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IRAN

QUESTIONS ET CONNAISSANCES

VOL. II

PÉRIODES MÉDIÉVALE ET MODERNE

EXTRAIT

TEXTES RÉUNIS PAR

Maria SZUPPE
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Ce deuxième volume des Actes du IVe Congrès Européen des Études Iraniennes comporte trente-trois contributions traitant des époques médiévale et moderne dans le monde iranien, depuis l’arrivée de l’islam en Iran et en le précédent volume, consacré à l’Iran ancien, les articles et réunions sont présentés par thèmes : langue et littérature ; histoire et archéologie ; religion, philosophie et histoire des sciences ; histoire de l’art.

(Todd Lawson
(McGill University, Montreal)

THE HIDDEN WORDS OF FAYD KASHANI

Résumé
Le Kalimät-i mahninā de Mullā Muḥsin Fayd Kāshānī (m. 1680) constitue une introduction importante, méconnue, au chisme duodécimain post-safavide. Il a été réceptif à cet ouvrage, de façon erronée, comme à un livre sur le soufisme, alors qu’il peut être défini comme une adaptation, au milieu safavide, du soufisme traditionnel, en même temps qu’il est un manuel de l’école philosophique et mystique appelée ʿIḥnāt-i ʿilāhī et fondée par Mullā Ṣadrī, l’auteur et plus jeune de l’auteur. Certaines caractéristiques d’une méthodologie légale ʿabḥārī sont présentées dans l’ouvrage comme dérivant naturellement de la même école philosophique et mystique. La brève analyse de son contenu et de ses thèmes révèle qu’il se concentre avant tout sur l’imamologie, même si les débats et les éclairages qui l’accompagnent empruntent largement à la tradition soufie. La liste des thèmes des 100 chapitres et la traduction des quelques passages sélectionnés permettent de faire une idée du contenu de cet ouvrage important.

Mots clés: ʿabḥārī; ʿIḥnāt; imamologie; ʿifār; chisme.

Résumé
Mullā Muḥsin Fayd Kāshānī’s (d. 1680) treatise, Kalimät-i mahninā, is an important if little studied introduction to post Safavid Twelver Shi‘ism. It has been erroneously referred to as a book on sufism, but it may more accurately be described as a adaptation of traditional sufism to the Safavid milieu, in addition to being a handbook of the philosophical and mystical school known as ʿIḥnāt-i ʿilāhī propounded by Mullā Ṣadrī, the author’s teacher and father-in-law. Certain features of an ʿAbḥārī legal methodology are presented in this handbook as deriving naturally from that same philosophical and mystical school. A brief analysis of its contents and themes reveals that its primary focus is that of imamology, even though the attendant discussions and elaborations borrow heavily from the Sufi tradition. A list of its 100 chapter headings together with a few translations of selected passages provide a description of the contents of this influential work.

Keywords: ʿAbḥārī; ʿIḥnāt; imamology; ʿifār; Shi‘ism.
The Hidden Words is the name of what may be considered one of the more important works of later Imami thought since it was written by a man who is considered to be the Abü Ḥanīfī Ghazālī of post-Safavid Shi'ism and may be thought an authoritative primer or manual of Islam as seen through the lense of Hikmat. The full title of Mullā Muḥsin Fayd Kāshāni’s Hidden Words (written in 1647/1057H.) is revealing: kalimāt makānīnāh min ‘ulāmā al-hikma wa’l-ma’rifā; it could be rendered as follows: “The Treasured Teachings of the Gnostics and Mystics.” It is written to the author himself, he was most surprised to learn that the title of the work was in ḍabar correspondence with the date of completion. It is written in both Arabic and Persian. It consists of 4,000 verses or lines and is divided into one hundred comparatively brief divisions, each of which is considered a “hidden word” and the two languages of Arabic and Persian may be combined in a given section. Each section is a Hidden Word or kalimā (pl. kalimāt) and the range of topics is really quite vast and the book is remarkably dense. Fayd Kāshāni was an accomplished poet and his Divān is highly regarded; it is therefore not surprising to find a large amount of his poetry in this manual. This is in addition to Quranic quotations, Hadith, Arabic or Persian maxims, quotations from other poets, quotations from the works of earlier thinkers, philosophers and spiritual authorities, and quotations from heroes of the Sufi tradition. Thus questions of theology (kalām), law (fīqh), mysticism (‘irfān, tasawwuf), metaphysics, ontology, eschatology, Quranic interpretation (tafsir, ta’wil), Islamic history, the efficacy of prayer and supplication, free will and predestination, transmigration of souls, continuous creation (khalq-i jadid) are all orchestrated into the single unitary and sweeping vision.

