

CHAPTER 26

Persian Poetic Wisdom and the Epistemology of ‘Knowledge by Presence’¹

Hossein Ziai

In this article I will examine Persian poetry’s role in describing a special knowledge, or wisdom, that informs the individual of the totality of human experience without limitations imposed by matter, and without the ambiguities of excessive and purely subjective spirituality. This is a complex approach to knowledge indeed, one that aims to construct a system that describes a meaningful harmony between experience and science. In this system it is in the practice of poetry that we witness the deeply penetrating impact of wisdom as the end of philosophy. Poetry is not separate from the existential *gestalt* of the ideal being, as it is unequivocally a fundamental pillar in its totality. In this domain of poetic consciousness, the role of philosophy is to refine and reconstruct the Aristotelian theory of intellectual knowledge into a unified epistemological theory capable of describing a comprehensive range of phenomena that includes the sensory, the intellectual, the intuitive, the imagined, and the inspirational, including the revealed. The name given to this special unified epistemological theory is ‘knowledge by presence’, as constructed by the Persian philosopher Shihāb al-Dīn Sohrawrdī (d. 1191) in his holistic system titled ‘Philosophy of Illumination’. This epistemological theory has played a central part in Persian poetic consciousness. The main figures in the tradition of Persian intellectual and mystical poetry have recognized this theory to be central to their view of how truth is obtained and how the poetic expression of experiential knowledge of the inclusive spectrum of phenomena informs the human of the nature and function of ‘wisdom’.

Briefly, the components that together make up the systematic view of Persian poetic wisdom are: (1) subject, S—knowing and conscious of the self (the poet-philosopher); (2) object, O—the noumena *and* the phenomena (an inclusive spectrum of all knowable things; the ‘unseen’ and the ‘seen’ realms); (3) process—the functional correspondence, R, between S and O, such that SRO yields knowledge, T_j, that is not limited by the predicative mode, X is Y. The poet’s role in this scheme is central, commencing as knowing subject, S—or, the conscious self—and progressing to the

knowing, creating self, at which time it becomes the main instrument for the recovery of the inclusive set of T_j . The final expression, the poetic composition, transforms the ordinary knowledge of things—necessarily (or presumed to be) limited—into a refined, elegant, multi-faceted and complex structure, which as a whole defines what is ‘wisdom’ and ‘truth’ and is expressed in poetic composition that reaches its pinnacle as ‘Persian poetic wisdom’. The structure includes the range of human experience that, as a whole, defines human existence—encompassing the mundane, the epic and romantic, the intellectual, the mythological, the mystical, and also the religious and spiritual. The poetic expression of no single Persian poet may constitute this structure as a totality, but exemplars of the tradition together as a whole serve to define the complex structure.

It is important to bear in mind a number of the essential concomitants that relate to the complex totality we are discussing: (1) divisions in the realm of being, which are simply stated as the ‘realm of *ghayb*’ (meaning ‘unseen’; the noumena); (2) the ‘realm of phenomenal existence’ (*‘ālam-e shahādāt*); and (3) the poet himself as the ‘knowing subject’ (*mowzu‘-e modrek/dānandeh*) who serves as the potential link between the two realms of being. In this scheme the poet—who is a philosopher as scientist and thus a philosopher-poet—is the subject who because of ‘experience’, but also because of discursive analysis, obtains knowledge of the inclusive realms of being and thus acts as a guide to human existence. As we shall see later, an *exemplary* figure in the tradition of Persian poetic wisdom is the fourteenth century Shams al-Dīn Ḥāfez, whose widely accepted epithet ‘*Lisān al-Ghayb*’ (Tongue of the Unseen) is an indication of his elevated rank. As ‘Tongue of the Unseen’ he is expressing extraordinary knowledge not limited by the material or the temporal. Thus by having recourse to the ‘Unseen’ (the divine realm in popular belief) the poet is the link between the two realms of existence, and his poetic wisdom expressed in his Persian *Dīvān* is believed to have prophetic attributes, and serves to inform the human of every aspect of the predicament of human existence. The ordinary human may thus access even the divine realm through poetic wisdom.

AN OVERVIEW OF EPISTEMOLOGY IN ILLUMINATIONIST PHILOSOPHY: KNOWLEDGE BY PRESENCE

The most important philosophical problem associated with the holistic construction of Illuminationist philosophy is related to the epistemology of obtaining primary principles in science. Sohrevardī, the Persian philosopher who constructed the philosophy of illumination, argues that: (1) the first step in science cannot be formulated as an essentialist definition; (2) because of future contingency, the laws of science cannot be formulated as universal affirmative propositions and considered always valid; and (3) the principles of epistemology are not reduced to the Peripatetic law of conjunction with the Active Intellect. Sohrevardī’s reconstructed unified epistemological theory of ‘knowledge by presence’ is aimed at refining the alleged faults and logical gaps in the Peripatetic theory. This is because the predicative mode ‘x is y’ does not inform of anything other than a change in terms of x to y without added signification. Sohrevardī’s position is that primary principles may be known through the cognitive mode named ‘immediate knowledge’ which is a mode stipulated by Aristotle himself in the *Posterior*

Analytics, I.2: 71b.20-72a.25: Science rests on necessary, true, primary, and most prior premises, which are known not through syllogistic demonstration, but by an 'immediate', intuitive way.

The Illuminationist insistence that the intuitive mode serve as the foundation of knowledge also posits self-consciousness as the generalized, universal law that acts in every domain of reality, and it may be compared to Ockham's concept of 'intuitive cognition' where he describes the generalized acts of apprehension by the subject, *not* restricted to sense-perception. The Illuminationist theory generalizes intuitive cognition, for example: 'I intuitively know I exist, or I think, is the same', then generalized as: 'every self-apprehending being is the same as its substantial existence.' In sum, the principles of knowledge, and the first step in science, rest on the primary and immediate intuitive cognitive mode. This knowledge is of essence, is pre-propositional, and rests on the a-temporal Illuminationist relation (*al-iḍāfa al-ishrāqiyya*) between the self-conscious knower (*mudrik*) and the essentially knowable thing—the object of knowledge—the known (*mudrak*). This 'relation' between the knower and the known, or knowing and being, is an identity preserving 'sameness' and replaces the Peripatetic principle of 'conjunction' between the alleged elevated human intellect and the Active Intellect. In this theory, with manifest impact on Persian poetic consciousness, 'vision-illumination' (*mushāhada-ishrāq*) is a process that acts on all levels of reality. In the corporeal realm the process acts as sight (*ibṣār*). The eye (*al-baṣar*, or the seeing subject, *al-bāṣir*), when capable of seeing, sees an object (*al-mubṣar*) when the object itself is illuminated (*mustanīr*). In the incorporeal realm every 'abstract light' 'sees' the 'lights' that is above it in rank, and in all cases it is the subject's act of 'seeing' that leads to truths obtained in ways that are not limited to the logical construction of predicative formulas. The valid epistemological mode of 'knowledge by presence' at any time T (now and in future) is when the knowing, self-conscious subject, S, 'sees' (*yushāhid*, a technical term that indicates a unified epistemological theory: sight, in external sensed reality, and vision-illumination—similar to Plato's intellectual vision—in non-corporeal, 'internal', realities, e.g. *Anschauung*, in the context of German Idealist philosophical discourse)² the manifest, real object, O, and obtains knowledge in a durationless instant. Thus the a-temporal relation, R, between S and O, named 'Illuminationist Relation', indicated above, will actualize (1) when S is 'sound' (the functioning organ of sight in its external application, and, say through praxis, heightened intuition and visionary experience of the philosopher-poet); (2) at the existence of a proper medium (corporeal light in the case of sight, and what Sohrawardī calls 'abstract light' of the non-corporeal, separate, 'boundary' realm named *Mundus Imaginalis*); and (3) on the removal of all external barriers between them (S and O). Then, as I stated above, the primary, intuitive and immediate knowledge—in the form SRO—determines knowledge and serves as the foundation for all subsequent syllogistic construction of scientific laws, as well as for all subsequent poetic expressions by the philosopher-poet acting as the 'knowing/seeing subject'. The implications of this methodology are clear. One defines, say, x and y and z, and subsequently one employs a figure of syllogism to arrive at a proposition with positive truth-value. Say, 'All x are y, all y are z, then all x are z.' Thus without valid definitions and without a constructed universal proposition, there can be no science in the Aristotelian sense. But we also know that without prior knowledge of x the stated construct is purely tautological. Thus the

immediate, intuitive knowledge by presence of the subject (poet-philosopher) of x is crucial for the principles of epistemological systems to be scientifically upheld. The distinction between the intuitive and the rational was utilized to establish the necessity of primary intuition, as an act by a self-conscious subject to thus obtain the primary principle upon which a system can be constructed by using the Aristotelian Syllogistic reasoning. Stated differently, scientific investigation based on a 'first step' that presupposes a differentiated reality (Prime Matter and Form) will result only in a system that is limited to the purely rational side of reality. This meant that the 'new' philosophy of illumination by explaining the intuitive, both as a continuous part of the whole reality, and as an epistemological first act by the *nous*, was able to remove epistemological uncertainty, and by allowing the knowing, conscious, and 'seeing' subject to obtain essential and primary knowledge, it was able to allow for the role of wisdom as the apogee of rational discourse to be set in Persian poetic expression.

