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Spiritual Practice in the Arabic Hagiography of the Chinese Ġahrīya Sufi Order

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Summary: The hagiography of the Chinese branch of the Naqšbandīya order of Islamic mysticism called Ġahrīya has been recorded, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in some Arabic and Persian language texts. These include stories about the founder of the Sufi order, Ma Mingxin (d. 1781), and his successors in the first few generations and many of the literary units revolve around the contemplative discipline declared obligatory for the followers of the brotherhood. MA XUEZHI gives a description, in his *Kitāb al-Ġabrī*, of the works which include practices believed to have been transmitted to Mingxin during his sojourn on the Arab peninsula. Besides offering a positivist approach description of the practices on the basis of the hagiographical writings, some codicological reflections will also be included in the presentation.

1 Introduction

The hagiography of the Chinese branch of the Naqšbandīya order of Islamic mysticism called Jeherenye (of Arabic Ġahrīya),¹ established mainly in the provinces of Gansu, Ningxia and Yunnan,² has been recorded in a small number of writings composed in the 19th and early 20th centuries in the Arabic, partly also in a hybrid Arabo-Persian language. The most important are the *Rašahāt* 熱什哈爾 of GUANLI YE 閔裏爺 MA XIANZHENG 馬先正 (d. 1862),³ *Kitāb al-Ġabrī* (*Daotong shi zhuan* 道統史傳) of MUḤAMMAD MANŠŪR MA XUEZHI 馬學智 (d. 1923) and *Manāqib* (*Mannageibu* 曼納給佈) of ‘ABD AL-AḤAD ZHAN YE 瓊爺 (d. 1924).⁴ As the Arabo-Persian text of the *Rašahāt*, the oldest of these texts, is not generally accessible (however, a Chinese translation thereof has been published), I concentrate on the

¹ On the order see FLETCHER 1995a, pp. 1–46; AUBIN 1960–2004, pp. 491–572; LIPMAN 1997, pp. 85–93; SOBIEROJ 2016, pp. 133–169, 136, fn. 19 for further references.

² Cf. SAGUCHI 1960–2004a, vol. 4, pp. 553–555 (“Kansu”), 1960–2004b, vol. 11, pp. 346–347 (“Yunnan”).

³ Cf. MA XIN 馬鑫, pp. 180–181; GUANLI YE 1993, p. 7 (introd.).

⁴ MA XIN 馬鑫, op. cit., p. 192.

hagiography as contained in the other two works (extant as facsimile manuscript editions and partly also in translation).⁵

The hagiography in the three above-mentioned works is made up mainly of stories about the founder of the Sufi order Ma Mingxin 馬明心 *Wiqāyat-ullāh al-Guanchuanfūwī* (d. 1781)⁶ and his successors in the first few generations. Many of the stories deal with the contemplative discipline declared obligatory for the followers of the brotherhood and they include mainly the following practices, all mentioned by MA XUEZHI in *K. al-Ġahrī*:

Recitation of Qur'ān and prayer formulas; *dīkr*, i.e. remembrance of God, silently and vocally; chanting of 'canonical' texts *Muḥammas* and *Madā'ih* in praise of the prophet Muḥammad.

The canonical texts used in the practice which are designated as *jīng* (經) in the Chinese translations of the hagiography are believed by the Ġahrīs to have been brought to them by their masters, from Arabia, i.e. Yemen. This provenance is confirmed by the stories in *K. al-Ġahrī* and *Manāqib* and it is implied in the *isnād* or list of authorities added to the *Madā'ih*. The mode of recitation of the *Muḥammas* on the other hand is said to have been taught to Mingxin by "Ibn Zain, aš-Šaiḥ al-kabīr al-Yamanī",⁷ who initiated him into the Naqšbandīya Sufi order.⁸ In their perception, the masters of the Ġahrīya have stood in a line of initiatory transmission connecting them with the Arab representatives of Sufism, being united with them according to the formula *li qi* 裏七 *wai ba* 外八, 'seven masters from inside', i.e. Arabia, and 'eight masters from outside', i.e. China.⁹

1.1 Terminology

Spiritual practice, in the Arabic hagiographical texts, has been subsumed under the generic term '*amal* (work)'.¹⁰

⁵ Occasionally, the main body of the manuscript texts is interrupted by paratexts in the Chinese language transcribed in Arabic script, the so-called xiao(er)jing (cf. SOBIEROJ: *Xiaojing and Manuscripts in Sino-Arabic script* [forthcoming]).

⁶ Cf. FORBES 1960–2004, pp. 850–852; SOBIEROJ 2016, pp. 135–136.

⁷ To be identified with Muḥammad b. [al-]Zain, the brother of 'Abd al-Ḥālīq b. Zain b. M. 'Abd al-Bāqī al-Mizğāḡī of Zabīd (d. 1740), not with the latter himself (against MA TONG 2000b, p. 90; cf. SOBIEROJ 2014, p. 105, fn. 56; id. 2016, p. 145, fn. 68).

⁸ The Naqšbandīya had been introduced to Zabīd by the Indian Sufi Tāḡ ad-Dīn Zakarīyā' al-'Uṭmānī (d. 1640; FLETCHER 1995a, p. 7) whose supporter was Muḥammad 'Abd al-Bāqī (REICHMUTH 2009, p. 21), father of az-Zain (d. 1725); the latter authorized vocal *dīkr* (FLETCHER 1995a, pp. 24–25).

⁹ Cf. YE FUDONG 冶福東 2009, p. 167; SOBIEROJ 2016, p. 139, fn. 39.

¹⁰ Cf. FENG ZENGLIE 馮增烈 2007, p. 142; YANG WANBAO 楊萬寶 in GUANLI YE 1993, p. 11, fn.

In *K. al-Ġabrī*, p. 37 the practices are also referred to as *‘ibāda* (service, worship) or more specifically as *qurubāt* (i.e. works that make the disciple draw closer to God) and in the Chinese trans. the expressions *gonggan* 功干, *gongxiu* 功修 and *gongke* 功課 have been used (MANŠÜR/MA 1997, pp. 23–24). The practitioners are called *sālik* (pl. *sālikūna*; MANŠÜR 1933, p. 8), a term which is translated as *xiugong* 修功 *bandaode ren*. The term *‘amal* by extension also denotes the banquet (*majlis al-‘amal*, *walīma*, *yan* 宴) which includes a meal and thereafter the collective performance of the ritual practice, done in the Sufi convent (*gongbei*, of Persian *qubba*) or in the house of a sympathizer with the Sufi order.

The practices were a means in Sufism to walk along the mystical way, *ṭarīqa*, a term that is also used to denote the Sufi order (*menhuan* 門宦), e.g. *ṭarīqa naqšbandīya*, and *ṭarīqa* was the bridge connecting law (*šarī‘a*) and mystical reality (*ḥaqīqa*) which were considered inseparable (*mutadāhila wa-mutamāziġa*; MANŠÜR 1933, p. 8).

2 The practices

2.1 Connecting with the master in the heart

In order to be successful in his spiritual practice the novice must, as a precondition, join a master (*šaiḥ*, *shaihai* 師海; *maulā*, *maolia* 毛倆; *shifu* 師傅) in whose perfection he believes and with whom he becomes connected in the heart.¹¹ He surrenders to him unreservedly and the extent to which obedience is required from him, in *K. al-Ġabrī*, is illustrated by a simile that is commonplace in classical Sufi literature. As MA XUEZHI explains in an endnote to his introduction, the novice’s attitude to his master must correspond to that of a corpse under the hands of the corpse-washer.¹² MANŠÜR also stipulates that the novices must not make any alterations, without the *šaiḥ*’s permission (*idn*; *kouhuan* 口喚), to the practices which they have been initiated into (*al-‘ibāda al-mulaqqana*). While they believe that their masters are

¹¹ Arabic: *rābiṭa* („Herzensbindung“; cf. MEIER 1994, pp. 49, 53; „bonding the heart with the shaykh, cf. BUEHLER 1998, pp. 131–134). The *rābiṭa* is declared the last of three methods of *ḍikr* which the *šaiḥs* of the Naqšbandīya-Muġaddidīya have instituted in order to refine the *laṭā’if ‘ālam al-amr* (“subtle substances of the world of the [divine] command”; MAZHAR 1896, p. 190; cf. fn. 16, 103).

¹² MANŠÜR 1933, p. 14; also MAZHAR 1896, p. 219: “As long as the novice does not consider himself vis-à-vis his master as dust or a corpse under the hands of the washer he will not reap any fruit”. Originally (e.g. with Sahl at-Tustarī [d. 283/896]) the simile served to illustrate the Sufi ideal of trust in God (*tawakkul*), later—from the 6th/12th c. onward—the concept was transferred to the novice’s relationship of obedience to his *šaiḥ* (cf. GRAMLICH 1976, vol. 2, p. 243).

the most perfect of all *šaiḥ*s—a reflection of the hubris of the Naqšbandīya which sees itself as superior to the other Sufi orders¹³—they also hold that their masters' spiritual works (*qurubāt*) are the finest of all.¹⁴ As a result, the novices make efforts to imitate their qualities of character (*taḥalluq bi-aḥlā-qihim*) and observe the *ādāb* or “good manners” toward their masters as outlined in the manuals of wayfaring (*kutub as-sulūk*; cf. MAṢṢŪR 1933, p. 14); probably the best known of these texts in Chinese Sufism is the Persian language *Miršād al-‘ibād* of Naḡm al-Dīn Rāzī (d. 654/1256) of which manuscript copies of Chinese provenance could still be seen (until recently) in the Sufi convents in the region.¹⁵

The novice must also be aware that his master sees him everywhere and he must see him as well.¹⁶ This is shown in a story of the *Manāqib* in which the disciple, Qalandar, is praised by Mingxin for having cultivated this awareness of the presence of the *šaiḥ* controlling him. The anecdote is concluded with the address to the disciples by Mingxin to be assiduous in the performance of their spiritual practice (*iğtahidū fī s-sulūkāt wa-r-riyādāt*) and there follows a relevant quotation from the *Muḥammas* which either he himself recited to legitimate his advice to the disciples or it is quoted by the author with the same motivation¹⁷.

