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Chapter 78: Renasissance in Iran: Haji Mulla Hadi Sabziwari

A: Life and Works

After the death of Mulla Sadra, the school established by him found its most famous interpreter and expositor in Haji Mulla Hadi Sabziwari who was the greatest of the Hakims of the Qajar period in Persia. After a period of turmoil caused by the Afghan invasion, in which the spiritual as well as the political life of Persia was temporarily disturbed, traditional learning became once again established under the Qajars, and in the hands of Haji Mulla Hadi and his students the wisdom of Mulla Sadra began once again to flourish through the Shiah world. This sage from Sabziwar gained so much fame that soon he became endowed with the simple title of Haji by which he is still known in the traditional *madrasahs*, 1 and his *Sharh–i Manzumah* became the most widely used book on *Hikmat* in Persia and has remained so until today.

Haji Mulla Hadi was born in 1212/1797–98 at Sabziwar in Khurasan, a city well known for its Sufis and also for Shiah tendencies even before the Safawid period, where he completed his early education in Arabic grammar and language. 2 At the age of ten he went to Meshed where he continued his studies in jurisprudence (*Figh*), logic, mathematics, and *Hikmat* for another ten years.

By now, his love for the intellectual sciences had become so great that the Haji left Meshed as well and journeyed to Ispahan, as Mulla Sadra had done two hundred and fifty years before him, to meet the greatest authorities of the day in *Hikmat*. Ispahan in that period was still the major centre of learning, especially in *Hikmat*. Haji spent eight years in this city studying under Mulla Ismail Ispahani and Mulla Ali Nuri both of whom were the leading authorities in the school of Akhund.

Haji Mulla Hadi, having completed his formal education, left Isahpan once again for Khurasan from where after five years of teaching he went on a pilgrimage to Mecca. Upon returning to Persia after three years of absence, he spent a year in Kirman where he married and then settled down in Sabziwar where

he established a school of his own. His fame had by then become so great that disciples from all over Persia as well as from India and the Arab countries came to the small city of Sabziwar to benefit from his personal contact and to attend his classes.

Nasir al–Din Shah in his visit to Meshed in 1274/1857–58 came especially to the city of Haji in order to meet him in person. In Sabziwar, away from the turmoil of the capital, Haji spent forty years in teaching, writing, and training disciples, of whom over a thousand completed the course on *Hikmat* under his direction.

Haji's life was extremely simple and his spirituality resembled more that of a Sufi master than just of a learned Hakim. It is said that along with regular students whom he instructed in the *madrasah* he had also special disciples whom he taught the mysteries of Sufism and initiated into the Path.3

He was not only called the "Plato of his time" and the "seal of the Hukama" (*khatam al-Hukama*), but was also considered by his contemporaries to possess the power of performing miracles of which many have been attributed to him in the various traditional sources. By the time lie passed away in 1289/1878, Haji had become the most famous and exalted spiritual and intellectual figure in Persia and has ever since been considered one of the dominant figures in the intellectual life of the Shiah world.

Unlike Mulla Sadra all of whose writings with one exception were in Arabic, Haji wrote in Persian as well as in Arabic. Moreover, he composed a great deal of poetry collected in his *Diwan*, which consists of poems in Persian of gnostic inspiration and poems in Arabic on *Hikmat* and logic.

The writings of Haji, of which a complete list is available, are as follows: *Al-Laali*, Arabic poem on logic; *Ghurar al-Faraid* or the *Sharh-i Manzumah*, Arabic poem with commentary on *Hikmat*; *Diwan* in Persian written under the pen name Asrar; commentary upon the prayer Dua-i Kabir; 4 commentary upon the prayer *Dua-i Sabah*; *Asrar al-Hikam*, written at the request of Nasir al-Din Shah, on *Hikmat*; commentaries upon the *Asfar*, the *Mafatih al-Ghaib*, *al-Mabda wal-Maad*, and *al-Shawahid al-Rububiyyah* of Mulla Sadra; glosses upon the commentary of Suyuti upon the *Alfiyyah* of ibn Malik, on grammar; commentary upon the *Mathnawi* of Jalal al-Din Rumi; commentary upon the *Nibras*, on the mysteries of worship; commentary upon the divine names; glosses upon the *Sharh-i Tajrid* of Lahiji; *Rah Qarah* and *Rahiq* in rhetoric; *Hidayat al-Talibin*, as yet an unpublished treatise in Persian on prophethood and the imamate; questions and answers regarding gnosis; and a treatise on the debate between Mulla Muhsin Faid and Shaikh Ahmad Ahsai.5

Of these writings the most famous is the *Sharh-i Manzumah*, which, along with the *Asfar* of Mulla Sadra, the *Shifa* of ibn Sina, and the *Sharh al-Isharat* of Nasir al-Din Tusi, is the basic text on *Hikmat*. This work consists of a series of poems on the essential questions of *Hikmat* composed in 1239/1823 on which Haji himself wrote a commentary along with glosses in 1260/1844. The book contains a complete summary of *Hikmat* in precise and orderly form.

