon is identified as *Khutbat aqālīm*) and *Majlisī*. Bihār. Vol. 9. P. 535 and the reference to Ibn Shahrāshūb (d. 1192 in Aleppo).

two floods [Koran VII: 133]. I am the Master of the second two floods [Koran XXIX: 14]. I am the Master of the Flood [*sayl al-'arim*⁵¹; Koran XXXIV: 16]. I am the Master of the hidden secrets (*al-asrār al-maknūna*). I am the Master of 'Ād and the Gardens. And I am the Master of Thamūd and the Signs. And I am their destroyer. And I am their shaker. And I am their place of return. And I am their destroyer. And I am their director. I am their two gates. I am their leveller. I am their maker to die and I am their maker to live. I am the First, I am the Last, I am the Outward, I am the Inward [Koran LVII: 3]. I was with time before time and I was with revolution before revolution. And I was with the Pen before the Pen and I was with the Tablet before the Tablet. And I am the master of the First Pre-eternity. And I am the master of Jabalqa and Jabarsa... I am the director of the first world when there was no heaven and no earth”.

So Ibn Sūrīma [?] approached him and said: “Thou art thou, O Commander of the Faithful!” Then ‘Alī said: “I am Me, there is no god hut God, my Lord and the Lord of all creatures. To Him is the creation and the command, He who directs all things through His wisdom and raises the heavens and the earth through His power... I have commanded Iblis to prostrate... I raised Idris to a high place, I caused Jesus to speak in the cradle. I have divided the world into five... I am that light which appeared on Sinai... I am the Master of the eternal gardens and he who causes the rivers to flow... and I fashioned the climes by the command of the Knower and the Wise. I am that Word through which all things are perfected. . Indeed the hypocrites who say ‘Alī has appointed himself are wrong... ‘Alī is a created light and servant of the Provider of sustenance, who ever says other than this, God condemns his deed”⁵².

Self-Knowledge

Thus far we have concentrated on the so-called gnostic aspects of this work — gnostic because of the repeated emphasis on knowledge — the knowledge of the Imam and the recognition of his true dignity. And, more importantly, the material is gnostic because of the ‘far flung’ imagery contained in the traditions — its gnostic, *outré*, and deeply mysterious flavour. But what of ‘standard’ Sufism? Rajab Bursī’s Sufism is most clearly in evidence in those passages which deal with the self, specifically its knowledge and its effacement. Three chapters are specifically dedicated to this theme.

I

The Glorious Lord says in the Gospel: “Know thyself, o man, and know thy lord. Thine external is for annihilation (*fanā*) and thine internal is Me”.

And the Master of the *Sharī‘a* [Muḥammad I said: “The most knowledgeable of you about his Lord is the most knowledgeable about his self”.

⁵¹ The flood which broke the dam of Marib (early in the 7th century c. e.) (*ed.*).

⁵² Mashāriq. P. 160—61.

II

And the Imam of Guidance [‘Alī] said: “He who knows his Lord knows his self”.

Commentary. The knowledge of the self is that a man knows his beginning and his end, from where he came and to where he is going, and this is based upon true knowledge of ‘delimited’ existence (*al-wujūd al-muqayyad*). And this is knowledge of the first effulgence (*al-favḍ al-awwal*) which overflowed from the Lord of Might. Then Being flowed from it and was made Existence by the command of the Necessary Existent... And this is the single point which is the beginning of the ‘engendered things’ {*kā’ināt*) and the end of all ‘existent things’ (*mawjūdāt*), and the Spirit of spirits, and the light of the apparitional incorporeal beings (*al-ashbāh*)...

