
Persian Poetry, Sufism and Ismailism: The Testimony of

Khawājah Qāsim Tushtarī's Recognizing God



SHAFIQUE N. VIRANI

Abstract

Khawājah Qāsim Tushtarī's recently discovered Recognizing God (Ma'rifat-i Khudāy ta'ālā) is one of the only texts known to have survived from the early Alamūt period of Ismaili Muslim history. This article analyses the work in the context of the "new Invitation" (da'wat-i jadīd) to the Ismaili faith that al-Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153) tells us was inaugurated by the Fāṭimid Imam al-Mustanshir billāh (d. 487/1094) and championed by Ḥasan-i Šabbāh (d. 518/1124). The text emphasises that the ultimate purpose of human existence is to know God, and that the path to this knowledge is through the Imam of the Time. The concepts of the 'true teacher' (mu'allim-i šādiq) and 'sage' (ḥakīm) are examined and the literary culture fostered at the Ismaili fortresses, particularly Girdkūh, is explored. Significantly, the article draws attention to the position of Sanā'ī Ghaznavī (d. circa 525/1131) in Persian Ismaili literature and to the very early development of pious, devotional and homiletic poetry as well as the "mathnawī metre" in Ismaili environments, which may have helped set the stage for some of the most significant poetic achievements of mystical Islam: the writings of Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār (d. circa 618/1221) and Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (d. 672/1273).

Keywords: Ismailism; Sufism; Shiism; Imam; Qāsim Tushtarī; Sanā'ī Ghaznavī; Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī; Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār; poetry; *ḥikmah*.

Background

...to the masters of insight and religious conviction it is as clear as the sun itself that the material world was created for the sake of human existence. The purpose of human existence is to recognize God (may He be exalted), so that the meaning of "We ennobled the children of Adam" (wa-la-qad karramnā banī Ādam, 17:70), from being merely potential, becomes actualized in the essence of human beings.

(Recognizing God by Khawājah Qāsim Tushtarī)

These words set the tone for one of the only surviving texts from the early Alamūt period of Ismaili history, a missive from Khawājah Qāsim Tushtarī in which he emphasises that in Ismaili belief, the central purpose of human existence is to recognise God. The text is revealing in many ways, not least because it provides some of the earliest evidence we have of literary, historical and doctrinal developments in Ismailism that were to allow the schools of Ismailism and Sufism to draw closer together over the course of many centuries.

With the death of the Prophet Muḥammad, the Muslim community came to adopt a variety of interpretations of his message. Among the diverse schools that emerged, the Imāmī Shī‘ah accepted the privileged position of the hereditary Imams of the Prophet’s family, adhering closely to their guidance. Following the death of Imam Ja‘far al-Šādiq in 148/765, the community divided. Among other groups, one eventually came to recognise the imamate of his son Mūsā al-Kāzīm,¹ while others held to Ja‘far al-Šādiq’s designation (*naṣṣ*) in favour of his elder son Ismā‘īl al-Mubārak. In the course of time, the adherents of this elder line came to be designated “al-Ismā‘īliyyah”,² while the younger line eventually became known as the “Ithnā‘ashariyyah”, or Twelver Shī‘ah, after the disappearance of their twelfth Imam.

¹The majority of Mūsā’s followers initially accepted the claims of Ja‘far al-Šādiq’s other son ‘Abd Allāh al-Afṭāh. However, his death soon after his father’s demise led to their acknowledgment of Mūsā al-Kāzīm. See Marshall G. S. Hodgson, “Dja‘far al-Šādiq”, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, (eds) Peri J. Bearman et al., online, 2nd edition (Leiden, 2012); (originally published, 1960–2007), http://dx.doi.org/myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_19221; Abū ‘Abd Allāh Ja‘far ibn Aḥmad al-Aswad Ibn al-Haytham, *Kitāb al-Munāẓarāt*, (eds and trans) Wilferd Madelung and Paul E. Walker, *The Advent of the Fatimids: A Contemporary Shi‘i Witness* (London, 2000), pp. 35–37 (ed.), pp. 90–92 (trans.); Hossein Modarressi, *Crisis and Consolidation in the Formative Period of Shi‘ite Islam: Abū Ja‘far ibn Qibā al-Rāzī and His Contribution to Imāmīte Shi‘ite Thought* (Princeton, 1993), pp. 53ff; Farhad Daftary, *The Ismā‘īlīs: Their History and Doctrines* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 94.

²This designation was seldom used by the early sectarians themselves and was applied to them by the heresiographers. Cf. Daftary, *Ismā‘īlīs*, p. 93. The group was referred to by a plethora of names in the early literature. Nizām al-Mulk (d. 485/1092), for example, mentions ten geographically specific designations: Ismā‘īlī (Aleppo and Cairo), Qarmaḥī (Baghdad, Transoxiana and Ghazna), Mubārakī (Kufa), Rāwandī and Burqu‘ī (Basra), Khālafi (Rayy), Muḥammirah (Jurjān), Mubayyidāh (Syria), Sa‘īdī (Maghrib), Janābī (Lahsa and Bahrain) and Bāḥinī. See Nizām al-Mulk, *Siyar al-Mulūk or Siyāsati-nāmāh*, (trans.) Hubert Darke, *The Book of Government or Rules for Kings*, 2nd edition (London, 1978), p. 231. Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) mentions Bāḥiniyyah, Qarāmiṭah, Khurramiyyah or Khurramdīniyyah, Bābakiyyah, Muḥammirah, Sab‘iyyah, Ismā‘īliyyah and Ta‘īmiyyah. Cited in Henry Corbin, “The Ismā‘īlī Response to the Polemic of Ghazālī”, Chapter 4, (trans.) James Morris, in *Ismā‘īlī Contributions to Islamic Culture*, (ed.) Seyyed Hossein Nasr (Tehran, 1977), p. 74. The name of a branch of the community which had become particularly infamous—the Qarāmiṭah—was often applied derogatorily, and incorrectly, to the entire community. In addition, hostile historical sources frequently refer to the Ismailis abusively as *malaḥida*—the apostates or heretics. Various Muslim groups commonly referred to their foes by this derogatory name, but by Alamūt times it seems to have been most widely directed at the Ismailis. See Wilferd Madelung, “Mulḥid”, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, (eds) Bearman et al. Mīrkhwānd, for example, states that the term was particularly applied to this community. See Muḥammad ibn Khwāndshāh Mīrkhwānd, *Rawḍat al-ṣafa‘ fi sīrat al-anbiyā’ wa’l-mulūk wa’l-khulafā’*, (ed.) Riḍā Qulī Khān, 10 vols (Tihārān, 1338–1339 HS/1959–1960 CE), Vol. 9, p. 114; Muḥammad ibn Khwāndshāh Mīrkhwānd, *Rawḍat al-ṣafa‘ fi sīrat al-anbiyā’ wa’l-mulūk wa’l-khulafā’*, (ed. and trans.) Am. Jourdain, *Le jardin de la pureté; Contenant l’histoire des Prophètes, des Rois et des Khalīfes; Par Mohammed, fils de Khavemdschah, connu sous le nom de Mirkhond*, (Paris, 1813), Vol. 9, p. 155.

Many of these names are inaccurate, some polemical, and others are a conflation of the group under study with others that had nothing to do with it. In the early period, the community commonly referred to itself as *al-da‘wat al-hādīyah*, “the Rightly-Guiding Invitation”, or simply as *al-da‘wah*, “the Invitation”. We also find such names as *ahl-i haqq* or *ahl-i haqīqat*, “the people of truth”, used in Persian speaking regions; *Mawlā’ī*, “the partisans of the lord”, in Hunza, Gilgit and Chitral; *Panjtanī*, “the partisans of the five”, that is, Muḥammad, ‘Alī, Fāṭimah, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, in parts of Central Asia; and *Satpanthū*, “follower of the path of truth”, *Khuwājāh* (*Khojā*), “the venerable”, *Shamsī*, “the followers of Pīr Shams” and *Mu‘min* (*Momnā*), “the faithful” in South Asia.

The name currently employed in academia—Ismā‘īliyyah—seems to have been used by the early community only occasionally. It appears to have originated with the early heresiographers, notably al-Nawbakhtī and al-Qummī. Moreover, the classification is not entirely precise. While it does give a sense that this is the community that adhered to Ja‘far al-Šādiq’s nomination of Ismā‘īl as his successor, rather than that which considered Mūsā al-Kāzīm as the Imam, the historical scenario is not as clear. It must be remembered that even among the groups that eventually acknowledged Mūsā al-Kāzīm as the Imam, there were those who, due to Ja‘far al-Šādiq’s explicit designation in favour of Ismā‘īl, considered him as the Imam before Mūsā. They thus had equal claim to being called Ismā‘īliyyah. It was against this lineage (and that of a transfer of the imamate from ‘Abd Allāh al-Afṭāh to Mūsā al-Kāzīm) that later Twelver scholars adopted the doctrine that after the case of al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, the imamate could not pass between brothers. This tradition is cited by the famous heresiographer, Nawbakhtī, among others. For a full account, see Abdulaziz Abdulhussein Sachedina, *Islamic Messianism: The Idea of Mahdi in Twelver Shi‘ism*, (eds) G. M. Wickens and R. M. Savory (Albany, New York, 1981), pp. 44–45.

In the year 297/909, the Ismaili Imam ‘Abd Allāh al-Mahdī (d. 322/934) established the Fāṭimid caliphate. At the height of their power, the Fāṭimid caliphs claimed dominion over all of North Africa, Egypt, Sicily, the Red Sea coast of Africa, Yemen, Syria, Palestine and the Hijaz with the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. A noteworthy feature of Ismā‘īlism was its organised “Invitation” (*da‘wah*) to recognise the Imam of the time. With the death of Imam al-Mustaṣhīr in 487/1094, the vizier and commander of the armies al-Afḍal (d. 515/1121) placed his brother-in-law, al-Mustaṣhīr’s younger son Aḥmad, on the throne, in place of the designated successor Abū Maṣhūr Nizār.³

The eastern Ismailis and their leaders, out of reach of the Fāṭimid armies, supported Nizār’s cause and broke away from Cairo. The castle of Alamūt was later to become the headquarters of the Nizārī Ismailis for over one-and-a-half centuries. ‘Aṭā-Malik Juwaynī, Hūlāgū Khān’s attendant and historian, who visited the celebrated library of Alamūt—“the fame of which had spread throughout the world”—⁴ informs us of the multitudes of Ismaili religious books he found there, indicating that there had been substantial literary production. However, in 654/1256 the community was dealt a stunning blow when the Mongol hordes swept through the Near East and destroyed their capital. Juwaynī condemned the library to be burned, saving only copies of the Quran and a few other treatises.⁵ Consigned to a fate similar to that of their books, the Ismailis themselves were also hunted down and slaughtered indiscriminately. So complete was this devastation that it was long assumed that the community, and virtually all of its literature, had ceased to exist.

The text analysed in this study is a work by Khwājah Qāsim Tushtarī, untitled but on the subject of *Recognizing God (Ma‘rifat-i Khudāy ta‘ālā)*. It is one of only a handful of works hitherto discovered that may hail from the early Alamūt period, with a likely composition

The term ‘Ismaili’, however, has a number of advantages, not least of which is its currency in academia. Moreover, it was not rejected among the Ismailis themselves. In a riposte to al-Ghazālī’s virulent attack on the Ismailis in his *Infamies of the Bāṭinīs and the Virtues of the Mustazhīrīs (Faḍā‘ih al-Bāṭiniyyah wa-faḍā‘ih al-Mustazhiriyyah)*, ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Walīd (d. 612/1215), the fifth dā‘ī of the Musta‘lian Ismailis, comments on the names Ghazālī ascribed to the community. With regard to the term Ismā‘īliyyah, he vaunts:

This name designates those whose [spiritual] ancestry goes back to Mawlānā Ismā‘īl ibn Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq, ibn Muḥammad al-Bāqir, ibn ‘Alī Zayn al-‘Abidīn, ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Taqī, ibn ‘Alī al-Murtaḍā al-Waṣī. This is our inherent name. It is our honour and our glory before all of the other branches of Islam, because we stand on the Path of the Truth, in following our guides the Imāms. We drink at an abundant fountain, and we hold firmly to the guiding lines of their walāyah. Thus they cause us to climb from rank to rank among the degrees of proximity [to God] and excellence.

Translated in Corbin, “Polemic of Ghazālī”, pp. 74–75, (romanisation modified). See also Ismail K. Poonawala, “An Ismā‘īlī Refutation of al-Ghazālī”, Paper presented at the 30th International Congress of Human Sciences in Asia and North Africa, Mexico City, August 1976, pp. 131–134.

Significantly, this name is now current in the communities that consider themselves the inheritors of the traditions of the descendants of Imam Ismā‘īl. Thus, despite the drawbacks outlined above, this term will be used.

³Throughout this article, when the words ‘Ismaili’ and ‘Ismailism’ are used in the context of the environment after the split, the Nizārī branch of the community is meant.

⁴‘Alā’ al-Dīn ‘Aṭā-Malik Juwaynī, *Ta‘rīkh-i Jahāngushāy*, (ed.) Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb Qazwīnī, 3 vols (Leiden, 1912–1937), Vol. 3, pp. 269–270; ‘Alā’ al-Dīn ‘Aṭā-Malik Juwaynī, *Ta‘rīkh-i Jahāngushāy*, (trans.) John Andrew Boyle, *The History of the World-Conqueror*, 2 vols (Cambridge, MA, 1958), Vol. 2, p. 719.

⁵Juwaynī, *Jahāngushāy*, Vol. 3, pp. 186–187, 269–270; Juwaynī, *World-Conqueror*, Vol. 2, pp. 666, 719.

date between 525/1131 and 533/1139, making it one of the oldest Ismaili texts from Alamūt still in existence.⁶

This article begins with an examination of previous scholarship that led to the discovery of this author and his writings and continues by surveying the text of *Recognizing God* in the context of the “new Invitation” (*da‘wat-i jadīd*) to the Ismaili faith inaugurated by the Fāṭimid Imam al-Mustanṣir billāh (d. 487/1094) and championed by Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ (d. 518/1124). In this connection, it explores the concepts of the true teacher (*mu‘allim-i ṣādiq*) and sage (*ḥakīm*) as technical terms in the Ismailism of the period. Both of these terms had specific connotations within the Ismaili Invitation (*da‘wat*), but there does not appear to have been a one-to-one correspondence with the established levels in the spiritual hierarchy or *ḥudūd-i dīn*.

The article delves into the poetic citations in *Recognizing God*, with specific attention given to the place of the celebrated Ḥakīm Sanā‘ī Ghaznawī (d. circa 525/1131) in Ismaili literature. It continues by positing several hypotheses about the literary culture in the Ismaili fortresses, about the development of the Persian metre that would eventually be used by Farīd al-Dīn ‘Aṭṭār (d. 618/1221) in his epics, and would soon be considered *the* mathnawī metre after Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (d. 672/1273) used it for his magnum opus, and about the rise to prominence of religious, devotional and homiletic themes in Persian poetry. In this vein, the article demonstrates the likelihood that the symbiotic relationship between Ismailism and Sufism, hitherto commonly considered to have begun after the fall of Alamūt, began at a much earlier date.

Scholarship: “Apparently a real Ismaili”

For centuries, the Ismailis were little heard from, and what people knew of them was largely derived from the works of their opponents. In the summer of 1914, however, Ivan Ivanovich Zarubin (d. 1964), the Russian Empire’s leading authority on the languages of the Pamirs, set out on an ethnographic and linguistic expedition to the remote, mountainous region of the Pamir Okrug, or what was to become the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast.⁷ While in Shughnān and Wakhān, he collected a handful of Persian texts belonging to the Ismailis of that region, which he donated two years later to the Asiatic Museum of the Russian Academy of Sciences.⁸ Along with items contributed by Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Semenov (d. 1958) slightly later, this tiny acquisition of fewer than 20 genuine manuscripts formed, at the time, the West’s largest collection of Ismaili texts.⁹

The small trove included *The Mine of Mysteries* (*Ma‘din al-asrār*), an epistle that was to become the first genuine Ismaili work in Persian prose ever published.¹⁰ Datable to after

⁶I have examined the historical background, manuscripts and dating of this composition: see Shafique N. Virani, “Alamūt, Ismailism and Khwājah Qāsim Tushṭarī’s *Recognizing God*”, *Shii Studies Review*, 2, 1–2 (2018).

⁷Paul Bergne, *The Birth of Tajikistan: National Identity and the Origins of the Republic* (London, 2007), p. 143. Having been part of the Bukhara Emirate and later of Ferghana, controlled by the Russian Empire, from 1925 the region was called the Autonomous Oblast of Gorno-Badakhshan.

⁸Wladimir Ivanow, “Ismailitica”, *Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 8 (1922), p. 3.

⁹Farhad Daftary, *The Ismā‘īlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 2007), p. 29.

