

Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978), p. 267.

31. Ibid., p. 268.
32. Shaykh Ahmad Aḥsā'ī, Jawāmi' al-Kilam, vol. 1, part 2, p. 176.
33. Ibid., p. 177.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid.
38. 'Abd al-Muhsin Mishkāt al-Dīnī, Nazarī bi Falsafa-i Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī "Mullā Ṣadrā" (Tehrān: Bonyād-i Farhang-i Irān, 1345sh), pp. 174-175.
39. Jawād Muṣṭafī, Mabda'-i Āfarīnesh az Dīdgāh-i Falāsifa-i Islām (Tehrān: Tehrān University, 1354sh), p. 181.
40. Shaykh Ahmad Aḥsā'ī, Sharḥ al-Fawā'id, p. 157.
41. Ibid., p. 455.
42. Ibid., p. 456.
43. Shaykh Ahmad Aḥsā'ī, Sharḥ al-Ziyārat al-Jāmi'a, p. 11.
44. Ibid.
45. Sayyid Kāẓim Rashtī, Uṣūl-i 'Aqā'id, p. 119.
46. Ibid., p. 125.
47. Ibid., p. 117.
48. Ibid., p. 129.
49. Ibid., pp. 131-132.
50. There are verses in the Qur'ān and Traditions that refer to sins and shortcomings of the prophets. Sayyid Kāẓim suggest that these verses are among those unclear (mutashābihāt) verses that should be understood in the light of the clear (muḥkamāt) verses. Here, for example, are three verses that indicate the sins and shortcomings of the prophets: "And Adam disobeyed his Lord, so his life became evil (to him)" (20:121);

"God forgiveth thy earlier and later faults, and fulfilleth His goodness to thee, and guideth thee on the right way" (48:2); "And of old We made a covenant with Adam; but he forgot it; and we found no firmness of purpose in him" (20:115).

In contrast to these verses, there are others which clearly indicate the sublime morality of the prophets such as, "And most surely you conform (yourself) to sublime morality" (68:4); or, "Nor does he speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed, the Lord of Mighty Power has taught him" (53:3-5). These verses clearly establish the infallibility of the prophet, for while the first denies that he does anything which is immoral, the second denies that he says anything which is not revealed to him. Sayyid Kāẓim says that if we do not want to understand the unclear sin-indicating verses in the light of the clear verses, these sin-indicating verses do not prove that the prophet committed that which is forbidden (ḥarām) or ignored that which is obligatory (wājib). He further remarks that the sins, if any, that are related to them could have been the sins of the community which they bore as a matter of favor to their communities.

51. Sayyid Kāẓim Rashtī, Uṣūl-i 'Aqā'id, p. 156.
52. Ibid., p. 157.
53. Shaykh Ahmad Aḥsā'ī, Sharḥ al-Ziyārat al-Jāmi'a, p. 11.
54. Ibid., p. 112. See also pp. 116 and 120.
55. Ibid., p. 136.
56. Ibid., p. 37.
57. Ibid., p. 49.
58. Ibid., p. 44.
59. Ibid., p. 80.
60. Sayyid Kāẓim Rashtī, Uṣūl-i 'Aqā'id, p. 176.
61. Shaykh Ahmad Aḥsā'ī, Sharḥ al-Ziyārat al-Jāmi'a, p. 24.
62. Ibid., p. 80.
63. Ibid., p. 65.
64. Ibid., p. 49.

65. "A title given to a leading sect of the Shī'ahs who, through their excessive zeal for the Imāms, have raised them above the degree of human being." Thomas Patrick Hughes, Dictionary of Islam (New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint, 1976), p. 139.

CHAPTER IV

The Basic Shaykhī Eschatological Doctrines

Shaykh Ahmad's views on eschatological doctrines constitute his most significant attempt to reconcile reason and revelation. Such an undertaking was not new in Islamic thought: many scholars before him had tried to reconcile man's reasoning with the revealed text of the Qur'ān and the narrated Traditions. Shaykh Ahmad, therefore, sought not to wrench reason and revelation into agreement, for some kind of harmony between the two was already thought to exist. His effort was to identify and describe the nature of that harmony, and he based his doctrine on the belief that the entire universe functions in accordance with certain regulations and in absolute harmony. Reason and revelation are construed as two manifestations of one reality; as such, no conflict could exist between them.

It is true, however, that the exoteric aspect of certain Quranic verses and Traditions is not acceptable to the intellect. Shaykh Ahmad describes such texts as unclear (mutashābihāt)¹ verses, which according to the Qur'ān are intended to be interpreted.² Consequently, his approach toward eschatological concepts, which are primarily expressed in the unclear verses of the Qur'ān, is a rationalistic one, and his interpretation of them allegorical. His approach, however, conflicted with that of the fundamentalist thinkers who accepted only the literal

meaning of the verses and disallowed any use of man's intellectual reasoning to explore other, symbolic, meanings. Shaykh Ahmad rejected these fundamentalist presentations of eschatological issues in the popular theological books of the Shī'ā. In fact, his views on Islamic eschatology are closer to Abū 'Alī Sīnā (d. 428/1038) and Mullā Ṣadrā (d. 1050/1640), his forerunners in this field. His rationalistic approach made him an influential reconciler of reason and revelation in his period. Consequently, the intellectual opposition that he, and later his pupils, encountered was aimed more at his eschatological views than any other aspect of his thought.

The rationalistic nature of Shaykh Ahmad's views attracted non-fundamentalists who were seeking a reconciliation between reason and revelation. In this respect, the Shaykhī school was a religious foundation for the intellectual enlightenment that developed in the latter decades of the nineteenth century in Iran.

Shaykh Ahmad's basic ontological doctrine of the absolute distinction between Possible Being and Necessary Being forms the cornerstone for Shaykhī eschatological speculations.

Shaykh Ahmad maintains that the will is the creative source and the producer of Possible Being, which consists of a hierarchy; beginning, at the lowest level, with the realm of matter and ending, at the highest level, with the realm of will. There are seven realms between the realm of matter

and the realm of will:

1. The realm of similitudes ('ālam-i mithāl), known also as the realm of intermediary (barzakh, or Havarqalyā)
2. The realm of bodily matter (mawādd-i jismānīya)
3. The realm of nature ('ālam-i ṭabī'at). This realm is contained in the realms of intellects ('ālam-i 'uqūl), spirits (arwāḥ) and souls (nufūs), but no separation or distinction exists among these three
4. The realm of souls (nufūs)
5. The realm of spirits ('ālam-i arwāḥ)
6. The realm of intellect ('ālam-i 'uqūl)
7. The realm of heart ('ālam-i fu'ād)³

As the realm of Possible Being is produced by the will, any eschatological question which ends up with God, in the popular Shī'ī view, ends up with the will in the Shaykhī view.

The basic eschatological questions which Shaykh Ahmad discusses are the Day of Judgment and its related issues-- Resurrection, Return, Meeting with God, Paradise and Hell, and reward and punishment. The advent of the Mahdī (Guided One) is strongly related to eschatological issues, but, since it occupies a special place in Shaykh Ahmad's works and played a significant role in the subsequent development of the movement, it will be dealt with in a separate chapter.

Before considering Shaykh Ahmad's views, it is necessary to review the essence of Islamic eschatology as it is revealed in the Qur'ān and expanded in the Traditions.

Islamic eschatology holds that the Day of Judgment will definitely come, but only God knows when it will occur. Its advent will be announced by the appearance of certain signs: "mountains will be like carded wool"; "heaven shall be rent asunder"; "the stars shall be dispersed"; "the seas shall be commingled"; and "the earth and the mountains will be borne away, and both of them crushed (to dust at a single crushing)."⁴ The Antichrist, al-Dajjāl,⁵ who leads people away from the right path, will appear. The sun will rise from the west, the Beast will appear, and Gog and Magog⁶ will come. Dense smoke, which will cover the earth for days, and several eclipses will proclaim the approach of the Day of Judgment. On that Day, the trumpet will blast twice. At the first blast, all living things will die; at the second, the dead will be resurrected. Then they will assemble in the gathering place, in the presence of God, for His judgment. God will ask them questions, weigh their deeds and then, in accordance with their conduct, send them to Hell or to Paradise. One of the major events of that Day will be the advent of the Mahdī (Guided One), who will be followed by the return of Christ.

