



ĀŠTĪĀNĪ, MAHDĪ

ĀŠTĪĀNĪ, ḤĀJJ MĪRZĀ MAHDĪ, known as Mīrzā Kūček (1306-1372/1888-89 to 1952-53), a scholar who excelled in both the traditional (*manqūl*) and rational (*ma'qūl*) sciences. His father, Mīrzā Ja'far, was both a nephew and a son-in-law of the great *mojtahed* Mīrzā **Moḥammad Ḥasan Āštīānī**, Ḥājj Mīrzā Mahdī first studied with his father, a religious authority in his own right, and then under Mīrzā Masīḥ Ṭālaqānī, Ākūnd Mollā 'Abd-al-Rasūl, Āqā Sayyed 'Abd-al-Karīm, Mīr Najm-al-dawla, Mīrzā Jahānbakš, and Āqā Shaikh Moḥammad Ḥosayn. At the early age of fifteen, he gained certificates of competence in various subjects from these masters, and proceeded to study with the greatest master of *ḥekmat* of the day, Mīrzā Abu'l-Ḥasan Jelwa. After the death of Jelwa in 1314/1897, he continued studying *ḥekmat* until, in 1327/1909, he went to Najaf to perfect his knowledge of *feqh*. There he joined the circle of **Ākūnd Mollā Moḥammad-Kāzem Korāsānī**, but bad health soon forced him to return to Iran. Two years later, he returned to Najaf, this time to study with Ākūnd Mollā Moḥammad Kāzem Yazdī, who granted him a certificate of *ejṭehād*. Later he studied with other jurists such as Āyatallāh Żīā'-al-dīn 'Erāqī, Āyatallāh Abu'l-Ḥasan Eṣfahānī, and Mīrzā Ḥosayn Nā'inī, all of whom granted him further certificates of *ejṭehād*, and he began teaching both *feqh* and *ḥekmat*. It was, however, in Tehran, that he finally settled and spent his learned career, interrupted by trips to Bukhara (where he is said to have taught briefly), Egypt, and Europe. He also spent a year in Qom, teaching *ḥekmat* to a large number of students that included Mīrza Moḥammad 'Alī Šāhābādī, who was later to be one of the instructors of Āyatallāh Komeynī in the same discipline. His literary legacy consists chiefly of commentaries on



works of *ḥekmat* (*Šarḥ-e manzūma* of Mollā Hādī Sabzavārī, *al-Asfār al-arbaʿa* of Mollā Šadrā, and *al-Šefāʿ* of Ebn Sīnā) and *feqh* (*Kefāyat al-oṣūl* of Ākūnd Mollā Moḥammad Kāzem Ḳorāsānī and *al-Matājer* of Shaikh Mortazā Anṣārī). He also wrote an original work, a treatise on *waḥdat al-wojūd*. He died of chronic jaundice in Tehran in 1372/1952-53, and his body was taken for burial to Qom.

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