

KNOWLEDGE AND POWER  
IN THE PHILOSOPHIES OF  
ḤAMĪD AL-DĪN KIRMĀNĪ  
AND MULLĀ ṢADRĀ SHĪRĀZĪ

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Sayeh Meisami



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Sayeh Meisami  
University of Dayton  
Dayton, OH, USA

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# 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Philosophy and Authority in Shi'ism: Kirmānī and Mullā Ṣadrā

Following the lead of Plato and Aristotle, classical Islamic philosophers built their political views on their understanding of a hierarchical cosmos, including a hierarchy of souls (*nufūs*). Abū Naṣr Fārābī (d. 339/950), commonly referred to as “the Second Master” in works of Islamic philosophy,<sup>1</sup> formulated the first systematic political discourse in Islamic intellectual history. He made a discursive framework for Islamic political theory based on Platonic idealism and intellectual authority. Nowadays, Fārābī’s work and the continuation of his political philosophy by later thinkers is widely known to scholars of Islamic studies.<sup>2</sup> In addition, Shi‘ī scholars have written extensively on the unique authority of the imams, signifying a designated line of the genealogical descendants of Prophet Muḥammad. What still needs attention is the discursive bond between philosophy and Shi‘ism. This is particularly true regarding the relation between the narratives of Islamic epistemology/psychology<sup>3</sup> and that of Shi‘ī authority in its complex religious and political applications. The possibility of historical confluence aside, the two fields share

narratives, arguments, statements, and concepts, as well as a synthetic methodology which is prominent in the philosophical texts produced in a Shī'ī context.

The present book is a critical investigation into the shared discursive ground between epistemology/psychology and religio-political theories of authority in the works of two thinkers who represent the intellectual dimensions of two influential Shī'ī dynasties. Ḥamīd al-Dīn Kirmānī (d. 412/1021) and Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī (d. 1050/1640) contributed to the generation of Shī'ī discourses of absolute authority in Fatimid Egypt and Safavid Persia. This analysis will show that the religio-political discourses of the two states are similar in character and orientation, sharing analogous arguments and narratives with respect to the doctrine of the imamate. This will be demonstrated based on the place and function of epistemology/psychology in narratives of authority as developed by the two thinkers. However, the differences between Kirmānī and Mullā Ṣadrā in their application of some of the narratives also reveal the influence of the dominant religious and political ideologies of their times.

Though separated by time and location, Kirmānī and Mullā Ṣadrā belong to the same tradition of incorporating Aristotelian philosophy in their writings as well as Neoplatonic readings of Aristotle and Plato's works. This is due, in part, to early Muslim philosophers adopting pseudo-Aristotelian writings, the intellectual attractiveness of Aristotelian logic and epistemology, and the political significance of a Platonic perfect ruler for Muslim thinkers. I argue that the utopian aspect of Plato's philosophy has been appealing particularly to those philosophical discourses that were formed in Shī'ī contexts.<sup>4</sup> From this point of view, it does not matter if Fārābī was Shī'ī or not, nor does it make much difference whether Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna) was influenced by his own Isma'īli family background, which he actually criticized and turned against.<sup>5</sup> Rather, the present study is focused on the confluence of discourses as not fully determined by the intentions of the writers in question or by specific historical links. This is not to underestimate the fact that Kirmānī and Mullā Ṣadrā were unquestionably Shī'ī and dedicated to the Shī'ī cause of intellectually reinforcing the imamate. Rather, their conscious motivation is not the subject of the present study. Moreover, it is posited that the philosophical narratives of knowledge and authority that the two philosophers incorporated into

their works are discursively rooted in a tradition which organically grew on the bedrock of Greek philosophy rather than solely on Shī'ī ideology.

To reveal the intricate relationship between knowledge and power in the philosophies of Kirmānī and Mullā Ṣadrā, I will begin with their epistemology/psychology, focusing specifically on their narratives of intellectual-spiritual evolution and existential transformation through knowledge. I use the term epistemology in the broad sense of the study of the nature, scope, and source of knowledge rather than as part of a theory of logical demonstration and conditions of knowledge and justification. Next, I will analyze the relation between these narratives, and their philosophical accounts of the imamate. By comparing Kirmānī and Mullā Ṣadrā, I elucidate (1) the main components of their epistemic/psychological discourses in terms of concepts, narratives, and arguments; (2) the common grounds of their epistemic narratives about the source and scope of human knowledge in light of their Shī'ī philosophies; (3) the function of their epistemic concepts, arguments, and narratives in their discourses on the absolute authority of the Shī'ī imam; and (4) knowledge-power dynamics within philosophical discourses of Shī'ī background and the influence of such dynamics on modern and contemporary Shī'ī religio-political discourses.

In view of the above findings, the book also sheds light on the possible influence of Isma'ili philosophical discourses on Mullā Ṣadrā's writings. To better investigate this issue, I discuss the discursive influence of Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274) as a key to the transmission of Isma'ili narratives of knowledge and authority to later Islamic philosophy in the Twelver context. The analysis specifically explores the influence of Isma'ili philosophical imamology on Mullā Ṣadrā's writings on the imamate through the medium of Ṭūsī; however, as a Twelver Shī'ī in the Safavid period, Mullā Ṣadrā could hardly admit to this influence.

In my comparison of the two thinkers, I have consulted a great number of primary sources and major secondary literature. Among Kirmānī's works, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*,<sup>6</sup> which is my main primary source for his philosophy, is the broadest in scope, and the most philosophically ambitious. This volume has been edited twice and is not yet available in translation apart from several passages translated by Daniel C. Peterson<sup>7</sup> and other scholars in journal articles. The volume is divided into seven major parts

called “ramparts” (singular. *mashraʿ*), with the last one divided into fourteen “Pathways” (singular. *al-sūr*). The treatise opens with a list of reader instructions on how to prepare oneself spiritually and intellectually to appreciate the book. Among the preparatory steps are the mortification of vicious desires and learning the words of the Ismaʿili past masters. Among these, Kirmānī specifically refers to Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān (d. 363/973) for his works on the exterior side of faith, and to Imam al-Muʿizz li-Dīn Allāh (d. 365/975), Maṣṣūr al-Yamān, and Abū Yaʿqūb Sijistānī for their contributions to the esoteric reading of the religion.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, from the very beginning, Kirmānī clarifies his philosophical methodology, which is based on a balance between revelation and reason, exoteric and esoteric. The purpose of Kirmānī’s *Rāḥat al-ʿaql* is summarized by De Smet as “the exposition of the science of *tawḥīd* that literally encompasses all the universal principles and all the sciences and forms of knowledge contained in the primary formula of *shahādah*, *la ilāha illā Allāh*.”<sup>9</sup> *Rāḥat al-ʿaql* incorporates Ismaʿili teachings and the Greek heritage as presented by preceding Islamic philosophers, primarily Fārābī. Kirmānī’s theology of *tawḥīd* is intertwined with his philosophical cosmology, epistemology/psychology, and eschatology. Through an intricate, discursive system that draws on many narratives, the treatise presents the goal of the Fatimid Summons (*daʿwa*) as the intellectual/spiritual resurrection of the Shiʿī believer. The text is very challenging to read due to the complex content and style. Kirmānī presents his ideas within an intricate web of overlapping concepts and arguments that are repeated in different chapters and in different contexts.

As for other primary texts by Kirmānī, I use *al-Riyāḍ*<sup>10</sup> and *al-Aqwāl al-dhababiyya*.<sup>11</sup> The chapter on the soul in the former treatise focuses on the ontological aspect of the soul rather than its evolution through knowledge formation. *Al-Aqwāl al-dhababiyya* discusses the constitution of the soul in the context of Kirmānī’s criticism of the famous scientist and philosopher Muḥammad ibn Zakariyyā Rāzī (d. between 313 and 320/925 and 932).

The text that I use for Kirmānī’s imamology, *al-Maṣābiḥ fī ithbāt al-imāma*,<sup>12</sup> is available in a critical edition and English translation. The translator opens with a concise introduction to Kirmānī’s works, and the

significance of the theme of the imamate. Similar to contemporary writings on the imamate, which will be discussed later, the treatise defends this central doctrine of Shi'ism, and provides a number of arguments to prove its necessity. Each theme in the treatise is central to the Isma'ili position. The treatise consists of two parts which are each divided into seven Lights (singular. *miṣbāḥ*) and Demonstrations (singular. *ithbāt*). Part One offers proofs for the existence of the Maker (*al-ṣāni'*) and the soul (*al-naḥs*), with the sections on the soul as the most philosophical parts of the treatise. It also discusses "the divine regime" (*al-siyāsa al-rabbāniyya*),<sup>13</sup> which is the system of reward and punishment in the afterlife. This is followed by the related topic of the laws and regulation (*al-sharā'i' wa'l-rusūm*) of the believer, and how truths about these issues are presented symbolically through the office of prophethood and the necessity of *ta'wīl*. While the first part discusses the imamate in general, the second part focuses on the imamate of al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh (d. 412 /1021) as the embodiment of that office. Here, Kirmānī proves the line of the imamate from 'Alī to Ismail and his descendants up to al-Ḥākim. In this respect, he discusses divine appointment (*naṣṣ*) and infallibility (*'iṣma*). Kirmānī also uses supplementary charts and tables (*al-wāḥ*) to illustrate his arguments. They appear at the end of the translated section of the volume, and include the attributes and characteristics of the Prophet and the Imam.

In Western academia, major scholarship on the Isma'ili intellectual tradition started as early as the 1930s with Vladimir Ivanow, and continued from the 1960s and beyond with the works of Heinz Halm, Etan Kohlberg, Wilferd Madelung, Samuel M. Stern, Henry Corbin, Ismail Poonawala, Hermann Landolt, and Farhad Daftary. Kirmānī scholarship flourished in the works of Paul E. Walker, Daniel De Smet, Faquir Muhammad Hunzai, Daniel C. Peterson, and Tatsuya Kikuchi during the 1990s and later; the only exception is Hunzai's dissertation, which was written earlier.<sup>14</sup> Although there have not been many texts written about Kirmānī, those works that have been produced are by first-class scholars in the field of Isma'ili studies, and are based on detailed examinations of primary sources.

Paul E. Walker and Daniel De Smet, both writing about Kirmānī, have produced groundbreaking texts on different aspects of Isma'ili

philosophy. Walker's *Early Philosophical Shiism*<sup>15</sup> is a pioneering work that illuminates the influence of Neoplatonic philosophy on Isma'ili thought. Although it focuses on Sijistānī, the work sheds light on the development of philosophical frameworks in the Isma'ili context and highlights the Persian connections of Isma'ili philosophy. Walker also shows the importance of knowledge in the context of Isma'ili authority. Apart from an introduction to Kirmānī's life and thought in *Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī: Ismaili Thought in the Age of al-Ḥākim*,<sup>16</sup> which is essential reading before delving into Kirmānī's texts, Walker edited and translated Kirmānī's previously mentioned *al-Maṣābiḥ fi ithbāt al-imāma*. Daniel De Smet's *La quiétude de l'intellect*<sup>17</sup> is a comprehensive, technical study of Kirmānī. The author discusses major philosophical and theological themes in Kirmānī's *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*. I use this book as one of my secondary sources.

Mullā Ṣadrā has received much more attention than Kirmānī both in his home country and in Western academia. Almost all major treatises by Mullā Ṣadrā have been edited and published. In addition, some of his writings have been translated into European languages, not to mention the large number of articles and monographs written about him by scholars of various nationalities in the Middle East, Europe, and North America. Mullā Ṣadrā's magnum opus, *al-Ḥikmat al-mutaʿāliya fi asfār al-ʿaqliyya al-arbaʿa*,<sup>18</sup> from here on referred to as "*al-Asfār*," covers all the areas of post-Avicennan philosophy. In addition to being the major source of Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophy and theology, the volumes of *al-Asfār* can also be regarded as an encyclopedia of Islamic philosophy and theology. The author quotes from many philosophers and theologians, though sometimes he relates their thoughts without mentioning their names. In doing so, he presents a history of those ideas that influenced later Islamic philosophy. The book is written based on a synthetic methodology which was adopted previously by several pre-Safavid thinkers, most importantly Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī (d. 787/1385). While the book's division into sections is principally based on the four journeys of the soul in Islamic mysticism,<sup>19</sup> it is also deeply immersed in philosophical technicalities which are based primarily on Ibn Sīnā's philosophy. However, the author is also critical of some of Ibn Sīnā's views. After *al-Asfār*, Mullā Ṣadrā's most important work is *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya*.<sup>20</sup> It summarizes Mullā

Ṣadrā's metaphysics, epistemology/psychology, cosmology, eschatology, theology, prophetology, imamology, and Sufi ideas. Mullā Ṣadrā's theory of the imamate appears mainly in his *Sharḥ uṣūl al-kāfi*,<sup>21</sup> a commentary on the earliest collection of Twelver Shī'ī traditions (*ḥadīth*) compiled by Muḥammad Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī (d. 329/864). Mullā Ṣadrā comprehensively discusses the necessity and characteristics of the imamate in one chapter of the book which, following al-Kulaynī's divisions, is titled "Kitāb al-Ḥujja." For the critical editions of the manuscripts of Mullā Ṣadrā's works, we are indebted primarily to the Iranian philosopher Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (d. 1426/2005), Muḥammad Riḍā Muḥaffar (d. 1383/1964), and Muḥammad Khājawī (d. 1433/2012).<sup>22</sup>

A preliminary study of Mullā Ṣadrā by European scholars began in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by a French minister at the Qajar court, Comte de Gobineau (d. 1882), and the German orientalist Max Horten (d. 1945). There was a long interval in Mullā Ṣadrā studies in the West after Horten. Serious scholarship on the philosopher was conducted in 1960s and '70s by Henry Corbin (d. 1978) and Seyyed Hossein Nasr, and was pursued in 1980s by Christian Jambet and James Winston Morris. Corbin's articles "De la philosophie prophétique en Islam Shi'ite," and "La place de Molla Sadra Shirazi dans la philosophie Iranienne" were published in 1962 and, in 1964, he also translated *al-Mashā'ir*<sup>23</sup> into French, with an introduction highlighting the interdependence between Mullā Ṣadrā's metaphysics of presence (*ḥudūr*) and his imamology. In his voluminous *En Islam Iranien*, Corbin devoted a lengthy chapter to Mullā Ṣadrā.<sup>24</sup> As for Nasr, apart from being appointed the director of the Iranian Royal Academy of Philosophy by the Pahlavi Queen in 1973, and his contribution to the advancement of Islamic philosophy as an academic subject, his prolific career in the West after the 1979 Islamic Revolution played an important role in the expansion of Mullā Ṣadrā studies. Corbin and Nasr similarly associated transcendental philosophy with "prophetic philosophy" or "theosophy." Nasr believes "the doctrines of Mullā Ṣadrā are theosophy rather than philosophy because they are not derived from discursive thought alone but are ultimately the fruit of the divine order."<sup>25</sup> This mystical approach to Mullā Ṣadrā was pursued by Corbin's student, Christian Jambet.<sup>26</sup>

With the exception of Fazlur Rahman,<sup>27</sup> the mystical approach to Mullā Ṣadrā was the most popular with Western scholars for a long time. The younger generation of scholars in the West, including Sajjad Rizvi, Ibrahim Kalin, Caner Dagli, Zailan Moris, Cécile Bonmariage, and Jari Kaukua, have highlighted the philosophical nuances of Mullā Ṣadrā's work. However, because of the nature of these scholars' projects, the political side of the philosopher's work either has been excluded or overshadowed by other themes in their *oeuvre*.<sup>28</sup> This gap seems to have been filled by the most recent publication on Mullā Ṣadrā's political philosophy which, at the time of writing, has not yet been released in print.<sup>29</sup>

The imamate as the primary embodiment of Shī'ī authority is one of the major themes in this volume, so it is important to present an overview of the earlier study of imamology as the background of Kirmānī's discourse on the imamate and as a possible influence on Mullā Ṣadrā. Kirmānī's imamology was preceded by several key Isma'īli writings defending the imamate. All these works have one thing in common. They are divided into proofs for the necessity of the imamate based on reasoning, and proofs for the particular lineage of Isma'īli imams based on scriptural narratives and traditions. Isma'īli thinkers made a great contribution to the discursive formation of the imamate. One of the earliest texts that addresses the imamate is *Kitāb al-Munāẓarāt*<sup>30</sup> by Ja'far ibn Aḥmad ibn al-Haytham. The text is based on a debate between the author and two Fatimid Summoners (*dā'i*), Abū 'Abdallah and Abu'l-'Abbās, who seem to be examining him on doctrinal issues. Moreover, the text includes considerable autobiographical information, as well as facts about the intellectual life of Isma'īlis during the revolutionary year of 296–297/909, prior to the establishment of Fatimid rule in the author's hometown, Qayrawān, in North Africa. Ibn al-Haytham argues that the imamate of 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib is supported by reason, revelation, and consensus. For the "proofs of intellect and reasoning," he asserts the need of the community for leadership and that a benevolent God would necessarily be concerned about the guidance of His creation, and so He made the earth the inheritance of His friends. After proving the necessity of the imamate, he presents his arguments for the lineage of the imams he believes in. The second part of the book, a conversation with Ibn Abu'l-'Abbās, mentions several logical issues, and briefly discusses differ-

ent theological branches. This text, which includes scriptural, theological, and logical arguments, as well as lines of poetry, is a telling example of resorting to a synthetic discourse to establish the authority of the imam.

In Khurāsān, north east of Iran, Sijistānī, Kirmānī's Isma'īli philosophical predecessor, did not give much attention to the imamate. In his study of Sijistānī's *Kitāb al-Yanābī'*, Paul Walker states that in this treatise "the Imams appear as secondary instruments of the Speaker (*al-nātiq*), [in this case Prophet Muḥammad], and his Founder (*asās*), [ʿAlī], and as necessary but lesser members of religious hierarchy."<sup>31</sup>

The synthetic genre of imamology adopted by Ibn al-Haytham became particularly popular during the caliphate of Imam al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh (d. 412/1021). For example, Naysābūrī's *Ithbāt al-imāma* is a form of philosophical theology in which the author combines Aristotelian logic and scriptural narratives to prove the necessity of the imamate. Although there is no mention of *falāsifa* such as al-Kindī and Fārābī in this treatise, their influence on the author is clear. He is determined to prove the necessity of the imamate not just on the basis of the Qur'an and tradition, but of "evidence (*istishhād*) and deduction (*istidlāl*) with information from philosophy, mathematics and all sciences."<sup>32</sup> He gives examples from degrees and differences among inanimate and animate kinds, and concludes that humans as the summit of creation need the imam to teach them everything, including the meaning of laws and rituals, as well as ordaining the good and forbidding the evil. He also emphasizes that ʿAlī is the summit of the imams. In the last section of the treatise, he tries to show that the imamate has been a tradition since the time of Adam, who made his son his imam. And lastly, he enumerates the virtues of the Master of the Age, al-Ḥākim, without naming him.

Another contemporary of Kirmānī, Abū al-Fawāris, similarly takes on the challenge of proving the necessity of the imamate in a short treatise, titled *risāla fi'l-imāma*.<sup>33</sup> He relies primarily on the Qur'an and the tradition, and relegates rational arguments to a secondary status. The treatise begins with the issue of the institution of the imamate, which the author regards as necessary according to both divine law and reason. He then proceeds to prove its unique place and irreplaceability. Next, he argues for the appointment (*naṣṣ*) of the imam and the refutation of consensual election. He interrupts this general discussion with specific arguments for

the imamate of Imam ʿAli and his descendants; this is followed by theological arguments for the imamate as the will of God. Again, the author switches to the specific case of the imamate, this time dealing with the case of Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl. There are two chapters on the issue of the concealed imam and why his names were kept secret. The last chapter of the treatise offers guidelines regarding how to distinguish the rightful imam from pretenders. For Abū al-Fawāris, the imam is appointed by God and, as do all the appointed imams, the imam of the time, al-Ḥākim, has the virtues of noble descent, knowledge, courage, and generosity. Similar to the other writings of the time defending the imamate, including Kirmānī's *al-Maṣābiḥ*, the treatise represents the efforts of the intellectuals of al-Ḥākim's day in the midst of ideological and political struggles between Sunnism and Shiʿism, that is, the caliphate of Baghdad and the Fatimid Cairo. Nevertheless, rational arguments for the necessity of the imamate also can be found in the earlier periods of the Fatimid rule. Wilferd Madelung has written an article on a treatise<sup>34</sup> purportedly written by the third Fatimid caliph, al-Manṣūr (d. 386/996). The main theme of the treatise is the necessity of the imamate; however, it also covers the question of divine appointment (*naṣṣ*) and excellence, as well as the qualities of the rightful imam. Among these qualities are knowledge of the religious law, piety, courage, and close kinship to the family of the prophet. The treatise seems to avoid ideological extremism (*ghuluww*), that is, ascriptions of divinity and knowledge of the unseen (*al-ʿilm bi'l-ghayb*) to the imam. Al-Manṣūr reportedly emphasized that the imam receives his knowledge and authority from the Prophet.

A similar effort to build the narrative of the imamate on a bedrock of logic and reason was made by the Nizārī Ismaʿīlis in Iran.<sup>35</sup> Among the works written on the imamate by Nizārī thinkers, the works of Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī are the most relevant to the present study; this is due to his later return to Twelver Shiʿism, his creedal discreteness (*taqiyya*), and his influence on Mullā Ṣadrā. Moreover, Ṭūsī was a celebrated philosopher and an excellent commentator of the works of Ibn Sīnā. Most importantly, the knowledge of the imam and his role in guiding the believers is the major theme of two major treatises attributed to Ṭūsī. In his spiritual autobiography, *Sayr wa sulūk*<sup>36</sup> and *Rawḍa-yi taslīm*,<sup>37</sup> works originally written in Persian, the proof for the necessity of the imamate is a major theme.

Regarding the relation between philosophy and Shī‘ī politics, generally speaking, contemporary scholars of Isma‘ili studies have paid a fair amount of attention to the subject. For example, Carmela Baffioni highlights a relation between the king-imam of *Rasā’il*, by the Brethren of Purity (*Ikhwān al-Ṣafā*), and the Fatimid imam-caliph.<sup>38</sup> On the other hand, Farhad Daftary believes that the Brethren did not have much influence on Fatimid Isma‘ilism, and were primarily read by the Summoners (*dā‘ī*) of Yemen and the Bohras of India. However, he explains that Fatimid rulers made the best use of the great minds of their time.<sup>39</sup> In his works on Isma‘ili intellectual history, Paul Walker focuses on the confluence of politics and philosophy, and this is also true of his Kirmānī studies.<sup>40</sup> As for scholarship on Nizārī Isma‘ilism, Shafique Virani investigates the meaning and function of the imamate within the historical and political context, and explores the narratives of authority to find an explanation for the insignificance of the imam’s political authority during the post-Alamūt era. He argues that the believers’ devotion to the imam of the time was realized through his authority as a perfect intellect.<sup>41</sup>

## 1.2 Notes on Method and Style

For the general interpretive perspective of the present study, I mainly derive my methodology from the postmodern field of discourse analysis, but I do not limit myself to it. My critical analysis of Kirmānī and Mullā Ṣadrā is only inspired by this methodology in a very broad manner. The term “discourse” has a wide scope of definitions owing to its complex nature and wide range of referents. Foucault in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* defines discourse “sometimes as the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualizable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a certain number of statements.”<sup>42</sup> Within this scope, I limit my use of the term “discourse” to a body of concepts, terms, statements, and narratives that frequently appear in and govern the relationship between speculative textual products. These also serve as the windows to the world at a particular time for a particular interpretive community organized under the same institution whose practices are governed by the prevailing discourse.

Following Foucault, I would like to reveal the implications of “discursive formation” for the dynamics between knowledge and power. For Foucault, relations of power are “immanent” in networks of knowledge, rather than being external to them. Moreover, the nature and manner of the relationship between knowledge and power changes from one historical context to another.<sup>43</sup> In his analysis, Foucault investigates how “specific domains of knowledge combine with specific domains of power in order to yield other specific domains of knowledge (and of power).”<sup>44</sup> Within this general framework of knowledge-power dynamics, I conduct a critical analysis of Shī‘ī narratives of the imamate as shaped within the interrelated discursive fields of philosophy, theology, and mysticism. The analysis is “critical” in the sense of unveiling the mutual empowerment of discursive fields, and their relation with sociopolitical power.<sup>45</sup> Methodologically speaking, critical discourse analysis is a comparative enterprise with an interdisciplinary orientation since it investigates and reveals mutual relations between different discursive fields. Most importantly for the present study, critical discourse analysis can disclose “the theorization of power as in part ‘ideological/discoursal.’”<sup>46</sup>

In my analysis of the mutual empowerment of philosophical, theological, and mystical discourses in the imamology of Kirmānī and Mullā Ṣadrā, the term “synthetic discourse” plays a key role. I use this term to refer to a synthesis of rationalistic propositions, theological statements, and exegetical and mystical remarks that amass an authoritative force and generate power when used together in hybrid texts such as the writings of Kirmānī and Mullā Ṣadrā. The application of the term “synthetic discourse” is not exclusive, as this can be a characteristic of any text, just as discourse analysis can be employed in the critical examination of all written texts. Nevertheless, while every text can be regarded as synthetic in that it incorporates different discourses and narratives, each particular example sheds light on a specific ideology that takes shape and becomes effective as a result of the synthesis at issue. Moreover, each case can be studied differently in terms of implications in the extralinguistic domain. In my analysis, the focal point is the empowerment of the discourse of political Shi‘ism by the philo-

sophical narratives of knowledge formation. At the level of implication, my analysis reveals the role of philosophical narratives as discursive springboards for the rationalization of absolute authority in the Shī‘ī domain.

It is important to note that my analysis of knowledge-power dynamics transcends the power of the state because “... relations of power and hence the analysis that must be made of them necessarily extends beyond the limits of the state ... [that] can only operate on the basis of other, already existing power relations.”<sup>47</sup>

Working within the above-mentioned framework, I approach key texts by Kirmānī and Mullā Ṣadrā in the original Arabic unless a reputable translation is available, in which case I use the translation together with the original text. Translations of primary texts are mine unless otherwise cited.

My analysis of Kirmānī’s epistemology-psychology is based primarily on his *Rāḥat al-‘aql* and partly on *Kitāb al-Riyāḍ* and *al-Aqwāl al-dhababiyya*. For Kirmānī’s imamology, I use his *al-Maṣābīḥ fi ithbāt al-imāma*. While I refer to Walker’s English translation of this treatise for quotations in this book, for my analysis, I also rely on the Arabic, which is also included in this edition. For Mullā Ṣadrā’s epistemology, *al-Asfār* and *ittiḥād al-‘āqil wa’l-ma‘qūl* are my main sources, although I have consulted some of his other works. For my analysis of his imamological narratives, I primarily depend on the chapter “Kitāb al-Ḥujja” from his commentary in *Sharḥ uṣūl al-Kāfi*.

Regarding the delimitations of the study, first, I am not investigating actual historical links and influences; this is not only owing to the lack of sufficient historical data in the case of the influence of Kirmānī on Mullā Ṣadrā, but also consistent with Foucault’s avoidance of a causal-teleological view of a “continuous” history, which he criticizes as “the indispensable correlative of the founding function of the subject.”<sup>48</sup> Second, I do not discuss Foucault’s criticism of the modernist understanding of the human consciousness as “the original subject of all historical developments and all actions.”<sup>49</sup> I have only borrowed basic tools from discourse analysis to offer a new perspective on the dynamics of knowledge-power in Shī‘ī intellectual discourses. The present study

makes no claim to cover Foucauldian topics per se, nor will it confine itself solely to postmodern analytical techniques.

The book consists of five chapters that are divided into several thematic sections. This chapter is the introduction, with a focus on the book's main themes and methodology, and a literature review. Chapter 2 begins with an overview of Kirmānī's intellectual career and his cosmology that also reveals his use of Qur'anic narratives as part and parcel of his philosophy. The greater part of this chapter analyzes Kirmānī's theory of knowledge and the soul; I discuss his theory of knowledge as part of his theory of the evolution of the soul in light of both Greek and Isma'ili discourses, focusing on how he uses concepts and narratives to help him bridge his view of human knowledge to the Shī'ī category of the infallible knowledge of the imam. A study of this connection facilitates the transition between Chap. 2 and 3. Chapter 3 shows Kirmānī's incorporation of the narratives of knowledge, perfection of the soul, and divine inspiration into his proofs for the imamate. In addition, I examine the influence of his philosophical imamology on the narratives adopted by Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, whose work can be read as a discursive link between Kirmānī and Mullā Ṣadrā. Beginning with an overview of Mullā Ṣadrā's work and his central place in the Twelver context of Iranian intellectual history, Chap. 4 focuses on the adoption of a synthetic discourse by the philosopher in his theory of knowledge and the soul. Mullā Ṣadrā's differentiation between epistemology and psychology is more visible than in Kirmānī's works; this is especially the case with Mullā Ṣadrā's doctrine of the unity of the knower and the known (*ittiḥād al-ʿāqil wa'l-maʿqūl*). However, also in his case, we can still speak of a complex of epistemology/psychology; this is because in later Islamic philosophy, knowledge is studied primarily as part of a spiritual journey toward God, and the sporadic analysis of truth and certainty as subjects of epistemology is only incidental. Mullā Ṣadrā has been the subject of several studies to date, and his epistemology/psychology has been discussed in a number of monographs and articles. For this reason, my analysis of Mullā Ṣadrā's theory of knowledge and the soul is important only in relation to the influence of the Isma'ili narrative of knowledge through divine inspira-

tion (*ta'yīd*) on Mullā Ṣadrā's imamology. The narrative of divine inspiration was transmitted to Mullā Ṣadrā's main epistemic discourse through the influence of Ṭūsī, to whom Mullā Ṣadrā is indebted for some of his key teachings. Mullā Ṣadrā's work is an exemplary case for studying the outcome of this discursive transmission because he is the most influential representative of philosophy in the Twelver context. Chapter 5 is a discussion of how the narratives used by Mullā Ṣadrā have shaped the dominant discourses on knowledge in the Twelver Shī'ī domains since the seventeenth century. This chapter particularly focuses on Mullā Ṣadrā's discourse on the authority of the imam/saint/jurist and points out the possibility of reading some passages in Mullā Ṣadrā writings as a discursive springboard for the narrative of the guardianship of the jurist (*wilāya al-faqīh*). The chapter ends with reviewing and summarizing major themes of the study.

For my transliteration of Arabic and Persian words, I use the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* system, with the exception of inseparable conjunctions; for example, in *al-Ishārāt wa'l-tanbihāt*, I render the conjunction with an apostrophe rather than a hyphen. In addition, the connection between two Persian words in adjectival phrases, which is called *idāfa*, is shown by -i and -yi for words that end in vowels. Arabic words that end in “ـا” are transliterated as ending in “a” rather than “ah.” The definite article “al” is not added to the names of Persians unless the name appears with “al” in the cited works. Also, I do not indicate the character *tā marbūta* even in the construct state, so “the virtuous city” would be *al-Madīna al-fāḍila* rather than *al-Madīnat al-fāḍila*. Throughout the book, Arabic and Persian technical terms and original phrases from the texts are in italics, with the exception of terms that serve a more general function and appear frequently in the book; for example, the term “Shī'ī” is not italicized.

Lunar and solar dates are followed by their Gregorian equivalents, and the solar dates are differentiated from the lunar ones with the addition of “S.H.” For translation of verses from the Qur'an, I use Abdel Haleem's translation.<sup>50</sup>

## Notes

1. In Islamic philosophical literature the First Master is Aristotle, the Second is Fārābī, and the Third is Muḥammad Bāqir Mīr Dāmād, the Safavid philosopher and Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophy teacher. See Muhsin Mahdi, *Alfarabi: Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1962), 4.
2. For the political philosophies of classical Islamic philosophers including Fārābī, see Charles E. Butterworth, ed., *The Political Aspects of Islamic Philosophy: Essays in Honor of Muhsin S. Mahdi* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992).
3. Throughout this book, I use “epistemology/psychology” because there is no clear delineation of a border between cognitive psychology and epistemology in the works of Kirmānī and Mullā Ṣadrā. Moreover, I am not engaging in epistemology in the technical sense of analyzing the conditions of knowledge and justification. I use the adjective “epistemic” in a broad sense as descriptive of narratives of knowledge formation.
4. On these issues, see Hans Daiber, “The Ismaili Background of Fārābī's Political Philosophy: Abū Ḥātim ar-Rāzī as a forerunner of Fārābī,” in *Gottes ist der Orient, Gottes ist der Okzident: Festschrift für Abdoldjavad Falaturi zum 65 Geburtstag*, ed. Hrsg. U. Tworuschka (Cologne: Böhlau, 1991). Fuzzi M. Najjar, “Fārābī's Political Philosophy and Shi'ism,” *Studia Islamica* 14 (1961): 57–72.
5. ʿAbd al-Wāḥid Jūzjānī, *The Life of Ibn Sina: A Critical Edition and Annotated Translation* by William E. Gohlman (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1971), 19. Robert Wisnovsky, “Avicenna,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, eds. Peter Adamson and Richard C. Taylor (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 95.
6. Ḥamīd al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd Allāh Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Ḥilmī (Cairo: Dār al-fīkr al-ʿArabiyya, 1953), 22.
7. Daniel C. Peterson, “The Repose of the Intellect,” in *The Anthology of Philosophy in Persia*, vol. 2, eds. Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Mahdi Aminrazavi, 175–192 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).
8. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 22.
9. Daniel De-Smet, *La quiétude de l'intellect: Néoplatonisme et gnose Ismaélienne dans l'œuvre de Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī (Xe/XIe S.)* (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters en Departement Oosterse Studies, 1995), 19.

10. Ḥamīd al-Dīn Kirmānī, *Kitāb al-Riyād*, ed. Aref Tamer (Beirut: al-Maṭba‘at at-tijāriyya, 1960).
11. Ḥamīd al-Dīn Kirmānī, *al-Aqwāl al-dhahabiyya*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Ṣawī (Tehran: Anjuman-i shahanshāhī-i falsafa-yi Īrān, 1977).
12. Ḥamīd al-Dīn Kirmānī, *Al-Maṣābiḥ fi ithbāt al-imāma*, ed. and trans. Paul. E. Walker: *Master of the Age: An Islamic Treatise on the Necessity of the Imamate: A Critical Edition of the Arabic Text and English Translation of Ḥamīd al-Dīn Aḥmad B. ‘Abd Allāh Kirmānī’s al-Maṣābiḥ fi ithbāt al-imāma* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2007).
13. Kirmānī, *Al-Maṣābiḥ fi ithbāt al-imāma*, 40; 43; 53.
14. Faquir Muhammad Hunzai, “The Concept of Tawḥīd in the Thought of Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī (d. after 411/1021),” PhD diss., McGill University (Canada), 1986. <http://search.proquest.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/pqdtglobal/docview/250905354/citation/A03EC29FA4C5464FPQ/2?accountid=14771>
15. Paul E. Walker, *Early Philosophical Shiism: the Ismaili Neoplatonism of Abū Ya‘qūb Sijistānī* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993).
16. Paul E. Walker, *Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī: Ismaili Thought in the Age of al-Ḥākim* (London/New York: I.B. Tauris, 1999).
17. Daniel De Smet, *La quiétude de l’intellect: Néoplatonisme et gnose Ismaélienne dans l’œuvre de Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī (Xe/XIe S.)* (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters en Departement Oosterse Studies, 1995).
18. Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī, *al-Ḥikmat al-muta‘āliya fi asfār al-‘aqliyya al-arba‘a*, ed. Muḥammad Riḍa Muḥaffar, 9 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-iḥyā’ al-turāth al-‘Arabī, 1999).
19. In his preface to the first volume, Mullā Ṣadrā explains that the gnostics (*al-‘urafā*) and the friends of God (*al-awliyā*) go on four spiritual journeys (*asfāran arba‘atan*): the journey from the created world to God (*al-safār min al-khalq ilā’l-Ḥaqq*); the journey with God in God (*al-safār bi’l-Ḥaqq fi’l-Ḥaqq*); the journey from God to the created world (*al-safār min al-Ḥaqq ilā’l-khalq*); and finally the journey with God in the created world (*al-safār bi’l-Ḥaqq fi’l-khalq*). Shīrāzī, *al-Ḥikmat al-muta‘āliya fi asfār al-‘aqliyya al-arba‘a*, 1:13.
20. Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī, *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshṭiyānī (Mashhad: Dānishgāh-i Mashhad, 1968).
21. Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī, *sharḥ uṣūl al-kāfi*, eds. Muḥammad Khājawī and ‘Alī Nūrī, 2nd ed. 4 vols. Tehran: Pizhūhishgāh-i ‘Ulūm-i Insānī wa Muṭāla‘at-i Farhangī, 1383 S.H./2004.

22. For a complete annotated bibliography of Mullā Ṣadrā, see Ibrahim Kalin, "An Annotated Bibliography of the Works of Mullā Ṣadrā with a Brief Account of His Life," *Islamic Studies* 42:1 (2003): 21–62.
23. Henry Corbin, Introduction to *Le livre des pénétrations métaphysiques = Kitāb al-Mashāʿir*, by Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Shīrāzī, trans. Henry Corbin (Paris: Verdier, 1988), 9–78.
24. Henry Corbin, *En Islam iranien, aspects spirituels et philosophiques*, 4 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), 4:54–122.
25. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Sadr al-Din Shirazi and his Transcendent Theosophy: Background, Life and Works* (Tehran: Institute for Humanities and Cultural Studies, 1997), 57.
26. Christian Jambet, *L'actre d'être: La philosophie de la révélation chez Mollā Sadrā* (Paris: Fayard, 2002). Jambet tries to prove that Mullā Ṣadrā replaces the dialectical framework of rational theology with the theophanic model of Ibn ʿArabī and to do this, Mullā Ṣadrā builds his theology on the divine attribute of knowledge. For the brief evaluation of literature in this section, I used my *Mulla Sadra* (Oxford, UK: Oneworld, 2013).
27. Rahman diverges from the mystical approach by emphasizing the rational aspects of Mullā Ṣadrā's thought. See his *The Philosophy of Mulla Sadra* (Albany: State University of New York, 1975).
28. For a classification of approaches to Mullā Ṣadrā, see Sajjad H. Rizvi, *Mullā Ṣadrā and Metaphysics: Modulation of being* (London/New York: Routledge, 2009), 4–14.
29. Seyyed Khalil Toussi, *The Political Philosophy of Mulla Sadra* (London, UK: Routledge, forthcoming).
30. Jaʿfar ibn Aḥmad ibn al-Haytham, *Kitāb al-munāẓarāt*, eds. and trans. Wilferd Madelung and Paul Ernest Walker: *The Advent of the Fatimids, a Contemporary Shiʿi Witness: An Edition and English Translation of Ibn al-Haytham's Kitāb al-munāẓarāt* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000).
31. Paul E. Walker, Introduction to *The Wellsprings of Wisdom: Kitāb al-Yanābīʿ* by Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī, trans. Paul E. Walker, 1–36 (Utah: University of Utah Press, 1994), 25.
32. Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm Naysābūrī, *Ithbāt al-imāma*, ed. and trans. Arzina R. Lalani: *Degrees of Excellence* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 34.
33. Aḥmad ibn Yaʿqūb Abū al-Fawāris, *al-Risāla fi'l-imāma*, trans. Sāmī Nasīb Makārim: *The Political Doctrine of the Ismāʿīlīs* (Delmar, NY: Caravan Books, 1977).

34. Wilferd Madelung, "A Treatise on the Imamate of the Fatimid Caliph al-Manṣūr bi-Allāh," in *Texts, Documents and Artefacts: Islamic Studies in Honour of D.S. Richards*, ed. F. Robinson, 69–77 (Leiden: Brill, 2003).
35. Nizārī Ismaʿilism originated in the political strife over the successor of the Fatimid imam al-Mustaṣfir bi'llāh (d. 489/1096). It is named after Abū Manṣūr al-Nizār, the eldest son of al-Mustaṣfir bi'llāh, whose caliphate started and ended in Cairo; it was later followed by several Ismaʿili groups outside of Egypt. The religious and political heart of Nizārī Ismaʿilism was the fortress of Alamūt in Iran. For a history of Nizārīs in Alamūt, see Farhad Daftary, *The Ismāʿilis: Their History and Doctrines* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 310–463.
36. Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, *Sayr wa sulūk*, ed. and trans. S. J. Badakhchani: *Contemplation and Action: The Spiritual Autobiography of a Muslim Scholar* (London: I.B. Tauris in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 1998).
37. Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, *Rawḍa-yi taslīm*, ed. and trans. S. J. Badakhchani: *Paradise of Submission: A Medieval Treatise on Ismaili Thought* (London: I.B. Tauris in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2005). There are doubts over the authorship of this treatise. According to Badakhshani, the editor of the text, the treatise could be the result of an intellectual collaboration between Ṭūsī and Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd, his advisor. See Ṭūsī, *Paradise of Submission*, xvi.
38. Carmela Baffioni, "History, Language and Ideology in the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā's View of the Imamate," in *Authority, Privacy and Public Order in Islam: Proceedings of the 22nd Congress of L'Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants*, eds. B. Michalak-Pikulska and A. Pikulski, 17–28 (Cracow, Poland: Peeters, 2006).
39. Farhad Daftary, *The Ismāʿilis: Their History and Doctrines* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992). The attribution of Ismaʿilism to the Brethren has faced opposition among scholars. For example, Ian R. Netton, whose speciality is the Brethren, believes the imam is not a central teaching in *Rasāʾil* and that the Brethren use the term "imam" only in the sense of a leader of Muslims, that is, caliph. See Ian R. Netton, "Brotherhood versus Imāmate: Ikhwān al-Ṣafā and the Ismāʿilis," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 2 (1980): 253–262.
40. Paul E. Walker, "In Praise of al-Ḥākim: Greek Elements in Ismaili Writings on the Imamate," *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 57 (2004): 367–392; *Faṭimid History and Ismaili Doctrine* (Burlington:

- Ashgate/Variorum, 2008); *Hamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī: Ismaili Thought in the Age of al-Hākīm* (London/New York: I.B. Tauris, 1999).
41. Shafique Virani, *The Ismailis in the Middle Ages: A History of Survival, a Search for Salvation* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2007).
  42. Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. Sheridan Smith (London: Tavistock Publications, 1972), 80.
  43. Joseph Rouse, "Power/Knowledge," in *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 111.
  44. Todd May, *Between Genealogy and Epistemology: Psychology, Politics, and Knowledge in the Thought of Michel Foucault* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press, 1993), 72.
  45. The distinction between discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis is a controversial one, as it is believed that any analysis in the Foucauldian sense has a critical orientation. On this issue, see Sara Mills, *Discourse* (New York: Routledge, 2004); Dominique Maingueneau, "Is Discourse Analysis Critical? And This Risky Order of Discourse," *Critical Discourse Studies* 3/2 (October 2006): 229–235. The distinction has a significant methodological place in my study since it emphasizes the role of speculative discourses in generating and establishing the dominant narratives of Shīfī authority and its crystallization in certain historical periods.
  46. Norman Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language* (Edinburgh, UK: Pearson Education Limited, 1995; rpt. 2010), 27.
  47. Michel Foucault, "Truth and Power," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 64.
  48. Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 12.
  49. Ibid.
  50. Abdel Haleem, M.A.S., trans. *The Qurʾan* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, rpt. 2016).

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# 2

## Ḥamīd al-Dīn Kirmānī on the Human Soul and Knowledge

### 2.1 Ḥamīd al-Dīn Kirmānī, the Fatimid Philosopher<sup>1</sup>/Summoner

Apart from a few scholarly books and articles on Kirmānī, which address an academic audience, scholarship on him is limited, with only one of his treatises, *al-Maṣābīḥ*,<sup>2</sup> having been fully translated into English. Major themes from Kirmānī's most philosophically ambitious work, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, have been discussed by Daniel De Smet.<sup>3</sup> This is the most elaborate discussion of Kirmānī's philosophy, and in it the author stresses the Greek origins of the philosopher's thought. He focuses mainly on Kirmānī's ontology and cosmology in view of his Neoplatonic emanationism. In contrast, Paul E. Walker shifts his emphasis toward the Aristotelian aspect of Kirmānī's work.<sup>4</sup> In this respect, he particularly highlights the influence of Fārābī on Kirmānī and the latter's divergence from his Ismaʿīli predecessors such as Muḥammad Nasafī (d. 322/943) and the latter's Neoplatonic circle and followers, most prominently, Abū Yaʿqūb Sijistānī (d. after 360/971).<sup>5</sup> Similar to De Smet, Walker is focused on Kirmānī's theological philosophy. In the same vein, Faquir Muḥammad Hunzai's dissertation on Kirmānī is concerned with the philosophical theology of divine oneness (*tawḥīd*),<sup>6</sup> and that of Carl Daniel Peterson is

focused on cosmogony.<sup>7</sup> There is also an article by Hunzai on Kirmānī's theory of knowledge, which is discussed in connection with the important role of esoteric knowledge in the quest after truth and the salvific role of knowledge for the human soul.<sup>8</sup>

In my critical analysis of Kirmānī's discourse on knowledge, the major sources used are *Rāḥat al-ʿaql* and a number of his edited treatises that will be cited later in this chapter.<sup>9</sup> There are two editions of *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, one by Kāmil Ḥusain and Muṣṭafā Ḥilmī, which was published in 1953,<sup>10</sup> and the other by Muṣṭafā Ghālib, published in 1967.<sup>11</sup> Both editions have been used by scholars and I rely primarily on the Ḥusain and Ḥilmī edition to reference my citations. As far as my citations are concerned, the two editions are almost identical but by citing from the first one, I pay tribute to the original attempt to edit Kirmānī's manuscript. Apart from its thematic comprehensiveness and philosophical character, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql* also provides a frame of reference for understanding other works by Kirmānī because it is believed to have been a work in progress over a long period of time in both Iraq and Cairo.<sup>12</sup> The structure and major divisions of *Rāḥat al-ʿaql* follow the model of a city, which in this case is a city of knowledge reminiscent of the famous tradition (*ḥadīth*), particularly prominent in Shīʿī literature, according to which the prophet says, "I am the city of knowledge and 'Ali is its gate."<sup>13</sup> In my discussion of the relation between Kirmānī's theory of knowledge and his philosophical politics, his *al-Maṣābīḥ fi ithbāt al-imāma* has an important place due to his use of philosophical narratives in formulating his imamology in general, and in proving the authority of the imam of his age, al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh (r. 386–411/996–1021), in particular.

Ḥamīd al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd Allāh Kirmānī (d. 412/1021) was a prominent figure from one of the most tumultuous periods in Fatimid Ismaʿilism. He was an intellectual dignitary who represented and advocated 'moderate' Ismaʿili thought during the imamate of the Fatimid imam/caliph, al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh.<sup>14</sup> Challenged by some dissident movements<sup>15</sup> that revolved around the attribution of divinity to al-Ḥākim, the official Fatimid institution of the Summons (*daʿwa*) in Cairo resorted to the intellectual forces of the time. The Fatimid imamate was already

built on an intellectual tradition which was being propagated and expanded by a variety of educational institutions, the most influential of which were the Assemblies of Wisdom (*al-majālis al-ḥikma*). It is believed that the assemblies were constantly interrupted during the rule of al-Ḥākim. The exact reason for the interruptions is not determined in historical documents but it must have been primarily caused by the rise of ‘heretical ideologies’ and the safety measures taken against their spread. The *Majālis* were reopened by al-Ḥākim’s successor.<sup>16</sup> The term *majālis* (singular. *majlis*) has a certain ambiguity as it refers both to the assembly and the discussion therein. Moreover, an important Isma‘īli genre of literature consists of collections of lectures given in those assemblies, one of which is attributed to Kirmānī and is titled *Majālis al-Baṣriyya wa Baghdādiyya*.<sup>17</sup> Over time, the genre of literature known as *majālis* has gone beyond Fatimid Isma‘ilism and is now generally associated with a formulized presentation of Shī‘ī discourses at large.<sup>18</sup> As for the term *ḥikma*, to which the *majālis*—the assemblies as well as the literature—are committed, it is important to note that in Islamic history, the term is laden with philosophical, spiritual, and Qur’anic connotations. In addition, in the Shī‘ī context it can sometimes be used interchangeably with the term philosophy despite the reluctance of Fatimid scholars to call themselves “philosophers.”<sup>19</sup> Whether or not we call Fatimid thinkers such as Kirmānī a philosopher or simply, as he would prefer, a man of wisdom (*ḥakīm*), the intellectual discourse that such thinkers contributed to has a strong philosophical character in terms of both content and methodology. With these points in mind, one can regard the Fatimid Assemblies of Wisdom as a concrete example of the influential role of intellectual/philosophical discourses in the power structure of the time.

According to the evidence of Kirmānī’s own writings, we know that he was affiliated both with the Buyids (r. 322/934–446/1055) in Baghdad and the Fatimids (r. 296/909–566/1171) in Cairo, though he finally moved to Cairo to help the reorganization of the Summons<sup>20</sup> after a period of religious and political upheaval. There are some reports suggesting that he was invited there by al-Ḥākim’s chief *dā‘ī*, Abū Manṣūr al-Khatkīn, and arrived in Cairo around 405/1014. As Walker explains,

Kirmānī was invited to “strengthen the central apparatus of *da‘wa* by his considerable scholarly presence.”<sup>21</sup> At the time when he arrived in Cairo, Kirmānī was already an established scholar and *da‘ī* in Iraq. Though there must have been considerable secrecy around his religio-political activity therein as a missionary of al-Ḥākim, there is a strong belief among some scholars that he played a major role in building up support for the Isma‘ili faith in some parts of Iraq.<sup>22</sup> During his long career as *da‘ī*, Kirmānī drew on both religious and rational sciences to help the cause of the imamate.

Although in his imamology he followed the mainstream Isma‘ili doctrine of the imamate,<sup>23</sup> his cosmology was more in line with Neoplatonism; in this he was similar to his intellectual predecessors, Fārābī (d. 338/950), Muḥammad Nasafī (d. 322/943), Abū Ḥātim Rāzī (fl. 4th/10th centuries), and Abū Ya‘qūb Sijistānī (d. after 360/971). While early Islamic philosophers were concerned about the relationship between reason and revelation,<sup>24</sup> Kirmānī was heir to the Shī‘ī customization of this tradition among those Isma‘ili thinkers who are sometimes categorized as belonging to the “School of Khurāsān.”<sup>25</sup> The main philosophical characteristic of this school, Neoplatonism, found its way through the next generations of Isma‘ili philosophers and Kirmānī also adopted many of its tenets, especially in his cosmology.<sup>26</sup> However, he tried to redirect Isma‘ili philosophy toward Aristotle and modified some of its teachings regarding the configuration of the universe and the origin and nature of the soul. This redirection should have been considered as progress by his successors as it was more consistent with the metaphysical psychology of Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā that would later be dominant, but this is not what actually happened. The next generations of Isma‘ili thinkers/*da‘īs*, most prominently, al-Mu‘ayyad fi’l-Dīn Shīrāzī (d. 470/1078) and Naṣir-i Khusraw (d. after 469/1077)<sup>27</sup> preferred to remain loyal to the Neoplatonic discourse of Sijistānī to the exclusion of Kirmānī’s Aristotelian modifications.<sup>28</sup>

Kirmānī’s intellectual discourse is also invested with his Qur’anic interpretations and, as we will see, in most of his arguments he relies on Qur’anic allusions and analogies. While Kirmānī’s use of Qur’anic concepts and narratives is more frequent than that of other major Islamic philosophers, he shares with them the tendency to show the rational ground of the Qur’an. Regarding his religious background, he is a good

example of “the Isma‘īli formulation of a new synthesis of reason and revelation based on Neoplatonism and Shī‘ī doctrine.”<sup>29</sup> In what follows, I will show how Kirmānī relies on Qur’anic narratives in order to support his cosmology. More importantly, the next section will demonstrate the significance of philosophical interpretation of the Qur’an for Kirmānī.

## 2.2 Qur’anic Narratives in Kirmānī’s Cosmology

In *Rāḥat al-‘aql*, there are many references to verses from the Qur’an along with philosophical interpretations. By revealing the philosophical relevance of Qur’anic ideas, Kirmānī proves his respect for rationality as a touchstone of authenticity and balance. One of the themes for which Kirmānī relies on the *ta’wīl* or esoteric interpretation of the Qur’an is the process of creation, which he expounds along the lines of both Neoplatonic cosmology and the doctrine of balance. Beginning his picture of creation with “the Exalted Transcendent” (*al-muta‘ālī subḥāna*),<sup>30</sup> Kirmānī mentions the Verse of the Throne (Q. 2:255)<sup>31</sup> which is the only place in the Qur’an where the term “throne” (*kursī*) is mentioned in relation to God. His explanation for the first creation by God diverges from both Greek Neoplatonists such as Plotinus, and Muslim philosophers such as Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā in that he dismisses the theory of “emanation” or “procession” (*ṣudūr*) from the Transcendent God and applies it only to the causal relation among the intellects in their ontological hierarchy. As for the creation of the first intellect by God, it was neither causation (*‘illiyya*) nor emanation but “transcendent innovation” (*ibdā‘*), which is the same as the “Command” (*al-amr*) in the Qur’an. The mechanism of *ibdā‘* is a divine mystery, hence beyond human reason, but Kirmānī provides a sketch of those attributes (*ṣifāt*) that are mentioned in the Qur’an in relation to the first intellect. Therefore, in the first place, he addresses the divine attributes such as “life,” “knowledge,” and “power.” In his reading, these are the attributes of transcendent innovation (*ibdā‘*) rather than of the transcendent innovator (*mubdī‘*).<sup>32</sup> He visualizes these attributes as different sectors of a circle

whose center is “life” (*ḥayāt*)<sup>33</sup> and identifies the latter as “the quintessence of this transcendent innovation,” (*jawhar ḥādḥal-ibdāʿ*),<sup>34</sup> an idea that he supports with his interpretation of the following verse from *al-āya al-kursī* in the passage below:

And Life precedes the rest of these Attributes, which is the reason why the Exalted Lord gave priority to the feature of Life in describing Himself ... “Allāh, there is no god but He, the Living, the Self-Subsisting. No slumber can seize Him, nor sleep” [(Q:2:255)]. Thus, He is One (*mutawahḥid*) with respect to being transcendent innovation and one single being, while with respect to the existence of attributes in Him, as we explained, He is many (*mutakaththir*).<sup>35</sup>

For Kirmānī, the first intellect is transcendentally innovated and the innovation (*ibdāʿ*) and the innovated (*mubdaʿ*) are identified. The first intellect is the Word or Command (*al-amr*) of God, rather than being an intermediary. The first intellect is what the Qurʾan refers to as God and invests with divine attributes.