¹⁰Muḥammad Riḍā ibn Khwājah Sulṭān Ḥusayn Ghūriyānī Khayrkhwāh-i Harātī (pseud. attribution), *Ma‘din al-asrār* (*Faṣl dar bayān-i shinākht-i imām*), (ed.) Wladimir Ivanow, *Faṣl dar Bayan-i Shinakht-i Imam (On the Recognition of the Imam)*, 3rd edition (Terhan, 1960); Muḥammad Riḍā ibn Khwājah Sulṭān Ḥusayn Ghūriyānī Khayrkhwāh-i Harātī (pseud. attribution), *Ma‘din al-asrār* (*Faṣl dar bayān-i shinākht-i imām*), (ed.) Wladimir Ivanow, *Faṣl Dar Bayan-i*

the death of Fakhr al-Dīn ‘Alī ibn Ḥusayn Wā’iz Kāshifī (d. 939/1533), whose poetry it quotes, the text refers to several works from Alamūt, indicating that at least some of these must have survived the Mongol invasions until the author’s time.¹¹ Here and elsewhere in this article, I use ‘Alamūt’ in reference not only to the castle itself, but to the various territories administered from the central headquarters.

In the course of listing the poets alluded to in *The Mine of Mysteries*, in his 1922 work, Ivanow writes about the author of a single couplet quoted in the text: “Khwājah Qāsim Tushtarī, whom I could not trace anywhere”.¹² His 1933 *Guide to Ismaili Literature* added no additional information, referred readers to his 1922 work, and glossed Qāsim Tushtarī’s name with the comment, “apparently a real Ismaili”.¹³ The new 1947 translation and 1949 edition of the text in the Ismaili Society series likewise added no new details about this person.¹⁴ However, in his 1960 edition, Ivanow writes, “In 1950 a learned Ismaili friend in Dar es Salaam, British East Africa, was very kind as to send us a valuable manuscript containing a collection of 16 Ismaili works (662 pages)”.¹⁵ This manuscript contained another copy of *The Mine of Mysteries*, which allowed Ivanow to produce his third edition of the text. The new manuscript, however, referred to the author of the single couplet as ‘Khwājah Qāsim Turshīzī’, rather than Tushtarī, adding confusion about the area with which he was associated. We have no definitive information linking him to one or the other locale, and so for the sake of expediency his toponymic surname (*nisbah*) will be left as Tushtarī.¹⁶

Shinākh-t-i Imam or On the Recognition of the Imam, 2nd edition (Leiden, 1949); Muḥammad Riḍā ibn Khwājah Sulṭān Ḥusayn Ghūriyānī Khayrkhwāh-i Harātī (pseud. attribution), *On the Recognition of the Imam (Faṣl dar bayān-i shinākh-t-i imām)*, (trans.) Wladimir Ivanow, *On the Recognition of the Imam*, 2nd edition (Bombay, 1947); Muḥammad Riḍā ibn Khwājah Sulṭān Ḥusayn Ghūriyānī Khayrkhwāh-i Harātī (pseud. attribution), “Ma’ādin al-asrār (Faṣl dar bayān-i shinākh-t-i imām)”, (ed. and trans.) Wladimir Ivanow, “Book on the Recognition of the Imam”, *Ismailiitica, Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 8, 1 (1922). The attribution of the text to Khayrkhwāh-i Harātī (d. after 960/1553) is Ivanow’s. In his 1947 translation of the work he mentions coming into contact with “many Ismailis from Hunza, Chitral and a few from Shughnān and other districts of Badakhshān”, one of whom claimed to be familiar with this work and mentioned that the real title was *Ma’ādin al-ḥaqā’iq*. “His testimony,” Ivanow complains, “did not inspire much confidence, and I would hesitate to accept his statement until it is supported from reliable sources” (p. x). However, in Wladimir Ivanow (ed.), *Ismaili Literature: A Bibliographical Survey*, 2nd edition (Tehran, Iran, 1963), pp. 107–108, he lists the title as *Ma’ādin al-asrār*, which is the plural of the title I have come across in some manuscripts, for example an uncatalogued volume with the date Dhū’l-Qa’dah 5, 1280 AH (=1864 CE), a copy of which is in the collection of the Research Unit of the Institute of Ismaili Studies in Khorog (formerly a unit of ITREC–Tajikistan), with the (temporary) folder number 175 and the title *Ma’ādin al-asrār*.

¹¹W. L. Hanaway, “Šaffī”, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, (eds) Bearman et al., http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/s-afi-SIM_6445. As Ivanow himself notes, the reference to a certain Ḥakīm Thanā’ī, whose poetry is also quoted in the *Ma’ādin*, is rather ambiguous: Khayrkhwāh-i Harātī (pseud. attribution), *Shinākh-t-i imām—1947*, p. 3. Thanā’ī’s identification as the poet of the same name (d. 996/1588), who was patronised by the Mughal emperor Jalāl al-Dīn Akbar, is possible, but speculative. For information and sources on the latter, see Ruqayyah Rasūlī, “Thanā’ī Mashhadī”, in *Dānishnāmah-yi jahān-i Islām* (Tehran, 1996), <http://www.encyclopaediaislamica.com/madkhal2.php?sid=4280>. The poem quoted in the *Ma’ādin*, “*Qaṣīdah-yi Sikandar*”, cannot be from the *Iskandar-nāmah* of the Mughal poet, which is in the form of a *mathnauī*. The precise identity of this Ḥakīm Thanā’ī is therefore still an open question.

¹²Khayrkhwāh-i Harātī (pseud. attribution), “*Shinākh-t-i imām—1922*”, pp. 6, 19 (ed.), p. 36 (trans.). (Quotation amended to render the poet’s name in Latin script).

¹³Wladimir Ivanow, *A Guide to Ismaili Literature* (London, 1933), p. 118.

¹⁴Khayrkhwāh-i Harātī (pseud. attribution), *Shinākh-t-i imām—1947*, p. 36; Khayrkhwāh-i Harātī (pseud. attribution), *Shinākh-t-i imām—1949*, p. 17.

¹⁵Khayrkhwāh-i Harātī (pseud. attribution), *Shinākh-t-i imām—1960*, p. 4. Note: Dares-selam modified to Dar es Salaam.

¹⁶For a more detailed exposition of this question, please see Virani, “Alamūt, Ismailism and Khwājah Qāsim Tushtarī’s *Recognizing God*”, pp. 215–216.

In his 1963 work, *Ismaili Literature: A Bibliographical Survey* (an amplified second edition of his *Guide to Ismaili Literature* published in 1933), under the heading ‘Qāsim Tushtarī’ (to which he adds the more familiar pronunciation “Shushtarī”), Ivanow writes, “another poet *apparently* from the same [Alamūt] period. Very short quotations of his poetry appear in early Nizārī works. So far nothing could be found to supply more precision concerning his biography”.¹⁷ The allusion to “works” (plural) is noteworthy, and likely reflects Ivanow’s belief, noted in the same bibliography, that Qāsim Tushtarī was cited in the *Pan̄j Sukhan* of Imam ‘Abd al-Salām ibn al-Mustanṣir billāh of Anjudān (d. 900/1494).¹⁸ In his 1977 *Biobibliography of Ismaili Literature*, I. K. Poonawala attributes to Khwājah Qāsim Tushtarī (whose *nisbah* is modified from the form found in the manuscripts to the more familiar variants “Shūshtarī” and “Tustarī”) a “collection of poems”, noting that “Ivanow states that his poems are frequently cited in the Nizārī works”.¹⁹ These statements, of course, must be nuanced, as only a lone couplet by the author is hitherto known to exist, and this is quoted in a single Nizārī work, datable, at the earliest, to the 10th/16th century. Had he composed other works of poetry, one imagines that they may have been collected in the seven-volume *Poems of the Resurrection* (*Dīwān-i qā’imiyāt*) of which only two volumes appear to have survived.²⁰ The majority of poems in this omnibus are by Ṣalāh al-Dīn Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd-i Kātib, but it does incorporate the poetry of several other Ismaili poets.²¹ In 2007, I identified a previously unknown prose work of Qāsim Tushtarī, the treatise *Recognizing God*, which is analysed here.²²

Contents of the text: “We have ennobled the children of Adam”

In his *Book of Confessions and Creeds* (*Kitāb al-mīlāl wa’l-niḥāl*), Tāj al-Dīn al-Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153) informs us that the Ismailis “have an Invitation in every age, and a new expression in every language”:²³

Previously, their Invitation incorporated many philosophical discourses, exalting God *qua* God beyond both existence and non-existence, or any qualities conceivable to the mind. It discussed the divine command, the first intellect, the soul that follows it, and how the creation of the

¹⁷Ivanow, *Ismaili Literature*, p. 134.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 140. In this regard, see Virani, “Alamūt, Ismailism and Khwājah Qāsim Tushtarī’s *Recognizing God*”, p. 198.

¹⁹Ismail K. Poonawala, *Biobibliography of Ismā’īlī Literature* (Malibu, 1977), p. 263.

²⁰Seyyed Jalāl Ḥosseini Badakhchani, “Preface”, in *Dīwān-i qā’imiyāt*, (ed.) Sayyid Jalāl Ḥusaynī (Seyyed Jalāl Ḥosseini) Badakhshānī (Badakhchani) (Tehran, 1395 HS/2016 CE), pp. 7–9.

²¹Muḥammad-Riḍā Shafī’ī-Kadkanī, “Qā’imiyāt wa jāyghāh-i ān dar sh ‘ir wa adab-i Fārsī”, in *Dīwān-i qā’imiyāt*, (ed.) Sayyid Jalāl Ḥusaynī (Seyyed Jalāl Ḥosseini) Badakhshānī (Badakhchani) (Tehran, 1390 HS/2011 CE), pp. 19–21. Badakhchani, “Preface”, in *Dīwān-i qā’imiyāt*, pp. 10–11, provides the various forms of the name as they appear in different sources. For greater specificity, I have opted to include Ṣalāh al-Dīn, as attested to in Naṣīr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Ṭūsī, *Sayr ū sulūk*, (ed. and trans.) Seyyed Jalāl Ḥosseini Badakhchani, *Contemplation and Action: The Spiritual Autobiography of a Muslim Scholar* (London, 1999), p. 6 (ed.), p. 30 (trans), and supported not only in Ṭūsī’s other works, but also in Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh’s *Jamī’ al-Tawārīkh*, as cited by Badakhchani. While “Kātib” is included in the name recorded in the publication of the *dīwān*, this form does not appear to be attested in the sources cited by Badakhchani, though Ṭūsī does refer to him as *malik al-kuttāb*.

²²Shafique N. Virani, *The Ismailis in the Middle Ages: A History of Survival, A Search for Salvation* (New York, 2007), pp. 13, 26, 72, 87–90, 95, 120.

²³Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Karīm ibn Abī Bakr Aḥmad al-Shahrastānī, *al-Mīlāl wa’l-niḥāl*, (eds) Amīr ‘Alī Muhannā and ‘Alī Ḥasan Fā’ūr (Bayrūt, 1421 AH/2001 CE), p. 228. Cf. Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Karīm Shahrastānī, *al-Mīlāl wa’l-niḥāl*, (trans) A. K. Kazi and J. G. Flynn, *Muslim Sects and Divisions: The Section on Muslim Sects in Kitāb al-Mīlāl wa’l-Niḥāl* (London, 1984), p. 65.

cosmos was a result of the universal soul's seeking perfection. Parallel to this celestial world, in our world it posited a spiritual hierarchy, led by a consummate, perfected human being (*al-shakhs al-kāmil al-bāliḡh*), known as the *nāṭiq*, the Speaker. All the dictates of the religious law were seen as having parallels in the natural world. The religio-legal dispensations (*al-sharā'ī*) are spiritual worlds of the divine command (*'awālim ruḥāniyyah amriyyah*), while the worlds (*al-'awālim*) are physical religio-legal dispensations of the creation (*sharā'ī jismāniyyah khalqīyyah*). The structure of letters and words was seen to be parallel to the composition of forms and bodies. Thus, beneficial knowledge from the words of spiritual edification (*al-'ulūm al-mustafādah min al-kalimāt al-ta'limiyyah*) are nourishment for souls, just as beneficial foods from the natural, created things (*al-aḡhdhiyyah al-mustafādah min al-ṭabā'ī 'al-khalqīyyah*) are nourishment for physical bodies. In this manner, they speak of the symbolism of the words and verses of the Quran. For example, in speaking of the *tasmiyyah*, the formula *bismi'llāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm*, "In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful," they point out that the first part, *bismi'llāh*, contains seven letters, and the second part, *al-raḥmān al-raḥīm*, contains twelve letters. Similarly, they point out the symbolism of numbers contained in the *tahlīl*, the formula *lā ilāha illā'llāh*.²⁴

al-Shahrestānī notes, however, that the system of correspondences, about which the Ismailis had composed many books in earlier times, was no longer current, as the Fāṭimid Imam al-Mustanshir billāh (d. 487/1094) had instructed that, for the people of their times, the Invitation must be preached with a focus on the need to follow the righteous Imam of every time. It was Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḡh who was most well known for his role in establishing this "new Invitation":

The advocates of the new Invitation changed tack when al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ṣabbāḡh announced his Invitation, confining his speech to compelling proofs. He appealed to the people for help and sought protection in the fortresses. He first arrived at the castle of Alamūt in the month of Sha'bān, in the year 483 (October 1090), after having journeyed to the lands of his Imam. He learned from the Imam how the Invitation should be preached to the folk of his time. Upon returning, he began to invite people to the designation of a righteous Imam in every age, and distinguished the saved community from all the other communities by this touchstone: "They have an Imam, while the others do not".²⁵

As few Ismaili sources from this period have been preserved, there are limited examples to illustrate the new emphasis in Ismaili thought. al-Shahrestānī provides an abridged Arabic translation of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḡh's *Four Chapters (Chahār faṣl)*. The original text of this work was consulted by 'Aṭā-Malik Juwaynī and used in composing his *History of the World-Conqueror (Ta'rikh-i jahān-gushā)*, by Rashīd al-Dīn Faḡl Allāh in his *Compendium of Chronicles (Jāmi' al-tawārīkh)* and by Abū'l-Qāsim Kāshānī in his *Cream of Chronicles (Zubdat al-tawārīkh)*.²⁶ Recently, a manuscript produced at Alamūt was discovered in Turkey, which

²⁴Abridged from al-Shahrestānī, *al-Milal wa'l-niḡal*, pp. 229–231. Cf. Shahrestānī, *Muslim Sects and Divisions*, pp. 165–167. All translations from Arabic, Persian and South Asian languages in this article are my own, except where indicated.

²⁵al-Shahrestānī, *al-Milal wa'l-niḡal*, pp. 231–232. Cf. Shahrestānī, *Muslim Sects and Divisions*, pp. 167–168; Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Order of Assassins: The Struggle of the Early Nizārī Ismā'īlīs against the Islamic World* (New York, 1980; originally published, The Hague, 1955), p. 325.

²⁶Farhad Daftary, *Ismaili Literature: A Bibliography of Sources and Studies* (London, 2004), pp. 114–115. Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḡh's *Fuṣūl* was seen and paraphrased by three Persian historians of the Ilkhānid period as well, namely 'Aṭā-Malik Juwaynī, Rashīd al-Dīn Faḡl Allāh and Abū'l-Qāsim Kāshānī.

contains a Persian translation of al-Shahrestānī's *Book of Confessions and Creeds*.²⁷ This finding has the potential to shed new light on the subject. Furthermore, studies highlighting al-Shahrestānī's Ismaili inclinations have provided insights into how his writings may be used to understand this period of Ismaili thought, though, of course, keeping in mind that al-Shahrestānī lived in a hostile environment and therefore deliberately wrote in a cryptic style. In Qāsim Tushtārī's *Recognizing God*, however, we now have an additional source that appears to date from the same period. It complements the *Four Chapters* by providing, in a very succinct manner, insights into the spiritual life of the community, while the *Four Chapters* is primarily written for an external audience. In the following discussion, section numbers (§) are provided to reference my forthcoming critical edition and translation of the text.²⁸

The primary motif of the text is that creation's purpose is the existence of humankind, but that human existence, in and of itself, is meaningless unless people dedicate themselves to seeking and recognising God. Of all creatures, only human beings have the capacity to attain gnosis of their Creator. The near contemporary Ismaili work—the *Prince of Sistan (Malik-i Sīstān)*, dated 588/1192—emphasises that “The root principle of religion is recognition of God, while how He is worshipped is a derivative branch”.²⁹ We find echoes of this sentiment in the later works of the Twelver Shī'ī savant Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī (d. 1050/1640), who writes in his *Transcendent Philosophy of the Four Intellectual Journeys (al-Ḥikmah al-muta'aliyah fi asfār al-'aqliyyah al-arba'ah)*:

God, may He be exalted, created the human spirit without the realisation of things within itself or knowledge of them, as He says, “It is God who brought you forth from your mothers' wombs knowing nothing,” (16:78). However, he created it but for recognition (*al-ma'rifah*) and submission (*al-tā'ah*), “I created jinn and humankind only to worship,” (51:56) ... Although the human spirit is mere potentiality and devoid of intelligibles (*ma'qūlāt*) at the beginning of its creation, it has the disposition to recognize truths, connecting to all of them. Thus, gnosis of God, His kingdom (*malakūt*) and His signs (*āyāt*) is the ultimate end. The purpose of worship is to journey toward Him, drawing unto Him. Acts of worship (*ibādah*) also depend upon recognition, resulting from it. As the Exalted One says, “Establish prayers to remember Me”, (20:14). Thus, knowledge is first and last, the origin and the destination.³⁰

²⁷Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Karīm ibn Abī Bakr Aḥmad al-Shahrestānī, *al-Milal wa'l-nihal*, (ed.) Sayyid Muḥammad 'Imādī (Seyyed Muhammad Emadī) Ḥā'irī (Haeri), *Tarjamah-yi kitāb al-milal wa'l-nihal az mutarjimī-yi nāshinākhah, nuskhah-yi bargardān-i dastnāvīs-i shumārah-yi 2371-i kitābkhānah-yi Ayāshīfiyā (Istānbūl)*, facsimile edition (Tehran, 1395 HS/2016 CE).

