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Mullā Şadrā

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# The Nature and Significance of Mullā Ṣadrā's Qur'ānic Writings<sup>1</sup>

MOHAMMED RUSTOM

**I**t is fairly well-known among scholars of later Islamic philosophy that Mullā Ṣadrā wrote a number of works on the Qur'ān. These consist of some sixteen texts, thirteen of which are independent *tafsīrs* on select *sūras* and *āyas*, and three of which are compositions that deal with various theoretical aspects of the Qur'ān. Although attempts have been made in modern scholarship to describe each of Ṣadrā's Qur'ānic works, we still lack a comprehensive overview of their nature and significance.<sup>2</sup> The absence of a thorough presentation of Ṣadrā's Qur'ānic writings has, in turn, proven to be a serious stumbling-block in discerning his function as an exegete.<sup>3</sup> Given this lacuna in Ṣadrāian scholarship, this article offers a detailed outline of the content, structure, and scope of each of Ṣadrā's compositions on the Qur'ān. The material presented here not only broadens our understanding of the importance of Ṣadrā's Qur'ānic works, but also sets the stage for a more nuanced approach to the theoretical dimensions of his scriptural hermeneutics.<sup>4</sup>

1 Thanks go to Todd Lawson, Maria Subtelny, Sebastian Günther, Shafique Virani, John Walbridge, Sajjad Rizvi, and Caner Dagli.

2 The first such attempt in modern scholarship is to be found in the monumental *al-Dharī'a ilā taṣānīf al-shī'a* (Najaf, 1939–87) by Āqā Buzurg Ṭīhrānī (d. 1391/1970). These entries can be categorized as follows: (1) “basic *tafsīr* entries,” that is, individual entries which simply list the *tafsīrs* attributed to Ṣadrā (*Dharī'a*, 4:278–9, 20:76); (2) “isolated *tafsīr* entries,” which treat each *tafsīr* work individually (*Dharī'a*, 4:331, 334, 336–8, 340, 343–4; 15:252); and (3) “isolated non-*tafsīr* entries,” which treat Ṣadrā's other writings on the Qur'ān individually (*Dharī'a*, 2:39; 16:400; 19:62; 21:305, 337). The most recent description of Ṣadrā's Qur'ānic works is in Sajjad Rizvi, *Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī: His Life and Works and the Sources for Safavid Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 77–87.

3 For a critical appraisal of the scholarly literature devoted to Ṣadrā's writings on the Qur'ān, see Mohammed Rustom, “Approaching Mullā Ṣadrā as Scriptural Exegete: A Survey of Scholarship on His Quranic Works,” *Comparative Islamic Studies* 6, no. 1 (2008): 75–96.

4 For one such attempt, see Rustom, *The Triumph of Mercy: Philosophy and Scripture in Mullā Ṣadrā* (Albany: State University of New York Press, forthcoming),

In the annotated list below, I have divided Ṣadrā's Qur'ānic writings into four general categories: commentaries on individual *sūras*, commentaries on individual *āyas*, theoretical works on the Qur'ān, and Qur'ānic works of doubtful authenticity. The list is followed by an appendix that presents a tentative chronology of those works belonging to the first three categories. These titles are considered in relation to themselves and with respect to Ṣadrā's other datable, non-Qur'ānic writings.

### Commentaries on Individual *Sūras*

#### 1. TAFSĪR SŪRAT AL-FĀTIḤA<sup>5</sup>

This book is Ṣadrā's last complete commentary on a Qur'ānic *sūra*. Appended to the 180-page published edition of the *tafsīr* are the philosophical glosses of Mullā 'Alī Nūrī (d. 1246/1830),<sup>6</sup> a major follower of Ṣadrā's teachings during the Qajar period, and someone whose writings have served as important philosophical and gnostic texts within the Ṣadrīan tradition.<sup>7</sup>

In both its philosophical and mystical content, the *Tafsīr Sūrat al-fātiḥa* is arguably the most profound of Ṣadrā's writings on the Qur'ān, as he brings to bear, in his function as commentator on this *sūra*, the entire range of his learning, synthetic abilities, and original insights. This work demonstrates in remarkably lucid fashion the manner in which Ṣadrā addresses issues in ontology, cosmology, psychology, and eschatology in the language of myth and religious symbolism, closely following the work of Ibn 'Arabī (d. 638/1240).<sup>8</sup>

Among the salient aspects of the *Tafsīr Sūrat al-fātiḥa* are Ṣadrā's discussion of the cosmos and its contents as so many instantiations

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ch. 1.

5 Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-karīm*, ed. Muḥammad Khwājāwī (Qum: Intishārāt-i Bīdār, 1987–90), 1:1–183; *Majmū'at al-tafsīr*, ed. Aḥmad Shīrāzī (Tehran, lithograph, 1322 AH/1904), 2–41. On first mention of Ṣadrā's *tafsīrs*, where applicable, I provide the page numbers to both the printed and lithographed editions; subsequent references to the *tafsīr* work in question are to the printed edition only.

6 Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr*, 1:451–496.

7 For Mullā 'Alī Nūrī, see Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "The Metaphysics of Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī and Islamic Philosophy in Qajar Iran," in *Qajar Iran: Political, Social, and Cultural Change, 1800–1925*, ed. Edmund Bosworth and Carole Hillenbrand (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1983), 190.

8 Cf. the pertinent remarks in Christian Jambet, *L'acte d'être: la philosophie de la révélation chez Mollā Ṣadrā* (Paris: Fayard, 2002), 402.

or modes of God's self-praise or *ḥamd* (signaled by Q 1:2), and his extended treatment of the question of the nature of idol-worship and the Akbarian doctrine of the "God created in faiths" (*al-ilāh al-makhlūq fī l-ʿaqāʿid*). But the *Tafsīr Sūrat al-fātiḥa*'s most important feature is undoubtedly Ṣadrā's in-depth inquiry into the nature of God's all-pervading mercy in the afterlife and the resultant salvation of all human beings; an evaluation that is intimately related to the different paths taken by people during their earthly lives. Although Ṣadrā's *tafsīr* and non-*tafsīr* writings broach this and cognate topics, the *Tafsīr Sūrat al-fātiḥa* presents a unique soteriological argument, and one that is equally rooted in both Ṣadrā's ontology and the structure of the *Fātiḥa* itself.<sup>9</sup>

## 2. TAFSĪR SŪRAT AL-BAQARA<sup>10</sup>

This *tafsīr* work is likely Ṣadrā's last commentary proper.<sup>11</sup> Although incomplete (it stops at the end of the *sūra*'s sixty-fifth *āya*), it is his longest work dedicated to the Qurʾān, taking up over 1100 pages. Like the *Tafsīr Sūrat al-fātiḥa*, this commentary is accompanied by Mullā ʿAlī Nūrī's glosses.<sup>12</sup>

More than any of his other *tafsīrs*, Ṣadrā is, in a sense, the most "polemical" in this commentary: in a manner not unfamiliar to his method in several sections of the *Asfār*, he dedicates a good deal of time to refuting a number of the theological positions held by the Ashʿarī and Muʿtazilī schools, particularly with respect to questions related to God's foreordainment and the role of human free will, the "eternal" nature of suffering in Hell,<sup>13</sup> and the temporal origination of God's Speech (*kalām*).

Ṣadrā's concern with theology is evident in this *tafsīr* as well. He tackles, albeit briefly, topics such as the "faith" of Pharaoh<sup>14</sup> and

9 For an in-depth analysis of the sources, structure, and content of this work, see Rustom, *Triumph of Mercy*, chs. 2–5, 7.

