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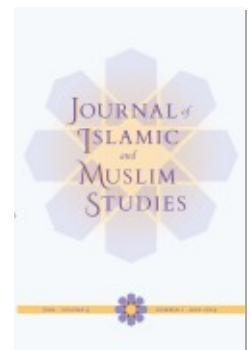
*The Divine Names: A Mystical Theology of the Names of God in the Qur'an* ed. by Yousef Casewit (review)

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## Book Reviews

### The Divine Names: A Mystical Theology of the Names of God in the Qur'an

(*Ma'ānī al-asmā' al-ilāhiyyah* by 'Afīf al-Dīn al-Tilimsānī)  
Yousef Casewit (editor and translator)  
New York: NYU Press, 2023. 656 Pages.

The near-total neglect in modern Western scholarship of 'Afīf al-Dīn Sulaymān b. 'Alī al-Tilimsānī (d. 690/1291) is as baffling as it is regrettable. A prolific mystical author and gifted poet, he not only studied with both the leading luminary of later Sufism Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī (d. 638/1240) and his stepson Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī (d. 673/1274) but was himself the son-in-law of the firebrand “monist” Sufi Ibn Sab'īn (d. 669/1258). Though a fellow student under Qūnawī of the renowned poet Fakhr al-Dīn al-'Irāqī (d. 688/1289) as well as other Ibn 'Arabian scholars such as Sa'īd al-Dīn al-Farghānī (d. 699/1300) and Mu'ayyad al-Dīn al-Jandī (d. 688/1289), he also studied hadith under Imām al-Nawawī (d. 676/1277). None other than Ibn Taymiyyah (728/1328) lambasted him for disbelief while nevertheless confessing the exceptional quality of his verse. And though hailing from Morocco, he even learned Persian in Konya during the time of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (672/1273) and most likely made his personal acquaintance. Indeed, it seems incomprehensible how a figure so uniquely positioned in his world as Tilimsānī could have remained without an entire article devoted to him in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*.<sup>1</sup>

With his new edition and translation of Tilimsānī's *Ma'ānī al-asmā' al-ilāhiyyah* (“Meanings of the Divine Names”), Yousef Casewit has therefore

rendered a major service to the field of Islamic Studies and the broader reading public alike by making a complete translation from the author available for the first time in a Western language, along with the first introduction to his life in English.<sup>2</sup> A general readership will now ascertain easily how both this treatise and its author exemplified multiple intersecting intellectual, religious and social currents during a period of singular transition and change in Islamic history. Like some better-known luminaries of Islam's textual heritage such as Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406), or Ibn 'Arabī whom he knew personally, Tilimsānī was one of many emigres from the Maghrib seeking the relative stability of the central lands of Islam beginning in the early 13th century. Like Ibn 'Arabī, he combined a polymath's command of the various Islamic sciences including grammar, lexicography, logic, theology, Qur'anic commentary, philosophy, and hadith with a mystical vision of staggering depth and an uncommon background of personal experience that only a lifetime of both inward and outward travel could bring. And like so many other works emerging from the climate of intellectual experimentation for which his era is now known, Tilimsānī's *Ma'ānī* is a testament to the ceaseless originality of Islamic thought especially in the face of novelty and diversity, weaving together multiple pre-existing schools of thought within its genre, with careful arguments and clearly defined terms.

But part of what makes Tilimsānī's *Ma'ānī* exceptional, and Casewit's work on both the treatise and its author so valuable, is that its discussions of metaphysics, cosmology and the spiritual path begin, according to Tilimsānī, where even the most advanced Sufi treatises typically end. Or, in his own words, "the starting point of this breath is Sufism, and its end point is beyond recognition" (p. 3). Put in terms of the "Four Journeys," a major concept of later Sufism that the author himself was the first to outline, Tilimsānī writes explicitly for those who have completed the first two: from the world to annihilation in God, and in God from annihilation to subsistence in Him. Rather than address those who lack this level of realization, he assumes an audience preoccupied with some stage of the third or fourth journey—the journeys from God to creation, and to God with creation.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, even compared with a figure as daring as Ibn 'Arabī, Tilimsānī shows exceptionally little regard for the degree of understanding of a general audience who has not reached this level, and he has no interest whatsoever in hedging the presentation of even his most startling mystical insights from the potential theological sensitivities of his readers.

These are probably the qualities that made Tilimsānī's prose works far less widely copied and commented upon in his time and since than those of his famous Andalusian counterpart, and significantly less than even his own poetry, whose mystical allusions and connotations were never transgressive enough to prevent it from enjoying a modest but devoted reception. And yet, his prose remains at once remarkably lucid, enough so that an uninitiated reader can

feel they have followed something substantial of his meaning while of course doubting if they will ever grasp it fully. Casewit's translation, the product of ten years' labor by a native speaker of Arabic, connoisseur of theoretical and applied Sufism, and uncompromising textual scholar, meanwhile succeeds in somehow extending these remarkable qualities of the original to place Tilimsānī and his teachings' unmatched combination of candor and profundity before a modern readership. Through it, experts, students, and non-specialists alike are afforded an unfiltered glimpse at the inner life of a rare visionary whose unique educational formation, personal experiences and social positioning make his writings an unexpectedly revealing cross-section of key overlapping trends in religiosity and learning during a time of major transformation in Islam's history.