Briefly, we should also examine the types of predication, e.g. how many ways it is said that 'A is B' and a critical re-evaluation of the universal affirmative proposition (the A-proposition of medieval logic, quantified as $(x)f(x)$ —for any x , x is y). The Illuminationist position examines the A-proposition: stated for example as 'all humans are rational animals', it begins by looking into how many ways the quantifier 'all' (the universal quantifier) is said, and distinguishes (a) among unrestricted 'all', 'each', 'every', 'each and every', 'whole' (as undifferentiated); and (b) the types of inclusion of members in P (P as the propositional statement). The final result is to define the 'identity relation' as a law of logic, which is reduced to the law of 'self-identity' ($A = A$). The epistemological implications of this law of logic were enormous for Sohrawardī. Therefore, in his Illuminationist system primary knowledge is not established because of the Active Intellect, as *dator formarum*, becoming one with, united, connected, etc. with the subject, but is based on the primary self-identity, *idrāk mā huwa huwa*, of the self, *al-ana'yya* (first person, knowing subject, etc.), whose act of self-consciousness, *idrāk al-ana'yya*, is the fundamental and primary real thing. This is simply the most abstract epistemological re-statement of the logical law of self-identity ($A = A$). But notice that this law generalized is an identity 'relation' (in logic and mathematics, say, between A and A, 2 and 2, as well as compounded relations such as $2 + 3 = 1 + 4$; $A = B$ & $B = C$, then $A = C$, etc.); in its basic epistemological statement it is 'the self related to itself', as self-apprehension. It is also nonpropositional and established prior to inference (that is, it is not in the form of x is y , or $A = A$ is not the same as A is A, where '=' is a 'relation', *iyāfa*, in Illuminationist logic; nor $A = A$ is established because of an inference, say $A = B$ & $B = C$ & $C = A$, thus $A = A$; it is true before the temporal process of inference). The 'new' theory is named 'Knowledge by Illumination and Presence', or more simply, 'Knowledge by Presence'. The entire range of knowledge is described by this theory. God's knowledge is by presence; self-identity, *idrāk mā huwa huwa*, self-consciousness, *idrāk al-ana'yya*, or *al-dhāt*, is also described by it, though at the primary stage the knowledge is 'intuitive', and prior to any differentiation between 'I' and 'non-I' ('I-ness' Self-consciousness)—that is, at the abstract primary logical foundation, $A = A$ prior to any differentiation of A into $B + C$). Now to further the argument as Sohrawardī does, any subject (established as the existing part of the whole continuum of self-conscious things, differing only in respective degrees of consciousness, with the source, the Light of

Lights, the most self-conscious), call it S, will come to know any 'manifest' object. This is because of the continuum theory that all objects too possess self-consciousness to a degree, have 'Evidenz' as a quality, *istināra*, which is manifestation, *zuhur*. Now, call the object O. Then at the moment of 'alignment' (*muṭābaqa*) between S and O, actualized in a durationless time, *ān*, will result S to grasp, or obtain what-is O, which results in S and O becoming 'related' by the illuminationist relation (*idafa ishrāqiyya*), and so knowledge is obtained and the ambiguity of knowledge by predication is removed. The ambiguity is observed in stating the general proposition 'x is y' while the what-is of x is not established by the simple predication. Does x 'become' the same, identical thing as/with y in predication, or does x retain its separate identity when y is predicated of it and is a description of something 'added' to what-is x? The relational correspondence of x and y is seen to be a statement that removes the ambiguities of predication. For example, if we say 'the subject is the object' or 'the knower is the known' ('*āqil ma'qul ast*, in Persian), do we mean that the subject 'becomes' the object, or 'is' identical with the object, or that the two are 'related' by an identity preserving relation? If we replace 'x is y' with xRy (R as the identity preserving one-to-one correspondence), then the ambiguity of what is 'x is y' and do/do not x and y lose their separate, individual identity in simple predication, is removed. In contemporary terms, this may be further described as the priority of 'knowledge by presence' over 'representational knowledge by predication', and the former may be compared with the notion of 'knowledge by acquaintance'³

PERSIAN POETRY AND THE EXPRESSION OF POETIC WISDOM

The impact of Illuminationist thinking, especially the unified epistemological theory of Knowledge by Presence, on Persian poetry is very significant. Because of it the poet-philosopher acts as the knowing subject who, when related to the object in the inclusive spectrum of reality, will know its essence and this will enable him to express the final end of the process in poetic form. Here the end of philosophy becomes poetry, and perhaps the role of this poetic wisdom is the most widely accepted in Iranian civilization. It is this impact that allows us to observe that Persian poetry, taken as a whole, has had and still has a pervasive and deeply penetrating role in defining truth. One may simply note what is well known, namely, that there are thousands of 'known' Persian poets who have helped shape the Iranian civilization for centuries. Scarcely would you find a Persian-speaking person who does not know at least a few lines of poetry, or has not heard poems recited at any and every occasion from the auspicious to the sombre and the tragic. It is not possible to imagine an Iranian home without an edition, or an abridgement, or an anthology of the works of poets such as Ferdowsī, Sa'dī, Ḥāfez and Rumī. The Persian *Dīvān* of many poets is used for divination, as are sacred scriptures. Poetry is the most lasting source for intellectual, artistic, and even mundane inspiration in the Iranian world. In short, Persian poetry is inseparable from the existential *gestalt* of the Iranian being.

However, it is difficult to fathom the breadth and the depth of Persian poetry in a short essay, to bring to bear the intricate details of its genesis and development, and to discuss the centuries of scholarship on its role in the making of the Iranian soul.

Let us consider a paradigm that posits three interrelated realms: the cosmic, the political, and the individual. This will allow us to explain the specific way in which the ideas, themes, events, and personalities that have shaped the Iranian civilization are interrelated and manifest in the poetic tradition. I will concentrate on the *principle* by which the cosmic and the human may be connected—and here, the poetic serves as such a link. This process by which the subject as poet is linked to the cosmic and is thus perceived by the populace to be holding the divine immutable secrets of being, is directly impacted by philosophical thinking, especially by the Illuminationist epistemological theory of Knowledge by Presence, as indicated above. The poet serves as the link between the ‘unseen’ realm—the cosmic, the divine—and the human—the political domain of the ‘city’ and the individual realm of the soul; and the wisdom of the poet’s words affect everyone, and everyone in this civilization turns to the poet’s wisdom for inspiration.

From the point of view of the mainstream Islamic religion, however, wisdom is restricted to revelation by God and by his choice. The Koran does recognize the concept of wisdom, and the term *ḥikma* does occur, but mainstream juridical Islam does not allow for the dynamic process of unfolding wisdom, nor does it accept the validity of an individual basis for it, be it a poet’s own poetic wisdom, a mystic’s intuitive grasp of the essence of reality, or the philosopher’s constructed truth that leads to wisdom. In the mainstream juridical interpretation of Islam, Logos is the *kalima*, word of God, and God’s own choice in revelation, *wahy*, directs the human activity in all its dimensions. But the mystical, the poetic, as well as certain types of illuminationist philosophical interpretations of Islam hold that divine revelation, in the form of divine inspiration, (*ilhām*) is continuous and is obtained in the being of the knowing subject, say the poet or poet-philosopher or mystic, through visions and illuminations; and the unified epistemological theory explains this. Many Persian mystics have claimed that God has never closed the doors of his bounteous love to them, that they are continuously inspired and challenged by Him. The visionary poets and authors of mystical and philosophical literature in Iran are inspired by a continuous experience of the sacred, and keep its magical quality alive through sustained practice, which continues to inform man of his place in the world. This Persian mystical and philosophical view, just mentioned, allows for the poet as an individual to grasp and then interpret the essence of truth, and to finally express it in poetic forms in order that the individuals who reside in the ‘city’ may gain wisdom by which to live happily. Thus, and with reference to our original paradigm, the poet is the spokesperson for the divine realm, just as the lofty epithet of the renowned Persian poet Ḥāfez, *Lisān al-Ghayb*, ‘Tongue of the Unseen’, so well characterizes this very pervasive conviction regarding poets and poetry.

