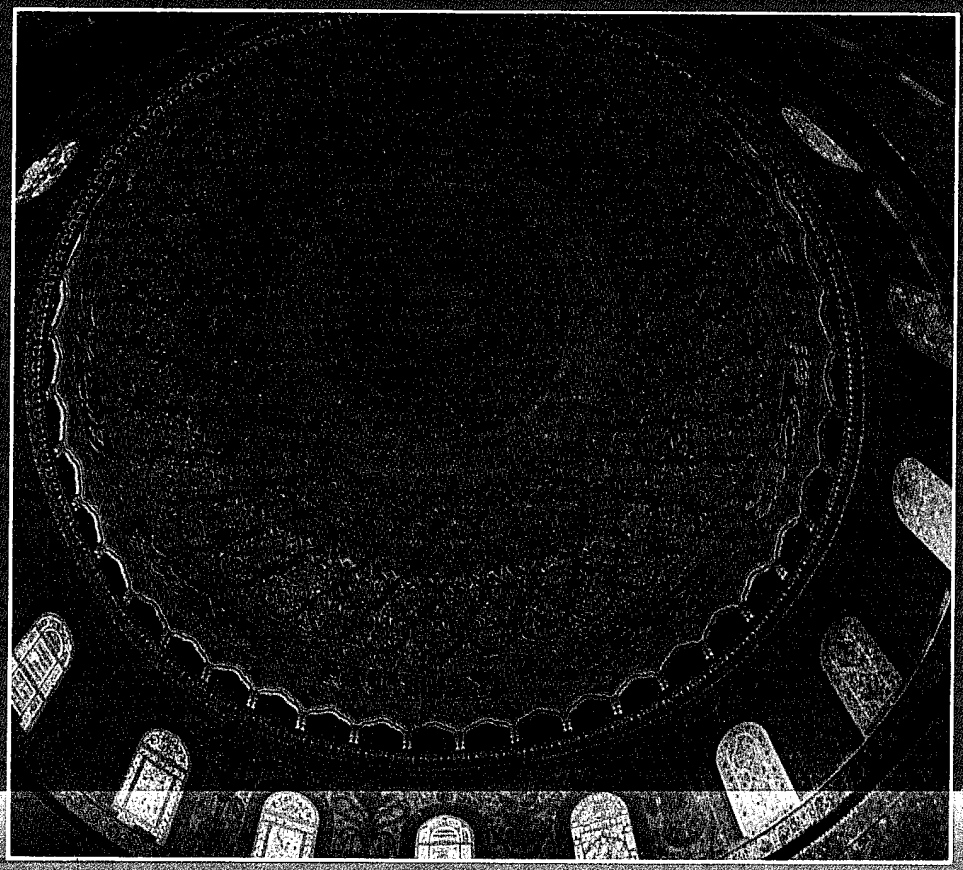
WORLD SPIRITUALITY

AN ENCYCLOPEDIC HISTORY OF THE RELIGIOUS QUEST

ISLAMIC SPIRITUALITY

MANIFESTATIONS



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1997
The Crossroad Publishing Company
370 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10017

World Spirituality, Volume 20
Diane Apostolos-Cappadona, Art Editor

Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Islamic spirituality : manifestations / edited by Seyyed Hossein Nasr.
p. cm. (World spirituality ; v. 20)
Includes bibliographical references (p.
ISBN 0-8245-0768-1; 0-8245-1724-5 (pbk.)
1. Sufism. I. Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. II. Series.
BP189.I85 1990
297'.4—dc 20 89-25272
CIP

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Spiritual Chivalry

SEYYED HOSSEIN NASR

IT IS NOT POSSIBLE to discuss Islamic spirituality without dealing with that spiritual reality which is called *futuwwah* in Arabic and *jawān-mardī* in Persian and which can be rendered into English as "mystical youth" or spiritual chivalry. Both the Arabic and Persian terms (*fatā* in Arabic and *jawān* in Persian) refer to youth or the Latin *juvenis* but have acquired a meaning related much more to the youth associated with the eternal spring of the life of the Spirit than to physical young age. To possess *futuwwah* or *jawānmardī* is to be embellished with the characteristics of courage and generosity associated with a chivalry transposed onto the highest level of meaning from the realm of external action to that of the spiritual life, without, however, excluding the world of external action. Therefore, their translation as "spiritual chivalry" evokes more than any other expression this basic Islamic concept, whose reality has been manifested in so many domains, from the activity of the guilds in the bazaars to those of knights on the battlefield, from the world of Sufi contemplatives to that of sultans and viziers.[1] Much of the spiritual substance of the Muslim soul has been molded over the centuries by *futuwwah* and *jawān-mardī*, and to this day a traditional Muslim looks with awe, reverence, and trust upon a person who manifests this "spiritual chivalry."