By this interpretation, Kirmānī is not defying the exoteric sense of the verse, but simply pointing out the philosophical layer of it consistent with his modified Neoplatonic cosmology and the Ismaʿili doctrine of divine transcendence. However, his approach tends more toward the allegorical once he comes across physical imagery used to suggest metaphysical and religious ideas. His parallelism between the first transcendentally innovated being who is the first among “the ranks above” (*al-ḥudūd al-ʿulwīyya*) and that of the speaking prophet (*al-nāṭiq*), who is the first in “the ranks below” (*al-ḥudūd al-suflīyya*),<sup>36</sup> draws on his reading of the verse “a good word is like a good tree whose root is firm and whose branches are high in the sky” (Q. 14:24) in that the first intellect and the Prophet are, respectively, the source of life and the source of knowledge (*al-ʿilm*) and guidance (*al-ḥudā*).<sup>37</sup>

Continuing with his cosmology, Kirmānī interprets “the Pen” (*al-qalam*) as the second intellect or the first proceeded being (*al-munbaʿith al-awwal*).<sup>38</sup> “The Pen” that appears in the Qurʾan (Q. 68:1) is interpreted in relation to “the Tablet” (*al-lawḥ*) (Q. 85:22) as the prime matter (*al-hayūlā*).<sup>39</sup> The Pen or the second intellect is also identified with the

Archangel (*al-malak al-muqarrab*).<sup>40</sup> As a pen can make letters appear on paper, the second intellect includes all the first principles and confers them onto the potential aspect of the third intellect, which is symbolized as “the Tablet.” As Kirmānī says “in the divine tradition, the second proceeded being (*al-munba‘ith al-thānī*) is symbolized as the Tablet since it is a receptacle for the forms, dependent on reception, such as the tablet receives the forms of sketches.”<sup>41</sup>

The cosmic relation between the first three intellects is also expressed by the verse “He is Allah, the Creator (*al-khāliq*), the Bestower (*al-bārī*), the Generator of Forms (*al-muṣawwir*), to Him belong the Most Beautiful Names (*al-asmā’ al-ḥusnā*)” (Q. 59:24).<sup>42</sup> According to Kirmānī, the first intellect is the “Generator of Forms”; these include the first principles of existent things (*al-a‘yān al-mabādī’ fi’l-wujūd*). The second intellect is “the Bestower” in the sense of “giving the existent forms that thing which befits them based on what is necessary for an order of wisdom (*naẓm al-ḥikma*).” And finally the third intellect is “the Creator” since He is in charge of “composition” (*tarkīb*).<sup>43</sup>

The world of intellects above is in charge of governing the world below, hence Kirmānī’s use of “throne” imagery consisting of *al-‘arsh* and *al-kursī*. Functioning as the actual and potential aspects of the “supreme sphere” (*al-falak al-a‘lā*) which is associated with the first intellect, *al-kursī* and *al-‘arsh*—both meaning “the Throne” though in this context *al-‘arsh* is the Throne and *al-kursī* is the Footstool on which one descends from it—respectively correspond to the form (*ṣūra*) or soul (*nafs*) of the supreme sphere, and the quasi-material body of it. Following Aristotle and Fārābī, Kirmānī considers the motion of the spheres as the source of motion and change in the material world.<sup>44</sup> This governing aspect of the first intellect, functioning through the supreme sphere with respect to the rest of the spheres and the world of nature, is Kirmānī’s interpretation of “the throne” including both *al-‘arsh* and *al-kursī*. He identifies the supreme sphere with “the Archangel who is given the charge of governing the affairs of the material world, [and] who in the divine tradition is called the Throne.”<sup>45</sup>

One can hardly overemphasize the significance of *ta’wīl* and those who possess the knowledge of *ta’wīl* in Kirmānī’s philosophy. For him, knowledge of *ta’wīl* is the achievement and the sign of great human souls that

reach the level of intellects and become the mediators of true knowledge to their followers. Furthermore, “the purpose of religion cannot be achieved without *ta’wīl*, which enables the human soul to attain the second perfection.”<sup>46</sup> Yet, the human soul has a journey to take before it can access this knowledge.

## 2.3 Knowledge and the Evolution of the Human Soul

In Kirmānī’s works, on one hand, knowledge formation is discussed mainly in the context of the ontological divisions and development of the human soul. On the other, his cognitive psychology is based on his overall view of the cosmos as a hierarchy based on emanation or procession.<sup>47</sup> Kirmānī never deals with knowledge for its own sake. In his system, not only are the lines between epistemology, psychology, and cosmology blurred, but his scattered views on knowledge formation are part and parcel of the Shī’ī synthetic discourse of authority based on excellence in knowledge, and his arguments are replete with theological and Qur’anic ideas, statements, and narratives.

In his philosophy, Kirmānī shares with one of his most important philosophical influences, Fārābī,<sup>48</sup> and his own contemporary, Ibn Sīnā, a reliance on Greek philosophy. Old histories of Islamic thought portrayed early Islamic philosophers as following Aristotle, although they were in fact influenced by a Neoplatonic work that was mistakenly attributed to Aristotle.<sup>49</sup> In this tradition, *The Theology of Aristotle*, which is now known to be an extract from the *Enneads* by Plotinus, is usually mentioned as the intellectual bedrock of the emanationist orientation of Fārābī and, following him, Ibn Sīnā.<sup>50</sup> Nevertheless, nowadays this picture is considered simplistic and many questions have been raised in recent times with regard to the process of intellection, which could, at first glance, be considered as an unintentional combination of the Neoplatonic emanation of intelligible forms from the agent intellect, with the abstraction of intelligible forms by the human intellect, as in Aristotle. For example, regarding Ibn Sīnā’s theory of knowledge, one scholar has asked: “Is the intelligible

abstracted by the soul or does it flow from the agent intellect [through the Neoplatonic process of emanation]?”<sup>51</sup>

As a contemporary of Ibn Sīnā<sup>52</sup> and strongly influenced by Fārābī, Kirmānī’s psychology and theory of knowledge show a synthesis of the Aristotelian doctrine of the soul and Neoplatonic narratives of emanation.<sup>53</sup> In this respect, I would differentiate between Kirmānī and Muslim Peripatetics. Within the Peripatetic framework, the Neoplatonic orientation of discourses could be explained in view of the many-layered history of commentaries on Aristotle, dubious authorships, changes through translations from Greek into Arabic, the attempts by Greek scholars in late antiquity to reconcile Aristotle with Plato, and the influence of dialectical theology (*kalām*). But, for Kirmānī, the adoption of Neoplatonic elements in his cognitive psychology can also be understood in light of the Shī‘ī discourse of the epistemic authority of the imam and the ranks following him within the Fatimid institution, though one cannot exclude the influence of the previously mentioned factors.<sup>54</sup>

Kirmānī’s theory of knowledge formation has a strongly soteriological character in that it explains the nature and function of knowledge from the perspective of the salvation of the soul. His theory of knowledge is developed within his metaphysical psychology, which appears to correspond with his discussion of the animal soul, yet is differentiated from it by its human spiritual teleology. He opens his discussion of the human soul by saying:

As for the human soul, though it is from the animal species, unlike the latter it subsists (in existence) in actuality (*qā’ima bi’l-fi‘l*) rather than being potential, for the very reason that its existence is not for the sake of its body but for its own sake, and also because it is the telos (*ghāya*) which is sought as the end of creation.<sup>55</sup>

This remark on the superiority of the human soul over the animal soul is preceded by an important point on the basis of which we can locate Kirmānī’s psychology on the continuum between Aristotle and Plotinus. While accepting the Aristotelian definition of the soul as “the perfection of the organic body,” he regards it as an “inclusive definition” (*ḥadd al-‘āmm*) rather than an exclusive one. For him, while the soul, in general,

is the entelechy of organic bodies,<sup>56</sup> the human soul in particular goes beyond this state, which is called “the first perfection” (*kamāl al-awwal*) in Peripatetic parlance.<sup>57</sup> This evokes Plotinus’ criticism of Aristotle’s definition of the soul as the form or actuality of the body.<sup>58</sup> However, unlike in the earlier Shī‘ī Neoplatonism, Kirmānī would not consider the human soul as a separate substance that exists before joining the body. The ontological independence of the soul from the body is particularly explicit in *The Theology of Aristotle*, according to which the rational soul had a “descent from her original abode into the material world.”<sup>59</sup> The soul is accepted as the first perfection of the body, but it does not stay at the level of bodily attachment. The unique nature of the human soul is explained in comparison to “her sisters,” (*ikhwātihā*) that is, the vegetative and the animal souls. While sharing with them the natural knowledge necessary for the life of body, the soul also needs to connect with what is above it. The end of the human soul is a “second perfection.”<sup>60</sup> The doctrine of the second perfection of the soul is the main link between Kirmānī’s psychology/epistemology and his Isma‘īli understanding of the imamate. The second perfection of the soul, which is also called “the second procession” (*al-inbi‘āth al-thānī*), is its ultimate actualization, which can happen only through the “instruction” (*ta‘līm*) of “the possessors of divine inspiration” (*al-mu‘ayyadīn*).<sup>61</sup> While using the Aristotelian framework of potential/actual with respect to the functionality of the soul, Kirmānī reframes the role of the actualizing source within his Shī‘ī narrative. Before explaining this doctrine in more detail and in relation to the Isma‘īli discourse of the imamate, it is necessary to explain the nature and function of the soul and its faculties.<sup>62</sup>

One of the hallmarks of Kirmānī’s understanding of the human soul is his evolutionary view of it in the sense that the soul is like a tabula rasa at birth, with the potential to grow in knowledge. What is particularly noteworthy is the association of knowledge with “form,” which is an Aristotelian concept. He maintains:

When the human soul comes into being, it is possessed of a pure, individual and free existence that has no form (*sūra*), no knowledge, no belief, no thoughts; it acquires knowledge and belief through the teaching of the instructors (*mu‘allimūn*) among whom the closest to the soul are the

parents. It is due to what it learns from them that it becomes Zoroastrian if they are Zoroastrians, Christian if they are Christians, Jewish if they are Jews, and Muslim if they are Muslims. If in the beginning of its existence the soul had a form in itself in the sense of a kind of knowledge other than what belongs to it in relation to the natural requirements of its body, it would be accidental to it as something that it would not receive and would not be able to receive for the very reason that one cannot receive a form unless one is devoid of it.<sup>63</sup>

Kirmānī is using the term “form” in the Aristotelian sense of actualizing the potential of the subject of knowledge. The form of knowledge actualizes the matter of the soul in the way that natural forms actualize natural matter. At the level of sense perception, the soul is said to “become actual” by receiving the perceptual forms; it then “becomes stronger and its fire is lighted.”<sup>64</sup> On the other hand, neither the sensitive faculty (*al-quwwa al-ḥāssa*) of the soul nor the sensible object (*maḥṣūs*) of it is actual unless the two are conjoined. Following Aristotle, Kirmānī explains sense perception based on the assimilation of the subject and object. According to Aristotle, “the sensitive faculty is potentially what the sensible object is in actuality. While it is being acted upon, it is not yet similar, but once it has been acted upon, it is assimilated and has the same character as the sensible object.”<sup>65</sup> Along the same lines, Kirmānī writes:

When the sensitive subject (*al-ḥāss*) and the sensible object (*al-maḥṣūs*) join each other during sensation and the sensitive subject perceives the sensible object by *receiving its form* and they join one another by way of likeness and become actual, this being an actual sensitive subject (*ḥāss bi'l-fi'l*) and that an actual sensible object (*maḥṣūs bi'l-fi'l*), like iron and fire which are not similar in quality but the iron becomes like fire by receiving its form, and fire becomes like iron by its action in it ... so does the soul become sensitive (*al-ḥissiyya*) when it receives the sensible form, and is actualized by it and becomes like it as the two are assimilated and conjoined.<sup>66</sup>

Notwithstanding the agreement between Kirmānī and Aristotle over the act of sensation, the narrative that Kirmānī adopts has different undertones. As for this particular quotation, his adaptation of the fire analogy recalls the Neoplatonic narrative of unification rather than

temporary assimilation alone. This is reinforced by the following passages on the relation between knowledge and virtue, based on the doctrine of balance (*muwāzina*),<sup>67</sup> which is Neoplatonic in that it takes for granted an inherent likeness between things of the world due to the common origin of all those things.<sup>68</sup> The analogy also brings to mind the dynamics of substantial transformation for the soul, which is explained based on the interrelation between knowledge and action; that is, the theoretical and the practical aspects of the human soul as one substance that is diversified by its different forms of knowledge.<sup>69</sup>

The actualization of the sensitive faculty by the sensible form is the first step in the quest of the human soul beyond the physical world, because the sensible form that is received by the soul is abstracted from matter and, in being so, brings about the primary perfection of the soul and makes it somehow similar to what is above, that is, the immaterial world. In the same manner, imagination (*khayāl*) is a nobler level of the soul because in imagination, the soul is independent of the sensitive organs and works on the sensible form which is already abstracted from matter.<sup>70</sup> It is an advantage for the human soul to be devoid of all knowledge at the beginning of its existence, because this makes the “pure believer ready to receive those types of knowledge that promote her to the stations of the righteous and the virtuous.”<sup>71</sup> In this manner, Kirmānī’s psychology/epistemology is smoothly transferred to the plane of religious ethics and spirituality; and this transfer is made possible by his usage of the narrative of existential transformation that can justify the evolution of the human soul toward a nobler destination. Therefore, although humans and animals share the faculties of sense perception and imagination, the human faculties are unique in seeking higher goals beyond the mere benefits of the body. In explaining this uniqueness, Kirmānī relies on a narrative that includes the concepts of assimilation, becoming, promotion, and perfection. This narrative culminates in the discussion of the rational soul (*al-nafs al-nāṭiqā*) to which Kirmānī devotes the largest portion of his psychology/epistemology. Before elaborating on Kirmānī’s evolutionary narrative of the human soul, which matches his salvific epistemology, it is important to note that similar to Fārābī,<sup>72</sup> he adopts the interpretation of the agent intellect of *De Anima* by Alexander of Aphrodisia, as being outside the human soul. Accordingly, one of the functions of this intellect is

to actualize the potential faculty of the rational soul to grasp the intelligible forms.<sup>73</sup> Nevertheless, Kirmānī's reading of the relationship between the human soul and the agent intellect is different from that of Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā. He explains this relationship within the framework of the Isma'ili doctrine of "instruction" (*ta'lim*) by those human souls whose ranks are between the ordinary souls and the agent intellect.<sup>74</sup> I will elaborate on this relationship after explaining Kirmānī's evolutionary view of the human soul, which is concerned with the ontological transformation of the soul through knowledge and practice.

Kirmānī elaborates on the evolution of the soul based on a parallelism with bodily evolution through seven consecutive stages.<sup>75</sup> The idea comes from his interpretation (*ta'wil*) of a passage from the Quran: "Man We did create from a quintessence (of clay); Then We placed him as (a drop of) sperm in a place of rest, firmly fixed; Then We made the sperm into a clot of congealed blood; then of that clot We made a (foetus) lump; then we made out of that lump bones and clothed the bones with flesh; then we developed out of it another creature. So blessed be Allah, the best to create!" (Q. 23:12–14). While the verses only address the evolution of the human body from being "an extract of clay" (*sulāla min ṭīn*) to becoming "a drop of sperm" (*nutfā*), "clot of congealed blood" (*'alaqa*), "lump" (*mudghā*), "bones" (*'iḏām*), "flesh" (*lahm*), and finally "another creation" (*al-khalq al-ākhar*), in his interpretation Kirmānī makes a correspondence between these seven phases and the spiritual evolution toward perfection. Accordingly, the soul goes from "the preliminary mixture of temperaments" (*mizāj*) from which "the faculty of growth (*nāmiyya*)" develops, through to the sensitive faculty (*al-ḥissiyya*), the imaginative faculty (*al-takhayyul*), the rational faculty (*al-nāṭiqā*), the intellective faculty (*al-'āqila*), and finally the "the second procession" (*al-inbi'āth al-thānī*) which is "the second perfection and the ultimate end beyond which there is no other end."<sup>76</sup> This development is necessary due to the primary imperfection (*nuqsān*) of the soul. The imperfection here is attributed to the rational soul because it is the rational soul that is expected to ascend to the level of the intellect.<sup>77</sup> When the soul reaches the final level, that is, the intellect, it becomes "an unchanging substance" (*jawhar al-thābit*).<sup>78</sup> Earlier in this chapter of his treatise, Kirmānī argues for the substantiality (*jawhariyya*) of the soul.<sup>79</sup> From the substantiality of the soul and its

capacity to evolve up to the highest level of perfection beyond which no change is possible, that is, the level of “the unchanging substance,” we can conclude that for Kirmānī, at least in the sphere of the soul, substantial change is possible. This is a potential link between Kirmānī and Mullā Ṣadrā, particularly with respect to the relation between their psychology/epistemology and Shī‘ī imamology.

Before opening a chapter on the rational soul, Kirmānī reveals his rationale for explaining the above-mentioned developmental stages of the human soul. The rationale is the “balance of religiosity” (*mīzān al-dīyāna*), according to which the parallelism between the development of the body and soul is expanded to the realm of religion, consisting of prophethood (*nubuwwa*), viceregency (*khilāfa*), and imamate (*imāma*). These three levels are represented by the “the speaking prophet” (*al-nāṭiq*), “the executor” (*al-waṣī*), and the imam.<sup>80</sup> The order of the phases of the soul, that is, *nāmiyya*, *ḥissiyya*, and *nāṭiqā*, corresponds to the ascending order of religiosity in the Isma‘īli *da‘wa*, which consists of ritualistic obligations and traditions (*al-farā’id wa’ l-sunan*), spiritual interpretation (*ta’wīl*) of those obligations, and knowledge of the intelligibles (*ma‘qūlāt*).<sup>81</sup> We can see such parallelisms everywhere in Kirmānī’s psychology/epistemology. To summarize, balance and harmony comprise the discursive building blocks of Kirmānī’s metaphysics, and are part and parcel of his synthetic discourse of knowledge and authority.

## 2.4 The Rational Soul and the Intellect

A key concept used in Kirmānī’s characterization of the human soul is “imperfection,” which the soul suffers from due to its attachment with the body. This concept is important as a primary building block of a discursive construction in which the ideals of infallible knowledge, instruction, and perfection empower each other. As he writes in *al-Aqwāl al-dhahabiyya*,

Since Allah, the Blessed and the Transcendent, created the soul imperfect with respect to the [intermediary] causes (*asbāb*) of its existence and the proximate and remote causes (*al-‘ilal al-qarība w’ l-ba‘īda*) of its existence,

it is short of the perfection by which it can become a pure and perfect intellect (*al-ʿaql al-tāmm al-kāmil*). In order to remove its imperfection and shortcomings, it needs to use and gain those kinds of knowledge which are outside of it. Through this [knowledge] it becomes the perfection of its body and depends on it for the preservation and constitution of the body, not just for the sake of the body, but for its own sake and its gradual growth in instruction (*taʿlīm*).<sup>82</sup>

It is important to note that for Kirmānī the rational soul is the perfection of the lower stages of one and the same spiritual substance. Kirmānī rejects Plato’s tripartite division of the soul in favor of the Aristotelian narrative. Accordingly, he regards the soul as one thing with diverse faculties. He considers the tripartite division to be a misinterpretation of Plato on the part of philosophers, most prominently, Muḥammad ibn Zakariyyā Rāzī (d. between 313 and 320/925 and 932), whose views Kirmānī criticizes, particularly in *al-Aqwāl al-dhahabiyya*.<sup>83</sup> Kirmānī interprets the Platonic divisions of the soul, “the growing appetitive (*al-nāmiyya al-shahawāniyya*), the animal impulsion (*al-ḥayawāniyya al-ghaḍabiyya*), and the divine rational (*al-nāṭiqa al-ilāhiyya*) [as] names for different actions of the same agent that depends on them for the perfection of the individual.”<sup>84</sup> This functional division of psychological faculties is in agreement with Aristotle’s *De Anima*, and Farābī’s psychology in *al-Madīna*.<sup>85</sup> However, one can detect a distinguishing focus in the narrative Kirmānī adopts to discuss the human soul, which he shares with the Adaptor of *The Theology of Aristotle* (*ThA*), who is usually referred to as “the Arabic Plotinus.” Both specifically emphasize the ontological unity of the soul. In his study of the Arabic Plotinus, Peter Adamson quotes a passage from *The Theology of Aristotle* which he believes to be “largely independent of the original Greek”:

*ThA* II.58–61 [B 38–9]: It must be known whether the soul is divided [(*tatajazzaʿu*)], or not divided. And if it is divided, then is it divided essentially or accidentally? And likewise, if it is not divided then is it undivided essentially or accidentally? We say that the soul is divided accidentally, for when it is in the body, then it admits of division through the division of the body... But [the soul] in itself does not admit of division at all. When we

say that the soul admits of division, we only say this relatively and accidentally, because [the soul] is only divided when it is in bodies.<sup>86</sup>

The emphasis on the ontological unity of the soul brings Kirmānī closer to Ibn Sīnā, with whom he shares the doctrine of the separability of the human soul as a whole, in contrast to Aristotle and Fārābī.<sup>87</sup> However, the human soul for Kirmānī has a specifically Ismaʿīli baggage that also distinguishes his psychology from that of Ibn Sīnā. Apart from the heavily synthetic discourse that he uses, Kirmānī relies on the concept of “interrelation” (*tanāsub*) and “balance” (*tawāzun*) in his cosmology, which also implies a close soul–body relation. This differentiates his narrative from the scientific approach of Ibn Sīnā towards the role of bodily organs as the loci for the functions of the soul’s faculties.<sup>88</sup> Kirmānī expands on the soul–body relationship within his Ismaʿīli cosmology of hierarchical parallelism between the physical and the spiritual worlds.

In discussing the dynamics of the rational soul, Kirmānī explains different faculties as ontologically connected along a vertical line of epistemic acts. In this respect, he frequently uses the term “*manzila*,” which can be translated as “station.” The rational soul is said to “progress through imagination from her sensitive station (*al-manzila al-ḥissiyya*)” because the station of imagination is the perfection of the sensitive soul. This is considered “perfection” because the object of imagination is detached from the external sensible objects, so it is “an idea and knowledge, and the attainment of the peak of resemblance and correspondence to the sacred things (*al-umūr al-qudsiyya*); and the purpose of the soul in these actions is to gain control of those things in the external world that are inaccessible to the senses,”<sup>89</sup> meaning, things of the intelligible sphere.

Kirmānī uses the analogy of a tree to explain the promotion of the soul through knowledge and practice from a “weak sapling” into a tree that is “strong and stable.”<sup>90</sup> He does not stop here, and proceeds to use other analogies that imply total transformation (*inqilāb*) and substantial change (*tahawwul*). The subsistence and survival of the soul as independent from the body is possible only through that soul’s transformation. He writes:

Once the rational soul succeeds in scaling its ranks (*marātib*) between its potential and actual states of existence, as we explained before, and its

substance is *ennobled*, and what is left of its natural attachments is *transformed*, [and it will have] an intelligible form (*al-ṣūra al-ʿaqliyya*) such as happens when the acidity of sour grapes is changed by accepting impacts ... and through [these changes] the rational soul will attain permanence and perfection and becomes eternally and fully subsistent at the rank of the second procession (*al-inbiʿāth al-thānī*).<sup>91</sup>

In this transformation, the soul aims to attain the level of the intellects in the sacred world above (*al-ḥazīra al-quds*). This is possible only by means of emanation (*fayḍ*) from that world. By receiving the emanation, the rational soul is transformed in its essence into the intellectual soul and “its transformation (*inqilāb*) becomes complete like the transformation brought to coal by fire.”<sup>92</sup> The final result of this substantial transformation is the second procession which is considered as new creation for the soul, which we also remember from the Qurʾanic allusion to “another creation” (*al-khalq al-ākhar*) mentioned before.<sup>93</sup> This final stage in the evolution of the human soul is called the “second procession.” Originally, the term “procession” referred to the cosmic procession which is a necessary, existentiating act of emanation starting with the first intellect.<sup>94</sup> However, the rationale for the attribution of a second “procession” needs to be clarified in the context of Kirmānī’s psychology and cosmology for the following reason: procession at the cosmic level is the Neoplatonic account of the act of creation, so one could ask if Kirmānī is referring to an actual second procession/creation with regard to the human soul. If this is the case, the second procession of the soul must be preceded by a first procession, which means that the human soul is created through a first procession and then goes through a second procession/creation upon the full realization of its potentialities. This interpretation alone would be convincing with respect to the Ismaʿili philosophers before Kirmānī, such as Sijistānī, because they followed the Neoplatonic doctrine of the universal soul *nafs-i kulīyya*, from which the individual souls proceed.<sup>95</sup> But Kirmānī rejects this Neoplatonic doctrine in favor of Aristotelian psychology.<sup>96</sup> For him, the soul has come into existence neither through the Command (*al-amr*) of Allah by way of transcendent innovation (*ibdāʿ*), nor by procession (*inbiʿāth*) within the holy sphere (*al-ʿālam al-quds*).<sup>97</sup> The first procession of the human soul is simply its first appearance in the

body, which is explicable in terms of a universal rule that can be deduced from Kirmānī's cosmology. According to this rule, species are ranked based on the diversity of the configuration (*tarkīb*) of their bodily constitutive parts. The type of soul corresponds to the bodily rank, so the human species with the high extent of diversity in its constitution is "the end" (*nihāya*) of the corporeal world.<sup>98</sup> The human soul is the result of the psychological promotion of the same phenomenon that originates in the natural world at the lowest level of mineral compounds (*ma'ādīn*). This latter phase of the psychic phenomenon can simply be identified as "life" (*ḥayāt*).<sup>99</sup> At the next level, which is the level of the vegetative or "growth soul" (*al-naḥs al-nāmiyya*), he emphasizes that it is "natural life as temporally originated (*ḥādīth*) among material bodies and depends on them for her existence and is annihilated once they cease to exist."<sup>100</sup> But a few lines above in the same paragraph, he says that "the growth soul" (*al-naḥs al-nāmiyya*) originates in the body "upon the command of Allah." At first reading, this statement seems to contradict what is quoted from him above on his rejection of the origination of the soul on the command of God; however, there is in effect no contradiction. The term that he uses here is temporal origination (*iḥdāth*) rather than transcendent innovation (*ibdāʿ*). In this instance, he is using the term "*amr Allah*" to refer to God as the ultimate cause of all things rather than to the technical Ismaʿili doctrine of *ibdāʿ*,<sup>101</sup> although he does not clarify this usage.

With the above rule in mind, the human soul is regarded both as originating in nature and as the ultimate product of the process of psychic formation. Moreover, the human realm is similar to the natural world at large in having bodily and psychic levels. This begins with the individual human life and extends to the ranks of humanity in general. A human being is similar to the larger natural world, just as a child takes after its parents. In his cosmology, Kirmānī discusses the macrocosm (*al-ʿālam al-kabīr*) and the microcosm (*al-ʿālam al-ṣaghīr*) in relation to each other and refers to the human body and soul as "the offspring of the macrocosm of nature" (*al-walad al-ʿālam al-kabīr al-ṭabīʿī*).<sup>101</sup> With this statement, Kirmānī points out both the natural origin of the human soul and the similarity between the soul and the larger world. In addition, he is preparing the discursive field for the hierarchy of souls and the superiority of high Ismaʿili ranks. He writes:

As there exist in the macrocosm the encompassing spheres (*al-aflāk al-muḥīt*) and shining planets (*al-kawākib al-nayyira*), and the four elements (*al-arkān al-arbaʿa*), and lofty mountains, and running streams, and various plants, and different mineral compounds (*al-maʿādin*), and so on and so forth; So are there, in the microcosm, organs (*al-ālāt*) that are arranged in ranks (*murattaba*) and illuminating perceptive senses (*al-mashāʿir al-muḍīʿa al-mudrika*), and the four constitutive temperaments (*al-ṭabāʿiʿ al-arbaʿa al-qāʿima*), and solid bones...<sup>102</sup>

Now that I have clarified the meaning of the first procession, I can return to the doctrine of the second procession and what it means in the context of Kirmānī’s philosophy. This doctrine is closely associated with the doctrine of the circle of being, which is based on a synthesis of Neoplatonic and mystical narratives. Central to this doctrine is the concept of the “end” (*nihāya*) in the sense of the ultimate purpose, or perfection of a process. Kirmānī uses this term frequently in his cosmology of concentric worlds in balance (*muwāzina*): this consists of “the world of transcendent innovation” (*al-ʿālam al-ibdāʿ*), which includes the immaterial intellects; “the world of nature” (*al-ʿālam al-ṭabīʿa*), consisting of bodily and psychic phenomena; “the world of religion” (*al-ʿālam al-dīn*) consisting of the Ismaʿīli ranks; and “the world of legislation” (*al-ʿālam al-waḍʿ*).<sup>103</sup> The dynamics of each world are discussed based on two ends, that is, the first end (*al-nihāya al-ʿūlā*) and the second end (*al-nihāya al-thāniya*). The human being is the second end, or second perfection of the world of nature, and occupies the center of creation, as shown in a diagram of concentric worlds.<sup>104</sup> According to Kirmānī, “the law and order of wisdom requires that the first end of things is the same as the second end of them,”<sup>105</sup> and that they match like “the beginning and ending point of a circle.”<sup>106</sup> So a human being resembles the beings in the world of the intellect “whose forms cannot possibly go beyond (*tataʿaddā*) the form of a human being” because “the human being (*al-insān*) is the end that was necessitated by the first cause (*al-ʿilla al-ʿūlā*).”<sup>107</sup> Kirmānī grounds this thesis in a scriptural narrative that includes both Adam and Christ:

Since the human being is the second end of all beings (*mawjūdāt*), and the second end resembles the first end, so the forms (*ṣuwar*) of the intellects

(*al-ʿuqūl*) who are the first principles (*al-mabādīʿ*) and the first end in the abode of transcendent innovation (*al-dār al-ibdāʿ*) are [the same as] the form of the human being who is the second end of the world of the soul (*al-ʿālam al-naḥs*)... [It is] reported from the speaking prophet, peace be upon him, that “verily God created Adam, the father of humanity, in the likeness of the form of His soul.” Therefore, the forces (*quwā*) of these intellects in the abode of *ibdāʿ* and the force of [the act of] *ibdāʿ* itself that is the first transcendently innovated (*al-mubdaʿ al-awwal*) thing—which are their lights—permeate the abode of nature and spread through it up to the souls which are the end ... And the intellects of the abode of *ibdāʿ* purify the souls in the corporeal world and reach the souls once their essences (*dhawāt*) are purged of the evil of natural urges and gains perfection for them, and goodness and awe and elevation, and purifies them and treats them with mercy such as a father treats his child. That is why Jesus the son of Mary, God’s blessings be with him, said: “I am the son of the One in heaven.”<sup>108</sup>

The human soul is created again once the second perfection or procession has been achieved. This new creation or second procession/perfection is the full actualization of the soul’s intellective potential through emanation or illumination—suggested by the previously quoted light imagery—from the intellects in the world above. Therefore, the perfection or the ultimate end of the human soul is referred to as “the second procession” owing to the soul’s transformation into “an actual intellect that subsists in its own right” (*al-ʿaql al-qāʾim bi’l-fiʿl*)<sup>109</sup> similar to the intellects in the world above.<sup>110</sup>

## 2.5 Intellective Emanation, Perfect Souls, and Infallible Knowledge

At this point, one can ask if the second procession is possible for all human souls. In addition, it is important to understand the process of intellective actualization. Regarding the first question, that is, the scope of the second procession, Kirmānī makes sure to limit the noblest instance of perfection to that human being who is “truly human” (*al-insān*

*bi'l-ḥaqīqa*), to the exclusion of those who merely look like humans. As he puts it:

There are two ends for beings, the first and the second, which are [respectively] the transcendent innovation (*al-ibdāʿ*) that is [the same as] the first transcendently innovated (*al-mubdāʿ al-awwal*)<sup>111</sup> and the human being. They resemble each other (*mithlān*), and because they are similar, the form (*ṣūra*) of one is the same as the form of the other. And I do not use the word “human being” except in reference to those who are truly human, such as the lords of the cycles, particularly the lord of the seventh cycle<sup>112</sup> who is the summa (*al-jāmiʿ*) of the speakers (*al-nuṭaqā*, singular. *nāṭiq*) and the founders/executors (*al-usas*, singular. *asās*) and the perfectors (*al-atimmā*)<sup>113</sup> and those who follow their commands and have achieved the virtues and possessed them and as a result became actual intellects that subsist in their own right (*al-ʿuqūl al-qāʾima bi'l-fiʿl*), not those who look like humans in their bodily forms but in their spiritual forms are beasts and wolves and monkeys and pigs and scorpions, and dogs that have no share from the world above (*al-dār al-thawāb*).<sup>114</sup>

Accordingly, Kirmānī confines the full actualization of the human potential intellect to the ranks of the *daʿwa*. Yet, being an existential hierarchy based on knowledge, these ranks do not have equal shares of knowledge. As we can see in the above quotation, Kirmānī is identifying the most perfect or truly human as “the lord of the seventh cycle” who is the Resurrector (*al-Qāʾim*)<sup>115</sup> in Ismaʿīli thought. For Kirmānī, the prophets and the imams have access to infallible knowledge while all other human beings are subject to epistemic lapses and errors.<sup>116</sup> This epistemic elitism is also a characteristic of Kirmānī’s philosophical predecessor, Sijistānī. According to the latter, the ordinary human intellect cannot have full access to the truth; that is, to certain pieces of knowledge which are attainable only for those in the highest ranks of the religious hierarchy.<sup>117</sup> This distinction is referred to as “une double noétique” by De Smet.<sup>118</sup> He compares passages from Kirmānī’s *Rāḥat al-ʿaql* and those of Plotinus’ *Enneads* to show that in his double noetics Kirmānī is following the Neoplatonic model, in particular, its Arabic adaptation in which the Neoplatonic gods turn into “the spiritual beings” (*al-rūḥāniyyūn*) who are identifiable as the ranks in the world of religion:

La double noétique esquissée par Kirmānī semble d'inspiration néoplatonicienne, puisqu'elle se rencontre déjà chez Plotin. Ce dernier maintient dans les *Ennéades* que, contrairement à notre intellect humain, le "principe directeur de l'univers" n'a besoin ni de raisonnement, ni de la mémoire ... "Les dieux qui sont au ciel contemplant éternellement et comme de loin les choses qui sont dans le ciel intelligible..." Dans la paraphrase arabe de ce passage, les "dieux" sont devenues des "êtres spirituelle" (*al-rūḥānīyūn*) identifiables à la fois aux Intelligences séparées de *falāsifa* et aux dignitaires (*ḥudūd*) de la hiérarchie ismaélienne, en premier lieu les Prophètes et Imāms.<sup>119</sup>

De Smet interprets "the spiritual beings" of the Arabic Plotinus as identifiable with both the immaterial intellects and the ranks of religion. I agree with him on double noetics and the possibility of identification of the Neoplatonic "gods" with the Isma'ili ranks, but one can hardly identify the Isma'ili ranks with the separated intellects of the "philosophers" (*falāsifa*). It is true that the Isma'ili top ranks of the world of religion achieve full actualization of their potential intellects, but they are distinguishable from the separated intellects of classical Islamic philosophy as the latter have no potential aspects whatsoever. Moreover, the ranks function as epistemic intermediaries, simply passing their inspirational knowledge onto the ranks below them. They must be differentiated not only from the separated intellects in total, but also from the agent intellect in the philosophies of Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā. In Ibn Sīnā's noetics, even at the "most intense" form of knowledge, that is, intellectual intuition (*ḥads*)<sup>120</sup> amongst "the noblest ranks of humanity," or of the "inspired soul" (*al-mu'ayyad al-nafs*),<sup>121</sup> knowledge is acquired through conjunction (*ittiṣāl*) with the agent intellect, which is separated from the human intellect.<sup>122</sup> Similarly, for Fārābī, at its highest peak, the rational faculty receives emanation from the agent intellect once it has passed through the stages of the passive intellect (*al-ʿaql al-munfaʿil*) and the acquired intellect (*al-ʿaql al-mustafād*). However, in discussing the relationship between the actualized human intellect and the agent intellect at "the highest rank of humanity," Fārābī uses both the terms "unity" (*ittiḥād*) and "descent" (*ḥall*).<sup>123</sup> Neither of these two terms is used by Ibn Sīnā on the same subject, and if we understand them as the actual

unification of the human and the agent intellect, Fārābī could be one reference for “*falāsifa*” in De Smet’s discussion of double noetics above. Yet, the unification of the agent intellect with the actual intellect, in a way that requires substantial transformation, cannot be supported within the context of Fārābī’s philosophy as a whole. For example, in his *Risāla fi’l-‘aql* (*Epistle on the Intellect*), he begins his definition of the agent intellect by citing Aristotle’s *De Anima* as “a separated form (*al-ṣūra al-mufāriqa*)<sup>124</sup>... which causes (*ja‘l*) the potential intellect to become actual intellect, and causes the potential intelligibles (*ma‘qūlāt*) to become actual intelligibles.”<sup>125</sup> To discuss the role of the agent intellect in Kirmānī’s epistemology, particularly with respect to the scope and mechanism of emanation, one needs to examine the dynamics of the soul in attaining knowledge of the external world.

Kirmānī can be read in accordance with the school of Fārābī to explain knowledge formation based on the stratified model of psychic faculties. In his epistemic narrative, Kirmānī also uses the Qur’anic lamp (*miṣbāḥ*) imagery which could be used as evidence for the possibility of discursive connections between him and Ibn Sīnā.<sup>126</sup> Furthermore, his use of light imagery puts his psychology/epistemology in conversation not only with the texts of classical Islamic philosophers,<sup>127</sup> but also with later philosophers such as Suhrawardī, Ṭūsī, and Mullā Ṣadrā, as I will discuss shortly. Nevertheless, his theory of knowledge departs from that of Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā both in its details and in his discussion of that theory in association with the doctrine of instruction (*ta‘lim*).

To begin, an emanationist theory of knowledge formation appears in its most elaborate form only toward the end of *Rāḥat al-‘aql* with a heavily allusive narrative of a Qur’anic character. Although in Kirmānī’s system the basic framework of intellection is similar to Fārābī’s fourfold classification of the intellect as the potential intellect, the actual intellect, the acquired intellect, and the agent intellect,<sup>128</sup> he states his divergence from the latter<sup>129</sup> by expanding the scope of divine emanation (*fayḍ*). He maintains:

In receiving divine lights, [the soul] is not just at the level of the rational soul, as the philosophers (*falāsifa*) believe that only the rational soul as the acquired intellect (*al-‘aql al-mustafād*) is capable of receiving emanation

from the agent intellect (*al-ʿaql al-faʿāl*). Rather, [it can happen] at the level of the sensitive soul and the imaginative soul as in the soul of Muḥammad, peace be upon him, because his soul was not first fully realized and then gained knowledge; he was inspired (*muʿayyad*) even as a boy. And like Jesus, peace be upon him, the divine powers (*al-quwā al-ilāhiyya*) reached him when he was little. In general, the divine powers reached the soul of the sons of Adam (*banī Ādam*) in the first place at the sensitive level and enriched them with knowledge for a long time. This is because the sensitive soul is the potential intellect ... And the intellect that is outside [of the soul] (*al-ʿaql al-khārij*) is in charge of the affairs of the world, with its light and emanation shining on all beings with the purpose of guiding and instructing the souls with what we have mentioned of the attainment of knowledge in the very beginning of [the soul's] existence. And its light overspreads (*fāʾiz*) and is attained by those souls who do not have the ability to conceive of intelligible forms and the ability to preserve knowledge in themselves. So, the souls who possess the potential for receiving and imagining are capable of receiving the emanation (*al-fayḍ*) and in this way the sensitive soul, at the level of imagining the sensible objects, may receive the lights through senses. So the intellect that is outside the soul becomes the agent taking charge of the souls (*muwakkil biʿl-anfus*) that works in them and makes them reach [knowledge] as did the soul of Adam who was taught by no one but God Almighty who sometimes bestowed on him the universal and particular intelligibles (*al-maʿqūlāt al-kullīyya waʿl-juzʿīyya*) and made him acquire them without thinking or seeing, and this is the highest rank of revelation, through truth-telling dreams (*manāmāt al-ṣādiqa*) and in waking (*yaqāza*).<sup>130</sup>

This passage is hard to interpret coherently since it seems to consider all souls as capable of receiving emanations from the agent intellect, but the examples given are limited to revelation/inspiration at the highest ranks of humanity in Ismaʿīli *daʿwa*. Kirmānī emphasizes that all human souls, referred to as “sons of Adam,” receive emanation at the level of sense perception. This is significant from an epistemological point of view. He is explicitly expanding emanation beyond the reception of universal forms to the reception of sensible forms and imaginative forms, which he refers to as “particular intelligibles” (*al-maʿqūlāt al-juzʿīyya*) a few lines below. This is an obvious break with Ibn Sīnā, who explains sense perception

and imagination by resorting merely to the power of the soul to abstract sensible forms from sensible objects and imaginative forms from sensible forms.<sup>131</sup> While Kirmānī also uses the term “abstraction” and refers to both sensible forms and imaginative forms as abstracted forms (*al-ṣuwar al-muntazi‘a*),<sup>132</sup> he is likening the processes of sense perception and imagination to the process of intellection by involving emanation from an external source. Nevertheless, the actual instances of the souls who receive emanation, especially at the level of imagination, are emphatically limited to the ranks of the inspired souls (*al-mu‘ayyadūn*).

It would be absurd to interpret Kirmānī as having denied ordinary human beings the power to perceive and imagine. This would immediately be dismissed by the above reference to “sons of Adam.” On the other hand, emanation may not give rise to an expectation of absolute certitude and infallibility on the part of ordinary human beings. Granted that ordinary souls receive their knowledge of the external world through emanation, one would need to explain epistemic errors on their part. In addition, the function of the inspired souls, the prophets and imams, should be clarified within the process of knowledge acquisition by ordinary souls.

According to a pivotal premise in Kirmānī’s psychology, “the substance of humankind is the noblest of all natural substances due to its capability to receive forms of knowledge [*ma‘ārif*] through emanation ... and it is in the beginning of its existence like a thing without a form, or a naked body without clothes.”<sup>133</sup> In this passage, Kirmānī is only referring to the ordinary human souls because as we remember from the previous quotation, the inspired souls do not need to grow in order to gain knowledge. To show this relation, Kirmānī relies on his interpretation of the “light” verse (Q. 24:35).<sup>134</sup> He gives an elaborate interpretation of the verse,<sup>135</sup> of which only the beginning is included here because of its relation to knowledge from above. In his interpretation of the verse, the light (*al-nūr*) symbolizes the inspiration (*ta‘yīd*) that God bestowed on the Prophet and his descendants. The speaking prophet (*al-nāṭiq*) is symbolized by the “niche” (*al-mishkāṭ*) as he is “the treasure house” (*khazāna*) of knowledge and truths that are bestowed from above. Inside the niche, there is “a lamp” (*miṣbāḥ*) that symbolizes divine sciences and it is inside “a glass” (*zujāja*) that symbolizes the imams and the perfectors (*a‘imma wa atimmā*):

And these truths and sciences are sacred lights (*al-anwār al-qudsiyya*) that the imams and perfectors are surrounded by and depend on, and gather together and preserve and never abandon. Thus, their souls are illuminated by [the lights] and so are the souls of their disciples who seek the lights in the same way that the lighted wick (*qindīl*) is surrounded by the lamp because it is inside it, and the penetration of light through the particles of the glass is owing to the lighted wick that illuminates its surrounding. And “the glass as it were a brilliant star” [(Q. 24:35)] stands for the executor (*waṣī*) and the imams and the perfectors, peace be upon them, due to their contemplation in these sacred affairs (*fikrihā fi hādhibi'l-umūr al-qudsiyya*) and their speculation (*nazarihā*) and their deduction (*istinbāṭihā*) of religious sciences and the prophetic law.<sup>136</sup>

So, for Kirmānī, ordinary human souls do not receive the light directly from the agent intellect, but through the intermediary of the inspired souls. Yet, this mediated emanation at the level of the ordinary souls is no guarantee of flawless perception and imagination, much less of infallible knowledge of the intelligibles. The light that is emanated from above should first shine through the “transparent” (*shaffāf*) souls of those who have reached the rank of the imamate. The “infallibility” (*ʿiṣma*) of these souls is explained based on the idea that they are “not overpowered by the accidents (*al-ʿawāriḍ*) of the natural world.”<sup>137</sup> However, other souls do not possess this transparency and detachment from corporeal concerns. The mirror of the ordinary soul is flawed and distorts the light that shines on it after having passed safely through the souls of the inspired ones. Therefore, through imagery of light, which is the most dominant image in his epistemic narrative, Kirmānī ties his theory of knowledge formation to the Shīʿī doctrine of infallibility, and consequently, absolute authority, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

## Notes

1. I am applying the term philosopher against Kirmānī's wishes, as he never called himself a philosopher. I am calling him a “philosopher” in its broadest sense, as exemplified by the later Islamic philosophers who

- synthesized Greek, religious, and mystical discourses in their systems. Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī's (d. 570/1191) call for the synthesis of reason and intuition was the official beginning of this movement, which was pursued by later philosophers, most prominently Mullā Ṣadrā (d. 1050/1640).
2. Ḥamīd al-Dīn Kirmānī, *al-Maṣābīḥ fī itḥbāt al-imāma*, ed. and trans. Paul E. Walker: *Master of the Age: An Islamic Treatise on the Necessity of the Imamate: A Critical Edition of the Arabic Text and English Translation of Ḥamīd al-Dīn Aḥmad B. 'Abd Allāh Kirmānī's al-Maṣābīḥ fī itḥbāt al-imāma* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2007).
  3. Daniel De Smet, *La Quiétude de l'intellect: Néoplatonisme et gnose Ismaélienne dans l'œuvre de Ḥamīd Ad-Dīn al-Kirmānī (Xe/XIe S.)* (Leuven, BE: Uitgeverij Peeters en Departement Oosterse Studies, 1995).
  4. See Paul Ernest Walker, *Early Philosophical Shiism: the Ismaili Neoplatonism of Abū Ya'qūb Sijistānī* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993); *Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī: Ismaili Thought in the Age of al-Ḥākim* (London/New York: I.B. Tauris, 1999); *Fatimid History and Ismaili Doctrine* (Burlington: Ashgate/Variorum, 2008).
  5. Paul E. Walker, "In Praise of al-Ḥākim: Greek Elements in Ismaili Writings on the Imamate," *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 57 (2004): 390.
  6. Faquir Muhammad Hunzai, "The Concept of Tawḥīd in the Thought of Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī" (PhD Dissertation, McGill University, 1986).
  7. Daniel Carl Peterson, "Cosmogony and the Ten Separated Intellects in the Rāḥat al-ʿaql of Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī" (PhD Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1990).
  8. Faquir Muḥammad Hunzai, "The Concept of Knowledge According to Kirmānī," in *Reason and Inspiration in Islam: Theology, Philosophy and Mysticism in Muslim Thought: Essays in Honour of Hermann Landolt*, ed. Todd Lawson (London/New York: I.B. Tauris, 2005).
  9. Ḥamīd al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn 'Abd Allāh Kirmānī *Majmū'at rasā'il al-Kirmānī*, ed. Muṣṭafā Ghālib (Beirut: al-Mu'assasa al-jāmi'iyya li'l-dirāsāt wa'l-nashr wa'l-tawzī', 1983); *al-Risāla al-waḍi'a fī ma'ālim al-dīn wa-uṣūlih*, ed. Muḥammad 'Isā Ḥarīrī (Kuwayt: Dār al-Qalam, 1987).

10. Ḥamīd al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd Allāh Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-‘aql*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Ḥilmī (Cairo: Dār al-fikr al-‘Arabīyya, 1953).
11. Ḥamīd al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd Allāh Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-‘aql*, ed. Muṣṭafā Ghālīb (Dār al-Andalus lil-ṭibā‘a wa’l-Nashr wa’l-tawzī‘, 1967).
12. Walker, *Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī: Ismaili Thought in the Age of al-Ḥākīm*, 33. For this remark, Walker relies on Josef Van Esse, “Zur Chronologie der Werke des Ḥamīdaddin al-Kirmānī,” in “Bibliographische Notizen zur Islamischen Theologie,” *Die Welt des Orient* 9 (1978): 259–261.
13. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-‘aql*, 424; “*al-Risāla mawsūm bi al-Lāzima*,” in *Majmū‘a rasā’il al-Kirmānī*, ed. Muṣṭafā Ghālīb (Beirut: al-Mu‘assasa al-jāmi‘iyya li’l-dirāsāt wa’l-nashr wa’l-tawzī‘, 1983), 76. Also see De Smet, *La Quiétude de l’intellect*, 16.
14. On the role of al-Ḥākīm as reflected in Fatimid documents, see Paul E. Walker, “The Role of the Imam-caliph as Depicted in Official Treatises and Documents Issued by the Fatimids,” in *The Study of Shi‘i Islam*, eds. Farhad Daftary and Gurdofarid Miskinzoda, 411–432 (London/New York: I.B. Tauris, 2013). For more specialized literature on al-Ḥākīm, see Josef Van Esse, *Chiliasmatische Erwartungen und die Versuchung der Göttlichkeit: d. Kalif al-Ḥākīm (386–411 H.)* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1977); Heinz Halm, “Der Treuhänder Gottes: Die Edikte des Kalifen al-Ḥākīm,” *Der Islam*, 63 (1986): 11–72.
15. For an overview of dissident movements during the life of al-Ḥākīm, see Farhad Daftary, *The Ismā‘ilis: Their History and Doctrines* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 195–200.
16. Heinz Halm, “The Ismā‘ili Oath (‘*ahd*) of Allegiance and the ‘Sessions of Wisdom’ (*majālis al-ḥikma*) in Fatimid Times,” in *Medieval Ismā‘ili History and Thought*, ed. Farhad Daftary, 91–117 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
17. For a full range of Fatimid learning institutions and their characteristics, see Paul E. Walker, “Fatimid Institutions of Learning,” *The American Research Center in Egypt* 34 (January 1, 1997): 179–200. For similar examples of this type of literature, see Ismail K. Poonawala, *Bibliography of Ismā‘ilī Literature* (Malibu, CA: Undena, 1977).

