

VII. Al-Suhrawardi and the Philosophy of Light

1. THE RESTORATION OF THE WISDOM OF ANCIENT PERSIA

1. Our previous studies of Shihab al-Din Yahya al-Suhrawardi, commonly known as the *Shaykh al-Ishraq*, have put us in a position to appreciate the full importance of his work. In an imaginary topography, this work is situated at a crossroads. Al-Suhrawardi died just seven years before Averroes. At that moment, therefore, in western Islam, 'Arab Peripateticism' was finding its ultimate expression in the work of Averroes, so much so that western historians, mistakenly confusing Averroes' Peripateticism with philosophy pure and simple, have overlong persisted in maintaining that philosophy in Islam culminated in Averroes. Yet at the same time in the East, and particularly in Iran, the work of al-Suhrawardi was opening up the road which so many thinkers and spiritual seekers were to follow down to our own days. It has already been suggested that the reasons for the failure and disappearance of 'Latin Avicennism' were in fact the same as those which lay behind the persistence of Avicennism in Iran; but from the background of this Avicennism the work of al-Suhrawardi, in one way or another, was never absent.

2. The figure of al-Suhrawardi (not to be confused with the similarly-named Sufis 'Umar and Abu al-Najib al-Suhrawardi) remains graced for us with all the attractiveness of youth, for his tragic fate tore him away from his vast projects at the age of thirty-six (thirty-eight in lunar years). He was born in 549/1155 in north-west Iran, the ancient Media, in Suhraward, a town still flourishing at the time of the Mongol turmoil. While still very young he studied at Maraghah in Azerbaijan, and then went to Isfahan in central Iran, where he found the Avicennan tradition fully alive. He went on to spend some years in south-eastern Anatolia, where he was warmly received by several of the Saljuq princes of Rum. Finally he went to Syria, from which he never returned. The doctors

of the Law instituted proceedings against him whose meaning will become apparent at the end of this survey of his work. Nothing was able to save him from the vindictiveness of the fanatical personality of Salah al-Din, the Saladin of the Crusades—not even the friendship of Saladin's son, al-Malik al-Zahir, the governor of Aleppo, who later became the close friend of Ibn al-'Arabi. Our young shaykh died mysteriously in the citadel of Aleppo on the 29th July 1191. His biographers usually refer to him as *al-shaykh al-maqtul*, meaning murdered or put to death. His followers prefer to say *al-shaykh al-shahid*, the martyred shaykh.

3. In order to grasp the scope of his work from the start, we must focus on the theme of the title of his main work: *Hikmat al-Ishraq*, an 'Oriental theosophy' conceived as a deliberate resurrection of the wisdom of ancient Persia. The great figures presiding over this doctrine are Hermes, Plato and Zoroaster—Zarathustra. Thus, on the one hand, there is Hermetic wisdom—Ibn Wahshiyah had already instanced a tradition in which the *ishraqiyun* were named as being a priestly class descended from Hermes' sister. On the other hand, the connection between Plato and Zoroaster, established in the West at the beginning of the Renaissance by the Byzantine philosopher Gemistos Pletho, was already decisive for twelfth-century Iranian philosophy.

We must observe the distinctively Suhrawardian import of the notions of 'Orient' and 'Oriental theosophy'. We have already mentioned Avicenna's project of an 'Oriental wisdom' or 'philosophy'. Al-Suhrawardi was fully aware of his relationship with his predecessor in this respect. He was acquainted with the 'notebooks' which were thought to preserve what was to have been the *Logic of the Orientals*, and he knew the fragments of the *Kitab al-Insaf* which had survived (see above, V, 4). Furthermore, the idea of the Orient as it is expressed in Avicenna's recital of Hayy ibn Yaqzan is the same as al-Suhrawardi's. He is so well aware of this that when, following Avicenna's example, he writes symbolic recitals of spiritual initiation, he praises Avicenna's recital, but only in order to emphasize the fact that his own 'Recital of the Occidental Exile' begins at the point where Avicenna's ends, as if he is making a gesture of supreme significance. What left him dissatisfied with Avicenna's symbolic recital corresponds to what left him dissatisfied with the fragments of his teaching. Avicenna had, to be sure, formulated the project of an 'Oriental philosophy', but the

project was bound to fail, for a decisive reason. Consequently it is to the study of his own book that the 'Shaykh al-Ishraq' invites anyone who wishes to be initiated into 'Oriental wisdom'. For reasons which we cannot go into here, the attempt to establish an opposition between Avicenna's 'Oriental philosophy' and al-Suhrawardi's 'illuminative' philosophy was based on insufficient acquaintance with the texts in question (see below).

The reason that al-Suhrawardi gives to explain why Avicenna could not realize the project of an 'Oriental philosophy' is that he was in ignorance of the principle, the 'Oriental source' (*al-asl al-mashriqi*) itself, which authenticates the qualification of 'Oriental'. Avicenna was unaware of this source, disclosed by the Sages of ancient Persia (the Khusrowanids) and identified with *theosophia*, divine wisdom *par excellence*. 'Among the ancient Persians', writes our shaykh, 'there was a community directed by God; He guided the eminent Sages, who are quite different from the Maguseans (*majusi*). It is their high doctrine of the Light—a doctrine to which, moreover, the experience of Plato and his predecessors bear witness—that I have revived in my book entitled *Oriental Theosophy (Hikmat al-Ishraq)*, and no one before me has attempted such a project.'

This has also been the opinion of his spiritual posterity. Sadra al-Shirazi speaks of al-Suhrawardi as the 'head of the Oriental school' (*mashriqiyun*), 'the resurrector of the doctrines of the Persian Sages concerning the principles of Light and Darkness.' These Orientals are also defined as Platonists. Sharif al-Jurjani defines the *ishraqiyun* or *mashriqiyun* as 'the philosophers whose leader is Plato'. Abu al-Qasim al-Kazaruni (d. 1014/1606) says: 'Just as al-Farabi renewed the philosophy of the Peripatetics, and for this reason deserved to be known as *Magjster secundus*, al-Suhrawardi revived and renewed the philosophy of the *ishraqiyun* in many books and treatises.' Very soon the distinction was made between Orientals (*ishraqiyun*) and Peripatetics (*mashsha'un*). The term 'Platonists of Persia' best designates, therefore, the school of which one characteristic was the interpretation of the Platonic archetypes in terms of Zoroastrian angelology,

4. Al-Suhrawardi developed this key idea in a lengthy work of forty-nine chapters—lengthy, that is, considering the shortness of his life. The nucleus of the work is a great dogmatic trilogy consisting of three treatises of three books each, and comprising Logic, Physics and

Metaphysics. All the themes of the Peripatetic programme are dealt with, for two reasons. Firstly, they serve as propaedeutics, because a solid philosophical training is needed by a person who wishes to set out along the spiritual Way. While those who draw back from following this Way will be able to content themselves with the teaching of the Peripatetics, it is precisely for the sake of those who do follow it that the true theosophy must be freed from all the futile discussions with which both the Peripatetics and the *mutakallimun*—the Islamic Scholastics—have encumbered it. If in the course of these treatises the writer's own profoundest thoughts sometimes break through, it is always with reference to the book to which these treatises are the introduction, the book that contains his secret, *Kitab Hikmat al-Ishraq*. Around the tetralogy formed by this book and the three preceding ones there is a whole body of *Opera minora*, shorter didactic works in Arabic and Persian. The collection is completed by the characteristic cycle of symbolic recitals to which we have already referred; these are mostly written in Persian and, in accordance with the shaykh's plan of spiritual instruction, they provide some of the essential themes for preparatory meditation. The whole is crowned by a sort of Book of Hours, consisting of psalms and invocations to the beings of light.

This entire work is the outcome of a personal experience to which al-Suhrawardi testifies when he speaks of the 'conversion that occurred in his youth'. He had started by defending the celestial physics of the Peripatetics, which limits the number of Intelligences—the beings of light—to ten (or fifty-five). In the course of an ecstatic vision he saw this closed spiritual universe explode, and was shown the multitude of those 'beings of light whom Hermes and Plato contemplated, and the celestial beams which are the sources of the *Light of Glory* and of the *Sovereignty of Light* (*ray wa khurrah*) heralded by Zarathustra, towards which a spiritual rapture raised the most devout and blessed King Kay Khusraw'.

Al-Suhrawardi's ecstatic confession thus refers us to one of the fundamental notions of Zoroastrianism: the notion of the *Xvarnah*, the Light of Glory (*khurrah* in Persian). With this as our starting-point, we must attempt to grasp, however briefly, the notion of *ishraq*, the structure of the world that it governs, and the form of spirituality that it determines.

2. THE ORIENT OF THE LIGHTS (ISHRAQ)

1. After studying the clues given by al-Suhrawardi and his immediate commentators, we realize that the notion of *ishraq* (a verbal noun meaning the splendour or illumination of the sun when it rises) possesses a threefold aspect. (1) We can understand it as the wisdom—the theosophy—of which the *Ishraq* is the source, being both the illumination and the reflection (*zuhur*) of being, and the act of awareness which, by unveiling it (*kashf*), is the cause of its appearance (makes it a *phainomenon*). Thus, just as in the sensible world the term signifies the splendour of the morning, the first radiance of the star, in the intelligible Heaven of the soul it signifies the epiphanic moment of knowledge. (2) Consequently, by *Oriental* philosophy or theosophy we must understand a doctrine founded on the Presence of the philosopher at the matutinal appearance of the intelligible Lights, at the outpouring of their dawn on the souls who are in a state of estrangement from their bodies. What is in question therefore is a philosophy which postulates inner vision and mystical experience, a knowledge which, because it originates in the Orient of the pure Intelligences, is an *Oriental* knowledge. (3) We can also understand this term as meaning the theosophy of the *Oriental*s (*ishraqiyun = mashriqiyun*), the theosophy, that is, of the Sages of ancient Persia—not only because of their position on the earth's surface, but because their knowledge was *Oriental* in the sense that it was based on inner revelation (*kashf*) and mystical vision (*mushahadah*). According to the *ishraqiyun*, this was also the knowledge of the ancient Greek Sages, with the exception of the followers of Aristotle who relied solely on discursive reasoning and logical argument.

2. Our authors, therefore, had never envisaged the artificial opposition established by Nallino between the idea of an 'illuminative philosophy' expounded by al-Suhrawardi, and the idea of an 'Oriental philosophy' expounded by Avicenna. The terms *ishraqiyun* and *mashriqiyun* are used interchangeably. One would have to find a single unique term to designate 'Oriental-illuminative' simultaneously, in the sense that we are here concerned with a knowledge which is *Oriental* because it is itself the *Orient* of knowledge. (Certain terms present themselves spontaneously: *Aurora consurgens*, *Cognitio matutina*.) In describing it, al-Suhrawardi refers to a period in his life when he was greatly

exercised by the problem of knowledge but was unable to resolve it. One night while he was dreaming, or in an intermediary state of being, Aristotle appeared to him, and he engaged in a closely-argued discussion with him. The account of this takes up several pages of one of his books (*Talwihat*).

But the Aristotle with whom al-Suhrawardi spoke was a frankly Platonic Aristotle, whom no one could regard as responsible for the dialectic fury of the Peripatetics. His first answer to the seeker who questions him is 'Awaken to yourself. Then there begins a progressive initiation into self-knowledge as knowledge which is neither the product of abstraction nor a re-presentation of the object through the intermediary of a form (*surah*), of a Species, but a Knowledge which is identical to the Soul itself, to the personal, existential (*ana'iyah*) subjectivity, and which is therefore essentially life, light, epiphany, awareness of self (*hayah, nur, zuhur, shu'ur bi-dhatihi*). In contrast to *representative* knowledge, which is knowledge of the abstract or logical universal (*'ilm sun*), what is in question is *presential*, unitive, intuitive knowledge, of an essence which is absolutely real in its ontological singularity (*'ilm hudun, ittisalf, shuhudi*)—a presential illumination (*ishraq huduri*) which the soul, as a being of light, causes to shine upon its object. By making herself present to herself, the soul also makes the object present to her. Her own epiphany to herself is the Presence of this presence, and it is this which constitutes the epiphanic or Oriental Presence (*hudur ishraqi*). The truth of all objective knowledge is thus nothing more nor less than the awareness that the knowing subject has of itself. This is the case for all the beings of light in all the worlds and inter-worlds: by the very act of their self-awareness, they cause themselves to be present to each other. This is the case also for the human soul, in the degree to which she tears herself away from the Darkness of her 'Occidental exile', that is to say from the world of sublunary matter. In answer to the seeker's last questions, Aristotle replies that the philosophers of Islam have not even remotely equalled Plato. Then, seeing that the questioner has in mind the two great Sufis Abu Yazid al-Bastami and Sahl al-Tustari (see above, VI, 2 and 5), he says to him: 'Yes, these are philosophers in the true sense.' 'Oriental theosophy' thus effects the union of philosophy and Sufism, which are henceforth inseparable.

3. These 'dawn splendours' refer us to the primordial Flame which is their source, and which al-Suhrawardi claims to have seen in a vision that revealed to him the authentic 'Oriental source'. This is the 'Light of Glory' that the Avesta names as the *Xvarnah* (*khurrah* in Persian, or in the Parsi form *fan, farrah*). Its function is primordial in Mazdean cosmology and anthropology. It is the effulgent majesty of the beings of light, and it is also the energy which conjoins the being of each being, its vital Fire, its 'personal angel' and its destiny (the word was translated into Greek as both $\Delta\acute{\omicron}\xi\alpha$ and Τυχη). It is present in al-Suhrawardi as the eternal radiance of the Light of Lights (*nur al-anwar*), whose sovereign force, by illuminating the totality of the light-being which proceeds from it, makes it eternally present to it (*tasallut ishraqi*). It is precisely the idea of this victorious force, this 'victorality' (*perozih* in Persian) which explains the name used by al-Suhrawardi to designate the sovereign Lights: *anwar qahirah*, 'victorial' Lights, dominant and archangelic ('Michaelian'; cf. Michael as *Angelus victor*).

Through this 'victorality' of the Light of Lights, there proceeds from it the being of light which is the first Archangel, whom our shaykh calls by his Zoroastrian name of *Bahman* {Vohu-Manah, the first of the *Amahraspands* or Zoroastrian Archangels). The relationship which eternally unfolds between the Light of Lights and the First Emanant is the archetypal relationship between the first Lover and the first Beloved. This relationship is exemplified at all levels of the procession of being, establishing all beings in pairs. It finds expression in the polarity of dominion and love (*qahr* and *mahabbah*; cf. the Islamic neo-Empedocles, above, V, 3 and below, VIII, 1), or as the polarity of illumination and contemplation, independence (*istighna*) and indigence (*faqr*), and so on. These are all so many intelligible 'dimensions' which, by compounding with one another, transcend the 'two-dimensional' space (of the necessary and the possible) of Avicenna's theory of the hierarchical Intelligences. By engendering each other out of their ii radiations and reflections, the hypostases of Light become countless in number. Intimated beyond the heaven of the Fixed Stars of Peripatetic or Ptolemaic astrology lie innumerable marvellous universes. In opposition to what was to happen in the West, where the development of astronomy eliminated angelology, here it is angelology which takes astronomy beyond the classical schema within which it was confined.

3. THE HIERARCHY OF THE UNIVERSES

1. The world of these Pure Lights is organized into a threefold hierarchy. From the initial relationship between the Light of Lights and the First Emanated Light, through the multiplication of the intelligible 'dimensions' which compound one with another, there proceeds eternally the universe of the Primordial Ruling Lights. Because they are the causes of each other and proceed from each other, they form a descending hierarchy which al-Suhrawardi calls the 'longitudinal Order' (*tabaqat al-tul*). These are the universes of the Archangels whom he calls the supreme sovereign Lights (*usul A'la'un*), the 'world of the Mothers' (*ummahat*, not to be confused with the term as it is used with reference to the Elements). This hierarchy of the archangelic world of the Mothers culminates in a twofold event which takes place in being.

On the one hand, their 'positive dimensions' (dominion, independence, active contemplation) produce a new Order of Archangels who are no longer each other's causes, but who are equal amongst themselves in the hierarchy of Emanation. These Lights form the 'latitudinal Order' (*tabaqat al-'ard*); they are the archangel-archetypes of 'lords of the species' (*arbab al-anwa'*), identified with the Platonic archetypes—not as realized universals, of course but as hypostases of Light. The names of the Zoroastrian Archangels and of some Angels (*Izad*) are expressly mentioned in their authentic form by al-Suhrawardi. This 'latitudinal Order' also includes the Angel of humanity, the Holy Spirit, Gabriel, the active Intelligence of the *falasifah*.

On the other hand, the 'negative' intelligible dimensions of the 'longitudinal Order' (dependence, passive illumination, love as indigence) produce the Heaven of the Fixed Stars which accords with them. The innumerable stellar individuations of this Heaven (as in the Avicennan schema, each celestial orb is celestial in relation to the Intelligence from which it emanates) are so many emanations which materialize, in a still wholly subtle celestial matter, that part of non-being which conceals—if one thinks of it hypothetically as isolated from its Principle—their being that emanates from the Light of Lights.

Finally, from this second order of Archangels there emanates a new Order of Lights, through the intermediary of which the Archangel-archetypes govern and rule over the Species, at least in the case of the higher Species. These are the Angel-Souls, the *Animae caelestes* and *Animae humanae* of Avicenna's angelology. Al-Suhrawardi,

however, calls them by a name borrowed from ancient Iranian chivalry: *Ispahbad* Lights (*Ispahbad* denoting the commander of an army)—a name and function which are not unreminiscent of the *hegemonikon* of the Stoics.

2. Even when sketched in such general terms, al-Suhrawardi's angelology is clearly a grave disruption of the schema of the world—physical, astronomical and metaphysical—which had been accepted from the time of al-Farabi and Avicenna. It is no longer the Moon's orb, as in Peripateticism, which marks the boundary between the celestial world and the material world of becoming. It is the Heaven of the Fixed Stars which now symbolizes the boundary between the angelic universe of Light and Spirit (*Ruh-abad*) and the dark, material universe of the *barzakh*. The characteristic term *barzakh*, when used in eschatology, means the intermediate, and when used in cosmology, it means the inter-world (the *mundus imaginalis*). In al-Suhrawardi's philosophy of the *Ishraq* it assumes a more general meaning: it designates in general everything that is body, everything that is a *screen* and an *interval*, and which of itself is Night and Darkness.

That concept, therefore, that the word *barzakh* connotes is fundamental to al-Suhrawardi's system of physics. The *barzakh* is pure Darkness; it could exist as such even if the Light were to withdraw. Thus, it is not even a potential light, a virtuality in the Aristotelian sense; in relation to Light it is pure negativity, *Ahrimanic* negativity as al-Suhrawardi understood it. It would be a mistake, then, to attempt to base the causal explanation of a positive fact on this negativity. Every species is an 'icon' of its Angel, a theurgy effected by this Angel in the *barzakh* which in itself is death and absolute night. It is an act of light on the part of the Angel, but this light does not combine hylomorphically with the Darkness. From this stems the critique, developed by al-Suhrawardi, of the Peripatetic notion of potential being, matter, substantial forms, and so on. It is true that his physics is based on the schema of Mazdean cosmology, in which the universe of being is divided into *menuk* (celestial, subtle) and *getik* (terrestrial, dense); but his interpretation of it is inspired by Manichaeism. In al-Suhrawardi, the perception of the world includes, in structural terms, a metaphysics of *essences*; existence is simply a way of regarding (*i'tibar*) essence or quiddity—it does not add anything to it *in concrete*. We have already noted that Sadra al-Shirazi was to promote the 'existential' version

of the *Ishraq* in his own metaphysical system, which posits the anteriority and the precedence of *existence* over essence.

3. The schema of the universe, then, is arranged according to a fourfold plan. (1) There is the world of the pure Intelligences (the archangelic Lights of two first Orders: the cherubic Intelligences or 'Mothers', and the Intelligence-archetypes). This is the world of *the jabarut*. (2) There is the world of the Lights who rule over a body (a 'fortress', *sisiyah*), the world of celestial and human Souls. This is the world of the *malakut*. (3) There is the double *barzakh* made up of the celestial Spheres and the world of sublunary Elements. This is the world of the *mulk*. (4) There is the *mundus imaginalis* ('*alam al-mithal*'). This is the world which is intermediary between the intelligible world of the beings of pure Light and the sensible world; and the perceiving organ proper to it is the active Imagination. It is the world not of Platonic ideas" (*muthul-iflatunlyah*), but of Forms and Images 'in suspension' (*muthulmu 'alla-qah*). This term means that such forms are not immanent in a material sub-stratum, as the colour red, for example, is immanent in a red body; they possess 'epiphanic places' (*mazahir*) where they manifest themselves like the image 'in suspension' in a mirror. This world contains all the richness and variety of the world of sense in a subtle state; it is a world of subsistent and autonomous Forms and Images, the threshold of the *malakut*. In it are to be found the mystical cities of Jabalqa, Jabarsa and Hurqalya.

It appears that al-Suhrawardi was indeed the first to elaborate the ontology of the inter-world, and the theme once introduced was taken up and expanded by all the mystics and gnostics of Islam. Its importance cannot be stressed too strongly. In the perspective of Man's post-mortem existence, the *mundus imaginalis* is the first world disclosed to him. Its function is threefold: the resurrection is achieved by means of it, because it is the place of the 'subtle bodies'. It is by virtue of it that the symbols configured by the prophets, as well as all visionary experiences, are actually true. Consequently, it is through the *mundus imaginalis* that the *ta'wil* achieved, that is to say the exegesis which 'leads back' the data of the Quranic Revelation to their 'literal spiritual' truth. Without it, there is only 'allegory'. By means of this inter-world, the conflict between philosophy and theology, knowledge and belief, symbol and history, is resolved. It is no longer necessary to choose between the speculative precedence of philosophy and the authoritative

precedence of theology. There is another way, which is the way of 'Oriental' theosophy.

Sadra al-Shirazi integrates this world of imaginative awareness to the *malakut*, which is the reason why the schema of the universe is threefold. But we can now assess what the loss of this inter-world can signify—a loss which was to be the result of Averroism {see below, VIII, 6). We can see it as the dividing line between the East, where the dominant influences were those of al-Suhrawardi and Ibn al-'Arabi, and the West, where 'Arab Peripateticism' was to develop into 'political Averroism'. Although historians are accustomed to viewing Averroism as the last word in 'Arab philosophy', in 'Arabism', in reality 'Islamic philosophy' embraces many other resources and treasures.

4. THE OCCIDENTAL EXILE

1. The meaning and function of al-Suhrawardi's symbolic Recitals of spiritual initiation must be viewed in the perspective of the inter-world. The action of these Recitals, in fact, takes place in the '*alam al-mithal*'. In them, the mystic relates the drama of his personal history on the level of a supra-sensible world, the world of the events of the soul, because the writer, in configuring his own symbols, spontaneously discovers the meaning of the symbols of the divine revelations. We are not concerned with a series of 'allegories' but with the secret hierohistory, invisible to the external senses, which unfolds in the world of the *malakut*, and *with* which external and fleeting events *symbolize*.

The Recital in which this fundamental note is most clearly sounded is entitled 'The Recital of the Occidental Exile' (*Qissat al-ghurbah al-gharbiyah*). 'Oriental' theosophy must, indeed, lead the gnostic to an awareness of his own 'Occidental exile', to an awareness of what is in fact the world of the *barzakh* as an 'Occident' opposed to the 'Orient of the Lights'. The Recital thus constitutes an initiation which leads the mystic back to his *origin*, to his *Orient*. The actual event accomplished through this initiation presupposes both the autonomous existence of the *mundus imaginalis* and the plenary noetic value of the imaginative awareness. Here in particular we are given to understand how and why, deprived of this world and this awareness, the imaginative is debased to the imaginary, and symbolic recitals are regarded merely as fiction.

2. The great concern of the 'Oriental' gnostic is to discover how the exile can return *home*. The *ishraqi* theosopher is essentially a man who does not separate or isolate the philosophical search from spiritual realization. In a very dense page of his vast commentary on the work of al-Kulayni (the *Kafi*, a fundamental Shiite work; see above, II, Preliminary Remarks), Mulla Sadra defines the spirituality of the *hukama' ishraqiyun* {the 'Oriental theosophers') as being itself a *barzakh*—that is to say, an intermediate, linking and uniting the Sufi method, which is essentially directed towards inner purification, with the method of the philosophers, which aims at pure knowledge. For al-Suhrawardi, a mystical experience which takes place without any previous philosophical training is in great danger of leading one astray; but a philosophy which neither aims at, nor culminates in, a personal spiritual realization is pure vanity. Thus, the book which is the vademecum of 'Oriental' philosophers—the *Kitab Hikmat al-Ishraq*—begins with a reform of Logic and ends in a sort of prayer of ecstasy—a form taken by many other similar books.

From the beginning, in the prologue, the author classifies the Sages, the *Hukama'*, according to whether they possess simultaneously speculative knowledge and spiritual experience, or excel in the one but are deficient in the other. The *hakim ilahi* (etymologically, it will be recalled, this means the *theosophos*, the Sage of God) is he who excels in *both*: he is the *hakim muta'allih* (the idea of *ta'alluh* corresponds to the Greek *theosis*). Hence the saying, repeated by all our thinkers, to the effect that *ishraqi* theosophy is to philosophy what Sufism is to the *kalam*, the dialectic scholasticism of Islam. The spiritual genealogy that al-Suhrawardi attributes to himself is significant. On the one hand, the 'eternal leaven' passes from the ancient Greek Sages (pre-Socratics, Pythagoreans, Platonists) to the Sufis Dhu-al-Nun al-Misri and Sahl al-Tustari; on the other hand, the 'leaven' of the wisdom of the ancient Persians is transmitted by way of the Sufi's Abu Yazid al-Bastami, al-Hallaj, and Abu al-Hasan al-Kharaqani. The two currents meet in the theosophy of the *ishraq*. This is, no doubt, a deliberately thematic view of 'history', but it is all the more eloquent for being so. Coming after the mysterious conversation with Aristotle, it confirms the fact that from now on one will no longer be able to separate philosophy from Sufism in the highest spirituality of Islam,

without even having to stipulate an affiliation to a *tariqah* (a Sufi congregation). Al-Suhrawardi never belonged to one.

3. It is this that indicates what al-Suhrawardi's mission, both creative and reformative, meant for Islam. If one persists in viewing Islam as merely an external, legalistic and literalist religion, such a mission amounts to an 'insurrection'. This is all that certain historians have seen with regard to al-Suhrawardi, as well as with regard to the Ismailis and to all the Shiite gnostics, and to Ibn al-'Arabi and his school. If, on the other hand, integral Islam is spiritual, encompassing the *shari'ah* the *tariqah* and the *haqiqah* then al-Suhrawardi's noble venture lies at the summit of this spirituality and is nourished by it. The spiritual meaning of the Quranic Revelation explains and transfigures the previous prophetic revelations and wisdom by manifesting their hidden meaning. This integral, spiritual Islam is what Shiism was from the beginning (see above, II). There thus exists a pre-established harmony, if not more than that, between the *ishraqiyun* theosophers and the Shiite theosophers. Prior even to the school of Isfahan under Mir Damad and Mulla Sadra, this harmony is to be discerned in an *ishraqi* Shiite thinker such as Ibn Abi Jumhur, whose influence on the Shaykhi school persists down to this day. This is due to the fact that both sides strive to attain to the *batin*, the esoteric aspect, the inner spiritual meaning, and both are equally averse to the abstract, sterile arguments of the *mutakal-limun*. Al-Suhrawardi's initiative unites philosophy with Sufism; the initiative of Hayder Amuli in the eighth/fourteenth century, like that of Ismailism after Alamut, brings together Shiites and Sufis who have forgotten their origins and vocation. The concepts of *hikmat ilahyah* (theosophy) and *'irfan-i shi'i* (Shiite gnosis) overlap.

For al-Suhrawardi, in fact, the man who excels equally in philosophy and in spiritual experience is to be found at the summit of his hierarchy of Sages. Such a man is the *pole (qutb)*, and without him the world could not continue to exist, even if he is only in it *incognito*, completely unknown to men. This is one of the most important themes of Shiism (*cf.* a conversation between the first Imam and his follower Kumayy ibn Ziyad). In Shiite terms, the 'pole of poles' is the Imam. His existence *incognito* presupposes both the Shiite idea of *the ghaybah*, the occultation of the Imam, and the idea of the cycle of the *walayah* succeeding the cycle of prophecy, after the 'Seal of the prophets'. As we know (see above, II, A), this *walayah* is none other than the Islamic name

for the permanent 'esoteric prophecy' (*nubuwwah batiniyah*). Even the doctors of the Law in Aleppo made no mistake about this. During al-Suhrawardi's trial, the charge leading to his condemnation was that he had professed that at any time, even at this moment, God can raise up a prophet. Even if what was in question was not a prophet-legislator but the *nubuwwah batiniyah*, such a profession was at the very least indicative of crypto-Shiism. In this manner, through his life's work and his death as a martyr to the cause of prophetic philosophy, al-Suhrawardi lived the tragedy of the 'Occidental exile' to its very end.

S. THE ISHRAQIYUN

1. The *ishraqiyun* are the spiritual descendants of al-Suhrawardi, and, in Iran at least, they still continue to exist. The first of them chronologically, was Shams al-Din al-Shahrazuri, who distinguished himself by his devotion to the *shaykh al-ishraq*. Paradoxically, almost nothing is known about the biography of this thinker, to whom we are indebted for a 'History of the Philosophers'. We know that when al-Suhrawardi was imprisoned in the citadel of Aleppo, he was accompanied by a young disciple named Shams. But it is impossible to say whether they were the same person, especially if we accept that al-Shahrazuri apparently died during the last third of the seventh/thirteenth century. However that may be, we owe to him two commentaries which are important also as personal testimonies: the first of these is the commentary on al-Suhrawardi's *Book of Elucidations (Talwihat)*, and the second is a commentary of the *Book of Oriental Theosophy (Kitab Hikmat al-Ishraq)*. It seems that al-Shahrazuri's work was put to good use by two of his successors: Ibn Kammuna (d. 683/1284) in his commentary on the first of these works, and Qutb al-Din al-Shirazi in his commentary on the second, which was completed in 694/1295.

We are indebted to al-Shahrazuri for three other works. (1) *A History of the Philosophers*, including both the philosophers prior to Islam and the philosophers of Islam. The biography of al-Suhrawardi which it contains is the most complete that we possess. (2) *A Book of Symbols (Kitab al-Rumuz)*, in which the writer pays particular attention to certain neo-Pythagorean motifs. (3) An immense philosophical and theological encyclopaedia, recapitulating the teaching of its fore-runners, and entitled *Treatises on the Divine Tree and on Theosophy*

cal Secrets (Rasa'il al-shajarah al-ilahiyah wa al-asrar al-rabbaniyah). There are copious quotations from the *Ikhwan al-Safa'*, Avicenna and al-Suhrawardi. It was completed in 680/1281—some ninety years, that is, after al-Suhrawardi's death. There are six or seven manuscripts of it in existence, comprising more than a thousand pages in folio.

2. Al-Suhrawardi had been far-sighted. He had envisaged something in the nature of an 'Order of *Ishraqiyun*', grouped around his seminal book (*Hikmat al-Ishraq*). He transposed the Quranic expression *ahl al-kitab*, meaning a community in possession of a Book revealed from Heaven (see above, I, 1), and called his 'Order of *Ishraqiyun*' *Ahl hadha al-Kitab*', meaning a community grouped around the present book of Oriental theosophy. There is another and even more significant feature. The head of this community was to be a *qayyim bi al-kitab*, a 'Keeper of the Book', who would be consulted on the hidden meaning of its difficult passages. (Al-Shahrazuri knew that he had a right to claim this qualification for himself.) Now the expression *qayyim al-kitab* serves in Shiism to denote the Imam and his essential function (see above, II, A, 4). It is certainly not by chance that, having spoken in the prologue to his great book of the part played by the *qutb*, the *pole*, al-Suhrawardi should again make use of a typical Shiite expression. In fact, there have always been *ishraqiyun* in Iran; they exist today, even though their community has no external organization and the *qayyim bi al-kitab* is unknown.

3. Throughout the centuries, there have been those who were influenced to one degree or another by the thinking of the Shaykh al-Ishraq, and those who were *ishraqiyun* but who professed a doctrine enriched by successive additions. Research remains to be done on the influence of the *ishraq* treatises on, for example, Nasir Tusi, Ibn al-'Arabi and the Iranian Shiite commentators of Ibn al-'Arabi (see part II). The task of inter-relating *Ishraq*, Ibn al-'Arabi and Shiism was achieved by Muhammad Ibn Abi Jumhur. Between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries CE there was an extraordinary outburst of activity. The works of al-Suhrawardi were extensively commented. Jalal al-Din al Dawwani (d. 907/1501) and Ghiyath al-Din Mansur al-Shirazi (d. 949/1542) wrote commentaries on the *Book of the Temples of Light*. Wadud al-Tabrizi wrote a commentary on the *Book of Tablets dedicated to 'Imad al-Din* (930/1524). The prologue and the second—the

most important—part of the great *Book of Oriental Theosophy* were translated and expanded in Persian, as was Qutb al-Shirazi's commentary, by an Indian Sufi, Muhammad Sharif ibn al-Harawi (the work is dated 1008/1600). Mir Damad (d. 1040/1631), the great master of the school of Isfahan, took the name *Ishraq* as his *nom de plume*. His famous disciple, Mulla Sadra al-Shirazi (d. 1050/1640) gave a whole series of very personal discourses on the *Book of Oriental Theosophy*, which altogether amount to a work of considerable length.

At this same period, the pious generous initiative of the Mogul emperor Akbar {d. 1014/1605) produced a spate of intense spiritual exchanges between India and Iran, with much coming and going of philosophers and Sufis. Ali Akbar's colleagues were steeped in the doctrines of *ishraq*. It was in this 'climate' that the great work of translating the Upanishads, the Bhagavad-Gita, and so on, from Sanskrit into Persian, was begun. This vast undertaking, and Akbar's great religious vision, also involved a whole group of Zoroastrians from Shiraz and the surrounding area who, accompanied by their high priest Azar Kayvan, emigrated to India between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Prominent among them is the figure of Farzanah Bahram-i Farshad, a man totally dedicated to the works of al-Suhrawardi and who translated part of them into Persian. In this way, in the 'climate' created by Akbar, the Zoroastrians found themselves represented in al-Suhrawardi, 'the resurrector of the wisdom of ancient Persia'.

These brief notes will suffice to indicate the extraordinary influence of al-Suhrawardi's work over the centuries. His influence in present-day Iran is inseparable from that of the Shiite thinkers who assimilated him, and above all from that of Mulla Sadra and his successors down to 'Abd Allah Zunuzi and Hadi Sabzavari, not forgetting the original position of the Shaykhi school. Today it is rare to be an *ishraqi* without also belonging in some degree to the school of Mulla Sadra al-Shirazi. In this way, the 'future' of al-Suhrawardi in Iran is linked with the revival of traditional metaphysics, which formed around the work of the master from Shiraz.

In Andalusia

We now come to an altogether different area of the Islamic world: the area of its furthest penetration into the West. Its cultural 'climate' is other than that of the East, particularly of Iran, and must be viewed in the historical context of the fortunes of Islam in the Iberian peninsula. We cannot give even an outline of this history here, and will have to confine ourselves to mentioning only a few of the major names and works. This cursory survey will enable us to perceive the ease with which ideas and men circulated from one end to the other of the *dar al-Islam*.

1. IBN MASARRAH AND THE SCHOOL OF ALMERIA

1. The importance of this school lies in the fact that it represents, at the Western extremity of the Islamic world, the esoteric Islam that we have come to know in the East, and that it exercised considerable influence. Its existence was, indeed, responsible for the part played at both geographical extremities of Islamic esotericism by the teaching of Empedocles—an Empedocles transformed into a herald of prophetic theosophy. Asin Palacios, on the other hand, preferred to see Ibn Masarra's followers as perpetuating the gnosis of Priscillian {fourth century CE); and it is true that the principal features of this gnosis—the Idea of a universal matter that is co-eternal with God, the divine origin of the soul, its union with the material body as the result of a sin committed in the world beyond, its redemption and return to its homeland as the effects of a purification made possible by the teaching of the prophets, the exegesis of the spiritual meaning of the Scriptures—arc all present in Ibn Masarra and his school.

According to his biographers, Ibn Masarra, who was born in 269/883, was not an Arab by race. We note that his father 'Abd Allah's physical appearance was such that even though he was a native of Cordoba, he was able to pass as a Norman from Sicily on his journeys

to the East—to Basrah, for example. More importantly, this father, a passionate lover of theological speculation who had frequented Mu'tazilite and esoteric circles in the East, sought to transmit to his son the features of his own spiritual physiognomy. Unfortunately, he died in 286/899, while completing his pilgrimage to Mecca. His son was barely seventeen, yet was already surrounded by disciples. With them he withdrew to a hermitage that he owned in the Sierra of Cordoba. The people rapidly became suspicious of him: when one is thought to be teaching the doctrine of a certain ancient Sage named Empedocles, one can obviously expect to be denounced as an atheist. Moreover, the political position of the Emirate of Cordoba at that time was extremely precarious. Ibn Masarraah chose to go into exile, accompanied by two of his favourite disciples.

He went as far as Medina and Mecca, thus making contact with the Eastern schools. He only returned to his country during the reign of 'Abd al-Rahman III, whose policy was more liberal. Even so, having learned from his contacts with the esoteric (*batini*) circles in the East, Ibn Masarraah was extremely wary. He returned to his hermitage in the Sierra of Cordoba, and there, to only a few of his followers, he revealed the meaning of his doctrines in the form of symbols. He developed an entire philosophy and way of spiritual life. Unfortunately, we know neither the number of his books nor their exact titles. Only two can definitely be attributed to him: one is the *Book of Penetrating Explanation (Kitab al-Tabsirah)*, which no doubt contained the key to his esoteric system, and the other is a *Book of Letters (Kitab al-Huruf)*, concerned with the mystical algebra mentioned above (IV, 2 and 5). These books circulated from hand to hand, escaping the vigilance of the *fuqaha'* while increasing their anger, and reached the East, where two 'orthodox' Sufis undertook to refute them. It does not appear that any legal action was taken or that there was an *auto-da-fe*, at least during Ibn Masarraah's own lifetime. Exhausted by his task, the Master died, surrounded by his disciples, in his hermitage in the Sierra, on the 20th October 319/931, aged barely fifty.

2. The veil under which he concealed his doctrine, the restricted number of his disciples, the heresy imputed to him and the impiety attached to his name are all factors that account for the poverty of the means available to us whereby a reconstruction of his work might be attempted. Nevertheless, this reconstruction has been accomplished

by the great Spanish Arabist, Asin Palacios. His task was twofold. On the one hand, the doctrine of Empedocles appeared to him as the axis around which Ibn Masarraah's most characteristic doctrines were grouped. On the other hand, Ibn Masarraah's system had to be reconstructed with the help of lengthy quotations from his work, which are mainly to be found in Ibn al-'Arabi.

The first task was relatively easy, thanks to the historians and the doxographers, notably al-Shahrastani, al-Shahrasturi, Ibn Abi Usaybi-ah, and al-Qifti. The hagiographic legend of the neo-Empedocles that was known in Islam {see above, V, 3 and VII, 2) does contain some parts of the authentic biography, even if exaggerated and transformed. According to these authors, Empedocles was chronologically the first of the five great philosophers of Greece: Empedocles, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. He was regarded as a hierophant, a prophet, dedicated to spiritual teaching and practice. He lived apart from the world, travelled around the East, and refused all honours. In short, he was seen as one of the prophets prior to Islam who could be contained within the wide context of Islamic prophetology. His moral physiognomy was that of a Sufi, and some of his books were known and quoted.

3. The doctrines attributed to him are principally concerned with the following themes: the pre-eminence and esotericism of philosophy and psychology, leading to the encounter with the *ruhaniyah*, the spiritual person or reality of the hidden being; the absolute simplicity, ineffability and mobile immobility of the first Being; the theory of Emanation; the categories of soul; individual souls as emanations of the Soul of the world; their pre-existence and redemption. The whole doctrine is enormously rich in both Gnostic and neo-Platonic terms.

Here, all we can say something about is the theory of the hierarchical Emanation of the five substances: the primordial Element or *Materia prima*, which is the first of the intelligible realities (not to be confused with universal corporeal matter); the Intelligence; the Soul; Nature; and secondary Matter. If we refer to the Plotinian hierarchy of the One, the Intelligence, the Soul, Nature and Matter, the difference is immediately obvious between Plotinus and the Islamic neo-Empedocles. The first of the Plotinian hypostases, the One, has been eliminated from the schema and replaced by the first Element or *Materia prima*. Certainly, there is in Plotinus (*Enneads* n, 4, 1 and 4) a clear idea

of a matter which exists in the intelligible world, distinct from and prior to our matter, and which provides the subject or *formed* being that is presupposed by all forms. But the difference is that for the neo-Empedocles this intelligible matter as such possesses actual reality, and he makes it the first divine Emanation. (We may recall the book *De Mysteriis Aegyptorum*, in which Porphyry explains the magical virtue of images and temples by the fact that they are made out of this pure divine matter.) It is precisely the idea of this universal intelligible Matter that is the characteristic theorem of Ibn Masarrāh's doctrine. The following are three brief observations about it.

(a) The elevation of the first Plotinian hypostasis to a level above the schema of the five substances is in accordance with the Ismaili requirement that the Principle or Primary Cause be elevated to a level above being and non-being. It is worth stressing this, in view of the affinity of Ibn Masarrāh's school and doctrines with those of the Islamic esotericism encountered elsewhere, especially the Shiite and Ismaili doctrines.

