GINĀN AS TAFSĪR LITERATURE
The Exegetical Dimensions of a Tradition

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The Ginān tradition holds a special place in devotional and religious life in the Shia Imami Ismaili Tariqah. Ginān recitations are ubiquitous in Isma’ili devotional life; they are played in homes, cars, and recited on auspicious religious occasions. Ginān recitation likewise comprises a central element of the congregational life of the Shia Imami Ismaili community within the jamā’at-khāna (congregation house). The vast corpus of the Ginān literature has long formed part of the spiritual heritage of the South Asian Isma’ilī community, especially in Sindhi, Khoja, and Gujarati South Asian communities. This study uses the genre of the Ginān to critically engage the boundary frameworks that can be considered tafsīr literature and argues that the ginānic narrative provides not only liturgical but theologically complex examples of a Subcontinent vernacular Shi’i exegetical tradition.

KEYWORDS: Shia Imami Ismaili Tariqah, Qur’an, tafsīr, ta’wīl, Ginān, Satpanth

‘In the Ginans that Pir Sadradin has given you, he has explained to you the essence of the Qur’an in Indian languages.’
— Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah, Aga Khan III, Zanzibar Farman, 5 July 1899

THE GINĀN TRADITION: SITUATING THE VERNACULAR WITHIN A GLOBAL DISCOURSE

The Ginān tradition holds a special place in the devotional religious life of the Shia Imami Ismaili Tariqah. Ginān recitation likewise comprises a central element of the congregational life of the Shia Imami Ismaili community within the jamā’at-khāna. The vast corpus of the Ginān literature has long formed part of the spiritual heritage of the South Asian Isma’ilī community, especially in different Sindhi, Khoja, and Gujarati South Asian communities.
The advent of projects to disseminate printed Ginān in printed books following textual standardization was concomitant with the encouragement of Hazar Imam H. H. Prince Shah Karim al-Husayni for all the spiritual children of the Imam (irrespective of their ethno-cultural background), to cultivate a relationship with the Ginān tradition. This has resulted in the Ginān becoming more familiar to Isma’ili communities coming from outside South Asia. Scholarship on the centrality of the Ginān to the devotional life of the transnational Isma’ili community of faith is well-represented in the academic literature on the subject. The pioneering works of Azim Nanji on the Satpanth tradition and Ali Asani on their specifically liturgical and ‘performance text’ dimensions are excellent contributions to that discourse.

When compared to these devotional elements, however, comparatively less attention has been paid to engaging the Ginān tradition as a commentarial or exegetical tradition. Apart from the excellent treatment of the subject of the intersection of the Ginān tradition and ta’wil of the Qur’an by Aziz Talbani and Parveen Hasanali, scholarship within the academy has enjoyed relatively few dedicated engagements with the exegetical dimensions of the Ginān tradition.

One of the most compelling aspects of situating the Ginān narrative tradition as a facet within the broader Islamic intellectual tafsīr projects is how it can facilitate reappraisals of the boundary demarcations imposed on the categories of tafsīr and ta’wil. While in some places these demarcations are wholly appropriate, in others there is an artificiality inherent in the imposition of these conceptual boundaries. This present study seeks to move forward the discourse on both the necessity to move past arbitrary boundary demarcations of what is, and is not, properly considered tafsīr, as well as how the Ginān narratives can be seen as exemplifications of the commentarial tradition.

Before proceeding further, a small discussion of the utilization of the terms tafsīr and ta’wil vis-à-vis the present discussion is warranted. When delineating tafsīr (which stems from the root ف-س-ر ‘to detect’) and ta’wil (likely from the root ل-و-ل ‘turn back to’), Aziz Talbani and Parveen Hasanali note that ‘ta’wil is generally understood as a hermeneutic exegesis of the Qur’ānic text. Ismaili ta’wil seeks to explore what is understood as the inner (bāṭin) meaning…Ta’wil is a return to the origin…to the original meaning of the revelation, hidden beneath the apparent text.’

For the purposes of the present work, ta’wil is intended to convey the meaning of a mystical or esoteric commentary, or one that provides elucidations upon the complexity and subtlety of the exegetical subject beyond a surface level explanatory mode. Ta’wil, then, is ultimately a form of tafsīr. Simultaneous plurality of meaning was acknowledged by the classical Islamic mufassirūn and by the companions of the Prophet Muhammad. The discursive multivalence of interpretive to which narratives such as the Qur’an are amenable is discussed in the tafsīr attributed to the Shi’i Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq. It is narrated from him that ‘the Book of God has four things: literal expression (ʿibārah), allusion (ishārah), subtleties (laṭāʾif), and the deepest realities (ḥaqāʾiq).’

Seeing the Ginān tradition within the framework of an exegetical vernacular communal discourse has implications for widening the rather narrow boundaries of what much scholarship has historically considered a legitimate example of a tafsīr project. Johanna Pink and
Andreas Görke correctly note in the introduction to their recent compilation on the subject of *tafsīr*:

Any discussion of *tafsīr*, its structure, methods, and function, will invariably come to the point where the very definition of the term is under debate. One option would be to adopt the original Arabic meaning of the term *tafsīr*, namely, ‘explanation’ and to consider any activity that tries to explain or interpret the Qur’an or parts of it as *tafsīr*. Following this option has the merit of including exegetical discourses that might not be part of any formal genre of Qur’an interpretation but are nonetheless highly relevant for achieving an overall assessment of Muslim exegesis of the Qur’an and might also be influential for Qur’anic commentaries of in a narrower sense...[including] works of legal, theological, or hadith scholarship.8

Aziz Talbani and Parveen Hasanali further observe, ‘*Gīnān* serve as ideal modes for *taʾwīlī* interpretation both in form and function. In form, the *Gīnān* generally presents a *mythos* a story using metaphors and imagery from the indigenous Indian culture integrated with Ismaili concepts by its creators, Persian and Arab ḏāʾīs and preachers of the Imām, known as Pīrs.9

However, this mythos should be seen not as the mobilization of fictitious cultural themes utilized in service of merely crafting a palatable communal folk-narrative. Rather, it is the conscious utilization of the typologies inherent within previously existing vernacular mythography to convey Ismaʿili theological propositions. By employing terms to which their audience had previous exposure, structurally and thematically, as well as integrating Qur’anic themes, this mythos reveals the situatedness of the *Gīnān* firmly within both the Qur’an narrative and vernacular South Asian devotional contexts. Its Qur’anic vernacularity is demonstrable not solely from narrative or literary elements, however; even linguistic study attests to this point. Approximately 14 percent of the words encountered in the *Gīnān* in one study conducted were found to be Arabic, and nearly one quarter, Gujarati.10

