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Multilingual Transmission and Sufi Lexicography: ‘Abdul Razzāq Kāshānī and the Transmission of Ibn ‘Arabī

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Abstract

The renowned Sufi, commentator and Qur’ānīc exegete ‘Abdul Razzāq Kāshānī (d. 735 H/1335?, also pronounced as al-Qāshānī or Qāsānī) played a major role in disseminating the teachings of Ibn ‘Arabī (d. 638 H/1240) in Ilkhanid (654 H/1256–750/1353), Iran. By teaching and training students such as Sharaf al-Dīn Dāwūd Qayṣarī (d. 751 H/1350), writing tirelessly on the main elements of *Akbarīan* mysticism, including *waḥdat al-wujūd* (oneness of being), *wilāya* (guardianship, sainthood), and *khatm al-wilāya* (the sealing of the sainthood), as well as commenting on *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* (the Bezels of Wisdom), Kāshānī proved to be a true heir to the legacy of his late master. However, the account of his contribution to this tradition, which was quite new in Iranian milieu at that time, will not be complete if we neglect to mention his initiative in systematizing and theorizing Ibn ‘Arabī’s teachings through his complex and detailed lexicons, including *Mu‘jam iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiya*, *Rashḥ al-zulāl fī sharḥ al-alfāz al-mutadāwilat bayn arbāb al-adhwāq wa-al-aḥwāl*, and *Laṭā‘if al-i‘lām fī ishārāt ahl al-ilhām*. By means of his lexicalization of the challenging language of Ibn ‘Arabī, Kāshānī facilitated a gain in popularity of the former’s teachings, as well as the widespread usage of those teachings both among Sufi circles and in the Ilkhanid court.

Keywords: ‘Abdul Razzāq Kāshānī; Ibn ‘Arabī; *Akbarīan* mysticism; Sufi terminology; Sufi lexicons

1. Kāshānī’s Life, Works, and Contributions to Akbarīan Mysticism

Studying one of the most inspiring bilingual (Arabo-Persian) intellectuals of the medieval Islamic era requires us to go beyond the modern, and often nationalistic-inclined hypotheses about language, culture and education to see people, developments and cultural contexts as they really were. Such research stands at the intersection of literary studies, Sufi studies and Islamic intellectual history in medieval Islamic world(s), and comparative literary studies. It also shows how multiple languages (here Arabic and Persian) were working harmoniously to contribute to the shaping of the Islamic culture of the premodern era in general. The deliberate use of Arabic as a lingua franca by non-Arab scholars sheds light on the rich multicultural and multilingual fabric of medieval Muslims societies.

This multilingual background of medieval-era scholars is reflected in a number of primary sources, including *al-Muqaddima* (The Introduction) of Tunisian sociologist, Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808 H/1406). As Hany Rashwan elucidates, Ibn Khaldūn’s study “included social insights regarding several cultures, including the ancient Greeks, Romans, Persians, and Hebrews, with special attention to nomadic peoples such as the Arabs, Berbers, Mongols, and Turks” (Rashwan 2024a, p. 608). In Ibn Khaldūn’s observation, a special emphasis is laid on the contribution of non-Arab scholars to the multilingual history of



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Arab-Islamic knowledge production in various fields over the centuries. According to Ibn Khaldūn:

“It is a strange fact that most of the scholars in the Islamic community (*al-millah*) are non-Arabs (*al-‘Ajam*), whether in religious sciences or intellectual sciences, except in very rare cases. Even if an Arab is among them by lineage, he is non-Arab in his language, upbringing, and teachers, although the religion (*al-millah*) is Arabic and the one who brought its law (*sharī‘atuhā*) is an Arab. The reason for this is that in the early days of the community (*al-millah*), there was neither knowledge (*‘ilm*) nor craft (*ṣinā‘ah*) due to the simplicity and nomadic nature of their conditions. The rulings of the Sharia, which are God’s commands and prohibitions, were carried in the hearts of men who knew their sources from the Qur’an and Sunnah, as they received them from the lawgiver (*ṣāhib al-shar‘*) and his companions. At that time, the people were Arabs (*‘Arab*) who did not know about education, writing, or compilation, nor were they driven to it by necessity”.

(translated and discussed by [Rashwan 2024a](#), p. 608)

Our Sufi and commentator, ‘Abdul Razzāq Kāshānī, was one whose writings contributed to such a multilingual and culturally diversified landscape. Ismail Lala sheds light on his life, writings, and his contribution to *Akbarian* mysticism¹, describing him as “an enviably productive, bilingual author [who] penned many books during his life” ([Lala 2019](#), pp. 25–26), including thirty-four in Arabic and ten in Persian. The fact that all of his books (including short treatises) are written from the perspective of Ibn ‘Arabī’s metaphysics, using his methodology (as well as that of Avicenna) and terminology, is indicative of his interest as well as his unquestionable authority in the theoretical mysticism of his master. On the reasons as to why Kāshānī took the initiative to write three similar books on this subject, [Al-Qāsimī \(n.d., p. 736\)](#) asserts that this trilogy should be treated as mirrors reflecting his massive contribution in developing and improving Sufi terminology and lexicon. These three writings provide us with a clear example of how an objective terminological methodology was deployed to gather Sufi terms from their primary sources that were widely circulated and authoritative. And to this end, he relied on the usage of these terms by specialists to reach the concepts of these terms. Furthermore, he employed three types of arrangement across his lexicons: alphabetical, thematic and conceptual; the same methods used in modern terminology today, which itself testifies to his foresight in the science and practice of terminology.

Kāshānī’s first encounter with Ibn ‘Arabī’s writings goes back to 655 H/1257,² when two of his masters in Sufism,³ Shaykh Ḍiyā’ al-Dīn Abū l-Ḥasan al-Shīrāzī (d. 70/1306)⁴ and Shaykh Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Ḥakīm Kīshī (d. 694 H/1295), had difficulty finding an expert in Shiraz in southwestern Iran with whom they could discuss *tawḥīd* and answer questions regarding the subject. Quoting Kīshī, Kāshānī writes ([Kāshānī 1397 SH](#), p. 69):

“... and at that time, there was no one in Shiraz with whom I could discuss *tawḥīd* and Shaykh Ḍiyā’ al-Dīn Abū l-Ḥasan did not have enough knowledge about it, and I [myself] was also perplexed, until *Fuṣūṣ* reached here”.

Considering the time of the completion of the *Fuṣūṣ* in 627 H/1229 ([Kāshānī 1383 SH](#), p. 44), obviously there cannot have been a big gap between the writing of the *Fuṣūṣ* and its arrival in Iran, which had been living under Ilkhanid rule. The Ilkhanid dynasty, which ruled over a vast territory, including present-day Iran, from 1256 to 1335 CE, was founded by Hulegu, a grandson of Genghis Khan. They finally converted to Islam, virtually ended the Abbasid Caliphate, controlled the Seljuks as a vassal state, waged war with the Mam-

luks, and unified Persia as a territorial and political entity, which itself paved the way for the Safavids.

Ilkhanids were enthusiastic patrons of arts, architecture and sciences. As Lambton (2012), Pfeiffer (1999, p. 10), Amitai-Preiss (1999, *passim*), and Al-Shaybī (1991, pp. 112–15) argue, under the Ilkhanids, intellectual life was quite vibrant and lively, and several Sufi orders, including Suhrawardīya (to which Kāshānī was affiliated) and Kubrawīya, as well as lesser-known *ṭarīqahs*, such as Kāzīrūnīya (also Ishāqīya)⁵ and Rushdīya, were active and prevalent⁶. According to Amitai-Preiss (1999, p. 35), not only were they popular, but also attached to the court, whose main policy was to invest in moderate and established Sufis such as Ṣafī al-Dīn Ardībīlī (d. 735 H/1334), the disciple of *Shaykh* Zāhid Gīlānī, or the Kubrawī *Shaykh*, ‘Alā’ al-Dawlah Simnānī (d. 736 H/1336).

Given this, the Ilkhanid court kept eyes on the activities of the *ghālī* Sufis who seemed to be troublesome for the political stability of their establishment. As Ramaḍān Jamā‘at and Jadīdī, among others, have explained, in the time lapse between the formation of the Ilkhanids in 654 H/1256 and the emergence of the Safavids in 907 H/1501, almost all of the Sufi orders who were shaped in Iran, Asia Minor and Iraq, expressed different shades of extremist inclinations. A combination of *waḥdat al-wujūdī* ideas, which usually tended to end up in *ulūhīyyat*, and Shī‘ism made the ideology of these non-moderate movements, which itself gave them enough motivation and zeal to nurture violent political ambitions (Ramaḍān Jamā‘at et al. 1400 SH, *passim*; Mīr Ja‘farī et al. 1385 SH, *passim*). The reason is clear: by attaching themselves to moderate Sufis and recruiting them into their system, Mongols wanted to use their capabilities, including their knowledge and popularity, as valuable sources of legitimacy. Amitai-Preiss ascertains (Amitai-Preiss 1999, pp. 32 & 35–36) that this policy had been started by Abū Sa‘īd’s⁷ ancestors, Arghūn (d. 695 H/1316) and his son Uljeitū (d. 690 H/1291), and ‘Alā’ al-Dawlah Simnānī, who was in the official service of both Arghūn and Ṣafī al-Dīn, could successfully restrain many of the Mongols “from molesting the people”.

Al-Shaybī (1991, p. 112) is right that this policy was based on the mutual need of the Mongols and the Sufis, because they “needed a group of people who would calm the people and react towards [their] invasion in accordance with the Sufi doctrine of satisfaction and resignation”. Tucker’s (2014, pp. 177–94) analysis of the activity of non-moderate, messianic Sufism, such as Nūrbakhshīya, Ḥurūfīya, Musha‘sha‘īya and Sarbidār, is backed by Al-Shaybī (1991, p. 56) too, who argues that, like in the Abbasid era, extremist Sufi orders were characterized by similarities with the Shī‘a *ghālī* movements. Al-Shaybī ascertains that the collapse of the Abbasids was beneficial for moderate Shī‘ism as well, which was slowly but gradually rising to prominence and recognition, due both to the conversion of a number of Ilkhanid *Khāns*, such as Ghāzān, to Shī‘ism, and the adoption of a moderate attitude by Twelvers (Al-Shaybī 1991, pp. 110–12 & 139).