The story is that his favourite disciple, Qalandar of Honglefu 鴻樂府 convent (in Jinjibao 金積堡), was rejected by some students and to convince them

¹³ Bahā' ad-Dīn an-Naqšbandī, the eponymous founder, declared that its point of departure was the end of all other paths (ALGAR 1976, p. 40, quoting MUḤAMMAD MURĀD [d. 1721]). ALGAR, loc. cit. relates this claim to the method of *dīkr*, viz. silent, practised by the Naqšbandīs. Elsewhere (p. 43) he mentions that the claim was also based on the disdain of the *karāmāt*, “miracles”; on this subject also see BUEHLER 1998, p. 121.

¹⁴ For instance: their retreats (*i'tikāf*). Qi Baba reports from the *Šaiḥ* of Pingliang that he went into seclusion for 100 days thereby modifying the traditional practice of solitary retreat for 40 days (*Arba'inīya*, described e.g. by SUHRAWARDĪ 2009, in *Awārif*, ch. 26–28) to do acts of devotion (ZHAN YE, p. 76). By doing so, the *šaiḥ* prayed to God—by dint of a mediatory function—to avert an impending catastrophe.

¹⁵ E.g. in the *Taizi Gongbei* of Linxia (Qādirīya); also in the *Banqiao daotong* of Wuzhong (Gahrīya).

¹⁶ An allusion to the exercise of visualizing the image of one's *šaiḥ*: „During remembering [God] he represents, opposite to his heart, the image of his master from whom he received the *dīkr* [formula] through [observing] perfect manners with him“ (*wa-yuṣaḥḥiṣ qubālata qalbiḥi šūrat aš-šaiḥ* etc.; MAZHAR 1896, p. 194 [for this work see fn. 23]). Through visualization of the image of his *šaiḥ* (*tašḥiṣ šūratihī*) the practitioner obtains inspiration (*faiḍ*) while believing that the master is his personal gate to the godhead (MAZHAR 1896, p. 190). Also in the performance of “the first method” of *dīkr* [cf. fn. 11] which can be done either with the “Greatest Name” or with the formula of negation and affirmation, there is involved a visualization of the *šaiḥ* (MAZHAR 1896, p. 194); this imaging is called *taṣawwur-i šaiḥ* by Indian Naqšbandīs (cf. BUEHLER 1998, pp. 134–138).

¹⁷ ZHAN YE [n.d.], p. 28; ZHAN YE/MA 2012, p. 14; *Muḥammas*, p. 18.

of his excellence, Mingxin asked everyone to slaughter two doves which he gave to the *murīds* at a place where he could not see them or where they could not see him. While they went to various corners of the monastery (*ṣaumi*;*daotang* 道堂) slaughtering the doves, Qalandar refrained and being asked by Mingxin why he did not follow the order, he explained that the master sees him at every place. Mingxin praised him for this: “Sublime is the portion (*naṣīb*; *pinji* 品級 [rank]) of him who looks at me whether I am absent or present and sublime is his spiritual practice” (*wa-mā a‘ẓama sulūkahu*).

The verses of the *Muḥammas* include Sufi teachings relating to the treatment of the lower self which is compared with a suckling that should be weaned not too late in order for it to overcome attachment to its mother’s breast (verse of Būṣīrī’s original poem). The carnal soul must be controlled (*ḥifẓ an-nafs*) in every circumstance, especially with respect to things forbidden. It must be checked through performance of spiritual works, through observation (*murāqaba*) and asking it to account for what it did (Tabād-kānī’s poetic elaboration):

Iḥfaz li-nafsika fī kulli l-umūri wa-lā / tuḥāwihā fī l-manāhī tabtanī ‘amalā / ḥāsib wa-rāqibhā yauman ḥalā wa-malā / wa-n-nafsu ka-ṭ-ṭifli / in tuḥmilhu ṣabba ‘alā / ḥubbi r-riḍā‘i wa-in taṭtimbu yanfaṭimū

“Control your carnal soul in all affairs and do not let it fall into the forbidden matters, to perpetrate [bad] works / Ask it to give account and observe it when you are alone or amidst the people / The soul is like a small child, if you neglect it, it will grow up / loving to be caressed, but if you wean it, it will abstain”.

2.2 The five *qurubāt* practices

MA XUEZHI MANṢŪR gives a description, in the introduction to *K. al-Ġahrī* (pp. 1–15), of five spiritual practices which he calls *qurubāt mulaqqanāt*, i.e. works taught by the masters that make the disciple draw closer to God.

2.2.1 Recitation of the Qur’ān

The first practice consists in reciting the Qur’ān while respecting the “subtle conditions and beautiful customs” (*ma‘a ṣ-ṣarā’iṭ ad-daḳīqa wa-l-ādāb al-ḡamīla*) thereof—not specified in *K. al-Ġahrī*—and completing the recitation on Sunday night (*al-ḥatma lailat kull al-iṭnaini*) or the day [after] (*K. al-Ġahrī*, p. 9).¹⁸ In order to alleviate the exercise of reading the

¹⁸ Muḥammad b. Ḥafīf aṣ-Šīrāzī (d. 371/982), in a collection of prayers, recommends formulas to be said at that occasion (cf. *Šarḥ al-faḍā’il*, ch. 120) for, according to a ḥadīṭ quoted, God answers prayers when offered after completing a Qur’ān recitation and there will also be planted a tree for him in paradise.

Qurʾān within one week, the revealed text has been divided in seven parts (*aḥzāb*).¹⁹

2.2.2 Recitation of the *Suwar al-Ḥwāḡagān*

The second practice is the recitation, on Thursday night, of the “Sūras of the Ḥwāḡagān” related to the masters of the proto-history of the Naqšbandīya,²⁰ i. e. a specific series of Qurʾānic verses and passages.²¹ The *K. al-Gabrī*, p. 27 includes a story which claims that this practice had been instituted by Ma Mingxin (“the pathfinder”; *dao zu* 道祖) in his Menhuan when he was proselytizing among the Turcophone ethnic group called Salar,²² in the Xunhua area of Eastern Qinghai/Northeastern Tibet:

Six Sālārī men went to his Highness, the honourable (*ḡanāb al-ḥaḍrat* [sic!]) Wiqāyatullāh—God sanctify his secret! His Highness said to them: “Every Thursday night you perform the ‘amal-practice (*innakum taʿmalūna*)”, i. e. they recite the *Suwar al-Ḥwāḡagān* [addition by MAṢṢŪR]. “The participation of [at least] seven persons is obligatory. You are six. Count me as one [extra] person.”

The story implies that Mingxin claimed that he participated in the ritual practice through a mystical presence, for which reason he declared it permitted to include him in the counting to reach the prescribed number of seven participants.

MAṢṢŪR, by contrast, explains how to recite the *Suwar al-Ḥwāḡagān* by referring to the *Manāqib Aḥmadīya wa-l-Maqāmāt as-Saʿdīya/Saʿīdīya* of the Naqšbandī šaiḥ [MUḤAMMAD] MAṢṢAR²³:

By kneeling down he [i. e. they] formed a circle (*dāʿira*), at the three prayer times of the morning prayer (*ṣubḥ*; *chen libai* 晨禮拜), midday prayer (*zuhr*, *shang* 晌) and evening prayer (*maḡrib*, *hun* 昏), and he recited in the congregation the words which the šaiḥs of the Naqšbandīya used to recite (*al-ḥatm al-mansūb ilā l-mašāʾiḥ al-kirām*).

¹⁹ In the core countries of the Islamic world, by contrast, the text has been divided into 30 portions (*aḡzāʾ*), which corresponds to the number of days in Ramaḍān (cf. WATT 1991, p. 57).

²⁰ The order had not yet crystallized into a form having a definite identity (ALGAR 1976, p. 41; also cf. SOBIEROJ 2016, pp. 141–142); for the Ḥwāḡagān cf. FLETCHER 1995a, pp. 4–5.

²¹ The *Ḥatm al-Ḥwāḡagān* has also been designated “the weekly congregational ḍikr” which took place Thursday or Friday night after the evening prayer (MEIER 1994, pp. 188–201).

²² Both Apaka Ḥwāḡa (cf. fn. 53) and his father had preached among the Salars and taught them Rūmī’s *Matnawī* (cf. FLETCHER 1995a, pp. 13–14).

²³ The above work treats the life of Aḥmad Saʿīd al-Fārūqī al-Ḥanafī an-Naqšbandī (d. 1276–1277/1860; MAṢṢAR 1896, p. 73), a descendant of the Imām Rabbānī (d. 1034/1624), and was written by MUḤAMMAD MAṢṢAR AL-AḤMADĪ AL-MADANĪ, the youngest of his sons (born in Dihlī in 1248/1832–1833; cf. MURĀD 1882–1883, p. 115; also SOBIEROJ 2016, p. 138, fn. 35).

The recitations end with prayers in which the merit of this practice is dedicated to the *ṣaiḥs* of the Naqšbandīya whose intercession is implored.²⁴

2.2.3 *Dikr*

Dikr, remembering God, as explained by MANŠŪR is performed in two ways, silently by the individual (*ḥafīyan*), and vocally in the assembly (*ḡahran*).²⁵ As a spiritual practice of Sufism *dikr* means becoming aware of God's presence in order to become annihilated in him through an act of grace. This can be achieved by reciting the *kalimat at-tauḥīd* or formula of the unity (*qingzhen yan* 清真言),²⁶ by calling on any of God's names or by repeating a specific prayer formula.

