



## BĀBĀ AFẒAL-AL-DĪN

**BĀBĀ AFẒAL-AL-DĪN** MOḤAMMAD B. ḤASAN MARAQĪ KĀŠĀNĪ, known as Bābā Afzal, poet and author of philosophical works in Persian. Several dates have been suggested for his death, the most likely being 610/1213-14 (M.-T. Modarres Rażawī, *Aḥwāl wa ātār-e . . . Naṣīr-al-Dīn [Ṭūsī]*, Tehran, 1354 Š./1975, p. 207; cf. J. Rypka, “Bābā Afḍal,” in *EI*<sup>2</sup> I, pp. 838-39). About his life practically nothing is known. His works (especially nos. 7 and 12, see below) suggest a disdain for officials, so it is not surprising that he is said to have once been imprisoned by the local governor on trumped-up charges of practicing sorcery (*sehr*); a *qaṣīda* he wrote on the occasion has been published (M. Mīnovī and Y. Maḥdawī, *Moṣannafāt-e Afzal-al-Dīn Moḥammad Maraqī Kāšānī*, 2 vols. [a promised third volume on his life and works has not been published], Tehran, 1331-37 Š./1952-58, pp. 731-32; cf. P. Bayzā’ī, “Ḥabsīya-ye Ḥakīm Afzal-al-Dīn Kāšānī,” *Yağmā* 4, 1330 Š./1951, pp. 414-17; M. Moḥīṭ Ṭabāṭabā’ī, “Bābā Afzal Zendānī,” *Moḥīṭ* 1, 1321 Š./1942, pp. 19-25). His tomb in Maraq, a village forty-two km northwest of Kāšān, is still a place of pilgrimage; a second grave is attributed locally to the *pādešāh* of Zang, who is said to have been a devoted disciple. The *taḍkeras* mention a family relationship and an exchange of quatrains (*robā’īs*) with Naṣīr-al-Dīn Ṭūsī, but these are next to impossible. The most that can be said is that in his *Šarḥ al-ešārāt* Ṭūsī refers to Bābā Afzal’s opinion on a point of logic (ed. Maṭba’at al-Ḥaydarī, I, Tehran, 1377/1957-58, p. 283; cf. *Moṣannafāt*, pp. 573-74) and that in his *Sayr o solūk* Ṭūsī mentions that he studied various sciences with Kamāl-al-Dīn Moḥammad Ḥāseb, a student of Bābā Afzal (quoted in M. Fayzī, Ḥ. ‘Āṭefī, ‘A. Behnīā, and ‘A. Šarīf, *Dīvān-o Ḥakīm Afzal-al-Dīn Moḥammad Maraqī Kāšānī (Bābā Afzal)*, Kāšān, 1351



Š./1972, p. 30).

Mīnovī suggests that Bābā Afẓal may have been an Isma‘īli (*Moṣannafāt*, introd., p. vii), but his prose works provide no evidence for this, and he alludes to Sunnism as the best of paths (*ibid.*, p. 297). Several *robā‘īs* mentioning ‘Alī may or may not be genuine; one that refers to the exclusive truth of Twelve-Imam Shi‘ism (*Dīvān*, no. 300) is certainly spurious. Though Bābā Afẓal avoids terminology connected specifically with Sufism in his major prose works, much of his poetry and some of his letters are explicitly Sufi in tone, while various passages in his prose works point to the spiritual benefits the traveler (*sālek*)—a favorite Sufi term—will gain by studying; e.g., “He will find his own self, which is the treasury of the realities of all things and the leaven (*māya*) of infinite existence” (*Moṣannafāt*, p. 149; cf. pp. 321, 724). Bābā Afẓal alludes in several places to the knowledge he has acquired through purifying his own soul; e.g., God gave him familiarity with the radiance of His own Being, making him into a mirror that reflected the whole of the universe (*ibid.*, p. 83; cf. p. 259). In a letter he mentions spending sixty years in the world’s darkness and discovering the water of life, which is intellect (*‘aql*, *kerad*). “Since my tongue has tasted intellect’s sweetness and savor, I have taken up residence at its wellspring” (*ibid.*, pp. 698-99).