As Tucker emphasizes (Tucker 2014, p. 182), due to their socio-political weaknesses, “this feeling of militant unity and power are far more characteristic of *ghulāt* millenarians than the relatively moderate and frequently quiescent Twelvers”. Nevertheless, despite this passivity in politics, Twelver (or moderate) Shī‘ism was not only gradually receiving social popularity and acceptance, but Shī‘a elements were also infiltrating the Sufi system, and sometimes became a replacement for it. Taqī Zādīh Dāwarī (1386 SH, *passim*) observes how the Sufi *dhikr* recitation sessions became replaced by *Āshūrā* and lamentation for Ḥusayn, and as Momen maintains (Momen 2016, p. 147), developments such as this eventually prepared the groundwork for the emergence of the Safavids, whose era was a landmark of the free reign of popular Shī‘ism in a variety of expressions.

Momen’s analysis of the “free reign” of Shī‘ism not only explains the socio-religious developments of the Safavid era, but also sheds light on the pre-Safavid developments as

well. He observes how “the devotion of ordinary people towards the Sufi saints, which had been a major factor in popular religiosity in previous centuries, was gradually transferred to the Shi‘i Imams, who now became the spiritual intermediaries and intercessors of the masses” (Momen 2016, p. 147). Hence, Kāshānī’s assertion (Kāshānī 1383 SH, pp. 46–47) of the popularity of the *Fuṣūṣ* in the Sufi circles of Shiraz should be understood within this context. So, too, did the theory of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, which was widely in circulation by Ibn ‘Arabī’s disciples (Tayefeh 2015, p. 30).

Tayefeh’s analysis resembles that of Dagli, who ascertains that by the time of Kāshānī, Ibn ‘Arabī’s mysticism had “already started to become a kind of meta-order, not itself providing spiritual initiation, but existing as a special dimension within existing orders” (Dagli 2016, p. 105). As Caner Dagli explains, *Fuṣūṣ* “was an important starting point for the centuries of philosophical elaboration” (Dagli 2016, p. 5), which had begun with Qūnawī and reached its culmination at the time of Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī. In addition, “it was precisely because it was brief, difficult, and controversial that the *Fuṣūṣ* became a kind of template for the philosophical speculations and elaborations of his school” (Dagli 2016, p. 5). Zarrīnkūb maintains that the encounter of Iranian Sufis with *Akbarian* mysticism should not have been “easy and comfortable” (Zarrīnkūb 1380 SH, p. 127). While compelling, his observation requires empirical evidence.

One of the instances that displays this clash is the steadfast opposition of Simnānī to *waḥdat al-wujūd*, which is encapsulated in the idea of *waḥdat al-shuhūd*. There is a general tendency to argue that Simnānī misunderstood Ibn ‘Arabī, and the skirmish between these two mystical systems is but a linguistic conflict on the meaning of *wujūd* as opposed to *shuhūd*, and therefore Simnānī’s alternative is just another reading of the Oneness of Being. On the other hand, there is the position of scholars such as Mohaghegh and Landolt (1971, p. 94), who argue that Simnānī’s critiques should be understood in the context of his mystical training in Kubrawīya Sufism, which was different from that of Ibn ‘Arabī, and that is why it was at odds, if not to say sharp contrast with *Akbarian* mysticism.

In his clarification on the different meanings of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, Chittick (2012, p. 36) explains that the critics of Ibn ‘Arabī, from Simnānī⁸ to Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī (d. 1034/1624),⁹ did not pay enough attention to the different meanings of the term *wujūd*, and that one of these meanings is ‘to find’ (coming from the Arabic *WJD*)¹⁰ and to perceive, or to see face to face, which is *shuhūd*, or witnessing. Relevant to this is its usage by early authors who “frequently discuss the word *kashf* (or unveiling) as a synonym for *shuhūd*, and Ibn ‘Arabī often employs both *kashf* and *shuhūd* as synonyms for *wujūd*” (Chittick 2012, p. 34). Given this, Sufis such as Simnānī, Muḥammad Gīsūdirāz (d. 1422), and Sirhindī, *inter alia*, dismissed the different meanings of *wujūd* and its synonymous usages in Ibn ‘Arabī’s writings.

In line with Chittick’s, is Mesbahi’s (2009, p. 163) opinion as he maintains that one of the foremost problems of Simnānī with *waḥdat al-wujūd* was the concept of *al-wujūd al-muṭlaq* (Absolute Existence), which was used by Ibn ‘Arabī to explain unity in multiplicity (*waḥdat dar kathrat*). Ibn ‘Arabī invented it to cover both *Ḥaqq* and His manifestations, while for Simnānī, *wujūd al-muṭlaq* must only include the Essence and nothing else. In other words, Ibn ‘Arabī believed in the inseparability of the *wujūd* from his manifestation, and that is why he explained them both by the concept of *wujūd al-muṭlaq*, while for Simnānī these two are different (Mesbahi 2009, p. 63 ff). Furthermore, Simnānī saw “*waḥdat al-wujūd* as tantamount to the concepts of *ḥulūl* (“incarnationism”) and *ittiḥād* (“unificationism”)”.

As an example, in *Al-‘Urwa li-ahl l-khalwa wa-l-jalwa* (An Authentication for the People of Seclusion and Company), Simnānī (1362 SH/1984, p. 265) dedicates one entire chapter to *ittiḥād*, *ḥulūl*, and *tanāsukh* (the transmigration of souls), which are taken for *waḥdat*. First,

he nullifies *ittiḥād*, arguing that “the unification of the Creator and creation is impossible”, because these two are inherently different. *Ittiḥād* is possible only when two things, which may even look like different but in nature one, come together to make a new thing, whose identity totally differs from its ingredients. Given this, Simnānī wonders how it is possible for the *makhlūq*, itself the mark (*athar*) of the emanation of the *khāliq*, to become unified with its creator (the source of *fayḍ*), which has a different nature.

Simnānī (1362 SH/1984, p. 267) develops the same argument to invalidate *ḥulūl* as well, because *wājib al-wujūd* (also *al-Qadīm*), in order to be one with the *ḥādith* (accident), cannot logically become incarnate, whether partially or completely. Because if the incarnation happens completely, then *wājib al-wujūd* substitutes the accident, which itself nullifies the attribute of *wujūb*, and the removal of the attribute of *wujūb* from *wājib* is rationally impossible. And if the incarnation happens partially, then it is not *wājib al-wujūd* in the first place, because *wājib al-wujūd* only incarnates in full sense and not in partial mode, and what incarnates partially is *ḥādith* (or accident).

In the same way, Simnānī (1362 SH/1984, pp. 267–69) proves that *tanāsukh* is wrong, with no justification or reasonable grounding in Islamic thought, because there do not exist several bodies through which one can travel in order to be purified, but only one body that has two deaths: one arbitrary and the other biological. So long as one is capable of purifying his heart and removing bad attributes, one will get a new birth until they finally die. Pertinent to this is the way Simnānī understands *tawḥīd*. As Najīb Māyil Hirawī (Simnānī 1362 SH/1984, p. 36) ascertains, for Simnānī, *tawḥīd* is only understandable through *kashf* (unveiling) and witnessing (*shuhūd*), although these two are not contradictory with *waḥdat al-wujūd* (Simnānī 1362 SH/1984, p. 36).

Regarding Kāshānī, I have explained elsewhere (Chamankhah 2020, p. 11) that three intellectual tendencies were shaped after this encounter, and Kāshānī belonged to the first one, i.e., the philosophical school of Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī, with figures such as Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī (d. 787 H/1385) and ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī (d. 826/1424?) as its members. It is called a ‘philosophical school’ because the impact of Avicenna’s philosophy, in which Kāshānī himself was originally trained, is visible in the general inclination and colorings of the writings of its members. For example, Kāshānī’s *Ta’wīlāt al-qur’ān al-ḥakīm*, as Morris ascertains (Morris 1987, pp. 3–4), is not a regular interpretation in its Sufi meaning, but rather a combination of Avicenna’s philosophy and Ibn ‘Arabī’s thought.

Lala (2019, p. 25) maintains that, as a prolific writer, Kāshānī’s books have been discussed and analyzed by modern scholars extensively.¹¹ They are not only remarkable contributions to *Akbarīan* mysticism, but have also paved the way for what I have called its “*Shī’itization*” (Chamankhah 2020, p. 13) as well; an initiative which eventually bore fruit both in the emergence of figures such as Ḥaydar Āmulī, who proudly thought of himself as Kāshānī’s student, as well as the founding father of Shī’a mysticism.

2. Kāshānī’s Glossaries and Lexicons

Before examining Kāshānī’s Arabic lexicons as the main subject of this paper, I will briefly explore his bilingual proficiency. This context is critical, as his contributions to Sufism and his linguistic innovations are deeply intertwined and come hand in hand. There is also another reason for it: no one has yet studied Kāshānī’s works to rediscover this multilingual overlooked aspect of his legacy. Kāshānī was a prolific bilingual writer and added significantly to the existing scholarship in *Akbarīan* mysticism. Hādīzādih (1380 SH) and Lambden (2017) list his books, and Owjabī (1384 SH) has published one of his Arabic manuscripts called *Taḥlīyat al-Arwāḥ bi Ḥaqā’iq al-Injāḥ* (Adorning Souls with the Realities of Success), written as a manual for philosophy students. *Taḥlīyat al-Arwāḥ bi Ḥaqā’iq al-Injāḥ*, is indicative of its author’s mastery in philosophy, and is consisting of an Introduction on

general philosophical topics, including *wujūd*, *māhīyat* (quiddity), *waḥdat wa kathrat*, *wujūb* (necessity), *imkān* (possibility or contingency), *imtinā* (impossibility), *ḥudūth wa qidam* (creation and eternity), *taʿlīl* (causality), and *maqūlāt* (categories). The book has chapters on *ṭabīʿīyāt* (physics), *ilāhīyāt* (theology), and an epilogue on Sufi topics, including *sulūk*, *ʿilm al-nūr* (the science of light), faith in God, repentance and seeking forgiveness, and other related issues.¹²

There existed a few Sufi glossaries before Kāshānī's trilogy; however, they cannot be regarded as independent books, but rather short texts, containing detailed explanations of Sufi terms, which have been incorporated into Sufi manuals. There are examples such as *Risāla qushayrīya fī ʿilm al-taṣawwuf* (the Qushayrī Treatise in the Science of Sufism) by Zayn al-Islām Abū l-Qāsim ʿAbd al-Karīm Hawāzin al-Qushayrī (d. 1072), *Kashf al-maḥjūb* of ʿAlī ibn ʿUthmān al-Hujwīrī (d. 1071), and *al-Taʿarruf li madhhab ahl al-taṣawwuf* of Abū Bakr al-Kalābādhī al-Bukhārī (d. 385 H/995).¹³ Because of this, Kāshānī should be considered the first prominent Sufi to take initiative in writing independent glossaries and lexicons in Ibn ʿArabī's tradition.