To further elaborate this fundamental Persian attitude, we may think of the poet in the following scheme as a subject, conscious of self and related to the manifest object—this in strict conformity to the illuminationist epistemological theory. The transition from the subject to the knowing subject, to the knowing, *creating* subject, marks the transformation of man as man to man as poet, whose creative wisdom transcends simple cognizance. This is when the spiritual journey, or, from the standpoint of the epic, the quest, begins. Finally there is a state of union, when the philosopher-poet has achieved total wisdom, or when the epic hero has emerged victorious from the supreme ordeal.

This is when the knowing subject enters the realms of power, *jabart*, and the divine, *lāhut*, and obtains the reality of things and is thus transformed into the knowing, *creating* subject. What are created are finally poems, and as poems they incorporate metaphors for the totality of the arduous journey, metaphors for all future individuals to contemplate, from within which they may then, by themselves and in their own eras, unravel the wisdom that will guide them on their quest.

Finally, as we look into the foundation of Persian poetry we may describe it as a collectivity, which is constituted by: variegated theoretical principles (predominantly Greek in conception); historical events and processes (taken from the West Asian, Islamic, and Iranian actual, or presumed sources); mythological stories and concepts (predominantly Iranian); religious dictums and worldviews (from the Judaeo-Islamic-Christian tradition, and from the indigenous Iranian religious traditions, predominantly in their Zoroastrian and later Zurvanite interpretations); as well as popular tales and sentiments (from multiple sources: Indian, Iranian, West Asian, Hellenic, and Bedouin). This complex foundation is, however, rendered 'Persian' through the poetic tradition and has become the identifying nature of the Iranian worldview. The multi-faceted worldview has so influenced the very essence of the Persian *paideia* and is so intertwined with the Persian poetic tradition that only through poetry is Persian wisdom finally and ultimately manifest.

In my view, the most significant distinguishing character of Persian poetry taken as a whole is its almost existential perspective that regards the end of philosophy to be poetry. From this vista, wisdom can only be communicated through the poetic medium, and the congenital poetic wisdom thus informs man of every facet of his response to his total environment, of the corporeal and the spiritual, of the ethical and the political, of the religious and the mundane. The ensuing perception of reality and the historical process is constructed in the form of metaphysical law, and the expression *consciously* employs metaphor, symbol, myth, lore and legend to inform of the very experience of being. The consequence is that Persian wisdom is more poetic than philosophical, always more intuitive than discursive. The way then, for example, that Persian wisdom seeks to unravel even the mysteries of nature is not by examining the principles of physics (as say, would the Peripatetic philosophers) but by looking into the metaphysical world and into the realm of myths, dreams, the fantastic and the sentimental.

The way in which the poet or more aptly, the 'poet-philosopher', obtains his wisdom, which is then translated by way of a totality, a *gestalt*, into an all-embracing metaphor and continues to unfold as the mythos base for the culture permeating it totally, is explained by the intricate epistemological system of Knowledge by Presence, as outlined above. Knowledge is not restricted to what is obtained by the input of sense data and the extraction of universal principles. Rather, knowledge rests on an intuitive total and a prior *relation* with what the whole is unrestrictedly. As I have indicated, the identity preserving, relational correspondence, R, between subject, S, and object, O, leads to knowledge. The knowing subject, here the poet, has, on certain conditions, direct access to the origin, to the one beyond being, to the Divine Itself. To quote Ḥāfez on this point:

There is no nearness nor farness on the path of love,
Thou I see clearly [from here] and send Thee prayers.⁴

And the Divine continuously bestows of His Being upon the poet's, and in this context, usually through the angel Sorūsh (the Iranian equivalent of the archangel Gabriel), as in this other poem by Ḥāfez:

Give me wine! Last night, Sorūsh, angel of the unseen world,
Brought me splendid news: His Grace does emanate upon us all.⁵

The poet-philosopher continues to serve as the link between the human and the divine, between the noumena and the phenomena, the seen and the unseen, and thus keeps open the doors of divine inspiration. The Unseen World continues to manifest itself to him until the time when he attains such a degree of sagacity, possessing wisdom, that he is designated *Lisān al-Ghayb*, Tongue of the Unseen, the well known epithet of Ḥāfez which points to the paradigmatic role of the poet and indicates his position in the epistemological structure outlined above.

The poet-philosopher's experience uncovers an inclusive set of truths (the sensed to the intellect and the inspired) giving him wisdom tantamount to the poetic wisdom in his expression. This experience, though potentially available to anyone, involves a process that makes up the individual's experience and is usually described through the metaphor of an inward journey having four stages, as described below. Here the poetic medium is considered to be the highest way of expressing the outcome of the experience, and this is where poetic wisdom reigns. Persian poets are, in my view, the main proponents of such wisdom in Iranian civilization, wisdom that affects people's consciousness, and the poet is thus the 'tongue', *lisān*, through which the essence of the 'unseen', *ghayb*, is revealed. He is the guide to the inhabitants of the 'city'.

REVELATION, INSPIRATION, AND POETIC WISDOM: ḤĀFEZ THE PARADIGM OF POETIC WISDOM

Persian poetic wisdom (*ḥikmat-e shā'irāneh*) is thought to continue the divine inspiration by constructing a metalanguage of metaphor, allegory and symbol that transcends the periods of historical time and the courts of temporal rule. Khāje Shams al-Din Muhammad Ḥāfez (1325-1389) was a leading poet in a complex and highly intricate Persian poetic tradition. Ḥāfez is alive in virtually every Persian household, rich and poor, learned or unlearned. Equally well versed in both Persian and Arabic letters, a courtier and Madrasa professor, he was favoured by kings and berated by clerics in protean succession. Apart from a few quatrains, *qaṣidas*, *qiṣ'as* and *masnavīs*, the *Dīvān* consists entirely of *ghazals*, each one a unique masterpiece, whose conflicting testimonials have received literal, mystical, and often controversial exegeses among scholars, with the general public commonly reserving a preference for the latter interpretation.

The poetic wisdom of Ḥāfez has for six centuries beckoned the believer, the sceptic, the downtrodden as well as the gentry to an abode where all things merge, wherein even the devil and the angel reside side by side. His poetic heavenly court, a veritable *mundus imaginalis*, is a circle bound by a string of truths, which knows no bounds to the depths of love, friendship, vision, and trust.

Rejecting preachers and professors, Sufi Orders and pious pretenders, the circle is open to any who will follow the Magi Master away from the mosque and into the tavern. Scepticism may be admitted there, but nihilism is not; the ascetic may linger here, but the enthusiast is welcomed. The world is vain and human intention frail, the riddle of existence unknowable, and the doings of Fate preordained, but God is just, life a celebration, and poetry a revelational act of faith. Ḥāfez submits to paradox and prophecy; belief and heresy pour from the poet's pen into sheer lucidity. It is not possible to imagine the land of Iran without this passionate *mind* to whom she once gave birth, and he will forever remain the Persians' *Lisān al Ghayb*. The universal, time less message of Ḥāfez may best be seen in his own poem:

Joseph long lost will return to Canaan, grieve no more.
 The den of woes will turn into a rose garden, grieve no more.
 O afflicted heart, you will heal again, do not despair,
 This dishevelled mind will come to be restored again, grieve no more.
 Life's spring will spread afresh on meadows,
 O sweet song-bird, the rose will shelter you again, grieve no more.
 Do not despair, you do not know the mysteries of the unseen,
 Many a secret game unfolds behind the veil, grieve no more.
 Should the deluge of oblivion consume the source of life,
 With Noah commanding your ship, fear not the tempest, grieve no more.
 And if yearning for the Ka'ba, you tread upon the desert,
 When thorns and thistles take to task, grieve no more.
 Though this post be perilous, and the harbour out of sight,
 There is no path to which there is no end, grieve no more.⁶

In such a distinctly 'poetic' civilization, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Shīrāzī, commonly referred to as Ḥāfez,⁷ or Khājeḥ Ḥāfez, stands out for the unsurpassed beauty of his words and for the penetrating depths of his meaning. He is the proven master of Persian lyrical poetry and any one of his odes stands out as an *exemplum* that indicates the collectivity of the tradition defined above. During his lifetime and since his death six centuries ago, Persian-speaking men and women, old and young, kings and paupers, illiterates as well as learned scholars,⁸ have turned to him for wisdom and inspiration. Moments of extreme sorrow as well as heights of felicity are shared with Kāfez by the common practice of using his *Divān* for divination (*fāl-e Ḥāfez*).⁹ His collected works, testimony of his unmatched genius, has had a major impact in shaping attitudes concerning every facet of life in the Iranian world.¹⁰ In almost all Persian-speaking homes one will find at least one edition, or an abridgement, or a quire or two of his poems.

