

# manuscript cultures

Hamburg | Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures

ISSN 1867-9617



## Publishing Information

### A Multiple-text Collection by Ẓahīr al-Dīn Mirzā Muḥammad Ibrāhīm

Edited by Sonja Brentjes

Every volume of *manuscript cultures* has been subjected to a double-blind peer review process and is openly accessible at no cost on the CSMC website <<https://www.csmc.uni-hamburg.de/publications/mc.html>>. We would like to thank the German Research Foundation (DFG) for its generous support of the Cluster of Excellence EXC 2176 ‘Understanding Written Artefacts’, which has made the publication of this journal volume possible.

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#### Print

BEISNER DRUCK GmbH & Co. KG, Buchholz i. d. Nordheide  
Printed in Germany

[www.csmc.uni-hamburg.de](http://www.csmc.uni-hamburg.de)

Funded by  
 Deutsche  
Forschungsgemeinschaft  
German Research Foundation

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#### Cover

Cambridge, Mass., Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Gift of Philip Hofer, MS 1984.463. fol. 61r: This folio shows in the middle at the right the riddle text in large letters in *thulūth* calligraphy. Between the five lines of this riddle is a part of an Arabic philosophical work in *naskhī* comprising three lines in each piece. In red, numbers and words are placed mostly below individual words of the riddle referring to letter magic. Around this centre piece, two brief Persian texts in *nasta‘līq*, an Arabic table, and a triangular diagram between lines of an Arabic explanation can be found. Both Arabic pieces are written in *naskhī*. The Persian text above the table introduces the lunar mansions, which the table enumerates. The Persian text in the left margin, entitled „A gem on theoretical philosophy about true speech“, deals with themes from *kalām*. The triangular diagram with its surrounding Arabic text treats the cosmological division of the universe in Muslim terms, beginning with God’s throne and descending through the Ptolemaic planetary sphere to the four Aristotelian spheres of the sublunar world to the underworld.

ISSN (Print) 1867-9617

ISSN (Online) 2749-1021

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Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures  
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Warburgstr. 26  
20354 Hamburg

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## Article

# Adjunct Texts: Five Glosses on a Page in a Safavid Collection

Chad Kia | Cambridge, Mass.

The Safavid compilation manuscript from 1089/1687 at Harvard Art Museums<sup>1</sup> may be seen as an outgrowth of the predominance of commentary (*sharḥ*) and supercommentary (*hāshiya*) in the bibliography of pre-modern Islamic letters.<sup>2</sup> Whether in the center of the page, in the margins, or in the interlinear space, the crowded miscellany of texts in this luxury codex cannot help but to overwhelm its plausible function as a typical medium for scholarly debate – even among the erudite elite – and suggests a collecting, album-like (*muraqqaʿ*) objective beyond the strictly educational or scholarly. Since the most distinguishing feature of the manuscript is the bewildering congeries of texts on nearly every page, understanding the relation between the various writings on one of those pages – like fol. 15a, which comes after the manuscript's prefatory sections – will go some way in clarifying the texts' cumulative function and contribute to a better understanding of the purpose of the manuscript as a whole.<sup>3</sup>

Observing all the transcriptions on fol. 15a, a 'main text' in the central rectangle stands out initially (Fig. 1). This 'main text' here is taken to be the five lines of bold *nastaʿlīq* script in the central panel of the page, which is the continuation of a discourse that began earlier in the manuscript, on fol. 12b. At its beginning the illuminated heading leaves space for only four *nastaʿlīq* lines of the main text, where, unlike most other pages of the manuscript, an interlinear text in smaller script is not fitted into the space between each line of the main text, but instead the bold, central lines are enclosed by scalloped frames and an interlinear ornamentation of flowery foliage that appear against a gold background.

This main text, written in a mixture of Persian and Arabic, often in cadenced and rhymed prose (*sajʿ*) is authored by Ṣāḥīr al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibrāhīm.<sup>4</sup> According to fol. 12a, the title of Ṣāḥīr al-Dīn's text is presumed to be *Nihāyat al-aqdām fī ṭawr al-kalām* (نهایة الاقدام فی طور الکلام 'The Farthest Points Reached in the Cycle of Theology'). This title, and even much of the content of Ṣāḥīr al-Dīn's treatise echo, or suggest, a conscious response or a follow-up to *Nihāyat al-aqdām fī ʿilm al-kalām* (نهایة الاقدام فی علم الکلام 'The Farthest Points Reached in the Science of Theology') by ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153), the Ashʿarite theologian who, it might be noted, had been suspected of harboring Shiite sympathies by his contemporaries.<sup>5</sup>