Muslims maintain that the return of all to God and the physical resurrection promised on the Day of Judgment are the manifestation of God's grace to mankind. Belief in that Day assists man to obey God and prevents him from committing sin. Whoever denies the Return denies the grace of God to His people.⁷

Shaykh Aḥmad's attitude toward the Day of Judgment differs from the approach of the other Shī'ā. While the Shī'ā maintain that on the Day of Judgment being will return to God, its source, Shaykh Aḥmad believes that the creation will return to its Possible source (mabda'-i imkānī), rather than to God, because creation has never come from God, Himself, but from the will. In addition, resurrection will take place not in the physical body, as the Shī'ī doctrine maintains, but in another body, which Shaykh Aḥmad calls the "subtle body" (jasad-i mithālī). The subtle body consists of the elements of the realm of similitudes ('ālam-i mithāl), or, in Shaykh Aḥmad's terminology, the Havarqalyā (the realm of the subtle). Since the concept of the "subtle body" and the realm of the subtle (Havarqalyā) is a key to Shaykhī eschatological views, it deserves closer attention.

Muḥammad Mu'īn's research on the etymology and history of the term Havarqalyā shows that it is derived from the Hebrew term habal qarna'im (Doppelgänger). According to this derivation, the pronunciation of the term should be Havarqalyā (هَوْرَقَالِيَا) as Mu'īn has suggested.⁸ This pronunciation, although the most authentic, is, however, less common. While Shaykh Aḥmad does not mention the pronunciation of the term in his works, Muḥammad Tonekābonī (d. 1302/1884), who was very familiar with the Shaykhī ideology, in his Qiṣaṣ al-'Ulamā states that the term should be pronounced Huvarqalyā (هُوْرَقَالِيَا).⁹ Tonekābonī, however,

adds that the term is commonly mispronounced Hurqalyā (هُرْقَالِيَا). He notes that when he pronounced the term Huvarqalyā (هُوَرْقَالِيَا) during a conversation with Ḥājj Mullā Ḥādī Sabzavārī (d. 1289/1872),¹⁰ Sabzavārī pointed out that the correct pronunciation was Hurqalyā (هُرْقَالِيَا), not Huvarqalyā (هُوَرْقَالِيَا). Tonekābonī then told Sabzavārī that he had heard a student of Mullā 'Alī Nūrī¹¹ quote Mullā 'Alī's statement that Hurqalyā (هُرْقَالِيَا) was wrong and that the correct pronunciation was Huvarqalyā (هُوَرْقَالِيَا).¹²

Today the popular, common pronunciation of this term is Hurqalyā (هُرْقَالِيَا), although it is not correct as far as its etymological derivation from the Hebrew term is concerned.

Shaykh Aḥmad was not the first to use the term Havarqalyā. According to Mu'īn,¹³ the term was first used by Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā b. Ḥabash Sohravardī, known as Shaykh al-Ishrāq (d. 587/1191), although the term itself received little explanation either in the works of Sohravardī or his commentators, such as Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd Shahzorī and Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Mas'ūd Shīrāzī (d. 710/1310). In the works of Sohravardī, the realm of similitudes is described as consisting of an elementary ('anāṣir) realm, within which are Jabursā and Jabulqā, and a celestial (aflāk) realm: this celestial realm of similitudes ('ālam aflāk al-muthul),¹⁴ is called Havarqalyā.

In the works of Shaykh Aḥmad, Havarqalyā (the realm of the subtle) has several connotations and often is used synonymously with "the realm of similitudes" ('ālam-i

mithāl) and "isthmus" (barzakh).

According to Shaykh Aḥmad, Havarqalyā is a Syriac term¹⁵ meaning "the next world" (mulk ākhar), located in the eighth climate (iqḷīm) and including two cities: Jabursā in the west and Jabulqā in the east.

Shaykh Aḥmad maintains that the realm of matter ('ālam-i mulk) consists of two levels: the lower level, or the realm of this earthly world ('ālam al-dunyā), and the upper level, which Shaykh Aḥmad calls Havarqalyā, or the "second material realm" ('ālam al-mulk al-thānī).¹⁶ Thus, in this sense Havarqalyā is regarded as a kind of purgatorial realm or isthmus (barzakh), which is an intermediary between this material world ('ālam-i mulk) and the next, spiritual, world ('ālam-i malakūt). Shaykh Aḥmad conceived of such an intermediate realm because he believed that since spirit is pure spirit and the physical body is pure matter, there should be another realm between the two, which is neither one nor the other.¹⁷ The elements of the Havarqalyā are described as having less density than the temporal elements that make up the material world, yet more density than pure spirit. This intermediary realm is the source of the second body of man, which will survive death and experience resurrection.

Shaykh Aḥmad maintains that man has two bodies: first, the material body consisting of physical elements--water, earth, air, and fire--which dissolves in the grave and does not become resurrected at all; and second, the subtle body,

which will endure after the physical body has crumbled to dust.¹⁸ It is the subtle body that will be resurrected on the Day of Judgment. The subtle body does not decompose because it consists of elements of the realm of similitudes ('ālam-i mithāl), or the Havarqalyā (the realm of the subtle).

Regarding the functions and characteristics of the subtle body, Shaykh Ahmad states that a "true man" consists of intellect ('aql), soul (nafs), nature (ṭabī'at), matter (mādda) and subtle (mithāl). Intellect is in soul, and soul is in nature, and all three--intellect, soul, and nature--are in matter. But the existence of matter is dependent upon the subtle body. Only when the subtle clings to matter, does a body (al-jism al-aṣlī) come into being.¹⁹ Shaykh Ahmad describes the first external body (al-ḥasad al-awwal al-ẓāhirī) as a "shell" made of earth, air, fire, and water, while the second body (al-ḥasad al-thānī) is a more delicate internal substance, like a pearl, made of subtle elements which are hidden in matter, i.e., the shell. After death, matter remains in the grave and its external appearance perishes. But its internal substance, which is subtle, survives. This internal substance is the second body, made of the Havarqalyā's elements.

In one of Sayyid Kāẓim's works, the concept of the subtle body occurs, but clothed in another term: "essential element." When Sayyid Kāẓim was asked how God would bring back the dead when they had been consumed by worms in their

graves, Sayyid Kāẓim answered that a thing consists of "essence" and "accident." The being of a thing depends primarily upon its essence. Man, accordingly, consists of accidental elements, which will be consumed by worms, and essential elements, which cannot perish or be destroyed. That element which will be resurrected on the Day of Judgment is the essential element, which survives after death, and is so subtle that it is not visible.²⁰ The Return, therefore, will be in the essential element and not the accidental. Although in his explanation Sayyid Kāẓim uses "essential element" and not "spirit," as opposed to "elementary element" or "body," throughout his description it is well understood that by the term "essential element" he refers to man's spirit. This speculation is supported in another treatise Sayyid Kāẓim wrote for Mullā Muqīm Qazvīnī, in which nafs-i nāṭiqa²¹ is used for "essential element." In this work he says that the reality of man is in his spirit (nafs-i nāṭiqa) and not in his body. During his life, Sayyid Kāẓim says, a person goes through the stages of childhood, adolescence, and old age. Through this process, many physical changes happen in his body, but his reality, which is his spirit, remains the same and does not change physically. He points out that some scholars, such as Mullā Ṣadrā, maintain that return of the body, as a religious dogma, is a fact and should be accepted, although intellect fails to prove it. Sayyid Kāẓim then remarks that God has given us two proofs through which the truth is revealed:

external proofs, such as the prophets, and internal proofs, such as man's intellect. These two kinds of proofs are in harmony and go together. Whatever a religion establishes, the intellect accepts as true. Therefore, it is not permissible to attempt to prove what is established by the divine decree, if the intellect does not testify to its righteousness.²²

In answering the question of Kāzīm b. 'Alī Naqī al-Suhā'ī on the nature of the relationship between letters, attributes of God, and creation, Shaykh Aḥmad outlines another aspect of the concept of the "realm of the subtle." He states that the "limited being" (wujūd al-muqayyad), which begins with the First Intellect and ends up with earth, consists of twenty-eight stages, each of which corresponds to an attribute of God as well as a letter of the Arabic alphabet as shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1

1	Intellect (<u>'aql</u>)	The Incomparable (<u>al-badī'</u>)	ا
2	Soul (<u>nafs</u>)	The Resurrector (<u>al-bā'ith</u>)	ب
3	Nature (<u>ṭabī'at</u>)	The Hidden (<u>al-bāṭin</u>)	ج
4	Matter (<u>mādda</u>)	The Last (<u>al-ākhir</u>)	د
5	Subtle (<u>mithāl</u>)	The Manifest (<u>al-zāhir</u>)	هـ
6	The Universal Substance (<u>jism al-kull</u>)	The Wise (<u>al-ḥakīm</u>)	و