²⁸Shafique N. Virani, “Early Nizari Ismailism: A Critical Edition and Annotated Translation of Khwājah Qāsim Tushtārī's *Recognizing God*”, in *Iran: Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies* (forthcoming).

²⁹*Aṣḥ-i dīn Khudā-shināsi'st, wa far' tā'atash*. I am currently finalising a critical edition and translation of this work. The most thorough study to date is Maryam Mu'izzī, “Bāznigari dar rawābiṭ-i Ismā'īliyān wa mulūk-i Nīmruz bar pāyah-yi matanī-yi naw yāftah”, *Muqālī'āt-i ta'rīkh-i Islām*, 2, 6 (Autumn 1389 HS/[2010 CE]).

³⁰Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Ḥikmah al-muta'aliyah fi asfār al-'aqliyyah al-arba'ah*, (ed.) Muḥammad Riḍā Muẓaffar, 9 vols (Beirut, 1999), Vol. 3, p. 515. For a more complete translation of this passage and a study illustrating commonalities between the thought of Mullā Ṣadrā and Ismaili thinkers, see Sayeh Meisami, “A Critical Analysis of Discourses on Knowledge and Absolute Authority in the Works of Ḥamid al-Dīn Kirmānī and Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī”, PhD thesis, University of Toronto, 2017. Hermann Landolt, “Introduction”, in *Paradise of Submission: A Medieval Treatise on Ismaili Thought; A New Persian Edition and English Translation of Naṣīr al-Dīn Tūsī's Rawḍa-yi taslīm*, (ed.) Seyyed Jalal Hosseini Badakhchani (London, 2005) presents several insights into Ismaili influences on Ṣadrā. See also Hermann Landolt, “‘Being-Towards-Resurrection’: Mullā Ṣadrā's Critique of Suhrawardī's Eschatology”, in *Roads to Paradise: Eschatology and Concepts of the Hereafter in Islam; Foundations and*

According to Tushtarī, humanity's capacity to recognise God is the reason the Quran states, "We have ennobled the children of Adam" (17:70). But if Adam's descendants do not seek to recognise God, they are no different from other animals; as the text states, quoting the Quran: "They are like cattle—nay! Even more astray" (7:179).

Following the Quran in comparing heedless human beings to brutes is one of the most prevalent themes in Ismaili works of many periods and regions of activity. The very same Quranic verse or its counterpart at 25:44 is cited in similar contexts in several places, with a particular emphasis on probing the inner meaning of symbols. In interpreting the spiritual meaning of ablutions in his *Symbolic Elucidation of the Pillars of Islam (Ta'wīl da'ā'im al-Islām)*, the Fāṭimid jurist Abū Ḥanīfah al-Nu'mān (d. 363/974) explains that just as water gives life to the body and purifies it, knowledge gives life to the soul and purifies it. Those who seek this knowledge from the Imams embark on the path of felicity, whereas those who are content with the apparent and do not seek its deeper meaning are as cattle.³¹ In his *Proofs of Prophecy (A'lām al-nubuwwah)*, Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 322/934) quotes this Quranic verse, referencing the testament of Matthew in the *Gospel* in order to emphasise the importance of understanding the inner meaning of scripture:

This is the speech that Jesus spoke in parables. He spoke to them only in parables so that what was spoken by the tongue of the prophet is fulfilled when he said, "I open my mouth to utter parables and I know the secrets that were there before the foundations of the earth were laid".³²

In the same vein, the 9th/15th-century Badakhshānī writer, Sayyid Suhrāb Walī, in his *Gift for the Readers (Tuḥfat al-nāziri'n)*, also known as *Thirty-six Epistles (Sī wa shish ṣaḥīfah)*, quotes the Quranic verse when he alludes to "those who have fallen from the rank of humanity, remaining with but the apparent meaning (*ẓāhir*) of the words of their prophets and inviters (*dā'īs*) and, in the manner of livestock, are satisfied with straw and grass, never reaching the seeds of grain".³³ This is repeated almost verbatim in Bū Ishāq Quhistānī's *Seven Chapters (Haft bāb)*.³⁴ Similarly, drawing on a trope in the Ismaili Ginān literature which portrays the Ismaili sages (*pīrs*) as purveyors of pearls that can only be recognised by those who seek their inner meaning, Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn (fl. 8th/14th c.) writes in verse:

Ejī bhaṇe Pīr Sadaradīn ame vaṇajārājī
joī joī vohoro vīrā vaṇaj hamārājī
*pashuṃ jivaḍā kīyā jāṇe vaṇaj hamārājī*³⁵

Formation of a Tradition, Reflections on the Hereafter in the Quran and Islamic Religious Thought, (eds) Sebastian Günther, Todd Lawson and Christian Mauder, 2 vols (Leiden, Netherlands, 2017), Vol. 1, Chapter 22 and *passim*.

³¹al-Qāḍī Abū Ḥanīfah ibn Muḥammad al-Nu'mān, *Ta'wīl al-da'ā'im*, (ed.) Muḥammad Ḥasan al-A'zamī, 3 vols (Bayrūt, n.d.; originally published, al-Qāhirah, 1967–1972), Vol. 1, p. 79.

³²Aḥmad ibn Ḥamdān Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *A'lām al-nubuwwah*, (ed. and trans.) Tarif Khalidi, *The Proofs of Prophecy* (Provo, Utah, 2011), p. 72 (ed.), p. 72 (trans.). Khalidi compares this passage to Matthew 13:34.

³³Sayyid Suhrāb Walī Badakhshānī, *Tuḥfat al-nāziri'n (Sī ū shish ṣaḥīfah)*, (ed.) Hūshang (Hushang) Ujāqī (Ujaqi), *Si-u shish sahifa (Thirty-six Epistles)* (Tehran, 1961), p. 1; Sayyid Suhrāb Walī Badakhshānī, *Tuḥfat al-nāziri'n (Sī ū shish ṣaḥīfah)* (Gilgit, Pakistan, 1960), p. 1.

³⁴Bū Ishāq Quhistānī, *Haft Bāb*, (ed.) Wladimir Ivanow, *Haft Bab or "Seven Chapters" by Abu Ishaq Quhistani* (Bombay, p. 1377 AH/1336 HS/1957 CE [Persian cover]/1959 CE [English cover]), p. 2 (ed.), p. 1 (trans.). See also Ḥakīm Abū Mu'īn Nāṣir-i Khusrāw, *Zād al-musāfir*, (eds) Ismā'īl 'Imādī Ḥā'irī and Muḥammad 'Imādī Ḥā'irī (Tehran, 1384 HS/2005 CE), p. 22.

³⁵Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn, "Dhan dhan ājano ḍāḍalore ame harīvar pāyājī", in *100 Ginānanī Chopāḍī*, 4th edition, 6 vols (Mumbāī, 1990 vs/February 1934 CE), Vol. 5, p. 74.

So teaches Pir Sadardin, “I am a merchant,
Assiduously assay my precious cargo and procure it, O chivalrous ones
What know brutish bovine souls of my wares?”³⁶

Believers must therefore seek to understand the hidden depths of meaning within the Quran and the words of their spiritual guides. In this vein, Qāsim Tushtarī insists that there must be a means for actualising humanity’s inherent potential to recognise the Creator. The one who brings human beings to this perfection is the Purveyor of Truth (*muḥiqq*). It is for this reason, he continues, that when questioned about this subject, Imam Zayn al-‘Ābidīn (d. 95/714) replied that recognition of God was only possible through recognition of the Imam of the Time. This same sentiment is also recorded in one of the defining passages in Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī’s (d. 672/1274) spiritual autobiography, *The Voyage (Sayr ū sulūk)*, in which he cites the *Blessed Epistles (Fuṣūl-i muqaddas)* of the Imam at Alamūt, which echo the words of Imam Zayn al-‘Ābidīn:

To sum up, from these premises and the testimonies of intellect and religious law (*‘aqlī wa sharī*) it became evident to me that the final steps on the path of the seekers after truth is to be blessed with success in knowing their instructor and to become knowledgeable through his knowledge, as it is expressed in the *Fuṣūl-i muqaddas*: ‘Knowledge of God is [through] knowledge of the Imam’.³⁷

Walāyah (the concept that God’s supreme authority must always have a representative in creation) is foremost among the seven pillars of Islam identified by the Fāṭimid jurist al-Nu‘mān, which thus differed from the primarily five or six pillar structures found in some other schools of Islam.³⁸ In his *Pillars of Islam (Da‘ā’im al-Islām)*, he explains the intimate relationship between *walāyah* and faith (*īmān*). Describing faith (*īmān*) as the inner aspect of Islam, he goes on to relate a tradition from Imam ‘Alī, further elaborating the link between faith (*īmān*) and *walāyah*, and establishing their connection to recognition of the divine (*ma‘rifah*):

The Commander of the Faithful, ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661), was asked, “What is faith (*īmān*), and what is submission (*islām*)?” He replied, “Submission (*islām*) is affirmation (*iqrār*), while faith (*īmān*) is affirmation plus recognition (*ma‘rifah*). Whosoever has been given knowledge by God regarding Him, His Prophet and His Imam, and then professes his faith in these three, is a believer (*mu‘min*)”.³⁹

³⁶For an exploration of this trope, see Shafique N. Virani, “Symphony of Gnosis: A Self-Definition of the Ismaili Ginān Literature”, *Reason and Inspiration in Islam: Theology, Philosophy and Mysticism in Muslim Thought*, (ed.) Todd Lawson (London, 2005), Chapter 55, pp. 513–514.

³⁷Ṭūsī, *Contemplation*, p. 17 (ed.), p. 47 (trans.). For the role played by the Imams in the believers’ recognition of God, see Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, *La religion discrète: Croyances et pratiques spirituelles dans l’Islam Shi‘ite*, (trans.) Hafiz Karmali et al., *The Spirituality of Shi‘i Islam: Beliefs and Practices* (London, 2011 – originally published, Paris, 2006), p. 112.

³⁸A thorough examination of this concept in a variety of Muslim schools can be found in Hermann Landolt, “Walāyah”, in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, (ed.) Lindsay Jones, 2nd edition, 15 vols (Detroit, 2005), Vol. 14.

³⁹al-Qāḍī Abū Ḥanīfah ibn Muḥammad al-Nu‘mān, *Da‘ā’im al-Islām wa-dhikr al-ḥalāl wa’l-ḥarām wa’l-qaḍāyā wa’l-ahkām*, (trans.) Asaf Ali Asghar Fyze and Ismail Kurban Hussein Poonawala, *The Pillars of Islam: Acts of Devotion and Religious Observances*, 2 vols (New Delhi, 2002), Vol. 1, p. 16. (Translation slightly emended).

Thus, while being a Muslim is premised on affirmation, this is only a preliminary stage on the path to becoming a believer (*mu'min*). Being a believer, in the words of 'Alī, is dependent on recognition (*ma'rifah*) of God, the Prophet and the Imam. This connection is further emphasised by Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī in his *Desideratum of the Faithful* (*Maṭlūb al-mu'minīn*), in which (substituting the testimony of faith (*shahādah*) where al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān has *walāyah*) he stresses the connection, "The first [of the pillars] is attestation to faith (*shahādāt*), which implies knowing God through the Imam of the Time".⁴⁰ As Qāsim Tushtarī asserts in the words of the Prophetic tradition, "Whoever dies without recognizing the Imam of his time dies the death of the age of ignorance (*jāhiliyyah*), and the ignorant is in the fire" (*man māta wa-lam ya'rif imām zamānih māta mītah jāhiliyyah wa'l-jāhil fī'l-nār*).⁴¹

Commenting on the well-known Prophetic tradition, "My community will be split into seventy-three sects, of which one will be saved and the rest destroyed" (*sa-taftariq ummatī min ba'dī thalāth wa-sab'īn firqah, firqah minhā nājiyah wa'l-bāqūn hālikūn*),⁴² Tushtarī asserts that the 72 misguided sects fall into error because they attempt to comprehend God through their own, limited, human intellects and knowledge, rather than by turning to the perfected intellects of the Prophets and Imams whom God Himself had appointed to guide them. Quoting the poet Sanā'ī, he asks:

⁴⁰Naṣīr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Ṭūsī, 'Maṭlūb al-mu'minīn', in *Shi'ī Interpretations of Islam: Three Treatises on Theology and Eschatology; A Persian Edition and English Translation of Tawallā wa tabarā, Maṭlūb al-mu'minīn and Āghāz wa anjām of Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī*, (ed. and trans.) Seyyed Jalal Hosseini Badakhchani, *Desideratum of the Faithful* (London, 2010), p. 27 (ed.), p. 41 (trans.).

⁴¹In al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān (d. 363/974), *Da'ā'im al-Islām wa-dhikr al-halāl wa'l-harām wa'l-qadāyā wa'l-ahkām*, (ed.) Āṣaf ibn 'Alī Aṣghar (Asaf A. A.) Fayḍī (Fyzee), 3 vols (al-Qāhirah, 1951), Vol. 1, p. 25, the tradition is recorded as follows: *man māta lā ya'rifu imām dahrih ḥayyan māta mīta jāhiliyyah*. See also footnote 2, which records that some manuscripts have 'aṣrih in place of dahrih.

Aḥmad ibn Ya'qūb Abū'l-Fawāris (d. circa 411/1020), *al-Risālah fī'l-imāmah*, (ed. and trans.) Sāmī Naṣīb (Sami Nasib) Makārim (Makarem), *The Political Doctrine of the Ismā'īlīs (The Imamate): An Edition and Translation, with Introduction and Notes of Abū l-Fawāris Aḥmad ibn Ya'qūb's ar-Risālah fī l-Imāma* (Delmar, NY, 1977), p. 3 (ed.), p. 22 (trans.) gives *man māta wa-lam ya'rif imām zamānih māta mīta jāhiliyyah*.

Al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (d. 470/1078), *al-Majālis al-Mu'ayyadīyyah: al-mi'ah al-ūlā*, (ed.) Hātim Ḥamid al-Dīn, 3 vols (Bombay, 1395 AH/1975 CE), Vol. 1, p. 110, has *man māta wa-lam ya'rif imām dahrih māta mīta jāhiliyyah*.

Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, *Le Guide divin dans le shī'isme originel: Aux sources de l'ésotérisme en Islam*, (trans.) David Streight, *The Divine Guide in Early Shi'ism: The Sources of Esotericism in Islam* (Albany, 1994; originally published, Paris, 1992), p. 228 n. 671, provides several Twelver Shī'ī sources for this tradition (with slight variations in wording).

See also Amir-Moezzi, *La religion discrète*, p. 272. The tradition is well-attested in early Sunnī sources as well. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241/855), *Musnad al-Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal*, (ed.) Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation, 14 vols (Vaduz, Liechtenstein, 2007), Vol. 7, p. 3727, *ḥadīth* 17150, has *man māta bi-ghayr imām māta mīta jāhiliyyah*.

Muḥammad ibn Sa'd (d. 230/845) reports that 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Umar quoted this tradition to 'Abd Allāh ibn Muṭī' in an effort to have him swear allegiance to Yazīd ibn Mu'āwiyah: *man māta wa-lā bay'ah 'alayh māta mīta jāhiliyyah*: see Muḥammad ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, (ed.) Eduard Sachau (Leiden, 1322 AH/1917 CE), p. 144.

⁴²An extensive background on sources for this well-known *ḥadīth* and its variants is provided in Ḥusayn Šābirī, *Ta'riḥ-i fīraq-i Islāmī, History of the Islamic Sects* (Tehran, 1388 HS/[2009 CE]), p. 34; Israel Friedlander, "The Heterodoxies of the Shiites in the Presentation of Ibn Hazm", *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 28 (1907), pp. 6-7; Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Karīm ibn Abī Bakr Aḥmad al-Shahrastānī, *al-Milal wa'l-niḥal*, (trans.) Daniel Gimaret and Guy Monnot, *Livre des religions et des sectes* ([Leuven, Belgium], 1986), pp. 108-109; [Yūsuf bin Muḥammad al-Nīsābūrī] Abū Tammām, *Bāb al-shayṭān min Kitāb al-shajarah*, (eds and trans.) Wilferd Madelung and Paul E. Walker, *An Ismaili Heresiography: The "Bāb al-shayṭān" from Abū Tammām's Kitāb al-shajara* (Leiden, 1998), pp. 7-8 (ed.), p. 27 (trans.).

chūn nadānī tū sirr-i sākhtan-ash
*kay tawahhum kunī shinākhtan-ash?*⁴³

As you do not even know the mystery of His creation
 How can you ever dream of fathoming Him?

