

ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK ON SUFISM

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SUFISM AND QUR'ĀNIC ETHICS

Atif Khalil

Introduction

The Qur'ān lies at the heart of Muslim spirituality, and provides the fount and wellspring for its doctrines and practices. To the extent that classical Islam as a whole was animated in both form and spirit by its central Scripture, all the way from law and ritual to theology and the arts, it would only be natural to find its reverberations running throughout its mysticism as well.¹ Indeed, some of the most influential literary expressions of Sufism, ranging from Ghazālī's (d. 1111) *Ihyā' 'ūlum al-dīn* (Reviving the Religious Sciences) to Rūmī's (d. 1273) *Mathnawī-i ma'nawī* (Couplets of Inner Meaning), took on the form of commentaries of the holy text, albeit in a different key, not unlike medieval Jewish works that were often analogously rooted in the Torah. "Everything of which we speak in our meetings and in our writings," Ibn 'Arabī (d. 1240) would write, "comes from the Qur'ān and its treasures."² And when Abū Tālib al-Makkī (d. 996) declared in his *Qūt al-qulūb* (Nourishment of Hearts) drawing on an early saying, sometimes ascribed to the Prophet, that "the people of the Qur'ān are the people of God, and His elect,"³ he was expressing a firmly held view in the fledging tradition for which he was giving voice. The polyvocality of Muslim scripture would itself generate many of the debates that would animate the intellectual culture of Sufism, and beyond that, the various competing theologies of Islam.

The Qur'ān, teleology and theological anthropology

The Qur'ānic foundations of Sufi piety and thought are perhaps most clearly discernable in the arena of ethics. Since, however, these ethical reflections are grounded in a larger theological and mystical vision of the nature of reality, they cannot be entirely separated from broader questions centering around human selfhood and teleology. At risk of generalizing, it would not be inaccurate to say that as a whole the goal of Sufism lies not simply in Paradise but the God of Paradise, in ultimate reality or *al-Haqq*, and not simply a felicitous afterlife. As Rābi'a al-'Adawiyya (d. 801) is famously reported to have said, "first the neighbor, then the house (*al-jār thumma al-dār*)." There is also the famous anecdote of her running through the streets with a torch in one hand and a bucket of water in the other, threatening to set Paradise to flames and to extinguish the fires of hell, so that worship might be made pure.

The historicity of the account, questioned by modern scholars, remains of secondary importance to the underlying moral of the story, one that accurately captures many of the mystically minded critiques of self-interested incentives to piety.⁴ The Qurʾān, for many of the Sufis, alludes to higher levels of surrender when it speaks of the companions of the left hand (the damned), the companions of the right hand (the saved), and finally, “the foremost” (*sābiqūn*), who are also “those brought near” (*muqarrabūn*) (Q. 56: 8–11).⁵ And there is also a criticism by way of intimation, of the mercenary-like devotion of some, when it chides those *who worship God for gain* (*alā ḥarf*) (Q. 22:11). Self-transcendence, in some form or another, is therefore a recurring motif in the classical literature of Sufism, and is usually described through the language of *fanāʾ* and *baqāʾ*, annihilation and subsistence. While the precise nature of what remains of the self, if anything at all, in the penultimate stages of the spiritual quest is difficult to determine, in light of both the allusive language of the Sufis as well as the ineffable nature of mystical experience, what is uncontested is that the final goal implies a desire in some form or another for intimacy with God.

Now how is this intimacy to be obtained? For many of the Sufis it is through realizing the divine attributes latent within the human soul, an idea sometimes retraced to the Prophetic injunction to “take on the attributes of God (*takhallaqū bi akhlāq Allāh*).”⁶ On the principle that like-attracts-like, the process of assuming these attributes draws the soul by an irresistible force into the court of God’s being. Thus Ghazālī could unequivocally declare that “the perfection of the servant (*kamāl al-ʿabd*), and his ultimate felicity (*saʿāda*), lies in assuming the attributes of God, most High.”⁷ These attributes themselves find their correspondence at the human level in virtues or beautiful character traits (*akhlāq*), the acquisition of which form the cornerstone of Sufism. Indeed, the Prophet himself is reported to have said, “I did not come except to perfect good character (*makārim al-akhlāq*).” And we also have the ḥadīth, “those of you most beloved to me are those of most beautiful character (*akhlāq*).”⁸ The internalization of these *akhlāq* are therefore not a peripheral aspect of Islamic spirituality, but lie at the center of its teleological vision, concerned as it is with the cultivation and refinement of the soul (*tazkiyat al-nafs*). As for the relation of these virtues to the defining figure of the religion, the Qurʾān says addressing the Prophet, *Verily you are of a tremendous character* (*khuluq*) (68:4). And it underscores the necessity of emulating his example when, addressing the broader human community, it states, *You have in the Messenger of God a sublime example* (33:21). What this means is that the divine attributes are most perfectly embodied at the human level in the model of the Prophet, not through divine incarnation, indwelling (*hulūl*), or a unitive conjunction of two distinct beings (*ittiḥād*), but reflection,⁹ with the Prophet serving as an archetype or template for human ethical perfection. And the Islamic science that dealt with this ethical dimension more than any other in the history of the faith was *taṣawwuf*. In fact, it would not be an exaggeration to suggest that no sub-tradition explored the psychological and theological dimensions of the virtues as comprehensively as Sufism. In this light, it is no surprise that Ibn ʿArabī would open his chapter on the “station of *taṣawwuf*” in his *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya* (Meccan Revelations) with a saying illustrative of this very point. “The people of the way of God,” he writes, “say that Sufism is good character (*khuluq*), and that he who surpasses you in character, has surpassed you in Sufism.”¹⁰ Moreover, no Islamic discipline that dealt with ethics exerted as far-reaching an influence on Muslims as a whole as *taṣawwuf*, due to its percolation throughout virtually all spheres of premodern Islamic culture and piety. The Greek-inspired branches of Islamic philosophy that drew heavily on Aristotelian ethics were no match, at the collective level, for the more Qurʾānically inspired ethics of the Sufis,¹¹ even though traces of the former were undeniably present in the latter to varying degrees depending on which figure one might have in mind.¹²