Bābā Afẓal’s most universally recognized contribution to Iranian culture lies in the field of literature. In poetry he has been considered one of the two or three greatest masters of the *robā‘ī*, while in philosophical prose only Sohrevardī stands on the same level. Though Bābā Afẓal wrote none of the visionary treatises of the type for which Sohrevardī is famous, his systematic expositions of the teachings of the Peripatetic philosophers surpass Sohrevardī’s similar works in clarity, smoothness, and liquidity. Like Ebn Sīnā (Avicenna; d. 428/1037) in the *Dāneš-nāma-ye ‘alā‘ī*, Bābā Afẓal employs a great deal of Persian vocabulary where others would have used Arabic, but unlike Ebn Sīnā he chooses only attractive and mellifluous terms, making his works a delight to read; nor does he neglect to employ the corresponding Arabic terms where clarity demands them. That he was a careful stylist in his philosophical works is shown by his letters, which are written less formally and show a preponderance of Arabic words.

Bābā Afẓal’s influence on later thinkers has not been investigated, and only a careful comparison of his works with later writings will be able to uncover its extent. Given the fact that his works are clearly and beautifully written, they were probably a rich source of inspiration for philosophical writings not only



in Persian but also in Arabic. Thus Mollā Ṣadrā (d. 1050/1640) modeled his Arabic *Eksīr al-‘ārefīn* (Mollā Ṣadrā, *Rasā’el*, Tehran, 1302/1884-85, pp. 278-340; ed. and Japanese tr., S. Kamada, Tokyo, 1984) on Bābā Afzal’s *Jāvedān-nāma*, though he did not mention this fact in the text, nor was it noticed by the work’s editor; the tables of contents of the two treatises are practically identical, many—though by no means all—of Mollā Ṣadrā’s arguments and examples are taken from Bābā Afzal’s work, and a significant amount of the text is literally translated.

*Philosophy.* Bābā Afzal wrote during a period when several figures were bridging the gaps between philosophy and Sufism. Ebn Sīnā had shown some of the directions this movement could take in his visionary recitals and in the last sections of *al-Eṣārāt wa’l-tanbīhāt*, while certain passages in the works of Ġazālī (d. 506/1111) had combined Sufi and philosophical concerns (cf. work no. 55 below); ‘Ayn-al-Qoṣāt Hamadānī (d. 525/1131) had employed philosophical terminology to express concepts derived from mystical unveiling (*kaṣf*). Among Bābā Afzal’s contemporaries, Sohravardī (d. 587/1191) followed many of Ebn Sīnā’s leads, while Ebn al-‘Arabī (d. 638/1240) made full use of philosophical terminology to depict a universe transfigured by the presence of God. For his part, Bābā Afzal follows the philosophical and logical (not the visionary or gnostic [*erfānī*] terminology of Ebn Sīnā and shows no obvious inclination to move in the new directions mapped out by other philosophers, nor to follow any of the various schools of Sufism. But most of his works evoke a visionary aura in spite of their philosophical and logical exactitude. Perhaps his major predecessors were those philosophers interested in Hermes and the esoteric side of the Greek legacy; given the nature of those works attributed to Greek authors that he chose to translate, he certainly deserves the title “Hermetizing” given him by Henry Corbin (*Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, London, 1960, p. 13; cf. below, works 50-53).

Bābā Afzal’s major concern is to explain the salvific power of true knowledge, i.e., self knowledge, or knowledge of the Self (*dāt* or *howwīyat*, God Himself viewed as the center of man’s being). As S. H. Nasr has pointed out, Bābā Afzal’s philosophy is basically an autology (*k’vod-šenāsī*; “Afdal al-Din Kashani and the Philosophical World of Khwaja Nasir al-Din Tusi,” in M. E. Marmura, ed., *Islamic Theology and Philosophy: Studies in Honor of George F. Hourani*, Albany, 1983, p. 260). To know oneself is to know the everlasting reality that is consciousness, and to know it is to be it. In contrast to most philosophers and philosophically minded Sufis, Bābā Afzal writes practically nothing about God



and His attributes, while rarely referring to the nature of existence except in relation to self-knowledge. His ontology is simultaneously an epistemology, since the full actualization of the potentialities of the universe can only take place through the self-awareness of human beings (*mardom, ensān*), which in turn depends upon the training of the human soul, or education in the widest sense of the term.