18. An interesting example of *majālis* literature outside of Ismaʿīli territories is *Majlis* written by the medieval thinker ʿAbd al-Karīm Shahrīstānī (d. 548/1153). This text is an illustration of medieval theology under the influence of Ismaʿīli cosmogony though it also shows other influences, such as Ashʿarism, Hellenism, and Sufism. See Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Karīm Shahrīstānī, *Majlis: discours sur l'ordre et la création*, Jalālī Nāʾīnī, ed. and trans. Diane Steigerwald (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1998).
19. In Faṭimid literature it is commonly associated with *taʾwīl*. See, al-Qaḍī al-Nuʿmān, *Taʾwīl Daʿāʾim al-Islām*, ed. Ismaʿīl Qurbān Ḥusayn (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002), II: 70–71.
20. The *daʿwa* was a hierarchical establishment consisting of the intellectual and religious elite of the Fatimid state. Though sometimes translated as “preachers,” the term “*duʿāt*” referred to scholars with a mission that went well beyond preaching. During the Fatimid dynasty *daʿwa* “functioned both as a propaganda and missionary agency outside the confines of political rule, and as an internal ideological organ within the state.” See Paul E. Walker, *Fatimid History and Ismaili Doctrine* (UK: Ashgate Variorum, 2008), 49.
21. Paul E. Walker, “Fatimid Institutions of Learning,” *The American Research Center in Egypt* 34 (January 1, 1997): 179–200.
22. Faquir Muhammad Hunzai, “The Concept of Tawḥīd in the Thought of Ḥamīd al-Dīn Kirmānī,” 12.
23. Kirmānī contributed to the rational narrative of the imamate that was already in vogue among Ismaʿīlis. His treatise on the imamate, *al-Maṣābiḥ fi ithbāt al-imāma*, belongs to the same genre of intellectual imamology as *Ithbāt al-imāma* by Aḥmad b. Aḥmad Nashābūrī and *al-Risāla fiʾl-imāma* by Aḥmad ibn Yaʿqūb Abū al-Fawāris, both contemporary Fatimid scholars of Kirmānī. See Aḥmad ibn Yaʿqūb Abū al-Fawāris, *al-Risāla fiʾl-imāma*, trans. Sāmī Nasīb Makārim: *The Political Doctrine of the Ismāʿīlis* (Delmar, NY: Caravan Books, 1977); Ḥamīd al-Dīn Kirmānī, *al-Maṣābiḥ fi ithbāt al-imāma*, ed. and trans. Paul E. Walker: *Master of the Age: an Islamic Treatise on the Necessity of the Imamate: A Critical Edition of the Arabic Text and English Translation of Ḥamīd al-Dīn Aḥmad B. ʿAbd Allāh Kirmānī's al-Maṣābiḥ fi ithbāt al-imāma* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2007); Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm Naysābūrī, *Ithbāt al-imāma*, ed. and trans. Arzina R. Lalani (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010). Ismaʿīli rational imamology is said to have begun with the third

- Fatimid Caliph, al-Manṣūr. On these attributions, see Wilfred Madelung, "A Treatise on the Imamate of the Fatimid Caliph al-Manṣūr bi-Allāh," in *Texts, Documents and Artefacts: Islamic Studies in Honour of D.S. Richards*, ed. F. Robinson (Leiden, NL: Brill, 2003), 69–77. According to Corbin, in their philosophical imamology, Ismaʿili and Twelver thinkers, though strongly influenced by the Muʿtazilī style of arguments based on the premise of rational necessity, were conscious of the limits of reason. Their epistemology was primarily based on the three sources of reason, intuition, and scripture. See Henry Corbin, "Imamologie et philosophie," in *Shīʿism, Vol. II: Theology and Philosophy*, eds. Paul Luft and Colin Turner (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2007), 1–27.
24. The relationship between reason and revelation is one of the main subjects of medieval philosophy in general. See Etienne Gilson, *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1938); *The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy*, trans. Alfred Howard Campbell Downes (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940).
  25. This attribution is made by Paul Walker in reference to early philosophers/*dāʿīs* of Persian origins, Abū Ḥātim Rāzī (4th/10th), Muḥammad b. Aḥmad Nasafī or Nakhshabī (4th/10th century), and Sijistānī. Sijistānī contextualizes the ideas developed in this school in the light of both Greek logic and philosophy, as well as the Ismaʿili doctrine of divine transcendence (*tawḥīd*). Sijistānī is credited with the philosophical refinement of the concept of divine transcendence especially in contrast with the Muʿtazilī theologians. See Paul E. Walker, *Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī: Intellectual Missionary* (London: I.B. Tauris in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London, 1996).
  26. Daniel De Smet discusses the evidence for the influence of Neoplatonism before Kirmānī's time in a treatise attributed to al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān. See Daniel De Smet, "The Risāla al-Mudhhiba Attributed to al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān: Important Evidence for the Adoption of Neoplatonism by Fatimid Ismailism at the Time of al-Muʿizz," in *Fortresses of the Intellect: Ismaili and other Islamic Studies in Honour of Farhad Daftary*, ed. Omar Ali-de-Unzaga, 309–341 (London/New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011).
  27. For Nāṣir-i Khusraw's views on the universal soul, see Leonard Lewisohn, "Hierocosmic Intellect and the Universal Soul in a Qaṣīda by Nāṣir Khusraw," *Iran* 45 (2007). Also see Alice C. Hunsberger, *Nasir*

*Khusraw, the Ruby of Badakhshan: A Portrait of the Persian Poet, Traveller and Philosopher* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000).

28. See Paul E. Walker, "In Praise of al-Ḥākim: Greek Elements in Ismaili Writings on the Imamate," *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 57 (2004): 367–392.
29. Ismail K. Poonawala, "Ismā'īlī ta'wīl of the Qur'ān," in *The Koran: Critical Concepts in Islamic studies*, ed. Colin Turner, 68–88 (London/ New York: Routledge, 2004), IV: 83.
30. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 81.
31. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 83. According to al-āya al-kursī (Q 2:225), "God: there is no god but Him, the Ever Living, the Ever Watchful. Neither slumber nor sleep overtakes Him. All that is in the heavens and in the earth belongs to Him. Who is there that can intercede with Him except by His leave? He knows what is before them and what is behind them, but they do not comprehend any of His knowledge except what He wills. His throne extends over the heavens and the earth; it does not weary Him to preserve them both. He is the Most High, the Tremendous."
32. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 81.
33. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 82.
34. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 83.
35. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 83.
36. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 138.
37. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 123.
38. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 101–107. This term, which has its origin in religious texts, prominently in the Qur'ān, appears frequently in the Ismā'īlī narrative of creation. However, Kirmānī deviates from his predecessors by identifying "the Pen" as the second intellect rather than the first. This deviation is consistent with his more basic differences from other Ismā'īlī thinkers, both those who came before and after him. For Kirmānī, the first intellect is transcendentally innovated in the one in whom the innovation (*ibdā'*) and the innovated (*mubdā'*) are identified. The first intellect is the Word or Command of God. The first intellect is what the Qur'ān refers to as God and invests with divine attributes. Kirmānī's predecessors believed in the Command (*al-amr*) as an intermediary between God and His creation and posited an ontological gap between the act of *ibdā'* and the first intellect that is *mubdā'*. For this doctrine, see Walker, *Early Philosophical Shiism*, 82–86.

39. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 108–116.
40. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 106–107.
41. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 108.
42. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 136.
43. Ibid.
44. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 179.
45. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 162.
46. Hunzai, “The Concept of Knowledge According to Kirmānī,” 137.
47. On the meaning and function of emanationism or the theory of procession (*inbiʿāth*) in Kirmānī’s philosophy in comparison to Plotinus and Fārābī, see Daniel Carl Peterson, “Ḥamīd al-Dīn Kirmānī on Creation,” in *Perspectives Arabes et Médiévales sur la Tradition Scientifique et Philosophique Grecque*, eds. A. Hasnawi, A. Elamrani-Jamal, and M. Aouad, 555–567 (Paris: Peeters, 1997).
48. For a study of Fārābī’s influence on Kirmānī through a content analysis of their two major works, respectively *On the Perfect State*, and *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, see Daniel De Smet “Al-Fārābī’s Influence on Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī Theory of Intellect and Soul,” in *In the Age of Al-Fārābī: Arabic Philosophy in the Fourth-Tenth Century*, ed. Peter Adamson, 131–150 (London: Warburg Institute, 2008).
49. For a study of the confusion, see F.W. Zimmermann, “The Origins of the So-called *Theology of Aristotle*,” in *Pseudo-Aristotle in the Middle Ages: The Theology and Other Texts*, eds. Jill Kraye, W.F. Ryan, and C.B. Schmitt, 110–240 (London: Warburg Institute Surveys and Texts XI), 1986.
50. See Muhsin Mahdi, Introduction to *Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle*, by Abū Naṣr Fārābī, trans. Muhsin Mahdi (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1962), 5. Also see Peter Adamson, *The Arabic Plotinus: A Philosophical Study of the Theology of Aristotle* (London: Duckworth, 2002).
51. Dag Nikolaus Hasse, “Avicenna’s Epistemological Optimism,” in *Interpreting Avicenna*, ed. Peter Adamson, 109–119 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 114. The question arises because emanation is a necessary overflow or radiation, while abstraction on the part of the mind is within the control of the human soul. While Ibn Sīnā builds his cosmology on the doctrine of emanation, his theory of knowledge is based on abstraction, hence the concern about consistency between his cosmology and epistemology. On this subject, see

Cristina D'Ancona, "Degrees of Abstraction in Avicenna. How to Combine Aristotle's *De anima* and the *Enneads*," in *Theories of Perception in Medieval and Early Modern Philosophy*, eds. S. Knuuttila and P. Kärkkäinen, 47–71 (Berlin: Springer, 2008); Jon McGinnis, "Making Abstraction Less Abstract: The Logical, Psychological, and Metaphysical Dimensions of Avicenna's Theory of Abstraction," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* (80): 169–183.

52. To date, no solid evidence has been found as to whether the two philosophers were acquainted. Paul Walker does not dismiss the possibility, mainly because of the fact that both were affiliated with the Buyids, though they were not active in the same geographic regions. See Walker, *Hamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī: Ismaili Thought in the Age of al-Ḥākim*, 122.
53. By using the word "synthesis," I am trying to avoid the attribution of a shift toward Platonism. With respect to Ibn Sīnā's psychology, the idea of the separability of the human soul has usually been explained in terms of his divergence from Aristotle's psychology in favour of Plato. In his critical book on Ibn Sīnā, Robert Wisnovsky criticizes scholars such as Fazlur Rahman for calling Ibn Sīnā's psychology, "non-Aristotelian," and argues that the seeming shift towards Plato in Ibn Sīnā's psychology should instead be seen as a reflection of the fact that his reading of Aristotle was consistent with a generation of "late-antique Greek thinkers such as Ammonius and Philoponus" who sought to understand Aristotle within their Neoplatonic frame of thought. In this respect, Ibn Sīnā's idea of the separability of the human soul is "a sophisticated and justifiable reading by a philosopher who stands as the culmination of the Ammonian synthesis." See Robert Wisnovsky, *Avicenna's Metaphysics in Context* (London: Duckworth, 2003), 113 and 140. On this subject also see Dimitri Gutas, "Avicenna: the Metaphysics of the Rational Soul," *The Muslim World* 102:3–4 (2012): 417–425; *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition: Introduction to Reading Avicenna's Philosophical Works* (Leiden, NL: E.J. Brill, 1988).
54. The same is true of the Twelver institution of the imamate. According to a widely reported Twelver Shī'ī tradition (*ḥadīth*), "We [the imams] are those endowed with knowledge (*'ilm*)—[we are *'ulamā*]—our followers are those who are taught *'ilm* (*muta'allimūn*), while the rest of the people are scum (*ghuthā*)." See Aḥmad al-Barqī, *Kitāb al-Maḥāsīn*, ed. Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥusaynī (Tehran: 1370 AH), I:227; Muḥammad Bāqir

- Majlisī, *Bihār al-anwār* (Beirut: 1403 AH/1983), 8:187, 194, cited and translated in Asma Afsaruddin, *Excellence and Precedence: Medieval Islamic Discourse on Legitimate Leadership* (Leiden, NL: Brill, 2002), 144. On the extraordinary knowledge of the imam, also see Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, *The Divine Guide in Early Shi'ism* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994), 6–7.
55. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 303; *Aqwāl al-dhabābiyya*, 36–37.
  56. In Book II of *De Anima*, Aristotle explains that although the soul is not identified with the body, it is “something belonging to body, and therefore resides in body and, what is more, in such and such a body [that is, a particular body].” See Aristotle, *De Anima*, ed. and trans. R.D. Hicks (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert Publisher, 1965), Book II: 3, 59. On the soul–body relation in Aristotle, especially the identification of the soul as form, see Steven Everson, “Psychology” in *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, 168–194 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
  57. For Ibn Sīnā’s definition of the soul, see Ibn Sīnā, *Avicennā’s De anima; Being the Psychological Part of Kitāb al-Shifāʾ*, ed. Fazlur Rahman (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), 39. On the meaning of perfection in Ibn Sīnā’s psychology, see Wisnovsky, *Avicennā’s Metaphysics in Context*, 113–141.
  58. Plotinus, *The Enneads*, trans. Stephen MacKenna (London, UK: Faber and Faber Limited, 3rd edition, 1962), 355. Also see H.J. Blumenthal, *Plotinus’ Psychology: His Doctrines of the Embodied Soul* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971).
  59. See the Arabic text of *The Theology of Aristotle* in ‘Abdul Raḥmān Badawī, *Aflūṭīn ʿindal-ʿArab* (Kuwait: Wikālat al-maṭbūʿāt, 1977), 7. For a study of the soul–body relation according to *The Theology of Aristotle*, see Peter Adamson, *The Arabic Plotinus: A Philosophical Study of the Theology of Aristotle* (London: Duckworth, 2002); “Aristotelianism and the Soul in the Arabic Plotinus” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 62:2 (2001): 211–232. The origin of the soul and its relation to the body is Kirmānī’s drastic departure from his Ismaʿīli predecessors such as Abū Yaʿqūb Sijjstānī. For a study of Sijjstānī’s views of the soul, see Paul Ernest Walker, *Early Philosophical Shiism: the Ismaili Neoplatonism of Abū Yaʿqūb Sijjstānī* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993); *Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijjstānī: Intellectual Missionary* (London: I.B. Tauris in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London, 1996).

60. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 303.
61. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 304. The term “divine inspiration” (*taʿyīd*) appears frequently in Ismaʿīli literature and refers to the type of knowledge possessed by the prophets and imams. In one of his major Ismaʿīli treatises, Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī describes true knowledge as the ultimate proximity to the fountain of existence. He categorizes knowledge into the necessary, the speculative, the instructional, and the inspirational (*taʿyīdī*). The first type is a priori and self-evident knowledge. Speculative knowledge requires a thought process; for example, our knowledge is speculative when we realize that our existence is not dependent on our will. Instructional knowledge is achieved through the teacher, from whom we learn that divine unity is neither agnosticism nor anthropomorphism. The last category is that of the esoteric and immediate knowledge that comes instantaneously through divine confirmation (*taʿyīd*). See Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, *Paradise of Submission: A Medieval Treatise on Ismaili Thought*, ed. and trans. S.J. Badakhchani (London: I.B. Tauris in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2005), 49–50. Regarding the authorship of this work, and its correct attribution, see Shafiqe Virani, Review of Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, *Paradise of Submission: A Medieval Treatise on Ismaili Thought*, ed. and trans. S.J. Badakhchani, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 69:1 (2010): 147. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/654979?origin=JSTOR-pdf>. Also see Hermann Landolt, Introduction to *Paradise of Submission: A Medieval Treatise on Ismaili Thought*, by Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, ed. and trans. S. J. Badakhchani (London: I.B. Tauris in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2005). These scholars believe that beside Ṭūsī, Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd should be considered the co-author of the book.
62. In classifying the faculties of the soul, Kirmānī follows Fārābī’s Aristotelian classification into the vegetative soul, sensitive soul, appetitive soul, imaginative soul, and rational soul, with the same supremacy given to the rational soul (*al-naḥs al-nāṭiqā*). See Abū Naṣr Fārābī, *On the Perfect State—Mabādīʾ ārāʾ ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila*, trans. Richard Walzer (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 165–175. For Fārābī’s psychology and philosophy of mind, see Deborah Black, “Al-Fārābī,” in *History of Islamic Philosophy*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman, 178–198 (London/New York: Routledge), I:184–187. Fārābī’s epistemology is believed to be a synthesis of Aristotelian and

- Neoplatonic, especially as a result of the influence of Neoplatonic commentaries on Aristotle with a strong soteriological character. See Ian Richard Netton, *Al-Fārābī and His School* (London: Routledge, 1992), 52. Also see Majid Fakhry, "Al-Fārābī and the Reconciliation of Plato and Aristotle," *Journal of the History of Idea* 26:4 (1965): 469–478.
63. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 309.
  64. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 311. The use of a fire analogy to describe the process of knowledge formation is quite frequent in Peripatetic philosophy. One of the most elaborate uses of this analogy is found in Ibn Sīnā, who explains different levels of theoretical reason (*al-ʿaql al-naẓarī*), which are identical with the faculties of the rational soul. Inspired by the "light" verse (Q 24:35), he delineates the actualization of the potential faculty of the rational soul through receiving the intelligible forms (*al-maʿqūlāt*) from the agent intellect (*al-ʿaql al-faʿʿāl*) for which he uses the metaphor of fire. The perfection of the rational soul lies in acquiring (*iktisāb*) the intelligible forms through a kind of conjunction with the agent intellect. See Ibn Sīnā, *al-Ishārāt waʾl-tanbīhāt*, ed. Sulayman Dunya, 2 vols (Cairo: Dār al-maʿārif, 1960), II: 365. While using the fire analogy, Ibn Sīnā's narrative stops at the level of conjunction to the exclusion of ontological transformation through unification with the agent intellect. He strongly argues against any form of unification. For Ibn Sīnā, "the intelligible is one thing, the intellect is one thing" and "the form of what is known is impressed upon the knower just as the form of what is sensed is impressed upon the sense." See Ibn Sīnā, *al-Taʿlīqāt*, ed. ʿAbdul Raḥmān Badawī (Cairo: al-Hayʾa al-Miṣriyya al-ʿamma lil-kitāb, 1973), 105. Cited by İbrahim Kalın, *Knowledge in Later Islamic Philosophy: Mullā Ṣadrā on Existence, Intellect, and Intuition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 54.
  65. Aristotle, *De Anima*, II: 6, 75.
  66. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 314.
  67. This is a thesis of balance between different levels of reality along a vertical order that includes the linguistic, physical, ethical, social, and religious. See Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 138; De Smet, *La Quiétude de l'intellect*, 27–31. At the semantic level, that is, the relation between words and objects, Kirmānī uses the term "interrelation" (*munāsaba*). See *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 49.
  68. Blumenthal, *Plotinus' Psychology*, 76.
  69. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 318.

70. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 315.
71. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 320. The imaginative faculty bridges sense perception to practical habits, hence its importance in relating epistemology to ethics and the fulfillment of religious duties in Kirmānī's philosophy. See Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 316–317. In general, the imaginative faculty plays an important role in the understanding of prophecy and the formation of the law (*al-sharīʿa*) among medieval Muslim philosophers. For the relation between the faculty of imagination and prophecy, see Fārābī, *On the Perfect State*, 224–225; 245–247. Also see Richard Walzer, "Al-Fārābī's Theory of Prophecy and Divination," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 77:1 (1957): 142–148.
72. Fārābī's discussion of different levels of the rational soul and her relation to the agent intellect appears in his *Mabādī' ārā' ahl al-madīna al-fādila* and in more details in *Risāla fi'l-ʿaql*. In his discussion, one can see the influence of Aristotle's Alexandrian commentators. He is also shown to have used Neoplatonic terms such as "unification" (*ittiḥād*) though he finally rejects the possibility of unification. His *Risāla fi'l-ʿaql* had an enduring influence on later Islamic philosophers such as Mullā Ṣadrā. See Kalin, *Knowledge in Later Islamic Philosophy*, 38; 44.
73. Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā adopted this interpretation of the independence of the agent intellect from the human soul, but diverged from Alexander of Aphrodisia in identifying the agent intellect with the Divine Intellect of the Book of *lambda* in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. Muslim Peripatetic philosophers identify the agent intellect as the tenth intellect. See De Smet, *La Quiétude de l'intellect*, 354–356; Frede, Dorothea, "Alexander of Aphrodisias," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (Summer 2013). Accessed October 5, 2015. <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2013/entries/alexander-aphrodisias/>
74. For a brief mention of this issue and the spiritual ranks in Kirmānī, see Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 324–325. Five ranks (*ḥudūd*) in Kirmānī's theological cosmology, the prophet (lawgiver), the executor, imam, proof (*ḥujja*), and Summoner (*dāʿī*) correspond to the heavenly ranks of the Pen, Tablet, Gabriel, Michael, and Israfil. See Walker, *Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī: Ismaili Thought in the Age of al-Ḥākim*, 113.
75. Kirmānī's view of the development of the soul along with the body is one of his major points of departure from the Neoplatonic psychology which had been adopted by the preceding Ismaʿīli philosophers. For Kirmānī, the human soul belongs in the psychological realm, and psy-

chological existence (*al-kawn al-nafsānī*) is dependent on natural existence (*al-kawn al-ṭabīʿī*). See, Kirmānī, “*al-Risāla mawsūma bi Mabāsīm al-bishārāt*,” in *Majmūʿa rasāʾil al-Kirmānī*, ed. Muṣṭafā Ghālib (Beirut: al-Muʿassasa al-jāmiʿiyya liʾl-dirāsāt waʾl-nashr waʾl-tawzīʿ, 1983), 121. For the Neoplatonic views of his Ismaʿīli philosophical predecessor Sijistānī on the origin and end of the human soul, see Paul E. Walker, *Philosophical Shiism*, chapter 8; *Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī: Intellectual Missionary*, 39–45.

76. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 336–337.
77. Kirmānī divides the cosmological category of intellect into five ranks (*marātib khamsa*): the first intellect, the second intellect, the acquired intellect (*al-ʿaql al-muktasab*), the actual intellect (*al-ʿaql biʾl-fiʿl*), and the potential intellect (*al-ʿaql biʾl-quwwa*) which belongs to the world of *ibdāʿ* and *inbīʿāth*. See Kirmānī, “al-Risālat al-naẓm fi muqābilat al-awālim,” 31.
78. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 338.
79. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 331.
80. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 64–65. For a study of Kirmānī’s discussion of the ranks of *daʿwa* and their relation to knowledge of *taʾwīl*, see Farhad Daftary, “Intellectual Life among Ismaʿilis: An Overview,” in *Intellectual Traditions in Islam*, ed. Farhad Daftary (London/New York: I.B. Tauris in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2000).
81. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 338. For the parallelism of the worlds in Kirmānī’s philosophy, see Kirmānī “*al-Risāla al-naẓm fi muqābilat al-awālim*,” in *Majmūʿa rasāʾil al-Kirmānī*, ed. Muṣṭafā Ghālib (Beirut: al-Muʿassasa al-jāmiʿiyya liʾl-dirāsāt waʾl-nashr waʾl-tawzīʿ, 1983).
82. Ḥamīd al-Dīn Kirmānī, *al-Aqwāl al-dhahabiyya*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Ṣāwī (Tehran: Anjuman-i shahanshāhī-i falsafa-yi Īrān, 1977), 89.
83. For Rāzī’s psychology, see Thérèse-Anne Druart, “Al-Rāzī’s Conception of the Soul: Psychological Background to his Ethics,” *Medieval Theology and Philosophy* 5 (1996): 245–254. Kirmānī was not the first to criticize the philosopher-scientist, Zakariyya Rāzī. Before him, another influential Ismaʿīli philosopher, Abū Ḥātīm Rāzī (fl. 4th/10th century) wrote extensively in rejection of Rāzī, whose philosophy was criticized as atheistic by religious scholars and thinkers such as Kirmānī. For an overview of the conflict between the two thinkers, see Paul E. Walker, “The Political Implications of al-Rāzī’s Philosophy,” in *The Political Aspects of Islamic Philosophy*, ed. Charles E. Butterworth, 61–94

(Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990). Rāzī's philosophy has not received sufficient attention in Muslim countries and there is still more room to work on the philosophical aspects of his work in Western academia. For an overview of his thought, see Lenn E. Goodman, "Muḥammad ibn Zakariyyā al-Rāzī," in *History of Islamic Philosophy*, eds. Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman, vol. 1, 198–215 (London/New York: Routledge, 1996). An interesting recent article has discussed Rāzī's political philosophy in light of his epistemology. See Alireza Shomali, "Razi on Reason and Political Authority: A Study in Medieval Persian Political Thought," *Iranian Studies* 49:1 (January 2016): 29–55. A contemporary article by a Muslim scholar harshly criticizes Rāzī for denying revelation and prophecy, and describes him in a biased manner as "an Iranian who pitted like many others against everything Arabian even the religion of Islam which was born in Arabia." See A.S. Bazmee Ansari, "Philosophical and Religious Views of Muḥammad ibn Zakariyyā al-Rāzī," *Islamic Studies* 16:3 (1977): 176. But Rāzī also is widely overlooked in Iran. His philosophical works have never been part of the academic curriculum in the Iranian universities, and he is mentioned in schools only for his scientific achievements.

84. Kirmānī, *al-Aqwāl al-dhahabiyya*, 49. On this issue, Kirmānī can be compared to Mullā Ṣadrā. The idea that the soul is a diversity in unity is emphasized by the latter, as "the soul in its unity is the entirety of her faculties" (*al-naḥṣ fi waḥdatuhā kull al-quwā*). See Gholamreza Avani, Introduction to *al-Aqwāl al-dhahabiyya*, by Ḥamīd al-Dīn Kirmānī, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Ṣāwī (Tehran: Anjuman-i Shahanshāhī-i Falsafa-yi Īrān, 1977), 18. I will discuss the similarity and its implications in more detail later in the book.
85. See Aristotle, *De Anima* II: 2 and 3, 59–63; Fārābī, *On the Perfect State*, 165–173.
86. Adamson, *The Arabic Plotinus*, 60–61. In Adamson's translation, the letter B at the beginning of the quotation refers to the Arabic text of *The Theology of Aristotle (ThA)* in Badawī's edition. See *Aflūṭīn 'inda 'l-ʿArab*, 38–39. For Adamson, this quotation and similar ones show the Adaptor's tendency to reconcile the Neoplatonic separability of the soul with the Aristotelian relation between the soul and the body. See Adamson, *The Arabic Plotinus*, 60.

87. Aristotle, *De Anima*, II: 2, 53. In Fārābī's thought, this idea is implied by his views on the perishability of the ignorant souls who "remain in a state of imperfection." See Fārābī, *On the Perfect State*, 271–273.
88. For the soul–body relationship in Islamic philosophy, see Deborah Black, "Psychology: Soul and Intellect," in *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, eds. Peter Adamson and Richard Taylor, 308–326 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
89. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 347.
90. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 348.
91. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 351 (italics mine).
92. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 352.
93. The similar Qurʾanic concept of new creation (*khalq al-jadīd*) is also referred to by Mullā Ṣadrā as a support for his doctrine of substantial change. This term appears six times in six verses in the Qurʾan (13:5; 14:19; 17:49; 17:98; 35:16; 50:15). In the Qurʾan, the term is commonly interpreted as referring to the resurrection, but both Kirmānī and Mullā Ṣadrā have interpreted it in accordance with their views on the transformation of the soul.
94. The first intellect is the first being and the "god" that human beings know, although it is the result of a unique act beyond existence, time, and even eternity by the Transcendent One, who is known in the Ismaʿīli context as *Mubdīʿ*. The Ismaʿīli doctrine of divine oneness (*tawḥīd*) is based on the complete transcendence of *Mubdīʿ*, whose act of transcendent innovation (*ibdāʿ*) is the reason for the existence of the first intellect. There is no perfect equivalent in European languages for the term *ibdāʿ*. De Smet and Hunzai follow Henry Corbin in translating the term into "I'instauration," which is "instauration" in English, in the sense of "establishing" according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary. See *Merriam-Webster OnLine*, s.v. "instauration." Accessed September 8, 2015 at <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/instauration>. For convenience, I have coined the term "transcendent innovation" to imply the fully transcendent status of the agent of this act as well as the act itself. Daniel Carl Peterson discusses the Qurʾanic root and possible equivalents of the term *ibdāʿ* in his dissertation on Kirmānī. See Daniel Carl Peterson, "Cosmogony and the Ten Separated Intellects in the *Rāḥat al-ʿaql* of Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī," (PhD dissertation, University of California, 1990). Also see his "Ḥamīd al-Dīn Kirmānī on Creation." In the latter work, Peterson compares *ibdāʿ* with

the theological concept of creation *ex nihilo*. For Kirmānī's theory of creation, see, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 156–170; De Smet, *La Quiétude de l'intellect*, chapter 3; Walker, *Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī: Ismaili Thought in the Age of al-Ḥākim*, chapter 5.

95. On the Universal Soul and her descent into individual bodies see Plotinus, *The Enneads*, 357–359. The doctrine of the Universal Soul was brought to the foreground by Porphyry in his commentaries on Plotinus. See Badawī, *Aflūṭīn ʿinda ʿl-ʿArab*, 18–28.
96. In his *Kitāb al-Rīyāḍ*, Kirmānī rejects the affinity between individual souls and the universal soul. First he identifies the universal soul of Sijistānī's *Kitāb al-Nuṣra* with the second intellect or *tālī* in his own cosmology and insists that “these souls are other than the *tālī* and the *tālī* is other than them,” for the very reason that *tālī* is perfect with no potential state in it, while the souls in our world are imperfect at the beginning and need to reach the second perfection. See Kirmānī's *Kitāb al-Rīyāḍ*, ed. Aref Tamer (Beirut: Dar-Assakafa, 1960), 88. See De Smet, *La Quiétude de l'intellect*, 232.
97. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 396.
98. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 295.
99. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 274. Whether or not one can attribute to Kirmānī a form of vitalism is a debatable matter that is beyond the scope of the present book.
100. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 282.
101. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 269 and 145.
102. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 296. For a list of worlds divided into *kabīr* and *ṣaghīr*, see Kirmānī, *Risāla al-naẓm fī muqābilat al-ʿawālim*, 12–14.
103. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 138; 154; 157. For an elaborate discussion of the relation between the worlds, see Kirmānī, *al-Risāla al-naẓm fī muqābilat al-ʿawālim*.
104. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 157.
105. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 143.
106. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 144.
107. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 145.
108. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 145–146.
109. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 162.
110. One can hardly dismiss the possibility of interpreting the term “second procession” as the second procession in Kirmānī's cosmology based on the similarity between the actualized human soul and the third intel-

lect. The third intellect proceeds from the second intellect which, in turn, proceeds from the transcendently innovated first intellect. The intricately woven web of Kirmānī's discourse on cosmic and psychic phenomena requires attention to actual similarities between two referents of the same term, that is, "*al-munba'ith al-thānī*." This is reinforced by his belief in an essential correspondence between words and objects. For the word-object relation, see Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 49–50; "al-Risāla al-Rawḍa," in *Majmū'a rasā'il al-Kirmānī*, ed. Muṣṭafā Ghālib (Beirut: al-Mu'assasa al-jāmi'iyya li'l-dirāsāt wa'l-nashr wa'l-tawzīʿ, 1983), 82. A detailed discussion of resemblances between the human soul and the third intellect is beyond the scope of the present study. Here it would suffice to mention only the receptive aspect of both, known in philosophy as material (*hayūlānī*) in the sense of prime matter, which is explained through the metaphor of "the Tablet" (*al-lawḥ*).

111. The identification of the act of transcendent innovation and the first intellect that is the first transcendently innovated being is one of the hallmarks of Kirmānī's cosmology. See, Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 73–75; De Smet, *La Quiétude de l'intellect*, 145; Walker 93; on the relation between this identification and the doctrine of diversity within unity, see Hunzai, "The Concept of Tawḥīd," 164–173.
112. In Fatimid Ismaʿīli soteriology, the seventh cycle is only a future event and is under the control (*salṭana*) of the lord of the seventh cycle or the Resurrector (*al-Qā'im*) when the souls are fully actualized and go through the "new creation." He is the seventh imam in the series of the seventh *nāṭiq*, who reunites all deceased and living souls for the Last Judgment. See Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 391–392.
113. There is a possibility that the original word used by Kirmānī was "the imams" (الأئمة) instead of (الائمةاء). However, in both editions of *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, the editors have put in the latter form with no footnotes on it, though the Ḥussain and Hilmī edition has indexed the term together with the "the imams" (الأئمة), as they usually come together in the treatise. As for this particular quotation, there is a possibility of error in inscription because the three highest ranks in the Ismaʿīli *da'wa*, that is, *nāṭiq*, *asās*, and *imām*, always follow each other. See Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 68; 138; 143. Nevertheless, the term *atimmāʾ* is used frequently by Kirmānī and this is preceded by Sijistani's use of it, translated into "des perfecteur" by Corbin. In general, *atimmāʾ* and *a'imma*, are co-

extensional in referring to the Shīʿī imams. See Abū Yaʿqūb Sijistānī, “Kitāb al-Yanābī” in *Trilogie ismaélienne: 1. Abū Yaʿqūb Sejestānī: (4e/10es.) 2. Sayyid-nā al-Hosayn ibn ʿAlī: Cosmogonie et eschatologie (7e/13es.) 3. Symboles choisis de la Roseaie du mystère, de Mahmūd Shabestariī (8e/14es) Textes édités avec traduction française et commentaires* (Tehran: Département d’Iranologie de l’Institut francoiranien, 1961), 21.

114. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 145. The literal translation for this term would be “the world of reward” but Kirmānī is referring to the intellectual world above rather than the Qurʾānic afterlife.
115. See Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 127–128. Kirmānī has an intricate view of history which is based on his doctrine of the concentric worlds. The Resurrector is the highest level of human intellect, at the topmost rank of the world of religion where the first point of the circle of being, i.e., the intellect, and the last, i.e., the perfect human, conjoin. There are different opinions as to the historical instance of the Resurrector in Ismaʿīlī thought, but in the Fatimid context, it refers to a messianic figure who will come in the future. Kirmānī describes him as the ultimate *summa* of all the ranks. See Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 127. Later I will discuss the significance of the concept of “summa” (*jāmiʿ*) or comprehensiveness as a Sufi doctrine working within the synthetic context of Kirmānī and Mullā Ṣadrā’s epistemic discourses.
116. The question of absolute certainty (*yaqīn*) is believed to have arisen first, within the context of Islamic philosophy, in Fārābī, under the influence of the Arabic translation of Aristotle’s *Posterior Analytics* but also as “a natural outgrowth of the introduction of certitude as a mental state distinct from knowledge, a point that emerges more clearly in Fārābī’s explication of the knowledge condition.” See Black, “Knowledge (*ʿilm*) and certitude (*Yaqīn*) in al-Fārābī’s Epistemology,” 19. In my analysis, the concern with certitude (*yaqīn*) as a mental/psychic state in Islamic philosophy is also important in shaping a type of epistemic discourse that lends itself to blending with the political discourse of absolute authority based on the psychological rank of the subject of knowledge. This relation is reinforced by the dominant analogy of certain knowledge as “vision,” suggesting that immediate contact with the source of the intelligibles is the necessary and sufficient condition for certitude at the level of the acquired intellect. For the analogy, see Fārābī, *Sharāʿit al-Yaqīn*, in *al-Mantiq ʿinda al-Fārābī*, ed. Rafiq

- al-ʿAjam and Majid Fakhry (Beirut, 1986–1987), 99, cited by Black, “Knowledge (*ʿIlm*) and certitude (*Yaqīn*) in al-Fārābī’s Epistemology,” 22.
117. For Sijistānī’s views on the human soul and her relation to the world above, see his *Kitāb al-Yanābīʿ*, which has been translated into French as *Le livre des sources* and annotated by Henry Corbin in *Trilogie ismaélienne*, 5–127. For a study of this treatise and translation in English, see Paul E. Walker, *The Wellsprings of Wisdom: A Study of Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī’s Kitāb al-Yanābīʿ: Including a Complete English Translation with Commentary and Notes on the Arabic Text* (Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah Press, 1994). Also see Walker, *Early Philosophical Shiism*, 93.
  118. De Smet, “Miroir, Savoir et Emanation dans l’Ismaélisme Fatimide,” 184.
  119. De Smet, “Miroir, Savoir et Emanation,” 186. De Smet’s citations of Plotinus are from *Enneads* IV: 4, 12; V: 8, 3 and that of the Arabic Plotinus from Badawī, *Aflūṭīn ʿinda ʿl-ʿArab*, 62–63.
  120. For a discussion of the place of intellectual intuition in Ibn Sīnā’s epistemology, see Black, “Certitude, Justification, and the Principles of Knowledge in Avicenna’s Epistemology,” 130–132. On the mechanism of intuition and its relation to “the intellective aspect of prophecy,” see Gutas, “Avicenna: The Metaphysics of the Rational Soul,” 420–422.
  121. The usage of the term “*al-muʿayyad*” with its strong Ismaʿili connotations in the context of Ibn Sīnā’s psychology could be a gateway to assessing the influence of Ismaʿili epistemic discourse on that of Ibn Sīnā. Nevertheless, in his psychology, the term signifies the soul that possesses “a high degree of purity (*shidda al-ṣafā*) and strong connection with the intelligible principles ...” See Ibn Sīnā, *Avicenna’s De Anima*, 249.
  122. Ibn Sīnā, *Avicenna’s De Anima*, 249–250.
  123. Fārābī, *On the Perfect State*, 244–245.
  124. It is important to note that the state of the agent intellect and its relation to the rational soul is a debatable subject in Aristotle studies mainly due to the differences between interpretations among his commentators. For Aristotle’s commentators, see Richard Sorabji, *Aristotle Transformed: the Ancient Commentators and their Influence* (London: Duckworth, 1990).

125. Fārābī, *Risāla fi' l-ʿaql*, ed. Maurice Bouyges (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1938), 24–25. For a summary of Fārābī's view of the role and place of the agent intellect, see Ian Richard Netton, *Al-Fārābī and His School* (London: Routledge, 1992), 49–54.
126. Shared epistemic narratives and imagery among Islamic philosophers of Persian origins are important for the discussion of epistemic authority in Shi'ism. For Ibn Sīnā's use of the Qur'anic allusion of light (Q 24:35) and the lamp (*miṣbāḥ*), see his *al-Ishārāt wa'l-tanbihāt*, vol. 2:366.
127. For the light imagery in Fārābī, see his *Risāla fi'l-ʿaql*, 25.
128. Fārābī, *Risāla fi'l-ʿaql*, 12. Kirmānī's cosmology is also based on his typology of the five category of intellects: the first intellect (*al-ʿaql al-awwal*); the second intellect (*al-ʿaql al-thānī*); the acquired intellect (*al-ʿaql al-muktasab/al-mustafād*); the actual intellect (*al-ʿaql bi'l-fi'l*); and the potential intellect (*al-ʿaql bi'l-quwwa*). He believes that although the last three types are not from the world of transcendent innovation (*al-ibdāʿ*), they share the same genus, that is, intellect. See Kirmānī, *Risāla al-Nazm*, 31.
129. He never mentions Fārābī by name but his reference to “*falāsifa*” in this context is most likely a reference to Fārābī.
130. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 403–404.
131. Fārābī, *On the Perfect State*, 197; Ibn Sīnā, *al-Ishārāt wa'l-tanbihāt*, 2: 343–354.
132. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 405.
133. Kirmānī, *al-Risāla mawsūma bi Mabāsīm al-bishārāt*, 115.
134. “God is the Light of the heavens and earth. His Light is like this: there is a niche, and in it a lamp, the lamp inside a glass, a glass like a glittering star, fueled from a blessed olive tree from neither east nor west, whose oil almost gives light even when no fire touches it—light upon light—God guides whoever He will to his Light; God draws such comparisons for people; God has full knowledge of everything.” This verse has a significant place in classical Islamic discourse on knowledge that is based on the interpretation of Ibn Sīnā, as mentioned before. But the verse has also been the subject of different exegeses and spiritual interpretations by exegetes, mystics, and later philosophers. For example, Mullā Ṣadrā has an independent exegetical treatise based on this verse. See Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī, *The Hermeneutics of the Light-Verse of the Qur'an*, trans. Latima-Parvin Peerwani (London: Saqi, 2003).

135. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 424–426.  
 136. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 425.  
 137. Kirmānī, *al-Risāla mawsūma bi Mabāsīm al-bishārāt*, 131.

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# 3

## Kirmānī's Discourse on the Imamate and its Influence

### 3.1 Rational Discourses of the Imamate in Shi'ism

This chapter will focus on Ḥamīd al-Dīn Kirmānī's concepts, narratives, and arguments in his discussion of the imamate in relation to his theory of the soul and of knowledge formation. By highlighting the epistemic/psychological ground of Kirmānī's arguments for the necessity of the imam's authority, his infallible knowledge, and the essential role of his guidance in the salvation of the religious community, I would like to make the following arguments. First, Kirmānī constructs a conceptual scheme that accommodates a rational formulation of the imamate based on Aristotelian psychology and Plotinus' doctrine of emanation. Second, the synthetic discourse that he employs in this respect culminates in an existential narrative of the evolution of the soul through inspirational knowledge. Third, this synthetic discourse and the existential narrative reappear and resonate in the Isma'ili texts of Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274), one of the major influences on the philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā. The section on Ṭūsī provides a gateway for our transition from Kirmānī to Mullā Ṣadrā. Before analyzing Kirmānī's discourse on the imamate, I need to delineate briefly the intellectual background and the

landscape of his time with regard to the imamate, and contextualize the discourse of the imamate as an essential component of Shī'ī political philosophy. After discussing Kirmānī's imamology, the chapter closes with a brief analysis of the discourse of the imamate in the Isma'ili writings of Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274), which in this study captures the transition of our focus from Kirmānī to Mullā Ṣadrā.

Shī'ī political philosophy is indebted to Abū Naṣr Fārābī (d. 339/950), the Brethren of Purity (*al-Ikhwān al-ṣafā*) from the second half of the fourth/tenth century, and the early Isma'ili thinkers such as Abū Ḥātim Rāzī (d. 322/934) and Abū Ya'qūb Sijistānī (d. after 360/971).<sup>1</sup> *Al-Rasā'il* (*The Epistles*) by the Brethren reached Muslim readership shortly after Fārābī's death in CE 950 and two chapters from Fārābī's *Mabādī' ar-rā'ih al-madīna al-fāḍila* are quoted in *al-Rasā'il*.<sup>2</sup> Regardless of the professed or implicit religious affinities of the thinkers concerned, the adoption and adaptation of Plato's narrative of absolute authority of *The Republic's* perfect ruler, who according to Fārābī and the Brethren is "divinely inspired,"<sup>3</sup> could be traced in Fatimid and Tayyibī political discourses. However, investigating the textual evidence for the influence of *al-madīna al-fāḍila* and *al-Rasā'il* on the works of Fatimid scholars has been a difficult task with a debatable outcome.<sup>4</sup>

In his *al-madīna al-fāḍila*, Fārābī characterizes "the ruler of the perfect city" (*ra'īs al-madīna al-fāḍila*) as someone who has the quality of "rulership" (*riyāsa*) as "a natural disposition" (*bi'l-fiṭra wa'l-ṭab'*) and habit (*mal-aka*); this is necessary for acquiring and perfecting the "art" (*ṣinā'a*) of rulership.<sup>5</sup> The soul of this ruler achieves perfection through connection to the agent intellect (*al-ʿaql al-fa'āl*), a unification (*ittiḥād*) that gains perfect knowledge and perfect happiness for the ruler:

This man [*al-insān*] holds the most perfect rank of humanity and has reached the highest degree of felicity. His soul is united as it were with the Active Intellect, in the way stated by us. He is the man who knows every action by which felicity can be reached ... This is the sovereign [*al-ra'īs*] over whom no other human being has any sovereignty whatsoever; he is the Imam; he is the first sovereign of the excellent city (*al-madīna al-fāḍila*), he is the sovereign of the excellent nation [*umma*], and the sovereign of the universal state [*al-ma'mūra kulluhā*].<sup>6</sup>

The text's editor and translator, Walzer, considers this qualification of the ruler as "a counterpart to the views of the Imāmiyya [the Twelvers] in Fārābī's days" and points out that "*Imām* is certainly a more general term than *khalīfa* (caliph)" and for him the imams of the Twelvers do represent a kind of philosopher.<sup>7</sup> Yet, Walzer does not explain why he confines this similarity to the Twelver imams, nor does he argue for his identification of Twelver imams with philosophers. As for the text itself, there is no evidence in favor of either position. Fārābī's characterization of the ruler as the highest rank of humanity would definitely take the qualification for rulership beyond the righteousness of the caliphs. Moreover, the unification with the agent intellect is the ground for infallibility (*'iṣma*), which is claimed only for the Shī'ī imams, be they Isma'īli or Twelver. The excellent (Muslim) community (*al-umma al-fāḍila*), which is translated as "the excellent nation" by Walzer, can also be exemplified by the city of the Prophet (*al-madīna al-nabī*) or any Muslim community ruled by an infallible imam who has perfect knowledge through unification with the agent intellect. In both Isma'īli and Twelver discourses, this type of knowledge is called "inspirational knowledge" (*al-'ilm al-ta'yīdī*).<sup>8</sup> For Fārābī, a city or community of this rank was probably only an ideal of a state based on the city of the Prophet, but the narrative that he is presenting also lends itself to Isma'īli interpretations associating the imamate with the Fatimid sovereignty of the time.<sup>9</sup>

As for the Brethren of Purity, due to ambiguities in their works, they have been claimed by both Isma'īlis and Twelvers. There are writings both by scholars specializing in the thoughts of the Brethren of Purity, and by scholars of Isma'īli studies that trace Isma'īli themes and narratives in *al-Rasā'il*.<sup>10</sup> Carmela Baffioni believes that the king-imam of *al-Rasā'il* can be interpreted as the Fatimid caliph, with the Brethren as his Summoners (*du'āt*). She also presents evidence from *al-Rasā'il* that "the king-imām is superior in intellect."<sup>11</sup> However, for Richard Netton, the attribution of Isma'īlism to the Brethren is not indisputable and he believes that at best we can accept the influence of early Isma'īli thought on the writings of the Brethren.<sup>12</sup> Regardless of the Brethren's sectarian affinities, what matters to the present study is the resonance of their philosophical narratives of knowledge and authority in Isma'īli texts. The influence is hard to overlook in the writings of the Fatimid thinkers, such

as Kirmānī and his contemporaries. For example, the concept of “the degrees of excellence” (*tafāḍul*) among creatures and species, which will be discussed shortly, can be traced back to *al-Rasāʾil*.<sup>13</sup> The Fatimid scholars’ proof of the unique knowledge and authority of prophets and the imams is based on their hierarchical view of all beings and the idea that prophets and the imams are the apex of existence.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, the Brethren famously compare the human soul as the microcosm with the whole universe as the macrocosm,<sup>15</sup> a conceptual framework that also informs Kirmānī’s psychology.

Similarly to Fārābī and the Brethren, Ismaʿili thinkers argue for the authority of leaders based on the latter’s knowledge. For one of the early Ismaʿili philosophers who belonged to the Persian school of Ismaʿilism,<sup>16</sup> Abū Ḥātim Rāzī, all sciences (*ʿulūm*) are founded on the bedrock of divine knowledge revealed to the prophets and through him to the sages (*ḥukamā*). In this way, he traces all types of sciences as a coherent system originating from the same source. For a man of faith such as Rāzī, this could be regarded as the main justification for interpreting religious doctrines in light of Greek philosophy, especially Neoplatonism, a line which he followed, along with other early Ismaʿili philosophers:

Thus, every branch of wisdom (*ḥikma*) in this world, great or small, takes its origin from prophets who bequeathed it to the wise (*al-ḥukamā*) and scholarly (*al-ʿulamā*) after them until it became a matter of instruction (*taʿlīm*) among mankind ... The same may be said of every book composed in accordance with some natural science such as *Almagest*, [works by] Euclid, and similar works. These works display an order (*naẓm*) and balance (*iʿtidāl*) that point to the fact that they take their origin from one individual who had no coauthor. If this is proved, it follows that these sciences originated through assistance from Allah (*taḥfīq min Allah*)—be He honored and glorified (*ʿazza wa jalla*) and revelation (*wahy*) from Him, and not through deduction by nature (*istikhrāj biʾl-ṭabʿ*)...<sup>17</sup>

So for Rāzī, revelation is the source of all knowledge. It is true that the above-quoted *Aʿlām al-nubuwwa* does not have an explicit political theme consistent with the Fatimid *daʿwa*.<sup>18</sup> However, Rāzī’s characterization of knowledge as grounded in a divine source, and his mention of

sages, are first necessary steps for the Isma'ili doctrine of the infallible imam and his absolute authority. Additionally, the possibility of access to the "perennial wisdom" becomes a recurrent theme in Isma'ili philosophical discourses, as I will discuss further below. According to Hans Daiber, "the idea of the inequality of people in society, who therefore require a leader, a teacher of 'universal knowledge'... based on divine revelation [in *al-A'lām al-nubuwwa*]," reappears in Fārābī.<sup>19</sup> Although it is in his *Kitāb al-Iṣlāḥ*<sup>20</sup> that Abū Ḥātim is said to have addressed issues related to *da'wa*,<sup>21</sup> his narrative in *al-A'lām al-nubuwwa* of knowledge as divine inspiration, and the necessity of someone who possesses it, is a pivotal doctrine of Fatimid Isma'ilism.

The Fatimid philosophical tradition was especially influenced by the works of Abū Ya'qūb Sijistānī (d. after 360/971) who was succeeded by Ḥamīd al-Dīn Kirmānī, though never overshadowed by him in the eyes of later Isma'ili thinkers. Sijistānī was mainly interested in the doctrine of prophecy rather than imamology per se. In his works, Sijistānī is not concerned with the imamate of a particular person at a particular point in history; however, he explains a shared epistemic quality of the speaker (*al-nāṭiq*) and the executor (*al-wasī*)<sup>22</sup> as both being divinely inspired (*mu'ayyad*).<sup>23</sup> In his *Kitāb al-Yanābīz*, Sijistānī provides a detailed formulization of inspirational knowledge and how it reaches the souls of the inspired ones (*al-mu'ayyadūn*). The spontaneous grasp of the intelligibles (*ma'qūlāt*) by the inspired souls can be extended to the imams, who are the progeny of 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib as the executor (*waṣī*). According to Sijistānī,

The [sign for the] beginning of *ta'yīd* in the *mu'ayyad* is that he becomes capable of discovering things (but not through senses) which are the principles for deducing hidden meaning in the sensibles (*al-mahsūsāt*). Rather, [the *mu'ayyad*] finds himself existing amidst the sensibles, [but] detached from them, [and] craving for intelligibles (*al-ma'qūlāt*) which have no connection with material things. The difference between a scholar (*al-'ālim*) and *mu'ayyad* is that the man of knowledge is always anxious to protect his sciences (*al-'ulūm*), and his ruling (*ḥukm*) is on sensibles which are material in nature, whereas *mu'ayyad* is independent of these [methods]. He [spontaneously] conceptualizes in his mind (*khāṭir*),<sup>24</sup> whereas a scholar is

incapable of doing that, and infers it through reasoning and by sensible proofs.<sup>25</sup>

Therefore, the early Isma‘ili thinkers of Persia had already prepared the general philosophical framework for their Fatimid successors to argue for the epistemic authority of their imams. This ideological agenda was most notable in the writing in the age of al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh (r. 386–411/996–1021). Specifically, contemporary thinkers Abū al-Fawāris, Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm Naysābūrī, and Ḥamīd al-Dīn Kirmānī focused their writings on the subject of the imamate, especially on the knowledge of the imam as one of the major proofs for the necessity of his existence and unique authority. Before we analyze Kirmānī on the imam’s knowledge in the next section of this chapter, his above-mentioned contemporaries will be discussed briefly and quoted on this topic.

For Abū al-Fawāris, the rational proof for the necessity of the imamate is based on the premise that knowledge is the perfection of humanity:

That which is enjoined by reason is the fact that reason asserts and witnesses that if God (the Exalted) had created the world with all the inanimate and growing things it contains, but deprived it of animals, it would have been lacking in order and devoid of wisdom. If likewise, He had created in it all the animals except man (*al-insān*), it would still be imperfect and not in order. Also, if He had created man in addition to all these, but made him devoid of wisdom (*ḥikma*)/and without knowledge (*ma‘rifā*), just as we find children and the insane, the world would have still been imperfect. Therefore, understanding (*‘ilm*) and knowledge (*ma‘rifā*) are the culmination of creation, the perfection of divine Art (*kamāl al-ṣan‘a*) and the order (*nizām*) of His power. Everything else is their instrument and the tool for bringing them about. There is no way to teach (*ta‘līm*) except with a teacher, elected (*mukhtār*) and inspired (*mu‘ayyad*) by God. God chooses him to guide His creatures to their welfare, both in this life and the life to come. And this person is the Imam.<sup>26</sup>

Furthermore, Abū al-Fawāris draws on the narrative of light in arguing for the necessity of divinely inspired souls. He calls prophets and the imams “divine lights” (*al-anwār al-ulūhiyya*) who are necessary for actualizing the potential of noble sciences (*al-‘ulūm al-sharīfā*) in the human

soul.<sup>27</sup> In his attempt to prove the imamate, Abū al-Fawāris follows the contemporary tradition of synthesizing a discourse composed of elements from the Aristotelian potential/actual,<sup>28</sup> the light analogy in Plato's *The Republic*,<sup>29</sup> and verses from the Qur'an and tradition (*ḥadīth*).