The Origin of *Futuwwah*

There has been a great debate concerning the origin of *futuwwah*. Some believe that the pre-Islamic Persian institution of *'ayyārī* became combined with Sufism to create *futuwwah*. (The term *'ayyār* means in general "keen of intelligence" and "brisk," but it was connected more particularly with organized groups that often rose up against the central authority of the caliph and his governors in various Persian provinces.) Others believe that just as there existed among the pre-Islamic Arabs the virtue of *muruwwah* (manliness), which consisted of courage (*shajā'ah*) and generosity (*sakhāwah*), so did the corresponding virtue develop among the sedentary

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people during the Islamic period under the heading of *futuwwah.* Yet others consider *futuwwah* to be a branch of Sufism with its own peculiar characteristics.[2] The traditional sources, especially those of the followers of *futuwwah,* consider the founder of this spiritual chivalry to be the father of monotheism, Abraham himself. The term *fatā* or youth is used in the Quran concerning Abraham in the following verse: "They said: We heard a youth (*fatā*) make mention of them, who is called Abraham" (XXI, 60). This is in reference to Abraham's breaking of idols. The celebrated Khurasani Sufi Imam Abu'l-Qāsim al-Qushayrī says in his *Risālah* (*Treatise*): "The *fatā* is he who breaks an idol. And the idol of each man is his ego."[3]

The Quran (XVIII, 13) also refers to the Seven Sleepers of the Cave (*aṣḥāb al-kahf*) as young men (*fityān*), and they too have been considered as people of *futuwwah* in later Islamic works on the subject. Considering the "ecumenical" significance of the Seven Sleepers, who belong to the whole monotheistic family,[4] and the role of Abraham as the father of monotheism, it is easy to see why *futuwwah* always possessed an "ecumenical" character. Before modern times, the followers of spiritual chivalry, whether they were Jews, Christians, or Muslims, formed a brotherhood that went beyond confessional boundaries. The *Gottesfreunde* mentioned in Rhenish mysticism bear a striking similarity to the *awliyā' Allāh,* the "friends of God" of mystical *futuwwah,* and the ideal of the followers of *futuwwah* is very similar to what one finds in the poetry of Wolfram von Eschenbach.[5] Abraham, who separated himself from the seductions of this world to seek the One God, remains the father of this spiritual chivalry common to Islam and the traditional West.[6]

"Abraham made this group embark upon the ship of the *ṭarīqah,* the mystic path. He cast the ship upon the full sea of the *ḥaqīqah,* the metaphysical truth, and made it land at the island of *futuwwah,* where the group established its domicile."[7]

Abraham was therefore the initiator of the cycle of *futuwwah,* which, according to later authors such as Wā'iẓ Kāshifī, was transmitted like prophecy (*nubuwwah*) itself. Abraham passed it to Ishmael and Isaac, Isaac to Jacob, and Jacob to Joseph, one of the chief exemplars of *futuwwah.* Then it was transmitted to Christianity and finally Islam. The Prophet of Islam received through the "Muḥammadan Light" the truth and power of *futuwwah,* which he transmitted to 'Alī, who henceforth became the supreme source of *futuwwah* in Islam for both Sunnis and Shi'ites. In one of the later treatises on *futuwwah* by 'Abd al-Razzāq Kāshānī entitled *Tuḥfat al-ikhwān fī khaṣā'iṣ al-fityān* (*The Gift of Brothers concerning the Characteristics of Spiritual Chivalry*), the cycles of prophecy and *futuwwah* are compared as follows:[8]

prophecy (*nubuwwah*)	origin	- Adam
	pole	- Ibraham
	seal	- Muḥammad
futuwwah	origin	- Abraham
	pole	- ʿAlī
	seal	- Twelfth Imam al-Mahdī