After the completion of his commentaries on *Manāzil al-sāʿirīn* (the Stations of the Travelers)¹⁴ of Khwāja ʿAbdullāh Anṣārī (d. 1089) and *Fuṣūṣ*, as well as writing *Taʾwīlāt al-qurʾān al-ḥakīm*,¹⁵ Kāshānī wrote the first of his trilogy, i.e., his Lexicon of the Sufi Technical Terms, called *Muʿjam iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiya* (A Glossary of the Sufi Terms)¹⁶, followed by *Rashḥ al-zulāl* (To Distill the Clear ...) ¹⁷ and *Laṭāʾif al-iʿlām* (the Subtleties of Imparting Knowledge ...) ¹⁸, in order to clarify the complexities of the philosophical language of Ibn ʿArabī, and to defend the Sufi path from any exoteric infringement. The *Muʿjam iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiya*,¹⁹ *Rashḥ al-zulāl* and *Laṭāʾif al-iʿlām* should be classified as both lexicons (a vocabulary of a language) and glossaries (a list of terms in a particular domain of knowledge with their definitions).

Iṣṭilāḥāt is a glossary, composed of twenty-eight chapters (*abwāb*), which are sorted non-alphabetically in the abjad order, starting at *alif* and ending at the letter *ghayn*. Lala maintains that (Lala 2019, p. 31) as a critical text, *Iṣṭilāḥāt* has been required reading in Sufi circles for the last six and a half centuries and is the only Kāshānī glossary which is translated into English.²⁰ According to Kāshānī in *Iṣṭilāḥāt* (Kāshānī 1992/1413, p. 49), every letter stands for a Sufistic term, station, or state. For example, the letter *alif* indicates the Essence, i.e., *dhāt al-aḥadiyya* or *al-ḥaqq min ḥaythu huwa awwal al-ashyāʾ fī azal al-āzāl*, and comes at the beginning of all the words that revolve around *dhāt*, His manifestations in different levels, including names and attributes, as well as states and stations (*ḥālāt wa maqāmāt*). It is also used to explain the binary of *ḥaqq wa al-khalq* and the ways in which these two are interrelated. For instance, *aḥwāl* (lit. states), starting with *alif*, refers to the blessings (*mawāhib*) of the servant, having been descended upon him from God, due to His pure and undeserved Mercy. The second category is also called *aḥwāl*, because it still develops (*taḥawwal*) the personality (*rusūmāt khulqīya*) and *darakāt* (levels) of the servant, upgrading him to a higher status (Kāshānī 1992/1413, p. 52).

Pertinent to this is *iḥsān*, or “the realization of the servitude by witnessing *ḥaḍrat al-rubūbiyya* through the light of insightfulness (*bi nūr al-baṣīra*)” (Kāshānī 1992/1413, p. 52). Kāshānī's source on the importance of *maqām al-iḥsān*, or *iḥsān fī sharīʿa*, is the famous Prophetic *ḥadīth* stating that “verily, worship Him as if He sees you, because if you don't see Him, He surely sees you” (Kāshānī 1992/1413, p. 53). Other than *ḥadīth-i nabawī*, Kāshānī benefits from the Shīʿa *ḥadīth* treasury as well, an endeavor which makes him stand out among his peers. As I discussed elsewhere (Chamankhah 2020), in addition to the commentaries and glosses that were written on Akbarian teachings, every element of Ibn ʿArabī's mysticism was embraced by his Iranian peers and was eventually incorporated into a Shīʿa doctrinal platform. Iranian Sufis and commentators were pioneers, not only because they wrote the largest number of commentaries and glosses on *al-Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* (Bezels of Wis-

dom), but also because what I call “*Shī‘itization of Akbarian Mysticism*” (Chamankhah 2020, pp. 60–68) started with them. In fact, it started with Kāshānī; however, serving as the climax of its logical and historical development was Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī’s (d. 787 H/1385) famous statement that Sufism is Shī‘ism, and vice versa (Āmulī 1391 SH, *passim*). Āmulī’s inspiration from Kāshānī, a well-documented fact in the history of Sufism, was so great that it encouraged the former to write “a fervent panegyric” (Hādīzāda, Majmu‘āt, p. 115 in Lala 2019, p. 23, footnote 120) on him. As I have discussed elsewhere (Lala 2019), Shī‘ism contains the same elements as Akbarian mysticism. Themes such as the office of imamate with the personality of the *imam*, as the living exemplar at its center, or Mahdism are the common themes of Shī‘ism and Sufism. On the other hand, the Akbarian theories of *wilāya* and *khatm al-wilāya*, as well as that of the Perfect Man, found themselves at home in Shī‘ism and were eventually accommodated by the Shī‘ī scholars. As a result, Sufi saints were transformed to reverence for the Shī‘ī *imams* (Lala 2019, pp. 42–45).

Kāshānī’s sources in *Iṣṭilāḥāt* are vast and diversified; a combination of philosophy (particularly Avicenna’s philosophy), the Sufi legacy of his predecessors, including, but not limited to, *al-Shaykh al-Kabīr*, *Shihāb Allāh wa al-Dīn*, al-Suhrawardī (d. 631–32 H/1234) (Kāshānī 1992/1413, p. 106), and his *‘Awārif al-ma‘ārif*, as well as Islamic sacred sources, particularly *ḥadīth* tradition. The footprint of philosophers, here Avicenna, is visible, when Kāshānī, following Ibn ‘Arabī, equates *umm al-kitāb* (Kāshānī 1992/1413, p. 57) (or *al-durrat al-bayḍā*, Kāshānī 1992/1413, p. 70) with *al-‘aql al-awwāl* (Kāshānī 1992/1413, p. 57), and brings two *ḥadīth* to support it: “the first thing, which was created by Allāh was *al-durrat al-bayḍā*” or “the first thing, which was created was *‘aql*” (Kāshānī 1992/1413, p. 70). As a Qur’ānic word, *umm al-kitāb* refers to the Book itself and is used three times in two meanings: twice as *lawḥ al-mahfūz* (lit. Preserved Tablet) and once as *aṣl wa asās* (lit. principle and foundation). *Āyāt al-muḥkamāt* (lit. clear verses) are regarded as the origin and the foundation of the Qur’ān and are used as a source for the interpretation of *āyāt al-mutashābih* or *mutashābihāt* (lit. ambiguous verses). In Sufi terminology, *umm al-kitāb* is also called *al-durrat al-bayḍā* (lit. white pearl) and *al-‘aql al-awwāl*, because it is believed that *lawḥ al-mahfūz* is made of a single massive pearl. It is believed that Ibn ‘Abbās (d. 68 H/687, with the full name of ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās, the famous jurist, *muḥaddith* and exegete), was the first one who interpreted *lawḥ al-mahfūz* in the verse thirty-nine of *Sūrat al-Ra‘d* (the Thunder 13:39), as such. The point about *Iṣṭilāḥāt* is that the author does not constrain himself to the terminology of his master, and in many cases incorporates terms that are not mentioned by Ibn ‘Arabī, a fact which indicates that Kāshānī is not just a student and a disseminator of Akbarian mysticism, but an independent Sufi with several initiatives and contributions to this tradition.

For instance, in the chapter on the letter *hā* of the same book, which contains ten entries starting with the letter *hā*, only two entries (*al-hurwa* and *al-hawājīs*) have been mentioned by Ibn ‘Arabī, and the rest is Kāshānī’s contribution. Scrutinizing *Iṣṭilāḥāt* shows how he turns the only remaining dictionary of his master, a tiny text of eleven pages, into three elaborated and meticulous glossaries and lexicons that later came to play a significant role in formulating the former’s teachings through documentation and codification (*tabwīb*) of his terminology. Kāshānī’s independent Sufi personality is at its peak when he defines *wujūd*, probably the most important word after *tawḥīd/waḥdat*²¹ in Akbarian mysticism and a loanword from philosophy, which ultimately goes back to Greek *ousia*, differently from that of Ibn ‘Arabī, and close to the author of *‘Awārif al-ma‘ārif* (Kāshānī 1992/1413, p. 74).

Relevant to this is his extensive employment of the Shī‘a *ḥadīth*, which is indicative of the fact that for the medieval Sufis like Kāshānī, Sufism was an inclusive discourse, standing beyond the narrow (and at times, misleading) dichotomy of Shī‘a and Sunni mysticism/Sufism: a categorization that later marked the Sufi/mystical activities of the post-

Safavid era and beyond. It was a kind of Sufism that even allocated a space to the most formidable enemy of Akbarian mysticism, i.e., Ibn Taymīyyah (d. 728/1328), whose name is occasionally mentioned in *Iṣṭilāḥāt* (Kāshānī 1992/1413, p. 77 ff).²² It also shows how, for the medieval Sufis, Sufism was an ‘Islamic’ thing; a cream (*dhurwa* or ‘*uṣāra*), or the best of the Islamic teachings par excellence.

