

shifted the attention of his followers to the imāms. Shaykh Ahmad's view was accepted by the Bāb and resulted in the complete elimination of the clergy in the Bābī religious system.

The third main area in which Shaykh Ahmad's ideas had an impact in Bābī doctrines was his attitude toward the Ṣūfīs, theologians, and philosophers whose views contradict the imāms' views thereby misleading people. The Bāb, in his writings, carried these views even further by blaming the learned for preventing people from recognizing the truth. The Bāb expresses his view in regard to the Christian learned in the following passage:

It is recorded in a tradition that of the entire concourse of the Christians no more than seventy people embraced the Faith of the Apostle of God. The blame falleth upon their doctors, for if these had believed, they would have been followed by the mass of their countrymen. Behold, then, that which hath come to pass! The learned men of Christendom are held to be learned by virtue of their safeguarding the teaching of Christ, and yet consider how they themselves have been the cause of men's failure to accept the Faith and attain unto salvation! Is it still thy wish to follow in their footsteps? The followers of Jesus submitted to their clerics to be saved on the Day of Resurrection, and as a result of this obedience they eventually entered into the fire, and on the Day when the Apostle of God appeared they shut themselves out from the recognition of His exalted Person. Dost thou desire to follow such divines?

Nay, by God, be thou neither a divine without discernment nor a follower without discernment, for both of these shall perish on the Day of Resurrection. Rather it behooveth thee to be a discerning divine, or to walk with insight in the way of God by obeying a true leader of religion.

In every nation thou beholdest unnumbered spiritual leaders who are bereft of true discern-

ment, and among every people thou dost encounter myriads of adherents who are devoid of the same characteristic. Ponder for a while in thy heart, have pity on thyself and turn not aside thine attention from proofs and evidences. However, seek not proofs and evidences after thine idle fancy; but rather base thy proofs upon what God hath appointed. Moreover, know thou that neither being a man of learning nor being a follower is in itself a source of glory. If thou art a man of learning, thy knowledge becometh an honour, and if thou art a follower, thine adherence unto leadership becometh an honour, only when these conform to the good-pleasure of God. And beware lest thou regard as an idle fancy the good-pleasure of God; it is the same as the good-pleasure of His Messenger. Consider the followers of Jesus. They were eagerly seeking the good-pleasure of God, yet none of them attained the good-pleasure of His Apostle which is identical with God's good-pleasure, except such as embraced His Faith.⁴²

The Bāb states that man's highest station is attained through faith in God and by acceptance of what has been revealed by Him, and not through the speculations of the learned. Then he says, "True knowledge, therefore, is the knowledge of God, and this is none other than the recognition of His Manifestation in each Dispensation."⁴³ This true knowledge, the Bāb asserts, is the most noble of created things.⁴⁴

Like Shaykh Ahmad, the Bāb maintains that truth is contained within the writings of the prophet of God, and that man should seek the truth in those writings. He writes,

Ponder a while and observe that everything in Islām hath its ultimate and eventual beginning in the Book of God. Consider likewise the Day of the Revelation of Him Whom God shall make manifest,⁴⁵ He in Whose grasp lieth the source of proofs, and let not erroneous considerations shut thee out from Him, for He is immeasurably exalted

above them, inasmuch as every proof proceedeth from the Book of God which is itself the supreme testimony, as all men are powerless to produce its like. Should myriads of men of learning, versed in logic, in the science of grammar, in law, in jurisprudence and the like, turn away from the Book of God, they would still be pronounced unbelievers. Thus the fruit is within the supreme testimony itself, not in the things derived therefrom.⁴⁶

While Shaykh Ahmad never went so far as to forbid the study of logic, philosophy, and jurisprudence,⁴⁷ the Bāb did so, maintaining that they were unprofitable pursuits and an obstacle to the recognition of the truth.

