MYSTICISM AND ETHICS IN ISLAM

Editors
Bilal Orfali | Atif Khalil | Mohammed Rustom

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EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

A well-known Hadith tells us that one day the Prophet Muhammad was in the presence of his Companions when he was approached by the Angel Gabriel, who appeared in the form of a man. He asked the Prophet to explain the meaning of *islām*. The Prophet replied by delineating the five pillars of practice: the *shahāda*, prayer, fasting, the alms tax, and pilgrimage. When asked about *īmān*, the Prophet listed the six pillars of faith, namely belief in God, prophecy, the angels, scriptures, the Final Day, and the divine measuring out. And then when asked about *iḥsān*, the Prophet replied, "It is that you worship God as if you see Him; but if you do not see Him, He nevertheless sees you." For many authors in the Islamic tradition, these prophetic responses came to designate the three spheres which encompass Muslim life, that is, "right action," "right thinking," and "doing the beautiful."

By extension, the areas of knowledge that covered these domains respectively came to be identified with law (whose focus is the body), theology and philosophy (whose focus is the mind), and Sufism (whose focus is the heart).[1] Since the locus of *iḥsān* is the human heart, this third dimension of the religion is directly related to introspection, interiority, and the cultivation of the virtues of the heart, beginning with *ikhlāṣ* or sincerity.[2] This explains why *iḥsān* has been commonly equated with the science of *taṣawwuf* in the Islamic tradition.

As a historical phenomenon, the precise origins of Sufism have been the subject of extensive debate in Western scholarship.[3] From the point of view of the tradition itself, needless to say, it is to be retraced to the inner life of the Prophet, his own "mystical" experiences, as well as certain teachings that were transmitted to a select group of companions who in turn taught others as they moved to regions as diverse as Kufa, Fustat, Khurasan, and Basra in the rapidly expanding Islamic world. Basra was particularly important for the development of ideas and practices later associated with *taṣawwuf* since it was here that the great Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī (d. 44/665) was placed in charge not only over the affairs of the city, but also of teaching the recital of the Quran.[4] Famous for his own austere life as well as his sermons that aroused a fear of the Resurrection and a desire to break one's ties with the world, he helped to shape the religious ambience of the city and to carve out the contours of a mode of piety for those serious about seeking God. Among the most important of his successors was al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728), who would also emphasize the need to nurture detachment, humility, self-discipline, the fear of God, and scrupulous self-accounting.

1. The best overview of Islamic thought and practice through the prism of this Hadith is to be found in William Chittick and Sachiko Murata, *The Vision of Islam* (New York: Paragon, 1994). See in particular pp. xxv–xxxiv.

2. See also the helpful analysis in Chittick, *In Search of the Lost Heart: Explorations in Islamic Thought*, ed. Mohammed Rustom, Atif Khalil, and Kazuyo Murata (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2012), 10–17.

3. See Nile Green, *Sufism: A Global* History (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), pp. 15–70 and Alexander Knysh, *Sufism: A New History of Islamic Mysticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), pp. 15–34. A still very useful overview can be found in Victor Danner, "The Early Development of Sufism," in *Islamic Spirituality*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr (New York: Crossroad, 1987–1991), 1:239–264.

4. Gavin Picken, *Spiritual Purification in Islam: The Life and Works of al-Muḥāsibī* (London: Routledge, 2011), 24.

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More than two centuries later, Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī (d. 386/996) would credit al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī with laying the foundation for the "science of the heart" (*ʿilm al-qulūb*), a name which for many would be identified with Sufism. The communities out of which the early tradition would sprout included the *qurrāʾ* (Quran reciters), *quṣṣāṣ* (preachers), *bakkāʾūn* (weepers), *ʿubbād* (worshippers), and *nussāk* (ascetics).[5] The role that the love of God played in the spiritual quest in this climate also cannot be ignored, even if one questions the historicity of the many legends concerning the great female mystic Rābiʿa al-ʿAdawiyya (d. 185/801) which depict her as the archetype of the selfless lover of God.[6]

The emergence of *taṣawwuf* as a distinct phenomenon is usually retraced to the so-called School of Baghdad. By the end of the eighth century, Baghdad was a thriving, multicultural metropolis where various currents of thinking merged to produce a rich intellectual and spiritual climate.[7] As for the School of Baghdad, its towering personality was Junayd (d. 298/910), a silk-merchant by trade who studied the religious sciences under the tutelage of some of the leading scholars and saints of the city.[8] The formation of his ascetic-mystical outlook came through mentors that included his uncle Sarī al-Saqaṭī (d. 253/867) and al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī (d. 243/857). While these two figures differed considerably on the value they attached to rational theology, both were deeply affected by the interiorizing moral psychology of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, which they in turn transmitted to Junayd. He would quietly emerge as the leading Sufi master of his day, and would be conferred with such titles as the "master of masters" (*shaykh al-mashāyikh*) and the "chief of the tribe" (*sayyid al-ṭāʾifa*).

Among the doctrines characteristic of Junayd and his circle was a view of *tawḥīd* that emphasized the necessity of a direct encounter with ultimate reality in order to grasp its rationally elusive, ineffable nature.[9] This was one reason why the early Sufis, especially those coming out of his circle, were sometimes known as "masters of *tawḥīd*" (*arbāb al-tawḥīd*): they had plunged into and effaced themselves in a reality the mystery of which could only be intimated through allusion, or a mind-bending blend of apophatic and cataphatic language. Among Junayd's contemporaries and students, the Baghdadi milieu also included those who discoursed about the passionate love of God, representing an intoxicated, antinomian, and even subversive form of Sufism that departed from Junayd's own emphasis on sobriety and self-control. But what was common to all of them was a profound reverence for the sacred sources of faith, as well as a view of existence that saw both the world and the human ego as illusory in relation to God. More important for our purposes, the Sufis belonging to the School of Baghdad also shared a vision that placed a

5. Picken, *Spiritual Purification in Islam*, 24–25.

6. In her recent book, *Rabiʿa from Narrative to Myth* (London: Oneworld, 2019), Rkia Cornell takes a middle ground between those who entirely reject and accept representations of her in the hagiographical literature. On Rābiʿa as a lover, see pp. 147–212. For far-reaching inquiries into female Sufi modes of divine love, see, inter alia, Maria Dakake, "'Guest of the Inmost Heart': Conceptions of the Divine Beloved among Early Sufi Women," *Comparative Islamic Studies* 3, no. 1 (2007): 72–97 and Éric Geoffroy, *Allah au féminin* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2020), chapters 7–9.

7. Picken, *Spiritual Purification in Islam,* 27.

8. For recent scholarly treatments of him, see Erik Ohlander, "al-Junayd al-Baghdadi: Chief of the Sect," in *Routledge Handbook on Sufism*, ed. Lloyd Ridgeon (London: Routledge, 2020), 32–45 and John Zaleski, "Sufi Asceticism and the Sunna of the Prophet in al-Junayd's *Adab al-muftaqir ilā Allāh*," *Oxford Journal of Islamic Studies* 32, no. 1 (2021): 1–26.

9. Ahmet Karamustafa, *Sufism: The Formative Period* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 16.

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concern for ethics and, more specifically, the refinement of character, squarely at the center of the mystical quest.

This explains why, at a very early period in the history of Sufism, we see Sufis who not only spoke of a kind of knowledge that was a fruit of mystical realization, but also of the states (*aḥwāl*) and stations (*maqāmāt*) which lead to the end of the path and the realization of this knowledge itself. These usually began with repentance, and then proceeded through the cultivation of other qualities of the soul such as patience, gratitude, detachment, contentment, fear, hope, trust, love, longing, and intimacy.[10] While their order, number, and precise features varied from one master to another, their acquisition entailed not only a divestment of their corresponding vices, but also a general process of self-transcendence where one peeled away baser qualities of the self, stripping away the thick layers of the ego in order to encounter the divine presence that resides in the heart.