The History of *Futuwwah*

There is no doubt that historically *futuwwah* was at first closely associated with Shiʿism and also Persia. After ʿAlī, it was Salmān al-Fārsī who was revered as the master of *futuwwah* and after him Abū Muslim Khurāsānī, the famous Persian general who brought about the downfall of the Umayyads. *Futuwwah* remained closely bound to the Shiʿite idea of *walāyah* or initiatic and spiritual power. Throughout the centuries, those devoted to the Twelfth Imam have been considered as *jawānmards* and *fatās par excellence,* as those knights who carry out the ultimate battle of good against evil and of the spirit against that externalization which stultifies and eclipses spiritual reality. Even after the sixth/twelfth century, when *futuwwah* spread to Sunni circles in Iraq, Syria, and Egypt, it retained its attachment to ʿAlī, while in Ottoman Turkey it continued to possess a strong Shiʿite color until the rule of Sultan Selim, when Shiʿism in general became ever more curtailed in the Ottoman world.

The utterance *lā fatā illā ʿAlī lā sayf illā dhul'-fiqār* (there is no *fatā* except ʿAlī and no sword except *dhu'l-fiqār* [the famous double-bladed sword of ʿAlī]) has been traditionally attributed to the archangel Gabriel, who transmitted it to the Prophet. This celebrated saying has echoed over the centuries throughout the Islamic world and is especially revered in the Shiʿite world but is not confined to it. The personality of ʿAlī, at once sage and knight, contemplative and protector of laborers and craftsmen, has continued to dominate through the centuries over the horizon of *futuwwah* as it has over much of Sufism.

During the Umayyad period, *futuwwah* gained many adherents among the non-Arabs and especially Persians who had embraced Islam (the *mawālī*). It is known that Salmān, ʿAlī's close associate, had contacts with the class of craftsmen in Iraq as did Abū Muslim, around whom an extensive literature grew during later centuries when he became one of the heroes of *futuwwah.* Despite the decadence of certain forms of *futuwwah* in the

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third/ninth and fourth/tenth centuries, authentic *futuwwah* became integrated into Sufism and references began to appear in Sufi texts to this distinct form of spiritual chivalry. In his *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyyah* (*The Classes of Sufis*), Sulamī, who is the author of the first work on *futuwwah,* considers many of the great figures of Sufism, such as Maʿrūf al-Karkhī, Abū Turāb al-Nakhshabī and Abū ʿAbbās al-Dīnawarī to have belonged to the tradition of *futuwwah.*[9] After this early period, references to *futuwwah* and *jawānmardī* become even more common in Sufi writers, especially those who were Persian, such as Qushayrī and Maybudī in his voluminous Quranic commentary the *Kashf al-asrār* (*Unveiling of Secrets*), while such famous poets as ʿUnṣurī and Firdawsī and such prose writers as ʿUnṣur al-Maʿālī Kā'ūs ibn Iskandar, author of the *Qābūs-nāmah* (*Book Dedicated to Qābūs*) extolled the virtues of spiritual chivalry. These references become more common among later Sufi writers such as Rūmī, leading to the period from the seventh/tenth century to the ninth/twelfth, when most of the famous *Futuwwat-nāmahs* (treatises on spiritual chivalry) were written, the most extensive being the *Futuwwat-namā-yi sulṭānī* (*The Royal Book on Futuwwah*) by the ninth/fifteenth-century scholar and Sufi, Ḥusayn Wāʿiẓ-i Kāshifī Sabziwārī.[10]

During the last phase of the rule of the Abbasids, the caliph al-Nāṣir li-Dīni'Llāh (d. 622/1225) transformed *futuwwah* into a chivalric initiation and instituted an organized order of knights who were bound together by the rites drawn from chivalry. This order was destroyed in Iraq as a consequence of the Mongol invasion but survived for some time in Mamluk Egypt and Syria and to some extent in Ottoman Turkey.

It was, however, the guild form of *futuwwah* which came to replace knightly *futuwwah* from the eighth/fourteenth century but which also remained closely associated with Nāṣirian *futuwwah.* In its popular manifestation, this type of guild *futuwwah* continued to be associated with Shiʿite circles in Anatolia as was also the case later in India, where the *Kasb-nāmahs* (*Books of Sustenance*) had a distinctly Shiʿite color. These guilds survived in the Ottoman world up to the thirteenth/nineteenth century, each guild having its own *fütüwwet-nāme,* the most important of which was *Fütüwwet-nāme-i kebir* (*The Great Book of Futuwwah*) of Sayyid Meḥmed al-Raḍawī, from the tenth/sixteenth century.[11] The guilds even continue to survive to this day here and there in Syria, Persia itself, Muslim India, and other regions of the Islamic world wherever traditional methods of craftsmanship and trade are still practiced.