The fourth area in which Shaykh Ahmad's ideas affected Bābī thought concerned the understanding of the concept of finality of the Prophet. Shaykh Ahmad maintained that the appearance of the prophets follows a cyclical pattern. The Bāb reaffirms this concept in the following words:

It is clear and evident that the object of all preceding Dispensations hath been to pave the way for the advent of Muhammad, the Apostle of God. These, including the Muhammadan Dispensation, have had, in their turn, as their objective the Revelation proclaimed by the Qā'im. The purpose underlying this Revelation, as well as those that preceded it, has in like manner, been to announce the advent of the Faith of Him Whom God will make manifest. And this Faith--the Faith of Him Whom God will make manifest--in its turn, together with all the Revelations gone before it, have as their object the Manifestation destined to succeed it. And the latter, no less than all the Revelations preceding it, prepare the way for the Revelation which is yet to follow. The process of the rise and setting of the Sun of Truth will thus indefinitely continue--a process that hath no beginning and will have no end.⁴⁸

Like Shaykh Ahmad, the Bāb compares the successive appearance of the prophets and their increasing perfection

to a body in successive stages of growth.⁴⁹ As an individual develops toward perfection during the various stages of his growth in the womb, so mankind as a whole improves in successive cycles in the world.⁵⁰ The Bāb writes:

For had the embryo not existed, how could he have reached his present state? Likewise had the religion taught by Adam not existed, this Faith would not have attained its present stage. Thus consider thou the development of God's Faith until the end that hath no end.⁵¹

And also:

Likewise continue thou to ascend through one Revelation after another, knowing that thy progress in the knowledge of God shall never come to an end, even as it can have no beginning.⁵²

He also states that

The process of His creation hath had no beginning and can have no end, otherwise it would necessitate the cessation of His celestial grace. God hath raised up Prophets and revealed Books as numerous as the creatures of the world, and will continue to do so to everlasting.⁵³

Shaykh Ahmad's doctrines on Islamic ontology and eschatology had a strong impact on the Bāb's approach toward these questions.⁵⁴ The basic issues of these two fields, discussed in the Shaykhī and Bābī works, appear to constitute the closest intellectual tie between the two systems.

In his discussion of the basic ontological questions, of the nature and attributes of God, the Bāb asserts that God will "dwell within the mystery of His Own divine Essence"⁵⁵ and is "exalted above the reach and ken of all created beings. . . ."⁵⁶ As Shaykh Ahmad substituted the recognition of the imām for the recognition of God, the Bāb

also states, "Know thou that in this world of being the knowledge of God can never be attained save through the knowledge of Him Who is the Dayspring of divine Reality [i.e., the prophet]." ⁵⁷ Thus, although for Shaykh Ahmad and the Bāb man cannot know God, take refuge in Him, or meet with Him, he can achieve the equivalent with His prophet.

Similar to Shaykh Ahmad's doctrine, the Bāb maintains that God created all things by His will and the will by itself. ⁵⁸ The relationship between the will and the universe is compared to the relationship between fire and heat. ⁵⁹

Although in Shaykh Ahmad's writings paradise and hell are interpreted literally, in accordance with the traditional belief, as well as allegorically, in the writings of the Bāb they only receive an allegorical interpretation.

The Bāb writes:

There is no paradise, in the estimation of the believers in the Divine Unity, more exalted than to obey God's commandments, and there is no fire in the eyes of those who have known God and His signs, fiercer than to transgress His laws and to oppress another soul, even to the extent of a mustard seed. ⁶⁰

Elsewhere he writes:

There is no paradise more wondrous for any soul than to be exposed to God's Manifestation in His Day, to hear His verses and believe in them, to attain His presence, which is naught but the presence of God, to sail upon the sea of the heavenly kingdom of His good-pleasure, and to partake of the choice fruits of the paradise of His divine Oneness. ⁶¹

In the Bāb's writings paradise and hell are given

different allegorical interpretations. In one place the Bāb maintains that paradise refers to those who believe in the Bayān, ⁶² i.e., the Bāb's Book; in another place, paradise is the Bayān itself; ⁶³ whoever accepts it is in paradise, and whoever denies it is in hell. In several cases the Bāb refers to paradise as being wherever the believers have been or are. ⁶⁴ He states that no hell is worse than unbelief or the denial of a prophet. ⁶⁵ Whoever denies the Bāb and refuses to take refuge in him shall not escape hell, and whoever has rejected the Bayān is already in hell. ⁶⁶