Bābā Afzal’s view of the structure of reality is set down most succinctly at the beginning of *Rahanjām-nāma* (*Moṣannafāt*, pp. 58ff.). Cleverly exploiting the meaning of the root *w-j-d*, he divides existence (*wojūd*) into two kinds, “being” (*būdan*) and “finding” (*yāftan*), each of which may be potential (*be-qowwa*) or actual (*be-fe’l*). Potential being is represented by the tree present in a seed, while actual being is the tree itself. Potential finding is life or the soul at whatever level it may be envisaged, from the mineral up to the human; actual finding is the self-consciousness of the intellect (*kerad, ‘aql*), where knowledge, knower, and known are identical. Existence that is only “being” lacks the perfection of “finding,” while finding that is only potential has not yet become everlasting. Each higher level of existence contains the lower levels within itself; everything outside the intelligible world of the soul is an imperfect likeness (*meṭāl*) of what is found within (*ibid.*, pp. 69ff., 83, 191, 241).

Like most Muslim cosmologists, Bābā Afzal discerns two movements in the universe, that from the origin (*āgāz, mabda*) to the world, or from “finding” to “being,” and that from the world to the point of return (*anjām, ma’ād*), from being to finding. The descending movement is ruled by the First Intellect, which is one of God’s two vicegerents (*kalīfa*) in the world and whose domain extends down through the spheres to the four elements. The ascending movement extends from nature (*ṭabī’a*) through the mineral, vegetal, and animal kingdoms up to man, God’s second vicegerent (*ibid.*, pp. 90-91). As the microcosm, man contains within himself all levels of the macrocosm; these he must actualize one by one to bring about the Return to God.

The goal of existence is for each thing to reach the full flowering of its own nature (*ibid.*, pp. 6ff.). Perfected human nature encompasses every degree of existence found in the ascending movement of the universe. Both in the outside world and in man himself, the four elements, held in balance by nature, prepare the ground for the actualization of the pneumatic (*nafsānī*) and spiritual (*rūḥānī*) faculties of the soul, i.e., all the powers connected specifically with vegetal, animal, and human existence. In attaining to perfection (*kamāl, tamāmī*), man brings to fruition the specifically human



faculty that is the intellect, which balances all the lower faculties on the basis of ethical norms (*farhang, adab*), thus giving rise to the virtues (*fazīlathā-ye kolqī*, *ibid.*, pp. 94ff.). Hence ethics has a firm ontological basis; the moral virtues are a necessary stage in the universe's return to God. The intellect, having brought the soul into equilibrium, i.e., having established the positive character traits which define a true human being, allows the realization of absolute being, the Self (*ibid.*, p. 75). The world is a tree whose fruit is man, man a tree whose fruit is soul, soul a tree whose fruit is intellect, and intellect a tree whose fruit is the meeting (*leqā'*) with God (*ibid.*, p. 315).

Philosophy is valuable because people who meditate upon its truths will look within themselves and come to understand that they already possess everything they seek. "Man has no need of anything but himself" (*ibid.*, p. 241). By classifying the kinds of knowledge and existents, philosophy awakens human souls from forgetfulness and incites them to reach the perfection of existence (*ibid.*, p. 153). It prepares man for death by allowing him to undergo a cognitive separation from the body before it dies. "Until the soul knows its separation (*mofāraqat* [from the body]), no separation takes place, neither during life when the body's parts are joined together, nor after death when they decompose" (*ibid.*, p. 701). Ignorance of its own nature is the cause of the soul's wretchedness (*šaqāwat*) in the next world.

*Works.* Works attributed to Bābā Afzal can be divided into four basic categories: poetry, prose, works of uncertain ascription, and works of incorrect ascription. All works are in Persian unless otherwise noted.

I. Poetry. 1. S. Nafīsī collected 483 quatrains ascribed to Bābā Afzal (*Robā'iyāt-e Afzal-al-Dīn*, Tehran, 1331 Š./1952), while Mīnovī and Mahdawī list 195 (*Mošannafāt*, pp. 737-72, 674-76). M. Fayzī et al. (*Dīvān*) add to the sources employed by these earlier works a manuscript dated 1215/1801 from the Madrasa-ye Solṭānī in Kāšān (no. 141/2) and list more than 686 quatrains, while rejecting another 37 as definitely spurious. All these scholars refer to instances where quatrains have been ascribed to other authors, but none attempts a serious critical study. In addition to the quatrains, twelve *gāzals* and three *qaṣīdas* are mentioned (*Dīvān*, pp. 242-59; cf. *ibid.*, pp. 731-36, 673). Though many of the quatrains would be unremarkable in any anthology of the genre, a large number reflect the specific philosophical concerns and language of Bābā Afzal's prose works. Recurring themes include warnings about the futility of involvement with the things of the corporeal world, the correspondence between microcosm and macrocosm, and self-knowledge as



the goal of human existence.