Since his death, Ḥāfez has been given a number of titles and epithets such as: *Bulbul-e Shīrāz* (the Nightingale of Shiraz), *Khājeḥ-ye Shīrāz* (the Master of Shiraz), *Khājeḥ-ye 'Irḡān* (the Master of Gnosis), *Tarjumān al-Ḥaqīqa* (the Interpreter of Truth), *Kāshif al-Ḥaqīqa* (the Revealer of Truth), *Tarjumān al-Asrār* (the Interpreter of Secrets), and most prevalently, *Lisān al-Ghayb*—exclusively bestowed on Ḥāfez.¹¹ The following analysis of the sources and usage of this term will argue that beyond a mere honorific and poetic

designation, it is a signifier of Ḥāfez's status as a source of divine inspiration and of prophetic vision.¹² It is, in addition, an indicator of a more inclusive truth, namely, that Iranian civilization as a whole inclines to seeking enlightenment from poetic wisdom.

The earliest written evidence of the epithet *Lisān al-Ghayb* is given in the 'Introduction' (*Dībācheh*) to a *Dīvān* of Ḥāfez compiled by Abu'l-Fatḥ Fereyḍīn 'Ḥasan Mīrzā', son of Suluān Ḥusayn Bāygarā, written by the famous calligrapher and court secretary (*dabīr*) Shihāb al-Dīn Murvārīd known as 'Bayānī' (d. 922/1516).¹³ The compiler indicates in the 'Introduction' that since Ḥāfez's *Dīvān* has a 'miraculous' language, it has been given the epithet *Lisān al-Ghayb*, and the poet is so known. The 'Introduction' includes the following quatrain in which the *Dīvān* is further said to be well-known as the 'Manifestation of the Holy Spirit':¹⁴

This treasure house of truths, devoid of fault,
Is a reflection of the scripture of 'no doubt' (Koran, II.2)
It is well known as the manifestation of the Holy Spirit,
And all men remember it as *Lisān al-Ghayb*.

Turning to biographers of Ḥāfez, we find that in several other instances as well, his poetic genius is discussed in terms of an inspiration by the Holy Spirit (*Rūḥ al-Qudus*).¹⁵ This is a significant identification, since, as we shall see below, inspiration and emanation received from the Holy Spirit is equated on the one hand with being informed by the angel Gabriel (or its Persian counterpart the angel Sorish), and on the other with access to unbound poetic knowledge that results from conjunction with the Active Intellect or the obtaining of unrestricted Knowledge by Presence, and are indicative of prophet-like qualities.¹⁶

Jan Rypka identifies the following possible reasons for the epithet: 'They named him *lisān al-ghayb*, "the tongue of secrets", referring to his alleged mysticism. Others take this expression to mean that his verses are free from artificialities or that his *dīvān*, like the Koran, can be consulted to interpret the future.'¹⁷ While Rypka is one of only a few historians of Persian literature known to me who have made reference to the epithet in question,¹⁸ such explanations and the vague notion of an 'alleged mysticism' do not add to our understanding of the phenomenon of a prophet-like 'tongue of the unseen'. That the *Dīvān* is consulted to 'interpret the future' does confirm, however, the view that Ḥāfez 'is considered to have received emanation from the 'Holy Spirit'.¹⁹ But the epistemology of the phenomenon must be analysed in order to understand how the 'tongue of the unseen' can 'interpret the future', as well as its other miracle-like implications. It has to be emphasized that medieval Arabic and Persian philosophical and mystical texts commonly equate the Holy Spirit (*Rūḥ al-Qudus*) with the Archangel Gabriel and with the Active Intellect, and being 'related' to it does imply 'miraculous' powers.²⁰ The epithet, therefore, would give Ḥāfez the elevated rank of a 'prophet-like' figure, and *Lisān al-Ghayb* would thus carry the weight of the sage-poet who, inspired by the divine, acts as the recipient of God's emanation, and then relates the divine message to man.

To be the 'Tongue of the Unseen' is to possess the knowledge of the 'Unseen' (*ghayb*), a property which in the Koran is said to be God's alone. The term *ghayb* occurs

in the Koran in forty-nine *āyas*, with its plural *ghuyb* being present an additional five times. The Koranic term is usually translated as 'unseen' or 'invisible'.²¹ A most prevalent theme is that God is the 'Knower of the Unseen and the seen' (VI.73; XXIII.92; XXXIX.46; LIX.22). Further, God alone knows the *ghayb* (V.109, 116; IX.78; X.20), and man can only know, or obtain, what he 'sees', that is, the world of *shāhāda* (XII.81). Possessing the 'thing' *ghayb* is equated with obtaining the 'abundance of wealth' and with triumph over adversity (VII.188).

This fundamental position of the association of God and *ghayb*, Paradise and *ghayb*, belief in the angels and *ghayb* is firmly stated in four widely repeated and well-known opening verses of the second Koranic Sira, where belief in the *ghayb* precedes the establishment of prayer (*ṣalāt*): 'This is a book wherein there is no doubt, a guidance for the God-fearing, those who believe in the *ghayb*, and establish prayer, and find sustenance in what we provide them' (II.2-3). The *ghayb* is 'contained' in the 'Clear Book' (*fi kitāb mubīn*), that is, the Koran (XXVII.75).

A sampling of four Koranic commentaries: the 'mystical' *Kashf al-Asrār* of Khājah 'Abdullāh Ansārī²²; the 'juridical' *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*, known as *Tafsīr al-Minār*²³; *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* by Ibn Kathīr²⁴; and the contemporary 'philosophical' *al-Mizān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* by 'Allāma Muḥammad Ḥosayn Tabāṭabā'ī²⁵, on the concept of *ghayb*, reflects a general agreement among them. In all four the *ghayb* is equated with the foundation of belief. All four emphasize that revelation and *ghayb* are connected, for they stipulate that it is only through revelation that the latter may be known.²⁶ None of them indicates a possibility of an individual and personal connection with the *ghayb*, emphasizing the significance of faith (Arabic *īmān wa huwa taṣḍīq*, Persian *geravīdan*) in relation to it. Thus we can underline the significance of *ghayb* for the Muslim, as expressed in the Koranic commentaries, by repeating famous sayings quoted in them: *al-ghayb al-Qur'ān*, 'the *ghayb* is the Koran'; and, *man āmana bi-Allāh fa-qad āmana bi'l-ghayb*, 'he who believes in God believes also in the *ghayb*.'²⁷

On the other hand, there are nineteen verses in the *Dīvān* of Ḥāfez where the term *ghayb* occurs. In three of them the position stipulated is in agreement with the Koranic principle we have outlined above:

No one knows secrets of the unseen, don't tell me stories.
 No one privy to the inner heart has found a way to that sanctuary.²⁸
 O cup bearer, pour me a cup of wine! For it is not known
 What the maker of the unseen did mould beyond the veil.²⁹
 Do not despair! You do not know the mysteries of the unseen,
 Many a secret game unfolds behind the veil, grieve no more.³⁰

In further agreement with the Koranic edicts Ḥāfez associates miraculous powers with the *ghayb*:

The inner being has become dark. Let the vigilant one
 Bring out a light from the unseen.³¹
 Best that my pain remain, than to go to imposter physicians.
 Let medicine from 'storehouse of the unseen' cure it.³²