This work has been so popular that during the hundred years that have passed since its composition

many commentaries have been written upon it including those of Muhammad Hidaji and the late Mirza Mehdi Ashtiyani as well as that of Muhammad Taqi Amuli whose commentary called the *Durar al–Fawaid* is perhaps the most comprehensive of all. The other writings of Haji, especially the *Asrar al–Hikam* which is of special interest because, as Haji himself writes in the introduction, it is a book concerned with the *Hikmat* derived from the Islamic revelation (*hikmat–i imani*) and not just with Greek philosophy (*hikmat–i yunani*), and the commentary upon the *Mathnawi* are also of much importance, but the fame of Haji is due primarily to his *Sharh–i Manzumah*.

B: Sources of Haji's Doctrines and the Characteristics of His Approach

Haji cannot be considered to be the founder of a new school; rather, lie expanded and clarified the teachings of Mulla Sadra without departing from the basic features of Akhund's doctrines. The sources of Haji's writings are, therefore, the same as those enumerated in our study of Mulla Sadra, viz., gnostic doctrines drawn mostly from the teachings of ibn Arabi, the teachings of the Shiah Imams, *ishraqi* theosophy, and Peripatetic philosophy.

In his writings the sage from Sabziwar drew mostly on the *Asfar* of Mulla Sadra, the *Qabasat* of Mir Damad, the commentary upon the *Hikmat al-Ishraq* of Suhrawardi by Qutb al-Din Shirazi, the *Sharh al-Ishrat* of Nasir al-Din Tusi, and the *Shawariq* of Lahiji.

In general, Haji did not rely so much upon reading various texts as he did upon meditating and contemplating on the essential aspects of metaphysics. The major source of his knowledge, as with Mulla Sadra, was his inner imam or the guardian angel through whom he was illuminated with the knowledge of the intelligible world. As to the formal sources of his doctrines, one must first of all mention Akhund and, secondly, Akhund's teachers and students some of whom have already been mentioned.6

Haji, following the path trod by Mulla Sadra, sought to combine gnosis, philosophy, and formal revelation; throughout his writings these three are present in a harmonious blend. He differed from Akhund in that he was able to expound the gnostic elements of his doctrines much more explicitly than Akhund and that he was not as much molested by the critics as the latter was.

It was due to this fact that he was highly respected by the Qajars and the 'ulama'; the Qajars were indeed not so opposed to Sufism and *Hikmat* as the Safawids were. Possessed with the gift for poetry and eloquence and great intellectual intuition which sometimes even in the middle of a treatise on logic would draw him towards metaphysical expositions, Haji wrote openly on Sufism and appears more as a Sufi well versed in philosophy and theosophy than a Hakim interested in gnostic doctrines. He was, like Mulla Sadra, among the few sages who were masters of both esoteric and exoteric doctrines, and of philosophy and gnosis.7

C: Teachings

As already mentioned, Haji's doctrines are in reality those of Mulla Sadra's condensed and systematized into a more orderly form. Haji follows his master in all the essential elements of his teaching such as the unity and gradation of Being, substantial motion, the union of the knower and the known.

There are only two points on which Haji criticizes his master: first, on the nature of knowledge which in some of his writings Akhund considers a quality of the human soul while Haji considers it to belong to its essence, like Being itself, above all the Aristotelian categories such as quality, quantity, etc.; and secondly, on Mulla Sadra's doctrine of the union of the intellect and the intelligible which Haji accepts, criticizing, however, his method of demonstrating its validity. Otherwise, the principles of the teachings of Haji in *Hikmat* are already to be found in the writings of Akhund.

It must not be thought, however, that Haji Mulla Hadi simply repeated the teachings of his predecessor verbatim. It is enough to glance at the voluminous writings of Mulla Sadra, in which one would surely be lost without a capable guide, and compare them with the precise form of *Sharh–i Manzumah* to see what service Haji rendered to *Hikmat* in general and to Mulla Sadra's school in particular. Haji prepared the way for the study of Mulla Sadra, and his writings may be considered to be an excellent introduction to the doctrines of his master.

The *Sharh-i Manzumah* depicts a complete cycle of *Hikmat*, containing in summary form all the basic elements of Mulla Sadra's teachings on the subject. In discussing its contents, therefore, one becomes better acquainted with Mulla Sadra as well as with Haji himself, and one gains a glimpse of traditional philosophy as it is taught in the Shiah *madrasahs* today.

The *Sharh–i Manzumah*, excluding the part on logic, is divided into seven books each of which is divided into several chapters, and each chapter in turn into several sections. The seven books deal with Being and Non–Being, substance and accidents, theodicy, natural philosophy, prophecy and dreams, eschatology, and ethics respectively.