As noted, for many of the spiritual authorities, ethics was premised on the idea of becoming, for lack of a better term, divine-like through a process of *takhalluq*. But does this doctrine have any basis in the Qur'an itself? In other words, does the theological anthropology of Sufism which discerns in the human being a (potential) theophany¹³ find any corroboration in the sacred scripture of the faith? Naturally, this depends on how one interprets the text. For some, like those theologians who stressed the total and absolute transcendence of God, there could be no common ground between the divine and the human orders, since *there is nothing like unto Him* (Q. 42:11). To suggest otherwise would lead one down the path of an anthropomorphism anathema to guardians of divine otherness. The closest one could come to encountering God might be through the Qur'an, but the intense debates that took place in early Islam around its ontological status disclosed some of the purely logical problems inherent in the idea of approaching a being conceived of as exclusively transcendent even through His word (*kalām*). For many of the Sufis, however, this divine likeness was present in the primordial Adam, and it was for this reason that God commanded the angels to bow before him. To quote the Qur'anic verse, *And when We said to the angels, prostrate yourselves before Adam. They all fell prostrate except Iblis. He demurred through pride and so became of the deniers* (Q. 2:34). The seeming paradox behind a divine instruction for some of His creatures to bow before another (the subject of extensive exegesis) was best resolved, for these Sufis, through a recognition of the theophanic nature of the primordial, perfect Adam—a nature alluded to in the canonical ḥadīth, “Verily God created Adam *‘alā šūratihi*.” While the final refrain of the report, *‘alā šūratihi*, was read by some to mean, “in his form,” which is to say that Adam was created as a fully fashioned adult—an interpretation that safeguarded divine transcendence—grammatically speaking, the ḥadīth could also be read “in *His* form,” with the pronoun returning to God. For Ibn ‘Arabī, both interpretations were valid since they conformed to the rules of Arabic, and since, for him, the grammatical rules and conventions of the language in which the scripture was revealed could be the only criterion to distinguish legitimate from illegitimate interpretations,¹⁴ the latter had to be accepted. Most importantly, it signified for him Adam’s status as a creature made in the form of the name Allah, as a mirror of the divine names contained in the supreme all-encompassing Name.¹⁵ Curiously, this all-encompassing nature of the primordial Adam is also why the mystic understood him to be androgynous, before the emergence of Eve and their eating from the forbidden tree, following which *their nudity became apparent to them (badat lahumā saw’ātuhumā)*¹⁶ (Q. 7:22, 20:121), and following which, through a process of sexual differentiation, Adam became male.¹⁷ (The implications such a reading might have on modern Muslim feminist ethics are self-evident.)

The theological anthropology of the Sufis who subscribed to the doctrine of *imago dei* was also rooted in the myth of Adam’s origins. In the Qur'an we read, *And I breathed into him of My spirit* (38:72; cf. Genesis 2:7). It is true that some commentators interpreted the *iqāfa* construct in *rūhī*, “My spirit,” to imply no more than possession, as when God might say “My earth” or “My paradise.” Others, however, interpreted it as an explicit reference to the divine nature of the spirit, in so far as it was believed to be an extension of God Himself. Ghazālī drew attention to this theme in his *Book of the Marvels of the Heart*, the *Kitāb sharḥ ‘ajā’ib al-qalb* of the *Iḥyā’*, but broached the subject with caution, noting that the *rūḥ* is a marvelous mystery that confounds and stupefies most intellects, and that its secret is alluded to in the verse, *And they ask you about the rūḥ. Say, the rūḥ is from the command of my Lord, and you have not been given knowledge save a little* (Q. 17:85).¹⁸ But his language, as readers of the *Iḥyā’* know all too well, was guarded and allusive¹⁹ (a quality for which Zaehner had little patience, and which led

to his contention that “Muslim mysticism is a source of confusion”²⁰). Ghazālī did however note that this *rūḥ* must be distinguished from the animating force of the body which, in his time, was the concern of medicine.²¹ Zabīdī (d. 1791) in his own lengthy commentary of the *Iḥyāʾ* would mention in passing that the spirit in Q. 17:85 is like God’s speech, implying its uncreated nature, but he would draw no explicit relation with Adam’s spirit, or suggest he was a repository of a pre-eternal, uncreated, divine element.²² Ibn ‘Arabī, however, in his *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* (Bezels of Wisdom) would be explicit, asserting that it is precisely due to this divine (or divine-like) *rūḥ*, which lies at the center of the human being that she yearns for God to begin with, much as one might long for their homeland in a state of exile²³—whence the metaphysical significance of the ḥadīth, “the love of the homeland is a part of faith (*ḥubb al-waṭn min al-imān*).”²⁴ And this same *rūḥ* would, for Ibn ‘Arabī and countless other Sufis, be the ultimate basis for the possibility of love between God and the human being, because one can only love one’s own similar. In fact, many of the classical thinkers who denied the possibility of passionate love between God and man did so on the grounds that one can only fully love a member of one’s own species, due to the shared nature of lovers.²⁵ This was not, however, the case for those for whom love lay at the center of the mystical quest, as both its catalyst and final end. Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qunawī (d. 1273/1274) would write of those struck by its arrow, “indeed, they do not know why they love Him, and they have no specific request (*maṭlab*) of Him. Rather, their turning to Him is caused by an original, essential affinity (*munāsaba aṣliyya dhātiyya*).”²⁶ The key term in the passage here is *munāsaba*, a word that suggests beyond mere “affinity” the idea “correspondence.” But this *munāsaba* was not just at the level of the inner essence of the human being. It also extended to the ethical qualities, attributes and character traits realized in the course of the mystical life, which intensified and made possible the reciprocal ecstasy of love that marked the relation between the human lover and divine beloved, or conversely, the divine lover and human beloved.