Shaykh Ahmad regarded Resurrection as the day of the advent of the Qā'im. Although he also interpreted Resurrection in accordance with the traditional belief of the Shī'a, the Bāb only interprets it as the day of the appearance of a new prophet. This interpretation is radically different from what the Shī'a understand in a purely material sense. The Bāb's most comprehensive explanation of his views on the Resurrection occurs in his main book, the Persian Bayān. It reads,

The substance of this chapter is this, that what is intended by the Day of Resurrection is the Day of the appearance of the Tree of divine Reality, ⁶⁷ but it is not seen that any one of the followers of Shī'ih Islām hath understood the meaning of the Day of Resurrection; rather have they fancifully imagined a thing which with God hath no reality. In the estimation of God and according to the usage of such as are initiated into divine mysteries, what is meant by the Day of Resurrection is this, that from the time of the appearance of Him Who is the Tree of divine Reality, at whatever period and under whatever name, until the moment of His disappearance, is the Day of Resurrection.

For example, from the inception of the mission of Jesus--may peace be upon Him--till the day of His ascension was the Resurrection of Moses. For during that period the Revelation of God shone forth through the appearance of that divine Reality, Who rewarded by His Word everyone who believed in Moses, and punished by His Word everyone who did not believe; inasmuch as God's Testimony for that Day was that which He had solemnly affirmed in the Gospel. And from the inception of the Revelation of the Apostle of God--may the blessings of God be upon Him--till the day of His ascension was the Resurrection of Jesus--peace be upon Him--wherein the Tree of divine Reality appeared in the person of Muḥammad, rewarding by His Word everyone who was not a believer in Jesus, and punishing by His Word everyone who was not a believer in Him. And from the moment when the Tree of the Bayān appeared until it disappeareth is the Resurrection of the Apostle of God, as is divinely foretold in the Qur'ān, the beginning of which was when two hours and eleven minutes had passed on the eve of the fifth of Jamādīyu'l-Avval, 1260 A.H. (22 May 1844), which is the year 1270 of the Declaration of the Mission of Muḥammad. This was the beginning of the Day of Resurrection of the Qur'ān, and until the disappearance of the Tree of divine Reality is the Resurrection of the Qur'ān. 68

Later in the same chapter, he continues,

This notwithstanding that in the Qur'ān the advent of the Day of Resurrection hath been promised unto all by God. For on that Day all men will be brought before God and will attain His Presence; which meaneth appearance before Him Who is the Tree of divine Reality and attainment unto His presence; inasmuch as it is not possible to appear before the Most Holy Essence of God, nor is it conceivable to seek reunion with Him. That which is feasible in the matter of appearance before Him and of meeting Him is attainment unto the Primal Tree. 69

And elsewhere in the same book he writes,

The Day of Resurrection is a day on which the sun riseth and setteth like unto any other day. How oft hath the Day of Resurrection dawned, and the people of the land where it occurred did not learn of the event. Had they heard, they would not have believed, and thus they were not told! 70

The impact of Shaykhī teachings manifested itself not only in Bābī ideology but also in the conduct of those Shaykhīs who became followers of the Bāb. In the Bāb, these Shaykhīs found the person Shaykh Aḥmad had written about and with whom he had had a close relationship in his dreams. These Shaykhīs were now able to express to a human being who actually lived among them the love and gratitude that their teacher had expressed to the Hidden Imām. No wonder, then, that thousands of Bābīs, of whom the most distinguished had come from a Shaykhī background, willingly endured the most horrible tortures and persecutions and sacrificed their lives for the Bāb.