Fayd Kāshāni was the star student of one of the greatest Muslim philosophers of any period, Sadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī known as Mullā Ṣadrā (d. 1640/1050H.) The vision referred to at the end of the previous paragraph is that interpretation of reality known as Hikmat-i ilāhī (Divine Wis-

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2 Tibrānī 1978, pp. 119-20, No. 987-8. It was printed, apparently for the first time, in Iran in 1878/1296. Although according to Professor N. Pourjavady (verbal communication, September 1999, Paris) it is deficient, the edition used here is edited by ‘Aẓīzollāh al-‘Utridi Quchāni, Tehran, Ma’assaseh-ye Matbu‘eh-yi Farahānī, 1338 H./1954 sh. [1963] and designated hereafter as KM. Other lithographs referred to in the literature but unavailable to me are: Bombay, 1296H./1878 (Corbin 1960); Tehran, 1316H./1938-9 (Corbin 1960; Nasr 1983, and Arjomand 1984). I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer and to Prof. Shigeru Kanoda of Tokyo University for valuable comments and suggestions on an earlier draft of this article.
4 See Appendix for an indication of the scope of topics treated and the...
Various Sufi personalities of classical and mediaeval Islam are mentioned by name and quoted, such as Bastami, Junayd and Kharrizu. But these quotations are highly selective and appear to be chosen for their agreement with and support of the system of Divine Wisdom elaborated by Mullâ Ṣadrâ (whose name, interestingly enough, is never mentioned). Kharrız (d. 899 or 890), for example, is quoted (unascrbed) in the opening paragraph of the book when the author says: "Praised be to Him who is known only through the joining of opposites". Junayd's celebrated codicil for the Prophet's answer to the question: Where was God before creation? is quoted and ascribed. Several references to the traditional Sufi topic of "withness" (ma'ya) occur throughout the text. But there is much else in the book that would be difficult to classify as tasawwuf. The Perfect Man, for example, is not only the Prophet Muhammad, but is also each of the Holy Imams and also all of them together. These Figures are the Absolute Rulers of the cosmos and are both the proper focus and source of love, knowledge and being (a kind of "holy trinity") of Hikmat. Such an extreme veneration of the Imams is exemplified in the copious quotations from the Mathâriq al-amârî of the late 14th/8th - early 15th/9th century "heretic" Rajab Bursî (d. 1411/814H). Furthermore, the theory supporting such a position is argued in the terms of Sadrian Hikmat. Such doctrines, it is suggested, are not quite sufism, unless of course one holds to the thesis (which remains to be convincingly argued in historical terms) that Shi'iism is actually the pure and original form of sufism. In addition, the multiplex, kathenotheic Fig-

ure(s) of the Perfect Man presented here suggests a political theory very much in line with that articulated in the author's "Mirror for the King," his Ā'îmeh-yi Shâhi, even if it is not clear that this political tract represents "a radical devaluation of earthly sovereignty".14

Most importantly, copious quotations are cited throughout from the words of the Shi'i Imams and the Prophet who (together with Fâtima) are known as the Fourteen Infallible or Sinless Ones. Thus, while the book discusses a number of the standard topics of Islamic religion, this discussion ultimately becomes a view of Islam as such through the lens of Mullâ Ṣadrâ's Hikmat-i ûlâ. It is, therefore, an excellent introduction to the highly technical and sometimes very difficult teaching of Ṣadrâ.15

It is important here to add that while Ṣadrâ is celebrated in philosophical circles for what is frequently perceived as a strictly ontological preoccupation, it has been pointed out that one of the more important achievements of Mullâ Ṣadrâ was the accommodation of Twelver Shi'iism to the high sufism of Ibn 'Arabi and his school — a project that had already been started by

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14 Arjomand 1984, p. 175. This interpretation may require some adjustment. See for example the recent assessment of Fâyûd's role in public political life in Bâbân 1996, pp. 117-138. Here it is not so clear that such so-called "gnostic" Shi'iism was as sublimely indifferent to politics and general societal questions as is assumed by Arjomand. It also should be pointed out that Arjomand's criticism of Corbín's choice of words is misinformed. Corbín did not intend the word "esoteric" to stand for ambiguous operations of charisma-monergarten. He intended it to stand for systems of thought or simply thought that addressed itself to the inner life of the person and the world. Thus Mullâ Ṣadrâ's work is esoteric (pace Arjomand 1984, p. 310 n.12) according to Corbín's usage, just as Corbín could consider Hegel and Heidegger as esotericists because of their respective emphasis on such "inner" issues as Spirit and Being (cf. Arjomand 1984, p.175). In this regard, it should be remembered that Corbín was in fact Heidegger's first translator. It may be that Arjomand's somewhat idiosyncratic use of the term "hermenetic" (Arjomand 1984, passim) indicates, ironically, a sharper understanding of the issues at stake than do his comments on such terminology as "gnostic" and "esoteric". Finally, it is unclear why Arjomand persists in reproducing the title of the work under discussion here as Kâlâmâh (Arjomand 1984, passim, and Arjomand 1986, passim) rather than the more standard Kâlâmât.