Needless to say, the divine likeness between God and the human being was not, for those Sufis who upheld it, in any sense corporeal or physical, at least not materially (even though the physical form was rich in symbolism, beginning with the erect stature of the human being which reflected God’s unity). If the divine presence were apparent in Adam’s very form, at the most outward and superficial level, through a one-to-one correspondence, Iblis would have no reason to protest God’s command with the words, *You have created me of fire (nār) while You have created him of clay* (Q. 7:12). After all, Adam’s exterior shell was fashioned from *ṭīn*—“from the dust of the earth,” to quote Genesis—which is lowly and base, and carried no clear sign of divine splendor or majesty, at least not in relation to the overwhelming beauty of the angels and the fiery luminosity of Satan. Yet Adam’s form was a vessel for the *rūḥ*, for gnosis, and for the divine secret, of which Sahl al-Tustarī (d. 896) would say, were it to be revealed, “lordship would become obsolete.”²⁷ The theomorphic nature of the human being was evident not so much in the sheath of his being as much as it was in a subtler, more interior dimension of his personality. To suggest otherwise would lead one down the path of a crude anthropomorphism, which the Sufis, despite their occasional reputation for theological provocation, did not and could not accept, since the relation between God and the human being was not just one of immanence, but of an interplay between divine transcendence and immanence, distance and nearness, otherness and similarity, a play wherein God both concealed and revealed Himself through veils of shadow and light. To argue to the contrary would also deprive one of the lesson to be learned from Iblis’ sin, since in his prideful refusal to bow before Adam he saw not with the eye of inwardness, as one must in the mystical quest, but through that of form alone. He stopped simply with what the object

of his prostration *appeared* to be, and like the Islamic Antichrist or Dajjāl, saw with one eye, prefiguring the quality of the deniers, about whom the Qur'ān says, *They know only what is apparent of the life of this world* (30:7). As Rūmī would have put it, he failed to see *ma'nā* (meaning) behind *ṣūra* (form), the hallmark of genuine wisdom and knowledge.²⁸

The Qur'ān, ethics & virtue theory

We are now in a better position to move to a closer and more focused analysis of the intersection between the Qur'ān, Sufism and ethics. The mystical quest in so far as it entails the ascent of the soul to God requires, from the perspective of the Sufis themselves—reverential as they were toward the sacred foundations of their faith—conformity to the Qur'ān, the *inlibration* of Islam (to use the expression of H. Wolfson²⁹), wherein logos became book. Its role in Islamic spirituality is somewhat analogous to Christ in Christianity or the Torah in Judaism.³⁰ Just as God reveals Himself through His Word, we as humans also return to Him through it, since the Word allows us, trapped in space and time, to forge a link with a Reality that stands above and beyond it. Within a Buddhist context, one might say the logos plays a role not entirely unlike the cosmic Buddha, who becomes, through his historical and very human embodiment, a path through whom individuals trapped in samsara find release in nirvana, or through which they return from the domain of pure relativity (form) to that of the absolute (formlessness). The emulation of Buddha, through internalizing his virtues, functions, in turn, as an indispensable precursor to final liberation and enlightenment. Indeed, one need not subscribe to the perennial philosophy to recognize some of the structural overlaps with respect to the central place the logos (or its near equivalents) occupy in the world's religions, especially in their more mystical formulations. Only an extreme reductionism would prevent one from discerning at least some of the traces of the “invisible geometry” shared by the world's religions, so eloquently described by Huston Smith.³¹

Now the Qur'ān, in Islam, is embodied in the figure of the Prophet—whence the famous ḥadīth of 'Ā'isha, when she was asked to describe her husband, replied “his *khuluq* (pl. *akhlāq*),” his character, “was the Qur'ān.”³² What this means is that if Muslim scripture is the inlibration of divine speech, the Prophet then becomes the incarnation of the inlibration, twice removed from God, but still His manifestation or self-revelation. When Christ said, “no one comes to the Father except through me,” we might, at some risk of Christianizing Islam, understand his role analogous not just to the Qur'ān, but its concrete appearance in the Prophet. In this sense, the logos, one might argue, has a triune nature in Islam, in so far as it comprises (a) the *kalām* in God as His pre-eternal, uncreated attribute (before its revelatory descent), (b) the *kalām* in the form of the Arabic revelation (during and after its descent) and (c) the *kalām* in the form of the Qur'ān's embodiment in the figure of the Prophet (its concrete manifestation in a human being). While these theological speculations might seem to lie outside the scope of secular scholarship, they help us better appreciate the precise role both the Prophet and the Qur'ān play in Sufi thought, and for our purposes, Sufi ethics, since the Qur'ān after all declares, *You have in the Messenger of God a sublime example* (33:21).³³

For the Sufis, moreover, the Prophet had both an outward and an inward dimension. His outward dimension, particularly the rules he brought to govern human conduct, became the basis of the *sharī'a* or Law. Its commandments—both of commission and omission, including the categories of acts in between—would regulate what the great early moral psychologist Muḥāsibī (d. 857) identified as the *a'māl al-jawāriḥ* or “actions of the limbs.” But the Prophet also had an inner reality, and this more inward dimension of his personality

came to determine, at least for those who sought to emulate his wont beyond mere outward superficialities, the *a'māl al-qulūb* or “actions of the heart.”³⁴ The branch of learning of which this was the principle subject fell within the purview of the *ṭarīqa* (broadly understood), that is to say, *tasawwuf*, also identified with respect to the famous Ḥadīth of Gabriel as the science of *ihsān*.³⁵ For Ghazālī, it was best described as *fiqh al-qalb*, “the jurisprudence of the Heart,” a field of knowledge that, unlike conventional *fiqh*, concerned as it was with the regulation of outward, bodily behavior, focused instead on the inward states of the soul and the movements of the Heart.³⁶ This is not to suggest that Sufism was confined to *'ilm al-mu'āmalā* or “the science of practical conduct,” since it also included a field of learning that dealt with metaphysics and the nature of reality, the knowledge of which was grounded not in rational speculation (the domain of philosophy proper) but direct mystical experience. While this particular dimension of Sufi writing, rooted in *'ilm al-mukāshafā* or the “science of unveiling,” formed an important part of the literature, most of it was focused on ethics, virtue theory, moral psychology and transformation of character (*tabdīl al-akhlāq*).³⁷