Thus, the focus in early Sufi literature was by-and-large not on expositing metaphysical doctrines (although these were not absent), but on the rules that governed the inward transformation that accompanied and made the fallen soul's return Home possible. In a general sense, this involved the convergence of overlapping domains—what in modern academic parlance we might call "virtue ethics," "moral psychology," "moral theology," and "mystical theology"—that combined to give Sufi ethics its distinctive character. And at the heart of this convergence there lay a conviction in the belief that man is an exile from a homeland to which he could only return through the inner life. In other words, the exile of Adam and Eve which began the drama of human terrestrial existence involved not only a descent, but also a corresponding exteriorization. Not only was it a fall; it was also an inversion that cast the human being away from his own Center. If the outward message of prophecy brought a method to return to the God's Paradise above (that is, after death), its inward message, as articulated by the Sufis insofar as they were the inheritors of the prophets, brought a method to return to the God of Paradise within, in the eternal Now.[11]

The ethical concerns of the Sufis always lay at the forefront of their teachings, even if ethics was, in the final analysis, no more than a means to an end that transcended it altogether. This distinctive feature of their literary output was highlighted decades ago by Marshall Hodgson when he observed that "Most [Muslim] mystical writers have spent far more time speaking of the everyday virtues . . . as they appear in the mystical perspective, than of ecstasies or even of the cosmic unity these ecstasies seem to bear witness to."[12] Even a work such as Ibn ʿArabī's (d. 638/1240) *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* (*The Meccan Openings*)—which is often considered to be an encyclopedia not of praxis (*ʿilm al-muʿāmala*) but of

10. For inquiries into a number of the virtues, see the studies of Atif Khalil, some of which include *Repentance and the Return to God: Tawba in Early Sufism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2018); "On Cultivating Gratitude in Sufi Virtue Ethics," *Journal of Sufi Studies* 4, nos. 1–2 (2015): 1–26; "Contentment, Satisfaction and Good-Pleasure: *Rida* in Early Sufi Moral Psychology," *Studies in Religion* 43, no. 3 (2014): 371–389. For a survey of the development of Sufi ethics, see Mukhtar A. Ali, "Classical Sufi Ethics," in *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Ethics*, ed. Mustafa Shah (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

11. A fine exposition of this point can be found throughout Seyyed Hossein Nasr's *The Garden of Truth* (New York: HarperOne, 2007).

12. Marshall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), 1:396.

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the knowledge of unveiling (*ʿilm al-mukāshafa*)—dedicates lengthy sections to the virtues "as they appear in the mystical perspective." To be sure, in no sub-tradition of Islam has so much collective intellectual energy been devoted to probing the ontology and teleology of the virtues as we see in *taṣawwuf*. And this, as noted, rested on the Sufis' conviction that the inner journey remained impossible except through *tabdīl al-akhlāq*, or the "transformation of character." This was why as early a figure as al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī (d. ca. early 4th/10th century) could say of the *abdāl*, or the "substitutes" who were a special class of God's friends (*awliyāʾ*) in the hierarchy of saints, that they were given this name on account of having replaced or substituted (through *tabdīl*) their vices or base character traits for virtues or noble character traits.[13]

While it is true that ethical questions, especially centering around the virtues, were also explored in Islamic philosophy, the ethics of the *falāsifa* never had anywhere near the influence over the collective consciousness of Muslims throughout history as compared to the more scripturally inspired *ʿilm al-akhlāq* of the Sufis. As for *fiqh* or jurisprudence, although ethics was not entirely relegated to its margins, the principal aim of the discipline was always on *aʿmāl al-jawāriḥ* (actions of the limbs) as opposed to the *aʿmāl al-qulūb* (actions of the heart). This is why Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) argued that while the jurist can tell you everything you need to know about the outward requirements of canonical prayer, qua jurist he will have next to nothing to say about its interior requisites, beginning with sincerity and the presence of heart. Ethics proper was certainly a major concern of *kalām*, but there the inquiries centered around much broader issues having to do with the foundations and ontological status of categories such as "right" and "wrong." Yet virtue ethics and the psychology of virtue per se were not major concerns for the *mutakallimūn*, content as they were to focus largely on the epistemological roots of good and evil, the beautiful and the ugly, etc.

For its part, modern scholarship has tended to emphasize the influence of Greek ethics on the traditions of *falsafa* and *kalām*. And to a certain extent that is a sensible mode of inquiry. But to view *taṣawwuf* and its vast and complicated ethical traditions with the same lens is quite problematic. This is for two reasons, the second of which builds off of the first:

1. The failure to account for the mysticism and ethics nexus as a native concern of Islamic civilization perpetuates a misunderstanding which has characterized scholarship for far too long; that is, the facile notion that Islamic civilization's ethical achievements are to be measured against the ethical achievements of the ancient Greeks.
2. Given (1) above, the distinctive nature, language, and concerns of Islamic ethics as enshrined in the vast repository of Sufi texts will consequently be lost upon us.

13. Sara Sviri, "The Self and its Transformation in Ṣūfism, with a Special Reference to Early Literature," in *Self and Self-Transformation in History of Religions*, ed. David Shulman and Guy Stroumsa (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 195–215. For the most recent study of al-Tirmidhī, see Aiyub Palmer, *Sainthood and Authority in Early Islam: al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī's Theory of wilāya and the Reenvisioning of the Sunnī Caliphate* (Leiden: Brill, 2020).

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One example shall suffice. The Sufis have developed a very complicated and involved understanding of the various stations along the Sufi path. These Sufi stations correspond to what we would normally refer to as the "virtues," which explains why, as indicated above, some modern scholars of Sufism speak of "Sufi virtue ethics." If one insists on understanding the Sufi stations along solely Greek lines and as informed by Greek ethical categories, many of the subtleties that characterize Sufi ethical discourse must be passed over in silence. This is because the Sufi stations are what most Sufis, regardless of their intellectual persuasion and manner of expression, understand to be the "stuff" of the Sufi path.

After all, how are we supposed to understand the Sufi virtue of poverty (*faqr*) if not through laying bare the inner logic of Sufi ethical discourse and the Sufi emphasis on the dawning of the divine qualities (*al-takhalluq bi-akhlāq Allāh*)? Likewise, what sense can we make of the Sufi understanding of humility (*tawāḍuʿ*), which, for many of the ancient Greeks, was anything but a virtue? The same can also be said about other major Sufi stations, such as witnessing (*shuhūd*—considered by some Sufis to be a station proper) and love (considered by many Sufis to be the virtue par excellence).

Apart from some of the studies already noted and several important books,[14] the relationship between Sufism or Islamic mysticism and ethics is therefore largely untilled land. The present volume attempts to survey this fertile area of investigation by attempting to come to a clearer idea of precisely what is meant by the terms "ethics" and "mysticism" vis-à-vis Islam and vis-à-vis each other. Needless to say, any such attempt demands a broad lens through which one can identify, study, and analyze the geographic expanse and various regional contexts in which these two terms have historically been enacted.

Discerning readers will note that some of the articles in *Mysticism and Ethics in Islam* do not have an eye so much on defining what mysticism and ethics in Islamic civilization are per se, but more on coming to terms with the parameters and boundaries within which they have historically fallen and been conceptualized. This allows us to better demarcate the terms, issues, concepts, and even figures which must be taken into account when approaching the question of the relationship between mysticism and ethics in Islam from past to present.

For the most part, the volume falls into four clearly demarcated time periods and foci: early, classical, late pre-modern, and modern and contemporary. Taken as a whole, these sections give us rich insights into some of the most important Sufi ideas and expressions which have animated the tradition, zeroing in on how concepts such as wealth and ownership or grief and godwariness factor into the

14. We particularly have in mind here Francesco Chiabotti, Eve Feuillebois-Pierunek, Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen, and Luca Patrizi, eds., *Ethics and Spirituality in Islam: Sufi adab* (Leiden: Brill, 2017); Mayeur-Jaouen, ed., *Adab and Modernity: A "Civilising Process"? (Sixteenth–Twenty-First Century)* (Leiden: Brill, 2017); Cyrus Zargar, *The Polished Mirror: Storytelling and the Pursuit of Virtue in Islamic Philosophy and Sufism* (London: Oneworld, 2017), part two. One may also profitably consult a number of the articles in the special issue of the *Journal of Islamic Ethics* 4, nos. 1–2 (2020) on the theme of *futuwwa*, which is guest-edited by Cyrus Zargar, as well Amir Hossein Asghari's fine discussion on the relationship between Sufism and ethics in modern Shīʿī Islam: "Replacing *Sharīʿah*, *Ṭarīqah* and *Ḥaqīqah* with *Fiqh*, *Akhlāq*, and *Tawḥīd*: Some Notes on Shaykh Muḥammad Bahārī (1325/1908)," *Journal of Sufi Studies* 9, no. 2 (2020): 202-214.