NOTES

1. Mudarris, in his Rayhānat al-Adab ([Tehrān: Khayyām, 1346sh], vol. 1, p. 81), states that when Shaykh Ahmad's works and approach (maslak) became widely known, he became subject to the curses and censure of the people. They changed their attitude toward him and even his son, Shaykh Muhammad, openly rose against him. Then, Mudarris gives the names of the most distinguished 'ulamā who opposed Shaykh Ahmad, namely, Muhammad Ḥasan (the author of Jawāhir al-Kalām, Āqā Sayyid Ibrāhīm (Qazvinī) (the author of Dawābiṭ), Sharīf al-'Ulamā, and Muhammad Ḥusayn (the author of Fuṣūl). Mudarris continues that the majority of the theologians (fuqahā) of the period did not decline to curse him; even the divine philosopher, Ḥājj Mullā 'Alī Nūrī, in spite of his respect for the Shaykh, denied his scholarship (faḍl), and Khānsārī, also, cursed him, in his Rawḍāt al-Jannāt, in which he wrote the biography of Shaykh Rajab Bursī.
Ḥusaynī, in his Tiryāq-i Fārūq ([Mashhad: lithograph, 1308/1890], p. 26), says that because Shaykh Ahmad regarded the imāms as the Four Causes (see below) a group of 'ulamā rejected him. Then, Ḥusaynī gives several names as examples, namely, Sayyid Maḥdī b. 'Alī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, Mullā (Muhammad) Taqī (known as Shahīd-i Thāliṭh), Mullā (Muhammad) Ja'far Astarābādī, and Mullā Āqā Darbandī. As demonstrated previously, the opposition to Shaykh Ahmad dates back to 1239 or 40/1824 when Ḥājj Muhammad Taqī Baraghānī (Shahīd-i Thāliṭh) issued a takfīr against him. Then, at the time of Sayyid Kāzīm Rashtī, the takfīr of Sayyid Maḥdī Ṭabāṭabā'ī was issued. This was followed by a series of attacks from several religious leaders whose names appear above.
2. The polemical works against the Shaykhīs are too numerous to be fully listed here. Al-Ṭehrānī, in his al-Dharī'a ilā Taṣānif al-Shī'a (26 vols., [Tehrān: Majlis, 1375/1956], vol. 10, pp. 182, 203) describes several of them. Below, a typical polemical work, the Tiryāq-i Fārūq, will be closely examined.
3. Mullā Muhammad Ja'far Astarābādī was one of the participants in the interrogation of Sayyid Kāzīm Rashtī (see chapter 5). He wrote the Ḥayāt al-Arwāh, a polemical work against the Shaykhīs, in 1240/1824, apparently the earliest one (See chapter 5, n. 9).
4. Shaykh Muhammad Ḥasan Najafī was the author of Jawāhir al-Kalām, the most comprehensive work of jurisprudence in the period.

5. The name is also recorded as Muhammad Ḥusayn b. Muhammad 'Alī al-Ḥusaynī al-Shahrestānī (see chapter 5, n. 55).
6. 'Alī Davvānī, Ostād-i Kull, Āqā Muhammad Bāqir b. Muhammad Akmal Ma'rūf bi Waḥīd Behbahānī (qom: Dār al-'Ilm, 1378/1958), p. 463.
7. Irshād al-'Awām is a major work of Ḥājj Muhammad Karīm Khān Kermānī on theology written in Persian in about 1263-65/1846-48.
8. Āqā Bozorg al-Ṭehrānī, al-Dharī'a, vol. 4, p. 441.
9. Ḥusaynī has a lengthy discussion on this point which runs to 52 pages (pp. 6-58). He gives the Shaykhī doctrines on the subject and then quotes several statements from Mufīd, 'Allama Hillī, Majlisī and Sayyid Murtaḍā to show that Shaykhī doctrines contradict these thinkers.
10. Ḥusaynī, Tiryāq-i Fārūq, p. 59.
11. Ibid., p. 179.
12. Ibid., p. 193.
13. Ḥusaynī quotes Mufīd who quotes Ṣadūq that, "In our belief the Ghulāt and the Mufawwiḍa are infidels and are worse than the Jews, Christians, Majūs, Qadariya, Ḥarūriya, and Ḥarbiya, or any other group of innovators with misleading illusions." Then Mufīd elaborates Ṣadūq's statement above in the following words, "The Ghulāt are those who have relatee 'Alī and his descendants, the imāms, to God and prophethood, and have described their religious and secular virtues to an extreme. They are infidels whom the Amīr al-Mu'minīn ('Alī) ordered to be killed and burned; the imāms also regarded them as infidels who have left Islam. The Mufawwiḍa were a branch of the Ghulāt, but they believed that the imāms are noneternal and created, and denied that they are eternal. In spite of this, the Mufawwiḍa regard the imāms as the creators and the distributors of sustenance (rizq). The Mufawwiḍa believe that God only created the imāms and He delegated (tafwīd) them to create the whole world and every thing and every action in it." (Tiryāq-i Fārūq, pp. 44-45).
14. Ḥusaynī, Tiryāq-i Fārūq, p. 151.
15. Ibid., p. 154.