One might say that at the center of this inward refinement stood *adab*, usually rendered “courtesy,” “propriety” or “etiquette.” For the Sufis, it was not enough simply to remain bound to the stipulations of the Law. One also had to internalize *adab*. “Verily God taught me *adab*,” said the Prophet, “and He perfected my *adab*.”³⁸ The virtue in question could involve one’s dealing with God or it could involve one’s dealings with others. In the case of the former, it entailed comporting oneself with the utmost etiquette at all times, as if one were—as one indeed is—in the divine presence. And this is why an early figure such as Jurayrī (d. 923/924) could say, “for twenty years I never stretched out my feet while sitting in solitary retreat (*khalwa*),”³⁹ because of the awe he felt in the divine court. And Hujwīrī (d. 1077) noted that when Zulaykha sought to seduce Joseph, she covered the face of an idol next to her “in order that it might not witness her want of propriety”—a story in which a lesson was to be drawn for those who wished to be educated in proper manners with God.⁴⁰ *Adab* also required one to take ownership of one’s sins, despite God’s creation of acts and His pre-eternal decree, just as it required retracing all of one’s virtuous deeds to their origin *in divinis*. “It is out of beautiful *adab* with God in matters of religion,” wrote Makkī,

that if you perform a beautiful act, you say, “My Master, You granted me the ability to carry it out, and it was by Your might and power, and through success granted by You, that I obeyed you. This is because my limbs are your soldiers. And if I did something through which I wronged myself, it was through my caprice and passion that my limbs transgressed, and those are my attributes.”⁴¹

For many authorities, such a view was itself rooted in the contrasting responses of Adam, Eve and Iblis toward their sins. Satan blamed God for his refusal to bow before Adam, protesting *You have led me astray* (Q. 15:39). Adam and Eve, however, took responsibility for eating from the forbidden tree, by confessing, *Our Lord we have wronged ourselves* (Q. 7:23). The key distinction hinged on *adab*: Adam and Eve exercised courtesy by acknowledging fault; Iblis turned the blame on to God in dispute and argumentation. And while God, as readers of the Qur’ān know, accepted the pleas of forgiveness of Adam and Eve, he cast away Iblis, condemned as *rajīm*, the “accursed.” Rūmī would explain the significance of this episode in the *Mathnawī* when he wrote,

After Adam’s repentance, God said to him, “Oh Adam, did I not create that sin and trial within you? Was that not My destiny and decree? How is it that when asking

forgiveness, you kept this fact hidden?” Adam said, “I feared lest I be discourteous.” God replied, “I also have observed courtesy toward you.” Whoever brings respect receives it. Whoever brings sugar eats almond candy.⁴²

By drawing attention to God's *adab* as a response to human *adab*, the Persian mystic highlighted the reciprocal nature of the quality. We should also point out here that at least part of the reason the authorities emphasized the need to take ownership of one's transgressions, despite the theological arguments one might muster against acknowledging fault (God being both *al-Hādī*, the Guide, and *al-Muḍill*, the Misleader) was that it helped maintain a sense of humility and lowliness before God—a virtue without which any real advancement on the path remained impossible. After all, the cardinal sin of both Iblis and Pharaoh—archetypes of rebellious transgression against God in the Qur'ān—was pride (*kibr*).⁴³

As for the second object of the virtue, as noted, it involved *adab* toward God's creatures. “The most important rule for such intercourse,” wrote Hujwīrī, “is to act well, and to observe the custom of the Apostle at home and abroad.”⁴⁴ Deeply rooted in those aspects of the *sunna* dealing with interpersonal relations, charitable self-sacrifice, and refined comportment, its importance cannot be overstated. In many of the Sufi Orders, its value can be discerned in everything ranging from the meticulous detail with which disciples are taught to serve tea to guests to the scrupulous attention given to straightening out and aligning shoes at the door of the local *zāwiya* or *tekke*. These practices are meant to prune and refine the character traits of members of the Order, through a painstaking attentiveness, that, when turned inwards, helps root out otherwise indiscernible weeds of the soul. By fostering a sensitivity toward the other, the disciple becomes more acutely conscious of the internal movements of her own heart. Indeed, Sufi literature has no shortage of stories recounting heroic acts of *adab*. In the *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā'* (Memorial of the Friends of God) of Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār (d. 1220), he recounts the tale through which Ḥātim al-Asamm (d. 852),⁴⁵ disciple of the famous Shaqīq al-Balkhī (d. 810), acquired his name. One day an old woman came to him with an inquiry. No sooner did she pose the question, she broke wind. Immediately, Ḥātim retorted, “speak louder. I am hard of hearing.” Moved by courtesy, he wished to prevent her from embarrassment. For 15 years, or so we are told, as long as the woman was alive, whenever anyone addressed him, he would instruct his interlocutors to speak louder. Following the woman's death, however, he responded to questions readily. “This,” recalled 'Aṭṭār, “is why he was called Ḥātim the Deaf [al-Asamm].”⁴⁶

While the word *adab* is present in the ḥadīth literature,⁴⁷ it does not appear (along with any of its semantic cognates) in the Qur'ān. Some verses were nevertheless interpreted to allude to the eminence of the virtue in Sufi literature. When Muslim Scripture declares, *O ye who believe, shield yourselves and your families from a fire* (Q. 66:6), Sirjānī (d. 1077) observed that according to Ibn 'Abbās (d. 687), the verse meant, “shield them through *adab* and knowledge from that fire.”⁴⁸ And when the Prophet was informed, *We have seen you turn your face towards Heaven* (2:144)—a reference to his desire for a change of *qibla* from Jerusalem to Mecca because he had become the object of ridicule by his adversaries⁴⁹—one exegete commented,

He informed him first of all that he is seen by the Real in order that he may exercise *adab* with an *adab* appropriate before the Real. And from his beautiful *adab* was that he gazed towards Heaven without asking. God in turn responded to his gaze in accordance with his wish.⁵⁰

Similarly, when the Qurʾān states in an enigmatic verse that his *gaze swerved not, nor did it stray* (53:17), interpreted by some as an intimation of the Prophet's vision of God, Qushayrī (d. 1072) wrote, "it has been said this means that he observed the etiquette required before the divine presence (*ādāb al-ḥaḍra*)."⁵¹