The first book that is in a sense the basis of the whole work and is on general principles (*al-umur al-ammah*) treats of the various aspects of Being, its positive and negative qualities, its unity and gradation, necessity and possibility, time and eternity, actuality and potentiality, quiddities, unity and multiplicity, and causality.

The second book treats of the definition of substance and accidents, and the third, which is called *al-ilahiyat bi al-maani al-akhass*, of the divine essence, the divine qualities and attributes, and the divine acts. The fourth book contains a summary discussion of natural philosophy (*tabiiyat*), including the meaning of body (*jism*), motion, time and space-astronomy, physics (in the Aristotelian sense), psychology, and the science of heavenly souls.

The fifth book treats of the cause of the truth and falsehood of dreams, the principles of miracles, the cause for strange happenings, and prophecy; and the sixth book of the resurrection of the soul and the body and questions pertaining to the Last Day. Finally, the last book treats of faith and infidelity and the various spiritual virtues such as repentance, truthfulness, surrender to the divine will, etc., which are usually discussed in the books on Sufi ethics such as the *Kitab al–Luma* of abu Nasr al–Sarraj.

Haji divides reality into three categories: the divine essence which is at once above all determinations including Being and is also the principle of all manifestations of Being Itself; extended being (*wujud al-munbasat*) which is the first act or word or determination of the divine essence and is identified with light; and particular beings which are the degrees and grades of extended being and from which the quiddities are abstracted. All these stages of reality are unified so that one can say that reality is an absolute unity with gradations, of which the most intelligible symbol is light.

The first feature of Being which Haji discusses is that it is self-evident and indefinable. There is no concept more evident than Being, because all things, by virtue of their existence, are drowned in the ocean of Being. Moreover, the definition of a species in logic involves its genus and specific difference, but there is no genus of which Being is the species. Therefore, from a logical point of view there is no definition of Being; Being is the most universal concept since the divine ipseity of which It is the first determination is, strictly speaking, above all conception.

Though the concept of Being is the most obvious of all concepts, yet the knowledge of the root or truth of Being, i.e., as It is in Itself and not in Its manifestation, is the most difficult to attain. Existence, which is the extension or manifestation of Being, is principial with respect to the quiddities. This view, which we have already mentioned in previous chapters, is one of the major points of contention among Muslim Hakims.

The Peripatetics gave priority to existence or Being over the quiddities, considering each being to be in essence different and distinct from other beings. Although Suhrawardi Maqtul never speaks of the principiality of the quiddities as understood by the later Hakims, he can be interpreted to consider existence to have no reality independent of the quiddities.

It was Mir Damad who re-examined this whole question and reached the conclusion that either the quiddities or existence would have to be principial, and divided the philosophers before him into the followers either of the principiality of existence or Being (*isalat-i wujud*), or of the principiality of the quiddities (*isalat-i mahiyyah*) while he himself sided with the latter group. 10

Mulla Sadra in turn accepted his teacher's classification but sided with the followers of the principiality of existence. Haji, likewise, follows Akhund in accepting the principiality of Being which he considers to be the source of all effects partaking of gradations.

Another question that arises concerning the concept of Being is whether It is just a verbal expression shared by particular beings or a reality that particular beings have in common. It is known that the

Asharites considered the term "being" to be merely a verbal expression used for both the Creator and the creatures; otherwise, according to them, there would be an aspect common to both which is opposed to the idea of divine transcendence.

Haji, like the other Hakims, rejects this reasoning and argues that in the statement "God is," by "is" we mean either non-being in which case we have denied God or something other than what we mean in the statement "man is" in which case we have denied our intelligence the ability to attain a knowledge of God. Since both of these conclusions are untenable, "is" in the case of God must share a meaning in common with "is" in the case of this or that creature. 11 The truth is that Being is one reality with degrees of intensity and not many realities from which the mind abstracts the concept of Being. 12

Another point on which Haji criticizes the Asharites is that of the existence of the images of things in the mind that is one of the important aspects of his doctrines. The Asharites believe that in the mind the quiddity and existence of an object are one and the same; when we think of man, the quiddity of the conception of man in our mind is the same as its existence in our mind.

Haji opposes this view and distinguishes between quiddity and existence even in the mind. The world of the mind is the same as the external world with the same quiddity in each case. The difference between the two comes in their existence; each has an existence proper to itself. If external existence becomes mental existence, then the object as it exists externally becomes the image of that object in the mind.

For example, when we think of fire, the concept of fire exists in our mind. It is the same quiddity as the objective fire that burns but its mode of existence differs. It has a mental existence that, although deprived of the power that makes fire burn and give off heat, is nevertheless a being 13

Reality, then, is a unity comprising stages or grades of intensity 14 the source of which is the divine essence that we may consider to be Pure Being without quiddity if by quiddity we mean the answer to the question *quid est* – "what is it?" or identical with its quiddity if by quiddity we understand that by which a thing is what it is.