He asks, after fashioning the heavens and the earth, had God not announced to the angels the perfection of His creation with the words “Indeed, I am placing a representative (*khaliḥfah*) on the earth” (2:30)? The knowledge of God through His representative, the Imam of the Time, is then further transmitted through the spiritual hierarchy:

The Imam of the Time conveys his gnosis to the greatest proof (*hujjat-i a‘zam*). The greatest proof (*hujjat-i a‘zam*) conveys that which reaches him from the light of the Imam of the Time to the proofs of the islands (*hujjatān-i jazā‘ir*). The proofs of the islands convey it to the inviters (*dā‘īs*), and by the command of the proofs, the inviters then convey it to licentiates (*ma‘dhūns*) of every island, according to their rank. The licentiates convey it to the respondents (*mustajibs*). Since each one holds a rank in the hierarchy that has been brought from potentiality to actuality, and they do not transgress their limit (*hadd*), they recognise God through God, becoming knowers with a single recognition. This is on the condition that they don’t transgress their bounds and rank. As for those who speak beyond their rank, it is as Almighty God says in the Noble Quran, “those who transgress the bounds (*hudūd*) of God harm their own soul” (*wa-man yata‘adda hudūd Allāh faqad ḡalama nafṣah*, 65:1).⁴⁴

The fact that such considerations were not merely theoretical but had pragmatic and practical relevance is revealed by Khwājah Qāsim’s critique of a historical situation in his own times, which was likely to have been the impetus for his composing the missive. His allusion to Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad is instructive in this regard. He writes:

To continue, we often hear (and the veracity of such tales we lay at the door of the narrators!) that some of the respondents fall short in obeying (whether in specific or general matters) the command (*farmān*) of the true teacher (*mu‘allim-i ṣādiq*) Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad, the pride of those who seek truth and leader of the people of certainty, (may his virtues increase and his blessings last).⁴⁵ They fail to realize that if they make a habit of this, they will not arrive at the universal from the particular, and that a person’s heart is blackened by sins. Faith does not abide in a heart

⁴³Abū’l-Majd Majdūd ibn Ādam Sanā‘ī Ghaznawī, *Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqah wa-sharī‘at al-ṭarīqah*, (ed.) Muḥammad Taqī Mudarris Riḍawī, 6th edition (Tehran, 1387 HS/[2008 CE]), p. 63. Riḍawī’s edition reads *chūn tū ham kunī*. This should be corrected to *chūn tawahhum kunī*.

⁴⁴§12: this passage is somewhat corrupted in the manuscripts and has several small lacunae. It has been reconstructed using the very familiar sources for the dignitaries in the Ismaili *ḥudūd-i dīn*. Further details are available in my “Early Nizari Ismailism: A Critical Edition and Annotated Translation of Khwājah Qāsim Tushtarī’s Recognizing God”, in *Iran: Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies* (forthcoming).

⁴⁵A variant found solely in ms 15048, our oldest witness, adds *al-hādī ilā ṭarīq al-yaqīn bar-guzīdah-yi ḥadrat-i rabb al-‘ālamīn*, “the guide on the path of certitude, chosen by the lord of the worlds”. While these titles would more commonly be used of the Prophet or the Imam, we do find a similar expression used in the preface of the *Paradise of Submission* (*Rawḍah-yi taslīm*) for Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, who is described as *khwājah-yi kāyīnāt wa dā‘ī al-du‘āt, ikhtiyār-i mawlā al-‘ālamīn*, translated by Badakhchani as “the chief missionary and master of creation, chosen by the lord of the worlds”: Naṣīr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Ṭūsī and Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd-i Kātib, *Rawḍah-yi taslīm* (*Taṣawwurat*), (ed. and trans.) Seyyed Jalal Hosseini Badakhchani, *Paradise of Submission: A Medieval Treatise on Ismaili Thought; A New Persian Edition and English Translation of Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī’s Rawḍah-yi taslīm* (London, 2005), p. 8 (ed.), p. 13 (trans.).

when it becomes dark, for the heart is the very essence of human existence. Such a person's abode shall be hell, and we seek refuge in God from that.

The general (or universal, *kullī*) and specific (or particular, *juzwī*) matters refer in the first instance to the general acceptance of God's sovereignty (represented by the first portion of the declaration of faith, "there is no deity save God") and the specific acceptance of the sovereignty of His appointed messenger (represented by the second portion of the declaration of faith, "Muḥammad is the messenger of God"). Neglect and indifference to God's appointee renders faith invalid. In the second instance, the expression refers to the general acceptance of the sovereignty of the Imam as the Prophet's successor and specifically to the acceptance of those whom the Imam appoints. Neglecting the sovereignty of those whom the Imam has appointed to positions of authority, in this case, the true teacher (*mu'allim-i ṣādiq*) Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad, also invalidates faith. A parallel argument is found in Ṭūsī and Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd's *Paradise of Submission (Rawḍah-yi taslīm)*:

[The infidel (*kāfir*)], remains at the initial common creatural confession (*iqrār-i 'āmm-i khalqī*)—[as said in the Qur'ān], 'If you ask them who has created them, they will certainly say, "God"' (43:87)—and refuses [to accept] the second exclusive confession [pertaining to the realm] of the Divine Command (*iqrār-i khāṣṣ-i amrī*) which—in accordance with [the revealed word], 'Allāh is the Master (*maulā*) of those who believe, and the infidels have no Master' (*Iā maulā lahum*) (47:11)—distinguishes the infidel from the believer. He undoubtedly attains to the first, but does not reach the second confession; thus he is called an infidel.⁴⁶

Khawājah Qāsim Tushtarī invokes Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad with tremendous reverence in §8 and cites his poetry, with the pen-name Qāsim, in §10. I have come across many poems in uncatalogued Persian Ismaili manuscripts with the pen-name Qāsim or Qāsimī that cannot be traced in the published *Dīwān* of the well-known mystic poet Qāsim-i Anwār (d. 837/1433), who used these pen names and who is mentioned in fairly early Ismaili works.⁴⁷ It is therefore possible that these scattered poems may have been composed by Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad "Qāsim" or, for that matter, by Qāsim Tushtarī. While §10 only refers to the poet as "the aforementioned master" (*khawājah-yi mushār ilayh*), the referent most recently cited in the text is Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad. Moreover, the aforementioned Ḥakīm Majdūd ibn Ādam went by the pen name Sanā'ī, not Qāsim, so this cannot be a reference to him.⁴⁸ Khawājah Qāsim Tushtarī identifies Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad "Qāsim" by a string of epithets: "the true teacher (*mu'allim-i ṣādiq*), Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad, the pride of those who realize the truth and leader of the people of certainty (may his virtues be increased and his blessings last!)"'. With a fair degree of confidence, we can identify Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad, who was clearly alive at the time Qāsim-i Tushtarī wrote

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, §3. Regarding the parallel usage of the conceptual pairs general (*kullī*)/specific (*juzwī*) and common (*'āmm*)/exclusive (*khāṣṣ*), see William C. Chittick, *The Heart of Islamic Philosophy: The Quest for Self-Knowledge in the Teachings of Afdal al-Dīn Kāshānī* (Oxford, 2001), p. 89.

⁴⁷Mu'īn al-Dīn 'Alī Ḥusaynī Qāsim-i Anwār, *Kulliyāt-i Qāsim-i Anwār*, (ed.) Sa'īd Nafīsī (Tehran, 1958). Qāsim-i Anwār's name is found in Khayrkhwāh-i Harātī (pseud. attribution), *Shinākht-i imām—1960*, p. 13; Khayrkhwāh-i Harātī (pseud. attribution), *Shinākht-i imām—1947*, p. 29; See also Virani, *Ismailis in the Middle Ages*, pp. 104, 118.

⁴⁸On Sanā'ī's "Names, pen names and epithets", see J. T. P. de Bruijn, *Of Piety and Poetry: The Interaction of Religion and Literature in the Life and Works of Ḥakīm Sanā'ī of Ghazna* (Leiden, 1983), pp. 19–22.

Recognizing God, as the son of the illustrious Ra'īs Muẓaffār (d. circa 533/1139), whom he eventually succeeded as governor of the castle of Girdkūh.⁴⁹

In addition to Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad, the Prophet and the Imams, including Imam Zayn al-Ābidīn (§5), two other figures are mentioned in Tushtārī's *Recognizing God*. One is Ḥakīm Sanā'ī. This is the pen name of the 6th/12th century savant Majdūd ibn Ādam, who is named in §4 and §7. Poetic quotations from his magnum opus, *The Orchard of Reality* (*Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqah* also known as *Fakhrī-nāmah* and *Ilāhī-nāmah*), appear throughout the work.⁵⁰ The second figure mentioned is Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad, whose poetry is quoted in §7. The dearth of sources means that it is not yet possible to identify with certainty who this may be. However, it is conceivable that he was the same person as an Ismaili inviter (*dā'ī*) with a similar name, a certain Kiyā Fakhr-Āwar of Asadābād. According to Rashīd al-Dīn and Kāshānī, Barkiyāruq (d. 498/1105), the Saljūq claimant to the throne, "was favorably inclined toward the lovers of [the Imam] Nizār (d. after 488/1095) and maintained good relations with the Ismaili companions (*rafiqān*). Because of the goodness of their character and conduct, neither did he deny their creed nor hate them".⁵¹ He was particularly keen on having their support in his succession struggle against his half-brother Muḥammad Tapar (d. 511/1118), with whom the Ismailis had stormy relations.⁵² Among Barkiyāruq's Ismaili courtiers was Kiyā Fakhr-Āwar, whom our Persian historians tell us "used to speak words of the Invitation (*sukhan-i da'wat*)", suggesting that he was an authorised inviter (*dā'ī*). They also tell us that the vizier 'Abd al-Jalīl Dihistānī, without the permission of

⁴⁹In this regard, see Virani, "Alamūt, Ismailism and Khwājah Qāsim Tushtārī's *Recognizing God*". Another less likely identification is the contemporary 'Alid poet, Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad Nāšir. In his short *mathnawī*, the satirical cum panegyric *Memoirs of Balkh* (*Kār-nāmah-yi Balkh*), Sanā'ī alludes to a number of his contemporary poets, one being this Sharaf al-Dīn, whom Sanā'ī singles out for extensive praise and lauds as "the lamp of the Prophet's descendants" (*sham-i nabirāgān-i rasūl*). Sanā'ī composed an ode in his honour. One of Sharif al-Dīn's own odes is preserved in Muḥammad 'Awfī's (d. after 630/1233) *Essences of Intellects* (*Lubāb al-albāb*), which was apparently completed in 618/1221. It is also possible that Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad, the son of Ra'īs Muẓaffār, and the Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad Nāšir celebrated by Sanā'ī are the same person. Muḥammad 'Awfī, *Lubāb al-albāb*, (ed.) Edward Granville Browne, 2 vols (London, 1321 AH/1903 CE), Vol. 2, pp. 267-270; see also de Bruijn, *Of Piety and Poetry*, pp. 56, 194, 261 n.101; François C. de Blois, *Persian Literature: Poetry ca. A.D. 1100 to 1225* (London, 1994), Vol. 5, part 2, pp. 420-421; J. Maḥīnī, "'Awfī, Saḍīd-al-Dīn", in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, (ed.) Ehsan Yarshater, online edition (New York, 2011), <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/awfi-sadid-al-din>, [accessed 27 May 2018]; Jawid A. Mojaddedi, "Hallāj, Abu'l-Muḡīṭ Ḥusayn", in *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (2012), (ed.) Yarshater, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/kamama-ye-balk>, [accessed 27 May 2018].

⁵⁰The latest recension of *The Orchard of Reality* was the unredacted version prepared shortly before 525/1131, the approximate year in which Sanā'ī is believed to have passed away. See J. T. P. de Bruijn, "Sanā'ī", in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, (eds) Bearman et al., http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/sana-i-SIM_6594?num=o&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&s.q=sana-i; J. T. P. de Bruijn, "Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqa wa šarī'at al-tariqa", in *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (2012), (ed.) Yarshater, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/hadiqat-al-haqiqa-wasariat-al-tariqa>, [accessed 30 May 2018]. Regarding the difficulty of establishing a precise date for Sanā'ī's death, considerations for the most likely year and the state of the poem at the time of Sanā'ī's passing, see de Bruijn, *Of Piety and Poetry*, pp. 23-25, 81, 86.

⁵¹This and the remainder of the paragraph are based on a composite of the narratives of Jamāl al-Dīn Abū'l-Qāsim 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Alī Kāshānī, *Zubdat al-tawārīkh: Bakhs-i Faṭīmiyān wa Nizāriyān*, (ed.) Muḥammad Taqī Dānishpazhūh, 2nd edition (Tehran, 1366 HS/1987 CE), p. 119, and Faḍl Allāh Ṭabīb Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh: Ta'ārīkh-i Ismā'īliyān*, (ed.) Muḥammad (Muhammad) Rawshan (Raushan) (Tehran, 1387 HS/2008 CE), pp. 155-156.

⁵²Muḥammad ibn Malik Shāh, commonly known as Muḥammad Tapar, was particularly active in his attacks on the Ismailis. See Farhad Daftary, "Ḥasan-i Šabbāḥ and the Origins of the Nizārī Isma'īli Movement", in *Medieval Isma'īli History and Thought*, (ed.) Farhad Daftary (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 190-191, 198-199. Ismaili impressions of Muḥammad Tapar are preserved in the Alamūt period text, *Malik-i Sīstān*, a critical edition and translation of which I am currently in an advanced stage of preparing.

Barkiyāruq, had Fakhr-Āwar killed, apparently sometime after 494/1101, when Barkiyāruq's forces bested Muḥammad Tapar's in Hamadān.⁵³ Fakhr-Āwar's period of activity and his having been an Ismaili inviter (*dā'ī*) suggest that he might have been the same person who wrote the poetry cited by Khwājah Qāsim.

Proofs from poetry, Sanā'ī and the Ismailis: "A lover of the Prophet and his progeny I am"

The poetry cited in Khwājah Qāsim's work is revealing in a variety of ways. In total, there are ten poetic quotations, with explicit attributions to Sanā'ī (§4), Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad (§7) and Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad (§10). I have been able to identify six of the remaining seven selections, the seventh being an unidentified couplet in §8.

The second poetic citation in §17, "Those closest to the king are more anxious / For they are familiar with royal punishment", identified as a couplet (*bayt*), is also known to exist as the first line of a quatrain (*rubā'ī*) commonly attributed to Abū Sa'īd Abī al-Khayr (d. 440/1049). The full text of the *rubā'ī* ascribed to him is as follows:

nazdīkān-rā bīsh buvad ḥayrānī
kīshān dānand siyāsat-i sulṭānī

mā-rā chih kih waṣf-i dast-gāh-i tū kunīm
mā-īm qarīn-i ḥayrat ū nādānī

Most anxious of all are those closest to the lord
For royal punishment they know well

What of it if I praise your splendid devices?
For I am a companion of astonishment and foolishness

In the Quran commentary *Unveiling of Mysteries and the Provision of the Pious* (*Kashf al-asrār wa-'uddat al-abrār*), 'Abd Allāh Anṣārī (fl. 5th/11th century) and Abū'l-Faḍl Rashīd al-Dīn Maybudī (fl. early 6th/12th century) and in his *Memorial of the Saints* (*Tadhkirat al-awliyā'*), Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār (d. 618/1221) cite the same line as Qāsim-i Tushtarī does, also omitting the second half. The provenance of the poem, however, is not certain, as questions have been raised about the corpus attributed to Abū Sa'īd, with several scholars denying that he left any poetic legacy.⁵⁴

⁵³On Dihistānī, see Clifford Edmund Bosworth, "Dehestānī, A'azz-al-MolkNezam-al-Dīn (sic) Abu'l-Mahāsēn 'Abd-al-Jalīl b. 'Alī", in *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (2011), (ed.) Yarshater, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/dehestani-abd-al-jalil>, [accessed 27 May 2018].

⁵⁴See, respectively, Rashīd al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Maybudī, *Kashf al-asrār wa-'uddat al-abrār, ma'rūf bi-Taḥṣīr-i Khwājah 'Abd Allāh Anṣārī*, (ed.) 'Alī Aṣghar Ḥikmat, 10 vols (Tehran, 1331-1339 HS/1952-1960 CE), Vol. 9, p. 300; and Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār, *Tadhkirat al-awliyā'*, (ed.) Muḥammad Istī'lāmī, 2nd edition (Tehran, 2535 Shāhinshāhī/[1976 CE]), p. 151. With regard to the cited verse, and additional references to quotations of it, see Muḥammad ibn Munawwar ibn Abī Sa'īd ibn Abī Ṭāhir ibn Abī Sa'īd, *Asrār al-tawḥīd fī maqāmāt al-Shaykh Abī Sa'īd*, (ed.) Muḥammad Riḍā Shafī'ī Kadkanī, 7th edition, 2 vols (Tehran, 1386 HS/[2007 CE]); originally published, 1366 HS), Vol. 2, p. 796. For an overview of the authenticity of the corpus attributed to Abū Sa'īd, and further references, see Gerhard Böwering, "Abū Sa'īd Abī'l-Kayr", in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, (ed.) Yarshater, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/abu-said-fazlallah-b>, [accessed 30 May 2018]; Najīb Mayel Heravi and Farzin Negahban, "Abū Sa'īd b. Abī al-Khayr", in *Encyclopaedia Islamica*, (eds) Wilferd Madelung and Farhad Daftary,

Over half of the quotations of poetry found in *Recognizing God* can be traced to *The Orchard of Reality* (*Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqah*) of the famed Ḥakīm Sanāʿī Ghaznawī. In addition, the metre of the unidentified poem is – ˘ – – / ˘ – ˘ – / – –, that is, *Khaffī-i sālim-i makhbūn-i aslam-i musabbagh*. This is essentially the same metre as that in which Sanāʿī's three *mathnawīs*, including *The Orchard of Reality*, are composed, *khaffī-i musaddas-i makhbūn-i maḥdhūf*, or – ˘ – – / ˘ – ˘ – / ˘ – ˘ –. Since it is perfectly acceptable and very common in Persian prosody for two short syllables to be replaced by a long one, it could be that this unidentified verse, too, is from Sanāʿī's magnum opus, even though it is not in the critically edited text.⁵⁵ As De Bruijn explains, over half of the lengthy work has been left out of the modern recensions:

In a prose introduction, handed down in many copies of the *Ḥadīqah*, a certain Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī Raffāʿi reports that he had prepared, on the order of Sulṭān Bahrāmshāh, an edition of the text containing five thousand distichs from the materials left behind by the poet. He refers to earlier authorial editions, one of which, amounting to ten thousand distichs, was assembled by Sanāʿī to be dispatched to Burhān al-Dīn Biryāngar Ghaznawī, a religious scholar living at Baghdad, whose help against accusations of Shīʿite sympathies he invoked in an epilogue to the poem.⁵⁶

While it is possible that Khwājah Qāsim Tushtarī was enamoured of the celebrated poet's verse, and therefore quoted it extensively, another possible reason for the pervasive references also suggests itself.

