

## A Shadhili Presence in Shi'ite Islam

Just as in the *ḥadīth* literature of Sunni Islam there are many prayers, supplications and litanies of the Prophet, which form the basis for Sunni prayer to this day, so also in the annals of Shi'ism there are numerous prayers recorded from the Prophet and the Shi'ite Imams which throughout history have formed the basis of Shi'ite prayer. Among the more important of these are prayers by the first Imam, 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib; the fourth Imam, Zayn al-'Ābidīn al-Sajjād (author of the *Ṣaḥīfat al-sajjādiyyah*, sometimes called «The Psalms of the Household of the Prophet»); and the sixth Imam, Ja'far al-Ṣādiq. One of the most well-known of these prayers, most of which are recorded in the standard Shi'ite prayer book *Mafāṭīḥ al-janān* («Keys to the Gardens of Paradise»)<sup>1</sup>, is the «Prayer of the Day of 'Arafah» by the third Imam, Husayn ibn 'Alī, the grandson of the Prophet.<sup>2</sup> This pra-

yer is famous not only for its great beauty, but also for the spiritual treasures it contains, and to this day it is read and chanted by pious Shi'ites every year on the Day of 'Arafah during the *ḥajj* in Mecca, when the prayer was originally recited by the Imam, as well as at other times throughout the year. It also plays a particularly important role in Shi'ite gnosis, and the great mystic philosophers, or theosophers (in the etymological sense of the word) of Persia such as Mullā Ṣadrā often refer to it in their works.

In the Arabic text Imam Ḥusayn's prayer covers about thirty pages. When one is reading it, there is a sudden and noticeable change of style in the last three or four pages. The language and concepts of the long first section are presented in a type of synthetic exposition very similar to that found in the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet, whereas the last few pages present a more analytic exposition along with a more explicit reference to gnostic and mystical themes. Upon asking a well-known contemporary Shi'ite 'ālim and theosopher about this sudden change in style, I was told that undoubtedly the Imam recited this last part of the prayer only for some of his select disciples.

1. This work of about 1000 pages was compiled by 'Abbās Qumī (d. 1359/1940) and has been printed in numerous editions in Iran, Iraq and Lebanon.

2. See *Mafāṭīḥ al-janān*, M.H. 'Ilmī edition, Tehran, 1381 A.H. lunar, pp. 531-60; Isawi edition, Tehran 1379, pp. 350-69 etc; I have prepared a complete translation of this prayer, which it is hoped will be published as part of an anthology of the sayings, prayers and sermons of the Shi'ite Imams in the near future.

There is in any case no doubt that many outstanding theologians and philosophers of Shi'ism have considered this section of the prayer to be an integral part of it. For example, Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī, the son-in-law of Mullā Ṣadrā and one of the great figures of the School of Ispahan,<sup>3</sup> quotes from it a number of times in his *Kalimāt-i maknūnah*,<sup>4</sup> and Ḥājjī Mullā Hādī Sabziwārī, the famous mystic-philosopher of the last century,<sup>5</sup> refers to it in many works, such as the *Sharḥ al-asmā'* and the *Sharḥ du'ā' al-ṣabāḥ*.<sup>6</sup>

Nevertheless, it is interesting to note the comments of 'Allāmah Majlisī (d. c. 1110/1698) upon Imam Ḥusayn's prayer. This well-known theologian and jurist of the Safavid period is the compiler of the mon-

3. Concerning Fayḍ and the School of Ispahan, see S.H. Nasr, «The School of Ispahan», *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M.M. Sharif, Wiesbaden, 1966, vol. II, pp. 904-932.

4. See *Kalimāt-i maknūnah*, ed. by 'A. 'Atārudī-Qūchānī, Tehran, 1383, pp. 5, 29, 34, 88, 100.

5. Concerning Sabziwārī, see S.H. Nasr, «Ḥājjī Mullā Hādī Sabziwārī», *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, vol. II, pp. 1543-1556.