Being has certain negative and positive qualities, the first such as the qualities of being neither substance nor accident, having no opposite, having no like, not being a compound and having no genus, species, and specific difference, etc.; and the second, the attributes of power, will, knowledge, and the like.

The quiddities, which accompany all stages of universal existence below Pure Being Itself, are abstracted by the mind from particular beings and are in fact the limitations of Being in each state of manifestation in all the vertical (*tuli*) and horizontal (*ardi*) stages in which Being manifests Itself. It is, therefore, by the quiddities that we can distinguish between various beings and different levels of existence.

Haji divides the quiddities according to their association with matter or potentiality. Quiddities are either

free from matter in which case they are called the world of the spirits, or combined with matter and are then called the world of bodies. In the world of spirits, if the quiddities are by essence and in actuality free from all matter, they are the intelligences (*uqul*), and if they are free but have need of matter to become actualized, they are the souls (*nufus*).

And in the world of bodies, if the quiddities possess a subtle form of matter, they belong to the world of inverted forms (*alam al-mithal*), which is the same as that of cosmic imagination, and if they possess a gross form of matter, they belong to the world of nature. All of these worlds are distinguished in this manner by their quiddities, but all of them are in reality stages of the same Being which manifests Itself in different manners according to the conditions at each stage of manifestation.

After a discussion of the various aspects of Being and the quiddities, Haji turns to a study of substance and accidents. 15 There are three substances, the intelligences, souls, and bodies, and the nine categories of accidents as outlined by Aristotle and Porphyry. Of special interest in this discussion is the category of quality (*kaif*) that is closely connected with that of knowledge.

Dawwani, the ninth/fifteenth century philosopher and jurist, had considered knowledge (*ilm*) to be in essence of the category of the known (*malum*) and in accident of the category of the quality of the soul. Mulla Sadra, on the contrary, believed that knowledge belongs in essence to the category of quality and in accident to that of the known. Haji adds and modifies these views, considering knowledge to be an accident of the category of the known as well as that of quality but in essence beyond all categories like Being Itself. 16

The third chapter of the *Sharh–i Manzumah* concerns theodicy, i.e., what pertains to the Divine Being, His names, attributes, and acts. 17 Haji, after emphasizing the transcendence, unity, and simplicity of the divine essence, begins his discussion about the divine qualities and attributes, which are mentioned in the Quran, and interprets each following the tradition of the Hakims and Sufis before him.

Of special interest is his account of the epithet "Knower" (*al–Alim*) in which Haji discusses divine knowledge mentioning that knowledge is in the essence of God and God is in essence the Knower of all things. He knows all things by knowing His own essence. 18

The knowledge of God consists of knowledge of beings at several stages which Haji enumerates as follows: 19 ilm-i anani, the heavenly science, which is the knowledge of God that creatures have no being of their own; ilm-i qalami, the science of the Pen, the knowledge that God has of all beings in the world of multiplicity before their manifestation; 20 ilm-i lauhi, the science of the Tablet, which consists of the knowledge of the universals as they are issued forth from the first intellect or the Pen; ilm-i qadai, the science of predestination, which is the knowledge of the archetypes or masters of species of the realities of this world; and, finally, ilm-i qadari, the science of fate which consists of the knowledge of particulars whether they be of the world of cosmic imagination or the psyche or of the world of the elements which is the physical world. God, therefore, has knowledge of all things, and all degrees of existence are

included in His knowledge.

Following the study of God's essence and His attributes, Haji turns to His acts21 which in reality mean the stages of Being in which God's signs are made manifest. God's acts are of many kinds and from them the hierarchy of creatures comes into being. This hierarchy consists of seven stages: the longitudinal intelligences, horizontal intelligences which are the same as the celestial archetypes,22 the universal soul and the soul of the heavenly spheres, the inverted forms of the world of imagination, nature, form, and matter.

These stages, although distinct from one another, do not destroy the unity of God's acts. God's essence, attributes, and acts all possess unity, each in its own degree. The lowest stage of unity is the unity of the acts and the highest that of the essence, the realization of which comes at the end of the spiritual journey.

In the chapter on natural philosophy, Haji briefly outlines the physics of the Muslim Peripatetics as contained in detail in the *Shifa* of ibn Sina and other similar texts, and the Ptolemaic astronomy of epicycles as perfected by Muslim astronomers with the modifications made in it by Mulla Sadra and the other later Hakims.

The most important of these modifications is the introduction of the idea of substantial motion according to which the whole of the cosmic substance is in a state of becoming and the quantity of change is comprised in the measure of time. Haji also displays the tendency to interpret various aspects of the natural and mathematical sciences symbolically; for instance, the water of Thales which he, like Mulla Sadra, identifies with the breath of the Compassionate (*nafas al–Rahman*) or the *tetractys* of Pythagoras which he regards as the symbol for the four principial stages of Being, intellect, soul, and nature.