On fol. 15a, Ṣāḥīr al-Dīn's text appears to be accompanied by five different supplemental tracts. Initially, the link between two of the marginal texts and the main text stands out in particular. The first noticeable instance of a link between the main text on fol. 15a and one of the marginal texts is the semantically transparent and readily visible repetition of the Arabic words *mafātīḥ-i abwāb* (مفاتیح ابواب 'keys to doors'). Appearing twice, the words can be seen once in the penultimate line of the main text in the central rectangle and then again in the bottom-right margin of the page, transcribed vertically in red ink as part of the title of a gloss. The line from the main text reads *mafātīḥ-i abwāb-i maʿānī wa-jinān* (مفاتیح ابواب معانی و جنان 'keys to the gates of meanings and heavens'), differing slightly from the use of the words in the marginal title, which read *mafātīḥ abwāb al-janna wa-ṭabaqātihā* (مفاتیح أبواب الجنة وطبقاتها 'keys to the gates of the heavens and their [different] circles').

<sup>1</sup> Sackler MS 1984.463 or the Illustrated Manuscript of a Compendium of Knowledge, made for Shāh Sulaymān, 1666–1686, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Gift of Philip Hofer.

<sup>2</sup> See Smyth 1992, 589–597.

<sup>3</sup> Regarding widespread 'non-court demand' for such cultural outputs, see Newman 2006, 90.

<sup>4</sup> Presumably the same 'governor' (vizier) of Azerbaijan Mīrzā Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Ṣāḥīr al-Dawla, mentioned in Persian sources, after whom the endowment of a Tabriz school was named, which is also mentioned by Melville 1981, 171.

<sup>5</sup> Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī, *Struggling with the Philosopher: A Refutation of Avicenna's Metaphysics*, trans. and ed. Madelung and Mayer 2001, 4.





The second noticeable link between a commentary on the page and the main text is the poem which begins above the central rectangle with a heading that is inscribed vertically on the top right margin. These verses are introduced as ‘words from a *mathnawī* [a narrative in rhyming couplets] by our perfect, all knowing... Shaykh Bahā’-ullāh’. The designation that connects this gloss to the central text is less obvious, but here too the word *jinān* (‘heavens’, which in Persian can also mean ‘inward’, ‘interior’, or ‘conscience’) can be seen in the third couplet mirroring its counterpart in the last line of the main text.

At this point, it is important to note that an older copy of this multiple-text manuscript at the British Library (BL), produced nine years earlier, in 1089/1678 – and also containing five lines of bold *nasta’līq* script per page, and comparable ornamentation throughout – may have served as the model for the Harvard manuscript.<sup>6</sup> Both these manuscripts contain the same prefatory *lughaz* passages that precede Ṣāhīr al-Dīn’s main text for some ten folios. These twenty-odd pages preceding Ṣāhīr al-Dīn’s text in the Harvard and the British Library copies are not (and apparently were never) part of an even older copy of the manuscript that is at the Malek Library in Tehran.<sup>7</sup> The addition of *lughaz*, a form of gematria with numerical and verbal riddles that may be solved for amusement or gnostic insights, must have seemed a fitting preface or addendum to Ṣāhīr al-Dīn’s main text, which, as will be seen, is a gnoseological exposition engaged with such topics as astrology, divination and magic squares and reflects the seventeenth-century resurgence of mystico-philosophical inquiry and unorthodox esoteric doctrines.<sup>8</sup> Written during the reign of the ‘dervish-loving king’, Shāh ‘Abbās II (d. 1077/1666),<sup>9</sup> Ṣāhīr al-Dīn’s own text is dated 1070/1660, the same year that ‘Abbās II ordered a Sufi center to be built in his capital, Isfahan.<sup>10</sup> But the oldest accessible redaction of the multiple-text manuscript considered here is the copy at the Malek Library, which was made in 1085/1674 – eight years after the death of ‘Abbās II – during the time of his successor, the ‘weak, reclusive and pleasure seeking’

Shāh Sulaymān (d. 1105/1694),<sup>11</sup> when orthodox Shia critics of Sufism and other ‘radical’ discourses had gained ground.<sup>12</sup> With some 53 folios, the main text in the Malek copy occupies not five but seven bold *nasta’līq* lines in its central panels and its margins and interlinear spaces are less crowded with commentaries and other texts. Compared with the approximately 133 folios of the Harvard manuscript, the British Library copy with some 206 folios is the longest of the three.