As we turn to the mystical texts we find that in agreement with the Koranic dictum, belief in the *ghayb* is also equated with faith.³³ But while in many instances God is said to be unique in His knowledge of the *ghayb*, there are equally many instances where Sıfıs are said to have a ‘way into the *ghayb*’³⁴. For the Persian mystics, *ghayb* is the supra-sensory realm beyond discursive knowledge, whose existence is attested by every manner of the attributes of divine manifestation such as ‘true dreams’ (*ru’yā şādiqa*), divine inspiration (*ilhām*), and by the mystics’ ‘inner’ experience of a spiritual journey (*sayr va suluk-e bāṭin*). In many mystical texts the *ghayb* is considered a realm beyond time and space: ‘there is no yesterday, today and tomorrow in the realm of *ghayb* ... there is no extension of time there. Whatever is and whatever will be are all there,’ writes the celebrated Persian mystic ‘Azīz al-Dīn Nasafī.³⁵ In the same type of mystical texts the *ghayb* is made known to humans by the intervention of angels who imprint ‘unseen’ forms in the heart of man.³⁶ In sum, the knowledge of ‘unseen’ divine mystery may be obtained according to the mystics by (a) the intervention of angels; (b) the ‘experience’ of gnosis (*ma’rifā*); or (c) divine inspiration and personal revelation (*mukāshafa, mushāhada wa ilhām*).³⁷

All three ways of ‘access’ to the *ghayb* are found in the poems of Ḥāfez. The angel Sorūsh serves as the messenger of the Unseen, and brings ‘news’, or ‘good tidings’ to the poet:

Bring me some wine! Last night, Sorūsh angel of the unseen world,
 Brought me splendid news: His Grace does emanate upon us all.³⁸
 Sorūsh, angel of the unseen world, brought me good tidings:
 No one will remain untouched by His Grace.³⁹
 What can I tell you: Last night, when drunk in the tavern,
 Such good tidings did Sorūsh, angel of the unseen, bring me.⁴⁰

On many other occasions, Ḥāfez refers to the angel simply as the ‘messenger of the unseen’:

Come, o cup bearer! Messenger of the unseen gave me good tidings:
 ‘Remain patient with pain! I will send you the potion.’⁴¹
 At dawn, messenger of the unseen world gave me good tidings:
 ‘Now is the reign of Shāh-Shujā’ drink boldly of wine.’⁴²
 Last night I asked: ‘Will the beauty of her lips cure my afflicted heart?’
 Messenger of the unseen cried out: ‘Yes, it will.’⁴³

The *Dīvān* of Ḥāfez is fraught with the idea of an ‘experience’ of the divine, characteristic of the second ‘access’ to the *ghayb*, which serves as the foundation for the poet’s knowledge and awareness. For example:

I see the light of God in the Magi tavern.
 What wonder! From where do I see this light!⁴⁴
 Last night at the crack of dawn I was delivered from despair.
 In the midst of darkness I was sustained with the water of life.⁴⁵

Inspiration (*ilhām*) is characteristic of the third 'access' to the *ghayb*, which along with the 'vision and illumination' (*mushāhada wa ishrāq*) of mystical and philosophical texts, is considered to be the 'personal' counterpart to prophetic revelation (*wahy*). Typical also of this view—that divine inspiration does *not* cease even when revelation ceases—we find the following poem:

O inspired one! You who dwell amongst ranks of sacred Cherubim,
And receive continuous divine emanation in your mind.⁴⁶
Everything God possesses in the unseen realm,
Is all revealed openly to your heart.

And in the same manner the intellect (*kherad*) is also inspired by the *ghayb*:

The intellect, inspired by the unseen, seeking virtue,
From way up in heaven, kissed thy divine majesty a hundred times.⁴⁷

This type of experience of the divine 'unseen' realm is considered the basis for knowledge, and is incorporated in the reconstruction of philosophy by the illuminationist philosophers of the post-Avicennan period, notably by Sohrawardī and his immediate followers such as Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Shahrāzūrī, Sa'd b. Mansūr Ibn Kammina, and Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī, who objectify the 'unseen' realm as a real, separate realm of existence designated *mundus imaginalis* (*'ālam al-mithāl*).⁴⁸ The existence of this 'unseen' realm is 'proven' by illuminationist knowledge, which is obtained in the durationless moments (*ānāt*) of experience, called vision (*mushāhada* and also *mukāshafa*) and illumination (*ishrāq*), or by even a strong intuition (*ḥads qawī*, *ḥads ṣarīḥ*).⁴⁹ Ḥāfez, like the mystics and the illuminationist philosophers, accepts the objective validity of the unseen.⁵⁰ The realm and its 'secrets' are *real*. Only pretenders deny them:

Only one who protests secrets of the unseen,
Will find fault with my love and my wayfaring.⁵¹
The pretender thought he could come and gaze upon the secrets.
The 'hand' of the unseen world came out and jostled the upstart away.⁵²

The real, objectified 'unseen' realm may even act to alleviate pain and suffering of the wayfarer:

Tell the dawn of hope, which lay attending the unseen,
To rise. The dark night of the soul has passed.⁵³
Light of divine ardour strikes thus from the hidden unseen.
You tell me, my bounty lost up in flames, what shall I do?⁵⁴

In the poetic metaphor, the 'unseen' may become manifest *in the heart* of any subject who, as in the examples below, has come to possess Jamshīd's 'world-revealing' Cup:

Why should a heart, who possesses Jamshīd's Cup and reveals the unseen,
Lament the ephemeral loss of a mere jewel?⁵⁵

Illuminationist philosophical allegories in Iran use 'Jamshīd's Cup' as a metaphor for the Active Intellect. Thus to 'possess Jamshīd's Cup' is equated with 'connection' (*ittiṣāl*) or 'union' (*ittihād*) with the Active Intellect. Those who possess the Cup, it is further interpreted, are the ones given divine 'inspiration' (*ilhām*) by the angel Gabriel, named Ravān Bakhsh (*dator spiritus*) in Persian, and identified with the angel Sorish of Iranian mythology. Ḥāfez, like authors of the philosophical allegories, allows a potential access by every individual to the Cup. The individual in possession of the Cup knows the 'secrets of the unseen', and is to be equated with the ranks of prophet-like divinely inspired poets:

If you wish, like Jamshīd, to acquire secrets of the unseen,
Come and befriend his world-revealing cup.⁵⁶

So far we have seen that knowledge of the *ghayb*, while associated with revelation in the Koran, may become manifest through a special process or means, designated personal revelation, or through vision and illumination. But in order to make sense of the epistemological process by which this type of knowledge is obtained, we must turn to a philosophical and structural analysis of the phenomenon associated with the poet. The way in which the poet obtains his wisdom, which is then translated by way of a totality—the poem—into an all-embracing metaphor and continues to unfold as the mythos-base for the culture, permeating it totally, can be explained by an intricate epistemological system. Briefly, knowledge is obtained *not* by the input of sense data and the extraction of universal principles. Rather, knowledge rests on an intuitive total and prior relation with what the whole is unrestrictedly. The knowing subject, here the poet, has, on certain conditions, a direct access to the origin, to the one beyond being, to the Divine Itself. To quote Ḥāfez on this point:

There is no veil blinding the lover's vision of the Beloved,
Thou art thyself the veil Ḥāfez ! Remove thyself from the midst.⁵⁷

The subject (here the 'lover') comes to know the object (here the 'Beloved') at the moment of encounter between the two barring obstacles of vision.⁵⁸ The poet obtains knowledge—translated to 'wisdom' in the metalanguage of Persian poetic metaphor—and thus continues to serve as the 'link' between the human and the divine, and so keeps open, as it were, the doors of revelation. The 'unseen world' continues to 'manifest' itself to him until which time he attains such a degree of sagacity that he is designated *Lisān al-Ghayb*.

Let me now discuss a structure in relation to which this designation, and its basic position in Persian poetic wisdom, may be understood more fully.