Knightly *futuwwah* also left its mark on traditional sports such as wrestling, where in Persia the *zūr-khānah* (literally, "house of strength") survives to this day as its offshoot. The *zūr-khānah,* with its "sacred pit," guide

or *murshid,* initiation, emphasis on moral virtue as well as the building and strengthening of the body, represents an important survival of knightly *futuwwah.* Over the centuries a whole class of men has appeared in society possessing proverbial physical strength combined with moral virtue, especially generosity and courage, which are so much emphasized in *futuwwah.*[12] They have been the protectors of society against both the oppression of rulers and internal aggression from thieves and ruffians. One of these wrestler knights, Pahlawān Maḥmūd Khwārazmī (d. 722/1322), known as Pūriyā-yi Walī, is one of Persia's national heroes. A great wrestler and fighter, he was also an accomplished Sufi and poet to whom the treatise *Kanz al-ḥaqā'iq* (*Treasure of Truths*) is attributed. To this day young wrestlers in the *zūr-khānah* swear by his name, and he embodies the combination of strength with humility, courage, and generosity which has characterized this type of *futuwwah* or *jawānmardī* over the centuries.

The Content of the *Futuwwat-nāmahs:* The Goal of *Futuwwah,* Initiation, Relation to the Crafts and Professions

The *Books of Futuwwah* written between the seventh/thirteenth and the ninth/fifteenth century by such figures as 'Abd al-Razzāq Kāshānī, Shams al-Dīn Āmulī, Shihāb al-Dīn 'Umar Suhrawardī, and Wā'iẓ-i Kāshifī reveal much about the goal and purpose of *futuwwah,* the rites associated with it, and the link between *futuwwah* and various crafts and guilds. As an example, one can consider Kāshānī's *Tuḥfat al-ikhwān fi khaṣā'iṣ al-fityān.*[13] According to the author, the fundamental concept associated with *futuwwah* is *fiṭrah* or man's primordial nature. Despite being cast into this world of chaos and darkness, man continues to bear within himself that *fiṭrah* with which he was created. The *fiṭrah* is a light that shines at the center of man's being even if it has now become covered by the veils of passion and forgetfulness. *Futuwwah* creates a condition in the soul that allows the spirit of man's *fiṭrah* to triumph over the darkness of this world and to conquer man's fallen nature rather than remaining within him in a state of potency. The goal of *futuwwah* is to make possible the transfer of the light of *fiṭrah* from potentiality to actuality. The greatest battle of the veritable knight is this struggle to make possible the reconquest of our nature by the light of *fiṭrah.* Spiritual chivalry on the highest level is the art by means of which we become ourselves and gain full awareness of our primordial nature.

In the first chapter of his work, Kāshānī deals with the stages of *futuwwah.* It begins with *muruwwah,* which is close to the Western medieval

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notion of *courtoisie.* Its higher stage is *walāyah,* in the Shiʿite sense of spiritual initiation, which Kāshānī identifies as return to one's *fiṭrah.* Repentance, which is the beginning of every spiritual quest, is none other than the primordial purity (*ṭahārah*) of man, and *futuwwah* or *jawānmardī* none other than the return to the condition of *alast,* that is, the primordial covenant made between God and man when, according to the Quran, God asks man "Am I not your Lord?" (*alastu bi-rabbikum*) and man replies "Yea!" (*balā*) (VII, 172). The third level above *futuwwah* is *risālah* or prophecy, which is at once the source of both *walāyah* and *futuwwah.* Without revelation man cannot actualize the light of his primordial nature in himself, although that nature resides at the center of his being.

The second chapter of Kāshānī's treatise treats the subject of *walāyah* (Persian *walāyat*), revealing why it is so central and why it is the link between prophecy and *futuwwah, walāyah* being the perfection (*kamāl*) of *futuwwah.* Abraham was the first person in whom *futuwwah* and *walāyah* became manifested at the same time. It is he who broke the idols in the name of the One God.