7	The Heaven (<u>al-'arsh</u>)	The All-Encompassing (<u>al-muḥīṭ</u>)	ز
8	The Throne (<u>al-kursī</u>)	The Appreciative (<u>al-shakūr</u>)	ح
9	The Celestial Spheres (<u>falak al-burūj</u>)	The Self-Sufficient (<u>ghanī al-dahr</u>)	ط
10	The Celestial Stations (<u>falak al-manāzil</u>)	The Powerful (<u>al-muqtadir</u>)	ی
11	The Sphere of Saturn (<u>falak al-zuḥal</u>)	The Lord (<u>al-rabb</u>)	ک
12	The Sphere of Jupiter (<u>falak al-mushtarī</u>)	The All-Knowing (<u>al-'ālim</u>)	ل
13	The Sphere of Mars (<u>falak al-mirrikh</u>)	The Subduer (<u>al-qāhir</u>)	م
14	The Sphere of the Sun (<u>falak al-shams</u>)	The Light (<u>al-nūr</u>)	ن
15	The Sphere of Venus (<u>falak al-zuhrah</u>)	The Fashioner (<u>al-muṣawwir</u>)	س
16	The Sphere of Mercury (<u>falak 'uṭārid</u>)	The Counter (<u>al-muḥṣīy</u>)	ع
17	The Sphere of the Moon (<u>falak al-qamar</u>)	The Evident (<u>al-mubīn</u>)	ی
18	The Ethereal Globe (<u>kura al-athīrīy</u>)	The Restrainer (<u>al-qābiḍ</u>)	ص
19	The Atmospheric Globe (<u>kura al-hawā</u>)	The Alive (<u>al-ḥayy</u>)	ق
20	The Water Globe (<u>kura al-mā'</u>)	The Quickener (<u>al-muḥyī</u>)	ر
21	The Earth Globe (<u>kura al-turāb</u>)	The Creator of Death (<u>al-mumīt</u>)	نی
22	Mineral (<u>al-jamād</u>)	The Mighty (<u>al-'azīz</u>)	ن
23	Vegetation (<u>nabāt</u>)	The Provider (<u>al-rāziq</u>)	ن
24	Animal (<u>al-ḥayawān</u>)	The Dishonorer (<u>al-mudhill</u>)	خ

25	Angel (<u>al-malak</u>)	The Strong (<u>al-qawīyy</u>)	ز
26	Jinn (<u>al-jinn</u>)	The Gracious (<u>al-laṭīf</u>)	ص
27	Man (<u>al-insān</u>)	The Gatherer (<u>al-jāmi'</u>)	ط
28	The Comprehensive Stage (<u>martabat al-jāmi'</u>)	The One Who is Ex- alted in Rank (<u>rafi' al-darajāt</u>)	ع

The realm of the subtle is the fifth rank which corresponds to God's attribute, "Manifest" (al-ẓāhir) and the letter "h" (ه). The location of the realm of the subtle, in this explanation, is between the realm of matter (mādda) and the realm of the universal substance (jism al-kull). The location of the subtle realm in this schema, however, differs from another schema that Shaykh Ahmad has presented on the realms of the universe. According to the other schema, the universe consists of six realms, namely:

1. Intellects ('uqūl), substances free from any physical element or form
2. Souls (nufūs), the words of the Preserved Tablet
3. Natures (ṭabāyi'), the realm of concrete individuals
4. The Realm of Jewel, or technical substances, referring to the atoms of atmosphere
5. The Realm of the Subtle, the forms in the atmosphere of the barzakh, between the malakūt and the mulk, located between the nonmaterial realm and the realm of time (the material)

6. The Realm of Material Bodies, which consists of elementary matter (al-mawādd al-ʿunṣurīya) and the subtle forms (al-ṣuwar al-mithālīya) which Shaykh Ahmad understands from the realm of subtle, in this context, as the realm of image of substance (ṣuwar al-dhāt), and that is the image of existence and its origin²⁴

According to this theory, a man is made of matter (al-mādda) and image (al-ṣura). The relationship between the matter and the image can be likened to a man in front of a mirror. The matter is like the mirror and the image is like a picture in the mirror.²⁵ The relationship between the realm of mithāl to this world is like the relationship between the sun and the earth. The sun manifests itself in the earth without descending to earth or entering into it. The sun is always in a fixed position, but its radiance is manifested on the different objects on the earth.

The subtle realm, therefore, is like the image that one can see in the mirror. The subtle realm is beyond the limitation of the material world. What man sees in his dream, which is the image, is the subtle realm.²⁶

If we, hypothetically, imagine that the realm of the subtle, like this material realm, has an earth and a heaven, Jābulqā and Jābursā would be its earth and Havarqalyā its heaven.

The concept of the subtle body is not only used to explain the resurrection of bodies on the Day of Judgment, it has also been used to discuss the Night Journey and the Ascension of the Prophet Muhammad to heaven. On the basis

of the Quranic verses, it is commonly held that the Prophet was carried from the "Sacred Mosque" of Mecca to the "Remote Mosque" of Jerusalem at night (isrā, night journey). From Jerusalem the Prophet ascended to the "Lote-Tree" (sidrat al-muntahā) and then was carried to the "measure of two bows or closer still" (qaba qawsayn aw adnā).²⁷

The exoteric meanings of this occurrence as given in the Qur'ān and Islamic Traditions, and as they are understood by the Muslims, are (1) the Prophet ascended beyond the material realm and (2) the Ascension took place with the material body of the Prophet. However, the Shaykhīs explain that the Ascension took place within the Possible Being and that Muḥammad did not ascend beyond the Possible realm. Since, according to Shaykhī thought, the Prophet had come from the "First Manifestation" (tajallī-i awal) or the "Divine Soul" (nafs-i rahmānī), the destination of his Ascension was this same source, which is located within the realm of Possible.²⁸ The Shaykhīs believe that the "measure of two bows" (qāba qawsayn) and the station of "closer still" (aw adnā), the highest point of the Ascension, are still within the Possible realm.²⁹ Shaykh Aḥmad, in contrast with the popular Muslim theologians' view, maintains that the Ascension took place not with the physical body of the Prophet, but with his subtle body.

Regarding Hell and Paradise, Shaykhīs hold that there are two paradises: a worldly paradise (behesht-i dunyā) and a Paradise in the hereafter (behesht-i ākhirat). After

separation from the body, the spirits of the believers, it is believed, will remain in the first, worldly paradise until the blast of the trumpet. This paradise is described in the Qur'ān as, "the gardens (jannāt) of perpetuity, which the Beneficent God has promised to His servants while unseen; surely His promise shall come to pass. They shall not hear therein any vain discourse, but only 'Peace', and they shall have their sustenance therein morning and evening" (19:61-62). This verse, Shaykh Aḥmad believes, refers to the world's paradise, because "morning" and "evening," which are mentioned in this verse, are found in this world and not in the hereafter, which is timeless. Following the above verse, the Qur'ān reads, "This is the garden [al-jannat] which We cause those of Our servants to inherit who guard (against evil)" (19:63). This verse, according to Shaykh Aḥmad, refers to the paradise of the hereafter.³⁰

According to Shaykhī eschatological views, hell is also of two kinds: there is a hell both in this world and in the hereafter. The Qur'ān refers to the world's hell in verses such as: "So Allah protected him from the evil (consequences) of what they planned, and the most evil chastisement overtook Pharaoh's people: The fire; they shall be brought before it (every) morning and evening . . ." (40:45-46).

The same argument is applied here that this verse refers to this world's hell because time is not applicable

in the hereafter. The rest of the verse, however, refers to the hereafter's hell; it reads, "And on the day when the hour shall come to pass: Make Pharaoh's people enter the severest chastisement." (40:46) This verse refers to the severest chastisement of the fire in the hell of the hereafter.³¹

A common Muslim belief is that on the Day of Judgment man will see or meet with God. This concept is found in many verses of the Qur'ān. For example: "They are losers indeed who reject the meeting of Allah; until when the hour comes upon them all of a sudden they shall say: Our grief for our neglecting it." (6:31) Another verse says, "They will perish indeed who called the meeting with Allah to be a lie, and they are not followers of the right direction." (10:45) And also it says, "He regulates the affair, making clear the communications that you may be certain of meeting your Lord." (13:2)

The concept of a meeting with God is one of the most controversial issues in Islamic theology. On the basis of the Quranic verse which reads, "Vision comprehends Him not, and He comprehends (all) vision." (6:104), some scholars believe that a meeting with God is impossible for man. They, therefore, take the verses which refer to meeting God allegorically, not literally. Another group of scholars believe that a meeting with God will surely occur. They assert that if such a meeting were impossible, Moses would not have asked for it. According to the Qur'ān, Moses said

to God, "My Lord! show me (Thyself), so that I may look upon Thee." (7:143) Although God replied, "You cannot (bear to) see Me," (7:143) the fact that Moses made this request indicates the possibility of such a meeting. In addition, although it was not possible for Moses to see God at that time, according to the Quranic verses, God will show Himself on the Day of Judgment. Thus, the negative answer that Moses received was for that time only, not forever.