2.2.3.1 *Dikr ḥafī*

As to *dikr ḥafī* (*an nian* 暗念), MANŠŪR's third practice (*K. al-Ġahrī*, pp. 10–11), silent remembrance is to be performed after night prayer and recitation of *Muḥammad*s and before the morning prayer (*fī ṭ-ṭarafain*). In the Ġahrīya, it consists of three formulas, namely, prayers on the Prophet (*ṣalawāt*),²⁷ asking God for forgiveness (*istiḡfār*) and the *tauḥīd*-formula, and they are to be recited—mentally—1200 times (in total). Some practitioners—MANŠŪR says—perform *dikr* by using the name of the divine essence (*ism ad-dāt*), i. e. Allāh [“the remembrance of the heart”; cf. BUEHLER 1998, p. 127], or by using the word of praise (*tasbīḥ*; *nian zansong ci*), i. e. *subḥāna llāh*, in this context. Šaiḥ Ḥaḳīqullāh (Ma Yide 馬以德 Siyueba Taiye; d. 1849), Mingxin's third successor, made changes to the traditional sequence (*tartīb*) of the *dikr* formulas by adding the word of praise to be said 100 times at the beginning and reducing the total number of repetitions to 1000 times only.²⁸

²⁴ MANŠŪR 1933, p. 10; MANŠŪR/MA 1997, intr., p. 6. The dedication of the reward of one's prayers to the dead may again be rewarded by God (cf. IBN ḤAFĪF, *Šarḥ*, fo. 109v).

²⁵ According to Sufi tradition, vocal *dikr* was taught by the prophet to his son-in-law 'Alī who passed it on to “the mass of sufi orders” while silent *dikr* is derived from Muḥammad by way of Abū Bakr, the latter's father-in-law; the Naqšbandī *silsila* passes through Abū Bakr (cf. ALGAR 1976, p. 41; BUEHLER 1998, p. 56).

²⁶ ZHAN YE/MA 2012, p. 7.

²⁷ The “prayer on the Prophet” (*ṣalāt 'alā n-nabī*; ZHAN YE, *Manāqib*, pp. 207–208) is translated as *zansheng* 讚聖 in ZHAN YE/MA 2012, p. 93; for text formulas and other aspects of this prayer cf. IBN ḤAFĪF, *Šarḥ*, ch. 57–61).

²⁸ As an aid in counting, prayer beads (*subḥa* [QUŠAIRĪ 1940, p. 21]) may have been used as did Ma Mingxin himself. The pathfinder, on the eve of the deportation of his spouse, the Šauyā'quwīya, and his daughters, from Gansu to Xinjiang, handed over his *tasbīḥ* to his wife, and she in turn passed it on to her daughter, the Sangu Taitai, when they were about to be separated (MA XIN, pp. 16, 22–23).

As to the remembrance of God using the *kalimat at-tauhīd*, it consists of two parts, negation of the non-divine (*lā ilāha*) and affirmation of God's existence (*illā llāh*).

Ma Mingxin, in *K. al-Ġabrī*, has given a description of the practice of *dīkr* using the *kalimat at-tauhīd* by appealing to the authority of Ibn Zain from whom he said he received the instruction. He uses the traditional imagery of a mysticism of love in which the Sufi aspires after union with God whom he adores as the object of his yearning. He distinguishes between two forms of remembrance using the formula which correspond to a process of internalization that leads from a vocal to a more inward, 'contracted', recitation. In justification of this teaching he quotes verses from the Qur'ān and sayings ascribed to Prophet Muḥammad.²⁹

Mingxin also underlined, by quoting his teacher, that *dīkr* must by no means be performed without the guidance of an authorized *šaiḥ*: „Without the direction of the *muršid* the person who performs the remembrance on his own initiative is accursed and rejected in both worlds“. In ZHAN YE, *Manāqib*, p. 10 (ZHAN YE/MA 2012, p. 7) the warning is ascribed to the founder of the Naqšbandīya order himself, Bahā' ad-Dīn: “The word *lā ilāha illā llāh Muḥammadun rasūlullāh* is the best formula of remembrance etc. [...] He who recites it without a *šaiḥ*'s permission is a disbeliever etc.”

The account in *K. al-Ġabrī*, p. 58 ends with a saying ascribed to Mingxin explanatory of the physical movements which the Sufi performs during *dīkr*

²⁹ “When you return from the vocal recitation of the formula of declaring the unity (*al-kalima at-taiyiba al-ḡabrīya*) to the inaudible recitation (*dimian* 低念; *al-kalima al-ḡabrīya al-aḥfā*), you say: *lā'in* [لَا إِنْ]. The *lā* of *lā ilāha* indicates the unification of lover and beloved after the separation (*ḡam' iftirāq al-'āṣiq wa-l-ma'sūq*). The [syllable] *in* of *illā llāh* indicates the real union (*wiṣāl ḡaḡīqī*) between lover and beloved. At this place separation has been overcome (*dahaba l-firāq*), and unification (*ḡā'a l-wiṣāl*) has occurred. The two have met in a mystical union (*ḡaṣala ḡam' al-ḡam'*), the divinity and the created existence have become one (*ittahadat al-ilāhīya wa-l-kaunīya*; *renzhu heyi* 人主合一 [MANŠÜR/MA 1997, p. 45]; *Manāqib*, p. 11, has the variant: *ittahadat al-'ubūdīya wa-l-ulūḡīya*). It is as God says: ‘Truth has appeared and falsehood has been dispelled’ (Sūra 17/81). This is the subtlety (*laṭīfa*) of / the subtle substance referred to by [the ḡadīṭ] ‘I have a moment with God’. The Sufis call this the station (*martaba*) ‘[distance] of two bows’ lengths or nearer’ (Sūra 53/9). This is the reality of ‘There is no god but God’. Therefore the reciter must be attentive, watchful and must not ignore these secrets”. For the recitation of the *kalima* as *lā in* see also the story in ZHAN YE, *Manāqib*, p. 201 (Chin. trans., p. 89): In the first year of the Xianfeng period (i.e. 1851), while commemorating the death of one of the masters, Ṭab'atullāh Shisan Taiye Ma Hualong (馬化龍, lived 1810–1871; MA XIN, pp. 95–102), the fourth successor, ordered that as part of the *aurād* the disciples should recite the *lā in*-formula as often as the *lā ilāha illā llāh*, namely 66 times each, adding that the last 33 recitations must be done with perfect concentration while severing all internal attachments (*wa-qṭa'ū ta'alluqāt kullahā*).

using the *kalima*. The quote also includes an implicit reference to a mystical physiology:

The movement of the head toward the right side during *dīkr* recitation relates to the negation (i.e. there is no deity), the movement of the head toward the left side relates to the affirmation (i.e. only God exists), for the left side is the place at which the heart and the belief are situated (*maḥall al-qalb wa-l-īmān*).³⁰

A description of the required mode of performing the *dīkr* is also given in ZHAN YE, *Manāqib*, p. 66: While initiating his successor, the Chuanchang 船廠 Taiye Ma Datian 馬達天 Quṭb al-‘ālam,³¹ into the secrets of the order, the Pingliang 平涼 Taiye Mu Xianzhang 穆憲章 Kullu risāla³² explained to him how to remember God. The instruction was given in answer to the successor’s question which group of people would first enter hell-fire in the hereafter:

“Those who keep the eyes open during *dīkr* and who are not concentrated in their heart will enter hell-fire the first, in the hereafter. When one recites the *kalima*, one has to close the door, extinguish the light and close one’s eyes. Only then are you able to remember God perfectly and you can dispel from your heart the self-centred thoughts” (*waswasat al-ḥayāl*). There follows in the text of the *Manāqib* a quote, probably added by ZHAN YE, which he excerpted from *al-Baḥḡa as-sanīya*³³ to confirm the ṣaiḥ’s words: “During *dīkr* close the eyes! When the eyes are closed it is as though the five senses were closed. The closing of the five senses is the cause for the opening of the heart.” There follows a quote from the Qur’ān: “Alike of you is he who conceals his saying (*man asarra l-qaul*), and he who proclaims it (*man ḡahara bihī*) etc.” (Sūra 13/10).

The context of the description linked with the threat of exposure to hell-fire underlines the importance ascribed to observing the injunctions as transmitted in the Naqšbandīya.

³⁰ The theory referred to is indebted to the mysticism of the *laṭā’if*, “subtle substances”, developed in the Indian Naqšbandīya-Muḡaddidīya: Man, according to the Imām Rab-bānī is composed of ten *laṭā’if*, five relating to the *‘ālam al-amr* (“world of the decree”), viz. *qalb*, *rūḥ* (“spirit”), *sirr* (“secret”), *al-ḥafī* (“the hidden”), *al-aḥfā* (“the most hidden”), as well as five relating to the *‘ālam al-ḥalq* (“world of the creation”), viz. the *nafs* and the four elements. The *laṭā’if* have their “root” (*aṣl*) above the throne, but these *uṣūl* are forgotten by man until the ṣaiḥ, designated *kāmil mukammil* (“perfect and perfection-bestowing”), enlivens them (*yatawaḡḡahu labā*). Then the roots are remembered and an inclination to them is brought forth through divine attraction (*bi-ḡaḍabāt ilāhīya*). The first five *laṭā’if* have a specific place in the body activated through *dīkr* (MAZHAR 1896, p. 195). For the correspondences cf. BUEHLER 1998, p. 111; a model of Naqšbandī cosmology is op. cit., p. 107, figure 5.