In most cases, Kāshānī’s definitions of the Sufi terms are more intricate than those of Ibn ‘Arabī. For instance, on the four journeys (*al-asfār al-arba‘ah*), he steps beyond his master’s examination and discusses it in more detail. *Bāb al-sīn* (Kāshānī 1992/1413, pp. 122–23) and *bāb al-nūn* of *Iṣṭilāḥāt* contain Kāshānī’s contribution to the existing scholarship of *asfār*, which had been debated by Ibn ‘Arabī in a less lengthy manner.²³ In addition to the first two volumes of *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyah* (Meccan Revelations), in which *al-asfār al-arba‘ah* (only the first two journeys) is discussed for the first time, Ibn ‘Arabī defines *safar* in *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyya*: “and then, *safar* means when *qalb* is captured by attention to *Haqq* through recollection” (Ibn ‘Arabī n.d., p. 284, footnote *, in Kāshānī 1992/1413, p. 123). As Ḥasan Zādiḥ ascertains (Ḥasan Zādiḥ Karīm Ābād 1390 SH, pp. 11–13), in both *Iṣṭilāḥāt* and *Manāzil al-sā‘irīn*, Kāshānī elaborates on *asfār* at length; a reading which later and through his student, Sharaf al-Dīn Dāwūd Qayṣarī (d. 751 H/1350), became the most predominant reading of this term and was eventually taken by Mullā Ṣadrā (d. 1045 H/1635–36) four centuries later in a book with the same title.

Therefore, here again the initiative is Kāshānī’s (1992/1413, pp. 117–18 & 122–23), who converts Ibn ‘Arabī’s two journeys into an elaborated discussion of *asfār*²⁴, consisting of four journeys, starting from *safar al-awwal*, the journey toward God, starting from the stations of the Self until reaching the Manifest Horizon, which constitutes the culmination of the station of the Heart, and the beginning of the manifestations of Divine Names (“*huwa al-sayr ‘ila Allah min manāzil al-naḥs ‘ila al-wuṣūl ‘ila al-ufuq al-mubīn, wa huwa nihāyat maqām al-qalb, wa mabda‘ al-tajalliyāt al-‘asmā‘iyyah*”) (Kāshānī 1992/1413, p. 122). The second journey is in God by embodying His attributes and realizing His names, reaching the highest horizon and the completion of the status of *wāḥidīya* (“*huwa al-sayr fi Allah bi al-ittiṣāf bi ṣifātihī wa al-taḥaqquq bi asmā‘ihī ‘ila al-ufuq al-a‘lā wa nahāyat al-ḥaḍrat al-wāḥidīya*”) (Kāshānī 1992/1413, p. 122). The third one is the journey to the station of Absolute Union and the Divine Presence of Oneness, and it is the station of two bows²⁵ (“*huwa al-taraqqī ‘ila al-‘ayn al-jam‘ wa al-ḥaḍrat al-‘aḥadīya wa huwa maqām qāb qawṣayn ...*”) (Kāshānī 1992/1413, p. 123). While *wāḥidīya*, originating from *waḥda* or unity, refers to a stage where the Absolute Divine Unity (*al-Aḥadīyah*) realizes itself through the diverse and differentiated universe, *aḥadīya*, i.e., uniqueness and the status of unmanifested Divine Oneness, represents God’s Essence before any attributes, names or creation come into being. The fourth journey is the journey by God, from God for the sake of perfection, and it is the station of subsistence following annihilation and separation following Union (“*huwa al-sayr bi Allah ‘an Allah lil takmīl. Wa huwa maqām al-baqā‘ ba‘d al-fanā‘ wa al-farq ba‘d al-jam‘*”) (Kāshānī 1992/1413, p. 123).

Also, in *bāb al-‘ayn*, he equates ‘*ālam al-amr* (the realm of command) with ‘*ālam al-malakūt* and ‘*ālam al-ghayb* and defines it as “the realm of the souls and spiritualities (‘*ālam al-arwāḥ wa al-rawḥānīyāt*)” (Kāshānī 1992/1413, p. 124), while in Ibn ‘Arabī’s lexicon, it is only ‘*ālam al-malakūt*, “in which things come to existence from God directly, without the help of causality” (Ibn ‘Arabī n.d., p. 296 in Kāshānī 1992/1413, p. 124). The same pattern repeats when he defines the word *al-‘ubūda*. For Ibn ‘Arabī, *al-‘ubūda* (servitude) is *maqām al-‘ubūdīya* and belongs to those who kill (*shāhada*) their *nafs* for the sake of their God, but according to Kāshānī, *al-‘ubūda* is the station of the elite of the elites, of those who sacrificed their *nafs*/Self based on which their servitude was founded. Therefore, by removing *nafs*,

they worship Him in the stations (*maqām*) of *aḥadīyat al-jam‘ wa al-farq* (Kāshānī 1992/1413, p. 126).

Kāshānī’s definition of *mawt* (death) as

“الموت باصطلاحهم قمع هوى النفس فأن حياتها به، و لا تميل إلى لذاتها و شهواتها”

“in their terminology, death is to suppress the whim of the soul, from which he draws his life, and to not incline to its pleasures and lusts” (Kāshānī 1992/1413, p. 110), is a typical Sufi one. So it is the classification of *mawt* (lit. death) into the four categories of white (*al-abyaḍ*), green (*al-akhḍar*), red (*al-aḥmar*), and black (*al-aswad*) that has a well-established background in the teachings of Ibn ‘Arabī.²⁶ *Al-mawt al-abyaḍ* (the white death) is fasting and the starvation (*al-jū‘*), which comes with it, because hunger illuminates your inward and whitens your heart, Kāshānī enunciates (Kāshānī 1992/1413, p. 111), while *al-mawt al-akhḍar* (the green death) is contentment with what one has. *Al-mawt al-aḥmar* (the red death) is to fight with *nafs* (Self) in what has been called *al-jihād al-akbar* (the greatest battle) and *al-mawt al-aswad* (the black death) is tolerance and patience for the hardships that come from relationships with others (Kāshānī 1992/1413, p. 112).

However, as Ralph. W. J. Austin argues (Austin 1980, p. 104), the most attractive part of *Iṣṭilāḥāt* is Kāshānī’s contribution to Ibn ‘Arabī’s discussion of *rabb* (Lord) and the idea that every believer has a personal God, i.e., “the particularization of universal relationship [...] between God and the Cosmos”, according to his/her *isti’dād*. Austin (1980, p. 104) continues that the Lord “has meaning only within the context of its relationship with the concept of servant” (Austin 1980), and therefore there is no “lordship or dominion without servitude”. This relationship signifies “the polarity of servant, as the particular, individual[ly] created, existent thing, and the Lord, as the particular aspect of God that creates and determines the destiny of that thing according to its latent, essential reality in God” (Austin 1980, p. 104). And as informed by each created being’s preparedness, beings cannot be other than what their Lord determines. Pertinent to this is the idea that the Lord has no choice but to approve what His will is, and the servant “disapproves of the Lord who, in effect, determines him only in accordance with what he himself inevitably is in essence” (Austin 1980, pp. 104–5).

Traditionally, the popular belief among the mystics was that God is manifested in conformity with the preparedness of the servant, but Nettler holds that (Nettler 2003, pp. 124–25), according to Ibn ‘Arabī, the preparedness of the servant, *isti’dād*, “is rather the servant’s preparedness to conform to a particular form of God’s phenomenal appearance. Indeed, this *isti’dād* is given by God to His servant”²⁷. Thus, when this preparedness comes to the heart, the heart sees Him in the form in which He is revealed to it. Nettler’s analysis is supported by Takeshita (1986, pp. 117–18), according to which the heart of the ‘*ārif* is the only thing that sees God in everything and worships him in the infinite shapes of His manifestations. Ibn ‘Arabī (1423 H/2002, vol. 1, p. 120) facilitates the idea that the ‘*ārif* is able to enlarge his heart in equal degree to the image upon which God Manifests Himself, and therefore, he is not passive in receiving His image.

By such an argument, the role of the polished heart of the ‘*ārif* in receiving divine manifestations and his preparedness to adapt to the image of God are more crucial than divine manifestation *per se*. Ibn ‘Arabī explains the difference between these two ideas by distinguishing between two kinds of theophanies (*tajalliyāt*); the first one is called *tajallī al-ghayb* (the Theophany of the Unseen/invisible), and the second, *tajallī al-shahāda* (the Theophany of the Visible). According to the first, the capacity to receive His manifestations is endowed to everyone, and thereby the hidden and invisible Reality, which is called *ḥurwa* (lit. he, masculine subject pronoun) and refers to His essence, is displayed in the heart of the ‘*ārif*. Following this, the second theophany happens when al-‘*ārif* sees Him as He appears to Himself in the form of the place (here heart) in which He is seen, or when He takes

the form of the place (here heart), He is appeared there (Ibn ‘Arabī 1423 H/2002, vol. 1, pp. 120–21).

Kāshānī (1992/1413, p. 126) uses his master’s discussion on preparedness and different forms of manifestations in the heart as they correspond to different types of *‘ubūda* (or *‘ubūdīya*). Hence, servitude and divine names, out of which the concept of the Lord is derived, are matching, and each stands for one kind of *rabb* and its corresponding *‘abd*. For instance, we have an *‘abd* which comes with *al-laṭīf*, and the one which comes with *al-khabīr*, and the one which corresponds to *al-ḥalīm*, and so on. Each divine name or *rabb* matches one type of *‘abd* according to his/her spiritual capacity. Hence, we have one hundred types of servitude, each matching one *rabb* or the name of personal God.

So far, we have had one hundred divine names, but thanks to Kāshānī’s addition to the tradition of *asmā’ wa-l-ṣifāt*, we now have the same forms of servitude, each different from another and each based on a different spiritual capacity of *‘abd*. For instance, *‘abd al-shahīd* (the servant of witnessing), is the one who testifies that *Ḥaqq* is a *shāhid* on everything and testifies it in his Self and in others from among His creatures (Kāshānī 1992/1413, p. 136). However, *‘abd al-majīd* is a servant who has been elevated by God (*majjadahu Allāh*) by completing his deeds and attributes, and making him an imitator of His faculties, so He praises him because of his virtues and excellences (Kāshānī 1992/1413, p. 136). In the same way, *‘abd al-mājid* is the one who has been honored by God due to his personal faculties and has been gifted by Him whatever he was eligible for (Kāshānī 1992/1413, p. 139). *‘Abd al-ṣamad* is a servant who represents His eternity and everlasting nature, and therefore, in accordance with his personal Lord, he is the source of help, strength and blessings for those who need it (Kāshānī 1992/1413, p. 139).

