SUFISM AND ISMĀʿĪLĪ DOCTRINE IN THE PERSIAN POETRY OF NIZĀRĪ QUHISTĀNĪ (645–721/1247–1321)[1]

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FOREWORD

Ḥakīm Nizārī Quhistānī (d. 721/1321),[2] one of the eminent and original Persian poets of the Mongol period, was born in 645/1247 in the village of Fūdāj which lies in the suburbs of the city of Bīrjand in south-eastern Khurāsān. He was, according to some authorities (see below, V), a scion of the last Ismāʿīlī Nizārī Imām, Rukn al-Dīn Khurshāh (653–54/ 1255–56). Since the only reliable facts about his life are those that can be deduced from his own works,[3] it is mostly to these that I will be directing my attention in the following brief sketch of his life and times. In this essay I shall summarise (i) Nizārī's biography, before proceeding to discuss (ii) his life as a courtier, vizier and panegryrist, (iii) the literary influences on his verse, (iv) his bacchanalian poetry, (v) various theories about the origins of his pen-name, (vi) the Ismāʿīlī motifs and (vii) Sufi topoi and symbolism of his homiletic *mathnawī* and erotic lyrical poetry. Finally, some general conclusions (viii) will be drawn to resolve some of the apparent contradictions ostensibly present in the different (Sufi-Ismāʿīlī) religious persuasions and spiritual doctrines expressed in his verse, while situating his poetry in its historical, literary, and spiritual contexts. Some reflections will also be offered on the place and significance of his poetry in the pantheon of mediaeval Persian poets, and comments made on the trans-sectarian context and mystical content of his verse as an expression of both Sufi symbolism and theosophy, and Ismāʿīlī doctrine.

II. NIZĀRĪ, POET AND COURTIER

Of Nizārī's early years until his mid-twenties, very little is known. He was born into a family who probably "belonged to a clan of high-profile notables of the Ismāʿīlī sect in Quhistān, in which they possessed an eminent leadership role."[4] He had three brothers. He apparently enjoyed a normal education, studying Arabic grammar, philosophy, literature, and the rudiments of Sufi theosophy.[5] In his mid-twenties Nīzārī found employment at the court of Shams al-Dīn Kart (643–76 /1245–77), the ruler of Sistān (and much of the province of Khurasān) in northern Iran.[6] Arriving in Herat in the early 1270s, he worked for the Kart dynasty (who ruled a large part of Afghanistan on behalf of the Mongols) in various capacities both as a tax-collector and court poet.[7] But as he became more intimate with the responsibilities of his job as a tax-collector, he gradually became disillusioned with the harsh and punitive measures adopted by the Karts who, under pressure from their Mongol overlords, often obliged him to exact money and goods by force from local peasants.

In 679/1280 he set out on a long journey from Quhistān, exploring some of the northern and Western provinces, particularly Georgia, bordering the Caspian Sea, while recording his travels in a *mathnawī* poem of over a thousand couplets entitled the *Safar-nāma*, "Travelogue". This was his earliest *mathnawī* poem, dedicated to a certain Sufi master named Amīn al-Dīn[8] (see below, VII). On his return to Herat in 681/1282, he resigned his post at the Kart court and retired to his hometown Bīrjand where he remained for nearly a decade, married and raised a family. Then in 694/1294, the local Mīhrabanīd prince ʿAlī Shāh hired him as his court poet, although he managed to keep this position for only two years before his outspoken opinions and polemics penned against the oppressive nobles at the prince's court, local mullahs and corrupt jurists caused offence to the prince, who exiled him from court.

From his early youth and employment in the Kart administration in his twenties until his death in retirement in 721/1321 in his mid-seventies, Nīzārī composed volumes of poetry, much of which was inspired by the court society and the high social circles in which he moved. Over the course of his long career as a courtier, he also wrote much occasional and panegryrical verse inspired by the social circumstances of court life and the political position that he held as

vizier of the kings of Quhistān.[9] After his exile from the Mīhrabanīd court, he spent the remaining two decades of his life, during his fifties and sixties (from 696/1296 to 721/1321) confined to his small property in Bīrjand where he composed most of his main *mathnawī* poems (*Munāẓara shab u rūz*, "The Dispute Between Night and Day"; *Azhar u mazhar*, "Disclosure and Theophany"; as well as his *Dastūr-nāma*, "Book of Directives").[10]

During his final years, Nizārī — who once claimed to have composed 10,000 couplets of panegyric verse — like Sanā'ī before him, renounced the paid poet's profession and retired into a cloistered existence in the hills of Quhistān. Disillusioned by his patrons' indifference, he spent these years bitterly lamenting the vanity of composing servile verses in praise of — to use Ḥāfiẓ's phrase — "a lord who lacks beneficence (*makhdūm bī ʿināyat*)."[11] Nothing better explains Nizārī's attitude towards composition of panegyric verse than the following lines from a long qaṣīda:[12]

هستم هنوز و بودم مست شراب و شاهد — نی بودم و نه باشم مغرور جاه و حشمت
گر مدح گفته باشم آن را دو وجه باشد — یا شیوهء تکلف یا قالب محبت
آن بر سر زبانم آن در میان جانم — تکلیف باز داند صاحب دل از عقیدت
دست طمع نبردم در لقمهء مزخرف — دامان جان نکردم آلودهء مذلت
در کوچهء قناعت دارم سرای خوبی — ضراب کیمیاگر صاحب نقود دولت
...عالم به علم کلی آن است و بس که ما را — راه معاد و مبدا روشن کند به حجت
من گر چه بی نصیبم ز انواع فضل هستم — در عالم معانی عالم به حکم فطرت
نی نی نزاریا نی نی مرد این حدیثی — تو از کجا و دانش نادانی و فضیلت
گر علم آفرینش دانسته ای و خود را — نادان تری نیابی باشی سزای لعنت
آن جا کدام بینش و آن جا کدام دانش — آن جا چه جای معنی وآن جا چه جای صورت
از خود برون نرفته او در درون نیاید — ناخوش بود مَلَک را با دیو کرده قربت
تو از میان برون شو تا جمله او بماند — القصه با تو گفتم اینک طریق وحدت

I still am — and always was — drunk from wine and from the icon of beauty. I never was, nor ever will be, swollen with conceit over status and the high rank of greatness. Have ever I praised anyone, that had two aspects: either it was belaboured ceremony, or else a form of love. If the former was mere lip-service, the latter come out from the depths of my soul: the heart's adept will distinguish between what's spoken out of social obligation and what's uttered from conviction. I never stretched out my hand in greed towards any base morsel, never sullied the robes of my soul with ignoble conduct. I have a good dwelling in the Street of Contentment, (just like) the minter of money, who is an alchemist, is the Lord of the cash of fortune… What the scholar has is only this general knowledge, but for us it suffices that we can clearly discern, by way of demonstrative proof (*ḥujjat*) (the difference) between the path of the Resurrection (*maʿād*) and the source and genesis of creation (*mabdaʾ*). Although I am entirely disadvantaged of diverse types of learning, I am learned by virtue of my inner nature in the world of interior spiritual significations (*ʿālam-i maʿnā*). No, no! O Nizārī. No, no! You are not the man to expound this lore. How far wide you are of knowledge and learning in your unknowing! For if you know all the lore of creation, and then do not find yourself yet more ignorant, you deserve damnation. What "vision" can possibly exist *There*; what "knowledge" can subsist *There*; what place is there for interior spiritual reality (*maʿnā*) or for the external phenomenal form (*ṣūrat*) *There*? As long as you have not abandoned your self, He will not enter within: how abhorrent it is for an angel to be the companion of a devil! So let "yourself" depart entirely from betwixt and between, that "He" alone may remain: this is the tale that I have told you: this is the Way to divine Unity (*ṭarīq-i waḥdat*).

In another poem (1231: 11830–38), Nizārī railed against the ethos of obsequious praise indulged in by panegyrical poets, declaring himself a devotee of the

religion of love. "I am a word-burner not word-spinner, speech-consumer not speech-writer," he cries. Repudiating the profession of paid panegyrist, he remarks: "Seek Nizārī if it's Love you want. If panegryrical praise, go to Anwarī":

عشق را ختم است بر عالم سری خلق را لایق نباشد سروری
پادشا عشق است و لازم میشود پارسا و رند را فرمان بری
بل که سلطانان عالم عشق را بندگی ها می کنند از چاکری
در بیان عاشق و معشوق و عشق سحر می پردازم اینک ساحری
فارغم حاشا که گویم مدح خلق زشت باشد گر کند عیسی خری
مست لایعقل چه جوید زیرکی مرد بی حاصل چه داند شاعری
من سخن سوزم سخن گو نیستم بت شکستن دیگرست از بت گری
گر چه قنبر حیدری باشد و لیک عنتری کردن نباشد حیدری
عشق می خواهی نزاری را طلب مدح می جویی بخواه از انوری

> Love is the consummation and crown of the world. Created beings are not worthy of Love's leadership. Love is King, and upon all it is incumbent to obey him, be they be pious devotees or libertines. In fact, the sultans of the world behave with devotion towards Love, acting with servility. In the exposition of the Lover, the Beloved and Love, I work magic, and here's the sorcery! I am free from praising any created being — may God forbid it — for it would be degrading for Jesus to bear an ass's burden. How can one who is drunk out of his senses pretend to be clever? How can a man devoid of accomplishments comprehend poetry? I am a word-burner, not a word-spinner, a speech-consumer, not a speech-writer: iconoclasm is different from iconolatry. Although Qanbar was the freed slave who belonged to ʿAlī, it does not suit ʿAlī to behave like a slavish baboon. Seek Nizārī if it's Love you want, but if it's panegryrical praise you desire, seek it from Anwarī.

Nizārī's rank and stature in the Persian poetic canon was certainly better appreciated by his contemporaries than by modern literary critics. In one of the earliest copies of his *Dīwān*, calligraphed by ʿAbd al-Rashīd b. Shaykh ʿAbdullāh Khalawī a century after his death in 837/1433, Nizārī is given such titles as "King of Poets" (*Malik al-shuʿara'*), "Sovereign of the Philosophers" (*Sulṭān al-ḥukamā'*), "Leader of the Mystics" (*Muqaddam al-ʿurafā'*), and even "Counsellor of Princes and Ministers" (*Nāṣiḥ al-ʿumarā' wa'l-wuzarā'*), demonstrating how highly he was esteemed by his own immediate contemporaries.[13] Shaykh Ādharī Ṭūsī (d. 866/1461), the poet laureate of Sulṭān Aḥmad Shah Bahmanī (reg. 825–37/1421–33), in his still unpublished "Jewels of the Mysteries" (*Jawāhir al-asrār*), likewise commends Nizārī for being a "comprehensive poet" (*shāʿir-i jāmiʿ*).[14] Considering the fact that only a decade has passed since the publication (1993) of Mujtahidzāda's two-volume critical edition of his *Dīwān*, it is fair to say that today scholars still have not made a proper appraisal of his poetic oeuvre. Aside from the thousands of lines of *mathnawī* verse that he composed, Nizārī's *Dīwān* represents a monumental achievement, totalling altogether 1408 *ghazals* and *qaṣīdas*, amounting altogether to 13,646 couplets. His *Dīwān*, which is the basis of the preliminary research carried out in this essay, proves him to be the most prolific Ismāʿīlī poet in the Persian language — and certainly the greatest poet in Persian literature of the Ismāʿīlī persuasion after Nāṣir-i Khusraw (d. 470/1077).