(b) Along with the theory of intelligible Matter we have a recurrence of Empedocles' notion of the two cosmic energies, which are designated as *φιλοφροσύνη* and discord (*νεῖκος*). The Arabic equivalent of the first of these terms is the word *mahabbah*, but the equivalent given for the second term essentially modifies its content. The words *qahr* and *ghalabah*, which are equivalents not of the Greek *νεῖκος* but of *κρατεῖν*, commonly used in astrology, connote the idea of domination, victory, sovereignty. In al-Suhrawardi, *qahr* and *mahabbah* are two 'dimensions' of the intelligible world (see above, VII, 2); *cahir* qualifies the 'victorial Lights', the pure archangelic Lights. Far from *qahr* being the distinguishing mark of the beings of corporeal matter, for al-Suhrawardi it qualifies the Avestan *Xvarnah*, the Light of Glory or sovereignty of Light. Thus there is one radical difference between neo-Empedocleism and the classical Empedocles—a subject which calls for further research.

(c) The doctrine of a primordial intelligible Matter exercised considerable influence. It is present not only in the Jewish philosopher Solomon ben Gabirol (died between 1058 and 1070 AD), but also in the work of Ibn al-'Arabi, a fact which enabled Asin Palacios to achieve a partial reconstruction of Ibn Masarrāh's thought. Ibn Masarrāh's neo-Empedoclean metaphysical theorem of the five substances or principles of

being has its corollary in Ibn al-'Arabi in the descending hierarchy of the five meanings of the term 'matter'. (1) There is the spiritual matter which is common both to the uncreated and to the created (*haqiqat al-haqa'iq*, the Essence of essences). (2) There is the spiritual matter which is common to all created beings, both spiritual and corporeal (*nafas al-rahman*). (3) There is the matter which is common to all bodies, celestial or sublunary. (4) There is physical matter (our matter) which is common to all sublunary bodies. (5) There is artificial matter, which is common to all accidental forms. Finally, the idea of a 'spiritual matter' [*cf.* Henry More's *spissitudo spiritualis*] was to be of fundamental importance in the eschatology of Mulla Sadra al-Shirazi and the school of Isfahan.

4. We cannot give an account here of the changes of fortune experienced by the school of Ibn Masarrāh, a school which was the first society of mystics formed in Muslim Spain. The school had to survive in an atmosphere of intolerance and suspicion, harassment and anathema. Obligated as they were to pursue a strict esotericism, the 'Masarrians' formed a secret hierarchical organization with an Imam as its leader. The most famous of them, at the start of the fifth/eleventh century, was Isma'il 'Abd Allah al-Ru'ayni, whose own daughter was reputed by the initiates to possess extraordinary theological knowledge. Unfortunately, during Isma'il's lifetime a schism occurred, in the aftermath of which we lose track of the school as a social organization. However that may be, the mystical bent of Ibn Masarrāh's ideas continued to have a profound effect.

The most convincing proof of the presence of Ibn Masarrāh's spirit of mysticism at the heart of Spanish Sufism is the enormous influence exercised by the esoteric core of the school of Almeria. After the death of Isma'il al-Ru'ayni, and at the start of the sixth/twelfth century, at the height of Almoravid power, Almeria became the capital, so to speak, of all the Spanish Sufis. Abu al-'Abbas ibn al-'Arif composed a new rule for the spiritual life (*tariqah*), which was based on the theosophy of Ibn Masarrāh. This rule was widely diffused by three great disciples: Abu Bakr al-Mallurqin in Granada, Ibn Barrajan—whose name was to be inseparable from that of Ibn al-'Arabi—in Seville (but he was deported to Morocco with Ibn al-'Arif, where they both died around 536/1141); and Ibn Qasi in the Algarve in southern Portugal, where he organized the initiates of Ibn Masarrāh's school

into a sort of religious militia known by the mystical name of *muridun*. Both the theosophical doctrine and the organization have significant features in common with those of Ismailism. Ibn Qasi reigned for ten years as the sovereign Imam in the Algarve, dying in 546/1151. Fourteen years after his death, in 560/1165, Ibn al-'Arabi was born, one of whose great works was to be a commentary on the only work by Ibn Qasi that has come down to us — a theosophical-mystical commentary on the command received by Moses before the Burning Bush: 'Take off thy sandals'. (Quran 20:12).

2. IBN HAZM OF CORDOBA

1. To Cordoba also belongs one of the most arresting characters of Andalusian Islam in the tenth and eleventh centuries, a complex character whose many sides are reflected in his work. There is Ibn Hazm the poet, Ibn Hazm the thinker, the theologian, the critical historian of religions and of the schools of philosophy and theology, the moralist and the jurist. Reinhardt Dozy describes him as *vir immensae doctrinae*. We are principally interested here in the Platonist and the historian of religions. Abu Muhammad 'Ali ibn Hazm was born in 383/994 into a family of high social standing; he himself liked to trace his ancestry back to a certain Persian called Yazid. His father was vizir to the caliph al-Mansur, and the young Ibn Hazm was thus able to receive the teaching of the famous masters of Cordoba in all the disciplines: the *hadith*, history, philosophy, law, medicine and literature.

Unfortunately, in April 403/1013, an entire quarter of Cordoba was sacked by the Berbers. In June of the same year, Ibn Hazm lost his father. With revolt brewing against Umayyad rule Ibn Hazm was expelled from Cordoba and his goods were confiscated. We see him, then, in his twentieth year, completely caught up in politics, taking his place among the most loyal supporters of the Umayyad dynasty. He fled to Almeria, where he played a leading part in the movement favouring the prince 'Abd al-Rahman IV, the legitimate pretender to the caliphate, against 'Ali ibn Hammud. But the prince was killed during a fight in which his army was routed, and Ibn Hazm was taken prisoner. He was, however, set free.

Nothing daunted, Ibn Hazm took refuge in Shatibah {Jativa). Here he found enough security and peace to write his remarkable book about

love, *The Dove's Necklace (Tawk al-hamamah)*. This is also a journal of his life's experience, in which he reveals among other things a wound that till then had been kept secret: his youthful love for his parents' adopted daughter. He always remained loyal to the cause of the Umayyad nobility as the only legitimate dynasty. He was the most staunch supporter of prince 'Abd al-Rahman V who succeeded in gaining the throne, under the name of al-Mustazhir, in 413/1023, and whose vizir he became. But the appointment was short-lived. Two months later, in February of the same year, al-Mustazhir was killed, and Ibn Hazm was once more banished from Cordoba. All hope of an Umayyad restoration was henceforth abandoned. Ibn Hazm renounced all political activity and devoted himself to science. He died in 454/1063.

2. In the book entitled *The Dove's Necklace*, Ibn Hazm takes his place among the initiates of Islamic Platonism, in which his famous predecessor was Muhammad ibn Dawud al-Isfahani (d. 297/909), whose remarkable *Kitab al-Zuhra* was mentioned earlier (VI, 6). It is likely that in the library of the castle of Jativa Ibn Hazm discovered a copy of the book by Ibn Dawud al-Isfahani. He refers expressly to the passage in the book where Ibn Dawud alludes to the Platonic myth of the *Symposium*: 'Certain initiates of philosophy have thought that in creating each spirit, God gave it a spherical form; he then split it into two parts, and placed each half inside a body.' The secret of love is the reunion of these two parts in their initial wholeness. The idea of the pre-existence of souls is indeed stated expressly in a *hadith* of the Prophet. Ibn Hazm refers to this, but he prefers to interpret it in the sense of a reunion of the higher element of souls that are isolated and scattered in this world. It is a question of the affinity between the impulses which move them and which came into being in their pre-existence in the higher world. Love is the mutual convergence of the form which perfects them. Like seeks like; love is a spiritual adhesion, an interfusion of souls.

As for the cause which for the most part prompts the unfolding of love, Ibn Hazm's analysis is clearly reminiscent of Plato's *Phaedrus*. This cause 'is a form which is outwardly (*zahir*) beautiful, because the soul is beautiful and desires passionately all that is beautiful, and inclines towards perfect images. If she sees such an image, she concentrates upon it; and if she then perceives in this image something

of her own nature, she is irresistibly attracted by it, and love in the true sense results. But if she does not perceive something of her own nature beyond the image, her affection does not go beyond the form'. It is important to set this sort of analysis in Ibn Hazm, who is a *zahirite* (that is, an *exotericist* in canonical matters, attached to the evidence of the letter and the appearance) alongside reflections such as the following: 'O pearl concealed beneath the human form: '_____I see a human form, but when I meditate more deeply, it appears to me as a body from the celestial world of Spheres.' These reflections could come from *esotericists* such as Ruzbihan of Shiraz or Ibn al-'Arabi, who are concerned to see each appearance as a 'theophanic form'. The dividing line between one and the other is rather vague: in both cases, the appearance becomes *apparition*. This is something that must be borne in mind in connection with the *zahirism* of the theologian Ibn Hazm.

We are indebted to the Arabist A.R. Nykl both for the first edition of the Arabic text of Ibn Dawud's book, and the first translation of Ibn Hazm's book into a Western language (English). A question of extreme interest has also been pursued by A.R. Nykl, a question which concerns the close resemblance between Ibn Hazm's theory of love and some of the ideas which occur in the 'Gaie Science' of Guillaume IX of Aquitaine, and in general in the main themes of the troubadours' repertory until the time of the crusade against the Albigensians. We can do no more here than point to the existence of the problem. The implications of it—geographical, typological, and spiritual—are enormous, for it is a question not just of form and theme, but of an element in common between the *Fedeli d'amore* and the religion of love professed by certain Sufis. But we must distinguish carefully between the positions adopted (see above, VI, 6). For the Platonist Ibn Dawud, for al-Jahiz, and for the neo-Hanbalite theologian Ibn al-Qayyim, the way of love has no divine outcome—it does not *emerge* anywhere. For the Platonism of the Sufis, for Ruzbihan of Shiraz and Ibn al-'Arabi, the way of love *is* this emergence. All the spirituality of the Sufis who came after them is different in tone from that of those who went before them. '*Udhri* love is not simply the model of God's love, because it is not a question of going from a human *object* to an *object* which is divine. What is in question is a transmutation of human love itself, for it is 'the only bridge over the torrent of the *tawhid*'.

Ibn Hazm's book on *Character and Behaviour* (*Kitab al-Akhlaq wa al-siyar*), which has been translated into Spanish by Asin Palacios, is also valuable in relation to the previous book, because in it the author defines the technical terms he uses in his analysis of the aspects of love. Moreover, it too is a work which springs, more or less, from the author's personal 'diary'. Without any predetermined plan, he sets down in it his observations, reflections and judgments on men and life. It is an extremely revealing book about man and society in fifth/eleventh century Andalusia.

3. As a canonist, Ibn Hazm is notable for a book (*Kitab al-Ibtal*, partially edited by I. Goldziher) in which he writes of the five determinants to which the different schools have recourse in order to make a juridical decision: analogy (*qiyas*), personal opinion (*ra'y*), approbation (*istihsan*), imitation (*taqlid*), and motivation (*ta'til*). In another book (*Kitab al-Muhalla*), he strongly criticizes the principles of the Shafi'ite school. Together with the *zahirite* doctrine, these books establish the bases for discussion with other writers.

By far the most important work of the theologian Ibn Hazm, however, is his treatise on religions and schools of thought (*Kitab al-fisal fi al-milal waal-ahwa' waal-nihal*, Cairo 1321/1903; also translated into Spanish by Asin Palacios). This long work is rightly regarded as the first treatise on the comparative history of religion to be written in Arabic or in any other language. In it the Master of Cordoba reveals the full scope of his genius and of his vast knowledge. He treats of the different religions, and also of the different attitudes of the human spirit in the face of religion, from that of the sceptic, who questions all sacred values, to that of the simple believer.

He divides people and doctrines into several categories, according to their attitude. There is the category of atheists, which includes both sceptics and materialists. There is the category of believers, which includes both those who believe in a personal divinity and those who believe in an abstract and impersonal divinity, with no relationship to humanity. The first group in this latter category is subdivided into monotheists and polytheists. Among the former a further distinction must be made between those who possess a Book revealed from Heaven by a prophet, and those who do not have such a Book. Those in possession of a Book (the *ahl al-kitab*; cf. above, I, 1) fall into two different classes: those who have faithfully preserved the sacred text

over the centuries without altering it in any way, and those who have altered the text. For Ibn Hazm the criterion for the truth of religion consists therefore in the affirmation of the divine Unity (*tawhid*) and the preservation over the centuries of the text of the Revelation in its integrity. Viewed in this light, religion is essentially founded on the sense of the divine, of the sacred; and the authenticity of this sense depends on the affirmation of the transcendent Unity, which is itself guaranteed by the prophetic Revelation. If this Revelation is to exercise a permanent influence, it must be preserved textually from century to century, since the text is the threshold itself whereby the believer may approach the divine mystery.

Such, broadly speaking, is the religious universe as seen by Ibn Hazm, and it was in accordance with it that he founded his *exoteric* (*zahiri*) system as the only way to attain spiritual truth. In order to support the suggestion made above with regard to this *zahirism*, we may recall that Ibn al-'Arabi, one of the greatest *esotericists* (*batini*) of all time, was himself also an Andalusian and, legally speaking, a *zahiri*!

3. IBN BAJJAH (AVEMPACE) OF SARAGOSSA

1. With Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Yahya ibn al-Sa'igh ibn Bajjah (Aven Badja, the *Avempace* of our Latin Scholastics), we move briefly to the north of the peninsula. This philosopher, whose short life was beset by tribulation, deserves special attention for the depth of his thought and his influence on Averroes and on Albert the Great. He was born at Saragossa at the end of the fifth/eleventh century, but in 512/1118 Saragossa was taken by Alfonso I of Aragon. This is why in the same year Ibn Bajjah fled to Seville, where he practised medicine, and then to Granada. He next went to Morocco, and was held in high esteem at the court of Fez, where he even held the post of vizier. But in 533/1138 the doctors of Fez, it is said, decided to get rid of their young and envied rival by poison. One of his friends and followers, a certain Abu al-Hasan 'Ali of Granada, wrote in the introduction to his collection of his master's treatises that Ibn Bajjah had been the first who truly promoted the teaching of the oriental philosophers of Islam in Spain. If one thinks of Ibn Masarra, this eulogy is perhaps somewhat exaggerated. In any case, the Jewish philosopher Solomon ben Gabirol (Avicbron) preceded him, though it is true that his writings were unknown to the Muslim philosophers.

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2. Ibn Bajjah is credited with several commentaries on the treatises of Aristotle (the *Physics*, the *Meteorology*, the *De generatione*, the *History of Animals*). His chief philosophical works remained unfinished, as Ibn Tufayl expressly states (see below, VIII, 5) while paying homage to his depth of spirit and lamenting his unhappy fate. They included various treatises on Logic, a treatise on the Soul, a treatise on the union of the human intellect with the active Intelligence—a theme which he took up again in the 'Letter of Farewell' addressed to one of his young friends on the eve of a voyage, in which he spoke of the true aim of existence and knowledge and which is quoted in the Latin version of Averroes' works as *Epistula expeditionis*. Finally, there is the treatise which earned him his reputation, entitled *The Regime of the Solitary* (*Tadbir al-mutawahhid*). Like al-Farabi, the solitary and contemplative Oriental whose influence upon him, given their affinity, was inevitable, Ibn Bajjah had a particular fondness for music and was himself a lute-player.

We should also note his extensive knowledge of medicine, mathematics and astronomy. It was through his interest in astronomy that he became involved in the opposition against Ptolemaic conceptions. The *status quaestionis* was discussed above in connection with Ibn al-Haytham (IV, 8). As long as the celestial Spheres are thought of as mathematical fictions for the use of geometers in calculating the planetary motions, the philosophers do not need to interfere. But as soon as they are thought of as concrete bodies, whether solid or fluid, the hypotheses must satisfy the laws of celestial physics. The celestial physics that was generally accepted was that of Aristotle and involved the notion of homocentric Spheres whose circular motion was centred on the centre of the world—thereby excluding the idea of epicycles and eccentrics. Throughout the twelfth century, the most eminent philosophers of Islamic Spain (Ibn Bajjah, Ibn Tufayl, Averroes) took part in the battle against Ptolemy, and this culminated in the system of al-Bitruji (the *Alpetragius* of the Latins) which had its supporters among those opposed to the Ptolemaic system up until the sixteenth century. We are indebted to the great Jewish philosopher Moses Maimonides (d. 1204 CE) for making known to us the substance of a treatise on astronomy composed by Ibn Bajjah. For pertinent reasons (having, of course, accepted the laws of motion as defined by the Peripatetics), Ibn Bajjah is opposed to epicycles and proposes his own

hypotheses. These were to influence Ibn Tufayl. inasmuch as he too, according to Averroes and al-Bitruji himself, took an interest in astronomy.

As we said above (IV, 8), what was actually in question was an *Imago mundi* which was the result less of experimental requirements than of an *a priori* perception of the universe. This perception is part and parcel of all the conceptions of the philosopher, and helps to situate Ibn Bajjah within the 'pleroma' of the Islamic philosophers. He himself made his situation clear in adopting a stand where al-Ghazali was concerned (see above, V, 7). Al-Ghazali appeared to him to have simplified the problem by saying that the contemplation in solitude of the spiritual world, a contemplation vouchsafed him through divine illumination, afforded him sweet delight. The truth is that al-Ghazali's essentially religious form of mysticism was alien to Ibn Bajjah; the philosopher's contemplation leads to something more detached. It can truly be said that by his influence on Averroes, Ibn Bajjah gave philosophy in Spain an orientation totally contrary to the spirit of al-Ghazali. Only the labour of speculative knowledge can lead man to knowledge of himself and of the agent or active Intelligence. It is none the less the case that the terms favoured by Ibn Bajjah, *solitary* and *stranger*, are in fact typical of mystical gnosis in Islam. It could thus be said that we are concerned with the same spiritual type, realized in individuals whose perception of their common goal differs, and who consequently differ also in their choice of the way to attain this goal. In Spain, one of these ways is that of Ibn Masarra, which Ibn al-'Arabi was to follow. Another way is that of Ibn Bajjah, which was adopted by Averroes.

3. S. Munk has provided a lengthy analysis of Ibn Bajjah's major work, the original of which was unfinished and was discovered only recently by Asin Palacios. Fortunately, the Jewish philosopher Moses of Narbonne {fourteenth century CE) had himself analysed it and quoted from it at length in his Hebrew commentary on Ibn Tufayl's *Hayy ibn Yaqzan*. From the sixteen extant chapters of this work, which are in truth uncommonly dense, we can only extract (and that not without difficulty) a few of the essential themes. The guiding principle can be described as an *itinerarium* leading the human spirit to union with the active Intelligence.

First of all the author explains the two words of the title, *The Regime*

of the Solitary. By 'regime' is meant 'several actions arranged according to a certain plan and for a certain purpose'. Now, 'the orderly combination of actions, requiring reflection, is only to be found in the *solitary* man. The regime of the solitary must be the image of the political regime of the perfect State, the model State.' Besides the influence of al-Farabi, the affinity with Abu al-Barakat al-Baghdadi is apparent here. We should observe that this ideal State is postulated neither *a priori* nor as the result of a political *coup d'etat*. It can be the result only of a preliminary reform of customs, a reform which is far more than 'social': it truly begins at the beginning, and aims first and foremost at the realization within each individual of the plenitude of human existence—the existence of the solitary—for (to adopt a somewhat facile play on words) it is the solitaries alone in Ibn Bajjah's sense who manifest solidarity.

These solitaries are men who have attained union with the active Intelligence, and who are thus able to form a perfect State in which there is no need for doctors, because the citizens have the best possible diet, nor for judges, because each individual has achieved the greatest perfection of which a human being is capable. At present, in all the imperfect States in which they live, the *solitaries*, with God as their only doctor, have the task of becoming the elements of the perfect City, the *plants* which must be cultivated and developed by the *regime* envisaged by the philosopher Ibn Bajjah, and which leads to the blessedness of the *solitary*. This term can be applied, therefore, both to the isolated individual and to several individuals at once; for as long as the community does not adopt the customs of the solitaries, they remain men whom Ibn Bajjah, with reference to al-Farabi and the Sufis, calls *strangers within* their families and their society, because they are citizens of the ideal republic anticipated by their daring spirituality. The stranger (*gharib*), the alien: the word comes from ancient Gnosis, runs through the sayings of the Shiite Imams, dominates al-Suhrawardi's *Recital of the Occidental Exile*, and is evidence in Ibn Bajjah that it is difficult to separate philosophy in Islam from gnosis.

4. To explain the basis on which the regime of the solitaries is founded, we must first group human actions in relation to the *forms* which they envisage, and also determine the *aims* of these actions in relation to the forms which each of them envisages. Here Ibn Bajjah, with astonishing speculative power, develops a theory of *spiritual forms*

to which we can only allude here. In the briefest possible terms, this theory distinguishes between the intelligible forms which must be abstracted from matter, and the intelligible forms which are in themselves separate from matter, and thus are perceived without having to be abstracted from it. The regime of the solitary leads him to perceive the former in a state and in circumstances which eventually reproduce the state and circumstances of the latter.

The forms which have to be abstracted from matter are called the hylic intelligibles (*ma'qulat hayulaniyah*). The possible (or hylic) intellect of man possesses them only *in potentia*; it is the active Intelligence which causes them to be *in actu*. Once *in actu*, they are perceived in their universality—that is to say, in the universal relationship which an essence sustains with the material individuals that exemplify it. But the ultimate goal of the solitary has no reference to matter (*hyle*). For this reason, in the end the universal relationship must itself disappear, and the solitary must perceive the forms in themselves, neither as immanent in matter nor as having to be abstracted from it. His intellect in some sense grasps the ideas of ideas, the essences of essences, including the essence itself of man, thanks to which man understands himself as being/intelligence. The forms which become intelligible *in actu* are then themselves intellect *in actu*, and this is the meaning here of the term *acquired intellect* or intellect emanated from the active Intelligence. Like the active Intelligence, these forms are unrelated to matter (*hyle*), because the intellect *in actu* is itself the 'substratum' of the acquired intellect.

In other words, when the intelligibles *potentia* have been abstracted from matter and become objects of thought, then their being is the being of forms which are no longer in matter. Intelligibles *in actu*, they are the acquired intellect which is the *form* of the intellect *in actu*. We can thus understand that once they have become intelligibles *in actu*, the forms of beings are the supreme term of those beings, and as such are themselves beings. And we can agree with al-Farabi that those things which are thought, having become intelligible *in actu*—that is, intellect *in actu*—are also able to think, inasmuch as they are intellect *in actu*.

The aim of the solitary is plain. It is to effect the operation whereby forms no longer have to be abstracted from a substratum, that is to say from their matter (*hyle*). 'When the intellect is *in actu* in relation

to all things which are intelligible *in actu*, it thinks of no being other than itself, but it thinks itself without abstraction' (without, that is, having to abstract a form from matter. This whole theory should be compared with the theory of 'presential knowledge' among the *ishraqiyun*; see above, VII).

5. There is one step left to take. 'There are beings who are pure forms without matter, forms which have never been in matter.' Hence, when these beings are thought, they do not need to become pure intelligible objects; they are already pure intelligible objects, as they were before being thought by the intellect, without having to be abstracted from matter. Because it is *in actu*, the intellect finds them separate from all matter and also *in actu*; it thinks them as they exist in themselves, as things which are intelligible and immaterial—their existence undergoes no change at all. We must conclude, then, that as the acquired intellect is the form of the intellect *in actu*, so these intelligible forms become forms for the acquired intellect, which is then as it were the substratum, the 'matter', of these forms, as it is also at the same time a form for the intellect *in actu* which is as it were its substratum.

Each of the forms which are at present *in concrete* immanent in their matter exists in and for the active Intelligence as a unique, separate and immaterial Form, without, of course, having had to be abstracted by the Intelligence from its respective matter, just as in the case of the intellect *in actu*. This is precisely the reason why man, in his essence, comes nearer than any other thing to the active Intelligence, because, as we have just seen, the acquired intellect is capable in its turn and by itself of the same movement as the movement of the intellect *in actu* when it thinks itself. Then there is born 'the true intelligible conception, that is to say the perception of the being which by its very essence is intellect *in actu*, with no past or present need of something to make it emerge from a state of potentiality.' This is a definition of the separate active Intelligence {'*aql fa'* 'al} as active and always in the act of intelligizing itself; and this is the term of all movements.

This brief summary will perhaps suffice to indicate the depth of Ibn Bajjah's thought. If we refer to what has been said here of the active Intelligence as the Holy Spirit, in connection with prophetic philosophy, Avicennism and al-Suhrawardi, it may be said that Ibn Bajjah's remarkable intellectual rigour makes him stand out from all the philosophers of Islam who, like him, have drawn up something re-

sembling a phenomenology of the Spirit. The work is incomplete, going no further than Chapter 26. Averroes not unreasonably found it obscure, and we shall never know how Ibn Bajjah would have gone on from this last chapter to conclude his *Regime of the Solitary*.

4. IBN AL-SID OF BADAJOZ

1. This philosopher, contemporary with Ibn Bajjah, was rediscovered by Asin Palacios; through the fault of his biographers, he had long been thought to be a grammarian and a philologist. He lived his life during the critical period of transition between the reign of the minor local dynasties (*tawa'if*) and the Almoravid invasion. He was born in 444/1052 in Badajoz in Extremadura, whence he was named *al-Batalyusi*, meaning from Badajoz. He was forced by the situation to seek refuge in Valencia, then in Albarracin, where he held the post of secretary at the little court of the emir 'Abd al-Malik ibn Razin (1058-1102 CE), and finally in Toledo, where he settled for several years. He must also have lived in Saragossa, since it was there that he conducted a polemic with Ibn Bajjah on questions of grammar and dialectic, which he recapitulated in his *Book of Questions (Kitab al-Masa'il)*. But, like Ibn Bajjah, he had to flee in 1118, when the town was taken by the Christians. He died in 521/1127, having devoted his last years to writing his books and instructing his disciples.

Of the eleven works mentioned by Asin, we will concentrate only on the last work, the *Book of Circles*, which earned the writer a place among the philosophers. For a long time, the book was known only to the Jewish philosophers, because the famous Moses ibn Tibbon (1240-1283 CE) had already produced a Hebrew version of it—an initiative which bears witness to the respect in which he held Ibn al-Sid's work. The work does in fact admirably reflect the state of knowledge and of philosophical problems in Muslim Spain, at a time when Ibn Bajjah was writing his own works, and several years before Ibn Tufayl and Averroes had planned theirs. In his *Book of Questions*, Ibn al-Sid had already been led to take a stand which is typical of a situation in which esotericism, such as that of the school of Almeria, is set aside, and religion and philosophy proceed to try and adapt themselves to each other. For our philosopher, religion and philosophy differ neither as regards their object nor as regards the aim of their respective

doctrines; they seek and teach the same truth by different methods and by addressing themselves to different faculties in man.

2. This is the philosophy described by Ibn al-Sid in his *Book of Questions*. It is true that it is an emanationist philosophy, but it is one which, unlike that of the Avicennians, is not content to reproduce the hierarchy of Plotinian hypostases as first principles. It goes on to systematize them with arguments of a mathematical nature, thereby lending a certain neo-Pythagorean tone to the whole system, as Asin Palacios has pointed out. Numbers are the symbols of the cosmos; the rhythm of the duration of things is genetically explained by the decad, which is the essence of all number; the One enters into all beings, is their true essence and their ultimate end. There is no doubt that the influence of the *Ikhwan al-Safa'* (see above, IV, 3) plays a part here; their writings had been circulating in Andalusia for over a century. Furthermore, it appears that Ibn al-Sid possessed the same liking for diagrams as the Ismailis.

Three circles symbolize the three stages of Emanation: (1) There is the decad of the pure active Intelligences or Forms without matter, of whom the tenth is the active Intelligence; (2) There is the decad of Souls: nine for the celestial Spheres, and the universal Soul, which emanates directly from the active Intelligence. (3) There is the decad of the material beings (form, corporeal matter, the four elements, the three natural kingdoms, and Man). In each circle, then, the tenth place is occupied respectively by active Intelligence, the universal Soul, and Man. The first chapter of the book is entitled "The explanation of the thesis of the philosophers stating that the order in which beings proceed from the first Cause resembles an ideal circle (*da'irah wahmiyah*), whose point of return to its beginning is in the form of Man'.

5. IBN TUFAYL OF CADIZ

1. This philosopher has already been mentioned (see above, VIII, 3) in connection with the opposition of the Peripatetics to Ptolemy's astronomy. His abilities were acknowledged by both Averroes and al-Bitruji. Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Malik ibn Tufayl was born in Cadiz (*Wadi-Ash*) in the province of Granada during the first years of our twelfth century. Like all his colleagues, his scholarship was encyclopaedic: he was a doctor, mathematician, astronomer, philos-

opher and poet. He held the post of secretary under the governor of Granada, then went to Morocco, where he was the close friend, vizir and doctor of the second sovereign of the Muwahhid (Almohad) dynasty, Abu Ya'qub Yusuf (1163-1184). Few other details are known about his external life. It is reported, however, that on the wishes of the sovereign he gave his friend Averroes the task of undertaking an analysis of the works of Aristotle. Averroes has even left a detailed account of his first interview with the sovereign. Ibn Tufayl died in Morocco in 580/1185.

Our Latin Scholastics, for whom the name Abu Bakr became *Abubacer*, knew of him only through a critique by Averroes (the *De Anima*, V), in which he reproaches Ibn Tufayl for identifying the potential intellect of man with the imagination. Ibn Tufayl held that when it is correctly employed the Imagination has the ability to receive the intelligibles, and that there is no need to posit any other intellect. One regrets the disappearance of a work which not only would have facilitated our understanding of the aims of his 'philosophical romance', but would also have helped us to make fruitful comparisons with the theory of the imagination so widely developed among the thinkers of Oriental Islam.

2. Ibn Tufayl owed his later reputation above all to the 'philosophical romance', entitled *Hayy ibn Yaqzan*, which was unknown to the Latin Scholastics. The work was translated into several languages, first into Hebrew by Moses of Narbonne in the fourteenth century, then into Latin in the seventeenth century by Edward Pococke, with the title *Philosophus autodidactus* (see *in fine* Bibliography). As we have seen, the whole of the speculative life of our philosophers centres round the spiritual being who is the active Intelligence, the tenth Angel of the first spiritual hierarchy, the Holy Spirit of prophetic philosophy. But the theory is so profoundly lived to its limits—by their trans-conscious (*sirr*) rather than by their subconscious selves—that it unfolds into a dramaturgical work whose characters are the philosopher's own symbols in the *itinerarium* leading him to this Intelligence. This was so in the case of Avicenna (see above, V, 4) as well as in the case of al-Suhrawardi (above, VII, 4). Ibn Tufayl was contemporary with al-Suhrawardi, and their respective intentions are strikingly similar. On his part, al-Suhrawardi drew the inspiration for his symbolic recitals from an experience which led him to the realization of the

'Oriental philosophy' which, he said, Avicenna had been unable to attain. Ibn Tufayl, in the prologue to his philosophical romance, refers to 'Oriental philosophy' and to Avicenna's recitals, because he knows that the former is to be found in these latter recitals. These philosophers have a single theme in common, and each of them develops it according to the bent of his own genius.

Essentially, Ibn Tufayl is indebted to Avicenna for the names of the characters—the *dramatis personae*. First, there is the recital by Avicenna of *Hayy ibn Yaqzan* (*Vivens filius vigilantis*). In passing, we should mention one theory which was quickly dropped: some researchers, misled by a *lapsus* on the part of Ibn Khaldun, suggested that there had been a third story bearing the same title, also by Avicenna, which had been Ibn Tufayl's model. This is not the case. Iranian tradition, which goes back to Avicenna's immediate circle, is quite definite on this point. The Avicennan recital as we know it is certainly the one to which Ibn Tufayl refers; but in Ibn Tufayl, *Hayy ibn Yaqzan* no longer represents the active Intelligence, but the *solitary* so dear to Ibn Bajjah, whose idea is thus taken to its furthest limits. Ibn Tufayl's recital is an original work, and in no way a mere extension of Avicenna's.

The names of the other two characters come from Avicenna's recital of *Salaman and Absal*. There are two works with this title. First, there is a Hermetic recital translated from the Greek, and expanded by the poet Jami (d. 898/1492) into a vast mystical epic in Persian. Secondly, there is the recital by Avicenna known to us only from the quotations and the summary of it given by Nasir al-Din Tusi (d. 672/1274). We also know that, in Avicenna's own words, 'Salaman does no more than typify you yourself, whereas Absal represents the stage you have reached in mystical gnosis.' On the other hand, according to the interpretation given by Nasir Tusi, they are the two aspects of the soul: Salaman is the practical intellect, and Absal is the contemplative intellect. As we shall see, it was this interpretation that Ibn Tufayl retained.

3. The setting of his philosophical romance, or, more accurately, of his 'recital of initiation', consists principally of two islands. On one of the islands the author situates a human society with its laws and customs; on the other island lives a *solitary*, a man who has attained full spiritual maturity without the help of any human teacher and outside all society. The men who make up the society on the first island live

under the constraint of a Law which is wholly external to them, and possess a religion whose mode of expression remains at the level of the world of sense. Nevertheless, two men stand out from this society; they are named Salaman and Absal (in accordance with most of the manuscripts and Ibn Tufayl's own reference to the matter, the authentic form of *Absalis* to be preferred to the corrupt *Asal*). These two men, then, raise themselves to a higher level of awareness. Salaman, who has a practical and 'social' spirit, adapts himself to popular religion and ends up by governing the people. But Absal, whose nature is contemplative and mystical, cannot adapt himself (a reminder of the transposed Avicennan recital). Absal, an exile in his own country, decides to emigrate to the island opposite, which he believes is completely uninhabited, in order to devote himself to the speculative life and to spiritual exercises.

In fact, this uninhabited island is 'peopled' by a hermit, Hayy ibn Yaqzan. He appeared there in a mysterious manner, either through the spontaneous generation of matter made spiritually active by the active Intelligence, or else because, abandoned as a baby to the sea, he miraculously reached the island. In any case, the little child is first succoured by a gazelle that is a living example of the sympathy uniting all living beings, and which nourishes and rears him. Then begins his mysterious education, with no visible human teacher. This is divided into seven-year periods, and from septenary to septenary Hayy ibn Yaqzan is brought to the maturity of a perfect philosopher (we are giving the briefest possible summary). Ibn Tufayl describes how the solitary acquires his first notions of physics; how he learns to distinguish between matter and form; how from the idea of body he rises to the threshold of the spiritual world; how he speculates, as he contemplates the Spheres, on the eternity of the world; how he discovers the necessity for a Demiurge; how he reflects on the nature and condition of his own intellect and becomes aware of the true and inexhaustible essence of man, and of what is for him the source of suffering of joy; how, in order to resemble God, he strives to let nothing subsist in him except thought alone, and is consequently led to the ineffable state in which he perceives the universal Theophany. The solitary perceives the divine appearance shining in the Intelligences of the highest Spheres, gradually diminishing as it approaches the sublunary world; finally he descends into his own depths, and perceives that there is a multitude of individual

essences resembling his own, some surrounded by light and purity, and others by Darkness and torment.

4. It is when he emerges from this ecstatic vision, after seven septenaries—seven times seven years—have passed, and the solitary is in his fiftieth year, that Absal joins him on the island. Their first encounter is difficult, and there is suspicion on both sides. But Absal succeeds in learning Hayy's language, and they make an astonishing discovery together: Absal realizes that all that was taught him about religion in the island of men is already known to Hayy, the solitary philosopher, guided solely by the active Intelligence, but known in a purer form. Absal discovers what a symbol is, and that all religion is the symbol of a spiritual truth and reality which is inaccessible to men without this veil: their inner vision is paralysed, both because their attention is focused exclusively on the world of sense and because of their social habits.

When Hayy learns that on the island opposite there are men living in a state of spiritual blindness, he nobly wishes to go and make the truth known to them. Absal agrees to go with him, but with regret. Thanks to a boat which chances to come to the shore of their island, the two solitaries go to the island where Absal used to live. To begin with they are received with great honour; but as they extend the scope of their philosophical indoctrination they observe that friendship gives place to coldness, and then to a growing hostility, for people are incapable of understanding them. On their side, the two friends realize that human society is beyond redemption, and they return to their island. They now know through experience that perfection, and consequently happiness, is accessible only to a few: the few that have the strength to renounce.

V There have been many views about the meaning of this tale and Ibn Tufayl's deepest intentions in writing it. There is no need to list them here, for it is the quality of symbols to possess inexhaustible meanings, and it is up to each reader to discover the truth for himself. It is wrong to see it as a Robinson Crusoe story. All the external events must be understood in a spiritual sense. We are concerned with the philosopher's spiritual autobiography, and Ibn Tufayl's intention corresponds with Avicenna's and with that of all his fraternity. The education leading to a full awareness of things is not the work of an

external human teacher. It is the illumination of the active Intelligence; but the active Intelligence only illumines the philosopher on the condition that he strips himself of all profane and worldly ambitions, and that he lives even in the midst of the world the life of a solitary, so dear to the heart of Ibn Bajjah. He must be solitary because the final meaning of Ibn Tufayl's recital appears to be that while the philosopher can understand the religious man, the reverse is not the case; the man who is simply and solely religious cannot understand the philosopher.

Adopting this point of view, Averroes was to classify men according to three spiritual categories: men of apodictic demonstration, of dialectical disputation, and of rhetorical exhortation. Does the return of Hayy ibn Yaqzan and Absal to their island mean that the conflict between philosophy and religion in Islam is desperate and without remedy? This is perhaps what one is accustomed to believe about Averroism when one speaks of it as the 'last word' in Islamic philosophy. But it is only a small area of the entire field of philosophy in Islam. To encompass the latter in its entirety and to understand what its future is to be, we must refer to what was said above {ch. II} about Shiism and prophetic philosophy.

6. AVERROES AND AVERROISM

1. The name of Averroes is one that evokes a powerful personality and an authentic philosopher of whom more or less everyone in the West has heard. The misfortune is that in this case Western vision has been lacking in perspective. We have already lamented the fact that it has been repeated over and over again that Averroes was the greatest name and the most eminent representative of what has been called 'Arab philosophy', and that with him this philosophy attained its apogee and its goal. In this way we have lost sight of what was happening in the East, where in fact the work of Averroes passed as if it were unnoticed. Neither Nasir Tusi, nor Mir Damad, nor Mulla Sadra, nor Hadi Sabzavari had any inkling of the role and the significance attributed by our textbooks to the Averroes-Ghazali polemic. If it had been explained to them they would have been amazed, as their successors today are amazed.

Abu al-Walid Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad *ibn Rushd* (Aven Rushd, which became Averroes for the Latins) was born at 242

Cordoba in 520/1126. His grandfather and father had been famous jurists, invested with the dignity of supreme judge (*qadi al-qudat*), and influential political personages. Needless to say, the young Averroes received a complete education: theology and law (*fiqh*), poetry, medicine, mathematics, astronomy and philosophy. In 548/1153 he went to Morocco, and in 565/1169-1170 he was *qadi* of Seville. The same year saw the completion of his *Commentary on the Treatise on Animals* and his *Lesser Commentary on Physics*. This was an immensely productive period of his life. In 570/1174, he completed his *Lesser Commentaries on Rhetoric and Metaphysics*, and became seriously ill. When he had recovered, he set out again on the journeys enjoined by his profession. In 574/1178 he was in Morocco—this was the year in which he wrote the treatise that was later translated into Latin with the title *De substantia orbis*; and in 578/1182 the Muwahhid sovereign Abu Ya'qub Yusuf, to whom he had been presented by Ibn Tufayl, appointed him as his physician, and then conferred on him the dignity of Qadi of Cordoba. Averroes enjoyed the same favour at the hands of the sovereign's successor, Abu Yusuf Ya'qub al-Mansur.

Yet already at this period of his life his philosophical opinions were arousing the suspicions of the doctors of the Law, in spite of the fact that he observed all the external prescriptions of the *shari'ah*. It seems that as he grew older, Averroes withdrew from public affairs in order to devote himself wholly to his philosophical studies. Nevertheless, his enemies succeeded in putting him out of favour with al-Mansur who, when he had passed through Cordoba in 1195, had showered Averroes with yet more honours. He was put under house arrest in Lucena (Elisana), near Cordoba, where he was subjected to the insults, satire and attacks of the 'orthodox' theologians and the people. Although it is true that al-Mansur recalled him to Morocco, it was not an order to restore him to favour: he died, without having seen Andalusia again, on the 9th Safar 595/10th December 1198, in a state of seclusion. He was seventy-two years old. His mortal remains were transferred to Cordoba. Ibn al-'Arabi, who when very young had met Averroes, attended the funeral and has left us a moving account of it.

2. The works of Averroes are too many for us to examine them in detail here. He wrote commentaries on most of the works of Aristotle,

for his goal as a philosopher was to restore Aristotle's thought to what he believed to have been its authenticity. In the case of some of the treatises, there are even three sets of commentary: greater, lesser and paraphrase. Hence Dante's comment: *Averrois che'l gran comento feo*. Sometimes his exposition is more free, and Averroes speaks on his own account, as in the *Epitome of the Metaphysics*. Apart from his commentaries, he wrote a number of other works of major importance.