15 The thought of Mullâ Ṣadrâ is a persuasive attempt at a reconciliation of reason and revelation. It depends very heavily on the work of earlier Muslim thinkers and philosophers such as Avicecca (d. 1037/429H), Suhrawardi (d. 1191/587H) and Ibn 'Arabi (d. 1249/638H), and is concerned to demonstrate the essentially spiritual nature of reality and existence, an existence or being-ness that is in a constant state of flux and whose constituent elements are knit together on all levels through a profound existential connection characterised by Ṣadrâ as deep or substantial motion. One of the axioms of this system of thought is the basic syzygical nature of this reality whose external dimension forms a whole only when taken into consideration with an "unseen" or "mystical" interior dimension. The esoteric and the esoteric as-
such thinkers as Bābā Afdal Kāshānī (d. ca. 1213-14/610-611H.), Sa’d al-Dīn Ḥamuyel (d. 1252/651H.), Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī (d. 1273/672H.), Maydham al-Bahrānī (d. 1280/679H.), Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmuli (d. ca. 1400/ 863H.), the above-mentioned Ḥajāb Būrā and Ibn Abī Jumhūr (d. after 1501/907H.). Thus to say that it is “about sufism” is to conceal the specific Shi’i content and nature of the book. While it may be that the essence of both philosophy and what is sometimes called Islamic gnosis are contained in the many quotations from the Imams, also known as the Awwāly, the Friends of God, it is misleading not to acknowledge the importance of these figures as distinct, sui generis, centres of devotion for the author of the book. Henry Corbin, for one, celebrated in no uncertain terms what he perceived to be the beauty and elegance of an Imamocentric ethos, and constantly drew the reader’s attention to this. The unerring guide to the perception and understanding of the esoteric or inner dimension of Reality or Being is precisely the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, and the Imams as found in the Qur’an and the sacred Traditions.

But Mullā Ṣadrā was not without critics. Indeed, he was actually “excommunicated” at one stage and sought refuge in isolation for a number of years in order to escape persecution. However, his radical reinterpretation of religion, coming at a time of various power-struggles amongst the clerical class would eventually issue in a strongly anti-Sufi Shi’i orthodoxy as found described and defended in, for example, the works of the younger Māljī (a student of Fāyḍ Kāshānī, as it happened) whose massive doctrinal work, the Rihār al-amwaṭ continues to provide the basic elements of belief for Shī‘ī orthodoxies. This is not to suggest that all mysticism has been drained out of Shi’ism, rather it is to draw attention to the importance of historical developments and influences on religious ideas and styles in piety and religious observance. In the later Safavid period mysticism and sufism were perceived by some as threats to clerical authority precisely because of the existence of powerful Sufi leaders whose authority and charisma vied with the authority of the official ulama and “the state” and was therefore perceived as a serious threat by the wielders of such power. Indeed, so charged was the atmosphere of the time that both Šadrā and Kāshānī com- posed substantial polemics against sufism, albeit a sufism of a particular kind.

One of the main reasons for the controversy, quite apart from the deep philosophical colouring of Šadrā’s thought — philosophy being more or less perennially suspect by official religious establishments — was the implications this thought had for popular religion. For such thinkers as Muḥsin Fāyḍ, who was befriended and highly regarded by Shāh ‘Abbās II, these recent philosophical developments paved the way for, on the one hand a more “democratic” approach to Islamic law, and on the other a more supra-rational and experiential attitude to Islamic scriptures (viz., the Qur’an and Hadīth). Such an attitude threatened the religious status quo presided over by mujtahids whose authority was grounded in the traditional, highly scholastic, discursive approach to the shari’a and general religious questions: ijtiḥād. In short, Mullā Šadrā’s philosophy fed into the recent religious developments which would come to be recognised as forming something of an Akhbārī opposition to the very powerful and perhaps phobic Usulī establishment.

This scenario is both illustrated and complicated to a very interesting degree by the person and work of Fāyḍ Kāshānī. As mentioned above, Kāshānī is esteemed as one of the chief orthodoxers of later Shi’ism. Yet he was deeply influenced by his teacher (and as it happens, father-in-law) Mullā Šadrā. Interestingly, in the work under discussion here (e.g. KM, #91, pp. 222-226) and other works, Kāshānī is an adamant supporter of the