It also should be noted that due to compositional variations, the inscriptions of the main text in the central panels of the folios in each of the three manuscripts run to different lengths, so that, for example, the five lines of Ṣāhīr al-Dīn’s main text on fol. 15a of the Harvard copy that concerns us here actually fall on two different folios of the British Library copy (with roughly three of the lines on BL fol. 25b and nearly two on BL fol. 26a). This and other discrepancies in the pagination of the main text in the three manuscripts account for some, mostly negligible, inconsistencies in the correspondence between marginal commentaries and the main passage they were presumably meant to gloss. On the other hand, the inclusion of new marginal commentaries in the later two manuscripts does end up straining the links between the main text and some of the older annotations that they displace, notwithstanding the apparent efforts made by the calligraphers or others involved in the production of these later manuscripts to avoid this problem. As we will see, this will constrain not only the assemblage of texts on fol. 15a of the Harvard copy, but also their significance relative to one another.

To begin with, however, the ‘main text’ in all three manuscripts is accompanied by one and the same commentary on the margins of its first two pages. Following the example of its British Library model, this marginal text in the Harvard copy crowds the central block from the right and below while echoing it visually with its own, smaller illuminated heading and a smaller *nasta’līq* script that – unlike both earlier copies – diagonally floats within irregularly scalloped borders against a gold background. In the older Malek copy, where the main text consists of seven lines per page, and where the marginal text is also missing some of the embellishing introductory lines found in the later two manuscripts, the gloss fails to fill the lower margin

<sup>6</sup> Seventeenth-century Safavid miscellany, London, British Library, Or. 12974.

<sup>7</sup> Tehran, Malek National Library and Museum Institution, MS no 1393.4.868.

<sup>8</sup> See Newman 1999, 95–96; Babayan 1996, 129–30.

<sup>9</sup> Muḥammad Ṭāhir Vahīd al-Zamān Qazwīnī, *Tarīkh-i Jahān-ārā-yi ‘Abbāsī*, ed. Mīr Muḥammad Ṣādīq and Ishrāqī 1383/2005, 744.

<sup>10</sup> Anzali 2012, 78.

<sup>11</sup> Matthee 2015, 291.

<sup>12</sup> Newman 2006, 97–98; Anzali 2012, 163.



below the main text on its second page, and so the space is left blank. The short marginal ‘commentary’ accompanying the opening lines of Ṣahīr al-Dīn’s main text is entitled ‘On Unity and Multiplicity’, and expounds on the metaphysical concept of unity in a neopythagorean fashion that includes discussion of numbers and geometry.<sup>13</sup>

The main text itself – which in the Harvard redaction begins immediately after the *basmala*, written in red ink within a gold cartouche – praises God’s pre-eternal and eternal status as ‘the First without an Other’, and describes God as the center of the ‘circle of existence’. Even before reaching the conventional salutation of the Prophet and his family, it is clear that the orientation of Ṣahīr al-Dīn’s text is gnostic and philosophical. The inscription written in red ink in the illuminated cartouche within the polychrome heading of the marginal text appears to steer a middle course, embracing both orthodoxy and gnosticism by citing the Qur’an’s *sūrat al-Nisā*: ‘God is the only God’ (4:171). But the citations of the famous verses by the ‘Sage of Herat’, ‘Abd Allāh Anṣārī (al-Hirawī, in Arabic)<sup>14</sup> on ‘the oneness of the Unique One’, which in the Harvard copy begin on the seventh line of the slanted text in the right margin, make it clear that the subject of the marginal text echoes that of the main text.

Two pages later, at the conclusion of the initial marginal text, ‘On Unity’, those involved with the production of the British Library copy saw fit to add a whole new marginal commentary (BL fol. 24a) to supersede the gloss already on the margins of the older Malek copy, and following their example, the Harvard manuscript likewise includes this new text after the conclusion of the marginal text in the bottom of fol. 13a, which will prove significant to the commentaries that appear on fol. 15a.

The new added gloss, written in Arabic, is or is mostly based on a tenth-century treatise on love from the *Epistles* of Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’ (the anonymous ‘Brethren of Purity’). It is entitled ‘On the Essence of Love’, and among other neoplatonic understandings of the subject, it explains love as an immense ‘longing to be united’ (*shiddat al-shawq ilā al-ittiḥād*) (BL fol. 24b), which ultimately emanates from the One God that is ‘Pure Existence’ (*al-wujūd al-mahḍ*) (BL fol.