³¹ Died in 1817 (cf. YANG 2010, p. 128).

³² Died in 1812 (cf. MA XIN, p. 71).

³³ Probably: *al-B. as-s. fī ādāb aṭ-ṭarīqa al-‘alīya al-Ḥālidiya an-Naqšbandīya*, of Muḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh al-Ḥānī al-Ḥālidi (d. 1279/1862; cf. DARNIQA 1987, p. 149).

In one of the stories of *K. al-Ğabrī* (including a polemic against Mingxin's rival, Ma Laichi 馬來遲 Abū l-Futūḥ; d. 1766) there is a connection between the *kalimat al-tauḥīd* and a reference to certain wild animals.

A disciple of Mingxin, the San Ahong (*ʿālim tālīṭ*) of Gongchangfu, had been haunted, when he followed Abū l-Futūḥ, by the vision of a crocodile and a leopard/panther which appeared before his inner eye during the recitation of the formula:

While performing the remembrance of God, I faced great danger. When I recited the word of the negation and that of the affirmation, I kept seeing a crocodile and a leopard.³⁴ Neither could I throw them off nor could I resist them (MANŠŪR 1933, pp. 24–25).

It may be worthy of note that the story involves a transfer of symbols which is further enriched through the Chinese translation.³⁵ In the imagery, the author of the Arabic text connected with a tradition in Persian literature where the non-divine has been symbolized as a crocodile, *nahang-i lā*, i.e. the crocodile of negation. The famous poet and member of the Naqšbandīya Nūr ad-Dīn Ğāmī (d. 898/1492) has written a tract³⁶ commenting on a verse of the Indian poet Amīr Ḥusrau (d. 725/1325) which includes this imagery. Possibly through Ğāmī whose works have been studied in Chinese Madrasa education (Jingtang jiaoyu), the Chinese Ğahrīya became aware of the imagery. As for the [black] leopard (*nimr*),³⁷ this animal has been employed in Arabic Sufi literature as a symbol for the carnal soul. ʿABD AL-QĀDIR AL-ĞĪLĀNĪ (d. 561/1166) whose Qādirīya Sufi order is still widespread in Islamicate China,³⁸ in his *Sirr al-asrār*,³⁹ p. 55 includes the leopard in a series of beasts (*sibāʿāt*), besides lion, wolf and pig, which the dreaming person sees under the influence of his blameworthy qualities (*al-ahlāq ad-damīma*). The *Minhāğ al-ʿābidīn* of AL-ĞAZĀLĪ (d. 505/1111), fo. 20v, on the other hand, includes some sections about the discrimination between various types of inspiration, divine, angelic, psychic, diabolic etc., and in this context the carnal soul (*an-nafs*), as the origin of one type of inspiration is compared with the leopard (*nimr*).

³⁴ *Yaʿtī rağul qāḥir at-timsāḥ wa-bātiš an-nimr* ("here comes a man who defeats the crocodile and seizes the leopard"; MANŠŪR 1933, p. 24, quoting Mingxin).

³⁵ The Chinese translation renders the names of the beasts called crocodile and leopard in the Arabic text as dragon and tiger.

³⁶ *Risāla dar šarḥ-i bayt* etc. (cf. SOBIEROJ 2016, p. 161, fn. 156); for the wider reception of Ğāmī's works see now PAPAS 2018.

³⁷ MANŠŪR 1933, p. 77.

³⁸ Cf. MA TONG 2000c, pp. 547–576.

³⁹ MAZĪDĪ 2007 (ed.); a Chinese trans. is MA TINGYI 1998.

2.2.3.2 Vocal *dīkr*

The vocal *dīkr*, performed in the congregation, constitutes MANṢŪR's fourth spiritual practice.

MANṢŪR quotes various literary sources such as the Qur'ān commentary *Tafsīr Rūḥ al-bayān* [of Ismā'īl Ḥaqqī al-Brūsawī (d. 1137/1724)]⁴⁰ and a collection of Ḥanafī Fatwas (*al-Fatāwā l-Ḥairīya*) [of Ḥair ad-Dīn al-Fārūqī (d. 1081/1671)] as well as the Prophetic tradition to justify the view that the vocal remembrance (*ad-dīkr bi-raf' aṣ-ṣaut*) is more effective in dispelling stray thoughts (*qam' al-ḥātir*) from the novice's heart than is silent remembrance.⁴¹

As to the contents of this practice, MANṢŪR equates the vocal *dīkr* with the recitation of the "noble prayer litanies" (*ḥalqat ad-dīkr 'alā l-ḡahr ya'nī l-Aurād aṣ-ṣarīfa*).

2.2.3.2.1 *al-Aurād aṣ-ṣarīfa*

Prayers designated as *Aurād* (pl. of Arabic *wird*),⁴² centred around a "word of praising [God]" and two series of divine names, were taught to Mingxin by Ibn Zain, before he sent him back to China as his missionary ("this word of praises must also be recited in our litanies", *aurādunā ṣ-ṣarīfa*). The text of the praises, beginning with *subḥāna l-abad al-abad*,⁴³ is included in *K. al-Ġahrī*, pp. 19–20 and it used to be recited after the morning prayers.⁴⁴

Mingxin, in his turn, taught the *Aurād aṣ-ṣarīfa*, translated as the "precious word of praise" (*zungui de zanci* 讚詞),⁴⁵ to his followers. Among them there was a young Ahong who had gained the pathfounder's favour⁴⁶ and who then asked Mingxin to allow him to place Sūra 7/23 in front of the *Aurād*-prayers: As Mingxin agreed, the Ahong inserted the Qur'ānic verse.⁴⁷ The story ends with the note that the ṣaiḥ eventually separated himself from

⁴⁰ Died in 1137/1724 (BROCKELMANN 1937–1949, vol. 2, p. 581). The commentary is also read by contemporary Indian Naqṣbandīs (cf. BUEHLER 1998, p. 164, fn. 71).

⁴¹ On the polemical literature written against the practice of vocal *dīkr* by the Central Asian 'ulamā' see BABADJANOV 2004, p. 297.

⁴² CHIH 2016, pp. 520–544 describes the *Aurād* as litanies and prayers taught by the master to the disciple to be recited at specific moments of the day and the night in addition to the ritual prayers (cf. p. 538) and she gives an outline of the *Aurād* as practiced by the members of the Ḥalwatīya order in 18th c. Egypt (pp. 538–539).

⁴³ Chinese: *zansong yongheng de zhu qingjing* 讚頌永恒的主清淨 (MANṢŪR/MA 1997, pp. 3–7); also: *zanci*.

⁴⁴ Cf. YANG, in GUANLI YE 1993, p. 9, fn. 4.

⁴⁵ MANṢŪR 1933, p. 59; MANṢŪR/MA 1997, p. 47.

⁴⁶ MANṢŪR 1933, p. 59; for the reasons of Mingxin's temporary inclination to the Ahong cf. SOBIEIROJ 2016, p. 157.

⁴⁷ MANṢŪR 1933, p. 59; MANṢŪR/MA 1997, p. 47.

the Ahong because he had followed the whims of his carnal soul. This may be interpreted as meaning that he was wrong in asking for an alteration of the arrangement of the transmitted prayers which must be accepted as taught by the masters ‘through license and initiation’ (*fī l-iğāza wa-t-talqīn*).

That not only the addition of passages to the *Aurād aš-šarīfa* was strongly disapproved but also the change in the frequency of their recitation is evinced by other stories in *K. al-Ğabrī*.

The Wu Ahong (al-‘Ālim al-‘adīm), active in Qinzhou 秦州 (today: Tianshui, Gansu), who at the occasion of a visit of Mingxin, in order to arrive in his presence quicker, did not recite the prayers starting with *subḥāna l-abad al-abad* according to the required frequency, was reprimanded for this. Because of his anxiety he had become inattentive and oblivious of the number of recitations already performed (*ğafaltu ḥīnan*).⁴⁸

The *Aurād* which the Pathfinder had himself assembled (*rakkabtuhā*), by dint of this origin, were believed to be of incalculable worth and they could only be recited with the šaiḥ’s permission, without additions and omissions.⁴⁹

The subsequent story in *K. al-Ğabrī* contains further explanations given by Mingxin himself for the reader to understand why the arrangement of the *Aurād* must not be altered: He explains that his method, “my religion” (*dīnī*), is comparable to a prescription for the treatment of illnesses. In order for the therapist to treat a patient successfully the dose of the medicament must not be altered arbitrarily and the same applies to the spiritual instruction.⁵⁰

In this anecdote, a disciple who asked the pathfinder for initiation into the practice of [the silent] *dīkr* (*dīkran mulaqqanan min ladun al-ḥaḍra*) was rejected as he had reduced, without permission, the number of recitations of the *Aurād* of the morning prayer from twice to once.⁵¹ Thanks to his clairvoyance, Mingxin recognized that the disciple had been inattentive in his prayers (“Why did you recite, this morning, the words *subḥāna l-abad al-abad* only once?”).⁵²

⁴⁸ In the manuscripts of some Naqšbandī prayer texts there are explicit references to the number of recitations prescribed for the transmitted prayers (e.g. BSB Munich Cod. arab. 1791, fo. 44r [*Du‘ā-i ḥatm-i Ḥwāğagān*]). In the Aoladi (*aurād*) of the Huasi Menhuan of Linxia the indications are included, in the printed edition, in Chinese.

⁴⁹ MANŠŪR 1933, p. 30; MANŠŪR/MA 1997, p. 17.

⁵⁰ MANŠŪR 1933, pp. 30–31; MANŠŪR/MA 1997, p. 17; GUANLI YE 1993, p. 102.

⁵¹ MANŠŪR 1933, p. 31; MANŠŪR/MA 1997, p. 17.