19 The existence of such writings by such mysteriously-minded authors demands that we revise the frequently propagated equivalence Islamic mysticism = sufism.
20 Shāh ‘Abbās II had a khānaqāḥ built for him and later destroyed (Asjandān 1984, pp. 148 and 154).
21 Thus Asjandān 1984, p. 146, quoting Wilfrid Madelung, “Akhbārīyya”, EP, Supplement: Two very important aspects of Akhbārī traditionalism served the vested interests of clerical notables in their effort to meet the challenge of the Shi‘ī hierarchy for exclusive hierocratic domination. It explicitly challenged the hierocratic authority of the mujtahids, and, by implication, it greatly enhanced the charisma of lineage of the ruling dynasty and of the sayyids who formed the clerical elite. The Akhbārīs firmly rejected ijtihād, thus wreaking havoc with the newly laid foundations of hierocratic authority. For them “Ijtihād, leading to mere gama‘ī [probable opinion, as opposed to certainty] and taqlīd, i.e., following the opinions of a mujtahid, are forbidden. Every believer must necessarily follow the akhbār of the Imams for whose proper understanding no more than a knowledge of Arabic and the specific terminology of the Imams is needed. If an apparent conflict between two traditions cannot be resolved by the methods prescribed by the Imams, tawaqquf, abstention from a decision is obligatory.”

16 KM, p. 79, where both a hadīth from Ibn Abī Jumhūr and Fāyḍ himself are castigated by the modern editor.
18 On Mullā Šadrā generally, see Corbin 1981; Nasr 1978; Morris 1981. Note Hosain Khomeini’s criticism. He was clearly uncomfortable with Shī‘īmuḥsin
Akhbārī legal method, a position which insisted that a believer might obtain valid spiritual guidance through direct contemplation and study of the Qurʾān and sacred Traditions (viz.: akhbār). This was contrary to the opposing Ḥāfilī position which insisted upon the “blind imitation” (taqlīd) of a religious scholar who gave various opinions and rulings based upon a frequently casuistic approach to sources and a vaunted elevation of book-learning, “reason” and “logic” as the essential tools for arriving at religious truth. Corbin illuminates the whole problem and reduces it to its most fundamental and defining issue when he says that the prime motivation of the Akhbārīs was the quest for a higher degree of certitude than that obtainable through the dialectic of the Usulī mujtahid.23

In the context of this debate and the Sadrian “heresy”, it may be thought that the religious œuvre of Fayyād Kāshānī should be divided into two basic categories: 1) works for the majority of Shi’is and works aimed at an elite cognoscenti. In the first category would be his massive collection of Traditions (Ḥadīth/Akhbār) known as al-Wafī or his important commentary on the Qurʾān al-Ṣāfī or his reworking of Ghazalī’s magnum opus the Iḥyā in Shi’i form, al-Maḥājīf al-bayḍā’ upon which his patristic reputation is largely based. The second category would be of works that have as their purpose the continuation and elaboration (and perhaps popularization) of the “dangerous” spiritual philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā. Although the Hidden Words may be the only evidence of Fayyād’s allegiance to Ḥikmat widely accessible before 1974 when his Usul al-ma’ārif was published in Ashtiyani’s edition, there is no evidence, so far, that such a possible subtext was at the direction of its author.24 Although clearly aimed at an elite group of scholars and intellectuals, the Hidden Words are stated with such clarity and presented as such an orderly “handbook” of elemental Ḥikmati-inspired readings of the various sources of Islamic religion that it may be assumed that like his perhaps egalitarian attitude towards law, his attitude towards Ḥikmat was that it was ultimately accessible to all. It should be mentioned, however, that another of his works, the Qurlat al-Uyun “Salace of the Eyes” is in reality this same Hidden Words with the more esoteric and technical philosophical content deleted.25

The commentary on the light verse (Qurʾān 24:35) found in Fayyād’s Hidden Words when compared with the commentary on the same verse found in the (perhaps) more popular al-Ṣāfī offers an instructive sample of the kinds of differences that characterise the two works of religious scholarship. Here, in al-Ṣāfī, Kāshānī’s taʾsīr of this verse opens with a not-so-veiled reference to the teachings of Ibn ʿArabī and while most of the commentary is taken up with specifying more clearly some equivalent for obscure Quranic vocabulary, or specifying the grammar for the purposes of recitation, this work is distinguished from other taṣīr of the same period by the degree with which it is explicitly concerned with matters philosophical and mystical.26 His commentary on the Quranic imagery: neither eastern nor western and light upon light is effective and instructive but patently not philosophical in the tradition of Ḥikmat. But unable to resist making the connection between Holy Scripture and the spiritual universe that he himself inhabits, he closes his own comments on the verse, in philosophical language on: And God strikes similitudes. And God is knower of all things, saying that this phrase indicates God’s method entails drawing the “intelligible close to the sensible”. Kāshānī offers credentials for his commentary by quoting several Traditions from the Imāms.27

In his Hidden Words the verse is pressed more explicitly into the service of Ḥikmat: God is the light of the Heavens and the Earth indicates for Kāshānī that His existence (muṣūf) is more clear (azahr) than all other things because His existence is sustained through and by Himself, whereas the existence of all else is through another [i.e. God]. He cites a Persian poem, unscribed: “How excellent the ignorance of one who searches with a candle in the desert for the Light of the sun!”28 In his discussion of quiddities and their nonexistence in relation to existence’s priority he refers once again to Qurʾān 24:35 as something of a proof text for this Ḥikmati-inspired doctrine. In this same section, he refers to the corollary of the Light Verse, the so-called “Darkness Verse” (Qurʾān 24:40) as follows:

And to support my theory of the appearance of the quiddities through the light of Being I adduce the ḥadīth in which the Prophet said: ‘God, the exalted, created creation in darkness, then he sprinkled upon it some of His light.’