First and foremost we must mention the *Tahafut al-tahafut*, his monumental reply to the critique by means of which al-Ghazali believed himself to be annihilating philosophy—we explained above (V, 7) why we prefer 'The Autodestruction of Autodestruction' as the translation of the title (the Latin translation by Kalo Kalonymos is *Destructio destructionis*). The work is now perfectly accessible even to non-Orientalist philosophers, thanks to the translation made by Simon van den Berg (*cf* Bibliography), which contains a wealth of notes giving us detailed information about the references, implications and allusions. Averroes follows al-Ghazali's text step by step, refuting it as he goes along, sometimes taking a wicked delight in referring to al-Ghazali's other books and showing him to be in flagrant contradiction with himself. Given the positions adopted by philosophers and theologians with respect to the same problems, one would have to be a great optimist to conclude from reading this book that they are divided by formulas rather than by essential things. The only other works we can mention here are the essays on physics, collected in the Latin editions under the title of *Sermo de substantia orbis* {see above}; two treatises on the problem central for our philosophers, namely the union of the separate (that is to say immaterial) active Intelligence with the human intellect; and three treatises on the accord between religion and philosophy.

We should point out, with S. Munk, that it is due to the Jewish philosophers that a good number of the works of Averroes have survived. The Arabic copies of them were always very rare, for the relentlessness with which the Muwahhids hunted down philosophy and philosophers prevented their reproduction and dissemination. By contrast, the scholarly rabbis of Christian Spain and Provence collected them, and made Hebrew versions of them—they even made copies of the original Arabic, in Hebrew characters. The origins of Latin Averroism go back to the Latin translation of Averroes' commentaries

on Aristotle made by Michael Scot, probably during his stay at Palermo from 1228 to 1235 when he was court astrologer to the Emperor Frederick II of Hohenstaufen.

3. Bearing these all too brief observations in mind, we may say that having to deal with Averroes in a few lines is a task all the more formidable because the main concern of each historian seems often to have been to demonstrate that in the great debate about the relationship between philosophy and religion, Averroes belongs to his own camp. Renan makes him a freethinker before the word was invented; in reaction to this, more or less recent studies tend to show him as an apologist for the Quran, or even as a theologian, in most cases without taking the trouble to explain exactly what they mean by the word. It can never be said too often that, once posed as a result of the translations from Arabic into Latin, some of the problems that have absorbed Christians do not necessarily take the same form in Islam and have no exact equivalent there. We must above all specify what Arabic term, in the present case, is being translated as theologian, never forgetting that the situation of the philosopher-theologian in Islam differed from that of his Christian 'homologue' in both the opportunities and the difficulties he experienced.

In fact, Averroes' perspective is determined by a strict 'discernment of spirits'. If we recall what was said at the beginning of the present study, we will recognize that Averroes was not the first in Islam to lay that the text of the divine Book revealed by the Prophet consists of the exoteric (*zahir*) letter, and one or more esoteric (*batin*) meanings. Like all esotericists, Averroes was firmly convinced that psychological and social catastrophes of the worst kind would result from the untimely revelation of the esoteric meaning of religious prescriptions and teachings to the weak and ignorant. In spite of this reservation, he knew that it was always the same truth that was present at different levels of interpretation and comprehension. It would therefore be wrong to attribute to Averroes himself the idea that there could be two contradictory truths. The famous doctrine of the 'double truth' actually belongs to Latin political Averroism.

To confuse this doctrine with Averroes' esotericism one would have to be entirely ignorant of the nature of the mental operation known as *ta'wil*—that is to say, the spiritual exegesis that we have already singled out as one of the sources of philosophical meditation in Islam

(I, 1). Esoteric truth and exoteric truth are in no sense contradictory. More specifically, we cannot study and appreciate the *ta'wil* practised by Averroes without knowing how it operated elsewhere: in Avicenna, in al-Suhrawardi, in Sufism and Shiism, above all in Ismailism. There is something common to them all, of course, but there are also fundamental differences in the practice of the *ta'wil*, and it is due precisely to these that the situation of the philosopher Averroes and of Averroism in the West is not that of esotericism in Oriental Islam.

4. A technical and detailed comparison has not yet been made. On one essential point such a comparison would clarify not only the themes but also the consequences of Averroes' cosmology, inasmuch as this cosmology ended by destroying the second hierarchy of Avicennan angelology, the hierarchy of the *Angeli* or *Animae caelestes*. This world of the *Animae caelestes*, the *malakut*, was—as the whole *ishraqi* tradition stresses—the world of autonomous Images perceived in their own right by the active Imagination. It is the world which authenticates the visions of prophets and mystics, as well as the meaning of the Resurrection and the multiple meanings of the Revelation, each of which symbolizes with the others. Once this world had disappeared, what was to become of the new birth of the soul, an event connected, especially in Ismailism, with the soul's progression through the night of symbols? Would the *ta'wil* degenerate into mere technique? At all events, it is unwise to speculate about Averroes' 'rationalism' while assuming things about him that properly belong to the internal conflicts of Christian thought. The question must be placed in the only context which gives it any real meaning.

Because his aim was to reaffirm a cosmology in purely Aristotelian terms, Averroes criticized Avicenna's triadic schema, which situated the *Anima caelestis* between the pure separate Intelligence and the celestial orb (see above, V, 4). Each orb is moved by a virtue, a finite energy, which acquires infinite power through the desire which moves it towards a being that is neither a body nor a power subsisting in a body, but a separate (immaterial) Intelligence, that moves this desire through being its final cause. According to Averroes, it is in homonymy, in pure metaphor, that the name of *soul* can be given to this kinetic energy, this desire which is an act of pure intellection. What motivates this critique is the adoption of an attitude which is fundamentally opposed to Avicennan emanationism—to the idea of a successive

procession of Intelligence from the One—for the simple reason that the idea of emanation is still allied with the idea of creation. Such an idea of creation is unintelligible for a strict Peripatetic, for whom there is no creative cause.

5. If a hierarchy exists in cosmology, it is because the kinetic force of each orb desires not only the Intelligence that pertains to its own Heaven, but also the supreme Intelligence. This Intelligence can thus be named as the cause, not in the sense of being the cause of emanation, but in the sense in which 'that which is understood' (intelligized) is the cause of 'that which understands it'—that is to say, as the final cause. Just as any intelligent and intelligible substance can in this sense be the cause of several beings, because each of these beings understands it in its own fashion, so the *Primum movens* can be such a cause, because in each Heaven the kinetic force of each orb understands it differently, in its own fashion. Thus, there is neither creation nor successive procession, but simultaneity in an eternal beginning.

The strict principle of *Ex Uno non fit nisi Unum* which governs Avicenna's neo-Platonic schema has been left behind, abolished as superfluous. (It had also been weakened by al-Suhrawardi's metaphysics of light, used for a similar purpose by Nasir Tusi.) Together with this, Averroes rejected the Avicennan idea of the active Intelligence as the *Dator formarum*. For him, forms are not ideal realities, extrinsic to their matter. They are not placed in matter by an agent; matter itself contains in potentiality its innumerable forms, which are inherent in it (a position which is diametrically opposed to that of al-Suhrawardi).

6. Once the notion of the *Anima caelestis* was abolished, what was to become of the principle at the heart of Avicennan anthropology: the homology between the *Anima caelestis* and the *anima humana*, between the relationship of the human soul to the angelic active Intelligence and the relationship of each *Anima caelestis* with the Intelligence towards which it is moved by its desire? How would one now accomplish the mystical journey towards the East in the way envisaged by Hayy ibn Yaqzan? Here again we must go back to the choices that determined the course of events. In the same way as Alexander of Aphrodisias, Averroes held to the idea of a separate Intelligence; but unlike him he rejected the idea that the potential human

intelligence was a simple disposition connected with the organic constitution. This was why Averroism and Alexandrism were to divide Western thought, as though the former represented the religious idea and the latter unbelief. The first of these two propositions was responsible for the insults directed at Averroes (Averroes, the Peripatetic!) by the anti-Platonists of the Renaissance, such as George Valla and Pomponazzi. Yet in the final analysis, were not Valla and Pomponazzi simply following Duns Scotus in rejecting the idea that the active Intelligence is a separate, divine and immortal substance, which is able to unite with us by means of the Imagination? In fact, were they not in general simply reaffirming the already overt rejection of Latin Avicennism and its idea of the active Intelligence?

On the other hand, this potential human intelligence, whose independence of the organic constitution was maintained in opposition to Alexander of Aphrodisias, is still not that of the personal individual. The personal individual as such possesses only the ability to receive that which is intelligible, and this ability disappears along with bodily existence. Whereas, for example, Mulla Sadra Shirazi, an Avicennan *ishraqi*, demonstrated forcefully that the principle of individuation is present in form, Averroes accepts matter as the principle of individuation. Thus the individual is identified with the corruptible, and immortality can only be generic. All one can say is that there is eternity within the individual, but what is 'eternizable' in him belongs wholly to the active Intelligence alone, not to the individual.

We know the extent to which each gnostic and mystic in Islam meditated on the Quranic verse 7:143, in which Moses asks God to reveal himself to him and received this reply: 'You will never see Me. However, behold this mountain: if it remains firm in its place, then—only then—will you see Me.' But when God revealed His glory to the mountain, He reduced it to dust; and Moses fell down in a swoon'. Nothing could be more telling than Averroes' *ta'wil* of this verse, as explained by Moses of Narbonne in his commentary on the Hebrew version of the treatise on the possibility of union with the active Intelligence. Man's hylic intellect does not possess *ab initio* the possibility of perceiving the active Intelligence. It must first become intellect *in actu*, and only then 'you will see Me'. But in this union, finally, it is the active Intelligence which perceives itself by particularizing itself for a moment in a human soul, as light is particularized

This union marks the obliteration of the passive intellect (like Moses' mountain)—it is not the gage and guarantee of individual survival. This takes us very far from Avicennism, in which the inalienable guarantee of spiritual individuality is this very awareness of itself that it succeeds in attaining through union with the active Intelligence.

TRANSITION

1. For a short time in the West, and in Iran down to our own day, Avicennism tended to be productive of mystical life, whereas Latin Averroism culminated in the political Averroism of Jean de Jandun and Marsilio of Padua (fourteenth century CE). Viewed in this light, the names of Avicenna and Averroes could be taken as the symbols of the spiritual destinies which awaited the East and West respectively, without imputing their differences to Averroism alone.

We have seen how Abu al-Barakat al-Baghdadi (see above, V, 6) pushed Avicennan gnosiology to its limit in that, according to him, each individual—or at least the individuals making up one spiritual family—had a distinct active Intelligence, which was a 'separate' spiritual entity. As we have already observed, the solutions proposed for the problem of the active Intelligence are highly revealing. When, for example, St. Thomas Aquinas gives each individual an active intellect, yet affirms that this intellect is not a 'separate' spiritual entity, he severs the direct relationship of the individual with the divine world, a relationship established by Avicenna's doctrine of the active Intelligence, itself identified with the Holy Spirit or Angel of Revelation. Once this relationship—a relationship which establishes the autonomy of the spiritual individual without a terrestrial intermediary—is severed, the authority of the Church takes the place of Hayy ibn Yaqzan's personal norm. Instead of the religious norm signifying liberty in the sense that it affirms an essentially individual initiation, it now becomes socialized; and spirit and soul rise in revolt against it. Once socialized, this norm ceased to be religious, and veered from monotheism to monism, from the idea of the divine Incarnation to the idea of the social Incarnation. So here, above all, we must be careful to observe the differences.

If we stress the fact that the Islamic religion does not possess the organs of a dogmatic magisterium, it is because it cannot bequeath either the concept or the thing itself to the secularized society which

would abide by it, as happens in the case where, for a secularized 'orthodoxy', 'deviationism' is substituted for 'heresy'. In Christianity, it was philosophy which joined battle with the magisterium, which had perhaps been all too diligent in preparing the weapons that were being turned against it. By contrast, it was not something like a political Averroism which could induce the Islamic Spirituals to free themselves from an oppressive orthodoxy, from the legalistic literalism of a *shari'ah*. Such freedom was obtained by means of the *ta'wil*, whose implications in Islamic esotericism in general must be fully analysed if we are to discover its homologues in the West.

2. It has been said that Averroes' asseveration 'O men! I do not say that the knowledge which you call divine science is false; what I am saying is that I have knowledge of human science' sums him up completely, and that 'the new humanity that blossomed in the Renaissance had its origin in these words' (Qadri). This may be so; and if such is the case, it would also be true to say that something came to an end with Averroes, something which could no longer survive in Islam but which was destined to shape European thought: the Latin Averroism which recapitulates all that used to be called 'Arabism'—a term which is used today in an entirely different sense. Nevertheless, although Averroist Peripateticism had run its course in western Islam, philosophical meditation still had a long career before it in the East, and particularly in Iran. There, as we have already observed, what speculative endeavour has sought to attain down to our day—the *hikmat ilahyah* or *philosophia divina*—has a better title, both conceptually and etymologically, to being called theosophy, because the metaphysical secularization which led to the separation of theology as such from philosophy as such was not known in Iran. This separation was effected in the West by Scholasticism itself. On the other hand, as we have seen throughout this study, the fundamental conception which prevailed among our philosophers was less an ethical conception arising out of a social norm than the idea of a spiritual perfection.

The human individual can attain this perfection not by following the *horizontal* direction of political and social matters, but by following the *vertical* direction which connects him to the transcendent hierarchies, the supreme guarantors of his personal destiny. This is why the 'regime of the solitary' inspired in Ibn Bajjah by al-Farabi is far removed from Latin political Averroism.

3. By ending with the death of Averroes, the first part of this study does not conform to the divisions generally adopted in the history of Western philosophy, where the fifteenth century is regarded as a 'decisive turning-point'. But the division into periods with which we are familiar in the West cannot be transposed to the calendar of the Islamic era. The state of affairs at the point where we leave it, at the end of the sixth/twelfth century, is marked in Western Islam by the death of Averroes (595/1198), and in the East by the death of al-Suhrawardi (587/1191). But at this very moment Ibn al-'Arabi came on the scene, and the influence of his vast work was destined to be conclusive. This is the reason why the last decade of our twelfth century saw the emergence of a dividing line, both sides of which were to develop: in the Christian West, into Alexandrism and political Averroism, and in the Islamic East, especially in Iran, into al-Suhrawardi's theosophy of Light, whose influence, combined with that of Ibn al-'Arabi, persists to this day. Nothing here could call into existence something like Thomism, whether the later be considered a triumph or a failure.

Insofar as the opposition between al-Ghazali and Averroes may with truth be defined as the opposition between the philosophy of the heart and pure speculative philosophy (bearing in mind that the equivalent of the Arabic word *'aql* is not *ratio* but *intellectus* or *Nous*), it was one that could be overcome only by something which did not reject either philosophy or the spiritual experience of Sufism. In essence, as we have seen, this was the doctrine of al-Suhrawardi. Let us not put it that he wished to overcome the Ghazali-Avicenna, Ghazali-Averroes conflict. It is only to Western eyes that this conflict can appear as decisive as that between Kant and Aristotle; al-Suhrawardi, like the Iranian thinkers, is beyond such conflicts. We have already observed how remarkable it is that in bringing together the names of Plato and Zarathustra he was three centuries ahead of the project outlined by the great Byzantine philosopher Gemistos Pletho.

4. We referred above to the presence of Ibn al-'Arabi at the transferring of Averroes' ashes to Cordoba. He retained poignant memories of the occasion. One side of the horse was laden with the coffin, and the other with Averroes' books: 'A bundle of books balancing a corpse!' In order to understand the meaning of speculative and scientific life in the traditional Islamic East, we must bear this image in mind like

an inverted symbol of its quest and its choice: 'a divine science' which triumphs over death.

It is to be regretted that for so long Islamic philosophy had been absent from our general histories of philosophy, or at any rate has been considered mainly from the point of view of what was known of it to our Latin scholastics. As we said at the beginning, in order to make this study complete we still have to take into account two further periods: that which starts with Ibn al-'Arabi and leads, by way of the 'metaphysics of Sufism', to the Safavid Renaissance in Iran, and that which starts with this Renaissance and leads down to our own day. We will be faced with the question of what is the future, in the Islamic world, of this traditional metaphysics, and what is its significance for the world.

The type of prophetic philosophy outlined at the start of this study made us aware of the meaning that should be attached to the fact that the great flowering of thought which continued in Iran after the Safavid period took place in Shiite Islam and not elsewhere. The question of its future is first and foremost a question about its role as a witness. Up until now, our histories of philosophy have never even called this witness into the witness-box. It could tell us why what happened in the West after the thirteenth century did not happen in Shiite Islam, even though it too is, as we pride ourselves on being, the product of the Bible and of Greek wisdom. A science which is capable of the unlimited conquest of the external world, but which exacts as a ransom the appalling crisis of all philosophy, the disappearance of the person and the acceptance of the void—can such a science, for this witness, weigh more heavily in the balance than 'a bundle of books balancing a corpse'?

II

From the Death of Averroes to the Present Day

General Survey

It may seem paradoxical to allocate eight centuries of philosophy, from the thirteenth to the twentieth century, to a single period. But this paradox merely throws into relief the difficulty of dividing Islamic philosophy into periods in a way that corresponds to what is customary in the history of philosophy. Let us begin by observing that if we go by the Islamic computation, this interval extends from the seventh century of the Hijrah to the end of the fourteenth century; and, further, that the sense of historical time and periods cannot be altogether the same when the thinker's inner life is centred and situated in relation to the era of the Hijrah, as when it is centred and situated in relation of the Christian era. Our own schema of Antiquity, Middle Ages and Modern Times has no corresponding basis in the time of the Islamic era. Of course, we can establish concordances between the calendars; but these concordances are entirely external and purely pragmatic, and bear no relation to real, existential contemporaneity. Our first problem, then, is the problem of a satisfactory division into periods.

Averroes died in 595/1198. It was long thought that his funeral was also the funeral of Islamic philosophy. This was correct in that the phase of Islamic philosophy known as 'Arab Peripateticism' came to an end with Averroes. On the other hand, this way of thinking was completely wrong in that it ignored the fact that the death of Averroes signalled the start of something new, something which is symbolized by the names of al-Suhrawardi (d. 587/1191) and Muhyi al-Din ibn al-'Arabi (d. 638/1240). This novel fact marks a decisive stage in the development of Islamic thought, in the sense that something came into being with Ibn al-'Arabi which had its source in the school of Almeria and in the Shiite and Ismaili influences, and which was to dominate the universe of Islamic thought down to the present day.

Al-Suhrawardi's 'Oriental' theosophy and Ibn al-'Arabi's mystical

theosophy brought to an end the confrontation in Sunni Islam between the theologians of the *kalam* and the Hellenizing philosophers. The current which originated with Ibn al-'Arabi differs with regard to its premisses and its implications both from the theology of the *kalam* and from Hellenizing philosophy; it differs from them both as much as they differ from each other. What is in question here is a type of thinking, of meditation and of philosophical experience which is truly Islamic in its originality. On the other hand, this current has many points of contact with previous Ismaili thought, as well as with al-Suhrawardi's *ishraqi* (Oriental or Illuminist') philosophy and Imamic Shiite philosophy. The current which originated with Suhrawardi, the *ishraq*, is also original in relation to the Hellenizing philosopher-logicians, and this originality has given rise to the remark that the *ishraq* is to philosophy what Sufism is to the *kalam*. These, broadly speaking, are the facts on which the internal division of Islamic philosophy into the period before and the period after the death of Averroes is based.

Certainly, as we have already suggested, this period of eight centuries can be subdivided, particularly at the point which begins the new era of the Safavid Renaissance and the school of Isfahan in the sixteenth century CE. Such a subdivision is justified by the fact that although the Iranians played a crucial part from the beginning in the development of philosophical meditation in Islam, it is also the case that after the death of Averroes the centre of Islamic philosophy was definitively moved from Western Islam in Andalusia to Eastern Islam in Iran. Yet there can be no doubt that such a subdivision is still external and exoteric. Between Haydar Amuli (fourteenth century) and Mir Damad or his followers (sixteenth century and after) there is not the difference that exists between one of our fourteenth-century scholastics and one of our Renaissance thinkers. It would be more to the point to think of a school of Chartres which continued to exist and to enrich itself down to our own days. But this comparison is not a method whereby we can 'remake' history.

As the space at our disposal here is very limited, there is a risk that in over-subdividing the period our grasp of it as a whole may also be fragmented. It will in any case be impossible for us to give a complete idea of the work of each of the philosophers mentioned; in many cases we shall be reduced merely to naming them, and a certain number will necessarily be missed out altogether. These gaps are also due to

the state of research. Imagine the task facing a historian of German philosophy if, from Kant to Heidegger, he had to work almost solely from manuscript works scattered in different libraries, or else from rare lithographic editions if he did not actually undertake to edit the works in question himself. This is more or less the situation for the historian of Islamic philosophy—and it is with the equivalent of a vast library that he has to deal.

We must specify, moreover, that we will be dealing here with traditional philosophy alone, not only for the reason given above, but so as to remain faithful to the concept itself of 'Islamic philosophy'. All the works that can be grouped under the title of 'modernism' inaugurate and constitute a chapter apart. The interest they present is often slight, depending on the degree to which Western philosophies have been assimilated by their authors. By contrast, traditional Islamic philosophy has found renewed expression in the labours of those in the West who have derived inspiration, in one way or another, from the concept of tradition and the norms that such a concept implies. Bearing in mind that a 'tradition' is transmitted in a living state only through a continual 'rebirth', it appears, as things stand at present, that even in the East the renaissance of the 'Oriental' tradition will be achieved only through the combined efforts of those in both East and West who are 'Orientals' in the true sense of the word, that is to say in the metaphysical sense understood by the *ishraqiyun*. As for the pseudo-esotericisms that nowadays abound in the West, they are the deplorable counterpart of the pseudo-Westernisms of Eastern thought. Etymologically speaking, the word 'esotericism' signifies a phenomenon which creates a spiritual communion between the three branches of the Abrahamic community; and it is the task of the philosophers to be the guardians and keepers of this communion, even when this runs counter to the 'exoteric' forces which constitute the outer appearance of History. The 'phenomenon of the sacred Book' is at the heart of their common origin—a phenomenon which betokens the high standing of prophetology, in all the forms with which philosophy can endow it.

Indeed it is with reference to this 'phenomenon of the sacred Book'—on which we have already based our concept of 'Islamic philosophy'—that we may interpret the different types of thinkers discussed in the following pages. We have already shown how the split

between Sunnism and Shiism must be viewed in relation to the 'phenomenon of the sacred Book', that is to say in relation to the Quranic Revelation—not simply because, according to Shiism, the Quran that we possess today is a mutilated form of the original, but because the truth of the holy Book in our possession must be sought at the heart of its hidden depths, in the plurality of its esoteric meanings. The key to these hidden depths is the Shiite doctrine of the Imam and of the *walayah*—the initiatic charisma of the 'Friends of God'—as the esoteric aspect of prophecy. Seen in this light, the task of philosophy is fundamentally hermeneutic.

Broadly speaking, the classification of philosophers here proposed is based on the fundamental attitude which characterizes the philosopher in question. There is the attitude of those who represent what is known as the '*kalam*' (literally 'discourse'), that is to say, Islamic scholasticism. In the eyes of someone like Mulla Sadra Shirazi, these are the thinkers for whom the subject and the object of knowledge confront each other face to face, a confrontation continued dialectically through the medium of discursive explanations from which any sense of an attitude other than theoretical appears to be absent. In upholding Islamic dogma, these thinkers brought into play the dialectical resources which they owed to Greek philosophy, for the task confronting them was above all apologetic. The Sunni *kalam*, whether Ash'arite or Mu'tazilite, excelled in this task. Opposing them were the Hellenizing philosophers (the *falasifa*), whose theories were based, for the most part, on false premisses. There is also, to be sure, a Shiite *kalam*; but just as the situation of the philosopher is different in Sunnism and Shiism—for the traditional data or *hadith* of Shiism conceal a gnosis which requires and provokes philosophical meditation—so, too, the Shiite *kalam* does not aspire to be sufficient to itself.

There are profound connections between philosophical speculation, the commentaries on the Quran, and juridical problems. In the case of a Sunni thinker such as Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, for example, there is a connection between his great theological works on the *kalam* and his monumental Quranic *tafsir*. Yet the nature of this connection is determined by a theological and philosophical position which would never have satisfied Haydar Amuli and Mulla Sadra. The same imbalance is also to be sensed in the division of the Shiite canonists

into the two great schools of the *Akhbariyun* and the *Usuliyun*; for the premisses concerned are not limited to canon law, but extend into philosophy. It is not accidental that great Shiite theologians such as Muhsin Fayd and Qadi Sa'id Qummi were *Akhbariyun*. The attitude adopted by the metaphysician-theologians goes beyond that of the theologians of the *kalam*, in that what is being envisaged and desired is a measure of certitude other than the certitude which results from the dialectic of the *kalam*.

The distance which separates the *kalam* from what is variously known as *hikmat ilahya* (metaphysics—literally 'divine philosophy', etymologically *theosophia*), *'irfan* (mystical theosophy), *hikmat ishraqiya* ('Oriental' theosophy), *hikmat yamaniya* ('Yemeni' theosophy, through the conjunction of the word Yemen with the word *Imam*, meaning faith) is the distance separating the certitude of theoretical knowledge (*'ilm al-yaqin*) and the certitude which is personally realized and lived (*haqq al-yaqin*). Again broadly speaking, according to the teaching of Mulla Sadra Shirazi, it could be said that to traverse this distance presupposes a metamorphosis in the knowing subject. The knowing subject becomes aware of his ontological indigence—that is, he becomes aware that in order to be himself, to possess the means whereby he can be himself, his own self is not sufficient; simultaneously he becomes aware of his inability to know so long as he is left to himself, since knowing is the form itself of being. As long as there is, on the one hand, a subject, I, isolated in its ego-ness (*ananiya*), and on the other hand an object, you, a divine Being isolated and abstracted in its unknowability, there cannot be (whatever Names and Attributes are conferred upon it) a knowledge allowing access to this object.

Knowledge can accede to this object only when it is not confronted dialectically, but is revealed to the knowing subject by the subject himself. This epiphany *eo ipso* substitutes for the original subject the absolute Subject that the former was attempting to intelligize as the object of knowledge. God is never an object; he can be known only through himself as an absolute Subject, absolved of all false objectivity. The divine Subject is in fact the active subject of all knowledge of God. It is God who thinks himself in the thought that the human intellect has of him, for in this thought the 'hidden Treasure' is revealed to himself. This is so in the case of every intelligible thing

(for example, the intelligible tree is the tree which thinks itself in the form of itself that is actualized in the human intellect). This profound identity obtains for both the metaphysician and the mystic, and the dividing line between them is indistinct. Both of them experience the truth of the inspired *hadith*: 'I am the eye through which he sees, the ear through which he hears', and so on.

All this is familiar to the reader of Ibn al-'Arabi or of the thinkers related to him. In order to give the Western reader who comes upon this area of Islamic thought for the first time some idea of where he is, we could say that in certain ways it is analogous to the thought of the theologian-philosophers who during the first half of the nineteenth century were known as the 'Hegelian right', and who withdrew, if not into total oblivion, at any rate into 'occultation', for the same reasons perhaps which have made Western researchers inattentive, uncomprehending or unjust towards whatever it is that is represented by the current of thought in Islam that has its origins in Ibn al-'Arabi. The disappearance in the West of the speculative theology of the 'Hegelian right', and the perpetuation of Ibn al-'Arabi's theosophy in Islam, are two contrasting symptoms, the reasons for which are no doubt to be sought in what ultimately differentiates the Christian phenomenon from the Islamic phenomenon.

The entire schema of the theologian-philosophers of the 'Hegelian right' was centred on the Nicean dogma of the Trinity. In Islamic theosophy, however, the Thought in which the divine Subject, in self-reflection, defines itself as being, and as revealed being (*Deus revelatus*), is not a 'second person' consubstantial with the 'first'. Remote from any concept of 'homoousia' (consubstantiality), this philosophy follows the way of Quranic Christology, which is itself modelled on the Christology of Arius. The initial theophany is the first and most sublime of creatures (the *Protoktistos*), but it is a creature, whatever name is used to designate it (*haqq makhluq*, the created God; *haqiqah muhammadiyah*, metaphysical Muhammadan Reality; *Nur muhammadi*, Muhammadan Light; *'aql awwal*, First Intelligence of the Pleroma). From another point of view, it may be observed that Eastern Orthodoxy, in rejecting the *filioque*, maintained the balance between the priestly function and the prophetic function, but the theologians of the 'Hegelian right' were not theologians of Eastern Orthodoxy. Nevertheless, *mutatis mutandis*, we can perceive in the

balance thus maintained an analogy to the balance maintained by Shiite theosophy at the heart of the concept of the *haqiqah muhammadiyah*: the balance between its two aspects, the esoteric and the esoteric, or between the aspect of the religious Law revealed by a prophet and the aspect of the Spirit who is its interpreter—between the vocation of the Prophet and the vocation of the Imam whose *walayah* is the esoteric aspect of prophecy. Each of the twelve Imams, according to the *hadith*, can say that he is the Face of God revealed to man, the theophany; and he is simultaneously the Face that man displays to God, for he is the form of his faith. As a result, theophany affirms the problem of being neither as infinitive (to be) nor as substantive (being), but in the imperative mood (*esto*). As the initial theophany, the *Protoktistos* is himself this primordial Imperative, and this is why the epiphany is by its essence creatureal. All this produces a radical difference in the concept of 'history'.

It is possible to develop a 'philosophy of history' on the basis of the dogma of the Incarnation regarded as an event within the course of history. It is difficult to develop a philosophy of history out of theophanies conceived as visionary events. What these events really call for is a 'historiosophy'. A philosophy of history is even able to be quite frankly agnostic; it may in the end recognize only an immanent causality in the web of events perceived at the level of the empirical world. At this point, the secularization of the absolute Spirit is complete. On the other hand, metaphysics and historiosophy are incompatible with any form of agnosticism. Historiosophy presupposes a perception of events on a level other than that of the empirical world (as our authors would say: on the visionary level of the *malakut*); essentially, it is in pursuit of spiritual energies and higher universes whose traces are imprinted on our world. The facts of historiosophy are those of a hierohistory: the Shiite division into periods of the cycle of prophecy and the cycle of the *walayah* or of spiritual initiation, Ibn al-'Arabi's typology of the prophets—these are all ways of thematizing facts which are not the concern of what in the West goes by the name of 'philosophy of history', but which are the concern of historiosophy. They are some of the many classifying terms indispensable for all comparative phenomenology when it is a question of contextualizing the thought or the thinkers we are dealing with here.

There are also grounds for saying that when we establish a correspondence between what is called 'speculative theology' in the West and what in Islam constitutes the theosophical metaphysics of esotericism, we become aware of the inadequacy of our terms 'philosophy' and 'theology', a serious inadequacy in that it separates two things which, from the point of view of our thinkers, cannot be isolated from each other. The true meaning of the word 'speculative' can only be understood in relation to *speculum*, the intelligence of speculative theology fulfils the function of a mirror reflecting God, a mirror in which God reveals himself ('to speculate is to reflect', *spekulieren heisst spiegeln*, F. von Baader). Islamic theosophy contains the perfect equivalent of all this: the mirror (*mir'ah*)—a fundamental theme—is the inner man to whom, by whom and for whom the theophany (*tajalli, zuhur*) takes place, and who is the place and form (*mazhar*) of this theophany. It is epiphany, not incarnation: the "image is shown in the mirror, not incarnated in it. The idea of a mirror also involves the idea of interiority, of the esoteric. What is speculative is esoteric. For this reason, the term which corresponds most closely with the elements composing the term *hikmat ilahiya* and which most adequately translates it, is the word 'theosophy' rather than philosophy or theology. This simple reminder puts paid to any objection which attempts to exclude theosophy from the domain of philosophy. Here, the theosopher's intention is to take philosophy to its furthest limits; otherwise, as far as our thinkers are concerned, philosophy is not worth the trouble. The philosophical exercise of the intellect (*'aql*), the theological realization of transmitted traditions (*naql*), are only accomplished by a third activity: *kashf*, meaning discovery, revelation, intuitive or visionary perception of what is revealed in the 'mirror'.

We cannot examine here how this schema operates in the case of all our 'speculative' thinkers. But this summary that we have given may indicate to the philosopher the significance of the mystical epic of the Spirit represented by the course of Islamic philosophy from the time of Suhrawardi and Ibn al-'Arabi, and may help him to orientate himself in the labyrinth of information which must of necessity be concise and allusive. All that we have just been saying with regard to the divine epiphany and the epiphanic function of being and the forms of being applies as much to Shiite, Imamite or Ismaili theosophy as to Sufi metaphysics. Some differences, however, do exist.

The first of these stems from the fact that, as a result of the numerical process of distribution, most Sufism is to be found among the Sunni majority. Sufism is nevertheless considered by Shiite theosophers as *volens nolens* representing the thought and the spirituality which originated in the teaching of the holy Imams. Haydar Amuli took it upon himself to remind us forcibly of this very fact. For his part, the seeker today can but remember what the school of Almeria represented for Ibn al-'Arabi. From the point of view of a Shiite, certain aspects of the Sufi metaphysic resemble aspects of an Imamology which either cannot or dares not openly declare itself.

Secondly, there have of course been Shiite Sufis in abundance. The word *tariqah* means 'way', and it was the name given to the Sufi congregations as 'materializations' of the way. There have been, and there still exist in active form, Shiite Sufi *turuq*. Yet there have been, and there still are, many Shiite theosophers who speak the same language as the Sufis, but who try not to be mistaken for them and have never professed to belong to an organized *tariqah*. As we said above, the main reason for this is that, unlike the Sunni believer, the Shiite believer has embarked on the spiritual or mystical path by virtue of being in receipt of the Imams' esoteric teaching. A second reason is that by means of a sort of pious agnosticism (there is such a thing), a certain type of Sufism was enabled to despise knowledge. Mulla Sadra himself wrote a book attacking it, and it was one of the symptoms of the crisis through which Sufism passed during the Safavid period. As a result, the notion of *tasawwuf* or Sufism does not cover the phenomenon of mysticism (speculative and experimental) in Islam in its entirety, as is customarily thought to be the case in the West. Hence the common usage of the terms *'irfan* and *'urafa*, which are still the terms preferred in Iran today.

After this brief survey, the no less brief account which follows will be arranged under three chapter headings.

Firstly, there is Sunni thought, which includes all those thinkers in the tradition of the *falasifa* as well as the scholastics of the *kalam* and their opponents.

Secondly, there is the metaphysics of Sufism, meaning the 'speculative' metaphysics mentioned above, which consists not in pondering on abstract logical concepts but in penetrating the supra sensible worlds and events. We are concerned here with spiritual men of both Sunni

and Shiite persuasion, as well as with those whose loyalties are ambiguous. This chapter will act as a massive link with the third.

Thirdly, we come to Shiite thought, beginning with Nasir al-Din Tusi, and reaching a peak with the school of Isfahan in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries CE. The labours of this school have extended over four centuries, and its example today has the character of a summons to a palingenesis.

I. Sunni Thought

A. THE PHILOSOPHERS

1. AL-ABHARI

Proceeding in accordance with a wholly exterior chronology, determined by the date of the death of the philosophers with whom we are concerned, the first to be named is Athir al-Din Mufaddal al-Abhari, who died around 663/1264, philosopher, mathematician and astronomer. Very little is known about his life, which he seems to have spent partly in Mosul and partly in Asia Minor. His books are few in number, but they have considerable importance in that they were used as text books and were frequently commentated. He wrote a *Kitab al-Isagughi*, an adaptation of the *Isagogue* by Porphyry, which was commentated by Shams al-Din al-Fanari (834/1470). His *Guide to Philosophy (Hidayat al-hikmah)* was in three parts (logic, physics and metaphysics), and, among others, Husayn al-Maybudi wrote a commentary on it in 880/1475. But the most important of all the commentaries on it, and much the most widely read in Iran, is the very personal commentary written by Mulla Sadra al-Shirazi. Another work by al-Abhari, the *Al-Kashf al-haqaiq* (The Discovery of Metaphysical Realities) reveals the philosopher's *ishraqi* affinities. The work is constructed according to a plan which is the inverse of the plan most commonly utilized: first he explains logic, then metaphysics, and ends with physics. It is noteworthy in that the eschatological section of the metaphysics is a literal reproduction of certain pages written by al-Suhrawardi the *Shaykh al-Ishraq*.

2. IBN SAB'IN

With this philosopher, we bid a final farewell to Andalusia. Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Haqq ibn Sab'in was born in Murcia in 614/1217-1218. He was thus part-contemporary with Ibn al-'Arabi, who was himself born in Murcia in 560/1165, and like him he emigrated to the East. He stayed at first in Ceuta in Morocco, and then went to

die in Mecca in 669/1270. His destiny epitomizes that of a bold and tormented philosopher, both in the lustre attached to his memory by his devoted disciples and faithful admirers, and in the deep-seated hatred, harassments and persecutions which are the lot of men such as he in this world. Finally, his Visigothic ancestry places him among the most illustrious and authentic representatives of Islamic civilization in Andalusia.

The force of his personality is apparent in the fact that his teaching brought into being a school of thought with its own distinctive features, while at the same time it incorporated what was common to the philosophers and mystics of Islam. The disciples of this school were called *Sab'Iniyun*, after the name of their teacher. Chief amongst them was the figure of al-Shushtari (d. 668/1269), 'a poet with the spontaneity of a Verlaine', as L. Massignon describes him, who was born at Cadiz and lived and died in near Damietta in the Maghreb. One of his poems speaks of the *isnad*, the spiritual genealogy which the *Sab'Iniyun* attributed to themselves. Not only does it include the names of al-Suhrawardi and Ibn al-'Arabi but, in common with al-Suhrawardi, they claim to be spiritually descended from Hermes, and in this way the school of Ibn Sab'in reveals affinities with the tendencies of the *ishraqiyun* {see above, HI, 3}. It is to be hoped that future researches will throw more light on the secret of the death that Ibn Sab'in chose of his own free will. He committed suicide at Mecca, it is said, 'because he desired to be united with God'. He opened his veins, let the blood drain out, and breathed his last on the 2nd Shawwal 669/19th May 1270—thirty years, therefore, after the death in Damascus in 1240 of his illustrious Murcian compatriot, Ibn al-'Arabi.

It was during his stay at Ceuta that Ibn Sab'in was ordered by the Muwahhid sovereign 'Abd al-Wahid al-Rashid to reply to a questionnaire which came from the emperor Frederick II Hohenstaufen, king of Sicily. This is the origin of the title given to the work: *Discourse on the Sicilian Questions (al-Masa'il al-siqilliyah)*. In fact, Ibn Sab'in's fame in the West up till now is due to this work. The emperor asked four questions: on the existence of the world *ab aeterno*, on the premisses and the essence of theology, on the Categories, and on the nature and immortality of the soul. The last question is in the form of an appendix in which the emperor asks about the divergences between Aristotle and his commentator Alexander of Aphrodisias. The

significance of this correspondence is more marked when it is set in the context, on the one hand, of Ibn Sab'in's works and of Islamic philosophy, and on the other hand in its Western context of Frederick II's unlimited curiosity as a seeker after truth, his dream of an 'imperial theology' based on the idea of the Perfect Man as the centre of the world—the cosmic *imperator*—and also on a messianism whose relationship with the messianism of the Joachimites (the disciples of Joachim of Fiore) could only be one of violent opposition.

We must, however, await the appearance of the long-expected editions of his work in order to set Ibn Sab'in in his context. His main work, the *Budd al-'arif* (which means something like *The Escape of the Gnostic*), together with the key to it (*Miftah Budd al-'arif*, preserved in a *unicum* in Eminye, Bursa), is full of bold and original perceptions. His portrayals of al-Farabi, Avicenna, al-Ghazali and Averroes represent the first attempt in Islamic philosophy at psychological interpretation. All these works should have been edited long ago. The philosophers who come next take us back from Andalusia to Iran.

3. AL-KATIBI AL-QAZWINI

Najm al-Din 'Ali al-Katibi al-Qazwini (d. 675/1276), who is known both by the Arabic form of his surname, *Katib* (the writer or clerk) and by its Persian form *Dabiran*, is one of the eminent philosophers, astronomers and mathematicians of the time. In philosophy, he was one of the teachers of al-'Allamah al-Hilli and Qutb al-Din al-Shirazi, and was himself a pupil of Nasir al-Din Tusi (see below, HI, 1). In 657/1259, he took part in the project of constructing the observatory of Maraghah in Azerbaijan, a project initiated by the Mongol sovereign Hulagu Khan. For a long time he taught at Qazwin. He was a Shafi'ite, and since this ritual or juridical school has a particular affinity with Shiism, he appears to have been strongly attracted by the latter, an attraction reinforced by his admiration for Nasir al-Din Tusi. We are indebted to him for a certain number of works on the philosophical sciences. His *Kitab Hikmat al-'ayn*, which encompasses all the metaphysical and mystical questions, was commentated by 'Allamah al-Hilli and others. His most often quoted work is the *Risalat al-shamsiyah*, a textbook on logic which was the subject of many commentaries, including those written by Sa'd al-Taftazani and Qutb al-Din al-Razi.

Rashid al-Din Fadl-Allah was born in Hamadan around 645/1247, and died tragically at Tabriz in 718/1318: he was executed, following the intrigues of his enemies, on the orders of Sultan Abu Sa'id, ninth Ilkhan of Persia. He was a universal genius, although his fame hitherto has rested mainly on his work as an eminent historian. He first practised medicine under the reign of the Mongol sovereign Abagha Khan (1265-1282), and then became court historian under Ghazan Khan (1295-1304). On the latter's orders, he undertook to write his monumental work of history, entitled *Jami' al-tawarikh* (*The Synthesis of Chronicles*). Soon, the concept of the work expanded and assumed the proportions of a universal history, but it remained incomplete (there are manuscripts of it in existence with splendid miniatures). In it, he demonstrates the same extraordinary breadth of knowledge that had made him famous as a doctor; he always goes to the source in search of information at first hand, which he gains from a *bhikshu* when he is talking about India, and from Chinese scholars when he is talking about China. He equals Leonardo da Vinci in the variety of his astonishing researches; he wrote a lengthy work—sadly, not yet discovered—which deals with meteorology, arboriculture, horticulture, and boat-building (*Kitab al-Ahya' wa al-athar*).