16. Ibid., p. 158.
17. Ibid., pp. 164-165.
18. Ibid., p. 119.
19. Ibid., p. 169.
20. Ibid., p. 170.
21. Ibid., p. 196.
22. Ibid., p. 174.
23. Ibid., p. 182.
24. Ibid., pp. 200-201.
25. The Qur'ān reads, "And a tree that grows out of Mount Sinai which produces oil and a condiment for those who eat" (23:20). And also it reads, "Consider the fig and the olive, and Mount Sinai" (95:1-2).
26. The Qur'ān reads, "And when Moses came at Our appointed time and his Lord spoke to him, he said: My Lord! show me (Thyself), so that I may look upon Thee. He said: You cannot (bear to) see Me, but look at the mountain, if it remains firm in its place, then will you see Me; but when his Lord manifested His glory to the mountain He made it crumble and Moses fell down in swoon: then when he recovered, he said: Glory be to Thee, I turn to Thee, and I am the first of the believers." (7:143).
27. The Qur'ān reads, "They said: O Zulqarnain! surely Gog and Magog make mischief in the land. Shall we then pay you a tribute or condition that you should raise a barrier between us and them." (18:94).
28. "'Guarding oneself.' A Shi'ah doctrine. A pious fraud whereby the Shi'ah Muslim believes he is justified in either smoothing down or in denying the peculiarities of his religious belief, in order to save himself from religious persecution. A Shi'ah can, therefore, pass himself off as a Sunni to escape persecution. . . ." (Thomas Patrick Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam* (New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Co., 1976, [first ed. 1885]), p. 628.
29. Mention of Gog and Magog is made in two places in the Qur'ān; 21:96 and 18:94. The latter reference has to do with the discussion (Quoted in n. 27 above).
30. Ḥusaynī, *Tiryāq-i Fārūq*, p. 202.
31. Ibid., p. 203.
32. Ḥusaynī regarded the "Āl Muḥammad" the descendents of 'Abd Allāh rather than the Prophet Muḥammad.
33. Ḥusaynī, *Tiryāq-i Fārūq*, p. 214.
34. According to Mehdī Bāmdād, some people believe that the family of Mīrzā Aḥmad were from Mughān and not from Khoy (*Sharḥ-i Ḥāl-i Rijāl-i Irān* [Tehrān: Zawwār, 1347 sh], vol. 1, p. 100).
35. Ibid., p. 100.
36. 'Abbās 'Alī Kayvān, *Hajj Nāma* (Tehrān: Bosfor, 1308sh), p. 128 (see chapter 5, n. 57).
37. The Bāb writes, "Since thou hast faithfully obeyed the true religion of God in the past, it behooveth thee to follow His true religion hereafter, inasmuch as every religion proceedeth from God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.
He Who hath revealed the Qur'ān unto Muḥammad, the Apostle of God, ordaining in the Faith of Islām that which was pleasing unto Him, hath likewise revealed the Bayān, in the manner ye have been promised, unto Him. Who is your Qā'im [He Who ariseth], your Guide, your Mihdī [One Who is guided], your Lord, Him Whom ye acclaim as the manifestation of God's most excellent titles." (Sayyid 'Alī Muḥammad, *The Bāb, Selections from the Writings of the Bāb*, trans. Habib Taherzadeh (Haifa: Bahā'ī World Centre, 1976), p. 139.
38. The Bāb writes, "God hath indeed sent down this Book unto Me with Truth that ye may be enabled to recognize the true names of God, inasmuch as ye have strayed in error far from the Truth." (Ibid., p. 65).
39. The Bāb writes, "O ye concourse of the believers! Utter not words of denial against Me once the Truth is made manifest, for indeed the mandate of the Bāb hath befittingly been proclaimed unto you in the Qur'ān aforetime. I swear by your Lord, this Book is verily the same Qur'ān which was sent down in the past." (Ibid., p. 67).
40. Professor Bausani suggests that, "The metaphysics of the Bāb is similar in certain ways to that of the Ismā'īlīs" (*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed., s.v. "Bāb"). Although this statement is correct, the similarities between the Shaykhīs and the Bābīs are even greater in