III. LITERARY INFLUENCES ON NIZĀRĪ'S POETRY

If and when a comprehensive history of Persian literature in the Mongol period is ever composed, Nizārī's poetic corpus will certainly be recognised as being highly significant for the light it sheds on the socio-political history of the Īl-Khānid Persia. Maẓāhir Muṣaffā, editor of his *Dīwān*, underlines that "in Nizārī's *ghazals* there are many signs of the impact

which the fanatically jealous, prejudiced and bigoted people of his age had upon him. These types of people were constantly reviling and slandering him, accusing him of heresy. Each of his *ghazals* is a cutting sword held up before his abusive critics and slanderers."[15] The following lines from a *qaṣīda* (not given in the main text of his *Dīwān*) give a flavour of the deep political dissatisfaction and social pessimism which permeates Nizārī's verse:[16]

جهان خراب شد از عالمان وقف تراش — برو نزاری و جز در لباس جهل مباش
درین مزارع دنیا به هرزه دانهء عمر — به اعتماد بَر اندر زمین شوره مپاش
خرد به وعظ منافق چه التفات کند — طبیب عقل به بیهوش کی دهد خشخاش
فساد و منکر اهل صلاح تا حدی است — که آفرین و ثنای واجب است بر اوباش
ز درس فقه چه آموختند جز سالوس — ز علم و فضل چه اندوختند جز پرخاش
دریغ اگر نه غوغای عام ترسیدی — فقیه بر سر منبر شراب خوردی فاش
فقیه را به ضیافت اشارتی فرمای — که گر به شامش خوانی بیاید از پی چاش
کجاست کیست مسلمان اگر منم ملحد... — درین قضیه مقصر غلو نکردی کاش

The world has been devastated by clerics who skim off charitable donations for themselves! Go, Nizārī, and dress yourself in the garments of obtuse ignorance. Do not idly sow away the seed of your life in this world's farmlands, putting stock in the thought you'll reap any harvest from such brackish marshland. Why should a reasonable mind incline to hear the sermon preached by a hypocrite? When did a doctor ever prescribe opium to a psychotic? The perfidy and vice of the so-called "folk of virtue" has reached such a point that it is *de rigueur* that we commend and acclaim anybody who is a knave! Indeed, what have they learned from studying Islamic jurisprudence but the art of imposture, fraud and humbug? What have they gleaned from pursuit of knowledge and learning but enmity and hostility? Alas! If it wasn't for the fact that they feared it might rouse popular agitation against them, these learned divines skilled in jurisprudence themselves would consume wine in public from on high in their pulpits! Go (just try it out for youself): invite a Muslim jurist to a banquet: you'll see how like a cat he'll show up for lunch also when you invite him to dinner! … So, if I am pagan unbeliever, tell me who's the Muslim? Where is he to be found? In such circumstances, it's a pity that someone like myself who is slack in faith (*muqaṣṣir*) did not become an Islamic extremist (*ghuluww*)![17]

A highly celebrated poet during his own lifetime, Nizārī composed verses directly modelled on a wide range of early classical Persian poets, including Shahīd-i Balkhī, Rudakī, Daqīqī and Khāqānī.[18] The voices of Sanā'ī and Niẓāmī are also central to the inspiration of Nizārī's *mathnawī* and *ghazal* poetry.[19] In his *mathnawī* poem *Dastūr-nāma*, "Book of Directives", dedicated to the drinking of wine,[20] discussed in section IV below, Nizārī appears to be strongly affected by the poetic style of Firdawsī as well.[21] The literary strains of 'Aṭṭār and Rūmī, all of whose wise dicta he directly admonishes the reader to emulate,[22] also strongly pervade his verse, while his *mathnawī* poem *Azhar u mazhar* was written in direct imitation of 'Aṭṭār's *Khusraw-nāma*.[23]

Maẓāhir Muṣaffā devotes thirty pages (315–45) documenting Sa'dī's influence on Nizārī, noting numerous occasions on which he explicitly paraphrases or else directly includes (*taḍmīn*) hemistichs from the *Būstān* or *ghazal*s of Sa'dī in his poetry, and judges that Sa'dī is the most influential poet upon him.[24] He convincingly demonstrates the presence of common conceptual notions utilised by both poets, although in regard to their mutual use of end-rhymes, poetic devices and metres, the greater part of his comparisons seem to be farfetched and unconvincing.

Nizārī's influence on Ḥāfiẓ's *Dīwān* was first pointed out by Jāmī in his *Bihāristān* who observed that "the literary style of Ḥāfiẓ's poetry is close to that of Nizārī Quhistānī, although in Nizārī's poetry there is much unevenness of quality to be found, contrary to that of Ḥāfiẓ."[25] This influence, which is documented by Ghulām 'Alī Changīz Bāybūrdī, is highlighted as

well by Muṣaffā, who presents some twenty-six pages of parallel verses exemplifing the deep influence of Nizārī's verse on Ḥāfiẓ (347–73). Many if not most of the parallels cited both by Bāybūrdī and Muṣaffā, however, are of a loosely conceptual nature rather than concerned with metrics or imagery. In my opinion, they constitute these critics' personal estimation rather than any irrefutable literary demonstration of Nizārī's themes and ideas influencing the genius of Ḥāfiẓ.

Nonetheless, from these influences alone it is obvious that Nizārī was steeped in the broad spectrum of the classical Persian poetic tradition, within which he certainly holds a pivotal place as the most important Ismāʿīlī re-interpreter of this canon of the Mongol period.

IV. NIZĀRĪ'S BACCHANALIA

Although E.G. Browne (writing towards 1920) was of the opinion that "Nizárí's poems … though spirited enough, appear for the most part to be of the usual Bacchanalian type, and give little or no indication of the poet's religious views or general circumstances,"[26] a closer examination of his *Dīwān* reveals this to be far from the truth; not only can one find distinctly Ismāʿīlī tendencies (see below, VI), but also some quite precise indications of his religious views in his verse, exposing the deep effect of Sufism (see below, VII) on his thought. However, there is no doubt that Bacchanalian imagery predominants in Nizārī's poetry, as Browne maintained. Of Nizārī's penchant for wine, Maẓāhir Muṣaffā comments astutely,

> His *ghazal*s are so completely steeped in wine from end to end that perhaps one can say that from among writers of (Persian) *ghazal*s no other poet is equal to Nizārī in the description of wine, in depicting states of intoxication and in praising wine and wine-drinking. So it is not without cause that most literary historians have considered him as a "bard of wine".[27]

In a key poem concerning repentance from intemperance the poet admonishes himself: "For forty years I have bathed myself in the blood of the wine-grape … Now I have repented from what is forbidden, and have broken my pledge to the wine-goblet. My head is drunk with another type of cup; my wine from another sort of tavern is drunk. On that my heart is set and in this lies my health: to drink the wine that is pure and celestial."[28] Nizārī — according to his own account here — was a tippler of wine for a period of some forty years, until suddenly he underwent a conversion experience. He took refuge in a mosque where he repented of his ways, but his teetotalism lasted only two years, for he soon returned "like Khayyām (*Khayyāmvār*)"[29] — as he confesses — to his former habits. The fact that his *mathnawī* poem, the *Dastūr-nāma* (written in 710/1310 when Nizārī was 65 years old) is devoted to praise of wine and the rites of wine-drinking, demonstrates that the poet to the very end of his life remained fascinated and enthralled by the "daughter of the vine."

No doubt out of deference to the intensely mystical dimension of his poetry, Muṣaffā interprets such clearly secular biographical references to wine as constituting pure allegory, wine being understood as a foil to convey Sufi ecstasy.[30] It must be said that, far from being an alien modern imposition, this mystical interpretation of Nizārī's bacchanalian verse is of ancient provenance, and was first expressed by Dawlatshāh Samarqandī *c.* 892/1487 who in his celebrated "Memoirs of the Poets" (*Tadhkirat al-shuʿarā*), alluding to the debate then going on about the religious vs. secular nature of Nizārī's poetry, wrote:

> Some folk consider Nizārī to be a monotheist and gnostic, others as belonging to the Ismāʿīlī sect. For however much his discourse concerns the worship of wine and the rites and arts of polite conversation and intoxication, his words display much gnostic wisdom and expound many spiritual truths as well. From the interior reality of his words (*ḥaqīqat-i sukhanān-i u*), it is apparent that he was wise man, an adept in the spiritual verities of things, so to harbour ill-faith about him is pure slander.[31]

Dawlatshāh is completely correct in his observation that nearly all the bacchanalian verses in his *ghazals* are surfeited with a profound mystical content as well. *Ghazal* 1362, ostensibly in praise of wine, for instance, reads (in prose translation):

> What sort of slander is this that they say I have repented of wine? God forbid it that I should ever repent (*tawba*) — when did I ever repent of wine? Stand up, O cupbearer and pour that spiritual water (*āb-i maʿnawī*) into the goblet: others are quickened

> to life by the spirit, but our spirit is living through it (wine). The king and his kingdom; the dervish and contentment, and me and love: indeed, as they say, all things return to their own origins. … From the purity of the elemental substance of wine, the mystery of the Invisible Realm is disclosed, for all of this hue and cry has been sent out in the world from the king's goblet.

Yet it is hard to tell whether such poems spring from any genuine mystical experience or state (*ḥāl*) or were just passing poetic moods. In another poem, Nizārī expressed exactly the opposite sentiment, claiming to "have repented from wine, not with aversion but rather with avid desire!"[32] Any intellectual consistency that can be read into such contradictory poetic expressions to my mind lies only on the level of the esoteric exegesis of symbols, in which the internal semiotic substance (*ma'nā*) of the metaphor, rather than its conceptual lexical shell (*lafẓ*) is audited by the ear of the creative imagination. "In nature, each individual symbol plays innumerable parts, as each particle of matter circulates in turn through every system," said Ralph Waldo Emerson in his study of Swedenborg's doctrine of correspondences. "The central identity enables any one symbol to express successively all the qualities and shades of real being. In the transmission of heavenly waters every hose fits every hydrant. Nature avenges herself speedily on the hard pedantry that would chain her waves. She is no literalist. Everything must be taken genially, and we must be at the top of our condition, to understand anything rightly."[33]

But leaving aside the question of whether or not the wine in Nizārī's verse was of the physical or figurative nature, metaphorical of ecstasy, or in actuality drunk from a banqueting chalice, it is the *spiritual pleasure* rather than *physical effect* of the wine that is always emphasised in his poetry. That the *esoteric* dimension of bacchanalian intoxication is the key topos of his Persian *khamriyya* is evident from two key sections of the *Dastūr-nāma* (vv. 406–15: on "The Spiritual Stations of the Wine-Drinkers;" vv. 456–65: on "Spiritual Flight and Divine Inspiration"), each of which describes the transcendence of egocentric self-consciousness on the part of "the drunkards," narrating their experience as a kind of mystical *hierosgamos* in which a "chymical wedding" takes place between the wine of the glass and the wine of praise of God.

Wine-drinking and wine imagery also appear in his verse as a deliberate act of social subversion: a kind of poetic device used to criticise the spiritually arid ascetics and ignorant clerics who repudiate or do not recognise the supremacy of the religion of love. Replying to an ascetic who teased him that he should consider swearing an oath on the wine he drank, Nizārī penned these mordant anti-clerical verses:[34]

مـــرا زاهد خشک لازم گـــرفت که می باید از باده سوگند خورد
بدو گفتـــــم ای شیخ اول تـــرا ببـــاید ازین می منی چند خورد
چو خـوردی اگر بخت یارت بـــود بدانی چـــرا گـــربه فرزند خورد!

> "You ought to swear an oath by the wine you drink," an arid Pharisee ascetic postulated me. "Shaykh," I replied, "I bid you instead to first imbibe a bit more of this wine of your self-conceit and vainglory. After drinking that, if luck be your mate, you'll then comprehend why the cat devours her own kittens."

In reply to another critical cleric, he puts the same point even more bluntly. The real immorality is egocentricism, not the so-called vice of drunkenness. Selfhood is the source of all sin, whereas intoxication at least may lead to the drinker to a kind of self-transcendence. Deliberately to find fault with your fellow-man is a vice far worse than drunkenness, for the latter only temporarily affects the drinker's state, while the former is a permanent blight upon all goodwill and neighbourly content.[35]

تو هـم مستی اگر من می پرستی چرا ای خـواجه بر من عـیب جـــویی
من آب رز خورم تو خـون مـــردم مکن با ســـست رایـی سخت رویـی
ترا اولی تـراست آن ای خردمند که عیـب خود نخست از خود بشویی
چو گشتی پاک دیگر عیبِ مردم نـجـــــویـی و نبیـنـی و نگـــویـــی

Although I adore wine, you yourself are a drunkard too, so why, dear sir, do you censure me? All I drink is the juice of grapes, but you soak up the blood of your fellow men. So don't adopt such an austere countenence upon such a poor conjecture. Of prime importance, O savant, is that first you wash yourself clean of your own faults. Then, once you become pure, you will never again seek to know — nor ever see or tell again — the faults of other men.

As such verses prove, even Nizārī's apparent "worldliness" always has an otherworldly aim: his apparent libertinism is surfeited with moral intent. Despite the seeming profanity of much of his verse, the actual content of his poetic imagery is steeped in Sufi symbolism, the outwardly secular imagery of which conveys a message full of moral purpose, all his verse being based on mystical topoi drawn from the typical vocabulary of Sufism: (e.g. contentment, patience, the superiority of love over reason, the veil of the self, etc.) that permeates the poetic inspiration of other Sufi poets of the Mongol period. In any case, our modern pietistic theological sensibility that attempts to evaluate the conceptual cosmos of mediaeval Persian poet using dualistic categories of "profane worldly practices" vs. so-called "sacred morality" — characteristic, for example of the Christian pietism of the English metaphysical poets (excluding Donne) — shall never be usefully applied to any of the Persian Sufi poets. In the end, as with Ḥāfiẓ's *Sāqī-nāma*, which directly follows Nizārī in the praise of "the charismatica of wine,"[36] it is of the gnosis of wine that the poet sings, celebrating a drunken esoteric wisdom, the "philosopher's antidote,"[37] before which the physical world pales into insignificance.