Shaykh Ahmad, however, rejects the traditional, literal interpretation of such a meeting with God on the basis of his ontological principle that the Essence of God is beyond the reach of Possible Being. He interprets the meeting with God described in the Qur'ān as "seeing" God with the heart. Seeing God would not be visually beholding God's Essence, but rather seeing God's manifestation. This is possible when man's heart has faith in Him, His actions, works, and teachings. If one obeys the commands of God and observes His prohibitions, God will remove the veil from his eyes and then he will be able to recognize God's will at work.³²

As for seeing God on the Day of Judgment, Shaykh Ahmad has another interpretation. As previously stated, on the basis of Islamic Traditions, Shaykh Ahmad interprets the Day of Judgment as the Day of the advent of the expected Qā'im. This interpretation, although based on Traditions, is radically different from the common Muslim belief. In the usual Muslim concept of the Day of Judgment, this Day is expected to alter the entire universe, bringing drastic

revolutions, changes, and the transformation of the very phenomenon of life on earth. In the Day of Judgment as understood by Shaykh Aḥmad, revolutions, changes, and transformations will take place, but not in the way that people literally understand from the text.

In this interpretation of the Day of Judgment, Shaykh Aḥmad attempts to reconcile intellect and revelation. The universe will not come to an end on the Day of Judgment; it has always existed and will continue to exist forever. What the Day of Judgment truly means is the Day of advent of a new manifestation of God which puts an end to the course of its previous dispensation and opens a new cycle for human beings. As the Day of the advent of the expected Qā'im, the Day of Judgment will bring about changes in the social, moral, and religious life of the people; the values that have been applied for centuries will change, the principles and teachings of the previous religion will change, and a profound revolution will take place in all the various aspects of man's activities.

Shaykh Aḥmad's interpretation of the Day of Judgment is founded on the many Traditions on the authority of Shī'ī imāns which interpret the Quranic verses on this subject as referring to the day of the advent of the Qā'im.³³ For example, one Quranic verse says, "The hour [the Day of Judgment] drew nigh" (54:1). A Tradition interprets the verse as the advent of the Qā'im.³⁴ Another Quranic verse refers to one of the signs of the Day of Judgment by saying

"For when the trumpet is sounded" (74:8). A Tradition regards the verse as referring to the Hidden Imām, i.e., the Qā'im.³⁵ Another verse in the Qur'ān reads, "And certainly We sent Moses with Our communications, saying: Bring forth your people from utter darkness into light and remind them of the days of Allah" (14:5). A Tradition tells us that "the days of Allah" is not only the Day of Judgment, but can also be thought of as the day of the Qā'im (yaum al-Qā'im) and also the day of death (yaum al-maut).³⁶ These few Traditions, the essence of which is found in numerous others, provide the basis for interpreting the Quranic verses on the Day of Judgment as indicating the advent of the Qā'im. This is exactly what Shaykh Aḥmad has done.

As reward or punishment is expected to be meted out on the traditional Day of Judgment, according to Shaykhī interpretation, reward and punishment will be given to people on the Day of the advent of the Qā'im. For those who succeed in recognizing him, that act of recognition itself will be their reward; and for those who fail to recognize him, that failure shall be their punishment. Therefore, to recognize the expected Qā'im is to enter paradise, and to be deprived of his recognition is hell. Moreover, the bridge (Ṣirāṭ) referred to in the texts will not be the familiar bridge between hell and paradise, but is a symbol of the Qā'im's teachings, principles, and doctrines. Shaykh Aḥmad, in a treatise known as Qatīfiya, says that Ṣirāṭ is the way from God to His creation and His creation's way to Him. The

"way" is a symbol which stands for the imām, his friendship, his teachings, and the recognition of himself.³⁷

Sayyid Kāzīm, in a treatise written for a certain Mullā Ḥusayn 'Alī, says that the Ṣirāṭ is of two kinds; one is in this world and one is in the hereafter. The Ṣirāṭ is a way which God has provided to assist His creation and is a way through which God can answer His creation's request for assistance. The Ṣirāṭ is a channel which connects God with His creation, and vice versa. This way is the way of Religion, which is the way between His action and His creation.³⁸ The Ṣirāṭ is also those deeds which are the result of man's recognition of the Prophet and obedience to His teachings, and by which he can enter Paradise.³⁹

Shaykh Aḥmad's approach towards the basic Islamic eschatological doctrines focuses on reconciliation between reason and revelation. To achieve this goal, he uses two tactics. First, he appeals to his ontological base which holds that no connection can be conceived between the realm of Possible Being and the realm of the Necessary Being, and consequently, any eschatological doctrine that, in the orthodox Shī'ī view, ends up with God, should, in his view, end up with the Will. Second, he maintains that if the Resurrection and Return are going to occur, they will happen with the subtle body and not with the physical body, contrary to popular doctrine. Finally, he suggests that the Day of Judgment can be thought of as the Day of the advent of the Qā'im, on which all signs of the Day of Judgment

would be fulfilled allegorically.

NOTES

1. This term refers to allegorical verses in the Qur'ān. See Qur'ān 3:7 and 39:23.
2. The Qur'ān reads, "He it is who has revealed the Book to you: some of its verses are decisive, they are the basis of the Book, and others are allegorical; then as for those in whose hearts there is perversity, they follow the part of it which is allegorical, seeking to mislead, and seeking to give it (their own) interpretation; but none knows its interpretation except Allah, and those who are firmly rooted in knowledge." (3:6).
3. Sayyid Kāzīm Rashtī, The Treatise for Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥasan (see chapter 3, n. 2), pp. 266-268.
4. See the following verses of the Qur'ān on the Day of Judgment: 101:1-11; 82:1-19; 69:13-37; 56:1-56.
5. The term means false or lying. It is given in Islamic Traditions to religious impostors.
6. Gog and Magog, in Arabic, Yājūj wa Mājūj or Y'ajūj wa M'ajūj, are mentioned in the Qur'ān. See 18:93-97.
7. Sayyid Kāzīm Rashtī, Uṣūl-i 'Aqā'id (see chapter 3, n. 2), p. 188.
8. Muḥammad Mu'īn, "Havarqalyā," Majalla-i Dāneshkada-i Adabiyāt, vol. 1 (1333sh), no. 3, p. 84.
9. Muḥammad Tonekābonī, Qiṣaṣ al-'Ulamā (Tehrān: 'Ilmiya Islāmīya, nd.), p. 44.
10. The most famous philosopher in nineteenth century Iran. Particularly well known for his commentaries on Mullā Ṣadrā's works.
11. A great philosopher of his time and the teacher of Ḥājī Mullā Hādī Sabzavārī.
12. Tonekābonī, Qiṣaṣ al-'Ulamā, pp. 45-46.
13. Mu'īn, Majalla-i Dāneshkada-i Adabiyāt, p. 84.
14. Ibid., p. 85.
15. Shaykh Aḥmad Aḥsā'ī, Jawāmi' al-kilām (see chapter 3, n. 2), vol. 1, part 2, p. 124.

16. Shaykh Aḥmad Aḥsā'ī, Sharḥ al-'Arshīya (Tabrīz: lithography, 1278/1861), p. 119.
17. Shaykh Aḥmad Aḥsā'ī, Jawāmi' al-Kilām, vol. 1, part 1, p. 123. Shaykh Aḥmad's doctrine on this subject is not original. However, an examination of the origins of his doctrine, and of the sources which may have influenced his ideas, and of the similarities between his doctrine and other religious and philosophical systems, is beyond the scope of this work.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid., p. 122.
20. Sayyid Kāzīm Rashtī, untitled collection of treatises, p. 61, published in 1276/1859 in Tabrīz. This work contains mostly treatises written by Sayyid Kāzīm Rashtī at the request of individual questioners. A lithography of this collection, bound along with Shaykh Aḥmad's Sharḥ al-Fawā'id bears the call number 2019-F in the National Bahā'ī Archive of Iran. This collection will hereafter be referred to as Collection of Treatises.
21. Nafs-i nāṭiqa, "the reasoning soul," is unique to human beings. While it possesses the faculties of vegetable and animal souls it also has the faculty of reasoning, which distinguishes man from plants and animals. Nafs-i nāṭiqa is the manifestation of man's spirit.
22. Sayyid Kāzīm Rashtī, Collection of Treatises, p. 361.
23. Shaykh Aḥmad Aḥsā'ī, Davāzdah Risāla az Shaykh Aḥmad Aḥsā'ī, p. 33. This collection of twelve short treatises by Shaykh Aḥmad Aḥsā'ī was copied by Ya'qūb b. Muqīm b. Sharīf al-Bārforoshī in 1263/1846; the manuscript is in the National Bahā'ī Archive of Iran and has the call number 2022-F. This collection will hereafter be referred to as the Davāzdah Risāla.
24. Shaykh Aḥmad Aḥsā'ī, Sharḥ al-Fawā'id (see chapter 3, n. 2), pp. 160-161.
25. Shaykh Aḥmad Aḥsā'ī, Davāzdah Risāla, p. 37.
26. Shaykh Aḥmad Aḥsā'ī, Jawāmi' al-Kilām, vol. 1, part 2, p. 119.
27. See the Qur'ān, 17:1; 53:7-14.
28. Sayyid Kāzīm Rashtī, The Treatise for Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥasan, p. 272.