The personal experience of truth that underlies the notion of inspiration is a process explained fully in illuminationist philosophy.⁵⁹ This process can be used to explain both the poetic experience of Ḥāfez as well as the epithet *Lisān al-Ghayb*. It

comprises four stages: 1- Praxis: asceticism and other forms of practice including the 'poetic' way of life,⁶⁰ which serve as a preparation for: 2- Visionary experience: this is when the poet becomes existentially 'acquainted' with the whole of reality,⁶¹ which leads to: 3- Analysis: discussion, contemplation, and examination of the experience,⁶² which in turn finally leads to: 4- Expression: setting to writing the results of the first three stages through the use of language, employing philosophical construction, myth, and poetry.⁶³ In the last stage, metaphors, signs and symbols are incorporated in a new mode of expression, which thus form, and so define a special language beyond simple, everyday discourse. Here poetry is considered the highest means by which one may 'speak' of the experience, and this is where poetic wisdom reigns. In the technical terminology of illuminationist philosophy, such a 'poetic' metalanguage is designated *Lisān al-Ishrāq*, said to be metaphorical (*marmūz*) and the highest means for the expression of experiential knowledge.⁶⁴ The poet is therefore considered the 'tongue', *lisān*, (that is, messenger) through which the essence of the unseen, *ghayb*, is revealed.

The process of experience of the wisdom of the unseen and of the subsequent communication in poetic form may be further elaborated in the simplified paradigm of a subject, conscious of self and related to the manifest object. The transition from the subject to the knowing subject, to the knowing, *creating* subject, marks the transformation of man as man to man as poet, whose creative wisdom transcends simple cognizance. This is when the knowing subject enters the realms of power, *jabart*, and the divine, *lāhut*—equated with the 'unseen realm' (*ālam al-ghayb*)—and obtains the reality of things, thus being transformed into the knowing, *creating* subject. What are created are finally poems, and as poems they incorporate metaphors for all future individuals to contemplate, from within which they may then, by themselves and in their own eras, unravel the wisdom that will guide them on their own quest for truth and happiness. This is the final distinguishing character of Persian poetry taken as a whole. It is an existential perspective that regards the end of philosophy to be poetry. From this vista, the wisdom of the unseen can only be communicated through the poetic medium, and the congenital poetic wisdom thus informs man of his response to his total environment, of the corporeal and the spiritual, of the ethical and the political, of the religious and the mundane. The ensuing perception of reality and the historical process is 'constructed' (the Persian *she'r sākhtan*) in a form, in an art form, at times of a metaphysics, that *consciously* employs metaphor, symbol, myth, lore and legend.

The consequence is that Persian wisdom is more poetic than philosophical, always more intuitive than discursive. The way then, for example, that Persian poetic wisdom seeks to unravel the mysteries of nature is not by examining the principles of physics (as say, would the Aristotelians) but to look into the metaphysical world and into the realm of myths, dreams, the fantastic and the sentimental, as do Ḥāfez and other major Persian poets.

The result of the experience of the *ghayb* may be revelation (*wah'y sharīh?*), inspiration (*ilhām*), divine call (*nidā*), or true dreams (*ru'yā ṣādīqa*). All of these result from the 'unseen' becoming manifest through the active imagination affecting the *sensus communis*, and thus may have an Epiphany that can be actually seen, just as Prophets have seen Gabriel in varying forms, or have heard a voice from the burning bush, as well as many other such occurrences. The Persian poetic wisdom is then the way for

individuals to also access unrestricted knowledge by becoming related to the Unseen either through the wisdom of the poet-philosopher, or even by themselves.

In conclusion, *Lisān al-Ghayb* can be finally seen as an ‘activity’ on the part of the poet, and not just a superlative attribute. If we consider the realm of the cosmic, of the political processes of history, and the individual being, we can see how Persian poetic wisdom serves as the *principle* by means of which the cosmic and the human may be connected. The poet serves as the link between the ‘unseen’ realm—the cosmic, the divine—and the human. He is the ‘tongue of the unseen’, a veritable prophet-like ‘messenger’ figure whose words of wisdom affect everyone from king to pauper.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Parts of this article were previously published in my paper ‘Hāfez, *Lisān al-Ghayb* of Persian Poetic Wisdom,’ in *Gott ist Schön und Er liebt die Schönheit*, eds. Alma Giese and J. Christoph Bürgel (Bern: Peter Lang, 1992), pp. 449-469.
2. Cf. the phenomenological concept of ‘seeing’, or the ‘intuition of essences’, *Wessensschau: Anschauung*, ‘seeing’ when applied to essence implies a ‘seeing of a different kind’, just as in the distinction between *ibṣār* and *mushāhada*.
3. Much of what has been said so far about Sohrawardī’s novel system of philosophy, the Philosophy of Illumination (*Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq*), may be compared with the key components of Indian philosophical systems and in particular with Śaṅkara’s *Advaita*. In order to indicate specific elements of epistemological structures and cosmological paradigms, I will briefly refer to the seventeenth century Persian commentary on the text of *Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq* by the Chishtī scholar, Muḥammad-Sharīf Niẓām al-Dīn Aḥmad b. al-Harawī, titled *Anwāriyya*, which is perhaps the most important scholarly work comparing the Philosophy of Illumination with Indian philosophical systems. For example, when discussing the notions of the multiplicity of intellects and Illuminationist continuum theories, Harawī names the *Advaita* as the Sanskrit counterpart in the domain of abstract intellects, the generation of abstract entities, etc. In his discussion of cosmology and celestial motion, he refers to Sanskrit terms such as *Satya Yuga*, *Tretā Yuga*, *Dvāpara Yuga*, and *Kali Yuga*. In the discussion of the special conditions of resurrection, metempsychosis, and prophetic dreams, he refers to the concepts of *Aṇḍaja*, *Arayuta*, *Udbhija*, *Khanija*, and others when making his comparative analysis. See Muḥammad-Sharīf al-Harawī, *Anwāriyya*, ed. with introd. and notes Hossein Ziai (Tehran: Amīr Kabīr, 1980), pp. 34-35, 68-69, and 150. Finally, epistemological notions of ‘seer’, ‘seen’, in the activity of ‘seeing’, have Sanskrit counterparts to the Persian and Arabic texts in the Illuminationist unified theory of ‘knowledge by presence’.
4. Ḥāfez, *Divān*, ed. S.A. Enjavī, 2nd ed. (Tehran: ‘Elmī, 1984) [hereafter Enjavī], p. 14. I consider Enjavī’s edition to be one of the few reliable ones in print. I have carefully checked every line that I quote from Ḥāfez against the edition by Ghanī and Qazvīnī (Tehran: Asāuīr, 1988) (hereafter Ghanī). All translations mine.
5. Enjavī, p. 221.
6. Enjavī, p. 186.
7. The poetic name (*takhalluṣ*) Ḥāfez was chosen by the poet himself, and is commonly believed to refer to his ability to recite the Koran by heart, according to him, ‘in fourteen versions’: *Qur’ān ze-bar be-khānī bā chārdah revāyat*. See Enjavī, p. 32.
8. In a recently published collection of essays on Ḥāfez by B. Khorramshahi, the author has documented ‘illiterates’ who can recite the *Divān* by heart, but cannot read from the printed text. See B. Khorramshahi, *Dhehn va Zabān-e Ḥāfez* (The Mind and Language of Ḥāfez) (Tehran: Nashr-e Now, 1988), pp. 18-19.