respect to the Bāb's approach, terminology, and his metaphysics. This matter still requires further investigation.

41. See Chapter 6, n. 16.
42. Selections from the Writings of the Bāb, pp. 123-124.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 89.
44. Sayyid 'Ali Muḥammad, the Bāb, Persian Bayān (lithography: n.d., n.p.), p. 195.
45. Him Whom God Shall Make Manifest (man yuḏhiruhu Allāh) is the title for the "expected one" in the works of the Bāb. See "Note V. 'Texts From the Persian Bayān Concerning the High Estate of Him Whom God Shall Manifest'" in Browne, A Traveller's Narrative (see chapter 5, n. 74), pp. 347-349.
46. Selections from the Writings of the Bāb, p. 104.
47. Persian Bayān, p. 130.
48. Selections from the Writings of the Bāb, pp. 105-106.
49. Persian Bayān, pp. 95-96, 98, 156.
50. *Ibid.*, pp. 235, 281.
51. Selections from the Writings of the Bāb, p. 89.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 91.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 125.
54. Professor Bausani, in his article "Bāb" (Encyclopaedia of Islam, new ed.), considers the contents of the Bayān under four fundamental points. In describing the second one he writes, "The spiritualistic interpretation of the eschatological terms which appear in the Qur'ān and other sacred works, such as 'Paradise', 'Hell', 'Death', 'Resurrection', 'Return', 'Judgement', 'Bridge' (Ṣirāt), 'Hour', etc., all of which allude not only to the end of the physical world but also to that of the prophetic cycle. From certain passages it seems that it must be understood that the true world being that of the spirit, of which the material world is nothing but an exteriorisation, God effectively destroys the world at the end of each prophetic cycle in order to re-create it by the Word of the subsequent prophet; the creative worth of the World is given great importance in the Bayān."
55. Selections from the Writings of the Bāb, p. 111.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 111.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 117.
58. Persian Bayān, p. 81.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 167.
60. Selections from the Writings of the Bāb, p. 79.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 78.
62. Persian Bayān, pp. 29-30.
63. *Ibid.*, pp. 42, 50, 96.
64. *Ibid.*, pp. 43, 46.
65. *Ibid.*, pp. 15, 24.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
67. The phrase "the Tree of divine Reality" (shajara-i ḥaqīqat) is used for any prophet of God.
68. Selections from the Writings of the Bāb, pp. 106-107.
69. *Ibid.*, p. 108. The phrase "the Primal Tree" (shajara-i awalīya) is used for any prophet of God.
70. *Ibid.*, p. 78.

CONCLUSION

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, a time of general decline in the intellectual creativity of the Shī'ī community in Iran, Iraq, and the Persian Gulf, Shaykh Aḥmad Aḥsā'ī was determined to reform and revitalize the Shī'ī society by direct inspiration from the words of the Prophet and the Shī'ī imāms. This reemphasis on the doctrine of the imamate formed the essence of his ideology. The doctrine of imamate, which distinguished the Shī'a from the Sunnīs, states that the virtue and guidance of the Prophet continues through the imāms so that mankind will not be deprived of his divine guidance.