If our tentative dating of *Recognizing God* is correct, Sanāʿī would have been an older contemporary of our author, and so the quotations found in the text would be among the earliest citations in Persian literature from *The Orchard of Reality*. Sanāʿī was one of the first major poets to use Persian verse for religious purposes in a significant way. In this, he followed in the footsteps of Shīʿī predecessors, particularly, as De Bruijn notes, Kisāʿī (fl. 4th/10th century) and Ḥakīm Nāṣir-i Khusraw (d. after 462/1070).⁵⁷ Arberry held that, "In his odes Sanāʿī comes stylistically nearest to Nāṣir-i Khusraw; while discoursing nobly on the majesty of God and the dedicated life, he rails incessantly against the evil times in which it was his misfortune to live and urges the wicked to repent of their sins before the wrath to come".⁵⁸ Beyond the themes and motifs that were his predecessor's legacy, Sanāʿī also composed in metres and rhymes that first appeared in the poetry of Ḥakīm Nāṣir.⁵⁹

One of Sanāʿī's greatest admirers was Qiwāmī-yi Rāzī, a Shīʿī contemporary who alludes to him often in his own *Dīwān*. Writing in about 560/1165, Naṣīr al-Dīn Abū'l-Rashīd al-Rāzī lists both Qiwāmī and Sanāʿī as Shīʿī poets. Similarly, writing in about 556/1161, ʿAbd al-Jalīl Qazwīnī, a leading Twelver Shīʿī scholar of Rayy, along with later Twelver

(Leiden, 2008), http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-islamica/abu-sa-i-d-b-abi-al-khayr-COM_0131.

⁵⁵Finn Thiesen, *A Manual of Classical Persian Prosody: With Chapters on Urdu, Karakhanidic and Ottoman Prosody* (Wiesbaden, 1982), p. 95.

⁵⁶de Bruijn, "Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqa wa šariʿat al-ṭariqa". Romanisation in passage modified.

⁵⁷de Bruijn, *Of Piety and Poetry*, pp. 146, 184–185.

⁵⁸Arthur J. Arberry, *Classical Persian Literature* (London, 1958), p. 89. Romanisation modified.

⁵⁹Muḥammad-Riḍā Shafīʿī-Kadkanī, *Tāziyānah-hā-yi sulūk: naqd wa taḥlīl-i chand qaṣīdah az Ḥakīm Sanāʿī*, Chapter 1, 2nd edition (Tehran, 1376 HS/[1997 CE]), pp. 292–293, 299, 306–308, 317, 339–340, 347, 362, 364, 369, 420, 478, 481; Leonard Lewisohn, "Hierocosmic Intellect and Universal Soul in a Qaṣīda by Nāṣir-i Khusraw", *Iran*, 45 (2007), p. 220 n.8.

Shī'ī authors, such as Qāḍī Nūr Allāh Shustarī (d. 1019/1610), argued for Sanā'ī's Shī'ism as well, although two of his poems and a letter suggesting sympathies specifically with Twelver Shī'ism have been demonstrated to be later forgeries.⁶⁰ Sanā'ī's contemporary Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-Raffā', who knew first-hand the circumstances surrounding the composition of *The Orchard*, writes in his prose introduction to the work that the poet declined the Sulṭān of Ghazna's invitation to his court, saying that he preferred the poverty and contentment exemplified by Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī (d. 32/653).⁶¹ Abū Dharr and Salmān al-Fārsī (d. 35/656) are, in fact, among the two most commonly cited examples of Muslim piety in Sanā'ī's poetry.⁶² While these two figures are respected by Muslims in general, they hold a special place in Shī'ī piety, being considered, along with 'Ammār ibn Yāsir (d. 37/657) and Miqdād ibn 'Amr, as among the 'four pillars' of the Shī'ah due to their allegiance to Imam 'Alī and the family of the Prophet.⁶³ In his poetry, Ḥakīm Nāṣir-i Khusraw singles out Abū Dharr and Salmān al-Fārsī as among those blessed to pledge allegiance (*bay'at*) directly to the Prophet.⁶⁴

De Bruijn acknowledges the clear expressions of devotion to the Family of the Prophet in Sanā'ī's works, as well as his close relationship with the descendants of the Prophet during his lifetime, but is hesitant to make a declaration of his loyalties based on this evidence.⁶⁵ High regard for the Prophet's family is, of course, ubiquitous in much of the Muslim world. Poems extolling figures such as the caliph 'Umar give reason for pause, but are dismissed by individuals such as Shustarī as simply examples of the prudence (*taqiyyah*) that Shī'īs were forced to practise in hostile environments. Arguing along similar lines as Shustarī, de Bruijn avers that Sanā'ī's close relationships with the leading Sunnī figures of his time would have made any open expression of Shī'ism very difficult.⁶⁶ Gillies Tetley makes the same observation with regard to the poet Mu'izzī (d. between 519–521/1125–1127), upon whose death Sanā'ī composed an elegy, "Like nearly all court poets, Mu'izzī was in general very careful to express himself in a manner that was appropriate and pleasing to the patron without giving offence elsewhere, especially so when he was addressing an Ismā'īlī patron; the last thing he needed was to be branded as an Ismā'īlī sympathiser".⁶⁷ Indeed, under Ghaznawid rule, during which Sanā'ī served, the vizier Ḥasanak Mīkāl (d. 422/1031) was executed, ostensibly for being an Ismaili. Shortly before this incident,

⁶⁰de Bruijn, *Of Piety and Poetry*, pp. 12–13, 73–74; Qāḍī Sayyid Nūr Allāh ibn 'Abd Allāh Shushtarī, *Majālis al-Mu'minīn*, 2 vols (Tehran, 1354 HS/1975 CE), Vol. 2, pp. 77–91; 'Abd al-Jalīl ibn Abī'l-Ḥusayn Qazwīnī-Rāzī, *Kitāb al-naqḍ ma'rifī ba ba'd mathālib al-Nawāṣib fi naqḍ faḍā'ih al-Rawāfiq*, 2 vols (Tehran, 1358 HS/1979 CE), Vol. 1, p. 232; Kazuo Morimoto, "Kitāb al-naqḍ", in *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (2015), (ed.) Yarshater, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/kitab-al-naqz>, [accessed 27 May 2018].

⁶¹Sanā'ī Ghaznawī, *Ḥadīqat al-Ḥaqqāh*, p. 18; de Bruijn, *Of Piety and Poetry*, p. 120.

⁶²de Bruijn, *Of Piety and Poetry*, p. 268 n.263.

⁶³Syed Husain M. Jafī, *The Origins and Early Development of Shi'a Islam* (London, 1979), p. 53. The prominent Fāṭimid Ismaili luminary al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān (d. 363/974), *Sharḥ al-akhbār fi faḍā'il al-a'immat al-aḥbār*, (ed.) Muḥammad al-Ḥusaynī al-Jalālī, 2nd ed., 3 vols (Beirut, 1427 AH/2006 CE), Vol. 1, p. 108, specifically identifies these four personalities in his description of the early Shī'ī community.

⁶⁴Ḥakīm Abū Mu'īn Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Dīwān-i ash'ār-i Ḥakīm Nāṣir-i Khusraw Qubādiyānī*, (eds) Mujtabā Mīnuwī and Mahdī (Mehdī) Muḥaqqiq (Mohaghegh), reprint edition (Tehran, 1357 HS/1978 CE; originally published, Tehran, 1353 HS/1974 CE), Vol. 1, poem 242, 508.

⁶⁵de Bruijn, *Of Piety and Poetry*, pp. 12–13, 35.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, p. 74. At the same time, he does not agree with Nūr Allāh Shustarī's assessment of Sanā'ī as a Shī'ī. See *ibid.*, pp. 247–248.

⁶⁷Gillies Tetley, *The Ghaznavid and Seljuk Turks: Poetry as a Source for Iranian History* (London, 2009), p. 140.

Firdawsī (d. 416/1025) is believed to have suffered the dismissive treatment of his *Book of Kings* (*Shāh-nāmah*) and to have been denied burial in the Muslim cemetery because of his Shī'ī beliefs.⁶⁸ Indeed, we know that Sanā'ī was plagued by accusations of Shī'ī sympathies during his lifetime, particularly since he was very explicit in his condemnation of the family of Marwān (the Umayyads) and their hostilities toward the Prophet's family.⁶⁹ A letter to Sulṭān Bahrām Shāh seeking protection in this regard has been preserved.⁷⁰ Sanā'ī's appeal for safety is understandable, given the openness of the critiques scattered throughout his works. For example, in his *Orchard*, after expressing his affection for the holy family of 'Alī, Fāṭimah and their two sons, he vows:

na-khwuram gham gar āl-i Bū Sufyān
na-shavand az ḥadīth-i man shādān...

mālik-i dūzakh ar buwad ghaḍbān
ghaḍab-i ū bigū ma-rā chih ziyān

mar ma-rā madḥ-i Muṣṭafā ast ghidhā
jahān-i man bād jān-ash-rā bah fidā

āl-i ū-rā bah jān kharīdāram
waz badī-khwāh-i āl bīzāram

dūst-dār-i rasūl wa āl-i way-am
zānkih paiwastah dar nawāl-i way-am

gar bah dast tīn 'aqīdah ū madhhab
ham barīn bad bidāriyam yā rabb

man zi bahr-i khūd tīn guzīdastam
*kandarīn rah-i najāt dīdastam*⁷¹

Grieve I won't if the descendants of Abū Sufyān
Rejoice not at my words...

⁶⁸Djalal Khaleghi-Motlagh, "Ferdowsi, Abu'l-Qāsem", in *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (2012), (ed.) Yarshater, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/ferdowsi-i>, [accessed 27 May 2018]; Farhad Daftary, "Fatimids", in *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (2012), (ed.) Yarshater, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/fatimids>, [accessed 27 May 2018]. I have come across a copy of a portion of an uncatalogued Persian manuscript at the Institute of Ismaili Studies containing an Ismaili prayer that prominently incorporates verses written by Firdawsī. Certain passages in the prayer suggest it may have originally been composed between the declaration of the *qiyāmah*, which ostensibly took place in 559/1164, and the fall of the fortress in 655/1256, while the Ismaili Imams were resident at Alamūt. The handwriting appears to be that of the aforementioned scribe Muḥammad Ḥusayn ibn Mīrzā 'Alī, "the fashioner of 'Arabī footwear" of Sidih, who copied the *Dīwān-i qā'imīyyāt* in 1101/1689. The prayer must have been scribed some time before the *Dīwān*, as the Imām Khalīf Allāh (r. 1082-1090/1671-1680) is mentioned as the Imam of the time. The prayer begins:

اللهم مولانا

توکلت بولانا، توکلت بولانا. توکل کردم و بیزارم از خویش و بدو باز گشتم.

⁶⁹de Bruijn, *Of Piety and Poetry*, p. 81.

⁷⁰Abū'l-Majd Majdūd ibn Ādam Sanā'ī Ghaznawī, *Makātīb-i Sanā'ī*, (ed.) Nadhīr Aḥmad (Tehran, 1379 AH/1960 CE), letter 16, pp. 145-149.

⁷¹Sanā'ī Ghaznawī, *Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqah*, p. 746. See also de Bruijn, *Of Piety and Poetry*, p. 81.

*Tell me, if the Prince of Hell is enraged
What of his wrath? It can't touch me*

*My daily bread is praise of the Chosen Prophet
May my world be sacrificed for him!*

*For his progeny I would give up my life
I despise those who would wish them ill*

*A lover of the Prophet and his progeny I am
For linked to his bounty am I*

*Even if this creed and conviction were depraved
O Lord, keep me always in this depravity*

*(Know) that I have chosen this for myself
For it is in this that I have seen the path of salvation*

The publication of the *Mine of Mysteries* (*Ma'din al-astār*) in 1922 established that Sanā'ī was mentioned in Ismaili works.⁷² However, this text dates, at the earliest, to the 10th/16th century, and given Sanā'ī's fame throughout the Persian-speaking world, it was not at all unusual for his name to be invoked. However, the manner in which he is mentioned is unusual. He is considered as someone who was, like Shaykh-i 'Aṭṭār and Muḥaqqiq-i Rūmī, one of the People of Truth (*ahl-i ḥaqq*). 'People of the Truth' (*ahl-i ḥaqq*) is one of the most common names by which Ismailis designate their own community.⁷³ Further, the text speaks of this triumvirate as being among those who spoke in mysteries and allusions, as opposed to the people of superficial forms (*zāhiriyān*).⁷⁴ While the passage does, unambiguously, testify to the high regard in which the author held the three, and perhaps even suggests that he considered them co-religionists, the text is too late in origin to constitute sound evidence of their actual religious leanings.

The recently published *Poems of the Resurrection* (*Dīwān-i qā'imīyyāt*) by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd-i Kātib and other poets provides earlier evidence that is more suggestive.⁷⁵

⁷²Khayrkhwāh-i Harāṭī (pseud. attribution), "*Shinākht-i imām—1922*", p. 17 (ed.), p. 32 (trans.).

⁷³Virani, *Ismailis in the Middle Ages*, pp. 71–72, 145–146. The designation is found, for example, in many poems in Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd-i Kātib, *Dīwān-i qā'imīyyāt*, (ed.) Sayyid Jalāl Ḥusaynī (Seyyed Jalal Hosseini) Badakhshānī (Badakhchani), *Poems of the Resurrection* (Tehran, 1390 HS/2011 CE), index, *ahl-i ḥaqq*, q.v. My forthcoming study on the various designations used for the Ismailis in a variety of regions, languages and time periods, portions of which have been presented at the Annual Meeting of the Middle East Studies Association (2002), and the Conference for the International Society for Iranian Studies (2012), argues that "People of Truth" is the most universal of all the names used by the Ismailis to designate their own community.

⁷⁴Khayrkhwāh-i Harāṭī (pseud. attrib.), *Shinākht-i imām—1960*, 13; Khayrkhwāh-i Harāṭī (pseud. attrib.), *Shinākht-i imām—1947*, p. 29. Khayrkhwāh-i Harāṭī goes even further in his *Qita'āt*, stating that Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī was a *ḥujjah* of the Imam. Muḥammad Riḍā ibn Khwājāh Sulṭān Ḥusayn Ghūriyānī Khayrkhwāh-i Harāṭī (pseud.), *Qita'āt in Tasnīfat-i Khayr-khwāh-i Heratī* (*Works of Khayr-khwāh Heratī*), (ed.) Wladimir Ivanow (Tehran, 1961), p. 78. I am at an advanced stage in the preparation of critical editions and translations of Khayrkhwāh's *Risālah* and *Qita'āt*, including the hitherto unpublished twenty-seventh *Qita'*.

⁷⁵The following discussion of Sanā'ī in the *Poems of the Resurrection* draws liberally from the pioneering work of Muḥammad-Riḍā Shafī'ī-Kadkanī, "*Qā'imīyyāt wa jāyghāh-i ān dar shi'ir wa adab-i Fārsī*", in *Dīwān-i qā'imīyyāt*, pp. 36–40.

As in *Recognizing God*, Ḥakīm Sanā'ī is the most quoted poet, by means of various literary conventions.