مـی بیـارید که مـی داروی حکمـاست مکشیدش که نیاید مدهیـدش که نخواست
می به تکلـیف نبایـد به کسی داد به زور جز به مخمور و برین قاعده تکلیف رواست
می به نزدیک بهایـم چه بهـا ارزد هیـچ بروا ز زنده دلان پرس که جان را چه بهاست
...هر کسی را روشی باشـد و رویی و رهی راه و روی و روش ما به دلِ اهل صفـاست
جوهـری صاف تر از می نبود ای صـوفی لاف نـزاری بشنـو تا به تو بر گـوید راست

Bring me wine, for wine is the philosopher's antidote. Do not drink with one unworthy of it; do not give it to one who does not earnestly desire it. One should never prescribe wine by force on anyone except for one languishing in dipsomania, in which case, the rule is that force is permitted. What value does wine have to beasts? Nothing. Go, ask the price of life from men whose hearts are quickened to life. … Every person has their own peculiar course, wit and way. Our wit and way is that of the heart of the brethren of purity (*ahl-i ṣafā*). O Sufi, there exists no purer substance than wine — listen to Nizārī for he speaks the truth to you.

V. THE POET'S *NOM-DE-PLUME*

Scholars and *Tadhkira* writers have varying opinions concerning the derivation of "Nizārī," the poet's adopted pen-name. According to E.G. Browne, it was derived from his devotion to the eldest son of Fāṭimid Caliph al-Mustanṣir: Nizār b. al-Mustanṣir (437–88/1045–95), a claimant to the Fāṭimid throne, whose claims to legitimacy, after his execution in 1095, were taken up by Ḥasan Ṣabbāḥ, through whose preaching a separate Nizārī Ismāʿīlī state came into existence in Seljuq Persia.[38]

Browne's view is not corroborated by Maẓāhir Muṣaffā, the editor of his *Dīwān*, who believes in the possibility, due to two couplets that appear in his *Dīwān*, that his pen-name was given to him by the Sunni ruler Shams al-Dīn ʿAlī Shāh (reg. 688–708/1289–1308,[39] who belonged to a dynasty ruling over Sīstān[40]), for whom Nizārī worked, as well as his vizier ʿAlaʾ al-Dīn Hindū, as an official and a court poet. One author — Borodin — identifies Nizārī as attached to the court of the Kart Maliks of Herat; another — Bayburdi — believes his patrons to have been local rulers and Mongol officials in Quhistān.[41]

Dhabīḥullāh Ṣafā considers his pen-name to be "a sobriquet belonging to the poet's family name" and, to be exact, as derived from an elder cousin of his named "Saʿd al-Dīn Nizārī" who held a high position in the Kart court.[42] Professor Ṣafā cites several verses from the *Dīwān* to try to clinch this point, concluding that "it is certain that 'Nizārī' was not merely the title adopted by the poet, but rather was a title used by other

members of his family. The poet, however, chose it as his particular *nom-de-plume*, … and this sobriquet is also without a doubt derived from either the genealogical affiliation or the devotion of his family to al-Muṣṭafā li-Dīn Allāh, famed as Nizār, the son of al-Mustanṣir bi'llāh Fāṭimī."[43] Professor Ṣafā goes on to cite the account given by Faṣīḥ Khwāfī in his *Mujmal-i Faṣīḥī*, in the entry detailing the events of the year 721/1224, in which Khwāfī states that "the poet Ḥakīm Nizārī Quhistānī, whose surname was Sa'd al-Dīn, was from Bīrjand. He came from the family lineage of 'Ala' al-Dīn Mulḥid, who was a disciple of Mustanṣir Ismā'īlī."[44] The "Mustanṣir Ismā'īlī" mentioned here is of course Nizār, while "'Alā' al-Dīn Mulḥid" is most probably 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad (reg. 618–53/ 1221–55, son of Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan, the penultimate Ismā'īlī Imām to reign before the Mongol onslaught, who was for a period the patron of Nāṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī.[45] From Khwāfī's notice, Professor Ṣafā adduces that "it is obvious that either the grandparents of the poet, due to their devotion to al-Muṣṭafā li-Dīn Allāh, famed as Nizār, adopted this genealogical pedigree for themselves, or else they considered themselves to be his descendents."[46]

Professor Ṣafā further speculates that Nizārī's father Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad was "perhaps the son of ['Alā' al-Dīn] Muḥammad and the brother Rukn al-Dīn Khurshāh."[47] If this is true, this would make an aristocratic Ismā'īlī nobleman out of Nizārī: the nephew, no less, of the last Nizārī Imam: Rukn al-Dīn Khurshāh (son of 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad). Khurshāh, who, it may be recalled, had succeeded his father to the imāmate in 653/1255, before submitting to the dissolution and destruction of the military garrisons of Nizārī kingdom at the hands of the Mongols and finally being executed by them in 655/1257).[48] The fact that both Rukn al-Dīn Khurshāh's brother and Nizārī's son were called "Shahanshāh" lends greater credence to Ṣafā's speculations. Concluding his review of Nizārī's Ismā'īlī connections, Ṣafā opines:

> In the book *Hidāyat al-mū'minīn* ("A Present to the Faithful"), which is also known as *Tārīkh-i Ismā'īlīyya* ("The History of the Ismā'īlīs"), it is mentioned that Nizārī was one of the missionaries of the Ismā'īlīs in Quhistān. Insofar as the missionary organisation of the Ismā'īlīs of Iran during his lifetime had fallen, as we well know, into a complete state of disarray, it is not clear whether Nizārī himself had been given the formal title of *Dā'ī*. The sole *pièce de résistance* that he and his family were able to put on exhibit amidst all that riot and melée was the rescuing of their own life-raft from succumbing to the peril of these tumultous waves. But this much however is certain: Nizārī, and the rest of his family, belonged to a clan of high-profile notables of the Ismā'īlī sect in Quhistān, in which they possessed an eminent leadership role.[49]

Although Maẓāhir Muṣaffā declares himself undecided about the derivation of the pen-name, he ultimately tends to favour the above arguments adduced by Professor Ṣafā concerning Nizārī's noble Ismā'īlī ancestry. In her study of Nizārī's life and works, Nadia Jamal has also reviewed various opinions about the provenance of his pen-name, without reaching any definite conclusions in this respect. However, she strongly emphasises both the Ismā'īlī background of poet's family and his own adherence to Ismā'īlism[50] as the key factor of his intellectual biography. But, since this study is primarily concerned with the doctrinal nature and import of Nizārī's verse, the above overview of the scholarly controversies surrounding his own poetic self-identity must for the moment suffice.

VI. ISMĀ'ĪLĪ DIMENSIONS OF NIZĀRĪ'S POETRY

Farhad Daftary points out that in pre-Safavid Persia, a coalescence emerged "between Persian Sufism and Nizārī Ismā'īlism, which represented two independent esoteric traditions in Islam. It is owing to this Ismā'īlī-Sufi coalescence, still even less understood from the Sufi side, that it is often difficult to ascertain whether a certain post-Alamūt Persian treatise was written by a Nizārī author influenced by Sufism, or whether it was produced in Sufi milieus exposed to Ismā'īlism."[51] These comments certainly ring true in regard to Nizārī's poetry in which the amalgamation of Ismā'īlī doctrine with Sufi symbols and concepts is so complete that analysis of the significance of a certain verse, without simultaneous study of both these esoteric traditions, is well-nigh impossible. In the light of his Sufi-Ismā'īlī intellectual syncretism, in what follows, I will first attempt to highlight the explicitly Ismā'īlī motifs in his poetry before proceeding to examine the Sufi doctrines and symbols (in the following section VII) therein.

There are many lines in Nizārī's *Dīwān* which attest to his Ismāʿīlī faith, and as S. Riḍā Mujtahidzāda points out, his poetry is so steeped in Ismāʿīlī technical terminology that his adherence to this religious denomination is beyond all doubt.[52] Albeit, Nizārī's Ismāʿīlī ideas are always expressed *within the context* of Sufism; it is as if the two doctrines interfused each other, making of him a kind of Sufi Ismāʿīlī or an Ismāʿīlī Sufi, so that he appears to wear the robes of both religious communities simultaneously.

The following *ghazal* (746: 7349–59), in which the poet expressly calls himself both an Ismāʿīlī *dāʿī* and a master of a Sufi *khānaqāh*, for instance, is typical of his religious syncretism in this respect:

ما بین حق و باطل ضدیتی ست مطلق — تیغی به تار مویی آویخته معلق
۷۳۵۰ ای یار یک نصیحت یارانه بشنو از من — مگرو به رای ناقص مشنو حدیث احمق
کز عین عرف گردد میم محق محقق — یک بار حای حیرت بر قاف قرب او زن
دوشیزه مریم ار نی چون زایدی مسیحا — حلاج مرده ار نی چون گویدی انا الحق
هر ظاهری که بینی بی باطنی نباشد — بشنو ندای دعوت زین داعی مصدق
با وقت ساز حالی تا وعده یی ستانیم — از کف مدار خالی جام می مروق
۷۳۵۵ من پیر خانقاهم یعنی شراب خانه — کرباس و صوف خواهم نه سندس و ستبرق
نا برده بوی و کردن نسبت به شیخ صادق — کار افتقار دارد نه اخضر و نه ازرق
مهر کسیست مارا در جان که وقت معجز — مه را به یک اشاره کردی در آسمان شق
با لحم و دم ما شد مهر ولی مخمر — دانی کدام ولی شیر مصاف خندق
دانم کنند جهال انکار بر نزاری — غم نیست گر مقلد گیرد برین سخن دق

(7349) There exists for us an absolute opposition between Truth and Falsity (such that between the two) there hangs suspended a sword sharp as a hairs' breadth. (7350) Listen to a piece of friendly advice from me, O friend: do not incline yourself to those whose judgement is flawed; do not listen to the words of fools. (7351) For once take the "Ḥ" of *ḥayrat* (mystical bewilderment) and put it next to the *Qāf* of *qurb* (intimacy with God) [i.e the Arabic letters. Ḥ + Q = *Ḥaqq* = Truth] so that it will be essentially evident to you how the *Mīm* of *Muḥiqq* (the true Ismāʿīlī adept) becomes ascertained. (7352) Mary was a virgin, else how could she have borne the Messiah? Ḥallāj was dead, else how had he ever said: "I am God"? (7353) Every exoteric reality you see is not without its esoteric dimension: Listen to the summons of the Mission from a certified missionary. (7354) Adopt yourself to the present moment's influx of inspiration so that I may obtain a promise [of realising this esoteric dimension] for you. Do not let your hand be without a cup of the best claret wine. (7355) I am a master of the *khānaqāh*, that is to say, of the wine-house: simple cotton and wool is all I want, not silk and gold brocade. (7356) You have not even imbibed a scent (of reality) and yet you relate yourself to Shaykh Ṣādiq. This affair concerns spiritual impoverishment (*iftiqār*), not (wearing) green or blue robes. (7357) I hold someone's love (*mihr*, also "sun") in my heart who when a miracle needed to be displayed, was able to the rend the moon in twain in the heavens. (7358) The love of the Walī is kneaded into my flesh and blood. Do you know who that is? It is that Commander-general, (who was) the lion on the battlefield of the [Battle of the] Trench.

(7359) Dense idiots — I know — detest Nizārī, but just because sham traditionalists finds faults with these words, there's no need to get upset.

This poem is important in placing in perspective both the Ismāʿīlī context of his Sufi expression and the Sufi context of his Ismāʿīlī Shiʿism. On the one hand, clear indications of his *Bāṭinī* persuasion can be seen in verses such as 7353, where the poet explicitly identifies himself as posessing a relatively high degree in the Ismāʿīlī esoteric hierarchy: that of the "certified missionary" (*dāʿī-yi muṣaddaq*).[53] In Ismāʿīlī gnosis, the role of the *dāʿī-yi muṭlaq* or "authorised missionary" — a term more or less equivalent here to Nizārī's "certified missionary" (*dāʿī-yi muṣaddaq*) — is to initiate seekers into the higher realms of knowledge and acquaint them with "angelology; to initiate them in the *tāʾwīl*, that is to say, in esoteric exegesis," as Henry Corbin points out.[54] This is exactly what Nizārī asks his reader to apprehend

from this verse: hearken to the esoteric teaching and Qurʾānic exegesis from one certified and authorised to expound it, he inculcates, for every outer phenomenon has an esoteric dimension which sustains it (the gist of the first hemistich in which he professes the classic Ismāʿīlī doctrine that every outer dimension of reality [*ẓāhir*] has a corresponding inner one, *bāṭin*).