II. Prose. A. Major original works. 2. *ʿArż-nāma (Moṣannafāt*, pp. 147-253). This is Bābā Afẓal’s longest and most complete exposition of his philosophy, a masterly summa that brings together all topics related to the perfection of the soul. It is divided into four “displays” (*ʿarż*) arranged in an ascending order according to the four kinds of things in the universe: corporeal bodies (*ajsām*), which are acted upon (*kardahā*); agents or souls, which do the acting (*konandahā*); concepts or known things (*dānestahā*); and knowers (*dānandagān*). First *ʿarż*: On corporeal things and their different kinds, the four elements, the unity of corporeal substance, place, motion, time, causes of motion, discrepancies of natures, the mixture of the elements, the engendering of things, plants, animals, human bodies. Second *ʿarż*: On activity (*koneš*), agents, and acts; and on creation (*kalq*) and origination (*ebdā*). Acts and motions in bodies derive from something other than the bodies themselves, i.e., nature or soul. Soul can only be perceived through intellect. Third *ʿarż*: On the world of knowledge and the concepts that are the objects of knowledge. Created things (*maḵlūqāt*) pertain to the corporeal world, which is an adulterated likeness or image, while originated things (*mobdaʿāt*) belong to the intelligible world, which is pure reality (*ḥaqīqat*). On the nature of knowledge, the knower, and the known, and the degrees of awareness. The existence of the highest kind of known things can not be separated from the act of being known (*dānestagī*). By knowing a thing a person becomes it. The highest object of knowledge is the First Known Thing (*dānesta-ye awwal*), i.e., God. All universal objects of knowledge (*maʿlūmāt-e kollī*) go back to a single source; all sciences are embraced by the divine science (*ʿelm-e elāhī*). Fourth *ʿarż*: On the kinds of knowers. That which in essence (*be-dāt*) is knower, knowledge, and known is one thing, the utmost limit and perfection of existence. Intellect knows through its very essence, and “that which is aware of the Absolute Existent is the Absolute Existent” (p. 233).

3. *Jāvedān-nāma (Moṣannafāt*, pp. 259-326; also ed. N. Taqawī, Tehran, 1311 Š./1932). This relatively comprehensive work is Bābā Afẓal’s most specifically Islamic treatment of his favorite themes; it is the only work of certain ascription to him outside the letters that quotes and comments on Qurʾān and Hadith. Bābā Afẓal points out that here, in contrast to his other works, his aim is to admonish and remind (*taḍkīr*), not to prove and demonstrate (p. 322). In four chapters the work explains the different kinds of sciences, brings out the importance of self-knowledge, and elucidates the nature of the origin and the



return. First chapter: On the kinds of knowledge and the superiority of otherworldly knowledge (*dāneš-e ān jahānī*), which is knowledge of the microcosm and the macrocosm (“the horizons and the souls” *āfāq wa anfos*) in relation to God. Second chapter: On self-knowledge. On the reasons for differences in schools of thought and in religions. The knowledge that is incumbent upon all human beings concerns (1) the meeting (*leqāʾ*) with God, i.e., *tawḥīd* or the profession of God’s Unity, and (2) the creation of the world and man. The meeting with God takes place constantly in this life, though most people are unaware of it. The faculties of the soul in the microcosm correspond with the archangels in the macrocosm. Third chapter: On the origin. On space, time, and motion; on kinds of origins and returns. Further analysis of the relationship between the soul’s faculties and the angels of the macrocosm. The meaning of the prostration of the angels before Adam and of Iblis’s rebellion. On inspiration (*elhām*) and satanic whispering (*waswasa*), both of which bring profit to God’s friends. Analysis of the two “I’s,” corporeal and pneumatic (*man-e jesmānī* and *naḥsānī*) and explanation of their levels of growth and their ultimate unity. Fourth chapter: On knowledge of the return. The body holds back the soul’s development in various ways that can only be overcome by meeting God in the microcosm and the macrocosm. By listening to God’s word (the verses or “signs” *āyāt* given to the microcosm), a person can come to see God’s signs (*āyāt*) in the macrocosm; vision of the truth follows upon hearing it. Felicity in the next world is for the soul to be resurrected in the best cognitive (*ʿelmī*) form, just as happiness in this world is for it to possess the best form of works (*ʿamalī*). The substance of felicity is knowledge and certainty, which are increased by the worship of God. Each transformation undergone by the soul is a death through which God forgives man; the “angel of death” at each level is the next higher stage of existence; e.g., the angel which takes away the animal soul is the human soul, and that which takes away the human soul is the intellect.