For example, the poet describes himself as a slave of the one who said:

*makun dar jism ū jān manzil kih īn dūn ast ū ān wālā*⁷⁶

Abide not in body and soul, for this one's sordid and that sublime

This is, in fact, the opening line of one of Ḥakīm Sanā'ī's most famous odes.⁷⁷

In another ode meant for the "ears of those who dwell in the sublime portal of the city of our lord (*mawlānā*)", the poet writes:

Balā umīd mī-dāram bah fayḍ-i raḥmat-i 'āmm-at
Kih ān bayt-i Sanā'ī kū bah istighfār kard inshā

Qarīn-i ḥāl-i īn bīchārah gardānī bah faḍl-i khwud
Kih rawshan mī-shavad jān-am badīn yak nuktaḥ-yi gharā

Bah ḥirṣ ar sharbatī khwurdam maḡīr az man kih dar manzil
*Biyābān būd ū tābistān ū āb-i sard ū istisqā*⁷⁸

Indeed, I trust in your overflowing kindness and mercy
For Sanā'ī composed such a verse, seeking forgiveness:

"By your grace, be apprised of the plight of this poor wretch
For hope in a single resplendent point illumines my soul

If I took a sip in greed, snatch it not back
For in my land was but the barren desert,
the scorching sun, the cooling water and my burning thirst"

While extensive quotations are suggestive, the epithets by which Sanā'ī is addressed are particularly noteworthy. For example, in the last couplet of one of his odes, the poet writes:

man bi-nāzam jān-i ān shāh-i ḥakīmān-rā kih guft
*"barg-i bī-bargī nadārī lāf-i darwīshī ma-zan"*⁷⁹

I tenderly laud the spirit of that King of Sages who said:

"If you have not the fig-leaf of poverty, don't boast of being a dervish!"

Similarly, Sanā'ī is the first poet quoted in Ṭūsī and Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd's *Paradise of Submission* (*Rawḍah-yi taslīm*), in which his verse is used to argue that it is not simply testifying to God that separates faith and infidelity, but acknowledgement of His earthly representative:

⁷⁶Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd-i Kātib, *Dīwān-i qā'imīyyāt*, p. 44.

⁷⁷Abū'l-Majd Majdūd ibn Ādam Sanā'ī Ghaznavī, *Dīwān-i Ḥakīm Sanā'ī Ghaznavī bar asās-i mu'tabartaīn nuskhah-hā*, (eds) Parwīz Bābā'ī and Badī' al-Zamān Furūzānfar (Tehran, 1381 HS/[2002 CE]), p. 58.

⁷⁸Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd-i Kātib, *Dīwān-i qā'imīyyāt*, p. 50. Both the first and second editions of the *Dīwān-i qā'imīyyāt* read *ba īn yak nuktaḥ-yi gharā*. I have amended this to *badīn yak nuktaḥ-yi gharā*. Rīdāwī's edition has *bad kardam* in place of *dar manzil*, Sanā'ī Ghaznavī, *Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqah*.

⁷⁹Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd-i Kātib, *Dīwān-i qā'imīyyāt*, poem 128, pp. 338-341.

Kufr ū dīn har dū dar rah-at pūyān
Wahdahū lā sharīk lahu gūyān

Infidelity and religion, both are trotting along Thy path
 Ever-repeating 'He is the One who has no partners'⁸⁰

In his response to the inquiry of a certain Khwājah Muḥammad Bāsa'īd, the Ismaili Imam of Alamūt Khudāwand 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad (d. 653/1255) warns him against those who offer lofty words about the Imam and protest their complete devotion and submission to him, but then proceed to act without any authorisation from him. Against such people, he emphasises the necessity of following the path to reach the destination, of maintaining the heavenly dispensation (*sharī'ah*) to reach the resurrection (*qiyāmah*), of holding fast to the revelation (*tanzīl*) to understand its symbolic elucidation (*ta'wīl*) and of beginning with the outward form (*ẓāhir*) in order to arrive at the inner meaning (*bāṭin*). In this context, he quotes Sanā'ī:

bah ma'nā kay rasad mardum gudhar nā kardah bar asmā?
 How can men arrive at the meaning without passing through the names?⁸¹

Writing about one century after Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd and two centuries after Sanā'ī, the Ismaili poet Ḥakīm Nizārī Quhistānī (d. 720/1320) was to compose his *Debate of Day and Night* (*Munāẓarah-yi rūz ū shab*) in the same metre as Sanā'ī's three *mathnawīs*, including *The Orchard of Reality* (*Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqah*).⁸² Curiously, one of the other poets whom he chose to honour in a similar fashion was Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār, the *hazaj* metre (— — — | ~ — — — | ~ — —) of whose *Tale of Khusraw* (*Khusraw-nāmah*) he emulated in his longest composition, the hitherto unpublished *Azhar and Mazhar* (*Azhar ū Mazhar*).⁸³ He writes:

⁸⁰ Cited and translated in Tūsi and Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd-i Kātib, *Rawḍah-yi taslīm* (*Taşavvurāt*), §3.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 213–214 (ed.), pp. 172–173 (trans.); Sanā'ī Ghaznawī, *Dīwān*, p. 58.

⁸² Sa'd al-Dīn ibn Shams al-Dīn Ḥakīm Nizārī Quhistānī, *Mathnawī-yi Rūz ū Shab*, (ed.) Naṣr Allāh (Nasrollah) Pūrjavādī (Pourjavady), *Ruz o Shab: The Debate Between Day and Night; A Mathnawi Composed in 699/1300* (Tehran, 1385 HS/2006 CE).

⁸³ Naṣr Allāh (Nasrollah) Pūrjavādī (Pourjavady), "Muqaddamah-yi musaḥḥih", "Ruz o Shab: The Debate between Day and Night; A Mathnawi Composed in 699/1300", in *Mathnawī-yi rūz-ū shab: Surūdah-yi Ḥakīm Nizārī Quhistānī bih sāl-i 699*, (ed.) Naṣr Allāh (Nasrollah) Pūrjavādī (Pourjavady) (Tehran, 1385 HS/2006 CE), p. 8. Pūrjavādī points out that Nizārī's early attribution of this poem to the pen of 'Aṭṭār should make us reconsider doubts that have been raised about his authorship. Regarding these doubts, see Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār, *Mukhtār-nāmah: Majmū'ah-yi rubā'īyāt* (Tehran, 1375 HS/1996 CE), pp. 22–59, as cited in Hermann Landolt, "'Aṭṭār, Sufism and Ismailism", in *'Aṭṭār and the Persian Sufi Tradition: The Art of Spiritual Flight*, (eds) Leonard Lewisohn and Christopher Shackle (London, 2006), p. 21 n.3. Muḥammad-Riḍā Shafī'ī-Kadkanī, *Zabūr-i Pārsī: Niḡālī bih zīndagī wa ghazal-hā-yi 'Aṭṭār* (Tehran, 1378 HS/1999 CE), pp. 96–101. The year of composition of *Azhar wa Mazhar* 700/1301 found in the following verses:

mu'arakh mī kunam īn nazm az āghāz
kīh ākhir kay az ū pardākhtam bāz

bih sāl-i haft sad az waqt-i hijrat
durūd az mā bar Aḥmad bād ū 'itrat

Sa'd al-Dīn ibn Shams al-Dīn Ḥakīm Nizārī Quhistānī, "Azhar wa Mazhar", 837 AH/[1434 CE]; MS 415, Российская национальная библиотека (National Library of Russia); 487 recto. A description of the manuscript is found in Boris Andreevich Dorn, *Catalogue des manuscrits et xylographes orientaux de la Bibliothèque impériale publique de St. Pétersbourg* (St Petersburg, 1852), p. 365.

Marā īn dāstān kaz dast bar khāst
Ba-gūyam kaz kudāmīn mast bar khwāst

Tatabbu' kardah-yi 'Aṭṭār būdam
Az ān zīn shākh bar khūrdār būdam...

Zi Khusraw-nāmah bihtar dāstan nīst
*Ki Khusraw-nāmah-yi ū gul-sitānī-st*⁸⁴

I shall tell from which intoxicated lover came this tale
 That sprung from my hands

I was a follower in the footsteps of 'Aṭṭār
 And thus fortune shone upon me...

There is no better tale than that of Khusraw
 For his *Khusraw-nāmah* is a garden of roses

Soon after Alamūt's fall, therefore, we see classical poets (who were later to inspire the Ṣūfīs) inspiring the Ismailis as well.

As de Bruijn notes, among the Muslim poets, just as Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī is commonly referred to by the honorific epithet "Mawlānā", Sa'dī (691/1292) as "Shaykh", Ḥāfiẓ (792/1390) as "Khwājah" and Jāmī (898/1492) as "Mullā", Sanā'ī was favoured especially (though not exclusively) with the title "Ḥakīm".⁸⁵ Indeed, he made copious use of the word *ḥikmah* in his poetry.⁸⁶ Muslim tradition has used the word *ḥakīm*, translated here as "sage", in both a general sense and as a technical term. For example, the word is often employed in the sense of "philosopher".⁸⁷ In Ismaili works, it frequently has a specific connotation, reflecting the manner in which the Quran regularly pairs the concept of the Book (*al-kitāb*) with that of the Wisdom (*al-ḥikmah*), as in 2:129, 2:151, 2:231, 3:48, 3:81, 3:164, 4:54, 4:113, 5:110, and 62:2.

A typical example is provided in *The Symbolic Meaning of the Pillars of Islam (Ta'wīl da'ā'im al-Islām)* of al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān (d. 363/974), foremost jurist of the Fāṭimids. He begins by citing the following Quranic verses:

Kamā arsalnā fīkum rasūl minkum yatlū 'alaykum āyātīnā wa-yuzakkīkum wa-yu'allimukum al-kitāb wa'l-ḥikmah wa-yu'allimukum mā lam takūnū ta'lamūn (2:151)

Just as we have sent to you a messenger from amongst you who recites our signs to you, purifies you, teaches you the Book (*al-kitāb*) and the Wisdom (*al-ḥikmah*), and teaches you that which you knew not.

⁸⁴ Ḥakīm Nizāī Quhistānī, "Azhar wa Mazhar"; MS 415; Российская национальная библиотека (National Library of Russia); 487 recto.

⁸⁵ de Bruijn, *Of Piety and Poetry*, p. 22.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 53–54.

⁸⁷ Several interpretations of the term in different Muslim environments are found in Christopher Melchert, "The Interpretation of Three Qur'anic Terms (*Siyāha*, *Ḥikma* and *Ṣiddīq*) of Special Interest to the Early Renunciants", in *The Meaning of the Word: Lexicology and Qur'anic Exegesis*, (ed.) Stephen R. Burge (Oxford, 2015), pp. 96–102.

Huwa al-ladhī ba'atha fi'l-ummiyyīn rasūl minhum yatū 'alayhim āyātih wa-yuzakkithim wa-yu'allimuhum al-kitāb wa'l-ḥikmah wa-in kānū min qabl lafi ḍalāl mubīn (62:2)

He is the one who sent among the unlettered ones a messenger from among them reciting to them our signs, purifying them and teaching them the Book (*al-kitāb*) and the Wisdom (*al-ḥikmah*), though before this they were in clear error.⁸⁸

Commenting on these verses, he writes:

Here, the outer meaning (*ẓāhir*) of *al-kitāb* is the Book of God, while *al-ḥikmah* refers to what God's Messenger (may God bless him and give him peace) elucidates and reports from Him. The inner meaning (*bāṭin*) of *al-kitāb*, as we have mentioned, is the Imam, and the inner meaning of *al-ḥikmah* is the symbolic spiritual elucidation (*al-ta'wīl al-bāṭin*). God's Messenger teaches them both the exoteric and spiritual meanings according to their levels and stations.⁸⁹

Similarly, al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī writes:

God, may His power be exalted, says:

Wa-man yu'ta al-ḥikmah fa-qad ūtiya khayran kathīra (2:269)

Those upon whom the Wisdom (*al-ḥikmah*) is bestowed have been granted an abundant good And He says:

Wa-qad ātaynā āl Ibrāhīm al-kitāb wa'l-ḥikmah (4:54)

We had given the descendants of Abraham the Book (*al-kitāb*) and the Wisdom (*al-ḥikmah*)

Here we have the Book commonly circulating among the people, easily available to all and sundry. But where is the Wisdom? Can it be anything other than the science of symbolic elucidation (*'ilm al-ta'wīl*), by which the Imams from the descendants of the Messenger are uniquely distinguished (peace be upon him and upon them)?⁹⁰

Centuries later, Mullā Ṣadrā, referring to the same Quranic verse (2:269) as al-Mu'ayyad, was also to attribute the concept of wisdom (*ḥikmah*) specifically to the Imams. He writes:

As you learned, there are two proofs, one esoteric (*bāṭinah*) and one exoteric (*ẓāhirah*). Similarly, there are two wisdoms, one hidden (*mastūrah*) and one manifest (*makshūfah*). The hidden wisdom is in the hearts of the Prophets and Imams (*al-awliyyā'*), for they are the divine sages (*al-ḥukamā' al-ilāhiyyūn*). Every one of them is, in one respect, a sage (*ḥakīm*), and in another, wisdom (*ḥikmah*), as we established in [our principle] of the unification of the actualised intellect (*al-'aql bi'l-fi'l*) and the intellector (*al-'āqil*). As for the manifest wisdom (*al-ḥikmah al-ẓāhirah*), it is the essences (sg. *dhāt*) of these individuals. Their very persons are the specific instances of wisdom (*ashkhāṣ al-ḥikmah*). Anyone who beholds one of them has a vision of the form of wisdom (*ṣūrat al-ḥikmah*) and its specific instance (*shakhs*). This is the ultimate end of the bestowal of

⁸⁸The Ismaili concept of *ummi*, here left simply as "unlettered", is explored in greater depth in Abū Naṣr Hibat Allāh ibn Abī 'Imrān Mūsā al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, *al-Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyah: al-mi'ah al-thāniyah*, (ed.) Ḥātim Ḥamīd al-Dīn, 3 vols (Oxford, 1407 AH/1986 CE), Vol. 2, pp. 467-468; Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Zād al-musāfir*, pp. 194-195. Ḥakīm Nāṣir-i Khusraw, for example, speaks of this concept in terms of the veils of the Prophet's insight being lifted, so that he could read the signs of God in creation.

⁸⁹al-Nu' mān, *Ta'wīl al-da'ā'im*, Vol. 1, pp. 70-71.

⁹⁰al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, *al-Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyah*, Vol. 2, p. 302. See also al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, *al-Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyah*, Vol. 1, p. 359.

wisdom and of abundant good upon ordinary people. Thus, whoever recognizes his Imam and obeys him, he obeys God, and wisdom and abundant good are bestowed upon him (2:269). This is because the Imam, peace be upon him, is wisdom itself, as we have explained.⁹¹

The pairing of the Book and the Wisdom in the Quran was therefore of central importance to Ismaili thinkers. The former was frequently associated with the literal revelation (*tanẓīl*) and the latter with its symbolic elucidation (*ta'wīl*) by the Imam, conveyed through his appointees in the spiritual hierarchy (*ḥudūd*). The word *ḥakīm* (sage), at least in its technical sense, could therefore only be attributed to the Imam himself, or to someone appointed by the Imam as capable of spiritual elucidation. In his *Confluence of Two Wisdoms* (*Jāmi' al-ḥikmatayn*), Nāṣir-i Khusraw avers the superiority of the people of symbolic elucidation (*ta'wīl*) and divine support (*ta'yīd*) over the philosophers, who depend solely on the human intellect, without the benefit of divine knowledge. This, he explains, is received from those vested with knowledge, the *rāsikhūn fī'l-ʿilm*, that is, the Prophet, 'Alī, and their descendants. He further writes that the Imam of the Time is the “treasure keeper of divine wisdom descended from God’s chosen Prophet”.⁹² As he explains in the *Dīwān*, the Imam’s wisdom is immaculate and devoid of both the extremes of anthropomorphism (*tashbīh*) and agnosticism (*ta'īl*):

*ḥikmat az ḥaḍrat-i farzand-i nabī bāyad just
pāk ū pākīzah zi tashbīh ū zi ta'īl chū sīm*⁹³

Wisdom (*ḥikmat*) must be sought from the exalted presence of the Prophet’s son
Chaste and unsullied as silver, pure of anthropomorphism and agnosticism

The connotation of *Sanāʿī* being referred to as a king of the sages (*shāh-i ḥakīmān*) in the *Poems of the Resurrection* takes on further importance in light of the usage of the term *ḥakīm* in the *Ethics of Muḥtasham* (*Akhlāq-i Muḥtashamī*), an Ismaili treatise prepared by Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥtasham of Quhistān (d. 655/1257) and his protégé, Naṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274). As outlined in the introduction, the book, divided into 40 chapters dealing with a wide variety of ethical topics, brings together verses from the Quran, the reports of the Prophet Muḥammad (*ḥadīths*), the words of the Imams, and the sayings of the inviters (*dāʿīs*), sages (*ḥakīms*) and other learned people (*buzurgān*).⁹⁴ The inclusion of the term *ḥakīm*, along with the more explicit and clearly defined term *dāʿī*, again suggests that in referring to *Sanāʿī* as a *ḥakīm*, the *Poems of the Resurrection* may have had a particularly religious function in mind, one associated with the Ismaili hierarchy and the appointees of the Imam. In places, *Sanāʿī* in fact refers to the particular type of poetry he composed as a poetry of *ḥikmat*.⁹⁵ It

⁹¹Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī Mullā Sadrā, *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-kāfi: Kitāb faḍl al-ʿilm wa-Kitāb al-ḥujjah*, (eds) Muḥammad Khwājāwī and 'Alī Nūrī, 2nd edition, 4 vols (Tehran, 1383 HS/2004 CE), Vol. 2, p. 551. Translated in Meisami, “Discourses on Knowledge”, pp. 194–195, translation modified.