On the other hand, two lines later, in verses 7355–56 of this *ghazal*, we find two clearly Sufi references:

I am a master of the *khānaqāh*, that is to say, of a wine-house;
Simple cotton and wool is all I need, not silk and gold brocade.
You have not even had a scent (of reality) and yet you relate yourself to Shaykh Ṣādiq;
This affair concerns spiritual impoverishment (*iftiqār*), not (wearing) green or blue robes.

When, in couplet 7355, Nizārī lays claim to be "a master of the *khānaqāh*," he clarifies this image as being both an allegorical expression and a spiritual rank, equating the Sufi symbol and institution of the *khānaqāh* to a *sharāb-khāna* or Winehouse, which according to al-Tahānawī, is "symbolic of the Angelic World, as well as signifying the inner being of the perfect gnostic which is full of yearning and creative exhuberance inspired by divine gnosis."[55] In the second hemistich, he emphasises that he is concerned moreover with the interior discipline of spiritual impoverishment (cotton and wool: the essential substance, *ṣūf*, of "Ṣūfism"), rather than mere exterior trappings of power and glory (silk and gold brocade).

In the next line (7356), citing "Shaykh Ṣādiq," Nizārī's refers to the sixth Shiʿite Imām Abū Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (d. 765), revered both by Ismāʿīlīs and Sufis as one the founding father of their communities. Thus the Sufi poet ʿAṭṭār lists al-Ṣādiq as the first Sufi in his *Tadhkirat al-awliyaʾ*, stating that "since most of the discourses made about the Sufi Path from amongst the members of the House (*ahl-i bayt*; i.e. Shiʿites) have been made by him, and since there are more accounts related from him than others, I have narrated a few words from him here, since they (the Sufis) are all one. When I mention him, I mention them all."[56] Concerning the technical term *iftiqār* (impoverishment), Sahl b. ʿAbdullāh Tustarī (d. 896) says, "No denser veil than making pretentious claims (*daʿwa*) exists between God and the devotee. There is no closer way to God than spiritual impoverishment (*iftiqār*) before Him."[57] Spiritual poverty (*faqr*), of course, is another term for Sufism itself, which is the ultimate subject of both these couplets (7355–56).

The final lines of the *ghazal* (7357ff.) furnish a Shiʿite theological context for the Ismāʿīlism of the first five couplets, containing an explicitly Shiʿite reference to ʿAlī, the son-in-law of the Prophet. In sum, as a poetic mélange of Ismāʿīlī doctrines couched in Sufi allegorical imagery, this *ghazal* gives a good illustration of Nizārī's highly original brand of Ismāʿīlī Shiʿism infused with Sufism or Sufi Ismāʿīlism imbued with Imāmī Shiʿīsm.

The following lines (vv. 979–80) from another ghazal (98: 970–83) also provide a clear expression of the Ismāʿīlī ambience of his poetry:

بشنو از ارباب تأویل این همه تشبیه چیست — آب حیوان باز نتوان یافت الا از هدات
آری آری مقتدای عارفان قائم بود — قائمی اما که باشد ذات او قائم به ذات

(979) Listen to the Lords of esoteric exegesis (*arbāb-i taʾwīl*)!
What are all these anthropomorphic comparisons (*tashbīh*)?
One cannot find the water of life except by way of Guidance.[58]
(980) Yes indeed, the leader of the gnostics in the Resurrector (*qāʾim*):
But he is (not just) a Resurrector, but one whose essence is self-subsistent.

The term *taʾwīl* used in verse 979 is a technical term in the Ismāʿīlī lexicon for allegorical and esoteric interpretation of the Qurʾān,[59] the Ismāʿīlīs themselves also being known as the *ahl-i taʾwīl*: those who practice esoteric exegesis of the Qurʾān. In the second hemistich of this verse, the polarity of *taʾwīl* and *tashbīh* is mentioned, the doctrinal context of which alludes to the Ismāʿīlīs' general rejection of the theological attempt to understand God by means of comparisons and analogies, an approach which led, they held, to anthropomorphism (*tashbīh*).[60] The

Ismāʿīlīs formulated their own doctrine of a *taʾwīl, a* secret epistemological method of scriptural analysis that is intimately bound up with the notion of absolute obedience to the Imām of the Age. Paul Walker's summary of this doctrine emphasises the theological authority of the Imām which buttresses its application:

> Free, personal exercise of the right to perform *taʾwīl* does not bring with it certitude; that comes only from adherence to God's divine guidance as provided on earth and in history by the lawgiving prophets and those who were chosen to stand in their place. The two doctrines are intimately related; *taʾwīl* — the interpretative act — and *nubuwwa* — apostolic prophecy — are the halves of one whole. Interpretation requires authority; authority confirms interpretation.[61]

It is for this reason that in the same breath and verse that Nizārī admonishes his reader to "listen to the masters of the esoteric exegesis (*arbāb-i taʾwīl*)," he also claims that the living waters of divine inspiration are only fed from the stream of divine "Guidance." It is this which forms the theme of the next verse (980) — that is, the Alamūt-period Nizārī-Ismāʿīlī doctrine of the "Resurrector" (*qāʾim*) according to which, as Farhad Daftary explains, the "resurrection was interpreted spiritually on the basis of Ismaʿili *taʾwīl* to mean recognition of the unveiled truth in the spiritual reality of the rightful imam of the time who was none other than the Nizārī Ismaʿili imam."[62] Thus, in the space of only two couplets, our poet admonishes his reader to follow the science of esoteric scriptural interpretation, to eschew making anthropomorphic comparisons based on sensory reason, and to follow the inspired Imām's or Qāʿim's guidance, without whom the entire doctrine of *taʾwīl* cannot be understood or put into practice. In such verses, the Nizārian Ismāʿīlī nature of Nizārī's thought is beyond all doubt.

In the following *qaṣīda*,[63] Nizārī selects his audience strategically on the grounds of their being cognoscenti of his specialist Ismāʿīlī terminology; Ismāʿīlī lore here becomes the touchstone of real knowledge. None but adepts in the science of *taʾwīl*, he says, merit his poetical discourse:

ندارم با کسی نه قال و نه قیل — که او تمثال نشناسد ز تمثیل
نه چون نیل عروسان کن تصور — که بر تمثال بنهادند آن نیل
نداری سمع جان کی باز دانی — دم آهنگر از صور سرافیل
...محق از کثرت باطل نترسد — زبون پشهء عاجز شود پیل
...محمد را فرستادند قرآن — کلیم و روح را تورات و انجیل
سداسر راست در هرحرف اگر نه — کلام الله را برهم چه تفصیل
مفسر راست گو باید اگر نه — خلافی نیست در تأویل و تنزیل
ز مستودع جدا کن مستقر را — همین یک نکته باشد اصل تأویل
به نقد الوقت باید خواند منصوص — ز موسی چند گویی وز سماعیل
گذشته بهرهء به گذشتگان بود — بس از افسانهء قابیل و هابیل
نزاری نیست بر عمد امعول — نشاید کرد بر تعمید تعویل

تراعلم الیقین عین الیقین شد
شدی فارغ ز مشروح وز تفصیل

(1) I have nothing to say to anyone who doesn't know the difference between the painted image (*timthāl*) and the symbolic representation (*tamthīl*). (2) Do not think that (real) indigo resembles the painted image of the bride's cosmetic blue. (3) You don't possess the inner ear of the soul (the faculty of spiritual audition) and thus cannot distinguish between the trumpet of Sarāfīl and the blacksmith's yell …(5) The truthful adept (*muḥiqq*) has no fear of a party of vain falsehoods: for even the elephant is subdued by the wretched fly. (10)… To Muḥammad was revealed the Qurʾān; to Moses (*kalīm*) and Jesus (*rūḥ*), the Torah and Gospels; (11) In each word of these, there lies a hundred mysteries: otherwise, what difference would exist between the words of God? (12) There must be

> a veracious interpreter who professes the truth (of these texts); otherwise there would be no difference between the esoteric exegesis (*ta'wīl*) and its literal revelation (*tanzīl*). (13) Distinguish between the acting imām (*mustawdaʿ*) and the appointed imām (*mustaqarr*): this one subtle point comprises the whole foundation of the (science of) esoteric exegesis (*ta'wīl*). (14) One must read what is laid down in the Scripture using the sound assets of the present moment (*naqd al-waqt*). How long will you prate on of Moses and Ismāʿīl? (15) What's past was the lot of those who have passed away: enough of the tale of Cain and Abel! (16) Nizārī is not himself by intent trustworthy: one should not rely merely upon goodwill. (17) Your (Nizārī's) "theoretical knowledge of certitude" (*ʿilm al-yaqīn*) has become "directly perceived experiential certitude" (*ʿayn al-yaqīn*): you're free from both the literary commentary and from its exegetical exposition.

While the technical terminology and imagery of Ismāʿīlism and Sufism blend into a mélange in this *qaṣīda*, the resultant pastiche is clearly more of an Ismāʿīlī than a Sufi tinge. "I have nothing to say," he begins in the first line, "to anyone who doesn't know the difference between the painted image (*timthāl*) and the symbolic representation (*tamthīl*)." The distinction between the painted image (*timthāl*) and allegorical representation (*tamthīl*), highlighted by the poet here, alludes to the Ismāʿīlī dichotomy between the literal word of the divine revelation (*tanzīl*) and its allegorical exegesis (*ta'wīl*), corresponding to the common hermeneutical distinction between a mythological symbol being taken literally, and its being interpreted as iconographic of a higher truth.[64] Thus the Ismāʿīlī poet Nāṣir-i Khusraw wrote: "Positive religion (*sharīʿat*) is the exoteric aspect of the spiritual Idea (*ḥaqīqat*) and the spiritual Idea is the esoteric aspect of positive religion; positive religion is the symbol (*mathal*), the spiritual Idea is that which is symbolised (*mamthūl*)."[65] While this doctrine is central to Ismāʿīlī hermeneutics, it is also by no means of marginal significance in Sufi doctrine.[66] Nizārī continues to emphasise the distinction between appearance and Reality in the following two verses (2, 3).

Skipping down a line, we come to this couplet (5): "…The truthful adept (*muḥiqq*) has no fear of a party of vain falsehoods: for even the elephant can be vanquished by a swarm of flies." The term *muḥiqq* is again culled from the Ismāʿīlī lexicon, having been applied extensively by Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī in his *Taṣawwurat* to the highest adepts in the Ismāʿīlī hierarchy who follow the Imām, roughly corresponding to the eminent position of the "gnostic (*ʿārif*)" in Sufi theosophical speculation. In the same text, Ṭūsī also explains that while in the beginning the forces of evil and vanity appear as superior and overwhelming in force, in the end the powers of goodness and rectitude subdue them. Nizārī's simile of the elephant tortured to death by a fly in its ear, which is a well-known topos in Persian poetry, expresses this in a suitably poetic fashion.

In lines 10 and 11 the poet addresses the central subject of the poem: the esoteric basis of prophetology and scriptural hermeneutics. Although Sufis and Ismāʿīlīs in their respective doctrines of esoteric exegesis diverge, it is a common notion in both Ismāʿīlī and Sufi thought that the sacred scriptures have several esoteric dimensions, each of which demands a greater degree of insight than the preceding one.[67] To the Ismāʿīlīs (as Nizārī in the next two verses 12 and 13 explains), the apprehension of the esoteric sense of the Qur'ān depends upon the presence of the Imām's personal exegesis: it is not that his person is *endowed with* truth, but rather that the Truth/*Ḥaqq*/God *exists through* his person. This stands in contrast to the Sunni Sufi perspective on the exegetical key of *ta'wīl*, the use of which is understood as dependent solely on denial of the self and negation of the aspirant's passions.[68]

The distinction between "the acting imam (*mustawdaʿ*)" and "the appointed imam (*mustaqarr*)," mentioned by the poet in line 13, relates to dichotomy between *majāz* and *ḥaqīqat*, which (in the context of Islamic theology) may be translated as "appearance" vs. "reality," and (in context of rhetoric and literary theory[69]) as "figurative speech" vs. "veritable expression," in which respect, this couplet reinstates the *timthāl* vs. *tamthīl* dichotomy of the first line. The "true and real" (*ḥaqīqī*) spiritual leader himself "comprises the whole foundation" — since he is the supreme exegete — of the science of esoteric Qur'ānic hermeneutics, in contradistinction to the merely figurative — *majāzī* — imām who is temporarily appointed, and able thus to present only an outward appearance of spiritual authority. In the purely historical context, the distinction between the two types of imām can be traced back to the Shiʿite Ismāʿīlī doctrine that considers ʿAlī to have been the first, and Ḥusayn the second, imām, respectively. Ḥusayn's brother Ḥasan,

according to Ismāʿīlī speculation, was just a temporary trustee (*mustawdaʿ*), as distinguished from one of the "permanently appointed" Imāms (*mustaqarr*).[70] In ideas of classical Persian Sufi love-lyricism, Nizārī claims that all knowledge depends on recognising the "Imām of the Age":

ره عاشقـــان سپردن نه به پای عقـل عام است — همه عاقلان چو مرغ اند وطریق عشق دام است
همه علـم ها فرو خـــوان و برِ مـن آی تـا مـن — بنشانـمت به حـجـت که تـمام ناتمـــام است
تو به هـر عمامـه پوشـی که قدم نهـاد پیشت — پس او در ایـستادی به نـماز کاین امـام است
نفسـی جهـان نباشـــد ز امـــام وقت خالـی — بـمرنج وگر بـرنجـی چه کنـم نـصِ کـلام است
تو امام وقـــت خـود را به یقیـن اگر ندانی — به یقین بدان که بر تو سرو مال و زن حرام است
بفـروشم آن امامت ز بـرای نُقـــل مستـــان — که عـمـامه بر سـر او گـرو شـراب و جام است
چو امـام تو دو باشد به جـواب من چه گویی — اگر از تـو باز پـرسم که امام تو کـــدام است
... همه مفـتیـان عالـم بدهـــند خـط فتـوی — که نزاری مخمـــر بتـــرین خـاص و عـام است
نه ز کشـتنـم هـراسی نه ز سوختـــن غباری — غم ریـــش کـس ندارم که بـروتِ جمله خام است

short, the entire science of esoteric exegesis is based on imāmology.