10 Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr*, 1:187 to the end of vol. 3; *Majmūʿat*, 41–289. Selections are translated in Jambet, *Mort et résurrection en islam: L'au-delà selon Mullā Sadrā* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2008), 209–218.

11 At *Tafsīr*, 1:349, Ṣadrā explicitly makes mention of his *Tafsīr Sūrat al-fātiḥa*.

12 Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr*, 1:496–513; 2:377–413; 3:475–528.

13 Ṣadrā's view on the question of Hell's eternity finds its most complete expression in his *Tafsīr Sūrat al-fātiḥa*, for which, see Rustom, *Triumph of Mercy*, ch. 7.

14 For a helpful discussion of this problem in Islamic thought, see Eric Ormsby, "The Faith of Pharaoh: A Disputed Question in Islamic Theology," in *Reason and*



whether or not people will be able to see God in the next life. The most important discussion in terms of theology is the detailed section devoted to *īmān*, or “faith,” which forms part of his commentary on Q 2:4. After explaining the inadequacy of several of the definitions of *īmān*, he divides its contents into fairly standard and broad categories: sayings (*aqwāl*), states (*aḥwāl*), and actions (*ʿmāl*). What is interesting in his discussion here is how he relates these three categories to what he calls “the levels and ranks of faith” (*darājāt al-īmān wa-marātibuhu*). Here, he makes it clear that everyone is a person of faith (*muʿmin*). What distinguishes one from another is the level of his understanding (*fiqh*). It is to the degree of one’s understanding of his faith that he will be characterized as more or less faithful.

Important for Ṣadrā’s understanding of the Qurʾān is the section devoted to its inimitability (*iʿjāz al-qurʾān*), which he is prompted to discuss based on the challenge made in Q 2:23 to produce “a *sūra* like it” (*sūra min mithlihi*). Also, there is one particular section in this commentary in which Ṣadrā discusses the “detached letters” (*al-ḥurūf al-muqattaʿa*) of the Qurʾān, closely following Ibn Sinā’s (d. 428/1037) *al-Risāla al-nayrūziyya*.

### 3. TAFSĪR SŪRAT AL-SAJDA<sup>15</sup>

In the introduction to this commentary, Ṣadrā lists eight *tafsīrs* that he had previously written. Based on Sajjad Rizvi and Muḥsin Bīdārfar’s observations, we can date four of them.<sup>16</sup> These dates, along with some internal evidence in one of Ṣadrā’s *tafsīrs* (see the entry on the *Tafsīr Sūrat al-zilzāl* below), allow us to safely conclude that the earliest this *tafsīr* could have been written is 1037/1628. The latest it could have been written is 1042/1632, when Ṣadrā wrote his most important theoretical work on scripture, the *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*.

The *Tafsīr Sūrat al-sajda* is 135 pages long. It offers a commentary on each verse, and contains an introduction and conclusion, but lacks chapter divisions. More than anything else, it is structured as a running commentary on Q 32. Although there are subheadings

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*Inspiration in Islam: Theology, Philosophy, and Mysticism in Muslim Thought*, ed. Todd Lawson (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005), 471–489.

15 Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr*, 6:1–135/*Majmūʿat*, 375–457. Selections are translated in Jambet, *Mort et résurrection en islam*, 232–244.

16 Muḥsin Bīdārfar, “Taqdīm,” in Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr*, 1:110–11; Rizvi, *Mullā Ṣadrā Shirāzī*, 77–87. For Ṣadrā’s list, see *Tafsīr*, 6:6.

throughout the work, as is the case with a number of Ṣadrā's other *tafsīrs*, they do not seem to play a significant role or have any discernable linguistic/stylistic unity. Rather, they appear to simply divide Ṣadrā's arguments as he proceeds with his points.

Although Ṣadrā is concerned with questions of eschatology and soteriology in this work (and some of the discussions here may be the direct source of related sections in his *Tafsīr Sūrat al-fātiḥa*), his meditations on the nature of the Qur'ān and its mysterious letters are among its unique features. Several verses of the *Sūrat al-sajda* also prompt him to elaborate on his cosmology, especially as it relates to God's attributes and the temporal origination (*ḥudūth*) of the world—which leads to some interesting discussions on psychology, such as the nature of the heart and its relation to the divine Throne, the levels of the "Folk of God" (*darajāt ahl allāh*), and the function of the Perfect Man (*al-insān al-kāmil*). It can also be noted that when Ṣadrā discusses the Muḥammadan Light (*nūr Muḥammadī*) here, he seems to rely on his earlier *tafsīr* works, such as the *Tafsīr Āyat al-kursī* and the *Tafsīr Āyat al-nūr* (for which, see below).

#### 4. TAFSĪR SŪRAT YĀSĪN<sup>17</sup>

This commentary was written in 1030/1621. It is essential for dating Ṣadrā's other writings and for its incorporation of earlier materials, both by himself and the great Persian philosopher, Afḍal al-Dīn Kāshānī (d. 610/1213–1214), commonly known as Bābā Afḍal.<sup>18</sup> Over 450 pages in length and accompanied by Mullā 'Alī Nūrī's glosses,<sup>19</sup> there are no real divisions in this book, although it does have a number of generic subheadings. Unlike any of his other works on scripture, this text contains an interesting discussion on the value and merit of poetry; this occurs in the context of Ṣadrā's refutation of the view that the Qur'ān is merely a form of poetry.

By virtue of the eschatological content of the *sūra*, the most significant aspect of this *tafsīr* is its treatment of bodily resurrection and the states of the afterlife. Interestingly, the *Tafsīr Sūrat yāsīn* is

17 Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr*, 5:10–480/*Majmū'at*, 457–493.

18 See the entry on the *Tafsīr Sūrat al-jumu'a* below. For an introduction to Kāshānī's life and thought, as well as a translation of more than half of his published works, see William Chittick, *The Heart of Islamic Philosophy: The Quest for Self-Knowledge in the Writings of Afḍal al-Dīn Kāshānī* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

19 Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr*, 5:482–514.

more concerned with issues of eschatology than any of Ṣadrā's other books on the Qur'ān. He presents here his fully mature views on the modality of the afterlife with particular reference to the becoming of the soul and the forms it will experience in its posthumous states. Ṣadrā's psychology and eschatology as detailed here parallel some of his discussions in his *al-Mabda' wa-l-ma'ād* and his treatment of the states of the afterlife in the *Asfār*.

One of this *tafsīr*'s unique features is its heavy reliance upon the work of Ibn 'Arabī and his followers. Although this is clearly the case in Ṣadrā's other works, this particular text demonstrates the effectiveness of the formulations of the school of Ibn 'Arabī in discussing some of the most vexing and age-old philosophical problems. In particular, Ṣadrā attempts to address the Neoplatonic belief, discussed by Ibn Sīnā and defended by Suhrawardī (d. 587/1191), concerning the attachment of souls to celestial bodies in the afterlife in order to undergo physical punishment for sins committed on earth. A close reading of Ṣadrā's response to his predecessors reveals that, through the lens of Ibn 'Arabī and his followers, Mullā Ṣadrā offers a remarkable solution which is entirely consistent with his philosophical perspective.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, Ṣadrā's position here sheds a great deal of light on his understanding of the creative aspect of imagination in the next life.