The third chapter deals with the roots of *futuwwah* and the conditions for entering into its fold. There is a clear indication in Kāshānī of the initiatic rites associated with *futuwwah.* The rites involve the drinking of water and salt, which the Prophet had offered to ʿAlī and Salmān. Then it involves the wearing of a pair of pants (*sarāwāl*) under one's dress like the one worn by ʿAlī. Finally, it involves the wearing of a belt as the Prophet had put on a belt around ʿAlī's waist. Each of these rites is symbolic of a spiritual reality. Water symbolizes gnosis and wisdom, salt justice, the pants decency and continence, and the belt courage and honor. There is an initiatic transmission from master to disciple actualized through rites that resemble the Sufi initiation as far as transmission of initiatic power is concerned, but the forms of these rites differ.

In the fourth chapter the author turns to the foundations and meaning of *futuwwah,* the foundation being none other than the purification of the soul, which alone can make possible the actualization of the light of man's primordial nature or *fiṭrah.* Kāshānī then proceeds to discuss the virtues of *futuwwah* which are central to the understanding of its reality.

The Virtues according to *Futuwwah*

Kāshānī's enumeration and description of the virtues of spiritual chivalry reveal how central the virtues are to the whole of *futuwwah,* just as they are to Sufism, for in both cases the reality involved is not words or thoughts but being and actions which affect and modify one's mode of being. The

virtues enumerated by Kāshānī, as by other masters of *futuwwah* in one form or another, are as follows:

1. repentance (*tawbah*). This involves inner transformation and return to one's origins.

2. generosity (*sakhā*). This is the highest level of *muruwwah* and consists of three degrees: the first involves objectivity and generosity without expectation of return; the second is beneficence and the giving of oneself and one's property through preference and freely; and the third is the giving of one's wealth in helping one's friends and allowing them to share in what one possesses.

3. humility (*tawāḍu'*). This is to make one's ego subservient to the intellect at the moment of action.

4. peace (*amn*). This is to have inner certitude and tranquillity of mind, and it is not possible without the light of faith (*īmān*) in one's heart.

5. truthfulness (*ṣidq*). *Ṣidq* is the basis of wisdom, and the *jawānmard* is the person who is always truthful and whose outward and private actions do not contradict each other.

6. guidance (*hidāyat*). This is to follow the path that leads to salvation, and it implies being firm in moving forward; at this stage guidance implies "vision through the heart" and gaining the knowledge of certainty (*'ilm al-yaqīn*).

7. counsel (*naṣīḥat*). This is the origin of the light of justice and the result of inner equilibrium bestowed by God.

8. faithfulness (*wafā*). This is to remain faithful to one's word, and on the highest level it refers to fulfilling the pre-eternal covenant made between God and man.

Kāshānī then mentions the calamities (*āfāt*) that can harm *futuwwat.* Foremost among these is pride, which always remains a danger, necessitating control of the carnal soul (*nafs*) at all times.

Finally, the author delineates the differences between *fatā, mutafattī,* and *mudda'ī.* Here he distinguishes between the real spiritual knight (*fatā*) or possessor of *futuwwah,* the person who claims such a state without being faithful to its principles (*mutafattī*), and the pretender (*mudda'ī*) who joins the circle of spiritual knights without having ever walked upon their path or learned of their inner states.

The author concludes his treatise by summarizing the virtues and their importance and emphasizes again the significance of generosity and hospitality.

Virtue, then, lies at the heart of *futuwwah,* for it alone can transform the soul and embellish it. Through popular forms of *futuwwah,* certain virtues were inculcated among different groups and classes of traditional Islamic

society, and on the highest level the virtues of *futuwwah* became synonymous with those of Sufism.

Futuwwah and the Guilds

As mentioned already, *futuwwah* became the spirit and guiding principle of many of the guilds in Persia, Anatolia, Syria, and other regions of the Islamic world. Through it, the activities of the artisan were integrated into the religious life and the outward activity of craftsmen became the support for the "inner work," much like the activity of medieval Western architects and craftsmen. There are several treatises in Persian, Arabic, and Turkish that bear testimony to the role of *futuwwah* in making possible the spiritual integration of traditional activities in the realm of the arts and crafts, which from the Islamic point of view are one and the same.[14] Such treatises exist for example for the guild of blacksmiths and textile makers.