Of the various theological, philosophical, sociological and ritualistic aspects of the Shaykhī school, it was intended in this work to focus on the theological aspects, particularly those doctrines formulated by Shaykh Aḥmad on basic questions of Islamic ontology and eschatology, such as God, His attributes, and His will and its relationship with creation; resurrection; and return. Of course, the theological doctrines of Shaykh Aḥmad appeared within the intellectual horizons of Persian society and were influenced by its social, political and economic conditions. Further investigation is required to illuminate how and why the theological doctrines of Shaykh Aḥmad, an Arab scholar, achieved popularity and respect among some Persian groups and elites at first, only to arouse opposition and become the target of

attack by some of the eminent Shī'ī 'ulamā. Although in his ontological doctrines, Shaykh Aḥmad opposed some of his predecessors, such as Ibn al-'Arabī, Mullā Ṣadrā, and Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī, he nevertheless was influenced by them and, particularly through Mullā Ṣadrā, by Ibn Sīnā. Shaykh Aḥmad's doctrines on the philosophical questions of creation, God's will, and His relationship with the universe manifest obvious similarities to those of the Ismā'īlīs. Shaykh Aḥmad's understanding of the position of the imāms brings him close to the Ghālīs and the Mufawwiḍa, while terminology and interpretation of the subtle body are reminiscent of Shihāb al-Dīn Sohrawardī and other Illuminists. His piety and detachment from the material affairs of daily life, his inspiration from the imāms in his dreams, and the love and annihilation of the will of the imāms, of which he speaks throughout his works, characterize him as a Ṣūfī, but, unlike other Ṣūfīs, he rejects the possibility of union with God.

In spite of these similarities, to determine the exact areas of influence and the ways through which he was influenced requires further study. To what extent the socio-political conditions of the Persian Gulf, 'Atabāt, and Iran contributed to the intellectual development of the Shaykhī school, the social role of the Shaykhīs in the political and intellectual changes that occurred in the second half of the nineteenth century, the social background of those who were attracted to the Shaykhī school, of those

Shaykhīs who converted to the Bāb and of those who rose against him, are all challenging questions for students of the nineteenth century intellectual history of Iran.

Shaykh Aḥmad's original contribution was his synthesis of the two main schools of Shī'ī thought in the first half of the nineteenth century--the Akhbārī and the Uṣūlī. Neither the dogmatic speculations of the Akhbārīs, nor the scholastic discussions of the Uṣūlīs satisfied him; therefore, he took a position between these two groups.

The major task Shaykh Aḥmad undertook was to reconcile revelation and reason: the first represented by the Akhbārīs, the second, by the Uṣūlīs. In his attempt he did not give a preponderant weight to either side. He respected man's reason but never overlooked the importance of divine inspiration which man may receive through his prayers and ascetic practices. He strongly believed in the Qur'ān and the Traditions of the imāms, but his belief in them did not prevent him from using his reason. In fact, he insisted that there must be an absolute harmony between revelation and reason. In his efforts to discover that harmony, however, he did not rely upon his reason whenever it could not comprehend the logic of the word of God.

Shaykh Aḥmad was not primarily concerned with establishing a new system of thought or a school different from Shī'a. But the way in which he approached the religious questions and presented them was new and original. His approach was an attempt to examine the Shī'ī beliefs from a

new perspective, but its source was firmly grounded within the Shī'ī framework and was regarded by others as the Shaykhī school of thought within Shī'ī Islam.

While the ideology of Shaykh Aḥmad in its entirety was strongly rooted in the Qur'ān and Islamic Traditions, it differed from that of other Shī'ī scholars. The difference derived primarily from the way in which Shaykh Aḥmad interpreted the Qur'ān and the Islamic Traditions. It was also based on certain Traditions that were not widely accepted by the majority of Shī'ī thinkers.

Shaykh Aḥmad challenged the views of the Ṣūfī Ibn al-'Arabī, the theologian Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ, and the philosopher Mullā Ṣadrā--three eminent scholars who dominated the Persian intellectual horizon in the nineteenth century. Shaykh Aḥmad's challenge was unique: unlike other writers on Shī'ī thought who had concentrated their attacks on only one of these groups, Shaykh Aḥmad challenged all three. Shaykh Aḥmad's primary purpose for focusing attention on the ideology of his predecessors was to draw the attention of those of his own generation who were sympathetic to them and also to prepare his followers for what he perceived to be a crucial event in the future: the appearance of the Qā'im. This, indeed, was the most important, constructive, and influential contribution that he made, the essence of his life's work.