After the discussion of natural philosophy, Haji turns to the soul and its faculties and stages of development. There are three types of souls: vegetative, animal, and rational, the last of which comprises the human soul as well as the soul of the heavenly spheres. The vegetative soul has the three faculties of feeding, growth, and reproduction; and the animal soul, the five external senses, the five internal senses, and the power of motion.23

In man all of these faculties are developed to their fullness, but they are no more than the tools and instruments of the human soul that Haji calls the *ispahbad* light24 and which is of the family of the lights of heaven.

The perfection of the soul is attained by treading the stages of the intellect and finally unifying itself with God. The soul is given essentially two powers, theoretical and practical, for each of which there are four degrees of perfection. The theoretical intellect is comprised of the potential intellect that has the capacity merely of receiving knowledge, the habitual intellect by which acquaintance is made with simple truth, the active intellect by which knowledge is gained without the aid of the senses, and finally the acquired intellect by which the spiritual essences can be contemplated directly.25

As for the practical intellect, it too consists of four stages: *tajliyyah*, which consists in following the divine Laws revealed through the prophets; *takhliyyah*, purifying the soul of evil traits; *tahliyyah*, embellishing the soul with spiritual virtues, and, finally, *fana* or annihilation, which has the three degrees: annihilation in the divine acts, in the divine attributes, and finally in the divine essence.26

In the chapter on prophecy27 Haji discusses the qualifications and characteristics that distinguish a prophet from ordinary men. The prophet is the intermediary between this world and the next, between the world of the senses and the spiritual essences, so that his being is necessary to maintain the hierarchy of Being. The prophet is distinguished by the fact that he has knowledge of all things which he has acquired by the grace of God and not through human instruction, by his power of action which is such that the matter of this world obeys him as if it were his body, and by his senses which are such that he sees and hears through them what is hidden to others. He is also marked by his immunity from sin and error (*ismah*) in all his acts and deeds.

Sainthood (*wilayah*) is in one aspect similar to prophecy in that the saint, like the prophet, has knowledge of the spiritual world. Yet every prophet is a saint while every saint is not a prophet. The prophet, in addition to his aspect of sainthood, has the duty of establishing laws in society and guiding the social, moral, and religious life of the people to whom he is sent.

Among the prophets themselves, a distinction is to be made between the *nabi* and the *rasul*, the latter being distinguished by the fact that he possesses a divine Book in addition to his prophetic mission. Among those who are called *rasul* there is a further distinction to be made between the *ulu al-azm*, i.e., those who's *Shariah* abrogates the *Shariah* before theirs, and those with whom this is not the case. 28 Finally, there is the Seal of the Prophets (*khatam al-anbiya*) the Prophet who envelops all these stages within himself.29

The mission of the Prophet Muhammad (S), upon whom be peace–by virtue of his being the Seal of Prophets is the summation of all previous prophetic missions; his spirit is the universal intellect which is the first theophany of the divine essence and which made the body of the Prophet (S) so subtle that he was able to make the Nocturnal Ascent (*miraj*) to the highest heaven. That is why his light filled all directions and also that to whatever direction he turned he had no shadow.

The direction of prayer (*qiblah*) of Moses (as) was in the west or in the world of multiplicity and that of Jesus (as) in the east or the world of unity. The *qiblah* of the Prophet Muhammad (s), on the other hand, is neither in the east nor in the west, 30 but between them because, being the centre as well as the totality of existence, he brought a prophetic message based upon unity in multiplicity and multiplicity in unity.31

As a Shiah, Haji was greatly concerned with the question of the Imamate in addition to that of prophecy and, therefore, discusses the political and religious differences which distinguish the Shiah conception of the Imamate from that of the Sunnis'. For the Shiahs, as Haji writes, the spirit of Ali (as) is in essence

one with that of the Prophet (S). It is the universal soul as the spirit of the Prophet is the universal intellect. Moreover, the light of Ali (as) is passed on to his descendants until the last and twelfth Imam (as) who is the invisible guardian and protector of the world and without whom all religion and social as well as cosmic order will be disturbed.

Just as there are twelve signs of the Zodiac, so are there twelve Imams of whom the last is like *Pisces* for all the stars of the Imamate and sainthood. 32 The Last Day which means the end of the longitudinal hierarchy of existence is also the day of the manifestation of the twelfth Imam (as) who is himself the last stage of the hierarchy which extends upwards to the divine essence or Light of lights (*nur al-anwar*).

On the question of eschatology, 33 Haji follows closely the teachings of Mulla Sadra in considering the soul to have come into being with the body but to have a life independent of the body after death. He also rejects the argument of earlier philosophers against bodily resurrection and defends the idea of the resurrection of the soul and the body together on the Last Day.