One result of the comprehensive and careful treatment the *Ma'ānī* and its author receive is to make 'Afif al-Dīn appear as a figure somehow central to the history of Sufism, despite having been largely forgotten by scholarship. Indeed, Casewit's lucid presentation of the text combined with a brief but illuminating analysis of Tilimsānī's life and thought together leave the reader with the paradoxical sense that it may have been precisely such a degree of centrality that caused our author to remain concealed from the eyes of his fellows, and much of history. To illustrate this point, while we learn that Tilimsānī spent the last few decades of his life in Damascus as a well-positioned but unassuming bureaucrat in the service of the Mamluk sultan al-Malik al-Manṣūr (r. 678/1279–689/1290), we are also reminded that this was only after withdrawing from organized Sufi life and having traversed the highest stages of the spiritual path, whose experiences and resulting insights his writings have relayed in striking detail. And though Tilimsānī ostensibly continued to write and teach after that time, he never attracted a significant following of which any mention survives. Contextualized in this fashion, Casewit presents a biographical sketch of Tilimsānī that would seem, if anything, to belong to one of the *afrād* of Sufi lore, the solitary saints who reach the highest level of realization but "remain hidden under the veils of ordinary behavior."<sup>4</sup>

Proceeding in this way, Casewit uses the space of a brief introduction to bring together the main biographical sources and autobiographical references that exist to further present the reader with the most comprehensive account of Tilimsānī's life yet to appear in scholarship.<sup>5</sup> More detailed studies of his thought, possibly yielding further insights on his life through contextualization with his personal circumstances, are certainly possible and highly desirable, as would be a study of Tilimsānī's reception and commemoration in commentarial, biographical, hagiographical, or indeed, heresiographical traditions.<sup>6</sup> However, we can expect Casewit's account to serve indefinitely as the essential introduction to any such scholarly enterprise, with the bibliography also providing future researchers with the most important references to begin any further reading. In addition

to the minimal picture of Tilimsānī's life on which the brief notices from main authorities agree, Casewit's erudition has brought together further precious details of Tilimsānī's life scattered throughout the secondary literature or missing from it entirely. These include his own personal acquaintance with Ibn 'Arabī gleaned from a manuscript attendance list of a *Futūḥāt* study session in the latter's home drawn up by none other than their mutual acquaintance Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī (pp. xviii–xix); his view of the roles of spiritual masters and the practice of retreat (*khalwah*) and invocation (*dhikr*) in his own life and those of others; and the remarkable fact that Tilimsānī once fought against the Crusaders, or in his own words “faced death at the swords of the Franks” (p. xxi). A brief analysis and thematic overview of the *Ma'ānī* and Tilimsānī's broader teachings follow, also the first such effort in English, followed by an overview of the manuscripts used.<sup>7</sup>

Tilimsānī's *Ma'ānī* belongs to a larger tradition of commentary on the names of God that was already well-established in Islamic scholarship by his lifetime, and fell into three main subgenres: linguistic, theological and mystical or Sufi. Since the appearance of the landmark mystical commentary of Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī (d. 465/1074), Sufis had been engaging the first two traditions and seeking to synthesize them with their own visionary insights. Ibn 'Arabī's career then began what Casewit refers to as an “ontological turn” in the interpretation of God's names, viewing them primarily as “relationships between God and creation” rather than consequences of God's will, like the theologians did (p. xxxvi). In typical Sufi fashion, all the more true of Ibn 'Arabī though having begun with other mystical thinkers of Andalusia before him, Tilimsānī seeks to continue weaving together the steadily accumulating insights of all previous traditions.<sup>8</sup>

Tilimsānī's *Ma'ānī* defies detailed summary, in large part due to its structure, though an overview of the latter is possible. That is, the chapters of the *Ma'ānī* follow the suras of the Qur'an. Not every sura receives a chapter, only those in which a name appears for the first time, and only those names have a section within that chapter, giving us a total of one hundred forty-three names in forty-two chapters. For the discussion of a name, Tilimsānī first refers to whether it is considered a name of God by three major authorities on the divine names: Abū Bakr al-Bayhaqī (d. 458/1065), Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) and Ibn Barraġān (d. 536/1141). Beyond this, Tilimsānī variously guides his discussion of each name's meanings and its relations to other names through considering some combination of its lexicography, etymology, and intended sense in its verse along with other proof texts from the Qur'an, hadith, or literary sources. This is accompanied by some combination of examples of the name at work in creation or the world of nature, discussions of the name's functions throughout higher states of being, and practical applications in the spiritual life, particularly concerning a spiritual master's prescription of specific names to a disciple based on the latter's needs.

Now, while a straightforward summary of the *Ma'ānī* remains difficult, a few further remarks and analyses of select passages can highlight its uniqueness and profundity as a work of philosophical Sufism. Broadly speaking, Tilimsānī's *Ma'ānī* illustrates the wider "monist" worldview underlying the "ontological turn" in Sufi hermeneutics. Espoused already by Tilimsānī's better-known associates Ibn 'Arabī and Ibn Sab'īn, this worldview identifies God's Essence strictly with Being (*wujūd*), making Him, as a consequence of His oneness (*tawhīd*), the only reality in existence, and all of creation simply the outward appearance of His inward reality. Consequently, this theoretical outlook eventually earned the general term *waḥdat al-wujūd* (the Oneness of Being).<sup>9</sup> However, Tilimsānī's writings as a whole attest to the range of diverse viewpoints possible within this broader category, for instance in his departure from his teachers Ibn 'Arabī and Qūnawī in rejecting the former's concept of the "immutable entities" (*a'yān thābita*). In this context, his vision of the divine names as presented in the *Ma'ānī* further exemplifies the originality of his perspective, since as Casewit highlights, Tilimsānī's overall focus is on the relations of divine names with one another, rather than as relations between God and the world, the usual focus of Ibn 'Arabī's discussions of the topic.