In addition to all this—already a fair illustration of his creative activity—there is a side of his work which is still unedited, and which more directly concerns the philosopher and the history of philosophy. This consists of a group of four books dealing with philosophy and mystical theology, commentaries on the Quran, and so on, together with a collection of letters with alternating questions on theology and medicine.

In November 1969, a congress of Iranologists was held at the universities of Tehran and Tabriz to commemorate the six hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Rashid al-Din's death. The resolutions that were passed permit one to hope that within a reasonable length of time these unedited works will be published.

S. QUTB AL-DIN AL-RAZI

Qutb al-Din al-Razi (Muhammad ibn 'Ail Ja'far), who died in 766/1364, was one of the philosophers of the period whose name

is particularly well-known. According to some, he was descended from the Buyid princes of Daylam, and according to others from the great Shiite family of the Babuyah of Qumm (to which the famous Shaykh-i Saduq belonged). He was one of the most famous disciples of al-'Allamah al-Hilli. He left about fifteen works and commentaries, the most important of which for the history of Iranian Avicennism is his *Kitab al-Muhakamat* (literally, the *Book of Summonses*). In it, he sets out to make an assessment and give a ruling on the divergences of the two great commentaries written on Avicenna's *Book of Instructions* (*Isharat*), those by Fakhr al-Din al-Razi and Nasir al-Din Tusi respectively.

Nevertheless, in spite of the eulogies bestowed on Qutb al-Din by his master al-'Allamah al-Hilli in the personal diploma (*ijazah*) that he conferred on him, 'Abd al-Razzaq al-Lahiji, a pupil of Mulla Sadra al-Shirazi and himself the author of a vast and very personal commentary on the *Isharat*, affirms that Qutb al-Din al-Razi did not really possess the necessary ability to grasp the deeper significance on Nasir al-Din Tusi's meditation on Avicenna's work.

B. THE THEOLOGIANS OF THE KALAM

1. FAKHR AL-DIN AL-RAZI

The name al-Razi always indicates a person or family originating from the ancient city of Rayy (the Raghā of the *Avesta*, the Rages of the *Book of Tobits*), which is about a dozen kilometres south of Tehran. Fakhr al-Din, who was born at Rayy in 543/1149, was a great traveller. He went to Khwarazm and Transoxiana, where he engaged in a lively dispute with the Mu'tazilites. He lived in Bukhara, then in Herat, where he opened a school, then in Samarqand, then in India, then finally and definitely at Herat, where he died in 606/1209.

Fakhr al-Din al-Razi was a complex character, who set himself to master and resolve the different currents of thought in Islam. Whether he was equal to the task was something about which al-Suhrawardi, the *Shaykh al-ishraq*, who had known him very well in his youth, was not certain. He was an Ash'arite, but at the same time he was opposed to atomism; he was profoundly versed in the Hellenizing philosophers (al-Farabi, Avicenna; his work also contains important quotations from Aba al-Barakat al-Baghdadi), and he **makes use** of all **the** resources

of their dialectic in constructing his vast dogmatic synthesis. 'For him, philosophy and theology are reconciled in a Platonic system which, in the final analysis, derived from an interpretation of the *Timaeus*', says P. Kraus. In judging it, we must return to the source of his metaphysics of being. On the one hand, there is the avowal that as of right, Logic has access to the essences or quiddities; this is what one might call the Platonic tendency. On the other hand, there is an ontology which remains on the level of the metaphysics of essence, and which views existence as something which is added to essence from outside. Of course, in that it 'is' a quiddity in some form or other, quiddity is already provided with a certain being, and this act of being would be enough to make it the active cause of its existence. But being is not intrinsic to quiddity; and this is why thought distinguishes between essence and existence. Nevertheless, quiddity possesses what suffices for existence by virtue of the fact that it is constituted at all. The problem is broached with an open mind with respect to Avicenna. But Fakhr al-Din al-Razi's solution to it would hardly go uncriticized by Mulla Sadra Shirazi, who was to bring about a radical revolution in the metaphysics of being.

Fakhr al-Razi left a considerable body of works, consisting of fifteen or so treatises whose scope extends over the *kalam*, philosophy and Quranic exegesis, as well as medicine, astrology, alchemy, physiognomy and mineralogy. We must confine ourselves here to mentioning first and foremost his commentary on the *Isharat* (the *Book of Instructions*) by Avicenna, and the searching critique by Nasir Tusi of this commentary. As we said above, Qutb al-Din al-Razi was later to attempt to 'arbitrate' between them. Secondly, there is his '*Summa*' (*Muhassal*) of the doctrines of the philosophers (*hukama'*) and the scholastics of the *kalam* (the *mutakallimun*), both ancient and modern. Thirdly, there is a very lengthy work entitled *Oriental Questions* (*Mabahith mashriqiya*), but the meaning of the word 'Oriental' is imprecise, and is in any case quite different from the technical meaning of the *Ishraqiyun*. It is a general survey of the *kalam* in three books: on being and its properties, on the broad categories of non-necessary being, and on the Necessary Being (rational theology). Fourthly, there is another, unedited, *Summa* of four chapters, written for his eldest son Mahmud. Fifthly, there is a book about the disputes (*munadalat*) in which he engaged more or less everywhere he went during his travels

with representatives of nearly all the schools of thought. The sixth work is his vast commentary on the Quran (*Mafatih al-ghayb*) in eight large quarto volumes, which also attains the rank of a *Summa* through the proliferation of the issues it raises and the research it contains. It is not to be wondered at that as in the case of so many other prolific thinkers, no study has yet been made of the work in its entirety.

The reconciliation attempted by Fakhr al-Razi is 'possibly less an attempt at reconciling the doctrines... than an endeavour to provide a common area of thought for minds of a different stamp— The reconciliation is less between reason and faith than between the philosopher and the believer' (R. Arnaldez). This may constitute an excellent programme of 'comparative philosophy'; but in elaborating it, Fakhr al-Razi had only the *kalam* at his disposal, an apologetic dialectic which can in no way achieve the metamorphosis of the subject brought about by speculative or esoteric philosophy (in the technical sense of these words as defined in our general survey). Although it is only in terms of this latter philosophy that the problem can be surmounted, Fakhr al-Razi deploys only the resources of the discursive intellect, and the transforming union between the human intellect and the active Intelligence or Holy Spirit is not achieved. It is most indicative in this respect that Fakhr al-Razi does not even seem to be aware of the metaphysical conception of the Imam and the Imamate as this is professed by the Shiite philosophers. Sadra al-Shirazi's detailed critique of this fact is particularly worthy of note.

In short, Fakhr al-Din al-Razi is a typical *mutakallim*, the perfect scholastic of the dialectic of the *kalam*. He was widely read; his *Muhassal* was studied by both Ibn Taymiyah and Ibn Khaldun. Ibn al-'Arabi corresponded with him. Even in the West, the Spanish Dominican Ramon Marti (thirteenth century) quoted him in his *Pugio fidei*.

2. AL-IJI

'Adud al-Din al-Iji, also an Iranian and an eminent representative of the philosophy and theology of the *kalam*, was born around 700/1300 at Ij, near Shiraz in Fars (Persia), at a time when the first wave of the Mongol invasion had ebbed. He was a judge (qadi) and professor (*mudarris*) at Shiraz, and he died there in 756/1355, a prisoner in (he fortress of Diraimiyan, on the mountain overlooking his native land.

Of the influences which dominated his philosophical and theological thinking, pride of place must be given to his teacher Ahmad ibn Hasan al-Jarabardi (d. 746/1345) and the work of al-Baydawi (d. ca. 685/1286). Besides a commentary on the Quran which has become a classic, the latter wrote a compendium of the *kalam* with the title *Matali' al-anwar* (*The Rising of the Lights*; here again, this term contains no *ishraqi* connotations). Al-Iji's main work is a Summa of the *kalam*, the *Kitab al-Mawaqif* (*the Book of Stations*), which consists of six great divisions or 'stations': (1) The theory of knowledge. (2) General principles concerning the science of being. (3) The theory of accidents, that is to say of categories other than substance. (4) The substances, and the theory of simple and composite bodies, of the Elements, and of the celestial bodies. (5) The theory of the soul, of the intellect and of the angelic Intelligences, and rational Theology (divine Essence, divine Names and attributes, divine operations). (6) Prophetology and eschatology. (Together with the commentaries, the edition of the *Mawaqif* which came out in Cairo in 1325 AH runs to eight books in four large quarto volumes.)

Is it possible to say that al-Iji truly constructed a 'Summa' of the *kalam*, in the sense that the work both of St. Thomas Aquinas and of Mulla Sadra Shirazi are Summae, implying the idea of a personal system in which the writer's own thoughts dominate the work from beginning to end? Perhaps no *mutakallim*, not even Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, has possessed the ability to construct such a system. In spite of this reservation, we can say that al-Iji compiled a philosophical-theological encyclopaedia for his time, within the field and perspective of the *kalam* of course. It could justifiably be said that at that time the *kalam*, considered in itself, was exhausted. But we must not lose sight of two other considerations: firstly, our authors should not be accused of multiplying the number commentaries and glosses. As we shall have occasion to repeat, this, for them, constituted 'research'. To adhere to a text was not indicative of an inability to think for oneself, but the most direct way to express one's thoughts on a certain number of given points. Secondly, we must remember that al-Iji was contemporary with al-Simnani, with whom the metaphysics of Sufism reached a peak, and with Haydar Amuli, with whom Shiite philosophy, influenced by the thinking of Ibn al-'Arabi, flowered anew. Considered in itself, perhaps, the *kalam* seems clogged up with *madrassa* scholasti-

cism; but we must seek the living thought in other currents. The Shiite metaphysicians were to dominate the *kalam*, philosophical metaphysics and mystical theosophy, and the *kalam* was thus enabled to continue in existence as a fertile propaedeutic.

Al-Iji's *Mawaqif* were commentated by his pupils, the most famous of whom was Sa'd al-Din al-Taftazani. But the classical commentary on the work was written by a thinker who did not belong to his immediate circle of followers: Mir Sharif al-Jurjani.

3. AL-TAFTAZANI

Sa'd al-Din al-Taftazani, al-Iji's disciple and commentator, was born in 722/1322 at Taftazan, a town of Khurasan in north-eastern Iran, and died at Samarqand in 792/1390. He wrote several manuals which have remained in use down to our day among the *madrassa*, one of which is the famous *Risalat al-shamsiyah*, a commentary on the treatise on logic composed by al-Katibi al-Qazwihi. He was an Ash'arite, but he was open-minded enough to tackle the explosive questions floating in the wake of polemics. In particular we should note the position he adopted with regard to the serious question of free will and predestination—a question that was the subject of passionate dispute in Islam, although it had never been doubted that man is invested with moral responsibility and is responsible for himself in the sight of God. Man and God both participate in human actions; every action is not a monolithic operation but a very complex process. Al-Taftazani was fervently convinced that God and man participate in these actions not metaphorically, but in a real sense. God is the creator of human actions, in the sense that he bestows on man the concomitant power to perform the action he has chosen. Al-Taftazani is possibly closer on this point to the school of al-Maturidi than to the Ash'arite school.

The relationships of philosophers to one another are not always easy. Al-Taftazani had taken the step of introducing his friend and colleague Mir Sharif al-Jurjani to Shah Shuja' at Shiraz, in 779/1377. When Tamerlane (Timur-i Leng) seized the town, both men were taken to Samarqand. The two friends were invited to hold an oratorical tournament, a great session of public 'debate', in Tamerlane's presence. Their friendship did not survive it.

4. AL-JURJANI

Mir Sayyid Sharif al-Jurjani came from a family which was originally from Astarabad, and was born in 740/1339 at Gurgan, south-east of the Caspian Sea. *Jurjan* and *Jurjani* are transcriptions corresponding to the Arabic pronunciation of the Persian words. His is one of the great names of the time. He had been the pupil of Qutb al-Din al-Razi, and he was the teacher of Jalaal al-Din al-Dawwani. He was a great traveller: in 766/1365 he was at Herat, then in Egypt; in 776/1374 he visited Constantinople, and then went to Shiraz, where he was appointed professor in 779/1377 by Shah Shuja'. Mention has just been made of his forced migration to Samarqand and its consequences. On the death of Tamerlane in 1405, he returned to Shiraz, where he died in 816/1413, after a full life. Apart from his journeys, he wrote around twenty-five works which made him famous, because most of them consisted mainly of technical works which have been used for centuries as textbooks by young philosophers and theologians. We referred above to his great commentary on al-Iji's *Mawaqif*. Apart from this, we can name here only his *Book of Definitions* (*Kitab al-Ta'rifat*). This work, which is still of great value, is the embryo of the future great dictionary of the technical terminology of philosophers writing in Arabic—a project which will involve the perusal of thousands and thousands of pages, and will probably not be undertaken for a long time to come.

With Shiite fervour, Qadi Nur Allah al-Shushtari, in his great work *Majalis al-mu'minin*, the *Assemblies of Believers*, aligned as many scholars as possible to the Imamite cause. One of these scholars was Mir Sharif al-Jurjani, whom Sayyid Muhammad Nurbakhshi (d. 869/1465), the eponym of the Sufi dynasty (*silsila*) of the *Nurbakhshiya*, and Ibn Abi Jumhur al-Ahsa'i held to be Shiite. It seems, however, that he was a Sunni. His son, on the other hand, Sayyid Shams al-Din, was a Shiite, while his grandson Mirza Makhdum was a Sunni. As we shall have occasion to repeat, the 'discipline of the arcane', observed by the Shiites in response to the vicissitudes of the times, often makes it difficult to decide questions of adherence.

C. THE ADVERSARIES OF THE PHILOSOPHERS

IBN TAYMIYAH AND HIS FOLLOWERS

The philosopher cannot altogether ignore the attacks of those who, for whatever reason, dispute the legitimacy of his research, and their arguments are in some sense a negative view of the history of philosophy. Seen in this light, agnosticism is a perpetual phenomenon, and is differentiated only by the motives to the negation that it perpetuates. These motives may appear contradictory in relation to each other, but in the eyes of the philosopher this does not make them less collusive in effect. There is modern agnosticism, derived from the many forms taken by criticism and positivism, and which has recourse to psychoanalysis, sociology and linguistics in order to prohibit all philosophy from affirming any other-worldly reality, because it is claimed out of hand that what is 'real' does not pertain to the sphere of metaphysics. Yet there is also the agnosticism professed by pious believers, an agnosticism which rejects the questions raised by the philosophers and condemns any attempt to raise such questions as 'rationalism', even when the philosopher's attitude is explicitly hostile to 'rationalism'. These pious agnostics are represented in all 'communities of the Book' (*ahl al-kitab*), in all three branches of the Abrahamic tradition. The 'objective' complicity between these different forms of agnosticism requires closer study. The metaphysician cannot hope to convince either side; any discussion is doomed to sterility, for it is a question hot of argument but of aptitude. All he can do is to bear witness to the vision of the world which is forced upon him, because he is its instrument. Only thus can he ensure the *traditio lampadis*.

Ibn Taymiyah, who was born at Harran in Mesopotamia in 661/1263, and who died in prison in Damascus in 728/1328, was a Hanbalite theologian, and consequently a representative of the line most antagonistic to that of the philosophers. He was a polemicist and a fighter, and he challenged everything and everyone with spirit and courage. In reading him, the metaphysician is at least able to grasp what it is in his own work which will always be incomprehensible to the non-philosopher. And when a character like Ibn Taymiyah proves to be the inspiration, through his writings, of the so-called modern Hanbalite renaissance a few centuries later—that is, the Wahhabite movement

in the eighteenth century and the *salafi* reform in the nineteenth century—then the philosopher must agree that such a character merits his particular attention.

One of his most famous teachers was Shaykh Shams al-Din al-Maqdisi, the great qadi of the Hanbalites in Damascus after 663/1265. Ibn Taymiyah's work is considerable, and has been studied in detail by H. Laoust. Unfortunately, we can do no more here than mention a few of the titles. There is his treatise against the Sufi brotherhood of the Rifa'iyah at Damascus, written before he left for Egypt in 705/1305. While he was in Egypt (705/1305-712/1312), he wrote his famous *Refutation of the Logicians* (*Radd al-mantiqiyin*), which is an attempt to destroy the logic of the Greeks and the main theses of the great philosophers, notably of al-Farabi, Avicenna and Ibn Sab'in. But his most important and characteristic work is the *Minhaj al-Sunnah* (*The Way of Sunnism*), which he wrote between 716/1316 and 720/1320. This is a massive and methodical polemic against the *Minhaj al-karamah* (*The Way of Charisma*) by al-'Allamah al-Hilli (726/1326), the famous theologian and pupil of Nasir al-Din Tusi.

Needless to say, Shiism survived the attack perfectly well, in as lively a fashion as philosophy survived the attacks of al-Ghazali. But Ibn Taymiyah's work is of great interest when it comes to understanding the fundamental contrast between the Sunni and the Shiite conceptions of Islam. Comparison is impossible, however, because everything here takes place on the level of the *kalam*, not on the level of the theosophical metaphysics of Haydar Amuli or Sadra Shirazi. Nevertheless, the work is a rich source of information about the various schools of thought as the author understood them, fuelling as they did his indignation. A propos of Avicenna, he criticizes those who make the Creator the absolute Being, conditioned by his very absoluteness; a propos of Ibn Sab'in, he criticizes those who conceive the relationship between the Necessary Being and non-necessary, creatural being as the relationship between matter and form; a propos of Ibn al-'Arabi, he attacks those who distinguish between existence in actuality and the simple, positive reality of essences (Ibn al-'Arabi's *a'yan thabita* or eternal haecceities); a propos of Sadr al-Din al-Qunyawi, he attacks those who identify Necessary Being with absolute, and thus unconditioned, being; and so on.

We must at least make mention of the most faithful of his disciples,

the Hanbalite Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyah (d. 751/1350), who taught and commentated his works and who accompanied him twice to prison. We should also mention his *Kitab al-Ruh*, a great *Book of the Spirit*, whose subject is the Spirits (*arwah*) of the dead and the living. Like his other works, of which there are seven or eight, this is worthy of more than a mere analysis.

D. THE ENCYCLOPAEDISTS

1. ZAKARIYA' AL-QAZWINI

We must find a place here for those whom we have grouped under the general heading of 'encyclopaedists'. The first two in this category, in particular, illustrate the same 'phenomenon of the world' as the philosophers, but they go more profoundly into the details and the points of view that the philosophers had no need to express in their treatises on physics and metaphysics—in spite of the fact that, as we said above, several of them were truly encyclopaedic in spirit. These details are important for phenomenological research, which is based on the rule of *sozein ta phainomena*, saving the appearances—that is to say, of taking account of the underlying ground of the phenomena, as these phenomena appear to those to whom they appear. The phenomenologist is not interested in material data as such—it is too easy to say of such data that they are 'out of date' (our modern scientific data go out of date with the greatest facility after ten years have passed). What the phenomenologist endeavours to discover is the primordial lineage—the *Imago mundi a priori*—which is the organ and form of perception of these phenomena. Thus the interest that our authors possess is permanent.

From this point of view, the work of Zakariya' al-Qazwini is of a rare richness. He was born at Qazvin, about a hundred and fifty kilometres west of Tehran, studied under Athir al-Din al-Abhari, and died in 682/1283. He was a man of insatiable curiosity, alive to everything that came his way, and always in search of new information. His work is difficult to place; it is 'cosmography' in the broadest etymological sense of the word, encompassing both the cosmos and all the sciences concerned with every form and level of manifestation.

He wrote two great works: firstly, *Athar al-bilad wa akhbar al-'ibda*, which could be **translated** as *Monuments and Men*, a vast anthology

of all available information on the themes proposed in the title the 'traces' of which exist in different countries and the information we possess about men. Secondly: *'Aja'ib al-makhlūqat wa ghara'ib al-mawjudat, The Marvels of Creation and the Curiousness of Beings*, or better still, *Marvellous Creatures and Curious Beings*. This work was written in Arabic, and exists in Persian translations. The best we can do here is to glance very briefly at this 'cosmography'.

The work is divided into two lengthy books, the first of which is concerned with the realities of the worlds above, and the second with the realities of the worlds below. In order to carry out its encyclopaedic programme, Book I begins with a long account of astronomy, treating of the particularities of each of the nine Spheres, and leads up to the two sciences which are allied with astronomy: angelology, with the different categories of Angels and celestial Spirits, and chronology, the science of time in its essence and in its forms of manifestation, discussing the different sorts of computation, eras and calendars. Book II deals with the world of the Elements: the sphere of Fire and meteors, the sphere of Air and general meteorology (rain, wind and lightning), the sphere of Water, with a description of the oceans, the seas and the animals which people them, and the sphere of Earth, describing geography in general (the seven climes and orography). Then comes mineralogy (metals and minerals); botany and the properties of plants; zoology; anthropology in all its aspects: the essence of man and of the thinking soul, ethics, embryology, man's anatomy and physiology, the organs of inner and outer perception, the intellectual faculties. This chapter contains the theory of the intellects as professed by the philosophers: the innate intellect, the intellect *in habitu*, the acquired intellect, and the intellect *in actu*. Then comes the chapter on races and nations, together with their customs; human actions and activities (see below, III, 8, the work of Mir Findiriski); scientific instruments (the astrolabe, talismans); chemistry; perfumes; defence against harmful animals and against the activities of jinn and evil spirits; fantastic and supernatural animals.

The book is thus a 'mirror' of all the knowledge in the world, as the awareness of the time perceived it through its immanent *Imago*. We should add that along with the manuscripts of Persian epics, in their triple form of heroic, romanesque and mystical, the manuscripts of al-Qazwini's work are *par excellence* among those which inspired

the work of the miniaturists, up until the time of the Qajars. From this point of view also, they are of extreme interest to the philosopher in showing the active Imagination at work.

2. SHAMS AL-DIN MUHAMMAD AL-AMULI

We do not know the exact dates of the birth and death of this other encyclopaedic thinker, who came from Amul, a province of Tabaristan to the south of the Caspian Sea (not to be confused with Sayyid Haydar Amuli: see pp.332-5). He lived in the eighth/fourteenth century, and was contemporary with al-Iji, with whom he had discussions and exchanged points of view. Moreover, as in the case of many of his contemporaries who observed the Shiite 'discipline of the arcane', some of his remarks have been interpreted as coming sometimes from a Sunni and sometimes from a Shiite. In 716/1316, at the end of the reign of Uljaytu (Sultan Muhammad Khudabindah), brother of Sultan Muhammad Ghazan Khan, he was professor at the *madrasa* of Sultaniyah in Azerbaijan. He wrote a commentary on the medical encyclopaedia of Sharaf al-Din al-Ilaqi and on Avicenna's medical *Qanun*. But he is best known for his vast encyclopaedia, entitled *Nafa'is al-funun* (something along the lines of *The Precious*, or *The Select Sciences*).

In its totality, this encyclopaedia brings together the description, history and analysis of one hundred and twenty-five sciences (the old lithographic edition comprised a folio volume of more than five hundred pages; the new typographical edition of Tehran consists of three large volumes in 8°). The work is divided into two parts. The first part deals with the sciences of the Ancients, that is to say, the classical sciences which originated with the Greeks and which continued or developed in Islam. The second part deals with the Islamic sciences proper, which arose in response to the requirements of Islam. We lack the space here to cast even a brief glimpse at this work, as we did in the case of Zakariya' al-Qazwini. An analytical study of it would meet an urgent need, if only in order to compare it with the work of Mir Findiriski, which is later and infinitely more limited in scope, and, more directly, with the plan followed by Ibn Khaldun.

3. IBN KHALDUN

This eminent thinker **deserves** to be classed **along** with the encyclo-

paedists, both for his breadth of mind and for the scope of his completed work. He deserves it all the more in that Western historians have attributed an extraordinary status to him (the bibliography on him is considerable). It was always understood that after Averroes, Islamic philosophy ran into the sands. The only figure to emerge from this desert a few centuries later was Ibn Khaldun. He was praised as a precursor who broke with traditional Islamic culture, and who had, unfortunately, no successor, until the West discovered his merits. After him, the desert closed in once more. Yet if Western historians have been fascinated by what they considered to be his greatness as a precursor, this was so precisely to the degree in which the thinking of this precursor was no longer, properly speaking, Islamic. They found in him what they thought of as being 'philosophy', but which was unfortunately no longer 'philosophy' in the eyes of traditional philosophers; while most of the themes in the programme of the traditional philosophers were not considered by the contemporary West to be philosophy at all. In short, there is total misunderstanding; and thanks to the appreciation bestowed on it in the West, the work of Ibn Khaldun is one of the places *par excellence* where an analysis of the sources and the far-reaching consequences of this misunderstanding is possible.

The consequences are extremely far-reaching. Ibn Khaldun has been credited rather facilely with a certain 'Voltairean irony' before the thing even existed, and an entire youthful *intelligentsia* in the Islamic world goes along with this. He has been hailed as the founder of historical criticism, as the precursor of modern sociology; agnosticism, historicism, positivism and sociologism all appear to have arisen in Islam before there were even the words to define them. The question this raises is the following: what premisses must be present, and what premisses must be absent, for philosophy to renounce both itself and its object and to be reduced to a sociology of philosophy? Our own Latin Middle Ages talked of a philosophy which was *ancilla theologiae*. If it becomes *ancilla sociologiae*, whom does the victory benefit? What was thought to signal the coming of dawn may have been but the fall of twilight. And the fact that the echo of this work was not heard elsewhere in Islam may have been because the shadow of the twilight was not lengthening there. At the very moment when, we are told, Islamic culture was at its last gasp, the metaphysics of Sufism and Shiism were undergoing a tremendous renewal with the work of people such

as al-Simnani, Haydar Amuli, Ibn Abi Jumhur, and so on, who prepared the way for the flowering of the school of Isfahan. We must therefore be aware of the stimulating action of Shiism on philosophical meditation, and of an eschatology in the absence of which there is no historiosophy. We may freely acknowledge a tragic greatness in the case of Ibn Khaldun, but this greatness is not, perhaps, what others have been pleased to think it is.

'Abd al-Rahman ibn Khaldun was born in Tunis in 732/1332, and died in Cairo in 808/1406. The monumental work to which he owes his reputation is the *Prolegomena (Al-Muqaddimah)*, translated relatively recently into English. It was written when the author was forty years old; he had compromised himself politically through a whole series of unfortunate experiences, and had established himself and his family in solitude in the fortress of Bani Salama, in the old province of Tiarat in Algeria. He also wrote a universal history, the *Kitab al-'Ibar*, the *Book concerning Events which constitute a Warning or a Lesson*; an autobiography; a treatise entitled *Shifa' al-'sa'il, The Healing of the Seeker*, which is possibly by him and is possibly intended to be about mysticism, but which is certainly not written by a mystic.

The *Prolegomena* take the form of an encyclopaedia of the information needed by the historian if he is to fulfil his task as Ibn Khaldun sees it. In this respect, Ibn Khaldun is quite rightly aware of the fact that he is founding a new and independent science, a science determined by its object, which is the totality of human civilization (*al-'umran al-bashari* and social facts. It is in six lengthy parts, and deals with human society (ethnology and anthropology), rural civilizations, forms of government and of institutions, societies of urban civilization, economic facts and conditions, science and the humanities—in short, all that goes today by the name of 'cultural phenomena'.

Such an inquiry, it is true, represents something new, something outside the metaphysical search which is the object of traditional philosophy. To see Ibn Khaldun as the precursor of 'modern' positivism is possibly not the best way of judging his work in the context of Islamic culture or, more accurately, of Islamic philosophy. To say that he was aware that the civilization to which he belonged was drawing to a close belongs to the *post eventum* type of prophecy, and it completely loses sight of how Islamic civilization, assuredly in a different form, flourished elsewhere, notably in Iran, of how Islamic philosophy has also

flourished, and of how both Islamic civilization and philosophy continue to endure over the centuries. One credits Ibn Khaldun with having opted for 'reality' while demolishing the edifice of speculative philosophy. Here again, there should be agreement as to what 'reality' is, and what Arabic term one has in mind as defining it. For it is begging the question to begin by reducing 'reality' to the dimensions imposed by agnosticism. The metaphysician is also convinced that he is dealing with 'reality'. But as we said at the beginning, it is important to distinguish carefully between historiosophy and the philosophy of history. The first of these involves the presupposition that the world is penetrated by the divine energies of the supra-sensible worlds. The second can be founded on a causality which completely eliminates the transcendent aspect—it can be a radical secularization of the first, and Ibn Khaldun's work represents just such a secularization. Shiite philosophy, for its part, professed a historiosophy to which historians of philosophy have paid absolutely no attention up till now. On the other hand, the sarcasms of Ibn Khaldun show that he was a total stranger to what the metaphysicians understand and experience as the union of the human intellect with the active Intelligence, which they identify with the Holy Spirit. The phenomenology of the Holy Spirit is replaced by a sociology which, ignoring the transcendent hypostasis of the Holy Spirit, recognizes only a universal reason which is immanent in historical humanity.

From this point of view, Ibn Khaldun has even appeared to some enthusiasts as a precursor of Karl Marx, in that he sees the differences between the generations as reflections of different modes of economic life, these modes being then regarded as explanations of the differences in question. Is it superfluous to recall the antithesis of this, and to ask whether humanity does not actually organize its social, economic and political life in accordance with the initial perception that, prior to all empirical data, is disclosed to it by the sense of its life and destiny? Islamic philosophy and spirituality have both replied to this question and have determined the axis of man's orientation. It is significant that in dealing with a subject as decisive as alchemy, Ibn Khaldun bypasses the real question. He saw nothing in alchemy but 'glass-blowers', at a time when his contemporary al-Jildaki was elaborating a monumental work on alchemy, viewed as being essentially a spiritual science of nature and man.

In short, after Averroes' death, was the true orientation of spirituality in Islam represented by Ibn al-'Arabi or Ibn Khaldun? Is the distant cause of our present deep crisis the fact that the way of Ibn Khaldun was not followed? Or does it, on the contrary, stem from the fact that by fulfilling Ibn Khaldun's programme, modern secularization went hand in hand with the obliteration of what someone like Ibn al-'Arabi represented and continues to represent? In both cases, the question confronting the philosopher is whether the reduction of the 'divine sciences' to 'human sciences' is in accordance with man's destiny. What is at stake is not merely the fate of Islamic philosophy, but the vocation of Islam in this world, and the validity of the witness that Islam has borne in this world for fourteen centuries. The no doubt tragic greatness of Ibn Khaldun's work appears to us to lie in the fact that it leads us to a conscious formulation of these questions.

II. The Metaphysics of Sufism

Sufism not only offers something other than a philosophy but has also expressed a most lively criticism of philosophy, to the extent that it identifies philosophy with a limiting rationalism. In spite of this, Sufism involves a whole system of metaphysics, a fact which proves how little philosophy and metaphysics can be identified with each other. As we said in our general survey, what is meant here by 'Sufi metaphysics' corresponds to what is generally understood as 'speculative mysticism'. As Meister Eckhart could not be left out of a history of German philosophy, no more can Ibn al-'Arabi be excluded from a history of Islamic philosophy. The difference between this metaphysics and the metaphysics of the thinkers who preceded it is, to put it briefly, the distance already indicated between the technical terms *'ilm al-yaqin*, meaning the certainty derived from theoretical knowledge, such as knowledge of the properties of fire, and *haqq al-yaqin*, meaning the certainty which proceeds from a personally realized truth, being oneself the fire. In the writings of the Sufi metaphysicians we find extremely complex schemas of the universe (for example, the speculations on the Throne, which connect with the speculations of the Jewish Cabbalists), but it is never a question of theoretical knowledge, isolated from the inner spiritual life. Seen from this point of view, metaphysics and mystical anthropology are inseparable, as are the *modi essendi* and the *modi intelligendi*. A speculative mysticism can also be a mysticism of love, just as a mysticism of love can involve a whole metaphysical system.

It is true that the boundary line is made even vaguer by the fact that, as we saw, the *situs* occupied by the *ishraqiyun* in relation to Peripatetic philosophy corresponds to that occupied by the Sufis in relation to **the** *kalam*. An *ishraqi* can be considered a Sufi in the broad sense of **the** word, and he is certainly closer to the Sufis than he will ever be to the *mutakalimun* or to the rationalist philosophers. Nevertheless, he cannot be considered purely and simply as a Sufi.

This chapter deals with both Sunnis and Shiites, whatever theory one adopts with regard to the origins of Sufism. Sufism is the common element in both Sunnism and Shiism, but there will be no attempt made in these brief pages to write the history of the Sufi brotherhoods (*turuq*). These receive only occasional mention.

Moreover, there are two factors to be considered here, because they force us to realize that Sufism (*tasawwuf*) by itself does not account for all the mystical spirituality of Islam. Firstly, there is the existence of the *ishraqiyun* whom we have just mentioned; they are to be found above all among the Shiites, especially after Mulla Sadra Shirazi. And there is the existence of these same Shiites, whose spirituality {interiorism, esotericism) stems from the teaching of the holy Imams, and who since the Safavid era, for reasons which we cannot go into here, prefer the words '*irfan* and '*urafa*' to the words *tasawwuf* and *sufiya*. In addition, to the degree to which for the Shiite spiritual Shiism as such is already 'the' *tariqah*, without his having to join 'a' *tariqah* or congregation, there exists within Shiism a Sufism which leaves behind it neither material traces nor archival documents.

Finally, we must avoid thinking in terms of watertight compartments. From the thirteenth century down to our day, the doctrine of Ibn al-'Arabi made itself equally felt among the Sufis and among the *ishraqiyun*, among the *hukama*" and the '*urafa*'.

1. RUZBIHAN BAQLI AL-SHIRAZI

The importance of this very great mystic, the part he played, his place in the history of Sufism, began to become apparent only after the recent publication of his works. He was born at Pasa, a town in the region of Shiraz, in 522/1128, and he died in Shiraz in 606/1209. He was partly contemporary with Ibn al-'Arabi, and we are indebted to him for the preservation of the only text of a work by al-Hallaj. But it is not enough to situate him between al-Hallaj and Ibn al-'Arabi if we are to define his personality and his doctrine. He differs from the Sufis who preceded him by rejecting any asceticism which opposes divine to human love, for he sees both as two forms of a love which is one and the same. It is a question not of a transfer from a human 'object' to a divine 'object', but of the metamorphosis or transformation of the 'subject'. The book entitled *The Jasmine of Love's Faithful* is on the one hand an account of the prophetic meaning of beauty, and views

the prophet of Islam as the prophet of the religion of beauty, and on the other hand returns with all the resources of Platonic inspiration to the pre-eternal origin of love, dealing with the great themes of the eternal witness and the eternal Betrothed. Hence the representation of the metamorphosis of the subject in the couple Majnun and Layla {the Tristan and Iseult of the mystical epic in both Arabic and Persian). At the height of his love, Majnun becomes the 'mirror of God'. God himself, through the eyes of the lover, contemplates his own eternal face in the beloved.

The source of this doctrine, which demonstrates Ruzbihan's affinity with both Leon Hebreo and the *Fedeli d'amore*, is the metaphysical intuition expressed in one of the inspired *hadith* which have nourished all speculative Sufism: the 'hidden Treasure' aspires to be known, and creates the world in order to be known and to know itself in created beings. The Spirit is the spring-head through which exist the holy Spirits, the pre-eternal, spiritual individualities of beings. Assuredly, every atom of being is an eye that is wholly absorbed in the contemplation of the Light which gave it birth. But then the divine Being experiences jealousy with regard to itself; in revealing or objectifying itself to itself, it is no longer identically its own witness to itself: it has witness outside itself, *another than* itself. This is the first Veil. The divine Being also seeks to take possession of itself again; it diverts this Spirit from contemplating it and sends its creature back to the contemplation of itself. This vision of itself through itself is the second Veil. The test of the Veil is the meaning itself of Creation and of the descent of the holy Spirits into this world. For the mystic, to pass the test consists in discovering self-knowledge to be the gaze with which God contemplates himself. Then the veil becomes a mirror, because from the beginning of Creation God has never contemplated any world *other than himself*—he abhors such a possibility. But those who become conscious of being the witnesses through whom God bears witness to himself are the eyes through which God looks at the world. This is already close to Ibn al-'Arabi.

At the request of a friend, Ruzbihan, at the age of fifty-five, wrote a journal of his dreams from the time of his youth. This document is possibly unique in the mystical literature of all time. It contains visions of archangels, of celestial forms, of prophets, of rosy dawns and rose gardens: the entire *diarium spirituale* is as it were a series of variations

on the theme of the amphiboly (*iltibas*) of the human Image which simultaneously 'is' and 'is not'. All that is sensible, visible and audible is amphiboly, has a double meaning, in that it reveals what is invisible and inaudible, and it is precisely this that constitutes the theophanic function of the beauty of created beings, without it being inconsistent with the divestment of the pure Essence (*tanzih*). Ruzbihan's thought does not progress by means of conceptual dialectic but through a dialectic of imagery; his books are difficult to translate, but are of utmost interest for any metaphysics of the imagination. Because of his extreme emotionalism, he was a man of 'inverted paradox', prone to the kind of extravagant utterances (*shathiyat*) favoured by mystics. He made a collection of the chief of such utterances from the Sufi masters, first in Arabic, and later, at the request of his pupils, he made an expanded version of them in Persian. This is a long and difficult work, a Summa of the Sufism of his time.

The Ruzbihanian tradition (*tariqah*) was continued in Shiraz over several generations. His mausoleum has been recently and magnificently restored. Anyone who is steeped in the work of Ruzbihan is able to understand how it is that the *Diwan* by his famous compatriot, the great poet Hafiz (791/1389), is still read today by the Sufis of Iran as a mystical Bible.

2. 'ATTAR OF NISHAPUR

Ruzbihan came from south-western Iran. Farid al-Din 'Attar was from the north-east, from Khurasan. Unfortunately, even though we can agree more or less on the date of his birth at Nishapur (513/1120), there is some difficulty in deciding on the exact date of his death. According to a long-held tradition, the year of his death was 627/1230 or 632/1235, which would make him extraordinarily old. Hellmut Ritter suggested the year 589/1193, which perhaps makes it too short a period. We will not go into the question here.

The late Hellmut Ritter, who devoted his life's work to one who was among Iran's greatest mystical poets, has observed that the work of 'Attar is somewhat unusual for an oriental poet in that it allows us to follow the stages of his inner development. Broadly speaking, there are three stages in 'Attar's inner biography. First there is a period of youth, in the course of which the poet progressively masters the art of the spiritual recital, and for that purpose gathers together a vast

amount of material. Secondly, there is a period during which the technique of the anaphora in all its forms is developed; the poet's art is displayed in works which are almost unparalleled in the literature of the world, as regards both their number and above all their scope. Thirdly, there is the Shiite period of his old age. Unfortunately, we cannot expand here on the highly important theme of 'Attar's conversion to Shiism, nor go into any detail about the authentic works and the works of dubious attribution (he had the same name as another, second 'Attar). It is clear which are the authentic works, because they are mentioned by 'Attar himself in his last work, *Lisan al-ghayb, The Language of Mystery*. They number something over fifteen, and the chief among them are *Ilahi-Namah, The Divine Book, Mantiq al-tayr, The Language of the Birds; Musibat-Namah, The Book of the Ordeal, Asrar-namah, The Book of Secrets; Ushtur-namah, The Book of the Camel*, to mention but a few. After Hakim al-Sana'i, who died in 545/1141, and who may be considered its founder, 'Attar, together with Jami (see below, p. 310) is the most important representative of the mystical Persian epic. We should make it clear that this epic can be a continuous story, and it can also take the form of a mystical rhapsody, whether the theme comes through in the recitals which illustrate it, or whether the stories succeed each other, linked together by an invisible thread which it is up to the reader to discover.

As *The Divine Book* and *The Language of the Birds*, which includes the wonderful mystical episode of the Simurgh, have been translated into French, we will convey some idea of 'Attar's work by a brief analysis of the *Musibat-namah*, which, like all his remaining works, has not as yet been translated into a Western language. Essentially, this is a recount recital of the soul's journey during its mystical meditation in a period of retreat. Forty stations correspond to the forty days of this retreat, and the 'journey in the spirit' is the way whereby man discovers that he is more than a being of flesh and blood, that he contains the universe within himself, or rather that he himself is the universe. The traveller does not rest by night or day. In order to find a remedy for the pain which ravages the exiled heart of the outsider, he goes for help to each of the four archangels of the tetrad in turn: Gabriel, Seraphiel, Michael and Azrael. Then he goes to the Angel who represents those who carry the cosmic Throne (the Sphere of Spheres), then to the Heaven of the fixed Stars, then to the 'protected

Table' (the Soul of the world), to the Calamus (the Intelligence), to paradise, to hell, to heaven, to the Sun and the Moon, to the four Elements, to the mountain where the Ark came to rest; then to the sea, to the minerals, to the plants, the wild animals, the birds, the fish, Satan, the spirits, man, to Adam and the six great prophets down to Muhammad, and lastly to the perception of the senses and the perception of the intellect. Finally, he arrives at the station of the heart and at that of the soul, where he is told: 'You have wandered the entire universe in vain, before coming at last to the shore of my sea. What you have been seeking is within you. You yourself are the obstacle which separates you from it. Plunge into this sea of mine, lose yourself in its depths.' Why has he had to go so far? 'In order that you should learn my value.' A sage explains to him: 'You must understand that your quest is the quest of the divine Lover in search of himself.' The traveller then understands that all the universes are within him; he is finally acquainted with the mystery of his soul. Up till that point he had travelled towards God, but henceforth he will travel 'in' God. The conclusion is not only the same as the final episode of the other mystical epics, but is one with the conclusion of all the mystical metaphysicians (see p.342 below, Mulla Sadra's 'four spiritual journeys').