Some of the Sufi authorities drew attention to the etymological relation of *adab* to the Arabic word for "banquet," *ma'duba*, which derives from the same trilateral root. Just as a banquet gathers together guests for a lavish meal, the *adīb*, one who exercises courtesy, brings together beautiful attributes.⁵² For Ibn ʿArabī, he gathers in the substance of his own soul the *makārim al-akhlāq* or "noble character traits" the Prophet came, by his own confession, to complete.⁵³ And this is because the *adīb* responds to every occasion and in every state in the most appropriate manner, giving each moment its right (*ḥaqq*) and proper due. More than simply a cultured person, whose refinement may be artificial and contrived, he comports himself with God, the world, and even himself, in a way that befits his status as God's vicegerent on earth. From this point of view, *adab* is the virtue that assembles together all other virtues, like a mother in the arms of whose embrace her children congregate. This is one of the reasons why in some of the Sufi manuals the chapters are thematically divided under such title headings as "the *adab* of remembrance" or "the *adab* of gratitude," since every virtue has a corresponding etiquette through which it obtains its final perfection.⁵⁴

The ascent to God through the states and stations

The most elaborate inquiries by the Sufis into the cultivation of the virtues took place within the pages of their manuals devoted to the "states" (*aḥwāl*; sing. *ḥāl*) and "stations" (*maqāmāt*; sing. *maqām*). Generally speaking, the states were understood to be fleeting gifts of grace, while the stations were acquired through personal effort and, once obtained, became firmly rooted in the soul. Together, they formed the rungs of the ladder in the ascending journey to God—the final *telos* of Sufi ethics—and became the concern of the aspirant after the more elementary ritual and formal requirements of Islamic Law were put into practice.⁵⁵ Although the virtues associated with the ascent were largely drawn from the Qurʾān, their systematization within the Sufi hierarchy of *aḥwāl* and *maqāmāt* did not occur until later. It remains difficult to single out one particular figure to whom we can definitively trace their schematization. In the view of Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī (d. 1234), the ascent was described by as early a figure as the caliph ʿAlī (d. 661). "Ask me about the celestial paths (*turuq al-samāʿ*)," he once told his listeners, "because I have greater knowledge of them than I do of the paths of the earth (*turuq al-ard*)." "He was alluding to the stations and states," noted Suhrawardī, and referred to them as celestial paths because through them the traveler's "heart becomes celestial."⁵⁶ Some modern scholars have suggested that Shaqīq al-Balkhī should be given credit for this development within the tradition, but that depends if the *Ādāb al-ʿibādāt* (Etiquettes of Worship) is correctly ascribed to him.⁵⁷

Whatever may have been its precise origin, *tauba* was frequently understood as the first stage in the mystical ascent. Usually translated "repentance," the Arabic term (like its Hebrew equivalent, *teshuvah*) means "to return." The underlying spatial metaphor at play in the word was nicely captured in an early aphorism, which defined it as a condition where "you stand before God as a face without a back, just as you were previously unto Him a back without a face."⁵⁸ What this meant was that *tauba* involved more than simply renouncing a particular sin (or sins). It was instead an all-consuming process of returning to God from a state of heedlessness—an experience that brought one from the fringes of faith to its center.

In this respect, it may best be described as a process of interior conversion, since it turned one to God through an interiorizing motion where repentance, conventionally understood, was one among other elements. Early Sufi hagiographies in particular are replete with the *tawba* narratives of penitents ranging from murderers and thieves to princes and worldly scholars, all of whom were inspired at some point in their lives to mend their ways and devote themselves to God. In Islamic history, the most famous conversion account was undoubtedly of Ghazālī as described in his *al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl* (The Deliverance from Error), an autobiography often compared to Augustine's *Confessions*.⁵⁹ As for the Qur'ānic use of the word, the triliteral root from which it derives (t-w-b) appears throughout the text, sometimes with God as the subject—one of His names being *al-Tawwāb* (“The Oft-Returning One”)—and other times with reference to the human being. In his chapter on the “station of *tawba*” in the *Futūḥāt*, Ibn 'Arabī would argue that the reason Scripture typically uses the relative for God (*tawwāb* as opposed to *tā'ib*) is because the human being's *tawba* lies stranded in between two divine *tawbas*: not only is human *tawba* met, in its wake, with the *tawba* of God in the form of forgiveness and acceptance, it is itself catalyzed and set in motion by His *tawba* through guidance and mercy.⁶⁰ The Qur'an speaks of both types of divine *tawbas* (cf. Q. 9:118; 2:160).⁶¹

In the classical literature, *tawba* was followed by a plethora of other virtues, from love (*maḥabbā*) and satisfaction (*riḍā'*) to patience (*ṣabr*) and gratitude (*shukr*), to name but a few. Their precise ordering, as well as number, differed from one author to another. Far from revealing substantial disagreements within Sufi doctrine, the diversity reflected instead the variety of grids that could be used to map out of the itinerary of the soul in its journey home. The overlapping, cross-pollinating nature of the virtues, and the organic process through which they were internalized, made the variation not only possible but also inevitable.⁶² And so Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj (d. 988) in his *Kitāb al-luma'* (Book of Flashes), one of the earliest comprehensive treatises of Sufi doctrine, listed seven stations; Makkī produced nine in his *Qūt al-qulūb*; Abū Sa'īd al-Kharrāz (d. 899) described 16 in the *Kitāb al-ṣidq* (Book of Truthfulness); Nūrī (d. 907) created his own order;⁶³ and in Muḥāsibī's works a definitive one seems to be lacking altogether. This variety did not simply rest on the different number of stations which for each of these authors comprised the ascent, but also because a virtue that one author might have identified as a *maqām* was a *ḥāl* for another, or because an author included both the states and stations in his levels. In the later tradition, their number reached as many as 40, as we find in the *Maqāmāt al-'arba'īn* of Abū Sa'īd b. Abī al-Khayr (d. 1049), or a hundred, as in the case of the *Manāzil al-sā'irīn* of Ansārī (d. 1089). Others enumerated up to three hundred or even a thousand stages. The only time when a schema was replicated seems to be when one author consciously reproduced the order of another. In Ibn 'Arabī's *Futūḥāt*, for example, the “stations of certainty” (*maqāmāt al-yaqīn*) are more or less structured according to the order found in Qushayrī's *Risāla* (Treatise),⁶⁴ a work we know the Andalusian mystic read religiously as a youth.