Rashḥ al-Zulāl is the second dictionary that I am discussing here. It is composed of four sections, including *Iṣṭilāḥāt* (discussed above), *Al-Qism al-thānī*, *Iṣṭilāḥ al-ṣūfiya* (which is a short text of eleven pages written by Ibn ‘Arabī), and finally the main texts of *Rashḥ al-zulāl*. *Rashḥ* was written to elucidate the *Iṣṭilāḥ al-ṣūfiya* of Ibn ‘Arabī; however, it should be regarded as an independent text. Focusing on the second section, *Al-Qism al-thānī* is a lexicon, which is not only written in the style of *Maqāmāt al-sā’irīn* (Stations of the Travelers, or in its more common title that is *Manāzil al-sā’irīn*) of Khwāja ‘Abdullāh Anṣārī of Herat (d. 480/1087)²⁸, but is also to explain the headlines (*‘anāwīn*) of *Maqāmāt*. *Al-Qism al-thānī* is composed of ten *aqṣām*; each *qism* consists of ten *maqāmāt* and each *maqām* contains ten *manzil*, all of them necessary for a novice to reach his goal, which is the status of *al-insān al-kāmil*.

The structure of the book is as fascinating as its content, although the latter must be understood in the context of the former. There are ten *aqṣām*, including *qism al-bidāyāt* (the chapter on the beginnings), *qism al-abwāb* (the chapter on the doors), *qism al-mu‘āmalāt* (the chapter on the transactions), *qism al-akhlāq* (the chapter on ethics), *qism al-uṣūl* (the chapter on the principles), *qism al-awḍiyya* (the chapter on the valleys), *qism al-aḥwāl* (the chapter on the states), *qism al-wilāyā* (the chapter on guardianships), *qism al-ḥaqā’iq* (the chapter on the truths), and *qism al-nihāyāt* (the chapter on the ends). The first *maqām* of the first *qism*, i.e., *qism al-bidāyāt*, is called *al-yaqāza* (vigilance) and means that servant must be aware and wakeful to his distance and estrangement from God (Kāshānī 1992/1413, p. 190). A true heir to the legacy of his master, Kāshānī uses Ibn ‘Arabī’s method, i.e., the allegory of ‘manifestation’, to explain the subtleties of the Sufi terminology of *Al-Qism al-thānī*. Although in *qism al-bidāyāt*, *al-yaqāza* is wakefulness and awareness to whatever keeps the servant from his master, but in the second *qism*, i.e., *qism al-abwāb*, *al-yaqāza* gains another meaning, which is *tayaqquḥ*, an Arabic cognate of the same word, which means watchfulness and alertness to Satan’s traps and deceptions, as well as being cautious to the imaginations that may bring us regret and remorse (Kāshānī 1992/1413, p. 190).

In *qism al-mu'āmalāt*, *yaqaza* is still called *tayaqquz*, but it gains a new meaning—vigilance toward the egotism and haughtiness of the Self (*ru'ūnāt al-nafs*), when one becomes arrogant after performing rituals such as prayers and fasting, because it will cause hypocrisy and insincerity (*al-rīyā wa-al-nifāq fī af'āl*) (Kāshānī 1992/1413, pp. 191–92). As Kāshānī moves on from *qism al-bidāyāt* to *qism al-mu'āmalāt* and to all other remaining *aqsām*, where *yaqaza*, according to the new *qism*, is defined differently, and it is in the last *qism*, i.e., *qism al-nihāyāt*, in which *yaqaza* is defined as “the ability to have divine wakefulness and to be wary of confusing necessary and contingent propositions” (Kāshānī 1992/1413, p. 192) (*al-tamakkun fī al-yaqazat al-ḥaqqānīya wa-al-taḥarruz 'an ishtibāh al-aḥkām al-wujūbiyat bil imkānīya*), which eventually prevents confusion between the *khālīq* and the *makhliq* (Kāshānī 1992/1413, p. 192).

After *al-yaqaza*, which is discussed in all the *aqsām*, Kāshānī turns to the second *maqām* of *qism al-bidāyāt*, *al-tawba* (repentance), and analyzes it in all the tenfold *aqsām*. This method continues until he investigates all the *maqāmāt* of *qism al-bidāyāt*, including *al-muḥāsaba* (accounting), *al-ināba* (returning), *al-tafakkur* (reflection), *al-tadhakkur* (remembrance), *al-i'tiṣām* (taking refuge), *al-firār* (fleeing), *al-rīyādat* (exercise), and *al-samā'* (hearing). In the next step, he moves to *qism al-abwāb*, consisting of ten *maqāmāt*, including *maqāmāt* of *al-ḥuzn* (sorrow), *al-khawf* (fear), *al-ishqāq* (opening), *al-khushū'* (humbleness), *al-ithbāt* (humility), *al-zuhd* (asceticism), *al-wara'* (piety), *al-tabattul* (detachment), *al-rajā'* (hope), and *al-raghbah* (desire), and he discusses each *maqām* as it stands and is defined in each *qism* (Kāshānī 1992/1413, pp. 205–24). For instance, *al-ḥuzn*, whose original image (*ṣūrat*) is in *qism al-bidāyāt* and defined as the feeling of despair and anguish in *al-yaqaza* when the servant falls into the ditch of negligence (Kāshānī 1992/1413, p. 205), in *qism al-abwāb*, becomes despair on the disability or failure (*taqṣīr*) in offering *'ibāda* to Him as well in doing right (Kāshānī 1992/1413, p. 206). However, in *qism al-nihāyāt*, Kāshānī ascertains that “you [the novice] won't be able to find *ḥuzn* unless you are at the beginning of the *maqām al-farq ba'd al-jam'*, which comes before the ability to reach the oneness (*aḥādīyat*) of *farq wa-l-jam'* (Kāshānī 1992/1413, p. 207). At the end, Kāshānī (1992/1413, pp. 206–7) brings a *Qur'ānīc* verse (Nasr 2015, p. 1322, 18:6)²⁹, stating that “Yet perhaps thou wouldst destroy thyself with grief for their sake, should they believe not in this account”.

While the original *ṣūrat* of all the *maqāmāt* is in the first *qism*, i.e., *qism al-bidāyāt*, their genesis rests in a *qism* to which they belong, but they become modulated (*mudarraḥ*) as they descend from *qism al-bidāyāt* to *qism al-nihāyāt*. After *qism al-abwāb* comes *qism al-mu'āmalāt*, consisting of the ten-fold *maqāmāt* of *al-rī'āya* (caring, observing), *al-murāqaba* (watchfulness), *al-ḥurma* (to refrain from transgression), *al-ikhlas* (sincerity), *al-tahdhīb* (purification), *al-istiḳāma* (straightness in the path of God) *al-tawakkul* (reliance on God), *al-tafwīd* (surrendering to the divine will), *al-thiqah* (confidence, trust) and *al-taslīm* (submission).

Qism al-akhlāq is including *al-ṣabr* (patience), *al-riḍā* (contentment) *al-shukr* (gratitude), *al-hayā* (modesty), *al-ṣidq* (veracity, truthfulness), *al-ithār* (sacrifice), *al-khulq* (character, way of life) *al-tawāḍu'* (humility), *al-futuwwat* (fulfilling the covenant of faith) and *al-inbisāt* (allowing the self to act in accordance with its natural disposition). *Al-ṣabr* is the stability and firmness that help the servant to remain firm in hardship, and is successfully fulfilled when *nafs* follows the rulings of *'aql* and *shar'*, and stays away from what these two prohibit. *Qism al-uṣūl* is the fifth *qism* and consists of *al-qaṣd* (the intention of answering the call of truth in the servant that draws him towards God), *al-'azm* (stepping on the path until the light of unveiling hits the servant), *al-irāda* (which is to respond to the call of truth, voluntarily), *al-adab* (a balance between contraction and expansion), *al-yaqīn* (confidence in finding the truth through unveiling), *al-uns* (tranquility after proximity), *al-dhikr* (deliverance from forgetfulness by the presence of God in heart), *al-faqr* (reverting to primordial non-existence by virtue of eternal precedence), *al-ghinā* (the safety of the heart from the

cause lies in perceiving the Cause) and *al-murād* (endowing the servant with complete preparedness in accordance with Divine solicitousness, and removing from him the impediments of imperfection). The *manāzil* (lit. stations) of this *qism* shows the path of the journey of the heart from the beginning to the last, which is annihilation in Him.

Qism al-awdiya (lit. riverbeds) is the sixth *maqām*, consisting of ten steps, namely *al-ihsān* (refining intent through the knowledge of *sharīʿa* and the spiritual path), *al-ʿilm* (a knowledge, which is achieved by behaving according to *sharīʿa* law), *al-hikma* (gnosis of objects and their rulings and faculties, as well as acting to fulfilling the rights of objects), *al-baṣīra* (the illumination of the intellect by the light of truth until everything becomes evident to the servant), *al-firāsa* (a hidden cause revealed to servant through inner purity), *al-taʿzīm* (to submit to Allah's rulings), *al-ilhām* (knowledge of hidden secrets by the eye of insightfulness in the World of Imagery), *al-sakīna* (stillness of soul towards God), *al-ṭumaʿnīna* (stillness strengthened by security emerging from closeness to God and the confidence comes with it), and *al-himmah* (shifting wholly towards the Truth). In the *maqāmāt* of *qism al-awdiya*, Sufi attains the knowledge that, as the external dimension of the Faith, *sharīʿa* is not only inseparable from its kernel, i.e., *haqīqa* and gnosis, but also lays a foundation for it. *Sharīʿa* also helps the novice to distinguish between true revelations and inspirations and delusions that could lead him astray, and that is why Sufism lays a special emphasis on the necessity of observing *sharīʿa* for the perfected Sufis, who have attained unity with God.