Apart from his great epics and a vast work on the lives of the mystics (*Tadhkirat al-awliya'*), 'Attar also left an enormous collection of individual poems, a *Diwan* of several thousand distichs in Persian. Some of them have the force of challenges:

He who has assiduously made himself a frequenter of the 'Temple of the Mages'—Of what denomination will he be? What ritual will he submit to?—I am beyond Good and Evil, beyond unbelief and religion, beyond theory and practice—For beyond all these things there are still many stages.

What is being woven here is a web of active images which originate in the Zoroastrian Mazdeism of ancient Persia, and which reveal a secret affinity with al-Suhrawardi's *ishraq*. The Temple of the Mages, the prior and the priory of the Mages, the sons of the Mages, the wine of the Mages—all these expressions are the symbolic designations of Sufi concepts and practices.

To be sure, the tendency in the West has been to minimize the importance of this vocabulary, because it has been thought *a priori*

that Mazdeism could have had no influence over Iranian Islam. But a totally different idea of things was maintained by the masters of Iranian Sufism. These ghazal by 'Attar, with their Mazdean symbolism, have been the subject of a pertinent commentary by Shaykh Safi al-Din al-Ardabili (735/1334), whom the Iranian dynasty of the Safavids acknowledged as their ancestor. We mention this here because there will be no opportunity to come back to it in this study, nor to speak of the commentaries of another shaykh among the '*urafa'* Iranians, Shaykh Adhari Tusi, who died at Isfara'in in 866/1461 -1462.

3. 'UMAR AL-SUHRAWARDI

Although they both came from the same town of Suhraward, in the region of Zanzan in north-eastern Iran, it is important not to confuse Shihab al-Din 'Umar al-Suhrawardi, the great shaykh who established himself in Baghdad, with Shihab al-Din Yahya al-Suhrawardi (587/1191), the *Shaykh al-Ishraq* and resurrector of the philosophy and theosophy of ancient Persia. Shihab al-Din 'Umar al-Suhrawardi was born in 539/1145, and died in Baghdad in 632/1234-1235. He took his first steps along the road of mysticism under the guidance of his paternal uncle Abu al-Najib al-Suhrawardi (d. 563/1167-1168), and both of them are the initiators of the *suhrawardiya* Sufi *tariqah* which still exists today.

Although he was essentially a great Sufi shaykh, 'Umar al-Suhrawardi is relevant to the history of philosophy for many reasons. He wrote a treatise against Greek philosophy, or more accurately against the 'Hellenizing philosophers', the *falasifa*, which was translated into Persian in 774/1372-1373 by Mu'in al-Din Yazdi. In the absence of any existing study of it, and because it is still difficult to gain access to the manuscripts, we cannot give a description of it here. Nevertheless, we may guess something of its nature from the fact that one of its chapters is about the 'second birth', as well as from the fact that 'Umar al-Suhrawardi's excellent Summa of Sufism, which is entitled '*Awarifal-Ma'arif*' (*The Benefits of Spiritual Knowledge*), also contains his personal philosophical doctrine—we have only to read chapter fifty-six, on the spirit, the soul and the intellect, to realize this. This Summa has itself been a current Sufi textbook for centuries. Between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries of the Christian era it was translated and commentated in both Persian and Turkish. It has been

read by all Sufis; but unfortunately, although there are plenty of manuscripts of it, there is no real critical edition.

Another aspect of 'Umar al-Suhrawardi's work which is of interest to the philosopher is that represented by his two treatises on the *futuwwah*. This Arabic word, whose Persian equivalent is *javan-mardi*, means youth or youthfulness. The *fata* or *javanmard* is the young man; but in its technical sense the word signifies the youthfulness of the spirit rather than that of physical age. The *futuwwah* is the particular form which the relationship between esotericism and social reality takes in Islam. As described by the Sufi writers, the phenomenon originated in Sufism and extends into the activities of the crafts: *futuwwah* corresponds both to the Western idea of chivalry and to that of a guild. There will be occasion to speak below of the symbolic story of its origins, in relation to the work of Husayn Kashifi. Here we will simply say that in extending beyond Sufism, the *futuwwah* aspires to confer a sacred quality on all professions, transforming their activities into so many liturgical acts. Admission to the *futuwwah* is by means of a ceremony of initiation, whose ritual consists of three methods of commitment between which the candidate must choose: commitment by word of honour, by acceptance of sword or spear, or by participation in the ritual Cup. The activities of the companions, who are bound to each other by a pact of fraternity, are elevated to the level of chivalric service. Every companion is a *javanmard*.

We may recall that 'Umar al-Suhrawardi was theological adviser to the 'Abbasid caliph Nasir li-Din Allah (575/1180-652/1225). The caliph, a strong sympathiser with Imamite Shiism and even with Ismailism, cherished the great project of making the *futuwwah* the link between the spiritual families from one end of the Islamic world to the other—something in the nature of a pan-Islamic *futuwwah*. He formed what has been called an aristocratic *futuwwah*, a 'court *futuwwah*'. But it is not this aristocratic order of chivalry which alone can justify an identification of the *futuwwah* with a Western chivalric order. In fact, one has only to refer to the spiritual genealogy that the *futuwwah* attributed to itself, and to its ethical rules, in order to understand this. Even though the Mongol invasions unfortunately wrecked the great project of Nasir li-Din Allah, the catastrophe did not entail the disappearance of the *futuwwah* as a spiritual chivalry. The books of the *futuwwah* are spaced over the centuries. Of those

which are written in the tradition of 'Umar al-Suhrawardi, we will mention the *Futuwwah-Namah* by Najm al-Din Zarkub al-Tabrizi (712/1313), who was himself a member of the *Suhrawardiya* order. It is true that all these treatises bear the stamp of Sufism, but this is because the *futuwwah* marks the introduction of the idea of spiritual chivalry into Sufism. {A similar phenomenon occurred in the West in the fourteenth century, in the Rhineland school of mysticism.} At the same time, the *futuwwah* is aware of being a branch of Sufism by virtue of its origins. On this account it was able to penetrate different trades and professions, putting forward in each case an appropriate form of *futuwwah*. It was truly one of the summits of the spiritual ideal envisaged by Islamic society.

Moreover, it must not be forgotten that the idea of the *futuwwah* appears inseparable from the Shiite idea of the *walayah*. It must be understood that this word indicates the pact of divine friendship (*dusti* in Persian), the pact of the 'Friends of God' (*Dustan-i Haqq*), which bases the relationship between God and man on the model of chivalric service. Unfortunately, if one persists in the habit of translating *walayah* as 'holiness', everything changes. The *walayah* is transmitted, through the divine initiative, to the 'Friends of God'. What a 'transmissible' holiness would consist of is not easy to perceive.

The influence of 'Umar al-Suhrawardi on Sufism as a whole was considerable. We can only draw attention here to two names: firstly, that of the shaykh's son, Muhammad ibn 'Umar (the fourth Suhrawardi!), who wrote a little manual of Sufism entitled *Zad al-musafir* (*The Traveller's Viaticum*), and, secondly, that of an Iranian Sufi, 'Izz al-Din Mahmud al-Kashani (735/1334-1335), who wrote an important work in Persian with the title *Misbah al-hidayat* (*The Torch of Spiritual Orientation*).

4. IBN AL-'ARABI AND HIS SCHOOL

Some of the figures of whom we have been speaking were contemporary with Ibn al-'Arabi; the dates of their death put them chronologically before him. We now come to the shore of an endless sea, to the foot of a mountain whose summit is lost in the clouds: all these metaphors are appropriate to the gigantic scope of the work of Ibn al-'Arabi, one of the greatest visionary theologians of all time. We must radically alter the false perspective, which stems from some unadmitted pre-

judice, according to which Ibn al-'Arabi's work signals the end of the golden age of Sufism. Far from this being the case, we may say that this work marks the beginning of something novel and original—so original that it could have occurred only at the heart of Abrahamic esotericism, and, of the three branches of this esotericism, only at the heart of the Islamic. The philosophy of the *falasifa*, the *kalam* of the scholastics, the asceticism of primitive pious Sufism—all these are swept away in a torrent of unprecedented speculative metaphysics and visionary power. This is the beginning of the 'golden age' of mystical theosophy. As is well known, Ibn al-'Arabi's theosophy and the 'Oriental' (*ishraq*) theosophy of al-Suhrawardi are related to each other. When both united with the Shiite theosophy deriving from the holy Imams, the result was the great flowering of Shiite metaphysics in Iran (with Haydar Amuli, Ibn Abi Jumhur, Mulla Sadra etc.) whose potential even today is far from being exhausted.

Ibn al-'Arabi was born in south-eastern Spain, in Murcia, on the 17th Ramadan 569/28th July 1165. His formative years and the years of his apprenticeship were spent in Andalusia. At the age of seventeen, Ibn al-'Arabi had an extraordinary conversation with the philosopher Averroes. There was no further encounter between them until the day when the ashes of Averroes were transported to Cordoba. The young Ibn al-'Arabi was present at this occasion, and he composed some poignant distichs which presage the orientation that he was to give to Islamic philosophy and spirituality. He was strongly influenced in his formative years by Ibn Masarra's school of Almeria, which propagated the teaching of Ismaili and Shiite missionaries. Later, when Mulla Sadra's school of Isfahan accepted the doctrines of Ibn al-'Arabi, the grandiose circuit of this return to the origins was completed. In the meantime, to remain in Andalusia was intolerable for anyone who wished to reject literalism. Ibn al-'Arabi decided to leave for the East, and undertook a voyage that for him possessed the value of a symbol. After an admirably full life and a prolific literary output, he died peacefully at Damascus, surrounded by his family, on the 28th Rabi' II 638/16th November 1240. He is buried there with his two sons on the side of Mount Qasiyun, and his tomb is still for many a place of pilgrimage.

It is impossible to summarize the doctrines of Ibn al-'Arabi in a few lines. All we can do is to indicate very briefly some of the essential

points. As in all gnosis, the keystone of the system, if the term is acceptable, is the mystery of a pure Essence which is unknowable, unpredictable, and ineffable. From this unfathomable Abyss the torrent of theophanies arises and proliferates, and the theory of the divine Names is born. Ibn al-'Arabi is in complete agreement about this with Ismaili and Twelver Shiite theosophy, both of which rigorously respect the rule and consequences of apophatic (*tanzih*) theology. Is there a breach between them in so far as Ibn al-'Arabi gives the name of Pure Light to this Ineffable Being, or identifies it with absolute Being, whereas Ismaili theosophy sees the source of being as strictly beyond being—as supra-being? Both interpretations result in a sense of the transcendent unity of being (*wahdat al-wujud*), which has been so widely misunderstood.

The divine abyss conceals the mystery of the 'hidden Treasure' that aspires to be known, and that creates creatures in order to become in them the object of its own knowledge. This revelation of the divine Being is accomplished in the form of a succession of theophanies characterized by three stages: the epiphany of the divine Essence to itself, which can only be spoken of by allusion; a second theophany which is the sum total of all the theophanies in and through which the divine Essence reveals itself to itself in the forms of the divine Names—that is to say, in the forms of beings such as they exist in the secret of the absolute mystery; and a third theophany in the forms of concrete individuals, which bestows upon the divine Names a concrete and manifest existence. These Names exist from all eternity within the divine Essence, and are this very Essence, because the Attributes which they designate, although they are not identical with the divine Essence as such, are nevertheless not different from it. These Names are known as 'Lords' (*arbab*) who possess the appearance of so many hypostases. {We may recall the procession of the divine Names in the Hebrew Book of Enoch, or 'Third Enoch'.}

In terms of actual experience, we can know these divine Names only through our knowledge of ourselves: God describes himself to us through us. In other words, the divine Names are essentially relative to the beings which name them, as these beings find and experience them in and through their own mode of being. This is why these Names **are** also designated as constitutive of the levels or planes of being (*hadarat*, *nazarat*, meaning presences or, as Ramon Llull translated

it, 'dignities'). Seven of them are the Imams of the Names, and the others are known as the 'guardians of the temple' or templars (*sadanah*): the theory of the divine Names is modelled on the general theory of the *hadarat*. Thus the divine Names possess meaning and full reality only through and for the beings who are their epiphanic forms (*mazahir*). Equally, these forms which support the divine Names have existed in the divine Essence from all eternity; they are our own latent existences in their archetypal state, 'eternal haecceities' (*a 'yan thabita*). It is these latent individualities which aspire from all eternity to be revealed: their yearning is that of the 'concealed Treasure' aspiring to be known. From this there eternally proceeds the 'Sigh of compassion' (*al-Nafas al-Rahmani*) which brings into active being the divine Names that are still unknown, and the existences through and for which these divine Names are made manifest in actuality. Thus in its hidden being, each existence is a breath of the divine existential Compassion, and the divine name *al-Lah* is the equivalent of the name *al-Rahman*, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

This 'Sigh of compassion' is the origin of *amass* whose composition is wholly subtle, and which is known by the name of Cloud (*'ama*): a primordial Cloud which both receives all forms and bestows upon beings their forms, is both active and passive, constructive and receptive. Primordial Cloud, existential Compassion, active, absolute or theophanic Imagination—these words designate the same original reality, who is the created God (*Haqq makhlūq*) by whom all creatures are created. He is the Creator-created, the Hidden-manifested, the Esoteric-exoteric, the First-last, and so on. It is through this Figure that esoteric theosophy in Islam can be situated on the level of the 'speculative theology' which we mentioned above in our general survey. The First-created (*Makhlūq awwal*, *Protoktistos*) in the bosom of this primordial Cloud is the Muhammadan Logos, the metaphysical reality of the prophet (*Haqiqah muhammadiyah*, also called the Muhammadan Holy Spirit (*Ruh muhammadi*), the source and origin of a theology of the Logos and of the Spirit which reproduces, in the form appropriate to it, the theology of the neo-Platonists, of gnosis, of Philo and of Origen.

The pair Creator-created (*haqq-Khalq*) is repeated at all levels of theophany and at all stages of the 'descent of being'. This is neither monism nor pantheism; rather, it can be called theomonism and

panentheism. Theomonism is no more than the philosophical expression of the interdependence of Creator and created—interdependence, that is, on the level of theophany. This is the secret of the personal divinity (*sirr al-rububiya*), of the interdependence, that is, between the lord (*rabb*) and him who chooses him as his lord (*marbub*), to the extent that one cannot subsist without the other. The diety (*uluhiya*) is on the level of pure Essence; the *rububiya* is the divinity of the personal lord to whom one has recourse, because one answers for him in this world. *Al-Lah* is the Name designating the divine Essence which is qualified by all its attributes, while the *rabb* or lord is the divine Being personified and particularized by one of his Names and Attributes. This is the whole secret of the divine Names and of what Ibn al-'Arabi calls 'the God created in beliefs', or rather the God who creates himself in these beliefs. This is why knowledge of God is limitless for the gnostic, since the recurrence of Creation and the metamorphoses of the theophanies are the law itself of being.

In this brief summary we can only suggest, not systematize. Ibn al-'Arabi was an enormously prolific writer. As we know thanks to the exemplary labours of Osman Yahya, his works in all number eight hundred and fifty-six, of which five hundred and fifty have come down to us in the form of two thousand one hundred and seventeen manuscripts. His most famous masterpiece is the vast work of some three thousand large quarto pages entitled *The Book of the Spiritual Conquests of Mecca (Kitab al-futuha tal-Makkiya)*, which is at present being edited for the first time by Osman Yahya. This work has been read throughout the centuries by all the philosophers and spiritual men of Islam. The same can be said of the collection entitled *The Gems of the Wisdom of the Prophets (Fusus al-hikam)*, which is not so much a history of the prophets as a speculative meditation on twenty-seven of them, regarded as the archetypes of the divine Revelation. The work itself pertains to the 'phenomenon of the revealed Book', for Ibn al-'Arabi presents it as having been inspired from Heaven by the Prophet. Both Shiite and Sunni authors have written commentaries on it. Osman Yahya has compiled an inventory of one hundred and fifty of them, about a hundred and thirty of which are the work of Iranian spiritual men. These commentaries are not simply innocuous glosses, for although the work of Ibn al-'Arabi aroused fervent admiration among his followers, it also provoked passionate wrath and

anathema among his adversaries.

Among other famous commentaries on the *Fusus*, there is one by Da'ud al-Qaysari (751/1350-1351), a Sunni, and one by Kamal al-Din 'Abd al-Razzaq {died between 735/1334 and 751/1350-1351), a famous Shiite thinker, to whom we also owe a mystical commentary on the Quran, a treatise on the vocabulary of Sufism and a treatise on the *futuwwah*. Mention should also be made of the lengthy Shiite commentary by Haydar Amuli, which is in the process of being edited, and which includes a severe criticism of Da'ud al-Qaysari on a point which is decisive for all the philosophy of the *walayah*.

Two questions arise: how is one to conceive of an integral history of Islamic philosophy before all these texts have been studied? And how long will it be before they have been studied?

There can be no question here of even a brief outline of the history of Ibn al-'Arabi's school. But we must not omit to mention the name of Sadr al-Din al-Qunyawi (meaning from Qunyah or Konia or Iconium, often mistakenly transcribed as *Qunawi*). Sadr al-Din (671/1272 or 673/1273-1274) was both the disciple and the son-in-law of Ibn al-'Arabi, and his thought was steeped in Ibn al-'Arabi's doctrine. He wrote a number of important works. He is of great interest in that he himself in some sense represents a crossroads: he was in touch with Jalal al-Din Rumi and Sa'd al-Din Hamuyah (or Hamu'i), and corresponded with the great Shiite philosopher Nasir al-Din Tusi, as well as with other shaykhs. None of the texts necessary for an analysis of his thought has yet been edited.

5. NAJM AL-DIN AL-KUBRA AND HIS SCHOOL

We noted above how Ibn al-'Arabi attributed a symbolic value to his geographical migration to the East. At the same period, before the Mongol invasion of Chingiz Khan, there took place a movement which was the symmetrical inverse of Ibn al-'Arabi's: the current of Sufism flowed from central Asia into Iran, Anatolia and Mesopotamia. This central Asian Sufism was dominated at that time by the great figure of Najm al-Din al-Kubra, and the encounter of his followers with the followers of Ibn al-'Arabi is of capital and decisive importance for the spiritual future of Oriental Islam. The geometrical location of this encounter could be defined symbolically as al-Suhrawardi's 'Oriental' theosophy of Light, for the doctrine of Najm al-Din al-Kubra

is also an experiential mysticism of Light. One could say that if the proximate cause of the Renaissance in the West during the sixteenth century was the influx of Byzantine scholars to Italy in the face of the Turkish conquest of Constantinople, a comparable phenomenon took place in the East some two and a half centuries earlier. This is why Islamic philosophy cannot be divided into periods in the same way as Western philosophy. Nevertheless, even if it is accurate to speak of the Safavid Renaissance in Iran, it is altogether wrong to speak of a 'Mongol Renaissance'. What must be taken into consideration is the contacts that took place between teachers and schools of thought—contacts whose results would compensate for all the calamities of the times.

Najm al-Din al-Kubra was born in 540/1146, and spent the first part of his life in long journeys to Nishapur, Hamadhan, Isfahan, Mecca and Alexandria. He returned to Khwarizm in 580/1184. His activities were thus centred on central Asia, where he had a vast following, even though he admitted only twelve disciples into his immediate and intimate circle. At the time of the siege of Khwarizm, Chingiz Khan had sent him a message, inviting him to take refuge with him. But Najm al-Din al-Kubra refused to abandon the people with whom he had lived for so many years, and according to the account given by Rashid al-Din Fadl-Allah (see above, p. 266), he died a hero's death in 618/1221, defending the town against the Mongols.

What distinguishes the Sufism of central Asia is the fact that Najm al-Din al-Kubra was the first Sufi master to turn his attention to the visionary phenomena of colour, the coloured photisms that the mystic perceives while he is in a spiritual state. He set himself the task of describing these photisms, and of analysing the degrees of colour as indicative of the state of the mystic and of the stage he had reached in his spiritual development. Needless to say, it is not a question of physical perceptions on the part of the external senses. Najm-al-Din al-Kubra refers over and over again to these coloured lights as something seen 'by closing one's eyes', a phenomenon which pertains to the perception of an 'aura'. We can see immediately that these meditations are part of a metaphysics of Light which links up with that of al-Suhrawardi's *ishraq*, and which like the latter postulates an ontology of the *mundus imaginalis*.

Affinity and correspondence do, of course, exist between physical

colours and 'aural' colours, in the sense that physical colours themselves possess a moral and spiritual quality which 'symbolizes with' the quality expressed by the *aura*. This correspondence gives a spiritual master a means of control whereby he is able to discriminate between these supra-sensible perceptions and what we would nowadays call 'hallucinations'. Technically, we should speak of a 'visionary apperception'. The phenomenon which corresponds to it is initial and primary, irreducible to anything else. The organ of this perception, and the mode of being which makes it possible, result from what Najm al-Din al-Kubra calls a philosophy of 'the subtle senses of the supra-sensible world'. 'Learn, oh my friend, that the object of the search is God, and the seeking subject is a light which comes from him'. The seeker is none other than the captive light itself, the 'man of light'. An effulgence from Heaven descends to meet the flame that springs from the aura of terrestrial man, and in this blaze of light Najm al-Din al-Kubra discerns or senses the presence of the 'celestial witness', of the 'supra-sensible personal guide'. The work of Najm al-din al-Kubra—his theory of photisms, his metaphysics of light and his physiology of the subtle organs—was admirably completed by 'Ala'al-Dawlah al-Simnani (see below).

Of the immediate followers of Najm al-Din al-Kubra, mention must be made—though all too briefly—of the father of Jalal al-Din Rumi, Baha' al-Din Walad (628/1230-1231), and of Sa'd al-Din Hamuyah (or Hamu'i) (650/1252-1253), whose works, which are still unedited, are as gripping as they are difficult to read. Sa'd al-Din Hamuyah was a practitioner of arithmosophy (the science of the philosophical alphabet), and of symbolic diagrams, and, as a fervent Shiite, he was linked by personal devotion to the Twelfth Imam, the Imam who is at present hidden.

Najm al-Din Dayah al-Razi (654/1256) was also a direct disciple of Najm al-Din al-Kubra. On the orders of his shaykh, he fled to the West before the invasion of Chingiz Khan. At Qunya he was in touch with Sadr al-Din al-Qunyawi and Jalal al-Din Rumi. In one of the books that he wrote in Persian, and which is still currently read in Iran, the *Mirsad al-'ibad* or *Highway of the Men of God*, he makes his own contribution to the theory of coloured photisms. We are also indebted to him for a mystical commentary on the Quran, which he was not able to complete beyond Surah 53 (the Star). Al-Simnani completed

it in a highly personal fashion, in a work which is one of the masterpieces of esotericism, that is to say of the radical interiorization of the literal narrative of the Quran.

'Aziz al-Din al-Nasafi {ca. 700/1300-1301) was a pupil of Sa'd al-Din Hamuyah. Several of his works in Persian have been edited: *Kashf al-haqa'iq*, *The Unveiling of Metaphysical Realities*; *Maqsad-i aqsa*, *The Supreme Aim*; the collection of treatises entitled *al-Insan al-Kamil*, *The Perfect Man*. His theosophy contains a cyclical theory of the epochs of the world which accords with that of Ismaili gnosis—a fact which explains why the Ismailis of central Asia considered him one of themselves. His theomonism accords with that of Ibn al-'Arabi. In his work we encounter the idea of a divine triad expressed by the names Allah, al-Rahman al-Rahun (God, the Compassionate, the Merciful), an idea which was taken up by Haydar Amuli in a more obviously neo-Platonic guise. Finally, the idea of the ascent of knowledge from the mineral level to the level of human awareness presages one of Mulla Sadra Shirazi's most characteristic intuitions.

6. AL-SIMNANI

In the tradition of the *Kubrawiyah*, the Order initiated by Najm al-Din al-Kubra, 'Ala' al-Dawlah al-Simnani (736/1336) occupies a distinguished position. The brevity of the following lines may be compensated for in the study that I have elsewhere devoted to him. He was born in 659/1261, and at the age of fifteen he entered service as a page to Arghun, the Mongol sovereign of Iran. At the age of twenty-four, while camping with the army of Arghun before Qazvin, he underwent a profound spiritual crisis. He asked to be released from his post, and devoted the rest of his life to Sufism. He lived mainly at Simnan, two hundred kilometres east of Tehran, where his mausoleum is still a place of pilgrimage. His work is considerable, both in Arabic and in Persian, and none of it has yet been edited. He developed, in depth and in detail, the 'physiology of the man of light' which Najm al-Din al-Kubra had inaugurated, and he integrated this to the schema of a grandiose cosmogony and cosmology which appear in great part to have proceeded from his personal intuition.

The high point of his work is possibly the Quranic commentary which completed the work of Najm al-Din Dayah al-Razi, whose death had prevented him from finishing it. This is a monument of the spiritual

hermeneutic of the Quran, a masterpiece of radical interiority, to which we can compare only a small number of mystical works in Christian and Jewish gnosis. Just as Schiller was to speak of 'the stars of your destiny' which are within you, al-Simnani spoke of the 'prophets of your being', thereby relating each element which emanates from one of the prophets of the Biblical and Quranic tradition to one of the centres of the subtle physiology typified respectively by one of these prophets. The elements of prophetology must be read and understood on these levels of 'inner history'. Each of the seven subtle centres is defined or augured by a coloured light or *aura* (in order of ascent from Adam to Muhammad, these are smoky grey, blue, red, white, yellow, black light and emerald green). The cosmogony which informs the subtle organs of this mystical anthropology deploys an entire system of metaphysical principles, stemming from the three primordial points of Essence (being), Unitude (life), and Unity (light). There are the protosubstances (the Throne or Soul of the world, the *Materia prima* or *Forma prima*), and there are the first Realities (the Inkwell of light or Muhammadan Holy Spirit, the Ink of Light or Muhammadan Light, the Calamus, the Intelligence, etc.). Each of these principles with their symbolic designations, graded proportionately, enters into the genesis of the subtle organs. Furthermore, scattered throughout al-Simnani's work are valuable autobiographical data, the elements of an extraordinary *diarium spirituale*.

7. 'ALIAL-HAMADHANI

Sayyid 'Ali al-Hamadhani (786/1385) was also one of the great figures of the *Kubrawiyah* tradition. As his title of *Sayyid* indicates, he was descended from the family of the Prophet through the Fifth Imam 'Ali Zayn al-'Abidin, and as his name indicates, he was a native of Hamadhan, the ancient Ecbatana, where he was born in 714/1314. He became a Sufi at the age of twelve, and thereafter spent his life in long journeys. In his late years, in 1380, he went to Kashmir, during the reign of Qutb al-Din Hindul, the fourth sovereign of the first Islamic dynasty, which lasted until 1561. He remained there for six years, disseminating Shiite Sufism, and died on his way back to Persia, at Pakli on the Indo-Afghan border. His son, Mir Mahmud al-Hamadhani, stayed in Kashmir for twelve years and consolidated his father's spiritual labours. The works and opuscles of 'Ali al-Hamadhani are

many in number and almost all are still unedited.

The following brief observations will serve to suggest the form taken by his thought; they are taken from the metaphysical premisses of an oneirocritical treatise which has come to our attention thanks to Fritz Meier, who has made a study of it. In it, 'Ali al-Hamadhani speaks of three forms of the manifestation of being: an absolute form, a negative form, and a relative form. The first of these is not perceptible to men, and is identified, by an implicit allusion to the Quranic verses of the Light (24:35) and in accordance with Mazdean cosmology, with the very essence of Light. The second form is also not perceptible to men, because in this form being attains its anti-pole, the point at which it disappears. This state of the non-presence of being, of non-being, is identified with absolute Darkness. Between the two is day, the clarity in which Light and Darkness mingle and their respective degrees of intensity diminish, with a result that is visible to man. This third form in the triad of the manifestation of being is relative being and is the visible form of God. Given this promising start, the philosopher may expect great things from the works of Sayyid 'Ali al-Hamadhani when they are finally edited.

After 'Ali al-Hamadhani, Najm al-Din al-Kubra's Order of *Kubrawiyah* divided into two branches (see p. 316 on the *Dhahabis*).

8. JALAL AL-DIN RUMI AND THE MAWLAWIS

The name of Jalal al-Din Rumi is universally renowned, and he has long been known in the West as one of the greatest Sufi poets to write in the Persian language. What is his place in the history of metaphysics?—this is the question that we shall attempt to answer here. Jalal al-Din Rumi, commonly known in the East as *Mawlana* or *Mawlawi*, meaning our teacher, our friend and guide, was born in central Asia, in Balkh, on the 6th Rabi' 1604/30th September 1207. We saw above that his father, Baha' al-Din Muhammad Walad, had been one of the followers of Najm al-Din al-Kubra. According to a long-established tradition, Baha' al-Din had laboured theological argument with Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (who, as we know, entered into such discussions more or less wherever he went), and on the orders of the sovereign of Khwarizm, Muhammad ibn Takas, who was al-Razi's protector, Baha' al-Din had to leave Balkh in 609/1212. The trouble with **this tradition is that Fakhr al-Razi may never have been**

to Balkh, and that he died in 606/1209. It is also likely that the sovereign of Khwarizm, confronted with the Mongol threat, had other things on his mind than the arguments between theologians and Sufis.

Balkh was taken by the Mongols in 617/1220. The emigration of Baha' al-Din and his family to the West must have taken place a short time before, and was part of the general exodus prompted by the Mongol invasion, which we mentioned above in connection with the Sufis of central Asia. However that may be, the migrant family stayed in Baghdad, Damascus and Mecca before settling at Qunyah in Anatolia. Our sources are not in agreement as to the date. According to a hallowed tradition, it was in the course of this journey that the encounter took place with Farid al-Din 'Attar at Nishapur, and the latter predicted that Jalal al-Din, then a little boy, had a great future before him. (If we admit the truth of this encounter, we must attribute extreme and somewhat dubious longevity to 'Attar, as we said above). Another tradition has it that at Damascus, Ibn al-'Arabi initiated the young Jalal al-Din into Sufism. Historically dubious as these episodes may be, they nevertheless reveal a profound symbolic truth, and they possess the virtue of suggesting the links of spiritual genealogy which in the eyes of the Sufis bound to three great masters together. At Qunyah, Jalal al-Din must also have been on terms of friendship with Sadr al-Din al-Qunyawi, the follower and son-in-law of Ibn al-'Arabi. *Eo ipso* Sadr al-Din was the spiritual link between Ibn al-'Arabi and Jalal al-Din Rumi. On the death of his father in 628/1230-1231, Jalal al-Din succeeded him in Qunyah as preacher and *mufti* until his own death on the 5th Jumada II 672/17th December 1273.

Meanwhile, the great events which orientated his spiritual biography took place. A year after the death of Baha' al-Din, Burhan al-Din Muhaqqiq, one of his former disciples, came to Qunyah. He explained to Jalal al-Din that his father had been not only a preacher and a jurist, a master of the exoteric religious sciences, but also a profound mystic. In this way, Jalal al-Din was initiated into the mystical doctrine of his own father by one of that father's disciples. A monument of this doctrine remains in existence, a collection in Persian of sermons or instructions (*Ma'arif*) in three books, which take as their text mainly a verse from the Quran or a *hadith*, and which were collected and transcribed by their hearers. These sermons expound a mystical doctrine as original as it is attractive; they develop all the aspects of inner contemplation

in a key which is somewhat that of an aesthetic quietism. It would be a pressing but extremely complex task to make a detailed comparison of the teaching contained in the father's *Ma'arif* with that contained in the son's immense *Mathnawi*.

In 642/1244-1245, the mysterious figure known by the name of Shams-i Tabriz arrived at Qunyah. This young and handsome dervish became the 'witness of contemplation' and thereafter occupied every moment of Jalal al-Din's time. The latter not only dedicated to him his great *Diwan* or collection of mystical poems, but he even published it using Shams' own name—meaning sun—as his *nom de plume*. Then Shams-i Tabriz disappeared, no doubt wearied by the attacks, inspired by jealousy, which were made against him. But through his invisible presence, he became Jalal al-Din's master and inner guide, the *Shaykh al-ghayb* of Najm al-Din al-Kubra and his followers, who is for the Sufi what the invisible Imam is to the Shiites: he who is present to their hearts. Sultan Walad, Jalal al-Din's son, has described this presence in some most lovely verses. However, Shams had two visible successors: first, Salah al-Din Zarkub, and after his death Husam al-Din Hasan, who inspired the *Mathnawi-i Mawlawi*.

This vast mystical rhapsody in Persian, which the Sufis like to call the Persian *Quran* (*Quran-i farsi*), cannot be summarized in a few lines. The famous prologue sounds the fundamental note: the complaint of the reed (the flute) which has been torn out of its native earth and aspires to return to its dwelling place. Then the rhapsody continues with a long succession of symbolic stories, which make up the mystical epic of the soul—in all, six books which total more than twenty-six thousand distichs or double verses. It is customary to oppose this doctrine of pure mystical love to the mental approach of the philosophers, and the *Mathnawi* does contain more than one scathing attack against the philosophers. But which philosophers?

The *Mathnawi* reproaches the philosophers for their enslavement to dialectic and logic, for their inability to perceive spiritual realities. They lack the sense of the supra-sensible which would allow them to understand that which is expressed by Earth, Fire and Water; as we should say today, they are 'technocrats'. They need tools and require evidence; they possess no doctrine of the active Imagination, and they regard everything that derives from it as chimerical fantasies. That is why those who yearn for Paradise, and who possess the vocation

for it, escape the damaging effects of philosophy and philosophers.

Mulla Sadra was in fact to declare that the esotericist feels a great deal closer to the naive believer than to the rationalist theologian. Likewise, all the accusations that Jalal al-Din levels against the philosophers had already been formulated, more or less, by al-Suhrawardi, the *shaykh al-ishraq*. Does he not make Aristotle say, during their dream-conversation at Jabarsa, that the Sufis are 'philosophers in the true sense'? There is a difference, no doubt, in that al-Suhrawardi intends that his disciple should pass through all the teaching of the Peripatetics as a sort of test, and in order not to lose himself later, once he has set out along the mystical way. It is, therefore, important to distinguish between philosophy and metaphysics. There can be an agnostic philosophy, but there cannot be an agnostic metaphysics. Sufism is not a philosophy, but there is a Sufi metaphysic. Similarly, the *ishraqiyun* philosophers were never bothered by the anti-philosophism of the *Mathnawi*, any more than they opposed Ibn al-'Arabi or Jalal al-Din Rumi, in spite of the differences between them. Even in the nineteenth century, Mulla Hadi Sabzavari, a profoundly *ishraqi* theosopher, wrote a massive commentary on the *Mathnawi* which is worthy to stand beside many of the commentaries written by Sufis. Finally, for everything that nowadays goes by the name of phenomenology of symbolic forms, metaphysics of the imagination, and so on, the *Mathnawi* is an inexhaustible source of material, especially as it is now easily accessible even to the non-Iranologist—thanks to the complete English translation of it by R.A. Nicholson.

Jalal al-Din Rumi also left works in prose {letters, sermons, the collection of *Logia* entitled *Fi-hi ma fi-hi*, meaning 'containing that which it contains'). Husam al-Din was Mawlana's successor until he died in 684/1285-1286. Then Jalal al-Din's son, Sultan Walad (d. 712/1312-1313), who had refused the immediate succession, became the shaykh of the Order of the *Mawlawis*. He was systematically active in organization and propaganda, and composed a triple *Mathnawi* and a collection of *Ma'arif* like that of his grandfather. He marks the beginning of the long history of the Order of *Mawlawis*, both within Turkey and outside it.

9. MAHMUD AL-SHABISTARI AND SHAMS AL-DIN AL-LAHJI

Mahmud al-Shabistari, one of the great Sufi shaykhs of Azerbaijan, is a major figure in the history of Iranian spirituality. He was born

in 687/1288 in Shabistar near Tabriz, and he lived mainly in this town, the capital of Azerbaijan, at a time when Tabriz, under its Mongol sovereigns, was a meeting-place for many scholars and eminent people. He was a great traveller, and was in contact or correspondence with a large number of spiritual men. He died at Tabriz while still young, at the age of thirty-three, in 720/1320-1321.

He wrote several treatises on Sufism in both verse and prose, but he is known principally for his *Mathnawi*, which is entitled *The Rosary of Mystery (Gulshan-i Raz)*. In it, he replies to seventeen questions, put to him by Mir Husayni Sadat al-Harawi, relating to mystical theosophy (*irfan*) and the spiritual way (*suluk*). This poem of barely a thousand distichs touches on all great themes of Sufi metaphysics: the mystical quest and its object, the Perfect Man, the symbols of the midday hour, of Sinai, of Simurgh and the mountain of Qaf, the *A'raf* and the inter-world, the cosmic Quran, the seven Imams of the divine Names, the journey into oneself, and so on. The poem has been read, re-read and meditated by generation after generation, and has been a sort of *vade-mecum* for the Iranian Sufis. But it was in fact written in a deliberately obscure language (like the Provençal *trobar clus*), and the references it contains are practically indecipherable without the aid of commentaries. There are about twenty of these in existence, and they are a credit to the Imamite Shiites as well as to the Ismailis.

Of outstanding importance among these commentaries is the one by Shams al-Din Muhammad al-Jilani al-Lahiji, which is a veritable Summa of Sufi metaphysics. We mentioned above that after 'Ah' al-Hamadhani, the *Kubrawiya* Order divided into two branches. *The Rosary of Mystery* also had commentators who belonged to the *Dhahabiya* branch. Shams al-Din belonged to the *Nurbakhshiya* branch. As his name suggests, he was a native of Lahijan, a small town in Jilan, a province bordering on the Caspian Sea in the south-west. He was a follower of the famous Sayyid Muhammad Nurbakhsh (869/1464-1465, whose name means 'giver of light'). On the latter's death, Shams al-Din was his most famous successor. He settled in Shiraz, where he lived in the *Khanaqah Nuriyah* (another epithet for light, attributed in this case to the Sufi lodge). He died there in 912/1506-1507. The philosopher, mathematician and astronomer Maybudi Qadi Mir Husayn (died between 904/1498 and 911/1505) calls him the friend of the four high metaphysical dwellings (*nasut*,

lahut, malakut, jabarut). He was praised in similar terms by other philosophers such as Sadr al-Din Dashtaki and Jalal Dawwani (see p. 329). His commentary on *The Rosary of Mystery* is a massive and concentrated work in Persian, possessing, as we have said, all the qualities of a Summa. Its title is *The Keys of the Miraculous Cure, a commentary on the Rosary of Mystery (Mafatih al-'ijaz ft sharh-i Gulshan-iRaz)*. The writer also left a treatise on geomancy and a *diwan* of mystical poems, which contains about five thousand distichs.

Shams al-Lahiji always dressed in black. When Shah Isma'il asked him the reason, the answer he gave, invoking the drama of Karbala' and the mourning in the hearts of Shiites which would last until the end of time, exhibits a sense of the symbolism of colours which belongs to the tradition of the metaphysics of photisms professed by the school of Najm al-Din al-Kubra. The theme of 'black light' (*nur-isiyah*) figures very largely in his commentary, with consequences which are far-reaching. As Najm al-Din Day ah al-Razi had already observed, the *coincidentia oppositorum* posited here contains the implication, like an echo of Zoroastrian Mazdeism, that light and Darkness are established *ab initio* and simultaneously, not that Darkness is the result of a creation which is mediate and derivative. Hence the classic problem of the metaphysics of being, which gives precedence of origin sometimes to essence and sometimes to existence, is left behind. Hence, too, the metaphysics of Shaykh Ahmad Ahsa'i was to posit the simultaneity *ab initio* of existence and quiddity, which drew such vigorous opposition from Mulla Hadi Sabzavari. Here again the metaphysics of Sufism are found at the heart of the great problems.

10. 'ABD AL-KARIM AL-JILI

Very little is known at present about the biography of this important mystical theosopher. The name of 'Abd al-Karim al-Jili or al-Jilani locates his family's origin in the Iranian province of Gilan, as was the case with Shams al-Din al-Lahiji before him. It also indicates that he was descended from 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jili or Mani (d. 560/1164-1165 or 562/1166-1167), founder of the Sufi Order of the *Qadiriya*. 'Abd al-Karim speaks of him as 'our shaykh', which would seem to imply that he belonged to the Order. He himself tells us that he lived in Yemen with his immediate shaykh, Sharaf al-Din Isma'il al-Jabarti, and that he travelled to India. He appears to have died in 805/1403. He left

about twenty works which are still unedited, although they are in the process of being edited and studied, and there must have been a large number of others which are lost. One of his great works, *al-Namus al-a'zam*, must have contained forty treatises, of which only about ten seem to have survived (unless he did not complete it). But the work to which he has hitherto owed his reputation is entitled *The Perfect Man (Kitab al-Insan al-Kamil*, mediocre edition of which came out in Cairo about eighty years ago, in 1304 A.H.).