There have been many different explanatory models offered to outline this vernacular liminality inherent within the *Gīnān* tradition. These various paradigms have usually granted explanatory priority from which to attribute the production of the vast corpus of the *Gīnān* tradition to a specific teleology. What may be termed the ‘conversion model’ thesis was largely championed by the earliest meaningful European academic treatments of the *Gīnān* literature and the Ismaʿili tradition, such as those of Wilfred Madelung11 and Vladimir Ivanow. Ivanow was perhaps the first western academician to offer meaningful, substantive engagement with the rich history of the Ismaʿili tradition, including a prolific translation project which resulted in the translation of some of Nasir Khusraw’s works such as the *Rawshana-yi Namih*. Such was his profundity and scope of influence that very few scholars of the Shiʿi tradition have neglected him within European academic circles in the twentieth century.12

In her excellent work on the *Gīnān* literature attributed to Pir Shamsuddin, Tazim R. Kassam calls him ‘the pacesetter of Ismaʿili studies in this century’.13 To Ivanow, the *Gīnān* narrative functioned as a pedagogical tool to facilitate conversion, and he saw in those hymns the ‘bridge between Isma’ilism and Hinduism, which permitted the new ideas to enter the entirely different world of Hindu mentality’.14 In concert with Ivanow and Azim Nanji,
Gulshan Khakee, in her incredibly detailed study on the multiple recensions of the work *Dasa-Avatara*, records how many of the various Satpanth communities narrate their identity in a process of proselytization, usually in the context of a missionary campaign by a *pīr*.

One of the leading Isma‘ili studies scholars, Farhad Daftary, rightly cognizant of the necessity to situate the Satpanth tradition within the broader Indo-Persian Nizari Isma‘ili milieu, has nuanced this idea somewhat, and sees the formation of the *Ginān* tradition as necessitated by issues of both proselytization as well as the general need for *taqiyya* (the self-protective dissimulation of theological identity). Daftary’s assessment of the *Ginān* literature amongst the Satpanth community sees both this process of conversion and *taqiyyah* at work, noting ‘the widespread practice of taqiyya by Nizāris of different regions…Nizāris were obliged to dissimulate…resorting to Sunni, Sufi, Twelver Shi‘i and Hindu disguises.’

He further observes:

> The Nizāri Khojas of the Indian subcontinent, as noted, elaborated their own literary tradition in the form of *gināns*, containing a diversity of mystical, mythological, didactic, cosmological, and eschatological themes.

This diverse fluidity of both inter- and intra-cultural exchange was not unique to the variegated Satpanth communities, however, and it was quite normative during the time in which the *Ginān* tradition emerged. Vernacularism permeated much of Subcontinent and Indo-Persian religious discourse, from bhakti Hindu devotional vernacularism to Persian apocalyptic material in late antiquity. As John Hawley observes, commenting on this phenomenon (using the example of the twelfth-century work, the *Bhagavata Mahatmya*), the depth of engagement and cultural exchange within the North Indian and Persian context were profound.

The formative period of the *Ginān* narrative and the Satpanth community exists within the framework of the rise and development of other vernacular devotional communities in South Asia like the proto-Bhakti movements and the *pānth* traditions. It likewise parallels the development of other expressive forms of theologically and devotionally-centred traditions in South Asian religious discourse, such as *grānths* and *qawwālī*. These liturgical elements of the *Ginān* tradition incorporated various Indian ragas and Persian folk musicality.

What Teena Purohit has offered in considering the *Ginān* and Satpanthi traditions as ‘Qur’anic refractions’ has tremendous explanatory power. Commenting on the multivocality of the *Ginān* tradition and its textual resonances with Qur’anic themes, Purohit observes:

> The subject of this Surah is the Sirat al-Mustaqim, what can be translated as the ‘true path’...The...paradigm I offer is to read the Satpanth as a refraction of Qur’anic ideas in the local Indian context...The *gināns* offer specific insights into how Islam indigenized in the Indic milieu, a process I describe as Qur’anic refraction. While Sirat-al-Mustaqim and Satpanth can both be translated as ‘true path,’ the latter is not simply the Gujarati version of the former. The *gināns* are part of the body of diverse literary forms that emerged in Indian vernacular languages.
The multivocality of the Satpanthi communities of faith and the multivalence of the Ginān allowed the ginānic narratives to be vehicles for both the transmission of liturgical devotional experiences, and as Purohit notes, Qur’anic commentarial tradition. This discursive liminality has resulted in very strong contestations for and against the sectarian boundary frameworks which many modern polities have imposed upon the various ‘Ginān community’ movements.

When the narrative content of the Ginān tradition is engaged, however, it must be admitted these are thoroughly Shi’i in the sense of allegiance to the divine person of ‘Ali. However, they are theologically and cosmologically grounded in a multifocal vernacularism that draws heavily on Qur’anic, Vaishnava, and Isma’ili theosophical discourse equally comfortably.

One facet of this multifocality was shaped by the Isma’ili Tariqah being a truly global movement from relatively early on within its history. Isma’ili theology and its exponents were present in North Africa far earlier than the advent of the official establishment of the Fatimid state. There was a demonstrable presence of the Isma’ili da’wah from 883 CE under the supervision of Ibn Hawshab Mansur al-Yaman in Sindh. The movement was perhaps active in those regions of South Asia as early as the time of the sixth and seventh Imams. Likewise, there has been demonstrated to have been the presence of ‘an Ismaili principality…established in Sindh, with its seat in Multan…[which] had established their influence in Gujarat by 1067. This wide geographic proliferation of Isma’ili da’īs necessitated fluid and accommodating presentations of the cosmology and theological truth claims of the Isma’ili movement. Azim Nanji extensively documents this heterogenous trans-nationality in the pioneering doctoral dissertation The Nizari Ismaili Tradition in Hind and Sind:

The tenth and eleventh centuries saw the Fatimid dynasty reach its zenith, and the khutba was recited in the name of the Fatimid caliph in almost half the Islamic territories, in places extending from the Maghrib in the west to Sind in the east, including Yemen...by the eleventh century internal weaknesses and external pressures in the form of a Sunni resurgence...the Ismailis split over the issue of succession...one giving allegiance to...Nizar...in Iran meanwhile one of the leaders, Hasan-i-Sabbah, having already established his headquarters in the fort of Alamut in the province of Daylam...threw in his lot in favor of Nizar and thus began the organization of an independent Nizari da’wa...with this background in mind we now turn to an area which had been a theatre of the Ismaili da’wa’s activity before the establishment of the Fatimid dynasty – namely Hind and Sind.

