

A HITHERTO UNKNOWN WORK ASCRIBED TO MĪR DĀMĀD

Saiyad Nizamuddin Ahmad

Was glänzt, ist für den Augenblick geboren,
Das Echte bleibt der Nachwelt unverloren.

Glitter is coined to meet the moment's rage;
The genuine lives on from age to age.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832)¹

The reign of the Ṣafawid Shāh °Abbās Ibn Muḥammad Khudābanda (ruled 995–1038/1588–1629)² witnessed a remarkable flourishing of high culture. Perhaps the most intellectually significant dimension of this cultural renaissance was in the realm of philosophical inquiry represented by a number of scholars who have been collectively designated as “the School of Iṣfahān.” This group of scholars included figures such as Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī (d. 1050/1640) (known as Mullā Ṣadrā), Qāḍī Sa°id al-Qummī (d. 1103/1691), Shaykh Bahā° al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Ḥusayn al-°Āmilī (d. 1030/1631), Mīr Findiriskī (d. 1050/1640), °Abd al-Razzāq al-Lāhijī (d. 1072/1661), Muḥammad Ibn Murtaḍā al-Kāshānī (known as Muḥsin al-Fayḍ) (d. 1091/1680), and the philosopher Mīr Burhān al-Dīn Muḥammad Bāqir (known as Mīr Dāmād) (d. 1041/1631).³

¹ *Goethe's Faust*, Trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Anchor Books, 1961), lines 73–74, 70–71.

² Clifford Edmund Bosworth, *The Islamic Dynasties* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 279. All subsequent references to regnal years will be based on this work.

³ On the School of Iṣfahān see Hamid Dabashi, “Mīr Dāmād and the Founding of the ‘School of Iṣfahān,’” in Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman, *The History of Islamic Philosophy*, 2 vols. (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 597–636; Seyyed Hossein Nasr, “The School of Iṣfahān,”

Mīr Dāmād, recognised as an eminent scholar in his own lifetime, came from a distinguished learned family. His maternal grandfather, °Alī Ibn Husayn Ibn °Abd al-°Alī al-Karakī (d. 940/1534), known as al-Muḥaqqiq al-Thānī and al-Muḥaqqiq al-Karakī, was a leading figure in legal studies and became a powerful cleric during the reign of Shāh Ṭahmāsp Ibn Ismā‘īl (ruled 930–984).⁴ Mīr Muḥammad Bāqir inherited the epithet “Dāmād,” which in Persian means son-in-law, from his father Mīr Shams al-Dīn who married the daughter of al-Muḥaqqiq al-Karakī and who thus became widely known as “the son-in-law” of the distinguished cleric.⁵ Mīr Dāmād was also a descendant of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ: Muḥammad Bāqir Ibn Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Maḥmūd Ibn °Abd al-Karīm Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Murtaḍā Ibn °Alī Ibn Jamāl al-Dīn Ibn Qawām al-Dīn Ibn °Abdillāh Ibn Ṣādiq Ibn Hāshim Ibn °Alī Ibn Mar‘ash Ibn °Ubaydillāh Ibn Aḥmad Ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Aṣghar Ibn °Alī Zayn al-°Ābidīn (d. 95/713) ﷺ Ibn al-Ḥusayn (d. 61/680) ﷺ Ibn °Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (40/661) ﷺ.⁶

in M. M. Sharif, *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, 2 vols. (Wiesbaden; Otto Harrassowitz, 1966) at 2: 914–922; Henry Corbin, *Histoire de la philosophie islamique* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1964), 462–465.

⁴ See Hossein Modarressi Ṭabāṭabā‘ī, *An Introduction to Shī‘ī Law* (London: Ithaca press, 1984), 50–51.

⁵ Hamid Dabashi, “Mīr Dāmād and the Founding of the ‘School of Isfahān’,” 1: 603.

⁶ al-Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Ḥusaynī al-Jalālī, *Fihris al-turāth*, 3 vols. (Chicago: The Open School, 1418–20/1998–2000), 2: 896. Hereinafter designated *FT*. For more on aspects of his life and thought, see Akbar Hādī, *Sharḥ-i ḥāl-i Mīr Dāmād wa Mīr Fındiriskī* (Isfahan: 1984); Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, *Muntakhabāt az āthār-i ḥukamā-yi ilāhī-yi Īrān az ‘aṣr-i Mīr Dāmād wa Mīr Fındiriskī tā Zamān-i Ḥāḍir* (Tehran and Paris: 1972); the various introductions in the critical edition of Mīr Dāmād’s *al-Qabasāt*, Eds. Mehdi Mohaghegh, Toshihiko Izutsu, °Alī Mūsawī Biḥbihānī, and Ibrāhīm Dībājī (Tehran: Institute of Islamic Studies, 1977); Andrew J. Newman, “Dāmād,” in *EIr* 6: 623–626; A. S. Bazmee Ansari, “al-Dāmād,” in *IEP* 2:103–104; and Henry Corbin, *En Islam iranien. Aspects spirituels et philosophiques*, 4 vols. (Paris: Éditions Galimard, 1972), 4: 9–53.