Qism al-aḥwāl is including *al-maḥabba* (a trait of the elite, and a result of honesty and dedication), *al-ghayra* (the valuableness of the beloved's image in the heart of the lover and the jealous preserving it against love being attached to anyone else), *al-shawq* (a journey to God with love to Him), *al-qalaq* (too much longing that makes heart impatient and uncomfortable), *al-aṭash* (the restlessness of the seeker until they reach the beloved and their soul become enlightened), *al-wajd* (a burning flame of love's fire awakens contemplation in lover), *al-dahish* (a perplexity seizes the servant), *al-haymān* (the persistence of perplexity and its steadfastness), *al-barq* (the first thing appears among the lights of *tajjālī*, inviting the servant to the *wilāya* of God) and *al-dhawq* (the steadfastness of light). The abovementioned states are transitory and temporal experiences that are achieved by travelers in order to help them to reach the coherency and transcendence of the soul. Despite their transient nature, they leave a permanent impact on the Sufi's conscience as well.

Qism al-wilāyā, which is the eighth station, consists of the ten *maqām* of *al-laḥz* (considering the light of revelation that is clothed in the garment of devotion), *al-waqt* (when the traveler hesitates between inconstancy and stability), *al-ṣafā* (to refrain from darkness), *al-surūr* (inner joy manifests as outward radiance and freshness), *al-sirr* (a meaning, which is hidden from being captured by senses), *al-naḥs* (tranquility in the acknowledgment of the promise of fulfillment), *al-ghurba* (departure from what one is fond of), *al-gharq* (when the servant is taken by the state of *wilāya* and conquered by love), *al-ghayba* (the seeker's absence from the hurdles of knowledge due to the intensity of the light of unveiling) and *al-tamakkun* (when *sālik* reaches *wilāya* and settles down there, while completely disconnected from everything else). *Awlīyā* are the people of purification of the heart, keeping the secret and the covenant, and preserving time. By keeping time, the seeker's complete focus will be on the present moment, getting rid of past regrets, and getting rid of future worries.

The ninth station is called *qism al-ḥaqāʾiq* and consists of *al-mukāshafa* (faith in the realities of Divine Names), *al-mushāhada* (belief that He is Witness over all things), *al-muʾāyana* (belief in seeing God in the Hereafter), *al-ḥayāt* (true Divine life is one of the essential attributes of the servant), *al-qabḍ* (protecting servant from people by God, while covered in the garb of *sharīʿa* and the face of people), *al-baṣṭ* (when Deity manifests in people), *al-sukr* (intoxication), *ṣaḥw* (sobriety), *al-ittiṣāl* (presence with God through the soundness of natural disposition) and *al-infiṣāl* (detachment from two worlds). In *qism al-ḥaqāʾiq*, or under-

standing divine truths and manifestations, the seeker steps into heart vision and then to immediate and definitive vision. The last station is called *qism al-nihāyāt* and includes the ten steps of *al-maʿrifat* (being aware of the truth as it is), *al-fanā* (annihilation), *al-baqā* (subsistence in God), *al-tahqīq* (a summary of knowledge about what the Truth is), *al-talbīs* (deception that can have different forms and be practiced by different groups of people), *al-wujūd* (perceiving the true reality of things as the purest form of witnessing), *al-tajrīd* (detachment from worldly attachments), *al-tafrīd* (referring to the Truth, and that the servant should not ask guidance and calling from anything but God), *al-jamʿ* (to move from multiplicity to unity by seeing beings as Divine manifestations) and *al-tawhīd*. (Kāshānī 1992/1413, pp. 189–90).

As Poshtdār and Riḍā ʿAbbāspūr (1391 SH) elucidate, in the Sufi culture, *al-fanā* is divided into three types, including *al-fanā fi al-fiʿl*, *al-fanā fi al-ṣifāt*, and *al-fanā fi al-dhāt* (annihilation in the Divine Action, annihilation in the Divine Attributes and Self-annihilation in God). The attainment of *maʿrifat* is a pre-requisite for the Sufi to step into the spiritual journey and has two levels: the level of external senses in which knowledge is attained by wisdom, and the higher level of spiritual openings, in which the heart receives revelations without the intermediary help of any physical organ. Reminiscent of the seven cities of love (*haft shahr-i ʿishq*), which is a prevalent theme in the Sufism of Khorasan, Kāshānī’s tenfold *sulūk* roadmap looks like a well-designed manual in the Sufi circles of the Timurid era. In Kāshānī’s coaching directive, however, *wilāya* (formulated in *qism al-wilāyā*) does not put an end to the novice’s journey, as they still need to take two more steps—*al-ḥaqāʾiq* and *al-nihāyāt*—to complete the journey. *Tawhīd*, which is the last *maqām* of *qism al-nihāyāt*, has different forms (*ṣuwar*, sg. *ṣūra*), and with its main *ṣūra* in *al-bidāyāt*, and its origin in *qism al-nihāyāt*,³⁰ it is “the oneness of unity and multiplicity, which is the oneness of Essence by His Essence (*aḥadīyyat al-farq wa-al-jamʿ, wa huwa tawhīd al-ḥaqq dhātihī bi dhātihī*)” (Kāshānī 1992/1413, p. 378).

On the appropriation of the term *al-nihāyāt*, and its place in Sufi *Weltanschauung*, ʿAbdulʿāl Shāhīn explains that *al-nihāyat* means “to return to the beginning” (*al-rujūʿ ila l-bidāya*) (Kāshānī 1992/1413, p. 362, footnote *), and that ‘being in the beginning’ is as if to be in the end (Kāshānī 1992/1413, p. 362). To quote ʿAbdulmunʿim Hafnī in his *Muʿjam iṣṭilāḥāt ṣūfiya*, “the people of *nihāyāt* are those whose strength of their inward and outward, as well as their truthfulness, stems from God. They are His army and have been put among people to guide and lead them. By them, the People of Will (*ahl al-irāda*) are attracted [to His message], and their *ẓāhir* is preserved intact (*maḥfūz*), while their *bāṭin* is sealed by knowledge” (Hafnī n.d., p. 259 in Kāshānī 1992/1413, p. 362). To conclude, *al-qism al-thānī* is composed of one thousand Sufi technical terms—each of them stands for a spiritual station.

Rashḥ al-zulāl, which is the second book of Kāshānī’s trilogy, should be regarded as a lexicon that sheds light on Ibn ʿArabī’s technical terms in his short manual, called *Iṣṭilāḥ al-ṣūfiya*. *Iṣṭilāḥ* is a dictionary of two hundred and eight words, starting with the term *hāwjis* (lit. conjecture) and ending with *sir al-sir* (the secret of the secret); it does not follow an alphabetical order, but the order of the Sufi stations. Ibn ʿArabī only provides us with a brief explanation of each term and leaves it to Kāshānī to explain his manual in a more nuanced way, and what he does is turn the short manual of his master into a sophisticated Sufi glossary. Kāshānī utilizes several sources, including *Qurʾānic* verses, Ibn ʿArabī’s mystical jargon, the existing Sufi tradition that he inherited, the rich Arabic literary tradition of his time, and, last but not least, Prophetic *ḥadīth*, to explain the Sufi terms.

Other than being a lexicon, *Rashḥ* (Kāshānī 2012, p. 201) contains several references to the political orientations of Ibn ʿArabī’s mysticism, especially when Kāshānī discusses the term *awṭād* (lit. pins, meaning poles) as the prerequisites of *quṭbīyat*, and as the columns

(*arkān*) of his government in *wilāya* and administration (*tadbīr*). Clarifying Ibn ‘Arabī’s terminology, Su‘ād al-Ḥakīm directly quotes from *Balaghat al-ghawāṣ fī al-akwān ilā ma‘dan al-ikhhlāṣ fī ma‘rifat al-insān* (lit. the Language of the Diver into the Universes to Extract the Mine of Sincerity to Understand Human Nature), in which *al-Shaykh al-Akbar* assigns a heavy weight of political connotations to *al-insānīya* (humanity). Therefore, *al-insānīya* means “*al-khilāfat ‘an Allah*”, including the stations of “*al-wilāya wa-al-nubuwwa, wa rasāla, wa al-imāma, wa al-amr, wa al-mulk, fal-kamāl al-insānī bi kamāl-i hādha al-marātib, wa huwa markūz fī l-insān bil quwwa mundhu Ādam ila al-ākhar mawlūd*” (Al-Ḥakīm 1401 H/1981, p. 154) (lit. humanity is successorship from God and contains stations such as *wilāya* and prophet-hood, and apostleship, and leadership, and command and rulership. Therefore, Man’s perfection depends on the perfection of these stations, which are implanted in him potentially [and in his natural disposition], from Adam until the last person). As far as the author is concerned, this is the most considerable proof testifying that *Akbarian* mysticism contains a political philosophy; a topic which has not been studied adequately yet.

Laṭā‘if al-i‘lām (Kāshānī n.d.) is a massive lexicon of one thousand, five hundred and thirty-eight words (*muṣṭalahāt*) that have been arranged alphabetically, and covers the most important Sufi terms. In the preamble, Kāshānī says (Kāshānī n.d., p. 2):

«فإني لما رأيت كثيراً من علماء الرسوم، ربما استعصى عليهم فهم ما يتضمنه كتبنا وكتب غيرنا من الفقه والاسرار التي يشير إليها المحققون العالمون بالله من أكابر شيوخ الصوفية الوارثين للعلوم الحقيقية والمعارف الخفية... أحببت أن أجمع هذا الكتاب مشتملاً على شرح ما هو الأهم من مصطلحاتهم، وما تواطأوا عليه من الألفاظ والألقاب التي يعبرون بها عما يتداولونه بينهم من علومهم الإلهية، وأسرارهم الشريفة الربانية، وما به يفهم بعضهم عن بعض كما جرت عليه عادة أهل كل فن.»

“When I saw the scholars of external forms, perhaps it was difficult for them to understand what has come in our books, as well as in the others’, from the points and the secrets, which have been [mentioned and] referred to by the knowledgeable researchers from among the most senior Sufi *shaykhs* who have the gnosis of God, and are the inheritors of the true knowledge and hidden gnosis [Therefore] ... I liked to bring together such a book, containing the explanations of their most important terms and what is embedded in it, including what they mean by the words and attributes of the divine sciences and of the respected divine secrets, which are common between them, and what is they understood from each other, as it is usually the case with the experts”.