Before closing, there is one final point that perhaps warrants further clarification. Earlier on it was noted that the internalization of the virtues amounts to a process of *takhalluq*, whereby the aspirant takes on or assumes certain divine qualities in a way that is commensurate to the human being, to enable him to obtain intimacy with God, on the basis of the principle that like-attracts-like. While this is certainly true with respect to many traits such as compassion (*raḥma*), benevolence (*ḥilm*), gratitude, patience, satisfaction, and love, all of which find correspondences in the divine names, it does not hold for each and every quality the integration of which forms an indelible component of Sufi life. What, after all, is one to make of fear (*khauf*), hope (*rajā'*), humility (*tawāḍu'*) and detachment (*zuhd*), which also figure in the lists of states and stations? Here a qualification is in order. To the extent that the

human being's relation with God is marked by both similarity and otherness, there are certain character traits that are unique to the human being, and necessary to perfect his capacity to reflect God's splendor, much like a mirror, and these pertain to his own fundamental reality, which is that of lowliness and nothingness. Through them the human being is able to more fully realize his own essential nature, which is not divine—since only God is God—but nothingness. Paradoxically, it is only when he realizes his true condition that he becomes capable of acting as a vessel or locus for the divine names. In light of these considerations, we might divide the virtues into two broad categories. There are first of all those that reflect divine radiance and find a counterpart in certain divine names. And second there are those particular to the human being and which enable him to polish the mirror of his own soul, so that it can reflect the only true reality there is. In this light, we might better understand a saying of the early Sufis, “when poverty is complete (*al-faqr idhā tamma*), it is God Himself.”⁶⁵ What this means is that God only appears through the human being when he withdraws from himself, much like the sun that lies concealed behind the clouds. The qualities that contribute to a movement toward “self-naughting” or “self-effacement” reflect one category of virtues, and those that contribute to a movement toward radiating the divine names reflect another. Expressed differently, one group involves divine absence, and the other, divine presence. In the final scheme of things, both help the human being realize his teleological end, since “the end is a return to the beginning,”⁶⁶ and the beginning lies in God.

Notes

- 1 See Seyyed H. Nasr, “The Quran as the Foundation of Islamic Spirituality,” in *Islamic Spirituality: Foundations*, ed. S. H. Nasr (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1987), pp. 3–10. On why Orientalist scholarship often failed to recognize the scriptural roots of Sufism, see Atif Khalil and Shiraz Sheikh, “Sufism in Western Historiography: A Brief Overview,” *Philosophy East and West* 66, no. 1 (2016), pp. 194–217. On Sufi approaches to the Qur’ān, see Alexander Knysch, “Sufism and the Qur’ān,” *EQ*; Kristin Z. Sands, *Sufi Commentaries on the Qur’ān in Classical Islam* (London: Routledge, 2006).
- 2 Cited in Michel Chodkiewicz, *An Ocean without a Shore: Ibn al-‘Arabī, the Book, and the Law*, trans. David Streight (Albany: SUNY, 1993), p. 20.
- 3 Abū Tālib al-Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb*, ed. Sa’īd Naṣīb Makārim (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1995), 1:284.
- 4 On the difference between the Rābi’a of hagiography and history, see Rkia Cornell, *Rabi’a: From Narrative to Myth* (London: Oneworld, 2019).
- 5 Many of the early Sufis identified the final group as the friends of God and the gnostics. Sulamī, *Ḥaqā’iq al-tafsīr*, 2:299–230 (commentary on Q. 56:8–11). Tafsir.com.
- 6 See the end of Ghazālī’s *al-Maḥṣad al-asnā* (Cairo: Dār al-Salām, 2008), p. 213.
- 7 Ghazālī, *Rawḍat al-tālibīn* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1982), 63. Cf. Plato’s *Republic* (613a–b) and *Theaetetus* (176b).
- 8 The tradition appears in Bukhārī and Muslim. See A. J. Wensinck, *Concordance et Indices de la Tradition Musulmane*, 6 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1936–1969), 2:75.
- 9 This reflective quality of the Prophet was sometimes substantiated through the ḥadīth, *man ra’ānī rā’a al-ḥaqq*, usually interpreted to mean, “he who has seen me (in a dream) has truly seen me.” That is to say, to encounter the Prophet in a dream is to have truly seen him and not merely a figment of the imagination. For many Sufis, however, the tradition may also read, “he who has seen me has seen the Real,” since like the moon, the Prophet’s own radiance, or so it was argued, was not his own but revealed the light of the divine sun. See Wensinck, 2:200.
- 10 *al-Taṣawwuf khuluq fa man zāda ‘alayka fi-l khuluq zāda ‘alayka fi-l taṣawwuf*. Ibn al-‘Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* (Cairo, n.d.), 2:266. The saying is attributed to Abū Bakr al-Kattānī (d. 934 CE) in Qushayrī’s *Risāla*, ed. ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd and Maḥmūd b. Sharīf (Damascus: Dār al-Farfūr, 2002), p. 427.
- 11 Cf. H. A. R. Gibb and Richard Walzer, “*Akhlāq*,” *EI*.
- 12 This is discernable in the works of Ghazālī, to use but one example. Indeed, the very idea of *takhalluq* finds its correspondence in the goals of those philosophers for whom ethics entailed a