28a).<sup>15</sup> Its insertion at this point should draw our attention to the content of the corresponding passage in Ṣahīr al-Dīn’s main text, which at this juncture, in both the British Library and the Harvard copies, is, indeed, also about love: the quotation of verses attributed to medieval Shia polymath Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 674/1274), which again stress the primary status and oneness of God, marks the culmination of what might be considered Ṣahīr al-Dīn’s preamble.<sup>16</sup> After this, the narrative perspective changes to the second person, addressing the reader directly with an exclamation: ‘Lovers[!]’ (*āshiqān*), heralding glad tidings and proclaiming that the zephyr has gently wafted in and (continuing on to fol. 13b) the night of separation for the lovelorn has ended and the dawn of reunion (*wiṣāl*) is beginning, which – as with the festival of Nowruz ushering in the spring – promises a gnostic banquet adorned with multifarious flowers of faith (fol. 13b).

Beginning at the bottom of fol. 13b and ending on the facing page (fol. 14a), a soliloquy in the form of a rhyming couplet presents another interjection (*hān* ‘hey’) that begins a rhetorical question posed in the form of a rhyming couplet with which the author essentially states his reasons for writing this work: ‘Glad tidings [keep] arriving from the kind Beloved’ (continuing on to fol. 14a) ‘but who is even capable of understanding any of it?’<sup>17</sup> This question actually sets the parameters of the undertaking and Ṣahīr al-Dīn’s objectives in the exposition that is to follow: Readers, lest you are unaware, we are inundated by the continually-arriving signs (and blessings) of the Divine Grace; let me point them out and explain them to you so you can better understand. Far from seeking an answer then, the rhyming question may be taken as an ‘abstract’ of the work, revealing the ‘problem’ Ṣahīr al-Dīn aims to address, with all that is to follow as the ‘response’ to how to perceive, comprehend and appreciate the ‘glad tidings’ from the Beloved. This ‘statement of thesis’ is followed by two altered (perhaps misquoted) couplets from book one and book three of Rūmī’s *Maṣnavī*<sup>18</sup> reiterating the lament over the lack of understanding or willingness to

<sup>15</sup> See Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’, *Rasā’il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’*, 503–511.

<sup>16</sup> ‘Abū al-Majd Muḥammad b. Mas’ūd-i Tabrizī, *Khulāṣat al-ash’ār fi al-rubā’iyyāt*, ed. Imānī 1383/2005, 53.

<sup>17</sup> هان بشارتها زیار مهربان / میرسد اما که را ادراک آن

<sup>18</sup> *Maṣnavī*, book 1, line 514: جان و دل را طاقت آن جوش نیست / با که گویم در جهان یک گوش نیست  
*Maṣnavī*, book 3, line 2098: مردم اندر حسرت فهم درست / اینچه می گویم بقدر فهم نوست

See Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad-i Balkhī [Rūmī], *Maṣnavī-i ma’navī*, ed. Nicholson 1382/2004, 23, 367.

<sup>13</sup> See the discussion of this theme and its role in the collection by Mousavi and Bohloul in this volume.

<sup>14</sup> The verses are from the end of al-Hirawī’s *Manāzil al-sā’irīn*; see ‘Abd Allāh al-Anṣārī al-Hirawī, *Manāzil al-sā’irīn*, 1327/1909, 52. Cf. Ahlwardt 1891, 12, no. 2826. Cf. also Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya’s lengthy commentary on the verses in his *Madārij al-sālikīn*, 1331–33/1913–15, III, 332–333.

understand, and then elaborating the same point, namely, that there is much to be grasped – presumably, given the conviction of the author expressed so far – on the subject of Divine Love, and what is to follow is an attempt at providing the reader (‘thou’) a measure of understanding.

After this, Ṣahīr al-Dīn’s panegyric – in embellished periphrastic rhymed prose – goes on to acknowledge, or reiterate, the dependence of all existence on the One transcendent God who, incidentally, is almost never mentioned directly. It is in the continuation of this discourse about ‘Him’, which we encounter on fol. 15a of the Harvard manuscript, that Ṣahīr al-Dīn’s narrative emphasizes ‘division does not make Him less, nor does multiplication make Him more’; and that He cannot ‘be likened’ (*dar tajnīs*) to anything at all, except ‘Unity’. Then He is exalted as a ‘superior crown in the midst of the firmament’, even as ‘[His] surefooted sturdiness [is] apparent upon the earth’. Finally – useful to our purpose – He is said to be ‘the Holder of the keys to [the levels of] meanings and gates of heavens, and the Upholder of the triumphant ensign at the summit of the green firmament’.