Other than being arranged alphabetically, each *muṣṭalah* is also explained according to an alphabetical order, which means that the first word of *bāb al-alif* starts with the letter of *alif*, which is *abwāb*. However, the second letter of the same word is *bā*, which is the second letter of the Arabic alphabet. After explaining all the Sufi words starting with *alif* as the first letter and *bā* (ب) as the second one, Kāshānī moves on to the next category under the same *bāb*, i.e., sorting and explaining words starting with *alif* as the first letter and T (ت) as the second. Kāshānī did not alphabetize according to trilateral roots (as is conventional in Arabic lexicography), but by individual lexeme. Therefore, this would be an easier system for Persian readers, for whom root-based organization would be hard to parse.

The next word is *al-ittihād*. After finishing words with *alif* and T, as the first and second letters, he goes to “*th*” (ث) as the second letter under *bāb al-alif*, starting with *al-ithbāt* and including words such as *ithbāt al-mu‘āmalāt, ithbāt al-muwāṣalāt, ithbāt al-khuṣūṣ, ithbāt al-hāqīqa*, and finally, *ithbāt al-khulāṣat ahl il-khuṣūṣ*. Kāshānī then goes to the next word, which is *al-aḥad*, following the same pattern of arranging words: the first letter is *alif* (under *bāb al-alif*) and the second letter is Ḥ (ح), and after explaining all the words with *alif* and Ḥ, he goes to the next word, and this pattern continues until the last *bāb*, i.e., *bāb al-yā’* (ی). There are seven *muṣṭalah* in this *bāb*, starting from *al-yāqūtāt al-ḥamrā’* (the red ruby standing for

ma'rifat in Sufi discourse) and ending at *yawm al-jumu'a*, with *yā'* as the first letter and *wāw* (و) as the second (Al-Qāsimī n.d., *passim*).

The content of *Latā'if*, according to Al-Qāsimī (n.d., p. 736 in Lala 2019, p. 49), as the most sophisticated Sufi encyclopedia of its time (and maybe our time too), is as impressive as its style. It is well rooted in the rich Islamic tradition and shows how Kāshānī's Weltanschauung, as well as the whole Akbarian mysticism, is not only inseparable from the main tenets of Islam but also identical. One can see how the author delves into the difficulty of Ibn 'Arabī's terminology in *Fuṣūṣ* and *Futūḥāt*, and uses Qur'ānic verses as well as *ḥadīth* tradition (including Shī'a *ḥadīth* sources) to support his arguments. Furthermore, while the author shows his adeptness in Akbarian mysticism, his deep familiarity with the main books of Ibn 'Arabī, and his expertise in the often-bumpy terrain of the former's jargon, he does not limit himself to the confines of his master's explanations of Sufi terms, and like what we observed in the other two lexicons, he goes further. Here again, the concise text of *Iṣṭilāḥ al-ṣūfiya* of Ibn 'Arabī is developed into a massive glossary of five-hundred and eighty-eight pages, in which every Sufi term is neatly defined, meticulously explained, and classified appropriately into sub-categories.

Even though the three lexicons by Kāshānī examined in this study were composed in Arabic, his work serves as a compelling testament to the bigger multicultural and multilingual context of the medieval Islamic era. There exist two main reasons for this. First is the multicultural and multilingual fabric of the Islamic culture that has been indicated in many primary accounts about medieval Islam. An undeniable fact that stands against modern perceptions about monolingualism, which are mostly manufactured and nationalistic, and tend to ignore the ethnicity of premodern scholars, who were writing in Arabic (Rashwan 2024a, pp. 606–7). This diverse group of intellectuals, ranging from poets and philosophers to scientists, theologians, jurists and Sufis, brought Turkic, Persian, Greek, Roman, and Indian influences to their work.

Second, despite their varied ethnic and linguistic origins, these scholars mastered Arabic as a shared intellectual language, underscoring multiculturalism as the defining feature of the medieval Islamic world. Arabic was a lingua franca, and therefore writing in it was regarded as a cultural practice. However, practicing in Arabic should not turn the multilingual and multicultural nature of these scholars' upbringing, as well as their learning atmosphere, into bilingualism, as the imprint of this culturally diversified context on their thought and works is evident. Alongside Arabic, Persian was also a lingua franca in the premodern Islamic world(s). Focusing on *balāgha* references written in Arabic, Hany Rashwan brings many instances from among Persian-origin scholars, who contributed to the scholarship of *balāgha* in medieval Islam. Although their Persian identity was mostly ignored due to political reasons, and many of them, like Abū Hilāl al-'Askarī, never left the Persian territories, their works lay a special emphasis on the connection between Arabic (and Persian) as lingua franca and the spread of ideas throughout premodern Islamic societies (Rashwan 2024d, pp. 28–33).

Kāshānī's lexicons are proof of the fact that any investigation of premodern Islamic intellectual history needs a comparative methodology that enables scholars to go beyond the mainstream, yet insufficient perspective to the rich history of medieval Islam in order "to analyze the often-overlooked aesthetic dimensions of literary and philosophical terms, placing them in conversation with Euro-American critical traditions through rigorous historical and philological inquiry" (Rashwan et al. 2025, p. 204).

As another example, one can indicate a considerable bulk of Sufi manuals having been written in Arabic by the Sufis and *ḥakīms* of Khorasan and Transoxania³¹ for the non-Arab speaker Sufis and novices in a geography far from the central parts of the Islamic world. All the writers of the manuals hailed from greater Khorasan or Transoxania, including

Bukhara (in today's Uzbekistan), Nishapur, Tus and Quchān (in today's Iran), and Ghazni (in today's Afghanistan). Other than being the lingua franca and an imperial language, Arabic was practiced by these Sufis and *ḥakīms* to show their devotion to their religion, despite the fact that the cultural context was predominantly Persian. Their works, like those of Kāshānī, contribute to the rich multilingual and multicultural context of the medieval Islamic world.

3. Conclusions

There is much to be learned from our study of Kāshānī's contributions to Ibn 'Arabī's mysticism. Kāshānī is a gigantic figure in *Akbarian* tradition for many reasons. First and foremost, he played an incontrovertible role in stylizing the challenging language of *al-Shaykh al-Akbar* in his trilogy, which was not only a remarkable addition to the latter's concise text, *Iṣṭilāḥ al-ṣūfiyya*, but also a necessary endeavor in clarifying the difficulties of his master's jargon. We observed how he converted the style of the eleven-page-long *Iṣṭilāḥ*, containing what Lala calls Ibn 'Arabī's "loose characterizations and ambiguous meanings" (Lala 2019, p. 32), into hundreds of sophisticated and intricate Sufi terms, using *Qur'ān* and *ḥadīth*, Avicenna's philosophy, and preceding mystics such as Suhrawardī, as his sources.

Other than being required reading in the Sufi circles, his manuals were important in the Ilkhanid court as well. Regarding this, one cannot imagine the destiny of Ibn 'Arabī's mysticism without Kāshānī's initiatives in formulating his teachings by compiling the three lexicons, which later became an integral part of the Sufi discourses. Pertinent to this is his defense of "the essential orthodoxy of Sufi terms [...] against an exoteric scholastic onslaught" (Lala 2019, p. 51), which is particularly salient in *Laṭā'if*.

Like Ibn 'Arabī and his students, he too thought and wrote within the context that Sufism and the Sunni creed are identical; a building which had been founded by al-Ghazālī (d. 505 H/1111) and adhered to the idea that Sufism is not an outsider to Islamic tradition. However, through familiarity with Shī'a *ḥadīth* sources and their extensive deployment, he stepped beyond this tradition and involuntarily opened the door to the later amalgamation of *Akbarian* mysticism into the Shī'a culture. Furthermore, by influencing later Sufis, including Qayṣarī and Ḥaydar Āmulī, both of whom played a significant role in strengthening this tradition, mainly through writing commentaries on the *Fuṣūṣ* and disseminating the theoretical mysticism in the post-Ilkhanid era, his legacy is still effective and operative in his homeland, Iran.

Kāshānī's entire body of writings, particularly his trilogy, display the fortitude and boldness of pre-modern Sufi literature as opposed to the Eurocentric assumptions and methodologies that claim universality. It challenges any quest for generalization that prevents cultures from speaking for themselves by using their own terms and conceptual devices. It displays how Persian medieval culture could successfully mirror the harmony between religion, literature, and Sufism, with Avicenna's philosophy as an inseparable part of it. Pertinent to this is the aesthetic value of Kāshānī's treasury, including his literary innovations, which stand against any suppositions that appeal otherwise.

In line with many of his contemporaries in the premodern Islamic period, Kāshānī emerged as a prolific producer of knowledge across Sufism, philosophy, and the Arabic literary tradition. From this perspective, his Arabic works should be understood as an integral component of the multilingual intellectual landscape of the premodern Islamic world(s). He lived in an era in which bilingualism and multilingualism had become normative rather than exceptional, and it was within this environment that translation assumed a central epistemic function, serving not merely as linguistic transfer, but as a vehicle for conceptual mediation across regions, ethnicities, and scholarly communities.

As Rashwan demonstrates, non-Arab scholars frequently employed poetic translation as a means of transmitting ḥadīth and producing Qur’ānic commentaries. A striking example is ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī’s *al-Arba‘īn*, in which forty ḥadīths are rendered into Persian dū-baytī verses, creating a bridge between sacred discourse and literary aesthetics. Such initiatives illustrate how the translation of ḥadīth into poetry cultivated comparative sensibilities and intensified emotional resonance (Rashwan 2024c, p. 178). Kāshānī’s lexicons performed a similar function. By systematizing and clarifying Arabo-Islamic Sufi terminology for Persian-speaking audiences, he enabled access to otherwise conceptually dense and linguistically untranslatable metaphysical vocabularies. In doing so, Kāshānī did not merely transmit Ibn ‘Arabī’s thought; he rearticulated it within a multilingual epistemic framework that expanded its interpretive horizons and ensured its enduring intellectual vitality.