Ultimately, this is probably a consequence of the degree of *tawhīd* that Tilimsānī has in view when he is writing. For, as already mentioned, Tilimsānī's presentation presupposes a certain level of realization as to the oneness of God's Essence. This makes his focus on the relation of divine names with each another much closer, in his worldview, to a meditation on things as they truly are, as opposed to an approach that constantly emphasizes the duality between Creator and creature. Accordingly, he advises his readers that the words of the *Ma'ānī* "issue from a presence through which the divine name is concealed in what it names," i.e., God's Essence, "and in which the meaning encompasses its word, not the word its meaning" (p. 3). That is, he is speaking from the level of realizing God's exclusive oneness (*aḥadiyya*), where all His attributes coincide in complete identity with His Essence and with one another.

A particularly striking example of the consequences of this approach can be seen in Tilimsānī's discussions of the two names of God *Allāh*, and *al-Raḥmān*, the All-Merciful. Despite the oft-cited Qur'anic verse, "call upon Allāh, or call upon the All-Merciful" (Q 17:110), the name Allāh is presented through much of later Sufi tradition as God's "Supreme Name" (*al-ism al-a'zam*), whose invocation is the highest rite of Sufism. And according to Tilimsānī, this "precedence" of Allāh over *al-Raḥmān* is true, but only "if we suppose there is a primacy. From other perspectives, however," he continues, "it is the All-Merciful that precedes Allāh. For the All-Merciful is derived from mercy, and mercy is the existence of all that appears." The ensuing discussion clarifies that, setting aside the conventional, human point of view, *al-Raḥmān* represents pure Being (*wujūd*, which Casewit

translates as “existence”), whereas Allāh represents its “degrees” (*marātib*), which, insofar as they are something other than Being itself, correspond to nonexistence. Allāh is then from this perspective a name that deals with nonexistence, and on that basis, divine wrath and punishment, rather than existence, mercy, and bliss. In accordance with the hadith “My mercy takes precedence over My wrath,” the name Allāh is therefore secondary to *al-Raḥmān* (pp. 7–11).

This may seem a somewhat shocking appraisal to even those deeply conversant in Sufi sources, but when seen in light of Tilimsānī’s claim that he is speaking from the level of God’s Essence, it quickly appears less problematic. For, as Tilimsānī has already clarified, the perspective from which he speaks is situated at the origin and end of the world of appearances, where most other people remain immersed. Because non-existence takes precedence for those people whose witnessing is “outside” the Essence, the Supreme Name from their perspective is Allāh, while its properties of wrath and punishment also ostensibly govern the effacement of their illusion of separative existence apart from God. For the one who subsists fully in God, however, the precedence of *al-Raḥmān* is apparent from the perspective of witnessing the divine names “from within,” or from the standpoint of immersion in the Essence from which both the appearance of the Creator and His act of creation unfold. Of this degree of realization, Tilimsānī writes,

The Reality of Realities encloses in one of its two halves [*shaṭrayhā* - AS] the names Allāh and the All-Merciful, and all the names derived from them. The other half of the Reality of Realities remains for the names of the servant. For the nondelimited servant, who is man from the standpoint of his servanthood and his divinity, is the counterpart of the comprehensive presence of the divine names and the presence of the cosmic names. These two presences are counterparts eternally and forever, without beginning and without end.

The human presence [*al-insāniyyah* - AS], which has no name, stands face-to-face with the Essence, which has no name, no counterpart, and no mode of expression. The relationship of the aeon to the subsistence of this human presence is like the relationship of time to the aeon. Most of those who ascribe Allāh to the Holy Essence, claiming that it is not derived, surmise that Allāh is for the Essence alone even though they have not witnessed it. But such is not the case, and therefore those who make such claims have no awareness of this human presence (pp. 11–13).

Among the more striking things revealed by this passage is that Tilimsānī feels no obligation to explain how the Reality of Realities possessing two “halves” is compatible with *tawḥīd*. Evidently, he is assuming an audience that will have already witnessed this themselves and therefore will not understand it to suggest an actual duality or multiplicity in God’s Essence in any way. But equally remarkable is his view that, from the same standpoint that can recognize the primacy of *al-Raḥmān*, humanity (*insāniyyah*) is something itself inwardly

inseparable from God's reality. Here, humanity is divinity's eternal complement, to such an extent that it somehow participates in it and projects its properties outward beyond itself toward non-existence, while also bearing the privative properties of servitude that are impossible for divinity itself. Thus, while Tilimsānī asserted previously that "only He is named by the name Allāh," (p. 7), this passage makes clear that, when witnessed by the absolute servant from the perspective of the Essence, the name Allāh is also the name of the Perfect Human Being (*al-insān al-kāmil*). In other words, governed by the name *al-Rahmān*, the Perfect Human Being acts as the face of God turned toward the rest of creation. While creation remains veiled from Him, the Perfect Human is the only one by whom the name Allāh can be known to them.<sup>10</sup>

More important than even these insights, however, is for Tilimsānī the realization that neither name, nor perspective, can truly have precedence over the other at the highest level of *tawhīd*. As for those who lack this realization, Tilimsānī writes,

They do not know that servanthood and lordship are both names of exaltedness, and that neither is above the other. For, in view of the oneness of the Essence, the one who occupies one rank is precisely the one who occupies the other. And since opposing properties belong to, are in, and are through the One, how could some properties be more eminent than others? (p. 89).

Tilimsānī is not the first or the only Sufi to articulate such a vision, though he is remarkable for neither seeking to blunt its impact through a deliberately convoluted presentation like Ibn 'Arabī, nor provide detailed explanations or apologies for his words to prove their compatibility with creed and orthopraxy like the latter's commentators. And yet, the limited evidence we do have of his reception also suggests that at least the early representatives of the very "Sufi orthodoxy" that grew out of the Ibn 'Arabī commentary school viewed Tilimsānī's writings favorably.<sup>11</sup> Of course, whether and to what extent Sufis over the centuries that followed quietly accepted Tilimsānī's mystical insights as representing the height of gnosis and essence of Sufism remains very much an open question of history. But what is certain is that Casewit's edition and translation of the *Ma'ānī* will bring much needed attention to this and related topics for a broader audience and serve as an invaluable source for further scholarly inquiry.