Similarly, in *Ithbāt al-imāma*, Naysābūrī tries to prove the necessity of the imamate by incorporating inductive and deductive methods as well as scriptural narratives. His methodology is more wide-ranging and inclusive than that of Abū al-Fawāris and the influence of philosophical discourses is more obvious in his treatise, though he does not mention any philosopher by the name. In the opening section of the treatise, the author announces the originality of his methodology in proving the imamate and distinguishes it from that of his predecessors in that it adopts ideas from mathematics, science, and philosophy. He says that for the premises of his arguments, he draws on both "the outer horizon" (*āfāq*) and "the inner selves" (*anfus*),<sup>30</sup> that include almost all fields of science, mathematics, philosophy, and religion.<sup>31</sup> His argument is based on the premise that the order of the universe is grounded in the degree of excellence (*al-tafāḍul*). In every species, there is one individual that is the summit in nobility in that species, and the human species is the highest in rank among all species. The perfection and summit of humanity includes the prophet and his progeny. As mentioned above, Abū al-Fawāris also relies on this hierarchical narrative of creation and considers the imam as the pinnacle, but Naysābūrī's adoption of the narrative is more systematic and he seems more methodologically conscious. He explains his methodology, including the sources for his findings, before presenting his proofs. He differs from Abū al-Fawāris also in his incorporation of political concepts and usage of Greek political doctrines through the influence of Fārābī.<sup>32</sup> From the premises that (1) authority is necessary as people need teaching (*ta'lim*), (2) teaching must ultimately come from a divine source, and (3) only the imam has access to infallible knowledge, Naysābūrī concludes the necessity of obedience to the imam:

We also say that since people are ignorant at the time of their birth, having no knowledge, and as knowledge does not come to them from nature, nor does speech, [therefore] they need teaching ... People do need teaching, one learning from the other until they reach the one who has had no

teaching from anyone but who received it through inspiration, not through teaching ... that is the prophet and the imam, peace be upon them. This is among the most cogent or convincing proofs for the confirmation of the imamate and the messengership (*al-risāla*).<sup>33</sup>

For Naysābūrī, the imam's knowledge goes beyond religious and political matters. Naysābūrī believes that all forms of human knowledge, such as arithmetic and geometry, also came from the imams, whom he identifies as all the sages from the beginning of creation. In sum, the imams are "God's proofs unto His creation" (*ḥujjat Allah 'alā khalqih*).<sup>34</sup>

## 3.2 Kirmānī's Theory of the Imamate

Ḥamīd al-Dīn Kirmānī wrote his treatise on the imamate before moving to Fatimid Cairo and before the appearance of Naysābūrī's work, mentioned in the previous section. Regarding their methodology, Kirmānī and Naysābūrī are similar in two respects. First, they rely on Greek philosophy in their arguments for the necessity of the imamate and related matters. Second, they take a moderate approach to the imamate of al-Ḥākīm and avoid the extremist belief in his divinity which was advocated by the "unorthodox" Isma'īlism of the time, especially that of the Drūze.<sup>35</sup> Yet Naysābūrī addresses the Isma'īlis in Egypt under the rule of al-Ḥākīm, while Kirmānī wrote his treatise on the imamate for a non-Isma'īli audience in Baghdad, especially trying to appeal to the Shī'ī vizier of the Buyids, Fakhr al-Mulk (d. 407/1016).<sup>36</sup> In addition, Naysābūrī is said to have included Greek philosophy only as a "declaration" rather than as a method of philosophical demonstration, and his ultimate purpose is the praise of al-Ḥākīm.<sup>37</sup>

In the prologue to his treatise, Kirmānī draws on the narrative of knowledge as emanation (*fayḍ*) from above, and in praising the vizier, Fakhr al-Mulk, for his "perception and knowledge" (*al-dirāya wa'l-'ilm*),<sup>38</sup> he also attributes "infallibility" (*iṣma*) to him. Moreover, he closes the prologue by claiming that his own knowledge has come to him through the imams and saints and asks for assistance from God and His friend (*walī*) or saint to complete the task.<sup>39</sup> He calls his task of proving the

imamate a “jihad that God has imposed on him.”<sup>40</sup> Similarly, in his prologue to *Rāḥat al-‘aql*, Kirmānī prays to God and His friend on earth (*walīhi fi ardīhi*) to bestow on him “infallibility” (*‘iṣma*) to complete the task of writing the treatise.<sup>41</sup> The fact that Kirmānī is applying the term *‘iṣma* in such an inclusive manner to people outside the circle of the imamte, including himself, requires explanation. One can either explain this application as a figure of speech and compliment to a grand statesman, or take it literally and find grounds for it in Kirmānī's thought. The first of these is less likely because the term “infallibility” (*‘iṣma*) has important theological associations in Shī‘ī discourses. It is true that the associations and connotations of *‘iṣma* are more visible in the verbal and written discourses of Twelvers, and a systematic treatment of it appears among the theologians of the tenth and eleventh centuries. But it is also important in Isma‘ilism due to the imam's task of esoteric interpretation (*ta'wīl*) of the Qur'an<sup>42</sup> as well as his religious and legal authority.<sup>43</sup>

Moreover, Kirmānī has devoted one Light in *al-Maṣābiḥ* to the necessity of the imam's infallibility, which will be discussed subsequently. As for the literal use of the term within the Isma‘ili context, attribution of infallibility to people outside the prophet's immediate family and their progeny seems to be grounded in the inspirational knowledge that is attributed not only to the imams but also to those who access infallible knowledge through the intermediary of those imams. Kirmānī himself hopes to have reached this point, or at least prays for it, but the noble epistemic state is regarded as an actualized reality in a wise Shī‘ī ruler, reminiscent of Rāzī's sages<sup>44</sup> and Fārābī's perfect ruler as mentioned in the previous section of this chapter. Nevertheless, bearing in mind his hierarchical psychology/epistemology as discussed in the previous chapter, one must understand the attribution of infallibility to those other than the prophet and the imams as being intended in a limited sense. First, the direct access to the divine world through inspiration (*ta'yīd*) differentiates the prophet and the imams from other ranks. Second, there must be a difference of scope between them. While the former are infallible in all kinds of knowledge, there is no proof as to the same scope of infallible knowledge for the latter. The reason for this is that as a high ranking *dā‘ī*, Kirmānī is

at the mercy of the imam for his knowledge, and resorts to him whenever necessary. For example, Kirmānī seeks immunity from errors in writing on the imamate though he cannot extend this to all other instances of knowledge in other domains. Nor would he be able to make a case for moral infallibility in any aspects of life other than in this particular task which he is trying to accomplish as a *dāʿī*.

Similar to Rāzī in his approach to the authority of the imam, in *al-Maṣābīḥ* Kirmānī uses a Neoplatonic framework to ground epistemic authority in the possibility of receiving knowledge through emanation from above. Therefore, to analyze Kirmānī's use of a synthetic discourse in his speculative formulization of the imamate, one can search for the Neoplatonic narratives of light, emanation, inspiration, and spiritual evolution, in relation to the Ismaʿīli doctrines of the imam's infallibility, and the necessity of his teaching. Moreover, in another study, one could discuss the imagery of light in relation to Persian intellectual discourse as a synthesis of mythological, hermetical, and theological narratives.<sup>45</sup>

Beginning with the title of Kirmānī's treatise on proof of the imamate, *al-Maṣābīḥ fi ithbāt al-imāma*, the literal translation in English would be *The Lamps in Proving the Imamate*. The literal translation for the Arabic term *miṣbāḥ* is "lamp," which can also be translated into "light" by way of synecdoche. Walker points out Kirmānī's remarks on his use of the term "*miṣbāḥ*" as an allusion to the verse in the Qur'an "and we have adorned the earthly sky with lights (*maṣābīḥ*) and made them things to throw at Satans" (Q. 67:5). The term stands for both the proofs that he offers for the imamate and the imams themselves.<sup>46</sup>

Kirmānī's treatise on the imamate consists of two major parts or "Discourses" (singular. *maqāla*). The first one discusses the premises (*muqadamāt*) that are necessary for proving the imamate in the next part of the treatise. It consists of seven Lights (*sabʿa maṣābīḥ*) beginning with an introduction, followed by proofs for the existence of the Maker (*al-Ṣāniʿ*), the everlasting soul (*al-naḥs al-bāqī*), the divine regime (*al-sīyāsa al-rabbāniyya*), the necessity of laws and regulations (*al-sharāʿiʿ waʾl-rusūm*), interpretation (*taʾwīl*), and prophetic office (*al-risāla*).<sup>47</sup>

The primary object of my analysis is the second Discourse, which builds on the premises in the first Discourse to prove the necessity of the imamate in general and the particular line of the imamate in Ismaʿīlism.

As in the first part, the second Discourse consists of seven Lights with each of these including several Demonstrations (singular. *burhān*). It is important to note that this part is immediately preceded by a proof for the necessity of the prophetic office, in the last Demonstration of the previous Discourse. That proof is based on the Neoplatonic doctrine of cosmic hierarchy or the degrees of excellence (*tafāḍul*). As previously mentioned, the Brethren incorporated this Neoplatonic doctrine into *al-Rasā'il*<sup>48</sup> and it became one of the hallmarks of Ismā'īli cosmology, prophetology, and imamology. According to the seventh Demonstration in the seventh Light of the first Discourse,

Each species that falls within a genus ends, in the specifics of its species, at what is more noble than all the rest of the same species. It is the foremost of them all and their leader because God singled it out with a superior excellence ... The human being is a species of animal and it is likewise necessary that they, too, have an end ultimately, in what is nobler than the rest and more knowledgeable than them all. He is their chief because of God singling him out with superior excellence, just as is the case with every other species ...<sup>49</sup>

Kirmānī builds his arguments in the first Light of the second Discourse on the necessity of the prophetic office, which has been established in the first Discourse. The fourteen Demonstrations in the first Light follow this line of argument:

- A. There are certain tasks that the Messenger of God (*Rasūl Allah*) had to fulfill as commanded by God's far-reaching wisdom (*al-ḥikma al-bāligha*) in creation.
- B. It would be contrary to God's far-reaching wisdom if no one were left in charge of those tasks after the Messenger. Therefore, the imamate is necessary.

Apart from relying on religious premises such as the Qur'anic doctrine of divine wisdom, which is admissible only in theological arguments, from a logical point of view, Kirmānī's arguments also seem to make an invalid deduction from the necessity of a deputy to the necessity of the

imamate. Nevertheless, he starts from a general idea of the imam as simply a deputy (*muwakkil*) of the Prophet, which seems to have a wider scope in the first Light. In this first Light, the imamate in the Shī'ī sense of the term is mainly suggested by several Shī'ī traditions such as the tradition of “the two precious things” (*ḥadīth al-thaqalayn*). It is only when we reach the next Lights that he introduces unique qualifications for the imam in order to ensure the exclusive applicability of the concept to the family of the prophet. He prepares the ground for this exclusive application in the first Light with the types of tasks that are the responsibility of the Prophet. These tasks are: protecting God's trust (*amāna Allah*); watching over the correct practice of the divine law (*sharī'a*); discovering the true meaning of the Qur'an; judging (*ḥukm*) between adversaries; guiding the community and interceding between them and God; summoning them to God and warning them against evil; ensuring the community's purity through implementing the purifying tax (*al-zakā*) that is the obligation of alms-giving; safeguarding public security; settling disagreements over religious matters; fulfilling Qur'anic promises and being the referent for Qur'anic references; fulfilling divine justice; and perfecting the world of law (*al-ʿālam al-waḍʿ*).<sup>50</sup> Kirmānī captures the gist of the tasks at the very end of the first Light. He says,

... the appointment of the imam is the ultimate obligation. In him the world of the law (*al-ʿālam al-waḍʿ*) is completed. God declared this principle when he imposed it; He said: “Today I have perfected for you your religion and I have completed for you my favour” [(Q. 5:3)]. And he connected the silent (*al-ṣāmit*) prophet with the speaking (*al-nāṭiq*) [prophet] who said: “I have left among you the two anchors, the Book of God and my family.”<sup>51</sup> The family functions, with respect to the Book and the law, as does the soul with respect to the world of the individual (*al-ʿālam al-shakhs*), and as do the angels with respect to this world [below] (*al-ʿālam al-dunyā*). Thus the imamate is obligatory (*wājib*).<sup>52</sup>

In his arguments for the necessity of the imamate, Kirmānī makes extensive use of Qur'anic verses and traditions but is very sparing with philosophical concepts. The second Discourse of the treatise is one Kirmānī's least philosophical writings. However, there is a strong Platonic element

underlying his theory of the imamate with regard to the insignificant role of people in choosing their leader. In addressing this issue, his particular target is the Sunni belief in the validity of consensus (*ijmāʿ*). Before expounding on this point, it is important to remember that as a corollary to the necessity of a deputy for the Prophet, Kirmānī attributes to the imam both political and religious tasks in the Muslim community. The imam is not only in charge of interpreting the Qur'an and traditions and solving issues regarding religious beliefs and practices, but he is also the supreme judge in legal matters and the ultimate decision-maker in the public affairs of the Muslim community, including its economic arrangements. Intellectually, morally, and politically, the imam is an instance of Fārābī's perfect ruler "over whom nobody has any sovereignty whatsoever."<sup>53</sup>

The demanding nature of the imam's responsibilities as both the spiritual/religious and political leader of the community requires infallibility (*ʿiṣma*) on his part. As mentioned before, the doctrine of infallibility is central to Twelver Shi'ism<sup>54</sup> and it indicates immunity from both moral lapses and errors of judgment. Kirmānī seems to understand infallibility in a very similar sense. For Kirmānī, the imam is similar to the Prophet in being "the treasure-trove of wisdom and knowledge (*maʿdan al-ḥikma wa'l-ʿilm*)" as well as being "trustworthy, reliable, incapable of perfidy (*khīyāna*) in regard to anything entrusted to him, or of an error in what he is charged with doing."<sup>55</sup> In *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, Kirmānī attributes moral infallibility to those whose souls are inspired from heaven (*al-muʿayyadīn min al-samāʾ*):

Ugly acts (*al-afʿāl al-qabīḥa*) do not proceed from those who are truly human (*insān bi'l-ḥaqīqa*) such as the prophets (*al-anbyāʾ*) and the ones inspired from the heaven (*al-muʿayyadīn min al-samāʾ*) because of the actual subsistence (*qyām bi'l-fiʿl*) of their souls and their attainment of everlasting perfection, virtue, and happiness (*al-kamāl wa'l-faḍīla wa'l-saʿāda al-abadiyya*), like a date (*al-ruṭab*) which has reached its perfection so it has nothing but sweetness.<sup>56</sup>

As mentioned at the end of Chap. 2 of the present study, according to Kirmānī, the soul of the imam is the transparent intermediary of all the knowledge that he receives through emanation. In the theory of the

imamate in *al-Maṣābīḥ fi ithbāt al-imāma*, the imam's infallibility is demonstrated as a necessary requirement for the tasks which are his responsibility. Most importantly, the imam plays a role that can be interpreted as similar to that of the agent intellect (*al-ʿaql al-faʿāl*) with respect to the type of knowledge which individual souls need to perfect themselves and achieve salvation. This is owing to Kirmānī's intellectual soteriology, whereby the perfection of the human soul or her "second procession" (*al-inbiʿāth al-thānī*) depends on her connection to the world of the intellects through the intermediary of the inspired ones (*al-nufūs al-muʿayyada*). As he states in *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*:

Those intellects that are potential in their subsistence (*al-ʿuqūl al-qāʾima bi'l-quwwa*), [that is, the souls of ordinary human beings], will never subsist in actuality (*qyām bi'l-fiʿl*), [as ultimate perfection and happiness], unless through a guiding agent (*al-bāʿith al-hādī*) from the transcendent God (*Allah taʿālā*), who is the totally inspired one (*al-muʿayyad al-tāmm*) and subsistent in perfection and actuality (*al-qāʾim bi'l-kamāl wa'l-fiʿl*) such as our Prophet, Muḥammad—peace be upon him and his descendants—and those who succeed him in guidance (*hidāya*) and instruction (*taʿlīm*).<sup>57</sup>

The first Discourse of *al-Maṣābīḥ* includes a chapter on the soul (*nafs*) that places a great emphasis on knowledge as essential for the existential perfection of the soul, and from that Kirmānī deduces the necessity of the imam's teaching. In the Light on the soul in the first Discourse of *al-Maṣābīḥ*, Kirmānī discusses knowledge within a soteriological context; that is, the final destination of the immortal soul after death. Kirmānī's soteriology is based on his characterization of the human soul as: (1) "devoid of knowledge (*ghayru ʿālima*) on its own and therefore in need of instruction (*taʿlīm*)," (2) alive in its essence, (3) not adjoined to or mixed with anything (*lā yujāwir wa lā yukhālīt*), and (4) capable of receiving emanation from the world of unity (*al-ʿālam al-waḥda*), that is the divine world, with knowledge and choice (*bi'l-ʿilm wa'l-ikhtiyār*).<sup>58</sup> According to Kirmānī,

Everything comes into existence for something and it moves toward that thing. We observe this plainly in the progress of the three kingdoms, which are animals, plants, and minerals, into that from which they have come

into existence, which are the four elements (*ummahāt*). The soul's coming into existence and its education from the beginning lies in knowledge, which is not of the world of nature but rather of the world of the sacred (*al-ʿālam al-quds*), which is the realm of the eternal. The progress of the soul in accord with what it acquires of knowledge, whether bad or noble, is toward eternity.<sup>59</sup>

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Kirmānī follows Aristotelian psychology regarding the origination of the soul along with the body, in which he diverges from his Neoplatonic Ismaʿili predecessors such as Muḥammad Nasafī (d. 332/943), Abū Ḥātim Rāzī (d. 323/934), and Abū Yaʿqūb Sijistānī (d. after 361/971). We also saw that his psychological/epistemic discourse incorporated the Neoplatonic narrative of existential perfection. With these points in mind, the above quotation concisely covers Kirmānī's theory of knowledge and the doctrine of the second procession of the soul through receiving emanation from above. The human soul is devoid of knowledge in the beginning, but it has the potential to rise above being a merely living substance to a knowing substance through acquiring knowledge.<sup>60</sup> Kirmānī defines knowledge as "the form of a thing (*ṣūra al-shayʿ*) in accord with what it is—as to the state of its existence, its quality, quantity, manner, and purpose."<sup>61</sup> Here he is referring to the conceptual knowledge that he considers necessary for the human souls not only to "rise above the beasts (*bahā'im*)" but "distinguish themselves from the beasts."<sup>62</sup> The gradual process of knowledge acquisition matches the gradual soul-making<sup>63</sup> that is facilitated by teaching at different levels. What Kirmānī is describing is not merely the realization (*tahaqquq*) of knowledge in the soul; it is also the realization of the human soul in its very existence. Perfection is not just perfecting a quality in the soul, but perfecting its very substance, which gains its identity as the human soul and its self-recognition as such.

Now if the salvation of the human soul lies in its perfection through knowledge which is from "the world of the sacred" (*al-ʿālam al-quds*), as in the above quotation from Kirmānī, and it is not capable of acquiring such knowledge on its own, there should, therefore, be a teacher. Such transmission of truths from the world above to the human soul requires the medium to be flawless. Therefore, the imam who is, after the prophet,

the epistemic link between the human soul and the world above, must necessarily be infallible.<sup>64</sup>

On the other hand, consistent with the doctrine of the double observance,<sup>65</sup> the knowledge that the soul needs for salvation includes both the esoteric and the exoteric. The souls of the imam's followers need to be enlightened in both matters of the spirit and matters of the law. Both aspects of the religion should be observed under the instruction of the infallible imam so that the private and the public spheres of the Muslim community/city/society mutually support each other. Kirmānī writes in the Aristotelian tradition of associating individual happiness with the correctness and happiness of the community and vice versa.<sup>66</sup> Like Fārābī, for Kirmānī living in a virtuous community is necessary in order to lead a virtuous life.<sup>67</sup> As a result, the infallible imam is both the spiritual and political leader of the Muslim community. Once he establishes the necessity of the imamate and the necessity of the imam's infallibility, Kirmānī devotes two Lights of the treatise to the issue of appointment (*naṣṣ*). In the fourth Light of *al-Maṣābīḥ*, Kirmānī tries to prove that the populace is not capable of choosing its imams, and in the fifth Light he proves that the imam is chosen by God and appointed by the Prophet. The two Lights draw on similar narratives and examples.

Granted that for Kirmānī the community (*al-umma*) needs the instruction of the imam to achieve knowledge and recognition of truths in all spheres of life, it must also be reliant on the imam in the matter of choosing him, which creates a vicious circle. This issue is traditionally discussed under the Shī'ī doctrine of divine designation or appointment (*naṣṣ min Allah*).<sup>68</sup> Kirmānī's arguments are based on his disdain for the Sunni doctrine of consensus (*ijmā' al-nās*),<sup>69</sup> and his distrust of the populace (*qāṭiba al-nās*) reflects the Platonic discourse of rulership. To prove that consensus has no binding force in choosing the imam, Kirmānī simply relies on counterexamples from the time of the Prophet when some groups of people agreed unanimously that the Prophet "was a liar, a charlatan, and was mad and that he was not a prophet."<sup>70</sup> For him, counterexamples show that consensus cannot be a source of authority. He assumes that the source of an appointment should be the cause (*'illa*) of it. So, if consensus were the cause of the authority, it would always produce it, which is not the case, as in the above counterexamples.<sup>71</sup>

What underlies the above arguments for the imam's appointment is the narrative denigrating the people's choices based on the Platonic elitist discourse of knowledge. People are not even qualified "to choose their judges and appoint their own notary witnesses."<sup>72</sup> They cannot recognize the category of something unless there is a visible sign. He says in the fourth Light that,

Because the imam must be infallible and the infallibility of the imam is not some mark on the face, nor such as to be readily apparent in his constitution so that the community would have a means to recognize him, it is inconceivable and incorrect that choosing him is the responsibility of the community. Hence, their choosing is not valid.<sup>73</sup>

And he repeats the same argument in the fifth Light in his proof for the exclusiveness of the choice to God and His Messenger:

The imamate is not some distinctive mark in creatures present and obvious such as an increase or decrease in some body part ... An example is the long neck in the camel or the existence of a trunk in the elephant, which when present in it, its nature indicates its species. Acknowledgment of the imam is obligatory (*wājib*) in religion but there is no path to religious understanding other than through the Messenger. Hence the imamate is not valid except by his choice, designation and indication.<sup>74</sup>

Therefore, for Kirmānī, lacking the knowledge necessary for recognizing the imam of the time, people would make incorrect choices. In *al-Risāla maawsūma bi Mabāsīm al-bishārāt*, which was written later than *al-Maṣābiḥ*, Kirmānī mentions a category of the "false imam" (*imam al-dalāl*) in opposition to the "true imam" (*imam al-ḥaqq*). For Kirmānī, "the false imam is appointed either by himself or by [ordinary] people."<sup>75</sup> The false imam is the opposite of the true imam in that he is not appointed by the divine command to guide people and he does not possess the knowledge that comes through divine inspiration (*ta'yīd*). In the tables and tablets (*alwāḥ*) at the end of *al-Maṣābiḥ*, one can find those characteristics which are present in the true imams but missing in the false ones. In addition to a series of moral and spiritual traits, these include essential attributes such as being a descendant of the Prophet and a

descendant of Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī, the true imams possess legal and religious authority, which is based on “knowledge of the Book and the law” (*ʿilm bi'l-kitāb wa' l-sharīʿa*).<sup>76</sup> In contrast, false imams are “devoid of all knowledge” (*khālī min al-ʿulūm*).<sup>77</sup> The knowledge that the true imam possesses is both theoretical and practical. The imam’s theoretical knowledge concerns a firm grasp of the literal sense of the figurative verses in the Qurʾan and those that are ambiguous,<sup>78</sup> as well as of the meaning of the doctrines of faith and acts of worship, which is necessary in order to guide a community gripped by doubts.<sup>79</sup> As for the practical knowledge required, it concerns the everyday life of a Muslim community including juridical decisions and collecting the purifying tax (*al-zakā*). In the fifth Light of the second Discourse, which is on the imamate of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, Kirmānī expounds on knowledge and practice as an essential “instrument” (*ʿāla*) for the prophetic profession and that of the imamate:

The stipulations of Islam that form the prophetic profession are like the others in being divided into knowledge of the manner of religious obligations (*al-farāʿid*), what is permitted and what is forbidden, the corporeal punishments (*al-ḥudūd*), legal stipulations (*al-aḥkām*), revelation (*al-tanzīl*), interpretation (*al-taʾwīl*); and into practice, which are purity (*al-ṭahāra*), prayer (*al-ṣalā*), the purifying tax (*al-zakā*), fasting (*al-ṣawm*), pilgrimage (*al-ḥajj*), striking with the sword, and what else has a function like these. Knowledge and practice belonged to ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib more than to any of the Companions (*al-Ṣaḥāba*) who lived after the Prophet. That judgment determines that he was most suited for governing and most worthy of the imamate.<sup>80</sup>

In *al-Maṣābīḥ*, Kirmānī highlights knowledge as one of the essential qualifications for the true imam, and also as the main reason why people cannot choose their imams, in that they lack infallible knowledge and “the community which is not infallible, is precluded from choosing;”<sup>81</sup> yet, Kirmānī does not expound on the nature of this knowledge and how it is achieved by the imam. The “Discourse on the Imamate” is written in such a way as to convince a non-Ismaʿīli audience of the credibility of the Ismaʿīli line of the imamate, culminating in the religious and political

authority of al-Ḥākim; so Kirmānī's discourse in this context seems to avoid technical, philosophical language. For the technical discussion of how the soul transforms through knowledge, again one needs to refer to *Raḥat al-ʿaql*, as discussed in the previous chapter. Except for the logical structure of the arguments and its use of philosophical terminology in some passages, the Discourse on the imamate does not have philosophical value. Nevertheless, this does not diminish the practical use it makes of rational tools and philosophical rhetoric to gain intellectual credibility for the discourse of the imamate in the eyes of his non-Ismaʿili audience.<sup>82</sup>

At this point, it is important to examine the influence of Kirmānī's writings on the imamology and discourses of authority among later Twelver thinkers, particularly Mullā Ṣadrā, through intermediary figures. In what follows, I will focus on Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274) because of the synthetic structure of his writings and the multidimensional character of his intellectual career.

### 3.3 Reappearance of Philosophical Imamology in the Works of Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī

The discursive continuation of Kirmānī's rational imamology is most observable in the works of Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī. In this section, I will highlight the Ismaʿili narrative of "instruction" (*taʿlīm*) in relation to the philosophical doctrine of superior knowledge in two Ismaʿili treatises attributed to Ṭūsī, *Rawḍa-yi taslīm*<sup>83</sup> and *Sayr wa sulūk*.<sup>84</sup> I will try to show that the type of imamological discourse formulated in the early Fatimid tradition and developed by Kirmānī was most probably a source of inspiration for Ṭūsī's philosophical imamology. I do not discuss Ṭūsī's *Tajrīd al-ʿitiqād* (*The Summa of Dogma*)<sup>85</sup> and *Risāla al-imāma* (*The Treatise of the Imamate*),<sup>86</sup> which he wrote as a Twelver philosopher-theologian. However, I would like to point out here that *Tajrīd al-ʿitiqād*, which is known by Twelvers as their first systematic philosophical theology, is similar in its structure to Kirmānī's *al-Maṣābiḥ*.<sup>87</sup> In tandem with

my methodology, I am not trying to prove an actual influence, but rather a discursive one that becomes effectual when concepts and narratives from different discursive fields attract each other and commingle to create a stronger field of power. Within the confines of this study, I will not discuss Ṭūsī's intellectual career, nor all aspects of the treatises cited in this section.<sup>88</sup> Rather than discussing Ṭūsī in his own right, I draw mainly on a selection of narratives to bring to the surface the discursive bridge that they perhaps created between Kirmānī and Mullā Ṣadrā.

Even in the possible absence of an intentional incorporation of ideas from Kirmānī on the part of Ṭūsī, the latter still provides a significant example by means of which we can probe the discursive continuation from Kirmānī to Mullā Ṣadrā because he wrote both in the Isma'ili and Twelver contexts. Regarding the influence of Ṭūsī on Mullā Ṣadrā, there is, of course, sufficient textual evidence in the latter's writing, though in some cases he may not cite Ṭūsī explicitly.<sup>89</sup> Moreover, Ṭūsī's writings are a synthesis of philosophical, theological, scriptural, and Sufi discourses, a characteristic that must have served as a bridge between Isma'ili and Twelver intellectual traditions of imamology.<sup>90</sup>

In both *Sayr wa Sulūk* and *Rawḍa-yi taslīm*, Ṭūsī intertwines psychology/epistemology with the theological doctrine of instruction (*ta'lim*) and the role it has in the existential perfection of the human soul.<sup>91</sup> In his narratives of the soul, the potential/actual, emanation, and perfection are the key concepts and he believes that "the soul's nobility (*sharaf-i nafs*) lies in its knowledge."<sup>92</sup> Through knowledge, the potential in the human soul for perfection can be actualized. Beginning with the Aristotelian definition of the human soul in Peripatetic philosophy as "the first perfection of the natural organic body (*kamāl-i auwal-i jism-i ṭabī'ī 'ālī*)," Ṭūsī proceeds to adopt a narrative of existential evolution through which the soul can grow in intensity and gain proximity to the divine:

... [the soul's] initial state is pure potentiality (*quwwat-i hayūlānī*). For just as the individual person (*shakhs*) exists potentially in the sperm, so the ultimate perfection of the human being exists *in potentia* in the soul. The soul's particular activity is to become gradually, and by degrees, an immaterial

form (*ṣūrat-i mujarrad*), whose very life is actualized in God almighty... It is clear that by absorbing the excellence of knowledge, one soul excels over others in strength until it attains the degree of the souls of the great *ḥujjās*<sup>93</sup> who by the purity of their essence, become capable of receiving emanations of the light of the sublime Word (*anwār-i kalīma-yi a'la*) and become distinguished from other souls through divine instruction (*ta'lim-i rabbānī*). By the grace of their teaching and learning, they rescue from darkness the souls of men, who are bound in the ocean of matter and shackled by the ties of nature.<sup>94</sup>

The evolutionary and holistic narrative of spiritual growth adopted in the above quotation seems to differentiate Ṭūsī from his Peripatetic predecessors and brings him closer to the Illuminationist (*ishrāqī*) narratives of substantial intensification in the philosophy of Suhrawardī (d. 586/1191).<sup>95</sup> However, the latter remark would be too simplistic if we did not take into consideration the Isma'ili framework of Ṭūsī's theory of the soul.<sup>96</sup> In light of my methodology, in his writings on knowledge and the soul, Ṭūsī is relying on a synthesis of narratives from Peripatetic, Illuminationist, Fatimid Isma'ili, and Sufi discourses. Moreover, the synthesis facilitates a smooth transition from the Isma'ili imamology of Kirmānī to the Twelver imamology of Mullā Ṣadrā which I will discuss in the next chapter.

Ṭūsī's text combines Ibn Sīnā's division of the rational soul and his view of the relationship between the acquired intellect (*al-ʿaql al-mustafād*) and the agent intellect (*al-ʿaql al-fāʿil*) with a narrative of existential realization. Regarding the former, he uses Ibn Sīnā's mirror imagery<sup>97</sup> which suggests an epistemic connection rather than an actual change in the substance of the soul. Ṭūsī describes the acquired intellect as a mirror which is held in front of the agent intellect.<sup>98</sup> In another place, he uses the analogy of natural matter (*hayūlā*)/form (*ṣūra*) in explaining the relation of knowledge and action to the human soul:

... The beginning of the soul is simple (*sāda*) and takes shape through knowledge (*ma'rifa*), opinion (*ra'y*), analogy (*qiyās*), moral disciplines (*ʿādāt*), and manners (*a'māl*). Each of these states assumes a form [that molds] the substance of each soul which becomes the matter (*hayūlā*) of that form.<sup>99</sup>

This relation is comparable to the actualization of natural substances by the agent intellect as “the giver of forms (*wāhib al-ṣuwar*),”<sup>100</sup> that is mentioned a few passages prior to the above quotation. On the other hand, there are the previously mentioned three forms of knowing, of which only one, *maʿrifā* (which I prefer to translate as “intuitive cognition”) is the way to truth. For Ṭūsī, “we are unable to choose truth through our own judgment [based on] opinion (*raʿy*) and analogy (*qiyās*).”<sup>101</sup> Therefore, the form of knowledge bestowed by the agent intellect on the soul is intuitive cognition, whose immediacy is comparable to vision.<sup>102</sup> The individual soul that has reached this degree of knowledge and spiritual existence is the *ḥujja*. In this regard, the imam is likened to the agent intellect of Peripatetic philosophy who radiates the lights of inspirational knowledge (*tayīd*), and the intuitive cognition (*maʿrifā*) of the *ḥujja* comes from “the outpouring of the imam’s illuminations (*fayḍ-i anwār-i tayīd-i imām*) that has become united with his thoughts.”<sup>103</sup> This gives the imam’s *ḥujja* or representative the power and credibility to actualize the potential in the souls of others and perfect them through instruction (*taʿlīm*).<sup>104</sup>

Ṭūsī shares with Kirmānī the Neoplatonic narrative of existential transformation. As mentioned in Chap. 2, Kirmānī says:

Once the rational soul succeeds in scaling its ranks (*marātib*) between its potential and actual states of existence, as we explained before, and its substance is *ennobled*, and what is left of its natural attachments is *transformed*, [and it assumes] an intelligible form (*al-ṣūra al-ʿaqliyya*) such as happens when the acidity of sour grapes is changed by accepting impacts ... then through [these changes] the rational soul will attain permanence and perfection and becomes eternally and fully subsistent at the rank of the second procession (*al-inbiʿāth al-thānī*).<sup>105</sup>

Additionally, similar to Kirmānī, Ṭūsī follows the Peripatetic theory of the stratified rational soul and, like him, changes direction from the Peripatetic theory in attributing the role of the agent intellect to the top ranks of Ismaʿīli *daʿwa* through the medium of *taʿlīm*. For both, the human soul can reach the highest rank of nobility by receiving emanations from the imam through the instruction of his representa-

tives. For Ṭūsī who, unlike Kirmānī, lives at a time when the imam does not have comprehensive rule over a large community, the role of the *ḥujja* in actualizing the potential of the peoples' souls is overemphasized. It is the *ḥujja* who is directly in charge of the mission of instructing people during the concealment of the imam. The crucial role and absolute authority of the imam's representatives in Nizārī Isma'īlism is a major theme in Ṭūsī's Isma'īli writings. For him, while the imam is the manifestation of the divine Word (*kalima*) or Command (*amr*),<sup>106</sup> "his supreme *ḥujja* is the manifestation of the First Intellect, that is, the visibility and power of the illumination of the First Intellect is made manifest through him."<sup>107</sup>

The doctrine of instruction is the main theme in Ṭūsī's spiritual autobiography, *Sayr wa sulūk*. In my opinion, rather than writing *Sayr wa sulūk* to serve primarily as his autobiography, Ṭūsī chooses the autobiographical genre mainly for the purpose of developing and accentuating the doctrine of instruction (*ta'lim*) because the genre gives him the space to vividly show the crucial role of instruction in one's spiritual life. Furthermore, he explains that his discovery of the essential role of *ta'lim* was his main reason for joining the Isma'īlis who were also called the people of the instruction (*Ta'limiyya*).<sup>108</sup> As it is an intellectual autobiography, the text allows Ṭūsī to freely use a variety of discourses including theological, philosophical, and Sufi. Similar to world-famous intellectual autobiographies such as Saint Augustine's *Confessions*, Ṭūsī's *Sayr wa sulūk* unfolds the author's quest for the truth and his assessment of different schools of thought on the way to the attainment of certainty. Ṭūsī soon discovers that this task cannot be accomplished without assistance from above through *ta'lim*, as explained below.

Ṭūsī argues for the validity of the doctrine of *ta'lim* within an epistemological framework because of its relation to the question of truth and certainty. In addition, he opens his argument based on the Peripatetic principle that "in any existing thing perfection is potential (*bi'l-quwwa*) [and] it cannot change from potentiality into actuality by itself without being affected by something outside itself."<sup>109</sup> He links this to a second premise according to which the potential for knowledge lies in the human being. Then he concludes that instruction is necessary:

It thus becomes clear that without the instruction (*taʿlīm*) of a teacher (*muʿallim*), and the bringing to perfection (*ikmāl*) by an agent of perfection (*mukammil*), the attainment of the truth is not possible; that mankind, with its greater number and differences of opinion, is mistaken in its claim that truth can be reached solely through the intellect and reason; and that the believers in instruction (*Taʿlīmiyān*) are therefore correct.<sup>110</sup>

Once the necessity of instruction is established, Ṭūsī makes a case for who has the qualifications to be the instructor. He starts with the familiar doctrine of the hierarchy of creation that we have already encountered in our discussion of Kirmānī and Naysābūrī. Ṭūsī attributes to “philosophers” (*falāsifa*) the idea that the human being is “the noblest [type of being] in the whole of existence,” and concludes that the noblest knowledge can be revealed only to human beings.<sup>111</sup> On the other hand, at the level of speculative knowledge (*ʿilm-i nazārī*), which is acquired by reason alone, certainty cannot be achieved because the immediate object of knowledge in the mind is only a picture (*mithāl*) or form (*ṣūra*) which is not exactly the same as the real, external object.<sup>112</sup> Perfect knowledge, which is associated with certainty, must be achieved directly through the cause rather than the effect. The knowledge of the first instructor or the imam comes directly from God:

The followers of *taʿlīm* believe in the principle (*qāʿida*) that everyone, whatever his degree may be, knows his own instructor, who in turn knows his own instructor [and so on] to the first instructor, who knows God through God. As a result, everyone also comes to know God through God.<sup>113</sup>

To this Ṭūsī adds that by submitting to the knowledge of the instructor, the disciple finally can reach a state of “unification (*ittiḥād*)” with him that guarantees a happy “return (*maʿād*).” Here Ṭūsī is using a Sufi narrative of unification through knowledge, which he contrasts with what he calls the veil (*ḥijāb*) of multiplicity (*takaththur*).<sup>114</sup> Yet, the narrative is rich in philosophical terminology of matter (*mādda*)/form (*ṣūra*), and he considers knowledge as a form that determines the nature and rank of the individual human soul. After mentioning the role of natural forms in actualizing matter, he proceeds to explain a process that I called

“soul-making” in my discussion of Kirmānī above. The soul-making process results in the full blossoming of the soul through the actualization of its intellectual and spiritual potentialities, which guarantees nobility and a happy return of the soul along with the great soul of its instructor. The discourse he is using in this context is a synthesis of the Neoplatonic narrative of unification, the Sufi narrative of master–disciple spiritual connection, and Isma‘ili imamology. According to Ṭūsī,

It is the same in that world where souls, despite their various ranks, emanate from one origin and share in the same essence (*māhiyya*), but they are perpetuated [individually] by virtue of the forms they acquire, which is the cause of their coming into this world. So, if the form which is presented in the soul of the disciple is identical to that which is represented in the instructor's soul, and if his position is such that he knows through the knowledge of his instructor, and the instructor is in agreement with his return (*ma‘ād*), there will be no differentiation and multiplicity between their souls.<sup>115</sup>

Although the soul-making narrative of Ṭūsī differs from that of Kirmānī in that the former follows the Neoplatonic view of the origin of the soul, they share the emphasis on the role of the instructor in facilitating the second procession or return of the soul. However, nowhere does Kirmānī use the narrative of unification between the soul of the instructor/imam and that of the disciple. This unification narrative, which Ṭūsī uses above, is consistent with similar themes that he employs in other works.<sup>116</sup>

A little further on in the text, Ṭūsī's spiritual narrative of instruction and submission (*taslīm*) is extended to also incorporate political concepts. He announces the “the sovereignty of the absolute ruler (*sulṭa-yi ḥākimī*)” as a necessary requirement for the disciples' submission.<sup>117</sup> Adopting the analogy of human organic body, which is reminiscent of Farābī on rulership,<sup>118</sup> he calls the imam “the commander (*farmāndih*)”:

Now man, who is a part of the universe, stands in relation to the command of the administrator (*mudabbir*) and ruler (*ḥākim*) as do the organs and limbs in relation to the soul. Indeed he is in the position of tools and

appliances which are at the disposition of the craftsman, to the extent that if he senses even a speck of self-determination, free will, desire to dislike, any wish to reconsider or interpret the reasons for right and wrong, or to think that things should be like this or that [in contradiction to the command of the instructor], he should realize that it is the result of some imperfection in his essence, some illness in his soul, or some incompleteness in his beliefs.<sup>119</sup>

Therefore, Ṭūsī establishes the absolute authority of the imam and his representatives based on the necessity of instruction, the imam's access to certain knowledge, and his infallibility. This unique status is, in turn, based on the cosmic level that the imam occupies. He is the perfect human (*al-insān al-kāmil*),<sup>120</sup> and the manifestation of the Word (*kalima*).<sup>121</sup> Ṭūsī's text on the existential state of the Imam recalls the Sufi doctrine of the perfect human that is one of the discursive links between Sufism and Shi'ism:

Now you may call the Imam—may salutations ensue upon mention of him—either “Imam,” or the “eternal Face of God” (*wajh Allāh al-bāqī*), or the “Supreme Attribute” (*ṣifat-i a'zam*), or the “Great Name of God” (*nām-i buzurg-i khudāy*) or “the Manifestation of the Supreme Logos” (*mazhar-i kalima-yi a'lā*) or “the Truthful Master of the Age” (*muḥiqq-i waqt*). For he is all things even without creation, whereas all creation devoid of him is but nothing. All these titles have one and the same meaning.<sup>122</sup>

The Isma'ili-Sufi doctrine of the imam as the perfect human, the pole of existence, and the manifestation of the great name (*al-ism al-a'zam*) of Allah later becomes one of the major themes in the philosophical imamology of Mullā Ṣadrā. Clearly, Ṭūsī's influence on the synthetic discourse of Mullā Ṣadrā precedes that of Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī (d.787/1385), who is known for his Sufi formulation of Shi'ism and the application of the concept of the perfect human to the Shī'i imam.<sup>123</sup> I will expand this argument in the next chapter to prove the contribution of Ṭūsī to the further development of the synthetic narrative of the imamate in the writings of Mullā Ṣadrā. As previously mentioned, an inquiry into the integration of Shī'i-Sufi imamology into Mullā Ṣadrā's narrative of the imamate through the influence of Ṭūsī can help disclose traces of Isma'ili discourses in later Islamic philosophy.

## Notes

1. Some earlier works on political philosophy by al-Kindī (d. 252/866), Sarakhsī (d. 286/899), and Abū Zayd Balkhī (d. 322/934) are missing. Regarding Ismaʿili works in political philosophy, Patricia Crone believes that early Ismaʿili thinkers addressed the subject “independently from Fārābī.” See Patricia Crone, *Medieval Islamic Political Thought* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004; 2005, rpt.), 167. See also Patricia Crone, “The Ikhwan al-Safa: Between al-Kindi and al-Farabi,” in *The Fortress of the Intellect: Ismaili and other Islamic Studies in Honour of Farhad Daftary*, ed. Omar Alī-de-Unzaga, 189–213 (London/New York: I.B. Tauris in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2011). For Hans Daiber, Fārābī's political philosophy was formulated under the influence of Abū Ḥatim Rāzī. He regards Fārābī's work as “a unique combination of Platonic and Aristotelian elements on the basis of Ismaʿili doctrines about the imamate.” See Hans Daiber, “Political Philosophy,” in *History of Islamic Philosophy*, eds. Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman, 841–869 (London/New York: Routledge, 1996), II: 848. For a more detailed analysis of the Ismaʿili influence on Fārābī, see Hans Daiber, “The Ismaʿili Background of Fārābī's Political Philosophy: Abū Ḥatim ar-Rāzī as the Forerunner of Fārābī,” in *Gottes ist der Orient—Gottes ist der Okzident: Festschrift für Abdoljavad Falaturi zum 65 Geburtstag*, ed. Udo Tworuschka, 143–150 (Cologne and Vienna, 1991).
2. Richard Walzer, Introduction to *On the Perfect State*, by Abū Naṣr Fārābī, trans. Richard Walzer: *al-Fārābī on the Perfect State* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1982), 21. The chapters are quoted in Ikhwān al-Ṣafā, *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā wa Khullān al-wafā*, ed. Khayr al-Dīn Ziriklī (Cairo: 1928), IV: 182.
3. Plato, *The Republic*, trans. G.M.A. Grube (Indianapolis, IN: Hachette Publishing Company, 1973), 190.
4. The influence of Fārābī on Kirmānī's cosmology both directly and through Abū Ya'qūb Sijistānī has been established in academic scholarship, though Kirmānī never mentions Fārābī in his works. See Daniel De Smet, “Al-Fārābī's Influence on Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī's Theory of Intellect and Soul,” in *In the Age of Al-Fārābī: Arabic Philosophy in the Fourth-Tenth Century*, ed. Peter Adamson, 131–150 (London: Warburg Institute, 2008); also see Daniel Carl

Peterson, “Cosmogony and the Ten Separated Intellects in the Rāḥat al-‘aql of Ḥamid al-Dīn al-Kirmānī” (PhD Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1990). But Fārābī’s influence on Kirmānī’s imamology has not yet been investigated. Moreover, Fārābī’s affinity with Shī‘ī ideology is a very controversial matter for which we do not have solid evidence. In contrast, there is a noteworthy consensus based on textual evidence over the Brethren regarding their Shī‘ī tendencies, particularly over the presence of Isma‘īli ideas in *al-Rasā’il* (*The Epistles*) and their influence on Ṭayyibī Isma‘īlis, who are said to have cited *al-Rasā’il*. On another note, contemporary scholars have sought evidence for traces of influence on Fatimid works. For example, Abbas Hamdani tries to prove that the early Fatimids were aware of *al-Rasā’il* and made references to it. See Abbas Hamdani, “An Early Fātimid Source on the Time and Authorship of the ‘Rasā’il Iḥwān al-Ṣafā,” *Arabica* 26:1 (February 1979): 62–75. Parts of *al-Rasā’il* have also been offered as examples of Fatimid propaganda (*da‘wa*). See Carmela Baffioni, “Iḥwān al-Ṣafā,” in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Stanford University, 2008), accessed November 17, 2015, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ikhwan-al-safa/>

For a concise report of different accounts on this issue, see Godefroid DeCallataÿ, “Brethren of Purity (Iḥwān al-Ṣafā’),” in *Encyclopedia of Islam Three* (Brill Online 2013), accessed November 17, 2015, [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/brethren-of-purity-ikhwan-al-safa-COM\\_25372](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/brethren-of-purity-ikhwan-al-safa-COM_25372)

5. Abū Naṣr Fārābī, *Mabādī’ ārā’ ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila*, trans. Richard Walzer: *On the Perfect State* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1982), 238, 239.
6. Fārābī, *Mabādī’ ārā’ ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila*, 246; 247.
7. Richard Walzer, Commentary on *the Perfect State*, by Abū Naṣr Fārābī, trans. Richard Walzer: *al-Fārābī On the Perfect State* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1982), 442.
8. On the doctrine of *ta’yīd*, see Abū Ya‘qūb Sijistānī, “Kitāb al-Yanābīc,” trans. Paul Ernest Walker: *The Wellsprings of Wisdom: Complete English Translation with Commentary and Notes on the Arabic Text* (Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah Press, 1994), 109–111. Also see Kirmānī,

*Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 304; 403–494. The philosophical formulization of knowledge by inspiration for the imam seems to have passed from Ismaʿili thinkers down to later Islamic philosophers such as Mullā Ṣadrā through Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī. See Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, *Rawḍa-yi taslīm*, ed. and trans. S. J. Badakhchani: *Paradise of Submission: A Medieval Treatise on Ismaili Thought* (London: I.B. Tauris in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2005). For Mullā Ṣadrā's use of this term, see Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī, *sharḥ uṣūl al-kāfi*, ed. Muḥammad Khājawī, 4 vols (Tehran: Pizhūhishgāh-i ʿulūm-i insāni wa muṭālaʿāt-i farhangī, 2004/1383 S.H), II: 473.

9. According to Fuzzi Najjar, Fārābī uses Neoplatonic philosophical framework to rationalize the political sovereignty of the imam based on his divinely inspired knowledge, in contrast to the popular status of the caliph. See M. Fuzzi Najjar, "Fārābī's Political Philosophy and Shi'ism," *Studia Islamica* 14 (1961): 57–72.
10. On this subject, see Ian Richard Netton, "Foreign Influences and Recurring Ismaʿili Motifs in the *Rasāʿil* of the Brethren of Purity," in *Islamic Philosophy and Theology: Critical Concepts in Islamic thought. Vol IV: Eclecticism, Illumination, and Reform*, ed. Ian Richard Netton, 16–29 (London/New York: Routledge, 2007).
11. Carmela Baffioni, "History, Language and Ideology in the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā's View of the Imamate," in *Authority, Privacy and Public Order in Islam: Proceedings of the 22nd Congress of L'Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants*, eds. B. Michalak-Pikulska and A. Pikulski Cracow, 17–28 (Poland: Peeters, 2006), 18; 25.
12. Ian R. Netton, "Brotherhood versus Imāmate: Ikhwān al-Ṣafā and the Ismāʿilis," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 2 (1980): 253–262.
13. For a discussion of this subject, see Muḥammad Farīd Ḥijāb, *al-Falsafa al-siyāsiyya ʿinda Ikhwān al-ṣafā* (Cairo: Maṭbaʿa al-hayʾat al-miṣriyya al-ʿamma al-kitāb, 1982), 193–194.
14. Ḥijāb, *al-Falsafa al-siyāsiyya ʿinda Ikhwān al-ṣafā*, 208.
15. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines: Conceptions of Nature and Methods Used for its Study by the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā, al-Birūnī, and Ibn Sina* (London, UK: Thames and Hudson, 1964; 1978), 66. Richard Ian Netton, "The *Rasāʿil* Ikhwān al-Ṣafā in the History of Ideas in Islam," in *Epistles of the Brethren of Purity: The Ikhwān al-Ṣafā and the Rasāʿil, an Introduction*, ed. Nader al-Bizri

- (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2008), 133.
16. For the intellectual dynamics in this school, see Paul E. Walker, *Early Philosophical Shiism: the Ismaili Neoplatonism of Abū Ya‘qūb Sijistānī* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993). Also see Samuel E. Stern, “The Early Isma‘ili Missionaries in North-West in Persia and Khorasan and Transoxiana,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 23 (1960): 56–90.
  17. See Abū Ḥatim Rāzī, *A‘lām al-nubuwwa*, trans. Tarif Khalidi: *The Proofs of Prophecy: A Parallel English-Arabic Text* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2011), 221. I have had to modify Khalidi’s translation of some terms for greater accuracy. This passage has also been translated by Everett K. Rowson. See Abū Ḥatim Rāzī, “A‘lām al-nubuwwah (Signs of Prophecy),” trans. Everett K. Rowson, in *An Anthology of Philosophy in Persia*, eds. Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Mehdi Aminrazavi, 2 vols (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2001), II:155. In this volume, the title of Rāzī’s treatise has mistakenly been translated as “Science of Prophecy,” while it should be “Signs/Proofs (a‘lām) of Prophecy.”
  18. Walker, *Early Philosophical Shiism*, 14.
  19. Daiber, “Political Philosophy,” 848.
  20. Abū Ḥatim al-Rāzī, *Kitāb al-Isḫāb*, ed. Ḥusām Khaḍḍūr (Salamiyya, Syria: Dār al-Ghadīr, 2008).
  21. Walker, *Early Philosophical Shiism*, 14.
  22. In Isma‘ili literature, the executor (*waṣī*), whose concrete example is ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, is in charge of interpreting the divine law provided by the Prophet as the speaker or legislator. See Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-‘aql*, 64–65.
  23. Walker, *Early Philosophical Shiism*, 127.
  24. It is possible to compare Sijistānī’s view of spontaneous conceptualization with Ibn Sīnā’s intellectual intuition (*ḥads*) in his *Kitāb al-Shifā’*. See Ibn Sīnā, *Avicenna’s De anima; Being the Psychological Part of Kitāb al-Shifā’*, ed. Fazlur Rahman (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), 249.
  25. Abū Ya‘qūb Sijistānī, “Kitāb al-Yanābī‘,” trans. Latimah Parvin Peerwani: “The Book of Wellsprings,” in *An Anthology of Philosophy in Persia*, eds. Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Mehdi Aminrazavi, 124–137 (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2001), 2:134. Paul E. Walker

- has translated the whole treatise. See Abū Yaʿqūb Sijistānī, *Kitāb al-Yanābīʿ*, trans. Paul Ernest Walker: *The Wellsprings of Wisdom: Complete English Translation with Commentary and Notes on the Arabic Text* (Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah Press, 1994).
26. Aḥmad ibn Yaʿqūb Abū al-Fawāris, *Al-Risāla fī'l-imāma*, trans. Sāmī Nasīb Makārim: *The Political Doctrine of the Ismāʿīlīs* (Delmar, NY: Caravan Books, 1977), 23. I made some corrections in quoting the English translation based on the Arabic text in this volume.
  27. Ibid.
  28. For Aristotle's psychology, see Michael Frede, "Aristotle's Conception of the Soul," in *Essays on Aristotle's De Anima*, eds. Martha C. Nussbaum and Amélie Oksenberg Rorty, 93–107 (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1995). For the influence of Aristotle on psychology in Islamic philosophy, see Deborah Black, "Psychology," in *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, eds. Peter Adamson and Richard C. Taylor, 308–326 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
  29. Plato, *The Republic*, Books VI and VII. The synthesis of Plato and Aristotle had already been carried out by Neoplatonic philosophers. It was adopted by the early Ismaʿīli philosophers in favor of arguments for the necessity of divinely inspired teachers.
  30. These are two Qurʾanic terms that refer to all of creation, i.e., the macrocosm of the universe and the inner world of the souls. The verse (Q 41:53) "We shall show them our signs in every region of the earth (*āfāq*) and in themselves (*anfus*) until it becomes clear to them that this is the Truth."
  31. Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm Naysābūrī, *Ithbāt al-imāma*, ed. and trans. Arzina R. Lalani: *Degrees of Excellence: A Fatimid Treatise on Leadership in Islam* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 34.
  32. Naysābūrī, *Ithbāt al-imāma*, 62. The translator of the text is almost certain that in paragraph 49, Naysābūrī is indirectly citing Fārābī's *Tahṣīl al-saʿāda*.
  33. Naysābūrī, *Ithbāt al-imāma*, 62–63.
  34. Naysābūrī, *Ithbāt al-imāma*, 63.
  35. The members of this branch of Ismaʿīlism are usually referred to as extremist Summoners (*dāʿīs*) who were mainly known for their deification of al-Ḥākim. According to Heinz Halm, the Drūze theology was "a bizarre conglomeration of old Ismaʿīli, Neoplatonic, and extreme Shiʿite conceptions and terms." See Heinz Halm, *Shiʿism*, trans. Janet

- Watson and Marian Hill (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 179.
36. On the historical context of Kirmānī's treatise, see Paul E. Walker, Introduction to *al-Maṣābiḥ fī Ithbāt al-imāma*, ed. and trans. Paul E. Walker: *Master of the Age: an Islamic Treatise on the Necessity of the Imamate: a Critical Edition of the Arabic Text and English Translation of Ḥamīd al-Dīn Aḥmad B. ʿAbd Allāh Kirmānī's al-Maṣābiḥ fī Ithbāt al-imāma* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 14–17; *Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī: Ismaili Thought in the Age of al-Ḥākim* (London/New York: I. B. Tauris, 1999), 11–14. For a comparative study of Kirmānī and Naysābūrī regarding their theories of the imamate, see Paul E. Walker, "In Praise of al-Ḥākim: Greek Elements in Ismaili Writings on the Imamate," in *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 57 (2004): 367–392.
  37. Walker, "In Praise of al-Ḥākim," 380–388.
  38. Ḥamīd al-Dīn Kirmānī, *al-Maṣābiḥ fī ithbāt al-imāma*, 38. The translation of the term *dirāya* as "perception" is problematic. The term *dirāya*, from the root *raʿy*, meaning "thought" or "vision," should be translated as "insight," rather than "perception," which may connote knowledge of the physical world.
  39. Ḥamīd al-Dīn Kirmānī, *al-Maṣābiḥ fī ithbāt al-imāma*, 38–39.
  40. Ibid.
  41. Ḥamīd al-Dīn Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, ed. Muḥammad Kāmil Ḥusain and Muṣṭafā Ḥilmī (Cairo: Dār al-fikr al-ʿArabīyya, 1953), 4.
  42. The Fatimid jurist and judge Qādī al-Nuʿmān considers the imams as the most authoritative agents of *taʿwīl* because their knowledge has been inherited from the Prophet. Though he may not have formulated *ʿiṣma*, he believes that the knowledge of *taʿwīl* that the imam inherits from the Prophet is infallible as it originated in divine inspiration. In *Asās al-taʿwīl* he says that "divinely inspired knowledge (*al-ʿilm al-taʿyīdī*) and sins (*maʿāṣī*) do not go together." Al-Qādī al-Nuʿmān, *Asās al-taʿwīl*, ed. Aref Tamer (Beirut: Manshūrāt Dār al-thiqāfa, 1960), 66. On this topic, also see Shah Bulbul, "al-Qādī al-Nuʿmān and the Concept of Bāṭin," in *Reason and Inspiration in Islam: Theology, Philosophy, and Mysticism in Muslim Thought: Essays in Honour of Hermann Landolt*, ed. Todd Lawson, 117–126 (London/New York: I. B. Tauris, 2005), 120–121.