29. Ibid., p. 268.
30. Sayyid Kāẓim Rashtī, Uṣūl-i 'Aqā'id, pp. 197-198.
31. Ibid., p. 200.
32. Shaykh Aḥmad Aḥsā'ī, Davāzdah Risāla, p. 107.
33. See the Traditions in Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī, Biḥār al-Anwār (Tehrān: al-Maktabat al-Islāmīya, 1384/1964), vol. 13, part 51, pp. 44-64.
34. Ibid., p. 49.
35. Ibid., p. 58.
36. Ibid., p. 45.
37. Shaykh Aḥmad Aḥsā'ī, Jawāmi' al-Kilam, vol. 1, part 2, p. 139.
38. Sayyid Kāẓim Rashtī, Collection of Treatises, p. 271.
39. Ibid., p. 272.

CHAPTER V

Developments in the Shaykhī School After
the Death of Shaykh Aḥmad Aḥsā'ī

The death of Shaykh Aḥmad Aḥsā'ī in 1241/1327 did not result in a struggle for succession, for it was widely known within his circle as well as outside that Sayyid Kāẓim Rashtī was to be his successor. Once when Shaykh Aḥmad had been asked who should be the authority after him, he replied that Sayyid Kāẓim was the one.¹ Shaykh Aḥmad called Sayyid Kāẓim "My Son" (waladī).² Indeed, one commentator has gone so far as to describe Sayyid Kāẓim as "the shining apple of his [Shaykh Aḥmad's] eye and the splendid bright strength of his heart, his companion in his hardships and troubles, and he who was like the shirt on his back."³

Sayyid Kāẓim's intellectual and scholastic relationship with Shaykh Aḥmad, his indisputable authority in Islamic literature in general and Shaykh Aḥmad's writings and thoughts in particular, and his piety and faithfulness made him the only one intellectually worthy and scholastically capable to lead the Shaykhī school.

Sayyid Kāẓim Rashtī b. Qāsim b. Aḥmad b. Ḥabīb was born in 1212/1798⁴ in Rasht in the Province of Gilān. His family was reputed to have been descended from the Prophet and traced its origin to Medina. After Sayyid Ḥabīb's death, his son, Sayyid Aḥmad, emigrated to Rasht, where his son Qāsim, and then Sayyid Kāẓim, were born.⁵

Little is known about Sayyid Kāẓim's childhood except that in his early years, in his home town, he received a traditional religious education. He studied Islamic sciences and memorized the Qur'ān.

When he was a young man he had a dream in which Fāẓima, the daughter of the Prophet, advised him to go to Yazd to meet with Shaykh Aḥmad Aḥsā'ī, who was residing there at the time. Acting upon this vision, Sayyid Kāẓim went to Yazd in 1231/1815 when he was about 20 years old and met with Shaykh Aḥmad. This was the beginning of his scholastic career. For about ten years, until Shaykh Aḥmad's death in 1241/1825, Sayyid Kāẓim studied with him, accompanied him on his journeys, and was his closest assistant. Although Shaykh Aḥmad was his main teacher, Sayyid Kāẓim had the opportunity to study with several other learned men of his time such as Sayyid 'Abd Allāh Shubbar (d. 1242/1826), Mullā 'Alī Rashtī, and Shaykh Mūsā Najafī (d. 1241/1825).⁶ Of his teachers, however, he most respected and admired Shaykh Aḥmad. To Sayyid Kāẓim, Shaykh Aḥmad was not merely a teacher but a spiritual leader, a sympathetic companion, and a kind guardian who looked after him with tender care. Through this relationship, Sayyid Kāẓim not only acquired the doctrinal beliefs of Shaykh Aḥmad, but also the Shaykh's attitudes and world view.

The ministry of Sayyid Kāẓim, which officially began in 1241/1825, was in fact an extension of Shaykh Aḥmad's authority and influence. By this it is not implied that

Sayyid Kāẓim's contribution was any the less, for it was Sayyid Kāẓim's creativity that brought Shaykh Aḥmad's thought into its full measure of elaboration.

During Sayyid Kāẓim's ministry, the Shaykhīs developed an increasing sense of solidarity. Although the Shaykhī school did not operate independently of the Shī'a, its unique features, which were only partly evident toward the end of the time of Shaykh Aḥmad, were becoming crystallized. It was at this time, too, that Shaykh Aḥmad's doctrines received full elaboration and further explanation in the works of Sayyid Kāẓim, which occurred partly as a result of several scholastic confrontations that Sayyid Kāẓim had in Karbalā with some of the leading religious authorities of the time. These confrontations brought out the unique characteristics of Shaykhī doctrines and the points of disagreement with other trends of thought.

Sayyid Kāẓim's most important confrontation took place in Karbalā at a meeting with three distinguished Uṣūlī scholars: Sayyid Mahdī b. Sayyid 'Alī Ṭabāṭabā'ī (d. 1260/1844), Muḥammad Ja'far Astarābādī (d. 1263/1847), and Muḥammad Sharīf b. Mullā Ḥasan 'Alī Māzandarānī, known as Sharīf al-'Ulamā (d. 1245/1829).⁷ The meeting, held at the request of Sayyid Mahdī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, was called to examine the Shaykhī views on theological questions such as the Return, the Ascension of the Prophet, and the status of the imāms.⁸ In this meeting, Sayyid Kāẓim admitted that some of Shaykh Aḥmad's writings appeared to contradict popular Shī'ī

beliefs. Upon this admission, Ṭabāṭabā'ī, with the cooperation of his colleagues, issued a takfīr to the effect that Shaykhīs were heretics. Later, Mullā Muḥammad Ja'far Astarābādī, one of the participants in that meeting, wrote a book rejecting the Shaykhī ideology.⁹ This takfīr was followed by others issued by authorities such as Mullā Āqā Darbandī (d. 1286/1869); Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad Raḥīm (d. 1250/1834), the author of al-Fuṣūl al-Gharawīya fi al-Uṣūl al-Fiqhīya; and Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥasan b. Bāqir Najafī (d. 1266 or 1268/1844), author of the Jawāhir al-Kalām fī Sharḥ Sharāyi' al-Islām.¹⁰

On another occasion in Karablā, a confrontation took place with Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥasan, the son of the well-known philosopher and student of Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophy, Mullā 'Alī Nūrī (d. 1246/1830). The subject was the concept of basīṭ al-ḥaqīqa, to which the opposition of Shaykh Aḥmad was well known. Although the concept was a major point of disagreement between the Shaykh and Mullā Ṣadrā, it is reported that when Muḥammad Ḥasan, who was a representative of Mullā Ṣadrā's school, explained Ṣadrā's stand on the subject, Sayyid Kāẓim did not have any objection.¹¹

The outcome of such frequent confrontations with representatives of different trends of thought was not, of course, always favorable for the Shaykhīs, but the effect of such confrontations was to increase solidarity and to advance a sense of identity among the Shaykhīs, who came to see themselves as distinct from the rest of the Shī'a in

thought, approach, and behavior. The confrontations intensified the enmity and hatred between the two parties. They also brought the Shaykhī school wider recognition and attracted to it students who were seeking a new approach toward religious questions. Confrontations also demonstrated that the Shaykhī ideology was a threat to the authority and power of the 'ulamā and the popularly held beliefs of the Shī'a.

The very fact that these discussions took place, regardless of the outcome, reveals that in Karbalā the Shī'ī 'ulamā regarded the Shaykhīs as a group against which they had to take measures in the name of protection of the Sharī'a. There is no doubt that they recognized in Shaykhī ideas a potential threat to their own authority and position.

The Shaykhī school at the time of Sayyid Kāẓim became an active force for antitraditionalists, who regarded it as a revolutionary movement against the religious authorities and their dogmas. The revolutionary force of the movement, now only in its religious embryonic form, would develop in later decades into a mature religious and socio-political revolution.

The intellectual result of the confrontations appeared in several apologetical and polemical works issuing from both parties.