The Perfect Man (*anthropos teleios*) reflects like a mirror not only the powers of nature but the divine powers as well. This mirror [*speculum*] is the place of 'speculative' theosophy. In this connection, and with just cause, allusion has been made to the *anthropos genikos*, Philo's generic man (celestial man as *summum genus*, terrestrial man as *summa species*). Al-Jili professes Ibn al-'Arabi's theomonism (*wahdat al-wujud*). The unique Essence to which the Names and Attributes apply has two aspects: pure Being which is divine Being (*Haqq*), and the being linked with non-being which is the world of creatural beings (*khalq*). The pure Essence clothes itself with attributes only during its theophanies. Seen in this light, Essence and Attributes are differentiated; but in the end the two are one, like water and ice. The world of phenomena is the theophanic world; in no way is it an illusion—its existence is real, since it is actually the theophany, the other self of the absolute. From this point of view, there is no real difference between Essence and Attributes: being is identical with thought. In agreement with Ibn al-'Arabi, al-Jili writes: 'We are ourselves the Attributes by means of which we describe God.' (In their *hadith*, the Shiite Imams declare: 'We are the Names, the Attributes...', thereby providing speculative theosophy with its Imamic basis.) The Perfect Man is cosmic thought, the microcosm in which all the Attributes come together; in him the Absolute becomes aware of itself. The theophanies exhibit three phases: there is the theophany of Unitude (the epiphany of the Names with which Perfect Man is united); there is the theophany of the Ipseity or epiphany of the Attributes; and there is the theophany of the divine Egoity or epiphany of the Essence. At this point, the Perfect Man has attained his fullest reality, the Absolute has returned to itself. At each period there are Perfect Men who are the epiphany of the pure metaphysical Muhammadan Reality (*Haqiqah muhammadiyah*), the Muhammadan Logos or eternal prophetic Reality.

This last proposition is the basis for a speculative prophetology which is actually derived from Shiite prophetology, and which reproduces the main features of primitive Judaeo-Christian prophetology (the theme of the *Verus propheta*). What we have just said will in turn enable us to understand why mention was made, in our general survey, of the 'speculative theologians' of the 'Hegelian right' at the beginning of the nineteenth century. There is, of course, the difference that here the Johannic Logos is conceived along the same lines as in Arian Christology. The tone of al-Jill's book, moreover, is characterized by a dramatic symbolism which is familiar to all gnostics. It is an epic of the Spirit, a 'narrative metaphysics'. It tells how the Stranger who is the Spirit returns after his long exile and captivity to the country of Yuh, and enters the vast city in which Khidr reigns over the 'men of the invisible'. There are profound affinities between al-Jili and Ibn al-'Arabi, although these do not annul the differences between them (which appear, for example, in connection with the theory of theophanies). With research in its present state, it would be premature to attempt to define either the affinities or the differences with any finality.

11. NI'MAT ALLAH WALI AL-KIRMANI

The name of Ni'mat Allah Wali al-Kirman is inseparable from the history of Shiite Sufism in Iran over the last seven centuries. Amir Nur al-Din Ni'mat Allah was born in 730/1329-1330 to a family of Sayyids who were descended from the Fifth Imam, Muhammad al-Baqir (115/733). When he was twenty-four years old he made a pilgrimage to Mecca, where he stayed for seven years and became one of the principal disciples of Shaykh 'Abd Allah al-Yafi'i (768/1366-1367). He lived successively in Samarqand, Herat and Yazd; he was in favour with Shah-Rukh, the son of Timur, and he finally settled in south-eastern Iran, in Mahan near Kirman, where he spent the last years of his life and to which his disciples flocked. He died there on the 22nd Rajab 834/5th April 1431, more than a hundred years old. It is true that some sources put the date of his death between 820/1417 and 834/1431. Apart from a *diwan* of mystical poems, he left about one hundred shorter works, amounting to about a thousand pages. As these are in the process of being edited, we cannot attempt a methodical classification of them in the way necessary for an overall summary.

These short works always deal with some theme current in mystical

theosophy and centred on a Quranic verse, a *hadith* of the Imams, a passage from Ibn al-'Arabi, and so on; by preference they focus on some specifically Twelver Shiite motif, such as the Twelfth Imam, or the *walayah* as the divine favour which sacralizes the holy Imams and which is the esoteric aspect of prophecy. "The esoteric aspect of the *walayah* contains the Essential Unity which is the absolute *Absconditum*. But the plurality of knowledge is the level of the eternal haecceities, for the eternally Manifested is clothed with plurality. The eternal haecceities are the forms of the divine Names on the level of knowledge, for the epiphany of the divine Names and Attributes, as regards their own distinctive features, postulates the multiplication of the Names.'

Today, Mahan is a sanctuary of Iranian Sufism and is visited by countless pilgrims. Ni'mat Allah is honoured as the king (*shah*) of dervishes, and is called 'Shah Ni'mat Allah Wali'. Later on we shall see this qualification propagated in his Order, the *Ni'matullahi* order, to which the majority of the Shiite *turuqs* in present-day Iran belong. The other group is that of the *Dhahabis* (see below, p. 316).

12. HURUFIS AND BEKTASHIS

It is to be regretted that we can only devote a few lines to the school of the Hurufis, that is to say of the initiates who practise the 'philosophical science of letters' (*'ilm al-huruf*). This could be described as a metaphysical algebra which in concept and method resembles that with which we are acquainted in the Jewish Cabbalah. In fact, the science of the philosophical alphabet and arithmosophy have been present from the beginning: tradition attributes their institution to the Sixth Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq, and from century to century we find traces of them in most of our mystical theosophers. But in speaking of the school or 'sect' of the Hurufis, we have in mind the particular school which owes its existence to Fadi Allah of Astarabad, a man with a tragic destiny who was executed by Timur in 804/1401-1402. According to his teaching, the summit of the degrees of being is the degree of the Word as the intimate and esoteric ground of being and of beings. In order for this esoteric aspect to be revealed, the Word must be uttered, and for this a 'clashing together' is necessary. But the phenomenon of this sonority does not derive from the external aspect of the things and beings which come together; it emanates from within them, from their inner or esoteric aspect.

As an established school, the Hurufi 'sect' seems to have disappeared very quickly. From Persia it went to Turkey, where the Bektashi dervishes became the representatives and the guardians of its doctrines. The order of Bektashis originated with Hajji Bektash (738/1337-1338), who, in spite of atrocious persecution, played a truly considerable role in the spiritual and cultural life of ancient Turkey down to the first third of this century. But the order observed a strict esotericism, and this has made it difficult to study its doctrines, in which we may perceive a strong neo-Platonic influence and a perception of things which is fundamentally Twelver Shiite. Mention should be made of the connection between the study of the symbolism of the features of human physiognomy and the most astonishing achievements of calligraphy. Here again is an inexhaustible mine for the phenomenology of symbolic forms.

13. JAMI

Symbolic forms are likewise the material of the poetic part of the work of Mulla Nur al-Din 'Abd al-Rahman Jami. He was an Iranian from Khurasan who was born at Jam in 817/1414, and after lengthy travel—two pilgrimages to Mashhad, to Mecca, and sojourns at Baghdad, Damascus and Tabriz—he settled at Herat, where he died in 898/1492. 'He was one of the most remarkable geniuses whom Persia ever produced, for he was at once a great poet, a great scholar, and a great mystic' says E.G. Browne. He belonged to the Sufi order of the *Naqshbandiya*, and his shaykh, Sa'd al-Din Muhammad al-Kashgari, had been the disciple and successor of the order's founder, Khwajah Baha'al-Din al-Naqshband {d. 790/1388).

All his work is of interest for the metaphysics of Sufism. There are long treatises in prose, among them a commentary on the *Lama'at (Illuminations)* by the famous Fakhr al-Din al-'Iraqi (d. ca. 698/1289), a small treatise composed by the latter on the occasion when he attended the lessons given by Sadr al-Din al-Qunyawī at Qunyah (see page 296). Al-'Iraqi was a typical wandering dervish (*qalandar*), unconcerned about his reputation, and attentive solely to the human beauty which he saw as the mirror of divine beauty. Jami also put together a large collection of Sufi biographies (*Nafahat al-uns, The Breaths of Divine Intimacy*). His *opera minora* include commentaries on Ibn al-'Arabi and Sadr al-Din al-Qunyawī. Given the lack of editions and

preliminary studies, it is difficult to give a summary of his entire production. His poetical work consists chiefly of a 'heptalogy' (*Haft Awrang, The Seven Thrones*). Of the seven moments of which it is constituted, special mention must be made of three mystical epics: *Joseph and Zulaykha, Majnun and Layla* (the Tristan and Iseult of the Persian mystical epic), and *Salaman and Absal*. Two versions exist of this last symbolic tale: one is the version of Avicenna which we know through a summary of it by Nasir Tusi, and the other is Hermetic in origin. It was the Hermetic version, not the Avicennan, that Jami orchestrated into a long poem.

14. HUSAYN KASHIFI

Husayn Wa'iz Kashifi (d. 910/1504-1505) was great Iranian preacher and spiritual figure of the time. He left about thirty works dealing with different questions of mystical theosophy, including a great mystical commentary on the Quran, and a *Garden (or Panegyric) of Martyrs (Rawzat al-shuhada')* which is a commentary on the persecutions suffered by the prophets and the Imams, especially the drama of Karbala'. However, although the Persian genius excels in metaphysics and mysticism rather than in ethics, Western Orientalists of the last century have shown most interest in the encyclopaedia of practical philosophy (*Akhlaq-i muhsini*) written by Husayn Kashifi, a work which succeeds two other examples of the genre, one composed by Nasir al-Din Tusi (*Akhlaq-i nasiri*) and the other by Jalal al-Din Dawwani (*Akhlaq-i jalali*).

We speak of Kashifi here, however, mainly in connection with a lengthy work, a *Futuwwah -Namah*, in which he makes a thorough study of the theme which we mentioned above when speaking of the work of 'Umar al-Suhrawardi: the *futuwwah*, the spiritual chivalry and guild. He recapitulates all the data furnished by tradition in order to describe this characteristic phenomenon of Islamic society. The idea of the *futuwwah* appears to be essentially bound up with the relationship between the prophetic mission and the Imamic charisma (the *walayah* as the esoteric aspect of prophecy) as envisaged by Shiism. Viewed in this manner, the *futuwwah* originated with Seth, the son of the Imam Adam, the 'first Sufi', in whose person the *futuwwah* is not yet differentiated from the *tariqah*—that is to say, from the mystical way or Sufism. (One may discern faint resemblances with the role of Seth in gnostic

writings, and with the identification of him with Agathodaimon among the Hermetics.) When men no longer possessed the strength to wear the cloak of Sufism (the *khirqah*), it was Abraham who founded the *futuwwah* as distinct from Sufism. In the person of Abraham the prophetic mission was henceforth assimilated to a chivalric service. By cutting across the cycle of prophecy and the cycle of the *walayah*, the *futuwwah* determines the division of historiosophy into periods. The cycle of prophecy was initiated by Adam, its pole was Abraham, and the Seal which brought it to a close was Muhammad. The cycle of the *futuwwah* was initiated by Abraham, its pole was the First Imam, and its Seal was the Twelfth Imam, the Imam of the Resurrection, the Longed-for One (*muntazai*), who at present is invisible. As the *futuwwah* has had members from all the communities of the Book (*Ahl al-Kitab*), Abraham is thus the father of a spiritual chivalry (*Abu al-fityan*) whose esoteric ecumenism brings together all three branches of the Abrahamic tradition.

15. 'ABD AL-GHANIAL-NABLUSI

The Syrian theosopher and mystic 'Abd al-Ghani al-Nablusi (meaning from Nabulus in Samaria), who died at Damascus in 1143/1731, was a prolific writer in the tradition of Ibn al-'Arabi (he left an excellent commentary on the *Fusus* in two great quarto volumes). His work comprises no less than a hundred and forty-five titles, and touches on the most diverse topics—his commentary on the mystical Odes of Ibn al-Farid is famous. He was affiliated to two Sufi orders at once, the *Mawlawi* and the *Naqshbandi*. Being a follower of Ibn al-'Arabi, he had to deal with the question of theomonism (*wahdat al-wujud*), which requires a sound philosophical training if one is not to fall short of the mark.

The shaykh explains that this transcendent unity signifies that non-necessary being (*khalq*, the Creation) is in no way independent of Necessary Being (*Haqq*, the divine Being) and that it cannot be extrinsic to the being of the latter. They are distinct from each other, but the being through which they both exist is one. The existence of Necessary Being is identical with its essence, whereas the being which has a beginning, which comes into being, exists through the existence which is identical with the essence of Necessary Being. But as Necessary Being is not identical with the essence of being which has a beginning,

so the being of the latter is not identical with the actual essence of Necessary Being. The same unique 'existence' belongs, in its own right, to Necessary Being, and it belongs, through Necessary Being, to non-necessary being. In the first case, it is unconditional and unique; in the second it is conditioned. It is to be hoped that a complete edition of the works of al-Nablusi, and a general study of them, will shortly appear.

Since it belongs to the same period in the Ottoman Empire, it is worth mentioning the work of Raghıb Pasha (d. 1176/1763), 'a great Ottoman vizir from 1756 to 1763 and possessor of a beautiful library, who left a collection of interesting observations on the main problems of Islamic culture' (L. Massignon).

16. NUR 'ALI-SHAH AND THE SUFI RENEWAL AT THE END OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

We have drawn attention elsewhere to the paradoxical situation of Shiism, which forced the esotericists of integral Shiite persuasion to practise a strict 'discipline of the arcane' with regard to those of their co-religionists who confined themselves to the legalistic and exoteric religion. This discipline becomes perhaps even more effective when it is practised outside any adherence to a Sufi order, since any external testimony then disappears. Furthermore, from the beginning of the Safavid dynasty—the very name betrays its Sufi origins (Safi al-Din al-Ardabili)—Sufism was infected with politics and at the same time its spirit and customs were relaxed, to such a point that the words *tasawwuf* and Sufism became suspect and it was preferable to use the terms '*him* (mystical theosophy) and '*urafa'* (mystical theosophers). Thus the great philosopher Sadrah al-Shirazi, a 'Sufi' as regards his inner life, wrote a book denouncing an entire group of ignorant and profligate Sufis. We must also bear in mind the situation to which we have already alluded: a Shiite adept knows that he has already set out along the mystical way in virtue of the fact that he follows the integral teaching of the holy Imams, without having to belong to an established Sufi *tariqah*. From this point of view, there can be *turuq* which are transmitted from individual to individual by oral teaching, in a form which leaves no material traces or archives. In short, when, thanks to those whom we shall mention in the following chapter, the philosophical and spiritual life still flourished, Iranian Sufism at the end of

the Safavid period was in a state of total decadence, characterized by the weakening and disintegration of all the established Sufi *uruq*. All that was left were a few Sufis of the *Nurbakhshi* order in Mashhad, and a few of the *Dhahabi* order at Shiraz.

It was during this time that a dervish or *Ni'mat Allahi* Sufi from India, Ma'sum 'Ali, reached the coast of Fans (Persia) by sea and settled with his family at Shiraz between 1190/1776 and 1193/1779. He had been sent from India by his spiritual master, Shaykh Shah 'Ali Rida Dakhani, to restore the *Ni'mat Allahi* order in Iran—an order which, while it owes its name to Shah Ni'mat Allah Wali (see p.308), goes back originally to the Eighth Shiite Imam, the Imam 'Ali Rida (203/818) through Ma'ruf al-Karkhi (200/815-816). Ma'sum 'Ali Shah succeeded in his task of spiritual restoration. At this point another great figure in the history of Iranian Sufism makes his appearance: Nur 'Ali-Shah.

Nur 'Ali-Shah was born at Isfahan in 1170/1756-1757 or 1172/1759, the son of Fayz 'Ali-Shah (Mirza 'Abd al-Husayn), himself the son of Mulla Muhammad 'Ali, Imam-Jum'ah of Tabas, a large oasis in the north-eastern part of the central desert. The echoes of the revival inspired by the appearance of Ma'sum 'Ali-Shah reached Isfahan, and father and son decided to leave together for Shiraz, where they became each other's spiritual brothers by joining the *tariqah* of Ma'sum 'ali-Shah. By all accounts, it appears that Nur 'Ali-Shah, who was renowned for his beauty, was a fascinating character. The enthusiasm and loyalty of his followers was unfortunately matched by the unbridled hatred of the pious bigots and exotericists (*ahl-i zahir*). Nur 'Ali-Shah died and was buried at Mosul in 1212/1797-1798, aged just forty. We should add that he married the sister of Runaq 'Ali-Shah, a woman of great spiritual and poetic gifts who herself composed a *diwan* of poems under the pseudonym of Hayyati.

He left some ten works, notable among which is the vast Persian rhapsody entitled *Jannat al-wisal* (*The Paradise of the Mystical Union*), consisting of one thousand two hundred and twelve pages in large octavo format in the most recent edition. In this monumental work, the great themes of Sufi theosophy and experiential mysticism are collected together and discussed in a way which is peculiar to the author (or authors). The work was to have comprised eight books, symbolic of the 'eight gates' of Paradise. In fact it was never completed: Nur

'Ali-Shah died before he had even finished Book III. It was his brother-in-law and successor, Runaq 'Ali-Shah, who continued the work, completed Book III and composed Books IV and V. Nizam 'Ali-Shah al-Kirmanî {1242/1826-1827} in his turn composed Books VI and VII. Certain members of the order were extremely prolific writers. Muzaffar 'Ali-Shah, at Kirmanshah in 1215/1800-1801, wrote among other things a treatise entitled *Majma 'al-bihar* (*The Meeting of the Seas*), in which the teaching of Ibn al-'Arabi mingles with the teaching of those Shiite *hadith* which are most gnostic in spirit. He also wrote a *Kibrit al-ahmar* (*The Philosopher's Stone*), a *Bahr al-asrar* (*The Ocean of Mystical Secrets*), and various other works. At Kirman he had been the disciple of Mushtaq 'Ali-Shah, who died a martyr to Shiism in 1206/1791-1792 during a popular uprising.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, under the pseudonym of Sayyaf, a dervish from Shiraz also composed a vast rhapsody whose title is reminiscent of Nur 'Ali-Shah's: *Kanz al-asrar wa Jannat al-wisal* (*The Treasure of Mystical Secrets and the Paradise of Union*). This work is enormous, consisting of about three thousand pages in the recently printed edition. It covers the field of mystical gnosis in twelve books, and the *hadith* of one of the Imams usually serve as the motif which introduces the verse commentary. It was completed in 1260/1844.

Another Ma'sum 'Ali-Shah, born at Shiraz in 1270/1853-1854 and died in 1344/1925-1926, left among other works a vast general encyclopaedia of Sufism in Persian, the *Tara'iq al-haqa'iq*, consisting of three large volumes in the recent edition.

We must at least mention Safi 'Ali-Shah, who was born at Isfahan in 1251/1835-1836. He lived in India before settling in Tehran, where he died, surrounded by many disciples, in 1316/1898-1899. His influence on the Iranian society of the time was considerable. Among other works, he left a monumental mystical *tafsir* of the Quran in verse (eight hundred and twenty-six folio pages in the edition of 1318 AH/ 1950). The *tariqah* of Safi 'Ali-Shah is still very much alive today. Mention should also be made of Sultan 'Ali-Shah (1327/1909) of Gonabad in Khurasan, who was succeeded by his son Nur 'Ali-Shah II (1337/1918-1919), whose influence was enormous and whose work was considerable. Today Gonabad is still the general area of a vast Sufi network which penetrates all levels of Iranian society. There

are many other *Ni'mat Allahi* shaykhs who deserve to be mentioned here. At present, the *khanaqah-i ni'matullahi* has Dr Javad Nurbakhsh as its 'pole', a man of prodigious activity. Under his leadership, the *khanaqah* has been reconstructed and expanded to acquire the dimensions of a Sufi university (with library, manuscripts, museum of calligraphy, etc.). Dr Nurbakhsh is extending the publication of ancient texts, and during the last years he has founded about fifty *new khanaqah* all over Iran. To his authority as a Sufi shaykh is added his competence as a doctor of neuropsychology, with a total grasp of the limits of psychoanalysis.

17. THE DHAHABIS

As we saw above, the Sufi order of *Kubrawiyya* divided into two branches after the death of Sayyid 'Ali al-Hamadani. His disciple Khwajah Ishaq Khutallani had named Sayyid Muhammad Nurbakhsh (795/1390-869/1464) as his successor. Unfortunately, Mir Shihab al-Din 'Abd Allah Barzishabadi refused to acknowledge him. From then on there were two distinct lines, of the *Nurbakhshiyya* and the *Dhahabiyya*. The latter stressed their spiritual descent which, like that of the *Ni'mat Allahis*, went back through Ma'ruf al-Karkhi (200/815-816) to the Eighth Imam, the Imam 'Ali al-Rida (203/818). Their Twelver Shiite fervour may be sensed in their writings on the metaphysics of Sufism.

Special mention must be made of the Dhahabi shaykh Najib al-Din al-Rida. He was a native of Tabriz who settled in Isfahan, where he died in 1080/1670 during the reign of Shah Sulayman (1666-1694). Two important works by him have been published: one is the *Nur al-hidayah* (*The Light of Spiritual Orientation*), and the other the *Sa'b al-mathani* (*mathnawi* on the Twelfth Imam). There are two particularly active Dhahabi publication centres at Shiraz and Tabriz. At Shiraz, the publications include the works of shaykh Agha Mirza Abu al-Qasim, who is better known by his honorary titles and pseudonyms of 'Baba-yi Shirazi' or 'Raz-i Shirazi', and who was succeeded by his son Majd al-Ashraf (1264/1848-1330/1912). Among other things, we are indebted to him for two important treatises of mystical theosophy. One is commentary on a famous gnostic sermon attributed to the First Imam, the *Khutbah al-Bayan* or *Sermon of the Great Declaration*. The other treatise, entitled *Manahij anwar al ma'rifah* (*The Paths of the Light of Gnosis*) is a commentary on the treatise attributed to the Sixth Imam

Ja'far al-Sadiq, *Misbah al-shari'ah* (*The Lamp which illumines literal religion*). At Tabriz, work has begun on the publication of the works of one of his followers, Mirza 'Abd al-Karim Rayaz al-Din al-Shirazi, otherwise known by his *tariqah* name of 'A'jubah 'Arif 'All-Shah' (1299/1882), which include a valuable study on Mahmud al-Shabistar's *Rosary of Mystery* (see p. 305). He left a large number of manuscripts, totalling about forty-one titles. Shams al-Din Parvizi has taken on the task of editing them.

These few pages may have given some idea of Sufism and its metaphysics; they will certainly have communicated an even stronger sense of the immense tasks that remain to be done. The following chapter will strengthen this impression still further.

. Shiite Thought

1. NASIR AL-DIN TUSI AND THE SHIITE KALAM

A Shiite *kalam* does exist. The word *kalam* designates the method of discursive exposition in which the resources of the dialectic inherited from the Greek philosophers are put at the service of the religious concepts posited by the Quran and the *hadith* (tradition). The exclusive *mutakallim* represents the type of the exoteric theologian. Nevertheless, the same religious theme which can be discussed from the exoteric point of view of the *kalam*, can also be handled with all the resources of mystical theosophy, of which the metaphysics of Sufism offers, as we have seen, notable examples. The same thinker may combine in himself both the abilities of a *mutakallim* and those of the philosopher and mystical theosopher, who is not content to dwell on concepts alone. This is most commonly the case in Shiism, and one of the main reasons for it may be found to lie in the teaching itself of the holy Imams. Nasir al-Din Tusi is a case in point.

Khwajah Nasir, or Master Nasir, which is the most common form of his name, was a man of universal genius (his bibliography numbers some eighty titles), to the extent that the culture of his time permitted. He was born at Tus in Khurasan on the 11th Jumada I 597/18th February 1201, and he died at Baghdad on the 18th Dhu al-Hijjah 672/26th January 1274. He had an adventurous youth in the service of the Ismaili princes in Quhistan, which explains his stay at the fortress of Alamut and the composition of an Ismaili treatise of which we will speak later. The situation became dangerous when the Mongols seized Alamut in 654/1256, but Khwajah Nasir handled it so well that he became adviser to Hulagu Khan and interceded with him for the Imamite Shiites, thus sparing them many of the horrors that followed the capture of Baghdad in 656/1258. He it was who then persuaded the Mongol sovereign to build the great observatory of Maraghah in Azerbaijan.

Khwajah Nasir was a mathematician and an astronomer (he wrote commentaries on Euclid's *Elements* and Ptolemy's *Almagest*, and composed a treatise on questions dealing with geometrical and physiological optics). In philosophy, he wrote a study in commentary form on Avicenna's *Isharat*, which 'Abd al-Razzaq Lahiji four centuries later considered to be the best treatise on Avicenna ever written. Khwajah Nasir defended Avicenna against Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, and again in a special treatise written in reply to Shahrastani. It could be said that if Iranian Avicennism, unlike the Latin Avicennism which died a premature death, has continued down to our days, it was Nasir Tusi who was its chief agent. In Shiite theology, his main works are *Tajrid al-'aqa'id* (*The Freeing of the Articles of Faith*), *Qawa'id al-'aqa'id* (*The Foundation of the Articles of Faith*), and the *FUSUL OR* 'chapters', written in Persian. In these works, the great themes of Shiite thought—the Imamate, the Twelfth Imam, and so on—are systematized. Over the centuries the first two have been the subject of some seventy commentaries and studies, and these urgently need to be inventoried, analyzed and placed in a historical context. The high point of Khwajah Nasir's work and spiritual physiognomy is not so much practical philosophy (the treatise entitled *Akhlaq-i nasiri*) as a Sufism which is as profoundly mystical as it is Shiite, expressed in the short treatise *Awsaf al-ashraf* (*The Characterology of Noble Souls*). Since Shiism recapitulated the aspirations of Iranian religious awareness, while philosophy faded out in the rest of the *Dar al-Islam* but remained alive in the Iranian schools, it is evident that Khwajah Nasir was the 'figurehead' of Shiite thinking.

Of the followers and the men nearest to Khwajah Nasir, we should mention Kamal al-Din Maytham al-Bahrani (678/1279-1280). A traditional saying has it that if he was Nasir Tusi's pupil in philosophy, the latter was his pupil in canon law (*fiqh*). He was also one of the masters of 'Allamah-i Hilli (see below). He left about fifteen works (not all the manuscripts have yet been located), several of which concern the problems of the Imamate of the Shiite Imams. He is best known for his twofold commentary in more than twenty volumes on the collection of sayings, letters and sermons by the First Imam, entitled *Nahj al-balaghah*. Maytham al-Bahrani was among those thinkers who combined the *kalam*, philosophy and mysticism (*'irfan*). Haydar Amuli

numbers him among the true philosophers who are heirs to the prophets and who are not content with exoteric knowledge.

Among them is the perfect shaykh Maytham al-Bahrani, who in his twofold commentary, major and minor, on the *Nahj al-balaghah* preferred the methods of the theomist gnostics, who trace their origins and their cloak (*khirqah*) back to the First Imam, to those of the scholars and professional philosophers. Similarly, in his commentary on the collection of the sayings of the First Imam entitled *Centiloquium*, he states that the truth unmitigated by doubt is the way of the theomists among the men of God who are called Sufis.

Khwajah Nasir's most famous disciple was certainly 'Allamah-i Hilli (his full name is Jamal al-Din Abu Mansur Hasan ibn Yusuf ibn Mutahhar al-Hilli), who was born in 648/1250-1251 at Hillah, and who died there in 726/1325. Among his teachers were al-Katibi (Dabiran) al-Qazwini (see p.265) and Maytham al-Bahrani. Like al-Bahrani and Khwajah Nasir, 'Allamah-i Hilli was contemporary with the Mongol upheaval, and played a role similar to that of his teacher. According to the testimony of the Shiite historians, his influence was decisive at the conferences to which Uljaytu summoned the leaders of the different religious persuasions, and the authority of his answers was such that from that moment Shiism was recognized as the official religion of Persia, and was able to come out of hiding. 'Allamah-i Hilli was a prolific writer whose bibliography comprises about one hundred and twenty titles. Some of his works have been published, while the manuscripts of others have still to be found.

As we said earlier, one of his works on the concept of the Shiite Imamate (*Minhaj al-karamah*) was the object of a violent Sunni attack by Ibn Taymiya (see above, p.273). Besides various treatises on canon law, 'Allamah established a systematic version of the science of tradition (*hadith* and *akhbar*), based on principles which were later to antagonise the *usuliyun* and the *akhbariyun* (see p.354). In the *kalam* tradition, he left a commentary on one of the very first treatises to be written by one of the oldest Imamite *mutakallimun*, Abu Ishaq Ibrahim al-Nawbakhti, who died about 350/961. Similarly, he wrote commentaries on the two treatises by Khwajah Nasir mentioned above, *Tajrid* and *Qawa'id*-commentaries which have been read and re-read, studied and commented by generations of scholars. He left a summary of the vast commentary by his teacher Maytham al-Bahrani on the *Nahj*

al-balaghah. Using the methods both of a man of the *kalam* and of a philosopher, he wrote studies on Avicenna's *Isharat (Directives)* and *Shifa' (Cure)*; attempted to solve the difficulties (*hill al-mushkilat*) of al-Suhrawardi's *Talwihat (Book of Elucidations)*; wrote a treatise comparing (*tanasub*) the Ash'arites and the Sophists; two other encyclopaedic treatises, *The Hidden Secrets (al-Asar al-khaffyah)* in philosophical sciences, the autograph version of which is at Najaf, and a *Complete Course of Instruction (Ta'lim tamm)* on philosophy and the *kalam*, etc. He casts doubt on the principle *Ex Uno non fit nisi Unum* (only One can proceed from the One), as his teacher Nasir Tusi, inspired by al-Suhrawardi, had done before him, and he concedes the existence of an intra-substantial motion which heralds the theory of Mulla Sadra.

In short, even though, as a preliminary to a monograph on the whole *opus*, a detailed study of his work remains to be done, we are already in a position to say that his example and his books were decisive in making philosophy 'at home' in Shiism, and in enabling it to defend itself against the attacks of the doctors of the exoteric Law.

The tradition originating with 'Allamah Hilli is a long one, and brings us up to the tragic confrontation between the Shiite and the Sunni *kalam*s in the persons of three men who are designated in Shiite nomenclature by the honorary name of *shahid* (martyr), meaning men who died as true witnesses to the cause of the holy Imams. *Shahid-i awwal*, the 'protomartyr', was Shaykh Shams al-Din Muhammad who, in 751/1350, at the age of seventeen, had been a pupil of Fakhr al-Muhaqqiqin, the son of 'Allamah-i Hilli. He wrote around twenty works, and was executed at Damascus in 786/1384. *Shahid-i thani*, the second martyr, was Shaykh Zayn al-Din ibn 'Ali, a sixth generation pupil of the pupils of 'Allamah-i Hilli. He left a considerable body of works, amounting to about eighty titles, and was executed at Istanbul in 966/1558-1559, on the orders of Sultan Salim II. Outstanding among them all is Qadi Nur Allah Shushtari, whose family was descended from the Fourth Imam Zaynal-'Abidin. He was a philosopher and a *mutakallim*, a mathematician and a poet, and he wrote about seventy works of which the best-known is the long *Majalis al-mu'minin (The Assemblies of Believers)*, written in Persian, and consisting of twelve chapters with notes on eminent Shiites of all categories (philosophers, theologians, Sufis, and so on). He took part in the coming

and going between India and Iran which occurred at that time thanks to the generous reforms of Shah Akbar, the Mongol sovereign of India from 1556 to 1605. He spent some time in Lahore.

An Ash'arite Sunni named Fadi Allah ibn Ruzbihan al-Isfahani had directed a violent attack against one of 'Allamah-i Hilli's treatises, entitled *Nahj al-haqq wa-Kashf al-sidq, The Way Opened to Truth and the Revealing of Sincerity*. Fadl-Allah's work was entitled *Ibtal al-batil*, or *The Book in which Error is Annihilated*. Nur-Allah responded at length to this in five hundred folio pages, entitled *Ihqaq al-haqq, The Book which does Justice to Truth*. The book was condemned by prominent Sunnis; Jahangir, Shah Akbar's successor, ordered the author to appear in court, and Qadi Nur-Allah was sentenced to a cruel martyrdom in 1019/1610-1611. He thus became the *shahid-isuvvum*, or third martyr. The work entitled *Ihqaq al-haqq* includes a juridical section, but also has a lengthy and extended section on philosophy. When we bring together the attacks of Ibn Taymiyah and Fadl-Allah ibn Ruzbihan against 'Allamah-i Hilli, and the intervention of Nur-Allah Shushtari and his tragic fate, it is clear that a comprehensive and thorough study is required, for without it an important chapter in Islamic philosophy must remain ill-defined.

Mention should be made of Ibn Yunus al-Nabati al-'Amili (877/1472-1473). He was a Shiite philosopher who principally owes his reputation to two lengthy works, one on the Imamate (*Kitab al-sirat al-mustaqlm, The Book of the Right Way*), and the other entitled *The Open Door on what is said Concerning the Soul (nafs) and the Spirit Ruh*. Al-Majlisi cites this work as one of his sources in his great encyclopaedia of Shiite *hadith*, the *Bihar al-anwar*. Ibn Yunus wrote other treatises on logic, on the *kalam*, on the Imamate, and on the divine Names.

Finally, there is a highly original philosopher whom we will include in this category, named Afdal al-Din Kashani, not because he was a *mutakallim*, but because of his relationship with Nasir al-Din Tusi—a relationship which is still unclear at the present state of research. According to some traditions, he may have been the latter's uncle on his mother's side. He lived during the first two-thirds of our thirteenth century, although we do not know the exact dates of his birth and death. He lived at the time of Hulagu Khan, and it is said that he played the same beneficial role in relation to the Mongols as Khwajah Nasir, and

he certainly succeeded in preserving his native town of Kashan from destruction.

The fact that he was a friend of Nasir Tusi is evident from two distichs that the latter wrote in his praise. It has also been recorded that the *ta'wil*—the symbolic hermeneutic of Quranic verses and *hadith* practised by Afdal al-Din—carries certain Ismaili overtones. This would accord very well with a statement by Khwajah Nasir in which he alludes to his own esotericism as having been derived from a pupil of Afdal al-Din. Afdal al-Din was a philosopher and a poet who wrote under the pseudonym of Baba Afdal, and whose work is written entirely in Persian. It consists of twelve treatises of which we will mention only the *Madarij al-kamal* (*The Degrees of Perfection*), which is an excellent account of philosophical anthropology, and the *Javdan-namah* or *Book of the Eternal*, perhaps the most original of his works, in which the philosopher, having spoken of self-knowledge, discusses the origin and the end of things as a 'prologue and epilogue in heaven'. We may note that Afdal al-Din was responsible for a translation into Persian of the *Liber de pomo*, a pseudo-Aristotelian treatise, and the *Yanbu' al-hayat* (*The Origins of Life*), a Hermetic treatise which also exists in Arabic, and is edited with the title of the Latin translation *De castigatione animae*. As regards the latter, certain parallel passages have been discovered in the Greek text of the *Corpus hermeticum*. This interest in Hermes, who is identified with Idris and Enoch, presages an affinity with al-Suhrawardi, the *Shaykh al-Ishraq*.

In the critical history of the philosophers that he gives in his great book *Jami' al-asrar*, Haydar Amuli expressly mentions Afdal al-Din as one of those who, having deepened philosophy and the official exoteric sciences, returns to 'the way of the men of God'. 'Afdal al-Din', he says, 'Was one of the greatest.'

2. THE ISMAILIS

We have already spoken of the origins of Ismailism and the recurring themes of Ismaili metaphysics. We may recall briefly some of the main facts. On the death of the Fatimid caliph al-Mustansir bi-Allah in 487/1094, the succession provoked a schism in the Ismaili community. Firstly, there were those who recognized the legitimacy of the Imam al-Musta'li, and who were to perpetuate the ancient Fatimid *da'wah*

down to the present day. But ever since the assassination of the caliph al-Amir in 524/1130, they have experienced, like the Twelver Shiites, a period of the Imam's occultation. They withdrew to Yemen, and in the sixteenth century their headquarters was transferred to India, where they were known as the *Bohras*. Secondly, there were those who remained loyal to the legitimacy of the Imam Nizar, whose grandson was miraculously rescued by his faithful initiates and taken to safety in the fortress of Alamut in Iran. There, on the 8th August 1164, the Imam Hasan 'ala dhikrihi al-salam (he is always designated by these words, which mean 'Hail to the mention of his name') proclaimed the Great Resurrection, according to which Ismailism became a pure gnosis, a purely personal religion of the Resurrection. With regard to the meaning of this proclamation, it is here above all that we must repeat that *Resurrectio non est factum historicum sed mysterium liturgicum*. Barely a century later, in 1256, the fortress of Alamut and the other Ismaili command-posts in Iran were destroyed by the Mongols. The last Imam, Rakn al-Din Shah, was murdered, but his son and his descendants survived under the mantle of Sufism, first in the Southern Caucasus, and later at Anjudan (between Hamadhan and Isfahan). It is this Imamic line of the reformed Ismailism of Alamut which has lasted down to our times, until Karim Agha-Khan IV. This branch is established mainly in the Iranian centres on the high plateaux of central Asia, and in India, where its initiates are known as *Khojas*.

Without this schema, it is impossible to grasp the situation of Ismailism with regard to the history of philosophy. The literature of Alamut was destroyed with the destruction of its library. Its literary output since then has been exceedingly feeble, owing to the unfavourable circumstances. By contrast, the branch of the *Bohras* has preserved entire collections. The tragedy for the philosopher is that while the *Khojas*, being more liberal-minded, are prepared to publish texts in order to make Ismailism known, all the manuscripts are in the possession of the *Bohras*, who continue to observe such a discipline of secrecy that of the seven hundred and seventy titles compiled by the late W. Ivanow (including the Druze texts), only a few dozen have up to now been accessible.

The *Musta'li* branch, since the end of the Fatimid dynasty, has included a number of prolific authors, beginning in the period which

is known as neo-Yemeni. We must confine ourselves here to mentioning the names of a few great Yemeni *da'is* whose work consisted mainly in constructing massive Summas of Ismaili metaphysics and Imamology: the 2nd *da'i*, Ibrahim ibn al-Husayn al-Hamidi (d. 557/1162); the 3rd *da'i*, Hatim ibn Ibrahim; the 5th *da'i*, 'Ali ibn Muhammad ibn al-Walid (d. 612/1215), to whom we are indebted, among other things, for a vast work (the *Damigh al-batil*, whose manuscript of twelve hundred pages in being studied and edited), which is the Ismaili reply to the great anti-Ismaili polemic by al-Ghazali, the *Mustazhiri*; the 8th *da'i*, Husayn ibn 'Ali (d. 657/1268), who left among other works a compendium of Ismaili metaphysics and eschatology, which has been edited; the 19th *da'i*, Idris 'Imad al-Din (d. 872/1468), who left a considerable body of historical and philosophical works (principally his *Zahr al-ma'ani*, which is in the process of being studied and edited). All this brings us to the Indian period, where we will draw attention to an enormous Summa by Hasan ibn Nuh al-Hindi al-Bharuchi (d. 939/1533), in seven great volumes which are known in the form of a summary, and in which we shall find all the essential elements of Ismaili history and metaphysics when we finally gain access to a manuscript. During this period, the *Musta'li* branch divided into two: the *Dawudi* and the *Sulaymani*. Here again, dozens of titles of works are known, but they are unfortunately no more than titles for the researcher.

Of the *Nizari* literature—that is to say, the literature of the reformed Ismailism of Alamut, which is entirely in Persian—two treatises by Nasir al-Din Tusi have fortunately been preserved, whose Ismaili 'associations' we drew attention to above. There is absolutely no decisive reason to doubt the authenticity of these two treatises, the most important of which is entitled *Rawdat al-taslim*. It was under the cloak (*khirqah*) of Sufism that Ismailism survived in Iran after the destruction of Alamut, and since then there has always been an ambiguity in Sufi literature itself. The long poem by Mahmud al-Shabistari (see above, page 305) contains echoes of Ismailism, and there is a partial Ismaili commentary of the *Rosary of Mystery*, which has been edited. Likewise, it was often in the form of treatises in verse that *Nizari* literature of the Alamut tradition was perpetuated. Quhistani (d. ca. 720/1320) appears to have been the first to make use of Sufi terminology in expressing Ismaili doctrines. The Imam Jalal al-Din

al-Mustansir bi-Allah II (880/1480), who lived and died in Anjudan under his surname Shah Qalandar, wrote an *Exhortation to Spiritual Chivalry (Pandiyat-i javanmardi)*, a concept whose significance for Shiism and Sufism has already been noted. Sayyid Suhrab Wali Badakhshani, who was writing in 856/1452, and Abu Ishaq Quhistani, who lived in the second half of the fifteenth century, both left a clear account of Ismaili philosophy. Khayr-Khwah—the *Benevolens*—of Herat (d. after 960/1553) was a prolific author and was chiefly responsible for the *Kalam-i pir (The Discourse of the Sage)*, an extension of Abu Ishaq Quhistani's *Seven Chapters*, which is, together with Nasir Tusi's *Rawdat al-taslim*, the most complete survey we possess of Ismaili philosophy of the alamuti tradition. Khaki Khurasani, writing in 1056/1645, and his son Raqqami Dizbadi, wrote lengthy philosophical poems. Ghulam 'Ali of Ahmadnagar {1110/1690} left a work in verse, the *Lama 'at al-tahirin (The Illumination of the Most Pure Ones)* of no less than eleven hundred somewhat chaotic pages, in which the philosophical themes are set forth in prose. Pir Shihab al-Din Shah Husayni, the eldest son of Agha-Khan II, who was born in 1850 and who died young in 1884, left several treatises which at the very least are excellent recapitulations of Ismaili gnosis.

These are the main works of the Ismailism of Alamut, which is apparently the only Ismailism known to Twelver Shiite authors of the period. It does not, perhaps, altogether counterbalance the vast works of the neo-Yemeni *da'is*. We noted above where the tragedy lies for the philosopher. The result has been that the Ismailism which, during the tenth and eleventh centuries of our era, pioneered the most daring metaphysical thought in Islam, has almost withdrawn into silence over the last centuries. Its voice, at once original and traditional, should be heard again today—a task of which it seems that the young Ismailis are aware.