43. There is no systematic treatment of infallibility in Fatimid literature apart from the chapter in Kirmānī's *al-Maṣābiḥ*. See Kirmānī, *al-Maṣābiḥ fī ithbāt al-imāma*, 81–84. He also mentions infallibility in other works. For example, see “*al-Risāla mawsūma bi Mabāsīm al-bishārāt*,” in *Majmū'a rasā'il al-Kirmānī*, ed. Muṣṭafā Ghālib, 113–133 (Beirut: al-Mu'assasa al-jāmi'iyyah li'l-dirāsāt wa'l-nashr wa'l-tawzī', 1983), 22; 113; 131. The doctrine of infallibility becomes very important in the Isma'ili works of Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī and, as one might expect, in his Twelver works.
44. Kirmānī also refers to Abū Ḥātim Rāzī as one of “the two wise men” (*al-Shaykhayn*) next to Abū Ya'qūb Sijistānī. See Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-'aql*, 22.
45. See Henry Corbin, *The Man of Light in Iranian Sufism*, trans. Nancy Pearson (New York: Random House, 1978). In this book, Corbin states that there is an essential affinity between Manichean gnosis and Isma'ilism. His analysis is usually said to have used a metahistorical method that is vertical rather than horizontal. In my opinion, what he actually does is discover similarities among different discourses. As for the Persian background of Isma'ili philosophy, early Isma'ili thinkers such as Muḥammad Nasafī and Abū Ḥātim Rāzī addressed Persian religions in their works and tried to link Zoroastrianism to Abrahamic religions. See Shin Nomoto, “An Early Ismaili View of Other Religions: A Chapter from the Kitāb al-Iṣlāḥ by Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī,” in *Reason and Inspiration in Islam: Theology, Philosophy and Mysticism in Muslim Thought: Essays in Honour of Hermann Landolt*, ed. Todd Lawson, 142–156 (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005). However, Rāzī and Nasafī differed in their approaches to Zoroastrianism, and Rāzī criticized Nasafī for some of his ideas in this respect. For Kirmānī's reading of this confrontation and his attempt to reconcile the two, see Ḥamid al-Dīn Kirmānī, *Kitāb al-Riyāḍ*, ed. Aref Tamer (Beirut: Dar-Assakafa, 1960). Also see Ismail K. Poonawala, “An Early Doctrinal Controversy in the Iranian School of Isma'ili Thought and Its Implications,” *Brill Journal of Persianate Studies* 5 (2012): 17–34.
46. Kirmānī, *al-Maṣābiḥ fī ithbāt al-imāma*, 34.
47. Kirmānī, *al-Maṣābiḥ fī ithbāt al-imāma*, 40.
48. Ḥijāb, *al-Falsafa al-siyāsiyya 'inda Ikhwān al-ṣafā*, 193–194.

49. Kirmānī, *al-Maṣābīḥ fī ithbāt al-imāma*, 69–70. For some of the terms, I use the Arabic text in Walker's edition, 36–46.
50. Kirmānī, *al-Maṣābīḥ fī ithbāt al-imāma*, 71–79.
51. The tradition of “the two precious things” (*ḥadīth al-thaqalayn*) is reported as part of the Prophet's speech in Ghadīr Khumm in which, according to Shī'īs, 'Alī was appointed by the Prophet as his successor. For the political significance of the events in Ghadīr Khumm, see Abdulaziz Sachedina, “Wilaya of Imam Ali and its Theological-Juridical Implications for the Islamic Political Thought,” in *Ghadīr/Ayatullah Muhammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr*, eds. Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi, Hussein Khimjee, 47–73 (Qom: Anṣariyān Publications, 2007). Also see Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, “Ghadīr Khumm,” *Encyclopedia of Islam, Three* (Brill Online 2013), accessed May 13, 2016, <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/>
52. Kirmānī, *al-Maṣābīḥ fī ithbāt al-imāma*, 79.
53. Fārābī, *Mabādī' āra' ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila*, 241.
54. Medieval literature by Twelver theologians include rational proofs for both the necessity of the imam's office and his infallibility. For a few major examples of such works, see Abī Ja'far Tūsī, Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan, *Kitāb al-Ghayba* (Najaf: Maktabat al-Ṣādiq, 1965); Muḥammad ibn 'Alī Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī, *Risālatu'l-ī'tiqādāt*, trans. Asaf Ali Asghar Fyze: *A Shī'ite Creed: A Translation of Risālatu'l-ī'tiqādāt of Muḥammad b. 'Alī Ibn Bābawayhi al-Qummī, Known as Shaykh Ṣadūq* (London; New York: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1942); Murtaḍā Sharīf, *Al-Shāfi fi'l-imāma*, ed. Sayyid 'Abd al-Zahrā al-Ḥosseini al-Khaṭīb, 4 vols (Tehran: Mu'assisat al-Ṣādiq, 1410 A.H.); M. M. Mufīd, *Kitāb al-irshād*, trans. I. K. A. Howard: *The Book of Guidance into the Lives of the Twelve Imams* (London, UK: Balagha Books, 1981). Mufid has been a lasting influence on the systematic rationalization of the imamate. See Martin J. McDermott, *The Theology of al-Shaikh al-Mufid* (Beirut: Dar al-mashriq éditeurs, 1978).
55. Kirmānī, *al-Maṣābīḥ fī ithbāt al-imāma*, 81.
56. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-'aql*, 329.
57. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-'aql*, 438.
58. Kirmānī, *al-Maṣābīḥ fī ithbāt al-imāma*, 51–52. Kirmānī confines reward and punishment in the afterlife to those souls who have received emanation through instruction with knowledge and at will. This is similar to Fārābī's soteriology whereby knowledge and deliberation are

- necessary requirements for recompense in the afterlife. See Fārābī, *Mabādī' ārā' ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila*, 259–277.
59. Kirmānī, *al-Maṣābiḥ fi ithbāt al-imāma*, 53.
  60. On the soul being devoid of knowledge, see Ḥamīd al-Dīn Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-aql*, 309; “*al-Risāla mawsūma bi Mabāsīm al-bishārāt*,” 115; *al-Maṣābiḥ fi ithbāt al-imāma*, 53.
  61. Kirmānī, *al-Maṣābiḥ fi ithbāt al-imāma*, 51.
  62. Ibid.
  63. I am borrowing the term from John Keats, “Letter to George and Georgiana Keats,” Accessed January 21, 2016. <http://www.mrbauld.com/keatsva.html>
  64. Kirmānī, *al-Maṣābiḥ fi ithbāt al-imāma*, 81.
  65. The mainstream Isma‘ilis of the time believed in the double observance or double worship that refers to the observance of both the esoteric (*bāṭin*) and exoteric (*ẓāhir*) aspects of the religion, that is, both the spiritual and legal sides of it. This was emphasized in opposition to dissident Isma‘ilis who observed only the esoteric side of Islam and neglected the law. See Daniel De Smet, “Esotericism and exotericism,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam Three*, eds. Kate Fleet et al. (Brill Online, 2015), accessed May 2, 2016, <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/>
  66. C.C.W. Taylor, “Politics,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, 233–258 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 241.
  67. For Fārābī’s organic view of happiness, see *Mabādī' ārā' ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila*, 232–233.
  68. All major Shī‘ī treatises on the imamate, both Isma‘ili and Twelver, cover the doctrine of the imam’s appointment. For a summary of this doctrine and sources in Twelver Shi‘ism, see Moojan Momen, *An Introduction to Shī‘ī Islam: The History and Doctrine of Twelver Shi‘ism* (New Haven: The Yale University Press, 1985); Lynda Clarke, “Doctrine of the Shi‘ah according to the Early Shi‘i Sources” (PhD Dissertation, McGill University, 1994); Arzina R. Lalani, *Early Shī‘ī Thought: The Teachings of Muḥammad al-Bāqir* (London/New York: I.B. Tauris, 2000), 79–83.
  69. In modern times, there have been attempts to characterize the Sunni method of consensus as democratic; yet, according to Fuzzi Najjar “attempts to reinterpret *ijmā‘* in terms of modern democratic theory

- represent a kind of *ijtihād*, meritorious, yet of dubious value for the very reason that *ijmāʿ* is concerned with the legitimization of theological opinions, juristic interpretations and practical decisions.” Muḥammad Fuzzi Najjar, “Democracy in Islamic Political Philosophy,” *Studia Islamica* 51 (1981): 121.
70. Kirmānī, *al-Maṣābīḥ fī ithbāt al-imāma*, 82.
  71. Ibid.
  72. Kirmānī, *al-Maṣābīḥ fī ithbāt al-imāma*, 82.
  73. Kirmānī, *al-Maṣābīḥ fī ithbāt al-imāma*, 83.
  74. Kirmānī, *al-Maṣābīḥ fī ithbāt al-imāma*, 85.
  75. Ḥamīd al-Dīn Kirmānī, “*al-Risāla maawsūma bi Mabāsīm al-bishārāt*,” in *Majmūʿat-rasāʾil al-Kirmānī*, ed. Muṣṭafā Ghālib, 113–133 (Beirut: al-Muʿassasa al-jāmiʿiyyah liʾl-dirāsāt waʾl-nashr waʾl-tawzīʿ, 1983), 118. The false imams (*aʾimma al-dīlāl*) also appear in Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 435.
  76. Kirmānī, *al-Maṣābīḥ fī ithbāt al-imāma*, 93.
  77. Kirmānī, *al-Maṣābīḥ fī ithbāt al-imāma*, 97–104; 125–127. The instance of false imams given by Kirmānī also include the first three caliphs after the Prophet, Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, and ʿUthmān.
  78. Kirmānī, *al-Maṣābīḥ fī ithbāt al-imāma*, 72.
  79. Kirmānī, *al-Maṣābīḥ fī ithbāt al-imāma*, 80.
  80. Kirmānī, *al-Maṣābīḥ fī ithbāt al-imāma*, 87. A comparison of these qualities with those of the perfect sovereigns in Fārābī’s *Mabādiʾ āraʾiyyat al-madīna al-fāḍila* is noteworthy. Apart from all the characteristics of the “first sovereign,” which include physical, speculative, and moral perfections, the successor of the first sovereign is also distinguished by the following qualities: “(1) He will be a philosopher. (2) He will know and remember the laws and customs (and rules of conduct) with which the first sovereigns had governed the city, conforming in all his actions to all their actions. (3) He will excel in deducing a new law by analogy (*qiyās*) where no law of his predecessors has been recorded, following, for his deductions, the principles laid down by the first imams (*al-aʾimma al-awwalīn*). (4) He will be good at deliberating and be powerful in his deductions to meet new situations for which the first sovereigns could not have laid down any law. (5) He will be good in guiding the people by his speech to fulfill the laws of the first sovereigns as well as those laws which he will have deduced in conformity with their principles after their time. (6) He should be of tough physique in

order to shoulder the tasks of war, mastering the serving as well as the ruling military art (*al-ṣinā'a al-ḥarbiyya al-khādima w'l-ra'isa*).” Fārābī's *Mabādī' ar-rā' ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila*, 252–253. The characteristics of the sovereigns in Fārābī and those attributed to the Shī'ī imams have strong similarities, with the exception of being a philosopher which is not a requirement from Kirmānī's point of view.

81. Kirmānī, *al-Maṣābiḥ fi itḥbāt al-imāma*, 83.
82. The logical and philosophical rhetoric in *al-Maṣābiḥ* is secondary to the scriptural narratives, which include not only texts from the Qur'an and tradition, but also biblical verses. Kirmānī quotes amply from the Qur'an, and in several cases quotes from the Hebrew and Syriac Bibles. Biblical allusion was a tradition among Isma'ili thinkers and seems to have had an important place in empowering their synthetic intellectual discourses. On the use of the Hebrew and Syriac Bibles in Kirmānī, see Daniel De Smet and J.M.F. Van Reeth, “Les citation bibliques dans l'oeuvre du dā'ī ismaélien Ḥamid ad-Dīn Kirmānī,” in *Law, Christianity and Modernism in Islamic Society Proceedings of the Eighteenth Congress of the Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants*, Held at the Katholieke Universiteit, Leuven, BE (September 3–9, 1996), eds. U. Vermeulen and J.M.F. Van Reeth (Leuven, NL: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1998). Also see Paul Kraus, “Hebräisch und syrische Zitate in ismā'ilitische Schriften” *Der Islam* 19 (1932): 243–263.
83. Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, *Rawḍa-yi taslīm*, ed. and trans. S. J. Badakhchani: *Paradise of Submission: A Medieval Treatise on Ismaili Thought* (London: I.B. Tauris in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2005).
84. Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, *Sayr wa Sulūk*, ed. and trans. S. J. Badakhchani: *Contemplation and Action: The Spiritual Autobiography of a Muslim Scholar* (London: I.B. Tauris in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 1998).
85. Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, *Tajrīd al-ī'tiqād*, ed. A. M. Sulayman. Iskandariyyah: Dār al-ma'rifa al-jāmi'iyya, 1996. For a study of this treatise, see I.K.A. Howard, “The Theology of the Imamate in the Work of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī,” in *Aḥṣarāt: Selected Articles 1975–83*, 118–125 (London: Muḥammadi Trust, 1983).
86. Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, *Risala-yi imāmat*, ed. Muḥammad Taqī Dānish-Pazhūh (Tehran: Intishārāt-i dānishgāh-i Tehran, 1956/1335 S.H.). See also Scarcia B. Amoretti, “La Risālat al-imāma di Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī,” *Rivista degli studi orientali* 47:3/4 (1972): 247–276.

87. Both treatises devote a major section in the beginning to philosophical issues such as creation and the nature of the soul before discussing the imamate. Moreover, in their discussion of the imamate, they both resort to theological and scriptural narratives rather than philosophical ones.
88. For Ṭūsī's life and works, see Hamid Dabashi, "Khawājah Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī: The Philosopher/Vizier and the Intellectual Climate of His Times," in *History of Islamic Philosophy*, eds. Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman, 2 vols (London/New York: Routledge, 1996), II: 527–584.
89. According to Hermann Landolt, Mullā Ṣadrā is indebted to Ṭūsī for both his understanding of the soul in its evolution from body to spirit, and his eschatology. See Hermann Landolt, Introduction to *Paradise of Submission* by Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, ed. and trans. Seyyed Jalal Badakhshani, 1–11 (London/New York: I.B. Tauris, 2005), 11.
90. The same synthetic character is emphasized in analysis of Ṭūsī's writings on ethics. See Wilferd Madelung, "Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's Ethics between Philosophy, Shi'ism, and Sufism," in *Shi'ism*, eds. Paul Laft and Colin Turner (London/New York: Routledge, 2008), II: 69–85.
91. *Rawḍa-i taslīm* has a more thorough and elaborate treatment of philosophical arguments and more explicit references to classical philosophy than *Sayr wa sulūk*. Scholars have often raised doubts about the authorship of *Rawa-i taslīm* because of its unusual style. See Muḥammad Taqī Mudarris Raḍawī, *Aḥwāl wa āthār-i Khwāja Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Dānishgāh-i Tehran, 1975); Landolt, Introduction to *Paradise of Submission*, 3; Shafiqe Virani, *Review of Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, Paradise of Submission: A Medieval Treatise on Ismaili Thought*, ed. and trans. Seyyed Jalal Badakhchani, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 69:1 (2010): 147.
92. Ṭūsī, *Rawḍa-i taslīm*, 36.
93. Senior ranks in Isma'ili *da'wa*. Following a pre-Fatimid Isma'ili tradition, the early Nizārī leaders were called the *ḥujjas* of the concealed imam and his representatives in the community and received instruction immediately from the imam himself. Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ was recognized as the imam's *ḥujja* after the Nizārī-Musta'li schism of 487/1094. See Farhad Daftary, "Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ and the Origins of the Nizārī Isma'ili Movement," in *Medieval Isma'ili History and Thought*, ed.

- Farhad Daftary, 181–204 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 197.
94. Ṭūsī, *Rawḍa-i taslīm*, 36–37; 38–39 in the Arabic edition.
  95. Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī, *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq*, ed. and trans. John Walbridge and Hossein Ziai: *The Philosophy of Illumination: A New Critical Edition of the Text of Ḥikmat al-ishrāq with English Translation* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1999), 62.
  96. In his famous commentary on Ibn Sinā's *al-Ishārāt wa'l- tanbīhāt*, Ṭūsī sometimes takes a position close to that of Suhrawardī. Hermann Landolt has an interesting article on this influence and believes that one can better understand such deviations from Ibn Sinā in light of Ṭūsī's Isma'īli arguments in *Sayr wa Sulūk*, rather than his Illuminationist (*Ishrāqī*) inclinations. See Hermann Landolt, "Khawaja Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, Isma'īlism and Ishrāqī Philosophy," in *Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī: Philosophe et Savant du XIIIe Siècle*, eds. N. Pourjavady and Z. Vesel, 13–30 (Tehran: Institut Français de Recherche en Iran, 2000).
  97. For Ibn Sinā's definition of the soul, see Ibn Sinā, *Avicenna's De anima: Being the Psychological Part of Kitāb al-Shifā'*, ed. Fazlur Rahman (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), 39. On the meaning of perfection in Ibn Sinā's psychology, see Wisnovsky, *Avicenna's Metaphysics in Context*, 113–141.
  98. Ṭūsī, *Rawḍa-i taslīm*, 38.
  99. Ṭūsī, *Rawḍa-i taslīm*, 36.
  100. Ṭūsī, *Rawḍa-i taslīm*, 26.
  101. Ṭūsī, *Rawḍa-i taslīm*, 53.
  102. Ṭūsī, *Rawḍa-i taslīm*, 39.
  103. Ṭūsī, *Rawḍa-i taslīm*, 131.
  104. Ṭūsī, *Rawḍa-i taslīm*, 132.
  105. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-'aql*, 351 (italics mine).
  106. Ṭūsī, *Rawḍa-i taslīm*, 131. With respect to the doctrine of the divine Command (*amr*), Ṭūsī follows the path of Isma'īli philosophers before Kirmānī. Like Sijistānī, Ṭūsī believes in the ontological independence of the Word (*kalima*) or Command (*amr*). On this issue, see Ṭūsī, *Rawḍa-i taslīm*, 19–22; for Sijistānī's doctrine of the divine Command, see Walker, *Early Philosophical Shiism*, 81–86. In effect, even later Fatimid thinkers such as Mu'ayyad fi'l-Dīn Shīrāzī (d. 470/1078) and Nāṣir-i Khusraw (d. after 469/1077) did not opt for Kirmānī's understanding of the doctrine of divine Command. See Nāṣir-i Khusraw,

- “Wajh-i dīn,” ed. and trans. Faquir M. Hunzai: “The Face of Religion,” in *Anthology of Ismā‘īli Literature: A Shī‘i Vision of Islam*, eds. Hermann Landolt, Samira Shaykh, and Kutub Kassam, 199–207 (London/New York: I.B. Tauris, 2008), 200; Walker, *Early Philosophical Shiism*, 19.
107. Ṭūsī, *Rawḍa-i taslīm*, 133.
  108. Ṭūsī, *Sayr wa sulūk*, 30.
  109. Ṭūsī, *Sayr wa sulūk*, 29.
  110. Ṭūsī, *Sayr wa sulūk*, 30.
  111. Ṭūsī, *Sayr wa sulūk*, 42.
  112. Ṭūsī, *Sayr wa sulūk*, 44. This remark shows the Illuminationist tendency of Ṭūsī’s epistemology. The epistemic gap between subject and object was later challenged more systematically by Mullā Ṣadrā. The latter replaced mental form (*al-ṣūra al-dhahniyya*) with mental existence (*al-wujūd al-dhahnī*), which is a higher degree of the external existence (*al-wujūd al-khārijī*) rather than a form or picture of it, therefore justifying knowledge of the world based on the existential unification of the knower and the known. Mullā Ṣadrā seems to have been inspired by Ṭūsī in raising this question. For Mullā Ṣadrā on the unification of the knower (*al-‘ālim*) and the known (*al-ma‘lūm*), see Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī, “Risāla fi’l-itthihād al-‘āqil wa’l-ma‘qūl,” in *Majmū‘a-yi rasā’il-i falsafī-i Ṣadr al-muta‘allihīn*, ed. Ḥamīd Nājī Isfahānī, 63–103 (Tehran: Hikmat, 2006/1385 S.H.).
  113. Ṭūsī, *Sayr wa sulūk*, 44.
  114. Ṭūsī, *Sayr wa sulūk*, 46.
  115. Ṭūsī, *Sayr wa sulūk*, 45–46.
  116. In some of his writings, Ṭūsī was very sympathetic to Sufism. His respect for Sufism is apparent in his famous correspondence with his contemporary disciple of Ibn ‘Arabī, Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī (d. 673/1274). For example, in the context of discussing the relationship between soul and body, Qūnawī mentions those *awliyā* who are capable of gaining independence from their bodies and who die a voluntary death (*mawt-i ikhtiyārī*). Although, Ṭūsī would not accept a complete separation between the soul and body, he still admits that the soul of the *awliyā* can reach the stage of self-sufficiency, and compliments Qūnawī as being one of them. See Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ishāq al-Qūnawī and Naṣīr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Ṭūsī, *al-Murāsālāt bayna Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī wa Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī*, ed. Gudrun Schubert (Beirut: Commissioned by Franz Steiner Publications

in Stuttgart, 1995), 120–121. Here, Ṭūsī uses the term *wilāya* in its Sufi sense as explained by the earliest systematic formulation of it in Gerald T. Elmore, *Islamic Sainthood in the Fullness of Time: Ibn al-ʿArabī's Book of the Fabulous Gryphon* (Leiden, NL: Brill, 1999); Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Tirmidhī, *Kitāb khatm al-awliyāʾ*, ed. ʿUthmān Yahyā (Beirut: al-Maṭbaʿa al-kāthūlikīya, 1965). For al-Tirmidhī, the saints (*awliyāʾ*) are the earthly epitomes of divine perfection who are always in the proximity of God. Just like there is a seal of prophethood that is the perfection of it, there exists a seal of sainthood (*wilāya*) who is the perfection of this position. The seal (*khātam*) of *wilāya* is the proof (*ḥujja*) of other *awliyāʾ* just as the Prophet Muhammad is the proof of other prophets (p. 422). This person is not named in the treatise but the author believes that the world will not end before he is brought forth by God as “the Resurrector by the Proof” (*al-qāʾim bi'l-ḥujja*) (p. 441). Here, the term “*al-qāʾim*” is significant with respect to its Shiʿī connotation and is an example of how different narratives merge. For Ṭūsī's use of Sufi concepts and narratives, see Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, *Awsāf al-ashraf*, eds. Najīb Māyil Haravī, Ḥakīm Asvadī, and Abd al-Khāliq Ghujdavānī (Mashhad, IR: Intisārāt-i Imām, 1982).

117. Ṭūsī, *Sayr wa sulūk*, 48.

118. Fārābī, *Mabādīʾ ārāʾ ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila*, 237.

119. Ṭūsī, *Sayr wa sulūk*, 49.

120. Ṭūsī, *Rawḍa-i taslīm*, 104; 123; 124; 130. For a classic work on the theme of the perfect human (*al-insān al-kāmil*), see ʿAbd al-Karīm ibn Ibrāhīm Jilī, *Insān al-kāmil* (Cairo: Maktabat wa-maṭbaʿat Muḥammad ʿAlī Ṣubayḥ, 1953).

121. Ṭūsī, *Rawḍa-i taslīm*, 105; 133; 170. On the resemblance between the Sufi doctrine of the perfect human and the imamate in Shiʿism, Nasr says that “the idea of the imam as the pole of the universe and that of the *Qutb* in Sufism are nearly identical,” and he cites Sayyid Ḥaydar ʿĀmulī on this relation. See Seyyed Hossein Nasr, “Shiʿism and Sufism: Their Relationship in Essence and History,” *Religious Studies* 6:3 (September 1970): 235.

122. Ṭūsī, *Rawḍa-i taslīm*, 133.

123. The synthesis is done notably in Ḥaydar ibn ʿAlī ʿĀmulī, *Jāmiʿ al-asnār wa manbaʿ al-anwār*, eds. Henry Corbin and Ismail Othmān Yaḥyā (Tehran: Anīstītū-i Irān va Faransāh, 1969). On the influence of ʿĀmulī on later Islamic philosophy, see Henry Corbin, *En Islam iranien, aspects*

*spirituels et philosophiques*, 4 vols (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), IV: 72–73; Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Philosophy from its Origin to the Present: Philosophy in the Land of Prophecy* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2006), 87; “Shi‘ism and Sufism,” 235.

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# 4

## Mullā Ṣadrā on Knowledge and the Imamate

### 4.1 Mullā Ṣadrā in Context

Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. Yaḥyā Qawāmī Shīrāzī, who is known as Mullā Ṣadrā (d. 1050/1640), founded a school of philosophy that is characterized by a conciliatory approach toward three major intellectual traditions in Islam. The traditions that he reconciles in his synthetic discourse are theology, philosophy, and mysticism all of which also include scriptural and Shīʿī narratives. As far as the relationship between his discourse on knowledge and authority is concerned, an examination of the synthetic character of Mullā Ṣadrā's texts is of great methodological value for the present inquiry. Through this examination, I will show that the narratives that Mullā Ṣadrā adopts and synthesizes in his theory of knowledge formation become the building blocks of his discourse on Shīʿī authority which is also synthetic.

In this chapter, after a brief review of the historical and intellectual context of Mullā Ṣadrā's work, I will explain his theory of knowledge and the soul. Next, I will analyze his discourse of the imamate and absolute

authority which, I argue, rests on his theory of knowledge. Since much work has already been done on Mullā Ṣadrā's epistemology and psychology, my analysis will be focused on those concepts and narratives that lead me to rate the potential of his synthetic discourse in shaping the discourse of the Shī'ī imamate as the source of both spiritual and political authority. In examining Mullā Ṣadrā's theory of knowledge and the human soul, I will refer primarily to his *Risāla fi ittihād al-'āqil wa'l-ma'qūl* (*Treatise on the Unification of the Intellect and the Intellected*)<sup>1</sup> and parts of *al-Asfār*.<sup>2</sup>

Compared to Kirmānī, Mullā Ṣadrā's work has had a more widespread reception. He has been a source of intellectual influence in both his home, Iran, and outside, especially in India. Though Mullā Ṣadrā was properly introduced into Western academia only as late as the 1970s, the amount of scholarship on him is quite remarkable.<sup>3</sup> Apart from several key translations of his works<sup>4</sup> and general introductions and historical accounts,<sup>5</sup> there are a significant number of monographs and articles on his ontology<sup>6</sup> and epistemology,<sup>7</sup> though his eschatology,<sup>8</sup> imamology,<sup>9</sup> and Qur'anic hermeneutics are less explored.<sup>10</sup> Scholars have also carried out comparative studies between certain aspects of Mullā Ṣadrā's thought and those of Western philosophers such as Spinoza, Kant, Husserl, and Heidegger.<sup>11</sup>

Mullā Ṣadrā lived his life in Persia under the Safavid dynasty (907–1135/1500–1736). His title, Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn, or "the chief among divine philosophers," shows the respect he enjoys among his people. He did not lead the adventurous life of Ibn Sīnā or Suhrawardī, thanks to the calmer intellectual milieu of the day under the Safavid king, Shāh Abbas I (r. 996–1038/1588–1629). Besides, Mullā Ṣadrā was born in Shiraz into an influential family and, at one point, his father became a minister in the Safavid court. His early education took place in Shiraz, and as a young scholar he traveled to Isfahan, the political and religious capital of the Safavid dynasty. In Isfahan, he continued his studies with the most notable philosophers and theologians of the day. Later, at the peak of his intellectual career, he was invited back to Shiraz. The establishment of a new school of philosophy by Mullā Ṣadrā happened in the right place and at the right time. Persia's new

religious and political identity as the Shī'ī land of Islam, rivaling both the Ottoman Empire (r. 698–1341/1299–1923) and Mughal dynasty (r. 932–1273/1526–1857), required well-versed scholars who could help its intellectual growth.<sup>12</sup> The major exponents of the School of Isfahan, Muḥammad Bāqir Mīr Dāmād (d. 1041/1631), Mīr Abū'l-Qāsim Findiriski (d. 1050/1640–1), and Bahā al-Dīn al-Āmilī (d. 1030/1621), were multifaceted 'Renaissance' figures, as the term may be understood in the Islamic context. They were well versed in many disciplines, including philosophy, mathematics, mysticism, theology, and jurisprudence. In the case of al-Āmilī, one should add the knowledge of astronomy and architecture to this list and Mīr Findiriskī also had a deep knowledge of Hindu philosophy. These scholars also trained a generation of students whose contributions are still influential today.<sup>13</sup> Drawing on the background of a synthetic approach to philosophy, which had started earlier in the eighth and ninth centuries in Shiraz and Isfahan, and consistent with a fervent appeal to the teachings of the twelve imams, the School of Isfahan developed a conciliatory attitude in dealing with philosophical and theological issues. Despite the diversity of their interests, the people in this school had philosophical concerns that they addressed "within the context of prophetic realities."<sup>14</sup> Mullā Ṣadrā's transcendental wisdom (*al-ḥikma al-muta'ālīya*) is the culmination of this approach to philosophy. In this text, Peripatetic (*mashā'i*) and Illuminationist (*Isbrāqī*) ideas join force with mysticism, Shī'ī theology, Qur'an, and tradition.<sup>15</sup> For his synthetic approach, Mullā Ṣadrā owed much to a number of preceding thinkers, especially Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274), Maytham al-Baḥrānī (d. 699/1299),<sup>16</sup> Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī (d. 787/1385),<sup>17</sup> Ibn Turkah Isfahānī (d. 835/1432).<sup>18</sup> Apart from their methodology, what connects these figures to each other and to Mullā Ṣadrā was their dedication to esoteric Islam, which is often identified as a major component of Shi'ism.<sup>19</sup>

In light of Mullā Ṣadrā's use of a synthetic discourse, the next section will investigate his epistemology in search of those concepts and narratives that make it a discursive springboard for his political philosophy by synthesizing the narratives of infallible knowledge with those of absolute authority.

## 4.2 Mullā Ṣadrā on the Nature of Knowledge

Mullā Ṣadrā's discourse on knowledge lies at the junction of four discursive traditions that took shape and mutually reinforced each other in medieval Islamic literature. These discursive traditions can be referred to as theological, philosophical, Sufi, and Shī'ī. In his classic book on knowledge in medieval Islam, Franz Rosenthal shows the pivotal place of the concept of knowledge in major Islamic traditions. Citing from a variety of primary sources, he makes a list of definitions of knowledge in Islamic literature. He also mentions the sporadic resistance of some mystics to defining knowledge.<sup>20</sup> In comparing these definitions, one notices that generally they are concerned with truth conditions in the light of correspondence between subject and object. There are also several cases in which knowledge is conflated with belief and the psychological states of the subject. While the narrative of knowledge as "finding" and "realization" appears frequently in discussion of both knowledge of external objects and knowledge as the presence of the subject to itself, the nature of knowledge itself as an existent phenomenon does not come to the fore. In other words, the ontology of knowledge does not seem to be the main concern of the medieval thinkers cited in Rosenthal's book, though we can catch a glimpse of it when discussing those who would later be incorporated into Sufi chains of authority. For example, Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī (d. 386/996) is quoted as defining knowledge as "a light thrust by God into the heart."<sup>21</sup>

For Peripatetic Islamic philosophers such as Ibn Sīnā, knowledge as a psychic quality (*al-kayf al-naṣṣānī*) occurs to the mind as an accident (*'araḍ*), and it originates in abstraction (*tajrīd*) of mental forms by the subject from the material external object.<sup>22</sup> For Mullā Ṣadrā, knowledge at all its levels is a form of being that is ontologically prior to the external world. The concept of "mental existence" (*al-wujūd al-dhihnī*) was originally used by Ibn Sīnā in addressing the issue of reference (*khābar*) to non-existent or fictional beings. For him, something that has no external existence but is conceived of in our minds (*al-shay' al-thābita fi'l-dhihn ma'dūman fi'l-ashyā' al-khārija*), has a mode of existence in the mind.<sup>23</sup> Although Mullā Ṣadrā builds on Ibn Sīnā's idea of a mental being, his

usage of this term is different. For Ibn Sīnā, external or concrete existence has priority over mental existence at the level of human knowledge of the world. But, for Mullā Ṣadrā, the being in the mind and that of the external object are two different degrees of the same being, with the mental existence having priority over the extra-mental, and being of a higher degree.

Mullā Ṣadrā criticizes the Peripatetic theory of knowledge as “negative” (*salbī*) in that it is based on abstraction rather than “realization” (*taḥaqquq*).<sup>24</sup> Although Suhrawardī’s view of knowledge as light and presence (*ḥudūr*) sounds more substantial and positive, it does not go as far as Mullā Ṣadrā expects, therefore the latter’s objections to Suhrawardī’s theory.<sup>25</sup> Yet Suhrawardī’s view of knowledge pointed him in the direction of Mullā Ṣadrā’s epistemology.<sup>26</sup> First, for Suhrawardī, our knowledge of the external world consists in presence; that is, acquaintance, in modern philosophical parlance. For example, in *al-Mashārīc wa’l-muṭāriḥāt*, he explains perception (*idrāk*) based on “the presence (*ḥudūr*) of the essence (*dhāt*) of the thing apprehended (*mudrak*)” rather than a representation of a “form (*sūra*).”<sup>27</sup>

This is reinforced by his theory of vision, which indicates an illuminative relation (*idāfa al-ishrāqiyya*) between subject and external object, though he never vouches for the unification of the knower and the known (*ittiḥād al-‘ālim wa’l-ma‘lūm*).<sup>28</sup> Vision occurs when the soul (*nafs*) is connected with an illuminated (*mustanīr*) object. The soul as light encompasses (*iḥāṭa*) the light of the object, and it is through this illuminative relation (*idāfa al-ishrāqiyya*) that the soul has a vision of the object.<sup>29</sup> This is also a paradigm of knowledge of all things in the physical world (*al-‘ālam al-jism*), the imaginal world (*al-‘ālam al-mithāl*), and the spiritual world (*al-‘ālam al-rūḥ*).<sup>30</sup> For Suhrawardī, reality consists only of lights of different degrees that emanate from the Light of Lights (*nūr al-anwār*) above which there is no nobler being.<sup>31</sup> Knowledge is possible because of the unity of light as *the* reality of the world. This unity is the ontological guarantee for an epistemology of presence (*ḥudūr*) that explains knowledge in terms of the presence of the object of knowledge (*ma‘lūm*) for the subject.

One possible way to understand the “presence” of one thing for another is to define it as a form of unification (*ittiḥād*). Yet Suhrawardī rejects the possibility of a unification between the subject and object of knowledge

based on his essentialist ontology. According to his essentialism (*aṣāla al-māhiyya*), only individual essences truly exist while existence (*wujūd*) as such is only a mental construct with no authenticity. Moreover, two essences cannot become one, a philosophical principle that is accepted by all Islamic philosophers.

While inspired by Suhrawardī's formulation of knowledge by presence (*al-ʿilm al-hudūrī*), Mullā Ṣadrā is also aware of the above-mentioned limitation owing to the former's essentialism. In contrast to Suhrawardī, Mullā Ṣadrā's ontology is based on the authenticity of existence/being (*wujūd*), which helps him replace Suhrawardī's graded unity (*al-waḥda al-tashkīkī*) of light with the graded unity of being (*al-waḥda al-tashkīkī al-wujūd*). One of the implications of this shift in ontology is the possibility of unification between the knower and the known in their beings; this is one of the hallmarks of Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophy. In what follows, I will show how Mullā Ṣadrā's narrative of unification is the key to his formulation of a synthetic discourse on knowledge formation that consists of philosophical and Sufi narratives.

Beginning with his definition of knowledge as "a form of being," Mullā Ṣadrā writes:

Knowledge is not a negative thing (*al-amr al-salbi*) such as abstraction from the matter (*al-tajarrud ʿan al-mādda*), nor is it a relation (*iḍāfa*) [between subject and object without its having an independent status]; it is rather a being (*wujūd*). And it is not just any being, but actual (*bi'l-fiʿl*) being rather than potential (*bi'l-quwwa*) being; and not just any actual being, but an actual being that is pure (*khālīṣ*) and not mixed with non-being (*ʿadam*).<sup>32</sup>

According to this passage, from an ontological point of view intelligible beings (*al-mawjūdāt al-ʿilmiyya*) are nobler than physical objects because they are not mixed with the non-being associated with matter (*mādda*), which lies at the lowest level of being and the highest level of non-being. Mental beings (*al-wujūdāt al-dhihniyya*) that fall under the category of noetic beings thus occupy a nobler rank of being than physical objects. To put it in a nutshell, for Mullā Ṣadrā, our knowledge of a thing encompasses it in the same way that a higher level of being does

the lower. The unification of the knower and the known at the three levels, of perception (*idrāk*), imagination (*takhayyul*), and intellection (*taʿaqqul*), is possible since the thing and the knowledge of the thing are two different levels of the same being with the mental being ranked above the extra-mental being. This existential relation between the knower and the known is referred to as presence (*ḥudūr*). Following the lead of Mullā Ṣadrā, later Twelver Shīʿī epistemology maintains the definition of knowledge in terms of presence. For example, the contemporary Iranian philosopher, Muḥammad Ḥussein Ṭabāṭabāʾī (d. 1360 S.H./1981), defines knowledge as “the presence (*ḥudūr*) of a thing (*shayʿ*) for another by virtue of being complete and actual (*tāmm al-fiʿliyya*) and independent of matter.”<sup>33</sup> In his formulation of knowledge, the division of knowledge into “knowledge by presence (*al-ʿilm al-ḥudūrī*)” and “knowledge by correspondence (*al-ʿilm al-ḥuṣūlī*)”<sup>34</sup> is simply a methodological division because “all knowledge by correspondence goes back to knowledge by presence because the known [object] (*al-maʿlūm*) which becomes present for the knower (*al-ʿālim*) is thus an immaterial being (*al-mawjūd al-mujarrad*).”<sup>35</sup> This means that apart from the presence of the immaterial reality of the soul for herself, which is generally agreed upon by Muslim philosophers, for Mullā Ṣadrā, our knowledge of the external world, which seems to be mediated by mental forms, is in reality unmediated. In this sense, knowledge is not a correspondence between two different realms of existence, but the unification of the two. Technically speaking, knowledge is the realization of a form of being at a more intense level or, in other words, an existential promotion, a becoming, an ascent from a lower level of being to the higher. According to Mullā Ṣadrā,

In sum, the intelligible form (*al-sūra al-ʿaqliyya*) is not encompassed by psychic states (*al-bayaʿāt al-nafsāniyya*) and its being is not a psychic being like in the case of psychic accidents (*al-ʿawāriḍ al-nafsāniyya*) such as appetite (*shahwa*), wrath (*ghadab*), fear (*khauf*), sorrow (*ḥuzn*), courage (*shajāʿa*), and so on. We also learned that what is meant by abstraction (*tajrīd*) in intellection (*taʿaqqul*) and other perceptions (*al-idrākāt*) is not what is commonly referred to as the removal of the unwanted (*ḥadhf baʿd al-zawāʿid*). Nor does it mean that the soul is standing fixed (*wāqifa*) while

the perceptible forms (*mudrakāt*) are transferred (*muntaqala*) from the material object (*mawḍūʿahā al-mādiyya*) [of the soul's knowledge] onto the sense (*al-ḥiss*) and from the sense to the imagination (*al-khayāl*) and from imagination to the intellect (*al-ʿaql*). Rather, the perceiver (*al-mudrik*) and the perceived (*al-mudrak*) are abstracted together (*yatarajjidān maʿan*) and together they change from one being into another, and together they move from one mode of existence (*nashʿa*) to another, and from one world (*ʿālam*) to another world until the soul becomes an intellect (*ʿaql*), an intellector (*ʿāqil*), and an intellected (*maʿqūl*) in actuality (*biʿl-fiʿl*) after she was potential (*biʿl-quwwa*) in all that.<sup>36</sup>

This characterization of knowledge formation as the venue for the existential promotion of the soul plays an important role within that epistemic/psychological discourse which empowers the Shīʿī discourse of authority. First, I would argue that building on a dynamic view of the soul that grows through knowledge, Mullā Ṣadrā's discourse on knowledge and epistemic authority promotes several interconnected narratives that facilitate the integration of his discourse on knowledge into imamology. These narratives consist of the Aristotelian doctrine of the need for the actualization of the epistemic potential of the soul; the Platonic-Neoplatonic narrative of the soul's ascent through knowledge; the Neoplatonic-Sufi narrative of unification (*ittiḥād*) between the knower and the known; and finally, the tension between the Peripatetic narrative of an ontologically independent agent intellect (*al-ʿaql al-faʿcāʿl*), and a Sufi-Shīʿī narrative in later Islamic philosophy which tends toward relegating the function of the agent intellect to the perfect soul of the imam or saint (*walī*).

My second argument in this respect is that some of these narratives resonate with Kirmānī's epistemic discourse and Ṭūsī's approach to knowledge and authority as discussed in the previous chapters. Their discourses on knowledge and authority are similarly woven from the concepts of perfection and existential promotion, and rest on Neoplatonic narratives and their ramifications into Sufi discourses. In what follows, I will look further into some of these concepts, narratives, and arguments in Mullā Ṣadrā's discourse on knowledge and imamology and point out their similarity to their counterparts in Kirmānī's and Ṭūsī's writings.

## The Soul in Progress and the Perfection Narrative

Let me begin with listing the components of the synthetic discourse of knowledge that Mullā Ṣadrā contributes to: (1) The Aristotelian matter/form or potential/actual and the need for the agent intellect to actualize the potential of the rational soul; (2) the Aristotelian theory of the soul originating as the form of the organic body; (3) the Sufi-philosophical doctrine of the graded oneness of being; (4) the Neoplatonic-Sufi narrative of intellectual-spiritual perfection/ascent and the resultant hierarchy of beings based on the hierarchy of knowledge; (5) the doctrine of the unification of the knower and the known; (6) the doctrine of the unification of the rational soul with the agent intellect based on the oneness of the intellectual spheres of being; (7) the Akbarian doctrine of the togetherness (*jam'iyya*) of the three modes of being in the soul of the perfect human (*al-insān al-kāmil*); (8) a philosophically unprecedented but partially Sufi-rooted doctrine of the mind as the creator of knowledge; and (9) a Shī'ī narrative of the nobility of knowledge and infallibility as adopted from the Shī'ī tradition (*ḥadīth*).

The theory of knowledge outlined in the previous section is intertwined with the narrative of the human soul as a being in progress. Mullā Ṣadrā begins with the Aristotelian view that the soul comes into being as the form of the body. In this respect, he is in agreement with Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, and Kirmānī, who also reject the Platonic doctrine of the preexistence of the rational soul. For Mullā Ṣadrā, the popularity of the belief in the “eternity of the rational souls (*qidam al-nufūs al-nāṭiqā*)” with “some people” resulted from their misinterpretation of Plato.<sup>37</sup> The people in question are very likely to be Isma'īli philosophers such as Muḥammad Nasafī (d. 322/943), Abū Ya'qūb Sijistānī (d. after 360/971), and their followers. They are not mentioned by name, but this Neoplatonic circle and their followers such as Nāṣir-i Khusraw (d. after 469/1077) may well be the target of Mullā Ṣadrā's criticism here. Mullā Ṣadrā believes that all authentic (*mu'tabar*) students of Aristotle “such as Themistius, Porphyry, Alexander of Aphrodisia, and his followers including Fārābī and the Master (*al-Shaykh*) [Ibn Sīnā], either explicitly or implicitly say that the rational soul (*al-nafs al-nāṭiqā*) is credited with an intellectual mode of being (*al-kaynūna al-aqliyya*) only after her perfection (*istikmāl*) through

knowledge and abstraction (*tajarrud*)... ”<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, Mullā Ṣadrā’s theory of the soul’s perfection differs from that of the Muslim Peripatetic philosophers that he mentions here. Ibn Sīnā is not in agreement with the Neoplatonic theory of intellection based on the unity of the knower and the known, as particularly attributed to Porphyry by Muslim philosophers.<sup>39</sup>

Based on Mullā Ṣadrā’s theory of the soul, the human soul is not fully realized as human in the beginning. Its full realization as a spiritual-intellectual being is something that needs to be achieved, rather than being a default state of that soul. As he famously put it, “The soul is bodily in origination (*jismāniyya al-ḥudūth*) and spiritual in subsistence (*rūḥāniyya al-baqāʾ*) once perfected (*istakmalat*) and moved from potentiality (*al-quwwa*) to actuality (*al-fiʿl*).”<sup>40</sup> Thus, Aristotle’s doctrine of the soul as the form/perfection (*ṣūra/kamāl*) of the organic body<sup>41</sup> is the first step for Mullā Ṣadrā’s psychology. Yet, he departs from Aristotle and Ibn Sīnā by integrating Porphyry’s unification narrative into his discourse on the soul and knowledge formation. For him, through unification (*ittihād*) the immediate objects of knowledge (*maʿlūm biʾl-dhāt*) and the soul are involved in an existential relation that results in the actualization of the “matter” of the soul by the noetic forms. For Mullā Ṣadrā, “once the soul intellects something, it becomes one with its intelligible form.”<sup>42</sup> An important part of Mullā Ṣadrā’s discourse on knowledge is dedicated to reinstating this doctrine of unification based on the major ontological principles of his philosophy, that is, the authentic reality of being (*aṣāla al-wujūd*) and the graded oneness of being (*al-waḥda al-tashkīk al-wujūd*). According to the first principle, “the reality of everything is being (*wujūd*) from which the effects of the reality and its [existential] conditions result ... Everything else becomes the possessor of reality through being.”<sup>43</sup> Regarding the second principle, being is *the* reality and diversities are only due to the existence of different grades of the same being.

The instances of being are different in terms of intensity and weakness as such, priority and posteriority as such, nobility and baseness as such, although the universal concepts applicable to it and abstracted from it, named quiddities (*māhiyyāt*) are in contrast essentially in terms of genus (*jins*), species (*nawʿ*), or accidents (*awāriḍ*).<sup>44</sup>

The doctrine of the unification of the knower and the known is consistent with Mullā Ṣadrā's ontology, according to which the only authentic reality is that of being, whereas essences are only delimitations of that reality reflected in the mind as concepts or quiddities. Conversely, in a philosophical system in which essence or quiddity (*māhiyya*) is regarded as real, as is the case for Ibn Sīnā, the unification of "two" entities would be out of the question. Mullā Ṣadrā reports Ibn Sīnā's rejection of Porphyry thus:

Then he said in *al-Ishārāt*: "there was a man among them [the ancients (*qudamā*)] known as Porphyry who wrote a book on the intellect and the intelligible, which is highly praised by Peripatetics. All of it is gibberish and they all know very well that neither they nor Porphyry himself understand it ..." Then he said in a section on the *Shifā* on the science of the soul: "One cannot say that the soul becomes the intelligible.<sup>45</sup> In my opinion, this is something impossible. I have never understood the claim that something transforms into something else and never figured out how this takes place." Then he mentioned the general argument for rejecting the unification [of the intellect (*al-ʿāqil*) with the intelligible (*al-maʿqūl*)], and began to slander and repudiate anyone who has accepted this unification by saying that "the man who has explained to people this matter the most is the person who composed *Isagogie* for them. He [Porphyry] was bent on speaking words of fantasy and Sufi poetry (*al-aqwāl al-mukhayyala al-shīrī al-sufiyya*) and contenting himself and others with imagination."<sup>46</sup>

The "Sufi" aspect of Porphyry's narrative that Ibn Sīnā criticizes in this quotation as "fantasy" becomes the backbone of Mullā Ṣadrā's narrative of perfection through knowledge. He synthesizes philosophical and Sufi discourses in his discussion of knowledge formation through unification of the two realms of being, i.e., the extra-mental (*khārijī*) and the mental (*dhahiri*). The doctrine of existential perfection through epistemic gains appears in many places in Mullā Ṣadrā's texts where Sufi terminology and narratives are strongly at work. Putting different parts of Mullā Ṣadrā's discourse of knowledge together, a narrative emerges that tells the story of the soul, beginning as a bodily entity devoid of all knowledge, then setting out on a journey that may end gloriously or tragically depending on whether the soul is fully realized as such or remains subhuman. With

the last point in mind, the story of the soul raises the question of whether every soul is capable of being fully actualized or spiritualized. This is an important question that was also addressed with respect to Kirmānī's epistemology in Chap. 2; I will return to it later in this chapter.

