

## **Abd al-Razzāq Kāshānī: His Life, Works and Contribution to Sufism**

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### **Abstract**

Kāshānī is one of the most influential Sufi authors of later Islamic history. He wrote disseminated commentaries and important treatises, both in Arabic and Persian, which are rooted in Ibn al-‘Arabī’s ontological discourse. His works made him one of the great exponents and promoters of the School of Waḥdah al-Wujūd of Ibn ‘Arabī after Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī and advocates the intellectual discipline and School of Shaykh Akbar. His simple, scholarly manner used to explain and classify Ibn ‘Arabī’s teaching. His remarkable esoteric interpretation, Ta’wīlāt al-Qurān; although compatible with Ibn al-‘Arabī’s basic world view, there are important differences of perspective that mark Kāshānī as an independent thinker. His commentary on Fusūs al-Ḥikam, in which he discusses about the matter of Waḥdah al-Wujūd, promoted Ibn ‘Arabī’s teaching into the Persian speaking world.

**Keywords:** Abd al-Razzāq Kāshānī, Sufism

### **Introduction**

Our knowledge about Kāshānī’s life is very little. What we know about him is limited to sporadic information, written by him in some of his treatises, according to demands of text and not with the intention of introducing himself. In addition, there are few historian books from which we can derive information about him. The collection of Kāshānī’s Treatises, by Majid Hādī Zādeh, however, should be mentioned, as it includes information about Kāshānī’s life.<sup>1</sup> This paper depicts great interest in the preparation of Kāshānī’s biography. In addition, it will present his works and his place in Sufism, especially his impact on Persian Sufism.

### **The Life of Kāshānī**

Kamāl al-Dīn Abū al-Faḍl ‘Abd al-Razzāq Ibn Jamāl al-Dīn Abū al-Ghanā‘im al-Kāshānī (650/1252 to 736/1335) was born into a

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<sup>1</sup> Majid Hādī Zādeh, *Majmū‘at Rasā’il wa Muṣannafāt* (Tehran: Mirāth Maktūb, 2000).

Persian family in Kāshān, located in the province Khurāsān and 240 Kilometer south of Tehran. He, therefore, was sometimes called Qāshī, Qāsānī, Kāshī, which all are the different names of his birth place, Kāshān.<sup>2</sup>

The oldest source mentioned to Abd al-Razzāq Kāshānī is the summarization of *Majma' al-Ādāb fī Mu'jam al-Alqāb*, by Ibn al-Fūwaṭī (d. 624/1227), who died sixteen years before Kāshānī.<sup>3</sup> In addition, we can learn about Kāshānī in the writing of his disciple, Qaysarī Rūmī (d.751/1350)<sup>4</sup>, whose commentary on *Fuṣūs al-Ḥikam* is well known. He recognized the name of Kāshānī's fathers as Abū al-Faḍl, with the title of kamāl al-Dīn, and, therefore, described his master as "perfection of nation, reality and religion" (*Kamāl al-Millāh Wa al-Ḥaq Wa al-Dīn*).<sup>5</sup> This title is also confirmed by 'Allāmah Amīn 'Āmilī (d. 1284/1905)<sup>6</sup>, Muḥaddith Qumī (d. 1294/1915).<sup>7</sup> Both Ibn al-Fūwaṭī and Qaysarī identified the name of his grandfather as Abū al-Ghanā'im.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ibn al-Fūwaṭī al-Shaybanī, *Majma' al-Ādāb fī Mu'jam al-Alqāb*, ed. Muḥammad al-Kāzīm (Tehran: Irshād Islāmī, 1995), 4:180, no: 3620; Dawūd Ibn Maḥmūd al-Qaysarī, *Sharḥ Fuṣūs al-Ḥikam* (Tehran: Elmī Farhangī, 1996), 4; Mudarris Tabrizī, *Rayḥānah al-Adab* (Tehran: Khayyām, 1995), 34; Pierre Lory, *Les Commentaires esoteriques du Quran*, Persian trans. Zaynab Pudineh Āqāī (Tehran: Hikmat, 2004), 25.

<sup>3</sup> Kamāl al-Dīn 'Abd al-Razzāq Ibn Aḥmad Ibn al-Fūwaṭī was an Iraqi historian, who wrote a great deal, but whose works have mostly been lost. His most important work is *Majma' al-Ādāb fī Mu'jam al-Alqāb* in 50 volumes, which is lost its large portions, but only two volumes (4 & 5) are survived. They are in Library virtual Damascus and library of University of Lahore in Pakistan (For more information. See NK Singh, *Encyclopaedic Historiography of Muslim World*, 374).

<sup>4</sup> Dāwūd Ibn Maḥmūd Ibn Muḥammad Qaysarī was the disciple of 'Abd al-Razzāq Kāshānī. His systematic philosophical introduction to *Fuṣūs al-Ḥikam* itself became the object of other commentaries. See Rama Sankar Yadav and B.v. Mandal, *Global Encyclopedia of Education*, ed. N. K. Singh, Global Vision Publishing Ho., 2007), 1:121).

<sup>5</sup> Al-Qaysarī, *Sharḥ Fuṣūs al-Ḥikam*, 4.

<sup>6</sup> Seyyid Muḥsin 'Āmilī (Born 1905 in Iran) was one of *Shī'ah* Scholars, whose important book is *A'yān al-Shī'ah* in 55 volumes, which is an Encyclopedia of famous *Shī'ite* men as explanation of Imamiyyah Teaching (See: Haytham Amin, *Sīrah al-Seyyid Muḥsin al-Amīn* (Qum: Dār al-Najm al-Jadīd, 2000).