Introducing Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’s treatise ‘On Love’ in the margins of fol. 13b of the Harvard manuscript follows the example of the British Library copy and begins with a Persian epigraph (written in red *nasta’liq* script) in the form of a rhyming couplet that is reminiscent of Firdawsī (d. 416/1025) in declaring the wisdom of a magus: ‘knowledge [*dānish*] is abundant but rather than being concentrated, it is disseminated widely.’ The Arabic ‘Treatise on Love’ (in black *naskh* script) commences and continues for five lines before it is interrupted again with four couplets of Persian poetry (in red *nasta’liq*) from Vaḥshī Bāfqī’s (d. 991/1583) romance, *Farḥād and Shīrīn*. Perhaps following the example of the encyclopedic epistles by Ikhwān, in which expositions are often elaborated by citations of poetry – including Persian verse – here too, their perspective on love has been punctuated by poetry – in Persian – exposing the interdependence of prose and poetic traditions in premodern Islamic letters.<sup>19</sup> This interruption of prose by verse, in order to stimulate, even manipulate the imagination of the reader – a primary function of figurative language, metrics, and poetry – provides a parallel access to the meanings and ideas transmitted in the preceding prose passage. In other words, such citation of poetry is not merely

accessory to the text but a synoptic ‘commentary’ in its own right.<sup>20</sup>

In this case, the cited verses of Vaḥshī are from the ‘discourse on the status of love’, a section of the preamble in his unfinished romance. It may be said that Vaḥshī – who belongs to a tradition of loosely affiliated gnostic writers known as adherents of ‘the religion of love’ – would still have been near the height of his seventeenth-century fame at the time the British Library copy of the manuscript was compiled in 1089/1678.<sup>21</sup> According to Vaḥshī, love is a divine-creative force, a proclivity or desire (*mayl*) that encompasses the entire cosmos.<sup>22</sup> In fact, Vaḥshī’s verses punctuate Ikhwān’s treatise again on fol. 14a with six more couplets from the same unfinished romance, this time citing a parable involving Majnūn’s view of his beloved Laylā, which cannot be compared with the perspective of those who do not love.<sup>23</sup> The gloss contains yet another Persian couplet about love by the twelfth-century metaphysician Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī (d. 587/1191) on fol. 14b,<sup>24</sup> which is followed, some twenty lines later, on the right margin by another couplet from an ode (*qaṣīda*) by Qāzī Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad (d. 1000/1591) – a Qazvin-educated poet who thrived during Shāh Ṭahmasp’s reign (d. 984/1576) – in which the speaker promises not to open the door even to the ‘angel of salvation’ should the beloved ever consent to drink wine with him.<sup>25</sup>

Perhaps it was the accumulation of such assertions about mystical love in Persian verse that inspired the patron of the Harvard manuscript to request the addition of yet another testimony on love as a peroration at the end of Ikhwān’s treatise on love; or was the motivation related to the already-existing gloss that was to appear at the bottom of the page, which exalts the rank of ‘the Perfect Man’? Whatever the case, those assembling the Harvard copy felt compelled to

<sup>20</sup> Mitchell 2009, 12–14.

<sup>21</sup> Iskandar Beg Munshī (d. circa 1043/1632), mentions Vaḥshī’s work as particularly celebrated. See Iskandar Beg Munshī, *History of Shah ‘Abbas the Great (Tārīkh-e ‘Ālamārā-ye ‘Abbāsī)*, tr. Savory 1978–1986, 1, 279.

<sup>22</sup> Referred to as *madhhab-i ‘ishq*. See Chittick 1995, 57, 59; and Zargar 2011. Also see Kamāl al-Dīn Vaḥshī-i Bāfqī, *Dīvān-i Vaḥshī-i Bāfqī*, ed. Darvīsh 1392/2014 [1342/1964], 506.

<sup>23</sup> Kamāl al-Dīn Vaḥshī-i Bāfqī, *Dīvān-i Vaḥshī-i Bāfqī*, ed. Darvīsh 1392/2014 [1342/1964], 507.

<sup>24</sup> گر عشق نبودی و غم عشق نبودی, see Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī, *Fī ḥaqīqat al-‘ishq yā mūnis al-‘ushshāq*, ed. Mufīd 1381/2003, 1.