3. THE ISHRAQI CURRENT

The *ishraqi* movement of the *Ishraqiyan-i Iran* (the 'Platonists of Persia') originated in the fundamental reform effected by al-Suhrawardi, the *Shaykh al-Ishraq* (d. 587/1191), in his *Book of Oriental Theosophy (Hikmat al-ishraq)*, whose purpose was to resurrect the theosophy of the sages of ancient Persia. In the course of the ensuing centuries, it contributed—together with the assimilation of Ibn al-

'Arabi to Shiite metaphysics—to the characteristic features of Islamic philosophy. We can therefore bring together under the same heading all the thinkers who have contributed through their works to the creation of this current, even when they were not nominally of Shiite persuasion. Their works bore fruit in Shiite thinking, and it is best not to split up their respective contributions.

At the head of this tradition of 'Platonists of Persia' is Shams al-Din al-Shahrazuri (seventh/thirteenth century). It is paradoxical that we should know nothing about the life of this philosopher, when he himself devoted an entire work to the biographies of the philosophers (*Nuzhat al-arwah*), the material for which was taken from his precursors—a fact which he fails to emphasize. We are principally indebted to him for a vast Summa of all the philosophy produced in Islam up to his own time; it is entitled *Treatises on the Divine Tree and on the Secrets of Theosophy*, and should have been edited and studied long ago (it was completed in 680/1282, and a copyist's note justifies us in thinking that the author was still alive in 687/1288). We are also indebted to him for two massive commentaries on two lengthy works by al-Suhrawardi, his *Book of Elucidations (Talwihat)* and the *Book of Oriental Theosophy*, many pages of which are transcribed in the works of other commentators. He was a convinced *ishraqi*, conscious of being the person whom al-Suhrawardi had designated in advance as the 'Keeper of the Book' (*Qayyim bi'al-Kitab*) for his time. As it is probably not an accident, we should draw attention to the fact that the 'Keeper of the Book of Oriental Theosophy' fulfilled a function similar to that which was conferred by Shiism on the Imams as 'Keepers of the Book' (the Quran) in its exoteric and esoteric integrity.

Ibn Kammunah (Sa'd ibn Mansur), who died in 683/1284, was another great philosopher of the period. He was Jewish, or of Jewish descent through his grandfather (Hibat Allah, Nathanael), and certain features in his work are responsible for his being listed in the Shiite catalogues as a Twelver Imamite philosopher. He wrote one of the most serious and original commentaries—completed in 667/1268—on the three parts (logic, physics and metaphysics) of al-Suhrawardi's difficult *Book of Elucidations relating to the Table and the Throne*. He wrote a dozen other works besides, among them a *Summary of the Arguments (tanqih al-abhath) concerning the Examination of the Three Religions* (Judaism, Christianity and Islam). The work got him

into grave trouble with the Sunni element in Baghdad. The author was inspired, it appears, by Abrahamic ecumenism.

Qutb al-Din Shirazi (Mahmud ibn Mas'ud), who was born at Shiraz in 634/1237 and who died at Tabriz in 710/1311, is possibly the most notable figure among the philosophers of the time. He was a mathematician, an astronomer, a philosopher and a Sufi, and he had had famous teachers: Nasir al-Din Tusi, Sadr al-Din Qunyawi, al-Katibi Qazwini. He wrote about fifteen works, among them an encyclopaedia of philosophy in Persian, the counterpart of al-Shahrazuri's encyclopaedia in Arabic, with the title *Durrat al-taj (The Pearl in the Crown)*. It was edited in Tehran in 1320/1942, and is in two parts: firstly, prolegomena on knowledge, logic, primary philosophy, physics, metaphysics and rational theology; secondly, Euclidean geometry, astronomy, arithmetic and music. He wrote a masterly commentary on al-Suhrawardi's *Book of Oriental Theosophy*, which has remained a textbook down to our day and is indispensable for an understanding of al-Suhrawardi's extremely concise text.

Jalal al-Din Dawwani, who was born in Dawwan near Shiraz in 830/1426-1427 and who died there in 907/1501-1502, was a prolific author, attracted by many questions concerning the *kalam*, philosophy, theology and mysticism. He studied at Shiraz and travelled more or less everywhere—in Persia, India and Iraq—and was converted to Shiism as a result of a dream. We will draw attention here chiefly to his commentary on al-Suhrawardi's *Book of the Temples of Light (Hayakil al-Nur)*. Many manuscripts of it are in existence, because every seeker in philosophy had read the book, especially as it provoked a counter-commentary by Ghiyath al-Din Mansur Shirazi (d. 949/1542; see p. 336). It was not the only point of conflict between the two philosophers.

In passing, mention should be made of one of Jalal al-Din Dawwani's many pupils, Amir Husayn Maybudi (Maybud is a town near Shiraz), who died in 904/1498-1499 or 911/1505-1506, and who is listed in most catalogues, not without reason, as a Shiite. He left about ten works, among them two studies: one on the *Kitab al-hidayah* by Athir al-Din al-Abhari (see p. 263) and the other on the *Diwan* by the First Imam, the prolegomena of which enabled him to expand on the great themes of Sufi metaphysics.

Two little-known personages from Tabriz are worth mentioning.

Wadud Tabrizi wrote in 930/1524 a systematic commentary on al-Suhrawardi's *Book of Tablets dedicated to 'Imad al-Din* (the Saljuq emir of Anatolia). Najm al-Din Mahmud Tabrizi, an even lesser-known contemporary of Wadud, wrote annotations on the *Book of Oriental Theosophy*. In fact, although al-Suhrawardi wrote a certain number of *opera minora* in Persian, his great treatises were written in Arabic. In 1008/1600, a certain Muhammad Sharif ibn Harawi elaborated in Persian not only on the prologue and the five books which make up the second half of the *Book of Oriental Theosophy*, but also on the commentary by Qutb al-Din Shirazi. The knowledge of things Indian revealed by the translator suggests that his initiative was connected with the generous concern that inspired the religious reform undertaken by Shah Akbar, the Mongol sovereign of India mentioned above. Indeed, *ishraqi* philosophy had considerable influence on the project of the 'ecumenical religion' conceived by Shah Akbar.

Also connected with this fermentation of philosophical and religious ideas was the incident involving Azar Kayvan, the Zoroastrian high priest, who emigrated to India with his community between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries CE. A long work in Persian written at the same period, the *Dabistan-i madhahib* (*The School of Religious Sciences*) provides us with all the information we possess on the situation which then prevailed in Zoroastrian circles, in a milieu which gave rise to a book such as the *Dasatir-namah* (*The Bible of the Ancient Prophets of Iran*). This book will only mislead the historian or the philosopher in quest of a document of primitive Zoroastrianism. On the other hand, it is of the greatest interest to the philosopher, since it is evidence of the diffusion of *ishraqi* philosophy, of which it bears unmistakable traces. Azar Kayvan's group included ardent admirers and translators of al-Suhrawardi, notable among whom was Farzanah Bahrain who lived in 1048/1638 and who left, apart from his undiscovered translations, a lengthy work in Persian entitled *The City of Four Gardens* (*Sharistan-i chahar chaman*). Another book in Persian which stems from the same group is entitled *Ayin-i Hushang* (*The Religion of Hushang*, who was an Iranian prophet-priest). The Parsees were sufficiently interested in these books to edit them; they considered the *Dasatir* to be a 'semi-Parsee' book, and there could be no better judgment than theirs. What we are confronted with here, then, is an *ishraqi* Zoroastrian literature, presently being studied, which

is a moving response to al-Suhrawardi's plans and which is evidence of the influence his philosophy exercised in seventeenth-century India.

Needless to say, the strength of the *ishraqi* current was not confined to those who actually commented some work by the *Shaykh al-Ishraq*. As we shall see later, Mulla Sadra Shirazi wrote a great volume of masterly annotations on the *Book of Oriental Theosophy*. But the influence of the *ishraq* went on increasing in the case of a number of Iranian thinkers who will receive mention here. A commentator on Ibn al-'Arabi such as 'Abd al-Razzaq Kashani, author of a commentary on the *Fusus*, is already aware of the Hermetic affinities of the *ishraqiyun*. The uniting of the *ishraqi current* and of the current which originated with Ibn al-'Arabi with the great themes of Shiite theosophy conferred its final form on Irano-Islamic philosophy. This union is already a *fait accompli* in the case of Ibn Abi Jumhur (see p. 335).

4. SHIISM AND ALCHEMY: AL-JALDAKI

The 'speculative' theosophy which is thus inaugurated—a theosophy in which the subject is conscious of being the mirror or *speculum* in which things and events come about—has its counterpart in a theosophy of Nature, properly included in 'prophetic philosophy', which is consummated in alchemy. This bond is best illustrated by the great alchemist Aydamur al-Jaldaki. The bond which links al-Jaldaki's alchemy to the prophetic theosophy of Twelver Shiism corresponds to the bond uniting Jabir ibn Hayyan's alchemy to Ismaili gnosis. Al-Jaldaki was intensely aware of alchemy as a spiritual science, even while describing the processes of practical alchemy. The alchemical work, simultaneously practical and symbolic, takes place both in the *materia prima* and in man's innermost being. There is an essential connection between the idea of alchemy and Shiite Imamology, and hence between the alchemical work and the *futuwwah* as a service of spiritual chivalry, raised to a level on which it can fulfil the requirements of cosmic salvation. Alchemy is not the pre-history of present-day chemistry.

Aydamur al-Jaldaki {the correct vocalization is not Jildaki) was an Iranian from Jaldak, a town about eighteen kilometres away from Mashhad in Khurasan. He lived in Damascus, and then moved to Cairo, where he died between 750/1349-1350 and 762/1360-1361. He left about fifteen works on alchemy, which have barely received attention.

We can mention here only his *Book of Demonstration Concerning the Secrets of the Science of the Balance* (*Kitab al-Burhan fi asrar 'ilm al-mizan*), a vast work in Arabic, comprising four sections in four great volumes.

On first reading it, one is struck by the part played in it by the more gnostic sermons (*khutab*) of the First Imam, among others the famous *Khutbat al-Bayan* referred to above. In chapter V of the second part, al-Jaldaki explains the following: alchemy is substantiated only in those who possess a high knowledge of philosophy (*hikmah*) and who assent to the message of the prophets; for this message encompasses both the exoteric imperatives of the Law and some of the secrets of superior philosophical wisdom. Likewise, the First Imam said that alchemy is 'the sister of prophecy', and that knowledge of alchemy is one of the forms of knowledge possessed by the prophets. By 'sister of prophecy' the Imam means that it is a way of designating the *hikmah*: philosophy or theosophical Wisdom. There is no doubt that the *hikmah* is the sister of prophecy. Having said this, the chapter ends by indicating a composition or combinatin (*tarkib*), the explanation of which must be sought from him who speaks from the top of the tree of the *futuwwah* and from the 'Niche of the lights of prophecy', that is to say the Imam. The passage leads on to the next chapter, which contains the commentary on Apollonius of Tyana's *Book of the Seven Statues*, which is in the form of a story of initiation (this is at present being studied).

We will mention later on two other small works on alchemy, one by Mr Findiriski and the other by Bidabadi. Similarly, where Shaykh Ahmad Ahsa'i and the Shaykhi school are concerned, the problems presented by the 'body of resurrection' are discussed with reference to the successive phases of the alchemical operation.

5. THE INTEGRATION OF IBN AL-'ARABI TO SHIITE METAPHYSICS

As we said above, a fact of fundamental significance is that Shiite thinkers found themselves completely at home in the work of Ibn al-'Arabi. This leads naturally to the question of Ibn al-'Arabi's early development in Andalusia. On the other hand, the veneration for the person and work of the *Doctor Maximus* (*al-Shaykh al-akbar*) did not exclude disagreement on certain points of doctrine which were of fundamental importance to all Shiite thinkers. The example of Haydar Amuli is a case in point.

Chronologically, we shall concentrate first on a group of two or three people who belonged to the same Shiite family, came from Khujand in Turkistan, and finally settled in Isfahan. Sadr al-Din Abu Hamid Muhammad Turkah Isfahani {seventh-eighth/thirteenth-fourteenth century: exact dates unknown) is among those thinkers praised by Haydar Amuli for not being contented with a purely theoretical philosophy. 'He too returned from his science and philosophy to the science and the men of Sufism, and he wrote several books and treatises on this subject, among them the book of absolute being.' Haydar Amuli goes on to quote an entire page from this work by our philosopher. Sadr al-Din did indeed write several works on metaphysics, the most important of which is entitled *Basic Theses concerning the Tawhid*.

His grandson Sa'in al-Din 'Ali Turkah Isfahani {died between 830/1426-1427 and 836/1432-1433) wrote a commentary on this particularly abstruse treatise, which he entitled *The Development of the Basic Theses concerning Absolute Being* (*Tamhid al-qawa'id fi al-wujud al-mutlaq*), and which is extraordinarily interesting for the study of Shiite metaphysics. Sa'in al-Din left a large number of works, very personal in character, and written as much in Arabic as in Persian: a commentary on Ibn al-'Arabi's *Fusus al-hikam*, a *Book of Greater Depths* (*mafahis*), a study of the Quranic verse 54:1 on 'the splitting asunder of the moon', whose esoteric meaning enables him to describe an original religious typology embracing the main schools of thought of his time. He also wrote studies on Mahmud al-Shabistari, on an ode (*qasidah*) by Ibn al-Farid, and so on. His works in Persian, amounting to about forty treatises, are presently being edited at Tehran.

We should also note that his cousin, Afdal al-Din Muhammad Sadr Turkah Isfahan!, was distinguished for his Persian translation of al-Shahrastanl's great work on religion and schools of philosophy (*Kitab al-Milal*). The work was concluded in Isfahan in 843/1439-1440, and completed by a personal study of the same work. The whole project marks a stage in the history of Iranian Islamic philosophy. Unfortunately its author was rewarded for his pains by being executed on the orders of Shah-Rukh, the son of Timur, in 850/1447—an act of malice which brought no joy to Shah-Rukh, who died eighty days later.

Another work, this time by Raj ab al-Bursi, a native of Bursa in Iraq, falls within the second half of the eighth/fourteenth century (exact dates not known). It, too, is of capital importance for this period of Shiite

philosophy. Of the eight or so titles in Rajab al-Bursi's bibliography, the *Mashariq al-anwar (The Oriens of the Lights)* is an excellent introduction to Shiite theosophy, for it brings together the most typical of the gnostic sermons attributed to the Imams. The work has been enormously expanded in a Persian paraphrase of several thousand folio pages, a task undertaken by a scholar who came from Sabzavar and settled in Mashhad, al-Hasan al-Khatib al-Qari, and who completed it in 1090/1680 on the orders of Shah Sulayman Safavi (1666-1694). The book concentrates particularly on the theme of the Muhammadan Logos, the eternal prophetic Reality (*Haqiqah muhammadiyah*, which embraces 'all the words in the book of being'. This Logos is the God-reflecting mirror, the unique Light with two dimensions: an exoteric dimension which is the prophetic mission, and an esoteric dimension which is the *walayah*, the divine love invested in the Imam.

However, with regard to the phenomenon of integration, considered from the point of view of its methodical elaboration, it is Sayyid Haydar Amuli's work that stands out as being of decisive importance. It is only recently that it has been possible to reconstruct his biography and part of this work, which is currently being studied and edited: its scope is overwhelming, even though it consists of only thirty-five or so titles (in both Arabic and Persian). The prolegomena alone to his commentary on Ibn al-'Arabi's *Fusus (The Text of Texts, Nass al-nusus*, presently being edited) constitute a remarkable doctrinal Summa taking up the whole of a large volume. Sayyid Haydar, who was born in 720/1320 at Amul, the capital of Tabaristan, south of the Caspian Sea, and who belonged to a very old Shiite family, had a brilliant youth. At the age of thirty, he underwent a profound spiritual crisis; he broke with all worldly ambitions and went to settle in the holy Shiite places in Iraq. The latest work known to be by him dates from 787/1385.

Just as al-Suhrawardi had wished to effect the union of the theosophy of the ancient Persians with Islamic philosophy, Haydar Amuli effected the union of Shiism and Sufi metaphysics. His doctrine of the *Tawhid* is founded on Ibn al-'Arabi's theomonism. There is an exoteric theological *tawhid* (there is no god but 'this' God) which bears witness to the divine Unity: it is this which is invoked by the prophets. There is also an esoteric ontological *tawhid* (only God 'is') which bears witness to the unity of being: it is this which is invoked by the 'Friends

of God'. It is upon the fulfilment of the *hadith* of the Imams that the reciprocity between prophetology and Imamology depends—a relationship of increasing interiority between the prophetic mission (*risalah*), the prophetic state (*nubuawah*), and the *walayah*, the esoteric aspect of prophecy and the Imamic charisma. There is a cycle of prophecy which is henceforth closed, but which is succeeded by the cycle of the *walayah* or spiritual initiation. The Seal of prophecy was the last prophet-messenger, Muhammad. The Seal of the *walayah* is the Muhammadan Imamate, in the dual person of the First Imam, the Seal of the absolute *walayah*, and the Twelfth Imam, the Seal of the post-Muhammadan *walayah*. In spite of his veneration for Ibn al-'Arabi, Haydar Amuli opposes him on this point, criticizing him systematically and with vigour for having made Jesus the Seal of the absolute or universal *walayah*. Let us repeat that the Shiite concept of the *walayah* (Persian *dusti*) is the concept of the charisma of divine friendship. It is not fully identifiable with the concept of *wilayah* which is current in Sufism, and which is usually but inaccurately translated as 'holiness'. It would be a contradiction for a prophet to be the Seal of the universal *walayah*. As we noted above in our general survey, what is at issue is more than a philosophy of history: it is the entire historiosophy of Shiism, a division into periods of hierohistory which was henceforth to prevail, and which can be compared in the West with the historiosophy professed by Joachim of Fiore and the Joachimites.

The perfect cohesion between the theosophy of al-Suhrawardi's *ishraq*, the theosophy of Ibn al-'Arabi and the Shiite tradition was consolidated by Ibn Abi Jumhur (804/1401-1402) and his great work, the *Kitab al-Mujli*. Like Haydar Amuli, Ibn Abi Jumhur explicitly identifies the Twelfth Imam, who is at the present time invisible and whose coming is awaited, with the Paraclete heralded in the Gospel of John. It is now that Shiite theosophy acquires a paracletic and Johannic tone, which explains our recent allusion to Joachimism in Western philosophy.

6. SADR AL-DIN DASHTAKI AND THE SCHOOL OF SHIRAZ

As in the case of the Turkah family of Isfahan, we have to do here with a family dynasty of philosophers. The father, Sadr al-Din Muhammad Dashtaki Shirazi (surnamed Amir Sadr al-Din or Sadr al-Din Kabir 'the Great'; not to be confused with Mulla Sadra who was also

a Sadr al-Din Muhammad Shirazi) was an eminent Shiite thinker of the ninth/fifteenth century. He was born in 828/1424-1425, murdered by the Turcomans in 903/1497, and buried at Shiraz. He had a great gift for argument, which severely tested Jalal Dawwani (see p.329). He left about ten works, among them two collections of studies on Nasir al-Din Tusi's *Tajrid* and its commentaries. In his great work (the *Asfar*, see p.342), Mulla Sadra refers to and discusses the positions adopted by Amir Sadr al-Din regarding the being that exists in thought, in 'mental existence' (*wujud dhihni*).

His son, Ghiyath al-Din Mansur Shirazi (d. 940/1533 or 949/1542), called rather pompously by certain of his biographers the 'Eleventh Intelligence' (he had other names as well), wrote about thirty works on philosophy and theology in both Arabic and Persian, concerned mainly with the *kalam*, philosophy and Sufism, but also treating of astronomy and medicine. He spent nearly all his life in Shiraz, where he taught at the Madrasa Mansuriya, founded for him by the Safavid sovereign Shah Tahmasp (1524-1576). The education he received in his youth gives us a very good idea of the intellectual and philosophical activity that went on in Shiraz at the time. His father Sadr al-Din organized discussions in which his son was an enthusiastic participant. The most famous speakers were the philosopher Dawwani, who often received a rough handling, and the Imamite jurist 'Ali ibn 'Abd al-'Ali Karki (surnamed Muhaqqiq-i Karki) who died in 940/1533. The results of these discussions have been recorded in many of his books, for example in those about Nasir Tusi's *Tajrid*. But his most famous work is the commentary on al-Suhrawardi's *Book of the Temples of Light*, which was a response to the commentary by Dawwani. The Work is noteworthy not just for the interest of the polemic, but also because it is evidence both of the extent to which the *ishraq* had penetrated the philosophy of the time, and of the author's Sufi tendencies. Viewed in this light, it heralds the synthesis that was to be forged by Mulla Sadra, who also held Ghiyath al-Din Mansur in high respect. It should be emphasized yet again that these thinkers are well worth study and editing, as are all those who succeeded them.

The grandson of Sadr al-Din Dashtaki and son of Ghiyath al-Din likewise established a certain reputation. He is commonly known as Amir Sadr al-Din II (he died around 961/1553-1554). Like his grandfather, he was interested in mineralogy, and he wrote a book

in Persian on the properties of precious stones (*Jawahir-namah*).

One of Sadr al-Din Dashtaki's most famous pupils was Shams al-Din Muhammad Khafari (935/1528-1529 or 957/1550), who had a great reputation as a philosopher and who appears to have been a great moral influence in Shiraz at that time. Muhaqqiq-i Karki, whom we mentioned above, liked to visit him during his journeys. Khafari left about ten works on philosophy, apart from commentary on the verse of the Throne (*ayat al-Kursi*). We should also mention one of his pupils, Shah Tahir ibn Razi al-Din Isma'ili Husayni, who finally settled in India, where he died in 952/1545-1546 or 956/1549. He left only a few works, among them a study of the metaphysics in Avicenna's *Shifa'*. He was a fervent Twelver Imamite, who effectively contributed to the dissemination of Shiite thought in India.

Finally, although his only link with those already mentioned is the fact that he too belonged to the milieu of Shiraz, we must draw attention to an extraordinary personality, Khwajah Muhammad ibn Mahmud Dihdar (his son was named Mahmud ibn Muhammad, with the result that the catalogues are not clear as to which of them wrote what). Biographically, all we can say is that he lived in 1013/1604-1605, and that he is buried in the Hafidiya at Shiraz. He is the representative *par excellence* of the mystical theosophy of Shiism, in the tradition of Rajab al-Bursi. He also practised divination (*jafr*) and arithmosophy—in short, the sciences which are the equivalent in Islamic gnosis of the techniques of the Cabbalah. He wrote about ten works, all of which are worthy of study. We can mention here only *The Pearl of the Orphan*, and *The Letter 'alif as a Symbol of the Human Form*, which discusses the knowledge of the degrees of the soul up to the degree of the cosmic man or macrocosm. The following is an extract:

'Know that the metaphysical reality of man is the metaphysical reality of Muhammad. I shall begin, therefore, with the *tafsir* or two surahs, one of which is the surah 'The Morning': 'Did not your lord find you as an orphan, and did he not give you hospitality?'

This is in fact the surah on which Ismaili gnosis bases the esoteric sense of almsgiving as the gift of gnosis to him who is able to receive it—a concept supported by all the Ismaili 'chivalry'. The implications are many.

7. MIR DAMAD AND THE SCHOOL OF ISFAHAN

With the restoration of the Iranian empire and the reign of Shah 'Abbas I (1587-1629), Isfahan became the capital of the Islamic arts and sciences, and the centre of spiritual culture in Iran. We have already suggested that the thinkers who began to proliferate in Iran at that time should be grouped under the heading of 'School of Isfahan'. Of course, as we shall see below, there were many different orientations within this school. On the other hand, it was not a question of spontaneous generation, as the foundations had already been laid by the thinkers named above. Nevertheless, once Shiism had definitely come out of hiding, vast works began to make their appearance (such as those by Mulla Sadra, Qadi Sa'id Qummi and others), in which the *hadith* of the Imams bore fruit in philosophical meditation. This does not mean that the philosophers were henceforth free of t r o u b l e .

The great themes in question were *par excellence* the problem of time, of the event, the reality of the imaginal world {'*alam al-mithal, barzakh*} and, correspondingly, a new gnosiology. In the writings of Mulla Sadra, this gnosiology amounted to a revolution in the metaphysics of being, a validation of the active Imagination, a concept of intrasubstantial movement which takes into account metamorphoses and palingeneses, a historiosophy based on the twofold 'dimension' of the Muhammadan Logos, the Muhammadan metaphysical light of Reality (the exoteric aspect of prophecy, and the esoteric aspect of Imamology)—a grandiose structure, closer to the great philosophical 'systems' of the West at the beginning of the nineteenth century than to the ideas of Ibn Khaldun.

The Iranian biographical-bibliographical catalogues too often make a summary distinction between Peripatetics (*mashsha'un*) and Platonists (*ishraqiyun*). First and foremost, the term 'Peripatetics' does not have quite the same meaning for our philosophers as it does for us, if only because of the *Theology* attributed to Aristotle, a work greatly popular among them. On the other hand—and for the same reason—it is almost the exception to find a pure Peripatetic among them, a philosopher who is not more or less steeped in neo-Platonism and who is not *eo ipso*, in one way or another, almost an *ishraqi*. A first and famous example is Mir Damad (Muhammad Baqir Astarabadi, who died in 1040/1631-1632), the 'teacher of thinking' to several generations of Shiite philosophers, and the greatest name of the School of

Isfahan. He is often classed among the *mashsha'un*; and while this is not inaccurate, this 'Peripatetic' has left ecstatic confessions of poignant beauty, with clear echoes of al-Suhrawardi, and he chose the pseudonym *Ishraq*. The college where he taught, the Madrasa Sadr, with its big gardens, still functions in Isfahan.

Mir Damad left around forty works in both Arabic and Persian, noted for their abstruseness and almost entirely unedited, as though somewhat eclipsed by those of his brilliant pupil Mulla Sadra. We should mention his *Book of the Burning Coals (Qabasat)*, a summa of his researches on Avicenna, written in Arabic; his *Book of the Burning Brands (Jadhawat)*, written in Persian; these fanciful titles have no bearing whatever on the seriousness of the text), in which, perhaps, he gives freer rein to his personal vision. One of the problems that preoccupied him was that of finding a solution to the dilemma of cosmology: a world *ab aeterno*, or a world which came into existence in time (as the *mutakallimun* professed) before there was any time? Between the eternally existing and the event which came into existence in time, he sought a solution in an eternal coming-to-be (*huduth dahri*), an eternally new event—a concept laden with implications for the events of hierohistory, and which entailed the further concept of an 'imaginary time' which was to inspire heated polemics.

Among Mir Damad's many pupils, mention can only be made here—apart from Mulla Sadra Shirazi; (see p.342)—of a few of the most famous. First among these is Sayyid Ahmad ibn Zaynal-'Abidin al-'Alawi (died between 1054/1644 and 1060/1650), a young cousin of his who became his pupil and then his son-in-law. His writings on philosophy are important and comprise about ten works. Besides the commentaries on his teacher's difficult treatises, there is a vast *opus* on Avicenna's *Shifa'* entitled *The Key to the Shifa'*, in which the author makes express reference to Avicenna's 'Oriental philosophy'; a long introduction to a philosophical and theosophical *tafsir* of the Quran (*Lata'if-i ghaybi in Persian*); and others.

Another pupil wrote a monumental commentary of one thousand two hundred folio pages on *The Book of the Burning Coals (Qabasat)*, an entire life's work. Unfortunately, all we know to date of this pupil is his name, Muhammad ibn 'Ali-Rida ibn al-Aqajani, and the date when he completed his work (1071 /1661). As we are acquainted with the manuscript, we take this opportunity to express our interest and

our hope that it will find an editor. What presents a considerable difficulty is that his work appears to have been duplicated by another of Mir Damad's pupils, whose name is lost to us because the manuscript is mutilated at the start, though its size is the same. Such commentaries are true explorations, in which the writers give free rein to their personal philosophical inspiration.

Another pupil of Mir Damad, Qutb al-Din Muhammad Ashkivari (also known as Sharif-i Lahiji, who died after 1075/1664-1665) wrote a vast rhapsody in Arabic and Persian, which divides the traditions, quotations and commentaries concerning the ancient sages prior to Islam, the philosophers and spiritual adepts of Sunni Islam, and finally the Imams and the great figures among the Shiite thinkers and adepts, into three great cycles. The chapter on Zoroaster contains a remarkable comparison of the Twelfth Imam of the Shiites with the *Saoshiyant* or eschatological Saviour of the Zoroastrians. He also wrote a treatise on the *mundus imaginalis* and a commentary on the Quran which employs a Shiite symbolic hermeneutic (*ta'wil*).

Lastly, we should mention Mulla Shamsa Gilani, whose work, amounting to about fifteen treatises hitherto confined to libraries, seems to us of increasing importance as its reconstruction proceeds. He was an Iranian who came from the shores of the Caspian Sea, and for many years he followed the teaching of Mir Damad, whose doctrines he expanded in his books. He was a great traveller {he had travelled over almost all of Iran, as well as in Iraq, Syria and Hijaz}. He was a younger co-disciple of Mulla Sadra, but unlike him he remained faithful to the metaphysics of essence. Although they criticized each other in their respective books, they conducted a friendly correspondence with each other. Worth mentioning here are his *Treatise on the Ways of Certitude*, his *Treatise on the Manifestation of Perfection to the Companions of Truth*, and his *Treatise on the Coming-to-be of the World*, in which he supports the thesis of Mir Damad that we summarized above.

8. MIR FINDIRISKI AND HIS PUPILS

Mir Abu al Qasim Findiriski {d. 1050/1640-1641}, who taught philosophical and theological sciences to several generations of students at Isfahan, was a powerful personality who remains shrouded in a certain mystery. Considering the great repute in which he was held, the work

he left is surprisingly meagre. He was involved in the project of translating Sanskrit texts into Persian, in which the prince Dara Shikuh played a major role. His main work is a highly original treatise in Persian on human actions and activity: he classes these according to a hierarchy which culminates in philosophers and prophets, who are brought together in a chapter on 'prophetic philosophy'. This chapter leads into hermeneutics and esotericism, and the treatise ends with a systematization of the degrees of the ladder of being, where it is not surprising to find the name and the shadow of Ahriman appearing in the work of this Iranian philosopher. He is classed as a 'Peripatetic', and indeed he wrote a treatise on the movement which sets out to be anti-Platonic. But this contemporary of Michael Maier also wrote a treatise on alchemy, which appears to contain his teaching on esotericism.

Mulla Sadra is frequently said to have been a member of his audience and one of his pupils, but nothing could be more uncertain than this, as Mulla Sadra never says a word about it. On the other hand, it is certain that Rajab 'Ali Tabrizi {see p.345} attended the lessons that he gave. Among the other students whom he instructed in philosophy, mention should be made of Husayn Khwansari (born in 1076/1607-1608 and died at Isfahan in 1098/1686-1687), a man whose ability in mathematics and astronomy, philosophy and the religious sciences (law, the *tafsir*, the *kalam*, the *hadith*) earned him the nickname of 'professor of all and everything'. He wrote around fifteen works, chief among which is his treatise on the captive will and the free will, studies on Avicenna's *Shifa'* and *Isharat*, on Nasr al-Din Tusi's *Tajrid*, on 'Ali al-Qushji's treatise on astronomy, and a commentary on the lessons of the Protomartyr (*Shahid-i awwal*, see p. 322).

Husayn Khwansari in his turn had many pupils, including his two sons Sayyid Jamal al-Din Khwansari (d. 1121/1709 or 1125/1713), and Sayyid Razi Khwansari; Mulla Masiha Pasa'i Shirazi (d.1130/1717-1718 or 1115/1703-1704), who is known principally for two works, one a treatise on Necessary Being, and one a paraphrase in Persian of al-Shaykhal-Mufid's *Irshad*, Muhammad Baqir Sabzavari, nicknamed Muhaqqiq Sabzavari (d. 1098/1686-1687), who wrote studies on Avicenna's *Shifa'* and *Isharat*, on al-Shaykh al-Mufid's *Irshad*, and a long work on culture in general, *The Garden of Lights*,

which he dedicated to Shah Sulayman; Mirza Rafi'a Na'ini (d. 1080/1669-1670 or 1082/1671-1672), who wrote some ten treatises, mainly works of philosophical exploration into the great Shiite writings: one on al-Kulayni's *Kafi*, which is accompanied by a personal study of it written in Persian, *al-Shajarat al-ilahyah dar Usul-i Kafi*, another on Muftid's *Irshad*, a third on the 'psalter' of the Fourth Imam, and a fourth on Nasir al-Din Tusi's commentary on the *Isharat*.

9. MULLA SADRA SHIRAZI AND HIS PUPILS

We have now reached the high point of the Iranian Islamic philosophy of these last centuries. Sadr al-Din Muhammad Shirazi, commonly known as Mulla Sadra, was born in 979/1571-1572 and died in 1050/1640-1641. He succeeded in creating a powerful personal synthesis of the different currents of which we have been speaking. Down to our own time his thought has left a personal stamp on all Iranian philosophy or, more broadly speaking, on Shiite consciousness at the level of its philosophical expression. He left a monumental body of work of more than forty-five titles, several of which are folio. The commentary that he wrote in the margins of Avicenna's *Shifa'* heralds its reformation, while his commentary on al-Suhrawardi's *Oriental Theosophy* provides the *ishraq* with a well-trying basis. His masterpiece, *The Four Journeys of the Spirit (al-Asfar-al-arba'ah*, a thousand folio pages in length) is a Summa which ever since it was written has nourished most of the thinkers of Iran. It is impossible to make a detailed list of the titles of his other works. We must, however, mention his great commentary, unfortunately never completed, on the 'Sources' (*Usul*) of al-Kulayni's *Kafi*, one of the fundamental books of Shiism. In it the most illustrious of the 'Platonists of Persia' constructs a monument of 'prophetic philosophy' which consolidates an alliance between Shiism and Platonism that can be traced back to the 'symbol of faith' of Shaykh-i Saduq Ibn Babuyah. We should also mention the commentaries on several surahs of the Quran—another monumental achievement in which Mulla Sadra shows himself to be the witness *par excellence* who makes it possible for us to understand how philosophy was able to maintain and renew its vigour in Shiite Islam while it was silent in the rest of the *Dar al-Islam*.

Mulla Sadra effected an entire revolution in the metaphysics of being by substituting a metaphysics of existence for the traditional meta-

physics of essences, and giving priority *ab initio* to existence over quiddity. His thesis that there are no immutable essences, but that each essence is determined and variable according to the degree of intensity of its act of existence, invokes another thesis, namely that of the intrasubstantial or transsubstantial movement that introduces movement into the category of substance. Mulla Sadra is the philosopher of metamorphoses, of transsubstantiations. His anthropology is in full agreement with that postulated by Shiite eschatology, expressed in the expectation of the coming of the Twelfth Imam as the coming of the Perfect Man. This anthropology is itself bound up with a grandiose cosmogony and psychogony: the fall of the Soul into the abyss of abysses, its slow ascent from level to level up to the human form, which is the point where it emerges onto the threshold of the *malakut* (the trans-physical spiritual world), the extension of anthropology into a physics and metaphysics of the resurrection. The concept of matter is neither that of materialism nor of spiritualism. Matter passes through infinite states of being: there is subtle matter, spiritual matter (*maddah ruhaniyah*), even divine matter. On this point Sadra is in profound accord with the Cambridge Platonists as well as with F.C. Oetinger (*Geistlichkeit*).

For all beings and all objects there is a threefold mode of existence: that on the level of the sensible world, that on the level of the *mundus imaginalis* ('*alam al-mithal*'), and that on the level of the world of the pure Intelligences. Al-Suhrawardi had established the ontology of the *mundus imaginalis*. Sadra was conscious of consummating the doctrine of the *Shaykh al-Ishraq* by taking one indispensable step: he predicated the immateriality of the active Imagination. This faculty is no longer dependent on the physical organism to the extent of perishing along with it, but is a purely spiritual faculty; in a sense, it is the subtle envelope of the soul. Hence Sadra concedes the 'creativity' (*khallaqiyah*) of the soul, as the creator of its own paradise or hell. In fact, all the levels of the modes of being and perception are governed by the same law of unity, which at the level of the intelligible world is the unity of intellection, of the intelligizing subject, and of the Form intelligized—the same unity as that of love, lover and beloved. Within this perspective we can perceive what Sadra meant by the unitive union of the human soul, in the supreme awareness of its acts of knowledge, with the active Intelligence which is the Holy Spirit. It is never a question

of an arithmetical unity, but of an intelligible unity permitting the reciprocity which allows us to understand that, in the soul which it metamorphoses, the Form—or Idea—intelligized by the active Intelligence is a Form which intelligizes itself, and that as a result the active Intelligence or Holy Spirit intelligizes itself in the soul's act of intellection. Reciprocally, the soul, as a Form intelligizing itself, intelligizes itself as a Form intelligized by the active Intelligence. Mulla Sadra is an authentic representative of 'speculative' philosophy in the sense described in our general survey, and this philosophy leads on to a phenomenology of the Holy Spirit.

It is scarcely surprising, given the density of his work, that it should have been the subject in our time of a whole host of what we would call studies and explorations, and what our authors would call glosses and commentaries. Mulla Sadra had a great many pupils, of whom we can only name the three most immediate followers. The first two were not only his pupils but also his sons-in-law.

The closest to him was certainly Mulla Muhsin Fayd Kashani (d. 1091/1680), a personality who was eminently representative of the type of Shiite philosopher and theosopher produced by the teaching of Mulla Sadra. He himself was a teacher at Isfahan at the Madrasa 'Abd Allah Shushtari, which still functions today and where it is still possible to visit the rooms in which he lived. He was a prolific writer in both Arabic and Persian, with a bibliography of more than a hundred and twenty titles. We cannot even give an idea here of their variety, for they cover the entire field of study covered by the curriculum. We may mention that he entirely rewrote, from the Shiite point of view, the *Ihya' al-'ulum al-din* (*The Revival of the Religious Sciences*), the great work by al-Ghazali for which he possessed an admiration that did not in the least detract from his admiration for Ibn al-'Arabi. Another of his great works, *'Ayn al-yaqin, The Certitude of the Eye-witness*, is a personal synthesis which complements his great commentary on the Quran.

Mulla Muhsin's brother-in-law, Mulla 'Abd al-Razzaq Lahiji (died at Qumm in 1072/1661-1662) seems to have been an entirely different personality. For a long time he attended the lessons of his father-in-law Mulla Sadra, but it appears that Sadra's theses as a whole did not satisfy his personal philosophy. In fact he seems to waver sometimes between two extremes, as if rent by an inner struggle, or intimidated by the

outer world and his social surroundings. In any case, it would be far too perfunctory to class him purely and simply as a 'Peripatetic', as some classifications do. As is evident from his book *Gawhar-i murad* (*The Substance of one's Intentions*), there is no doubt that he had personal experience of Sufism. He left about a dozen works. His commentary on Nasir Tusi's *Tajrid* (edited in two folio volumes) is regarded as the best in the field. His annotations on physics in Tusi's commentary on Avicenna's *Isharat* are still unedited, although the position he there adopts is highly original. One of his sons, Mirza Hasan Lahiji (d. 1121/1709-1710) wrote a dozen works which are particularly concerned with the philosophy of the Shiite Imamate.

Another immediate pupil of Mulla Sadra, Husayn Tunakabuni, who died in 1104/1692-1693 between Mecca and Medina, on his return from a pilgrimage, was himself an exemplary *ishraqi* philosopher and a faithful interpreter of Mulla Sadra. He wrote several treatises on the coming-to-be of the world, on the transcendent unity of being, and so on, as well as studies on Avicenna's *Shifa'*, Nasir Tusi's *Tajrid* and the text-book by Khafari referred to above.

10. RAJAB 'ALI TABRIZI AND HIS PUPILS

Rajab 'Ali Tabrizi, who died in 1080/1669-1670, was, as his name suggests, a native of Tabriz, and a contemporary of Shah 'Abbas II (1642-1666), who honoured him with several visits. In the person of Rajab 'Ali we enter a philosophical climate different from that of Mulla Sadra, and there is a sense in which it is stimulating to see him take the opposite view to Sadra's theses (the negation of 'existential' metaphysics, of transubstantial movement, of mental existence as existence in its own right, etc.).

Rajab 'Ali is distinguished *ab initio* by a metaphysics of being which affirms not the analogy, but the radical uncertainty of the concept of being when it is ascribed to Necessary Being and non-necessary beings. There cannot therefore be any question of common participation in the concept; yet there is on the other hand pure homonymy in the use of the term, because our concept of being actually embraces only created being, creatural being. The principle and source of being always transcends being, and can be discerned only from afar, *per viam negativam* (*tanzih*), that is to say through apophatic theology. There can thus be no question of theomonism, of a transcendent unity of

being embracing both the uncreated and the created. Rajab 'Ali is perfectly aware that he will be accused of being the first person ever to profess such a metaphysics of being. His reply is that terrible calumnies have been perpetrated in order to obliterate this tradition. He knows that the tradition of the holy Imams is on his side, but he has no doubt that on this point he rejoins the path of Ismaili gnosis and that he will himself concur with the theosophy of the Shaykhi school {see p.352}. This does not prevent him from possessing a doctrine of 'presential knowledge' which is very close to that of al-Suhrawardi.

His pupils were many. The most famous of them was Qadi Sa'id Qummi (see below), apart from whom the most outstanding was Muhammad Rafi' Pir-Zadah (dates uncertain) who was his teacher's *famulus* and secretary. When Rajab 'Ali grew old, it was painful for him to write, and on his instructions his disciple wrote a long work entitled *al-Ma'arif al-ilahiyah (The Great Themes of Metaphysics)*, which both preserves and continues the master's teaching. Another disciple was 'Abbas Mawlawi (d. after 1101/1689-1690), who left two great Summas recapitulating Shiite philosophy, dedicated to Shah Sulayman {1666-1694}. They were entitled *al-Anwar al-sulaymaniyah (The Book of Lights dedicated to Sulayman)*, completed in 1101 /1689-1690), and *al-Fawa'id al-usuliyah (The Fundamental Teachings)*, completed in 1084/1673-1674). Two of his other, less famous pupils were Mulla Muhammad Tunakabuni and Mir Qawam Razi.