<sup>7</sup> 'Abbas Qumī known as *Muḥaddith Qumī* was born in 1915 in Qum/ Iran. His famous work is *Mafātiḥ al-Jinān*, which is a collection of Imamiyyah *Ḥadīth* about praying. See Shireen Mahdavi, *For God, Mammon and Country: a*

There are three other great masters, who possess the same name as ‘Abd al-Razzāq, which may be confused with Kāshānī. First, Abū Faḍl Kāmāl al-Dīn Abd al-Razzāq Ibn Aḥmad, one of his contemporary Sufi, who was known as Ibn al-Fūwaṭī al-Shaybānī (d. 723/1323),<sup>9</sup> the author of *Majma‘ al-Ādāb Fī Mu‘jam al-Alqāb*. The second is Kāmāl al-Dīn Abd al-Razzāq Ibn Ishāq Samarqandī (d. 887/1482),<sup>10</sup> the author of *Maṭla‘ Sa‘dīn wa Majma‘ Bahrayn*. The third one is ‘Izz al-Dīn Maḥmūd Kāshānī (d. 735/1335), the author of *Miṣbāḥ al-Hidāyah wa Miftāḥ al-Kifāyah* and *Kashf al-Wujūh al-Ghar lī Ma‘ānī Naẓm al-Dur*.

The beginning of the second half of the fourteenth century, when Kāshānī started his education, was synchronized with the Mongol’s reign. Before then, Persia, Iraq, Syria and Asia Minor were the home of culture and education. There were hundreds of schools in Hirārt, Nayshābūr, Iṣfahān, Baṣrah and Baghdād, but after the Mongol’s devastation, these centers were completely destroyed. Most masters and students were killed or forced to leave these centers. And, even if some of them remained, they lost their previous glory and importance.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, Kāshānī spent his entire life in insecure times, with ravaging of Chinggis relatives. It was in this period that Kāshānī studied the traditional religious science. Unfortunately, we do not have much information about him in this period, but according to his letter to ‘Alā’ al-

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*Nineteenth Century Persian Merchant*, Hāj Muḥammad Ḥassan Amīn al-Zarb (N.pl.: Westview Press, 1999), 259.

<sup>8</sup> Al-Qayṣarī, *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-Hikam*, 4; Abd al-Razzāq Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Ṣūfiyyah* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1984), 31-32.

<sup>9</sup> Muḥammad ibn Shākir, *Fawāt al-Wafiyāt* (Beirut: Dār-e Ṣār, 1974), 1:272; Shihāb al-Dīn Abī al-Falāḥ, *Shadahrāt al-Dhahab fī Akhbār Man Dhahab* (Beirut: Dār Ibn kathīr, 1986), 6:60; Khayr al-Dīn Zereklī, *al-‘Ālām* (Beirut: Dār al-‘Ilm lil Malāyīn, 1986), 3:349; Āmilī, Muḥsin Amīn, *A‘yān al-Shī‘ah* (Beirut: Dār al-Ta‘ārruf lil Maṭbū‘āt, 1983), 8:5.

<sup>10</sup> He is the author of *Maṭla‘ Sa‘dīn wa Majma‘ Bahrayn*, an important historical source about the Mongol and Taymurid’s period. There are three valid prescriptions available in library of Iran and Turkey. See ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn Zarrin Kūb, *Dunbālah-ī Justijū-iy Dār Taṣawwuf Iran* (Tehran: Amir kabir, 2000), 49.

<sup>11</sup> ‘Aṭā Mulk Ibn Muḥammad Jūwaynī, *Tārīkh-e Jahāngushā* (Tehran: Ferdaws, 2007), 1:139; Muḥammad Qāsim Hindūshāh Istarābādī, *Tārīkh-e Fereshteh* (Tehran: Anjuman Āthār wa Maḥākhir Farhangī, 2010), 121; George Saliba, *Islamic Science and Making of the European Renaissance* (USA: MIT Press, 2007), 236-243.

Dawlah Simnānī, we can assume that he would have been an expertise in jurisprudence (*Fiqh*), *Ḥadīth*, Qurān interpretation (*Tafsīr*, Theology, Knowledge of Courtesy and Wisdom<sup>12</sup>). His *Al-Sawānīh al-Ghaybiyyah* is proof of his proficiency in ‘Arabic literature. In addition, his treatise *Mabda’ wa Ma’ād* is a bare sample of his widespread knowledge of *Ḥadīth*. Hence, his disciple, Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī called him “Master of Scholars” and Ḥaydar Āmulī (d. after 782/1380)<sup>13</sup> described him as “The Greatest Master and Sea of Middling (*al-Mūlī al-‘Aẓam wa al-Baḥr al-Khaḍm*) also positioning him at the level of Imām Fakhr Rāzī (d. 606/1209),<sup>14</sup> Khawjah Nāṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī (d. 672/1273),<sup>15</sup> al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) and Avicenna (d. 428/1037).<sup>16</sup> According to Jāmī, he is the one, who possesses both inward and outward knowledge.<sup>17</sup>

According to Kāshānī’s notes, some of the Sufī masters played important roles in his life: Sharaf al-Dīn Ibrāhīm Ibn Ṣadr al-Dīn Rūzbahān (d. 685/1286), Nūr al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Isfarāyenī (d. ca. 698/1299) and Nūr al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Ṣamad Ibn ‘Alī Iṣfahānī Naṭanzī (d. 699/1300) and Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Aḥmad al-Ḥakīm Kīshī (d. 694/1295).<sup>18</sup>

<sup>12</sup> See Kāshānī’s first letter to ‘Alā’ al-Dawlah Simnānī in Majid Hādizādeh, *Majmū’ah Rasā’il* (Tehran: Mirāth Maktūb, 2000).

<sup>13</sup> He was the Persian jurist and Sufī, who was follower of Kubrawiyyah Order. He tried to establish that Shi’ism and genuine Sufim come from the same source and basic origin. See *Sufism, an Entry to Encyclopaedia of the World of Islam*, ed. Ghulām ‘Ali Haddād ‘Ādil, Muḥammad Jafar and Rād Tāro (UK: EWI Press, 2012), 55.