In his efforts to prepare his followers for the appearance of the Qā'im, Shaykh Aḥmad laid the cornerstone

for a religious reform which was to appear after him in the form of the Bābī movement. Shaykh Ahmad did not intend to produce a reform in Islamic law or the social order of Shī'ī society, but to reshape the Shī'ī attitude toward the advent of the Qā'im. For him the appearance of the Qā'im was the answer to all questions and, therefore, the people must be prepared for the day of his advent, which, when it occurred, would be the source of happiness, prosperity, and salvation.

Shaykh Ahmad's intellectual contribution to the generations that followed him was much greater than that of his predecessors. In particular, he offered to the people of his own time more than he had received from his father's generation. Without Shaykh Ahmad's intellectual contribution, the Bāb could not have won the followers, popularity, and influence that he did.

APPENDIX A

Writings of Shaykh Ahmad and Sayyid Kāzīm on the Qā'im

The page numbers refer to the Fihrist, where a full description of each work will be found.

The Works of Shaykh Ahmad Ahsā'ī

1. Risāla-i Ja'farīya, written for Mīrzā Ja'far Nawwab. Question 7 (p. 222)
2. Risāla-i 'Ismat wa Raj'at, written for Prince Muḥammad 'Alī Mīrzā (p. 242)
3. Fā'ida, written for Shaykh Mūsā b. Muḥammad Ṣā'igh (p. 242)
4. Risāla-i Mūsawīya, written for Shaykh Mūsā Baḥrānī (p. 244)
5. Khuṭba, a prayer of supplication for the Qā'im (p. 246)
6. Khuṭba, which contains a prayer of supplication for the Qā'im (p. 245)
7. Risāla, written for Sayyid Ḥusayn b. 'Abd al-Qāhir. Question 2 (p. 259)
8. Risāla-i Rashtīya, written for Mullā 'Alī b. Mīrzā Jān Rashtī. Questions 12 and 28 (p. 260)
9. Risāla-i Ṣālihīya, written for Shaykh Ṣālih b. Ṭawq. Question 16 (p. 262)
10. Risāla-i Qaṭīfiya, written for Shaykh Ahmad b. Shaykh Ṣālih Qaṭīfī. Questions 39, 40 and 41 (p. 272)
11. Risāla-i Qaṭīfiya (another work composed for the above person). Question 6 (p. 279)

The Works of Sayyid Kāzīm Rashtī

His two main works, Sharḥ al-Qaṣīda al-lāmīya (Tabrīz: lithography, 1272/1855) and Sharḥ al-Khuṭba al-ṭutunjiya (Tabrīz: lithography 1270/1853) are the major sources for the questions on the Qā'im. His other works on the subject are as follows:

1. Risāla, written for Shaykh Muḥammad b. Shaykh 'Abd 'Alī

Āl 'Abd al-Jabbār Qatīfī (p. 314)

APPENDIX B

2. Risāla, written for Ḥājǰ Makkī b. Ḥājǰ 'Abd Allāh Baḥrānī. Question 2 (p. 315)
3. Risāla, written for Shaykh Muḥammad b. Shaykh Ḥusayn Baḥrānī. Questions 8 and 9 (p. 342)
4. Risāla, written for Mīrzā Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Tabrīzī. Questions 1 and 2 (p. 348)
5. Risāla, written for an unknown questioner. Question 3 (p. 349)
6. Risāla, written to answer several questions that he received from Iṣfahān. Question 3 (p. 353)
7. Risāla, written for an unknown questioner. Question 2 (p. 359)

The Abjad System

List of Letters and Their Numerical Values

ا	1	ی	10	ق	100
ب	2	ك	20	ر	200
ج	3	ل	30	ش	300
د	4	م	40	ت	400
ه	5	ن	50	ث	500
و	6	س	60	خ	600
ز	7	ع	70	ذ	700
ح	8	ف	80	ض	800
ط	9	ص	90	ظ	900
				غ	1000

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