Sayyid Kāẓim's Works

Sayyid Kāẓim's works were primarily written in the form of a risāla (treatise) in answer to the religious questions of his students, followers, religious authorities, and statesmen. The questions they asked were numerous and touched on a vast range of subjects, from daily juridical problems to theology and philosophy, and even Freemasonry in the west. A single treatise might cover a few or as many as eighty questions in different fields.¹²

Sayyid Kāẓim also wrote commentaries on Quranic verses or phrases, on Traditions on the authority of the Prophet and the imāms, and on the works of his predecessors, such as Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ or Shaykh Aḥmad Aḥsā'ī. Besides writing commentaries on Shaykh Aḥmad's works, Sayyid Kāẓim translated Shaykh Aḥmad's Ḥayāt al-Nafs and Risāla-i Ḥaydarīya into Persian as well as a few sections of the Sharḥ al-Ziyāra.

Sayyid Kāẓim states clearly that his ideology derives from Shaykh Aḥmad Aḥsā'ī's and his knowledge comes from him as well.¹³ Although this statement may have traces of humility, it is nonetheless a fact that his writings are an obvious extension of those of Shaykh Aḥmad Aḥsā'ī. Even a glance at Sayyid Kāẓim's works reveals that he was deeply influenced by the methodology, terminology, and general approach of Shaykh Aḥmad.

Sayyid Kāẓim wrote extensively. He himself gives a

list of 138 works at the end of his Dalīl al-Mutahayyirīn.¹⁴ Nicolas, in Essai Sur Le Chéikhisme, lists 135 works;¹⁵ Habībābādī, in the Makārim al-Āthār, lists 60; and Mudarris, in Rayḥānat al-Adab, mentions that Sayyid Kāẓim wrote 150 works.¹⁷ The most complete and comprehensive list of Sayyid Kāẓim's works, however, is provided by Ibrāhīmī, who devotes the second chapter of the second volume of the Fihrist¹⁸ entirely to them. In this chapter, he lists about 170 works under the following headings:

1. Works on divine theology and virtues
2. Works on doctrines and rejection of his opponents' views
3. Works on mysticism
4. Works on principles of fiqh
5. Works on fiqh
6. Commentaries
7. Works answering various questions¹⁹

The language of Sayyid Kāẓim, like that of his teacher Shaykh Aḥmad, is not easy to understand. Technical terms, allegorical expressions, and extensive gnostic terminology contribute to this difficulty. Indeed, the author of the Aḥsan al-Wadī'a, Muḥammad Mahdī Mūsawī, remarks that no one can understand his works. He goes on to state sarcastically that Sayyid Kāẓim has written in Hindi.²⁰

While Shaykh Aḥmad wrote exclusively in Arabic, Sayyid Kāẓim wrote some works in Persian, although his major books are entirely in Arabic. Three of his most important books

are considered in greater detail.

1. Sharḥ al-Khuṭbat al-Tutunjīya

This is a commentary on a sermon delivered by 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib between Kufa and Medina. Nahj al-Balāgha does not contain this sermon, but it is recorded in al-Majmū' al-Rā'iq²¹ and Shaykh Rajab al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Bursī's Mashāriq Anwār al-Yaqīn.²² Sayyid Kāẓim wrote the commentary, which exceeds 350 pages, in 1232/1816 at the request of certain 'ulamā, whose names are not mentioned. Sayyid Kāẓim in his Dalīl al-Mutahayyirīn states that his commentary on Tutunjīya contains divine secrets that only a pure-hearted and enlightened person could bear to understand.²³ The version of 'Alī's sermon he has used is that quoted by Shaykh Rajab al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Bursī.²⁴ In his commentary, Sayyid Kāẓim quotes the sermon phrase by phrase and follows each quotation with an elaborate interpretation. The commentary contains detailed a discussion of eschatological and ontological issues as treated by Muslim scholars.

2. Sharḥ al-Qaṣīdat al-Lāmiya

The Qaṣīdat al-Lāmiya was written by 'Abd al-Bāqī Afandī al-Mūshilī²⁵ in praise of Imām Mūsā al-Kāẓim.²⁶ Sayyid Kāẓim wrote his commentary on the Qaṣīda in 1258/1842 at the request of 'Alī Ridā Pashā, the governor of Baghdād. Sharḥ al-Qaṣīda is Sayyid Kāẓim's major work on broad Islamic theological perspectives.²⁷

3. Dalīl al-Mutahayyirīn

This work was written to explain Shaykhī views and to defend

Shaykhī ideology against the attacks of the 'ulamā. The book contains a biography of Shaykh Aḥmad Aḥsā'ī, excerpts from his ijāzas, and comments on his character, his achievements, and the hardships he suffered during his life. Sayyid Kāẓim explains points of dispute between the Shaykhīs and the Shī'a and records in detail his confrontations with the 'ulamā. At the end of the book, he lists the works of the Shaykh and then his own works, with a few words of description about each.

Sayyid Kāẓim, in addition to writing religious treatises, educated hundreds of students, many of whom became leading authorities on religion and participated actively in social and religious struggles after he died. The Makārim al-Āthār gives the names of several of Sayyid Kāẓim's students,²⁸ among whom are Ḥājj Muḥammad Karīm Khān Kermānī, the great Persian poetess Qurrat al-'Ain, Mullā Ḥusayn Boshro'ī, and Shaykh 'Alī Torshīzī. All became influential and distinguished leaders in the later developments of the Shaykhī school.

Unfortunately, Sayyid Kāẓim did not live long enough to witness the results of his achievements. He was forty-seven years old when he became ill, or was poisoned,²⁹ and died on 11 Dhī al-Ḥijja 1259/1843³⁰ in Karbalā.

He was survived by three children, a girl and two boys. The most distinguished of them was Sayyid Aḥmad, who was killed in 1295/1878 in 'Atabāt.³¹

Inspired and energetic, Sayyid Kāẓim played such an

important role in the Shaykhī school that, when he died, the movement that Shaykh Ahmad had initiated, and which Sayyid Kazim had organized, disintegrated almost immediately. His death, in fact, marked the beginning of a serious crisis among his followers. The crisis centered on the issue of successorship, for Sayyid Kāzīm had not appointed anyone as his successor, and this created disunity in his circle.

The disunity that appeared among the Shaykhīs in this period not only prevented the movement from any further significant extension in size, but also weakened the solidarity of the school. This weakness, in turn, paved the way for serious attacks of the Shī'ā on the Shaykhīs.

The headquarters of the movement which had been established in Karbalā at the time of Shaykh Ahmad and had attracted hundreds of religious students at the time of Sayyid Kāzīm, now moved out of Karbalā and new centers were established in Kermān and Ādharbāyjān. They attracted fewer students in general, and far fewer students from the Arab lands. The new centers also lacked the scholarly reputation that Karbalā had possessed at the time of Sayyid Kāzīm. As long as the Shaykhī school was based in Karbalā, the center for Shī'ī scholarship, it had a direct connection with other Islamic trends of thought, but the relocation of the Shaykhīs to Iran removed them from this direct contact with the mainstream. The Shī'ā who considered the Shaykhīs heretics, may well have viewed this move out of Karbalā as a victory.

The transfer to Iran also brought about an important change in the literature of the school : while Shaykh Ahmad had written his works entirely in Arabic and Sayyid Kāzīm wrote only a few books in Persian, the new Shaykhī leaders now gradually began to write primarily in Persian and for a largely non-Arab audience. The works of these leaders did little more than review the Shaykhī ideology as formulated in the works of Shaykh Ahmad and elaborated in the works of Sayyid Kāzīm. There is nothing in their works to compare with the originality and significance of the writings of Shaykh Ahmad and Sayyid Kāzīm.

The most important of the drastic changes which afflicted the school after the death of Sayyid Kāzīm was the lack of accepted leadership, which resulted in factionalism within the school. In his will,³² Sayyid Kāzīm does not mention a successor. However, he repeatedly emphasizes two major points: the importance of unity among his followers and the advent of the One whom Sayyid Kāzīm terms the "Sign of God" (Āyat Allāh) and the "Proof of God" (Hujjat Allāh).³³ In addition, he advises his followers in these words:

To awaken from the sleep of ignorance. Today is the day of examination and clarification. In such a day, one should hold on to the firmest handle, and beseech God that all gather together on the Day of Gathering³⁴ [that is, the Day of Judgment] and disunity does not occur among you³⁵. . . . Be careful not to take too much pride in your material possessions. On that day, he who is humble will be raised and he who is mighty will be lowered³⁶. . . . In each period [ʿasr] there must be a Protector [walī] who carries out the

affairs of religion. . . . He [the walī] is the Sign of God and the Proof of God. . . . Earlier he came to you and taught you what you did not know³⁷. . . . There, undoubtedly, must be the appearance of Sign after Sign in every period³⁸. . . . Hold fast to the covenant of God and lay hold on the firmest handle,³⁹ ask for success and guidance from God. . . . I beseech you to avoid disunity, because disunity cuts the tree of unity; it uproots the word of harmony and accord; it destroys the foundations of prophethood [nubuwwat]; and it shakes the pillars of successorship [wilāyat].⁴⁰

The fact that Sayyid Kāẓim did not appoint anyone as his successor, and the fact that he urged his followers to seek the walī, indicates that Sayyid Kāẓim believed that the advent of the walī was imminent, thus there was no need to appoint a successor. Without an appointed successor, and with no student who could win general acceptance within his circle, as had been the case after the death of Shaykh Aḥmad, disputes arose and various claimants to the succession appeared. Among them two distinguished students of Sayyid Kāẓim were most prominent: Ḥājj Muḥammad Karīm Khān Kermānī (d. 1288/1871) and Ḥājj Mīrzā Shafī‘ Tabrizī.