In the final four lines of the poem, Nizārī renders an Ismāʿīlī gloss upon the Sufi term *naqd al-waqt*: "the economic assets of time," or "coin of mystical consciousness," asserting that "the sound assets of the present moment (*naqd al-waqt*)"[71] is the basis of all Scriptural interpretation. According to many Persian Sufis, such as Rūmī[72] for instance, the sacred Scripture is a touchstone (*miḥakk*) on which one must strike the coin of one's consciousness to find out if it rings true. In his manual of Sufi doctrine, the *Mirṣād al-ʿibād*, Najm al-Dīn Rāzī describes his own text as a touchstone upon which aspirants may strike the coin of their spiritual moments (*naqd al-waqt*) to see if they ring true.[73] However, this is not the sense of the term *naqd al-waqt* which Nizārī choses to employ in line 14. In that verse, the coin of one's consciousness refers *not* to the interior presential awareness of the mystic — the sense that this term usually possesses in Sufism — but rather to the living presence of the Imām. Nizārī's conclusion to the *qaṣīda* underlines his own spiritual realisation, which however is not an understanding that is egocentric or self-conscious in nature (hence expressed through the paradoxical claim that "Nizārī is not himself by intent trustworthy") but rather *experientally* proven by his own direct understanding, which is here identified with the consciousness of the Imām.

In another *ghazal* (153: 1527–37),[74] also heavily steeped both in Ismāʿīlī terminology and imagery and

(1527) Vulgar Reason's foot cannot walk the Way of Love. Intellectuals are all like birds but the Way of Love the snare. (1528) Go and study well all the different sciences, then come to me, so that I can show you by way of (the) Proof (*ḥujjat*) that all of that (you've studied) is but half-baked. (1529) Anyone togged up in a turban who stands before you, you stand behind (in prayer), for "this is the Imām". (1530) But the world is never devoid, even for a moment, of the Imām of the Age. Do not be hurt (at this) if you find it offensive; what else can I do? It is the word of the prophet's designation (*naṣṣ*).[75] (1531) For certain, know that all health and wealth and women are forbidden for you if you don't know who the Imām of your Age is. (1532) I'd be glad to sell that Imāmat for (the price of) the candy of drunkards, for the turban on his head is in pawn to wine and cup. (1533) Since your Imām consists of two (persons), if I ask you which one of them is your Imām, what will you say in reply to me? … (1536) All the worlds' religious judges will (be sure to) set their signature to the fatwa that "Nizārī, the drunken sot, is worst among all the masses and the nobles." (1537) They have no fear of killing me, nor in cremating me (would be touched by any) smoke, but nobody's beard gives me grief, since baby's whiskers are all they wear.

The poem begins by discussing the common Sufi topos of the pre-eminence of Love over Reason in the first three couplets (1527–29), before immediately

plunging (in verses 1530–33) into a discussion of the Shi'ite-Ismā'īlī doctrine of the ever-living presence of the Imām. Although it is not clear whether the Imām spoken of in these four verses (1529–33) refers to the living Nizārī Ismā'īlī or simply the hidden Twelver Imām, it is evident that the esoteric lore of "Love" transcends the scope of exoteric Reason. Love's lore in this context signifies knowledge of the Imām. It is for this reason that he claims that (1528) "Go and study well all the different sciences, then come to me, so that I can show you by way of (the) Proof (*ḥujjat*) that all of that (you've studied) is but half-baked."

In this poem, one finds the vocabulary and technical terminology of Sufi mysticism harnassed to haul the carriage of Shi'ite theology, and Sufi erotic lyricism put at the service of imāmology.[76] The theological context of this ghazal is clarified by another *qaṣīda* (cited by Muṣaffā, introduction, *Dīwān-i Nizārī*, pp. 78–81, but too long to discuss here), in which Nizārī places his Ismā'īlī Sufism in a very clear autobiographical context as he expounds his spiritual realisation in Sufi terms, again concluding the narrative of his mystical journey with verses in praise of the "Imām of the Age" to whose authority he has submitted himself.

While this overview of Nizārī's Ismā'īlī imagery and ideas does demonstrate the extent of the poet's commitment to the Ismā'īlī faith, it should be emphasised that the material cited so far comprises only a tiny portion of his Persian poetry. Yet from the study of these few ghazals and *qaṣīda*s alone, it may be concluded that it is incorrect to say that Nizārī used the vocabulary of Sufism to express Ismā'īlī ideas; rather it seems more accurate to say that he integrated Sufi spirituality into Ismā'īlī theosophy, fusing the two into an original mélange of his own making. Before drawing any definite conclusions (VIII) about the precise contents of the mélange, it will be necessary to take a closer look at Nizārī's attitude towards the Sufi doctrines and symbols that fill his verse.

VII. SUFI DOCTRINES AND SYMBOLS IN NIZĀRĪ'S POETRY

Despite all his praise of the Imām noted in the *ghazal* 153 translated above, and his explicitly pronounced Ismā'īlī beliefs, Nizārī in some places seems to give his direct support to the axiomatic Sufi doctrine of obedience to the spiritual master (*pīr*). In his *mathnawī* poem *Azhar u mazhar*,[77] composed in the final years of his life, he wrote:

ببـاید صـاحـب الاسـرار پیـری — که باشـد پای مردی دست گیـری
بدو بسـپردن و تسـلیـم کـردن — به کل تـرک امـید و بـیم کـردن
نبـاشد منـزلی بـرتر ز تسلیـم — به شـرط آن که نگـریزی ز تعلیم
چو شد تسلیم مرد از خود برون شد — و گـر بیرون نشد تسلـیم چون شد

> One must have a spiritual master (*pīr*) adept in the mysteries, who may hold the seeker's hand, guiding his steps. One should submit and surrender oneself to him, abandoning all hope and desire. There is no degree higher than Surrender — on the condition that you do not flee from the instructions you're given. When a man surrenders himself, he sets himself aside. What type of surrender is it if he never leaves himself?

These same sentiments are reiterated in his *Dastūr-nāma*[78] also composed in the final years of his life, in verses where he encourages the reader to follow a master spiritual guide (*pīr-i rahbar*). The final verses of the poem seem to refer to this *pīr* as being the Ismā'īlī Imām,[79] causing a hybridisation of the two notions of *ṭarīqa* guidance and imāmate-directorship to occur.

یکی پیـر رهبـر طلب ای جـوان — که راه از پسس پیش بردن تـوان
بدو ده زمام و بـرون شـو ز خـود — نداری دگر کـار با نـیک و بد
به تسلیـم او چون مسلـم شوی — نـمودار سـر دو عالـم شوی
مشو پـس رو غـول وهم و خیـال — به افسـون خـربط مرو در جـوال
محقـق دگر گـونه دارد سخـن — معـول مکـن بر مـزلـزل، مکن

مکن اقـتدا جـز به مـــرد خدا قیـاس تو غـول است نه مقتـدا
به حق بازیابی مُحـق را نـخست دگـر باره حـق از مُحق شد درست
کسی مقتـدا در امامت نکوست که نـور خـدا در دل پاک اوست
بدان نـور یابی خـلاص از ظلام تـتبـع بدان نـــور کن والسـلام

O youth, go and seek a spiritual master to guide you (*pīr-i rahbar*), so you make progress forward by following behind him. Give the reins of yourself over to him, and leave yourself aside, having no more concern for (your own personal) good or ill. When your surrender to him has been confirmed, you will then become an exemplar for both the worlds. Do not follow the monster of fantasy and fancy: do not become enchanted and caught like a goose in a sack. The one who has experientially verified and personally realised the truth (*muḥaqqiq*) speaks in another manner: do not, do not rest on what is itself shaky and wobbly. Do not follow anyone but a man of God: your own rationalisations are just a monstrous brigand, not a guide. At first you will find the truthful adept (*muḥiqq*) through God: then you will find God confirmed through the truthful adept. It is well that one should follow the *imāmat*, for the light of God is within his pure heart. By that light you will be freed from darkness: follow that light, and — farewell!

Examining Nizārī's attitude towards Sufism more closely, one can see that while on the whole it is one of wholesale endorsement, occasionally he does differentiate his own Ismāʿīlī persuasion from formal doctrinal *taṣawwuf*. His denominational distinction between Ismāʿīlism and Sufism is particularly visible in one *ghazal*[80] where the Sufis are cited as a separate spiritual group from whom he differentiates himself, admonishing the reader to surrender instead to the *taʿlīm* (teaching) of the Imām:

صوفیان گویند ابن الوقت باش ای منتظر من نه آن باشـم که باشم در محل انتـــظار
صوفیان همـراه ما باشنـد ما نعم البـــدل ما به منصوص امام ایشان به حکم اختیـار
از نزاری بشنو این تنبیه تا ایمـن شـوی بـر پی تعلیـم رو تسلیـــم شـــو مردانه وار

The Sufis say: "O you who wait in expectation, be a son of the present moment", but I am not one who would just wait in expectation. If Sufis were to accompany us — what a great trade-off! — we'll follow the bidding of the Imām, they'll follow the beck and call of self-will. So listen to this admonition from Nizārī that you may be secure: submit yourself to the [Ismāʿīlī] teachings (*taʿlīm*) like a man.

In another *ghazal*, Nizārī describes the "perfection of Sufism" (کمال تصوف) as gnosis (معرفت), the realisation of which permits the gnostic to transcend artificial religious formalism that would insist on asserting a significant difference between wearing Muslim garments and the Christian cincture.[81]

به مـذهب من اگر عارفی تفاوت نیست ردا فکـندن و زنار بر میـــــان بسـتن
کمال اهل تصوف به چیـست مـیدانی؟ به معرفت، نه به بر جستن و فرو جستن

There is no difference according to my religion, if you are a gnostic, whether you wear a Muslim mantle on your back, or bind a Christian cincture about your waist. Do you know in what perfection lies according to the adepts of Sufism? It lies in gnostic insight; it's not in jumping up or bowing down.

But the most important poem in his corpus for illustrating his overall favourable attitude towards Sufism and his endorsement — if not actual pursuit — of its principles and practices, is the first major

mathnawī composed by Nizārī,[82] the *Safar-nāma*,[83] a travelogue composed between 678–79/1279–80. The poem revolves around three main themes: (i) long accounts of young Nizārī's love affairs with various women (with interesting details as to how these affairs aided or impeded his spiritual development); (ii) his reactions, often highly critical, to the alien lands, peoples and towns that he visited; and finally, (iii) homilies in which the poet confides the deeper spiritual meaning or purport to be taken from these various autobiographical vignettes and dervish tales to the reader.