⁹²Ḥakīm Abū Muʿīn Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Jāmi' al-ḥikmatayn*, (eds) Henry Corbin and Muḥammad Muʿīn, *Kitāb-e Jāmi' al-Hikmatayn: Le livre réunissant les deux sagesse; ou harmonie de la philosophie Grecque et de la théosophie Ismaélienne* (Tehran, 1953), p. 16. *Wārith-i maqām* in the text should be read *maqām-i wārithat*.

⁹³Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Dīwān-i Nāṣir-i Khusraw—Mīnuwī and Muḥaqqiq*, Vol. 1, poem 170, p. 356.

⁹⁴Nāṣir al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥīm ibn Abī Manṣūr Muḥtasham and Naṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Ṭūsī, *Akhlāq-i Muḥtashamī* (Tehran, 1339 HS/1960 CE), pp. 1–2. I am currently preparing an English translation of this work.

⁹⁵de Bruijn, *Of Piety and Poetry*, p. 22.

should be noted that Nāṣir-i Khusraw and Nizārī Quhistānī, two of the major Ismaili poets in Persian, are also referred to as *ḥakīm*.

Most explicit in the *Poems of the Resurrection*, however, is the following couplet:

sham 'ū tāj-i dā 'īyān ya 'nī Sanā'ī dād nazm
*ay khudāwandān-i māl al-i 'tibār al-i 'tibār*⁹⁶

Candle and crown of the *dā 'īs*, Sanā'ī did sing:

O you who have accumulated wealth, take heed, take heed!

The verse is unambiguous. The poet clearly considered Sanā'ī not only a co-religionist, but declared him an Ismaili *dā 'ī*, or inviter to the faith. Odes 4 and 79 in the *Poems of the Resurrection* are direct imitations of Sanā'ī's work and, more telling, a complete ode of Sanā'ī is incorporated in the oldest manuscript of this *Dīwān* of Ismaili poetry.⁹⁷

Kadkanī adduces further suggestive evidence in Kāshānī's *Cream of Chronicles* (*Zubdat al-tawārīkh*). In his section on the Ismailis, Kāshānī cites two poems of Sanā'ī castigating the Umayyad Abū Sufyān (d. 32/653) and his descendants for the wrongs they had inflicted upon the prophet's family. The third poem, which is also found in Sanā'ī's corpus, is headed by a sentence that says "Again, a dignitary among their [viz., the Ismaili] notables says..."⁹⁸ Kadkanī argues that the statement is even stronger, as the scribe of the manuscript used for the critical edition often errs in writing *a 'īyān* (اعيان) rather than *dā 'īyān* (داعيان), thus providing an even more explicit function for Sanā'ī's activities among the Ismailis, not simply as a notable, but as a *dā 'ī*. It should be recalled that at this time, virtually all Ismailis living beyond the protection of their own political domains would, of necessity, have had to conceal their identities.⁹⁹ Given these allusions, one also wonders whether any deeper meaning should be attributed to the Vizier Qiwām al-Dīn Darguzīnī's (d. 527/1133) desire to meet Sanā'ī, as the former had been accused by his detractors of being an Ismaili.¹⁰⁰

One is reminded of Naṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī's forthright statement in *The Journey* (*Sayr ū sulūk*) that Tāj al-Dīn al-Shahrastānī was an Ismaili *dā 'ī*.¹⁰¹ Modern scholarship, particularly that of Muḥammad Riḍā Jalālī Nā'īmī, Muḥammad Taqī Dānishpazhūh, Wilferd Madelung, Jean Jolivet, Guy Monnot, Diana Steigerwald and Toby Mayer, has borne out Ṭūsī's remark,

⁹⁶ Ḥasan-i Maḥmūd-i Kātib, *Dīwān-i qā'imiyyāt*, p. 218; Sanā'ī Ghaznawī, *Dīwān*, p. 126.

⁹⁷ Sayyid Jalāl Ḥusaynī (Seyyed Jalal Hosseini) Badakhshānī (Badakhchani), "Muqaddimah-yi muṣaḥḥiḥī", in *Dīwān-i qā'imiyyāt*, (ed.) Sayyid Jalāl Ḥusaynī (Seyyed Jalal Hosseini) Badakhshānī (Badakhchani) (Tehran, 1390 HS/2011 CE), p. 10.

⁹⁸ Kāshānī, *Zubdat*, p. 9. The same poem, with minor variations, can be found on p. 62 of the critical edition. The editor of the *Zubdat* provides additional references for the poetry's attribution to Sanā'ī in his notes. The third poem is also attributed to other poets, as Kadkanī notes. However, the fact that the first two poems are explicitly attributed to Sanā'ī by Kāshānī strongly suggests that he felt the third poem was also Sanā'ī's.

⁹⁹ For contemporary examples of this, refer to my study of Kāshānī's account of Dihkhudā (Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ) and Ra'īs Muẓaffār in Virānī, "Alamūt, Ismailism and Khwājah Qāsim Tushtārī's *Recognizing God*".

¹⁰⁰ de Bruijn, *Of Piety and Poetry*, pp. 68–71; Sanā'ī Ghaznawī, *Makātib-i Sanā'ī*, pp. 130–136. Sanā'ī's professional dealings and personal friendship with the poet 'Uthmān-i Mukhtārī, who introduced him to one of his relatives as "having no equal among his contemporaries", may also deserve deeper investigation, as Mukhtārī had served at the court of the ruler of Ṭabas-i Gilakī, the chief city of the Ismaili stronghold of Quhistān. 'Uthmān ibn Muḥammad Mukhtārī Ghaznawī, *Dīwān-i 'Uthmān Mukhtārī*, (ed.) Jalāl al-Dīn Humā'ī (Tehran, 1341 HS/1962 CE), pp. 7, 245, as cited in de Bruijn, *Of Piety and Poetry*, p. 161. In this regard see also *ibid.*, pp. 150–151, and Tetley, *The Ghaznavid and Seljuk Turks*, p. 138.

¹⁰¹ Ṭūsī, *Contemplation*, p. 6 (ed.), p. 26 (trans.).

and maintains that, despite his external appearance as a Shāfiʿī Sunni of the Ashʿarī persuasion, at heart al-Shahraṣṭānī adhered to Ismailism.¹⁰² Madelung and Mayer neatly summarise it as follows, “al-Shahraṣṭānī can thus be described as Sunni socially and communally, but as Shiʿī and Ismaʿīli in some of his core beliefs and religious thought”.¹⁰³

Might Sanāʿī’s situation have been similar? It is beyond the scope of this article to conduct an in-depth examination of Sanāʿī’s writings for indications of commonalities with Ismaili thought. That said, it is easy to see how, for example, his *Worshippers’ Journey to the Place of Return* (*Sayr al-ʿibād ilāʾl-maʿād*), with its narrative detailing a search through a hierarchy for the perfect guide, who is the epiphany of the creative fiat *kun* and who leads the seeker along the path of perfection, might have been interpreted by Ismaili readers as an allegory emanating from their own tradition. Many of these same themes recur in the very first lines of Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī’s spiritual autobiography, in which he describes the Imam as:

the lord of the age (*khudāwand-i zamān*), the legitimate [Imam] of this epoch, the rightful leader, the manifestation of the word of God in the two worlds, the master of the ‘two weighty things’ (*thaqalayn*), the guardian of the east and the west—may God exalt his word (*kalimah*) and spread his invitation (*daʿwat*) across the earth.¹⁰⁴

Indeed, as some of the examples in *Recognizing God* demonstrate, passages in Sanāʿī’s *Garden of Reality* certainly were used to illustrate themes of Ismaili thought. While the testimony of *Recognizing God* is by no means unequivocal, when combined with statements from such sources as the *Poems of the Resurrection* and Kāshānī’s *Cream of Chronicles*, along with contemporary testimony in which Sanāʿī was accused of Shiʿism, it does shed further light on the question. At the very least, *Recognizing God* demonstrates that immediately after Sanāʿī’s death, Ismaili authors were already citing his poetry in their religious works.

Literary culture in the fortresses and the development of pious poetry: “Verses on the wisdom and praise of his progeny”

Rashīd al-Dīn and Kāshānī tell us of the literary inclinations of Raʾīs Muẓaffar and his son Sharaf al-Dīn, the Ismaili leaders at the fortress of Girdkūh.¹⁰⁵ Raʾīs Muẓaffar was a cultivated author of belletristic leanings. He had studied under ʿAbd al-Malik ibn ʿAṭṭāsh, whom Ibn al-Athīr described as “an eloquent litterateur and skilled calligrapher”.¹⁰⁶ He himself was described as raising the Saljūq Prince Ismāʿīl, Amīrdād Ḥabashī’s offspring,

¹⁰²Hermann Landolt, “Foreword”, in *Keys to the Arcana: Shahraṣṭānī’s Esoteric Commentary on the Qurʾān; A Translation of the Commentary on Sūrah al-Fāṭiḥa from Muhammad b. ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Shahraṣṭānī’s Maḥāṭib al-Asrār wa Maṣābiḥ al-Abḥār*, (ed.) Toby Mayer (London, 2009), provides a useful review of many of the developments of this point of view in scholarship. See also Muḥammad Taqī Dānishpazhūh, “Dāʿī al-duʿāt Taj al-Dīn Shahraṣṭānah”, *Nāmāh-yi Āstān-i Quds*, 7, 2–3 (1346 HS/1967 CE); Muḥammad Taqī Dānishpazhūh, “Dāʿī al-duʿāt Taj al-Dīn Shahraṣṭānah”, *Nāmāh-yi Āstān-i Quds*, 9, 4 (1347 HS/1968 CE); Diane Steigerwald, *La pensée philosophique et théologique de Shahraṣṭānī* (m. 548/1153), Sainte-Foy, Québec, 1997).

¹⁰³Wilferd Madelung and Toby Mayer, “Introduction: Al-Shahraṣṭānī, Ismaʿīlism and Philosophy”, in *Struggling with the Philosopher: A Refutation of Avicenna’s Metaphysics, A New Arabic Edition and English Translation of Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Shahraṣṭānī’s Kitāb al-Muṣāraʿa* (London, 2001), p. 4.

¹⁰⁴Ṭūsī, *Contemplation*, p. 1 (ed.), p. 23 (trans.), romanisation and translation slightly emended.

¹⁰⁵See Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jāmiʿ al-Tawārīkh: Taʾrīkh-i Ismāʿīliyyān*, pp. 116–119; Kāshānī, *Zubdat*, pp. 151–155. The relevant passages are translated in Virani, “Alamūt, Ismailism and Khwājah Qāsim Tushtarī’s *Recognizing God*”.

¹⁰⁶Izz al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fīʾl-taʾrīkh*, (ed.) ʿAlī Shīrī (Bayrūt, 1425 AH/2004 CE), Vol. 9, p. 67.

“cultivating in him grace, wisdom, and knowledge of literature and the arts”. His son would have been exposed to the same genteel upbringing. The fact that Rashīd al-Dīn and Kāshānī describe him, like his father, as a cultivated litterateur, makes it very likely that he also composed poetry and that the verses with the pen name Qāsim in *Recognizing God* are his. The combination of genteel tastes and financial means would have made the patronage of literature and the arts at Girdkūh a distinct possibility, and it seems likely that this was, indeed, the case.

An example of such pursuits may be found in the biography of Abū'l-'Alā' Ganjawī (d. *circa* 554/1160).¹⁰⁷ One of the outstanding poets of the 6th/12th century, Ganjawī was known as the Preceptor of Poets (*ustād al-shu'arā'*), having been the mentor of the illustrious Falakī and Khāqānī Shīrwānī. He had a close relationship with his pupil, to whom he gave the pen name “Khāqānī”.¹⁰⁸ Khāqānī also married his master's daughter. However, the two poets had a falling out and in one of his poems Khāqānī attacks his teacher, accusing him, among other things, of being an Ismaili, particularly because of his association with Dāmghān, and, by extension, of nearby Girdkūh, calling him “the dog of Dāmghān, bait in the trap of the Magians”.¹⁰⁹ Kadkanī argues that the loss of the poetic *dīwān* of such an important Persian poet as Ganjawī is likely to have been the result of his association with the Ismailis of Girdkūh.¹¹⁰ For our purposes, it does not matter whether Khāqānī's aspersions against his teacher's religious faith were true so much as the fact that Abū'l-'Alā' Ganjawī stayed at Girdkūh, ostensibly contributing to the literary culture there.

Might the tradition of a Persian literary culture at the Ismaili fortresses, and particularly the development of Persian poetry as a vehicle for expressing pious, rather than just secular, sentiments, have been a continuation of earlier Shī'ī, and particularly Ismaili, developments in this domain? It is well-known that Sanā'ī's oeuvre represents a watershed in the evolution of Persian poetry in terms of its expression of homiletic and religious sentiment. While, of course, several previous poets had occasionally articulated such feelings, as de Bruijn noted, the only major Persian poets who could be considered forerunners of Sanā'ī in this regard are Kisā'ī and Nāṣir-i Khusraw. We may add that all three of these poets are commonly referred to as *ḥakīm*.

While much of Kisā'ī's oeuvre has now been lost, the early 13th century anthologist Muḥammad 'Awfī writes in his *Essences of Intellects* (*Lubāb al-albāb*):

The Ḥakīm, Kisā'ī Marwazī: Kisā'ī was a poet who held close the cloak (*kisā'*) of asceticism, and with the crown of poverty upon his head, swept away dirt from the plains of the heart with the sleeve of submission (*taslīm*), and settled the dust of greed from the desert of his breast with tears streaming from his eyes. The majority of his verses were about ascetic devotion and homily, and were in praise of the People of the House of Prophecy (*ahl-i bayt-i nubuwvat*).¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷Z. Sajjādi, “Abu'l-'Alā' Ganjavī, Neẓām-al-Dīn Maḥmūd”, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (2011), (ed.) Yarshater, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/abul-ala-ganjavi-poet>, [accessed 28 May 2018].

¹⁰⁸Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Sajjādi, “Muqaddimah”, in *Dīwān-i Khāqānī-yi Shīrwānī*, (ed.) Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Sajjādi (Tehran, 1382 AH/1338 HS/[1960 CE]), p. iii.

¹⁰⁹Badī' al-Zamān Furūzānfar, *Sukhan wa sukhawārān*, reprint ed., 2 vols (Tehran, 1369 HS/1990 CE), Vol. 2, p. 323.

¹¹⁰Shafī'ī-Kadkanī, “Qā'imīyyāt wa jāyghāh-i ān dar sh'ir wa adab-i Fārsī”, in *Dīwān-i qā'imīyyāt*, p. 14.

¹¹¹'Awfī, *Lubāb al-albāb*, Vol. 2, p. 33.

De Bruijn suggests the pen name Kisā'ī may allude to the craft of a tailor. However, given the poet's devotion to the People of the House, that is, the family of the Prophet, the pen name may very well allude to his attachment to the *ahl al-kisā'*, the People of the Cloak—the Prophet Muḥammad himself; his daughter, Fāṭimah; her husband and the cousin of the Prophet, 'Alī; and the Prophet's two grandsons by this marriage al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, who form the nucleus of the “House of Prophecy”. It is in light of the “Tradition of the Cloak”, *ḥadīth al-kisā'*, that both Shī'ī and Sunnī commentators overwhelmingly interpret the Quranic verse of purification (*taḥḥūr*). According to this account, the Prophet wrapped himself and the other four members of his family in his cloak, solemnly declaring, “O God, these are the People of my House (*ahl bayt*)!” He then recited the following Quranic verse, “God desires only to remove impurity from you, O People of the House (*ahl al-bayt*), and to purify you completely” (33:33).¹¹²

Nāṣir-i Khusraw, the Ismaili *ḥujjat*, saw himself as continuing Kisā'ī's legacy, held the poetry of Kisā'ī in esteem and referenced him in a number of his odes, claiming to have breathed new life into his predecessor's verses and to have surpassed them:

gar sukhan-hā-yi Kisā'ī shudah pīrand ū da'īf
sukhan-i ḥujjat bā quwwat ū tāzah ū burnā'st

If the poesie of Kisā'ī has become old and frail
Ḥujjat's verses convey power, freshness and youth!¹¹³

bar ḥikmat ū bar midḥat-i awlād-i payambar
ash'ār hamī-gū'ī bah har waqt chū Ḥassān

pizhmurd badīn shi'r-i tū ān shi'r-i Kisā'ī
“In *gumbad-i gardān kih bar āwurd badīn sān?*”

bar baḥr-i hazaj guftī ū taqī'ash kardī
*maf'ūlu mafā'īlu mafā'īlu fa'ūlān*¹¹⁴

Like Ḥassān, the Prophet's poet, you compose at all times
Verses on the wisdom and praise of his progeny

Before this poesie of yours, wilted has Kisā'ī's verse:
“Who brought forth this whirling dome in this manner?”

¹¹²For further details and references, see Shafique N. Virani, “Ahl al-Bayt”, in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, (ed.) Jones.