<sup>14</sup> Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad Ibn ‘Umar Ibn Ḥusayn Ibn Ḥasan Ibn Alī Ṭabaristānī Rāzī, was a well-known Persian Sunni Muslim, theologian and philosopher. He also wrote on medicines, physics, astrology, literature, history and law. See N. Hanif, *Biographical Encyclopaedia of Sufis: Central Asia and Middle East* (New Delhi: Sarup & Sons, 2002), 2:372).

<sup>15</sup> Khawjah Muḥammad Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Ḥasan Ṭūsī better known as Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī was a Persian polymath and prolific writer, an astronomer, biologist, chemist, mathematician, philosopher, physician, physicist, scientist, theologian. The Muslim scholar Ibn Khaldun (1332–1406) considered him to be the greatest of the later Persian scholars. See: *The Cambridge History of Iran*, ed. J. A. Boyle (4<sup>th</sup> ed., Cambridge UK: University press, n.d.), 5:620.

<sup>16</sup> Ḥaydar Āmulī, *Jamī’ al-Asrār wa Manba’ al-Anwār* (Tehran: Hermes, 2008), 498.

<sup>17</sup> Nūr al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī, *Nafahāt al-Uns min Ḥaḍarāt al-Quds* (Tehran: Sa’dī, 1988), 482.

<sup>18</sup> Pierre Lory, *Les Commentoires esoteriques du Quran*, 234.

The most life of Kāshānī spends to join acompany Nūr al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Ṣamad Naṭanzī and Shams al-Dīn Kishī instead of traveling. He himself was an experienced master of lots of students and taught the mysterious text like *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*. One of his prominent students, Dāwud Qaysarī (d. 751/1350) reportet: “As I joined to my master, al-Qāsānī, a group of my brothers was learning about the mysterious knowledge about the beauty (*al-Jamāl*) and glory (*al-Jalāl*) of God through reading *Fuṣū al-Ḥikam* by him.”<sup>19</sup>

Al-Qaysarī, whose commentary on *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*<sup>20</sup> is the most widely read commentary in the eastern land of Islam,<sup>21</sup> undoubtedly, learned *Fusūs* by Kāshānī.<sup>22</sup>

Kāshānī at the late of his life had a journey to Sulṭānyyah, where he decided to contact A’lā al-Dawlah Simnānī (d. 736/1336). According to Jāmī, Mir Iqbāl Sistānī accompanied Kāshānī in this journey and their discussion about the *Waḥdah al-Wujūd* gave him the idea to write a letter to Simnānī.<sup>23</sup> Their correspondences is related to the one of challenging and interesting debate about the conception of *Tawḥid*, according to theory of Ibn Arabī’s teaching, called *Waḥdah al-Wujūd*. These two letters are the representative of two different Schools of thought called *Waḥdah al-Wujūd* and *Waḥdah al-Shuhūd*, while they are based on the same principle Unity (*Waḥdah*). Kāshānī wrote these letters as he was setteled in kāshan.<sup>24</sup> Later, he decided to go to Naṭanz, where the journey of his education was started and his first master was rested in his tomb. That was the place, where he found his way for the first and rest for ever.

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<sup>19</sup> Al-Qaysarī, *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, 4.

<sup>20</sup> The important of his commentary is that the later Persian commentaries on *Fusūs* are based on his ‘Arabīc commentary. See Massood Alī Khan and Azhar Iqbāl, *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (N.pl.: Commonwealth Publisher, 2005), 274; Sankar Yadav and B. N. Mandal, *Global Encyclopedia of Education* (New Delhi: Global ublishsing House, 2007), 1:119)

<sup>21</sup> Seyyed Hossein Naṣr, *History of Islam* ( N.pl.: routledge, 1996), 518.

<sup>22</sup> William C. Chittik, *A Short Introduction to Sufism* (N.pl.: Oneworld Publications, 2000).

<sup>23</sup> Nūr al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī, *Nafahāt al-Uns min Ḥaḍarāt al-Quds*, 482; ‘Alā al-Dawlah Simnānī, *al-‘Urwah lī Ahl al-Khalwah wa al-Jilwah* (Tehran: Mawlā, 1984), 46.

<sup>24</sup> ‘Alā al-Dawlah Simnānī, *al-‘Urwah lī Ahl al-Khalwah wa al-Jilwah* 488.

### **Kāshānī on the State of *al-Karīm* and *al-Qādīr***

The prominent trait of Kāshānī, is his courtesy to his masters and his effort to exonerate some of his contemporary scholars from blasphemous accusations. In addition, his tolerant and gentle approach toward his opponents shows his high spiritual stage in the spiritual path. This characteristic earned him the tendency and cooperation of minister, Khawjah Ghiyāth al-Dīn Muḥammad (d. 736/1336),<sup>25</sup> which depicts his respectful place and influence in Mongol government.<sup>26</sup>

He clearly speaks about two spiritual stages, which he attained during his life: *al-Karīm* and *al-Qādīr*. As he explained about “*al-‘Ibādah*” in *Laṭāif al- A’lām fī Ishārāt ahl al-Ilhām*, when the term slave (‘*Abd*) is added to one of God’s attributions. It means that this attribution is completely manifested in the slave.<sup>27</sup> According to Kāshānī’ point of view, ‘*Abd Allāh* is a slave of God, who manifested the name ‘*Abd*, in other words, he is an image of all God’s names and attributes, because he attained the ultimate stage of illumination, which is the most complete expression of God’s attributes. Hence, he has the high rank among creatures and serves God in the complete form of slavery. This stage, certainly, belongs to Prophet Mohammad (p.b.u.h).<sup>28</sup>