There was also direct Shi’i Imami Isma’ili rule in the Sind from 1005 CE. Not simply the Sindh region, however, but all of South Asia, since before the common era, and the Subcontinent specifically, was a place of incredible proliferation of inter and intra-cultural exchange (especially after the Byzantine Empire and the ‘Islamic Expansion’ South Asia in general). This was assisted by a sophisticated collection of trade networks, connecting Arab, Gujarati, Persian, Chinese, and European trade goods. With this trade network, there likewise came an equally prolific diffusion of political, philosophical, and religious ideas and texts; this was especially true from the1200s to the 1600s. This period was during the height of the bhakti poetic and scriptural/theological diffusion into wider Indic society.
this intertextuality played out in many of the delightfully picturesque polemical narratives from the hagiography of Čaitanya, wherein he utilized Qur’anic exegesis in disputation with his Muslim interlocutors.29  

While there may have been periods of lapse of direct contact, the connection between Indic and Persianate Islamic cultures remained strong. The Isma’ili tradition was no exception, even during periods of intense persecution. As Shafique Virani documents, Subcontinent and Central Asian contact with Persian Isma’ili dāʾīs went on well into the post-Mongol period of Alamut.30

**THE DISCURSIVE MULTIVOCALITY OF THE GINĀN TRADITION: PURANIC DIVERGENCES, ‘ALID RE-INTEGRATIONS, AND QUR’ANIC REFRACTIONS**

The *Ginān* narrative not only intones in traditional South Asian melodies (*raga*), as previously noted, but likewise invokes multiple Indo-Persian thematic elements. The way these thematic and recitational elements integrate themselves with Qur’anic thematic material can be understood through ideas proposed by Tony Stewart, describing a similar reality as that which occurs with the Qur’anic vernacularity of the *Ginān* within a Bengali literary context.31 Stewart’s ‘translation theory’ paradigm, when applied to the *Ginān* tradition, convincingly situates the necessity for seeing the variegated fluidity of themes one encounters in the *Gināns* as exegetical in nature.

This trans-confessional theological framework in which these variegated exemplifications of a devotionalism are situated is attestation to the fluidity of the boundaries in the Subcontinent religious sphere at the time. The articulators of the *Ginān* and their composers, in employing the medium of vernacularity to translate Qur’anic and Shi’i theological content, were no exception to this pattern of shared vernacular religio-social intercourse. The *Gināns* routinely condemn the various Hindu *pānths* and *dharmas*, yet never directly reject their (transcendent) deities, scriptures like the Vedas or Puranas, nor the idea that these *dhārmas* contain scriptural truths. One example of this is found in the So Kiria *Ginān* of Pir Sadrud-din, which reflects a condemnation of Hindu exegetical understanding of scripture and the concomitant cultic religious systems that followed that understanding.

However, it simultaneously is possessed of a much more ecumenical spirit regarding the scriptures of those traditions themselves. The *pir* admonishes his listeners that *khāt darasān pujē nahin pāme mokh, ved sāsatar kahe na karavo dokh* (‘the religious worship systems cannot liberate, [but] the holy revealed scriptures are not to be abandoned’).32 A clear delineation is made between the *puja* and the *ved* therein. While the Hindu *darshana* and *puja* may not lead to liberation (*moksha*), Vedic scriptures (and by necessary extension, the Qur’an) are to be accepted.

The classic Isma’ili work *Anant Akahado*, attributed to the fifteenth century Pir Hasan Kabirdin, is very telling of how Indo-Persian and Hindu thematic material could be interwoven into the exegetical framework of the *Ginān*. The narrative of this *grānṭh*33 expounds extensively upon core Isma’ili cosmological and onto-theological ideas, woven around the mythography of well-known Subcontinent theologemes.34 This is mythos in multiple senses,
both as communal narrative identity framing, and as utilization and reintegration of previously articulated ideas in fluid ways that accommodate the new religious elements the narrative presents. For instance, a line in Anant Akahado says:

Āshāji Ketā kalap ne ketā jug tis mā(n) hae gur tu(n) hi huāji....
O Lord! In many ages and eras, you were guide (teacher, liberator)....

This intentionally echoes a well-known refrain in the Gita: ‘For the protection of the virtuous, for the extirpation of evil doers...I manifest myself from age to age.'

This form of discursive exchange was normative for much of Levantine and South Asian socio-religious and literary practice, as Farina Mir notes, regarding the decidedly vernacular literary phenomena of Punjabi popular qisse folk narrative tradition. This tradition in turn borrows heavily from the Arabic and Persian qīṣaṣ story genre. Specifically, Mir highlights the exemplification of this vernacularism by Amir Khusraw, noting:

Khusro is best remembered in Indian literary circles as one of the earliest exponents of Hindvi...an Indian vernacular language...Khusro composed renditions of the romances Laila-Majnun and Khusro-Shirin in Persian and in masnavi forms which illustrates that Arab and Persian tales, in Persian literary forms, were incorporated in South Asian literary products.

Mir convincingly argues in her work for the normativity of an intercultural exchange between the Arab and the Indo-Persian literary cultures and their ideas. Such exchange is documented in her other works as well, wherein she observes that ‘the qisse genre was adopted by India’s Persian literati as early as the late thirteenth century. In the following centuries it was taken up by Punjabi poets, and poets in other vernacular languages’ and that it ‘retained certain elements of the Persian qisse tradition....’ The vernacularizing synthesis resulting from the dyadic exchange of these poetics finds a similar reality in Ginān. Isma’ili theological concepts become married with bhakti devotional terms in a highly sophisticated form of vernacular commentarial tradition. This exemplifies what Timothy Dobe in a very helpful recent work has termed ‘shared idioms of piety’.

The Ginān narrative cannot be excluded from being seen as a legitimate form of tafsīr because of the utilization of such vernacularism. Rather, it is on account of such facets that Ginān literature and tradition are well within the milieu of a cross-cultural, accessibly democratized Shi’i Qur’anic homiletic.