Not only is the entire *Safar-nāma* filled with popular dervish tales that testify to Nizārī's fondness for Sufism, the poet's evident initiation into a Sufi *ṭarīqa* is broached in many passages, the most interesting of which — from a biographical point of view at least — occurs at the end of the poem, where Nizārī devotes several pages to writing memoirs in verse to his travelling-companions. Invariably, he invokes the Sufi Muse — the *Sāqī* — to make an oblation of wine that he may drink to the name and the memory of his faithful friends. Many of their names mentioned still remain unidentified.[84] Among these unknown personages one finds the name of a certain "supreme master of masters Amīn al-Dīn," to whom the entire work was dedicated, whose identity, if discovered, would help illuminate, and possibly answer, the vexed question of Nizārī's *ṭarīqa* affiliation. In praise of this Amīn al-Dīn, Nizārī writes:

از من سر گشته در عالم چو گوی — پیش شیخ الاولیا رمزی بگوی
کاشف اسرار حق شیخ الشیوخ — جوهر انوار حق شیخ الشیوخ
عیسی ثانی امین الدین که هست — پیش قدر همتش افلاک پست
قاطع بدعت شمشیر زمان — تابع امر خداوند جهان

From me — who wanders bewildered like a ball around the world,
Convey this secret message to the master of the saints — He who is the supreme spiritual master, the revealer of the mysteries of the Truth,
The substance of divine illumination, the supreme master.
The second Jesus: Amīn al-Dīn, such that
The heavens bow abjectly down before his will;
He is Time's sharp sword, severing away all heretical deviation,
Being obedient to the command of the Lord of the world …

Since, as stated above, the *Safar-nāma* was his first major *mathnawī*, composed by Nizārī in his early thirties, it is probable that his acquaintance with this (his?) Sufi master began during his teens or twenties. In the beginning of the *Safar-nāma*, the poet's close association with dervishes and absorption in Sufi spiritual practices is also clearly visible. In 678/1279, Nizārī alighted in Iṣfahān, the first waystation of his journey, where he revisited a longtime friend and an old fellow Sufi, who encouraged him to compose a versified memoir of his travels (later to become the *Safar-nāma*). Here, he comments that the entire purpose of the *mathnawī* is to commemorate his friends and recall their friendship, "not to make mention of buildings and bath-houses."[85] The Sufi ambience of the poem is especially evident in the last line of these verses[86] where he admits that both his friend and he "had worn the same Sufi mantle from the same Sufi master," that is, were fellow disciples of the same spiritual guide, demonstrating beyond all doubt his direct affiliation to a Sufi *ṭarīqa*:

بر صفاهان زان گرفتم راه را — تا ببینم یار ایرانشاه را
آن جهان فضل را جان آمده — افسوس بر سر اعیان آمده
خرقه از زهد و تقوی را نظام — سلک نظمش کلک معنی را نظام
مونس ایام تنهائی من — راست گویم کهل بینائی من
یار نیکو عهد نیکو ذات من... — داشته پیوسته خوش اوقات من
هر دو بعدا ز ترک چنگ ونای و نوش — بوده از یک پیر با هم خرقه پوش

We took the road to Iṣfahān in order to see a friend, Īrānshāh. He was the soul of the world of knowledge, envied by all the grandees. His discipline was to wear a Sufi cloak (*khirqa*) of ascetic restraint and piety, while his versification gave harmony to the pen of

من مـروق میکشـم با شـــاهدا ن او ریاضت میـکشـد با زا هدا ن
من گرفته روز و شب گیسوی منـگ او گرفته خلقهء مسجـد به چنـگ
من در رندا ن باده در کف هر صباح او چو دیگر پارسـایان در صـلاح

spiritual insight. He was the friend of my days of loneliness. To speak truthfully, he enlightened my vision.[87] He was a goodly faithful friend, good to my heart, who always kept my hours gay and cheerful. Both of us were wore the same Sufi mantle (*khirqa*) from the same spiritual guide (*pīr*), after abstaining from harp, flute and drink.

It is not clear who the "Īrānshāh" cited by Nizārī here is. The Persian phrase is *yār Īrānshāh* (or *yār-i Īrānshāh*: both readings suit the scansion of this particular *mathnawī* metre), meaning either "a friend (called) Īrānshāh" or "a friend from Īrānshāh." If we accept the second sense, Īrānshāh may possibly refer to a small village near Iṣfahān, perhaps to the well-known village of "Īrānshāh" in the vicinity of Khurramābād, a major city between Iṣfahān and Kirmānshāh.[88] Alternatively, the poet's reference could be to "Shāhanshāh," a village a few kilometres north-west of Iṣfahān, or to Shāhriḍā, the town south of Iṣfahān on the road to Abādeh, either of which may have had a different name in the thirteenth century. If interpreted in the first sense, however — following Baiburdi's and Nadia Jamal's opinion here, and translating the phrase as "a friend called Īrānshāh" — quite possibly Īrānshāh may be assumed to be an unknown Ismāʿīlī adept.[89] However, both of these interpretations will remain completely hypothetical conjectures until we have some definite information from another historical source contemporary to the poet that confirms and corroborates the meaning or identity of the person or place-name "Īrānshāh".

Making no attempt at self-promotion, unwilling to set himself up as a man of piety and prayer in the passages that immediately follow the above verses, the poet celebrates his own profligacy, deliberately contrasting his licentious behaviour — after the fashion of the Sufi *malāmatī* tradition — to the devout conduct of his dear Sufi friend:

With the ascetics, he subjects himself to stern ascetic discipline, while I guzzle down wine alongside beautiful ladies. He clings to the door of the mosque. I hazard my hand day and night on games of dice. He behaves like holy men with rectitude: each dawn I hold in hand a cup of wine like a libertine.[90]

Nizārī's portrait of himself as a drunkard, of course, as was pointed out in the discussion of Nizārī's "bacchanalia" above (IV), may be interpreted allegorically as symbolic of a higher spiritual awareness. Such sentiments at the very least completely typify the ethos of Persian Sufism, and in particular the erotic mysticism of poets such as Saʿdī, in which the drunken ecstasy of the religion of love is contrasted and vaunted as superior to the "dry" puritanism of exoteric Sharīʿa-oriented ascetical faith.[91] Nor should one expect less than this sort of excess from the greatest wine-poet in the history of Persian ghazal poetry, compared to Ḥāfiẓ by no less an authority than Jāmī.

The pervasive Sufi ambience of the poem also appears in the only place in the poem[92] where even a hint of Nizārī's Ismāʿīlī sympathies is expressed. This occurs in a story about a Sufi master (*pīr*) and his novice disciple (*naw-murīd*), who asks the master what the seeker's desired goal should be. The moral drawn is that the desired goal is contentment with having one's wishes always thwarted, that is to say, with non-fufillment of one's desires (*nāmurādī*).[93] Echoing the Sufi master's reply, Nizārī relates: "if you heed what the [Ismāʿīlī] missionary (*dāʿī*) says you will find fortune; your soul will be animate, your heart enlightened."

گر ز داعـــی بشنوی مقبـــل شوی زنده جـــان شـــوی و روشندل شوی

In this tale, we find a Sufi master preaching a classic Sufi doctrine, in which the ethical purport of the Sufi teachings is appropriated for the purposes of a spirituality that is defined as specifically Ismāʿīlī

تا نخـواهـی جز خدا را و السلام هر چه خواهی از خدا باشد حرام

(گر ز داعـی بشنوی), but with the Sufi morality and Ismāʿīlī ethics appearing as indistinguishable to all intents and purposes.

Yet of all of Nizārī's poetry, it is the *mathnawī* poem *Safar-nāma* that is the most pervasively Sufi in tenor in terms of doctrinal teaching and morality, with Nizārī frequently and freely using stories about Sufi masters (*pīr*) and disciples (*murīd*) exactly like ʿAṭṭār in the *Ilahī-nāma* or Sanāʾī in the *Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqa* before

من یقینم گر ترا باری شکیست مرد حق را مشرق و مغرب یکیست
بر همین مـذهب بداری یاربـم غیر از این دیگـر نباشد مذهبـم

him. One of the most interesting and original of these Sufi morality tales concerns the esoteric significance of "sin" for the Sufi adept, in which Nizārī explains the creative function of Satan. This is couched in the context of a story of Sufi master refusing to initiate a disciple until the disciple had first paid a visit to the devil.[94]

هر جا که میرود همه ملک خدای اوست مرد خدا به مشرق و مغرب غریب نیست

The biographical details inspiring this tale are perhaps more significant for what they tell us about Nizārī's human rather than divine affairs, that is, his relationship with women. In Ardabil, Nizārī relates,[95] he fell into a violent passion over a mysterious and beautiful village girl. Although social circumstances decreed that she was not to be his, his love for her was so intense that he longed to die when absent from her. Since he was unable to sleep for weeks on end, local physicians despaired of ever curing him. Finally, he turned to God and entreated to be granted an hour of sleep, whereupon falling into a deep slumber, he found

که بی سپاه و حشم شاه ملکت عجـم است کمال عارف درویش دان به نفـــس شریف

himself being tortured in Hell. Upon awakening, he thanked God that it was only a dream: slowly it dawned on him, however, that his error was to have coveted a being besides God: to have pursued an object of desire other than the Divine, for "may all besides God be forbidden to you unless all you wish for is God, and bid goodbye to all else."[96]

In the end, the moral lessons adduced from his failures and successes in love, and journeys through various outflung areas of Greater Persia led Nizārī to cite Sufi tales in which edification, admonition and spiritual reckoning are contained, and the waywardness of his own ways of indulgence in sin led him to invoke a transcendental mystical ethic wherein God is perceived to pervade all phenomena, whether good or evil, familiar or foreign.[97]

> To the man of God, East and West are one. Of this I'm certain, though you may doubt. My religion (*madhhab*) is nothing but this. O Lord, maintain me in this faith!

These cosmopolitan sentiments of course echo classical Persian Sufi doctrines, and recall in particular Saʿdī's verse:

Such ideas I think owe far more to the universalistic spirit of Persian Sufism (see below, VIII) than to any Ismāʿīlī doctrine and philosophy, although that is not to argue that the particular ethos of Persian Ismāʿīlism espoused in verse by Nizārī was not equally universalistic and broad-minded as the thought of Sufism during the same period.

VIII. CONCLUSION: NIZĀRĪ'S SUFI-ISMĀʿĪLĪ SYNTHESIS

> "Know perfection to be the dervish gnostic, who being cognisant of his own pure soul, is the king of Persia without army and ceremony."[98]

If "Sufism" itself is understood in the broadest and most ecumenical sense of the word, in which (especially during the Mongol period) such doctrines of the "unity of religions" are of primary socio-political importance,[99] it is not difficult to reconcile Nizārī's denominational identity as a follower the Ismāʿīlī community and its Imām with his penchant for the teachings of the dervish masters and the contemplative practices of Sufism. Nizārī's synthesis of Sufi and Ismāʿīlī thought was, in fact, a direct product of the broad ecumenical world-view of mediaeval Persian Sufism, the key ideas of which are explicitly trans-sectarian, and in many cases, which foster tolerance of religious diversity and nurture the on-going inter-religious dialogue between Islam, Christianity and Judaism in the mediaeval Muslim world.[100]

If one were looking for a similar instance of an eclectic synthesis of diverse theological doctrines crossing denominational and sectarian boundaries, Nizārī's position as an Ismāʿīlī Muslim in Mongol Persia closely resembles that of the most prolific and the second greatest Judeo-Persian poet of the Safavid period, ʿEmrānī (b. 1454 Iṣfahān, d. Kāshān after 1534). Although a devout Jew, Emrānī's poetry was directly inspired by the works of all the major classical Persian Sufi poets, such as Saʿdī, Niẓāmī, Rūmī, and especially ʿAṭṭār, exactly the same mystical literary tradition in which Nizārī's *Dīwān* (see above, III) is steeped. This Judeo-Persian poet fearlessly and freely cites Muslim *ḥadīth* to support Jewish mystical notions; Qurʾānic terms *ḥashr* and *maḥshar* are used to express the Jewish-rabbinic doctrine of the world to come, while classical Persian symbolism (especially Ḥāfiẓ) serves in his verse to illustrate maxims drawn of the Hebrew Fathers![101] As David Yeroushalmi points out, ʿEmrānī's "extensive use of mystical expressions, concepts and allusions presupposes that the reader is familiar with the meanings and connotations of such [Sufi] terms."[102] Albeit a Jew, he clearly "conveys a Sufi point of view."[103]

If the cosmopolitan humour of the Persian Sufi tradition was able to allow an orthodox mediaeval *Jewish* poet to successfully eradicate the artificial exclusivism of religious boundaries, the achievement and articulation of a similar religious synthesis appears even less strange and surprising in an Ismāʿīlī *Muslim* such as Nizārī. Unless one takes into account the historical context of the ecumenical tolerance of Persian Sufism, approaching Nizārī's poetry in light of what Marshal Hodgson celebrated as "the human outreach of the [Muslim] mystics,"[104] the modern imagination will no doubt fail to resolve the contradictions apparent within this synthesis. Yet crossing the sectarian divide in the intra-Islamic context, much less the extra-Islamic context, was a phenomenon of considerable normality in mediaeval Persian *taṣawwuf*. From the eleventh century onwards, as Hodgson underlines, Sufism had become popularised "as institutionalised mass religion," and as it became "the most important vehicle of serious inward religious experience in the region from Nile to Oxus, from which control by any ecclesiastical hierarchy or rivalry from sacramental mysteries had disappeared, Ṣūfī ways became adjusted to more than one sort of religious aspiration."[105]

Just as with the Judeo-Persian verse of ʿEmrānī, Nizārī's mystical genius articulates a Sufi message of moral ecumenism, for which, in the words of W.C. Smith, it was not the religion but the religiousness of the faithful which carried ultimate significance: "a theological statement cannot be baldly true in itself, but rather can become true in the life of persons, when it is interiorised and lived."[106] And this is ultimately, the outlook of Nizārī on religious unity and diversity, as he says (in a *ghazal*)[107] about Judaism and Islam:

کنشت و کعبه تعلق به وجه صـــــدق کند
روا ست از همه جانـب نیـازِ پاک سرشت

کجاست خواجه مجالِ تصرف اندر غیـب
که داند آن که قضـا بر سر من و تو نوشت

(Terms like) "Synagogue and Kaʿba" each relate to the angle of one's spiritual sincerity: for a person of pure character, it is is permitted to turn in supplication to *all* directions. Whence, O noble man, do you allow yourself to claim command over the supernatural realm? What do you know that Providence has writ on your, or my, forehead?