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*focuses on novel exchanges between Sufi and Shi'ite intellectual traditions and their popularization through Persian and Turkish vernacular literatures between the Mongol and Safavid periods (ca. 1258–1501). Revisiting the question of Sufi orders promoting “Shi'a sympathy” across social and cultural boundaries in premodern Islam, he is also interested in investigating the role that economic and political pressures played in transforming this forgotten landscape of confessional ambiguity into one of sectarian conflict.*

## Endnotes

1. Until last year, there was only one book-length study on Tilimsāni, in Arabic, by 'Umar Mūsā Bāshā, *al-'Aḥīf al-Tilimsāni: shā'ir al-wahdah al-muḥlaqah* (Damascus: Manshūrāt Ittihād al-Kuttāb al-'Arab, 1982). This was only just joined by the study in Turkish, Samet Kelleci, *Aḥīf al-Tilimsāni ve Şerhu Menazili's-Sairin Adlı Eserinin Değerlendirilmesi*, (Istanbul: Kitap Dünyası, 2023). In European languages, his first appearance seems to be a study by Clément Huart devoted mostly to Tilimsāni's son al-Shābb al-Zarīf and the latter's poetry, “Aḥīf-Eddīn Soléimān de Tlemcen et son Fils l'Adolescent Spirituel,” in *Centenario della Nascita di Michele Amari*, ed. Giuseppe Salvo Cozzo (Palermo: Stabilimento Tipografico Virzi, 1910), 2:262–282. After brief recognition of the importance of his mystical insights by R. A. Nicholson in *The Mystics of Islam* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1914), 93, 164–65, A. J. Arberry drew extensively from Tilimsāni's commentary on the *Mawāqif* of al-Niffārī in the footnotes to his translated edition *The Mawāqif and Mukhāḥabāt of Muḥammad ibn 'Abdī 'l-Jabbār al-Niffārī, with other Fragments* (London: Luzac and Co., 1935). For Tilimsāni's entry in Brockelmann, see *GAL*, *SI* 458—but beware the mistaken conflation of his *Dīwān* with an erotic novella due to its fictional protagonist's name, “Cherif Soliman!” Since then, the Euro-American secondary literature on Tilimsāni has remained minimal, and with no discussion whatsoever of his writings' reception. *EI* and *EI2*, “‘Aḥīf al-Dīn al-Tilimsāni” consists of “see al-tilimsāni”—itself a brief enumeration of individuals bearing the demonym that gives a paragraph on ‘Aḥīf al-Dīn mentioning his rumored heresy, fine poetry, and mystical proclivities but with no evaluation of his thought and only a partial list of his writings. Well before its edition in 2000 (see below), Paul Nwyia printed excerpts of Tilimsāni's commentary on the *Mawāqif* in the most significant effort in Euro-American scholarship toward elucidating Tilimsāni's thought, a study beginning with his place in heresiography but going on to the first and only serious twentieth-century consideration, however brief, of his original ideas outside the Muslim world. See “Une Cible d'Ibn Taimiya: Le Moniste al-Tilimsāni (m. 690/1291),” *Bulletin d'Études Orientales* 30 (1978): 127–45. There is now also a rhetorical analysis of a poem by Tilimsāni in English, by Ali Ahmad Hussein, “The Rhetorical Fabric of a Seventh/Thirteenth-Century Sufi Poem by ‘Aḥīf al-Dīn al-Tilimsāni,” in *Doing Justice to a Wronged Literature: Essays on Arabic Literature and Rhetoric of the 12th–18th Centuries in Honour of Thomas Bauer*, ed. Hakan Özkan and Nefeli Papoutsakis (Leiden: Brill, 2022), 10–35. In Muslim countries meanwhile, Tilimsāni has received, besides Bāshā, little further attention. A number of early published notices simply extend Tilimsāni's treatment in premodern chronicle, biographical and bibliographical traditions, notably Muḥammad b. Abī al-Qāsim al-Ḥifnāwī, *Ta'rif al-khalaf bi-rijāl al-salaf* (Algiers: Maṭba'at Piyir Funtānah al-Sharqiyah, 1324/1906), 2:251–52; Khayr al-Dīn Zirikli, *al-A'lām: Qāmūs tarājim li-ashhar al-rijāl wa-al-nisā' min al-'Arab wa-al-musta'ribin wa-al-mustashriqīn*, (Cairo: al-Maṭba'ah al-'Arabiyyah al-Miṣriyyah, 1927) 1:388; Isma'il Pāshā al-Baghḍādī, *Hadīyyat al-'arīfīn* (Istanbul: Milli Eđitim Basımevi, 1951), 1:400; 'Umar Farrūkh, *Tārīkh al-adab* (Beirut: Dār al-'Ilm li-al-Malāyīn, 1965), 3:656–59; and the introduction to the *Dīwān* of his son, al-Shābb al-Zarīf