TA’WĪL, TAFSĪR, AND TAʿLĪM: THE QUR’ANIC VERNACULAR EXEGESIS OF THE GINĀN STREAMS OF COMMENTARIAL TRADITION

The Ginān tradition is not only amenable to being framed as interpretive, but it self-referentially asserts that it is bringing Qur’anic material to its audience. Perhaps the strongest attestation to the necessity to frame the ginānic discourse in many respects as primarily exegetical comes in the form of the direct exegetical and pedagogical references made
within many Gināns to the Qur’an. These examples in the voluminous ginānic corpus are exhaustive.

Kamalludin Muhammad Ali notes the following such illustrative examples:

*Pir Shams pade ilam Kuran, Womān so jo jañe bharam ginān.*
Pir Shams narrates the knowledge of the Qur’an. A believer is one who knows the divine knowledge.40

*Gur nache garbimānhe, te gae Kuranne re lōl.*
The spiritual guide danced to the Garbi and related the teachings of the Qur’an.41

*Satgur kahere Pir Shams Kuran ja bhakhīya, Ane bhakhīya char ved ja jan; Te gat gangamanhe besi kari, Kidhi sachi sankh nirvān re.*
The Satgur says: ‘Pir Shams has preached the Qur’an and preached the four Vedas. Sitting among the Gat Jamat, he has narrated the true signs.’42

*Eji Pir Sadardin yara pade re Kuranā, Bahar jave taka andar lana, Shahne sujānō apnā pirne pichhānō, bhi Saiyān.*
O brother! Pir Sadruddin is giving you the teachings of the Holy Qur’an. Bring back those who have turned away from your religion. Recognize the Imam and know the Pir.43

*Eji Ali Nabithi e satpanth chaliya, Tene sīrevie gubat apar; Athar vedi a satpanth kahie, Te to khojiya Kuran minjar; cheto.*
Light manifested from light; its abode is in the light. He created this true path (Satpanth) and searched it out from the Holy Qur’an. That Satpanth continued from Hazrat Ali and the Prophet; follow it most discreetly. This Satpanth is according to Athar Veda [the last Veda] that has been searched out from the Holy Qur’an.44

One can also see an illustration of this in the Aash Punee Ham Shaah Dar Paaya attributed to the fourteenth century Isma’ili Pir Hasan Kabir Din: ‘Peer Sadardeen recites the Qur’aan. He brings back to the fold those who leave it.’45 As Chhotu Lakhani records in a monograph on the subject of the Ginān tradition, specifically when commenting on the Gināns of ʿAbd al-Nabi and Pir Sadruddin:

Ginan contains a number of terms which are exclusively Indian, particularly of the vaishnavites...they believed in Das Avataars...According to them, ever since the creation of the world, the Jyot i.e. the Light or Noor passed through several creations to convey the Divine Guidance. Pir Sadruddin, while teaching Islam in keeping with Allah’s Guidance in the Holy Quran, showed them the Sirat-ul-Mustaqueem (Sat Panth) from their own point of view.46

The Ginān narrative at times functions as a kind of homolytic. This can be observed in the following material attributed to alternatively to both Shams Tabriz47 and Pir Sadruddin:
The secret of the two worlds, the shadow of Allah’s Noor, Which came down from the heaven to the land and became manifest, was Ali... As there is oil in the wick of the lamp... Why do you consider its visible form? Throughout the day Ali does exist in it. 48

Here the homily is on the ontology of the Imam, in the context of one of the most powerful and moving verses in the Qur’an, āyah al-nūr in Sura al-Nur. As Gerhard Bowering notes in his seminal occasional paper on the subject: “Throughout the ages, light has been valued as the most beautiful phenomenon of creation... in the Qur’an... the theme of light, God’s light, is... directly addressed in the famous “light verse”.” 49

As the prolific Ahmadi Qur’an translator and author Muhammad Ali has recognized, ḍaw’ or ḍiyāʾ signifies ‘that light which subsists by itself’, and nūr ‘that which subsists through some other thing’. 50 He is by no means idiosyncratic in this definition. Lane records that the word nūr connotes the lunar, rather than solar light, that ḍiyāʾ is more intense, and that ḍiyāʾ is essential whereas nūr is accidental light. 51

On this ontological consubstantiality of nūr Allāh and nūr al-Imām, Kamaluddin Ali Muhammad observes:

Another key term in the Qur’an which alludes to the concept of Imamat is Nūr (light), which is sent down by Allah, and the believers are required to believe in it, as the Qur’an says: ‘so believe in Allah and His messenger and the Light in which We have revealed. And Allah is informed of what ye do’ (64:8)... The Imams are the manifested Nūr and they guide people on the Straight Path... Imam Muhammad al-Bāqir also points to this concept in the following verse ‘is he who was dead and We raised him unto life, and set for him a light wherein he walks... as him whose similitude is in utter darkness?’... According to Hazrat Imam Muhammad al-Bāqir, the dead man in the above verse symbolizes ignorant people and the Nūr walking among the people is the Imam of the time. 52

The Ginān tradition nuances these points, offering a mystical interpretation of how the light of God is essentially ‘borrowed’ light. The exegetical dimension of this assertion is nuanced to explain that the nūr Allāh is met with in the tajallī of the person of the Imam (Imam ‘Ali, being the prototypical Imam, and also the present, living Isma’ili Imam). This is just as commentarial as it is credal. The Ginān abound in rich presentations of such highly abstract theological ideas of immense profundity, yet the Ginān narrative not only masterfully communicates this profundity, but its poetic nature does so in a devotional way accessible to all within the community of faith.

By nuancing the modalities in which the divine light and its process of indwelling the locus of manifestation for that divine light (which is either in mankind in general, or in special exemplars of divine perfection, the saints, the friends of God, or members of the Ahl al-Bayt such as Fatima, ‘Ali, and the Imams), the Ginān provides commentarial observation. This commentary elucidates how the light of God can be spoken of as ‘reflected’ or ‘borrowed’ in essence in the Qur’an through asserting the manner in which this light is manifested through the conduit of the panj-i pāk and Imam-i Zaman.