##### 5. TAFSĪR SŪRAT AL-ḤADĪD<sup>21</sup>

This book was written around 1022/1613, and is Ṣadrā's first *tafsīr* work.<sup>22</sup> It is over 280 pages, and contains an introduction and a conclusion. Like the *Tafsīr Sūrat al-sajda*, it does not consist of chapters as such. Unlike the *Tafsīr Sūrat al-sajda*, however, it makes consistent use of subheadings throughout the work, each of which is referred to as an "unveiling" (*mukāshafa*). In its printed edition, Mullā 'Alī Nūrī's glosses are also appended to the text.<sup>23</sup>

20 The discussion is prompted by the famous *ḥadīth* of awakening. See Rustom, "Psychology, Eschatology, and Imagination in Mullā Ṣadrā Shirāzī's Commentary on the *Ḥadīth* of Awakening," *Islam and Science* 5, no. 1 (2007): 9–22.

21 Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr*, 6:140–327; *Majmū'at*, 518–565.

22 See Ṣadrā, *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-kāfi*, ed. Muḥammad Khwājawi (Tehran: Mu'assasa-yi Muṭāla'āt wa-Taḥqīqāt-i Farhangī, 1366Sh/1987), 3:116. The text in question makes it clear that Ṣadrā's *Tafsīr Āyat al-kursī* (a very early work) was written some time after his *Tafsīr Sūrat al-ḥadīd*.

23 Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr*, 6:331–89.

This commentary contains a fine example of how Ṣadrā's transcendent philosophy (*al-ḥikma al-muta'āliya*) relates to the Qur'ānic message. His doctrine of substantial motion is briefly discussed here, and is linked to his treatment of the increased levels of perception human beings experience in this world and in the next. Consequently, a good deal of this commentary is devoted to matters of psychology and eschatology.

Significantly, Ṣadrā draws on several well-known Qur'ānic symbols, such as the "preserved tablet" (*al-lawḥ al-maḥfūz*) and the "inscribed book" (*al-kitāb al-maṣṭūr*), to explain how the soul's descent into the world, its subsequent development and return to God, and God's foreordainment of its destiny tie into one another. Here, again, we clearly notice the influence of the school of Ibn 'Arabī upon Ṣadrā's formulations, especially with respect to his identification of the heart as the locus of the name Allāh, and his understanding of the function of the divine names in the *telos* of the cosmos.

#### 6. TAFSĪR SŪRAT AL-WĀQĪ'A<sup>24</sup>

The date of the composition of this work is not known, but we can certainly place it between 1030/1621 and some time before Ṣadrā penned his *Tafsīr Sūrat al-sajda*.<sup>25</sup> This *tafsīr* is over 120 pages and comes with an introduction, subheadings (but no chapter headings), and a conclusion. It is a straightforward running commentary on the *sūra*'s principle themes: the final day and the afterlife.

Ṣadrā makes it clear in his introduction that one cannot understand these eschatological realities without "tasting" (*dhawq*) and a heightened state of consciousness (*wijdān*). Consequently, this commentary contains fairly detailed discussions concerning the states of the grave, the resurrection, and the ranks of souls in the afterlife. As in a number of his other books, Ṣadrā states that the forms of knowledge souls will have in the next life will be commensurate with their levels of knowledge in this life. In his treatment of the function of imagination and its relation to the levels of being, Ṣadrā bases himself on Ibn 'Arabī's *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya* and *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*.<sup>26</sup>

24 Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr*, 7:8–134; *Majmū'at*, 495–518. Selections are translated in Jambet, *Mort et résurrection en islam*, 245–263.

25 At *Tafsīr* 7:93, Ṣadrā alludes to his *Tafsīr Sūrat yāsīn*, which was written in 1022/1621.

26 *Ibid.*, 7:36–7.

Perhaps the most interesting features of this commentary are Ṣadrā's interpretations of the many eschatological symbols mentioned in the *sūra*. In this sense, this work resembles sections of Ṣadrā's *Tafsīr Sūrat al-ḥadīd* and the later parts of his *Asrār al-āyāt*, another of his theoretical works on the Qur'ān.

#### 7. TAFSĪR SŪRAT AL-JUMU'Ā<sup>27</sup>

The exact date of this work's composition is not certain. Bīdārfar considers it to have been written between 1041/1631 and 1050/1640 (Ṣadrā's commonly acknowledged death date),<sup>28</sup> while Rizvi dates its composition between 1041/1631 and 1043–4/1634 (a year before Ṣadrā's newly proposed death date).<sup>29</sup> In the introduction to his translation of Ṣadrā's *Iksīr al-ʿarīfīn*, William Chittick argues that the *Iksīr*, itself a significant reworking of Bābā Afḍal's *Jāwidān-nāma*, was written in 1030/1621 or perhaps earlier, since the *Tafsīr Sūrat yāsīn*, definitively composed in 1030/1621, contains an expanded version of material already contained in the *Iksīr*. This leads Chittick to conclude that the *Iksīr* must have been written some time before the *Tafsīr Sūrat yāsīn*. This is significant, Chittick argues, because the *Iksīr* itself contains an expanded version of material from Ṣadrā's *Tafsīr Sūrat al-jumu'ā*.<sup>30</sup> If Chittick's observations are correct, the *Tafsīr Sūrat al-jumu'ā* would have to be placed before the *Iksīr* and thus in an earlier phase of Ṣadrā's career as opposed to a later phase. Bīdārfar and Rizvi, on the other hand, do not consider this particular *tafsīr* to be early, most likely because Ṣadrā does not mention it in the introduction to his *Tafsīr Sūrat al-sajda*. But there seems to be another good reason not to consider the *Tafsīr Sūrat al-jumu'ā* as an early work, namely Ṣadrā's explicit mention of his *Tafsīr Sūrat yāsīn* in the *Tafsīr Sūrat al-jumu'ā* itself.<sup>31</sup>

Ṣadrā's *Tafsīr Sūrat al-jumu'ā* is a complete commentary on this *sūra*, and is close to 200 pages in length. The commentary contains

27 Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr*, 7:136–305; *Majmū'at*, 565–589.

28 Bīdārfar, "Taḳdīm," 1:110.

29 Rizvi, *Mullā Ṣadrā Shirāzī*, 84. For Rizvi's argument in favor of Ṣadrā's earlier death date, see 28–30.

30 See Chittick, "Translator's Introduction," in Ṣadrā, *The Elixir of the Gnostics*, ed. and trans. William Chittick (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2003), xix–xx.

31 See Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr*, 7:218. Moreover, some other internal evidence seems to suggest that this book was written after the *Asfār* (see Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr*, 7:256), which was completed in 1037/1628 (Rizvi, *Mullā Ṣadrā Shirāzī*, 54).

an introduction, twelve chapters called “dawning places” (*maṭlaʿ*),<sup>32</sup> and a conclusion. Mullā ʿAlī Nūrī’s glosses are appended to the work.<sup>33</sup> Each of the *maṭlaʿ*s of *Tafsīr Sūrat al-jumuʿa* are centered around one verse of the *sūra*, the exception being the sixth *maṭlaʿ*, which contains comments on verses six and seven, and ninth and tenth *maṭlaʿ*, which, combined, do the same for verse ten. The chapters are composed of the generic subheadings characteristic of a number of Ṣadrā’s *tafsīrs*. Each *maṭlaʿ* generally contains several *ishrāqāt* (illuminations) and any one of a number of subheadings, with names such as “moonlight” (*nūr qamarī*), “earthly shadow” (*zill farshī*), “moon-shadow” (*zill qamarī*), and “throne-light” (*nūr ʿarshī*).