However, Kāshānī was able to manifest two names of God: *al-Karīm* and *al-Qādīr*. *Al-Karīm* is one of God’s names. Arabs call a person *Karīm*, who forgives the guilty and is kind to misbehavers.<sup>29</sup> According to Kāshānī, *al-Karīm* is a stage, in which God purifies the believer from all moral failure and gifted him ethical adornment. He is aware of God as generous and merciful and hopes for God’s forgiveness. In his eyes, people’s sins are worthless against the forgiveness of God. Moreover; he is aware of his stage and does not exceed his limit. He knows that the original owner is God and everything he has is a gift from Him;

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<sup>25</sup> The minister of Abū Said Ilkhān Mongol (1317-1336)

<sup>26</sup> Kamāl al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Razzāq Kāshānī, *Sharḥ Manāzil al-Sāerīn* (Beirut: Dār al-Muḥtaba lil Nashr wa al-Tawzī’, 1995), 2.

<sup>27</sup> Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al- Ṣūfiyyah*, ed. ‘Abd al-‘āl Sharīf (Cairo: Dār al-Manār, 1992), 124

<sup>28</sup> Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al- Ṣūfiyyah*, 126.

<sup>29</sup> Simnānī, *Rawḥ al-Arwāḥ fī Sharḥ Asmā’ al-Mulk al-Fattāḥ* (N.pl.: n.pb., n.d.), 367.

hence, he shares his assets with other people and forgives their failures.<sup>30</sup> He wrote:

“The whole matter is that I am your slave,  
The slave of a generous would never be mistreated,  
It is true that I committed many sins,  
But forgiveness is a custom of generous”<sup>31</sup>

In his point of view, *Abd al-Qādir* is a person, who manifests the name *al-Qādir*. He observes God’s mighty anywhere and God’s power is beyond others. Therefore he argued:

“... This slave (*‘Abd al-Qādir*) strongly believes the strength of God’s assistance to creations; therefore, he finds the mortality of himself and the humility and worthless of stage of believers; as he saw the power of God existing in everything, he finds himself more needful than the slightest person”<sup>32</sup>.

He is aware that the entire mighty belong to God and His might covers all of creation. All actions and reactions are the manifestation of His mighty and nothing is beyond it; therefore, he portrayed God’s power that nothing can be a barrier to Him from doing the right thing. On the other hand, he finds himself a humble and needful person and subsequently has understanding and tolerance towards his opponents. He wrote about the stage of *al-Qādir*:

“I am slave to the power of Allāh,  
When it appears in the action of resident,  
Hence, I am characterized by humiliation and disability,  
Needful of the slightest being”<sup>33</sup>

According to Sufis, the supreme ethics is attainable by gaining these two stages. Kāshānī’s conduct against mistreatment of his opponents shows us the manifestation of these two ethics in his personality. For example, ‘Alā al-Dawlah Simnānī excommunicated him and claimed that he is far of pure food and right saying; however, Kāshānī wrote him:

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<sup>30</sup> Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al- Ṣūfiyyah*, p. 133-134.

<sup>31</sup> Kāshānī, *Laṭāif al-A’lām fī Ishārāt al-Ilhām* (Tehran: Mirāth Maktūb, 2001), 505.

<sup>32</sup> Kāshānī, *Laṭāif al-A’lām fī Ishārāt al-Ilhām*, 512-513.

<sup>33</sup> Kāshānī, *Laṭāif al-A’lām fī Ishārāt al-Ilhām*, 512.

“... To the great Shaykh of Islam, guardian of *Sharī‘ah*, whose inner is illuminated of light of faith, and peripatetic are the resident of his glory marquee and ...”

Then, politely continues:

“... After praying for you, I should confess that I, as a poor Sufi, never mentioned your name without full of curtesy ... I thought you may not agree with it and it may bother you...”

So, it is clear that he did not lose his courtesy and tolerance against his opponents; since he is aware that every action is not out of his power and might; rather, he tried to answer with respect and cover, their mistakes. In one of his treatises about a famous person,<sup>34</sup> he wrote:

“... One of great master, a guardian of *Sharī‘ah*, whose piety is basis of his knowledge calls one of pervious scholars as unawareness and lost, and claimed that he deserves punishment because of doing some mistakes, while he was a knowledgeable scholar ...”<sup>35</sup>

The courtesy, tolerance, acceptance and interaction according to all groups of Sufis, theologian and jurisprudence, are the prominent qualities of his character.

Study Islamic literatures from fourteenth century onward, depict the polemical discussion around Ibn ‘Arabī’s legacy. It is not surprising, when Awḥid al-Dīn Kirmānī (d. 635/1238) was called innovative by Suhrawardī<sup>36</sup> or Simnānī, clearly, held no respect for Shaykh Akbar. In this regard, some Sufis took it upon themselves to protect his teaching *vis-à-vis* the controversial Muslim masters. In this regard, Kāshānī, as a commentator of Ibn ‘Arabī’s teachings, chose a different way from others. It is clear, who finds himself more needful than the slightest person, can never disrespect other masters.

### **The Place of Kāshānī in Sufism**

Kāshānī, certainly, is one of most prolific writers in the history of Sufism. Although he is mostly known as a commentator, in this part we will present those characteristic features of his writings that help to explain his great influence on Sufism, especially in

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<sup>34</sup> He might be Ibn ‘Arabī.

<sup>35</sup> Pierre Lory, *Ta‘wīlāt al-Quran*, Persian Translation, 229.

<sup>36</sup> ‘Umar ibn Muḥammad Suhrawardī, *Rashaf al-Naṣā‘ih al-Imāniyyah*, 5.



Persian Sufism, not only as a commentator, but also as an independent thinker.