The *Futuwwat-nāmah* of the textile makers (*chītsāzān*) is particularly significant in clarifying the relation between the guilds and *futuwwah*.[15] According to this treatise, every action in making and painting the textile has a symbolic significance. The chief of the guild of textile makers was the sixth Shi'ite Imam, Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, and it was Gabriel who first taught mankind how to dye cloth. The treatise insists that it is necessary to have a master (*ustād*) and that only through the spiritual instructions transmitted by the chain of *futuwwah* can spirit be breathed into the labor of the craftsman and significance be bestowed upon it.

Through *futuwwah,* Islamic spirituality penetrated into the everyday activities of Islamic society, and art became integrated into the spiritual dimension of Islam, not only theoretically but also in practice. No full understanding of Islamic spirituality is possible without the comprehension of the role of spiritual chivalry in transforming the soul of those who in turn transformed and ennobled matter in that universal activity which is art in its traditional sense and before it became confined to a special class of human beings within modern Western society.

Rūmī and Sincerity of Action

In one of the most famous episodes in the *Mathnawī,* Rūmī has summarized in immortal Persian poetry what lies at the heart of *futuwwah,* namely, selfless generosity, courage, and detached action combined with sincerity (*ikhlāṣ*) and dedicated to God. The account involves the battle between 'Alī, the pole of *futuwwah,* and a warrior who had engaged him upon the battlefield:

Learn how to act sincerely [*ikhlāṣ*] from ʿAlī: know that the Lion of God (ʿAlī) was purged of (all) deceit.

In fighting against the infidels he got the upper hand of (vanquished) a certain knight, and quickly drew a sword and made haste (to slay him).

He spat on the face of ʿAlī, the pride of every prophet and every saint;

He spat on the countenance before which the face of the moon bows low in the place of worship.

ʿAlī at once threw his sword away and relaxed (his efforts) in fighting him.

That champion was astounded by this act and by his showing forgiveness and mercy without occasion.

He said, "You lifted your keen sword against me: why have you flung it aside and spared me?

What did you see that was better than combat with me, so that you have become slack in hunting me down?

What did you see, so that such anger as yours abated, and so that such a lightning flashed and (then) recoiled? . . .

In bravery you are the Lion of the Lord: in generosity who indeed knows who (what) you are?

In generosity you are (like) Moses' cloud in the desert, whence came the dishes of food and bread incomparable." . . .

He [ʿAlī] said, "I am wielding the sword for God's sake, I am the servant of God, I am not under the command of the body.

I am the Lion of God, I am not the lion of passion: my deed bears witness to my religion.

In war I am (manifesting the truth of) *thou didst not throw when thou threwest:* I am (but) as the sword, and the wielder is the (Divine) Sun.

I have removed the baggage of self out of the way, I have deemed (what is) other than God to be non-existence.

I am a shadow, the Sun is my lord; I am the chamberlain, I am not the curtain (which prevents approach) to Him.

I am filled with the pearls of union, like a (jewelled) sword: in battle I make (men) living, not slain.

Blood does not cover the sheen of my sword: how should the wind sweep away my clouds?

I am not a straw, I am a mountain of forbearance and patience and justice: how should the fierce wind carry off the mountain?"[16]

Ibn ʿArabī and *Futuwwah*

The highest meaning of *futuwwah* is to be found in the writings of Ibn ʿArabī, who integrated this particular strand of spirituality along with so many other currents into the vast synthesis for which he is so well known. Ibn ʿArabī had already encountered a number of masters of *futuwwah* while he was in Andalusia. In his *Rūḥ al-quds* (*Sacred Spirit*) he writes concerning Abū Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Malāqī al-Fakhkhār, "This man, who was

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the chamberlain, I am not the cur-
(jewelled) sword: in battle I make
word: how should the wind sweep
bearance and patience and justice:
mountain?"[16]

Futuwwah

be found in the writings of Ibn
and of spirituality along with so
is for which he is so well known.
ber of masters of *futuwwah* while
cred Spirit) he writes concerning
-Fakhkhār, "This man, who was

known as the 'ship-caulker' (al-Qalafāt), was a companion of Abū al-Rabī' al-Kafīf and others and a friend of Ibrāhīm b. Ṭarīf. He followed the way of Chivalry (*futuwwah*) and showed all the signs of doing so."[17]

Ibn 'Arabī devoted three chapters of his magnum opus *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyyah* (*The Meccan Revelation*) to the subject of *futuwwah* and also discusses this theme in his other works. For example, in his *Ḥilyat al-abdāl* (*The Ornament of the Abdāl*) he mentions not only the following of the *Sharī'ah* but also the acquisition of virtues (*makārim al-akhlāq*), among which he mentions explicitly *zuhd* (asceticism) and *futuwwah* as indispensable for spiritual progress.[18] It is, however, in the *Futūḥāt* that Ibn 'Arabī delves into the deepest mysteries of *futuwwah*. In the first chapter of this monumental work he describes the meeting with the mysterious youth (*fatā*) to whose encounter he attributes the creation of the whole work. It is this dazzling figure who reveals to him the mystery of the *Ka'bah* of Divine Lordship.