The opening lines of *Sūrat al-jumuʿa* say that *Whatever is in the heavens and the earth glorifies (yusabbiḥu) God*. This verse allows Ṣadrā to introduce the well-known distinction between necessary and contingent being, since the fact that all things glorify God is itself an indication that they are contingent. Yet not all existents are the same, as some are less dense than others by virtue of their detachment from matter. Thus, the more an existent is characterized by materiality the less intense its glorification of God, and the less it is characterized by materiality the more intense its glorification.

Although it may seem that this commentary deals with questions of ontology more than anything else,<sup>34</sup> this is only true with respect to the first *maṭlaʿ*. The remaining *maṭlaʿ*s discuss in some detail the divine wisdom behind God’s sending prophets to humankind, the nature of knowledge and wisdom, and the meaning of death and eschatology. As a corollary of the latter, some attention is paid to questions of psychology. Characteristic of some of his

32 Those familiar with the Sufi commentary tradition will immediately recognize the (Qurʾānic) term *maṭlaʿ* (97:5), since it functions as one of the “senses” of Sufi Qurʾānic exegesis. It can be translated in several ways: anagogic sense, lookout point, or transcendent perspective. The way Ṣadrā employs the term here indicates that we should understand it within the context of his treatment of hierarchies (both cosmological and psychological), which are developed throughout the *tafsīr* work. Thus, in this context, I have translated the term as “dawning place.” For a discussion of this term within the context of the Sufi Qurʾānic exegetical tradition, see Kristin Zahra Sands, *Ṣūfī Commentaries on the Qurʾān in Classical Islam* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 8–12.

33 Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr*, 7:446–67.

34 Cf. Ibrahim Kalin, “An Annotated Bibliography of the Works of Mullā Ṣadrā with a Brief Account of his Life,” *Islamic Studies* 42, no.1 (2003): 39; Rizvi, *Mullā Ṣadrā Shirāzī*, 84.

other writings, such as the *Sih asl*, Ṣadrā also spends a good deal of time contrasting people who love this world (especially worldly scholars) with those who love the next world.

This commentary's main area of focus is the "levels of faith" (*marātib al-īmān*), this is in keeping with Ṣadrā's pronouncements in his introduction to the text, where he states that the work contains "the mothers of the objectives of faith" (*ummahāt al-maqāṣid al-īmāniyya*).<sup>35</sup> Perhaps more than his other *tafsīrs*, in the *Tafsīr Sūrat al-jumu'a* Ṣadrā expands on that aspect of the religious life that complements faith, namely practice. Ṣadrā's concern with religious practice comes out best toward the end of the tenth *maṭla'*, where he dedicates a profound discussion to the "levels of invocation" or "remembrance" (*marātib al-dhikr*).

#### 8. TAFSĪR SŪRAT AL-ṬĀRIQ<sup>36</sup>

This is the second shortest of Ṣadrā's Qur'ān commentaries. It was composed in 1030/1621. Just over fifty pages in length, the *Tafsīr Sūrat al-ṭāriq* comes with an important introduction, several sub-headings with various titles, and a brief concluding paragraph. In his introduction, Ṣadrā's language betrays its indebtedness to the Sufi Qur'ānic exegetical tradition, as he speaks of his unveiling the "beauty of the brides" (*jamāl al-ʿarāʿis*) and "virgins" (*abkār*) of the Qur'ān's *sūras* and *āyas*.<sup>37</sup> He also alludes to the function of the bestowal of divine mercy in comprehending the Qur'ān.<sup>38</sup>

Thematically, the *Tafsīr Sūrat al-ṭāriq* is similar to parts of the *Tafsīr Sūrat al-wāqī'a*. The most interesting section of the commentary is its discussion of cosmology and how the existence of the heavens (*samā'*) mentioned in the opening verse of *Sūrat al-ṭāriq* point to the existence of God. Here Ṣadrā attempts to establish the contingency of the heavens, and, in doing so, goes on to show how that which is contingent necessarily points to that which is beyond itself, namely the Necessary (*al-wājib*). One aspect of this commentary not to be found in Ṣadrā's other *tafsīrs* is his treatment of the stages of man's development (prompted by verses six and seven of the *sūra*). This point is a perfect complement to Ṣadrā's doctrine

35 Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr*, 7:139.

36 Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr*, 7:308–59; *Majmū'at*, 589–598.

37 Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr*, 7:308.

38 *Ibid.*, 7:309.

of substantial motion (*al-ḥaraka al-jawhariyya*), although he does not explicitly draw the connection here.

9. TAFSĪR SŪRAT AL-AʿLĀ<sup>39</sup>

Like several of the other *tafsīrs* described above, this work was most likely written after 1022/1613, and certainly before the composition of Ṣadrā's *Tafsīr Sūrat al-sajda*. A relatively short treatise (less than fifty pages), the *Tafsīr Sūrat al-aʿlā* is the most structured of all of Ṣadrā's writings on the Qurʾān. It contains an introduction, seven chapters,<sup>40</sup> and a very short concluding paragraph. Each chapter is entitled *tasbiḥ* ("declaration of transcendence" or "glorification"), and each *tasbiḥ* is devoted to one or more of the *sūra*'s verses.

The *sūra* begins in the imperative, commanding readers to glorify the name of God (*sabbiḥ ism rabbika l-aʿlā*), and this is the reason Ṣadrā calls the chapters of his commentary *tasbiḥs*. He begins his commentary by explaining that the primary denotation (*al-maqṣūd al-aṣlī*) of the root *s.b.h.* is God's transcendence and exaltedness. Although the root denotes "glorification," it does so as a result of stating how other and far removed God is. Thus, each chapter begins with God's transcendence and then addresses a variety of issues, such as God's providence and solicitude for His creatures, His attributes, and the types of damnation and felicity people will experience in the afterlife.

10. TAFSĪR SŪRAT AL-ZILZĀL<sup>41</sup>

By far the most modest of Ṣadrā's commentaries on a Qurʾānic *sūra*—both in size and scope—this thirty-four page work contains a short introduction, generic subheadings, and a brief conclusion. We know that this *tafsīr* was written some time before 1042/1632, since Ṣadrā refers to it by name in his *Tafsīr Sūrat al-sajda*. And, more significantly, he explicitly mentions his famous *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya* in this *tafsīr*.<sup>42</sup> As Rizvi observes, the *Shawāhid* must have been completed before 1041/1631, since in this text Ṣadrā speaks of his esteemed teacher, Mīr Dāmād (d. 1041/1631), as still alive.<sup>43</sup> The *Shawāhid* is a mature work and was the subject of a number of

39 Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr*, 7:362–407; *Majmūʿat*, 598–607.

40 Cf. Kalin, "An Annotated Bibliography," 38; Rizvi, *Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī*, 85.

41 Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr*, 7:410–44; *Majmūʿat*, 607–613.

42 Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr*, 7:435.

43 Rizvi, *Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī*, 59.



important commentaries, the most significant of which is by the Qajar philosopher and follower of Ṣadrā, Mullā Hādī Sabziwārī (d. 1289/1873). According to Rizvi, the *Shawāhid* was completed between 1030/1621 and 1040/1630, but certainly before 1041/1631. Since the *Asfār* was completed in 1037/1628 and the *Shawāhid* was in all likelihood written after the *Asfār*'s completion, it would be safe to date the completion of the *Shawāhid* somewhere between 1037/1628 and 1041/1631. Since the *Tafsīr Sūrat al-zilzāl* mentions the *Shawāhid*, the earliest it could have been written is 1628. We can, therefore, locate the date of this *tafsīr*'s composition somewhere between 1037/1628 and 1041/1632.