The creation thus of quiddities in darkness indicates its fixity in the divine knowledge prior to its appearance through Being. Darkness is the nonexistence of the divine; when it is illumined then the quiddities occur

Like a mirage in sandy deserts, which the man parched with thirst mistakes for water until when he comes up to it he finds it to be nothing. But he finds God ever with him. [24:39]


24 See Lawson 1993, pp. 179-87.


26
Every structure of creation and existent phenomenon has existence according to the law of love as in ‘And I loved to be known, so I created creation in order that I be known’. And if there were not love there would not appear what has appeared, and whatever has appeared is from love and by means of love, and love flows through it. Nay, rather [all manifestation] is love. Each person, nay each thing is nothing except that it is commanded to be through love maḥabbah... Consequently, the deeprooted place of love in all created things can never be negated...

(Poetry):

Your heart will move according to what your passion desires
There is no love except the First Lover

Qur’an [17:23]:
And thy Lord hath decreed that ye love none (lá ṭa‘budū) but Him
... As for love of another [i.e. other than God], even if it be for comeliness, or beauty or closeness (qurba) to God or His perfection ... this is permitted because beauty is beloved by the Divine Essence whether it is external and formal beauty, or internal and spiritual. ‘God is beautiful and He loves beauty, so He loves Himself’. Other than Him there is nothing that can be beautiful or perfect, because each comely one and beautiful and perfect one and glorious one are manifestations of Him... Every reflection of all the divine light is the beauty and the traces of perfection of that Extremely Exalted Holiness which appears in the manifestations of the vessels of His appearance, and in the receiving mirrors of those divine reflections.

(Poetry):

Every beautiful one is comely from His beauty

... If the effects of that beauty fall upon the mirror of the heart... beauty comes to be... All beauty comes from Him: He has no partner.

... We close this teaching with the topic of moral beauty (iḥṣān), because iḥṣān is also beloved of the Divine Essence... And there is no iḥṣān except from God, and there is no one who is morally beautiful other than God, glorified be His praise. He is the creator of iḥṣān and its Master and Sole Owner and the maker of the modes and occasions of every muḥṣin. This is one of the benefits (ḥasanā) of His
drop from the oceans of His perfection and excellences. (...) Be occupied with Beauty, and do not covet fame or wealth (...).

There is also the love derived from love of self; it can turn to the love of God, exalted be He, as I have taught you. Be not attracted to any face except through the love of God. None truly understands this except the friends awliyā and the dear ones (ahlībā) of God, as intimated by the Lord of Martyrs (i.e. ʿUthmān ibn ʿAbdullāh) upon him be peace, in the Prayer of ʿArafat: "Thou art He who removes all the others from the hearts of thy friends so that they love only you."

So when the True One knew Himself and knew the world [as distinct] from Himself, then there came forth its form. Nothing is more beloved than His self — He sees it in the mirror of the World. There is no Lover but God and no Beloved other than God.31

Light, love and truth permeate much of Fayḍ’s discourse in this work and nowhere are the productive ambiguities, paradoxes and apparent contradictions inherent in such a theology point out better than in the lengthy quotations from the theologically suspect — "ghulīghulāwun" — but nonetheless very influential Khaṭbat al-tatawfiqa included by Rajab Burşī in his Mashaʿrīq and for which the Hidden Words is one of the more important later sources.32 A few examples will suffice. Here, ʿAll is quoted as follows:

‘Indeed! I know wonders of the creation of God that none but God himself knows. And I know what was and what will be: what was in the first period of primordial existence (al-dharr al-awwal) that preceded the First Adam. It was revealed to me and I came to know it. And my Lord taught me. (...) I inform you of what you were and what you will be during that time and what you will meet with on the Day of Resurrection/Rising (qiyyāma) (...) And indeed He hid the knowledge of it from all of the prophets except the master of this