<sup>25</sup> See Mīr Taqī al-Dīn Kāshānī, *Khulāṣat al-ash‘ār wa-zubdat al-aḥkār* [Isfahan part], ed. Adīb Burūmand and Naṣīrī Kahnamūyī 1386/2008, 194.

<sup>19</sup> Poonawala 2014, 95.



add another gloss by citing several verses by the Safavid jurist and polymath Shaykh Bahā'ī (d. 1030/1621), who is introduced here as a virtually 'Perfect Man' himself.<sup>26</sup> These cited verses from the *maṣnavī* of Bahā'ī, *Bread and Sweets* (*Nān va ḥalvā*) – serving as a coda to Ikhwān's piece, which ends at the bottom of the facing page (fol. 14b) – bring us back to the second of the two tractable examples that were noted among the commentaries on fol. 15a at the beginning of this essay.<sup>27</sup> The addition of Bahā'ī's verses here, on the margin of fol. 15a, is also noteworthy because the same verses, and many more besides from his *Bread and Sweets*, will be encountered again in some twenty pages: from fol. 23a to fol. 26b, the Harvard manuscript, following the example of its British Library model,<sup>28</sup> makes space available by interrupting the main text – doing away with the whole design structure of the page, including the central rectangle and marginal linings – in order to insert long passages from Bahā'ī's *maṣnavī* and other material.

The desire to repeat some of the same verses by Bahā'ī again here on fol. 15a, after the end of Ikhwān's treatise on love, would have required negotiating the available space on the page with the other commentaries yet to be copied: in the first place, the two original glosses that had already been displaced by the addition of the Ikhwān piece itself. These short tracts, already present in the margins of the older Malek copy, were not eliminated from the two later redactions of the manuscript but rather, with their contents still remaining relevant, they have been accommodated in the folios immediately following Ikhwān's 'On the Essence of Love'.

The first of these comments, apparently also written by Ṣahīr al-Dīn, is a very short tract that reiterates the essential oneness of the Creator and fits in its entirety in the interlinear space between the first four bold lines of the central rectangle on fol. 14b, where the gloss by Ikhwān also comes to an end in the margins. The second displaced text is from another work by al-Shahraṣṭānī entitled *Kitāb al-Milal wal-niḥal* (*Book of Sects and Creeds*), and concerns a supposed pythagorean understanding of 'oneness' and 'division' in beings. It follows immediately after the end of the other displaced gloss, in the remaining interlinear space under the

penultimate line of the main text, and then continues onto the interlinear spaces of the facing page, on fol. 15a. However, Shahraṣṭānī's text suddenly breaks off prematurely before using up the last interlinear space in the central rectangle of fol. 15a and continues instead in the left margin of the page to fill the space below where Bahā'ī's verses have been newly added.

A different, short note, written at a nearly vertical angle, usurps the last interlinear space on fol. 15a where Shahraṣṭānī's text might have otherwise been written. This apparently compendious gloss is a citation from Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī's (d. 792/1390) book *Muṭawwal-i talkhīs* or the 'Long Abridgment', and tellingly, it is written under the by-now-familiar line in the main text that reads, 'keys to the gates of meanings and heavens' (مفاتيح ابواب معانی و جنان) *mafātīḥ-i abwāb-i ma'ānī va jinān*).

Even with no further scrutiny, Taftāzānī's short gloss, which, by the way, makes no references to 'keys' or to 'paradise', must be thoroughly relevant to this particular passage in Ṣahīr al-Dīn's text. Even on page seven of the earlier Malek copy, where fewer commentaries are crammed together, Taftāzānī's text is again placed between the bold lines of the central panel underneath the same words of Ṣahīr al-Dīn's main text. Indeed, this proximity is deemed so important that in the Malek copy too, Taftāzānī's text interrupts the flow of another interlinear commentary. In the British Library copy as well, although Taftāzānī's short gloss is written vertically on the extreme right margin of fol. 26a (between the thin red line of the outer frame of the central rectangle and the gutter of the folio) still the beginning of the gloss is kept adjacent to the words *mafātīḥ-i abwāb* in Ṣahīr al-Dīn's main text.