### **Kāshānī as a Commentator**

In the Muslim world, Kāshānī's name is knotted to Ibn 'Arabī as a commentator of his teachings. His interpretations bewildered both his Muslim and non-Muslim readers. Although, Ibn 'Arabī's works has been interpreted by some other Sufis like Qūnawī (d. 673/1274), Tilmisānī (d. 690/1291), Jandī (d. 691/1292) and Furghānī (d. 699/1300), Kāshānī's commentaries possess a unique place among them.<sup>37</sup> In this regard, the Persian Professor Bidārfar has a comparison study between Kāshānī and Tilmisānī commentary on *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*.<sup>38</sup> However, Kāshānī's commentary is not as long as Tilmisānī, but it is a comprehensive interpretation written in simple literature. Actually, Kāshānī's style of classification is the prominent point, which differ his commentaries from others.<sup>39</sup>

It is worthy of mention that, almost one century after Ibn 'Arabī, the School of *Waḥdah al-Wujūd* was in ultimate widespread by his disciples, and its vocabulary and related subjects were fixed. Therefore, Kāshānī could use more creative allegories and spiritual terms without religious apologies, and he tried to regularize the metaphysical theories founded by Ibn Arabī.

In addition, Kāshānī's tendency to write simple and keeping away from complex literary expression, absorbed not only academics, but also a broad band of non-specialists, who were interested in Sufism.<sup>40</sup> Even contemporary scholars like Izutsu called Kāshānī the greatest figure emerging from Ibn Arabī's School. Current scholars recognize his commentary the second source after *Fuṣūṣ* and frequently refer to it in order to explain the Ibn Arabī's teaching.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Rama Sankar Yadav and B.V. Mandal, *Global Encyclopedia of Education*, ed. N. K. Singh, 119.

<sup>38</sup> Kāshānī, *Sharḥ Manāzil al-Sāerīn*, 32.

<sup>39</sup> Lory, *Persian Translation*, 34.

<sup>40</sup> Ḥaydar Āmūlī, *Naṣ al-Nuṣūṣ* (Tehran: Mū'assasah Mutālīāt wa Tahqīqāt Farhangī, 1992), 13; James Winston Morris, "Ibn 'Arabī and his Interpreters," *Institute of Islamic Studies* (Paris: n.pb., n.d.), 2-5.

<sup>41</sup> Toshihiko Izutsu, *Sufism and Taoism* (U.S: University of California Publ., 1983), 23.

Kāshānī's commentary is not limited only to *Fuṣūṣ*, his explanation on *Manāzil al-Sāerīn* of Khawjah Abd Allāh Anṣārī (d. 481 H) is also well known to all exponents. Shaykh Ḥaidar Āmulī (d. 787/1385)<sup>42</sup> wrote about it:

“... And there are some commentaries on *Manāzil al-Sāerīn*; however, the greatest and best investigation among them belongs to great master, ‘Abd al-Razzāq Kāshānī, the complete theist (*Mūwahḥid*), the king of Sufis, honor of nation, righteousness and religion.”<sup>43</sup>

Moreover, Kāshānī's extraordinary accuracy of text, solutions to problems, mastery of Persian-‘Arabīc literature and methods of writing; in addition to his spiritual experience, made his works unique. His teachings are, as well, taught in courses at some universities and traditional Islamic academics. Kāshānī himself said about his commentary:

“There was different version of *Manāzil al-Sāerīn*, in which the phrases were dissimilar. In some part of it distortion and wrong phrases were clearly observed, while some other phrases were misleading; therefor, it was difficult to distinguish the right sentence from the wrong. Until with God's help, I received a correct version confirmed by Shaykh's writing in 475H. So, I started to correct and safely interpret book; since, I felt in this way Shaykh has shown me his permission to work on his book.”<sup>44</sup>

Generally, the style and method of Kāshānī's commentaries made them an extraordinarily archetypal. His explanation of theoretical Sufism, showing the individual spiritual realization, can be used as an example by beginners on the spiritual path.

### **Kāshānī an Independent Author**

Kāshānī is a creative Sufi author making an archetype of guidance for better understanding of Sufis' idioms. Ibn al-Fuwaḥī expressed on his proficiency and skills of writing.<sup>45</sup> His book, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-*

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<sup>42</sup> Ḥaidar Āmulī was a *Shi'ite* Sufi, philosophers and an early representative of Persian Imamite theosophy and one of the most distinguished commentators of Ibn ‘Arabī, during the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>43</sup> Ḥaidar Āmulī, *Jāmī' al-Asrār wa Manba' al-Anwār* (2th ed., Qum: Markaz Mutālīāt wa Madārik Islāmī, 2009), 326.

<sup>44</sup> Kāshānī, *Sharḥ Manāzil al-Sāerīn*, 622.

<sup>45</sup> Kāshānī, *Sharḥ Manāzil al-Sāerīn*, 622.

*Ṣūfiyyah*, is a key guide for understanding the different stages of spritual path (*Sulūk*).<sup>46</sup> It is the comprehensive and most read work in Sufism. It contains 760 Sufi's technical terms.

As it was mentioned before, Kāshānī considered the heritage of two Sufi zones in order to give a comprehensive image of Sufism. He, however, went further and analyzed Sufi's origin in his work *Tuḥfah al- Ikhwān fī Khaṣāiṣ al-Fityān*. He found the origin of Sufism in *Futūwwah* (chivalry), which was initiated by Prophet Abraham. In this regard, he was more influenced by Khurāsān School; since chivalry was more considered and studied by Khurāsān's Sufis, such as Abd al-Raḥmān Sulamī and Shihāb al-Din Suhrawardī, than Sufis in Andalusia and Egypt.