(d. 688/1289), ed. Shākir Hādī Shukr (Najaf: Maṭbaʿat al-Najaf, 1967), 3–6. The only other analysis can be found in editors' introductions to his published writings, beginning with Yūsuf Zaydān in his 1989 partial edition of Tilimsānī's *Dīwān*, and Mansūr's edition of *Sharḥ Manāzil al-sā'irīn* the same year (see below). Zaydān's survey of Sufi literature, *al-Mutawāliyyāt* (Cairo: al-Dār al-Miṣriyyah al-Lubnāniyyah, 1998) also contains some substantial discussion of Tilimsānī, at 119–149. In Persian, there was also authored a brief encyclopedia article on Tilimsānī in the Iranian *Dā'irat al-ma'ārif-i buzurg-i Islāmī*, ed. Kāzīm Mūsavī Bujnūrdī (Tehran: Markaz-i Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif, 1988), 16:126–27, which has not yet appeared in its ongoing translation, the *Encyclopaedia Islamica*, ed. Wilferd Madelung, Farhad Daftary and Kāzīm Mūsavī Bujnūrdī (Leiden: Brill, 2008–). Another Persian entry on Tilimsānī was later prepared by Ḥasan Sayyid 'Arab, "Tilimsānī, 'Afīf al-Dīn Sulaymān," in *Danishnāmah-yi jahān-i Islām* (Tehran: Bunyād-i Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif-i Islāmī, 2004), 8:123–25. The most thorough, but still brief article to assemble many of these references from Muslim countries, though without European ones, did not appear until 2012 in Turkish, with Semih Ceyhan, "Tilimsānī, Afīfüddīn," *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, (Istanbul: TDV İslām Araştırmaları Merkezi, 2012), 41:163–64. A recent Turkish dissertation that has also presented significant new analysis of Tilimsānī's teachings along with the first collection of references on his students (see below, n. 6) is Tuğba Görgün, *Şerhu Mevākif-i Niffəri Bağlamında Afīfüddīn Tilimsānī'nin Tasavvufî Görüşleri ve Vakfe Anlayışı*, (PhD diss., Necmettin Erbakan Üniversitesi, 2019). The exceptionally zealous reader disappointed to find these references missing from Casewit's bibliography will quickly find them at a general level to be factually redundant, with all of them concurring on the same basic outline of Tilimsānī's life, and realize that if Casewit gives no focused historiographic overview of "Tilimsānī studies," this is because no such sub-field really exists yet, nor would charting its contours for the first time be suitable for a general audience. Casewit does, meanwhile, further provide a major detail missing from the accounts just mentioned, by referencing Yahia's discovery that Tilimsānī indeed studied personally with Ibn 'Arabī, based on an attendance sheet for a listening (*samā'*) session of the *Futūḥāt* drawn up by none other than Şadr al-Dīn Qūnawī (Istanbul, Süleymaniyye Kütüphanesi, Evkaf Museisi MS 1845–1881). See Osman Yahia, *Mu'allafāt Ibn al-'Arabī*, ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Ṭayyib (Cairo: al-Hay'ah al-Miṣriyyah al-'Ammah li-al-Kitāb, 2001), 440 (original in French, *Histoire et Classification de l'Oeuvre d'Ibn 'Arabi* [Damascus: Institut Français de Damas, 1964], 209). Cf. also William C. Chittick, "The Last Will and Testament of Ibn 'Arabī's Foremost Disciple and Some Notes on its Author," *Sophia Perennis* 4, no. 1 (1978), 43–58, and Claude Addas, *The Quest for Red Sulphur: The Life of Ibn 'Arabi*, tr. Peter Kingsley (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1993), 265.

2. For most of the era of modern scholarship, the only complete work of Tilimsānī's available in print was his *Dīwān*, with lithographs from Cairo in 1281/1864–65, 1287/1870–71 and 1308/1890–91, and Beirut in 1885 (Ceyhan, "Tilimsānī"). The first critical editions of Tilimsānī's writings took another century after these printings to appear with selections from his *Dīwān*, ed. Yūsuf Zaydān (Cairo: Idārat al-Kutub wa-al-Maktūbāt, 1989), and his *Sharḥ Manāzil al-sā'irīn*, ed. 'Abd al-Ḥafīz Maṣnūr (Tunis: Dār al-Turkī li-al-Nashr, 1989) the same year. Another, complete edition of the *Dīwān* was also later prepared by 'Arabī Daḥw (Algiers: *Dīwān al-Maṭbū'āt al-Jāmi'ah*, 1994), another edition of the *Sharḥ Manāzil* by Muḥsin Bidārfar (Qum: Intishārāt-i Bidār, 2006), and later editions of both the *Sharḥ* and *Dīwān* by 'Aṣim Ibrāhīm al-Kayyālī (Beirut: Kitāb Nāshirūn, 2013). Over a decade after the publication of the *Dīwān*, there became available an edition of his *Sharḥ Mawāqif al-Niffari* from Jamāl al-Marzūqī (Cairo: al-Hay'ah al-Miṣriyyah al-'Ammah li-al-Kitāb, 2000), which has since seen another printing prepared by Kayyālī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub, 2007). Despite being one of the earliest ever composed, his *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* only became available in the last decade with an edition by Akbar Rāshidi Niyā (Tehran:

Intishārāt-i Sukhan, 2013). This was followed by his *Sharḥ al-Tā'īyyah al-kubrā*, ed. Giuseppe Scattolin, Muṣṭafā 'Abd al-Samī' Salāmah, and Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub wa-al-Wathā'iq al-Qawmiyyah, 2016), and Orkhan Musakhanov's editions of his *Sharḥ al-Fātiḥah wa-ba'd sūrat al-Baqarah* and *Ma'ānī al-asmā' al-ilāhiyyah* (Istanbul: ISAM Center for Islamic Studies, 2018). The *Ma'ānī* previously appeared in Turkish as *Esmā'ül-Hüsnâ*, tr. Selahattain Alpay (Istanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 1996), and was translated again by Musakhanov from his edition as *Tilimsāni İlâhî İsimler Nazariyesi* (Istanbul: Litera Yayıncılık, 2018). Giving the most complete account of his works to date, Musakhanov's discovery of Tilimsāni's commentary on the *Fātiḥah* and part of *al-Baqara* brings the total number of his known works to eleven. Two of these are uncertain in attribution, one likely according to Musakhanov; all are extant. The two works safely attributable to Tilimsāni that remain unpublished are his commentary on Ibn Sīnā's *al-Qaṣīda al-'ayniyya* (Damascus, Zāhiriyya Library MS 6648; Cairo, Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya MS 2410) and a treatise on prosody (*Risāla fī 'ilm al-'arūḍ*, Berlin MS 7128). The likely but uncertain work is one *Kitāb ḥāshiyat al-Fuṣūṣ*, appended to the two earliest copies of Tilimsāni's *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ* (Tehran, Majlis MS 10613; Cairo, Dār al-Kutub al-Khudawīyya MS 390), and the more uncertain an untitled collection of further glosses of the *Fuṣūṣ* apparently based on Tilimsāni's *Sharḥ* bound with a third copy of the *Hāshiyā* (Manisa, İl Halk Kütüphanesi, MS 1105/2 36b–42b). There is now also a Turkish translation of Tilimsāni's *Sharḥ Manāzil al-sā'irin*, for which both existing editions were consulted, by Abdürrezzak Tek, *Tasavvufta Haller ve Makamlar: Menāzilüis-Sâirin Şerhi*, (Istanbul: Erkam Yayınları, 2024).