> We may roughly distinguish four moments in this prelude. The first moment is constituted by the processional and the encounter before the Black Stone; it culminates in the declaration in which the Youth states who he is. The recognition of the mystic meaning of the Ka'ba, emerging through its stone walls, goes hand in hand with the mystic's encounter with his own celestial pleroma in the person of the Youth. The Youth commands him: "Behold the secret of the Temple before it escapes; you will see what pride it derives from those who revolve in processional around its stones, looking at them from beneath its veils and coverings." And indeed the mystic sees it take on life. Gaining awareness of the Youth's rank, of his position dominating the where and the when, of the meaning of his "descent," he addresses him in the world of Apparitions (of Idea-Images, *'ālam al-mithāl*): "I kissed his right hand and wiped the sweat of Revelation from his forehead. I said to him: "Look at him who aspires to live in your company and desires ardently to enjoy your friendship." For all answer he gave me to understand by a sign and an enigma that such was his fundamental nature that he conversed with no one except in symbols. "When you have learned, experienced, and understood my discourse in symbols, you will know that one does not apprehend or learn it as one apprehends and learns the eloquence of orators. . . ." I said to him: "O messenger of good tidings! That is an immense benefit. Teach me your vocabulary, initiate me into the movements one must give to the key that opens your secrets, for I should like to converse by night with you, I should like to make a pact with you." Again, he who is thus introduced as the eternal Companion, the celestial *paredros,* answers only by a sign. But then I understood. The reality of his beauty was unveiled to me, and I was overwhelmed with love. I fainted and he took hold of me. When I recovered from my faint, still trembling with fear, he knew that I had understood who he was. He threw away his traveler's staff and halted (that is, ceased to be the evanescent one, he who escapes). . . . I said to him: "Impart to me some of your secrets that I may be among the number of your doctors." He said to me: "Note well

the articulations of my nature, the ordering of my structure. What you ask me you will find etched in myself, for I am not someone who speaks words or to whom words are spoken. My knowledge extends only to myself, and my essence (my person) is no other than my Names. I am Knowledge, the Known and the Knower. I am Wisdom, the work of wisdom and the Sage (or: I am *Sophia, philosophy* and the *philosopher*)."[19]

Who is this figure who is at once the knower and the known and whom Ibn ʿArabī describes with such paradoxical characteristics as "being neither alive nor dead" and "contained in all things and containing all things," the being from whose nature "all that is written in this book" is drawn?[20] This youth, the reality of *futuwwah,* is none other than Ibn ʿArabī's own reality in the world of eternity, his being *in divinis.*

Certain *ḥadīths* of the Prophet refer to the inhabitants of paradise as beardless youths, and Ibn ʿArabī himself quotes a *ḥadīth* according to which, "I have seen my Lord in the form of a beardless youth."[21] The meeting with the *fatā* before the *Kaʿbah* is therefore nothing other than Ibn ʿArabī's encounter with his Lord. For those who, like Abraham, have been able to break the idol of their passions, it is possible to meet the *fatā* who is the source of all spiritual chivalry. In meeting with one's celestial reality man participates in that mystical youth which is none other than the youthfulness of the eternal spring of the life of the Spirit. From that youth there emanates the spiritual chivalry which has affected the mores and wonts of numerous knights and rulers, craftsmen, and artisans. But on the highest level, this eternal youth enables man to realize supreme knowledge and to become aware that he *is* himself only when he realizes himself *in divinis.* The highest form of spiritual chivalry is therefore to break the yoke of servitude to our lower nature in order to be worthy of encountering that celestial youth, that *fatā,* who *is* who we are, have been and will be eternally and in whom alone are we truly ourselves, immortalized in the proximity of the Divine Self.