Kamaluddin Ali Muhammad observes on this point the directly referential exegetical glossing by Sayyid Imam Shah of the Qur’anic theologeme of nūr Allāh:
Light manifested from light; its abode is in the light. He created this true path (Satpanth) and searched it out from the Holy Qur’an. That Satpanth continued from Hazrat Ali and the Prophet; follow it most discreetly. This Satpanth is according to Athar Veda (the last Veda) that has been searched out from the Holy Qur’an.53

Henry Corbin has characterized this lucent theophany, to which the Ginān refer, as the:

...Pillar of Light that constitutes the divinity (lāhūt) of the Imām...the archangelic Forms of the Celestial Pleroma (dar al-ibdā’) have human form...this refers to Man in the true and absolute sense, that is to the Imāms, and most particularly to him who completes their line, the ‘Perfect Child’, the Resurrecter (Qā’im)...perfect divine humanity, that of the Imām...the Imām is the mazhar, the Epiphanic Form.54

The Satpanth tradition(s) have in the Ginān a form of ta’līm, a method of communal pedagogical discursive. This instruction, articulated in a vernacular homolytic form of exegesis, demonstrates a unique stream of tradition that is simultaneously in continuity with the broader global Isma‘ili and generally Shi‘i cosmological framework. These narratives are likewise in concert with the broader Indo-Persian theological bricolage from which they emerge. This results in several core devotional concepts being the hallmark of this vernacular Shi‘i Satpanth tradition. The Imam as the light of God, the soteriological efficacy of the Shāh-jo Dīdar or ‘vision of the Lord’, and Heaven (Vaikuntha) as a gift of the Imam as divinized lucent theophany of God are central ginānic themes, evidencing the manner in which the rich tapestry of this tradition abounds in both Qur’anic and Indic theological paradigms.

Another relevant exegetical inter-textual resonance between Qur’anic and Puranic themes can be found in the emphasis upon the invocation/repetition of divine names in Ginān traditions. This onto-theological assertion of ‘name theophany’ concurs with both Qur’anic and Puranic possibilities of real divine presence in speech.55 This can by extension include the ‘name of the Lord’ or the kalām Allāh as well as those individuals and entities indwelt by divine presence or articulating divine utterance (mantra, śruti, etc.). The exemplification of this modality of theophany in the Puranic context and the Ginān literature is striking. In the Navroz Ginān of Sayyid Fatih ʿAli Shah, we read:

In Love, I was attached to the Lord in rapture, and I gained enduring delight from the Master. With my mind thus fixed on the ever-living Lord, the treasury of truth was filled with pearls.56

The centrality of divine names is emphasized in the Navroz Ginān and is also found in the Ginān of Pir Shams who beautifully extolls the unicity of the divinity in a poetic brilliance ever cognizant of the Lord’s supreme indivisible, irresistible divine unicity (tawhīd):

Eji Kāem dāyam tun sāmi tere name bi koi koi
You are the everlasting, O Lord, though your names are many.57
This echoes the narrative within the Qurʾan found in Q. 17:110: ‘Say: Supplicate to Allah or supplicate to the Beneficent, by whatever [name] you call unto him by, then for him are the Greatest Names.’

In many examples from the Ginān tradition, the Qurʾanic idea of the asmāʾ al-ḥusnā, or God having the ‘best names’, is commented on, with the ism-i aʿẓam, or the supreme name, being that of ‘Ali. The Ginān of Pir Sadrain Haq tun paak tun baadashaah states:

O Most High (‘Ali)! It is You only. You are the Maintainer, you are the Merciful, you are The First, The Last, the Judge, O Most High (‘Ali). It is only You. You have created. You have produced. You are the Creator O Most High (‘Ali)! It is only You.58

On this Lokhani says, ‘[O]ur great Pirs and Dais, including Pir Shams, the Author of this Gīnān…see everything in Ali and through Ali. For them Ali is none else but Allah’s Ali i.e. Aliyullah.’59 This is exegetical, not merely poetic or pietistic excess. Rather, it presents taʾwīl of the nature of the divine names, illustrating their manifestation (tajallī) through the Imam.

This feature of the Ginān tradition’s concept of the Imām as divine immanence exegetes much notable Qurʾanic material. There is an abundance of Qurʾanic verses that are equally suggestive of either a ‘plain-text’ reading (ẓāhir) or an esoteric, metaphorical (bāṭin), or which are even explicit assertions of the concept of divine immanence. These include:

And when My servants ask thee concerning Me, surely, I am nigh. I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calls me. (Q. 286)

And certainly We created man, and We know what his mind suggests to him – and We are nearer to him than his life vein. (Q. 50:16)

The Hand of Allah is over their hands. (Q. 48:10)

Likewise, Q. 8:17 (‘then it was not you who cut them down, but Allah struck them, and it was not you who cast [at the enemy], but it was Allah who performed the act of casting’) is strongly indicative of a divine-human consubstantiality, or at least agentive synonymy. In that synonymy, mankind functions as a tajallī or manifestation of divine attributes, and the Prophet or the Imam expresses the highest expression of manifestation for these divine characteristics.

This notion of divine immanence is presented in the Ginān tradition as exemplified by the person of the Imam, who is the maẓhar or locus of divine manifestation. The tajallī by the Imam functions in the ginānic narrative as the self-disclosure of the otherwise wholly transcendent God. The modality by which this is achieved is the nūr Allāh, the light of God, as the light of imamate (and especially in the divine personage of Imam ‘Ali) is concomitant with the very fabric of Ginān narrative cosmology. This is again quite in keeping with the broader tradition of mystical Shiʿi thought. It would be hard to consider the above words and not be reminded of Khutba al-Iftikhar (the well-known ‘sermon of glorification’) and the Khutba al-Tajiyah attributed to Imam ‘Ali. These works, which can be found for example in
the collection *Mashariq Anwar al-Yaqin fi Asrar Amir al-Mu’minin* by Hafiz Rajab al-Bursi, can themselves be considered forms of mystical exegetical literature.60

Often the *Ginān* see fulfilment in the Nizari stream of Isma’ili tradition of Qur’anic thematic material. Rashida Noormuhammad-Hunzai comments on this in her occasional paper, observing:

In the Ginan ‘D ur deshthi ayo vanjaro’, Pir Sadardin states: ‘Eji sute bethe bhai rah chalanteji Naant Sahebjiko lijiyeji.’ In his composition Pir Hasan Kabiridin says, ‘O my brother! Standing, or lying down, reclining of sitting, remember Mawla all the time.’ Let us look at the Qur’anic verse 190-191 in Chapter 3…which reads, ‘The men of intellect are those who remember Allah standing, sitting, and reclining’…The similarity in the words is obvious…This is a recurring theme of the Ginans and many will instantly recall Imam Begum’s ‘Har dam zikr karna’ and ‘Har dam Jampo Pir Shah nun jaap Japanta Rahiye’.61

The *Ginān* present ta’wil and ta’lim of Qur’anic and extra-Qur’anic material, with the Imam always in view. They offer interpretive engagement with themes such as proper modalities of worship, the ontological nature of the Imam and the office of *imāma*, the metaphysical realities of the *nūr al-imām* and the Imam as *tajallī al-nūr*, the final judgement of *qiyyāmat*, the light of God (*nūr Allāh*) and subtleties of divine onto-theology.