3. Or literally, "to Being with the existent" (*ilā al-wujūd ma' al-mawjūd*). See Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam*, 164–66, discussing a passage of Tilimsāni, *Sharḥ Manāzil al-sā'irin*, ed. Bidārfar, at 2:382, now cited and contextualized historically in an important survey by Mansure Rahmani, Ahad Faramarz Gharamaleki, and Hassan Arif, "Journey in Sufism: Literal or Metaphorical?" *Journal of Sufi Studies* 7, no. 1–2 (2018): 125–39, at 136–37. The fourth journey, which deals with perfecting others, was refigured by Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī (d. 750/1350) as "in creation with God." *Sharḥ al-Qayṣarī 'alā Tā'īyyat Ibn al-Fāriḍ al-kubrā* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2004), 55; cited, with misprint, in Rahmani et. al., "Journey," 136. Since then a fixture of the school of Ibn 'Arabī, the Four Journeys so envisioned went on to inspire the structure and even title of the renowned Safavid-era philosopher Mullā Ṣadrā's (d. 1050/1641) magnum opus, *al-Ḥikmah al-muta'āliyya fī al-asfār al-'aqliyyah al-arba'ah* (*Transcendent Philosophy on the Four Intellectual Journeys*). Ṣadrā described the fourth journey as "from creation to creation by God." See Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Ṣadr al-Dīn Shirāzī and his Transcendent Theosophy* (Tehran: Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy, 1978), 57–68; Sajjād Rizvī, *Mullā Ṣadrā Shirāzī: His Life and Works and the Sources for Safavid Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 52–58.

4. Michel Chodkiewicz, *Seal of the Saints: Prophecy and Sainthood in the Doctrine of Ibn 'Arabī*, tr. Liadain Sherrard (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1993), 108–9: "The *afrād* do not, normally, have disciples . . . they spread knowledge around them without claiming ultimate authority or imposing a discipline, as a gift which may be accepted or refused," Chodkiewicz writes. "They blend into the *'amma*, the main body of believers: no apparent asceticism, no excessive visible devotions, no manifestly supernatural intervention in their very ordinary lives draws people's attention to them."

5. The authorities Casewit uses are: Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348), *Tārīkh al-Islām wa-wafayāt al-mashāhīr wa-al-'alām*, ed. 'Umar 'Abd al-Salām Tadmūrī (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1990–2000), 51: no. 627, 406–12, and *al-'Ibar fī khabar man ghabar*, ed. Abū Hāir Zaghlūl (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1985), 3:372–73; Khalīl b. Aybak al-Ṣafādī (d. 764/1363), *al-Wāfi bi-al-wafayāt*, ed. Aḥmad al-Arnā'ūt and Turki Muṣṭafā (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 2000), 3:109, 15:250; Ibn Shākir al-Kutubī (d. 764/1363), *Fawā'id*

*al-wafayāt*, ed. Ihsān ‘Abbās (Beirut: Dār Šādir, 2000), 2:72–76; Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī (d. 902/1457), *Al-Qawl al-munbī ‘an tarjumat Ibn al-‘Arabī*, ed. Khālīd ibn al-‘Arabī Mudrik (Mecca: Jāmi‘ at Umm al-Qurā, 2001), 2:293–94; Zayn al-Dīn Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Ra‘ūf al-Munāwī (1031/1621), *al-Kawākib al-durriyya fī tarājim al-sādāh al-šūfiyyah*, 2:79–96 (the author’s account of his own meeting with Tilimsānī at 89, this reference given in Ceyhan, relayed by Ibn al-‘Imād (d. 1089/1679) whom Casewit cites directly, in his *Shadharāt al-dhahab fī akhbār man dhahab*, ed. Aḥmad al-Arnā‘ūt [Damascus: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1986], 7:720); Ḥājji Khalifāh (a.k.a. Kātib Çelebi, d. 1067/1657), *Kashf al-Ẓunūn fī asāmī al-kutub wa-al-funūn* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 1966), 1:266. Ceyhan has further cited Ibn Taghribirdī’s (d. 847/1470) *al-Manhal al-šāfi wa-al-mustawfā ba’d al-wāfi* (Cairo: al-Hay’ah al-Miṣriyyah al-‘Āmmah lil-Kitāb, 1984), 6:38–43, and the Turkish translation of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmi’s (d. 898/1392) *Nafaḥāt al-uns min ḥaḍarāt al-quds*. Tilimsānī’s entry in the Persian, ed. Maḥmūd ‘Abidī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Iṭtilā‘āt, 1991), is at 568–70. The few omissions from both Casewit and Ceyhan are notices from Faḍl Allāh b. Abī al-Fakhr al-Šuqā‘ī (d. 726/1325), *Tālī Kitāb Wafayāt al-A‘yān*, ed. Jacqueline Sublet (Damascus: Institut Français de Damas, 1974), 105–6 (cited in Addas, *Sulphur*, 257); ‘Abd Allāh b. As‘ad al-Yāfi‘ī (d. 768/1367), *Mir‘āt al-janān wa-‘ibrat al-yaqẓān fī ma‘rifat mā yu‘tabir min ḥawādīth al-zamān*, (Hyderabad: Dār al-Kitāb al-Islāmī, 1919), 4:216–17 and Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373), *al-Bidāyah wa-al-nihāyah* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1978), 13:326, both cited in *Sharḥ manāzil*, ed. Maṅšūr, 31; al-Ḥasan b. ‘Umar b. Ḥabīb al-Ḥalabī (d. 776/1377) (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub wa-al-Wathā‘iq al-Qawmiyyah, 2013), 2:44–45 (originally abridged and ed. Weijers, “Summa Operis *Durrat al-Aslāk Orientalia* 2, [1846]: 197–489, at 283, cited in Huart, “‘Affif-Eddīn,” 282); and Shams al-Dīn al-Jazarī (d. 833/1429), *Tārīkh ḥawādīth al-zamān wa-anbā‘ih wa-wafayāt al-akābir wa-al-a‘yān min abnā‘ih*, ed. ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Salām Tadmurī (Šaydā: al-Maktabah al-‘Aṣriyyah, 1998), 1:80, 96 (cited in *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ*, 59).