There are a few instances in this *tafsīr* where Ṣadrā directly links the notion of "scripture" to his ontology and cosmology.<sup>44</sup> Some interesting points also emerge in his exposition of the nature of the scrolls (*ṣuḥuf*) of peoples' deeds which will be brought forth on the final day. Although this particular *sūra* does not mention these scrolls, its last two verses speak about people "seeing" their good and evil actions. The notion of "seeing" in the afterlife is therefore one of the major themes that runs through this commentary.

### Commentaries on Individual Āyas

#### 11. TAFSĪR ĀYAT AL-KURSĪ<sup>45</sup>

This work, which is over 300 pages long, was written around 1022/1613 and is thus one of Ṣadrā's earliest works devoted to the Qur'ān. Contrary to what the work's title indicates, it is not only a commentary on the Throne verse (Q 2:255). Half of the text is actually a commentary on the two verses that follow it. The book is divided into an introduction, twenty discussions (*maqāla*) with different generic titles, and a conclusion. The first eleven discussions are devoted to commenting on the Throne verse, discussions twelve to fifteen to Q 2:256, and discussions sixteen to twenty to Q 2:257. Like his *Tafsīr Sūrat al-baqara*, Ṣadrā's comments on the other two

44 For a helpful discussion of this phenomenon, see Shigeru Kamada, "Mullā Ṣadrā Between Mystical Philosophy and Qur'ān Interpretation through His Commentary on the 'Chapter of the Earthquake,'" *International Journal of Asian Studies* 2, no. 2 (2005): 275–289.

45 Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr*, 4:8–342/*Majmū'at*, 290–357. Selections are translated in Jambet, *Mort et résurrection en islam*, 264–285.

verses of this *sūra* also allow him to address issues related to the meaning of faith and unbelief.

The mention of “intercession” in Q 2:255, “the firm handle” (*al-<sup>c</sup>urwat al-wuthqā*) in Q 2:256, and God’s *walāya* in Q 2:257 prompts Ṣadrā to discuss the institution of the Imamate and its legitimacy, as well as the reality of “intercession” on the day of judgment, concerns that he does not display in any of his other *tafsīrs*.<sup>46</sup> It is difficult to determine why the distinctly “Shī‘ī” character of this book almost disappears by the time we reach Ṣadrā’s final *tafsīr*. At the same time, his last work on “scripture,” the incomplete *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-kāfi* (completed in 1043–4/1634), is just as Shī‘ī in nature as the *Tafsīr Āyat al-kursī*.

Ṣadrā also deals here with the nature of being, God’s mercy, and the divine names and attributes. Significantly, several key features of this work in matters concerning eschatology and soteriology, the significance of the *tahlīl* formula, and the nature of God’s essence and attributes, parallel or even correspond to sections of Ṣadrā’s *Tafsīr Sūrat al-fātiḥa*, and thus partly serve as one of this text’s main sources.

#### 12. TAFSĪR ĀYAT AL-NŪR<sup>47</sup>

Completed in 1030/1621, Ṣadrā’s extensive commentary on the light verse (slightly over eighty pages) contains an introduction, six sections (*fuṣūl*, often divided into subsections with various generic subtitles), and a concluding statement (*khātima wa-waṣīyya*). Of all of his works on the Qur’ān, this *tafsīr* has received the most attention in modern scholarship. There seems to be a good justification for this, since this particular *tafsīr* represents many of Ṣadrā’s central concerns as a philosopher/mystic commenting upon scripture.

46 One of the alternative titles of this work is *Tafsīr al-<sup>c</sup>urwat al-wuthqā*. This term may be linked with the intercession granted by the Imams and the well-known *ḥadīth* of the “ship of Noah” (*saḥīnat Nūḥ*). See Muḥammad Khwājawi’s introduction in Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr*, 4:5. This title (i.e., *Tafsīr al-<sup>c</sup>urwat al-wuthqā*) has at times been mistakenly attributed to Ṣadrā’s son. See Maṣūm ‘Alī Shāh, *Tarāṭīq al-ḥaqā’iq*, ed. Muḥammad Ja‘far Maḥjūb (Tehran: Kitābkhāna-yi Sanā‘ī, 1960), 1:182. ‘Abd al-Nabī Qazwīnī, *Tatmīm Amal al-āmīl*, ed. Sayyid Aḥmad Ḥusaynī (Qum: Maktabat Āyat Allāh Mar‘ashī, 1987), 51, seems to attribute this work to Ṣadrā’s son as well, but refers to it as *Tafsīr Āyat al-kursī*.

47 Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr*, 4:345–427/*Majmū‘at*, 358–375. Translated as *On the Hermeneutics of the Light Verse of the Qur’ān*, trans. Latimah Peerwani (London: ICAS Press, 2004).

Since there is a fairly long commentary tradition on the light verse, Ṣadrā draws on the commentaries by Ibn Sinā, Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210), and Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274). Apart from his citations from the Imams, he also demonstrates his familiarity with the sayings of the Sufis, citing figures such as Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728), Kharrāz (d. 286/899), Dhū l-Nūn (d. 245/860), Abū Yazīd Biṣṭāmī (d. 234/848 or 261/875), Shiblī (d. 334/946), and, indirectly, ʿAyn al-Quḍāt Hamadānī (d. 526/1131).<sup>48</sup>

As would be expected in this commentary, Ṣadrā clearly identifies light with being and brings it to bear upon the verse's pregnant symbology. This then allows him to relate the fundamentality of light and the verse's symbols to his psychology, cosmology, and anthropology. The nature and cosmic function of the Perfect Man is brought out particularly well here. Unlike Ṣadrā's other *tafsīrs*, there seems to be more emphasis in this text upon the question of self-knowledge, once again evincing the influence of the work of Bābā Afḍal.

13. TAFSĪR QUR'ĀN 27:88<sup>49</sup>

This three-page, incomplete commentary on Q 27:88, *And you look at the mountains, deeming them to be still . . .*, seems to have first been attributed to Ṣadrā by Āqā Buzurg.<sup>50</sup> It might be best to place this work at a very early period in Ṣadrā's career because of its distinctly Shī'ī undertones.<sup>51</sup> Assuming that this treatise is an early work, it might be a good example of what Ṣadrā had in mind when he spoke of his "miscellaneous writings" (*mutafarraqāt*) on the Qur'ān, and

48 For discussions of Ṣadrā's relationship to Sufism, see Carl Ernst, "Sufism and Philosophy in Mullā Ṣadrā," in *Mullā Ṣadrā and Transcendent Philosophy (Islam-West Philosophical Dialogue: The Papers Presented at the World Congress on Mullā Ṣadrā, May, 1999, Tehran)* (Tehran: SIPRI, 2001), 1:173–92; Janis Ešots, "Mullā Ṣadrā's Teaching on *Wujūd*: A Synthesis of Philosophy and Mysticism" (PhD diss., Tallinn University, 2007).

49 Ṣadrā, *Majmū'at*, 614–616.