On one hand, Kashānī used to be a disciple of Suhrawardiyyah School and familiar with theology and philosophy. His works, on the other hand, not only present the teaching of Ibn 'Arabī, but also reflect Suhrawardī philosophy. Although, in Kāshānī's cosmology, the trace of philosophy can be seen, yet it is different from Fārābi's and Aviceina's view. For example, from Kāshānī's cosmology standpoint, the intellect agent possesses the second stage of determination, descent, or first stage, after the presence of essence, while it has the tenth stage according to Fārābi's and Aviceina's point of view.<sup>47</sup>

In addition, Kāshānī's works are providing a set of spiritual worldview in the treatise of *Mabda' wa Ma'ād*.<sup>48</sup> He also has a comparative analysis to basics principle of religion and Sufism in his *Tashrīqāt* treatise.

Another prominent feature of Kāshānī is his efforts for strengthening the scientific principle of Sufism through its approximation with *Sharī'ah* and Quran. His remarkable esoteric interpretation *Ta'wilāt al-Qurān*, is a proof of this claim.<sup>49</sup>

Kāshānī's numerous compilations show his high grade knowledge; in addition, popularizing his writings depicts his importance place in history of Sufism. Because of his high degree knowledge and talent to organize difficult subjects and make them

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<sup>46</sup> Lory, Persian Translation, 34 34.

<sup>47</sup> Lory, Persian Translation, 41.

<sup>48</sup> The Origin and Resurrection

<sup>49</sup> Lory, Persian Translation, 6; N.K. Singh, *Global Encyclopedia of Islamic Mystic and Mysticism* (N.pl.: Global Vision, 2009), 1:119.

understandable for all classes of people, his students asked him to write a commentary on *Fuṣūṣ and Manāzil al-Sāerīn*.<sup>50</sup> In addition, due to extremely controversial arguments around origin (*mabda'*) and resurrection (*ma'ād*), some of his disciples and Governor asked him to write about it.<sup>51</sup> Similarly, his *al-Sawāniḥ al-Ghaybiyyah* was written in order to answer the questions of "People of Convent" (*Khānqāh*),<sup>52</sup> which contains his spiritual experiences.<sup>53</sup>

Despite of this fact that Kāshānī's works reflects Ibn Arabī's teachings, we can observe some small different views, which marks him as an independent thinker. For example, according to spiritual stages, Ibn Arabī believed in a stage above the ultimate honest (*Qurb*). This is a stage of immanency (*Qurbat*), of which the pervious Sufis were not aware. He allocated chapter 161 of *al-Futūḥāt al-Makiyyah* to this stage, which is a stage between truth and prophecy.<sup>54</sup> According to *'Awārif al-Ma'ārif*, the ultimate stage of spiritual stage is truth, so that even sometimes it is recognized as one of four basic principles of faith.<sup>55</sup> Sufis, usually, accept that the last stage of spiritual journey is behind the stage of prophecy. Kāshānī, indeed, speaks about truth in details and tells about different kinds of it in *Laṭā'if al-A'lām*.

Undoubtedly, after Ibn Arabī, Ghazālī and Sulamī, Kāshānī is one of the most influential writers in the history of Sufism. Jamī called him a great scholar, who gathered all inner and outward knowledge in himself.<sup>56</sup> Kāshānī's specific interpretation on School of *Waḥdah al-Wujūd* with the back ground of Suhrawardiyah Philosophy, including his personal spiritual experience, made him an independent Sufi author. The above

<sup>50</sup> Kāshānī, *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, p. 3.

<sup>51</sup> Ibn al-Fūwaṭī al-Shaybanī, *Majma' al-Ādāb fī Mu'jam al-Alqāb*, 4:181

<sup>52</sup> The Muslim covenant is called *Khānqāh*. See Duġan Kuban, *Muslim Religious Architecture: Development of Religious Architecture in Later Periods* (N.pl.: Brill, 1974), 3:37.

<sup>53</sup> Duġan Kuban, *Muslim Religious Architecture: Development of Religious Architecture in Later Periods*, 3:37.

<sup>54</sup> Ibn 'Arabī, *al-Futuḥāt al-Makiyyah* (Beirut: Dār Ṣār, 2010), 2:260; 'Umar ibn Muḥammad Suhrawardī, *'Awārif al-Ma'ārif* (N.pl.: n.pb., 2010), 10.

<sup>55</sup> Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamūyah, *Al-Miṣbāḥ Fī al-Taṣawwūf* (Tehran: Mawla', 1983), 94; Suhrawardī, *'Awārif al-Ma'ārif*, 532.

<sup>56</sup> Jāmī, *Nafahāt al-Uns min Ḥaḍarāt al-Quds*, 482.

features are enough to distinguish his works from others and make them always at the center of scholars' interest.

### **Kāshānī's Impact on Persian Sufism**

As previously mentioned, Kāshānī is one of the foremost and certainly one of the influential representatives of what may more rightfully be called School of *Waḥdah al-Wujūd*.<sup>57</sup> Through his commentaries and teachings this theory was promoted in the eastern Islamic world, especially in Persia. He is a central core of two main components of Sufism arising from different areas: First, is practical Sufism and spiritual rules from Khurāsān till Baghdād, which ultimately can be observed in *Manāzil al-Sāerīn* and *'Awārif al-Ma'ārif*. Second, is creation and explanation of delicate spiritual concepts by Ibn 'Arabī and his disciple Qūnawī from Andalusia and Egypt until Konya. Kāshānī's equal understanding of these two mystics' zones and assimilation of them has given a complete image of Sufism. Kashanī's commentary on Ibn Arabī's teaching was the starting point of further development of Ibn Arabī's teaching in Persian. This later appeared in the new spiritual movement in Persian Sufism through his indirect successors, like Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī (d.787/1385) and Ni'mat Allāh Walī (d. 834/1431), whose works frequently refer to Kāshānī and present the vitality and deep influence of him.