The link between the interlinear gloss and Ṣahīr al-Dīn's reference becomes more meaningful once we spot Taftāzānī's reference to the 'science of meanings' ('*ilm al-ma'ānī* 'study of syntax'); a science, to the 'gates' of which, according to Ṣahīr al-Dīn's text, God, or 'He', holds the 'keys'. Here, Taftāzānī is referring to the content of another book on rhetoric by Khatīb Dimashq or al-Khatīb al-Qazwīnī (d. 739/1338), stating 'he discusses in eight chapters' (*bāb*, pl. *abwāb*, 'door', 'gate' or 'entrance', can also mean 'chapter', 'level' or 'section') Arabic words and their dependence for meaning on the circumstances and aim of their uses, and then proceeds to list the titles or the subject headings of the eight

<sup>26</sup> الكامل العارف باليقين شيخنا بهاء الله والحق والدين, fol. 15a.

<sup>27</sup> Bahā' al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Āmilī, 'Nān va ḥalvā', in *Kullīyāt-i ash'ār-i fārsī-i Shaykh Bahā'ī*, ed. Jawāhirī 1372/1994, 2–24.

<sup>28</sup> Fols 33a–36b in the British Library copy.

chapters (*abwāb*).<sup>29</sup> The fact that this quote from Taftāzānī refers to a thirteenth-century compendium entitled ‘The Key to the Disciplines’ (*Miftāḥ al-‘ulūm*)<sup>30</sup> may not have been entirely irrelevant to its appearance here: the reference to *miftāḥ* (‘key’) in the title of that seminal compendium echoing Ṣāḥib al-Dīn’s own use of the word *mafātīḥ* (‘keys’) may well have been an association that was pertinent to its selection. In short, Taftāzānī’s gloss is meant to expound on the main text’s use of the word ‘keys to the gates of meanings’ and show that it alludes to the importance of proper understanding of holy writ in the Qur’an – which can be the key to salvation and paradise.

That, however, is not the only significance of Taftāzānī’s gloss and for the insistence by the compilers of all three manuscripts on maintaining its proximity to the line in Ṣāḥib al-Dīn’s text that contains the words ‘keys to the gates of meanings and heavens’. Beyond word associations and explicating the import attached to the correct understanding of divine words alluded to in Ṣāḥib al-Dīn’s text, the content of Taftāzānī’s short note contains further ancillary significance that is exposed only in association with another commentary on the page, and that brings us back to the first marginal gloss we encountered among the assortment of texts on fol. 15a of the Harvard copy: the transparent and readily visible connection we noted between the words ‘keys to the gates’ (مفاتيح ابواب) in the main text and the title of the commentary that repeats them in the bottom-right margin of the page, transcribed vertically in red ink: ‘the keys to the gates of the heavens and their [different] circles’ (*mafātīḥ abwāb al-janna wa-ṭabaqātihā*).

The first indication that this anonymous marginal commentary may have some bearing on Taftāzānī’s gloss – in addition to Ṣāḥib al-Dīn’s main text – is that all three texts make references to the word ‘gates’ (*abwāb*). But the relevance of Taftāzānī’s gloss to the anonymous marginal commentary is to its content and not simply because the latter’s title mentions the word ‘*abwāb*’. And it is here that we may finally see how the insertion of the twenty-three couplets from Bahā’ī’s *Bread and Sweets* may have had unintended

consequences. This addition neglected or discounted the disruptive effect it would have on the relevance of the two commentaries on the page, both to each other and to the main text. Or maybe the consequence was a matter of indifference. After all, the anonymous text about the keys to the gates of the heavens is the sole commentary on the margins of page seven in the Malek copy, and it remains likewise undivided in the British Library copy, where it appears in its entirety on the margin of fol. 26a despite so many other adjustments and the addition of supplemental texts in that expanded redaction. Indeed, even on fol. 15a of the Harvard copy, despite the need, or rather the desire to add the verses from Bahā’ī’s poem as an extra gloss on the page, the compilers have still managed to save just enough space for the title of the anonymous piece in its own gold-framed cartouche and its opening words, barely making ten short lines in a rectangle in the lower margin, right below the central panel. But alas, because most of this marginal text now falls on the margins of another page, the relevance of the content of the piece to Ṣāḥib al-Dīn’s line, and especially to the gloss by Taftāzānī on fol. 15a, has been attenuated.

The marginal commentary ‘the keys to the gates of the heavens and their [different] circles’ (likely, also written by Ṣāḥib al-Dīn) enumerates the hierarchical ranks through which the human soul and the human intellect could be perfected, a process through which the exalted status of ‘the Perfect Man’ could be achieved. Here, it is the ‘eight ranks’ or the ‘eight stages’ (*al-marātib al-thamāniya*) that are compared with the ‘keys to the gates of high heaven’ (*mafātīḥ abwāb al-janna al-‘āliya*). Implicit to the equation of these ‘eight stages’ with the ‘keys to the eight gates of Heaven’ is the allusion to various Hadiths in which the Prophet Muḥammad has referred to paradise as having eight gates.<sup>31</sup> But the specific reference to ‘eight’ also undeniably links this passage to Taftāzānī’s text on the ‘science of meaning’ and its listing of ‘eight chapters’ (*thamāniya abwāb*) in which proper understanding of God’s words are explicated.