50 See Āqā Buzurg, *Dharī'a*, 4:278.

51 In two places, the text mentions the *tafsīr* of a certain "ʿAlī b. Ibrāhīm," which is most likely a reference to the important early Shī'ī Qur'ān commentator, al-Qummī (d. 307/919). Ṣadrā also makes a somewhat opaque reference to the "*shiqshiqiyya*," which he appears to link to the "people of intelligence" (*ahl al-fatāna*), from whom the reality of the final hour is not hidden. See Ṣadrā, *Majmū'at*, 615. To readers familiar with the *Nahj al-balāgha*, the term *shiqshiqiyya* evokes the book's famous third sermon.

which he distinguished from his more complete *tafsirs*.<sup>52</sup> Indeed, the work is “scattered” in that it reads like a set of stray reflections on Q 27:88. In terms of both style and content, this text resembles Ṣadrā’s other *tafsirs*, and so there is no good reason to assume that he is not its author, especially since the treatise clearly alludes to (but does not develop) Ṣadrā’s doctrine of substantial motion.

### Theoretical Works on the Qurʾān

#### 14. MAFĀTĪḤ AL-GHAYB<sup>53</sup>

In the final phase of Ṣadrā’s career, his writings on the Qurʾān took on a slightly different focus. Whereas before 1041/1631 he had written a number of independent commentaries on *sūras* and *āyas*, from 1041/1631 to the end of his life he began to write books that deal with a variety of hermeneutical questions and themes related to the Qurʾān. This shift in focus is best evidenced in the *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb* (cf. Q 6:59) written in 1042/1632.

It is not quite clear why Ṣadrā did not devote a treatise to independent questions concerning the Qurʾān until a much later date in his intellectual life. It would be incorrect to say that the *Mafātīḥ* was written after Ṣadrā’s intellectual perspective had crystallized, since his first *tafsir* work is quite mature, and was completed a considerable time after the commencement of the *Aṣfār*. It would also be incorrect to say that Ṣadrā wrote the *Mafātīḥ* as an “introduction” to his Qurʾān commentaries, since there is little evidence in the *Mafātīḥ* itself that suggests this. All that we can say with certainty is that, after having already written over ten *tafsirs*, Ṣadrā’s perspective deepened by the time he penned the *Mafātīḥ*, and he was thus in a better position to address the general hermeneutical questions and important themes related to the Qurʾān. Thus, the *Mafātīḥ* can be said to present the epitome of Ṣadrā’s hermeneutical approach to the Qurʾān.<sup>54</sup>

The published version of the *Mafātīḥ* is over 700 pages and is accompanied by Mullā ʿAlī Nūrī’s extensive glosses.<sup>55</sup> The book contains an important introduction and twenty chapters or “keys”

52 See Ṣadrā, *Tafsir*, 6:6 and above.

53 Ṣadrā, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, ed. Muḥammad Khwājāwī (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Tārīkh al-ʿArabī, 2002), 75–782.

54 See Rustom, *Triumph of Mercy*, ch. 1.

55 Ṣadrā, *Mafātīḥ*, 787–881.

(*mafātīh*), the first ten of which comprise part one, and the last ten of which comprise part two. Each chapter consists of various subtitles, all of which have specific titles.

Technically speaking, the *Mafātīh* is not a work on the Qurʾān or on Qurʾānic hermeneutics, since only the first two *miftāḥ*s are concerned with the Qurʾān as such. *Miftāḥ* 1 (which is a significantly expanded discussion of several sections of Ṣadrā's *Asfār* and, to a lesser extent, parts of his *Tafsīr Sūrat al-sajda*) and *miftāḥ* 2 inform the remaining eighteen *miftāḥ*s in such a way that, without them, understanding how the *Mafātīh* in its entirety is meant to outline Ṣadrā's hermeneutics is impossible. Thus, *miftāḥ* 4, which concerns the different types of "inspiration" (*ilhām*) a person may receive, cannot, in and of itself, function as an outline of Ṣadrā's hermeneutics, but it does inform what Ṣadrā says in *miftāḥ* 1, where he discusses "revelation" (*waḥy*). This means that the book's chapters beyond *miftāḥ* 2—dealing as they do with such topics as the nature of knowledge, angelology, eschatology, the creation of the world, and wayfaring on the path to God—do not allow one to abstract Ṣadrā's hermeneutical theory proper. They function as practical applications of the theoretical considerations laid out in *miftāḥ* 1 and *miftāḥ* 2, or, in rare cases, elaborate upon some of the ideas discussed in them. From this perspective, those sections in *miftāḥ*s 3–20, where Ṣadrā deals with the Qurʾān, resemble his reflections on its verses to be found in his *tafsīr* and non-*tafsīr* works.

15. *ASRĀR AL-ĀYĀT WA-ANWĀR AL-BAYYINĀT*<sup>56</sup>

The *Asrār al-āyāt* was written during the final phase of Ṣadrā's career. It is over 200 pages in length, while Mullā ʿAlī Nūrī's glosses are longer than the book itself.<sup>57</sup> The *Asrār* consists of an introduction and three sections (*ṭaraf*). Each section is subdivided into several subsections known as "places of witnessing" (*mashhad*), each of which contains several principles (*qāʿida*). The scope of this work is vast, for in it Ṣadrā discusses a wide range of theological and philosophical topics, often drawing upon verses of the Qurʾān in his discussions.

56 Ṣadrā, *Asrār al-āyāt wa-anwār al-bayyināt*, ed. S. M. Mūsawī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Ḥikmat, 1385Sh/2006).

57 *Ibid.*, 223–522.

The *Asrār* deals with various philosophical and mystical issues: the path of the wayfarers to God and the method of those who are “firmly rooted in knowledge” (an allusion to Q 3:7), proofs for God’s existence, the nature of the Supreme Name (*al-ism al-‘aẓam*) and its locus of manifestation (*mazhar*, i.e., the Perfect Man), the Muḥammadan Reality, the temporal origination of the world, meditations on the transience of this worldly life, and eschatology. In the *Asrār*, Ṣadrā also discusses the names and qualities of the Qurʾān, the difference between God’s speech and His book, the modality of revelation to the prophets, the nature of the divine book, God’s address (*khiṭāb*) to His creatures, and the “Perfect Words” (*al-kalimāt al-tāmmāt*) referred to in a famous *ḥadīth*.

16. MUTASHĀBIHĀT AL-QURʾĀN<sup>58</sup>

Although we do not have a date of composition for this short treatise on the “ambiguous” verses of the Qurʾān, it may have been written after the *Mafātīḥ*, since parts of the treatise seem to expand on shorter discussions in corresponding sections of the *Mafātīḥ*.<sup>59</sup> The treatise itself consists of an introduction and five chapters (*fuṣūl*), and is no more than thirty pages long.

Ṣadrā begins this text by summarizing the problem of the ambiguous verses and briefly highlighting the views of his predecessors. Here, he charges a number of Qurʾān commentators’ interpretations of these verses as being nothing more than sophistry. Ṣadrā then launches an attack on the interpretations of scripture carried out by “the deniers of the divine attributes” (*ahl al-taʿṭīl*). After clearing the ground, so to speak, he moves on to his own treatment of the ambiguous verses, discussing the nature of metaphor and explaining how unveiling (*kashf*) functions in the interpretation of these verses. Ṣadrā is careful to tell his readers that not all verses that cannot be understood rationally are to be interpreted metaphorically. It is

58 Ṣadrā, *Sih risāla-yi falsafī*, ed. Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (Tehran: Markazī-yi Intishārāt-i Daftar-i Tablighāt-i Islāmī, 1379 Sh/2000), 257–284. A translation of this work can be found in David Dakake, “Defining Ambiguity: Early and Classical Commentary on the *Mutashābih* Verses of the Qurʾān” (PhD diss., Temple University, in progress).