⁵² A prayer including the *ta‘wīd*-formula said by Mingxin in the context whereby he invoked God’s protection against omitting, adding, changing and altering [the order of the transmitted prayers (*na‘ūdū billāh min an-nuqṣān wa-z-ziyāda wa-t-tağyīr wa-t-tabdīl*)] underlines the severity of the breach of this injunction (*ta‘wīd*-prayers recommended by Muḥammad against various afflictions, in IBN ḤAFĪF, *Šarḥ*, ch. 210).

Prayer formulas were taught to the disciples not only as part of their daily duty of *dīkr* but also as *therapeutic aid*. Besides underlining the psychotherapeutic aspect of the prayers, some of the relevant stories also include a polemic against the rivals of the Ġahrīya order, firstly Abū l-Futūḥ Ma Lai-chi, and secondly against another branch of the Naqšbandīya active in the Gansu/Qinghai area, the Mufuti, i. e. Mufti order of Ma Shouzhen 馬守貞.⁵³

Mingxin advised the Mullā aḍ-Ḍahabī (Chinese: Jin 金 Manlā) of a place called Didao 狄道 in Southern Gansu to recite the prayer *subḥāna llāh* ('praised be God') three times when he turned to the master seeking his help. In his imagination the mullā felt threatened by a large cat whenever he began the ritual prayer with the words "God is greater" (*takbīr al-iftitāḥ*).⁵⁴ The same formula had been recommended to the mullā by the founding šaiḥs of the Mufuti and Huasi 花寺 orders which he himself had belonged to earlier.

However, the prayer recommended by the two šaiḥs did not show any effect with the mullā. Only when the words "praised be God" were recommended to him by Mingxin, did the animal remove itself, at the first recitation. At the second it disappeared from his eyes and at the third recitation of the formula all the disquiet had come to an end (*tanazzaha 'an kulli tašwīš*).⁵⁵

Also Qi Baba [Ye] (七爸爸爺),⁵⁶ the saintly father of the Chuanchang Taiye, had been a follower⁵⁷ of Abū l-Futūḥ at first. He is said to have been very conscientious in the performance of the religious duties.⁵⁸ At night he refrained from sleeping but at some time he entered a mental crisis. During *dīkr* a red light flashed before his eyes, and from behind a white light appeared. He recited incessantly: *lā ḥawla wa-lā qūwata illā billāh al-ʿālī al-ʿazīm* ("there is no strength nor power except through God, the high, the great"; ZHAN YE 2012, p. 18).⁵⁹

He went to Abū l-Futūḥ telling him that he was in danger. The latter told him that it is an illness, saying: "In Xiguan (*ribāt fanā' al-mağrib*) [a district of Hezhou] there is a good physician. Go to him and have yourself be treated!" However, secretly Qi Baba said to himself: It is a psychic condition and no physical illness. He went back home disappointed. Soon after

⁵³ Both Sufis stood in the tradition of the Uyghur saint Apaka (Āfāq) Ḥwāḡa who was made governor by the Oirat Mongols in 1679 (MA TONG 2000b, p. 36; AUBIN 1960–2004, p. 338; cf. FLETCHER 1995a, pp. 10–11, 15–20 [on Abū l-Futūḥ's carrier]).

⁵⁴ For prayers to be said before and after the *takbīr al-iftitāḥ* cf. IBN ḤAFĪF, *Šarḥ*, ch. 19–21.

⁵⁵ MANŠÜR 1933, pp. 44–45; MANŠÜR/MA 1997, pp. 32–33. For the permissibility of changing one's spiritual mentor, with Indian Naqšbandīs, cf. BUEHLER 1998, p. 162.

⁵⁶ For his biography cf. MA XIN, p. 82 (he attributes to him the name Ma Wensheng 馬文生).

⁵⁷ *Jiaoxia* 教下, *jiaotu* 教徒 (ZHAN YE/MA 2012, p. 10).

⁵⁸ *Zai gangong fangmian* 在干功方面 (ZHAN YE/MA 2012, p. 10).

⁵⁹ For traditions on the merits (*fī faḍl*) of reciting this formula cf. IBN ḤAFĪF, *Šarḥ*, ch. 53.

he hurried to the pathfinder. He met him in his lodge in Xiguan and he renewed his intention (*nawā nīyatan ḡadīda*). He told the maulā what had happened to him in the performance of *dīkr*. Mingxin said: “You are noble and intelligent. In front of you the light of prophecy has appeared and behind you the light of sanctity. The two lights have united in your pure back. If God wills, several generations of saints will emerge from your back.”⁶⁰

The stories above emphasize that, in terms of charisma and empowerment, Mingxin was superior to his rivals. In the last anecdote, a vision of lights which appeared to Qi Baba is interpreted by Mingxin as an announcement of the birth of his second successor, the Chuanchang Taiye.

Besides the prayer of praise, *Zanci*, which Mingxin is said to have received from Ibn Zain, there is also a connection between a collection of *Aurād* as recited in the Huasi Menhuan of Abū l-Futūḥ, and their teacher ‘Aqīla under whom they both studied in Mecca.⁶¹ At the end of the *Aurād* included in a booklet printed 2012 in the Lao Huasi mosque of Hezhou (Linxia),⁶² there is a prayer headed *Du‘ā’ al-aurād* in which forgiveness is implored for the Muslims in general and for certain saints in particular, viz. Abū l-Futūḥ aṣ-Ṣīnī whose name is preceded by that of Muḥammad b. Aḥmad ‘Aqīla, Bahā’ ad-Dīn an-Naqṣbandī and ‘Abdalqādir al-Ġilānī.⁶³

Ma Laichi is also believed to have obtained from his teacher ‘Aqīla the two-volume *Maulūd* on the birth of the Prophet which according to MA TONG⁶⁴ is recited during the ‘amal-gatherings of the Huasi Sufi order in Hezhou.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ ZHAN YE [n. d.], pp. 16–19.

⁶¹ There is a report in MANṢŪR 1933, p. 44, in which Mingxin informs Abū l-Futūḥ about the death of ‘Aqīla.

⁶² An endowment stamp on the back cover of my personal copy carrying the characters *Qingzhen laohuasi waigefu* 外格夫, i.e. *waqf*, is placed over the injunction that the text must not be removed from the prayer hall.

⁶³ On connections between the Qādirīya and Naqṣbandīya orders cf. ALGAR 1976, p. 45.

⁶⁴ MA TONG 2000b, p. 32; here, the name is transcribed as “Agelai” (阿格萊). He is mentioned by FLETCHER 1995a, p. 16 but he fails to identify him.

⁶⁵ Besides, the *Minšār* is another text Ma Laichi is believed to have brought with from Yemen [FLETCHER 1995a, pp. 16–17: as a gift from one Maulānā Maḥdūm to whom he was sent by ‘Aqīla (!)]. The text, a collection of Qur’ānic verses, prayers, qaṣīdas and lists of authorities, partly written in Persian, is sold in Western Gansu (Guanghe) and the Xunhua area of Qinghai as a facsimilated manuscript as also in the form of a printed booklet (Lanzhou, Xiaoxihu). It mentions the names of both Muḥammad b. A. ‘Aqīla and of M. Abū al-Futūḥ al-Ṣīnī. Both versions are entitled *Muṣār* [!] and *K. al-Muṣār*, resp. The (correct) Arabic work title *Minšār* has been traditionally transcribed by Chinese Mingsha(le) 明沙 or 冥沙 or 冥沙勒 (cf. LIPMAN 1999, p. 556, fn. 12; MA TONG 2000a [1980], p. 163; idem 2007, p. 337; FLETCHER 1995a, p. 17 [who failed to identify the title]). It should be added that the Arabic word *minšār* denotes “saw” which is an obvious reference to the

The scholar ‘Aqīla whose memory is invoked both in the order of Ma Mingxin and that of Ma Laichi is to be identified with the author Muḥammad b. Aḥmad ‘Aqīla al-Yamanī whose collection of Prophetic traditions entitled *al-Fawā'id al-ḡalīla* is still extant. In the collection there is included a chain of ḥadīṭ transmitters which includes the name of a Naqšbandī master called Taḡ ad-Dīn al-Hindī an-N. (cf. BSB Cod.arab. 2126, fo. 2r), confirming the link between ‘Aqīla and the Sufis of Gansu.⁶⁶

2.2.4 Recitation of *Muḥammad* and *Madā'ih*

MANṢŪR explains in his introduction that the fifth spiritual exercise consists in the melodious recitation of the *Muḥammad* and the *Madā'ih*, in praise of the Prophet (*qirā'at al-qaṣā'id an-nabawīya wa-l-madā'ih an-nabawīya bil-ḡinā'*), and he adds that the recitation has to be performed according to specific conditions that must not be divulged to the unworthy.⁶⁷

At the same time, the texts of *Muḥammad*, *Madā'ih* and *Aurād* were also meant to be recited publicly, by contrast to the other practices which were performed secretly (inaudibly). The *Manāqib* (ZHAN YE, p. 30) makes this distinction in a story about the meeting between an old divine of Tuochangbao 駝場堡, Lao Ahong (*al-ālim al-mašīb*), and Mingxin. The scholar complains in front of him that, because of the hostilities of the numerous enemies of the Ġahrīya in the village only the secret, not the public practices could be performed:

The performance of the secret spiritual practices (*‘amal al-‘ibādāt al-ḥafīyāt; ancang de* 暗藏的 *gongke*) is easy to me, but not so the vocal ones (*‘amal al-ḡabrīya; mingyang de* 明揚的 *gongke*). I grieve over the fact that it is not possible to recite the *Aurād*, *Madā'ih* and *Muḥammad* [aloud].⁶⁸

The recitation of *Muḥammad* and *Madā'ih* by chanting⁶⁹ provoked the protest of other Muslims (Sufis). To justify this mode of recitation, MANṢŪR,

dīkr-i arra (or *dīkr-i minšār*) or “remembrance of the saw” (designated as such because of the rasping sound it produces; ALGAR 1976, p. 42), that used to be practised, i. a., in the turkophone Sufism of Aḥmad-i Yasawī (cf. FLETCHER 1995b, p. 115; BABADJANOV 2004, pp. 297, 299), one of the ṣaiḥs included in the above lists (*Muṣār*, p. 48).