¹¹³Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Dīwān-i Nāṣir-i Khusraw—Mīnuwī and Muḥaqqiq*, Vol. 1, poem 10, 23; Ḥakīm Abū Mu'īn Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Dīwān-i ash'ār-i Ḥakīm Abū Mu'īn Ḥamīd al-Dīn Nāṣir-i Khusraw Qubādiyānī: Ba inḍimām-i Rawshanā'ī-ī-nāmāh, Sa'ādāt-nāmāh, wa Risālah-i ba nathr dar jawāb-i nawād ū yak su'āl*, (eds) Naṣr Allāh Taqawī and Mujtabā Mīnuwī, Mahdī Suhaylī reprint edition (Tehran, 1339 HS/[1960 CE]; originally published, Tehran, 1304-1307 HS/1925-1928 CE), p. 47; J. T. P. de Bruijn, “Kesā'ī Marvazī”, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (2008), (ed.) Yarshater, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/kesai-marvazi-persian-poet>, [accessed 28 May 2018].

¹¹⁴Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Dīwān-i Nāṣir-i Khusraw—Taqawī, Mīnuwī and Taqīzadah*, p. 354; Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Dīwān-i Nāṣir-i Khusraw—Mīnuwī and Muḥaqqiq*, Vol. 1. See also indices, q.v. Kisā'ī. Muḥammad Amīn Riyāḥī, “Qasīdah-i az Kisā'ī Marvazī”, *Yaghmā*, 22, 10 (1969); Muḥammad Amīn Riyāḥī, “Pīshraw-i Nāṣir-i Khusraw”, *Yaghmā*, 27, 10 (1974); Muḥammad Amīn Riyāḥī, “Yād-nāmāh-yi Nāṣir-i Khusraw”, (Mashhad, 2535 Shahinshāhī/[1355 HS]/1976 CE).

Like him you chanted this poem, scanning it in Hazaj, the “shaking metre”

Dam dam di | di dam dam di | di dam dam di | di dam dam

Scholars such as Muḥammad Mu‘īn and Sa‘īd Nafīsī are of the opinion that Kisā‘ī was an Ismaili Shī‘ī, while de Bruijn, basing his opinion on testimony in ‘Abd al-Jalīl Rāzī’s 6th/12th century *Book on the Shamelessness of the Haters of the Prophet’s Family, in Refutation of the Book Disgraces of the Shī‘īs* (*Ba‘ḍ mathālib al-Nawāṣib fī naqḍ ba‘ḍ faḍā’ih al-Rawāfiḍ*), suggests that he was a Twelver Shī‘ī.¹¹⁵ Given the closeness of these two sister schools of Imāmī Shī‘ism, the problem is not easy to solve, particularly as Kisā‘ī’s complete *Dīwān* has been lost to posterity.

We also see a parallel pietistic trend in the development of Arabic Ismaili poetry of the same period. Tahera Qutbuddin has argued that al-Mu‘ayyad fī’l-Dīn al-Shūrāzī, a contemporary of Nāṣir-i Khusraw, inaugurated a new tradition of religious commitment in Arabic poetry under the Fāṭimids.¹¹⁶ While earlier Fāṭimid poets writing in Arabic, such as Ibn Hānī’ (d. *circa* 362/973), did express religious sentiment in verse, the homiletic element was not prominent. Similarly, early Persian poetry lacks the full development of religious and pietistic qualities. Rūdakī (d. *circa* 329/941), a contemporary of the Fāṭimid caliph al-Mahdī (d. 322/934), became well-known as “Adam of the Poets” (*ādam-i shu‘arā*) because of his role in inaugurating new Persian as a literary medium. We can establish with some confidence that he was an Ismaili. The Sāmānid poet, Ma‘rūf Balkhī (fl. 4th/10th century), writes:

az Rūdakī shunīdam sulṭān-i shā‘irān:

“kandar jahān bah kas ma-g(i)raw juz bah Fāṭimī”

I heard this from Rudakī, Sulṭān of poets:

“Pledge yourself to nobody in this world, save to the Fāṭimid”¹¹⁷

While Rūdakī’s *Dīwān* is no longer extant, the surviving fragments of his poetry are largely secular in nature, albeit with certain homiletic, though perhaps not overtly religious, themes.¹¹⁸ Thus, with al-Mu‘ayyad in Arabic and Kisā‘ī and Nāṣir-i Khusraw in Persian, we see the development of a new category of poetry, one which spoke of a spiritual world and

¹¹⁵Aḥmad ibn ‘Umar Niẓāmī-yi ‘Arūḍī-yi Samarqandī, *Chahār maqālah*, (eds) Muḥammad Qazwīnī and Muḥammad Mu‘īn (Tehran, 1955), p. 97 (ed.), pp. 89–97 (commentary), and Sa‘īd Nafīsī, *Ta’rīkh-i nazm wa nathr dar Īrān wa dar zabān-i Fārsī*, 2 vols (Tehran, 1344 HS/[1965 CE]), Vol. 1, pp. 26, 37–38; de Bruijn, “Kesā‘ī Marvazī”, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*. On ‘Abd al-Jalīl Rāzī, see Wilferd Madelung, “‘Abd-Al-Jalīl Rāzī”, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (2011), (ed.) Yarshater, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/abd-al-jalil-qazvini-razi-emami-shiite-scholar-12th-century>, [accessed 28 May 2018].

¹¹⁶Tahera Qutbuddin, *Al-Mu‘ayyad al-Shūrāzī and Fatimid Da‘wa Poetry: A Case of Commitment in Classical Arabic Literature* (Leiden, 2005), *passim*. See also Abū Naṣr Hibat Allāh ibn Abī ‘Imrān Mūsā al-Mu‘ayyad fī’l-Dīn al-Shūrāzī, *Dīwān*, (ed.) Muḥammad Kāmil Ḥusayn, *Dīwān al-Mu‘ayyad fī-al-Dīn dā‘ī al-du‘āt* (al-Qāhirah, 1949); Abū Naṣr Hibat Allāh ibn Abī ‘Imrān Mūsā al-Mu‘ayyad fī’l-Dīn al-Shūrāzī, *Dīwān*, (trans.) Mohamad Adra, *Mount of Knowledge, Sword of Eloquence: Collected Poems of an Ismaili Muslim Scholar in Fatimid Egypt; A Translation from the Original Arabic of al-Mu‘ayyad al-Shūrāzī’s Dīwān* (London, 2011).

¹¹⁷The verse is recorded in the writings of ‘Awfī, *Lubāb al-albāb*, and Amīn Aḥmad Rāzī in *Tadhkira-yi haft iqlīm*, see Nafīsī, *Ta’rīkh-i nazm wa nathr dar Īrān wa dar zabān-i Fārsī*, Vol. 1, pp. 264, 282, 296. Ḥujjat Allāh Tibyāniyān, “Rūdakī”, in *Dānishnāmah-yi Adab-i Fārsī: Adab-i Fārsī dar Āsyā-yi Miyanah* (*An Encyclopedia of Persian Literature: Persian Literature in Central Asia*), (ed.) Ḥasan Anūshah, 2nd edition, 5 vols (Tehran, 1380 HS/2001 CE), Vol. 1, pp. 460–463.

¹¹⁸François C. de Blois, “Rūdakī”, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, (eds) Bearman et al., http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/rudaki-SIM_63197s.num=0&s.f.s2_par-ent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&s.q=rudaki.

in which the religious, devotional and homiletic elements were not only extremely prominent but were, in fact, the dominant force.

Of piety and poetry: “‘Aṭṭār was the spirit, Sanā’ī his eyes twain”

The trend of pious poetry, which had gained prominence in a Shī’ī environment, was continued and taken in new directions by Sanā’ī. By his writings it spread throughout the Persianate regions, inspiring wide appreciation. In particular, one may note his influence on two successors, Farīd al-Dīn ‘Aṭṭār (d. *circa* 618/1221) and Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (d. 672/1273), exemplified in Rūmī’s well-known verse:

*‘Aṭṭār rūḥ būd ū Sanā’ī dū chashm-i ū
mā az pay-i Sanā’ī ū ‘Aṭṭār āmadīm*

‘Aṭṭār was its spirit, Sanā’ī its eyes twain
And in time thereafter, Came we in their train¹¹⁹

The case of Ra’īs Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad’s poetry cited in Khwājah Qāsim Tushtarī’s *Recognizing God* is especially interesting in this regard. It reads:

*bandagī dānī chih bāshad ay pīsar
war na-mī-dānī zi man bi-sh(i)nav khabar*

*bandah bāyad bandagī kardan mudām
tā shawad dar bandagī kārash tamām*

*bāz agar pursand az way yak sukhan
tū jawāb-i ū shinaw aknūn zi man*

*īn sukhan gūyad zi rū-yi bandagī
tā na-bīnad dar rah-i dīn māndagī*

*man na-dānam tā chih gūyam dar jahān
ānchih gūyandam bi-gū gūyam hamān*

*īn sukhan qāsim zi ustādān shunīd
az tamāmī-yi sukhan-hā bar-guzīd*

My child, know you the meaning of servitude?
If you know not, then harken to my words!

In constant servitude a servant must be
So that he be perfect in his enterprise

Then were he to be asked yet again
Harken as I tell you his response

¹¹⁹ Arthur J. Arberry, *Sufism: An Account of the Mystics of Islam* (London, 1950), p. 141. Diacritical marks added; “the spirit” and “his eyes” modified to “its spirit” and “its eyes”.

This is what he would say about servitude
 So that torpor not be felt on the path of faith

I myself know not what to say in the world
 I say exactly what I am told to say

From the masters Qāsim heard these words
 And preferred them to all others

Anyone familiar with Persian poetry will immediately recognise the lilting cadence and rhythm of the lines. This is the same metre used in Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī's immortal *Rhyming Couplets of Spiritual Meaning* (*Mathnawī-yi ma'navī*), after which it became the metre used for virtually all Persian poetry of the *mathnawī* genre, *ramal-i maḥdhūf-i musaddas*, that is, – ~ – – / – ~ – – / – ~ – –.

Use of this metre for *mathnawīs* is exceedingly rare before Shaykh Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār made it famous in his epics, particularly the *Bird's Discourse* (*Mantiq al-tayr*).¹²⁰ Prior to 'Aṭṭār, we find the metre used in the famous *ghazal* of Rūdakī, by which he is said to have convinced his king to return to Bukhārā:

bū-yi jū-yi mūliyān āyad hamī
*yād-i yār-i mihr-bān āyad hamī*¹²¹

Yet comes the scent of Mūliyān's rivulet
 Yet comes the memory of a friend beloved

The surviving fragments of what was apparently Rūdakī's magnum opus *Katīlah and Dimnah* (*Katīlah wa Dimnah*), a *mathnawī* containing the translation of the *Panchatantra*, along with his *Story of Sindbad* (*Sindbād-nāmah*), are also in a very similar metre. A surviving couplet is provided below in transcription to illustrate the scansion:

nīm rūzān bar sar-i mā bar gudhasht
*chū bah khāwar shud zi mā nā-dīd gasht*¹²²

As will be readily apparent to those versed in Persian prosody, while the rhythm is essentially the same, the final syllable in Rūdakī's *mathnawī* is overlong (*darāz* as opposed to *buland*), – ~ – – / – ~ – – / – ~ – +, that is, *ramal-i maqṣūr-i musaddas* rather than *ramal-i maḥdhūf-i musaddas*.¹²³ The distinction is primarily theoretical, and it is entirely possible for a composition to have lines with final syllables that are either long or overlong. Thus, for example, the metre of the famous Persian epic poem *Book of Kings* (*Shāh-nāmah*) is *mutaqārib-i musamman-i maḥdhūf aw maqṣūr*, that is, either long or overlong.¹²⁴

¹²⁰Annemarie Schimmel, *A Two-Colored Brocade: The Imagery of Persian Poetry* (Chapel Hill, 1992), pp. 5, 31; Thiesen, *Classical Persian Prosody*, p. 203.

¹²¹Sa'īd Nafīsī, *Muḥīṭ-i zīndagī wa aḥwāl wa ash'ār-i Rūdakī*, 2nd edition (Tehran, 1341 HS/[1963 CE]), p. 516.

¹²²Examples of the few surviving couplets can be seen in Sa'īd Nafīsī, *Muḥīṭ-i zīndagī wa aḥwāl wa ash'ār-i Rūdakī*, 3rd edition (Tehran, [1983 CE]), pp. 532–560. An example from p. 532 is provided.

¹²³Cf. Thiesen, *Classical Persian Prosody*, p. 129.

¹²⁴Cf. *ibid.*, p. 18.

Regardless, if our identification of Ra'īs Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad “Qāsim” is correct, his verses quoted in Tushtārī's *Recognizing God* would be one of the oldest uses, if not the oldest testimony, of this metre for a *mathnawī*. This metre then went on to become famous with 'Aṭṭār and reached its pinnacle with Mawlānā Rūmī.

Conclusion

Research by the late French orientalist Henry Corbin and his Russian contemporary Wladimir Ivanow established as axiomatic the symbiotic relationship between Sufism and Ismailism in the aftermath of the Mongol invasions.¹²⁵ This association was believed to have continued relatively uninterrupted from the middle of the 13th century until modern times. Later authors, including Hamid Algar, Nasrollah Pourjavady, Peter Lamborn Wilson, Farhad Daftary, Fritz Meier and Leonard Lewisohn, have since repeated and further elaborated upon the basic hypothesis advanced by the two earlier scholars, while Hermann Landolt has written perceptive pieces regarding the cases of Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār and Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā Suhrawardī.¹²⁶ I have provided additional documentary evidence for some aspects of the theory, while demonstrating that other assumptions are untenable.¹²⁷ The foregoing arguments arising out of Khwājah Qāsim Tushtārī's *Recognizing God*, while suggestive rather than conclusive, do oblige us to consider the likelihood that the relationship between Ismailism and Sufism dates to an even earlier period than previously believed.

As Shahrastānī reports, the Fāṭimid Imam al-Mustanṣir billāh had given guidance on a new direction for the Ismaili Invitation, which emphasised particular aspects of thought. In Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāh's *Four Chapters* we see one result of this approach, geared primarily to an external audience; in *Recognizing God* we see another result, this time focused on an Ismaili audience. Seeking recognition of God through the Imam of the Time and his appointed hierarchy is affirmed as the focal point of human existence, and the pivot around which faith revolves. <shafique.virani@utoronto.ca>

¹²⁵See, for example, Wladimir Ivanow, “Sufism and Ismailism: Chiragh-Nama”, *Majallā-yi Mardum-Shināsī/Revue Iranienne d'Anthropologie*, 3 (1338 HS/1959 CE); Wladimir Ivanow, “Ismailism and Sufism”, *Ismaili Bulletin*, 1, 12 (September 1975); Henry Corbin, *Trilogie Ismaélienne: 1. Abū Ya'qūb Sejestānī: Le livre des sources (4e/10es.) 2. Sayyid-nā al-Hosayn ibn 'Alī: Cosmogonie et eschatologie (7e/13es.) 3. Symboles choisis de la roseraie du mystère, de Mahmūd Shabestārī (8e/14es)*, Trān wa Yaman: ya'nī sih risālah-yi Ismā'īlī (Téhéran, 1340 HS/1961 CE), p. 3; Shāh Ṭāhir al-Dakkanī (attrib.), *Ba'ḏī az ta'wīlāt-i gulshan-i rāz*, in *Trilogie Ismaélienne* (ed. and trans.) Henry Corbin, *Symboles choisis de la roseraie du mystère, de Mahmūd Shabestārī (8e/14es)* (Téhéran, 1340 HS/1961 CE), passim.

¹²⁶See, for example, Farhad Daftary, “Ismā'īlī-Sufi Relations in Early Post-Alamūt and Safavid Persia”, in *The Heritage of Sufism: Late Classical Persianate Sufism (1501–1750)*, (eds) Leonard Lewisohn and David Morgan, 3 vols (Oxford, 1999), Vol. 3; Leonard Lewisohn, “Sufism and Ismā'īlī Doctrine in the Persian Poetry of Nizārī Quhistānī (645–721/1247–1321)”, *Iran: Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies*, 41 (2003); Hamid Algar, “The Revolt of Āghā Khān Maḥallātī and the Transference of the Ismā'īlī Imamate to India”, *Studia Islamica*, 29 (1969); Nasrollah Pourjavady and Peter Lamborn Wilson, “Ismā'īlīs and Ni'matullāhīs”, *Studia Islamica*, 41 (1975); Fritz Meier, “Ismailiten und Mystik im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert”, *Persica*, 16 (2000); Landolt, “'Aṭṭār, Sufism and Ismailism”, in *'Aṭṭār and the Persian Sufi Tradition: The Art of Spiritual Flight*.

¹²⁷Virani, *Ismailis in the Middle Ages*, pp. 66–68, 74, 104, 106, 142–148; Shafique N. Virani, “The Voice of Truth: Life and Works of Sayyid Nūr Muḥammad Shāh, a 15th/16th Century Ismā'īlī Mystic”, Master's thesis, McGill University, 1995, pp. 44–50.

Acknowledgements. This article is dedicated to the memory of the late Al-Waez Noormohamed Remtulla Walliani of Mombasa, Kenya. I would like to gratefully acknowledge Dr Hermann Landolt, Dr Faquir M. Hunzai, Shaftolu Gulamadov, Andriy Bilenkyy and Zeinab Farokhi, all of whom read a draft of this article and gave valuable feedback and comments, as well as the Library of the Institute of Ismaili Studies, which generously provided access to copies of two manuscripts of Khwājah Qāsim Tushtarī's work.

SHAFIQUE N. VIRANI
University of Toronto