**GINĀNIC INVOCATION OF QUR’ANIC TYPOLOGIES: THE MUKHĪ AS EMBODIMENT OF Q. 3:45-51 IN THE GINĀN OF IMAM SHAH AND NUR SATGUR AS ‘IBRAHIM TYPOLOGY’ IN THE PUTALA GINĀN**

The nature of the Qur’anic refraction within the *Ginān* tradition forms a vernacular mythos, and it is no doubt a didactic mythos par excellence. The didactical nature of this mythography is an ontological concomitant with the exegetical model employed by the *Ginān*, as argues Ali Asani:

> These poetic compositions provided the faithful with an understanding of the ‘true meaning’ of the Qur’an serving to penetrate its…inner signification…the *gināns* were, in effect, ‘secondary’ texts generated to transmit the teachings of a ‘primary’ scripture – the Qur’an.62

These themes are interspersed throughout the variety of different *Ginān* traditions through utilization of various narratological devices. Sometimes the *Ginān* will highlight a Qur’anic theological point through mythographic reintegration of Qur’anic material. This is highlighted in the poetic hagiography of the Putala *Ginān*, which presents a story of the *da’wa* campaign of Pir Nur Satgur in Gujarat and describes a miraculous encounter with Nur Satgur and the priests of Gujarat.

This encounter nuances the Qur’anic typological frame narrative of the prophet Ibrahim’s disputation with his folk over idolatry. The Qur’an describes this disputation in Sura al-Anbiya’. Ibrahim, after breaking the objects of the idolatrous worship of his people, emphasizes that the act was a catalyst for rhetorical argumentation against their ineffectu-
ality by enquiring if they can speak (Q. 21:62-32). The people of Ibrahim, cognizant of the inability of their gods to be communicative, respond that they cannot speak or respond. This highlights the prophetic argumentation, and the prophet chastises his people for their folly. He said, “Do you all serve in worship from amongst those who cannot provide you benefit or harm, in contraposition to Allah?” (Q. 21:66)

The Ginān narrative relates a conversation between Pir Nur Satgur and the king of Gujarat and his priests. This is much akin to the discourse between Ibrahim and the chiefs of his clan. For example, we read:

[T]he priest stood beside the Guide...the priest said: ‘How can you place your feet on the image of a god? This image is worshiped by King Jai Singh’. Then Nur Satgur uttered these well-known words: ‘Listen, priest, to what I have to say. If these gods of yours are real, why do they not speak?’

This is a direct thematic reintegration of the hallmark of the Qur’anic narration of the smashing of the idols by Ibrahim in his disputations with the Babylonian chiefs. Namely, they are not worthy of worship as they are neither able to protect themselves from assault nor inform their devotees of who committed that assault. This is thematically juxtaposed against the transcendent God who is supremely efficacious and sustains both idol and idol-maker’s very existence.

Not only are the words of the pīr well-known to the community, but those words are famous words highlighting the extra-ginānic inter-textual resonance they evoke. They are Qur’anic words, they are Ibrahim’s words, and the ginānic narrative is self-referentially cognizant of this material. In a deft illustration of exegetical manoeuvring, it highlights that theological significance and repurposing to the reader or listener. This intra-textual utilization of extra-ginānic material provides scaffolding for a vernacular exegesis of both their content and theological significance in a broader condemnation of idolatry.

The priest answers Pir Nur Satgur in a manner directly evocative of the answer that the chiefs of Ibrahim gave him in the Qur’an. However, it should be carefully noted that in what we consider to be a ‘midrashic’ and therefore highly divergent exegetical flourish, there is a significant departure from the consciously referenced Qur’anic material. In fact, what we read is a direct example, semiotically speaking, of a literary inversion. Whereas Ibrahim inquires as to the communicative abilities of the gods after he has destroyed them, here the pīr first enquires of the people if the gods can speak. When told that they are stones and cannot speak, Pir Nur Satgur proceeds to enliven them. By divine command, through which the pīr is a vessel, the stones not only speak but dance, sing, and play musical instruments.

This too is highly exegetical and harkens to another Qur’anic story, where the prophet ‘Isa in Sura Al-i ‘Imran (Q. 3:49), by means of the permission and power of God, gives life to clay birds that fly away. The ginānic narrative here functions on multiple levels. The text is narrative hagiography and devotional and liturgical poetry but also thoroughly exegetical vernacular Qur’anic commentary that highlights the transcendent divine power of the Lord of all the worlds. What we encounter in these narratives is the same phenomenology at play that Teena Purohit recognizes in the Dasavatara Granth:
Even though the content is Indian, the essential message and form remain Qur’anic. One of my central arguments about Dasavatār is that it too replicates the particular dialectic of Qur’anic theology, whereby the Qur’an is deemed wholly dependent on its theological antecedents while at the same time abrogating the ultimate authority of those antecedents... Dasavatār adopts the literary genre of the puranas...to deliver a message of messianic Imami Shi’ism...in Dasavatār the central Shi’i movement out of occultation transpires between two geographic spaces – Arab and Indian lands...Imamate ideology is localized, concretized, and given meaning in the Indic space. This Imamate perspective creates a shift in epicenter: from the Arab to the Indian context. The Imamate teaching in Dasavatār thereby illustrates how a foundational idea of the Qur’an – the centrality of prophecy – takes on a distinctive form in its new context. This process of refraction of Qur’anic ideas into the Indic Satpanth worldview is not only conceptual; it has historical and cultural implications for the study of communities as well.64

What the Putala Ginān presents is a similar reutilization of the rhetorical argumentation that Ibrahim articulates that repurposes the Qur’anic story within a devotional and hagiographical context. Layer upon layer of narrative homolytic is discernible when the narrative is carefully read. Here in the Putala Ginān, the charisma of the living saint (as opposed to the dead idols of the priests) functions on a semiotic level as an ‘indexicality’ of the efficacious felicity of the one true God being argued for in the narrative, and the ineffectual futility of idolatrous pagan worship. Even the wording of the Ginān is also highly significant at this point:

\[
tare nur sat-gur boleā vikhiyāt suno pujārā hamāri-vāt. Jo e dev tamārā hove sahi to tam sāthe kāne kun bole nahi.
\]

If these gods of yours are real, why do they not speak?65

Within the various parallel narratives of the Abrahamic disputation (such as Q. 21:63–65), both times the assertion is made regarding the nature of idols: mā hāʾulāʾi yanṭiqūn (‘these things cannot speak’). From a narrative standpoint, this exemplifies the most profound intertextual resonance cueing the audience receiving this Ginān to the words of the prophet Ibrahim in the Qur’anic text occurring during the Abrahamic disputation over the futility of idolatry and the incommunicative nature of the idols, wherein he poses the question to his folk why they do not enquire of the ‘big idol’ who smashed the smaller idols. The Ginān here functions as the ‘response’ to the ‘call’ of the Qur’an.