Among *Shi'ite* Imāmiyyah, Āmulī was especially important in bringing Ibn al-'Arabī's teaching into the mainstream of *Shi'ite* thought in Iran. He wrote enormous commentary on the *Fuṣūṣ*, called *Naṣṣ al-Nuṣūṣ* and edified the abstract of Kāshānī's *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Šūfiyyah*, which later was translated into Persian in detailed explanation. He investigated the meaning of the *Fuṣūṣ* on three levels: *Naql* (*Qurān* and *Ḥadīth*, as especial sources for *Shi'ite*), *Aql* (Theology and Philosophy), and *Kashf* (referring to his own experience).<sup>58</sup> In Āmulī point of view, the reality of Sufism and *Shi'ite* Imāmiyyah are the same and true *Shi'ite* is

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<sup>57</sup> James Winston Morris, "Ibn 'Arabī and his Interpreters," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 107 (1987); Part II-A originally appeared in JAOS, vol. 106 (1986); and Part I in JAOS, vol. 106 (1986).

<sup>58</sup> Āmulī, *Naṣṣ al-Nuṣūṣ*, ed. Henry Corbin and 'Uthmān Ṭismāil Yaḥyā (Tehran: Educational institute of France and Iran, 1969), 106-08.

Sufis; therefore, he recognizes the Imāmyyah Infallible leaders (*Imām*) as Sufi.<sup>59</sup>

It is worthy of mention that Persian commentaries on the *Fuṣūṣ* are frequently based on the ‘Arabīc commentary of Kāshānī. He taught *Fuṣūṣ* to Dāwūd Qayṣarī (d.751/1350), the author of dozens of works in ‘Arabīc and Persian. His systematic philosophical introduction to *Sharḥ al-Fuṣūṣ* itself became the object of later Persian commentaries. An approval for it is the first Persian commentary on *Fuṣūṣ*, *Nuṣūṣ al-Khuṣūṣ*, written by his student Bābā Rukn-al-Din Shīrāzī (d. 769/1368).<sup>60</sup>

The poet and Sufi master, Shah Ni‘mat-Allāh Walī, followed closely in the tracks of Kāshānī and Qayṣarī. In addition, of over one hundred treatises on theoretical and practical Sufism, which are directly rooted in *Waḥda al-Wujūd* School, he wrote *Risālah Ta‘rīfāt*, which is the Persian translation of Kāshānī’s *Iṣtilāḥāt al-Sūfiyyah*.<sup>61</sup>

In Persia, even some Sufi authors like ‘Alā’-al-Dawlah Simnānī (d. 736/1336), who had a critical view to Ibn al-‘Arabī’s world view, credited markedly from terminology established by Kāshānī and his immediate followers.<sup>62</sup> Sometimes Sufis did not take the criticisms of these authors too seriously. Typical are the remarks of Sayyid Ashraf Jahāngir Simnānī (d. 829/1426),<sup>63</sup> who studied with Semnānī but sided with Kāshānī in his defense of Ibn al-‘Arabī against Simnānī’s criticisms.<sup>64</sup> According to him, Simnānī had not correctly understood what Ibn al-‘Arabī was saying. Kāshānī might have the main role to change Simnānī’s opinion towards Ibn Arabī. However, Simnānī retracted his Idea about Ibn Arabī before his death and recognized him as “People of the

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<sup>59</sup> Muḥsin al-Amin al-Āmūlī, *A ‘yān al-Shī‘ah* (Beirut: Dār al-Ta‘arūf lil Maṭbūāt, 1982), 6: 273.

<sup>60</sup> Rukn al-Dīn Shīrāzī, *Nuṣūṣ al-Khuṣūṣ fī al-Tarjumah al-Fuṣūṣ* (Tehran: Rajab ‘Alī Mazlūmī Publ., 1980).

<sup>61</sup> Nūr al-Dīn Shāh Ni‘mat Allāh Walī, *Rasāil Shāh Ni‘mat Allāh Walī* (Tehran: Khānqāh Ni‘mat Allāh, 1978), 3.

<sup>62</sup> Herman Landolt, “Der Briefwechsel Zwischen Kāshānī und Simnānī über *Waḥda al-Wujūd*,” *Der Islam* 50 (1973), 93-111.

<sup>63</sup> Sayyid Ashraf Jahāngir Simnānī was one of famous Sufi in India and founder of Ashrafiyyah order, the suborder of Kubrawiyyah order. His important book is *Laṭāif Ashrafi*, which is collected by his disciple Nizām Ḥāji Yamanī.

<sup>64</sup> Hamid Maḥmūdīān, “*Waḥdah al-Shuhūd* in Simnānī’s point of view,” *Irfān*, no. 18, (1993), 187.

Right,” but remained constant against the theory of *Waḥdah al-Wujūd*.<sup>65</sup>

### Kāshānī's Works

There are more than forty treatises related to Kāshānī; however, for some of them is a question if they were really written by him, such as *al-Sirāj al-Wahhāj* and *Risālah Fī Badāyah Khalq Insān and al-Nuṣūṣ*. Despite of Kāshānī's numerous treatises in Arabic and Persian, he generally is famous because of his commentaries on *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* and *Manāzil al-Sāerīn* and *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Ṣūfiyyah*. In addition, his most read work is *Ta'wīlat al-Quran*, which is frequently published under the name of Ibn 'Arabī.