9. No other Persian *Divān* is used as extensively (if at all) as that of Ḥāfez for divination, a most widespread practice. Many histories, biographies, and autobiographies report instances when a person (usually a king, or a high ranking official) would make a divination to determine a specific course of action. See, for example, S. 'Abd al-RaKīm Khalkhālī, *Tafa'ul az Divān-e Khājah* (Using the *Divān* for Divination), in *Ḥāfez-Nāmeḥ* (rpt. Tehran: no publ., 1987), pp. 57-69.
10. See, for example, the entry 'Ḥāfez-e Shirāzī,' in A. A. Dehkhodā, *Lughatnāmeḥ*, Vol. 6, 2nd ed. (Tehran: Tehran University Press, n.d.), pp. 8528-8544.
11. See *ibid.* p. 116; see also 'Abd al-Nabī Fakhr al-Zamānī Qazvīnī, *Tadhkareh-ye Maykhāneh*, ed. A. Golchīn Ma'ānī (Tehran: Eqbal, 1961), pp. 84-85.
12. Poets in many civilizations have been considered to be divinely inspired 'prophets', whose poetry informs us through the metalanguage of metaphor and myth. In a recently published volume, ten scholars write on the association of poetry and prophecy in classical and medieval cultures, and discuss the 'intimate' relationship between the two. See James L. Kugel (ed.), *Poetry and Prophecy: The Beginnings of a Literary Tradition* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1990). In the Islamic civilisation, however, because of the position 'end of prophets' (*khātam al-anbiyā*) given to Muḥammad, poets are never actually called 'prophet' (*nabī*). In the one instance of the famous Arab poet al-Mutanabbī, whose name does intimate prophetic claim, many medieval Muslim scholars, as shown by Professor Wolfhart Heinrich, felt compelled to devise elaborate arguments to reject the notion that he was a claimant to prophethood. See Wolfhart Heinrich, 'The Meaning of Mutanabbī,' in *Poetry and Prophecy, ed. cit.*, pp. 130-133. But in some instances prophetic qualities have been attributed to poets, as best exemplified in the well-known statement said of the Persian poet Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn Rīmī: *nīst payghambar valī dārd ketāb* ('He is not a prophet, but does have a book.')
13. See Qazvīnī, *ed. cit.*, n. 1, pp. 84-86. Jan Rypka refers to this fact; however, his reference to *Tadhkareh-ye Maykhāneh* is taken from a review of the work by M. Moqarrebi in *Rāhnamāyeh Ketāb* 4.2 (1961): 158-163, and he does not indicate the significance of the passages, nor of the poem in praise of Ḥāfez. See Jan Rypka, *History of Iranian Literature* (Dordrecht-Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1968), pp. 269; 276, n. 78; 277, n. 115.
14. There is a two-fold attribution of *Lisān al-Ghayb* in the *Dibācheh*, once to Ḥāfez and once to the *Divān* itself: *tasmīyeh-ye in divān-e mu'jez bayān be-lisān al-ghayb ettifāq uftād* ('the name of this *Divān* with miraculous language was agreed upon as *Lisān al-ghayb*'). See Qazvīnī, *ed. cit.*, pp. 84-85, n. 1. The identity between the poet and his poems collected in the *Divān* is clear, and the epithet is commonly associated with Ḥāfez himself.
15. See Dehkhodā, *ed. cit.*, p. 8528, n. 3, who quotes from 'recent' manuscripts (no dates are given, but the manuscripts in question are believed to be from the early Safavid period in the sixteenth century) of the 'Introduction' to the *Divān* by Muḥammad Golandām, wherein Ḥāfez is not only associated with the inspiration given by the Holy Spirit, but the following rather bold statement is said of him as well: *va ṣedā-ye fahvā-ye ' wa mā yanṭiqu 'an al-hawā in huwa illā wahy^{mn} yūḥā* (Koran, LII.3-4) *dar āfāq va anfus andākht* ('He [Ḥāfez] spread the true and joyous sound of "Nor does he speak of his own desire. It is naught save a revelation that is revealed (Koran, LIII.3-4)" in heavens and on the earth.')
16. See Fazlur Rahman, *Avicenna's De Anima* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), pp. 18-22, 25, 34, 278; also see Fazlur Rahman, *Avicenna's Psychology* (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), pp. 38-40.
17. Jan Rypka, *ed. cit.*, p. 269.
18. Other brief references are found in the following articles: E. Sepahbodī, *Ḥāfez Mufasser-e 'Ālam-e Ghayb* (Ḥāfez, Interpreter of the Unseen Realm), in *Majalleh-ye Dāneshkadeh-ye Adabiyāt va 'Olm-e Insānī* 18.2 (1971): 35-49; M.A. Islami-Nadoushan, *Ḥāfez Shā'er-e Dānandeh-ye Rāz* (Ḥāfez the Poet Who Knows the Secrets), *Jām-e Jahān-Bīn* (Tehran: no publ., 1970), pp. 261-280.
19. See above, n. 8. Ḥāfez himself uses the concept 'Emanation given by the Holy Spirit' in three verses, of which the most indicative of the theory of a divine emanation brought to man through intermediation (by the Holy Spirit, or the angel Sorish) is the following:

Should the emanation given by the Holy Spirit come to aid once more,
Others, too, will accomplish what the Messiah did. (Enjavī, p. 88.)

20. Alfarabi is the first philosopher in Islam to discuss the activity of the 'law-giver' (*al-shāri'*) in terms of union with the Active Intellect (*al-'aql al-fa'āl*). The mystical and prophetic dimensions of such a union were systematized and in a way accentuated by Avicenna for the first time in the ninth and tenth *Namaṭs* of *al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbīhāt*. Avicenna's and other views are examined by Fazlur Rahman in *Prophecy in Islam* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1958), Ch II. The multiple identification among Gabriel, the Holy Spirit, Sorish, Jamshīd's World Revealing Cup, and the Active Intellect, made, however, by Sohravardī in his Arabic 'theoretical' works and in his Persian philosophical allegories, impacts Persian poetry to a far greater extent. The role of the Active Intellect personified in Persian literature as the angel has been demonstrated in an excellent recent study by T. Pirnāmdāriyān, *Symbolism and Symbolic Stories in Persian Literature* (Tehran: no publ., 1988), especially pp. 240-275. I have elsewhere analysed Sohravardī's epistemological arguments in identifying the Active Intellect with the Holy Spirit and with the Persian Ravān Bakhsh (*dator spiritus*): see Hossein Ziai, *Knowledge and Illumination, Brown Judaic Studies* 97 (Atlanta, 1990): pp. 137, n.1; 144-146, 153-155.
21. The edition of the Koran I have used is *The Glorious Koran*, trans. M. H. Pickthall (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1980). I have made a few changes in the translation such as 'God' for Pickthall's 'Allah', 'revelation' for Pickthall's 'inspiration' when the Arabic is (*wahy*), and in some places I have kept the Arabic *ghayb* instead of Pickthall's 'Unseen' or 'Invisible' for emphasis.
22. This Koranic commentary, while well known as *Tafsīr-e Khājah 'Abd 'Allah Anṣārī*, was written by Abu'l-Fazl Rashīd al-Dīn al-Maybudī in 520 A.H. based partially on Anṣārī's work. See Maybudī, *Kashf al-Asrār wa 'Uddat al-Abrār: Ma'rif be-Tafsīr-e Khājah 'Abd Allāh Anṣārī*, Vol. I (Tehran: Majles, 1952), pp. 45-47.
23. See *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*, Vol. I (Cairo: Dār al-Minār, 1367 A.H.), pp. 126-128.
24. See Abu'l-Fidā' Ismā'il Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm* (Beirut: Dār al-Andalus, 1966), I, pp. 69-74.
25. See al-'Allāma Muḥammad Ḥosayn al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *al-Mizān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, Vol. I (Tehran: no publ., 1965), pp. 45-46.
26. The 'connection' may be through the faculty of imagination (*al-quwwa al-mutakhayyala*), as discussed by philosophers and Mutakallims. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, for example, discusses three qualities of prophets (*khawāṣṣ al-nabī*), the second one concerning the relation between the *ghayb* and the prophet: 'The second quality of the prophet is in the strength of his faculty of imagination, which [enables] him to see, in his state of wakefulness, the angels of God, to hear the Word of God, and to tell of the present, the past and future unseen things.' See Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Mabāḥith al-Mashriqiyya*, Vol. II (Tehran: no publ., 1966), p. 523.
27. See Ibn Kathīr, *ed. cit.*, p. 73. The Shī'a position on the *ghayb* is essentially the same, but they add that the hidden Imām dwells in the *ghayb* and possesses its knowledge, so that for them belief in the *ghayb* means belief also in the occultation of the Imām and in his powers. See Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *ed. cit.*, p. 46, who relates a tradition from Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (the sixth Shī'a Imām) explaining the Koranic verse '[Those] who believe in the Unseen' (II. 3) as those 'who believe in the resurrection of the 12th Imām'.
28. Enjavī, p. 75.
29. *Ibid.* p. 81.
30. *Ibid.* p. 133.
31. *Ibid.* p. 257.
32. *Ibid.* p. 46. A clear reference to the Koranic āyas VI.50, and XI.31: *qul lā aqilu la-kum 'indī khazā'in Allāh wa lā a'lamu al-ghayb ... (al-āya)*.
33. See for example, B. Forouzanfar (ed.), *Tarjumeḥ-ye Risāleh-ye Qushayriyyeh* (Tehran: no publ., 1961), p. 16: *īmān bāvar dāshtan ast be-del be-dāncheh ḥaqq ū rā beyāgāhānad az ghayb-hā* ('faith is