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Notes

- ¹ It is also pronounced as al-Qāshānī or Qāsānī.
- ² *Akbarīan* mysticism (also theoretical mysticism or ‘*irfān-i naẓarī*’) “is the type of speculative mysticism or theosophy associated with Ibn ‘Arabī as philosophized and systematized by his disciple [Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī (d. 673/1274)] ... and the later members of the Ibn ‘Arabī School” (Koushki 2012, p. 30).
- ³ Ibn ‘Arabī had died seventeen years earlier in 638.
- ⁴ As ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn Zarrīnkūb ascertains (Zarrīnkūb 1380 SH, pp. 130–31), Kāshānī’s masters were all Suhrawardī Sufis, and he had *Suhrawardī* trainings in Sufism, and that is why he cannot be regarded as a simple follower and commentator of Ibn ‘Arabī. He, in fact, merged *Akbarīan* mysticism with the Suhrawardī teachings.
- ⁵ With the full name of Naṣīr al-Dīn Abū Ḥāmid Maḥmūd ibn al-Imām Ḍiyā’ al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan Mas‘ūd ibn Maḥmūd al-Shīrāzī. For the complete list of the names of Kāshānī’s masters, I consulted Fatemeh Tayefeh’s doctoral thesis (Tayefeh 2015).
- ⁶ Lambton (2012) believes that the *silsila* was founded by *Shaykh* Ibrāhīm Shahrīyār Kāzīrūnī (d. 426/1035). See: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/fars-iii> (last accessed on 6 July 2026).
- ⁷ ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn Zarrīnkūb (1380 SH, p. 127) in *Dunbāla-yi Justujū dar Taṣawwuf Iran* in his discussion of Iranian Sufism indirectly indicates the popularity of “Sunni mysticism”, though he never mentions the term and only refers to it as “*Ṣūfiya-yi Iran*” (lit. Iranian Sufism).
- ⁸ Abū Sa‘īd Bahādur Khān (d. 736 H/1335).
- ⁹ As I have discussed in “Hall ul-fuṣūṣ and its Main Tenets: A Reading into Mīr Sayyid ‘Alī Hamadānī’s Commentary on Fuṣūṣ ul-ḥikam” (*the Muslim World Journal*, Chamankhah 2024), in all probability, Qāḍī ‘Aḍud al-Dīn Ījī (d. 756 or 760/1355 or 56) should be regarded as the first one who used *waḥdat al-shuhūd*. As a polymath, Ījī was a prominent metaphysician, *mutakallim*, jurist, poet, a contemporary of Hafiz Shīrāzī and the teacher of Sa‘īd al-Dīn Taftāzānī (d. 790/1390), who wrote *al-Mawāqif* (the Book of Stations) in *kalām*. *Al-Mawāqif* was taught in seminaries in the Ilkhanid Iran. Ījī was a contemporary of the above-mentioned Simnānī, and it is believed that Simnānī might have taken it from Ījī.
- ¹⁰ *Shaykh* Aḥmad Sirhindī, known as *Imām Rabbānī* and *Mujaddid alif al-thānī* (lit. the Reviver of the Second Millennium), was the *Naqshbandī* Sufi and *mutakallim* of the seventeenth century, a contemporary of the famous Mughal emperor, Abul Faṭḥ Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Akbar, popularly known as Akbar the Great (d. 1014/1605). Sirhindī had every problem with the liberal policy of religious tolerance and its fruit, the communal harmony between Hindus and Muslims, which were promoted by Akbar. He also criticized Sunni scholars for their silence or cooperation with Akbar’s religious policy. For more information, see: (Karbalāi 2019).
- ¹¹ “*Al-wujūd*, in the expression *waḥdat al-wujūd*, is to be taken from the passive of WJD, *wujida*, “to be found = to exist”. I thank the respected reviewer for reminding me of this point.

- Here is a short list of works having been done on Kāshānī, on his key texts and his contribution to Akbarian mysticism: (Tayefeh 2015; ‘Alāqah 1377 SH; Nasr 1977; Zarrīnkūb 1380 SH; Imāmī 1381 SH Shamsī; Mazāhirī 1387 SH Shamsī; Murata 1992; Macdonald 1960; Lory 2016; Lala 2019). (Chamankhah 2020). And the most recent one: (Chamankhah 2022).
- 12 Kāshānī belongs to a broader cohort of Persian-speaking scholars who mastered Arabic and played a decisive role in transferring Arabic intellectual traditions into Persianate contexts. His bilingual activity parallels that of Abū Manṣūr al-Tha‘ālībī (d. 1038), whose Arabic prose demonstrates the permeability of linguistic boundaries in medieval Islamic scholarship. As Rashwan (2024b) shows, figures like al-Tha‘ālībī treated ḥadīth as a flexible oral-literary form, revealing how multilingual scholars navigated between Arabic sacred discourse and Persian literary culture. Such cases illustrate that *balāgha* functioned as a premodern literary theory shaped significantly by non-Arab intellectuals. The vibrancy of Arabo-Islamic knowledge production thus depended on multilingual mediation rather than monolingual authority. These scholars exemplify how intellectual exchange across languages sustained and expanded Arabo-Islamic literary traditions.
- 13 Al-Kalābādhī’s book is one of the first in this genre.
- 14 The book is originally in Arabic, but there exist multiple Persian translations from and commentaries upon it.
- 15 The book is originally in Arabic, and has been translated into Persian by Seyyed Javād Hāshemī ‘Ulyā. The Persian version has been published in 1395 SH by Mawlā Publication.
- 16 The book is written in Arabic, although there exist two Persian translations of it. One by Muḥammad ‘Alī Mudūd Lārī (published in 1393 SH by Zawwār Publication), and the other by Muḥammad Khwājawī (published in 1372 SH by Mawlā Publication).
- 17 The book is originally in Arabic, and has not been translated into Persian yet.
- 18 The book is originally in Arabic, with no translation in Persian so far.
- 19 From now on, *Iṣṭilāḥāt*.
- 20 *Iṣṭilāḥāt* has also been converted into Persian. See (Khājawī 1378 SH).
- 21 These two are different, but I use them interchangeably.
- 22 Kāshānī and Ibn Taymīyyah were contemporaries.
- 23 I have studied the history of the four journeys and its development in pre- and post-Akbarian times in my book (Chamankhah 2019, pp. 58–59).
- 24 Kāshānī writes (Kāshānī 1992/1413, pp. 122–23):
- «السفر: هو توجه القلب بالحق. والاسفار الأربعة، الأول: هو السير بالله من منازل النفس إلى الوصول إلى الأفق المبين، وهو نهاية مقال القلب ومبدأ تجلياته السماوية. الثاني: هو السير في الالهيات تصافيف صفاته والتحقيق أسمائه إلى الأفق الأعلى نه”ية الحضرة الواحدة. الثالث: هو الترقى إلى عين الجمع الحضرة الواحدة هو مقام قابض سينما يقينا لاثنين فاذا ارتفعت فهو مقام أودنيو هو نهاية الولاية. السفر الرابع: هو السير بالله على الله لتكميل وهو مقام البقاء بعد الفناء والفرق بعد الجمع.»
- Or in *bāb al-nūn* (Kāshānī 1992/1413, pp. 117–18):
- «نهاية السفر الأول: هو رفع حب الجبال أكثر من توجهها للوحدة نهاية السفر الثاني: هو رفع الحجاب للوحدة عن جوهالكثرة العلمية الباطنية. نهاية السفر الثالث: هو زوال التقيد بالظن والظاهر والباطن بالحصول لآحادية عين الجمع. نهاية السفر الرابع: عند الرجوع عن الحق إلى الخلق في مقام الاستقامة. هو آحادية الجمع والفرق يشهد اندراج الحق في الخلق، وضم محلا لا لخلق في الحق تنبير بالعين والواحدة في صور الكثرة، وصور الكثرة في عين الواحد.»
- 25 Which signifies one of the highest spiritual stations of Perfection, which is attained by the greatest perfect man, the Prophet of Islam. This is what the *Qur’ān* (*Sūrat al-Najm* 53: 9) also indicates: “till he was within two bows’ length or nearer” (Nasr 2015, p. 2364).
- 26 The four types of death are a well-established debate in *kalām* and Sufism, and both *mutakallimūn* and Sufis tried to find evidence in the *Qur’ān* and *ḥadīth*, including *ḥadīth-i qudsī*, for it.
- 27 The italic is in the text.
- 28 ‘Abdulāh Anṣārī Hirawī, the famous Ḥanbalī Sufi, *Qur’ān* and *ḥadīth* expert of the fifth/eleventh century. The title of *Khwāja* (lit. dignitary, lord) was used for the progenies of the disciples of the Prophet, who lived in non-Arab, Persophone societies, although his official title was *Shaykh al-Islam*, which had been given to him by the twenty-sixth Abbasid caliph, *al-Qā’im bi amr Allah* (d. 467/1075), circa 462/1070. His other titles include *al-Shaykh al-Shuyūkh*, *Zayn al-‘Ulemā* (the adornment of the scholars) and *Nāṣir al-Sunnah* (lit. the supporter of the tradition). Anṣārī was a strict Ḥanbalī jurist and believed in the observance of *sharī’a*.
- 29 For all my *Qur’ānic* references I use Nasr (2015) here. For more information about his life, works and beliefs, see: (Rawān Farhādī 1377 SH).
- 30 These *ṣuwar* are as follows: *ṣūrat al-tawḥīd fi al-abwāb*, *ṣūrat al-tawḥīd fi al-mu’āmalāt*, *ṣūrat al-tawḥīd fi al-akhlāq*, *ṣūrat al-tawḥīd fi al-uṣūl*, *ṣūrat al-tawḥīd fi al-awdiya*, *ṣūrat al-tawḥīd fi al-aḥwāl*, *ṣūrat al-tawḥīd fi al-wilāya*, and finally *ṣūrat al-tawḥīd fi al-ḥaqā’iq* (Kāshānī 1992/1413, pp. 362–79).
- 31 Also Transoxiana.

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