4. *Madārej al-kamāl* (*Moṣannafāt*, pp. 3-52). This is Bābā Afzal’s most complete discussion of the development and transformation of the soul. In a postscript found in some manuscripts (pp. 671-72; cf. pp. 700-01), he explains that he had originally written the work in Arabic, but then two of his companions persuaded him to translate it into Persian; the Arabic text is extant but has not been published. The work is divided into eight chapters and several sections: (1) On the human substance, showing the several levels of existence within man, from nature to intellect. (2) On that which distinguishes human beings from other creatures, in particular the fact that human beings can strive to



actualize all levels of existence, including the highest, which is self-knowledge. (3) On the degrees of human imperfection and perfection. Imperfection is not blameworthy so long as intellect is actively seeking to purify man from animal traits. The full actualization of perfection belongs to those who have actualized self through knowing God's Self. (4) All perception aids human beings in reaching perfection, since it belongs to the higher levels of existence that must be actualized. (5) Attachment to the desires of the body turns the soul away from its spiritual food, which is knowledge. (6) A perfect human being (*mardom-e tamām*) has actualized equilibrium among all the faculties of the soul on the basis of the intellect's rule. (7) Perfection can be reached through purification and spiritual discipline, meditation on the principles of certain knowledge, and actualization of the moral virtues. (8) Knowledge allows human beings to actualize their every potentiality and reach the unity of the intelligent agent, the intellect, and the object of intelligence (*etteḥād-e 'āqel o 'aql o ma'qūl*).

5. *Rahanjām-nāma* (*Moṣannafāt*, pp. 55-80; also ed. S. M. Meškāt, *Selsela-ye entešārāt-e Dāneškada-ye ma'qūl wa manqūl* 5, 1315 Š./1936, pp. 26-57). In three discourses this work explains self-knowledge as the road to human perfection. First discourse: On the self (*k'vod*) and how it can be known. Characteristically the self perceives universal (*kollī*) things (as opposed to the particular [*jozwī*] things perceived by the animal faculties); the more universal the objects it perceives, the closer it comes to knowledge of its own nature. An understanding of the factors that bring about pneumatic existence leads to self-knowledge. The highest degree of understanding and self-awareness is intellect. Second discourse: On the nature of knowledge and awareness (*āgāhī*). All things exist in the soul; by knowing what is outside of itself, the soul comes to know itself. Third discourse: On the profit of knowledge. By coming to know itself, the soul reaches Self, which is the end of all ends, being, everlastingness, and perfection.

6. *Resāla dar 'elm o noṭq* or *Menhāj-e mobīn* (*Moṣannafāt*, pp. 477-579). Written first in Arabic and then translated into Persian, this work, Bābā Afzal's second longest, shows the extreme importance he attached to logical thinking in the strict Aristotelian sense. Certain authors have suggested that the original was by Aristotle or Avicenna, but in the Arabic text Bābā Afzal expresses his disagreement with Avicenna's definition of *qīās al-kolḥ* in a manner that suggests his own authorship (cf. *ibid.*, p. 574). The editors quote sufficient sections from the original (pp. 580-82) to show that the Persian is much



expanded and makes a thoroughly fresh contribution. Bābā Afzal explains that he wrote the work to clarify the two arts (*honar*) that are specific to human beings: knowing (*dānestan*) and speaking (*goftan*). In the relatively short section on knowing (16 pages), he provides important definitions of the basic terminology necessary for logical discussions, including, for example, the distinction between existence (*būd, hastī*) and quiddity or “thing” (*čīz, šay*). The second part of the work provides a detailed exposition of the science of logic.