For my analysis of Mullā Ṣadrā's epistemic discourse as the salvific story of the soul, imperfection (*naqs*) is the best place to begin. The term "imperfection" as used in the context of metaphysical psychology and epistemology is an equivalent of the Aristotelian term "potential" (*bi'l-quwwa*). Mullā Ṣadrā explains the potential state of the human soul in an analogy to the potential state of prime matter (*al-hayūlā al-'ūlā*) by writing,

Just like the prime matter is a potential sensory being (*al-wujūd al-ḥissiyya bi'l-quwwa*), the substantiality of the soul (*al-jawhariyya al-nafs*) in the beginning of [its] origination (*awwal al-kawn*) is similar to the substantiality of the prime matter and as weak (*dā'ifa*) as an accident (*shabāhatan bi'l-'arāḍiyya*) not to say even weaker than that due to being a mere potentiality (*quwwatu maḥḍin*).<sup>47</sup>

The comparison between the soul and prime matter is very important in two ways. It establishes the narrative of the material origination of the soul and builds up the grounds on which one can explain knowledge formation in terms of the actualization of the "matter" of the soul by the form of knowledge. Moreover, similar to the actualization of natural matter by the natural form, the process is one of existential unification in the sense that once matter receives the form, differentiation is possible only at a conceptual level. The latter is a principle in Peripatetic natural philosophy, but here Mullā Ṣadrā is also incorporating the narrative of existential gradation, which is his own. He makes a distinction between potential and actual beings in terms of intensity and regards the soul in potentiality as "weak." Moreover, he attributes weakness (*dā'if*) and strength (*quwwa*) equally to the objects of our knowledge. The soul and the object of its knowledge are unified in being and have the same degree of being. For example, the soul is at its weakest at the level of sense perception (*al-idrāk al-ḥissiyya*) and this is also true of the sensible objects (*al-maḥsūsāt*). Next in this ontological-epistemological hierarchy is imagination (*takhayyul*), and finally intellection (*ta'aqqul*).<sup>48</sup>

Upon calling the human soul “mere potentiality” and “weak” at the beginning of its origination, Mullā Ṣadrā responds to a possible question about the innate nature (*fiṭra*) of the human soul compared to that of other animals. It is important to note that the term *fiṭra* has Qur’anic connotations and suggests the special constitution of the human soul as created by God.<sup>49</sup> Aware of the scriptural and theological association of the term *fiṭra*, Mullā Ṣadrā makes a distinction between the human soul and those of animals, while emphasizing the original imperfection of the soul. Apparently, the human soul is different only by virtue of its potential to go beyond the basic states of being/knowledge that it shares with all other animals:

The innate nature (*fiṭra*) of the human [soul] is different from that of the animal (*al-ḥayawān*) since the end (*ākhir*) of the animal nature (*fiṭra al-ḥayawān*) is the beginning (*awwal*) of the human nature (*fiṭra al-insān*) due to the differences among innate natures (*faṭarāt*) and modes of being (*nasha’āt*). And we say about the origin of the existence of the human being qua human, meaning a rational substance (*al-jawhar al-nāṭiq*), that he possesses the potential of a being (*quwwatu wujūdīn*) which particularizes (*yakhuṣṣu*) it and on which depends his perfection (*kamāl*). Likewise, his knowledge has a potential and a perfection, so his knowledge of himself (*‘ilmihī bi dhātihī*) and of [other] things is the same as the being of his own self (*wujūdu dhātihī*) and the being of [other] things for him (*wujūdu ašyā’i li dhātihī*). This is because his being is an intellectual being (*wujūdu ‘aqliyyīn*) and what is gained for an intellectual thing cannot be but intellectual. And, as long as his being is potential, the object of his intellection (*ma’qūl*) is also potentially intelligible. Thus, in the beginning of [the soul’s] existence, his knowledge of himself and of what is acquired for him is [respectively] the potentiality for self-knowledge and knowledge of other things.<sup>50</sup>

In discussing the original imperfection of the human soul, Mullā Ṣadrā keeps an eye on the Qur’anic narrative of salvation through knowledge. This is one of the places in his works where the adoption of a synthetic discourse becomes very obvious:

Verily Allah the Transcendent (*ta’ālā*) created the human soul devoid (*khālī*) of the realization of things (*taḥaqquq al-ašyā’*) within it and the

knowledge of them as He says “It is God who brought you out of your mothers’ wombs knowing nothing” [(Q. 16:780)], but He created [the soul] for nothing but intuitive recognition (*al-maʿrifā*) and devotion (*al-tāʿa*). [God said] “I created jinn and mankind only to worship Me” [(Q. 15:56)], and if the human soul was not created in order to gain knowledge of the realities of things (*al-ḥaqāʾiq al-ashyāʾ*) as they are, one of those things would be actual (*biʾl-fiʿl*) [for her] in the beginning of its creation rather than being devoid of all like the prime matter (*al-bayūlāʾ*) which was created to be shaped by natural forms (*al-ṣuwar al-ṭabīʿiyya*) while in the foundation of its substance (*al-aṣl al-jawharihā*) it was mere potentiality (*quwwa al-mahḍā*) and devoid of the bodily forms (*al-ṣuwar al-jismiyya*). This is true of the human soul. Although it is mere potentiality and devoid of intelligibles (*maʿqūlāt*) in the beginning of its creation, it has the disposition (*shaʾn*) to gain knowledge of the truths (*al-ḥaqāʾiq*) and be connected to all of them. Thus, the gnosis (*ʿirfān*) of Allah and His Kingdom (*al-malakūt*) and His Signs (*al-āyāt*) is the goal (*al-ghāya*) [of creation]. And worship (*taʿabbud*) is to gain approximation (*taqarrub*) [to Allah] and orienting one’s conducts (*sulūk*) toward Him, and knowing that piety (*ibāda*) is contingent (*maṣhrūt*) on knowledge, and results from it as the Transcendent One says “Keep up the prayer so that you remember Me” [(Q 20:14)]. Thus, knowledge is the first and the last (*al-awwal waʾl-ākhir*) and the beginning and the end (*al-mabdaʾ waʾl-ghāya*).<sup>51</sup>

Apart from the Qurʾanic references, the above passage also relies on the Sufi concept of “gnosis” (*ʿirfān*) which, in turn, imbues the terms “*maʿrifā*,” “*tahaqquq*,” “*taqarrub*,” “*ibāda*,” and “*sulūk*,” with a spiritual sense.<sup>52</sup> Together, they create a Sufi subtext within the philosophical discussion of the soul’s evolution and reinforce the synthetic character of Mullā’s Ṣadrā’s discourse on knowledge.<sup>53</sup> Among these concepts, “realization” (*tahaqquq*) has a pivotal place. As mentioned before, Mullā Ṣadrā regards knowledge acquisition as the realization (*tahaqquq*) of some reality for the knower. “*Tahaqquq*” is commonly defined as “the vision of the True One (*al-Ḥaqq*) in the forms of His Names (*ṣuwar-i asmāʾ*) which are the existent things (*al-akwān*).”<sup>54</sup> This explains the rationale for the association of knowledge with approximation (*taqarrub*) to God and His worship. In this synthesis of the philosophical, Sufi, and Qurʾanic discourses, the “realities of things,” which are the

immediate objects of knowledge “realized” in the soul, can be interpreted as the “forms of divine names” that have a significant place in Sufi metaphysical discourses, most prominently that of Ibn ‘Arabī (d. 637/1240) and his followers.<sup>55</sup> The term “*taḥaqquq*” did not appear for the first time in the writings of Ibn ‘Arabī, but the role it played in his discourse on knowledge was unprecedented. Derived from the term “*ḥaqq*” (The True One) and cognate with “verification” (*taḥqīq*) and “truth” (*ḥaqīqa*) the term, “realization” (*taḥaqquq*) connects knowledge to the existential state of those who attain it. In Ibn ‘Arabī’s writings, *taḥqīq* signifies the opposite of “following authority” (*taqlīd*), that is “the business of the common people (*‘awāmm*)” but “delineates the state of the great gnostics, those who have verified the truth (*ḥaqīqa*) of their knowledge through unveiling and direct vision.”<sup>56</sup> The possessors of verified knowledge, or certainty (*yaqīn*), are referred to as “the Verifiers” (*al-muḥaqqiqūn*)<sup>57</sup> because they have not only verified the truth of their knowledge but also have been promoted to an existential rank in which the truths of things (*ḥaqā’iq*) are realized (*taḥaqquq*). These truths are actually “names” (*asmā*), “attributes” (*awṣāf*), or “character traits” (*akhlāq*)” of God,<sup>58</sup> so through acquiring knowledge of them, the human soul assumes these attributes or traits. For Ibn ‘Arabī, this is the meaning of the well-known dictum attributed to the Prophet, “God created human being upon His own image.”<sup>59</sup> As we can see in comparison to the above quotation from Mullā Ṣadrā, the Sufi narrative of knowledge and existential promotion is perfectly integrated into Mullā Ṣadrā’s discourse on knowledge. Philosophically speaking, both thinkers explain knowledge based on the Neoplatonic doctrine of unification of the knower and the known because knowledge in the sense of realization (*taḥaqquq*) and character-assuming (*takhalluq*) can be justified only in the absence of an existential gap between the subject and the immediate object of knowledge.

Before continuing Mullā Ṣadrā’s story of the soul in the next section and looking further into his synthetic discourse, I would like to briefly compare his narrative of the original imperfection of the human soul with that of Kirmānī’s. As discussed in Chap. 2, Kirmānī follows Aristotelian psychology by rejecting the preexistence of the soul and regarding the soul as the form of the body. His narrative of the soul’s

growth begins with the imperfection of the soul in its origination. According to Kirmānī, “when the human soul comes into being, it is possessed of a pure, individual and free existence that has no form (*ṣūra*), no knowledge, no belief, no thoughts ...”<sup>60</sup> However, the human soul is different from the animal soul in that it has the potential to go beyond the basic state of its being, as shared by other animals, and move toward reaching a “second perfection.”<sup>61</sup> Previously, I argued that Kirmānī used the term “form” in the Aristotelian sense of actualizing the potential of the subject of knowledge. I also argued that with “form,” he was referring to a noetic form that actualizes the matter of the soul in the way that natural forms actualize natural matter. At the level of sense perception, the soul is said to “become actual” by receiving perceptual forms and it gradually “becomes stronger and its fire is lighted.”<sup>62</sup> Kirmānī’s narrative of the soul’s perfection is similar to Mullā Ṣadrā’s in using the concept of “transformation (*inqilāb*)” or “substantial change (*tahawwul*)” that leads to the “new creation” (*khalq al-jadīd*) of the soul or, the soul’s “second procession” (*al-inbi‘āth al-thānī*).<sup>63</sup> Moreover, the Qur’anic concept of “new creation” (Q 13:5; 14:19; 17:49; 17:98; 35:16; 50:15) is incorporated by Kirmānī and Mullā Ṣadrā into the narrative of the existential perfection/transformation of the human soul through its actualization/realization by the forms of knowledge. This similarity in the discourses of the two thinkers is very important as it links their narrative of knowledge formation to that of authority. They rely equally on a synthetic discourse woven from Aristotelian ideas, Neoplatonic readings of Aristotle, and Qur’anic narratives, which influences the Shī‘ī discourse of authority based on the existential and epistemic nobility of the imam and his representatives. I will discuss the last point further while explaining Mullā Ṣadrā’s imamology.

## The Ultimate Source of Knowledge: Emanation Narrative

The absence of an inherent epistemic agent that can actualize the potentiality of the average soul is a Peripatetic legacy that entails epistemic elitism. However, the doctrine of the unification of the knower and the

known and their identification in their degree of being makes Mullā Ṣadrā's narrative of this legacy more amenable to readings that support unquestionable authority based on an ontological hierarchy of souls. Following Aristotle, Peripatetic and later Islamic philosophers, including Mullā Ṣadrā, posit an agent intellect that actualizes the potentiality of the human soul for gaining knowledge of the universal forms or intelligibles. However, as discussed previously in this volume, they clearly follow the commentators of Aristotle in considering this agent as external to the human soul. Mullā Ṣadrā attributes his view of the agent intellect to Aristotle via Alexander of Aphrodisia:

This agent (*al-fā'il*), as mentioned by Aristotle, is similar to light because like light which causes all visible colors to become actual, this intellect renders the potential intellect (*al-ʿaql al-hayūlānī*) actual by establishing in it the habit (*malaka*) of intellectual conception (*taṣawwur al-ʿaqlī*).<sup>64</sup>

There are two points in this passage that should be noted regarding the relation between the agent intellect and the human intellect. First is the adoption of the light analogy, connecting Mullā Ṣadrā's discourse to the emanative narrative of knowledge acquisition,<sup>65</sup> as well as resonating Suhrawardī's formulation of knowledge as an illuminative relation (*idāfa al-ishrāqiyya*) as mentioned before in this chapter. Second, the agent intellect is said to establish the "habit" of "intellectual conception" in the human soul, which means that after the actualization of the potential intellect by the agent intellect, the former would be capable of intellection on its own. The attribution of such independence to the human soul could be best understood in light of the unification doctrine. An alternative reading of the "habit" would be the habit of reconnecting to the agent intellect on the part of the human intellect to receive the forms of knowledge. In my opinion, the latter reading is not in agreement with Mullā Ṣadrā's argument for the substantial change of the human soul through knowledge and the unification of the human intellect with the agent intellect. Rather, as a result of unification with the agent intellect, the human intellect can become an agent in itself with the noetic forms being dependent on it. According to Mullā Ṣadrā,

There is no doubt that the soul (*al-nafs*) is the agent origin (*al-mabda' al-fā'ili*) of the forms that exist in her faculties (*quwāhā*) and perceptions (*madārahā*). As for the intellectual forms (*al-ṣuwar al-ʿaqliyya*), they are perceived by the soul. Thus, the soul is in the beginning a potential intellect that can receive the intellectual forms, but when it is connected to the agent intellect, it becomes an agent (*fā'ila*) and a reservoir (*ḥāfiẓ*) of them.<sup>66</sup>

As we have seen in a previous quote from Mullā Ṣadrā, he believes that most people do not go beyond the animal levels of sense perception and imagination. So, the attribution of an intellectual habit and the resulting epistemic independence for the human intellect would only make sense if it is exclusive to certain human souls. There are pieces of evidence scattered throughout Mullā Ṣadrā's writings that support the promotion of some souls to the level of the intellects. The same passage about the agent intellect that was quoted previously appears in another text by Mullā Ṣadrā; however, as a result of the obvious Qur'anic and theological nature of that text, here the passage takes a different tone by using Qur'anic concepts:

Thus, when the potential faculty (*al-quwwa al-hayūlāniyya*) becomes actual intellect (*ʿaqlan bi'l-fi'l*), it becomes identical with the intelligible things (*al-ashyā' al-ma'qūla*) and there is no doubt that the intelligible things are possessed of the most superior being (*afdāl al-wujūd*) and the noblest of the goods (*ashraf al-khayrāt*) after the First One (*al-Awwal*). And the happiness (*sa'āda*) of the soul is more sublime (*ajall*) and more powerful (*aqwā*) than the potential faculty (*quwwa al-hayūlāniyya*). The soul is transferred from the rank of the sensible (*al-ḥadd al-mahsūs*) to the rank of the intelligible (*al-ḥadd al-ma'qūl*) and the sacred world (*al-ʿālam al-quds*), to endure (*sābira*) in the divine realm (*al-ṣuq' al-ilāhī*) and enter into the way of the separate intellects (*al-jawāhir al-mufāraqa*) and the incorporeal forms (*al-ṣuwar al-mujarrada*) which are the loci for illumination (*al-muṭāriḥ*) by the divine beam (*al-ashī' al-ilāhiyya*), and the site for the lights (*al-mawādi' al-anwār*) and the joys of the Necessary [being or God] (*al-ladhbhāt al-wājibiyya*), and the recipients of never-ending delights (*al-qawābil al-ibtihājāt al-ghayr al-mutanābiya*).<sup>67</sup>

According to the passage above, only certain souls can reach the level of the intellects. This takes us back to Kirmānī's evolutionary discourse

on the human soul and his soteriological discourse of knowledge formation. As explained in Chap. 2, according to Kirmānī, the human soul is capable of transforming into “an actual intellect that subsists in its own right” (*al-ʿaql al-qāʾim biʾl-fiʿl*),<sup>68</sup> which is the state of the separate intellects in the sacred world. There are several areas where the epistemic discourses of Kirmānī and Mullā Ṣadrā show strong similarities. I have already mentioned their similarity in the narrative of the soul’s original imperfection and the possibility to evolve in their mode of existence. Closely associated with this narrative is their emanative narrative of knowledge acquisition and the role of an intellectual agent from the world above to actualize the potential of the soul. It is true that in their narratives of emanation and that of the actualization of the potential human intellect these two thinkers are both indebted to the Neoplatonic heritage of Islamic philosophy; yet, they go beyond this shared heritage by incorporating their epistemology into their imamology. Moreover, as I will explain in the next section, Ṭūsī provides a link between the two thinkers as someone who was heir to both Peripatetic and Ismaʿīli discourses on knowledge. In the next section, I will investigate Mullā Ṣadrā’s incorporation of the philosophical discourse on knowledge into his imamology.

### 4.3 Perfect Souls, Imams, and the Necessity of Instruction

According to the famous Twelver Shīʿī scholar, Hossein Modarresi,

The introduction of Sufi ideas and interpretations into Islamic philosophy in the Safavid period brought about a new Shīʿite school of Islamic philosophy in the eleventh/seventeenth century and helped the Sufi cosmological theories of Ibn ʿArabī to become established in Shīʿite philosophical thought. Some of the adherents of this philosophical school put forward a theory of the Imām’s “existential authority” (*al-wilāya al-takwīniyya*) that was virtually the same as the Mufawwiḍā’s<sup>69</sup> cosmological theory on the authority of the “first creature” or the “perfect man” in the creation and supervision of the world.<sup>70</sup>

Although the author of the above passage does not mention Mullā Ṣadrā as an example of the revival of extremism in philosophical imamology, he would serve as a telling example. Mullā Ṣadrā's imamology is deeply entrenched in philosophical Sufism and narratives that enhance the supernatural state of the imams. Mullā Ṣadrā's commentary on *al-Kāfi*<sup>71</sup> by Muḥammad Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī (d. 238–29/940–41) is a great example of his use of a synthetic discourse to prove the absolute authority of the Shī'ī imam. In one important chapter of the commentary, “Book of the Proof” or “Kitāb al-ḥujja,” Mullā Ṣadrā builds up his proofs for the necessity of the imamate out of philosophical, Sufi, Qur'anic, and Shī'ī narratives. Mullā Ṣadrā's comments on a selection of thirty-two traditions (*ḥadīth*) from *al-Kāfi*. The section called “Kitāb al-ḥujja” is focused primarily on a tradition that says “the earth would not sustain in existence without an imam who is the proof of Allah for His people (*ḥujjat Allāh 'alā khalqih*).”<sup>72</sup> In al-Kulaynī's collection, this tradition appears many times in alternate forms, all pointing to the necessity of the imamate. Before commenting on this tradition, Mullā Ṣadrā reminds his readers that people differ in their intellectual capacities and emphasizes that the method of rational demonstration (*burhān*) is good for communicating with those of higher intellectual levels.<sup>73</sup> This seems to be a serious reminder because his explanation for the tradition is based on philosophical and Sufi teachings, most importantly those concerning the perfect human (*al-insān al-kāmil*), and the contingency of the nobler (*al-imkān al-ashraf*).<sup>74</sup>

The philosophical narrative of the perfect human was originally derived from the writings of Ibn 'Arabī.<sup>75</sup> For Mullā Ṣadrā, the perfect human (*al-insān al-kāmil*) is the pinnacle of humanity as well as “the final purpose of being,” and “Allah's vice regent on earth”; He identifies the latter with the imam without whom the world would “fall off the rank of existence.”<sup>76</sup> Mullā Ṣadrā's synthesis of the Shī'ī narrative of the imamate with the Sufi narrative of the perfect human is most manifest in his use of the concept of sainthood (*wilāya*). In his adoption of a synthetic discourse on *wilāya*, Mullā Ṣadrā was heir to a long tradition of speculative mysticism that lends itself to Shī'ī interpretations. Even in reading some early Sufi texts, one can hardly miss the synthesis of Shī'ī and Sufi discourses. For example, in his great classic, *Khatm al-awliyā'* (*The Seal of the*

*Saints*) Muḥammad b. ‘Alī Tirmidhī (d. 255/869), uses some concepts and doctrines that recall Shī‘ī narratives. According to Tirmidhī, “the saints (*al-awliyā’*)” are the earthly epitomes of divine perfection who are always in the proximity of God. Just as there is a seal of prophethood that is the perfection of that state, there is also a seal of *wilāya* who embodies the perfection of this position. The seal (*khatm*) of *wilāya* is the proof (*ḥujja*) of other *awliyā’* just as Prophet Muḥammad is the proof of other prophets.<sup>77</sup> Tirmidhī’s reference to *awliyā’* as “the proof of Allah to His creation (*ḥujjat Allah ‘alā khalqih*)”<sup>78</sup> reinforces the idea of synthesizing Sufi and Shī‘ī discourses for the very reason that it is based on a Shī‘ī tradition (*ḥadīth*) which is collected by al-Kulaynī.

In his definition of *wilāya*, Mullā Ṣadrā’s discourse is heavily informed by Ibn ‘Arabī’s formulation of the narrative of the perfect human.<sup>79</sup> In a recent article on the influence of Ibn ‘Arabī on Mullā Ṣadrā, the latter’s adaptation of a passage from the former was noted; this is good evidence of how Sufi narratives are incorporated into Mullā Ṣadrā’s imamology.<sup>80</sup> For Mullā Ṣadrā, the genealogical descendants of the Prophet are instances of *wilāya* and examples of the perfect human, as evidenced in this passage:

Thus *wilāya* is a divine quality (*na‘t*) and so is a [divine] inheritance. And the *walī* will not receive this position from the prophet unless God would take it from the prophet through inheritance to confer it on the *walī* so that the position would be in its fullest and most perfect form. However, some of the *awliyā* receive this position from the prophet as a heritage such as the People of the House (*al-ahl al-bayt*) – peace be upon them – who saw the Prophet in person ... As for the rest of *awliyā*, they receive the position directly from God because God Himself is the inheritor [of *wilāya*] and bestows it on them.<sup>81</sup>

In his discourse on *wilāya-imāma* based on the Sufi concept of the perfect human, Mullā Ṣadrā uses the Akbarian doctrine of “all-comprehensiveness” (*jam‘/jāmi‘iyya*). According to Mullā Ṣadrā, the *walī* as the perfect human reaches the “station of all-comprehensiveness” (*maqām-i jam‘*), in which “neither the contemplation of God would make him negligent of the creation, nor his consideration of the created

world would distract him from God.”<sup>82</sup> The state of all-comprehensiveness has two aspects, cosmic and psychological, which are actually two sides of the same coin and are usually explained together within a synthetic discursive field comprising philosophy, Sufism, and Shi‘ism. Mullā Ṣadrā describes the human soul as “an encompassing unity (*al-wahda al-jam‘iyya*) that is a shadow of divine unity (*al-wahda al-ilāhiyya*) in being by itself intellective (*‘āqila*), imaginative (*mutakhayyila*), and sentient (*ḥassāsa*).”<sup>83</sup> These faculties of the soul correspond at the cosmic level to the hierarchical ranks of being. They respectively correspond to the intellective world, the imaginal world, and the sensible world.<sup>84</sup> This is completely based on Ibn ‘Arabī’s formulation of the concept. According to Ibn ‘Arabī, “the perfect human is the all-comprehensive engendered (*al-kawn al-jāmi‘*) because he gathers within himself everything in the Divine Reality and everything in the cosmos.”<sup>85</sup> He is also said to have been “singled out for the knowledge of all the Names and the All-Comprehensive Words.”<sup>86</sup>

Prior to unfolding his imamology in his commentary on “Kitāb al-ḥujja”, Mullā Ṣadrā writes on the superiority of knowledge which is the title of the relevant section in *al-Kāfi*, that is, “Kitāb al-faḍl al-‘ilm” or “the Book of Superiority of Knowledge”. In this section of his *Sharḥ uṣul al-Kāfi*, Mullā Ṣadrā unfolds and expands the theological narrative of the original imperfection of the human soul and her need for knowledge “to perfect” (*istakmala*) herself beyond the “imperfect” and “dark” (*ḡulamānī*) level of the body.<sup>87</sup> According to Dakake in her article on “Kitāb al-faḍl al-‘ilm”, “Kulaynī’s chapter offers Ṣadrā a platform from which he can address some of the epistemological issues he wrestles with in his philosophical works, as they relate to the teachings of the Shī‘ī Imāms.”<sup>88</sup> In general, writing on the superiority of knowledge and its attribution to the imam is an important component of Shī‘ī intellectual heritage.<sup>89</sup> As for Mullā Ṣadrā, the identification of knowledge with being invests his epistemology with a special role in his synthetic discourse on Shī‘ī authority based on existential hierarchy. In “Kitāb al-faḍl al-‘ilm”, knowledge comes in different levels and so do the lives of those who possess different degrees of knowledge:

Knowledge (*‘ilm*) means the habit (*malaka*) formed in the souls of the possessors of knowledge (*al-‘ulamā’*), after a great amount of thought (*al-afkār*),

and speculations (*al-anzār*), and contemplations (*al-ta'ammulāt*), and intellections (*al-ta'qqulāt*) which are different in intensity (*shidda*) and weakness (*da'f*), and perfection (*kamāl*) and imperfection (*nuqṣān*) depending on the purity of the soul (*ṣafā' al-naḥs*) and the number of intellections (*kathra al-ta'qqulāt*) and spiritual mortifications (*rīyādāt*) with assistance from God (*taufīq min Allāh*) and His confirmation (*ta'yīd*). And there is no doubt that this is an intellectual light (*nūr al-ʿaqlī*) that God throws on the heart of whoever He wants from among His servants (*ʿibād*). ... And this light differs among the believers depending on the power of their faith and their difference in proximity (*qurb*) to God. Some of them such as the prophets and the perfect saints (*al-awliyā' al-kāmilūn*), peace be upon them, possess a light similar to the light of the sun, while the lights of others are like the light of the moon, or the light of greater stars and lesser stars, and so forth [down to] the light of the farthest star (*al-subhā*) and the light of fire (*al-nayrān*).<sup>90</sup>

In this passage from “Kitāb al-faḍl al-ʿilm”, apart from the important narrative of hierarchy of knowledge, and the use of light imagery, the use of the term *awliyā'* is noteworthy. I am not going to argue for or against Dakake's view on Mullā Ṣadrā's use of this term beyond the genealogical descendants of Prophet Muḥammad.<sup>91</sup> However, I emphasize that her finding is important in that it reveals the synthetic character of Mullā Ṣadrā's discourse on knowledge. As previously mentioned, the term *walī* as used in the writings of Mullā Ṣadrā is one of the best instances where Sufi and Shī'ī narratives are mixed. Before Mullā Ṣadrā, Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī (d. 787/1385) presented the Shī'ī imams as instances of the perfect human or perfect *walī*.<sup>92</sup> Using the synthetic philosophical-Sufi discourse, he argues that true knowledge is the knowledge of the “truths of things” (*al-ḥaqā'iq al-ashyā'*)<sup>93</sup> and that the perfect human (*al-insān al-kāmil*) or “Pole” (*al-qutb*) who has knowledge of them all<sup>94</sup> is best represented by the infallible imams.<sup>95</sup> As I will discuss below, Mullā Ṣadrā's discourse on the imamate in “Kitāb al-ḥujja” is very similar to that of Āmulī in combining the Sufi and Shī'ī narratives of perfect knowledge possessed by the imam-*walī*.

A key concept in “Kitāb al-ḥujja” is the term “proof” (*ḥujja*). This term is said to have originally come down through the tradition (*ḥadīth*) from the Shī'ī imam, al-Bāqir (d. 114/743) who was a source of Shī'ī

knowledge for both Isma‘ili and Twelver Shī‘ī scholars.<sup>96</sup> For Mullā Ṣadrā, “the earth can never be without the proof from God (*al-ḥujja min Allāh*) who possesses all the proofs (*al-ḥujaj*) and evidences (*al-bayyināt*) and inspirational sciences (*al-‘ulūm al-ladunniyya*).”<sup>97</sup> To prove the necessity of the *ḥujja*, who is the Shī‘ī imam in this context,<sup>98</sup> Mullā Ṣadrā begins with different faculties of the human soul and the all-comprehensiveness of a soul who reaches perfection:

Verily the perfect human (*al-insān al-kāmil*) consists of three parts: nature (*ṭabī‘a*), psyche (*nafs*), and intellect (*‘aql*) that can also be called the soul (*rūḥ*). And each is from a different world and each is possessed of perfection (*kamāl*) and imperfection (*naqṣ*) and there are those among human beings who are perfect in all these. The perfection of the soul (*al-rūḥ*) or the theoretical intellect (*al-‘aql al-naẓarī*) is attained through knowledge of divine truths and matters (*al-ḥaqā‘iq wa’l-‘umūr al-ilāhiyya*). And the perfection of the psyche (*al-nafs*) or the imaginative faculty (*al-quwwa al-khīyāliyya*) is attained through recording of particular images. And the perfection of the nature (*ṭabī‘a*) is the power over material substances (*mawādd*) that is attained through control (*iḥāṭa*), transforming (*qalb*) and moving (*taḥrīk*).<sup>99</sup>

As an heir to Peripatetic philosophy, Mullā Ṣadrā considers the perfection of the intellective faculty as the highest achievement of the human soul. He follows his Peripatetic predecessors in making the perfection of the human intellect contingent on its connection to the agent intellect (*al-‘aql al-fa‘‘āl*), and in “Kitāb al-ḥujja,” he attributes this level to prophets and saints (*awliyā‘*).<sup>100</sup> These souls are independent of instruction (*ta‘lim*) as they receive all knowledge directly from the agent intellect; however, all other human beings can receive knowledge from the agent intellect only through the prophets and saints. In this treatise, the agent intellect is also called “the supreme pen (*al-qalam al-a‘lā*)” and “the teacher with intense force (*al-mu‘allim al-shadīd al-quwā*).”<sup>101</sup> The terms “pen” and “teacher” share a pivotal place in Kirmānī’s discourse on knowledge. Kirmānī identifies “the pen” as the second intellect of his cosmology<sup>102</sup> while Mullā Ṣadrā applies this term to the agent intellect, which is the tenth intellect in his philosophy following Ibn Sīnā. Nevertheless, the usage of this Qur’anic term (Q. 3:39; 68:1) is important in comparing

the epistemic discourses of the two thinkers in the present study because of the significance of pen imagery in the context of instruction. Moreover, Mullā Ṣadrā uses the term “pen” next to the term “teacher,” and the two reinforce each other in the narrative of human need for instruction.

Along with this Sufi-philosophical narrative of all-comprehensiveness, Mullā Ṣadrā also uses the concept of “the contingency of the nobler” (*al-imbkān al-ashraf*) which is part of an important narrative in the Illuminationist discourse of Suhrawardī. According to Suhrawardī, “if a baser contingent [being] (*al-mumkin al-akhass*) exists, a nobler contingent must already have existed.”<sup>103</sup> Mullā Ṣadrā tries to demonstrate the existence of the noblest among existent species, that is, the perfect human/imam/*ḥujja* based on this principle:

The chain of being which is an emanation from the Transcendent First (*al-Awwal al-subḥānah*) starts from the nobler down to the baser, and from the higher down to the lower. From observing the states of beings and relations among them, it is known that the baser and lower would not come into being but through the nobler and the more perfect according to the latter’s essential causality and natural priority.<sup>104</sup>

For Mullā Ṣadrā, the existence of the ordinary human species necessarily requires the existence of the superior species of the prophets and imams.<sup>105</sup> On the other hand, the nobler beings are the very purpose (*ghāya*) of the existence of baser beings; therefore, as per the well-known Shī‘ī ḥadīth, even if there existed only two people in the world, one should necessarily be the imam/*ḥujja*.<sup>106</sup> Mullā Ṣadrā’s reading of the above-mentioned tradition based on the contingency of the nobler is very similar to the Isma‘īli doctrine of the degree of excellence as explained by the Isma‘īli thinker, Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm Naysābūrī, a fifth/eleventh-century thinker, who in his *Ithbāt al-imāma* draws on both rational and revealed tools to demonstrate the necessity of the imamate. The main theme in this treatise is the “degree of excellence” (*tafāḍul*), according to which the imamate is the highest degree of every genus and species in the universe. He provides examples from different spheres of existence including planets, plants, and animals. In the world, the human being is “the pinnacle” of all nature and similarly, the imam is the summit of

humanity.<sup>107</sup> Following this pattern, Mullā Ṣadrā argues that the relation of the *ḥujja* to other human beings is like the relation of the human being to other animals.<sup>108</sup> In other words, the imams are not just excellent human beings but a different species of human beings.

This narrative is closely related to the necessity of the imamate for the instruction of people. This part of “Kitāb al-ḥujja” is characterized by a synthesis of the epistemic and the existential proofs for the necessity of the imamate in terms of the Neoplatonic law of intermediaries between God as One Transcendent Being who is without diversity, and His creation that is diverse and divisible.<sup>109</sup> At the existential level, there should be intermediaries through whose existence the hierarchical ladder of creation unfolds. While at the level of creation, the angels—or intellects in philosophical parlance—play the role of intermediary between God and the world, at the level of instruction the prophets and the imams are in charge of transmitting knowledge to the world below.<sup>110</sup> He expands this role also beyond the imams to “the perfect scholars” (*al-ʿulamāʾ al-kāmilīn*) and attributes to them the capacity to delve into difficult sciences (*al-ʿulūm al-ghāmiḍa*).<sup>111</sup> I would argue that Mullā Ṣadrā’s identification of knowledge as a form of being is the philosophical premise from which, in “Kitāb al-ḥujja,” the existential and epistemic arguments for the necessity of the imamate derive. For example in his commentary on the following tradition, he relates the ontological concept of “cause” to “knowledge” through the pedagogical concepts of “explanation (*sharḥ*),”

Verily Allah establishes things through [intermediary] causes (*asbāb*), so for every being He made a cause (*sabab*), and for every cause an explanation, and for every explanation some knowledge, and for every knowledge a speaking gate (*bāb al-nāṭiq*) by whose recognition one will gain that knowledge, otherwise one will remain ignorant of it.<sup>112</sup>

Mullā Ṣadrā begins his commentary on the tradition above with his philosophical principle of the authentic reality of being (*aṣāla al-wujūd*). According to him, it is the being (*al-wujūd*) of every contingent thing (*al-mumkin*) that needs a cause (*sabab*), not the essence/quiddity (*māhiyya*) of it. And for the cause of a particular being, there is either an

essential definition (*ḥadd*) and/or an accidental description (*rasm*)<sup>113</sup> which comprise the explanation (*sharḥ*) referred to in the tradition. Furthermore, true knowledge of a thing is gained only if we know the definition of its cause, which can only be accessed by means of a rational demonstration (*al-burhān*), which is provided by a speaking gate (*al-bāb al-nāṭiq*):

And [God] established for every knowledge a speaking gate (*al-bāb al-nāṭiq*) and whoever knows him will have that [knowledge], and whoever is ignorant of him, will be ignorant of that [knowledge] – here the first pronoun [“him”] refers to the gate and the second pronoun [“that”] refers to knowledge. And as we learned before, the proof of God (*ḥujjat Allah*) is of two kinds: the hidden proof (*ḥujja al-bāṭina*) and the manifest proof (*ḥujja al-ẓāhira*). The [instances] for the first one are the prophets and those who follow their example in receiving knowledge from God by way of rational demonstration (*al-burhān al-ʿaqlī*). The second one is for the majority of people and their kind who receive knowledge from the Prophet and the imams – peace be upon them. Thus, just like God made a hidden gate (*al-bāb al-bāṭin*) or a hidden proof for every knowledge, He made a manifest gate or manifest proof, meaning, the Messenger of Allah – peace be upon him – and the infallible imams (*al-ʾimma al-maʿṣūmīn*) – peace be upon them.<sup>114</sup>

The division may sound a bit confusing as the instances of both forms of proof are the prophets and imams. What Mullā Ṣadrā is referring to as the hidden proof is actually the rational soul of the prophets and the imams, who can connect to the agent intellect, through whom they receive true knowledge from God. As for the second type, the prophets and the imams are manifest proofs for their followers. So, the apparent ambiguity can be removed by separating the epistemic state of the prophets and imams in themselves from their pedagogical mission regarding their followers. The most important point in this passage is that the Prophets and the imams are the only pathways to knowledge. However, the phrase “and those who follow their examples” leaves room for expanding the epistemic authority to the larger category of perfect humans. I will return to this point later when discussing the authority of imam’s representative.

In another passage in “Kitāb al-ḥujja,” Mullā Ṣadrā explains this division more clearly and identifies the prophets and the imams with knowledge, or what he calls “wisdom (*al-ḥikma*),” based on the principle of the unification of the knower and the known, which was previously mentioned in this chapter. This passage is a telling example of Mullā Ṣadrā’s use of a synthetic discourse to establish the unique epistemic authority of the imams:

And as you learned, there are two proofs (*ḥujjatān*): the hidden (*mastūra*) and the manifest (*makshūfa*). The hidden proof is in the hearts (*al-qulūb*) of the prophets and the saints (*al-awliyāʾ*) who are the divine possessors of wisdom (*al-ḥukamāʾ al-ilāhiyyūn*). And each of them is a wise man (*al-ḥakīm*) in one respect and wisdom (*al-ḥikma*) in another respect as we established in [our principle] of the unification of the actual intellect (*al-ʿaql biʿl-fiʿl*) and the intellector (*al-ʿāqil*). As for the manifest proof, it is comprised of these individuals, meaning, their very persons (*ashkhās*) are the specific instances of wisdom (*al-ashkhās al-ḥikma*). And everybody who visits one of them, he has a vision of the form of wisdom (*al-ṣūra al-ḥikma*) and a specific instance (*shakhṣ*) of it. This is the ultimate end of the endowment of wisdom (*itāʾ ghāya al-ḥikma*) and of multiple goods (*al-khayr al-kathīr*) upon ordinary people (*al-ʿamma al-nās*). Thus, whoever recognizes his imam and obeys him, he obeys God and he is given wisdom and much good [(Q 2:269)].<sup>115</sup> This is due to the fact that the imam – peace be upon him – is the very wisdom itself as explained [before].<sup>116</sup>

As we can see in the passage above, Sufi, philosophical, Qurʾanic, and Shīʿī narratives and concepts are combined to reinforce the unique position of the prophets and the imams and their authority over all other people. Those other than the prophets and the imams are believed to be “incapable of understanding intellectual matters” (*al-umūr al-ʿaqliyya*),<sup>117</sup> hence the necessity of their instruction by those who are intellectually privileged. It is also important to note that one can deduce, from Mullā Ṣadrā’s identification of the imams with wisdom, the oneness of their reality and that the imams are the individual instances of that reality. Mullā Ṣadrā repeats this notion later in the text by referring to the prophets and the imams as “one universal intellective person” (*shakhṣin wāhidin kullīyin ʿaqliyyin*).<sup>118</sup> This narrative of the imams as instances of one and the same reality reflects the Ismaʿīli view of the imamate, particularly in its formulation by Ṭūsī. Ṭūsī regards the reality of the imam as a species

with individual instances while his “everlasting and eternal essence (*jawhar-i qā'im wa bāqī*)... transcends all species and individuals.”<sup>119</sup> As for Kirmānī, he does not use the term “species” (*naw'*) in referring to the reality of the imamate, but his account of the imamate is still a metaphysical one pointing to a universal reality. According to Kirmānī, along the hierarchy of creation the rank of the imam corresponds to “the third being” (*al-mawjūd al-thālith*) and it is called “the rank of the command” (*martaba al-amr*). He clarifies that alongside the first rank, that of “the speaking prophet” (*al-nāṭiq*) and rank of “the executor” (*al-waṣī*), the rank of the imam is one of the three “universal ranks” (*marātib al-kulliyā*).<sup>120</sup> We can deduce from this that all the individual instances of the imams are historical realizations of this universal rank of the imamate. Thus, regardless of subtle differences between Kirmānī's discourse and that of Ṭūsī's, both are using a narrative of the imam as a universal reality which is later adopted by Mullā Ṣadrā and his followers.<sup>121</sup>

In his reading of the Shī'ī traditions on the authority of the imams, Mullā Ṣadrā makes sure to establish that all those other than the imams and those who follow their teachings are either infidel (*kāfir*) or ignorant (*jāhil*) persons with no access to true knowledge.<sup>122</sup> Mullā Ṣadrā's passage on the two epistemically privileged groups of people includes terms and concepts that recall the Isma'īli narratives of divine inspiration (*ta'yīd*) and instruction (*ta'līm*):

Know that all the gates (*abwāb*) to the good (*al-khayr*), happiness (*al-sa'āda*), and the recipients of the light of knowledge and guidance are exclusive (*munḥaṣir*) to two [gates]: First is the heart (*al-qalb*), meaning, the heart of the inspired one (*al-mu'ayyad*) by the power of the proof (*ḥujja*) and demonstration (*al-burhān*), which is illuminated by the light of intuitive recognition (*al-nūr al-'irfān*). The second [gate] is the gate of hearing (*al-sam'*) which works through the power of the reception (*al-qabūl*), the submission (*al-taslīm*), and the obedience (*al-ṭā'a*) toward the teacher (*al-mu'allim*) who receives [knowledge] from God esoterically (*fi'l-bāṭin*) and [the knowledge] reaches his tongue to be heard by the pupil (*al-muta'allim*) exoterically (*fi'l-zāhir*). The first [gate] belongs to the guiding Imams (*al-a'imma al-hādīn*) who are firm in knowledge (*al-rāsikhīn fi'l-'ilm*) [(Q 3:7)] while the second is for their followers (*al-tābi'in*) who are instructed by them.<sup>123</sup>

As we can see in the above passage, the imam's access to absolute knowledge implies the necessity of submission to him. So, the people are not just obliged to learn from the imam, but also to take commands from him. Moreover, in a previous passage the imam is called "ruler of the earthly world" (*sultān al-ʿālam al-ardī*).<sup>124</sup> To bridge the epistemic authority of "those who are firm in knowledge" to their external power, Mullā Ṣadrā takes an important step. He makes an argument for the identification of knowledge with power (*qudra*) in the context of his commentary on a tradition which emphasizes the worldly power of the imams next to their knowledge. The tradition reports the imams as saying that "we are those firm in knowledge (*al-rāsikhūn fi'l-ʿilm*) and we are the envied ones (*al-maḥsūdūn*)."<sup>125</sup> According to Mullā Ṣadrā, the envy<sup>126</sup> of some people for the imams is instigated by all "the true perfections" (*al-kamālāt al-ḥaqīqī*) they enjoy both in knowledge and power:

Know that knowledge (*ʿilm*) and power (*qudra*) are different in the human sphere of existence (*al-nashʾa al-insāniyya*). But in the divine world and the intellective sphere of existence (*al-nashʾa al-ʿaqliyya*) knowledge is the same as power and power is the same as knowledge. That is why for the intellective principles (*al-mabādīʾ al-ʿaqliyya*) [meaning the intellects], their knowledge of things is the same as bringing them into existence (*ʿijād*) and emanating them as the forms of these things (*inshāʾ uhā li šuwar tilk al-ashyā*). As for the human being, once his knowledge is completed and his perfection is fully realized and he is separated from this world to traverse to the sacred world (*al-ʿālam al-quds*) [meaning the world of the intellect], then his knowledge and power become one and the same thing. [At that time], his rule (*ḥukm*) and his power will penetrate the kingdom of the earth and heavens (*al-mulk wa'l-malakūt*).<sup>127</sup>

The identification of knowledge with power in the divine realm is a pivotal principle in Shīʿī philosophical theology, elaborately formulated by Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī in his *Tajrīd al-ʿtiqād*,<sup>128</sup> and Mullā Ṣadrā expands on it, based on the Sufi-philosophical doctrine of the unity of being.<sup>129</sup> As for the narrative of the identity of knowledge and power at the level of the perfect human, saint, or imam, the passage quoted above has a unique

place in Mullā Ṣadrā's works. In his other texts, this identity is implied by the doctrine of the all-comprehensiveness of the perfect soul, discussed earlier. Generally, Mullā Ṣadrā uses this narrative in his discussion of miracles and prayers that work through the power that perfect souls have over the natural world.<sup>130</sup> Nevertheless, it is only in “Kitāb al-ḥujja” that the knowledge–power identification becomes part of Mullā Ṣadrā's discourse on the imamate. The identification of knowledge with power at the level of the imamate directs Mullā Ṣadrā's discourse on the epistemic authority of the imam toward a discourse on political authority that is discussed in the next section.

#### 4.4 Mullā Ṣadrā's Political Imamology and the Imam's Representatives

General imamology addresses the necessity of the imamate, the appointment of the imam, and the imam's characteristics and traits. Building on the findings of general imamology, the discourse of political imamology becomes more specific with respect to social narratives, historical instances of authority, and arguments for or against actual claims to that authority. With this in mind, most of the discussions in the previous section fall into the category of general imamology, with the exception of Mullā Ṣadrā's reference to “the envied ones” (*al-maḥsūdūn*), which suggests hostility on the part of the imam's enemies and so recalls the political circumstances of the times in which these imams lived. The doctrine of infallibility, which is an important part of Twelver general imamology, was not discussed in the previous chapter independently from the perfect knowledge of the imams because in “Kitāb al-ḥujja,” the imam's infallibility (*ʿiṣma*) is assumed as evident, and Mullā Ṣadrā does not argue for it separately. Unlike Kirmānī in *al-Maṣābīḥ*, he does not devote a section in “Kitāb al-ḥujja” to proving the infallibility of the imams. Yet, in the relevant passages, he refers to them as “the infallible imams” or simply “the infallible ones” (*al-maʿṣūmīn*).<sup>131</sup>

To move from general imamology to political imamology, Mullā Ṣadrā uses the concepts of “fairness” (*qisṭ*) and “justice” (*ʿadl*). The term “rule/

judgment” (*ḥukm*) also becomes useful in this context because it means both a statement that is either true or false, and a moral/juridical statement of right or wrong pertaining to an action. Mullā Ṣadrā compares the role of the imam in the lives of people to the role of the intellectual faculty of the human soul in helping the individual to distinguish between true and false judgments. According to Mullā Ṣadrā,

As God created for the perceptive members (*al-a’dā’ al-idrākiyya*) [of the soul] a ruling leader (*imāman qā’iman*) on whom rests the fair judgment (*ḥukman ‘adlan*) and it distinguishes between the truth and falsity of the judgment in perceiving the particulars (*al-juz’iyyāt*), so clearly He established in the macrocosm (*al-‘ālam al-kabīr*) an imam who rules with fairness (*qisṭ*) and justice (*‘adl*) among human beings.<sup>132</sup>

As we can see, he uses the term “judgment” in both its epistemic and moral senses and by doing so, connects the imam’s epistemic authority, suggested by the analogy of the soul, to his political authority as a ruler. With the pronouncement of the imam’s political authority, Mullā Ṣadrā immediately addresses the question of divine appointment (*naṣṣ*).<sup>133</sup> He believes that the appointment (*naṣṣ*) of the imam by the Prophet and of each imam by the previous one is a necessity at all times and regards it as “a judgment of the reason” (*al-ḥukm al-‘aqliyya*) over which all religions agree.<sup>134</sup> He briefly touches on the Sunni doctrine of “consensus (*ijmā’*)” and rejects it by simply repeating the familiar narrative that leaving the world without a proof (*ḥujja*) after the Prophet would be contrary to divine wisdom. He quotes a tradition that relies on an anatomical analogy to show divine wisdom and providence at work in every nuance of creation and leaves the reader with the rhetorical question: “How could God not have considered in His providence (*qadā’*) the need of the community (*al-umma*) for a vice regent (*al-khalīfa*) to deal with their affairs after the Messenger of Allah – peace be upon him and his descendants?”<sup>135</sup>

Therefore, in the manner of some major Shī‘ī scholars preceding him, Mullā Ṣadrā regards the existence of the imam/*ḥujja* and his appointment as a necessity for the administration of the community. In his political imamology, he also makes it clear that after the Prophet only ‘Alī ibn Abī

Ṭālib deserved to take up the position of the imam and that he was appointed by the prophet himself. Yet, Mullā Ṣadrā writes during the Occultation (*ghayba*) of the Twelfth imam, so his discourse on the necessity of the imam/*ḥujja's* active role in the public affairs must take into consideration the leadership of the community by a person other than the imam himself. In the passage below, he clearly speaks of “those who represent” the imam:

It is a necessity that at all times there should be a saint/guardian (*walī*) who is in charge of (*qā'im*) preserving the Qur'an and knows the secrets (*al-asrār*) and mysteries (*al-rumūz*) of it so as he can teach the believers and guide those who receive guidance (*al-muhtadīn*), and perfect the souls of his God-fearing (*al-muttaqīn*) followers (*al-atbā'*) and supporters (*al-shī'a*), and illuminate their hearts with the light of knowledge and certainty (*yaqīn*). Thus, the warner (*al-mundhir*) was the Messenger of the Lord [(Q 4:165)] of the two worlds (*rabb al-'ālamīn*) and the guide (*al-hādī*) was the Commander of the Faithful (*Amīr al-mu'minīn*), the imam of the God-fearing (*imam al-muttaqīn*), 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, salutations be upon him to whom these qualities are attributed – and there are many prophetic traditions on this subject that support each other, [the inclusion of] which would make this discussion too long. And after him [‘Alī] there are those who represent him (*yanūbu manābih*) and take charge of his position (*yaqūmu maqāmih*) among the Friends of God/saints (*awliyā' Allah*) and the trustees (*awṣiyā'*) of His messenger (*rasūl*). This is due to the fact that the earth is never without those who guide people with His light.<sup>136</sup>

Obviously, in this passage Mullā Ṣadrā is extending the imam's role in guiding the community to those individuals who can represent his position. He refers to those representatives as “saints” and “trustees,” which raises the question whether he considered these to be two different categories of people who would be eligible to function as the spiritual and political leaders of the community. Although it is possible for the two terms to refer to the same person, one can hardly ignore different discursive roles that they play in Islamic literature. The term “*waṣī*,” which appears frequently in Shī'ī theological literature, originally referred to 'Alī as the “inheritor (*wārith*)” of the Prophet's belongings, knowledge and authority. But, according to Twelver and Isma'īli traditions, the term also

refers to the trustees of all the prophets throughout the prophetic history. In Isma‘ili discourses too, “*waṣī*” often refers to ‘Alī, who is also called the founder (*asās*), coming after the Prophet.<sup>137</sup> As for the term *awlīyā’*, it has a different discursive history from *awsīyā’* and as mentioned before, it is a key venue through which Sufi and Shī‘ī narratives overlap.

In another text by Mullā Ṣadrā, a third authority appears which he refers to as the “jurists” (*al-mujtahidīn*).<sup>138</sup> According to a scholar, by “jurists” Mullā Ṣadrā means legal scholars who can give *fatwā* and function as a kind of intermediary between the imams and the believers.<sup>139</sup> In his *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya*, Mullā Ṣadrā emphasizes the authority of the imam, the saint, and the jurist after the closing of the gate of prophecy (*nubuwwa*) and messenger-ship (*risāla*). I have already discussed the significance of the concept *walī* in Mullā Ṣadrā’s narrative of authority and as we can see in the above passage, the main function of a *walī* is to teach people the true meaning of the Qur’an.<sup>140</sup> Moreover, *wilāya* is a rank of knowledge and spirituality that also can be possessed by a prophet, not to mention the possession of it by all the infallible imams, who are also referred to as *awlīyā’* in Shī‘ī discourses.<sup>141</sup> What remains to be explained here is the function of the jurist in the network of Shī‘ī authority. The term “*mujtahid*” appears at the very end of *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya*. It comes within a passage where the author explains the continuation of religious authority after the death of the Prophet that marks the closing of the venue of revelation through the visual apparition of the angel of revelation (*al-malak al-ḥāmil al-wahy*). According to Mullā Ṣadrā,

[After the Prophet], God preserved the rule (*ḥukm*) of the bringers of good news (*al-mubashshirāt*) [(Q 4:165)]<sup>142</sup> and the imams who are immune to errors (*al-ā’imma al-ma‘ṣūmīn ‘an al-khaṭā’*) – salutations be upon them – and the authority of the jurists (*al-mujtahidīn*). While removing (*azāla*) the title [of prophet or messenger] from them, He established their authority and commanded anyone who is lacking in the knowledge of the divine judgment (*al-ḥukm al-ilāhī*) to take their questions to the people of remembrance (*ahl al-dhikr*)<sup>143</sup> as God said “If you do not know, ask the people who know the scriptures (*ahl al-dhikr*).” [(Q 21:7)] So, [the jurists] give their expert opinion (*fatwā*) according to their jurisprudence (*ijtihād*) and

they could also disagree just like different religious laws (*al-sharāʿi*) disagree as God said “We have assigned a law and a path to each of you.”<sup>144</sup>

This is a very important passage in Mullā Ṣadrā’s works because he is explicitly attributing the legal-political authority of the prophets and the imams to jurists. Before discussing the authority of the jurists and the influence of Mullā Ṣadrā’s philosophical discourse on later texts regarding authority during the Occultation, I would like to address this question: what is the source of knowledge in the case of the jurists? If the legal-political authority of the jurist is mentioned on a par with the authority of the prophets and that of the imams, there must also be a way to compare his epistemic authority with theirs.

Mullā Ṣadrā builds his argument for the epistemic authority of the jurist on differentiating between methods of acquiring the same epistemic content from the same source. In this context, namely the passage cited below, Mullā Ṣadrā does not use the term “*al-mujtahidīn*” or the equivalent of it “*al-fuqahā*” but the term “religious scholars (*al-ʿulamā*).”<sup>145</sup> The latter is a more general concept with wider application and it also applies to jurists because jurists are types of religious scholars. Two definitions of *ijtihād* are commonly cited: according to Ḥillī, the more general definition of *ijtihād* is “exerting oneself to the utmost of one’s ability to accomplish a difficult action” and the more technical one is “to attain a probable opinion (*ẓann*) about a ruling in the sacred law.”<sup>146</sup> Writing in the fourteenth century, Ḥillī, who was one of the early theoreticians of Twelver jurisprudence, offers a modest narrative of knowledge involved in jurisprudence.<sup>147</sup> For him, certainty is a state that only the Prophet and the imams could reach. This is not true in the case of Mullā Ṣadrā’s writings, as he was heir to the Safavid promotion of the jurist to the level of absolute authority.<sup>148</sup> For Mullā Ṣadrā, of the three methods of the attainment of knowledge, that is, revelation (*waḥy*), divine inspiration (*ilhām*), and speculative acquisition (*iktisāb*), the first belongs to prophets (*al-anbiyāʿ*) and saints (*al-awliyāʿ*), the second belongs to the imams, and the third is for the speculative religious scholars (*al-naddār min al-ʿulamā*). These three groups are different only in their processes of attaining knowledge:

As for acquisition (*al-iktisāb*), it is the way of the speculative religious scholars (*al-naddār min al-ʿulamā*). And acquisition does not differ from divine inspiration (*al-ilhām*) in the very emanation (*fayādān*) of the intelligible forms (*al-suwar al-ʿilmiyya*) and the recipient (*qābil*) of them and the agent (*fāʿil*) or the giver (*mufīd*) of them. They only differ in the way that the veil is removed (*zawāl al-ḥijāb*) [between the giver and the recipient] and its direction (*jabat*). [Similarly] revelation (*wahy*) and inspiration do not differ in any of the things mentioned above though they are different in the degree of clarity (*wudūh*) and luminosity (*al-nūriyya*) and the vision of the angel who bestows the intelligible forms. Thus, according to what came before, the sciences (*al-ʿulūm*) are not attained for us unless through the intermediary of the noetic angels (*al-malāʾika al-ʿilmiyya*) who are the agent intellects (*al-ʿuqūl al-fāʿāla*) in different ways. As God said: “It is not granted to any mortal that God should speak to him except through revelation or from behind a veil, or by sending a messenger to reveal by His command what He will [(Q. 42:51)].”<sup>149</sup>

In this passage, Mullā Ṣadrā claims absolute epistemic authority for the learned scholars. Nevertheless, he would not attribute such a high rank to any scholar; one thinks rather of certain celebrated scholars of the time such as those with titles such as “the *mujtabid* of the age” and “the *shaykh al-Islām*.”<sup>150</sup> It is important to note that such titles were bestowed on religious scholars by the Safavid kings, and the office held by these chosen *ʿulamā* represented the mutual empowerment of religion and the state.<sup>151</sup> As Abbas Amanat puts it, “cooperation over a broad range of juristic and political issues guaranteed mutual legitimacy for the Shah and the *mujtabid*, and it is largely in this context that their veneration by the state can be fully understood.”<sup>152</sup>

Returning to the subject of the knowledge of the *mujtabid*, as was pointed out earlier in this chapter, Mullā Ṣadrā regards true knowledge as the result of the unification of the intellective soul with the agent intellect. Furthermore, in “Kitāb al-ḥujja,” the soul of the imam is identified as knowledge or wisdom itself due to the unification principle.<sup>153</sup> From these tenets and the passage above, one can infer Mullā Ṣadrā’s possible contribution to the discursive formation of the absolute authority of the jurisprudence (*wilāya al-muṭlaqa li’l-faqīh*). Although this concept did not exist in the Safavid religious and political discourses, I would argue

that Mullā Ṣadrā's discourse on knowledge and authority, especially in its incorporation of the Sufi narrative of *wilāya*, became an important discursive springboard for the formation of the absolute authority of the jurists and its political crystallization in modern and contemporary Iran. It is important to note as a reminder here that in accordance with my approach to the dynamics of discourses, I do not argue that Mullā Ṣadrā's contribution to *wilāya al-faqīh* was intentional, or that he even anticipated such a political implication. The next chapter expounds on the discursive legacy of Mullā Ṣadrā regarding authority and its political stretch in modern times.