This is the first number and the secret [that explains the difference between] the Inclusive Divine Unity and the Transcendent Exclusive Divine Unity (*al-wāḥid* and *al-aḥad*)⁵³. And that is because the essence of God is unknowable for man (*bashar*). So knowledge of Him is through His qualities (*sifāt*). And the single point is a quality (*sifa*) of God, and the quality indicates the Qualified, because by its appearance God is known. And it is the flashing of the light (*la’la’ al-nūr*) which shines out (*sha’sha’a*) from the splendour of the Exclusive Unity (*al-aḥadiya*) in the sign (*sīmā’*) of the Muḥammadan Presence. To this the following statement alludes: “Whoever knows You, knows you through this sign”. This is supported by another saying: “Were it not for us, none would know God. And were it not for God, none would know us”. Thus, it is the Light from which dawn all other lights, and the One from which appear all bodies (*ajsād*), and the mystery from which are generated all mysteries, and the Intellect (‘*aql*) from which spring all intellects, and the Soul from which appear all souls, and the Tablet which contains the hidden secrets, and the Throne which spreads throughout heaven and earth, and the Mighty Throne that encompasses all things, and the Eye by which all other eyes see, and the Reality to which all things testify in the beginning, just as they testified in the Exclusive Unity to the Necessary Existent. It is the highest limit of the knowledge of all knowers, the means of access to Muḥammad and ‘Alī through the reality of their knowledge or through the knowledge of their realities. But this gate is covered by the veil [indicated in “But We give unto you of knowledge only a little”. [Koran LXXXV: 170]. To this allude the statements of the Imams: that which was given to the Near Angels was less than what was given to Muḥammad, so how can the world of man [have more]? And on this topic is the statement: “Our cause is bewilderingly abstruse; none can bear it except a sent prophet — not even an angel brought nigh”⁵⁴. He who connects with the rays of their light has known [this] himself because he has recognized [the difference between] the essence of

⁵³ Briefly, these are two ‘modes’ of the Divine Oneness: *al-wāḥidiya* refers to the Oneness that implies within it the multiplicity of creation, while *al-aḥadiya* refers to the utterly unknowable unique, transcendent singleness of God. These ideas are traced to Ibn ‘Arabī.

⁵⁴ Significant variant of the *ḥadīth* mentioned above.

existence (*‘ayn al-wujūd*) and the reality of that which is made to exist (*ḥaqīqat al-mawjūd*), and the absolute single uniqueness of the served Lord (*fardāniyyat al-rabb al-mab‘ūd*). The knowledge of the self is the knowledge of the reality of ‘delimited’ existence. This is none other than the Single Point whose exterior is Prophethood and whose interior is Sainthood (*walāya*). Thus he who knows *nubuwwa* and *walāya* with true knowledge knows his Lord. So he who knows Muḥammad and ‘Alī knows his Lord⁵⁵.

This is a particularly good example of the function of the Prophet and the Imam in Bursī’s theory of knowledge. It also is a fine example of Bursī’s use of the mystical and philosophical language of ‘high’ Sufism as it had developed by his time. Obviously, the source for such terminology is Ibn ‘Arabī. Bursī’s contemporary Haydar Āmulī and the later Ibn Abī Jumhūr would, in their distinctive ways, attempt a similar application of the ideas and terminology of the Great Doctor to the intellectual requirements of Shi’ism. These authors, in turn, helped to prepare the way for the famous Isfahan school of philosophy that flourished during high Safavid times. To continue somewhat with Rajab Bursī’s commentary:

III

But, if the pronoun in his word *‘nafsihi*’ refers to God it means “God himself warns you that they [the Prophet and the Imam] are the spirit of God and His word and the soul of existence and its reality. So in two ways it means “He who knows them knows his Lord”. Thus, at the time of death he will see with the eye of certainty none but Muhammad and ‘Alī because the Real is too glorious to be seen by the eyes. And the dead one at the time of his death will witness in the Real [his peculiar] state and station (*ḥāl* and *maqām*) and see nothing but them at the time of death because he sees with the eye of certainty. Thus Amīr al-Mu’minīn [‘Alī] said: “I am the eye of certainty, and I am death of the dead”. This is indicated in the *Kitāb basā’ir al-darajāt* from the Imam Ja’far: “No one in the East or the West dies, whether he loves or hates [Muḥammad and ‘Alī], but that he will be brought into the presence of ‘Alī and Muḥammad. Then he will be blessed or condemned”. This will be at the time of the Trumpet... the soul will be returned to its body. At that time he will see none but Muḥammad and ‘Alī because the Living the Self-subsistent, glorified by His name, is not seen by mortal eye, but is seen by the eye of spiritual perception. To this alludes his statement: “The eyes set Him not in the visible realm, hut the minds see Him through the realities of faith”. The meaning is that His existence is testified to because His exterior is invisible and His interior is not hidden⁵⁶.