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spiritual life, and why the pursuit of love and human wholeness have always been envisioned as its ultimate telos. Other articles examine the form and function of ethics and spiritual practice in the writings of several major Sufi authors (and even philosophers and rational theologians influenced by Sufism) hailing from various regions of the Islamic world ranging from Egypt and India to Central Asia and China. Still other contributions seek to outline the different genres and writing styles that have enshrined a range of familiar and not so familiar Sufi literary tropes, motifs, and images.

Since Sufism is of course not only a historical tradition but one that also has shaped and continues to shape the texture of ethical and spiritual discourse in the modern world, a good degree of emphasis in this book is dedicated to coming to terms with this important insight. What makes the modern reception of Sufism particularly interesting is, of course, the colonial and post-colonial contexts in which it has been performed. The papers in the last section of this collection therefore examine how the classical Sufi tradition was received, naturalized, and refigured by some of the most important nineteenth- and twentieth-century Sufi personalities against the backdrop of these two contexts and in regions as diverse as West Africa and Russia.

In terms of Sufism and ethics today, we had originally conceived of including a chapter on the important contemporary Moroccan philosopher and mystic Abdurrahman Taha. Yet, given the fact that there are now two exceptional volumes dedicated to exploring his ethics in English,[15] we decided to conclude our volume with a contribution on the surprisingly understudied ethical thought of Seyyed Hossein Nasr, whose critique of modernity and alternative Islamic metaphysics, ethics, and epistemology predate those of Taha by some two decades.

This volume grew out of a conference which was held at the American University of Beirut on May 2nd and 3rd, 2019 under the auspices of the Sheikh Zayed Chair of Arabic and Islamic Studies at AUB, and was organized by Bilal Orfali, Radwan Sayyid, and Mohammed Rustom.[16] The event marked 100 years since the birth of the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the founder of the United Arab Emirates who was famous for embodying the ethical ideals and values discussed throughout our volume. Sixteen of this collection's twenty-five contributions are derived from papers delivered at the conference, while the remaining nine represent contributions that came our way after it had concluded. Radwan Sayyid's important role as co-organizer was matched by the editorial efforts of Atif Khalil, who replaced him as a co-editor of this volume.

15. See Wael Hallaq, *Reforming Modernity: Ethics and the New Human in the Philosophy of Abdurrahman Taha* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019) and Mohammed Hashas and Mutaz al-Khatib, eds., *Islamic Ethics and the Trusteeship Paradigm: Taha Abderrahmane's Philosophy in Comparative Perspectives* (Leiden: Brill, 2020).

16. For further details, see the conference report by Louise Gallorini in *al-ʿUṣūr al-Wusṭā* 27 (2019): 267–272.

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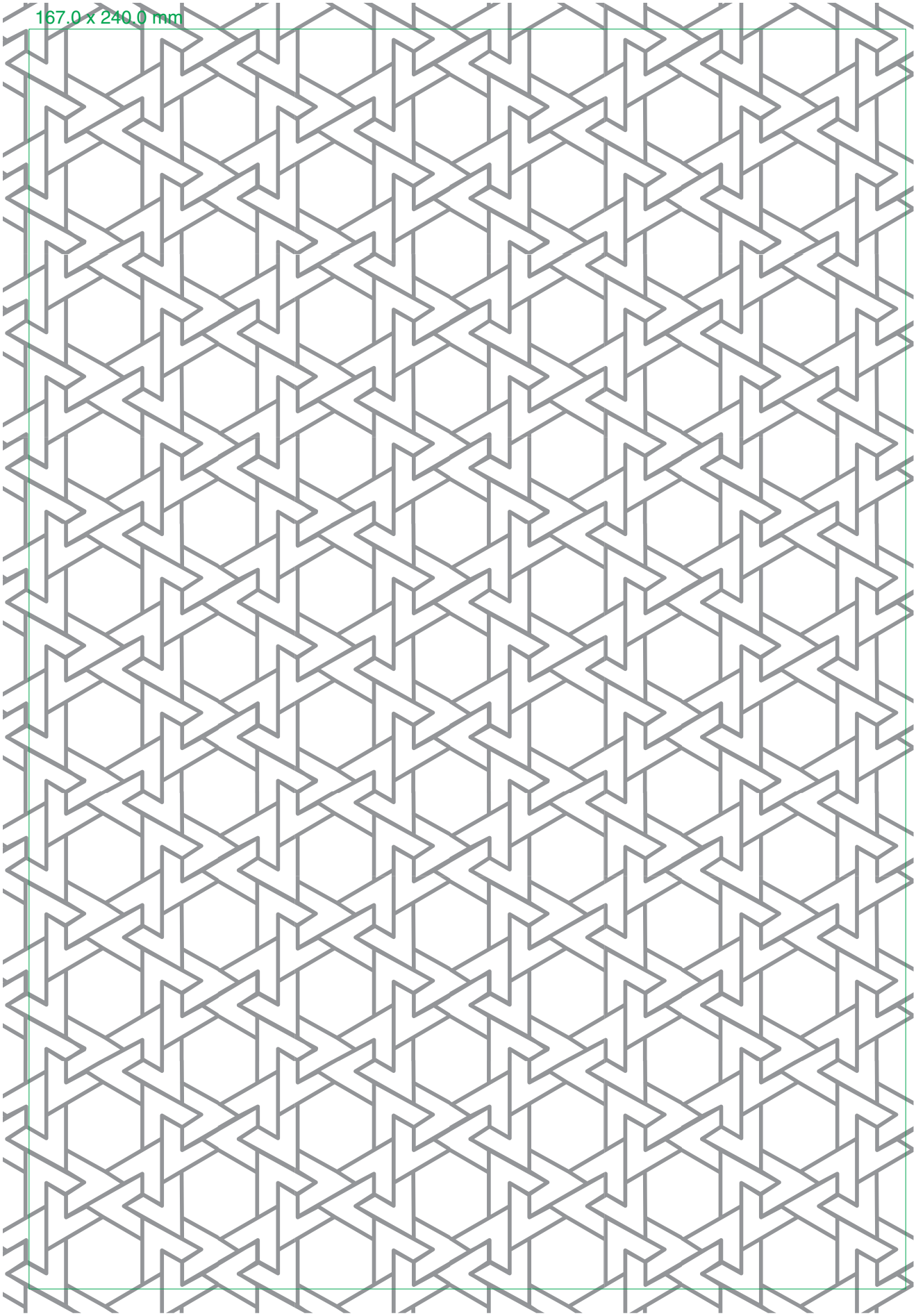
We wish to thank the Sheikh Zayed Chair for making this book and that splendid international gathering a possibility, as well as the hard work of the conference organizers' assistants, particularly Aida Abbass. We also wish to express our gratitude to the AUB Press Editor in Residence Mary Clare Leader and the many excellent scholars who participated in the event and/or contributed to this published volume. Without their collegiality and belief in the importance of interdisciplinary approaches to the study of Islam, this volume would not have been able to address the question of the relationship between mysticism and ethics in Islam in so rich and variegated a manner.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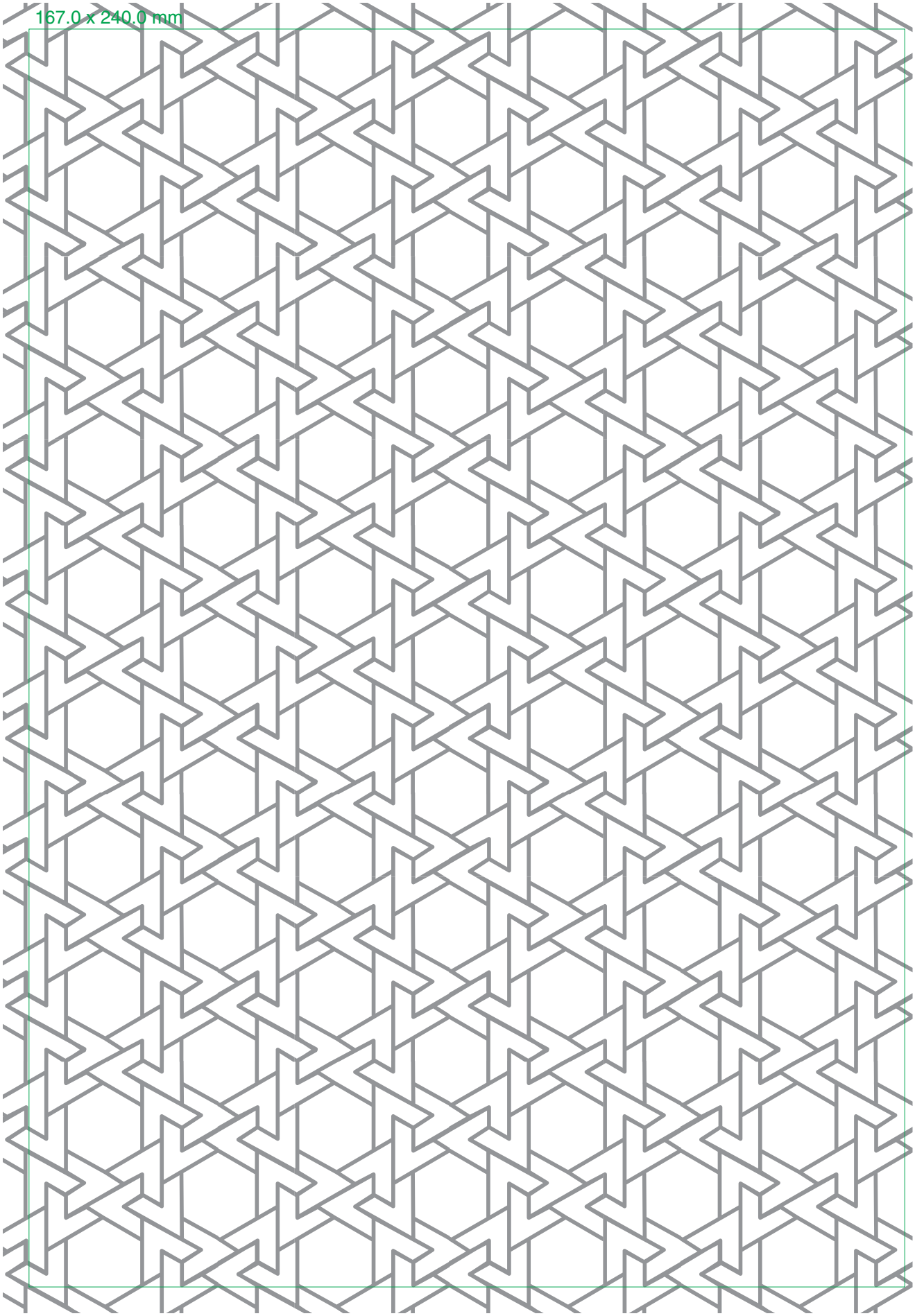
SECTION I
EARLY PERIOD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أحلام المتصوّفة وأثرها على علم التعبير الإسلاميّ
في القرنين الرابع والخامس للهجرة