31 KM, pp. 85-89; n.b. the self-deprecating pun on the author's name here.

32 KM, pp. 196-205; see Lawson 1987, pp. 15, 195-6, 208, 219; Lawson 1992, pp. 261-276; and the recent extremely valuable article by Amir-Moezzi (Amir-Moezzi 1996). Notwithstanding Shaykh Ahmad’s antipathy for Fayḍ Kāšānī (he referred to him as Muṣīrī as opposed to Muḥṣīn, just as he referred to Ibn Arbi as Muḥṣīn al-Dīn rather than Muḥyī al-Dīn)), this sermon was the subject of a lengthy commentary by al-ʿAṣīrī’s successor Sayyid Kāẓim Rashūdī (d. 1845/1259H) on which see Corbin 1993, pp. 115-118, and Amir-Moezzi 1996, especially pp. 195 and 207. This sermon was also referred to and commented upon many times by the Bāb throughout his writings. See Lawson 1987, pp. 329-360. Indeed, apart from those

33 KM, p.167-8. For convenience, the words Aeon and Cycle are used to translate, however inadequately, kawr and dawr respectively. These terms have a technical meaning in Ismāʿili cosmogony and eschatology, viz.: kawr ‘a’zam, dawr ‘isr, dawr ‘isrā (see Corbin 1961; Madelung, Efr.; and Duhary 1990, index, s.v. dawr, kawr) and may carry something of such an intention to this context. There is some reason to believe that Rajab Burşī was a crypto-Ismāʿīlī (Lawson 1992). In general, in Ismāʿīlī a nd Twelver Shiʿism, time is divided into two major periods: one “before” the day of Alasri and one “after” (Amir-Moezzi, Efr.). Thus, kawr might be taken to refer to the “time” of the pristine, unmanifested godhead, the period prior to the movement indicated in the famous ḥudūth qudrat “I was hidden treasure”, while dawr might be taken to refer to the period after this movement. If the ḥudūth is truly from the first Imām, “All ibn Abī Tālib, it is very difficult to speculate on how he himself might have defined the terms. I take this statement as something of pleonasm, with the main point being: “I have always existed, even before
This sampling of materials should make clear the kinds of issues and teachings comprised by the Hidden Words and also helps to elucidate why these words might have been hidden in the first place. But we know that in Shi’ism hiddleness itself is also a mode of the divine. Forty years ago Corbin published his Terre céleste in which he drew attention — it seems for the first time in modern scholarship — to the Kalimat maknūna. Corbin translated the chapter on the abstruse problem of the spiritual interworld or ‘alām al-mithāl because, according to him, Fāyḍ’s treatment of this topic here is the best available. However, it seems that apart from one or two instances, this remarkable book was destined to remain hidden from western scholarship until the publication of Arjomand’s influential Shadow of God in 1984. Why this should be so is difficult to ascertain especially since it has been identified as one of the only published evidences of Kāshānī’s allegiance to Mullā Šadrā until the 1974 publication of his Uṣūl al-ma‘ārif. Despite the fact that there is probably no more apposite verse (24:35) in the Quran with which to propagate the teachings of that tradition, al-Šāfi‘i is relatively — but as we saw not completely — innocent of Ḥikmat-inspired themes. That the Hidden Words indulges more in this should not lead us to believe that Kāshānī himself sought to divide his community into groups of knowers and ignorant ones (although such a division may have been perceived to have existed as an expression of the natural order of things). Rather it seems more likely that Kāshānī saw as his duty to make the kind of salvific knowledge he was engaged in available to as many of his fellow Shi’ites as possible. If this had to be done by degrees, then it would not be the first time.

The question also arises as to just how universal Fāyḍ Kāshānī considered his teaching to be. How pertinent or compelling could it have been to a non-Shi’i audience? And finally, if we wish to continue the comparison between Fāyḍ Kāshānī and Ghazālī, it is perhaps in line with such a comparison to assign an analogous place to their respective “problematic” works: the Mishkât al-anwâr of Ghazālī, the Kalimat maknūna of Kāshānī. One striking difference here is immediately obvious: unlike the case with the first work, there seems to have been no attempt or need to deny that the author of the second work was the same man who is so highly esteemed by the tradition he helped to shape.

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APPENDIX

Topic Headings for KM (see bibliography). Each topic is preceded by: Kalima fihā which can be translated as: “Doctrine concerning”, “Teachings on”, “Chapter on” etc. In what follows, I have usually left this untranslated.

The contents may be generally described as Ḥikmat. There are several categories within this broader one: 1) epistemology, including discussions pertaining to the Akhbari Uṣūl question; 2) ontology, a sub-category of which is explicitly along the lines of wahdat al-wujūd and continuous “atomistic” recreation and destruction of the world; 3) theology; 4) mysticism/‘irfan; 5) cosmogony; 6) the Perfect Man; 7) eschatology; 8) theology; 9) perception; 10) walāya / guardianship / Shi‘ism; 11) imanology / theopanology. Note that the table of contents of the edition at hand (pp. 251-235) contains numerous mistakes; many of these have been corrected so that the enumeration of topics and the corresponding page number below are accurate. Misspellings and typographical errors in the original have not been indicated. The first number is that of the kalima; the second number, in parentheses, is the number of the page on which the given kalima begins.