It should be noted that the ideological viewpoint which resulted in the division of the followers of Sayyid Kāẓim into two groups had to do primarily with the type of leadership that each group sought. While Ḥājj Muḥammad Karīm Khān Kermānī believed in individual leadership, Ḥājj Mīrzā Shafī‘ believed in ijtihād. This meant that Ḥājj Muḥammad Karīm Khān claimed, and was accepted by his followers, to be the only individual leader of the Shaykhīs whose ideas were legitimized, whereas Mīrzā Shafī‘ believed

that the Shaykhīs should follow the principles of Shaykh Aḥmad and Sayyid Kāẓim but for daily religious questions, should follow the examples of the Shī‘ī recognized mujtahids of their time.

It was about five months after the death of Sayyid Kāẓim, on 5 Jumādā al-Ulā 1260/1844, that Sayyid ‘Alī Muḥammad Shīrāzī declared himself to be the Bāb (Gate) to the advent of the Qā‘im. Sayyid ‘Alī Muḥammad's claim was not connected with the crises of succession within the Shaykhī school, but since he had attended Sayyid Kāẓim's circle,⁴¹ and the advent of the Qā‘im was predicted in the Shaykhī writings,⁴² the claim of the Bāb attracted many students of the Shaykhī school, who became known as Bābīs.⁴³

The two groups of Shaykhīs that emerged following the death of Sayyid Kāẓim, however, were to have a much different relationship with the Bābī movement, opposing the claims of the Bāb and even actively participating in efforts to crush the nascent movement.

Ḥājj Muḥammad Karīm Khān Kermānī
and the Shaykhīs of Kermān

The student of Sayyid Kāẓim who won the largest number of supporters was Ḥājj Muḥammad Karīm Khān Kermānī.⁴⁴ He was the son of Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Khān Ḥāḥīr al-Dawla, the governor of Kermān and cousin of Faṭḥ ‘Alī Shāh.

Muḥammad Karīm Khān was born in 1225/1810 to a rich

family in Kermān.⁴⁵ He received his elementary education in the city of his birth and was a young man when he met a certain Ḥājj Ismā'īl,⁴⁶ one of Sayyid Kāẓim's students. During this meeting, he learned about the Shaykhī school and became so attracted to it that he went to Karbalā and met Sayyid Kāẓim. He remained there for eight months⁴⁷ and attended Sayyid Kāẓim's circle. Then he returned to Kermān. After four years he made another trip to Karbalā, where he stayed for two years.⁴⁸ It was on his way back to Kermān that he claimed to be the successor of Sayyid Kāẓim and the leader of the school. Except for a few trips to Tehrān and Mashhad, he spent most of his time in Kermān teaching, preaching, and writing books. In 1288/1871, as he was on his way to Karbalā, he died in Tahrod, a village near Kermān. His body, after remaining in Langar for one and half years, was carried to Karbalā and buried there.

The majority of the Shaykhīs in Kermān accepted Ḥājj Muḥammad Karīm Khān as the legitimate leader of the school after Sayyid Kāẓim. He considered himself as an inspired leader who was acting in accordance with divine guidance,⁴⁹ but his authority was based on the loyalty of his followers, mainly the members of his family located in Kermān; he never attracted the loyalty of all the followers of Sayyid Kāẓim Rashtī.

The followers of Ḥājj Muḥammad Karīm Khān became known as the Shaykhīs of Kermān (Shaykhīya-i Kermān or Shaykhīya-i Ḥājj Karīm Khānī) in contrast with the groups of Shaykhīs in

Tabrīz and Hamadān. He was a traditionalist Shaykhī who remained loyal to the Shaykhī school. The school of Kermān never entered into active revolt against the established authorities. They were among the power elite of Kermān who conservatively limited themselves to religious activities mainly in that province. The Shaykhī leader of Kermān was, in fact, the head of his clan, and the leadership of the Shaykhīs of Kermān has remained in the family of Ḥājj Muḥammad Karīm Khān to the present day. The successors of Ḥājj Muḥammad Karīm Khān were his son Muḥammad Khān (d. 1324/1906); Ḥājj Zayn al-'Abidīn Khān (d. 1360/1941), his other son; then Ḥājj Abū al-Qāsim Khān (d. 1389/1969),⁵⁰ the son of Ḥājj Zayn al-'Abidīn Khān.⁵¹ Presently 'Abd al-Riḍā Ibrāhīmī, the son of Ḥājj Abū al-Qāsim Khān, is the leader of the school, and his headquarters are still in Kermān.

When Ḥājj Muḥammad Karīm Khān appointed his son Muḥammad Khān as his successor, a great Shaykhī scholar, Mīrzā Muḥammad Bāqir Hamadānī (d. 1319/1901), did not accept the latter's leadership. Mīrzā Muḥammad Bāqir b. Muḥammad Ja'far, originally from Iṣfahān but known as Hamadānī because he had resided in Hamadān for about thirty years, was born in 1239/1823.⁵² He received his elementary education in Iṣfahān and then joined Ḥājj Muḥammad Karīm Khān's circle in Kermān. He studied with Ḥājj Muḥammad Karīm Khān, and became his devoted follower and then his deputy in Hamadān.

Mīrzā Muḥammad Bāqir believed that successorship should be given to the most learned member of the Shaykhī community-- i.e., himself!--not necessarily to a member of Ḥājj Muḥammad Karīm Khān's family. This claim, which was supported by many Shaykhīs, particularly outside Kermān, brought into being a new branch of Shaykhīs under the leadership of Mīrzā Muḥammad Bāqir, who considered himself to be the most respected and learned Shaykhī after Ḥājj Muḥammad Karīm Khān. His followers came to be known as the Bāqirīs, or the Shaykhīs of Hamadān. Mehdī Bāmdād, in the Tārīkh-i Rijāl-i Irān, states that after the separation of the Bāqirīs, the followers of Ḥājj Muḥammad Khān became known as Nāṭiqī (adjective form derived from the noun nāṭiq which literally means speaker) or Nawāṭiq (plural of nāṭiq).⁵³ This statement, however, is not supported by any other sources.

Mīrzā Muḥammad Bāqir wrote about 150 books and treatises.⁵⁴ His better known works are al-Ijtināb, written in Persian in 1307/1889 to answer the polemical questions 'Abd al-Ṣamad b. 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥusaynī al Māzandarānī (d. 1315/1897) had raised in his work, the Tiryāq-i Fārūq;⁵⁵ and al-Uṣūl al-Dīniya, a work written in Persian on Shī'ī doctrines.⁵⁶

In 1315/1897, there was an uprising against the Shaykhīs of Hamadān, during which Mīrzā Muḥammad Bāqir fled to Nāeīn and subsequently made his residence in that area. He died in 1319/1901 in Jandaq at the age of eighty.⁵⁷

Mīrzā Shafī' Tabrīzī
and the Shaykhīs of Tabrīz

Mīrzā Shafī' was a student of Shaykh Aḥmad Aḥsā'ī and Sayyid Kāzīm Rashtī. As soon as he returned to Tabrīz after the death of Sayyid Kāzīm, he established a Shaykhī circle there, and members of his family and the nobility of Tabrīz supported him.⁵⁸

Mīrzā Shafī' b. Mīrzā Rafī' was born in 1218/1803 and lived for eighty-three years. He received the traditional elementary education in his home town and then went to 'Atabāt to continue his education. In 'Atabāt he studied with Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥasan Najafī, author of the Jawāhir al-Kalām, the most important work on jurisprudence written in this period, and then continued with Sayyid Kāzīm Rashtī, from whom he received his ijāza. Mīrzā Shafī' was a respected man of his time, known for his piety and knowledge.⁵⁹ After his death, his son, Mīrzā Mūsā, received his father's authority and led the school till 1319/1901, when he died.