- process of becoming divine-like (*ta'alluh*). On the overlapping ethical concerns of classical Muslim philosophers, jurists, and Sufis, see Cyrus Zargar, *The Polished Mirror: Storytelling and the Pursuit of Virtue in Islamic Philosophy and Sufism* (London: Oneworld, 2017).
- 13 This is a mere “potential” because only the realization of the mystical impulse allows for the possibility to be raised for potency to actuality.
 - 14 On Ibn 'Arabī's hermeneutics, see Chodkiewicz, *An Ocean without Shore*. Despite the creative nature of his scholarship, Almond's comparisons of Ibn 'Arabī and Derrida in *Sufism and Deconstruction* (London: Routledge, 2009) fall short in this respect, since the Andalusian mystic does not suggest, like the French philosopher, that *all* readings of the sacred text are valid, but only those that conform to the rules of language. In the case of Ibn 'Arabī, its infinity may be likened to a well of bottomless depth but finite circumference, with its finite parameters here being defined by linguistically acceptable meanings. See my review of his otherwise thought provoking work in *Sacred Web* 39 (2017): 163–168.
 - 15 See Ibn al-'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 1:123–124, as well as the opening chapter on Adam in the *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, ed. Abū al-'Alā 'Aḥīfī (1946; Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1980), pp. 48–58. See also Chodkiewicz's superb discussion of this theme in *An Ocean without Shore*, 37–39. For a good translation of the *Fuṣūṣ*, see *The Ringstones of Wisdom* by Caner Dagli (Chicago: Kazi Publications, 2004).
 - 16 The Arabic *saw'ātuḥuma* may also refer to genitalia.
 - 17 Chodkiewicz, *An Ocean without Shore*, p. 39. Ibn al-'Arabī draws attention through his radical literalism to the fact that the “tree” or *shajar* Adam and Eve were prohibited to approach was itself the principle of multiplicity, since the *shajar*, etymologically related to discord and strife, was merely a symbol of the loss of unity. A tree after all comprises a trunk that splits into various branches which then diversify through leaves.
 - 18 Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* (Aleppo: Dār al-Wa'ī, 1998), 2:4–6.
 - 19 For an analysis of this feature of his writings, see Timothy Gianotti, *Al-Ghazali's Unspeakable Doctrine of the Soul* (Leiden: Brill, 2001).
 - 20 See Robert Zaehner, *Mysticism: Sacred and Profane* (1957; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 161. Zaehner was unable to appreciate the need within Islam as a whole to balance a dualistic theology in its non-mystical formulations (what he called “theism”) with a non-dualistic metaphysics in its mystical one (what he called “monism”)—a complementarity that may be likened to the relation between Newtonian and Quantum physics.
 - 21 Ghazālī, *Iḥyā'*, 2:4–6.
 - 22 Zabīdī, *Iḥāf al-sāda al-muttaqīn bi-sharḥ asrār Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1989), 8:372.
 - 23 Ibn al-'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ*, 215–216. See also the opening chapter on Adam.
 - 24 See *Futūḥāt*, 1:124. While Ibn 'Arabī does not explicitly mention the ḥadīth, his use of language to describe the relation between God, Adam, and Eve makes it clear that he has it in mind. See also the final chapter of the *Fuṣūṣ*.
 - 25 See Joseph N. Bell, *Love Theory in Later Hanbalite Islam* (Albany: SUNY, 1979). For the entire discussion, see pp. 107–119.
 - 26 Cited (with minor edits) in Bell, *Love Theory in Later Hanbalite Islam*, 75–76. The passage is from Qunawī's *al-Nafāḥāt al-ilāhiyya*.
 - 27 Cited in Ibn al-'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ*, 90–91 (chapter on Ismā'īl).
 - 28 To be perfectly clear, the theophanic nature of the human being did not entirely preclude Adam's body, since his form captured, through symbolism, elements of the divine nature. However, these elements, as noted, were present not at the crude level of flesh and bone, but through a subtle reflection in the cloak over Adam's spirit. And this is because the outward form of Adam mirrored the outward form of the cosmos (as macrocosm), both of which combined to reveal the possibilities latent in God. Such a doctrine should not be confused with anthropomorphism.
 - 29 Harry Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalam* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976).
 - 30 See Atif Khalil, “Jewish-Muslim Relations, Globalization, and the Judeo-Islamic Legacy,” *Journal of Religion and Society* 17 (2015), pp. 1–21 (8–11).
 - 31 Huston Smith, *Forgotten Truth: The Common Vision of the World's Religions* (1976; New York: HarperOne, 1992), preface (esp. v).
 - 32 Aḥmad. For a variant, see Muṣlim, *Musāfirīn*, 139 (Wensinck, 2:75).
 - 33 The nature and levels of this logos can also be conceived of through the prism of the *Ḥaqīqa Muḥammadiyya* (“The Muhammadan Reality”) from its ontological origin to its historical unfolding

- through Adam and the various prophets, finally culminating in the historical Prophet Muhammad as the final “seal of prophecy.” See Michel Chodkiewicz’s superb discussion of this theme in *Seal of the Saints: Prophethood and Sainthood in the Doctrine of Ibn ‘Arabī*, trans. Liadain Sherrard (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1993), pp. 60–73 (Chapter 4).
- 34 On the distinction between the two kinds of acts, see al-Ḥārith b. Asad al-Muḥāsibī, *Masā’il fi a’māl qulūb wa al-jawāriḥ* (Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2000), particularly pp. 79–83.
- 35 The best modern discussion of the significance of this ḥadīth is found in William Chittick and Sachiko Murata, *The Vision of Islam* (St. Paul, Minnesota: Paragon House, 1994).
- 36 See by way of comparison Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb*, 2:10 (near the opening of his chapter on *tawakkul*).
- 37 The observation of Marshall Hodgson is pertinent here:
- [I]t is usual to think of the mystical as simply an extraordinary occasion in consciousness [... but the ...] more striking events, at least as they appear in the classical Sufī tradition, are but peaks of a very widespread type of awareness. Mystics have almost always described a lengthy mystical “way”, leading by innumerable small steps from the first glimmerings of devout *tawba* in the sinner up to the most ecstatic moments of the saint. Most mystical writers have spent far more time speaking of the everyday virtues of patience, courage and unselfishness, as they appear in the mystical perspective, than of ecstasies or even of the cosmic unity these ecstasies seem to bear witness to.
- The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), 1:396.
- 38 Cited in Ibn al-‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 2:284; Kharkūshī (also = Khargūshī [d. 1015 or 1016 CE]), *Tahdhīb al-asrār*, ed. Syed Muhammad ‘Alī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya), p. 193. A minor variant (*aḥsana ta’dībī* instead of *aḥsana adabī*) occurs in Qushayrī, *Risāla*, 485. Suyūfī considered the latter version sound (see *al-Jāmi‘ al-ṣaḡhīr*).
- 39 Qushayrī, *Risāla*, pp. 486–487. See also Kharkūshī, *Tahdhīb al-asrār*, p. 191.
- 40 Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Mahjūb: The Oldest Persian Treatise on Sufism*, trans. Reynold A. Nicholson (1911; repr., Lahore: Islamic Book Service, 1992), pp. 335–336.
- 41 Makkī, *Qūt*, 2:95–96.
- 42 Cited in William Chittick, *Sufi Path of Love: The Spiritual Teachings of Rumi* (Albany: State University of New York, 1983), pp. 84–85. See also my discussion of this theme in “Ibn al-‘Arabī on the Three Conditions of *Tawba*,” *Journal of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 17 (2006), pp. 403–416.
- 43 Pharaoh claimed *I am your lord most high* (Q. 79:24), while Iblīs refused to prostrate *out of pride* (*istakbara*) (Q. 2:34). For more on the subject, see Mohammed Rustom’s recent translation of Ghazālī’s *Kitāb dhamm al-kibr wa al-‘ujb* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 2018).
- 44 Hujwīrī, *Kashf*, p. 336.
- 45 For more on him, see Qushayrī, *Risāla*, 83 (section on Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Ḥātim b. ‘Alwān).
- 46 Farīd al-Dīn ‘Aṭṭār, *Muslim Saints and Mystics: Episodes from the Tadḥkirat al-awliyā’*, trans. A.J. Arberry, (1966; repr., London: Penguin Books, 1990), p. 150.
- 47 See Wensinck for some examples, 1:36–37.
- 48 ‘*addibūhum wa ‘allimūhum wa qūhum bi dhālika al-nār*. Abū l-Ḥasan al-Sīrjānī, *Kitāb al-bayāḍ wa al-sawāḍ*, eds. Bilal Orfali and Nada Saab (Leiden: Brill, 2012), p. 167.
- 49 See Caner Dagli, Commentary on al-Baqara, in *The Study Quran*, ed. S. N. Nasr et al. (New York: HarperCollins, 2015), p. 65.
- 50 Sīrjānī, *Kitāb al-bayāḍ*, p. 167.
- 51 Qushayrī, *Risāla*, p. 475.
- 52 Ibn al-‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 284; Qushayrī, *Risāla*, p. 475.
- 53 *Fa-l adīb huwa jāmi‘ li makārim akhlāq*. Ibn al-‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, p. 284.
- 54 For a recent study of *adab*, see *Ethics and Spirituality in Islam: Sufi adab*, eds. Francesco Chiabotti et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2016).
- 55 The word *maqām* appears 14 times in the Qur’ān, and the related *muqām* (“station,” “time or place of abode”), three times, with both occurring only in singular form. Sometimes *maqām* is used of humans (*take as your abode of worship the maqām of Abraham* [Q. 2:125]), and sometimes it is used of God (*he who fears the maqām of his Lord shall have two gardens* [Q. 55:46]). The term *manāzil* (“dwelling” or “alighting places”) was also used in the classical literature, as was *mawāqif* (“halting places”), most notably by Nīffārī (d. 965), but it was not employed in the same way as *maqām* or *manzil* to refer to the ascending hierarchy of virtues. See his *al-Mawāqif wa al-makhātibāt*, ed. and