1(2) That both direct knowledge (ma‘rifa) and direct physical vision (ru‘ya) [of the Hidden Imam] are sometimes supported and sometimes refused by the sacred texts.
2(6) On contemplation and discussion about God — and on the exhortation to acquire ma‘rifa.
3(8) On God’s manifestation and His hiddleness.
4(12) On the spiritual significance (ma‘na) of Being/Existence (wujūd).
5(13) That there is no quiddity (māhiyya) to the Absolute Reality (al-haqq) other than Being/Existence.
6(16) On various conceptions of Existence.
7(19) On the Divine Attributes and Names; they are identical with the Divine
other point of view.

8(24)  On the divine reality of the pre-existent archetypes (a‘yân al-thâbita).
9(25)  On how Being is joined to the archetypes in the external [realm].
10(26) Small collection of statements explaining the relationship (nisba) of the objective reality (maj‘îlya) of quiddity and its relationship to Being and its refutation from both assertions.
11(28)  On the existence of the archetypes in the external world (outside the mind) and that there is no existence to them in it.
12(30)  On the mutability of the existence of the archetypes.
13(32) On His independence of all else than Him.
14(33) On the "why" of creation and that it is a conceptual matter.
15(35) On the spiritual significance of Existential Oneness and the differences in the other grades of existent things.
16(36) Some illustrative examples (tanâhîlât) in explanation of Existential Oneness.
17(42) On transcendence and anthropomorphism.
18(44) Further illustrations in explanation of the connection between Oneness, Multiplicity, Transcendence and Anthropomorphism.
20(48) On the modality by which pre-eternal divine knowledge comes to the light of day.
21(49) On the renewal of creation at every moment (khalîq-i jadid).
22(51) That the [instantaneous] substitution of things is not a substitution of essence nor a numeration of deeds and attributes.
23(53) On God’s eternal self-subsisting gâyûmîya and that other than Him there is none who can claim to be a self-sustaining, true Riser (qâ’îm).
24(55) On the spiritual significance of “the generation of the world” (îdâth al-‘alam) and the meaning of the doctrine of pre-eternity.
25(57) On the coming forth of the many from the One and their arrangement according to the divine names.
26(59) On the spiritual significance of the divine names and the modality of their arrangement.
27(60) On the spiritual significance of the divine statement (Qur’an 6:73, 16:40, 19:35, 36:82, 40:68) “Be thou and it is.”
28(62) On the totality of existent things and their gradations and that they are in the process of returning to a single essence (‘ayn wâhidata).
29(65) On the modality of the descent and ascent of Existence.
30(67) On the priority of spirits (arwâbî) over bodies (ajâdî) and an explanation of their generation by means of the generation of bodies.
31(70) On the reality of the World of Images (Gîlîm al-wajîhî, wasilîh).