His discussion of existence, found throughout the work, is another good example of Rajab Bursī’s reliance on Ibn ‘Arabī. His introduction to the *ḥadīth* from ‘Alī “Have you seen a certain man?” is important to notice here.

⁵⁵ Mashāriq. P. 188—89.

⁵⁶ Mashāriq. P. 190.

If we pursue the subject of the existent beings (*mawjūdāt*) that they end in a single point, which is itself but a quality of the Essence and cause of the existent beings, we may call it by a number of names. It is the Intellect mentioned in the statement: “The first thing God created was the Intellect”. And this is the Muḥammadan Presence according to [the Prophet’s] statement: “The first thing God created was my light”. It is the first of the created existents that came forth from God, exalted be He, without any intermediary. We call it the First Intellect. And inasmuch as created things get the power to think from it, we call it the Active Intellect (*al-‘aql al-fa‘āl*). And inasmuch as the Intellect emanates to all existent things, which, in turn, perceive the realities of all things by it, we call it the Universal Intellect. So it is absolutely clear that the Muḥammadan Presence is the point of light and the first appearance, the reality of engendered things, the beginning of existent things and the axis of all circles. Its exterior is a quality of God, and its interior is the hidden dimension of God. It is the Greatest Name outwardly and the form of the rest of the world. Upon it depends whoever disbelieves or believes. Its spirit is a transcript of the Exclusive Unity that abides in the Divine Nature (*lāhūt*). And its spiritual form is the meaning of the earthly and heavenly kingdoms. And its heart is the treasure house of the life which never dies. This is because God, exalted be He, spoke a word in the beginning which became light. Then he spoke a word which became spirit. And then he caused the light to enter that spirit (or that light to enter that word.) He then made them a veil, which is his word and his light, and his spirit, and his veil, And it permeates the world (*sarayān fī ‘l-‘ālam*) as the point permeates all the letters and bodies. This permeation is one in number, as is the permeation of speech with the *alif* and the permeation of all the names with the Holy Name. The [word] is the beginning of all [things] and the reality of all [things], so that all [things] speak by means of the tongue of spiritual “state” and “station”. It testifies to God through his primordial oneness and to Muḥammad and ‘Alī of their fatherhood and sovereignty. To this points the statement: “Alī and I are the fathers of this community”. So, if they are the fathers of this community, it follows that they are the fathers of the rest of the nations, according to the proof from “the specific is over the general and the higher over the lower, not the opposite”. If it were not so, there would never be any creation to specify him through: “If it were not for thee I would not have created the spheres”. So know that the Acts proceed from the Qualities, and the Qualities proceed from the Essence. And the quality which is the Leader of Qualities is in the created things, namely the Muḥammadan Presence⁵⁷.

One of the strongest clues to Bursī’s reliance on Ibn ‘Arabī is seen above in the word *sarayān* (permeation/suffusion). The comparison of this passage with the passage in the first *faṣṣ* of Ibn ‘Arabī’s *Fuṣūs al-ḥikam* reveals a strong parallelism be-

⁵⁷ *Mashāriq*. P. 30—32. For a more classically-based philosophical discussion see the treatise «That existence is in two parts» (*Mashāriq*. P. 27—28). This section also contains a commentary on *kuntu kanzan makhfiyan*, a reference to Ḥallāj and Ibn Arabī’s terminology.

tween Ibn ‘Arabī and Rajab Bursī’s language. It is as if the latter was writing while reading Ibn Arabī’s book. He does not, however, make any explicit mention of this⁵⁸. Thus his work acquires the character of a tacit commentary on the *Fuṣūṣ*.