لينا الجمّال

ترجم حنين بن إسحاق (ت 260هـ/873م)[1] *كتاب تعبير الرؤيا* لأرطاميدورس الإفسيّ (القرن الثاني للميلاد)[2] من اليونانيّة إلى العربيّة في القرن الثالث للهجرة. ويحيل معظم الباحثين إلى هذا الكتاب بصفته دليلًا على تأثّر كتب تعبير الرؤيا الإسلاميّة بالفكر اليونانيّ.[3] وممّا يرد فيه أنّ ثياب الصوف في غير الشتاء ليست دليل خيرٍ في المنام، وأنّها رديئةٌ مطلقًا لمن كان عبدًا أو أراد أن يتقدّم إلى القاضي بخصومة، وذلك «لكثرة ثقلها وجفافها.»[4] أمّا الخركوشيّ (ت 407هـ/1016م)[5] وهو المتصوّف الأوّل – على حدّ علمنا – الذي وضع كتابًا في تعبير الرؤيا فيقول: لبس الصوف في المنام للعلماء نسكٌ وزهد.[6] فكيف يمكن في ضوء ما سبق أن تُفهم منامات المتصوّفة بمنأًى عن أخلاقهم؟ ولماذا الإشارة إلى المنامات وتعبيرها عند الحديث عن التصوّف والأخلاق؟

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1. Gotthard Strohmaier, "Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq," in *EI³*, online.
2. Maria Mavroudi, "Artemidorus of Ephesus," in *EI³*, online.
3. للمزيد عن الكتاب وترجمته، راجع: توفيق فهد، *الكهانة العربيّة قبل الإسلام*، ترجمة حسن عودة ورندة بعث (بيروت: قدمس، 2007)، 176؛ John Lamoreaux, *The Early Muslim Tradition of Dream Interpretation* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 47-51; Elizabeth Sirriyeh, *Dreams and Visions in the World of Islam: A History of Muslim Dreaming and Foreknowing* (London, New York: I. B. Tauris, 2015), 30-33; Christine Walde, "Dream Interpretation in a Prosperous Age? Artemidorus, the Greek Interpreter of Dreams," in *Dream Cultures: Explorations in the Comparative History of Dreaming*, ed. David Shulman and Guy G. Stroumsa (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 121-142.
4. أرطاميدورس الإفسيّ، *كتاب تعبير الرؤيا*، تحقيق توفيق فهد (دمشق: المعهد الفرنسيّ للدراسات العربيّة، 1964)، 189.
5. A. J. Arberry, "*al-Kharqūshī*," in *EI²*, 4:1074.
6. أبو سعيد الخركوشيّ، *البشارة والنذارة في تعبير الرؤيا والمراقبة*، مخطوط المتحف البريطانيّ، 259.

167.0 x 240.0 mm

إنّ العلاقة التي تجمع التصوّف بالمنامات تحتلّ مكانةً مهمّة في مسيرة كلٍّ من الشيخ ومريده.[7] وقد شكّلت المنامات وسطًا لانتقال المعارف في المذهب الصوفيّ وأدّت أحيانًا وظيفةً معرفيّة تواصليّة[8] واكتسبت سلطةً توازي تلك التي تمتّعت بها النصوص في هذا المذهب،[9] فغدت بناءً ولبنةً في الوقت عينه: بناءٌ معقّدٌ قائمٌ بذاته، ولبنةٌ في بناء التصوّف تساهم في تأطيره وفهمه.[10] ولذلك يُعدّ تأويل الرؤيا – في رأي شيمل (Schimmel) – من أهمّ واجبات مرشدي الصوفيّة قاطبة،[11] وتُعدّ كتب التعبير المفتاح أو الشيفرة لفهم الرسائل التي أراد الله أن يبلغها عبده في المنام.[12] تعرّف هذه الدراسة بالخركوشيّ بصفته متصوّفًا وضع كتابًا في التعبير، وتبيّن الانزياح الدلاليّ الذي طال رموز تعبير الرؤيا انطلاقًا من تصوّفه. ثمّ توظّف كتابه في تحليل منامات بعض المتصوّفة، محاولةً إدراك أثر الأخلاق على تلقّي المنامات وفهمها أوّلًا، وعلى علم التعبير ومصنّفاته ثانيًا.

أوّلًا: الخركوشيّ وتجديده في علم التعبير

هو أبو سعد – أو أبو سعيد – عبد الملك بن محمّد بن إبراهيم النيسابوريّ، واعظٌ متصوّفٌ من فقهاء الشافعيّة. ولد في خركوش وهي سكّةٌ في نيسابور، ورحل إلى العراق والشام والحجاز ومصر وجالس العلماء. قدم بغداد حاجًّا سنة 393هـ وحدّث بها، ثمّ غادرها إلى مكّة وأقام فيها حتّى سنة 396هـ. كان ثقةً صالحًا ورعًا زاهدًا حافظًا مفسّرًا. لقّبه الذهبيّ بالإمام القدوة وشيخ الإسلام، وقال عنه الحاكم: «لم أرَ أجمع منه علمًا وزهدًا وتواضعًا وإرشادًا إلى الله.» توفّي في نيسابور سنة 407هـ وقيل 406هـ.[13]

أمّا مصنّفات الخركوشيّ، فمن المترجمين من لم يذكر منها شيئًا،[14] ومنهم من قال: له تفسيرٌ كبير، وكتاب *دلائل النبوّة* [ويسمّى أيضًا *شرف المصطفى*]، وكتاب *الزهد*.[15] وزاد عليها بروكلمان *تهذيب الأسرار في طبقات الخيار والبشارة والنذارة في تعبير الرؤيا والمراقبة*.[16]