Notes

1 This article is based on a lecture delivered as part of a panel on "Ismaili Literary History" sponsored by the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London, at the Middle Eastern Association

of North America (MESA) annual conference, San Francisco, 18 November 2001. I am grateful to Dr Farhad Daftary (Head, Department of Academic Research and Publication [DARP] at the Insitute of Ismaili Studies in London) for inviting me to participate in this panel, and to Kutub Kassam (Senior Editor, DARP) for discussing in detail and correcting my perception about a number of Ismāʿīlī-related issues raised in this essay. I would also like to thank Dr Nadia Jamal for providing me with draft copies of selected chapters from her study of Nizārī, *Surviving the Mongols: Nizārī Quhistānī and the Continuity of the Ismaili Tradition in Persia* (London, 2002). Some of Dr Jamal's insights, to which I was able to refer (prior to its publication) after completing this essay, provided useful historical contextualisation to this study (particularly in regard to the poet's biography), without altering the substance or content of any of the arguments advanced below. I would like to also thank Terry Graham for reviewing earlier drafts of this essay and offering many helpful suggestions about expression of certain ideas.

2 *Dīwān-i Ḥakīm Nizārī Quhistānī*, ed. ʿAlī Riḍā Mujtahidzāda, introduction by Maẓāhir Muṣaffā (Tehran, 1371 A.Hsh./1992), introduction, p. 12. His full name is given as Ḥakīm Saʿd al-Dīn b. Shams al-Dīn b. Muḥammad Nizārī Fūdājī Bīrjandī Quhistānī.

3 J.T.P. de Bruijn, art. "Nizārī Ḳuhistānī," in *EI²*, VIII, p. 83.

4 Dhabīḥullāh Ṣafā, *Tārīkh-i Adabiyyāt dar Īrān* (Tehran, 1373 A.Hsh./1994; 10th edition), III/2, p. 736.

5 S. Riḍā Mujtahidzāda, *Ḥakīm Nizārī Quhistanī* (Mashhad, n.d.), p. 4.

6 Most of the key details of Nīzārī's career as a courtier have been pieced together by Nadia Jamal in her recent book, *Surviving the Mongols* (see n. 1 above) from which the following summary is mostly drawn.

7 Jamal, *op. cit.*, pp. 71–73.

8 Muṣaffā, introduction, *Dīwān-i Nizārī*, pp. 234–35.

9 Muṣaffā notes (introduction, *Dīwān-i Nizārī*, pp. 95ff.) that Nizārī wrote panegyrical verse in praise of several high political figures, including some lines in the *Dastūr-nāma* in praise of Khwāja Majd al-Dīn Wazīr, a long autobiographical *qaṣīda* (introduction, *Dīwān-i Nizārī*, pp. 101–03) and several short verses in his *mathnawī* poem *Rūz u shab* in praise of Shāh Shams al-Dīn I Kart (reg. 643–84/ 1245–85). He also wrote an autobiographical poem that is dedicated in its final verse to praise of Shams al-Dīn Juwaynī (1226–83), Hulāgūʿs vizier (introduction, *Dīwān-i Nizārī*, pp. 106–07), ending in the rhyme *maḥrūm* ("outcast"), in which he begs the vizier's assistance. In the year 678/1279, Nizārī served as Shams al-Dīn Juwaynī's travelling companion through Azerbayjan, a fact that he mentions in his *Safar-nāma* (introduction, *Dīwān-i Nizārī*, p. 109). He also wrote a panegyric to 'Alā' al-Dīn Hindū, the Īl-Khānid vizier of Khurāsān (see de Bruijn, *loc. cit.*), in which he asks that his stipend be continued, and a *qaṣīda* to Tāj al-Dīn Ḥasan (introduction, *Dīwān-i Nizārī*, p. 110). Four long *qaṣīda*s, whose final rhyming words are *laʿl* ("ruby"), *murvārīd* ("pearl") and *gawhar* ("jewel"), written in praise of various eminent personages, should also be mentioned in this context, as they display a great mastery of the art of the panegyric, although they add nothing to the poet's spiritual degree (*ibid.*, pp. 110–18). A long *qaṣīda* in praise of a unknown Mongol official, and another long *qaṣīda* addressed to a certain prince under whom Nizārī had served, complaining of his ill-treatment (*ibid.*, pp. 120–24), also belong to the poet's repertoire of political works containing important biographical details.

10 Jamal, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

11 See Muṣaffā's account of this stage of his life: introduction, *Dīwān-i Nizārī*, p. 129.

12 Cited *ibid.*, pp. 147–49

13 *Ibid.*, p. 13, note 10.

14 See *Jawāhir al-asrār*, British Library manuscript No. 1269, found in the Hermann Ethé, *Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts in the India Office Library* (repr. London: India Office Library 1980), p. 1128 (no. 2036); fol. 232b.

15 Introduction, *Dīwān-i Nizārī*, p. 82.

16 Cited in *ibid.*, pp. 83–84. For an alternative translation of these lines, see Jamal, *op. cit.*, pp. 78–79.

17 *Ghuluww* is "a general term of disapproval probably coined by some early Shīʿī authors and adopted by heresiographers in reference to those Shīʿīs accused of exagerration in religion and in respect to the imams" (Farhad Daftary, *The Ismailis: their history and doctrines* [Cambridge 1990], p. 64). The Ismāʿīlīs were quite often referred to by their enemies as "extremist" (*ghalī*) in this respect (Hodgson, "Ghulāt," *EI²*, II, p. 1094). The antonym of *ghuluww* is *muqaṣṣir*, meaning one who is slack in faith, falling short in the performance of his religious duties. The Ismāʿīlī poet Nāṣir-i Khusraw previously had paired these terms together in several verses (see Dihkhudā, *Lughat-nāma*, s.v. "Muqaṣṣir"). Obviously, Nizārī's usage of these technical terms, drawn from the lexicon of Sunni heresiography, is purely sardonic and ironic here.

18 See the list of parallel verses composed by Nizārī in imitation of these poets cited by Muṣaffā, introduction, *Dīwān-i Nizārī*, pp. 301–14.

19 See *ibid.*, pp. 308–10.

20 See *ibid.*, pp. 252–99.

21 Muṣaffā, introduction, *Dīwān-i Nizārī*, p. 306.

22 See the verses cited in *ibid.*, p. 312.

23 See *ibid.*, pp. 246–52.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 321; see also Mujtahidzāda, *Ḥakīm Nizārī Quhistanī*, p. 10.

25 *Bihāristān-i va Rasa'il-i Jāmī*, ed. Aʿlā Afṣaḥzād, Muḥammad Jān ʿUmrāf and Abū Bakr Ẓuhūr al-Dīn (Tehran, 1379 A.Hsh./2000), p. 148.

26 *A Literary History of Persia* (Cambridge, 1920, repr. 1956), III, p. 155.

27 Introduction, *Dīwān-i Nizārī*, p. 88.

28 From the poem cited in *ibid.*, p. 68; a similar line occurs in the *Dastūr-nāma*, see his *Dīwān*, p. 265, v. 81.

29 See the poem cited by Muṣaffā, introduction, *Dīwān-i Nizārī*, pp. 68–69.

30 *Ibid.*, pp. 67ff.

31 Ed. Muḥammad ʿAbbāsī (Tehran, 1337 A.Hsh./ 1958), p. 260.

32 *Dīwān-i Nizārī*, 1064: 10278.

33 From his essay on "Swedenborg; or, the Mystic" in *R.W. Emerson: Essays and Lectures* (New York, 1983), p. 676.

34 Cited by Muṣaffā, introduction, *Dīwān-i Nizārī*, p. 196.

35 Cited in *ibid.*, p. 201.

36 It would be useful to study the influence of Nizārī's *Dastūr-nāma* on the *Sāqī-nāma* of Ḥāfiẓ.

37 As the lines from the following poem (*Dīwān-i Nizārī*, 159, pp. 682–83) attest. Other references to the spiritual wine in his poetry include *ibid.*, *ghazals* 900, 1362.

38 "That Nizárí of Quhistán belonged to the Ismaʿílí sect is not merely suggested by his pen-name and place of origin, but is asserted or hinted at by most of the biographers. On the death of Al-Mustanṣir, the eighth Fáṭimid or Ismaʿílí Caliph (A.D. 1035–1094), there ensued a struggle for the succession between his two sons al-Mustaʿlí and Nizár, in which the latter lost his life and his throne, but continued to be regarded by the Eastern or Persian Ismaʿílís (including the derived Syrian branch) as the legitimate Imám. It was from him, no doubt, that the poet took his *nom de guerre*, for the other suggestion, that it was derived from the Persian adjective *nizár* ("thin," "weak") is quite untenable." Browne, *op. cit.*, III, pp. 154–55.

39 "It is not improbable that the bestowal of this epithet ("Nizārī") was from Shāh Shams al-Dīn, who followed the Sunnī *madhhab*, who was opposed to the Ismāʿīlism, by reason of the fact that with the family name of Ḥakīm [Nizārī] (Saʿd al-Dīn b. Shams al-Dīn) he was in concord. As S.G. Borodin puts it, "Whether or not it was for the purposes of maintaining a disguise or out of heartfelt sincerity, throughout his whole *Kulliyyāt*, he always used the pen-name 'Nizārī' with the meaning of 'thin' and 'slim'." Introduction, *Dīwān-i Nizārī*, p. 25

40 de Bruijn, art. "Nizārī Ḳuhistānī."

41 *Ibid.*

42 *Tārīkh-i Adabiyyāt dar Īrān*, III/2, p. 733.

43 *Ibid.*, p. 735.

44 *Ibid.*

45 See Daftary, *A Short History of the Ismailis* (Edinburgh, 1998), pp. 146–47.

46 *Op. cit.*, p. 735.

47 *Ibid.*, p. 735–36, n. 2.

48 Daftary, *A Short History*, pp. 151–52.

49 *Op. cit.*, p. 736.

50 Jamal, *op. cit.*, chs. 5–6.

51 "Ismāʿīlī-Sufi Relations in Early Post-Alamūt and Safavid Persia," in L. Lewisohn and David Morgan (eds.), *The Heritage of Sufism*, vol. III: *Late Classical Persianate Sufism (1501–1750)* (Oxford, 1999), p. 278.

52 *Ḥakīm Nizārī Quhistānī*, p. 15.

53 Numbering between six to eight, in the following order: 1. *Nāṭiq* (speaking, law-giving prophet); 2. *Asās* ("foundation": one who understands and interprets the inner *ta'wīl* of the revelation); 3. *Imām* (a spiritual "leader" responsible for execution of divine commands); 4. *Bāb* (a "Gate" who acted as the Imām's administrator); 5. *Ḥujjat* ("Proof" capable of discerning spiritual good from evil, held to be twelve in number in the Fatimid religious hierarchy); 6. *Dāʿī al-balāgh* (Missionary empowered to preach publically); 7. *Dāʿī al-muṭlaq* (Missionary with absolute authority); 8. *Dāʿī al-maḥdūd* (Missionary who clarifies religious restrictions for common believers); 9. *Ma'dhūn-i muṭlaq* (Licentiate with absolute authority who assists the *Dāʿī*); 10. *Ma'dhūn-i maḥdūd* (Licentiate who attracts noviates to the Ismāʿīlī faith); 11. *Lāḥiq* (Adjunct); 12. *Jināḥ* (Wing). The arrangement of the esoteric hierarchy here given is cited by Muṣaffā in his introduction to the *Dīwān-i Nizārī*, p. 41, no. 41. For a discussion of some of these terms see Daftary, *A Short History* (glossary); and *idem, The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, pp. 229ff. Using almost identical terms, in his "Divine Epiphany and Spiritual Birth in Ismailian Gnosis" (*Cyclical Time and Ismaili Gnosis, tr. R. Manheim* [London, 1983], pp. 90–96), Corbin also provides a detailed discussion of the Ismāʿīlī esoteric hierarchy in the thought of Ḥamīd al-Dīn Kirmānī.