6. See esp. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū‘at al-rasā‘il wa-al-masā‘il* (Cairo: Lajnat al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 1976), 1:176–77, 4:74–75; Ibn Khaldun, in Taqī al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Fāsi, *al-Iqd al-thamīn fī ta‘rīkh al-balad al-amin*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥāmid al-Faqī, Fu‘ād Sayyid, and Maḥmūd Muḥammad (Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Sunnah al-Muḥammadiyyah, 1958–69), 2:180–81, and *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, tr. Franz Rosenthal (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 3:92 (Quatremère ed. 3:73), cited and discussed in Alexander Knysch, *Ibn ‘Arabī in the Later Islamic Tradition* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999), 61–85, 191–92, and index, s.v. “Tilimsānī,” and James Morris, “An Arab Machiavelli? Rhetoric, Philosophy and Politics in Ibn Khaldun’s Critique of Sufism,” *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review* 8 (2009), 242–291, at 260–61 and n. 29. To give a more specific example of what is so interesting about this topic, it is repeated throughout several biographical notices that Tilimsānī was once accused of belonging to the Nuṣayriyyah, to which he is said to have retorted “the Nuṣayrī is a part of me” (see e.g. al-Yāfi‘ī, *Mir‘āt al-janān*, 4:216). Of course, “Nuṣayrī” could easily have served as a generic term of abuse for Sufis uttered in the same breath as *zindīq*, *mulḥid*, etc.—although Ibn Khaldūn, without mentioning the Nuṣayris by name, does repeatedly accuse the Sufi “monists” that included Tilimsānī of coming under the influence of the “extremists” (*ghulāt*) among the Ismā‘īlī Shi‘a (see *Muqaddimah*, 3:92–93). For his part, Jāmi gives a celebratory explanation of Tilimsānī’s reported quip based on how “one of the stations [of the Sufis] is that of union (*jam‘*), such that its possessor sees all the pieces of existence as parts and aspects of himself,” *Nafaḥāt*, 568–69. However, this narrative still appears to have fed with time into later Shi‘a claiming Tilimsānī for their own. Cf. Ḥasan al-Šadr’s otherwise also puzzling mention of Tilimsānī as “fervent in Shi‘ism (*shadīd al-tashayyū*)” in his biographical dictionary of Shi‘ite scholars, *Ta‘sis al-Shi‘a li-‘ulūm al-Islām* (Al-Kāzimiyyah: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Irāqiyyah, 1951), at 129, where he continues, “it is astonishing that some people, when they see a man open in his Shi‘ism, accuse him of Nuṣayrism—even if it

be the likes of ‘Afif al-Dīn, the pious, pure polymath and lordly scholar!” This seems hardly to be an invention of al-Ṣadr, and more likely the product of a longer tradition that needs investigation, to which the frequent misstatement in sources of Tilimsānī’s *nisbah* “al-Kūmī” as “al-Kūfī” (cf. Addas, *Sulphur*, 257) presumably also contributed. Nwyia, “Une Cible,” 131, however, argues that Tilimsānī held certain mahdist beliefs in particular that made the original accusation somewhat less arbitrary. Whatever the case, any posthumous inclusion of Tilimsānī among the Shi‘a is probably due to his recognition as an authority in *‘irfān* rather than any specific belief he expressed. But above all, these points alert us to how little real attention has yet been paid to Tilimsānī’s reception, and still less his immediate students or readership. We do know that his commentary on *Manāzil al-Sā‘irīn* was the main source for that of ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī (d. 1329), who calls him “*al-Imām al-‘Arīf*.” See editor’s introduction to *Sharḥ Manāzil al-Sā‘irīn*, ed. Bīdārfar, 64–69, and the text, at 93. Kāshānī’s student Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī (d. 750/1350) also copied Tilimsānī’s commentary; see İhsan Fazlıoğlu, “What Happened in Iznik? The Shaping of Ottoman Intellectual Life and Dāwūd Qayṣarī,” *Nazariyat Journal for the History of Islamic Philosophy and Sciences* 4, no. 1 (October 2017): 17–18. Recent work on the major authority of later Sufism, ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulūsī (d. 1143/1731) has also shown him to have been a defender of Tilimsānī; see Elizabeth Sirriyeh, *Sufi Visionary of Ottoman Damascus: ‘Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulusi, 1641–1731* (Oxon: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005), 7–12; Samer Akkach, *‘Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulusi: Islam and the Enlightenment* (Oxford: OneWorld, 2007), 11–12. However, much more work along these lines is needed to properly ascertain Tilimsānī’s standing in later Sufi tradition. As for Tilimsānī’s actual students, Görgün has for the first time assembled some references showing them to have included the celebrated Mamluk poet and theorist Ibn Abī al-‘Isbā (d. 654/1256), who studied linguistic and literary sciences with him; the disciple of ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī (d. 632/1234), Muḥyi al-Dīn Ibrāhīm b. ‘Umar al-Fārūsī (d. 694/1294–5), who was the copyist of two surviving manuscripts of Tilimsānī’s *Dīwān*; one Abū al-Qāsim ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Ṭabarī (d. unknown) upon whose request Tilimsānī composed his *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ*; and possibly a certain Jamāl al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. Ṭayy al-‘Ajlūnī (d. 734/1333–4), an otherwise unknown individual of humble means who reportedly memorized Tilimsānī’s *Dīwān* and was credited with its popularization in Şafad. Görgün, *Şerhu*, 9–10. This preliminary sketch not only seems consistent with Tilimsānī’s poetry being generally more popular than his technical treatises, but also a more effective and diffuse means in propagating elements of his worldview than any explicit, organized transmission of his speculative writings—in line with the suggestion of Morris, *An Arab Machiavelli*, 260–61; cf. also Knysch, *Ibn ‘Arabī*, 45, 211. Both areas of Tilimsānī’s reception, however, remain almost entirely open fields of opportunity for potentially fascinating intertextual studies.