59 Cf. Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, “*Muqaddima-yi muṣaḥḥih*,” 77. Āshtiyānī’s glosses to this text, which are to be found in Ṣadrā, *Sih risāla*, 285–310, mainly consist of those excerpts from the *Mafātīḥ* that discuss the Qurʾān’s *mutashābih* verses.

precisely through “unveiling” that one can come to know the reality of those Qurʾānic passages that seem to defy reason.

### Qurʾānic Works of Doubtful Authenticity

#### 17–19. TAFSĪRS SŪRAT YŪSŪF, ṬALĀQ, AND QADR

Carl Brockelmann ascribes the *Tafsīr Sūrat Yūsuf* to Ṣadrā. But no reference to this work is found in Ṣadrā’s writings; and there does appear to be one rather late reference to the *Tafsīr Sūrat al-ṭalāq*.<sup>60</sup> There do not appear to be any extant manuscripts of the *Tafsīr Sūrat al-ṭalāq* or the *Tafsīr Sūrat al-qadr*.

#### 20. TAFSĪR SŪRAT AL-ḌUHĀ

Several authors, the first of whom appears to have been Āqā Buzurg, have ascribed this title to Ṣadrā. The *Tafsīr Sūrat al-ḍuhā* is listed in the “individual *tafsīr* entries” of the *Dharīʿa*,<sup>61</sup> but does not appear among the titles listed in its “basic *tafsīr* entries.” It is difficult to determine whether or not the first of the two “basic *tafsīr* entries” was written before the entry on the *Tafsīr Sūrat al-ḍuhā* found its way into the list of “individual *tafsīr* entries.” Although the former’s entry number is 1283, and the latter is numbered 1466, its precedence relates to alphabetical order. Thus, it is not possible to judge whether or not Āqā Buzurg wished to amend his first list of “basic *tafsīr* entries” but did not have the opportunity to do so. In fact, the volume in which both of these entries appear was edited and printed after Āqā Buzurg’s death under the care of his sons.<sup>62</sup> The problem is further complicated by the fact that the first list of “basic *tafsīr* entries” says the source for its listing of Ṣadrā’s *tafsīrs* is a collection of Ṣadrā’s *tafsīr* printed in 1333/1914. But the *Tafsīr Sūrat al-ḍuhā* is reported by Āqā Buzurg to have been found in a printed collection of his *tafsīrs* dating to 1332/1913.<sup>63</sup> All subsequent entries in the *Dharīʿa* that make reference to this printed collection date it to 1332/1913, so the 1333/1914 date is likely to have been a slip of the

60 Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur* (Leiden: Brill, 1938), Suppl. 2:589.

61 Āqā Buzurg, *Dharīʿa*, 4:338. For my tripartite division of the *Dharīʿa*’s entries on Ṣadrā’s Qurʾānic works, see n. 1 above.

62 See *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, s.v.v. “*al-Darīʿa elā taṣānīf al-šīʿa*” (by Etan Kohlberg).

63 Āqā Buzurg, *Dharīʿa*, 4:338. The collection of Ṣadrā’s *tafsīr* used by Āqā Buzurg seems to be different from the lithographed edition in my possession, because the latter was printed some ten years earlier and, more importantly, because it does not contain the *Tafsīr Sūrat al-ḍuhā*.

pen on the part of the author. The fact that Āqā Buzurg does not have an entry on this work in his listing of “individual *tafsīr* entries” may also call its attribution to Ṣadrā into question. According to Nahīd Bāqirī Khurramdashtī and Fāṭima Aṣgharī, this title is extant in manuscript form.<sup>64</sup>

#### 21. TAFSĪR SŪRAT AL-IKHLĀṢ<sup>65</sup>

This title is not commonly ascribed to Ṣadrā, but is included in some of the more recent bibliographies of his works.<sup>66</sup> Because the text cannot be dated to any particular period, if Ṣadrā is its author, he could have written it at any point in his career. Compared to his other *tafsīrs*, the *Tafsīr Sūrat al-ikhlāṣ* is structured differently, and its discussions are not as detailed as those in texts of a similar size (i.e., less than forty pages). The *tafsīr* is strangely divided into two parts, which seem to be two separate treatises. Part 1 consists of an introduction composed of six sections or “merits” (*fāʿida*), comments on the *sūra’s* verses, and a conclusion that is composed of two “merits.” The first part of the commentary is mostly concerned with proving God’s oneness. There is nothing specifically Ṣadrian about this part of the commentary. The language is fairly straightforward, and a reliance upon the terminology of the school of Ibn ʿArabī is evidenced throughout.

The second part of the *tafsīr* is also a running commentary on each of the verses of Q 112. In the introduction to the second part, which is the most important section of the *Tafsīr Sūrat al-ikhlāṣ*, the author briefly discusses the symbolism of the letters of the *basmala*.

#### 22–24. MAʿĀNĪ AL-ALFĀZ AL-MUFRADA MIN AL-QURʾĀN, RISĀLA FĪ RUMŪZ AL-QURʾĀN, AND TAʿLĪQA ʿALĀ ANWĀR AL-TANZĪL

The *Maʿānī* was first listed by Khurramdashtī and Aṣgharī.<sup>67</sup> They say that it is a short treatise that discusses some of the individual terms and/or phrases found in the Qurʾān. Ṣadrā does not appear to refer to this work in his writings. In all likelihood, it too is an excerpt from a larger work. This hypothesis may be correct, since in Āqā

64 Nahīd Bāqirī Khurramdashtī (with the assistance of Fāṭima Aṣgharī), *Kitābshināsī-yi jāmiʿ-i Mullā Ṣadrā* (Tehran: SIPRI, 1999), 72.

65 Ṣadrā, *Majmūʿat al-rasāʾil al-falsafīyya*, ed. Ḥamid Nāji Iṣfahānī (Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ Turāth al-ʿArabī, n.d., repr. ed.), 429–472.

66 See Kalin, “An Annotated Bibliography,” 40; Khurramdashtī and Aṣgharī, *Kitābshināsī-yi jāmiʿ-i Mullā Ṣadrā*, 73; Rizvi, *Mullā Ṣadrā Shirāzī*, 109.

67 Khurramdashtī and Aṣgharī, *Kitābshināsī-yi jāmiʿ-i Mullā Ṣadrā*, 74.



Buzurg's content description of Ṣadrā's *Mafātīh*, he states that one of the sections in *miftāh* 1 is about the “*maʿānī al-alfāz al-mufrada*” of the Qurʾān.<sup>68</sup> Going on this description alone, it appears to correspond to *miftāh* 1:1–3. The *Risāla fī rumūz al-qurʾān*, which is only listed by Brockelmann,<sup>69</sup> is likely to be the same as the *Maʿānī*, or at least a part of it, since its title indicates that it corresponds to *miftāh* 1:1, which is about the symbols (*rumūz*) of the Qurʾān.