11. QADI SA'ID QUMMI

The importance of this thinker and spiritual man is so great that he requires a section to himself, restricted though we are to a few lines. Qadi Sa'id was born at Qumm in 1043/1633, spent most of his life there as a teacher, and died there in 1103/1691-1692. In Isfahan he was the pupil of Rajab 'Ali Tabrizi, but he was also a pupil of Muhsin Fayd and 'Abd al-Razzaq Lahiji (with whom he studied al-Suhrawardi's *Oriental Theosophy*). In this way, his person and his thought were moulded by two traditions.

He is eminently representative of the mystical theosophy of Twelver Shiism. He was Shiite *ishraqi*, whose works should all have been edited long ago. It is difficult to number them, for in the author's mind his treatises were to form a number of independent volumes, and these

volumes were never completed. Thus, after the Persian treatise *Kalid-i bihisht (The Key of Paradise)*, where he takes up the theory of the equivocalness of being professed by his teacher Rajab 'Ali, he started to write an extremely complex *Commentary on Forty Hadith*, but he does not get beyond the twenty-eighth. This is followed by a *Book of Forty Treatises*, of which only ten or possibly eleven were written. He left a notebook of annotations on the *Theology* attributed to Aristotle, a work which our philosophers have always continued to read. Finally, there is his *magnum opus*. In the same way that Mulla Sadra constructed a veritable Summa of Shiite theosophical metaphysics in commentating al-Kulayni's *Kafi*, Qadi Sa'id constructed his own Summa in commentating the *Tawhid* by Shaykh-i Saduq Ibn Babuyan. It too was never completed, but the three volumes that Qadi Sa'id managed to write are a monumental achievement.

Saduq's works bring together a vast number of the traditions of the Imams, fundamental both for apophatic theology and for the Imamology to which it gives rise. These traditions are sometimes in the form of autonomous treatises which develop within the commentary. The same is true of Qadi Sa'id's study of the esoteric meaning of the five basic religious prescriptions. In the cubic structure of the Temple of the Ka'bah he perceives the structure of the Imamate of the Twelve Imams. The Temple of stone is transfigured into the spiritual Temple of the Imamate, and becomes the secret itself of human life, the *qiblah* or axis of orientation of a pilgrimage which is identified with the stages of life. Once again, philosophy becomes a 'narrative philosophy', just as Schelling was to wish that it should be. The *hadith* of the 'Twelve Veils of Light' associates Imamology with cosmogony, as well as with the theosophy of history and metahistory, in its symbolic description of the peregrinations of the Muhammadan Light in the Pleroma, and then of its 'descents' from world to world through seventy thousand Veils until it reaches this world. The twelve Veils of light are the twelve Imams and their twelve respective universes, 'figured' as twelve millennia. These twelve universes are the archetype of the cycle of the *walayah* which is their inverted image, because it reinvolutes through a process of return and reascent. This is as it were a revival of the ancient Graeco-Iranian theologies of the Aeon. Qadi Sa'id develops a concept of time which is allied to the ontology of the *mundus imaginalis* and of the subtle body. Each being has a *quantum (miqdar)*

of its own time, a personal time, which behaves like a piece of wax when it is compressed or else stretched. The *quantum* is constant, but there is a time which is compact and dense, which is the time of the sensible world; a subtle time, which is the time of the 'imaginal world'; and a supra-subtle time, which is the time of the world of pure Intelligences. The dimensions of contemporaneity increase in relation to the 'subtlety' of the mode of existence: the *quantum* of time which is given to a spiritual individual can thus encompass the immensity of being, and hold both past and future in the present. From this point of view, the commentary on the *hadith* or recital of the 'White Cloud' is fascinating.

12. FROM THE SCHOOL OF ISFAHAN TO THE SCHOOL OF TEHRAN

We come now to a period which was difficult for the philosophers, and which continues to be difficult for those of their colleagues wishing to record their history, such was the chaos then reigning and so scattered were the manuscripts. (They have reappeared only as catalogues have been published.) The situation is dominated by the catastrophe which put an end to Safavid Isfahan and to the reign of Sultan Husayn: the capture of the city by the Afghans after a siege of unspeakable cruelty {1135/21st October 1722}, of which we are poignantly reminded by a page of the philosopher Isma'il Khwaju'i. The Afghan domination lasted only eight or nine years, and the Safavid dynasty survived, nominally, in Tahmasp II and 'Abbas III, until 1736. Then came the reign of Nadir Shah and, at Shiraz, that of the Zand dynasty. In short, there was a long period of disturbance and instability until the coming of the Qajar dynasty. {The reign of Agha Muhammad Khan actually began in 1779, but he was not crowned until 1796.} With the second Qajar sovereign Fath 'Ali-Shah (1797-1834) the centre of intellectual and cultural life in Iran was definitively moved from Isfahan to Tehran. From the point of view of the philosopher, this period is characterized by the growing influence of the thought of Mulla Sadra, who had not been fully understood or well received by his contemporaries. For the sake of clarity, we will divide the philosophers provisionally into four groups.

Firstly, there is the group belonging to the period of the catastrophe, starting with Mirza Muhammad Sadiq Ardistani, who died in 1134/1721-1722, the year of the siege of Isfahan. This philosopher

and highly spiritual man suffered great hardship, for he had brought on himself the wrath of Shah Sultan Husayn. The most important of his two principal works is the *Hikmah sadiqiya* {the author's personal philosophy}, which is concerned with the soul and its supra-sensible faculties, and in which, following Mulla Sadra, he takes a clear stand against Avicenna and the Avicennans in general, in favour of the immateriality of the active Imagination (*tajarrud-i khayal*). But he appears to have found it more difficult to explain the attachment of the universal Soul to the body. This attachment consists of an epiphany {*tajalli, zuhur*}, and each individual thinking soul is array of the radiance of the universal Soul. But in what does this epiphany essentially consist—this 'descent' which holds the universal Soul suspended (*tajalli; cf.* Quran 53:8)? The book was actually written by a pupil of Sadiq Ardistani, Mulla Hamzah (Mani (d. 1134/1721-1722, also during the siege of Isfahan), in accordance with the master's teaching, while another pupil, Muhammad 'Ali ibn Muhammad Rida, wrote a long introduction to it.

Contemporary with Sadiq Ardistani was 'Inayat Allah Gilani, who expounded the works of Avicenna. Fadi Hindi Isfahani (d. 1135/1722-1723) left around fifteen works. Mirza Muhammad-Taqi Almasi (d. 1159/1746) was the grandson of Muhammad-Taqi Majlisi {d. 1070/1659-1660}, the father of Muhammad-Baqir Majlisi (d. 1111/1699-1700), who wrote the great Shiite encyclopaedia *Bihar al-anwar*, as well as some works of history and edification which have been widely read in Iran down to our day. Almasi left, among other things, a book on the 'Great Occultation of the Twelfth Imam'. Qutb al-Din Muhammad Nayrizi Shirazi (d. 1173/1759-1760) was a true *ishraqi*: 'The logic of the Peripatetics is not immune from error; it is not sufficient to itself; it is the source of delusion. For my part, I take the logic of the Gnostics to be in truth the logic of metaphysics.' Isma'il Khwaju'i (d. in Isfahan in 1171/1757-1758 or 1173/1759-1760), who suffered the horrors of the siege, wrote around one hundred and fifty treatises on the manifold questions of philosophy, the various sciences and the great themes of Shiism (including a treatise on the Imamate). He is principally known for his spirited treatise against the concept of 'imaginary time' (*zaman mawhum*, not 'imaginal'), which he wrote in refutation of Jamal al-Din Khwansari (see p.341), and which involves the theory of Mir Damad.

Secondly, we come to Agha Muhammad Bidabadi {1198/1783-1784) and his pupils. Shaykh Bidabadi had himself been a pupil of Mirza Muhammad-Taqi Almasi and Isma'il Khwaju'i. He expounded the works of Mulla Sadra at Isfahan—the text of his lessons on the *Asfar* has been preserved. Like Mir Findiriski, he wrote a treatise on alchemy which was fully commentated in 1209/1794-1795 by a doctor of Isfahan, Mirza Muhammad Rida ibn Rajab 'Ali. He had a great many followers, including Mulla Mihrab Gilani (1217/1802-1803); Abu al-Qasim Khatunabadi (1203/1788-1789), who wrote mainly on Shiite themes (e.g. al-Kulayni's *Kafi*); and Mahdi Naraqi (1209/1794-1795), who was also the pupil of Isma'il Khwaju'i. Mahdi Naraqi was a powerful personality and a tireless man of action; he was equally competent in the fields of philosophy, morals, mathematics and the juridical sciences (he was a strong supporter of the *usuliyun* versus the *akhbariyun*). He left about a dozen works, all of which bear the stamp of his personality—even those which are concerned with the classic questions of being and essence. His great treatise on morals (*Jami 'al-sa'adat*) is still read today. We must also mention Mirza Ahmad Ardakani Shirazi, who wrote an important commentary on Mulla Sadra's *Kitab al-masha'ir*, although all we know about him is the fact that he was working in Shiraz in 1225/1810.

Thirdly, we have Mulla 'Ali ibn Jamshid Nuri (1246/1830-1831) and his pupils. Mulla 'Ali Nun was one of the most famous students of Muhammad Bidabadi and one of the most respected professors of his time. He studied at Mazandaran and Qazvin before settling in Isfahan. We are indebted to him for some important lectures on several works by Mulla Sadra, on the *Fawa'id* (teachings) of Shaykh Ahmad Ahsa'i (see below), as well as for a long commentary on the *Tawhid* surah and a reply to the polemic of a Christian missionary. He had a whole host of pupils, although we can mention only a few names here. There was Mulla Isma'il Isfahani (1277/1860-1861), who himself left some important lectures on Mulla Sadra; Mulla Agha-yi Qazvini, a pupil of both Mulla 'Ali Nun and Mulla Isma'il Isfahani; Muhammad Ja'far Langarudi, who wrote a very extensive commentary on the *Masha'ir* and the *Hikmat 'arshiyah* (*The Theosophy of the Throne*) by Mulla Sadra, and whose commentary on Nasir al-Din Tusi's *Tajrid* dates from 1255/1839-1840. The most eminent followers of Mulla 'Ali Nuri, 'Abd-Allah Zunuzi and Hadi Sabzavari, will be discus-

sed below.

Fourthly, we come to the school of Tehran. During the reign of Fath 'Ali Qajar (1797-1834), the Madrasa Khan Marvi was founded at Tehran. Mulla 'Ali Nuri was invited to teach there, but he preferred to delegate the task to one of his most brilliant pupils, Mulla 'Abd-Allah Zunuzi (1257/1841-1842). This invitation was, in a way, the signal for the transferring of the centre of Islamic sciences from Isfahan to Tehran. This is evidenced by several great philosophical figures. First and foremost is 'Abd-Allah Zunuzi, a native of Zunuz near Tabriz, who studied at Karbala', then at Qum, then at Isfahan, where he studied philosophy under Mulla 'Ali Nuri. He wrote several long works, all of them in the spirit of al-Suhrawardi and Mulla Sadra; it is to be hoped that they will shortly be edited. He had two sons, one of whom (Husayn Zunuzi) was expert in mathematics and astronomy. The other, Agha 'Ali Zunuzi (known as *Mudanis*, meaning the 'professor' *par excellence*, and who died in 1307/1889-1890), had a reputation equal to his father's as a philosopher. He left several works, also in the tradition of Mulla Sadra, whom he taught and commentated. His most notable work is a work in Persian (*Badayi'al-hikam*), in which he replies to seven obscure questions put to him by the prince Imad al-Dawlah Badi 'al-Mulk Mirza, who was himself a translator of Mulla Sadra into Persian. Muhammad Rida Qumshahi {1306/1888-1889) was a metaphysician and an ardent disciple of Mulla Sadra, as well as a most noble moral person. In Isfahan he had been the pupil of Mulla 'Ali Nuri and of Muhammad Ja'far Langarudi, and then he established himself at Tehran where he taught at the Madrasa Sadr, chiefly on Mulla Sadra's *Asfar* and Ibn al-'Arabi's *Fusus*. Sayyid Abu al-Hasan Jalvah (1315/1896), also a well-known professor in the same tradition, taught for forty years in Tehran, at the Madrasa Dar al-Shifa'. He left a treatise on intrasubstantial motion, and a large number of lectures on Sadra's *Asfar*, Avicenna's *Shifa'*, al-Abhari's *Hidayah*, and so on.

It is impossible to mention even the names of the students who studied under these masters. Down the generations, even though we cannot allude to their writings, we encounter the names of Mirza Tahir Tunakabuni, Mirza Mahdi Ashtiyani, Mirza Muhammad 'Ali Shahabadl, Sayyid Husayn Bakublhi. This last was a professor at Najaf, and the teacher of two eminent contemporary traditional philosophers: Sayyid Kazim 'Assar, professor at the Faculty of Theology at Tehran,

and Shaykh 'Allamah Muhammad Husayn Tabataba'i, professor at the theological university of Qum, to whom we are indebted—among other things—for a new edition of Mulla Sadra's *Asfar and* a philosophical commentary on the Quran.

13. SHAYKH AHMAD AHSAT AND THE SHAYKHI SCHOOL OF KIRMAN

The Shaykhi school was contemporary with the philosophers we have been speaking about, but occupies a place which is completely its own. As for the designations 'shaykhism' and 'shaykhis', it was not the school itself which chose them in order to distinguish itself; they were chosen by 'others', who gave it these names in order to define its students as disciples of the 'shaykh'—that is, of Shaykh Ahmad Ahsa'i. Shaykh Ahmad Ahsa'i had never even had the intention of founding a school, and did not mean to differ from the 'others' save in his strict adherence to the integral theosophical teachings of the Imams of Twelver Shiism. He had deepened this teaching through a life of personal meditation, and possessed evidence of it in his inner experiences, in which he was privileged to speak in vision to the Imams whom he regarded as his only teachers. This integral Imamism confronted a persistent failure of understanding, the history of which is not particularly edifying. It should nevertheless be said that it had the scope of a metaphysical reformation, possessing quite different aims from those envisaged by the 'reformist' movements which sprang up elsewhere in the Islamic world.

Shaykh Ahmad Ahsa'i was a man of noble spirituality, who manifested all the features of a 'man of God'—something that has never been contested. He was born in 1166/1753 at al-Ahsa', in the territory of Bahrayn. He appears to have been of pure Arab descent, coming originally from the part of Arabia which is on the coast of the Persian Gulf (where the Qarmats in the tenth century had founded a little ideal State, visited by Nasir-i Khusraw). But he spent about fifteen years in Iran, and were it not for the response and the enthusiasm aroused there by his person and teaching, 'Shaykhism' would doubtless not exist. His first steps along the spiritual way are known to us from his autobiography. The Shaykhi tradition has no teacher of whom he might have claimed to be a disciple. It is as though he had no teacher other than the *ustadh-i ghaybi*—that inner teacher whom other spiritual men have also claimed as their own, but who in his case expressly designates

in turn one of the 'Fourteen Immaculate Ones'. Nevertheless, we know the names of a few teachers whose lectures he attended. After an astonishingly full life, in which he inspired fervent devotion in his followers—and also, unfortunately, the all too human jealousy of some of his colleagues—he died a few steps away from Medina in 1241/1826: his intention had been to settle in Mecca with his family. His work is considerable, and consists of over a hundred and thirty-two titles—many more, in fact, for certain works are collections of several treatises. Almost everything he wrote has been published in lithographic editions.

The successors of Shaykh Ahmad Ahsa'i have all been exceptional thinkers and spiritual men, although this by no means guaranteed them a peaceful existence. Firstly, there was the figure who was truly his spiritual son, Sayyid Kazim Rashti, born at Rasht, south-west of the Caspian Sea, 1212/1798, and dying at Baghdad in 1259/1843. Sayyid Kazim was gifted with a rare aptitude for profound metaphysical speculation, and he too wrote a considerable number of works. Some of these unfortunately disappeared, together with a number of autograph manuscripts of Shaykh Ahmad, when his home in Karbala' was plundered, as happened on two occasions. With Shaykh Ahmad's second successor, the school established its centre at Kirman in south-eastern Iran, where it has a madrasa of theology, a college and a printing works. Shaykh Muhammad Karim-Khan Kirmani, who was born at Kirman in 1225/1809 and who died in 1288/1870, belonged through his father, Ibrahim-Khan, to the imperial ruling family. He studied under Sayyid Kazim at Karbala', and has left an impressive number of works (more than two hundred and seventy-eight titles) covering the whole field of Islamic and philosophical sciences, including alchemy, medicine, optics and music. His son, Shaykh Muhammad-Khan Kirmani (1263/1846-1324/1906), who succeeded him, also wrote an enormous number of works. Father and son were in intimate collaboration, both intellectual and spiritual, and this was also the case between Muhammad-Khan and his younger brother, Shaykh Zaynal-'Abidin Khan Kirmani (1276/1859-1360/1942), who succeeded him and whose equally considerable writings are in the main unedited. Finally, the fifth successor, Shaykh Abu al-Qasim Ibrahimi, known as 'Sarkar Agha' (1314/1896-1389/1969), was also the author of important works in which he had to confront the most burning

questions. He was succeeded by his son 'Abd al-Rida Khan Ibrahimi, who has already published a great deal. Altogether the works of these masters, which are preserved in Kirman, amount to a thousand titles, of which barely half have been published.

Since the seventeenth century especially, Shiite thinkers have adopted two strongly contrasting stands. On the one hand there are the *usulis*, or *usuliyun*, who could broadly be defined as 'critical theologians', and on the other hand there are the *akhbaris* or *akhbariyun*, who appear to be the 'fundamentalist' theologians. The former approach the vast body of Shiite tradition with a critique based on extrinsic criteria which do not conduce to any certainty, and which are rejected by the *akhbariyun*, who accept the *corpus in* its integrality. Their head was Muhammad Amin Astarabadi {1033/1623-1624}. The 'fundamentalists' are considered to be simple people, for mystical theosophy is no part of their approach. This is not to say that there have not been some highly distinguished metaphysicians among them, such as Muhsin Fayd and Qadi Sa'id Qummi (see above pp.344, 346). The point is that although the two schools appear to be in opposition mainly on questions of canon law, in fact the hermeneutical premisses of the *akhbars* have repercussions with respect to the sources of traditional metaphysics. The *akhbaris* have recourse neither to the authority of the *mujtahids*—the accepted researchers—nor to the human authority of the transmitters of tradition, but to the content itself of the *hadith*, in deciding whether or not the latter come from the Imams. To the degree that, given these premisses, Akhbarism calls for a greater metaphysical and theosophical depth, we can understand and define the fundamental position of the Shaykhi school as intermediary, but certainly closer to that of the *akhbaris*.

Shaykh Ahmad Ahsa'i and his successors have strictly adhered to the consequences of Shiite apophatic theology. The idea of 'absolute' being, as it is commonly employed by philosophers, is not even an initial idea for them, for the passive participle 'absolute' presupposes an *absolvens*, an 'absolution' of being, liberating being by putting it not in the infinitive (*esse*), nor in the substantival participle (*ens*), but in the imperative (*esto*). Cosmogony is envisaged in the form of a transcendent Adamology. The pre-eternal fundamental Will, at once both subject and object, both matter, form and finality of its autocre-ative act, is seen as a metaphysical, primordial Adam {*Adam al-akbar*,

the Greater Adam, *Homo maximus*); and the metaphysical Eve who is the equal of this Adam is the liberation of being, of being absolved from non-being, from the Great Abyss. From this zenith represented by the *Adam maximus*, 'our father' Adam, born with neither father nor mother, is the nadir in the world of our earthly history—in fact he is the third Adam, for between the two is the 'second Adam' who is the Muhammadan Logos or Muhammadan Light (*Nur muhammadi*), made up of fourteen entities of light. The meaning of the terms of Peripatetic hylomorphism is reversed: matter is light, being itself, existence. Form is quiddity, compassion, the shadowy dimension which fixes and defines this light. This is why matter is the father, the masculine aspect, while form is the mother or feminine aspect, and the 'imaginal Form' (*surah mithaliyah*) is the principle of individuation. Thus the *hadith* of the Sixth Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq finds its justification: 'The believer is the brother of the believer because of their father and mother. Their father is the Light, their mother is Mercy.'

Shaykh Ahmad used the *hadith* of the holy Imams in the same creative way to construct the anthropology characteristic of his school. This anthropology leads to what could be called an 'alchemy of the body of resurrection'; it distinguishes between a twofold body of flesh (*jasad*)—a body of perishable flesh and a body of spiritual flesh (*caro spiritualis*) which is imperishable—and a twofold subtle body (*jism*)—an astral body and an essential, original archetypal body. All this corresponds point for point with the double *okhema* of the neo-Platonist Proclus. The modality of the body of resurrection {formed of the *jasad B* and the *jism B*} is described in conjunction with the alchemical operation, thus linking up with the teaching of Western esotericism. Finally, there is a doctrine characteristic of the Shaykhi school which its teacher designate as the 'Fourth Pillar'. This doctrine simply develops the teaching of the Imams: be in communion with all those who are 'Friends of God' (*awliya'*), and break with all those who are hostile towards them {in Persian, *tawallah o tabarrah*). However, the idea of the 'Friends of God' involves the idea of the permanent esoteric hierarchy, and *eo ipso* the conditions which determine its existence in the present period of the occultation of the Imam. The occultation (*ghaybah*) of the Imam, the 'mystical pole' of the world, *eo ipso* implies the occultation of him who is the Threshold (*Bab*), and thence of the entire hierarchy which leads up to him. When we

speak of this hierarchy in general, or of him who is its mouthpiece (*Natiq-i wahid*) from generation to generation, what is signified is a category of persons, but in no way does it imply that these persons can be manifested in public and designated individually. Their occultation is necessary: no one can pride himself on being one of them. They are known only to the Imam, whose last wish, expressed in his last letter, states that whoever publicly claims to have been invested by him is eo ipso guilty of imposture. The *ghaybah* cannot be broken before the coming of the Imam, as the masters of the Shaykhi school have been tireless in repeating. Thus, any religious movement, however interesting in itself, which breaks the *ghaybah* thereby breaks with Shiism, and consequently cannot claim to be of Shaykhi descent.

This is merely a brief allusion to the Shaykhi doctrines. It suggests that these doctrines are not within the grasp of the first comer, and that the discussion of them should never have descended to the market place. These objections have been made over and over again, but no one has paid any attention to the answers of the Shaykhis or taken the trouble to understand their terminology. Orientalists whose only model, perhaps, was the church of Rome, have written that Shaykh Ahmad was 'excommunicated' by the *mujtahids*, which is untrue. No *mujtahid* was involved in the altogether personal and ineffectual intrigue of Mulla Barghani at Qazvin, who had no power to introduce into Islam the concept of 'excommunication'. Among other things, Shaykh Ahmad wrote two long volumes of studies, on two important works by Mulla Sadra Shirazi. Surprised, distressed and helpless in the face of incomprehension, he asked one of his friends, Muhammad ibn Muqim ibn Sharif Mazandarani, during his second stay in Isfahan, to reply to the criticisms made against his commentary on *The Theosophy of the Throne (Hikmat 'arshiyah)*. The work, which is unedited, deserves to be mentioned. We cannot say more here than that all this is in the process of being studied.

14. JA'FAR KASHFI

Special mention must also be made of this original thinker, who has a certain affinity with the Shaykhi school. His work is fully representative of the concerns of the metaphysician-theosophers in nineteenth-century Persia. Sayyid Ja'far Kashfi belonged to a family descended from the Seventh Imam, Musa Kazim (183/799). He was born at

Darabgard in Fars (Persia), lived all his life at Borujard and died in 1267/1850-1851; his work comprises about twelve titles, and is written in both Persian and Arabic. These are in the course of being studied. All we can mention here is his great work in Persian entitled *Tuhfat al-muluk (The Gift offered to the Sovereigns)*, which was written at the request of a Qajar prince, son of Fath 'Ali-Shah, the Shah-Zadah Muhammad-Taqi Mirza. The work is in two volumes. The first of these is arranged in three books, concerned respectively with, firstly, the essence of the Intelligence (*aql*, the *Nous*), the first hypostasis, identified with the *Ruhmuhammadi*, the Muhammadan Holy Spirit; secondly, with the epiphanies (*mazahir*) of the Intelligence, and its relationship and points of contact with beings; and, thirdly, with the vestiges, effects, virtues and marks of the Intelligence. The second volume is a vast encyclopaedic systematization of speculative philosophy and historiosophy. The whole work is thus a Summa, and the fact that it is written in Persian makes it more significant still.

Ja'far Kashfi's system is based on the traditional Shiite text concerning the Intelligence, above all the *hadith* I and XIV of the 'Book of the Intelligence' in the great anthology of al-Kulayni (the *Kafi*). (1) At the beginning of beginnings, there is the imperative which charges the Intelligence to turn away from its Principle in order to turn towards created being, to 'descend into the world'. This movement gives rise to the exoteric aspect of the Intelligence, which corresponds to the prophetic mission (*nubuwah*) and to literal revelation (*tanzil*). (2) A second imperative commands it to turn again to its Principle. This movement of conversion 'bends' the exoteric aspect of the Intelligence back towards its esoteric aspect, which corresponds to the Imam's *walayah* or charisma and to the *ta'wil* which re-conduces the revealed letter to its hidden meaning, its spiritual archetype. The cognizability of any reality whatsoever presupposes the manifestation and cognizability of its opposite. The divine Essence has neither likeness nor opposite, and is unknowable. What is knowable of it to man's intellect is at the level of the initial theophany—that is to say, the theophany which is the Intelligence-Light and as such the Muhammadan Holy Spirit (*Ruh muhammadi*), the eternal Muhammadan Reality. The manifestation of this Intelligence-Light involves the manifestation of its opposite: shadow, darkness, ignorance, *agnosia*. This is not the shadow of the Intelligence, for a being of light has no shadow; it is

as though a wall is hidden in darkness, which at the rising of the sun manifests its shadow. Thus, the epiphany of being reveals non-being. This is not to say that non-being comes to be—anti-being cannot receive being. But negativity—the void—exists and is the antagonist of being, that is to say of Light.

Thus the metaphysical epic of the Intelligence is confronted by the counter-epic of its antagonist. Two universes descend and ascend to meet each other, effecting their intermixture on the level of the world of man, in the encounter between the 'sons of Light' and the 'sons of Darkness'. What is remarkable is that the tone of this metaphysic is determined by the same preoccupation that lies at the very origins of Iranian thought: the confrontation of Light and Darkness which is resolved by eschatology, the 'separation' which will be the task of the Twelfth Imam at the time of his coming, just as in Zoroastrianism it will be the task of the *Saoshyant*. The times of the conversion and the reversion of the Intelligence constitute the Ages of the world. The time of the *walayah* which succeeds the time of the *nubuwah* leads Ja'far Kashfi to construct a paracletic historiosophy whose periods can be brought into correspondence with each other, as we have already seen to be the case with the three reigns of historiosophy instituted by Joachim of Fiore. This is one of the high points of Shiite metaphysics. The work of the Iranian thinker, be it noted, is contemporary with the great metaphysical 'systems' which came into existence in the West during the first half of the nineteenth century.

15. THE SCHOOLS OF KHURASAN

(a) *Hadi Sabzavari and the school of Sabzavar*

The eminent figure of the 'Sage of Sabzavar' dominates the period which corresponds in Iran to the middle of our nineteenth century. He has been called 'the Plato of his time', and for good measure he is also said to be its Aristotle. In any case, he was for philosophy in the reign of Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar (1848-1896) what Mulla Sadra Shirazi had been in the reign of Shah 'Abbas the Great. He was also the faithful interpreter of Mulla Sadra and played a part in making him the 'master thinker' of the Iranian philosophers. It could even be said that circumstances permitted him, to a greater extent than Mulla Sadra, to give free rein to his genius as a mystical theosopher, because there was greater freedom of self-expression during the Safavid epoch.

Mulla Hadi Sabzavari was born in 1212/1797-1798 at Sabzavar, a small town in Khurasan between Shahrud and Nishapur in north-eastern Iran, where his father, Muhammad Mahdi Sabzavari, was a person of consequence. It was there that he received his first education, which he completed in Mashhad at the age of twenty. In 1232/1816-1817, wishing to go deeper into the study of philosophy, he went to Isfahan, which was still, in spite of its decline, the centre where the greatest teachers of the philosophical sciences and theology congregated. His teachers were Mulla Isma'il Isfahani and Mulla 'Ali ibn Jamshid Nuri (see above). After ten years he returned to Khurasan, where he taught for five years. He then went on a pilgrimage to Mecca. He was absent for three years, after which he returned to Iran. He stayed for some time at Kirman, where he taught and where he married. Finally he settled once and for all in Sabzavar, which then became in its turn a centre for philosophical teaching and spirituality, visited by disciples from all over the world: from the Arabic countries, from the Caucasus and Azerbaijan, and from India. After a life of teaching and writing his many works, Mulla Hadi Sabzavari died in 1295/1878 (or according to some sources, in 1289-1290/1872-1873).

The originality of this thinker may be perceived above all in the personal tone of his writings, based principally on the work of Mulla Sadra Shirazi, on al-Suhrawardi's *Oriental Theosophy*, and on the work of Ibn al-'Arabi and the *hadith* and traditions of the Shiite Imams. Hadi Sabzavari is *par excellence* representative of the category of sages that al-Suhrawardi, in his prologue to the *Oriental Theosophy*, situates on the highest level: those who are masters both in speculative philosophy and in spiritual experience, who possess both exoteric knowledge and the highest esoteric knowledge. He is an *ishraqi* theosopher *par excellence*. This enables us to understand from the beginning the emotive impact of his teachings on certain of his followers. Hadi Sabzavari was equally at ease when dealing with the most difficult problems of the metaphysics of being in Mulla Sadra as when commenting the *Mathnawi* of Jalal al-Din Rumi. It was in this direction that the school of Sabzavar developed the teaching of Mulla Sadra. Hadi Sabzavari accepts the original priority of being, of 'existence', over quiddity, as he also accepts the transcendent unity of being, whose degrees of intensity or weakness determine the mode of being of the quiddities in the world of the pure Intelligences, in the *mundus*

imaginalis ('alam al-mithal), and in the physical world. He accepts the principle of intrasubstantial motion, which accounts for the metamorphoses of being and for the posthumous existence of the human being.

The master of Sabzavar left about thirty works. One of the most widely-read is the *Sharh-i manzumah*. Originally this is a piece in verse (*manzumah*) concerned with logic and philosophy. The author himself provides a commentary (*sharh*) which he packs with notes and observations. In the end, the work amounts to seven books: general metaphysics, a treatise on substance and accident, special metaphysics or philosophical theology (*ilahiyat*), physics, the philosophy of prophecy and Imamology, eschatology, morals and the science of custom. His pupils and their pupils meditated and studied this personal commentary extensively: Akhund Hidaji, Shaykh Muhammad-Taqi Amuli, Agha Mirza Mahdi Ashtiyani (d. 1372/1952-1953) worked on it to such a degree that it has now become a textbook for all students of traditional philosophy.

We will mention four great works which take the form of commentaries on the works of Mulla Sadra, but which in fact bring together the personal doctrines and teaching of Hadi Sabzavari. There is the commentary on the *Asfar* (the four spiritual journeys) which alone amounts to a concentrated work. There is the commentary on the *Shawahid al-rububiyah* (*The Witnesses of the divine Epiphanies*), on the *Kitab al-mabda' wa al-ma'ad* (*On the Origin and Return of Being*), and on the *Mafatih al-ghayb* (*The Keys of the Supra-sensible World*). These four commentaries form the Sabzavarian *corpus*, in which we may study the fruition of Mulla Sadra's thought, as well as the way in which the difficulties which it continues to raise are faced. Mulla Hadi also wrote a commentary on the most obscure or difficult sections in the six books of Jalal al-Din Rumi's *Mathnawi* (this entire work amounts to five hundred folio pages, in the lithographic edition which came out in Tehran in 1285/1868-1869). It would be utterly misleading to see in this a philosophical attempt to rationalize the parables of the mystics. Here again, in order to avoid any ambiguity with regard to the word 'philosophy', we should call it the work of an *ishraqi* metaphysician who is in the same position with respect to the rationalist philosophers as the metaphysic of Sufism with respect to the rationalist theologians of the *kalam*.

Another long work, *Asrar al-hikam* (*Secrets of Philosophy*) is devoted to the manifold questions concerned with the origins of being and eschatology, and explains the esoteric meaning of the liturgical practices. The author produced a summary of this work, entitled *Hidayat al-talibin* (*The Orientation of the Seekers*), at the request of Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar, who went to visit him at Sabzavar. Like Mulla Sadra, Muhsin Fayd and Qadi Sa'id Qummi, the master of Sabzavar excelled at bringing out the theosophical teaching implicit in the Imamic texts. The great study on the divine Names (*Sharh-i Asma'*) is in fact a commentary on a Shiite prayer. The divine Names (see Ibn al-'Arabi) possess both a cosmogonic and a liturgical function; by means of the latter they serve as instruments whereby a being can return to the *malakut* and to the Principle. Finally, mention must be made of a very important collection of sixteen treatises in Persian and Arabic, which was inspired by the questions of pupils or correspondents. We can only indicate here, together with the depth of these answers, the extreme interest of the questions, whose diversity enables us to understand the day-by-day preoccupations of Mulla Hadi Sabzavari's contemporaries.

In order to depict the fervour that then existed in the philosophical centre of Sabzavar, we must mention the names of some of the students who, as we have said, came from all quarters of Iran and elsewhere. Three of them have already been mentioned. They are to be found in their turn in the main teaching centres of traditional philosophy in Iran: Tehran, Tabriz, Qum, Isfahan, Shiraz, Mashhad. Unfortunately, the present state of research enables us to cite only the best-known of the names in question, for the collection of their works is far from complete. There was Mulla 'abd al-Karim Qutshani, who himself taught at Mashhad and wrote annotations on the *Sharh-i manzumah*. Shaykh 'Ali Fadi Tabbati" (Tibeti), whose name reveals his Tibetan origin, was highly esteemed by Hadi Sabzavari: one of the treatises in the 'collection of sixteen' mentioned above is a reply to a question put by him, and is a fine and subtle apologia for philosophical meditation in response to the alarms and doubts raised by the exotericists. Mirza 'Abbas Hakim Darabi Shirazi (d. 1300/1882-1883) also taught philosophy at Shiraz and had many followers. Mulla Kazim Kurasani (d. 1329/1911) was a perfect Shiite theosopher, professing that whoever does not possess sufficient knowledge of philosophy and metaphysics cannot understand

the *hadith* and the traditions of the holy Imams. Agha Mirza Muhammad Yazdi (Fadi Yazdi), after writing a reply to the criticisms addressed to Muhsin Fayd Kashani by Shaykh Ahmad Ahsa'i (see above) with regard to his *Treatise on Knowledge*, asked his teacher to take part in the matter; Hadi Sabzavari's reply is also to be found in the 'collection of sixteen treatises'. Mirza Sayyid Abu Talib Zinjani left among other things a book on the qualification of *Mujtahids* (*Ijtihad o taqlid*), the great question which divided the *usulis* and the *akhbaris* in the controversy mentioned above. Mulla Isma'il 'Arif Bujnurdi attended the lectures of Hadi Sabzavari when the latter was teaching at Mashhad. Mirza Husayn Sabzavari was a teacher at Tehran, where he was the colleague of the masters of the school of Tehran whom we spoke of above. His pupils were Mirza Ibrahim Zinjani, Akhund Hidaji (see above), and Mirza 'Ali Yazdi, who taught at the theological university of Qum.

(b) *The school of Mashhad*

Mashhad, the holy town of Khurasan where the sanctuary of the Eighth Imam 'Ali Rida (203/818) is preserved, a place of pilgrimage for all Shiites, possessed, from century to century, *madrasas* in which the teaching of the *hikmat ilahyah* was represented. Here, however, we are concerned with it only as an extension of the impetus given to the intellectual and spiritual life of Khurasan by Hadi Sabzavari and his school. Two personalities in particular are worthy of mention: Agha Mirza Muhammad Saruqadi, who had studied philosophy at Sabzavar, and Mulla Ghulam Husayn (d. 1318/1900-1901), who was a pupil of Mulla Hadi Sabzavari for six years and then became the *Shaykh al-Islam* at Mashhad. These two masters were succeeded by two other masters who bestowed its character on what we here call the school of Mashhad. One of them was Hajji Fadi Khurasani (d. 1342/1923-1924), who taught for a long time at Mashhad and was a master of repute both in philosophy and in religious sciences (he was acknowledged as a *mujtahid*). The other was Agha Buzurg Hakim (d. 1355/1936-1937), also a teacher of philosophy at Mashhad in the tradition of Mulla Sadra. Unfortunately, the critiques of the exotericists, reawakening the perpetual inner drama of Shiism, forced him to renounce his teaching. His death left a void in the teaching of philosophy in Khurasan. These two eminent men had their followers,

among whom Agha Mirza Hasan Bujnurdi distinguished himself by his ability to bring together the canonical sciences and the philosophical sciences.

Here we arrive at an event of major importance for the intellectual life of Iran: the multiplication of Iranian universities with the encouragement of the reigning sovereign, Muhammad Rida Shah Pahlavi. Two of the State universities, Tehran and Mashhad, include faculties of theology whose role is not simply the creation of mullahs, but the wider dissemination of the Islamic sciences, including everything related to traditional philosophy. We will conclude this all too brief allusion to the school of Mashhad by mentioning the work of a young master of philosophy, a professor at the Faculty of Theology at the university of Mashhad, Sayyid Jalal al-Din Ashtiyani, whose orientation, activity and productivity we can indicate only by describing him as a Mulla Sadra *redivivus*. His work, which arises out of the traditional teaching of the masters cited above, is already considerable, comprising a long treatise on being from the metaphysical and mystical points of view; an extensive study on the prolegomena of Dawud al-Qaysari to the latter's commentary on Ibn al-'Arabi's *Fusus*, of which the first volume of seven hundred pages is a renewed and deeper representation of the related problems; several editions of texts, furnished with notes and observations of exceptional density, such as the edition of Langa-rudi's commentary on Mulla Sadra's *Kitab al-Masha'ir*, of Sadra's *Shawahid* with Sabzavari's commentary, of the 'sixteen treatises' mentioned above, and so on. Finally, there is the great and unprecedented undertaking, with which the present writer is associated with regard to the French section: an *Anthology of Iranian Philosophers from the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day*. One volume has already appeared. In all there are to be five volumes, bringing to life the work of around forty Iranian thinkers. It is intended not as an assessment, but as a starting-point.

Perspective

The introduction to the great family of thinkers that we have here attempted to represent for the first time does not call for a conclusion. Indeed, we do not believe that traditional Islamic philosophy, and particularly the philosophy of the Shiite tradition, is a closed book. It is this traditional philosophy alone with which we have been concerned. The work of figures such as Muhammad Iqbal, for example, appears to us to belong to a different chapter of the history of philosophy. As for the future of traditional philosophy, we can speak of it only by diagnosing the dangers and hopes which lie in wait for it. We may perhaps point out that until air travel became widespread, Iran had remained very remote, and traditional philosophy was long preserved from destructive contacts. In any case, that time is over. Today, dangers and hopes have their origins both in the East and in the West.

On the Eastern side, there have been too many more or less reformist essayists who, having properly assimilated neither their own traditional philosophy nor the philosophies of the modern West, have written hasty syntheses whose good intentions are no compensation for their extremely dubious nature. Their work is the Eastern equivalent of the pseudo-esotericisms which abound in the West. Both merely serve to aggravate the confusion and the disorder. What it comes down to, briefly, is this: in the countries of Islam, there exists a category of intellectuals whose excessive Westernization, combined with the technological invasion, seems to have destroyed their traditional spiritual roots. On the other hand—and principally in Iran—there still exists a vast number of people of all ages who are qualified by their moral dignity and their intellectual education to represent their traditional spiritual culture. Unfortunately, very often these people who are in a position to ensure the *traditio lampadis* know practically nothing about the great spiritual traditions of the West. There are the difficulties of language and vocabulary—the translations of philosophical texts are all too often done at second or third hand. The problem for the future is as follows: is philosophy merely the expression of the social conditions of a certain time and, if so, should so-called traditional philosophy

evaporate beneath the pressure of the social and political ideologies of the moment? Or does philosophy realize that its justification consists not in the agnosticism which has paralysed so many Western thinkers for generations, but in the preservation of the metaphysic without which it is at the mercy of every wind that blows? Metaphysics is not conditioned by social change but by the objective which it realizes—that is to say, the spiritual universes which it is the vocation of metaphysics to discover and examine.

It is from this point of view, perhaps, that we should take stock of the loss of that *mundus imaginalis* which was the concern of so many Islamic thinkers. Much has been said, rightly, about the Western impact which has wrecked the structures of traditional civilizations. Mention should also be made of what could counterbalance this. For the first time, after so many centuries, we have methods at our disposal which enable seekers in each of the three branches of the Abrahamic tradition to communicate with each other. Reciprocity must take the place of isolation, for only this tradition in its integrality can confront the colossal problems that we face today. But the lesson to be learned from our Islamic metaphysicians is that they never imagined that their esotericism—that is to say, their interiority was possible without a new inner birth. A *tradition* lives and transmits life only if it is a perpetual *rebirth*.