Of the twenty-one children that Mīrzā Mūsā left behind, Mīrzā 'Alī became the most famous. Born in 1277/1860 and killed by the Russians in 1330/1912,⁶⁰ he became known as the Thiqat al-Islām-i Shahīd. He received his elementary education from his grandfather Mīrzā Shafī', and others, and went to 'Atabāt for higher religious education.⁶¹ Upon his return to Tabrīz in 1308/1890 he became a respected,

learned man. With the death of his father, Mīrzā Mūsā, in 1319/1901, he became the head of the Shaykhī school of Tabrīz. Mīrzā 'Alī was a distinguished scholar in religion and literature. He was interested in new sciences, social change and the socio-political issues of his time. His interests led him to participate in the social affairs of the country as a secular thinker.⁶² He wrote several books such as the Risāla-i Lālān, on social issues, and the Mir'āt al-Kutub, an immense biobibliography.⁶³

Up to the time of Mīrzā 'Alī, sources report that in Tabrīz there was enmity between the Shaykhīs and the Shī'a. Aḥmad Kasravī states that the bloody fighting which had occurred earlier between the Shī'a and the Shaykhīs had lessened, but in the years before the Constitutional Movement, hatred still existed between them; they had separate mosques, they would not intermarry,⁶⁴ they considered each other as najis (religiously impure), and they would not use the same public baths.⁶⁵ Through the efforts of Mīrzā 'Alī, the deeply rooted enmity between the Shaykhīs and the Shī'a was reduced,⁶⁶ and later on, during the uprising of the masses for the Constitutional Movement, the two parties came together against despotism, and the gap was bridged.⁶⁷

The Shaykhīs of Tabrīz never succeeded in obtaining hegemony over all the Shaykhīs, but immediately following the death of Sayyid Kāẓim they attracted those students of his who held more antitraditionalist views. In contrast

with the Shaykhīs of Kermān, the Shaykhīs of Tabrīz were very much involved in the current socio-political issues of the province of Ādharbāyjān, where they had a close relationship with the royal family residing there and engaged in the public affairs of the society. This involvement manifested itself most clearly at the time of Mīrzā 'Alī, who came out publicly against the established authorities and institutions and received the support of his adherents. This developed into an active rebellion against the established order and ultimately led to the Constitutional Movement.

In contrast with the leaders of the Shaykhīs of Kermān, who claimed to enjoy the inspired leadership of their community, the leaders of the Shaykhīs of Tabrīz never made such a claim. While the leadership of the Shaykhīs of Kermān was centered in an acknowledged individual, the Shaykhīs of Tabrīz lacked a universally accepted individual leader.

In contrast with the Uṣūlī 'ulamā of Tabrīz and the Shaykhīs of Kermān, who were among the local notables with considerable landed property and other investments and lived in luxury, the Shaykhīs of Tabrīz lived a moderate life.⁶⁸

Sayyid 'Alī Muḥammad Shīrāzī, The Bāb
and the Bābīs

Within a short period after Sayyid Kāẓim's death,

Sayyid 'Alī Muḥammad declared himself to be the Bāb (Gate) to the twelfth Imām for whom the Shī'a in general and the Shaykhīs in particular had been waiting.

Sayyid 'Alī Muḥammad Shīrāzī was born into a respected merchant family of Shīrāz on the first of Muḥarram 1235/1819.⁶⁹ Orphaned at an early age, he was raised by his maternal uncle, Sayyid 'Alī. He received his formal elementary education in his home town and then, as a young man, went into business with his uncle, who was also a merchant. In 1257/1841, Sayyid 'Alī Muḥammad made a pilgrimage to 'Atabāt where he stayed for 11 months.⁷⁰ There he met Sayyid Kāzīm Rashtī and attended his circle. Upon his return to Shīrāz, he proclaimed himself the Bāb on (5 Jumādā al-Ulā 1260/23 of May 1844). He made his declaration to Mullā Ḥusayn Boshro'ī, an eminent student in the Shaykhī circle, saying, "O thou who art the first to believe in Me! Verily I say, I am the Bāb, the Gate of God, and thou art the Bābu'l-Bāb, the gate of that Gate. Eighteen souls must, in the beginning, spontaneously and of their own accord, accept Me and recognize the truth of My Revelation."⁷¹ Shortly after this event, seventeen other people became believers and, along with Mullā Ḥusayn Boshro'ī, formed the Letters of the Living (Ḥurūf-i Ḥayy; the numerical value of the word Ḥayy is 18). The Letters of the Living, most of whom were Shaykhīs, as the first disciples of the Bāb were given the task of proclaiming his advent throughout the country. Through the Bāb's writings, which were addressed

to religious and secular leaders,⁷² and through the efforts of his disciples, the Bāb's message spread and within only six years reached every corner of Iran, attracted the attention of thousands, and became the main issue of the day.

The 'ulamā, threatened by the new message, the implication of which was nothing short of undermining the traditional order and the authority of the mujtahids, used all their resources to destroy the Bāb and his followers. The state joined the 'ulamā in its efforts. As a result, thousands of Bābī men, women, and children were murdered in the most horrible circumstances. Lord Curzon, in his Persia and the Persian Question, writes: "Tales of magnificent heroism illumine the bloodstained pages of Babi history . . . and the fires of Smithfield did not kindle a nobler courage than has met and defied the more refined torturemongers of Tehran."⁷³

The Bāb himself, subjected to imprisonment during his six years of ministry, was sentenced to death and executed in 1266/1849 by a firing squad in Tabrīz.

The term "Bāb" which Sayyid 'Alī Muḥammad applied to himself, was familiar to the people of his time. It had been used by Muslims of various sects for several centuries. As Huart points out,

Bāb, an Arabic word signifying "gate", early received among the Ṣūfīs the meaning of the "gate by which one enters, means of communication with that which is within" and was applied to prominent Shaikh's. Among the Ismā'īlīs, this word is used symbolically for the Shaikh or spiritual leader, who initiates into the mysteries of religion, the

asās; among the Nuṣairīs, Salmān al-Fārisi, who was entrusted with the propaganda, is the Bāb. The Druses call by this name the first spiritual minister, who embodies universal reason.⁷⁴

Among the Shī'ā the term Bāb was assigned to Four Gates (al-Abwāb al-Arba'a), four people who claimed to be intermediaries between the Hidden Imām and the believers during the Lesser Occultation.⁷⁵ The term is used in almost the same sense in Shaykhī writings. On the basis of Shī'ī Traditions, Shaykh Aḥmad in his Sharḥ al-Ziyāra states that the Prophet Muḥammad--and the Prophet's knowledge--is like a house and that the imāms are like the doors (al-abwāb) to it.⁷⁶ Shaykh Aḥmad quotes a famous Tradition on the authority of the Prophet which reads, "I am the city of knowledge and 'Alī is its Gate."⁷⁷

In his account of the concept of ma'rifa (knowledge), Shaykh Aḥmad states that it exists on six levels:

1. The knowledge of the oneness of God
2. The knowledge of al-ma'ānī (the meanings)
3. The knowledge of al-abwāb (the gates)
4. The knowledge of al-imām (the imāms)
5. The knowledge of al-arkān (the pillars)
6. The knowledge of al-nuḡabā (the guardians)
7. The knowledge of al-nuḡabā (the helpers)⁷⁸

Then, Shaykh Aḥmad provides details about each level, saying that in the terminology of the Illuminists (Ahl al-Ishrāq) "gate" is equal to the First Intellect, and in the terminology of the religious scholars (Ahl al-Shar') it is equal

to the Pen (al-Qalam) or the Muḥammadan Intellect (al-'Aql al-Muḥammadī), which is the gate between God and His creation.⁷⁹

Shaykh Aḥmad and Sayyid Kāẓim were known to their students as the gates. Qurrat al-'Ain, in her treatises, refers to them by the term "the two gates" (al-bābayn).⁸⁰ She also refers to Sayyid Kāẓim as "The earlier gate of God" (bāb Allāh al-muḡaddam)⁸¹ in comparison to Sayyid 'Alī Muḥammad, who appeared later. Sayyid 'Alī Muḥammad also refers to Shaykh Aḥmad and Sayyid Kāẓim as "bāb." In his Qayyūm al-Asmā, his first work, Sayyid 'Alī Muḥammad writes, "O ye peoples of the earth! During the time of My absence I sent down the Gates unto you. However the believers, except for a handful, obeyed them not. Formerly I sent forth unto you Aḥmad and more recently Kāẓim, but apart from the pure in heart amongst you no one followed them."⁸²

The term "bāb," however, became best known as the title for Sayyid 'Alī Muḥammad, who at the very beginning of his mission identified himself as the Gate through which men might attain to the knowledge of the Twelfth Imām,⁸³ the expected Qā'im. In his first work, the Qayyūm al-Asmā, however, he frequently referred to himself by the term "Gate of God." The Bāb writes: "As to those who deny Him Who is the Sublime Gate of God, for them We have prepared, as justly decreed by God, a sore torment. And He, God, is the Mighty, the Wise."⁸⁴ And also, "I am the 'Gate of God' and I give you to drink, by the leave of God, the sovereign