There are two resurrections, the first at death, which is the minor, and the other on the Last Day, which is the major resurrection. In the first case all the faculties of the soul are absorbed in the *ispahbad* light and in the second all the lights of the universe are absorbed in the divine source of all being or the Light of all lights.

Haji discusses also the traditional belief about the events which are to take place at the time of resurrection and discusses the symbolic as well as the literal meaning of the Scale (*mizan*), the Bridge (*sirat*), and the Account–taking (*hisab*) of good and evil. The physical *sirat* is that which, as the Quran mentions, covers the chasm over the inferno, but the spiritual *sirat* is the path which the universal man treads towards the Truth (*Haqq*) and which connects him with the Truth.

In the final chapter on ethics Haji outlines the degrees of faith (*iman*) from simple acceptance to demonstration and from that to spiritual vision. This last degree can be reached only through the purification of the soul and the acquisition of spiritual virtues such as purity, truthfulness, reliance upon God, surrender to the divine will, etc. When man acquires all of these virtues his soul becomes simple and pure; he then becomes the receptor of the divine theophanies that illuminate his being and finally unify him with the centre, which is at once his own source of being and the origin of cosmic existence.

D: Post-Sabziwarian Hikmat

The doctrines of Haji that we have outlined and his influence are still very much alive in Persia. The school of those whose teachers learnt the mysteries of *Hikmat* from Haji Sabziwari himself and narrated stories about his life to them has been able to preserve itself in Persia, despite the anticontemplative attitude encouraged by the spirit of excessive modernism, chiefly because of the life which Haji and to a certain extent some of the other Qajar Hakims infused into it.34

Of the famous masters of *Hikmat* in Persia during the last century, we may name abu al-Hasan Jilwah, Muhammad Rida Qumshii, Jahangir Khan Qashqai, Mulla Ali Zunuzi, the author of *Badayi al-Hikam*, and Mirza Tahir Tunikabuni, all of whom were contemporaries of Haji, and those of a later date like the late Mirza Mehdi Ashtiyani, the author of *Asas al-Tauhid*, who passed away only recently.

Of the masters living today there are several who are worthy of special attention like Sayyid Muhammad Kazim Assar,35 Hajj Muhammad Husain Tabatabai, the most prolific writer among the present Hakims of Persia,36 and Sayyid abu al-Hasan Rafii Qazwini, a man who is a true master of all the traditional sciences and perhaps the greatest living authority on *Hikmat* and who lives in Qazwin in meditation and training of a few disciples away from the turmoils of modern life.

One should also mention Muhyi al–Din Qumshii, the author of *Hikmat–i Ilahi* and a large *Diwan* of Sufi poetry and the holder of the chair of Mulla Sadra in the Theological Faculty of Teheran University; Mirza Rahim Arbab who lives in Ispahan, the old centre of *Hikmat* in Persia; Hairi Mazandarani, now residing in Simnan, the author of *Hikmat–i bu Ali* and one of the most erudite of the living Hakims; Jawad Muslih, the author of a commentary upon the *Asfar* and its translator into Persian; Murtida Mutahhari, Muhammad Ali Hakim, Husain Ali Rashid, and Mahmud Shibahi, all with the exception of Mirza Rahim Arbab and Hairi Mazandarani being Professors at the Theological Faculty of Teheran University; Ahmad Ashtiyani, the author of several works on *Hikmat* and gnosis; Fadil–i Tuni, the commentator of the *Fusus al–Hikam* of ibn Arabi and many other treatises and a Professor at the Faculty of Letters of Teheran University; and Muhammad Taqi Amuli, the author of the commentary *Durar al–Fawaid* upon the *Sharh–i Manzumah*.

One cannot discuss the intellectual history of Islam justly without taking into account this long tradition the roots of which go back to the early civilizations of the Middle East and which has been preserved in Persia and in the bosom of Shiism to this day. 37 The outstanding figure of Haji Mulla Hadi was able to revive and strengthen this tradition in the Qajar period as Mulla Sadra had done two centuries before him, and to make this wisdom to continue as a living spiritual and intellectual tradition till today.

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1336-37 Solar; Muhammad Rida Salihi Kirmani, *Wujud az Nazar-i Falasifih-i Islam*, Piruz Press, Qum, 1336, Solar; A. M. A. Shushtery, *Outlines of Islamic Culture*, 2 Vols., Bangalore, 1938.