- trans. A. J. Arberry (London: Cambridge University Press, 1935). Derivatives of the root w-q-f appear in the Qur'ān on four occasions (Q. 6:28; 6:30; 34:31; 37:24), but in none of these as *mawāqif* or its singular *mawqif*. The term never gained the degree of circulation as *maqām* or *manzil* in the tradition. The *EF* entry on “*Mawqif*,” for example, makes no mention of its use in Sufism. As for *hāl*, in its nominal form it does not appear in the Qur'ān. The verbs *hāla*, *yaḥūlu*, and *hīla* each occur once (Q. 8:24, 11:43, and 24:45). The closest case where the verbal form is used in its Sufi sense, to convey the idea of a transitory state (as opposed to the *maqām*, which is typically fixed), seems to be in Q. 8:24, *Know that God comes in between (yaḥūlu bayna) a man and his own heart*. Hu-jwīrī likely had this passage in mind when he defined *hāl* as a state that “descends from God into a man’s heart.” *Kashf*, 181.
- 56 Abū Ḥafṣ Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī, *‘Awārif al-ma’ārif*, ed. Sayyid Aḥmad, Adīb al-Kimrānī and Maḥmūd Muṣṭafā (Saudi Arabia: Al-Maktaba al-Makkiyya, 2001), 2:812–813.
- 57 Alexander Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism: A Short History* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), p. 34. Paul Nwyia has argued for the authenticity of this attribution in *Exégèse coranique et langage mystique* (Beirut: Dar el-Machreq, 1970), pp. 213–216.
- 58 Abū Bakr b. Muḥammad al-Kalābādhī, *al-Ta’arruf li madhhab ahl al-taṣawwuf*, ed. Yuḥannā Ṣādir (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 2001), p. 65; Sulamī, *Ḥaqā’iq*, 1:183.
- 59 In the view of this author, the best translation of this work is still that of W. Montgomery Watt in *The Faith and Practice of Ghazālī* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1963).
- 60 Ibn al-‘Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya*, 1:139–143.
- 61 For more on this theme, see Atif Khalil, *Repentance and the Return to God: Tawba in Early Sufism* (Albany: State University of New York, 2018).
- 62 See S. H. Nasr’s remarks on this question in his chapter on the states and stations in *Sufi Essays* (Albany: SUNY, 1991).
- 63 See the *Risāla maqāmāt al-qulūb* of Nūrī in Paul Nwyia, “Textes Mystiques Inédits D’Abū-l Ḥasan al-Nūrī (m. 295/907),” *Mélanges de l’Université Saint Joseph* 43 (1968), pp. 131–132. Nūrī does not explore in any detail the order of the *maqāmāt* in this short treatise, which is concerned first and foremost with the various kinds of spiritual hearts. See Nwyia, *ibid.*, pp. 117–127.
- 64 I say “more or less” because technically speaking Ibn ‘Arabī does not simply repeat Qushayrī’s order of chapters. Most of them are followed by chapters on leaving (*tark*) the very *maqām* in question. The chapter on *tawba*, for example, is followed by a chapter on “abandoning repentance” (*tark al-tawba*). The general order of the *maqāmāt* however remains the same as found in the *Risāla*. For more on the relationship between the *Futūḥāt* and the *Risāla*, see Michel Chodkiewicz, “*Mi’rāj al-kalima*: de la *Risāla* Qushayriyya aux *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*,” in *Reason and Inspiration in Islam: Theology, Philosophy, and Mysticism in Muslim Thought*, ed. Todd Lawson (London: I. B. Tauris & Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2005), pp. 248–261.
- 65 On the various sources of this early saying which Rūmī and Jāmī were both fond of quoting, see Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 123.
- 66 Attributed to Junayd (d. 910), and cited in Mullā Ṣadrā, *Iksīr al-‘arīfīn*, trans. W. Chittick (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 2003), p. 54.