Thanks to Ṣadrā's inventory of books in his personal library,<sup>70</sup> we know that he was familiar with the *tafsīr* of the famous Sunnī theologian and exegete, ʿAbd Allāh al-Bayḍāwī (d. 716/1316), parts of whose *Anwār al-tanzīl* were in his possession.<sup>71</sup> However, the common attribution of a set of glosses on this text to Ṣadrā under the title *Taʿlīqa ʿalā Anwār al-tanzīl*<sup>72</sup> is, in all likelihood, mistaken.<sup>73</sup>

68 ʿĀqā Buzurg, *Dharīʿa*, 21:305.

69 Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*, Suppl. 2:589.

70 See Ṣadrā, *Yaddāsht-hā-yi Mullā Ṣadrā hamrah bā fihrist-i kitābkhāna-yi shakhṣī-yi Mullā Ṣadrā*, ed. Muḥammad Barakat (Qum: Intishārāt-i Bīdār, 1377Sh/1998). It is reproduced in English in Rizvi, *Mullā Ṣadrā Shirāzī*, 117–135. For the entry on Bayḍāwī, see *ibid.*, 118–119. This inventory of works, although very useful, certainly does not present us with a complete listing of all of the texts in Ṣadrā's possession over the course of his career. According to the editor of the catalog of Ṣadrā's personal library, the latest Ṣadrā could have drawn up this list would have been around two decades before his death (see Ṣadrā, *Yaddāsht-hā*, 8–9).

71 For this work, see Bayḍāwī, *Anwār al-tanzīl wa-asrār al-taʾwīl* (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿArabīyya, 1911).

72 See, for example, Dihqan Mangabadi, “Mullā Ṣadrā's Method of Qurʾān Commentary,” in *Eschatology, Exegesis, Hadith (Islam-West Philosophical Dialogue: The Papers Presented at the World Congress on Mullā Ṣadrā*, May, 1999) (Tehran: SIPRI, 2005), 441, where the author has “*Hahiyah* (sic.) *bar* (marginal gloss on) *Tafsīr Bayḍari* (sic.)”; Muḥammad ʿAlī Mudarris, *Rayḥānat al-adab* (Tehran: Kitābforūshī-yi Khayyām, 1369Sh/1990), 4:419.

73 See Rizvi, *Mullā Ṣadrā Shirāzī*, 116.

## Appendix

### Toward a Chronology of Mullā Ṣadrā's Qur'ānic Works

Below is a tentative chronology of Ṣadrā's Qur'ān-related compositions which are of unquestionable authenticity.<sup>74</sup> The first table considers these works alone, and the second with respect to his datable, non-Qur'ānic writings. In order to avoid confusion, I have only employed Gregorian dates.

#### A Tentative Chronology of Ṣadrā's Qur'ānic Works

Year	Title	Notes
ca. 1613	<i>T. S. Ḥadīd</i>	First <i>tafsīr</i> work; before <i>T. Ā. Kursī</i>
ca. 1613	<i>T. Ā. Kursī</i>	Shortly after <i>T. S. Ḥadīd</i>
ca. 1613	<i>T. Q 27:88</i>	Incomplete; likely a very early work
1621	<i>T. Ā. Nūr</i>	Before <i>T. S. Sajda</i>
1621	<i>T. S. Ṭāriq</i>	Before <i>T. S. Sajda</i>
1621	<i>T. S. Yāsīn</i>	Before <i>T. S. Sajda</i>
1621–32	<i>T. S. Wāqī'a</i>	Before <i>T. S. Sajda</i> ; after <i>T. S. Yāsīn</i>
1621–32	<i>T. S. A'lā</i>	Before <i>T. S. Sajda</i>
1628–32	<i>T. S. Jumū'a</i>	Before <i>T. S. Sajda</i> ?; after <i>T. S. Yāsīn</i>
1628–32	<i>T. S. Zilzāl</i>	Before <i>T. S. Sajda</i>
1628–32	<i>T. S. Sajda</i>	After all of the above (but not <i>T. S. Jumū'a</i> ?); before <i>Mafātīḥ</i>
1631	<i>Asrār</i>	Possibly after <i>Mafātīḥ</i>
1632	<i>Mafātīḥ</i>	
1632–34	<i>Mutashāb</i>	Most likely after <i>Mafātīḥ</i>
1632–34	<i>T. S. Fātiḥa</i>	After <i>Mafātīḥ</i>
1632–34	<i>T. S. Baqara</i>	After <i>T. S. Fātiḥa</i>

74 The dates given in this tentative chronology are based on the following (in their order of usefulness): Rizvi, *Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī*, 51–135; references within Ṣadrā's writings; Bidārfar, "Taqdīm," 110–1; Chittick, "Translators' Introduction," xix–xx.

**A Chronology of Ṣadrā's Qur'ānic Works  
vis-à-vis His Datable, non-Qur'ānic Writings**

Year	Title	Notes
1606	<i>Mabda'</i>	
* ca. 1613	<i>T. S. Ḥadīd</i>	First <i>tafsīr</i> work; before <i>T. Ā. Kursī</i>
* ca. 1613	<i>T. Ā. Kursī</i>	Shortly after <i>T. S. Ḥadīd</i>
* ca. 1613	<i>T. Q 27:88</i>	Incomplete; likely a very early work
1614	<i>Wāridāt</i>	1621?
1618	<i>Kasr</i>	
1606–20	<i>Sh. al-Hidāya</i>	Completed around 1606, reworked in 1620
* 1621	<i>T. Ā. Nūr</i>	Before <i>T. S. Sajda</i>
* 1621	<i>T. S. Ṭāriq</i>	Before <i>T. S. Sajda</i>
1621?	<i>Iksīr</i>	Possibly before <i>T. S. Yāsīn</i>
* 1621	<i>T. S. Yāsīn</i>	Before <i>T. S. Sajda</i>
* 1621–32	<i>T. S. Wāqī'a</i>	Before <i>T. S. Sajda</i> ; after <i>T. S. Yāsīn</i>
* 1621–32	<i>T. S. Alā</i>	Before <i>T. S. Sajda</i>
1623	<i>Risālat al-ḥashr</i>	
1624	<i>Masā'il</i>	Incomplete
1624–25	<i>Hudūth</i>	
* 1628–32	<i>T. S. Jumū'a</i>	Before <i>T. S. Sajda</i> ?; after <i>T. S. Yāsīn</i>
1628	<i>Asfār</i>	Commenced in 1606
1628	<i>Mashā'ir</i>	Likely after <i>Asfār</i>
1628–31	<i>Shawāhid</i>	
* 1628–32	<i>T. S. Zilzāl</i>	Before <i>T. S. Sajda</i>
* 1628–32	<i>T. S. Sajda</i>	After all of the above (but not <i>T. S. Jumū'a</i> ?); before <i>Mafātīh</i>
* 1631	<i>Asrār</i>	Possibly after <i>Mafātīh</i>
* 1632	<i>Mafātīh</i>	
* 1632–34	<i>Mutashāb</i>	Most likely after <i>Mafātīh</i>
* 1632–34	<i>T. S. Fātiḥa</i>	After <i>Mafātīh</i>
* 1632–34	<i>T. S. Baqara</i>	After <i>T. S. Fātiḥa</i>
1634	<i>Sh. al-Kāfi</i>	Incomplete
1628–34	<i>Ta'liq Ilāhiyyāt al-shifā'</i>	After <i>Shawāhid</i>
1632–34	<i>Ta'liq Sh. Ḥikmat al-ishrāq</i>	After <i>T. S. Fātiḥa</i>
1632–34	<i>'Arshiyya</i>	After <i>Ta'liq Sh. Ḥikmat al-ishrāq</i>