- 1. Only the most eminent figures in the intellectual life of Islam have come to receive such simple designations. In Persia one can name only a few such luminaries, ibn Sina being called Shaikh; Nasir al–Din Tusi, Khwajah; Jalal al–Din Rumi, Mulla; ibn Arabi, Shaikh al–Akbar; and Mulla Sadra, Akhund. In view of these designations it is easy to see what an exalted position has been accorded to Haji in Persia.
- 2. There is an account of the life of Haji by himself on which we have drawn much for our information. See M. Mudarrisi Chahardihi, Tarikh-i Falasifih-i Islam, Ilmi Press, Teheran, 1336–37 Solar, Vol. 2, pp. 131ff.; and also by the same author Life and Philosophy of Haji Mulla Hddi Sabziwari, Tahuri Bookshop, Teheran, 1955. The story of the life of Haji as related by his son as well as a summary of some of Haji's doctrines not all of which, however, can be considered to be authentic is given by E. G. Browne, in his A Year Amongst the Persians, Adam & Charles Black, London, 1950, pp. 143–58. Accounts of his life are also found in the usual sources like the Qisas al–Ulama, Matla al–Shams, and Riyad al–Arifin. When Gobineau visited Persia, Haji was alive and at the height of his fame; he is mentioned with great respect in Gohineau's writings; see Comte de Gobineau, Les religions et les philosophies dans l'Asie centrale, G. Gres et Cie, Paris, 1923, pp. 113–16. There are also references to Haji in A. M. A. Shushtery, Outlines of Islamic Culture, Bangalore, 1938, Vol. 2, pp. 452–54; and in M. Iqbal, The Development of Metaphysics in Persia, Luzac & Co., London, 1908, pp. 175ff.
- <u>3.</u> Among his special disciples one may name Sultan Ali Shah Gunabadi who later became the founder of the Gunabadi brotherhood of Sufis that is one of the most widely expanded brotherhoods in Persia today. For the stages through which Haji's students had to pass before being able to participate in his courses on Hikmat, see E. G. Browne, op. cit., pp. 147–48.
- 4. There are many prayers composed by the various Shiah Imams, especially the fourth Imam Zain al-Abidin (as), like the Dua-i Kubra, Misbah, and the Sahifih-i Sajjadiyyah (Sajjad being the title of the fourth Imam) which are read and chanted throughout the year, especially during Ramadan, as devotional prayers. Many of them, however, are not simply prayers of devotion but are replete with gnostic and metaphysical doctrines of highest inspiration and have been, therefore, commented upon by many of the Hukama and gnostics, who, like Haji, have drawn out their inner meaning by the light of their own inspiration.
- 5. See M. Mudarrisi Chahardihi, op. cit., pp. 63ff.
- 6. It is difficult to understand Iqbal's statement made in his Development of Metaphysics in Persia that with Sabziwari Persian thought went back to pure Platonism and abandoned the Neo-Platonic theory of emanation. Actually, Haji, like other Muslim Hakims before him, accepts the multiple states of Being each of which has issued forth from the state above through effusion or theophany. It is true that Plato was a definite source of Haji's doctrines as he himself was for nearly all the later Persian Hakims after Suhrawardi, but this is not to deny Haji's affinity to the doctrines of Plotinus and his commentators, especially concerning the hierarchy of the intelligences.
- 7. See the chapter on Suhrawardi Magtul.
- 8. The relation of particular beings to extended being is like that of knots to the chord in which they are tied. See Sharh-i Manzumah, Teheran, lithographed edition, 1298/1880, section on Ilahiyat, pp. 1ff.; and M. R. Salihi Kirmani, Wujud az Nazar-i Falasifih-i Islam, Piruz Press, Qum, 1336/1917, pp. 55ff.
- 9. See Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "The Polarisation of Being," Pakistan Philosophical Journal, Vol. 3, No. 2, Oct. 1959, pp. 8–13.
- 10. We can, therefore, justly say that this issue as understood by the later Hakims is one of the distinguishing features of Hikmat in the Safawid period and that the earlier schools, the Peripatetics as well as the Illuminationists, did not interpret this question in the same manner as the later Hakims.
- 11. The whole discussion concerning Being occupies the first section of the Ilahiyat of Sharh-i Manzumah, pp. 1-131.
- 12. The theologians (Mutikallimun) believed that each creature in the objective world is a quiddity including the divine essence that is an unknowable quiddity. Although this view is diametrically opposed to the view of the Hakims, in certain passages Haji interprets the view of the theologians symbolically to mean the same as the view of the Illuminationists and, therefore, defends them even though attacking them for their literalism.