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33(74) On the validity of transformation (mustakh) and the invalidity of transmigration (nakbî).
34(76) On the complexity of the soul in its essence and how through it is made to appear the stages of the human soul in its advancements.
35(78) Exalted word about the sublime world and the modality of the advance of the human soul unto it.
36(80) Truthful word about the causes of the descent of the spirits from the exalted malakût.
37(81) That all of existence is good and that evil is without being, not made existent except by means of an accident.
38(83) That all perfections are subordinate to Him.
39(85) That love (al-bubbî) permeates (sayârdân) all existence and that there is neither lover (mu’dîbî) nor beloved (ma’alîbî) other than God.
40(89) On God’s utter nearness to (qurba, ma’ya) all existing things.
41(90) That the entire cosmos (kawn al-kull) is upon the straight path (siyâd al-mustaqâm) notwithstanding the [apparent] crookedness of some of the paths/developments (tarâwî).
42(91) That the final destination of all is Him, exalted be He, notwithstanding the venal mischief of some.
43(93) That the [true] being of the innate character of all things is [meant to be ] in the process of affirming oneness and the explanation of the [apparent] error of some.
44(94) On the spiritual significance of al-qadâ’ and al-qadar.
45(95) On the nature of God’s Proof over His creation, and it is not their proof over Him.
46(99) On the distinction between the creative command and the compulsive [command], the repudiation of [the problem of] predestination and free will and the establishment of [the correct view which is] "a thing between the two things".
47(103) On the way in which external causes influence actions and the establishment of requital/punishment for them and the explanation of “the exhaustion of the divine will” and the “drying up of the Pen” as in the case of those things which pertain to the human, like knowledge and power and purpose from a totality/multiplicity of causes.
48(106) The disclosing of the mystery of effacement and establishment and the linking of vacillation and change of mind to God, praised be He.
49(109) On the meaning of  tarnâ’ in linking deeds to God, praised be He, and in linking them to the servants.
64(112) On the spiritual meaning (ma‘înî) of al-‘abîdî in God and al-‘abîdî with
51(114)  On the spiritual significance of appearance and manifestation.
52(115)  On the differences (ṣawāwīl) amongst the created things in manifestation.
53(116)  On the appearance of God (zuhūr al-haqq) in the manifestations inasmuch as it be the divine names and [inasmuch as it be the case that] the manifestation of the name of Allāh is the Perfect Man.
54(117)  That the real cause of the existence of [the Perfect] Man is through his being a place of manifestation for the divine Ispitiyāt (laawiyāt) and the perfect Integrator of [all the multiplicity of] the cosmos.
55(118)  That the Perfect Man is the culmination of all the species of all knowledge in all grades and that he is, in terms of this station, God visible.
56(120)  That the Perfect Man is the disposer (al-mudabbir) of the world through the divine names and that he is the means (al-wāṣiyāt) for the meeting/connexion (muytiq) of God (al-haqq) with creation.
57(121)  That the Perfect Man has a Firstness and a Lastness, a quality of being Manifest and a quality of being Hidden, and Servitude and Lordship [cf. Qur′ān 57:3].
58(123)  That the Perfect Man is the Greater World (macrocosm).
59(124)  That the Perfect Man is the Book of God and His form.
60(126)  On the necessity of the obedience of all created things to the Perfect Man.
61(130)  That the “destruction of the world” is its emptiness the Perfect Man and that the “life in the hereafter” is his existence in it.
62(132)  That the Abode of Existence is one and the world and the hereafter are two relativities.
63(134)  That the Abode of Existence and creation are eternal.
64(135)  On the multiplicity of principles in growth.
65(136)  On the modality of the growth of the last out of the first.
66(139)  On “purgatory” (barzakh) and the blowing of the trumpet.
67(145)  That the Resurrection (qiyyūma) is the Perfect Man.
68(149)  That the Perfect Man sees the affairs of the next world while he is in this world and sees what transpires in this world while he is in the hereafter: He lives in both worlds (simultaneously).
69(152)  On the types of Gathering (at judgement day) and their allotment to man.
70(154)  On the spiritual significance of the Meeting with God.
71(157)  On the “scrolls of recorded deed”, that they are the souls of humans.
72(159)  On the Balance (miṣará), that it is the Perfect Man and his guidance.
73(160)  That the Path is the Perfect Man and his guidance.
74(161)  On the various types of creatures in the next period of growth (the Hereafter).
75(164)  On the divisions of Paradise and Hell and the beginning of the growth of the who both.
76(168)  On the reality of Hell and that it is created of accursed.
78(172)  On the legacy of the degrees of ascent and the degrees of descent (darajāt/ darākat) and the substitution of the bad and the good.
79(179)  On the Apportioner of Paradise and Hell, and it is the Perfect Man.
80(181)  On the gates of Paradise and Hell and they are the animal faculties of perception.
81(183)  On the word al-ahid [cf. Qur′ān 7:46-48] and that it applies properly to the Perfect Man as long as [he is] in this growth/world.
82(186)  On prophethood and guardianship (nubūwāt and waliyyāt).
83(187)  That our prophet and his twelve legates are the most perfect of all humans, nay rather of all created things.
84(193)  That the idols of the Quraysh are the most vile of all other humans, nay rather of all created things.
85(196)  On His sublimity.
86(205)  On the necessity of the Imam and that recognition of him is not possible except through a clear proof from God and designation by the apostle of Allāh.
87(208)  On the contention that there was no authoritative text (nass) and no consensus (ijma‘) governing what took place; rather, the authoritative text (nass) governed what did not happen.
88(210)  On the reason for the absence of agreement about the succession of the Commander of the Faithful ... even though there was clear designation.
89(213)  On the cause of the straying away of the generality of the umma from the light of the Imāms even though the proof of — as well as the compelling need for — the Imāms appeared clearly to them.
90(217)  That it is not permissible to take the laws of the shari‘a or the doctrines of religion from anyone but the Prophet and his legates and that it is not permitted to legislate concerning the ambiguous verses except through ta‘wil.
91(222)  Against the use of personal opinion (ma‘ṣūla) in matters of religion (dīn).
92(226)  The various opinions on the questions of religion (dīn).
93(227)  On the reason of the disagreement of mankind with regard to the various maddhabs and opinions, and thanks for true guidance.
94(230)  On the grades of faith and unbelief.
95(233)  In which is distinguished the saved sect from the lost sects.
96(239)  On the distribution of knowledge and ulama and that it is through following/imitating a learned one.
97(241)  On the place where wisdom is taken from and its status and the necessity of guarding it and keeping it secret.
98(244)  On the nobility of wisdom and its people.
99(246)  On the occurrence of the knowledge of wisdom.
100(250)  On the proposition that the ulama are the inheritors of the prophets and how it happens that some of them are enemies and the hateful ones.
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