⁶⁶ For ‘Aqīla (d. 1150/1737) who had given licences for ḥadīṭ and Sufi transmissions to ‘Abd al-Ḥālīq b. az-Zain al-Mizḡāḡī, cf. REICHMUTH 2009, p. 22.

⁶⁷ MANṢŪR/MA 1997: “by relying on secret transmission”.

⁶⁸ Mingxin comforts the old man with the promise that his successor, the Pingliang Taiye, would cause the order to flourish again.

⁶⁹ Cf. MA TONG 2000b, p. 93: “In the execution of the praise of the Prophet and the ‘amal [the texts] are to be recited aloud, in the Yamanī accent (*y. diao*), while placing an emphasis on the melody (*zhongshi yinyun*). It is encouraged that one recites expressively, „through a rhythmical recitation which varies according to the mood. In the recitation (*songnian*) one

just as he did with regard to vocal *dīkr* (*K. al-Ġabrī*, p. 13), appeals to various literary works, such as i. a. *Rūḥ al-bayān* (a tafsīr), *Durr al-aurād* (on prayer), *al-Fatāwā l-ḥairīya* (on law), *Ihyā' 'ulūm ad-dīn* of AL-ĠAZĀLĪ:

Certain people may heed my advice: They try to forbid the recitation, with melody, of *Muḥammad* und *Madā'ih*, while believing that this mode of recitation is incorrect. These people may study the *Rūḥ al-bayān* and the other classics carefully etc.

MANṢŪR also, in this context (*K. al-Ġabrī*, pp. 12–13), contrasts the Chinese—it may be added: Muslim—scholars' concentration on the “study of grammar and morphology” (*'ilm an-naḥw wa-s-ṣarf*) which he identifies as the cause of their error (*ḡawāya*) with the Sufis' focus on spiritual meanings. The latter, he says, transform the consonants and vowels of the canonical texts into subtle allusions and fine secrets (*baddalū l-ḥurūf wa-l-ḥarakāt li-l-iṣārāt*). To legitimate this neglect of phonetic considerations, the Iranian mystic Ḥabīb al-ʿAḡamī,⁷⁰ one of the legendary forefathers of Sufism is appealed to. Ḥabīb, a non-Arab is shown to be superior to the renunciant Ḥasan al-Baṣrī⁷¹ who by Sufi tradition is believed to have been in communication with ʿAlī, the Prophet's cousin.⁷² Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, in an anecdote narrated by MANṢŪR, doubts the legitimacy of Ḥabīb's ritual prayer because of his demonstrated inability to correctly pronounce the pharyngeal consonant *ḥā'* of *al-ḥamdu lillāh*. In a dream Allāh scolded him for his concentration on phonetics adding that only because of having stood behind Ḥabīb in the ritual⁷³ all his previous prayers have become accepted (literally: ‘sealed’).⁷⁴ Thus, with MANṢŪR, the

must express solemnity, joy, sorrow, sadness, happiness as well as a deep sentiment of grief. The recitation must not only transport a musical emotion, it must also possess a quality of agitation (*gudong xing*) and attraction.” For the public recitation of the *Qaṣīdat al-Burda* in the Arab countries see DAUB 2016, pp. 32–39 (“Rezitation und Gesang”). Listening to Sufi music, ‘the most vocal of all activities of remembrance’, was generally declared forbidden by (legally-minded) Naqṣbandīs (cf. BUEHLER 1998, p. 128, fn. 104).

⁷⁰ For Ḥabīb (d. 156/772) cf. GRAMLICH 1976, p. 172, fn. 921.

⁷¹ Died in 110/728; for his biography cf. RITTER 1933. In the vita of Ibn Ḥafīf there is included a story illustrating the superiority of Ḥabīb-i ʿAḡamī in relation to Ḥasan b. Abī l-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (sic!). In the story Ḥabīb dwelt on an island and Ḥasan was unable to walk over the water to meet him as the science (*'ilm*) which he had taught Ḥabīb did not provide him with the means necessary to accomplish this feat (DAILAMĪ 1955, pp. 118–119).

⁷² Cf. GRAMLICH 1976, p. 172.

⁷³ A variant version of the story about Ḥasan's unwillingness to pray behind Ḥabīb can already be found in QUṢAIRĪ 1940, p. 194 (= GRAMLICH 1989, p. 527).

⁷⁴ Also in ZHAN YE, *Manāqib*, p. 200 (ZHAN YE/MA 2012, p. 89), the concentration on Arabic grammar is contrasted with a focus on spiritual meanings. Here however not the exoteric scholars are criticized for their limited perspective on spirituality but the disciples of Shisan Taiye Ṭabʿatullāh (cf. fn. 37). Two disciples, al-Aq Aḥūnd al-Fuḫānī and al-Qāʿ Aḥūnd al-Mālaysī, were disputing over what is the correct pronunciation of

discourse on the Ġahrīya practices turns into an apology of the authenticity of Chinese Islam against its critics from the core countries.

2.2.4.1 *Muḥammad*

The *muḥammad* in question is an elaboration composed by the Iranian poet Muḥammad Tabādkānī al-Maulawī of Ṭūs (d. ca. 900/1494)⁷⁵ of five verses (*taḥmīs*; *wu ye muhanmaisi*) of al-Būṣīrī's (d. c. 694/1294) famous "Mantle poem", the *Qaṣīdat al-Burda*. MANṢŪR underlines the importance of the text in the Ġahrīya by quoting verses from it (v. 125), without however identifying his source, to end Mingxin's vita in *K. al-Ġahrī* (p. 70).

MANṢŪR, in his section on the practices, ascribes to the recitation of the *Muḥammad* the function of remedying the deficiencies in the execution of the ritual prayers previously performed.⁷⁶ Besides, he claims that through the recitation of the poetical text Sufi path, mystical reality and religious law become united: "Thereby, for the wayfarers (*as-sālikūna*), *ṭarīqa* (path) and *ḥaqīqa* (reality) become integrated into the *ṣarī'a*" (*K. al-Ġahrī*, p. 8).⁷⁷

According to MANṢŪR, the *Muḥammad* was to be recited every evening after the night prayer.⁷⁸ In this, the poem was read in individual sections, i. e. every evening a specific passage of the canonical text was recited. As a result,

the expression *Allāhu akbar* in the litanies. Al-Fuṣṣiānī said that "he", probably the ṣaiḥ, recited *Allāhu akbar* while pronouncing the second of the two words with initial vowel *a* (*qara'a Allāhu akbar bi-faṭḥ al-alif*); the scholar of Malay (*al-ʿālim al-Mālayṣi*), on the other hand, claimed that "he" recited initial *alif* while suppressing vowel *a* (*[bi-]sukūn al-alif*). When they went to the ṣaiḥ telling him about their dispute he rebuked them for only knowing the outside of the liturgical formula (*zāhir al-kalima*) without understanding the esoteric subtlety (*wa-lā tafqahū* [!] *l-laṭīf al-bāṭin*). He also pointed out to them that to pronounce *akbar* while suppressing initial vowel *a*, the letter *alif* merges (literally: enters) with the letter *hā'* of *Allāh*, and the "form" (*ṣūra*) of *Allāhu akbar* changes to *Allāhu kbar*. This however—he explained—signifies attainment of the level of two bows' lengths (*huwa l-bulūḡ ilā martabat qāba qausaini*), i. e. the state the Prophet reached during his ascension according to Sūra 53/9.

⁷⁵ Cf. HĀČĈĪ ḤALĪFA 1835–58, vol. 4, p. 527; SOBIEROJ 2014, p. 107.

⁷⁶ The analogous view that the supererogatory prayers (*nawāfil*) are necessary in a compensatory sense is expressed in the ḥadīṭ, "they will overwhelm the imperfections of the corresponding *farā'id* [obligatory prayers] on Judgment day" (cf. CHODKIEWICZ 1993, p. 116).

⁷⁷ He tries to explain how this happens by referring to the simile of a chicken egg: "*Ṣarī'a*, *ṭarīqa* and *ḥaqīqa* can be compared with a chicken egg. If you bore a hole in its shell with a small needle it is intact outwardly and one can eat it. However the chick cannot emerge from it through the embrace and hatching of the hen. When there is the slightest defect in the (execution) of the *ṣarī'a*, the *ṭarīqa* cannot be performed with success, let alone the *ḥaqīqa*" (MANṢŪR 1933, p. 9, quoting the Ġahrī master Ḥaqīqullāh).