6. See *Sharḥ al-asmā'*, Tehran, 1281, pp. 51, 190, 346; *Sharḥ du'ā' al-ṣabāḥ*, Tehran, 1283, p. 13 (These two works were recently reprinted in Qum in one volume). One can also mention the Qajar prince Badī' al-Mulk Mīrzā 'Imād al-Dawlah, who quotes from this part of the prayer in his commentary on the *Mashā'ir* of Mullā Ṣadrā. See *Kitāb al-mashā'ir* (*Le livre des pénétrations métaphysiques*), ed. by H. Corbin, Tehran-Paris, 1964, p. 91 of the Persian text and p. 104 of the French.

umental encyclopedia of Shi'ite *ḥadīth* entitled *Bihār al-anwār* («Oceans of Lights»), a work comprising 110 volumes in its modern edition. There, after quoting the text of the prayer from the *Iqbāl* of Sayyid ibn Ṭā'ūs (d. 664/1265-6), Majlisī remarks as follows:

«Al-Kaf'amī has also included this prayer in his *al-Balad al-amīn*, and Sayyid ibn Ṭā'ūs in (his other work) *Miṣbāḥ al-zā'ir...*, but in these works the last folio is not found, from the words 'My God' to the end of the prayer. Likewise this part of the prayer is not found in some of the old manuscripts of *al-Iqbāl*, and the sentences of this folio are not completely in agreement with the style of the prayers belonging to the inerrant members of the Household of the Prophet; rather, they are in keeping with the taste of the Sufis. Therefore certain of the 'ulamā' have believed that this folio was added to the text afterwards, and was composed by one of the Sufi shaykhs.

«In short, this addition was either included in one of the sources used by Ibn Ṭā'ūs, or it was added later — this second possibility being more likely, as is indicated by the fact that it is not found in some old manuscripts and in the *Miṣbāḥ al-zā'ir*. And God knows best the realities of things.»<sup>7</sup>

7. *Bihār al-anwār*, Qum, 1388 A.H. lunar, vol. 98, pp. 227-228.

But in spite of this reservation by one of the foremost Shi'ite scholars of *ḥadīth*, the whole of this prayer is included in the standard prayer-books and recited on appropriate occasions, undoubtedly because the content of the whole prayer, including the last and doubtful portion, is so much in keeping with Shi'ite spirituality.

As to the source of this addition, Victor Danner's recent translation of the *Hikam* of the Shādhilī Sufi master Ibn 'Aṭā'allāh al-Iskandarī (d. 709/1309)<sup>8</sup> provides the answer, for the «intimate discourses» included at the end of that volume are in fact the same as the last part of the Imam's prayer. A comparison with the Arabic text, recently published along with a French translation by Paul Nwyia<sup>9</sup>, shows that this prayer follows that text almost word for word, with only the usual variations which are familiar to anyone who has collated ancient manuscripts.

Sayyid ibn Tā'ūs died about 50 years before Ibn 'Aṭā'allāh, which might tempt one to guess that the prayer does in fact belong to Imam Ḥusayn and that Ibn 'Aṭā'allāh used to recite it, while his disciples thought that he had composed it himself. But

the fact that the Shi'ites themselves have doubts about its attribution to the Imam, that the style of the Imam's prayer changes abruptly in the last section, and that early manuscripts of the only work in which this part of the prayer is attributed to Imam Ḥusayn do not contain it,<sup>10</sup> all contribute to making it relatively certain that Ibn 'Aṭā'allāh is in fact the author. In addition one can conclude from the researches of both Danner and Nwyia that there has never been any question about the attribution of the prayer to Ibn 'Aṭā'allāh.

It is thus interesting to note how Shi'ism has adopted as its own an expression of the spirituality of one of the great shaykhs of Sunni Islam, thus confirming what Danner has said about the «universal appeal» of the *Hikam*<sup>11</sup> and what a number of authors, in particular S. H. Nasr and H. Corbin, have pointed out about the close affinities between Sufism and

10. Majlisī's exact wording, occurring twice in the above passage, is *ba'd al-nusakh al-'atīqah*, «some of the ancient copies,» which would leave the possibility open that this part of the prayer does exist in some other ancient copies. However, from the general context and the use of this fact to prove that this part of the prayer is most likely borrowed, it would rather seem that what Majlisī means is that it does not exist in the old copies he has seen. Obviously the first task of anyone not satisfied with Majlisī's arguments is to study the manuscripts of this work.

11. *Ibn 'Aṭā'allāh's Sufi Aphorisms*, p. 20.

8. *Ibn 'Aṭā'allāh's Sufi Aphorisms*, Leiden, 1973, pp. 64-69.

9. *Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh et la naissance de la confrérie Ṣāḍilīte*, Beirut, 1972, pp. 209-229.

Shi'ism.<sup>12</sup> Certainly any Shi'ite who has been touched by the grace of this prayer, however, would only reply that in any case it is in fact Imam

Husayn -- himself a link in the Shādhilī *silsilah* -- who inspired Ibn 'Aṭā' allāh.

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12. See S.H. Nasr, *Sufi Essays*, London, 1972, chapter VIII.