7. *Sāz o pīrāya-ye šāhān-e pormāya* (*Mošannafāt*, pp. 83-110; also ed. [with no. 52] by Ḥ. Mobaššer-al-Saltāna, Tehran, 1311 Š./1932). Hardly a typical “Mirror for princes,” this treatise explains not only the perfect king but also the perfect soul. It is divided into an introduction, three discourses, and a conclusion. Introduction: Human beings are the most excellent of creatures, containing within themselves the characteristics of all other things. Among human faculties, speech is the highest, while the most useful speech is that which reaches the noblest of human beings, i.e., kings and rulers. First discourse: There are many kinds of kings. The soul is king over the four humors, the intellect over the soul, and God over the intellect. Second discourse: The function of humans is to take creation back to God, but only perfect human beings are able to achieve this. Intellect acts to bring all the soul’s faculties into balance on the basis of ethical norms. In the many degrees of human existence, the perfect man is king over ordinary human beings, and the more perfect man king over the perfect man. The role of a king is to govern his subjects in such a way as to allow them to reach their highest perfection, i.e., the full actualization of intellect, upon which depends felicity in the next world. The king’s moral qualities must include opposition to no one, gentleness and indulgence toward everyone, humility, and courage. Only a king illuminated by intellect can stay a king. Third discourse: The king’s duty is to nurture (*parvardan*), i.e., to perfect those who have the aptitude for perfection. He achieves this on the basis of self-knowledge and his own perfection; only then can he discern the desired perfection of each thing and help in its actualization. Conclusion: Contemporary kings and rulers live in dreadful opposition to everything described in the present work, but if they should make it their guide, they can be freed from cares in this world and the next.

B. Minor works. 8. *Mabādī-e mawjūdāt-e nafsānī* (*Mošannafāt*, pp. 585-97; also published in *Jelwa* 1, 1324 Š./1945, pp. 121-28). Explains in five sections (1) the



two basic kinds of existent things, natural (*ṭabīʿī*) and pneumatic (*naḥsānī*), (2-4) some of the terminology related to the latter kind, including Aristotle's ten categories, and (5) the meaning of the most general of terms, *ḥaqīqat*, *čiz*, and *mawjūd*.

9. *Īmanī az boṭlān-e naḥs dar panāh-e kherad* (*Moṣannafāt*, pp. 601-09). The food of the soul is knowledge, though the soul, in contrast to the body, can never eat enough. All knowledge is useless unless put into the service of knowledge of self, which in turn depends upon discernment among the three constituent elements of the human being (body, soul, and intellect). All things are found in the intellect, so nothing can oppose it or destroy it.

10. Answers to questions posed by Montakāb-al-Dīn Harāskānī (*Moṣannafāt*, pp. 717-28). This important treatise touches on points not dealt with elsewhere; topics include the influence of the stars and planets on human beings, the role of the intellect in bringing the faculties of the soul into balance, the life of the soul through knowledge and its death through ignorance, and the futility of discussing religion and theology with worldly people. In one passage Bābā Afzal establishes a connection between his philosophical views and ideas current in Sufism by explaining that there are several successive levels of spirit (*rūḥ*) which man may actualize; the highest, the holy spirit (*rūḥ-e qodsī*), is the radiance of the Divine Essence and is mentioned in the Koranic verse, "I breathed into him [Adam] of My spirit" (15:29); in Bābā Afzal's own writings, it is referred to as intellect (*Moṣannafāt*, pp. 723-25).

11. Answer to a letter from Šams-al-Dīn Moḥammad Dozvākūš (*Moṣannafāt*, pp. 681-91; one of Bābā Afzal's "companions," *yār*, cf. pp. 671-72). Provides important clarifications of the recurrent theme that the intellect is the sheer actuality of knowing, or the unity of knower, knowledge, and known. The letter refers to the various kinds of seekers (*sālek*) on the path to God, dividing them into two broad categories according to their natural gifts. It insists on the necessity of following a spiritual guide and on the special nature of the training needed by the human soul as opposed to the vegetal and animal souls.

12. Answer to a letter from Majd-al-Dīn Moḥammad b. 'Obayd-Allāh (*Moṣannafāt*, pp. 692-99). Majd-al-Dīn was apparently an important official who had requested that Bābā Afzal write something appropriate with which to begin epistles and addresses; this letter should be read in conjunction with *Sāz o pīrāya* (no. 7, above) to appreciate Bābā Afzal's view of the imperfections of



government. Bābā Afzal opens by discussing the nature of human language as the fruit of the tree of human nature. But the meaning of language can only be grasped fully by knowing the meaning of one's own self. To actualize the leaves and branches of the tree—the arts and social skills—a person must drive the tree's root (the soul) deep into the hidden water of the intellect. The natural world, where delusion and unconsciousness rule, stands in stark contrast to the pneumatic world of wakefulness; in his official capacities, Majd-al-Dīn should always choose the latter over the former.