## Notes

1. Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī, "Risāla fī ittiḥād al-ʿāqil wa'l-maʿqūl" in *Majmūʿa-yi rasāʾil-i falsafī-yi Ṣadr al-mutaʿallihīn*, ed. Ḥāmid Nāǧi Iṣfahānī, 63–103 (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Ḥikmat, 1996).
2. Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī, *al-Ḥikmat al-mutaʿāliya fī asfār al-ʿaqliyya al-arbaʿa*, ed. Muḥammad Riḍa Muẓaffar, 9 vols (Beirut: Dār al-ihyāʾ al-turāth al-ʿArabī, 1999).
3. Prior to the 1970s, a German Orientalist, Max Horten (d. 1945) wrote a book on Mullā Ṣadrā in German, which did not have a remarkable impact at the time. See Max Horten, *Das Philosophische System von Schirāzi (1640)* (Strassburg: K.J. Trübner, 1913).
4. Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī, *Kitāb al-Mashāʿir*, trans. Henri Corbin: *Le livre des pénétration métaphysiques* (Tehran: Institut Français d'Iranologie, 1964); *Kitāb al-ʿArshīyya*, trans. James Winston Morris: *The Wisdom of the Throne* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981); *Iksīr al-ʿarḑīn*, trans. William Chittick: *The Elixir of Gnostics* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2003).
5. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī and his Transcendent Theosophy: Background, Life and Works* (Tehran: Institute for Humanities and Cultural Studies, 1978); *Islamic Philosophy from its Origins to the Present* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press). Hossein Ziai, "Mullā Ṣadrā: His Life and Works," in *History of Islamic Philosophy*, eds. Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman (London/New York: Routledge, 1996). Sajjad Rizvi, *Mulla Sadra: His Life and Works and the*

- Sources for Safavid Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). Sayeh Meisami, *Mulla Sadra* (Oxford, UK: Oneworld, 2013). Ibrahim Kalin, *Mulla Sadra* (Delhi, India: Oxford University Press, 2014).
6. See Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Ḥaq, “Mulla Sadra’s Concept of Being,” *Islamic Studies* 6 (1967): 268–276. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, “Mulla Sadra and the Doctrine of the Unity of Being,” *Philosophical Forum* 4 (1972): 153–161. Fazlur Rahman, *The Philosophy of Mulla Sadra* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1975). Christian Jambet, *The Act of Being: The Philosophy of Revelation in Mulla Sadra* (New York: Zone Books, 2006). Cecil Bonmariage, *Le réel et les réalités: Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī et la structure de la réalité* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique, 2007); J. Vrin. David Burrell, “Mullā Ṣadrā’s Ontology Revisited,” *Journal of Islamic Philosophy* 6 (2010): 45–67. Sajjad Rizvi, *Mullā Ṣadrā and Metaphysics: Modulation of Being* (London/New York: Routledge, 2009).
  7. See Muḥammad Ha’irī Yazdī, *The Principles of Epistemology in Islamic Philosophy: Knowledge by Presence* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992); Ibrahim Kalin, *Knowledge in Later Islamic Philosophy: Mullā Ṣadrā on Existence, Intellect, and Intuition* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2010). Zailan Moris, *Revelation, Intellectual Intuition and Reason in the Philosophy of Mulla Sadra* (London/New York: Routledge, 2003). Mahmoud Khatami, *From a Sadrean Point of View: Towards an Ontetic Elimination of the Subjectivistic Self* (London: London Academy of Iranian Studies, 2004). Jari Kaukua, *Self-Awareness in Islamic Philosophy: Avicenna and Beyond* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014).
  8. Eiyad S. al-Kutubi, *Mullā Ṣadrā’s Eschatology: Evolution of Being* (Abingdon, London/ New York: Routledge, 2015).
  9. Shigeru Kamada, Mullā Ṣadrā’s imāma/walāya: An Aspect of His Indebtedness to Ibn ‘Arabī,” *Journal of Islamic Philosophy* 6 (2010): 67–79. Maria Massy Dakake, “Hierarchies of Knowing in Mullā Ṣadrā,” *Journal of Islamic Philosophy* 6 (2010): 5–46.
  10. Latima-Parvin Peerwani, *On the Hermeneutics of the Light Verse of the Quran* (London: Saqi Books, 2004). Mohammed Rustom, “The Nature and Significance of Mullā Ṣadrā’s Qur’ānic Writings,” *Journal of Islamic Philosophy* 6 (2010): 109–30; *The Triumph of Mercy: Philosophy and Scripture in Mullā Ṣadrā* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2012).
  11. Alparslan Açıkgeneç, *Being and Existence in Sadra and Heidegger* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1993). Reza Akbarian, *The Fundamental*

- Principles of Mulla Sadra's Transcendental Philosophy* (London: London Academy of Islamic Studies, 2000). Muḥammad Kamal, *Mulla Sadra's Transcendental Philosophy* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).
12. On this topic, see Marco di Branco, "The Perfect King and His Philosophers," *Politics, Religion and Graeco-Arabic Philosophy in Safavid Iran: the Case of the Uthūlūjīyā'*, *Studia graeco-arabica, The Journal of the Project Greek into Arabic Philosophical Concepts and Linguistic Bridges* 4 (2014): 191–218.
  13. For Mullā Ṣadrā's relation to these figures, see Rizvi, *Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī: His Life and Works*, 8–14.
  14. Nasr, *Islamic Philosophy from its Origins to the Present*, 221.
  15. This section is partly based on my *Mullā Ṣadrā* (Oxford, UK: Oneworld, 2013). For an annotated bibliography of Mullā Ṣadrā, see Ibrahim Kalin, "An Annotated Bibliography of the Works of Mullā Ṣadrā with a brief Account of his Life," *Islamic Studies* 42:1 (2003): 21–62.
  16. Maytham b. 'Alī al-Baḥrānī, *Sharḥ nahj al-balāghah*, eds. Team of scholars, 5 vols (Tehran: Mu'assisa al-Naṣr, 1959). His book on theology is imbued with philosophical themes and terminology. See also Maytham b. 'Alī Baḥrānī, *Qawā'id al-marām fi 'ilm al-kalām*, ed. Sayyid Aḥmad al-Ḥusaynī (Qum: Kitābkhānah-yi 'umūmī-yi Āyat Allāh al-'Uzmā Mar'ashī Najafī, 1398 A.H.). Also see Majīd Rūḥī Dihkurdi, "Mu'arriḥ wa rawish-shināsī-yi *Sharḥ nahj al-balāghah* by Maytham Baḥrānī," *Ulūm-i ḥadīth* 48 (1378 S.H.): 56–77. For the influence of Maytham Baḥrānī on Shī'ī imamology, see Hamid Mavani, "Doctrine of Imamate in Twelver Shī'ism: Traditional, Theological, Philosophical and Mystical Perspectives" (PhD dissertation, McGill University, 2005).
  17. Ḥaydar ibn 'Alī Āmulī, *Jāmi' al-asrār wa manba' al-anwār*, eds. Henry Corbin and Ismail Othmān Yaḥyā (Tehran: Anīstītū-i Īrān va Faransah, 1969). This is a systematic endeavor to reconcile the Sufi teachings of Ibn 'Arabī with Twelver Shī'ism. Āmulī identifies the Shī'ī imamate with the Sufi *wilāya*, and writing for a Shī'ī audience in the north of Iran, he influenced all later attempts to harmonize Shī'ism with Sufism. In reading Āmulī, we are advised by Robert Wisnovsky not to reduce the influences on him only to Ibn 'Arabī. The author believes that Ḥaydar Āmulī had a different concern from that of Ibn 'Arabī. The latter's interest in the Neoplatonic metaphysics of perfection was due to his interest in, not only an ontological context for the imamate, but also a way to explain how the world connects to God through the perfection of the human soul. Wisnovsky tries to show that Ḥaydar Āmulī

- is also indebted to Ibn Sīnā and the Neoplatonic reading of perfection. So Wisnovsky advises readers to be aware of the influence of disparate sources when reading a classical figure, instead of only limiting themselves to a single source. See Robert Wisnovsky, "One Aspect of the Akbarian Turn in Shi'ī Theology," in *Sufism and Theology*, ed. Ayman Shihadeh, 49–62 (Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press, 2007).
18. See 'Alī ibn Muḥammad Ibn Ṭurkhaḥ Iṣfahānī, *Tambīd al-qawā'id*, eds. Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, Muḥammad Riḍā Qumshā'ī, and Mīrzā Maḥmūd Qummī (Tehran: Anjuman-i shāhanshāhī-yi falsafa-yi Īrān, 1976). The treatise tries to show the unity of reason and gnosis, and one of its main themes is the perfect human (*al-insān al-kāmil*). Ibn Ṭurkhaḥ relies on philosophical concepts and logical arguments to explain Ibn 'Arabī's mystical doctrines of the oneness of being (*waḥda al-wujūd*) and the perfect human. In his identification of knowledge as a form of being, he also anticipates Mullā Ṣadrā's epistemology.
  19. In an article on the relationship between Shi'ism and mysticism, Nasr mentions Āmulī, al-Baḥrānī and Ibn Ṭurkhaḥ among those who paved the way for a Shi'ī intellectual renaissance under the Safavids by reading Shi'ī texts in a gnostic (*'irfānī*) light. See Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Shi'ism and Sufism: Their Relationship in Essence and History," *Religious Studies* 6:3 (September 1970): 229–242. On this theme, also see Kāmil Muṣṭafā al-Shaybī, *al-Ṣilah bayna al-taṣawwuf wa' l-tashayyuf* (Cairo: Dār al-ma'ārif, 1969).
  20. Franz Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant: The Concept of Knowledge in Medieval Islam* (Leiden, NL: Brill, 2007), 52–69.
  21. Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant*, 68. The theme of knowledge as light in Sufism is expanded by Rosenthal in chapter 6 of the book.
  22. Ibn Sīnā, *al-Ishārāt wa'l-tanbihāt*, ed. Sulayman Dunya, 2 vols (Cairo: Dār al-ma'ārif, 1960), 368–372.
  23. Ibn Sīnā, *Ilāhiyyāt al-Shifā*, trans. Michael Marmura: *The Metaphysics of the Healing* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young Press, 2005), 25. On Ibn Sīnā's theory of mental existence, see Deborah Black, "Avicenna on the Ontological and Epistemic Status of Fictional Beings," *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 8 (1997): 425–445.
  24. Shīrāzī, *al-Ḥikmat al-muta'āliya fi asfār al-'aqliyya al-arba'a*, III: 287.
  25. Mullā Ṣadrā discusses this extensively in his commentary on Suhrawardī's *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq*. See Kalin, *Knowledge in Later Islamic*

- Philosophy: Mullā Ṣadrā on Existence, Intellect, and Intuition*, 59–67; Ghulām Ḥossein Ibrāhīmī Dīnānī, *Shu‘ā‘-i andīshah wa shuhūd-i falsafa-yi Suhrawardī* (Tehran: Intishārāt-i ḥikmat, 1986), 335–345.
26. Suhrawardī’s influence on Mullā Ṣadrā can be traced in many parts of the latter’s philosophy, but in this study I only discuss his influence regarding their views on the nature of knowledge.
  27. Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī, *al-Mashārī‘ wāl-muṭāriḥāt* cited by Mehdi Ḥā’irī Yazdī, *The Principles of Epistemology in Islamic Philosophy: Knowledge by Presence* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992), 67.
  28. See Kalin, *Knowledge in Later Islamic Philosophy*, 59–66.
  29. Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī, *The Philosophy of Illumination*, eds. and trans. John Walbridge and Hossein Ziai (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1999), 70–73.
  30. Ibrāhīmī Dīnānī, *Shu‘ā‘-i andīshah wa shuhūd-i falsafa-yi Suhrawardī*, 359.
  31. For Suhrawardī’s science of lights, see Suhrawardī, *The Philosophy of Illumination*, 83–89.
  32. Shīrāzī, *al-Ḥikmat al-muta‘āliya fi asfār al-‘aqliyya al-arba‘a*, III: 297.
  33. Muḥammad Ḥussein Ṭabāṭabā’ī, *Nihāya al-ḥikma* (Qom: Mu’assasa al-nashr al-Islāmī, n.d.), 240.
  34. In Peripatetic philosophy, knowledge by correspondence is our knowledge of the external world through the intermediary of quiddity (*māhiyya*), abstracted from the external object and representing it. The only example of knowledge by presence is the knowledge that the soul has of herself without the intermediary of any mental forms or images. While Mullā Ṣadrā and his school begin their sections on knowledge with this division, unlike their Peripatetic predecessors, they finally reduce all knowledge to knowledge by presence. On the two-fold division of knowledge, see Ha’irī Yazdī, *The Principles of Epistemology in Islamic Philosophy*, 43–56. On different theories of knowledge, see Kalin, *Knowledge in Later Islamic Philosophy*, 118–135.
  35. Ṭabāṭabā’ī, *Nihāya al-ḥikma*, 241.
  36. Shīrāzī, *al-Ḥikmat al-muta‘āliya fi asfār al-‘aqliyya al-arba‘a*, III: 366.
  37. Shīrāzī, *al-Ḥikmat al-muta‘āliya fi asfār al-‘aqliyya al-arba‘a*, III: 487.
  38. *Ibid.*
  39. Porphyry’s demonstration of the unification of the knower and the known follows his arguments against unification in the case of sense perception and imagination, which reach out of themselves for their

- objects. He says that “In the case of these faculties, then, their mode of apprehension is of such a nature as this: in no case would any of them, through reverting towards and being concentrated on itself, come to the recognition of any form, sensible or nonsensible. In the case of intellect, on the other hand, apprehension does not take place in this way, but in virtue of its concentrating on itself and contemplating itself.” This passage is from Plotinus’ *Enneads* as edited by Porphyry and is known as *Launching Points to the Intelligibles*. See John Dillon and Lloyd P. Gerson, *Neoplatonic Philosophy: Introductory Readings* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 2004), 190.
40. Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī, *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (Mashhad, IR: Dānishgāh-i Mashhad, 1968), 221; “Risāla fī ittiḥād al-‘aql wa’l-ma‘qūl,” 88.
  41. Aristotle, *De Anima*, ed. and trans. R.D. Hicks (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert Publisher, 1965), Book II: 3, 59.
  42. Shīrāzī, *al-Ḥikmat al-muta‘āliya fī asfār al-‘aqliyya al-arba‘a*, III: 337.
  43. Mullā Ṣadrā, Shīrāzī, *Kitāb al-Mashā‘ir*, ed. Ibrahim Kalin and trans. Seyyed Hossein Nasr: *The Book of Metaphysical Penetrations: A Parallel English-Arabic Text* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2014), 13.
  44. Shīrāzī, *al-Ḥikmat al-muta‘āliya fī asfār al-‘aqliyya al-arba‘a*, IX: 186. Translated in Meisami, *Mulla Sadra*, 35. For Mullā Ṣadrā’s arguments against the authentic reality of essence (*aṣāla al-māhiyya*) in favor of the authentic reality of being, see Shīrāzī, *Kitāb al-Mashā‘ir*, 40–47.
  45. In quoting this passage, I had to change the original translation of the term from “intelligibilia” to “the intelligible” to be consistent with the rest of my text.
  46. Shīrāzī, “Risāla fī ittiḥād al-‘aql wa’l-ma‘qūl,” 21. The translation of the passage is by Kalin, “Appendix: Treatise on the Unification of the Intellector and the Intellect,” in *Knowledge in Later Islamic Philosophy*, 269; *al-Ḥikmat al-muta‘āliya fī asfār al-‘aqliyya al-arba‘a*, III: 322.
  47. Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī, *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya*, 202.
  48. Shīrāzī, *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya*, 203. Here Mullā Ṣadrā also mentions estimation (*tawabḥum*), which is strange because he famously argues against the existence of this level of the mind in his criticism of Ibn Sīnā’s epistemology. Estimation is defined by Ibn Sīnā as the perception of particular meanings (*ma‘ānī al-juzwiyya*) such as the sheep’s fear of wolves. See Ibn Sīnā, *Remarks and Admonitions: Physics and Metaphysics*, trans. Shams Inati (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 101.

49. In the words of John Esposito, *fiṭra* is “according to the *Quran*, the original state in which humans are created by God. In the *Qur’an*, God is called *Fāṭir*, that is, creator of heaven and earth, and the verb *faṭara* is also used to mean ‘to create.’ However, the commonly accepted meaning of the word derives from the traditions of Muḥammad, according to which God creates children according to *fiṭra*, and their parents later make them Jews or Christians. As such, every child is born a Muslim. The concept of *fiṭra* was commonly invoked by Sufis, who often viewed their own quest as the means for restoring the original harmony of creation.” John L. Esposito, *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 87.
50. Shīrāzī, *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya*, 202–203.
51. Shīrāzī, *al-Ḥikmat al-muta‘aliya fi asfār al-‘aqliyya al-arba‘a*, III: 515.
52. In his *Iksīr al-‘arīfīn*, which is a translation of Afḍal al-Dīn Kāshānī’s *Jāwīdān nāma*, Mullā Ṣadrā draws heavily on Sufi concepts and narratives to explain the ontological and epistemological state of the human soul. He calls the soul in the beginning of her creation a “broken leg” (*maqṣūra al-qadam*): “At the beginning of her configuration, the soul’s leg is broken. When the brokenness disappears, she comes forth inverted (*mankūsa*) among the plants. When she inclines away from inversion toward the level of the dumb beasts (*al-bahā‘im*), she is midway between inversion and standing straight. When in her movement she reaches the degree of humanness (*al-daraja al-insāniyya*), her stature has stood up straight and her ‘resurrection (al-*qyāma*) stood forth’ so that she stands before the Author (*al-bārī*).” See Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī, *Iksīr al-‘arīfīn*, trans. William Chittick: *The Elixir of Gnostics* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2003), 45. Also compare Mullā Ṣadrā’s use of plant imagery to a similar one in Kirmānī’s text where he describes the soul as being, in the beginning, a “weak sapling.” See Ḥamīd al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd Allāh Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-‘aql*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Ḥilmī (Cairo: Dār al-fikr al-‘Arabiyya, 1953), 348.
53. Mullā Ṣadrā was not the first thinker to synthesize the Sufi and philosophical discourses. Ṣā‘in al-Dīn Ibn Turkah Iṣfahānī (d. 835/1432) preceded Mullā Ṣadrā in generating a synthetic discourse of this kind. This is especially noticeable in his *al-Tamhīd al-qawā‘id*, which is a commentary on Abū Ḥamīd Iṣfahānī’s *al-Qawā‘id al-tawḥīd*, and expands on Ibn ‘Arabī’s views on being and knowledge. In his approach to philosophy, Ibn Turkah diverges from Ibn ‘Arabī by arguing that the

- journey of the soul in quest of truth goes through the illuminated fields of philosophy but ends up on the heights of gnosis. In his Prologue (*Khuṭba*) to *al-Tambhīd al-qawā'id*, he clearly explains his synthetic methodology and appreciates the necessity of rational speculation. The main theme of the Prologue is that reason and revelation are both necessary as constituents of true knowledge. That is why the author frequently mentions the ancient philosophers, such as Plato, whom he calls “divine Plato.” Similar to philosophical compendiums, Ibn Turkah begins with different categories of sciences and their subjects to define the science of gnosis (*ʿirfān*) as a superior form of knowledge based on the generality of its subjects and the methodology of acquiring it. See ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad Turkah Iṣfahānī, “Khuṭba al-kitāb” cited in ʿAbdullah Jawādī Āmulī, *Tabrīr-i Tambhīd al-qawā'id*, ed. Ḥamīd Pārsānīya, 3 vols (Qom: Markaz-i nashr-i asrā', 1387 S.H.), I: 115–118. The contemporary Iranian historian of philosophy, Seyyed Hossein Nasr believes that Ibn Turkah was Shī'ī. See Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Philosophy from its Origin to the Present: Philosophy in the Land of Prophecy* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2006), 210.
54. ʿAbd al-Razzāq Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyya*, ed. Muḥammad Kamāl Ibrāhīm Jaʿfar (Qom: Intishārāt-i bīdār, 1991), 156.
  55. For the influence of Ibn ʿArabī on Islamic literature, see James Winston Morris, “Ibn ʿArabī Part II (Conclusion): Influences and Interpretations,” *Journal of American Oriental Society* 107:1 (Jan-Mar 1978): 101–119. For major scholarship on the influence of Ibn ʿArabī on Mullā Ṣadrā, see Christian Jambet, *The Act of Being: The Philosophy of Revelation in Mulla Sadra* (New York: Zone Books, 2006); Shigeru Kamada, “Mullā Ṣadrā’s imāma/walāya: An Aspect of His Indebtedness to Ibn ʿArabī,” *Journal of Islamic Philosophy*, 6 (2010): 67–79.
  56. William Chittick, *Ibn ʿArabī’s Metaphysics of Imagination: The Sufi Path of Knowledge* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989), 166.
  57. Chittick, *Ibn ʿArabī’s Metaphysics of Imagination*, 4; 149.
  58. Chittick, *Ibn ʿArabī’s Metaphysics of Imagination*, 286. It is important to note that according to Chittick, Ibn ʿArabī’s ethics follows a theomorphic approach based on his metaphysics, so it must be distinguished from ethics in the common sense of the term. On this subject, see Chittick, *Ibn ʿArabī’s Metaphysics of Imagination*, 22–26.

59. Chittick, *Ibn 'Arabī's Metaphysics of Imagination*, 287.
60. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-'aql*, 309.
61. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-'aql*, 303.
62. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-'aql*, 311
63. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-'aql*, 351.
64. Shīrāzī, *al-Ḥikmat al-muta'aliya fi asfār al-'aqliyya al-arba'a*, III: 431; *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, ed. Muḥammad Khājawī (Tehran: Mu'assasa-i taḥqīqāt-i farhangī, 1363 S.H.), 116.
65. For the light analogy in Neoplatonism as transmitted through Arabic translations, see 'Abdul Raḥmān Badawī, *Aflūṭīn 'inda l-'Arab* (Kuwait: Wikāla al-maṭbū'āt, 1977), 119–120.
66. Shīrāzī, *al-Ḥikmat al-muta'aliya fi asfār al-'aqliyya al-arba'a*, VIII: 259. In my arguments for the independence of the human intellect, I was inspired by Abdulrasūl 'Ubūdiyyat, *Dar'āmadi bi niẓām-i ḥikmat-i Ṣadrā'ī*, 2 vols (Tehran: Intishārāt-i samt, 2007/1386 S.H.), II: 94–99. On the promotion of the human intellect to the level of the agent intellect, also see Shīrāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 579. Here, he also makes references to Sufi discourses. See Shīrāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 598.
67. Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 117.
68. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-'aql*, 162.
69. In Shī'ī literature, the term is derived from *tafwīd* which means “delegation,” a doctrine according to which God has delegated to the imam the management and care of the world. It refers to a theological narrative that attributes superhuman qualities to the imams. See **Suleiman A. Mourad**, “Muways b. 'Imrān, Abū 'Imrān,” in *Encyclopedia of Islam Three*, eds. Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, and Everett Rowson (Brill Online, 2013), accessed June 20, 2016, [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/muways-b-imran-abu-imran-COM\\_23884?s.num=0&s.f.s2\\_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-3&s.q=tafwid](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/muways-b-imran-abu-imran-COM_23884?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-3&s.q=tafwid)
70. Hossein Modarresi, *Crisis and Consolidation in the Formative Period of Shī'ite Islam* (Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 1993), 49.
71. Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfi*, ed. 'Alī Akbar Ghaffārī, 8 vols (Tehran: Maktabat al-Ṣādiq, 1381 A.H./1961); Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfi*, ed. Shaykh Muḥammad al-Ākhūndī, vols 3–8 (Tehran: Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyya, 1377 A.H./1957–1379 A.H./1959). Al-Kulaynī's *al-kāfi* is the earliest extant authoritative collection of Shī'ī traditions (*ḥadīth*) and one of the four most authoritative sources of traditions among Twelver Shī'īs. See Mojan Momen, *An Introduction to Shī'ī*

- Islam: The History and Doctrine of Twelver Shi'ism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985), 174. One of the hallmarks of *al-Kāfi* is its emphasis on the concepts of knowledge, intellect, and reason. It is also said that Kulaynī tends to interpret *al-ʿaql* more in the sense of reason. On this topic, see Lynda Clarke, "Doctrine of the Shi'ah according to the Early Shi'i Sources," PhD dissertation, McGill University (Canada), 1994.
72. Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī, II: 485.
  73. Shīrāzī, *Sharḥ uṣūl al-kāfi*, eds. Muḥammad Khājawī and ʿAlī Nūrī, 2nd ed. 4 vols (Tehran: Pizhūhishgāh-i ʿulūm-i insānī wa muṭalaʿāt-i farhangī, 1383 S.H./2004), II: 482.
  74. Sayeh Meisami, "Mullā Ṣadrā's Philosophical Arguments for the Necessity of the Imamate," *Religion Compass* 10 (2016): 251.
  75. Ibn ʿArabī, *The Meccan Revelations*, ed. Michel Chodkiewicz, trans. William Chittick and James W. Morris, 2 vols (New York: Pir Press, 2004), I: 109; 213; 217; 234; 320; 322.
  76. Shīrāzī, *Sharḥ uṣūl al-kāfi*, II: 487–488.
  77. Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī Tirmidhī, *Kitāb khatm al-awliyāʾ* ed. ʿUthmān Yaḥyā (Beirut: al-Maṭbaʿah al-kātūlikiyyah, 1965), 422. Ibn ʿArabī addressed many of the points related to this concept in answering metaphysical and mystical questions raised by Tirmidhī. In this book, Ibn ʿArabī's comments are included in the footnotes on the text cited above. On Tirmidhī's work, see Bernd Radtke, "Some Recent Research on Al-Hakim Al-Tirmidhi," *Der Islam* 83:1 (2006): 39–89.
  78. Tirmidhī, *Kitāb khatm al-awliyāʾ*, 346.
  79. I have previously written on the influence of Ibn ʿArabī on Mullā Ṣadrā as an example of the synthesis of Sufism and Shi'ism. See Sayeh Meisami, "Mullā Ṣadrā on the Efficacy of Prayer (*Duʿā*)," *The Brill Journal of Sufi Studies* 4 (2015): 59–83. For major writings on the confluence of Sufism and Shi'ism, see Kāmil Muṣṭafā al-Shaybī, *al-Ṣilāḥ bayna al-taṣawwuf wa'l-tashayyūʿ* (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1969); Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Shi'ism and Sufism: Their Relationship in Essence and History," *Religious Studies*, 6:3 (1970): 229–242.
  80. Shigeru Kamada, "Mullā Ṣadrā's Imāma/Wilāya: An Aspect of His Indebtedness to Ibn ʿArabī," *Journal of Islamic Philosophy* 6 (2010): 71.
  81. Shīrāzī, *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya*, 377–378; *Sharḥ uṣūl al-kāfi*, II: 450–451. The quotation was originally translated in Meisami, *Mulla Sadra*, 112.
  82. Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī, *al-Wāridāt al-qalbiyya wa maʿrifā al-rubūbiyya*, ed. Ahmad Shafīʿihā (Tehran: Anjuman-i falsafa-yi Irān, 1980), 186. Also see Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-sūfiyya*, 41.

83. Shīrāzī, *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya*, 228.
84. Meisami, "Mullā Ṣadrā on the Efficacy of Prayer," 64.
85. Chittick, *Ibn 'Arabī's Metaphysics of Imagination*, 239. On the station of all-comprehensiveness, see also Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, trans. Muhammad Ali Muvahḥid and Ṣamad Muvahḥid (Tehran: Nashr-i kārnāmeḥ, 1385 S.H./2006), 157.
86. Ibn 'Arabī, *The Meccan Revelations*, I: 44.
87. Mullā Ṣadrā, *Sharḥ uṣūl al-kāfi*, II: 201.
88. Dakake, "Hierarchies of Knowing in Mullā Ṣadrā's Commentary on the *Uṣūl al-kāfi*," 9.
89. For the meanings of knowledge in Twelver Shī'ism and references on this subject, see Amir Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, *The Divine Guide in Early Shi'ism* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994), 6–22.
90. Mullā Ṣadrā. *Sharḥ uṣūl al-kāfi*, II: 73. The term "*ta'yīd*" was previously translated as "inspiration" in the Isma'ili context. In translating from Mullā Ṣadrā's *Sharḥ uṣūl al-kāfi*, I use "inspiration" for the term "*ilhām*." However, the frequent adoption of this Qur'anic term by Mullā Ṣadrā may suggest the incorporation of Isma'ili concepts and narratives.
91. Dakake, "Hierarchies of Knowing in Mullā Ṣadrā's Commentary on the *Uṣūl al-kāfi*," 35. On the expandability of Sufi-Shī'ī terminology, James Morris has an interesting article in which he analyzes the use of the term "Mahdī" by Ibn 'Arabī in *Futūḥāt al-Makiyya*. Based on his interpretation of the term, Mahdī has the Qur'anic sense of a person whose soul has evolved through divine guidance (*hidāya*), and it is a state that can be reached by every soul who seeks it. See James Winston Morris, "Ibn 'Arabī's Messianic Secret: From 'the Mahdī' to the Imamate of Every Soul," *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society* 30, (2001): 1–18. For an analysis of the relation between the Shī'ī use of the term *wilāya* and its meaning in Sufi literature, based on a sociological approach, see Maria Massi Dakake, *The Charismatic Community: Shi'ite Identity in Early Islam* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2007).
92. For Āmulī's intellectual contribution to Sufi-Shī'ī dynamics, see Henry Corbin, *En Islam iranien, aspects spirituels et philosophiques*, 4 vols (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), III: 149–213. For the influence of Ibn 'Arabī on Shī'ī discourses through Ḥaydar Āmulī, see Robert Wisnovsky, "One Aspect of the Akbarian Turn in Shi'ī Theology," in *Sufism and Theology*, ed. Ayman Shihadeh (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007); Khanjar Ḥamiyāh, *al-'Irfān al-shī'i: dirāsa fi-l-ḥayāt al-rūḥiyya wa-l-fikriyya*

- li-Haydar al-Āmulī* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Hādī, 2004); Hermann Landolt, “Ḥaydar Āmulī et les deux mi‘rāj,” *Studia Islamica* 1:91 (2000): 91–106.
93. Āmulī, *Jāmi‘ al-asrār wa manba‘ al-anwār*, 494.
  94. Āmulī, *Jāmi‘ al-asrār wa manba‘ al-anwār*, 561.
  95. Āmulī, *Jāmi‘ al-asrār wa manba‘ al-anwār*, 246; 443; 444; 456.
  96. Arzina R. Lalani, *Early Shi‘ī Thought: The Teachings of Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir* (London/New York: I.B. Tauris, 2000), 83. Lalani explains al-Bāqir’s contribution to the formulation of the doctrine of the imamate including the doctrine of infallibility (‘iṣma). Also, the author provides evidence for the incorporation of al-Bāqir’s traditions in Isma‘īli texts.
  97. Mullā Ṣadrā, *Sharḥ uṣūl al-kāfi*, II: 427.
  98. In Isma‘īli discourses, both Fatimid and Nizārī, *ḥujja* is often used in the sense of a rank of the Summons (*da‘wa*) below the imam and is not identified with the imam though the *ḥujja* has a very high status. For a history of the use of “*ḥujja*” in Isma‘īli literature, see Farhad Daftary, *The Isma‘īlīs: their History and Doctrines* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 117–118; according to Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī “the soul of the supreme *ḥujja*, which by itself, knows nothing and is nothing, is illuminated by the effulgent radiation of the divine assistance (*ta’yīd*) [or inspiration] from the imam.” See Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, *Rawḍa-yi taslīm*, ed. and trans. S. J. Badakhchani: *Paradise of Submission: A Medieval Treatise on Ismaili Thought* (London: I.B. Tauris in association with Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2005), 131.
  99. Mullā Ṣadrā, *Sharḥ uṣūl al-kāfi*, II: 440.
  100. While this is attributed to Peripatetic philosophers, Fārābī’s position is debatable because he explains revelation in terms of the perfection of imagination rather than intellection. For the relation between the faculty of imagination and prophecy, see Fārābī, *On the Perfect State*, 224–225; 245–247. Also, see Richard Walzer, “Al-Fārābī’s Theory of Prophecy and Divination,” *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 77:1 (1957): 142–148.
  101. Mullā Ṣadrā, *Sharḥ uṣūl al-kāfi*, II: 442.
  102. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-‘aql*, 101–107.
  103. Suhrawardī, *The Philosophy of Illumination*, 107.
  104. Shīrāzī, *Sharḥ uṣūl al-kāfi*, II: 503.
  105. Shīrāzī, *Sharḥ uṣūl al-kāfi*, II: 504.

106. Ibid.
107. Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm Naysābūrī, *The Degrees of Excellence: a Fatimid Treatise on Leadership in Islam: a new Arabic Edition and English Translation of Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Naysābūrī's Kitāb Ithbāt al-imāma*, ed. and trans. Arzina R. Lalani (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 48–50.
108. Shīrāzī, *Sharḥ uṣūl al-kāfi*, II: 504.
109. Badawī, *Aflūṭīn 'inda l-'Arab*, 134–139.
110. Shīrāzī, *Sharḥ uṣūl al-kāfi*, II: 509.
111. Shīrāzī, *Sharḥ uṣūl al-kāfi*, II: 511.
112. Shīrāzī, *Sharḥ uṣūl al-kāfi*, II: 530.
113. In Aristotelian logic as formulated by Islamic philosophers, definition (*ta'rif*) comes under essential definition (*ḥadd*), which is based on genus and differentia, and definition by accidents (*rasm*) by using inclusive accident (*'araḍ al-ʿamm*) and particular accident (*'araḍ al-khāṣṣ*).
114. Shīrāzī, *Sharḥ uṣūl al-kāfi*, II: 532.
115. According to Qur'an (2:269): "And He gives wisdom to whoever He will. Whoever is given wisdom has truly been given much good, but only those with insight will bear this in mind."
116. Shīrāzī, *Sharḥ uṣūl al-kāfi*, II: 551.
117. Shīrāzī, *Sharḥ uṣūl al-kāfi*, II: 571.
118. Shīrāzī, *Sharḥ uṣūl al-kāfi*, II: 585; 605.
119. Ṭūsī, *Rawḍa-yi taslīm*, 121. For the Twelver tradition of supernatural assumptions about the preexistence of the imam in light of Sufi narratives, see Amir-Moezzi, *The Divine Guide in Early Shi'ism*, 29–59.
120. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 134.
121. Among Mullā Ṣadrā's successors, Fayḍ Kāshānī's narrative of the imamate is one of the best examples of the continuation of the above-mentioned account of the imamate as a cosmic rank, instances of which must always exist. See Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī, *'ilm al-yaqīn*, trans. Hussein Ustād-Walī, 2 vols (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Hikmat, 2014), I: 482–484. In his discourse on the imamate, Fayḍ Kāshānī also follows Mullā Ṣadrā in synthesizing Sufi and Shī'ī narratives. On this subject, see Shigeru Kamada, "Fayḍ al-Kāshānī's walāya: The Confluence of Shi'ī Imamology and Mysticism," in *Reason and Inspiration in Islam: Theology, Philosophy and Mysticism in Muslim Thought: Essays in Honour of Hermann Landolt*, ed. Todd Lawson, 455–468 (London/New York: I.B. Tauris, 2005).
122. Shīrāzī, *Sharḥ uṣūl al-kāfi*, II: 573–574.

123. Shīrāzī, *Sharḥ uṣūl al-kāfi*, II: 584.
124. Shīrāzī, *Sharḥ uṣūl al-kāfi*, II: 487.
125. Shīrāzī, *Sharḥ uṣūl al-kāfi*, II: 562.
126. Typical of Shīʿī traditions on the authority of the imamate, this tradition suggests the deprivation of the Shīʿī imams from their rightful position as rulers and implies that their unrivaled perfection was the cause of envy and hostility.
127. Shīrāzī, *Sharḥ uṣūl al-kāfi*, II: 566.
128. In Shīʿī philosophical theology, this issue is discussed under the topic of divine attributes (*al-ṣifāt al-ilāhiyya*) and their identity with the divine essence (*al-dhāt al-ilāhī*). See Allāma Muḥammad Ḥillī, *Kashf al-murād fī sharḥ tajrīd al-īʿtiqād*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥasanzāda Āmulī (Qom: Muʿassasa-i nashr-i Islāmī, 1433 A.H.), 410.
129. On the identity of divine knowledge and power in Mullā Ṣadrāʾs philosophy, see Shīrāzī, *al-Hikmat al-mutaʿāliya fi asfār al-ʿaqliyya al-arbaʿa*, VI: 333. Also see Fazlur Rahman, *The Philosophy of Mulla Sadra*, 142.
130. Shīrāzī, *al-Hikmat al-mutaʿāliya fi asfār al-ʿaqliyya al-arbaʿa*, III: 362–366; *al-Wāridāt al-qalbiyya wa maʿrifa al-rubūbiyya*, 113–114.
131. For an example, see Shīrāzī, *Sharḥ uṣūl al-kāfi*, II: 479.
132. Shīrāzī, *Sharḥ uṣūl al-kāfi*, II: 404.
133. For the imamsʾ divine appointment (*naṣṣ*) in philosophical theology, see Ḥillī, *Kashf al-murād fī sharḥ tajrīd al-īʿtiqād*, 495–496; Maytham ibn ʿAlī Baḥrānī, *Qawāʿid al-marām fi ʿilm al-kalām*, 181.
134. Shīrāzī, *Sharḥ uṣūl al-kāfi*, II: 404–405.
135. Shīrāzī, *Sharḥ uṣūl al-kāfi*, II: 405.
136. Shīrāzī, *Sharḥ uṣūl al-kāfi*, II: 611.
137. Etan Kohlberg, “Waṣī” in *Encyclopedia of Islam Three*, eds. Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, and Everett Rowson (Brill Online, 2013), accessed June 14, 2016, [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/wasi-SIM\\_7881?s.num=0&s.f.s2\\_parent=s.f.cluster.Encyclopaedia+of+Islam&s.q=wasi](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/wasi-SIM_7881?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.cluster.Encyclopaedia+of+Islam&s.q=wasi)
138. Shīrāzī, *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya*, 377.
139. Kamada, “Mullā Ṣadrāʾs imāma/walāya: an Aspect of His Indebtedness to Ibn ʿArabī,” 72.
140. In certain instances in Sufi history, the spiritual saint is also regarded as the deputy of the Concealed Imam and is endowed with the authority to legalize the rule of the state. For a study of the Shiʿitization of the Sufi *wilāya*, see Oliver Scharbrodt, “The Quṭb as Special Representative of the

Hidden Imam: the Conflation of Shi‘i and Sufi Vilāyat in the Ni‘matullāhi Order,” in *Shi‘i Trends and Dynamics in Modern Times (XVIIIth-XXth centuries): Courants et dynamiques chiïtes à l’époque moderne (XVIIIe-XXe siècles)*, eds. Denis Hermann and Sabrina Mervin, 33–49 (Beirut: Ergon Verlag Würzburg in Kommission, 2010). On the interrelationship between Sufism and politics, also see Omid Safi, *The Politics of Knowledge in Pre-modern Islam: Negotiating Ideology and Religious Inquiry* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

141. Shīrāzī, *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya*, 377; *Sharḥ uṣūl al-kāfi*, II: 423; 431; 478; 500; 523; 555; 564.
142. The “bearers of good news” (*al-mubashshirāt*) refers to the prophets and messengers of God. “They were messengers bearing good news and warning, so that mankind would have no excuse before God, after receiving the messengers: God is almighty and all wise.” (Q. 4:165).
143. For this Qur’anic term (Q. 3:58; 13:28; 15:6; 15:9; 20:124; 21:7; 43:5; 51:55; 54:40) and its usage in Sufi narratives, see Luis Gardet, “Dhikr,” in *Encyclopedia of Islam, Three*, eds. Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, and Everett Rowson (Brill Online, 2013), accessed June 16, 2016, [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/dhikr-COM\\_0162?s.num=0&s.f.s2\\_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&s.q=dhikr](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/dhikr-COM_0162?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&s.q=dhikr)
144. Shīrāzī, *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya*, 377. A similar passage appears in *Uṣūl al-kāfi*, II: 450.
145. Shīrāzī, *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya*, 349.
146. Allāma Muḥammad Hillī, “Tadhhib al-wuṣūl ilā ‘ilm al-uṣūl,” trans. John Cooper in *Authority and Political Culture in Shi‘ism*, ed. Said Amir Arjomand, 243–248 (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1988), 243. For the meaning and a historiography of the term, see Ahmed El Shamsy, “Fiqh, Faqih, Fuqahā,” in *Encyclopedia of Islam Three*, eds. Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, and Everett Rowson (Brill Online, 2013), accessed June 16, 2016, [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/fiqh-faqih-fuqaha-COM\\_27135?s.num=0&s.f.s2\\_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-3&s.q=fiqh](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/fiqh-faqih-fuqaha-COM_27135?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-3&s.q=fiqh)

On the history of the emergence and development of *ijtihād*, see Norman Calder, “Doubt and Prerogative: the Emergence of an Imāmi Shi‘i Theory of Ijtihād,” in *Shi‘ism: Critical Concepts in Islamic Studies*, eds. Paul Luft and Colin Turner, 4 vols (London/New York: Routledge, 2008), III: 177–194.

147. According to Ismail Poonawala, the transmission of authority from the imams to religious scholars started in the imamate of al-Bāqir and al-Šādiq but during the imamate of the later imams and especially the lesser occultation, “historical circumstances ensured that practical authority would be gradually transferred to the learned disciples.” See Ismail K. Poonawala, “The Imam’s Authority during the Pre-ghayba Period: Theoretical and Practical Considerations,” in *Shi‘ite Heritage: Essays on Classical and Modern Traditions*, ed. Lynda Clarke, 103–123 (Binghamton: Global, 2001), 121. On this topic, also see Wilferd Madelung, “Authority in Twelver Shi‘ism in the Absence of the Imam,” in *La notion d’autorité au Moyen Âge: Byzance, Occident*, eds. George Makdisi, Dominique Sourdel, and Janine Sourdel Thomine, 163–173 (Paris: Presse Universitaires du France, 1982).
148. On the absolute authority of the jurists, see Said Amir Arjomand, “The Mujtahid of the Age and the Mullā-bāshī: An Intermediate Stage in the Institutionalization of Religious Authority in Shi‘ite Iran,” in *Authority and Political Culture in Shi‘ism*, ed. Said Amir Arjomand, 80–98 (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1988), 80–84.
149. Shīrāzī, *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya*, 349.
150. The first title was given to Shaykh ‘Alī al-Karakī (d. 940/1534) by Shāh Ismail I (r. 906–930/1501–1524) and although the Karakī family retained a special authority among later scholars, this title was not given to one particular person later; a number of *mujtahids* were regarded as authorities and were given the title of *shaykh al-Islām*. Among these, the *shaykh al-Islām* of Isfahan, the capital of the Safavids since the reign of Shah Abbas I (r. 995–1038/1587–1629), had the greatest power among religious scholars. The best example of the authority held in this office was Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī (d. 1110/1699) who relied on certain Shī‘ī narratives to undermine both Sunnism and Sufism. See Arjomand, “The Mujtahid of the Age and the Mullā-bāshī,” 82–84.
151. On religion and politics during the Safavid era, see Colin P. Mitchell, *The Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran: Power, Religion and Rhetoric* (London/New York: Tauris, 2009); Said Amir Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam: Religion, Political Order, and Societal Change in Shi‘ite Iran from the Beginning to 1890* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).
152. Abbas Amanat, “In Between the Madrasa and the Marketplace: the Designation of Clerical Leadership in Modern Shi‘ism,” in *Authority*

- and *Political Culture in Shi'ism*, ed. Said Amir Arjomand, 98–132 (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1988), 105.
153. Shirāzī, *Sharḥ uṣūl al-kāfi*, II: 551.

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# 5

## Mullā Ṣadrā's Legacy and Concluding Remarks

### 5.1 Shī'ī Philosophy and Politics: Mullā Ṣadrā's Legacy

In this chapter, I will argue that Mullā Ṣadrā's synthetic discourse on knowledge and authority can be interpreted as a discursive springboard for the establishment of the modern discourse of Shī'ī political authority, prominently the guardianship of the jurist (*wilāya al-faqīh*) in contemporary Iran. I will look briefly into the discursive legacy of Mullā Ṣadrā in the formation and development of the discourse on the absolute religio-political authority of top jurists. As the present study is focused on the analysis of written discourses, I am not going to investigate the actual interaction of Mullā Ṣadrā and his disciples with the state. Nor will I discuss in detail the celebration of Mullā Ṣadrā in Iran that took place especially after the 1979 Islamic Revolution.<sup>1</sup> To bring to light Mullā Ṣadrā's influence, I will only follow the thread of his narrative of absolute epistemic authority as it relates to the imam and his representatives. The focus will be on the incorporation of philosophical and Sufi discourses into several influential texts from early modern and modern times, culminating in the establishment of the theory of *wilāya al-faqīh* as the

dominant religio-political discourse during and after the Islamic Revolution of Iran.

To begin, the term *wilāya al-faqīh* itself signifies concepts from different discourses, Sufi, theological, and legal, that have come together to reinforce a narrative of absolute authority. It was pointed out earlier in the previous chapter that *wilāya* is a concept with both Sufi and Shī'ī applications. This plays a key role in Mullā Ṣadrā's synthetic discourse, especially where he discusses epistemic authority and attributes it to the perfect human and his instances in the form of prophets, imams, and saints. In the previous chapter, I argued that by connecting the dots between the narratives of epistemic authority in *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya* and "Kitāb al-ḥujja," one could imagine a discursive springboard for the narrative of *wilāya al-faqīh* in some of the passages in Mullā Ṣadrā's texts. It would be illuminating to look at how this early narrative was developed in discourses that were modeled on Mullā Ṣadrā, though in some cases it is very implicit owing to the historical and political circumstances of the times.

In this respect, the works of Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī (d. 1091/1680)<sup>2</sup> provide a good place to begin. A devoted disciple and the son-in-law of Mullā Ṣadrā, Fayḍ who worked both as a celebrated jurist and a scholar of Sufism, followed his master in generating a synthetic discourse on the imamate. In his famous treatise, *Kalimāt al-maknūna min 'ulūm ahl al-ḥikma wa'l-ma'rifa* (*The Hidden Discourses Concerning the Knowledge of Those Who Have Wisdom and Gnosis*),<sup>3</sup> Fayḍ concentrates on the state and authority of the perfect human and adopts philosophical and Sufi narratives in a synthesis very similar to that of Mullā Ṣadrā. After establishing the doctrine of the perfect human as the intermediary between the divine and the human based on Ibn 'Arabī's mysticism and Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophy of the oneness of being (*waḥda al-wujūd*), Fayḍ identifies the perfect human with the Shī'ī imam:

Since the objective of creation and continuation of the world is the perfect man, namely the just imam who is the viceregent (*khalīfa*) of God on the earth in the same way as the purpose of the body is the rational soul (*al-naḥs al-nāṭiqā*), it must follow that the lowest world (*dunyā*) would perish with the removal of this man in the same way as the body would decay and perish with the departure of the rational soul.<sup>4</sup>

Similar to Mullā Ṣadrā in his “Kitāb al-ḥujja,” in this passage Fayḍ synthesizes Akbarian and Shī‘ī discourses by using the narrative of the perfect human and the Shī‘ī tradition (*ḥadīth*) reported in a different wording by al-Kulaynī saying “the earth would not sustain in existence without an imam who is the proof of Allah for His people (*ḥujjat Allāh ‘alā khalqih*).”<sup>5</sup> He creates the same synthesis in a section on the imamate in his *‘ilm al-yaqīn* (*Certain Knowledge*), where the discourse he uses is of a more theological and scriptural nature. He states that “the purpose of creation is the imam” and that the earth would never be without “a manifest or hidden proof (*ḥujja*).”<sup>6</sup> However, he attributes a political function to the imam using a more mundane terminology than Mullā Ṣadrā. Next to the job of guiding human beings, the imam is also in charge of “managing the worldly affairs” and “retaining security in cities.”<sup>7</sup> In this treatise, he briefly responds to a hypothetical question about the office of the imamate during the Occultation. His answer simply consists in a tradition according to which the Hidden imam (*imam al-ghā’ib*) performs his function “like the sun from behind the clouds.”<sup>8</sup>

As for Fayḍ’s position on jurisprudence, it is correctly pointed out by Andrew Newman that although Fayḍ belonged to the Akhbārī movement that contests jurisprudence,<sup>9</sup> in his social and religious role he could be categorized as a jurist (*mujtahid* or *faqīh*) since he “supported the allocation of important community practices to the *faqīh* during occultation.”<sup>10</sup> In effect, like some later Akhbārī figures,<sup>11</sup> in some cases Fayḍ relied on rational reasoning in deducing legal rulings.<sup>12</sup> But his discourse on absolute religious authority only includes the imams. While using both philosophical and Sufi discourses, in his narrative of epistemic authority, Fayḍ only regards the infallible imam as having the ability to access certain knowledge. This seems to be a departure from Mullā Ṣadrā’s discourse on knowledge and authority. Yet Fayḍ’s position as an Akhbārī who would not attribute absolute authority to jurists explains this divergence. Moreover, the distribution of power among the clergy had undergone some changes since the early Safavid times. What all Safavid phases had in common was the fact that the king was always regarded as the political representative of the imam and he appointed the religious authorities. However, by Fayḍ’s day, there was no longer one dominant jurist whom all the others had to obey. Rather, the king appointed

different jurists for each major city, all of whom were required to stay loyal to him. Fayḍ himself was deeply loyal to Shah Abbas II for most of his career.<sup>13</sup>

‘Abd al-Razzāq Fayyāḍ Lāhijī was another son-in-law and disciple of Mullā Ṣadrā who adopted a synthetic discourse in his Shī‘ī writings. A good example is his *Shawāriq al-ilhām* (*Illuminations of the Inspiration*) which he wrote as a commentary on Ṭūsī’s *Tajrīd al-i‘tiqād* in five volumes of detailed philosophical theology.<sup>14</sup> He was one of the few people who taught philosophy in the Qom seminary.<sup>15</sup> While devoted to Sufi ideas and narratives in his works, he “did not approve of mystics who lacked prior training in either theology or philosophy.”<sup>16</sup>

Despite being overshadowed by his brother-in-law, Fayḍ Kāshānī, and having no state-appointed position, Lāhijī was still favored by Shah Abbas II. His famous Persian text, *Gawhar-i murād* (*The Desired Jewel*)<sup>17</sup> is evidence of his loyalty to the king and his desire for patronage.<sup>18</sup> In this text, following Mullā Ṣadrā’s path, Lāhijī explains that “the pursuit of knowledge cannot depend on *taqlīd*, the rehearsal and imitation of doctrines, but must be the result of intellectual effort and lived spiritual experience.”<sup>19</sup> Lāhijī discusses the imamate in the third Discourse of his Persian treatise (*maqāla*), *Gawhar-i murād*, in which he relies on both rational and revealed narratives to prove the necessity of the imamate and the imam’s infallibility and appointment by God and the Prophet. He also uses the same narratives to prove the imamate of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib after the death of the Prophet to the exclusion of the prior caliphs. For Lāhijī, the viceregency (*khilāfa*) of ‘Alī is obvious from the perspective of reason (*‘aql*), revelation (*naql*), common sense (*‘urf*), and custom (*‘ādat*).<sup>20</sup> In mentioning the characteristics of the imam, Lāhijī places emphasis on both his knowledge of all things and his capability to govern:

It is established by reason and demonstration (*burhān*) that the imam’s qualifications are infallibility (*‘iṣmat*), knowledge of the laws in the Qur’an and tradition, the governance (*tadbīr*) of the servants/masses (*ru‘āyā*) and political affairs (*amr-i siyāsāt*) and such as these, as well as being the best (*afḍal*) in all these mentioned. But, it is also proved to the followers of Twelver Shi‘ism (*imāmiyya*) through reports about the pure imams—salutations be upon them all—that in addition to the above mentioned qualifications,

there are a few others which are signs (*ʿalāmāt*) and attributes (*ṣifāt*) for the imam including the knowledge of all sciences (*jamīʿ-i ʿulūm*) and all those things that people may need even among non-religious affairs.<sup>21</sup>

With respect to epistemic and political authority, Lāhijī does not go beyond the dominant religious discourse of the infallible imam within the boundaries of what was permitted during the reign of Abbas II. Later, with the defeat of the Ahkbarīs by the Uṣūlī jurists and changes in social and political situations of modern times, the synthetic discourse of absolute authority was revived in the intellectual discourses of the Qajar era (1174–1304/1789–1925).<sup>22</sup> Among these discourses, the writings of Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥṣāʾī (d. 1241/1826) and Mullā Hādī Sabziwārī (1212–1295 or 1298/1797–1878 or 1881) serve as good examples because of the influence of Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophy on them and their use of a synthetic discourse on authority. During Qajar times, the religious scholars or *ʿulamāʿ* acquired an unprecedented level of power. Moreover, the narrative of *wilāya al-faqīh* was elaborately formulated and merged with that of the *marjaʿ al-taqlīd* or the source of emulation, “in which position were combined the viceregency of the Imam and the Uṣūlī conception of *ijtihād*.”<sup>23</sup> This was due in part to the fact that the Qajar kings had no claim to have descended from the imams or to hold a position of viceregency for them. In practice, they only had political legitimacy, which needed to be sustained by the “natural support” of the religious scholars.<sup>24</sup>

Originally from Bahrain, Shaykh Aḥmad ibn Zayn al-Dīn al-Aḥṣāʾī is known as the founder of the school of Shaykhism.<sup>25</sup> Al-Aḥṣāʾī received patronage from the Qajar king Faṭḥ ʿAlī Shah (r. 1176–1213/1798–1834) who invited him to move from Basra to Iran, an offer which al-Aḥṣāʾī accepted. He was celebrated for a long time as a *marjaʿ al-taqlīd* (source of religious emulation) in Iran until he was antagonized by some jurists due to his use of Sufi narratives in his discourse on authority. He is believed to have continued on the path of Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī and Mullā Ṣadrā in synthesizing Shīʿī theology and philosophy.<sup>26</sup> While adopting the methodology of the school of Mullā Ṣadrā, al-Aḥṣāʾī also harshly criticized Mullā Ṣadrā and Fayḍ Kāshānī, and even accused them of pantheism because of their adherence to the principle of the unity of being (*waḥda al-wujūd*).<sup>27</sup> Setting his criticisms aside, in his imamology, apart

from his dedication to syllogism, al-Aḥṣāʾī relies on philosophical concepts to prove Shīʿī doctrines such as the infallibility of the imam.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, his Shīʿī theology is replete with narratives from the Illuminationist philosophy of Suhrawardī.<sup>29</sup> In his elitist position on knowledge, al-Aḥṣāʾī separates the masses from those who have access to true knowledge, that is, the *ʿulamāʾ*. While he believes the imam is the primary example of a true possessor of knowledge, al-Aḥṣāʾī also extends religious authority to those scholars whose knowledge is based on jurisprudence, illumination (*ishrāq*), and philosophical rationalism. The masses are commanded to follow the *ʿulamāʾ* just as they are expected to obey the prophets.<sup>30</sup> His emphasis on illumination or inspiration as a necessary tool in reaching true knowledge brings his position on religious authority very close to that of Mullā Ṣadrā. Al-Aḥṣāʾī “contended that he drew the essence of his knowledge from a spiritual faculty of inspiration (*ilhām*) or of ‘unveiling’ (*kashf*, *mukāshafa*), by which he meant the ability to establish direct, intimate contact with the Imāms and the Prophet, either in a dream or in a state of contemplation.”<sup>31</sup> This is similar to Mullā Ṣadrā’s narrative of immediate knowledge as available to prophets, imams, saints, and jurists. For al-Aḥṣāʾī, divine grace is bestowed on perfect persons through the medium of the imam, and it is the light of the Twelfth Imam that shines in their hearts.<sup>32</sup> To summarize, al-Aḥṣāʾī’s elitist position on authority with respect to the *ʿulamāʾ* of the time is an important example of how the earlier synthesis of philosophical, Sufi, and theological narratives formed the dominant discourse of religious authority in the Qajar period and paved the way for the gradual formation of the discourse of *wilāya al-faqīh*.