والكتاب الأخير هو دليل تفسيرٍ للمنامات وليس مجموعةً من المنامات ككتاب ابن أبي الدنيا (ت 281هـ/894م)[17]. وما زال مخطوطًا ولم يحظ إلى الآن بتحقيقٍ أمين، بل يُرجّح أنّه نُشر مرارًا باسم ابن سيرين لسببين بارزين: أوّلهما التشابه بين مضمون كتاب ابن سيرين ومخطوط *البشارة والنذارة*، وثانيهما أنّ المقدّمة تعود إلى الخركوشيّ صراحةً «مقدّمة الأستاذ أبي سعيد الواعظ،» وأنّ عددًا كبيرًا من الأبواب يبدأ بذكره: «قال/يقول الأستاذ أبو سعيد الواعظ.»[18]

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7. رسّخت هذه المكانة مجموعةٌ كبيرةٌ من الأحاديث النبويّة، منها قول النبيّ: «الرؤيا الصادقة جزءٌ من ستّةٍ وأربعين جزءًا من النبوّة.» وبنى أبو خلف الطبريّ (ت 412هـ/1021م) على هذا الحديث ليقول إنّ المنامات أولى مراحل الوحي؛ راجع: Abū Khalaf Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Malik al-Ṭabarī (d. ca. 470/1077), *The Comfort of the Mystics: A Manual and Anthology of Early Sufism*, ed. Gerhard Böwering and Bilal Orfali (Boston, Leiden: Brill, 2013), 426.

8. Erik Ohlander, "Behind the Veil of the Unseen," in *Dreams and Visions in Islamic Societies*, ed. Özgen Felek and Alexander Knysh (Albany: SUNY Press, 2012), 201-203.

9. Nile Green, *Sufism: A Global History* (Malden, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 77.

10. Ohlander, "Behind the Veil of the Unseen," 207.

11. أنّا ماري شيمل، *أحلام الخليفة: الأحلام وتعبيرها في الثقافة الإسلاميّة*، ترجمة حسام الدين جمال بدر وآخرين (كولونيا: منشورات الجمل، 2005)، 257.

12. Lamoreaux, *The Early Muslim Tradition of Dream Interpretation*, *84*.

13. الخطيب البغداديّ، *تاريخ بغداد*، تحقيق بشّار معروف (بيروت: دار الغرب الإسلاميّ، 2001)، 188/12؛ والذهبيّ، *سير أعلام النبلاء*، تحقيق شعيب الأرناؤوط وآخرين (بيروت: مؤسّسة الرسالة، 1985)، 256/17-257؛ والصفديّ، *الوافي بالوفيات*، تحقيق أحمد الأرناؤوط وتركي مصطفى (بيروت: دار إحياء التراث، 2000)، 133/19؛ والسبكيّ، *طبقات الشافعيّة الكبرى*، تحقيق محمود الطناحي وعبد الفتّاح الحلو (القاهرة: هجر للطباعة والنشر، 1413هـ)، 222/5-223؛ وابن العماد الحنبليّ، *شذرات الذهب في أخبار من ذهب*، تحقيق عبد القادر ومحمود الأرناؤوط (دمشق، بيروت: دار ابن كثير، 1989)، 47/5-48؛ وخير الدين الزركليّ، *الأعلام* (بيروت: دار العلم للملايين، 2002)، 163/4؛ وعمر رضا كحّالة، *معجم المؤلّفين* (بيروت: دار إحياء التراث العربيّ، دون تاريخ)، 188/6.

14. الخطيب البغداديّ، *تاريخ بغداد*، 188/21؛ والسبكيّ، *طبقات الشافعيّة الكبرى*، 222/5-223.

15. الذهبيّ، *سير أعلام النبلاء*، 256/17؛ والصفديّ، *الوافي بالوفيات*، 133/91؛ وابن العماد الحنبليّ، *شذرات الذهب*، 47/5.

16. كارل بروكلمان، *تاريخ الأدب العربيّ* (القاهرة: دار المعارف، 1959)، 84/4-85.

17. Leonard Librande, "Ibn Abī l-Dunyā," in *EI*³, online.

18. أحصيت إلى الآن ستّين دارًا عربيّة نشرت كتاب تفسير الأحلام لابن سيرين، وأتوقّع أن يكون العدد الفعليّ أكبر من ذلك. وأعمل الآن على تحقيق هذا الكتاب مع الدكتور بلال الأرفه لي بالعودة إلى ثمانية مخطوطات. وفي ما يلي أسماء الدور التي تنشر الكتاب مصنّفةً وفق مدينة النشر: بيروت: دار الكتاب العربيّ، دار الفكر، المكتبة العصريّة، دار المحجّة البيضاء، دار الرسول الأكرم، دار نوبليس، مؤسّسة الكتب الثقافيّة، دار البلاغة، المكتبة الحديثة للطباعة والنشر، مكتبة الطلّاب، مكتبة حسن العصريّة، دار الشرق العربيّ، مؤسّسة الأعلمي للمطبوعات، دار النهضة العربيّة، دار الكتب العلميّة، دار المناهل، دار الحكايات للطباعة والنشر، رشاد برس، مكتبة التربية، المكتبة الثقافيّة، دار العلوم العربيّة، دار الراتب الجامعيّة، دار الأرقم بن أبي الأرقم، دار اليوسف، مؤسّسة المعارف؛ تونس: مطبعة المنار؛ الجيزة: وكالة الصحافة العربيّة؛ دمشق: دار الرضوان، دار كرم، دار ابن كثير؛ الرياض: مركز التراث للبرمجيّات؛ الشارقة: دار

167.0 x 240.0 mm

وإنّ ما جاء به الخركوشيّ في كتاب *البشارة والنذارة* قد يكون مبنيًّا على ما قاله سلفه ابن قتيبة (ت 276هـ/889م)[19] في كتاب تعبير *الرؤيا*، الذي يعود إلى القرن الثالث للهجرة وهو أقدم ما وصلنا في تعبير الرؤيا عند المسلمين.[20] وقد يكرّر الخركوشيّ كذلك بعض ما جاء في *القادري في التعبير* لمعاصره الدينوريّ (ت بعد 400هـ/1010م)،[21] وهو مؤلَّفٌ ضخم وُضع للخليفة القادر باللّٰه (ت 422هـ/1031م)،[22] ويجمع بين الثقافة اليونانيّة وثقافتي الهند والفرس.[23] ولكنّ أثر التصوّف الذي ظهر جليًّا عند الخركوشيّ قد يسمح باكتشاف جزءٍ من العلاقة التي تربط أخلاق المتصوّفة بمناماتهم.[24] ولعلّ استعراض مثالٍ واحدٍ يوضح ذلك أكثر.

يقول أرطاميدورس إنّ اللباس في المنام خيرٌ إذا كان في الزمان الموافق من السنة، ويستثني من كان يريد أن يتقدّم إلى القاضي في خصومةٍ ومن كان عبدًا، فثياب الصوف أو «المرعز الجدد»[25] — على حدّ تعبير حنين بن إسحاق — لهم رديئةٌ ولو رأوا كأنّهم لابسوها في الشتاء، «وذلك لكثرة ثقلها وجفاها.»[26] أمّا الخركوشيّ فيقول: «احتراق الصوف فساد الدين وذهاب الأموال. ولبسه [يعني في المنام] للعلماء زهد.»[27] ويُردّ هذا الانزياح الدلاليّ الذي طال رمزيّة الصوف إلى عاملين اثنين: أخلاق المتصوّفة، ووظيفة المنام في المذهب الصوفيّ.