*Ta'wīlat al-Quran*, undoubtedly, is one of the valuable esoteric interpretations. It is in two volumes: The first volume begins with the commentary of *Sūrah Fātiḥah* till end of *Sūrah Kahf*, and the second volume contains commentaries of *Sūrah Maryam* untill end of the *Qurān*. His book is published under the title of the Ibn 'Arabī's commenraty on Quran (*Tafsīr Ibn 'Arabī*).<sup>66</sup> In this regard, the French scholar, Pierre Lorry discussed the questionable subject whether the author of *Ta'wīlat* is Kāshānī or Ibn Arabī? He argued that *Ta'wīlat* belongs to Kāshānī; since the most available manuscripts of *T'wīlat* belong to him.<sup>67</sup>

There are many argumentation that proofs *Ta'wīlat* belong to Kāshānī. In the introduction of *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Ṣūfiyyah*, Kāshānī mentioned to *Ta'wīlat al-Quran al-Karīm*:

“...After, I have finished *Sharḥ Manāzil al-Sāerīn* and *Sharḥ fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* and *Ta'wīlat al-Quran*, I started to write *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Ṣūfiyyah* ...”<sup>68</sup>

Kāshānī, sometimes, mentioned to his *Ta'wīlat* in *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*:

“...Who wants to confirm, can ckeck with the *Ta'wīlat al-Quran*, which I worte....”<sup>69</sup>

“... Who wants to study the truth of this story and its similar tales, revise it in *Ta'wīlat*, which I wrote about Quran...”<sup>70</sup>

<sup>65</sup> 'Alā' al-Dawlah Simnānī, *Chihil Majlis* (Tehran: Adib, 1985), 137 and 353.

<sup>66</sup> Ibn 'Arabī, *Tafsīr Ibn 'Arab* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2001).

<sup>67</sup> Lorry, *Ta'wīlat al-Quran*, 65-66.

<sup>68</sup> Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Ṣūfiyyah* (N.pl.: Dār al-Manār, 1992), 42.

<sup>69</sup> Kāshānī, *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, 309.

In addition in *Ta'wīlāt al-Qurān*, when Kāshānī explained the story about “Bilquis Throne,” cited from Ibn ‘Arabī.<sup>71</sup> On the other hand, in the second volume of *Ta'wīlāt*, the author by interpreting the verse thirty of *Sūrah al-Qaṣāṣ* called Nūr al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Ṣamad Naṭanzī (d. 699/1300) as his Shaykh or pole.<sup>72</sup> It is clear that Naṭanzī was one of the Suhrawardiyah patriarchs and Kāshānī’s master.<sup>73</sup> Plus the proof of other great masters like Shaykh Haydar Āmulī, Jāmī and Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Ḥamzah Fanārī (d. 834/1431),<sup>74</sup> we can conclude that *Ta'wīlāt al-Qurān*, without doubt, belongs to Kāshānī. Some of his most popular treatises are as follow:

### **The Arabic Composition:**

1. *Ta'wīlāt al-Qurān*
2. *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Sufiyyah*
3. *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*
4. *Sharḥ Manāzil al-Sāerīn*
5. *Sharḥ Mawāqī‘ al-Nujūm wa Maṭāli‘ Ahillah al-Asrār wa al-‘Ulūm*
6. *Risāla fī Ta'wīl Bismi Allāh*
7. *Risālah ‘Irfāniyyah*
8. *Risālah al-Asmāiyyah*
9. *Risālah Mu‘ādiyyah*
10. *Risālah fī Qadā’ wa Qadar*
11. *Al-Sunnat al-Sarrmadiyyah wa Ta‘īn-i Miqdār Ayyām al-Rubūbiyyah*
12. *Al-Sawāniḥ al-Ghaybiyyah wa al-Mawāhib al-Ayniyyah*
13. *Tazkirah al-Fawā’id*
14. *Rashaḥ al-Zulāl fī Sharḥ al-Alfāz al-Mutidāwilah Baina Arbāb al-Aẓwāq wa al-Aḥwāl*
15. *Tuḥfah al-Ikhwān Fī Khaṣāiṣ al-Fityān*

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<sup>70</sup> Kāshānī, *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, 320 and 206.

<sup>71</sup> Kāshānī, *Ta'wīlāt al-Qurān*, 2:110.

<sup>72</sup> Kāshānī, *Ta'wīlāt al-Qurān*, 228.

<sup>73</sup> Kāshānī, *Ta'wīlāt al-Qurān*, 37-38; Lory, *Ta'wīlāt al-Quran*, 66.

<sup>74</sup> Āmulī, *Jāmi‘ al-Asrār wa Manba‘ al-Anwār*, 50, 498; *Hamzah Fanārī, Miṣbah al-Uns Bayn al-Ma‘qūl wa al-Mashhūd* (Tehran: Mawla’, 1995), 279, 280, and 369; ‘Abd al-Rahām Jāmī, *Naqd al-Nuṣūṣ Fī Sharḥ Naqsh al-Fuṣūṣ*, (Tehran: Mu‘assisah Muṭāli‘āt wa Taḥqiqāt Farhangī, 1991), 103; Jāmī, *Nafaḥāt al-Uns Min Ḥaḍarāt al-Quds*, 383.



16. *Fawā'id al- Arabīyyah*
17. *Tafsīr Āyat al-Kursī*
18. *Tafsīr Sūrah al-Jum'ah*
19. *Fī Taḥqīq Ḥaqīqah al-Dhāt al-Aḥadyiah*
20. *Taḥqīq fī Ma'ānī Alif wa Lām*

### **The Persian Composition**

21. *Tuhfah al-Ikhwān fī Khaṣāiṣ al-Fityān* (Kashānī first wrote this treatise in Arabic, then according to the request of his students rewrote it into Persian).
22. *Fī Bidāyat Khalq al-Insān*
23. *Risālah Mukhtaṣar Dār Mabda' wa Ma'ād*
24. *Risālah Tashrīqāt*
25. *Risālah Dār Tafsīr Qwl al-Nabī: Three extermination and three salvation (Thalāth Muhlakāt wa Thalath Munjiyyāt)*
26. *Kāshānī's letter to Simanānī I*
27. *Kāshānī's letter to Simanānī II*
28. *Harmonized Persian Compilation*
29. *Fawā'id Farsī:*
  - i. *In the reality of gratitude*
  - ii. *On the question from the 'Alī Ibn abī Ṭālib about justice and liberality*
  - iii. *On the inner heterogeneity between the God's word before and after that*

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