However, the addition of Bahā’ī’s twenty-three couplets to fol. 15a of the Harvard manuscript has meant that most of the marginal gloss ‘keys to the gates’, including the passage comparing ‘the eight stages of the soul’s refinement’ to ‘keys to the (eight) gates of heaven’ are forced off the page, compromising the reader’s simultaneous perception of both

<sup>29</sup> Sa’d al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī, *al-Muṭawwal sharḥ-i talkhīs-i miftāḥ al-‘ulūm*, ed. Hindawī 2013, 19. Compare to the eight conditions for legal interpretation (*ijtihād*) mentioned in the essay by Mousavi and Bohloul in this volume.

<sup>30</sup> Taftāzānī’s *Muṭawwal* is an extensive gloss on a work by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Khatīb al-Qazwīnī, entitled *Talkhīs al-miftāḥ*, a summary of *Miftāḥ al-‘ulūm* by Muḥammad al-Sakkākī (d. 626/1229), which was itself based on two works by ‘Abd al-Qāḥir al-Jurjānī (d. 47/1078). See Smyth 1992, 594.

<sup>31</sup> See, for example, translation of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 4, 54, n. 479.

references.<sup>32</sup> Beyond their obvious metaphoric or even literal implications, the repeated references to number eight on the same page may also have been originally intended as a way of harnessing the specific numerical virtues of these words and whatever divinatory insights they may have offered.<sup>33</sup> If so, that too is disrupted.<sup>34</sup> In short, whatever effect the original proximity of the three passages to one another might have had – the Almighty holding the keys to the eight gates of heaven, which are just as good as the eight keys to the meanings of His words in the Qur'an, or the eight stages through which the soul and intellect can be refined – has been neutralized by the insertion of Bahā'ī's verses.

The insistence on the inclusion of Shaykh Bahā'ī's opinion about gnostic love,<sup>35</sup> despite its hindering effect on the other commentaries on fol. 15a, and even though they are already due to appear on the later pages of the manuscript, betrays an urgency that suggests a political context. Highlighting and repeating the views of Shaykh Bahā'ī, one of the leading Imāmī scholars of the age, who after a lifetime in the service

of the Safavid state and official religion, disparages formal religious learning and 'superficial' worldly fortune in favor of mendicancy and gnosis, is clearly a reflection of the reaction to the polemical attacks against Sufism that reached their climax in the seventeenth century.<sup>36</sup> The year 1089/1687, when this luxury copy of the manuscript was produced, is also the year that three of the most prominent and outspoken anti-Sufi critics were appointed to the highest clerical positions in Isfahan and two other major urban centers of the Safavid realm.<sup>37</sup> Whatever the original purpose of this Safavid multiple-text manuscript – in which Ṣāḥib al-Dīn's main text functions as through line – its manifest concern with exemplarity is akin to that of a 'Persian album'; in this case, a compendium of mystico-philosophical and occult specimens bound in a single luxury volume.<sup>38</sup> However, the timing of its production suggests that its purpose may not have been so much an effectuation of elite erudition as a canny reworking solicitous of a newly puritanical elite.

<sup>32</sup> It is also telling that a note of clarification accompanying this marginal gloss which appears in all three manuscript on the edge of the page, outside the line of the outer frame, is inconveniently written upside-down on fol. 15b of the Harvard copy.

<sup>33</sup> See the discussion of this theme and its role in the collection by Mousavi and Bohloul in this volume.

<sup>34</sup> Regarding the ubiquity of lettrism in premodern Islamic world, see Melvin-Koushki 2016, 52. n. 38.

<sup>35</sup> علم نبود غیر علم عاشقی, fol. 15a.

<sup>36</sup> Sa'īd Nafīsī, *Aḥwāl wa-ash'ār-i fārsī-i Shaykh Bahā'ī*, 1316/1938, 103, 118–119, 124; also see, Kohlberg 1988.

<sup>37</sup> Anzali 2012, 160.

<sup>38</sup> On the development of Persian album, see Roxburgh 2005.



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ISSN 1867–9617

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