13. Answer to a letter from Šams-al-Dīn Dozvākūš (*Mošannafāt*, pp. 700-06). Bābā Afzal points out the spiritual benefit to be found in *Madārej al-kamāl* (no. 4, above) and then turns to the specific question of the felicity (*sa'adat*) or wretchedness (*šaqawat*) of the soul in the next world. He provides important clarifications of the nature of the intellect as the actualization of the potentialities of the soul, and in the process strongly criticizes current views of the soul's nature (perhaps the only place in his works where he takes an explicitly critical approach).

14. Letter of condolence to Tāj-al-Dīn Moḥammad Nūšābādī (*Mošannafāt*, pp. 706-09). Grief arises not from the loss of a loved one, but from our ignorance in being attached to false hopes. Bābā Afzal discusses the life of the soul, quoting from Edrīs as reported in *Zajr al-nafs* (no. 51, below).

15. Letter apparently to one Šams-al-Dīn (Dovzākūš?; *Mošannafāt*, pp. 710-12). Speaks of the scarcity of true knowledge and refers to having sent a copy of *Zajr al-nafs*.

16. Letter apparently to the same Šams-al-Dīn (*Mošannafāt*, pp. 713-17). In reply to a request to send anything new he had written, Bābā Afzal remarks that he has been kept too busy by his disciples (*aṣḥāb*) and family to write anything, but what he has already written is in any case sufficient. His works are not lengthy, but if they find a receptive heart, “they will turn it into a world” which will look upon this outside world as trivial. Bābā Afzal admonishes the recipient to keep up his spiritual discipline, since the worst disaster for a gifted person is laziness.

17-48. Miscellaneous pieces (*Mošannafāt*, pp. 611-65). These thirty-two works range in length from two lines to six pages. Most of the subjects are covered in Bābā Afzal's longer works, some approaching verbatim repetitions (e.g., pp. 662 and 315; 646 and 320). About the only subject covered here and not found



elsewhere is music (pp. 653-54).

49. *Āyāt al-ṣaḥāʾa fī'l-kašf 'an maṭāleb elāhīya sab'a* (ed. Moḥyī-al-Dīn Kordī, *Jāme' al-badāye'*, Cairo, 1919, pp. 201-04). Brief discussion in Arabic of intellect, soul, and body.

C. Translations. 50. *Resāla-ye nafs-e Arestūṭāles (Moṣannafāt*, pp. 389-458; also ed. S. M. Meškāt, with an introduction by Malek-al-Šo'arā' Bahār, 2nd ed., Isfahan, 1333 Š./1954). This is a Persian translation of one of the several Arabic epitomes of Aristotle's *De anima* (cf. F. E. Peters, *Aristoteles Arabus*, Leiden, 1968, p. 43). The Arabic text, attributed to Eshāq b. Ḥonayn, was published by A. Ahwānī (*Ebn Rošd: Talkīš ketāb al-nafs*, Cairo, 1950, pp. 128-75). M. Saghir Hasan has shown that Bābā Afzal's translation was based on a better Arabic text than the printed version ("Notes on the Edition of the *Kitāb al-nafs* Ascribed to Ishāq ibn Ḥunayn," *JRAS*, 1956-57, p. 72).

51. *Yanbū' al-ḥayāt (Moṣannafāt*, pp. 331-85). The Arabic text, attributed to Hermes and sometimes also to Plato or Aristotle, is known by several other names as well, including *Mo'āḍalat al-nafs* and *Zajr al-nafs* (Sezgin, *GAS* IV, pp. 43-44); it was printed by 'A. Badawī (*al-Aflāṭūnīyat al-moḥḍata 'end al-'Arab*, Cairo, 1955, pp. 51-116). Latin and German translations were made in the nineteenth century, and an English translation was made from the Latin (W. Scott, *Hermetica* 4, Oxford, 1936, pp. 277-352; cf. Sezgin, *ibid.*). The work takes the form of thirteen chapters, each containing a series of admonitions addressed to the soul; many of the themes of Bābā Afzal's own works are clearly present, though without the systematic presentation and logical demonstrations: the things of this world are symbols and images of the intelligible world; this world is not to be blamed, only the soul's love for it; the goal of life is for the soul to bring the intellect into full actuality; the soul must love death, which is rebirth into the intelligible world; the intellect is the soul's father, teaching it ethical norms and correct modes of activity (*farhang o adab*); everything that must be known is already present in the soul.