أ) أخلاق المتصوّفة:

ترتبط رمزيّة الصوف بالمتصوّفة في أكثر من ناحية، فلبس الصوف علمٌ من أعلام الزهد.[28] وتقول إحدى النظريّات إنّ المتصوّفة سُمّوا كذلك نسبةً إلى الصوف،[29] وذهب بعض الدارسين إلى أنّ الصوف كان لباس أهل الصفّة، والملائكة أيضًا.[30] ومَنْحُ لباس الصوف في المنام يدلّ على انتقال البركة من المانح إلى الممنوح.[31] تقول أمة العزيز وهي من المتصوّفات الأوائل: «من لبس الصوف يجب أن يكون أصفى الناس وقتًا، وأحسن الناس خُلُقًا، وأكرم الخلق حركة، وأعذب الناس طبعًا، وأسخاهم يدًا، كما تميّز عن الخلق بلباسه، كذلك يتميّز عنهم بأوصافه.»[32] فالصوف إذًا مظهرٌ يعكس تخلّق النفس بأخلاقٍ كثيرة.[33]

الأسرة للإعلام، دار عالم الثقافة للنشر؛ طرابلس (لبنان): دار الشمال، المؤسّسة الحديثة للكتاب؛ عمّان: دار الفكر، دار أعلام الثقافة، جمعيّة عمّال المطابع التعاونيّة، دار الحسن، دار البيت العتيق؛ القاهرة: دار الطلائع، دار الصفوة، مكتبة ومطبعة محمّد علي صبيح وأولاده، دار الطباعة الحديثة، دار إحياء الكتب العربيّة، دار الحديث، مكتبة مصر لطباعة الأوفست، دار الفكر الإسلاميّ الحديث، المكتبة المحمودية، دار الغد الجديد، مكتبة مدبولي، هلا للنشر والتوزيع، مؤسّسة طيبة للتوزيع والنشر، الدار الذهبيّة، دار الأمين، مكتبة الجمهوريّة العربيّة؛ المنصورة: مكتبة الإيمان.

19. G. Lecomte, "Ibn Ḳutayba," in *EI²*, 3:844.

20. اتُّهم الخركوشيّ بالنقل عن ابن قتيبة: يقول إبراهيم صالح محقّق كتاب الأخير: «نقل منه مباشرةً أبو سعد الواعظ، بل نقل معظمه، في كتابه *البشارة والنذارة في تفسير الأحلام*،» والأمر بحاجةٍ إلى دراسةٍ أعمق، راجع: ابن قتيبة، كتاب تعبير *الرؤيا*، تحقيق إبراهيم صالح (دمشق: دار البشائر، 2001)، 10.

21. Bilal Orfali, "al-Dīnawarī, Abū Saʿd Naṣr b. Yaʿqūb," in *EI³*, online.

22. D. Sourdel, "al-Ḳādir Bi'llāh," in *EI²*, 4:378.

23. اتُّهم الخركوشيّ أيضًا بالنقل عن الدينوريّ مع إسقاط الأسانيد، راجع: Lamoreaux, *The Early Muslim Tradition of Dream Interpretation*, 69.

24. لقد حصر لامورو (Lamoreaux) الأثر الصوفيّ في إيراد الخركوشيّ لبعض منامات المتصوّفة الأوائل، لكنّنا نرى أنّ الأثر أعمق من ذلك بكثير، وهذه الدراسة محاولةٌ لإثبات ذلك، راجع: Lamoreaux, *The Early Muslim Tradition of Dream Interpretation*, 102-103.

25. «جعل سيبويه المِرْعِزّى صفةً، عنى به اللين من الصوف [...] وثوبٌ مُمَرْعَزٌ: من باب تَمَدْرَع وتمسكن؛» محمّد بن مكرم بن منظور، *لسان العرب* (بيروت: دار صادر، دون تاريخ)، 5/354. ولعلّ المقصود بالجدد «الجُدّاد» وهو الخلقان من الثياب؛ ابن منظور، *لسان العرب*، 3/114.

26. أرطاميدورس، *كتاب تعبير الرؤيا*، 189. وتجدر الإشارة إلى أنّ ارتداء الصوف كان شائعًا لدى النسّاك من المسيحيّين قبل الإسلام ولكن لا يوجد في كتاب أرطاميدورس أدنى إشارة إلى ذلك، راجع: Alexander Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism: A Short History* (Leiden, Boston, Köln: Brill, 2000), 7

27. الخركوشيّ، *البشارة والنذارة*، مخطوط المتحف البريطانيّ، 130أ.

28. Abū l-Ḥasan al-Sīrjānī, *Sufism, Black and White: A Critical Edition of Kitāb al-Bayāḍ wa-l-Sawād*, ed. Bilal Orfali and Nada Saab (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2012), 108.

29. راجع: Alexander Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism*, 5; Ahmet Karamustafa, *Sufism: The Formative Period* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007), 6; John Renard, *Historical Dictionary of Sufism* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2005), 1.

30. Al-Sīrjānī, *Sufism, Black and White*, 107.

31. شيمل، *أحلام الخليفة*، 263.

32. Abū ʻAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī, *Early Sufi Women: Dhikr an-niswa al-mutaʿabbidāt al-ṣūfiyyāt*, trans. Rkia Cornell (Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 1999), 223.

33. يُضاف إلى ذلك مجموعةٌ من الأحاديث التي تُنسب إلى النبيّ وترد في كتب التصوّف، ومنها قوله: «عليكم بلباس الصوف تجدون حلاوة الإيمان في قلوبكم، وعليكم بلباس الصوف تجدون قلّة الأكل، وعليكم بلباس الصوف تُعرفون به في الآخرة، فإنّ النظر في الصوف يورث في القلب التفكّر، والتفكّر يورث الحكمة...؛» راجع: Al-Sīrjānī, *Sufism, Black and White*, 107.

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ب) وظيفة المنام في المذهب الصوفيّ:

المنام في الفكر الصوفيّ بمثابة مرآةٍ يرى فيها الحالِم ليلًا انعكاس أعماله في النهار، فيغدو وجهًا من أوجه محاسبة النفس وتأديبها،[34] وكثيرًا ما تتحقّق توبة أحدهم بسبب رؤيا منام.[35] تقول شيمل: المنام يعكس الحقيقة المطلقة على نحو الصورة التي تعكسها المرآة المظلمة.[36] والمنام في ذلك يؤدّي وظيفة الشيخ، إن لم ينب عنه أحيانًا.[37] فالشيخ أيضًا يتحتّم عليه أن يكون بالنسبة لمريده بمثابة مرآة، يحاسب نفسه من خلالها ويستحضر جمال الله.[38] وبذلك تكون وظيفة المنام قد تخطّت حدود التكهّن أو التنبّؤ إلى وظائف أخرى،[39] فلم يعد المنام نافذةً على المستقبل بقدر ما هو زادٌ روحيّ أو محاسبةٌ أو تثبيت.[40]

ويُضاف إلى هذين العاملين عاملٌ ثالث وهو منامات المتصوّفة، أو ما يشكّل التطبيق العمليّ للإطار النظريّ المنصوص عليه في كتاب الخركوشيّ أو غيره من كتب التعبير. ويخوض الجزء الثاني في هذا الجانب العمليّ من خلال تحليل منامات بعض المتصوّفة.

ثانيًا: منامات المتصوّفة وصلتها بأخلاقهم

يرمي هذا الجزء إلى تحليل منامات ثلاثة، وإظهار أهمّيّة الأخلاق في تأويلها. وقد اختيرت هذه المنامات من كتابَي *سلوة العارفين وأنس المشتاقين* لأبي خلف الطبريّ (ت 412هـ/1021م)[41]، *والرسالة القشيريّة* لأبي القاسم القشيريّ (ت 465هـ/1072م).[42] وقد تكرّر بعض هذه المنامات في مصادر لاحقة للتصوّف. وأعرض في دراستي لرموز التعبير ما جاء به أرطاميدورس في كتابه *تعبير الرؤيا* على ما جاء به الخركوشيّ في كتاب *البشارة والنذارة في تعبير الرؤيا والمراقبة*. وقد أفدت من مخطوطين للكتاب هما: مخطوط برلين ومخطوط المتحف البريطانيّ.[43]

أ) المنام الأوّل: من وحي سيرة النبي

ورد المنام في الكتابين– *سلوة العارفين والرسالة القشيريّة*– دون ذكر صاحبه، وفيه:

> «حُكي عن بعضهم أنّه قال: رأيت في المنام رسول الله صلّى الله عليه وسلّم وحوله جماعةٌ من الفقراء، فبينما هو كذلك إذ نزل من السماء مَلَكان، وبيد أحدهما طَست، وبيد الآخر إبريق: فوُضع الطست بين يدي رسول الله صلّى الله عليه وسلّم، فغسل يده، ثمّ أمر الملكين حتّى غسلوا أيديهم، ثمّ وُضع الطست بين يديّ، فقال أحدهما للآخر: لا تصبّ على يده فإنّه ليس منهم، فقلت: يا رسول الله أليس قد روي عنك قلت:'المرء مع من أحبّ؟'فقال: بلى، فقلت: وأنا أحبّك وأحبّ هؤلاء الفقراء، فقال صلّى الله عليه وسلّم: صُبّ على يده، فإنّه منهم.»[44]