7. For the edition of the text, Casewit has introduced a new collation of three manuscripts against the 2018 edition of Musakhanov, which was based on a manuscript housed at the Konya Manuscript Library (MS 695), itself copied in 695/1295 from an autograph, five years after the author’s passing. Among Casewit’s three manuscripts, the first is housed in Istanbul’s Süleymaniye Library (Laleli MS 1556), formerly preserved in the collection of the Ottoman Sultan Mustafa III (r. 1171/1757–1187/1774) and copied in 794/1392. The second is an undated manuscript formerly endowed by the mother of Sultan Abdülmeçid I (r. 1255/1839–1277–1861), now housed in Istanbul’s Bayezit State Library (MS 8011). The third is also undated, but in Casewit’s estimation eighth/fourteenth century, and from the same tradition as the second manuscript sharing common errors, housed at Khuda Bakhsh Library in Patna, India (MS 2789/16). Casewit’s collation supports some corrections to the later textual tradition, but also functions to survey the text’s overall reception—a service already increasingly rare today, to say nothing of the case of texts for which reliable editions already exist. Thanks to his efforts, however, future researchers will now know that between the surviving manuscript families of Tilimsānī’s *Ma‘ānī*, there are no major variations.

8. E.g. after enumerating differing opinions on the divine name *al-Baṣīr* (the Seeing), Tilimsāni writes (p. 63) “those who have attained the station of realization, which is above all stations, affirm the soundness of what each group says without disputing with those whose position agrees with or contradicts theirs,” going on to cite Ibn ‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt* 3:132, “God’s creatures have devised many a belief about Him/and I give credence to all that they believe.” Casewit has previously examined the Andalusian precedents for this kind of perspectivalism among a group of mystics he refers to as the *mu‘tabirūn* (contemplators) in his *The Mystics of al-Andalus: Ibn Barrajān and Islamic Thought in the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

9. Casewit notes (p. xxiii) that Tilimsāni was one of the earliest writers to use the term (*Sharḥ Manāzil al-Sā‘irīn*, ed. Kayyālī, 245), though this was not in the sense of a school of thought. For the evolution of the term, see William Chittick, “Rūmī and *waḥdat al-wujūd*,” in *Poetry and Mysticism in Islam: The Heritage of Rumi*, ed. Amin Banani, Richard Hovannisian, and Georges Sabagh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 70–111. For a critical evaluation of the suitability of “monism” for describing this school of thought, see Mohammed Rustom, “Is Ibn al-‘Arabī’s Ontology Pantheistic?” *Journal of Islamic Philosophy* 2 (2006): 53–67, at 63–66.

10. The Perfect Human Being is variously identified in later Sufi tradition with the Spirit, Universal Substance, First Intellect, and Muhammadan Reality, or their manifestation on earth at a given time as the Pole (*quṭb*) or God’s Caliph (*khalīfah*). This figure is the manifestation of the name Allāh and acts on God’s behalf in the cosmos, but also frequently equated with God’s “Throne” (*‘arsh*), and is therefore governed specifically by *al-Rahmān* in accordance with the verse “The All-Merciful settled upon the throne” (Q. 20:5). See Tilimsāni, *Sharḥ Mawāqif al-Niffari*, 52. Compare Ibn ‘Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, tr. Caner Dagli (Chicago: Kazi Publications, 2004), 220, and citation and discussion in Mohammed Rustom, “Dāwūd al-Qayṣari: Notes on His Life, Influence and the Muhammadan Reality,” *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn ‘Arabi Society* 38 (2005), 51–64, at 62–64; ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī, *Ta‘wīlāt al-Qur‘ān*, as *Tafsīr Ibn ‘Arabī*, ed. ‘Abd al-Wārith Muḥammad ‘Alī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 2001), 2:139.

11. See above, n. 6.

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## **Neo-Traditionalism in Islam in the West: Orthodoxy, Spirituality and Politics**

*Walaa Quisay*

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The work under review offers a sociological and anthropological study of an influential current within Anglo-American Islam. Walaa Quisay analyses the discourse about tradition and modernity within this current. She contends that there is a concerning reactionary dimension to this discourse, especially