Notes

1. This translation has been used by H. Corbin in his numerous important studies of the subject, such as *En Islam iranien* (Paris: Gallimard, 1972) vol. 4, Livre VII, entitled "Le Douzième Imam et la chevalrie spirituelle" (pp. 390ff.); and his *L'Homme et son ange: Initiation et chevalrie spirituelle* (Paris: Fayard, 1983) chap. 3, entitled "Juvénilité et chevalrie en Islam iranien" (pp. 207ff.).

2. There is a vast literature on *futuwwah* in European languages as well as in Arabic and Persian. Some of the most important essays on the subject have been assembled and rendered into Persian by E. Naraghi in his *Āʾīn-i jawānmardī* (Tehran: Chāpkhāna-yi Katībah, 1363 A.H.S.). For a bibliography of works in European languages, see the article "*futuwwa*" by F. Taeschner in the *New Encyclopedia of Islam.* The best study in

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3. Quoted by M. Chodkiewicz in his introduction to Ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Sulamī, *The Book of Sufi Chivalry (Futuwwah),* trans. Sheikh Tosun Bayrak al-Jerrahi al-Halveti (New York: Inner Traditions International, 1983) 21.

4. The late L. Massignon carried out many studies on the *aṣḥāb al-kahf* to bring out their significance as a bridge between the three monotheistic religions. See his *Opera Minora,* ed. Y. Moubarac (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1969).

5. See Corbin, *L'Homme et son ange,* 218–19.

6. The later texts of *futuwwah* identify Seth as the person with whom *futuwwah* became a spiritual path (*tarīqah*) and whose dress was the cape or *khirqah.* But at the time of Abraham this *khirqah* became "too heavy" to bear and so Abraham found a new way, which was that of *futuwwah* as it came to be known in later periods.

7. Corbin, *L'Homme,* 219.

8. See M. Ṣarrāf, ed., *Rasā'il-i jawānmardān* (Tehran and Paris: A. Maisonneuve, 1973); see also Naraghi, *Ā'īn-i jawānmardī,* 20.

9. See A. Zarrīnkūb, *Justijū dar taṣawwuf-i Īrān* (Tehran: Amīr Kabīr, 1357 A.H.) chap. 14; and S. Nafisi, *Sarchashma-yi taṣawwuf dar Īrān* (Tehran: Librairie Foroughi, 1965) 130ff. Ibn Mi'mār Ḥanbalī is the earliest Sufi figure associated with *futuwwah.*

10. Edited for the first time by M. J. Maḥjūb (Tehran: Bunyād-i farhang-i Īrān, 1350 A.H.) with an extensive introduction by the editor on the history of *futuwwah.*

11. See F. Taeschner, "*Futuwwa,*" in *New Encyclopedia of Islam,* where the *futuwwāt* in the Ottoman world are discussed in detail. Each guild, such as that of smiths, leather workers, or textile makers, possessed its own *futuwwat-nāmah* relating its artistic practices to spiritual principles. See also Yasar Nuri Ozturk, *The Eye of the Heart* (Istanbul: Redhouse Press, 1988) chap. 8.

12. On the *zūr-khānah,* see Partaw Bayḍā'ī Kāshānī, "Ta'thīr-i ā'īn-i jawānmardī dar warzishhā-yi bāstānī," in Naraghi, *Ā'īn-i jawānmardī,* 142–48.

13. The text is given by Ṣarrāf in his *Rasā'il.*

14. This has been treated amply by T. Burckhardt in many of his works, such as *The Art of Islam,* trans. P. Hobson (London: Festival of the World of Islam, 1976); and *Mirror of the Intellect,* trans. W. Stoddart, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987).

15. See Ṣarrāf, *Rasā'il.*

16. R. A. Nicholson, *The Mathnawī of Jalāluddīn Rūmī* (London: Luzac, 1982) 2:202–5.

17. See Ibn 'Arabī, *Sufis of Andalusia,* trans. R. W. J. Austin (London: Allen & Unwin, 1971) 129. In the same work he also mentions another master of *futuwwah,* Abu'l-Ḥasan al-Qanawī, whom he met in Andalusia.

18. See C. Addas, *Ibn 'Arabī ou La quête du Soufre Rouge* (Paris: Gallimard, 1989) 199.

19. H. Corbin, *Creative Imagination in the Ṣūfism of Ibn 'Arabī,* trans. R. Manheim (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969) 383–85.

20. See Chodkiewicz, introduction to Ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Sulamī, *The Book of Sufi Chivalry,* 23.

21. Ibid., 28.