Conclusion

The history of Islam provides Muslims with a powerful longing for the rarefied atmosphere of certitude associated with the first community, established by the Prophet. One may assume that the basic feature of this cultural nostalgia is that it is directed to a time which was free of the vexing spiritual question of legitimate authority. The memory itself of the city of the Prophet, the calling to mind when Muslims enjoyed the unmediated guidance of the Messenger of God, is an unfailing source of authentic religious and spiritual certitude.

Further, the development of Islamic religious thought may also be seen as the result of a variety of attempts to maintain this certitude by establishing certain theories of spiritual or religious authority (distinct, of course, from authoritarianism). Because in Islam certitude is supported by and intimately connected with knowledge (*‘ilm*), the concern with our quest for certitude underlies the five types of Sufi writing outlined by S.H. Nasr: 1) ethics, 2) doctrine, 3) esoteric sciences, 4) sacred history, 5) depiction of Paradise and the literary creation of a celestial atmosphere. Here the purpose of authority is to free the soul from the perplexities posed to it by reason. The two major divisions within Islam — Sunnism and Shi’ism — present different methods of attaining certainty and ‘systematizing’ religious authority as a means of freeing the soul through recapturing the vision of that time when Muslims were relatively untroubled by such concerns.

The author/compiler of the text that has been the subject of this essay has achieved a distinctive vision of the nature of this authority and also of the means whereby the believer may have access to it. In so doing, he has drawn upon all the major resources available to the greater Islamic tradition: the Koran, *ḥadīth*, Kalam, Philosophy, and Sufism. The resultant synthesis would appear to be most appealing given the fact that his book went through ten printings in rapid succession during the 1960’s in Lebanon. It is eminently representative of the period in Twelver history between the Mongol invasions and the establishment of the Safavids. It preserves a record of the development of this history by reacting against the ways and usages of mainstream Twelver Shi’ism, which may be seen as an attempt to disassociate itself from specific trends in more primitive Shi’ism, by rejecting certain religious postures, exemplified in some of the material translated below, and identifying more closely with Sunni Islam by adopting its system of jurisprudence. This phenomenon mirrors a similar development within Sunni Islam, where Sufism may be seen as an attempt to counter the confidence placed in consensus (*ijmā’*) as a starting point for recreating the ‘celestial atmosphere’ of Medina by investing in a more personalistic style of piety.

⁵⁸ *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* / Ed. A. ‘Afīfī. Beirut, 1400/1980. P. 55.

By the time our author was writing, his hometown, Ḥilla, had become the centre of Twelver Shi'ism. Ḥilla had been a Shi'ite centre since its establishment by the powerful Shi'ite dynasty, the Mazyadids, in 495/1102. But it was about a century later that it really came into its own, replacing Aleppo, as the centre of Shi'ite learning. Its fortunes continued to rise in this regard until well after the Mongol invasion. Because the Shi'ite leaders of Ḥilla submitted without reservation to Mongol rule, life in the small city was permitted to continue undisturbed. This augured extremely well for the continued elaboration of a distinctive Shi'ite theology and jurisprudence. Momen states the case most succinctly:

While Baghdad, the centre of Sunni orthodoxy, had been devastated, Ḥilla, the main centre of Shi'ism, had submitted to the Mongols and was spared. The killing of the 'Abbasid Caliph threw Sunni theology and constitutional theory... into some disorder, while the occulted Imam of the Shi'ites had not been affected⁵⁹.