54 *Cyclical Time*, p. 93.

55 *Kashshāf iṣṭilāḥāt al-funūn*, ed. M. Wajih, Abd al-Haqq and Gholam Kadir, with W. Nassau Lees (Calcutta, 1862), II, p. 1563; cited in J. Nurbakhsh, *Sufi Symbolism*, I, tr. L. Lewisohn and T. Graham (London, 1984), p. 201.

56 Farīd al-Dīn ʿAṭṭār, *Tadhkirat al-awliyā*, ed. M. Istiʿlāmī. (3rd ed. Tehran, 1365/1986), p. 12.

57 *Ibid*., p. 315.

58 In the text of the Dīwān (p. 610), the term (ندا ت) is given for (هدا ت) which is cited in the introduction: the latter textual variant used here.

59 See I. Poonawala, art. "Taʾwīl," in *EI*², X, pp. 391–92.

60 In his *Ṭaṣawwurat*, Ṭūsī also contrasts the "Realm of false similitudes" (*ʿālam-i mushābahat*) with the "world of clarifications and clear distinctions" (*ʿālam-i mubāyanat*). In the first, only expressions of the exoteric literal sense of revelation (*ʿibārāt-i tanzīlī*) are understood, because understanding is through sense perception and imagination, in contrast to the latter world, where the esoteric exegesis is revealed.

61 *Early Philosophical Shiism: the Ismaili Neoplatonism of Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 146–47.

62 "Introduction: Ismaʿilis and Ismaʿili Studies," in Daftary (ed.), *Mediaeval Ismaʿili History and Thought* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 6.

63 Given by Muṣaffā, introduction, *Dīwān-i Nizārī*, pp. 169–70, this *qaṣīda* of 17 hemistiches is not included in the text of his *Dīwān* since it occured in only one manuscript, yet there does not seem to be any doubt about the accuracy of its attribution to Nizārī.

64 See Alfred Ivry, "The Utilization of Allegory in Islamic Philosophy," in Jon Whitman (ed.), *Interpretation and Allegory: Antiquity to the Modern Period* (Leiden, 2000), pp. 153–80.

65 *Jāmiʿ al-ḥikmatayn*, ed. H. Corbin and M. Muʿīn (repr. Tehran, 1984), Corbin's French introduction, p. 67.

66 See Paul Nwyia, *Exégesè coranique et langage mystique* (Beirut, 1970), pp. 59–61; 145–47.

67 Cf. Rūmī, *Mathnawī-yi maʿnawī*, ed. R.A. Nicholson (repr. Tehran 1984, bi-saʿy-i Naṣruʾllāh Pūrjavādī), III: 4244–49.

68 *Ibid*., V: 3125ff.

69 See B. Reinhart and de Bruijn, art. "Madjāz" in *EI*², V, pp. 1025–27.

70 For further discussion between the two types of Imām, see Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, pp. 104–05, 114–15.

71 This is Sufi term referring to the preciousness of the present moment. For a good summary of the meanings of this term, see Javad Nurbakhsh, *Spiritual Poverty in Sufism*, tr. L. Lewisohn (London, 1984), p. 101.

72 *Mathnawī*, IV: 2301–06.

73 *Mirṣād al-ʿibād min al-mabdāʾ ilā ʾl-maʿād*, ed. Muḥammad Amīn Riyāhī (2nd ed. Tehran, 1986), p. 29.

74 Also discussed by Muṣaffā, introduction, *Dīwān-i Nizārī*, pp. 50–53.

75 The term *naṣṣ-i kalām* in the context of Shiʿism refers to the principle that the Prophet supposedly had designated ʿAlī to be his successor as *naṣṣ al-taʿyīn* (see *EI*², art. "Naṣṣ"), since according to authoritative Shiʿite traditions, the world cannot exist a moment without a *ḥujjat* (proof) or *imām* of God. (see *EI*², art. "Imāma").

76 Cf. Jamal, *op. cit*., pp. 96–97z.

77 These lines are cited by Muṣaffā, introduction, *Dīwān-i Nizārī*, p. 251.

78 *Ibid*., pp. 262–63: vv. 49–57.

79 Cf. Muṣaffā's discussion of this topic: introduction, *ibid*., pp. 62–64.

80 Cited in *ibid*., p. 61, but not as part of the printed text. For a more Ismāʿīlī perspective on this poem, see Jamal, *op. cit*., p. 98.

81 *Dīwān-i Nizārī*, II, p. 204 (*ghazal* 950: 9312–13).

82 Muṣaffā, introduction, *Dīwān-i Nizārī*, p. 235.

83 *Ibid*., p. 96. My interpretation is based on what appear to be the overt Sufi references in the poem. For a more Ismāʿīlī interpretation of this poem, see Jamal, *op. cit*., ch. 7 and pp. 63, 109–10, 113–19, 121, 123, 127, 133–35, 145–46.

84 The last four pages of the *Safar-nāma* are filled with praises of various people, the identity of many of whom is unknown, including Sayf al-Dīn Ḥusayn, Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad, (Fakhr Āl-i Muṣṭafā) ʿAbd al-Malik Naṣīrī, zayn al-Dīn ʿAlī, Sharaf Masʿūd, Naṣīr al-Dīn Ḥasan, Manūchihr, Shams al-Dīn Muẓaffar, Jamāl al-Dīn Raʾīs, Ḥasan Masʿūd, Shihāb Najm, Shams al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥīm, Tāj al-Dīn Ḥasan. The *Safar-nāma* text used here is that published in Nadia Eboo Jamal, *The Continuity of the Nizari Ismaili Daʿwa*, 1256–1350 (New York University Ph.D. dissertation, January 1996, unpubl.), pp. 294–97. For a discussion of the identity of some of the above persons, see Muṣaffā, introduction, *Dīwān-i Nizārī,* pp. 95ff.

85 *Safar-nāma* text, in Jamal, *The Continuity*, p. 258. Thus, he says:

زین سفر مقصود من افسانه نیست وصف شرح گلخن و کاشانه نیست
هست ذکر دوستان معهود من ذکر ایشان است ازین مقصود من

86 *Ibid*., p. 258.

87 Literally: the collyrium of my eyesight.

88 See Dihkhudā, *Lughat-nāma*, s.v. "Īrānshāh."

89 Jamal, *Surviving the Mongols*, ch. 7.

90 *Safar-nāma* text, in Jamal, *The Continuity*, p. 258.

91 Javad Nurbakhsh has devoted nearly 100 pages (123–214) of volume one of his 15-volume encyclopaedia of *Sufi*

Symbolism (New York and London, 1984–2000) to the various meanings of wine and drinking wine in Sufism, demonstrating how prevalent and popular this imagery was in classical Persian Sufi poetry.

92 *Safar-nāma* text, in Jamal, *The Continuity*, pp. 264–65.

93 Glorification of nonfulfilment (*bīmurādī*) is a stock topos in Persian Sufi mystical poetry. See Rūmī, *Mathnawī*, III: 4262–72; Saʿdī, *Ghazalhā*, ed. Nūrullāh Īzadparast (Tehran, 1362/1983), no. 42, pp. 59–60.

94 *Safar-nāma* text, in Jamal, *The Continuity*, pp. 277–78. The relevant verses are:

تا ز کفر و دین بـــرون ناید مـرید — کـی ره تسلیـم را شـــاید برید
شد جوانی پیش پـــیری سالخورد — التمـــاس خـــرقهء پیـــر کـرد
پیر دانا گفتـــش ای جان پـدر — اول از ابـلیـس ره زن در گـذر
زانکه گر بر نگذری راهـت زنـد — همچـــو مار خفته ناگاهت زنـــد
مـدت یک سال مـهلـت دادمـت — بر مـراد نفـس رخـصت دادمت
در جهان هرچ احتیـــاج آید تـرا — جهـد کن تا در کـــنار آید تـــرا
آرزوی نفـــس چـون آری بـدست — میپـرست آن آرزو چـون بت پرست
از قـفای آن شود معـلـــوم تـرا — کان خیـــالی بود و بی مفهـوم ترا
عاریت جائیست این فانی سرای — هیچ دیگر نیست باقی جز خدا ست
از هوای نفس چون ساکن شـــوی — پیش من باز آی تا ایمن شـــوی
چون شوی ایمن ز رهزن خرقه پوش — حلقهء فقر آنگهـی در کن بگـوش

95 *Ibid.*, pp. 271–72.

96 *Ibid.*, p. 275.

97 *Ibid.*, p. 288

98 Muṣaffā, introduction, *Dīwān-i Nizārī*, p. 143.

99 See Leonard Lewisohn, *Beyond Faith and Infidelity: the Sufi Poetry and Teachings of Mahmud Shabistari* (London, 1995), pp. 82–92.

100 The tolerant nature of Persian Sufism has been underlined by scores of Iranian scholars over the last fifty years, such as S. Nasīfī, Q. Ghanī, Dh. Ṣafā, Rajaʾī-Bukharāʾī and ʿA. Zarrīnkūb, and their views are well-known to every undergraduate student who has spent even a single hour over their works. For a general treatment of tolerance in Persian Sufism, see Mujtabā Mīnuvī, "Āzādigī va tasāmuḥ," *Irānshināsī*, IV/1 (1992): 179–80; and for an extended study, see M.G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam* (Chicago, 1977), II, pp. 200–54, especially the two sections on "The human outreach of the mystics" (204–06) and "The catholic appeal of Ṣūfism" (217–20). See also Lewisohn, "The Esoteric Christianity of Islam: Interiorisation of Christian Imagery in Medieval Persian Sufi Poetry," in Lloyd Ridgeon, (ed.), *Muslim Perspectives of Christianity* (London, 2001), pp. 127–56.

101 See my review in *JRAS*, VII/2 (1997), 300–02, of the work cited in the following note.

102 David Yeroushalmi, *The Judeo-Persian Poet ʿEmrānī and his Book of Treasure: Emrānī's* Ganj-nāme*, a versified Commentary on the Mishnaic Tractate Abot*, edited, translated and annotated with a critical study (Études sur le Judaïsme Médiéval, t. 15. Leiden, 1995), introduction, p. 87. In his poetry, Yerouslami points out, "Not only the Torah, but also the Fathers (Hebrew Abot) of the Jewish tradition are presented in terms borrowed from the Islamic mystical system. They are entitled *valī* (Ar. *walī*), i.e. "Guardians" of the Path, a term which in Sufism applies to persons whose holiness brings them near to God, endowing them with saintly qualities (5: 78). Moses is said to have been a *darvīš* (4: 27). The Jewish Elders (Heb. *ha-zeqenim*), to whom the Torah was handed by Joshua (Abot 1: 1) are called *Pīrān*, plural of *Pīr*, i.e the Sufi Elders who guide the mystical searcher. Likewise, the Hebrew rab, i.e. "master", "teacher" and "authority" (Abot 1: 6) is rendered *Pīr* (12: 15), *moršed*, i.e. "guide" and *dalīl*, i.e. "expounder" (24: 9), all of which terms refer to the Sufi masters who expound the mystical path. … In the *Ganj-nāme* the aim of the [Sufi] mystical path and the goal of the Tractate Abot are conceived as being identical. As such, the teaching of the masters so the Mishnah are said to lead to the same destination as the precepts of the Sufi doctrine." (pp. 86–88).

103 *Ibid.*, introduction, p. 64.

104 *The Venture of Islam*, II, pp. 204ff.

105 *Ibid.*, II, pp. 210–11.

106 *The Meaning and End of Religion* (Minneapolis, 1991), p. 322, n. 14.

107 *Dīwān-i Nizārī*, I, *ghazal* 343: 3431–32, pp. 920–21, the ideas, imagery and metre of which were later imitated by Ḥāfiẓ in two different poems, where Ḥāfiẓ imitates the second line of Nizārī cited above (see *Dīwān-i Ḥāfiẓ*, ed. Khānlarī [Tehran, 1362 A.Hsh./1983] as follows:

ghazal 77: 6:

مکن به نامه سیاهی مـلامـــت من مست
که آگه است که تقدیر بر سرش چه نوشت

ghazal 78: 5:

نا امیـدم مکـــــــن از ســابقهء لطـف ازل
تو پس پرده چه دانی که که خوب است و که زشت