While there are no doubt many parallelisms to the mise en scène met within the Putala Ginān to various other South Asian hagiographical narratives, it is the linguistic, thematic, and semiotic parallels, displaying a point for point agreement with the Qur’anic story of Abrahamic contestations against idolatry, that attest to the function of the Putala Ginān as a form of Qur’anic reintegration. It is this form of reintegration that make the narratives in works like the Dasavatara and many other Ginān narratives interconnected with other parallel bodies of South Asian bodies of literature, but likewise rather unique. This is correctly observed by Christopher Shackle and Zawahir Moir in their study of Ginān; they note, ‘It is doubtful if much is to be gained from comparing the austered ginanic idiom...to
the Vaisnava poetic tradition...contrasts here are more profitably to be pursued than any
real parallels.66

It is the totality of the Qur’anic thematic witness that stands as powerful attestation to the
inculcation of Qur’anic themes, and while this is by no means identicality, identicality is not
a prerequisite for indexicality. This pattern of the reintegration of Qur’anic and Indic themes
appertaining to prophetic attributes, being applied within the framework of the ginānic
narrative on the divine figures featured in the Satpanth, is a rather normative feature of
that tradition. Dominique Sila-Khan has done excellent work demonstrating this ginānic
proclivity for didactic integration of reimagined motifs.67 At times it is not the pīr himself
but rather the mukhī who exemplifies the prophetic attributes.

In an Imam Shahi Ginān68 extolling the virtues of the mukhī,69 the Ginān here integrates
and repurposes some seminal Qur’anic themes. As part of the enumeration of duties incum-
bent upon the one who been worthy to occupy the sacrality of the office, and how he should
conduct himself in the pastoral care of the jamāʿat, the mukhī is extolled as possessing a
litany of felicities. Most notably for the present discussion, ‘Mukhi te je muvā mānvi kare
jinkā dil hove tenā kāj sare (Mukhi is the one who breathes life into the non-living [or brings
to life the dead] and grants the wishes of the heart).’70 Another example is: ‘Mukhi is he who
has the knowledge...and the information of each house.’71 There are parallels, both linguistic
and typological, with the prophet ʿIsa in the Qur’an (Q. 3:45-51).

The prophet ʿIsa is extolled as the one who instructs the people in the scriptures (Q. 3:48),
heals the infirmities of people and even raises the dead (Q. 3:49), and perhaps in what can be
seen as the catena of the parallelism, he knows what is in their houses and what they store up
(Q. 3:49). The mukhī at the close of the ginānic narrative in question, like the prophet at the
culmination of these verses, is likewise exalted to heaven. Such a specific list of attributes,
including such peculiarities as knowing what people have in their homes, elucidates the
ginānic proclivity for reintegration of Qur’anic material.

Reading this corollary between prophets from among the previous nations of the People
of the Book and the mukhī or the pīr is reinforced all the more strongly when it is remem-
bered that the Shiʿi Imams are often portrayed as the inheritors of the attributes, or even
the superiors of the Israelite prophets in Shiʿi theological works, both Ithna ʿAshari and
Ismaʿili.72 Both the pīr and the mukhī, as the designated legate and caretaker on behalf of
the Ismaʿili Imam for the jamāʿat and his deputized pastoral agents, are portrayed at times
in Satpanth narratives as a wasīla, as it were, of the Imam, insofar as they are serving on his
behalf. This can be seen in the variegation in the ginānic term satguru at times being applied
to the Imam himself and at times to the pīr.

This consciously multiform narrative structure, repurposing Persian, Arab, and Indian
material in its vernacularism, demonstrates the variegated liminality of boundary space
which is perhaps the defining hallmark of the Gināns. The vast corpus of Ginān literature
fulfils multiple roles simultaneously, and its narrative multifocality and multivocality treat
a diverse plurality of theological, political, and cosmological issues, wholly vernacular, yet
affirming the fundamental truth content of the cosmological and theological tenets of the
Ismaʿili tradition. Namely, these are the cosmic eternal personality of the manifest Imam,
the salvific promise of the resurrection, and the echoing refrain of ʿAli as accessible through
the guidance of the imamate and those he has deputized.
CONCLUSION

The imposition of overly rigid boundaries upon tafsīr as a kind of well-defined genre has been counterproductive within Islamic studies. Viewing the Ginān as partly commentarial tradition allows scholarship to engage both ginānic articulations and tafsīr projects in a manner appropriately cognizant of the fluidity of boundary space within both discourses.

Ultimately, what is argued for here is to seek for a more expansive and accommodating framework from which to view the Ginān tradition and tafsīr. This framework conceives the Ginān as functioning as a form of vernacular scriptural exegesis and esoteric hermeneutic offered to the ginānic community. The Gināns form a repository of multiple streams of tradition, culminating in a richly religious, musical, and literary vernacular tradition attesting to the fluidity and liminality of South Asian religious discourse.

NOTES

1. I here retain here the spelling utilized by the Shia Imami Ismaili Tariqah and Religious Education Board.
2. From the Arabic word for congregation and the Persian word for a dwelling space; lit. the ‘congregation house’. It is the traditional religious and social sacred and communal space for Isma’ili prayers and other gatherings.
3. The fourth Aga Khan and the 49th hereditary Imam of the Ismaili Tariqah.
4. ‘Many times, I have recommended to my spiritual children that they should remember Ginans...it is most important that my spiritual children from wherever they may come should...hold to this tradition which is so special.” Karachi Farman, 16 December 1964; see Ginan-e-Sharif: Our Wonderful Tradition (Vancouver: Shia Imami Ismailia Association for Canada, 1977), i.