⁷⁸ *Xiao li* 宵礼; *ṣalāt al-ʿiṣā'* (cf. YANG ZONGSHAN 2007, p. 312b); also MA TONG 2000b, p. 33 writes that the Ġahrīs were obliged to recite (*songdu*) the poem after the *hufudan*, i. e. night prayer.

the headings of the sections even served the Ġahrīs as a device for dating, as appears for instance in a story in the *Manāqib* related by the Shagou maulā [Ma Yuanzhang] concerning the visit of some disciples to the šaiḥ of Pingliang.⁷⁹

Some disciples were more gifted as reciters than others and those credited with the greater talent were allowed by the šaiḥs to read the *Muḥammad* in the assemblies which generated envy among their ranks. Duanbozi (ʿālim *qaṣīr al-ʿunuq* [“short necked Ahong”]), according to *K. al-Ġahrī*, used to recite the poem in the presence of the Chuanchang Taiye until it occurred to the Pingliang Taiye that his successor may replace the short-necked by his son Ḥaḳīqullāh. The Ahong reacted with hate and he severed the connection with the Chuanchang Taiye.⁸⁰

In the Ġahrīya order, the text of the *Muḥammad*, unless re-activated from memory, nowadays is usually read from a manuscript copy written by the hand of Riyāḍ ad-Dīn Ṣadīqullāh Muḥammad Nūr Ma Yuanzhang 馬元章 (d. 1920),⁸¹ who was the seventh generation master, and it has been published in facsimile.⁸²

Ma Mingxin and, thereafter, his followers searched for clues in the text of the *Muḥammad* helping them to gain spiritual orientation and tackle the hardships they faced in their daily life which for many was characterized by war and persecution.⁸³

⁷⁹ “In the era of the Pingliang Taiye, Jalāl, Qalandar, Wotaidi and Niu Ahong [...] entered the šaiḥ’s house. He attended on them and allowed them to dwell with him. They stayed with him for some time, and at the evening of the *Hal ḥaqā’iq* [i. e. when the chapter of the *Muḥammad* starting with these words was recited] the maulā spoke to them about the secrets which the Pathfinder had received from the Grand šaiḥ in Yemen. He told them the whole history of the Ġahrīya order from its advent in China and the time of its blossoming until the uprisings etc.” (ZHAN YE, pp. 66–70; ZHAN YE/MA 2012, pp. 28–29).

⁸⁰ MANŠŪR 1933, p. 115; MANŠŪR/MA 1997, p. 103.

⁸¹ Cf. *Muḥammad* (Beijing: Chaohua chuban she 2012), p. 332; MA TONG 2000b, p. 33; for the vita of the Shagou 沙沟 Taiye see MA XIN, pp. 34–41.

⁸² E. g. Beijing: Chaohua chuban she 2012. A facsimile copy of this text written by another scribe has been seen in the possession of a Ġahrī imām in Xiji, Ningxia (see figure on facing page). The first verse of Būṣīrī’s poem is made up of the last two hemistichs on this page and it is preceded by three lines of the elaboration composed in the same metre and with the same rhyme. The style of writing is a bold ornamental *ḥaṭṭ-i šīnī*. There follow three lines of a Persian translation written in a smaller hand but again ending with letter *mim*. The *rasm* of the Arabic poem of 163 verses is fully vocalized. Chinese translations of the verses have been added in the margins: The inner margin displays a *hanzi* translation which is repeated written in the Arabic script (*xiaojing*) on the outer margin. Between the lines a translation in a Chinese vernacular has been added, again written in Arabic letters.

⁸³ The disputes over the correct performance of *dīkr* and the revolt in 1784 led the Qing government to adopt an anti-Muslim policy (FLETCHER 1995b, p. 115).



Mingxin justified his line of action as a missionary for a renewal of the Chinese Naqšbandīya by referring to specific verses of the *Muḥammadas*: For instance, whenever he became aware of the existence of individuals considered receptive for his message he would send out to them an invitation to join his school or he would go himself.

According to the *riwāya* in *K. al-Ġabrī*,⁸⁴ Mingxin supported this programme of practising *daʿwa* by quoting verse 116 of the *Muḥammadas* including a verse from the amplification in which the Muslims are asked to “Hold on to the generous (i. e. the Prophet) when he sympathizes with us / Good tidings, people of islam, for we have / From divine care, a pillar that does not collapse” (*fastamsikū bi-karīmin in yaḥinna lanā / bušrā lanā maʿšara l-islāmi inna lanā / min al-ʿināyati ruknan ġaira munhadimī*). The quotation evinces that Mingxin identified with the Prophet and that he considered selection by him to be a reason for joy.

His first successor, the Pingliang Taiye, was the preeminent target of such an election and the story how his allegiance was gained through the initiative of Mingxin’s missionary, Qalandar,⁸⁵ is the content of the subsequent *riwāya* in *K. al-Ġabrī*.⁸⁶

There is an interesting parallel to the story about Qalandar’s mission in *Rašahāt*.⁸⁷ The author of this work quotes verses of the *Muḥammadas* (v. 152) to illustrate the psychological state, i. e. despair of Muḥammad Muḥyī ad-Dīn Qalandar who was at the verge of dying from hunger on the way to Pingliang, where he was ordered by Mingxin to rush, in only three days, to collect the young preacher of the Upper Mosque:

*Qad ʿayya lī markabu s-sairi l-maḥūdu bihī / fa-fī l-fayāfī man-i l-malġa
l-malūdu bihī*

“The riding beast which I spur on in my way has become weak / Who can serve as the place of refuge in the deserts?”⁸⁸

Miraculously, soon after there appeared a jar of water and two loaves of bread on the way. Qalandar and his travel companion Watadī quickly realized that

⁸⁴ MANŠŪR 1933, pp. 63–64; MANŠŪR/MA 1997, pp. 50–51.

⁸⁵ In ZHAN YE, p. 31, Qalandar’s spiritual state is praised: “Q. reached the highest rank which a man can reach. He spoke about the mysteries and admonished his brethren every day to be conscientious in their performance of the practices ‘for there are many secrets on the way’. He also said: ‘In our order (*jiaomen* 教門) there are individuals from whose mouths flowers are ejected.”

⁸⁶ MANŠŪR 1933, p. 64.

⁸⁷ GUANLI YE 1993, p. 74.

⁸⁸ The translator YANG WANBAO identifies the poem by mentioning its name but fails to give the verse number. IBN ḤAFĪF has devoted ch. 75 of *Šarḥ al-faḍāʾil* to prayers one should say while travelling on one’s riding-beast.

it was their šaiḥ's love (*qing* 情) that had brought the food to them to save their lives.

The Ġahrīs also found specific acts and character qualities of their masters reflected in the poetical verses which guided them in coming to terms with their šaiḥs' activities that, at times, bewildered them.

An example is the dissimulation of Ḥaqīqullāh, son of the Chuanchang Taiye who, when his father was interrogated at the justice court of Lanzhou, pressured to confess his alleged crimes,⁸⁹ feigned ignorance: "My father did not teach me anything other than [the knowledge] of planting trees from which I take clubs⁹⁰ while I beg." The text continues:

When Wang Ye, a disciple, heard these words of Ḥaqīqullāh, he was deeply moved and he said: 'The ambition (*himma*) of this man is truly great! The school in Lugouzha (i. e. Jinjibao)⁹¹ will prosper under his guidance. He has a very clear mind and only pretends to be confused (*jiazhuang hutu* 假装糊涂; *yatağāhalu wa-yatanākaru*). He hides his true personality and does not follow [the rulers] as did the Jewish and Christian divines in the Prophet's presence.⁹² As Būṣīrī, the author of the *Muḥammas* (!), says:

Do not be puzzled by the envious who negates it (i. e. the Qur'ānic revelation) / He pretends being ignorant while in truth he is skilful and understanding (*lā tağaban li-ḥasūdīn rāḥa yunkiruhā / tağāhulan wahwa 'ainu l-ḥādiqi l-fahimī*; v. 103)."

2.2.4.2 *Madā'ih* (*maidayih* 邁達伊哈)⁹³

The Ġahrī Sufis were also required to recite the *Madā'ih* on a daily basis. They believed that Ma Mingxin brought the *Madā'ih* to China returning from Yemen where he had received the text from Ibn Zain.⁹⁴ They discovered references to the names of their masters, both Arab and Chinese, encoded, in particular verses of the *Madā'ih*.⁹⁵

⁸⁹ In the manuscript of *K. al-Ġahrī*, the "crimes" are transcribed in Xiaojing by four unintelligible words of which the last two are *gan*, *gou* (MANŠŪR 1933, p. 123).

⁹⁰ The Chin. trans. adds: "to drive away the dogs".

⁹¹ Cf. YANG XUELIN 2010, p. 127.

⁹² MANŠŪR/MA 1997, p. 110; MANŠŪR 1933, p. 124.

⁹³ In a facsimile reproduction of a manuscript published recently in Kunming (for a description cf. SOBIEROJ 2014, p. 104), the text is followed by a prayer in which the name of Bahā' ad-Dīn an-Naqšbandī is mentioned.

⁹⁴ Cf. MA TONG 2000b, p. 34.

⁹⁵ Cf. NUŠRATULLĀH 2009, pp. 6–9; for the names of their masters they discovered in the *Muḥammas* cf. SOBIEROJ 2016, p. 139, fn. 39.

Analogously to the *Muḥammas*, the *Madā'ih* were recited with a melody, while the reciter's voice rose and fell.⁹⁶ That this method of recitation has been approved by the Pathfounder becomes clear through a story included both in GUANLI YE 1993, p. 10 and MANŞŪR 1933, p. 20 which ends with the mention of one of Mingxin's ten favourite disciples called Sa'd ad-Dīn who knew how to recite the *Madā'ih* with melody.

The main part of the text, i.e. chapters 3–16, have been recited by the Ġahrīya as an antiphonal singing, namely with reciter and congregation chanting alternately. The chapters are divided in three parts each, *riwāya*, *ḡawāb* and *bait*, i.e. transmission, answer and poetic verse. The performance starts with the singer's *riwāya* relating to Muḥammad's vita and his recitation is answered by the assembly and concluded with a verse which is recited jointly by singer and assembly; in this arrangement a conducting *ṣaiḥ* is present who directs both.⁹⁷ In a facsimile manuscript written by the calligrapher Wang Yaocheng (王耀成, Hongkong, Tianma chuban she, 2011) special devices have been used involving red colour to mark the three constitutive sections.