If Shi'ism is seen in part as a protest movement in reaction to mainstream Sunni Islam, then the processes set in motion by these historical developments are ironic. Shi'ism was now irreversibly on its way to becoming another orthodoxy. That Bursī's piety shares much with the religious orientation known very generally as Sufism, another 'protest movement,' is confirmed by the fact that our author resorts to the basic terminology and categories of thought of Sufism in attempting to make clear his own chosen 'method' or vision of authority. Thus a believer is referred to as a gnostic ('*ārif*), who, through his love (*maḥabbā*), and knowledge (*ma'rifa*) of the Imams as the sole bearers of religious authority (*walāya*), draws nearer to spiritual perfection and to an ever deepening knowledge of his own self, whose superfluous qualities will be shed in the process. The central idea of his vision or system is carried by the word *walāya*. Obviously, I am not suggesting that Rajab Bursī had to go outside the Shi'ite textual tradition for this word. In this instance the coincidence in terminology between Shi'ism and Sufism is not terribly meaningful. The main thrust of this terminology, both in Sufism and in the writings of Bursī, is to establish a personal, intimate link with the 'spirit' of religion. Other terms and motifs, including the considerable influence of Ibn 'Arabī, are more indicative of Sufi influence. But, most importantly, Rajab Bursī rejects the position of the *fuqahā'* of Ḥilla as being only partially (if at all) conducive to the kind of certitude his religion demands. Again, this would seem to have a great deal in common with Sufism. In some respects, the difference in attitude between Bursī and his contemporaries may also be compared usefully with the later tensions between the Akhbārīs and the Uṣūlīs, a tension which may be briefly described as one between reason and revelation⁶⁰.

⁵⁹ Momen. Introduction. P. 91—92.

⁶⁰ This is, however, something of an oversimplification. In addition to the article by Kohlberg cited above, see also: *Cole J. Shi'i Clerics in Iraq and Iran, 1722—1780: The Akhbārī-USulī Conflict Reconsidered // Iranian Studies. Vol.18. № 1 (1985). P. 3 —33.*

While Rajab Bursī has been condemned by some authors as holding an immoderate belief in the Imams, most who have written about him also speak quite highly of his poetry. It is perhaps the poet in him that speaks in such strong terms. Poets, we are told, perceive reality intensely. It is therefore not surprising that they express themselves with equal intensity. While it would not be a complete mistake to attempt to classify Rajab Bursī's religious doctrine on the basis of his deeply felt experience of his love for the Imams, his book is not a doctrine in the strict sense. That his mind was active and searching is clear from the above excerpts. And the "explanations" of the spiritual laws, based on Ibn 'Arabī's ideas and laid bare throughout the *Mashāriq*, appealed to him possibly as much for what they said as for what they left unsaid. In the end, it would be difficult to answer the question: was Rajab Bursī more in love with the Imams or with the ideas that made this love reasonable?

Appendix

Bursī's works as listed in *Fikr*:

- 1) *Mashāriq al-anwār* (*Mashāriq anwār al-yaqīn fī asrār Amīr al-Mu'minīn*) Printed in India in 1303/1885-6 and 1318/1900-1 and in Beirut in 1379/1959-60.
- 2) *Mashāriq al-amān wa lubāb haqā'iq al-īmān*.
- 3) *Risāla fī dhikr al-salāt 'alā al-rasūl wa al-ā'imma min munsha'āt nafsihi*.
- 4) *Zivāra li Amīr al-Mu'minīn*.
- 5) *Lum'a kāshif (fihā asrār al-asmā' wa al-ṣifāt wa al-ḥurūf wa al-āyāt wa mā yunāsibuhā min al-du'āt wa mā yuqāribuhā min al-kalimāt wa ratabahā 'alā tartīb al-sā'āt wa ta'aqqub al-awqāt fī al-layālī wa al-ayām li ikhtilā al-umūr wa al-aḥkām)*.
- 6) *al-Durr al-thāmin fī dhikr [Amīr al-Mu'minīn]*. 500 Koranic verses indicating the virtues of 'Alī.
- 7) *Lawāmi' anwār al-tamjīd wa jawāmi' asrār al-tawhīd*. Possibly appearing at the beginning of the *Mashāriq al-anwār*.
- 8) *Risāla fī tafsīr sūrat al-ikhlās*.
- 9) *Risāla fī kayfiyyat al-tawhīd wa al-salāt 'alā al-rasūl wa al-ā'imma ('alayhim al salām)*.
- 10) *Kitāb fī mawlid al-Nabī wa Fātima wa Amīr al-Mu'minīn wa faḍā'iluhum ('alayhim al-salām)*.
- 11) Another book on the excellences of 'Alī.
- 12) *Kitāb al-ālifayn fī waṣf sādāt al-kawnayn*. Excerpts of this are reproduced in the *Bihār at-anwār* (see above).