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34. تجدر الإشارة إلى أنّ *كتاب تعبير الرؤيا* الذي وضعه شمس الدين الديلميّ (ت589 هـ/1193م) كان بعنوان: *مرآة الأرواح وصورة الوجاه*.
35. شيمل، *أحلام الخليفة*، 257.
36. شيمل، *أحلام الخليفة*، 482.
37. ذهبت سارة سفيري (Sara Sviri) إلى أنّ المنامات قد تنوب عن دور الشيخ المربّي، وذلك ضمن تحليلها للمنامات الواردة في السيرة الذاتيّة للحكيم الترمذيّ في كتابه *بدء الشأن*. وتجدر الإشارة إلى أنّ معظم تلك المنامات كانت لزوجته، راجع:
Sara Sviri, "Dreaming Analyzed and Recorded: Dreams in the World of Medieval Islam," in *Dream Cultures: Explorations in the Comparative History of Dreaming*, ed. David Shulman and Guy G. Stroumsa (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 252-273.
38. شيمل، *أحلام الخليفة*، 272؛ راجع أيضًا: Renard, *Historical Dictionary of Islam*, 205.
39. أحصيت إلى الآن تسع وظائف أوجدها التصوّف لتعبير المنام غير التكهّن بالمستقبل: ترسيخ شرعيّة شيخ معيّن أو طريقةٍ ما، وإعلان ولاية أحدهم، وإعانة المريد على اختيار شيخٍ له، وتوثيق صلة المريد بشيخه، ومحاسبة النفس، وإحداث تحوّل جذريّ من الضلال إلى الهدى، والحثّ على الارتحال من مكانٍ إلى آخر طلبًا للقاء شيخ، والتثبيت والإمداد بزادٍ روحيّ، والكشف عن قبر أحد الأولياء.
40. للتوسّع أكثر في هذه الفكرة، راجع: Jonathan Katz, "Dreams and Their Interpretation in Sufi Thought," in *Dreams and Visions in Islamic Societies*, ed. Özgen Felek and Alexander Knysh (Albany: SUNY Press, 2012), 184.
41. Gerhard Böwering and Bilal Orfali, Introduction to *The Comfort of the Mystics*, 1 .
42. H. Halm, "Al-Ḳushayrī," in *EI²*, 5:526.
43. تفاصيل هذين المخطوطين في قائمة المصادر.
44. أبو القاسم القشيريّ، *الرسالة القشيريّة*، تحقيق عبد الحليم محمود ومحمود بن الشريف (القاهرة: مؤسّسة دار الشعب، 1989)، 612؛ Al-Ṭabarī, *The Comfort of the Mystics*, 431-432.

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في مطلع المنام قرينةٌ تحول دون تشكيك السامع أو القارئ في مضمونه، فرؤية النبيّ في المنام مقترنةٌ بقوله: «من رآني في المنام لكأنّما رآني في اليقظة لا يتمثّل الشيطان بي.»[45] ولذلك ترد رؤيا النبيّ مرارًا في سياق إثبات الشرعيّة لخليفةٍ أو مذهبٍ أو شيخٍ أو حتّى قرار...[46] ولم يأت المنام على تحديد أيّ إطار مكانيّ أو زمانيّ، ولكنّه عيّن الحضور بقوله: «وحوله جماعةٌ من الفقراء.» فما دلالة الفقر في المنام؟ إن نظرنا في كتاب أرطاميدورس وجدنا ذكر الفقراء مرتبطًا لزومًا بالسؤال، ورؤيتهم في المنام — على حدّ قوله — «مضرّةٌ كبيرةٌ وشدّة» وقد يدلّون على موت صاحب الرؤيا «لأنّهم يُشبّهون بالموت، وذلك أنّهم وحدهم من الناس إذا أخذوا من الإنسان شيئًا لم يعطوه شيئًا، كما أنّ الموت يأخذ ولا يعطي.»[47] وبالانتقال إلى الخركوشيّ فقد أورد الفقر في بابٍ واحدٍ مع التواضع بعنوان: «في رؤية التواضع والفقر وما أشبه ذلك،» الأمر الذي يؤكّد ما جاء به بعض الدارسين أنّ إدراك خلقٍ معيّنٍ من أخلاق المتصوّفة لا يكتمل إلّا من خلال الإحاطة بأخلاقٍ أخرى.[48] فالفقر مثلًا متّصلٌ بأخلاقٍ أخرى كالزهد والتواضع والتوكّل والرضا.. وفي ذلك يقول النصرابادي (ت 367هـ/978م): «ينبغي للفقير أن يكون مؤتزرًا بالقناعة مرتديًا بالعفّة.»[49] وفي تأويل الفقر يقول الخركوشيّ: «فمن رأى كأنّه فقير فإنّه يكثر عليه الطعام ويستبشر في أموره.»[50] لقد شكّل الفقر صفةً ملازمةً للصوفيّ الحقيقيّ فهو «من لا يملك شيئًا ولا يملكه شيء.» وممّا يرد في الكتابين اللذين ذكرا المنام: الفقر شعار الأولياء وحلية الأصفياء واختيار الحقّ سبحانه لخواصّه من الأتقياء والأنبياء. والفقراء صفوة الله عزّ وجلّ من عباده، ومواضع أسراره بين خلقه، بهم يصون الحقّ الخلق، وببركاتهم يُبسط عليهم الرزق.[51]

وبالانتقال إلى قوله: «نزل من السماء مَلَكان، وبيد أحدهما طست، وبيد الآخر إبريق» فإنّ هذا المشهد يذكّرنا بمشهدٍ من السيرة النبويّة وهو حادثة شقّ الصدر التي يقول فيها النبيّ: «بينا أنا الساعة قائمٌ على إخوتي، إذ أتاني رهطٌ ثلاثة، بيد أحدهم إبريقُ فضّة، وفي يد الثاني طَستٌ من زُمُرُّدةٍ خضراءَ ملؤُها ثلج، فأخذوني، فانطلقوا بي إلى ذروةِ الجبل...»[52] إلى قوله: «فانتزع قلبي وشقَّه، فأخرج منه نُكتةً سوداءَ مملوءةً بالدَّم، فرمى بها، فقال: هذه حظُّ الشيطان منك يا حبيب الله.»[53] إنّ هذا التشابه بين أداتي نصّ المنام ومشهد شقّ الصدر يدفعنا إلى التساؤل عن العلاقة التي تجمع بينهما. فلعلّ الذين غُسلت أيديهم في المنام هم أولئك الذين ليس للشيطان منهم حظّ، أو أنّهم «وارِثو النبوّة» كما يعتقد المتصوّفة استنادًا إلى قول النبيّ: «العلماء ورثة الأنبياء.»[54]

45. مسلم، صحيح *مسلم* (الرياض: دار طيبة، 2006)، 1077، حديث رقم 2266.
46. يقول خمّاش عن العقل الإسلاميّ: «لم تعد مسألة رؤيا النبيّ والسماع منه عبر تجربةٍ منامية تحضر تجلّياتها فجأة، دونما ترتيبٍ مسبقٍ بين عالمي الغيب والشهادة، تستجيب لطموحات وتطلّعات هذا العقل المعرفيّة، فابتدع وسائل وطرائق تمكّن من خلالها، وفقًا للعديد من الأدبيّات الدينيّة، من استحضار الذات النبويّة وقتما شاء، فيسأل عن مسائل محدّدة، فقهيّة أو عقائديّة، أو في مجال التمييز بين الأحاديث النبويّة وإسقاط بعضها، أو في مجالات النزاعات السياسيّة لتنتصر الذات النبويّة لفئةٍ مقابل فئةٍ أخرى؛» نبال خمّاش، *الأساطير والأحلام المؤسّسة للعقل الإسلامي* (بيروت: المؤسّسة العربيّة للدراسات والنشر، 2013)، 371. ولمزيدٍ من النقاش حول رؤيا النبيّ في المنام، راجع: فهد، *الكهانة العربيّة*، 205-206؛ Ignaz Goldziher, "The Appearance of the Prophet in Dreams," *The Journal of The Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland 33* (1912): 503-506; Lamoreaux, "An Early Muslim Autobiographical Dream Narrative," in *Dreaming Across Boundaries: The Interpretation of Dreams in Islamic Lands*, ed. Louise Marlow (Cambridge, Massachusettts, and London: Harvard University Press, 2008), 90-91.
47. أرطاميدورس، *كتاب تعبير الرؤيا*، 417-418.
48. Karamustafa, *Sufism: The Formative Period*, 47; Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism*, 36.
49. Al-Sīrjānī, *Sufism, Black and White*, 139.
50. الخركوشيّ، *البشارة والنذارة*، مخطوط برلين، 167ب.
51. القشيريّ، *الرسالة القشيريّة*، 452؛ Al-Ṭabarī, *The Comfort of the Mystics*, 355.
52. أبو بكر البيهقيّ، *دلائل النبوّة ومعرفة أحوال صاحب الشريعة* (بيروت: دار الكتب العلميّة، 1984)، 140/1.
53. البيهقيّ، *دلائل النبوّة*، 141/1.
54. أبو عيسى محمّد بن عيسى الترمذيّ، *الجامع الكبير*، تحقيق بشّار عوّاد معروف (بيروت: دار الغرب الإسلامي، 1990)، 608-609، حديث رقم 2682.