Later in the Qajar period, Mullā Hādī Sabziwārī, an eminent philosopher, ensured the continuation of Mullā Ṣadrā’s influence until today. His *Manẓūma*, which is a philosophical work in verse, together with his commentary on it, *Sharḥ-i Manẓūma*, became major sources for philosophy teaching in the Iranian seminaries.<sup>33</sup> He wrote a short treatise, *Hidāya al-ṭālibīn fī maʿrifā al-anbiyāʾ waʾl-maʿṣūmīn* (*The Guide of the Seekers in Knowledge of the Prophets and the Infallible Ones*), upon the request of the Qajar king, Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh (r. 1848–1896) who is referred to in the prologue with laudatory epithets such as “the Helper of Islam and the Muslims” (*ghīyāth al-Islām waʾl-muslimīn*).<sup>34</sup> On its first

appearance, the treatise covered almost all the subjects that the author later expands on in his famous *Asrār al-ḥikam (The Secrets of Wisdom)*<sup>35</sup> with the exception of the chapter on “General Metaphysics” (*‘umūr al-‘amma*) which was added later. It is important to note that in his major philosophical works, the author belongs to the school of Mullā Ṣadrā and follows the latter's doctrine of the authentic reality of being (*aṣāla al-wujūd*).

Sabziwārī's *Hidāya al-ṭālibīn* is one of the best examples of a synthetic discourse of religious authority. It is written in a refined Persian style and consists of both poetry and prose. The text also includes many Qur'anic narratives and citations from Shī'ī traditions. It also employs both philosophical and mystical concepts and narratives that are merged in discussions of issues of faith, such as the necessity and function of prophethood (*nubuwwa*), the imams' infallibility, and the necessity of the imamate. The author's arguments are based on premises from the Illuminationist (*ishrāqī*), and Transcendental (*muta'ālīya*) philosophies of Suhrawardī and Mullā Ṣadrā, as well as the philosophical Sufism of Ibn 'Arabī. Sabziwārī is regarded as a philosopher who completed the work of his predecessors, such as Mullā Ṣadrā, building on their attempts to create a harmony between philosophical, Sufi, and Shī'ī discourses. Also, as in the words of Hossein Ziai, Sabziwārī “made abundant use of Illuminationist meta-language (*lisān al-ishrāq*) in order to reformulate knowledge by presence (*al-‘ilm al-ḥudūrī*) so as to prove the legitimacy and authority of the imamate, and thus of the Guardianship (*wilāya*) in the absence of the Twelfth imam.”<sup>36</sup>

Sabziwārī defines *wilāya* as “knowledge of divine truths such as [knowledge] of the essence (*dhāt*) and the attributes (*ṣifāt*) and the acts (*af'āl*) by way of intuition (*shuhūd*)... [so] every prophet is a *walī* while the reverse does not hold [that is, not every *walī* is a prophet].”<sup>37</sup> While attributing the rank of *wilāya* to all prophets, Sabziwārī differentiates Muḥammad from the others by means of the Sufi narrative of the perfect human as associated with Ibn 'Arabī's doctrine of “the Muḥammadan Reality (*ḥaqīqa al-Muḥammadiyya*)” and explains it as the first intellect of Islamic philosophy.<sup>38</sup> His discourse on the necessity of the perfect human resembles that of Mullā Ṣadrā in that it shows a hierarchy of species that culminates in the intellectual aspect of the human soul and the soul of the Prophet, which is like the heart of humanity as a whole.<sup>39</sup>

As for the imamate, Sabziwārī adopts a political discourse by using the term leadership (*rīyāsa*), and in his arguments for the necessity of the imamate, he follows Mullā Ṣadrā by using evidence obtained through both reason and revelation. He also calls the imam “the universal soul (*naḥs-i kuliyya*),”<sup>40</sup> which is similar to Mullā Ṣadrā’s “form of wisdom”<sup>41</sup> in that it is a universal reality. For Sabziwārī, the necessity of infallibility (*‘iṣma*) is the *raison d’être* of the divine appointment (*naṣṣ*) of the imam. But he goes further than the Shī‘ī arguments for *naṣṣ* and adopts a synthetic narrative of mystical philosophy to prove its necessity. He starts with a prophetic tradition that says, “Alī and I were a light in God’s hands four thousand years before He created Adam.”<sup>42</sup> From here, his arguments are based on an intricate combination of philosophical—both Peripatetic and Illuminationist—and Sufi narratives which he presents as a commentary on the above-mentioned tradition. His lengthy argument is made up of several steps. First, he tries to prove that the “light” mentioned in the tradition is one and the same as being (*wujūd*), since “light is luminous in itself (*zāhir bi’l-dhāt*) and illuminating for the other (*muzhir li’l-ghayr*).” This holds true for being, which is existent by itself (*mawjūd bi dhātih*).<sup>43</sup> Next, he repeats Mullā Ṣadrā’s identification of knowledge with being and goes on to say that “where there is being, there is also knowledge, power, will, life and love and the like of these pervade in the sense that they are the same as being ... and the sacred rational soul (*naḥs-i nāṭiqa-yi qudsiyya*) itself is being.”<sup>44</sup> On the other hand, since being is graded in its reality, the universal intellect (*‘aql-i kullī*) and the universal soul (*naḥs-i kullī*) are different only in their grade of existence, rather than being two different realities.<sup>45</sup> After proving that the two Neoplatonic eternal principles, the intellect and the soul, are actually one reality in two different grades, he continues his commentary on the tradition and says that “the spirituality of his Seal of Prophecy (*ḥaḍrat-i khatm-i martabat*)—peace be upon him—is the universal intellect and the spirituality of the Commander of the Faithful (Amīr al-mu’minīn) ‘Alī—salutation be upon him—is the universal soul.”<sup>46</sup> Once it has been established that the Prophet and the imam are different grades of the same reality, Sabziwārī goes on to emphasize the infallibility of the imam. In this context, he also uses the Akbarian term, “Muḥammadan Reality (*ḥaqīqa al-Muḥmmadiyya*)” in the sense of the totality of God’s creation

as simple whole (*kull al-āthār bi naḥw-i baṣīṭ*),<sup>47</sup> and mentions a tradition attributed to 'Alī according to which he said that "I conquered the fort of Khaybar by divine power (*quwwa al-rabāniyya*) not bodily power (*quwwa al-jismāniyya*)." <sup>48</sup>

Therefore, Sabziwārī relies on philosophical and Sufi narratives to prove the necessity of the imamate and of the imam's infallible knowledge and divine power. He closes the section on the imamate addressing the important question of the role of the imam during the Occultation. For him, as for Mullā Ṣadrā, "the earth cannot be without a proof (*ḥujja*)," and he uses the principle of "determination without a determinant" (*tarjih bi lā murajjah*) according to which there must necessarily be a reason for determining one option over another; so it would be irrational for God to have sent proofs once, but not at other times, since God would never change His ways.<sup>49</sup> Yet the question still remains as to how the Hidden Imam governs the world during his Occultation. Sabziwārī's answer to this question is based on the Shī'ī narrative of intermediaries between the imam and the world, though he expands the tradition to include religious scholars (*'ulamā'*) and general representatives (*nawwāb-i 'āmm*) of the imam. Moreover he uses the Sufi-Isma'īli dichotomy of esoteric/exoteric (*bāṭin/zāhir*) or (*ṣūra/ma'nā*), as well as the philosophical narrative of the universal intellect and mediated emanation. The following passage is a very interesting example of the use of a synthetic discourse in a religious context with political overtones:

The existence of the [Hidden] Imam is a kind of grace (*lutf*) in virtue of his esoteric governance (*taṣarruf-i bāṭini*) whereas his exoteric governance (*taṣarruf-i zāhiri*) is another kind of grace. People may be denied the latter grace due to their own [attitude] and misconduct (*si'-i kirdār*). But, the esoteric governance is the expanse of his grace which is received by the scholars of God [or those who have knowledge of God] (*'ulamā' bi Allāh*) from the lamp that bears the light of his Highness (*nūr-i mishkāt-i ān ḥadrat*), and the masses (*khalā'iq*) are in need of their [the scholars'] assistance. And, in a mysterious way, it is because of the form (*ṣūrat*) of his Highness that his meaning (*ma'nā*) is hidden by virtue of its extreme manifestation (*fart-i zuhūr*).<sup>50</sup> He is by way of viceregency (*bi khilāfat*) the inheritor of the Muḥammadan universal intellect (*'aql-i kullī-i Muḥammadi*) and if he were manifest, not everyone would be able to receive his grace

unless by means of an intermediary (*wāsiṭa*), and connection (*rābiṭa*), and intermediaries (*wasā'it*) and means (*wasā'il*), which are actually there. And, those who perform a guidance, do it only through the esoteric aspect (*juz'-i ma'nawī*) [of the imam] rather than the formal aspect (*juz'-i šūrī*). And, the esoteric aspect of his Highness is always at work and whoever deserves anything, the attainment is through the emanation (*fayḍ*) of his Highness by God's permission (*bi idhn Allah*)... May people sincerely request the preservation of faith (*ḥifẓ-i dīn*) and orthopraxy (*siḥḥat-i ā'in wa rawish*) and knowledge (*dānish*) and insight (*bīnish*) from the general representatives (*nawwāb-i 'āmm*) and the guardians of the community (*awlīyā'-i ummat*), which is possible. And may they seek food for the intellect (*ghadhā-yi 'aql*) which is nourished by the ray of his existence (*asha'a-yi wujūd*) and the emanation (*fayḍ*) of his existence, rather than seeing only the form/visage (*šurat*), which is [food] for sense (*ḥiss*) and imagination (*khayāl*).<sup>51</sup>

Sabziwārī is clearly designating the religious elite as the only path to knowledge and salvation for people. As previously mentioned, especially during the second half of the Qajar period, the 'ulamā' gained unprecedented power and some prominent jurists took leadership (*rīyāsa*) roles. The jurists were not only regarded as the source of emulation (*marja' al-taqlīd*) but, in various cases, became involved in political affairs, and according to some, political education was a requirement for this involvement.<sup>52</sup> The extent and scope of the involvement of jurists in political affairs ranged from a simple exchange of warning letters<sup>53</sup> to actual abolishment of government rulings.<sup>54</sup> Finally, "the changing political situation in the last decade of the [nineteenth] century obliged the religious leaders to take a markedly anti-governmental position."<sup>55</sup> This was not the case with all Qajar jurists; however, the clash of power between the state and the jurists continued throughout the reign of both Pahlavi kings in the twentieth century and paved the way for the adoption of an extreme political discourse by Ayatollah Khomeini (d. 1989). There are several ways in which one can approach Ayatollah Khomeini's discourse on authority and there is a considerable number of secondary writings on different aspects of his religio-political career. I will focus briefly on the use of Mullā Ṣadrā's discourse on knowledge and authority in Ayatollah Khomeini's doctrine of *wilāya al-faqīh*. In the words of Abbas Amanat,

“[Ayatollah Khomeini’s] theory had an unmistakable mystico-philosophical core that was colored on the outside by Shiite legal trappings.”<sup>56</sup> One can modify Amanat’s statement by arguing that rather than being an external cover, the Shī‘ī aspect of Ayatollah Khomeini’s discourse on authority was already an essential narrative in his mystical philosophy, as it was in the philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā and his disciples such as Sabziwārī.

One of the first texts that Ayatollah Khomeini studied as a young scholar in the Shī‘ī seminary of Qom was Mullā Ṣadrā’s *al-Asfār*, whose theme of the soul’s spiritual journey he later adopted in his own writings.<sup>57</sup> Among Ayatollah Khomeini’s writings, *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāya* shows his dedication to the discourse of mystical philosophy as developed in the works of Ibn ‘Arabī, Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī, and the school of Mullā Ṣadrā. From Mullā Ṣadrā, whom he refers to as “the master of perfect gnostics (*shaykh al-‘urafā’ al-kāmilīn*),” he particularly adopts the narrative of the evolution of the soul through knowledge.<sup>58</sup> The text of this book, especially where it discusses the perfect human, is a synthesis of philosophical, Sufi, theological, Qur’anic, and Shī‘ī narratives.<sup>59</sup> It is true that *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāya* only expands on the mystical narrative of *wilāya* and the mystical philosophy of the perfect human; however, this can also be read as the discursive background of Ayatollah Khomeini’s later works on *wilāya al-faqīh*. The term *wilāya* has such a pivotal place in his writings that one cannot dismiss its political usage as just a figure of speech. In many passages, he uses the term *wilāya* either in place of “viceregency” (*khilāfa*) or together with it, which suggests the inclination of his discourse toward worldly guardianship.<sup>60</sup> According to Ayatollah Khomeini,

Know, oh spiritual friend—may God grant you success in obtaining His satisfaction and may He bestow upon you and us a vision of His Names and Attributes!—that this viceregency (*khilāfa*) is among the loftiest divine ranks and the noblest lordly stations granted by God. It is the main gate of Divine Appearance (*ẓuhur*) and Being (*wujud*), the major key to the [world of the] Unseen (*al-‘ālam al-ghayb*) and the world of Witnessing (*‘ālam al-shuhūd*). This is the station of proximity [to Godhead] (*taqarrub*) which contains the keys to the Unseen, the keys known to Him and nobody else. By means of those keys the divine Names have made their appearance from their concealment, and the divine Attributes have come out from their hiding ... Such viceregency is the spirit of Mohammedan successorship, its

master, its root, and its principle. It is the root from which sprang the viceregency in all existing worlds. It is simultaneously the viceregency, the vice-regent, and the one who appoints the viceregent to the world. ... This type of viceregency manifested itself in its most complete form in the presence of God's Greatest Name, which is the Lord of Absolute Mohammedan Reality (*rabb al-ḥaqīqa al-Muḥammadiyya al-muṭlaqa*), the root of universal divine realities. Therefore, this viceregency is the root of viceregency per se, while the latter is nothing but its [outward] manifestation...<sup>61</sup>

One may be inclined to separate Ayatollah Khomeini's mystical discourse of *wilāya* from his later political discourse of *wilāya al-faqīh*, but this is not how discourses function in reality. They empower each other whether or not the relationship is intended by the author. Moreover, Ayatollah Khomeini may have regarded himself "as an embodiment of the perfect human of his epoch."<sup>62</sup> He had already argued for the embodiment of the perfect human in the person of the Prophet and the imams and his arguments were based on the major tenets of mystical philosophy that had culminated in the works of Mullā Ṣadrā.<sup>63</sup> To extend the authority of the imam to the jurist, one could synthesize Mullā Ṣadrā's narrative of the expansion of *wilāya* beyond the genealogical descendants of the Prophet and with the narrative of "jurists as the deputy of the imam," which was formulated earlier by Aḥmad Narāqī.<sup>64</sup> Ayatollah Khomeini is believed to have "encouraged the linkage of the study of philosophy and mysticism with the political theory of *wilāya al-faqīh*," and some of his students who became influential figures in Qom would follow his path in "defending the juristic theory in the language of philosophy and mysticism."<sup>65</sup> In one of his speeches, Ayatollah Khomeini announces that,

Today the *fuqahā* (jurists) of Islam are *ḥujjas* (proofs) to the people. Just as the most noble Messenger (*rasūl-i akram*) was the proof of God (*ḥujjat Allah*)—the conduct of all affairs was entrusted to him so that whoever disobeyed him had a proof advanced against him—so too the *fuqahā* are the proofs of the Imām to the people. All the affairs of the Muslims have been entrusted to them. God will advance a proof and argument against anyone who disobeys them in anything concerning government, the conduct of Muslim affairs, or the gathering and expenditure of public funds.<sup>66</sup>

As pointed out previously, the term *ḥujja* is used very frequently in Shī'ī texts, including Mullā Ṣadrā's imamology. The term is laden with both Shī'ī and Sufi connotations. Similar to Mullā Ṣadrā, Ayatollah Khomeini extends the application of *ḥujja* beyond the infallible imams. In most of the spoken and written discourses produced during the period of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini's mixed narrative of religious and political authority (*wilāya*) was promoted. His short manifesto on *wilāya al-faqīh* opens with a statement including a principle that is familiar to all who have studied philosophical texts: "The governance of the Jurisprudent is a notion (*taṣawwur*) whose very conception necessitates its affirmation (*taṣdīq*)." <sup>67</sup> This is a characteristic of evident (*badīhī*) knowledge; one example of this from Mullā Ṣadrā's school is our knowledge of the reality of being (*wujūd*), in the sense that once we conceive of the notion of being in our mind, we necessarily affirm its existence. <sup>68</sup> So the rule is only applicable to evident knowledge and its application by Ayatollah Khomeini to our knowledge of *wilāya al-faqīh* is quite out of context. It would be wrong to imagine that Ayatollah Khomeini considered *wilāya al-faqīh* to be as evident as the concept of being (*wujūd*), but his application has a justification from the perspective of discourse analysis. According to this application, a religio-political discourse is empowered by a philosophical discourse that is already familiar and influential. In the same manifesto, Ayatollah Khomeini applies the narrative of the imam's delegation of authority to jurists whom he regards as the source of religious emulation (*marja' al-taqlid*) and the political leaders of the Muslim community. <sup>69</sup>

God's authority (*wilāya*) means that the imam is the reference (*marja'*) to the people on all issues and that God appointed him and trusted him to take every action capable of doing the people good and making them happy. The same applies to the jurists. They are the nation's reference and leaders. God's authority is the man appointed by God in charge of the affairs of the Muslims. His actions and his statements are a writ to the Muslims that must be implemented. <sup>70</sup>

To summarize, Ayatollah Khomeini's work is a contemporary example of how the synthetic discourse of Shī'ī mystical philosophy empowers the

political discourse of absolute authority. While in his texts on *wilāya al-faqīh* Ayatollah Khomeini usually speaks of the jurists in the plural, this could be merely out of political expediency. In reality, he promoted a discourse that pointed to him as *the* jurist and there is no evidence that after coming to power he ever compromised his judgments in conversation with other jurists of the time. I argue that in his conception of religious and political power, he remained dedicated to the mystical discourse of the perfect human and his absolute authority.

## 5.2 Concluding Remarks

In this final section, I will conclude by revisiting in a concise manner the four major themes of the book as stated in the Introduction. Accordingly, this section is divided into four parts, corresponding to the initial thematic divisions regarding the discursive dynamics of knowledge and power in the works of Ḥamīd al-Dīn Kirmānī and Mullā Ṣadrā in comparison to each other.

### (1) **The main components of Kirmānī and Mullā Ṣadrā’s epistemic/psychological discourses in terms of concepts, narratives, and arguments**

There are several concepts and narratives that connect the epistemic/psychological discourses of Kirmānī and Mullā Ṣadrā. According to the evidence of the Kirmānī texts cited in Chap. 2, his dominant psychological narrative describes the human soul as an evolving substance that is capable of transformation and transcending the initial bodily state of the soul and becoming transhuman. The concepts of which this narrative is composed include “imperfection,” “potentiality,” “form,” “actualization,” “assimilation,” “becoming,” “transformation,” and “second procession.” According to this narrative, the soul is both ontologically and epistemologically imperfect in its original creation due to being attached to the body and devoid of knowledge. Yet, it can transform itself and become a higher form of being, meaning an intellectual being, through the actualization of the soul’s matter by the form of knowledge.

Similarly, Mullā Ṣadrā's narrative of the soul is that of an evolving substance, although for him any substance is a form of being and so is knowledge. Although Kirmānī does not write within this conceptual framework of the authenticity of being (*aṣāla al-wujūd*), his narrative of the soul's existential transformation can be best understood and explained in retrospect within that framework. If essences were authentic in their reality, substances, which are essences in Peripatetic ontology, could not go through gradual change.<sup>71</sup> Yet for both Kirmānī and Mullā Ṣadrā, the gradual transformation of the soul is facilitated by knowledge as the actualizing form (*ṣūra*). This usage brings their epistemic discourses close together but distant from the classical narrative of knowledge as an accident (*ʿaraḍ*) that is not capable of causing a substantial change in the soul.<sup>72</sup> Additionally, in their epistemic narratives, Kirmānī and Mullā Ṣadrā equally rely on the Qurʾanic concept of "new creation" (*khalq al-jadīd*) (Q. 13:5; 14:19; 17:49; 17:98; 35:16; 50:15)<sup>73</sup> which reinforces their arguments for the salvific function of knowledge.

**(2) The common ground shared by Kirmānī and Mullā Ṣadrā that can be seen if we read their epistemic narratives about the source and scope of human knowledge in light of their Shīʿī philosophies**

With the soul being devoid of knowledge at the time of its creation, the question of the source of knowledge becomes urgent in Islamic philosophy. In this regard, Kirmānī and Mullā Ṣadrā adopt the narrative of the agent intellect as the external source of intelligibles for the human mind and consider it as the reservoir and giver of all forms of knowledge, which for Kirmānī include sensible, imaginative, and intellective forms. Direct reception of the knowledge that is described as the emanation of light from the agent intellect is not possible for all. Kirmānī's epistemic discourse goes far beyond Peripatetic philosophy in its elitism, due to the scope of direct emanation, which in his Ismaʿīli parlance is called knowledge by divine inspiration (*taʾyīd*). His narrative of the source and scope of knowledge is a clear example of his use of a synthetic discourse composed of philosophical and theological narratives. As explained in Chap. 2, in Kirmānī's texts the epistemic concept of certainty and the Shīʿī

concept of infallibility are closely associated and reinforce the religious-political narrative of the imam's authority. While it is possible for all great souls to approximate certain knowledge, in Kirmānī's discourse, this is only ever possible through the intermediary of the imam as the genealogical, spiritual, and legal heir of the Prophet.<sup>74</sup>

Mullā Ṣadrā shares with Kirmānī the narrative of the agent intellect as the source of the intelligibles but his discourse departs from that of Kirmānī in one important aspect. While repeating the narrative of inspirational knowledge (*ta'yīd*), and that of the necessity of instruction (*ta'lim*)<sup>75</sup> by the inspired souls (*al-mu'ayyadūn*) for ordinary people, Mullā Ṣadrā argues for the unification of the human intellect with the agent intellect and the resultant epistemic independence of the soul.<sup>76</sup> On the other hand, he expands the scope of certain knowledge beyond the domain of the Shī'ī imams. It is true that he never applies the theological concept of infallibility to anyone other than the imams, but there are elements in his narrative of epistemic authority that suggest the possibility of inspirational knowledge for the saint (*walī*) and the jurist (*faqīh*). This extension is facilitated by the synthetic character of his discourse on knowledge and authority, building on the Akbarian narrative which is absent in Kirmānī's texts. In Mullā Ṣadrā's synthesis of discourses, the Akbarian narrative of the *wilāya* of the perfect human (*al-insān al-kāmil*), and the Twelver narrative of jurisprudence and its representative power during the imam's Occultation, play important parts. This aspect of his discourse makes it different to Kirmānī's discourse on knowledge and authority that revolves around the imam alone. Nevertheless, Kirmānī's doctrine of the transformation of the soul into "an actual intellect that subsists in its own right (*al-'aql al-qā'im bi'l-fi'l*),"<sup>77</sup> anticipates Mullā Ṣadrā's ambitious discourse on knowledge and authority.

### (3) **The function of Kirmānī's and Mullā Ṣadrā's epistemic concepts, arguments, and narratives in their discourses on the absolute authority of the Shī'ī imam**

Both Kirmānī and Mullā Ṣadrā write against a discursive Shī'ī background in which the imams are praised for their unique and infallible knowledge. Shī'ī traditions in both Isma'ili and Twelver canonical

collections are immersed in narratives of the imam's unrivaled knowledge as a prophetic heritage that encompasses exoteric and esoteric matters.<sup>78</sup> In Shī'ī literature, the imams are frequently referred to as "learned" (*al-ʿālim*). This originates in the famous prophetic tradition in which Prophet Muḥammad refers to himself as the city of knowledge and to ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib as its gate (*bāb*).<sup>79</sup> Kirmānī and Mullā Ṣadrā contribute to this discursive tradition and expand it by incorporating Aristotelian and Neoplatonic arguments. As discussed in Chap. 3, knowledge by inspiration (*ta'yīd*) is the key concept through which Kirmānī's epistemic discourse connects to his imamology. He repeats the Peripatetic narrative of knowledge as emanation from above in his formulation of the imam's infallible authority, and his discourse resonates with the philosophical tradition in Iran, dating from both before and after him, that revolves around light imagery and vision analogy.<sup>80</sup>

Similar to Kirmānī, for Mullā Ṣadrā, knowledge of religious/spiritual and worldly affairs is equally necessary for the imam as the spiritual and political leader of the community. In this regard, both thinkers use the narrative of existential hierarchy based on knowledge and use it to support the ontological-epistemological superiority of the imams and their unquestionable authority. This is also closely related to the narrative of people's ignorance in the absence of the imam's instruction (*ta'līm*). Yet, lacking in the doctrine of the unification of the knower and the known, Kirmānī differs from Mullā Ṣadrā in being ambiguous about whether the imam is only an intermediary between the agent intellect and the ranks below or unified with the agent itself. As discussed in Chap. 4, Mullā Ṣadrā's epistemology of unification facilitated the narrative of the imam as the ultimate source of knowledge itself. Furthermore, Mullā Ṣadrā's epistemic and imamological narratives also incorporate the Akbarian concept of the perfect human, which was anticipated by Kirmānī's concept of "the truly human," which was, in his time, not yet a full-fledged mystico-philosophical doctrine. While Kirmānī refers to the category of "the truly human" as those who become actual intellects, his instances for this category do not go beyond the prophets and the imams.<sup>81</sup>

(4) **Knowledge–power dynamics within philosophical discourses of Shī‘ī background and the influence of such dynamics on modern and contemporary Shī‘ī religio-political discourses**

The analysis of Kirmānī and Mullā Ṣadrā’s narratives of epistemic authority in connection with religio-political authority reveals that in the Shī‘ī context: (1) Those discourses that contribute to the empowerment of political authority are mainly synthetic and they are composed of philosophical, theological, mystical, and scriptural narratives and concepts; (2) in different historical and social conditions, some of these narratives become more dominant than others. For example, the mystical narrative of the perfect human used in Mullā Ṣadrā’s synthetic discourse of authority is extensively and explicitly used and influences other narratives. As another example, while Kirmānī’s discourse is replete with philosophical narratives, they generally tend to be overpowered by theological and scriptural ones. In the area of critical discourse analysis, this phenomenon is often referred to as the “recontextualization of discourse.”<sup>82</sup> The variation in prioritizing one narrative over the other proves the interdependence of discourses and the institutionalized ideologies of the time; (3) discourses do not emerge suddenly; they have a gradual development. For example, the emergence of the Shī‘ī discourse of political authority beyond the imam’s domain was gradual and grew in proportion with the increasing use of Sufi narratives; (4) among different narratives used in a synthetic discourse such as the Shī‘ī discourse of authority, some seem at first sight to be less prone to change due to their claim of “universal rationality.” In this respect, the philosophical narrative of the potentiality of the soul and the agent intellect are good examples as they appear to have the same content in the works of Kirmānī and of Mullā Ṣadrā. Nevertheless, as previously discussed, the narrative of the agent intellect as the ultimate source of the intelligibles, though apparently used in the same Peripatetic sense, connects in new ways to other narratives, which results in different applications of the concept; and (5) discourses, as in the example of the Shī‘ī discourse of authority, function primarily in relation and response to those from which they spring, as well as the dominant discourses of the time, rather than being fully determined by the conscious intention of their authors. For example, in comparing Kirmānī and Mullā Ṣadrā, one can see that in their narratives of epistemic authority, their discursive

background in the Islamic appropriation of Greek philosophy, and the Shī'ī discourses of their times, both play an important part. This can explain why, in spite of his conscious antagonism to “philosophy,” Kirmānī relies so strongly on philosophical concepts and narratives.

My study shows that there exists a category of Shī'ī philosophical discourse that is strongly reliant on a synthesis of different narratives to rationalize the authority of the imam and his representatives. By comparing the works of Kirmānī and Mullā Ṣadrā, I have tried to prove that philosophical discourses have been an essential component in the Shī'ī discourses of absolute authority at important moments in the history of institutionalized Shi'ism. In spite of many doctrinal, historical, and political differences between Isma'ili and Twelver Shi'ism, major discursive developments in these two contexts show a similar use of synthetic discourses, with the philosophical discourse playing a determining role regardless of the intention of the authors.

The pivotal role of philosophical narratives of knowledge and authority in the Shī'ī contexts of Fatimid and Safavid literatures proves the importance of an interdisciplinary analysis which includes philosophy, religion, and politics. In this respect, Kirmānī and Mullā Ṣadrā serve as revealing case studies for the reason that in their texts, philosophy, religion, and politics—in the sense of political imamology—are intertwined. Additionally, there is a continuity between Kirmānī and Mullā Ṣadrā or, to put it another way, between Isma'ili and Twelver philosophical-religious-political discourses. The same holds for the relation between their texts and contemporary Shī'ī discourses. Over centuries, the discursive bridge has been sustained by the endeavors of Shī'ī philosophers, especially those who constructed a discursive opening for the entrance of Isma'ili narratives into Twelver philosophical imamology. The writings of Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī are a great example of this. As discussed in the section on Ṭūsī in Chap. 3, he adopted a synthetic discourse in most of his texts in which philosophy, Akbarian Sufism, and Shi'ism gather force to propagate the unique authority of the imam. Moreover, he prepared the ground for the transition of the Fatimid discourse of the imam's absolute authority to the Twelver discourse of the delegation of the imam's authority to his representatives. As quoted earlier in Chap. 3, according to Ṭūsī, the imam's “supreme *ḥujja* is the manifestation of the First Intellect, that is, the visibility and power of the illumination of the First Intellect is made manifest

through him.”<sup>83</sup> This philosophical narrative of authority reappears not only in the Safavid discourse of Mullā Ṣadrā, but also in the contemporary narrative of the jurist as the representative of the imam. The continuation of Isma‘ili synthetic discourse on knowledge and authority in the Twelver domain through Ṭūsī was partly facilitated by the fact that both discourses are present in his texts and it is often impossible to separate the two.

Last, but not least, this study has revealed that some contemporary Twelver political discourses are deeply rooted in philosophical narratives especially that resulted from a merging of Twelver with Sufi concepts. In this respect, Ayatollah Khomeini’s discourse on the guardianship of the jurist discloses the political power of such a synthesis in the contemporary Iranian Shī‘ī context.

The analysis of the contemporary ideological and political relevance of these philosophical discourses has been brief in the present study; however, it may encourage further research in the domain of contemporary Shī‘ī philosophy and politics. By using the method of discourse analysis, scholars can look into other aspects of Shī‘ī texts and reveal discursive relations across time and space. One suggestion for further research might be an examination of the mutual empowerment of the speculative and practical domains in Shi‘ism. For example, one could further examine the mutual empowerment of philosophy and politics by disclosing the conversation between written philosophical texts, and written and/or spoken discourses in politics, such as official documents, speeches, correspondences, indictments, and so on. Critical discourse analysis is a versatile method which can be applied to many different fields. Moreover, its interdisciplinary nature can be very helpful in the field of Islamic studies, which accommodates a variety of disciplines, including philosophy, religion, and politics.

## Notes

1. It is a well-known fact that in Iran, there have been a large number of scholarship- and state-funded projects that have researched Mullā Ṣadrā’s works. In 1994, the Iranian government funded the establishment of the Ṣadrā Islamic Philosophy Research Institute in Tehran, which also publishes *Khiradnama-yi Sadra*, a journal on Islamic philosophy. The director of the institute is the brother of the supreme leader, Ayatollah

Khamenei. In 1999, the institute also convened the World Congress on Mullā Şadrā, which attracted many scholars from around the world. See Sayeh Meisami, *Mulla Sadra* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2013), 124–127. It is important to note that many influential political figures in the contemporary Shi'ī world have had a background in later Islamic philosophy, including Ayatollah Khomeini and Muḥammad Bāqir Şadr. On the philosophy of the latter-mentioned figure, see John Walbridge, “Muhammad-Baqir al-Sadr: The Search for New Foundations,” in *The Most Learned of the Shi'a: The Institution of the Marja' Taqlid*, ed. Linda S. Walbridge, 131–140 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

2. On Fayḍ's life and works, see William Chittick, “Muḥsin Fayḍ-i Kāshānī,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam Two*, eds. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel and W.P. Heinrichs (Brill Online, 2013), accessed June 19, 2016, [http://dx.doi.org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.1163/1573-3912\\_islam\\_COM\\_0785](http://dx.doi.org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0785).
- For Kāshānī's work and his relation to Sufism, see Leonard Lewisohn, “Sufism and the School of Işfahān,” in *The Heritage of Sufism*, eds. Leonard Lewisohn and David Morgan, 3 vols, 63–164 (Oxford, UK: Oneworld, 1999), III: 112–134.
3. For a review of the content and different versions of this treatise, see Cyrus Ali Zargar, “Revealing Revisions: Fayḍ al-Kāshānī's Four Versions of al-Kalimāt al-Maknūna,” *Iranian Studies* 47:2 (2014): 241–262.
4. Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī, *Kalimāt maknūna min 'ulūm ahl al-ḥikma wāl-ma'rifa*, ed. 'Azīz Allāh Qūchānī (Tehran: 1383 A.H./1963). The passage is translated and cited by Shigeru Kamada, “Fayḍ al-Kāshānī's walāya: The Confluence of Shi'ī Imamology and Mysticism,” 464.
5. Mullā Şadrā, Shīrāzī, *Sharḥ uşūl al-kāfī*, eds. Muḥammad Khājawī and 'Alī Nūrī, 2nd ed. 4 vols (Tehran: Pizhūhishgāh-i 'ulūm-i insānī wa muṭāla'āt-i farhangī), II: 485.
6. Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī, *'ilm al-yaqīn*, trans. Hossein Ustād-Walī, 2 vols (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Ḥikmat, 2014), 482–484.
7. Kāshānī, *'ilm al-yaqīn*, 484.
8. Ibid.
9. In Twelver Shi'ism, the Akhbāriyya are the scholars “who rely primarily on the traditions, *akhbār*, of the *Imāms* as a source of religious knowledge, in contrast to the Uşūliyya, who admit a larger share of speculative reason in the principles (*uşūl*) of theology and religious law.” Wilferd Madelung, “Akhbāriyya” in *Encyclopedia of Islam Three*, eds. Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krāmer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, and Everett Rowson

(Brill Online, 2013), accessed June 19, 2016, [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/akhbariyya-SIM\\_8312](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/akhbariyya-SIM_8312).

Also see Robert Gleave, *Scripturalist Islam: The History and Doctrines of the Akhbārī Shīʿī School* (Leiden, NL: Brill, 2007), 268–296.

10. Andrew J. Newman, “Fayd al-Kashani and the Rejection of Clergy/State Alliance: Friday Prayer as Politics in the Safavid Period,” in *The Most Learned of the Shīʿa: The Institution of the Marīʿ Taqlid*, ed. Linda S. Walbridge, 34–52 (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2001), 41.
11. For example, in the works of Yusuf ibn Aḥmad al-Baḥrānī (d. 1186/1773), an influential later Akhbārī, “one can hardly distinguish between his work and that of an Uṣūlī jurist.” Abdulaziz A. Sachedina, *The Just Ruler in Shīʿite Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 20. On this subject, see Robert Gleave, “Compromise and Conciliation in the Akhbārī-Uṣūlī Dispute: Yūsuf al-Baḥrānī’s Assessment of ‘Abd Allāh al-Samāhijī’s Munyat al-Mumārisīn,” in *Fortresses of the Intellect: Ismaili and other Islamic Studies in Honour of Farhad Daftary*, ed. Omar Alī-de-Unzaga, 491–519 (London/New York: I.B. Tauris in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2011).
12. His use of independent reasoning is noticeable in his *al-Haqq al-mubīn fī kayfiyya al-tafaqquh fī l-dīn* and *Tahdhīb al-aḥkām*.
13. On one occasion, Fayḍ had to disobey the king by resigning from his office as the imam of the Friday prayer in Isfahan. See Newman, “Fayd al-Kashani and the Rejection of Clergy/State Alliance,” 42–44. In his *Āʾīn-i shāhī* (*The Kingly Mirror*) Fayḍ explains kingship as a phenomenon that can be explained as part of God’s plan for creation. This is an interesting example of a Safavid discourse built on the synthesis of religious and political discourses. See Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī, *The Kingly Mirror*, trans. William Chittick, in *Authority and Political Culture in Shīʿism*, ed. Said Amir Arjomand, 269–284 (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1988).
14. ‘Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī, *Shawāriq al-ilhām fī sharḥ al-Tajrīd al-kalām*, ed. Shaykh Akbar ‘Alī Asad-zāda, 5 vols (Qom: Muʾassasa-yi imam Ṣādiq, 1389 S. H./2010). As *Shawāriq* is an incomplete commentary on *Tajrīd*, it does not have any sections on the prophethood and the imamate that could be interesting for my analysis.
15. Sajjad Rizvi, “Only the Imam Knows Best: The Maktab-i Tafkīk’s Attack on the Legitimacy of Philosophy in Iran,” *The Journal of Royal Asiatic Society* 22:3–4 (2012): 489.

16. Lewisohn, "Sufism and the School of Iṣfahān," 110.
17. ʿAbd al-Razzāq Lāhijī, *Gawhar-i murād*, ed. Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn Qurbānī Lāhijī (Tehran: Wizārat-i farhang wa irshād-i Islāmī, 1372 S.H./1993).
18. Sajjad Rizvi, "A Sufi Theology Fit for a Shīʿī King: the *Gawhar-i Murād* of ʿAbd al-Razzāq Lāhijī (d. 1072/1661–2)," in *Sufism and Theology*, ed. Ayman Shihadeh, 83–98 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 89; 91.
19. Rizvi, "A Sufi Theology Fit for a Shīʿī King," 91.
20. ʿAbd al-Razzāq Lāhijī, *Gawhar-i murād*, MSS 1301–1301 A.H./1884, f. 204, Iranian National Digital Library, accessed July 1, 2016, <http://dl.nlai.ir/UI/f9b6b581-cb8a-4b3e-9e7c-87ddc47b6019/Catalogue.aspx>.
21. *Gawhar-i murād*, f. 225.
22. Much work was done by scholars to pave the way toward the guardianship of the jurist (*wilāya al-faqīh*) between the Safavid and Qajar eras. For example, Mullā Aḥmad Narāqī (1185/1771–1245/1829) made important contributions to the discursive formation of this doctrine. He was the first scholar to write on *wilāya al-faqīh*. See Muḥsin Kadīvar, "Theories of Government in Shīʿī fiqh," in *Shiʿism: Critical Concepts in Islamic Studies*, eds. Paul Luft and Colin Turner, 4 vols (London/New York: Routledge, 2008), III: 269. On Narāqī's work, see Ahmad Kazem Moussavi, "The Development of the Doctrine of Vilāyat-i Faqīh: The Role of Mullā Aḥmad Narāqī," (MA thesis, McGill University, 1983). However, in the present study I only look at those intellectual discourses that were influenced by the synthetic methodology of Mullā Ṣadrā. For major studies on the theory of *wilāya al-faqīh*, see Nikki Keddi, *Religion and State in Iran 1785–1906: The Role of the Ulama in the Qajar Period* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1969). Hamid Algar, *Religion and State in Iran 1785–1906* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1969). Abdulaziz A. Sachedina, *The Just Ruler in Shiʿite Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988). Liyakat N. Takim, *The Heirs of the Prophet: Charisma and Religious Authority in Shiʿite Islam* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2006).
23. Ahmad Kazem Moussavi, "The Attitude of the ʿUlamā toward the Government in Nineteenth-Century Iran," *Reason and Inspiration in Islam: Theology, Philosophy and Mysticism in Muslim Thought: Essays in Honour of Hermann Landolt*, ed. Todd Lawson, 522–537 (London/New York: I.B. Tauris, 2005), 522.

24. Kazem Moussavi, "The Attitude of the 'Ulamā toward the Government in Nineteenth-Century Iran," 522; 533.
25. For Shaykhism, see Henry Corbin, *En Islam iranien, aspects spirituels et philosophiques*, 4 vols (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), IV: *livre VI*. See also Vahid Rafati, *The Development of Shaykhi Thought in Shi'i Islam*, (PhD dissertation, University of California Los Angeles [UCLA], 1979).
26. Henry Corbin, *En Islam iranien*, IV: 256.
27. Juan R.I. Cole, "Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsa'i on the Sources of Religious Authority," in *The Most Learned of the Shi'a: The Institution of the Marja' Taqlid*, ed. Linda S. Walbridge, 82–93 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 82; Juan R.I. Cole, "Individualism and Spiritual Path," in *The Shi'ite Heritage: Essays on Classical and Modern Traditions*, ed. Lynda Clarke, 345–358 (New York: Binghamton University, 2001), 347. For al-Aḥṣā'i's criticism of Mullā Ṣadrā, see his *Sharḥ al-'Arshiyya* (Kirmān: Chāpkhāna-yi Sa'adat, 1983). For a critical summary of his criticism, see Gulām Ḥossein Ibrāhīmī Dīnānī, *Mājarā-yi fikr-i falsafī dar jahān-i Islām*, 3 vols (Tehran: Intishārāt-i ṭarḥ-i naw, 1379 S.H./2000), III: 361–385. James Morris correctly points out that in spite of the differences between them, the influence of Mullā Ṣadrā on al-Aḥṣā'i cannot be ignored. See James Winston Morris, *The Wisdom of the Throne* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), 49.
28. Shaykh Zayn al-Dīn al-Aḥṣā'i, *Jawāmi' al-kilām*, MSS 1273, f. 14–19, Iranian National Digital Library, accessed June 21, 2016, <http://opac.nlai.ir/opac-prod/bibliographic/1220305>.
29. Cole, "Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsa'i on the Sources of Religious Authority," 85.
30. Cole, "Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsa'i on the Sources of Religious Authority," 88–89.
31. Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, "al-Aḥṣā'i, Shaykh Aḥmad," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam Three*, eds. Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, and Everett Rowson (Brill Online, 2013), accessed June 20, 2016, [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/al-ahsai-shaykh-ahmad-SIM\\_0320?s.num=0&s.f.s2\\_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-3&s.q=ahmad+al-ahsa%27i](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/al-ahsai-shaykh-ahmad-SIM_0320?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-3&s.q=ahmad+al-ahsa%27i).
32. Cole, "Individualism and Spiritual Path," 356.
33. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "The Traditional Texts used in the Persian Madrasahs," *Islamic Quarterly* 19:3 (1975): 179.
34. Mullā Hādī Sabziwārī, "Hidāya al-ṭalibīn fi ma'rifa al-anbiyā' wa'l-a'imma al-ma'ṣūmīn," in *Majmū'a-yi rasā'il*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Aṣṭiyānī, 1–119 (Mashhad, IR: Mashhad University Press, 1970), 5–6.

35. Mullā Ḥādī Sabziwārī, *Asrār al-ḥikam* (Tehran: Behesht-i jāwid, 1393 S.H./2014).
36. Hossein Ziai, "Knowledge and Authority in Shī'ī Philosophy," in *The Shī'ite Heritage: Essays on Classical and Modern Traditions*, ed. Lynda Clarke, 360–374 (New York: Binghamton University, 2001), 373.
37. Sabziwārī, "Hidāya al-ṭālibīn," 32.
38. Sabziwārī, "Hidāya al-ṭālibīn," 65.
39. Sabziwārī, "Hidāya al-ṭālibīn," 84.
40. Sabziwārī, "Hidāya al-ṭālibīn," 93.
41. Shīrāzī, *Sharḥ uṣūl al-kāfī*, II: 551.
42. Sabziwārī, "Hidāya al-ṭālibīn," 100.
43. Sabziwārī, "Hidāya al-ṭālibīn," 101.
44. Sabziwārī, "Hidāya al-ṭālibīn," 102.
45. As we can see in this text, based on Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophy, Sabziwārī revives the Neoplatonic universal soul of Isma'īli philosophers in philosophical literature.
46. Sabziwārī, "Hidāya al-ṭālibīn," 106.
47. Sabziwārī, "Hidāya al-ṭālibīn," 107–108.
48. Sabziwārī, "Hidāya al-ṭālibīn," 110; 111.
49. Sabziwārī, "Hidāya al-ṭālibīn," 114.
50. In his *Manzūma* and *Sharḥ-i manzūma*, Sabziwārī says something similar about God. In an apostrophe to God, he says "O, Thou who is hidden for the excess of Thy luminosity." See Murtaḍā Mutahharī, *Sharḥ-i manzūma-yi Ḥājj Mullā Ḥādī Sabziwārī* (Tehran: Ṣadrā, 1373 S.H./1994), 5.
51. Sabziwārī, "Hidāya al-ṭālibīn," 115.
52. Sachedina, *The Just Ruler in Shī'ite Islam*, 231.
53. For an example of this kind of involvement, see Said Amir Arjomand, "An Exchange between a Mujtahid and a Qajar Official," in *Authority and Political Culture in Shī'ism*, ed. Said Amir Arjomand, 329–333 (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1988).
54. An important example of this kind is the role played by the prominent *mujtahid* Mīrzā Ḥassan Shīrāzī (d. 1312/1896). He banned the consumption of tobacco, against the will of the state. According to Abbas Amanat, his success as a leading *mujtahid* was also due to his mercantile background and his merchant connections. See Abbas Amanat, "In Between the Madrasa and the Marketplace: The Designation of Clerical Leadership in Modern Shī'ism," in *Authority and Political Culture in Shī'ism*, ed. Said Amir Arjomand, 98–132 (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1988), 116–119.

55. Amanat, "In Between the Madrasa and the Marketplace," 124.
56. Abbas Amanat, "From Ijtihād to Wilāyat-i Faqīh: The Evolution of the Shiite Legal Authority to Political Power," in *Shari'a: Islamic Law in the Contemporary Context*, eds. Abbas Amanat and Frank Griffel, 120–136 (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 130. For more evidence on Ayatollah Khomeini's attribution of authority to religious scholars, see Takim, *Heirs of the Prophet*, 106.
57. Alexander Knysh, "Irfān Revisited: Khomeini and the Legacy of Islamic Mystical Philosophy," *Middle East Journal* 46:4 (1992): 634–635.
58. Rūḥullāh Khomeini, *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāya* (Beirut: Mu'assisa al-'ilmī li'l-maṭbū'āt, 1427 A.H./2006), 113.
59. For example, see Khomeini, *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāya*, 102.
60. Khomeini, *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāya*, 133.
61. Khomeini, *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāya*, cited by Knysh, "Irfān Revisited: Khomeini and the Legacy of Islamic Mystical Philosophy," 646.
62. Knysh, "Irfān Revisited: Khomeini and the Legacy of Islamic Mystical Philosophy," 652. Also see Farhang Rajaei, *Islamic Values and World View: Khomeini on Man, the State, and International Politics* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1983), 35–37.
63. Khomeini, *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāya*, 163.
64. For Narāqī's influence on Khomeini, see Shahroukh Akhavi, "Contending Discourses in Shī'ī Law on the Doctrine of Wilāyat al-Faqīh," in *Shi'ism: Critical Concepts in Islamic Studies*, eds. Paul Luft and Colin Turner, 4 vols (London/New York: Routledge, 2008), IV: 254.
65. Rizvi, "Only the Imam Knows Best," 490. Also see Hamid Algar, "The Fusion of the Gnostic and the Political in the Personality and Life of Imam Khumayni," *Al-Tawhīd* 17, 2 (2003): 3–17.
66. Rūḥullāh Khomeini, *Governance of the Jurist (Wilāyat-i faqīh): Islamic Government*, trans. Hamid Algar (Tehran: The Institute for Compilation and Publication of Imam Khomeini's Works, n. d.), 51, accessed June 23, 2016, [http://www.iranchamber.com/history/rkhomeini/books/velayat\\_faqqeh.pdf](http://www.iranchamber.com/history/rkhomeini/books/velayat_faqqeh.pdf).
67. Khomeini, *Governance of the Jurist (Wilāyat-i faqīh)*, 7. I have modified the translation based on its Farsi version.
68. On the evident knowledge of the reality of being, see Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī, *al-Hikmat al-muta'āliya fi asfār al-'aqliyya al-arba'a*, III: 431; *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, ed. Muḥammad Khājawī (Tehran: Mu'assasa-i taḥqīqāt-i farhangī, 1363 S.H.), I: 38–44. There are several treatises written on the two logical terms *taṣawwur* and *taṣdiq* by Islamic philosophers, and one

- of these is by Mullā Ṣadrā. See Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī, *Risāla al-taṣawwūr wa'l-taṣdīq*, trans. Mahdī Hā'irī Yazdī: *Āgāhī wa guwāhī* (Tehran: Wizārat-i farhang wa āmūzish-i 'ālī, 1367 A.H./1988).
69. That Ayatollah Khomeini opens a discourse of universal leadership for the jurist rather than just for the leadership of the Shī'ī community is an interesting topic that I am not addressing here.
  70. Khomeini, *Islamic Government*, 62.
  71. Ibn Sīnā, *al-ṭabī'yyāt al-Shifā*, 10 vols (Qom: Maktaba al-Āyatullāh al-ʿuzmā' Mar'ashī Najafī, 1401 A.H./1984), I: 98–103.
  72. Ibn Sīnā, *al-Ishārāt wa'l-tanbihāt*, ed. Sulayman Dunya, 3 vols (Cairo: Dār al-ma'ārif, 1960), III: 8.
  73. Ḥamīd al-Dīn Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, eds. Kāmil Husain and Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Ḥilmī (Cairo: Dār al-fikr al-ʿArabīyya, 1953), 351. Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī, *Kitāb al-ʿArshīyya*, trans. James Winston Morris: *The Wisdom of the Throne* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), 120.
  74. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 438.
  75. Shīrāzī, *Sharḥ uṣūl al-kāfī*, II: 584.
  76. Shīrāzī, *al-Ḥikmat al-muta'āliya fi asfār al-ʿaqliyya al-arba'a*, VIII: 259; 395; *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 579.
  77. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 162.
  78. On this subject, see Uri Rubin, "Prophets and Progenitors in the Early Shī'a Tradition," in *Shī'ism*, eds. Paul Luft and Colin Turner, 50–78 (Oxon, UK: Routledge, 2008), III: 57.
  79. Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, *The Divine Guide in Early Shī'ism: The Sources of Esotericism in Islam* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994), 69–70.
  80. Paul E. Walker, *Master of the Age: An Islamic Treatise on the Necessity of the Imamate: A Critical Edition of the Arabic Text and English Translation of Ḥamīd al-Dīn Aḥmad B. ʿAbd Allāh al-Kirmānī's al-Maṣābiḥ fi itbbāt al-imāma* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 34.
  81. Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, 145.
  82. Norman Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language* (Edinburgh, UK: Pearson Education Limited, 1995; rpt. 2010), 20.
  83. Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, *Rawḍa-yi taslīm*, ed. and trans. S. J. Badakhchani: *Paradise of Submission: A Medieval Treatise on Ismaili Thought* (London: I.B. Tauris in association with Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2005), 133.

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