- 13. For this view Haji is indebted partly to Mulla Sadra and partly to Jalal al-Din Dawwani.
- 14. In his commentary upon the Mathnawi, Teheran, lithographed edition, 1285/1868, p. 8, Haji names these stages as the divine essence or ipseity; its first determination; the archetypes (al-ayan al-thabitah); the world of the spirits (arwah); the world of inverted forms or similitudes (amthal); the world of bodies (ajsam); and, finally, the stage which is the summation of all those before it, i.e., the stage of the perfect man (al-insan al-kamil). In other places Haji considers the seven stages of universal existence to be the divine essence that is the Principle, the world of divinity, of the intelligences, of the angels, of the archetypes, of forms, and of matter. This descending hierarchy is also mentioned in E. G. Browne, op. cit., p. 150; A. M. A. Shushtery, op. cit., p. 454.
- 15. Sharh-i Manzumah, pp. 131-40.
- 16. Mulla Ali Zunuzi, a contemporary of the sage of Sabziwar, in his Badayi al–Hikam criticizes Haji's view and defends Mulla Sadra against his criticism. The view of Mulla Sadra as mentioned above appears in some of his works, while in others he also considers knowledge to be, like Being, above the categories.
- 17. Sharh-i Manzumah, pp. 140-51.
- 18. Ibid., p. 157. M. T. Amuli, Durar al–Fawaid, Mustafawi Press, Teheran, Vol. 1, pp. 480ff. It is in this discussion that Haji criticizes Mulla Sadra for having proved the identity of the knower and the known in the Mashair through the argument of relation (tadayuf) that Haji considers to be insufficient.
- 19. Asrar al-Hikam, Teheran, lithographed edition, 1286/1869, pp. 83ff.
- <u>20.</u> This knowledge, Haji compares to the point of the Pen before writing which contains all the letters of the alphabet before they become distinct on paper. The Pen is the same as the reality of Muhammad (al-haqiqat al-Muhammadiyyah) and the first victorial light (nur al-qahir) of the Illuminationists.
- 21. Sharh-i Manzumah, pp. 183-84.
- 22. Refer to the chapter on Suhrawardi Maqtul. This seven-fold hierarchy is essentially the same as mentioned above with only a change in terminology that occurs often among the Hakims.
- 23. Sharh-i Manzumah, pp. 284ff.; Asrar al-Hikam, pp. 152ff. These faculties arc also outlined in Iqbal, op. cit., and Browne, op. cit., p. 157.
- 24. For the meaning of this expression that is taken from the terminology of the Illuminationists, see the chapter on Suhrawardi Maqtul.
- 25. See Igbal, op. cit., pp. 185-86.
- <u>26.</u> These stages have already been discussed in the chapter on Mulla Sadra whose terminology Haji has adopted directly. See also A. M. A., Shushtary, op. cit., p. 454.
- 27. Sharh-i Manzumah, pp. 318-29; also Asrar al-Hikam, pp. 307ff.
- 28. Regarding the question of the relation of Islam to previous religions and abrogation of older religions, see F. Schuon, Transcendent Unity of Religions, Pantheon Co., New York, 1953, Chaps. 5 to 7.
- 29. Haji considers the greatest miracle of the Prophet Muhammad (S), who is the Seal of Prophecy, to be the Quran, which in the beauty of language has no match in Arabic literature. He adds that in each period God gives those miracles to His prophets that conform to the mentality of the people of that age. That is why the miracle of the Quran lies in its language as the Arabs considered eloquence to be of such great importance; likewise, in the case of Moses (as) his miracle was in magic which was at his time one of the basic arts, and in the case of Christ (as) raising the dead to life because medicine occupied at that time an exalted position among the sciences.
- <u>30.</u> This is with reference to the verse of Light in the Quran (24:35), in which the olive tree, from the oil of which the divine light emanates, is said to be neither of the east nor of the west.
- <u>31.</u> By this symbolism Haji implies that the message of Moses (as) was essentially the exoteric aspect of the Abrahamic tradition, and the message of Jesus (as) its esoteric aspect, while Islam, being a totality, is the summation of the two, at once esoteric and exoteric. See also F. Schuon, op. cit., Chap. 6.
- 32. Asrar al-Hikam, p. 369.
- 33. Sharh-i Manzumah, pp. 329ff.; Asrar al-Hikam, pp. 261ff.
- 34. A list of some of these Hakims is given by Gobineau, op. cit., pp. 116–20. See also Itimad al–Saltanih Muhammad Husain Khan, Kitab al–Maathir wal–Athar, Teheran, lithographed edition, 1306/1888, pp. 131–226.

- 35. This great authority on Hikmat and gnosis has trained a generation of students in Teheran University and the Sepahsalar madrasah but has not written extensively on these subjects.
- <u>36.</u> This sage whom we mentioned in the chapter on Mulla Sadra is the author of many important works in Arabic and Persian including the commentary al–Mizan, Usul–i Falsafih wa Rawish–i Realism with commentary by Murtida Mutahhari, a book on the principles of Shiism which came as answers to a set of questions posed by Henri Corbin and published as the Salanih–i Maktab–i Tashayyu, No. 2; commentary upon the Asfar, etc. Tabatabai has revived the study of Hikmat in Qum, which is the most important centre of Shiah studies today and has produced many scholars who have themselves become authorities on the intellectual sciences.
- <u>37.</u> It is for this reason that with great obstinacy and despite some awkwardness we have refused to translate Hikmat and Hakim simply as philosophy and philosopher even if in Persia too Hikmat is often called falsafah. Philosophy in Western languages is almost synonymous with one form or another of rationalism, and recently irrationalism has been divorced from sapientia which Hikmat and even falsafah imply in Arabic and Persian.

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