It is also worth noting the works of Alwaʾiz (the term here meaning a deputized religious instructor, teacher, and preacher for the community) Kamaluddin Ali Muhammad, a prolific author who has written and lectured extensively for the Shia Imami Ismaili Tariqah and Religious Education Board and autonomously in both a personal and professional capacity. Some of these works include ‘Ismaili Tariqah’, ‘Qur’an and Ginan’, and ‘Practices and Ceremonies: Essays on Rites and Rituals’. Alwaʾiz Kamaluddin also makes available multi-volume editions of much of the canon of Ginān literature, including grānths (long-form ginānic texts). His wife Alwaʾiza Zarina Kamaluddin has done extensive work collecting, standardizing, documenting, and recording, various ragas and maqām (tunes and melodies) that accompany the singing and reciting of Ginān. It should be noted however that many ginān variant melodies may exist for a single Ginān. Their works can be found at <Most of these works are available in Urdu and English; some even enjoy a Persian translation.

13. Tazim R. Kassam, *Songs of Wisdom, 11*
15. Gulshan Khakee, ‘The Dasa Avatāra of the Satpanthi Ismailis and the Imam Shahis of Indo-Pakistan’ (PhD thesis, Harvard University 1972), 5. Interestingly, Khakee notes this at one point within a discussion of the ubiquity of Pir Shams and Shams-i Tabriz connection/confusion. Khalkee contends that Pir Shams was buried in Multan and was called ShamsTabriz (the mentor of Jalal al-Din Rumi, the great Sufi poet buried in Konya) not only by the Ismailis of Indo-Pakistan but also by other Muslims. Guloshan Khakee, ‘The Dasa Avatāra’, 5.
17. Farhad Daftary, *Ismaili Literature, 64.*
20. Karim Nooruddin Gillani notes that the Ginān hymns are rooted in north Indian light classical and folk music, and that each ginān has a set composition raga or melodic mode. Karim Nooruddin Gillani, ‘Ginān: A Musical Heritage of Ismā’īlī Muslims’, 2005 (MA thesis, University of Alberta, Edmonton, 2005), 2. He adds elsewhere that, interestingly, ‘the same system can be found in other regional and religious communities such as Gujarat’s devotional music of dhal, and Sikh’s Shabad, as they both contain hymns, mainly based on their ritual performances and liturgical context.’ Karim Nooruddin Gillani, ‘Sound and Recitation of Khojah Ismaili Ginans: Tradition and Transformation’ (PhD thesis, University of Alberta, Edmonton, 2012), 51.
23. Farhad Daftary notes that the ‘ground for the establishment of the Fatimid state was meticulously laid by the da’i Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Shi‘ī’. Farhad Daftary, *Ismaili Literature* (New York: I.B. Taurus and the Institute
of Ismaili Studies: 2006), 26, 27. Daftary notes that ʿAbd Allah al-Shiʿi had a very robust missionary program amongst the Iktaman (Kutama) Tamazight tribe as early as 280 AH. This culminated in the overthrow of the Aghlabid polity and well-known establishment of the Fatimid Maghribi state in 296 AH. This fact was recorded by the Ismaʿili Qadi al-Nuʿmān in his Ifitah al-Daʿwa. Farhad Daftary, Ismaili Literature, 26–27, 76.


28. These events are outlined in the hagiographical work Sri Ćaitanya Caritamrita. For a discussion of these events and that text, see Ravi M. Gupta, Caitanya Vaisnava Philosophy (Abingdon, UK: 2016).


30. ‘[T]he premodern Sufi or Muslim writer working within the constraints of a Bengali language whose extant technical vocabulary was conditioned largely by Hindu ideational constructs, attempted to imagine an Islamic idea in a new literary environment. These texts become, then, historical witness to the earliest attempts to think Islamic thoughts in local language.’ Tony K. Stewart, ‘In Search of Equivalence: Conceiving Muslim-Hindu encounters through Translation theory’, History of Religions 40 no. 3 (2001), 273. Stewart observes that ‘all of translation is a search for equivalence, but obviously, the kind of equivalence that is sought is mediated by the nature of the concept being translated from the source language (SL) and the desired result in the target or received language (TL)’. Ibid, 273.

31. Zawahir Moir and Christopher Shackle, Ismaili Hymns, 66–67. Moir and Shackle render it as: ‘He who reveres Hindu teachings does not find salvation. Do not condemn the sayings of scriptures.’

32. In the Ismaʿili context, a grānth is a long form Ginān.

36. Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā (Gorakhpur: Gita Press, 2005), 49.
47. Western academic objections to the historicity of this hagiographical identification (or conflation) met with in Isma’ili hagiography notwithstanding, Pir Shams is routinely identified with the Shams who the teacher of Rumi within much of the hagiographical material. However, not all Isma’ili communities adopt this position, and in addition to Shams-i-Tabriz multiple identities have been posited for Pir Shāms. For a discussion of this, see Tazzam R. Kassam, *Songs of Wisdom and Circles of Dance: Hymns from the Satpānth Ismā’ili Muslim Saint, Pir Shams* (Albany: SUNY press, 1995), especially pages 75-125, which directly treat this question.

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JOURNAL OF THE CONTEMPORARY STUDY OF ISLAM | VOLUME 1 | ISSUE 2 | 2020
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57. Ibid., 113.
59. Ibid., 85 (translation lightly edited).
60. Such as the famous ‘I Am’ sayings of the Imam, e.g. *anā kalimat Allāh* (‘I am the word of Allah’), *anā al-mutakallim bil-waḥī* (‘I am the speaker of divine inspiration’), *anā shahr Ramadān* (‘I am the month of Ramadan’), *anā laylat al-qadr* (‘I am the Night of Destiny’), and *anā umm al-kitāb* (‘I am the mother of the Book’). In these succinct aphorisms, ‘Ali is offering commentary on the nature of revelation, what is God’s Speech, and more esoteric questions like the nature of *umm al-kitāb* mentioned in Q. 43:4. See al-Hafiz Rajab al-Bursi, *Mashariiq Anwar al-Yaqin fi Asrar Amr al-Muʾminin* (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-ʿAlami, 2017), 260–261.
64. Teena Purohit, *The Aga Khan Case*, 11.
69. The deputized officiary of the jamāʿat-khāna. The meaning linguistically is very much like the word *raʾis* in Arabic (meaning ‘head’ or ‘chief’). A *mukhī* can be either male, or female (*mukhiānī ṣāḥiba*) and can also be applied to a person of greater authority than the official presiding on behalf of the Imam over a *jamāʿat-khānai*, depending on the context.