52. *Resāla-ye toffāḥa (Moṣannafāt*, pp. 113-44; also ed. [with no. 7, above] by Ḥ. Mobaṣṣer-al-Salṭana, Tehran, 1311 Š./1932). This is the pseudo-Aristotelian *Liber de pomo*, well-known in Latin and Hebrew. In contrast to these two versions, Bābā Afzal's translation follows the original Arabic text closely (cf. Peters, *Aristoteles Arabus*, pp. 65-66; for the Arabic text with a study of its sources, cf. J. Kraemer, "Das arabische Original des *Liber de pomo*," in *Studi Orientali in onore de Giorgio Levi della Vida* I, Rome, 1956, pp. 484-506). Bābā



Afzal's text was edited and translated into English by D. S. Margoliouth ("The Book of the Apple, Ascribed to Aristotle," *JRAS*, 1982, pp. 187-252). The work contains Aristotle's teachings and admonitions to his students on his death bed, dealing especially with the nature of the soul, its purification, the necessity of possessing the moral virtues, and the indispensability of knowledge for works to have any value.

53. *Moktaṣar-ī dar ḥāl-e nafs* (*Moṣannafāt*, pp. 461-66). The original is attributed to Ebn Sīnā; in seven chapters the treatise describes the attributes of the soul, such as its purity, simplicity, everlastingness, and cognitive power.

III. Works of uncertain ascription. 54. *Al-Mofīd le'l-mostafīd* (ed. N. Taqawī, Tehran, 1310 Š./1931, 93 pp. [not seen]). Apparently a synopsis of Bābā Afzal's teachings, it was printed from the manuscript in the Ketāb-kāna-ye Salṭanatī in Tehran; the copyist of a manuscript in Tehran University (1035) attributes it to Ġazālī (Monzawī, *Noskaha* II, pp. 1689-90).

55. *Čahār 'onwān* (printed as an addendum to Jāmī, *Aše'at al-lama'āt*, 2nd ed. by Ḥ. Rabbānī, Tehran, 1352 Š./1973, pp. 338-58). This is a skillful abridgment and condensation of the first part of Ġazālī's *Kīmīā-ye sa'ādat*, concerning the sign of being a Moslem (*'onwān-e mosalmānī*), which Ġazālī himself divides into four *'onwāns*: knowledge of self, of God, of this world, and of the next world (ed. A. Ārām, Tehran, 1319 Š./1940, pp. 7-103). The abridgment takes material from *'onwān* I, introduction, sections 1-2, 4-8, 16; II, 1-3; III, 1-2; IV, 1-2, 12, 13, 15. Only the last paragraph of the work seems to be the independent contribution of the author. Both the material selected and the last paragraph—which emphasizes the utmost importance of knowledge as an everlasting attribute of self—are consistent with Bābā Afzal's prose style and major concerns. 56. *Šarḥ Ḥayy b. Yaqzān* (of Ebn Sīnā). Probably identical with the work by a contemporary of Ebn Sīnā edited and translated by Corbin (*Ebn Sīnā wa tamṭīlāt-e 'erfānī* I, Tehran, 1331 Š./1952; *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*; cf. Nasr, "Afdal al-Din," p. 255).

IV. Works of incorrect ascription. 1. *Elm-e wājeb*. A short unpublished treatise rejecting the Peripatetic idea that God does not know particular things. There is no reason to attribute this work to Bābā Afzal except that the sole manuscript is found with a number of his short works; the style is totally Arabized, and the content is too theological (cf. Monzawī, II, pp. 822-23; Nasr, "Afdal al-Din," p. 254).



2. *Šarḥ foṣūṣ al-ḥekam* (of Ebn al-‘Arabī; mentioned by Nafisī in *Robā‘iyāt*, pp. 78-9). Bābā Afzal’s dates, concerns, and terminological style preclude this work’s authenticity.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Given in the text.

See also M. T. Dānešpažūh, “Neveštahā-ye Bābā Afzal,” *Mehr* 8, 1331 Š./1952, pp. 433-36, 499-502.