The *Manāqib* of ZHAN YE includes an example of a *Madā'ih* performance. Ḥaḳīqullāh appears as the favourite reciter of the text in the presence of the Pingliang Taiye and in the story the *ṣaiḥ* and the disciple recited the poem antiphonally. They sat in a circle on their knees and when the *ṣaiḥ* recited, the disciple fell silent and when Ḥaḳīqullāh recited the *ṣaiḥ* moved his hand to the right and to the left (directing the congregation). The disciple was also allowed to choose the poetical verse as well as the Prophetic tradition which he wanted to recite as he had been taught the melody by Qalandar,⁹⁸ Mingxin's disciple.

MANŞŪR 1933, pp. 21–22 includes the description of an 'amal-ceremony in which Qur'ānic verses were recited as well as parts of the *Madā'ih*, and in particular the „Great praise” (*daliao de ermaili*), and a poem introduced by the words *ṣaribnā* (“we have drunk”). The prayers traditionally referred to as *Daliao* 大了⁹⁹ begin with the Fātiḥa and continue with selected verses of the second Sūra possibly also including the prayers with names of God (p. 229) as printed in the facsimile edition of the manuscript of the *Madā'ih* published in Hongkong. The identification of the *Daliao* as the said verses

⁹⁶ Cf. YANG, in GUANLI YE 1993, p. 10.

⁹⁷ Cf. MA XUEHUA 馬學華, imam at the Cangzhou Xisi-mosque 滄州西寺, in *Madā'ih*, Hongkong 2011, preface.

⁹⁸ Qalandar, according to GUANLI YE 1993, p. 46, witnessed how Mingxin handed over a copy of the *Muḥammas* to one Taizi Wang Ahong.

⁹⁹ The term is explained by NUŞRATULLĀH 2009, p. 12.

can be understood from the printed headings added to the manuscript text on p. 217. In the hagiographical story, the ceremony was occasioned by the containment—through Mingxin’s supernatural intervention—of the inundation of a river which had threatened the Muslims’ villages. The divines of the surrounding villages were invited and animals were slaughtered for the feasting.

2.2.4.3 Physiology of recitation

In one of the stories of *K. al-Ġahrī* a glimpse of the physiology of reciting the canonical texts can be caught. There also arises the impression that both *Muḥammad* and *Madā’ih* have been recited by the same method:

One of the disciples came to Mingxin with a complaint. He said: “Our maulā, when I enter the circle of remembrance and the assembly of [reciting] the *Madā’ih* and *Muḥammad*, I feel disquieted, I tremble and shout.” The master asked: “Have you felt [anything] (*a-ahsasta*)?” [...] He said: “You did not draw upward the middle breath” (*lam taḡḡab anta nafasak al-awsat; tiqi zhongqi* 提起中氣). He also said: “Draw upward the middle breath”, while pointing with his blessed finger to my umbilicus (*surra*). When he made the gesture with his finger I felt as if a thread (*al-hait*) was suspended (!, *yudallā*) from beneath the umbilicus to the top of my skull.¹⁰⁰ From then on did I feel settled, I became quiet and was not agitated anymore.¹⁰¹

While the Chinese expression *tiqi zhongqi* may be understood to refer to meditation practices involving the mysterious energy flow called Qi, the original Arabic text mentions the breath (*nafas*) which is central to *dīkr* techniques of Central Asian Sufism (Yasawīya, Naqšbandīya)¹⁰² that can be explained without assuming a borrowing of concepts from the Chinese environment.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Literally: ‘brain’ (*fauq ad-dimāḡ*); cf. GRAMLICH 1976, p. 398 (“Naqšbandīyadīkr”); for the location of *laṭīfas* (the *nafs* has been established by some Naqšbandīs in the *dimāḡ*) cf. BUEHLER 1998, p. 111.

¹⁰¹ MANŠŪR 1933, pp. 51–52; MANŠŪR/MA 1997, p. 39.

¹⁰² Both Sufi orders share the same ancestor, viz. Yūsuf Hamadānī (d. 535/1140), the first of the Ḥwāḡagān (supra; fn. 20; ALGAR 1976, p. 42). With Yūsuf’s successor, Ġiḡduwānī, the exclusive practice of silent *dīkr* becomes established and with Bahā’ ad-Dīn silent *dīkr* finally became normative. However, one of Ġiḡduwānī’s successors, Maḥmūd Faḡnawī, again introduced vocal *dīkr* into the *silṣila* (ALGAR 1976, pp. 42–43). ALGAR mentions on p. 45 as instances of vocal *dīkr* practiced by Naqšbandīs under Yasawī influence, i. a., certain “obscure Naqshbandī-Yasawī groups in Kansu, Shensi and Sinkiang”. Aḥmad Sirhindī al-Muḡaddidī, besides Ḥālīd al-Baḡdādī, according to ALGAR 1976, p. 46, had both “reaffirmed the excellence of silent *dīkr*”.

¹⁰³ The second of the three methods of *dīkr* of the Muḡaddidīya (cf. MAZHAR 1896, p. 197; supra, fn. 16), operating with the negation and affirmation formula, is said to

2.3 Divine grace and predestination versus human works

Notwithstanding the great importance ascribed to the scrupulous performance of the spiritual practices there are indications that it was understood that the goal of mysticism can only be reached as an act of grace by God. Grace is implicitly referred to in the use of the concept of *ğadba*, attraction, exerted by God to the benefit of chosen individuals.

Ma Mingxin taught, while also explaining the *ğadba* concept, that there are two types of mystics (*ahl at-tarīqa*) which he calls *ğahrī* and *ħafī*, respectively: “*Ğahrī* is he who experiences *ğadba* (*dedao tisheng* 提升 [‘becomes uplifted’]); then he is guided to the *mirṣād* (‘check-point’) and thereafter he travels on the straight path. As to the *ħafī*, he is *ħafī* first and then experiences *ğadba*.” The translator explains that the latter type of mystic first walks along the way of the practices and thereafter he becomes ‘uplifted’, i.e. becomes object of God’s ‘pulling’.¹⁰⁴

The author of the *Manāqib* invokes the *ħadīṭ* to justify the concept of a divine attraction: “The Prophet said: ‘The uplifting by God (*ğadabāt al-ħaqq*) exceeds the spiritual works of both men and Jinn.’” Qi Baba (*al-Bābā as-sābi‘*) is referred to by way of example (*sālik mağdūb* [attracted wayfarer]; *zhijie tiba* 直接提拔): “With one step he ascended to heaven (*taraqqa bi-riğl wāħid*) and he reached a level in which he stood between God and humankind.”¹⁰⁵

The efficacy of spiritual practices—and human works generally—is also infringed upon by God’s predestination which the Sunnī Muslims of the *Ğahrīya* order have believed in: One Li Ahong from Shandong complained to the Pathfounder that in spite of his assiduously performed devotions of *farā’id* and *nawāfil*, i.e. obligatory and voluntary ritual prayers, he did not reach the experience of entering into God’s proximity. Mingxin explained that this was due to the divine predestination referred to in Sūra 21/101–3, “But as for those unto whom already the reward has gone forth before from Us, they shall be kept far from it” [i.e. from hell].¹⁰⁶

consist in enclosing the breath beneath the umbilicus (*an yaḥṣura n-naḥas taḥta s-surra wa-yaṣ’ada minḥa bi-kalimat lā*) and in raising the word *lā*, “through the tongue of the imagination” (*al-ħayāl*), until it reaches the brain. BUEHLER 1998, p. 110 refers, i.a. to Taoist equivalents (e.g. ‘elixir of fields’) and quotes ROUSELLE 1960 as his source.

¹⁰⁴ MANŞÜR 1933, p. 58; MANŞÜR/MA 1997, p. 46; for *ğadba*, with Indian Naqšbandīs, cf. BUEHLER 1998, pp. 121–123.

¹⁰⁵ ZHAN YE [n. d.], pp. 16–19; ZHAN YE/MA 2012, pp. 10–11.

¹⁰⁶ MANŞÜR 1933, p. 31.

Conclusion

The performance of the spiritual practices described in *K. al-Ġahrī*, and that of remembrance (*dīkr*) in particular, was designed to bring about, in the novice's consciousness, a state of proximity to God and even an experience of unification through a mystical realization of the *kalimat at-tauhīd*.

The *liqī waiba* formula testifies to the Ġahrīya's belief that their Sufism has been inherited by the Chinese masters from the Arab mystics through an uninterrupted chain of initiatory transmission. The canonical texts used in the practices, according to the Ġahrī tradition, were transmitted to Mingxin in Yemen by his *šaiḥ* Ibn Zain al-Mizgāḡī. However, as to the *Aurād*, only through Mingxin's assembling and ordering of the textual units have they been deemed fit to be used in the practices. This, in turn, underlines the importance ascribed to emulating the spiritual master: Without the initiatory intervention of the *šaiḥ* the practices could not bear fruit. He guided the novice through the pitfalls encountered in the pursuit of the practices by interpreting the mystical states, activating the *laṭīfas* and occasionally also by modifying the *qurubāt*.

Although the Chinese Sufis did their best to assimilate the Arabic language texts and liturgy, i. a. by copying the manuscripts, they knew full well that their mastery of Arabic philology and maybe also their performance of the Islamic ritual was imperfect; wherefore, according to MANŠŪR, by way of compensation, they contrasted the exoteric scholars' concentration on Arabic grammar with their own focus on spiritual meanings: The prayers of the Mesopotamian renunciant Ḥasan al-Baṣrī were only accepted by God because in the ritual practice he stood behind Ḥabīb-i 'Aḡamī, a non-Arab Sufi saint.

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