- belief in what God reveals to him [the *sūfi*] from the *ghayb* in the heart.'). a statement typical of early Sufism where the 'heart' is the locus of inspiration given by God. Equally typical is that God reveals the *ghayb*, and that the mystic does not obtain it by himself. In contrast, typical of the *sūfi* esoteric terminology, we find such concepts introduced by the mystics as 'unseen of the unseen' (*ghayb-e ghayb*) and 'unseen of the unseen of the unseen' (*ghayb-e ghayb-e ghayb*), to which the *βūfi* have access. See, for example, Nūr al-Dīn Isfarāyēnī, *Kashf al-Asrār*, ed. and trans. H. Landolt (Paris: Verdier, 1986), pp. 10, 150.
34. See, for example, *Tarjumeḥ-ye Rīsāleh-ye Qushayriyyeh*, ed. cit., p. 18: *ṣūfiyān be-ālam-e ghayb rāh dārand*. But, again God is unique in his knowledge of the *ghayb*: "*ḥaqq yegāneh ast be-elm-e ghayb, dānest ānchēh bid va ānchēh khāst bid, va ānchēh na-khāst bid v agar bidī che-gneh bidī*" ('God is unique in His knowledge of the *ghayb*. He knows what has been, and what will be, and [even] what will not be, and were it to be how it will be.'). *ibid.* p. 21.
 35. See 'Azīz al-Dīn Nasafī, *Kitāb al-Insān al-Kāmil*, ed. M. Molé (Tehran: Institut Français d'Iranologie, 1962), p. 242. The same type of an idea of space beyond the Euclidean is found also in Ḥāfez.
 36. 'Azīz al-Dīn Nasafī, ed. cit., p. 242.
 37. In a telling passage in *ḥikmat al-Ishrāq*, Sohrawardī stipulates that knowledge of the unseen is obtained by prophets (*al-anbiyā'*), saints (*al-awliyā'*), and by other philosopher-sages (*ḥukamā'*) through Illuminationist experience, which may be as something heard in the heart, or by seeing someone (an angelic figure) who talks to the subject, or by seeing a Form (*mūthāl mu'allaqa*). Such experiences, not confined to God's choice, inform the subject of knowledge of the unseen realm (*ālam al-ghayb*). See Sohrawardī, *Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq*, ed. H. Corbin (Tehran: Institut Français d'Iranologie, 1954), pp. 240-242.
 38. Enjavī., p. 221.
 39. *Ibid.* p. 82.
 40. *Ibid.* p. 19.
 41. *Ibid.* p. 51.
 42. *Ibid.* p. 148.
 43. *Ibid.* p. 98.
 44. *Ibid.* p. 178. The 'light of God' is among the prevalent Persian poetic metaphors for mystical knowledge (*ma'rifa*).
 45. *Ibid.* p. 78. Qazvīnī relates that this poem was a direct result of a dream-vision of 'āfe in which 'a royal mounted man' (*shāhsavār*), from whose mount's hoofs light was emanating all the way up to the heavens, appeared to him, spoke to him, and while feeding him a morsel of light he had taken out of his mouth, told him 'Rise Ḥāfez! We have granted your wish. Knowledge shall be revealed to you.' See Qazvīnī, *Tadhkareh-ye Maykhāneh*, ed. cit., p. 87. People of Shiraz mark the very place where Ḥāfez is considered to have had his 'visionary' experience. See Dehkhodā, ed. cit., pp. 8528-8544.
 46. Enjavī, p. 286. From the *qaṣīdeh* in praise of Shāh Shujā'.
 47. Qazvīnī, *Dīvān*, p. 421.
 48. See Hossein Ziai, 'Beyond Philosophy: Suhrawardī's Illuminationist Path to Wisdom,' in *Myth and Philosophy*, eds. Frank E. Reynolds and David Tracy (New York: State University of New York, 1990), especially pp. 223-229. The term *mundus imaginalis* was first used by H. Corbin, who discusses the 'spiritual' implications of the realm. See H. Corbin, *En Islam iranien*, Vol. 2 (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), pp. 188-195.
 49. Elsewhere I have discussed the epistemological structure of 'intuition' and 'vision' (which covers *ilhām*, *mushāhada*, and *mukāshafa*, as well). See Hossein Ziai, *Knowledge and Illumination*, ed. cit., pp. 155-166.
 50. Ḥāfez was well acquainted with the tradition of Islamic philosophy, which by the fourteenth century was heavily influenced by the Illuminationist tradition. This is well attested by his biographers, who mention the texts he had studied, among them Bayyāwī's *Maṭāli' al-Anār fī Ṭawāli' al-Anwār* (on philosophy, which by that time was commonly designated *Ḥikmat*); Qūflī al-

Dīn Rāzī's *SharḲ al-Maṭālī*' (on logic); Sakkākī's *MiftāḲ al-'Ulm*, as well as many others on Koranic commentary and on the poetic arts. See Dehkhodā, *ed. cit.*, pp. 8528-8544. See also B. Khorramshahi, *ed. cit.*, p. xii, who states that Ḥāfez was proficient in philosophy.

51. Enjavī, p. 108.
52. *Ibid.* p. 69.
53. *Ibid.* p. 83.
54. *Ibid.* p. 171.
55. *Ibid.* p. 75.
56. *Ibid.* p. 145.
57. *Ibid.* p. 137.
58. The epistemological principle at work here, which in my view is evident in the quoted poem, is called 'knowledge by presence' (*al-'ilm al-ḥuḍūrī*). This principle posits that knowledge of primary things cannot be obtained by the Aristotelian essentialist definition (*horos* and *horismos* in the Greek, and *al-ḥadd al-tāmm* in the Arabic), but is obtained when a knowing subject 'sees' (*yushāhad*) the manifest, evident (*āhir*, or *mustanīr*, similar to Hüsserl's notion of *Evidenz*) object in a durationless instant, which results in an 'illuminationist relation' (*al-iḍāfa al-ishrāqīyya*) between the two. I have elsewhere analysed this principle in detail. See Hossein Ziai, *Knowledge and Illumination*, *ed. cit.*, pp. 137-143.
59. The epistemological characteristic of knowledge based on inspiration is that it is 'knowledge by presence', when as stated by Sohravardī: *yu'ayyad ibn al-bashar bi-rḲ qudsī yurīh al-shay' kamā huwa*. See *ibid.* p. 137.
60. Ḥāfez is known to have undergone ṣūfī practices. See Qazvīnī, *ed. cit.*, p. 87; H. Amīnī, "Marāḥel Taṣṣavuf va 'Avālem-e 'Irfānī-ye Ḥāfez (Ṣūfī Stages, and Gnostic Sentiments of Ḥāfez), in *Nashrīye-ye Farhang-e Khurāsān* 4.3 (n.d.): 35-37; and A. Gulchīn Ma'ānī, 'Ustād va Murād-e Khājah Ḥāfez' (Ḥāfez's Master and Spiritual Guide), in *Keshvar-e Iran* 19 (n.d.): 23-26. But the point concerning undergoing hardship and pain, akin to a 'dark night of the soul', before visionary experience can best be surmised from his own poems where the metaphor 'den of woes' (*kulbeh-ye aḥzān*) is used. This metaphor is used in three poems, and in each one we observe the view that time spent in the 'den of woes' leads to a revelatory experience. See Enjavī, pp. 133, 186, 237.
61. See above n. 41.
62. As exemplified by the use of metaphors such as 'study' (*dars*), 'prayer' (*du'ā*), 'nightly vigil' (*verd*) throughout the *Dīvān*.
63. As exemplified by Ḥāfez's own metaphor 'Ḥāfez-poems' (*she'r-e Ḥāfez*), which occurs fifteen times in the *Dīvān*, and by such attributes as 'lucidity', 'power', and 'heavenly expression' associated with it. The significance of the lucid, heavenly, and powerful metalanguage 'Ḥāfez-poems', can best be seen in the following (Enjavī, p. 59):

During the time of Adam, in the Garden of Paradise, Ḥāfez-poems
Adorned the heavenly book of wild roses and hyacinths.

64. See Suhrawardī, *Kitāb al-Mashāri' wa al-Muṭārahāt*, in *Opera Metaphisica et Mystica I*, ed. H. Corbin (Istanbul: Maarif Matbaasi, 1954), p. 494.