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ولعلّ حركة صبّ الماء تحمل دلالةً أخرى أيضًا: فهل المقصود بها قبول انضمام الفرد إلى الجماعة؟ أم هل يكون الماء دليلًا على الرحمة أو المحبّة أو المغفرة؟[55] لا يتحدّث أرطاميدورس عن غسل عضوٍ معيّنٍ وإنّما يتحدّث عن الاغتسال عامّة، فهو للصحيح غنًى، وللمريض صحّة، أمّا الفقير فإن رأى كأنّه يغتسل مع جماعةٍ يخدمونه دلّ ذلك على مرضٍ طويلٍ يعرض له لأنّ الفقير لا يغتسل مثل هذا الاغتسال إلّا من مرض.[56] وفي المقلب الآخر، يقول الخركوشيّ: «ومن رأى أنّه اغتسل فإنّه يقضي حاجته، والاغتسال تطهيرٌ من الذنوب وكشف الهموم.»[57] ولا حاجة للحديث عن الفرق الشاسع بين التأويلين.

ولم يكن صاحب المنام أهلًا للالتحاق بجماعة الفقراء لولا المحبّة التي رفعته وأسعفته حتّى قال النبيّ: «صُبّ على يده فإنّه منهم.» وقد توسّل ذلك من خلال حديثٍ نبويّ جاء ردًّا على رجل سأل النبيّ يومًا: يا رسول الله، الرجلُ يحبّ القوم ولا يبلغ عملهم؟ فقال رسول الله صلّى الله عليه وسلّم: «المَرءُ مع مَن أَحَبَّ.»[58] وللمحبّة ثمنٌ عند أهل التصوّف، ولذلك قيل: «الحبّ معانقة الطاعة ومباينة المخالفة،» وقيل أيضًا: الحبّ محو المحبّ لصفاته وإثبات المحبوب بذاته...[59] فالمحبّة إذًا خلقٌ يستتبع التخلّق بأخلاقٍ كثيرة. وهكذا فإنّ منامًا واحدًا تداخلت في تحليله أخلاقٌ شتّى، الفقر وما يستوجبه من رضا وتوكّل، والمحبّة وما يستتبعها من التخلّق بأخلاق الله... الأمر الذي يجعل تأويل المنام ناقصًا وربّما خاطئًا دون أخذ هذه الأخلاق بعين الاعتبار. وقد شكّل النظر في كتاب تعبير الرؤيا *البشارة والنذارة* وفي التناصّ مع الحديث النبويّ سياقين جديدين أغنيا عمليّة تلقّي المنام ومنحاها بعدًا جديدًا.

ب) المنام الثاني: عند قبر النبيّ

هو لابن الجلّاء[60]، وقد ورد في الكتابين أيضًا، وفيه:

> «وقال ابن الجلّاء: دخلتُ مدينة رسول الله صلّى الله عليه وسلّم وبي فاقةٌ فتقدّمتُ إلى القبر وسلّمتُ على النبيّ صلّى الله عليه وسلّم وعلى ضجيعيه، ثمّ قلت: يا رسول الله بي فاقةٌ وأنا ضيفك، ثمّ تنحّيت ونمت بين القبر والمنبر، فإذا أنا بالنبيّ صلّى الله عليه وسلّم جاءني ودفع إليّ رغيف خبز، فأكلت نصفه، فانتبهتُ فإذا في يدي نصف رغيف.»[61]

بعكس المنام الأوّل، لقد افتُتح المنام الثاني بتعيين إطارٍ مكانيّ، فابن الجلّاء يزور قبر النبيّ في مدينته، ويغفو «بين القبر والمنبر.» وهذا المكان هو بوصف الحديث النبويّ روضةٌ من رياض الجنّة: «ما بين بيتي ومنبري روضةٌ من رياض الجنّة.»[62] ومعلومٌ أنّ الرؤيا الصادقة قد ارتبطت في الإسلام بإطارٍ زمنيّ لقول النبيّ «أصدق الرؤيا بالأسحار،»[63] ولكن لا حديث يشير إلى إطارٍ مكانيّ، فالرائي إن بات في المسجد أو في داره أو في الطريق سواء،[64] الأمر الذي اختلف عند أهل التصوّف حيث أصبح أداء صلاة الاستخارة في مقام بعض الأولياء أمرًا شائعًا، اعتقادًا بأنّ المنام يصدق في تلك الأماكن أكثر.[65]

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55. تجدر الإشارة إلى أنّ الماء في منام أبي العبّاس بن مسروق يرمز إلى خلقٍ آخر وهو الحياء، ونصّه: «قال أبو العبّاس بن مسروق: دخلت على سريّ وبين يديه ماءٌ مجتمعٌ وفي يده قضيبٌ يقلّب به ذلك الماء، فقال: يا بدبخت، هذا رجلٌ كان عندي اليوم، فتكلّمت عليه في شيءٍ من علم الحياء فذاب حتّى صار كما ترى. وقال غيره: رآه في النوم وهذا هو الصحيح؛» Al- Sīrjānī, *Sufism, Black and White*, 382.
56. أرطاميدورس، *كتاب تعبير الرؤيا*، 128.
57. الخركوشيّ، *البشارة والنذارة*، مخطوط المتحف البريطانيّ، 33ب.
58. ابن حنبل، *مسند الإمام أحمد بن حنبل*، تحقيق شعيب الأرناؤوط وعادل مرشد وآخرين (بيروت: مؤسّسة الرسالة، 2001)، 329/21، حديث رقم 13828.
59. القشيريّ، *الرسالة القشيريّة*، 521.
60. هو أبو عبد الله أحمد بن يحيى، من كبار مشايخ الصوفيّة، انتقل من بغداد فسكن الشام. يقول إسماعيل بن نُجيد: «إنّ في الدنيا ثلاثة من أئمّة الصوفيّة لا رابع لهم: أبو عثمان بنيسابور، والجنيد ببغداد، وأبو عبد الله الجلاء بالشام.» راجع: السلميّ، *تاريخ الصوفيّة: وبذيله محن الصوفيّة*، تحقيق محمّد الجادر (دمشق: دار نينوى، 2015)، 77-79.
61. القشيريّ، *الرسالة القشيريّة*، 610؛ Al-Sīrjānī, *Sufism, Black and White*, 156; Al-Ṭabarī, *The Comfort of the Mystics*, 429.
62. *البخاريّ، صحيح البخاري* (دمشق: دار ابن كثير، 2002)، 288، حديث رقم 1196.
63. ابن حنبل، *المسند*، 341/17، حديث رقم 11240.
64. لم يُطرح هذا الموضوع من قبل على الرغم من الأهمّيّة التي يتبوّأها «المكان» في الفكرين العربيّ والإسلاميّ، ولذلك أوليه العناية في أطروحتي التي تدرس علاقة المنام بالمكان في العصر العبّاسيّ.
65. Sirriyeh, *Dreams and Visions in the World of Islam*, 169, 172.

167.0 x 240.0 mm

فكيف بقبر النبيّ تحديدًا؟ وإنّ المكانة الخاصّة التي تحظى بها القبور عند أصحاب هذا المذهب قد دفعت نايل غرين (Nile Green) إلى الاعتقاد بأنّ علاقة المتصوّفة بدينهم تبلورت في أمرين: ألسنة مشايخ التصوّف، وقبورهم.[66]

أين الأخلاق من هذا كلّه؟ تحيلنا زيارة القبور وملازمتها إلى خُلُق الزهد، لما فيهما من عزوفٍ عن الدنيا واستصغارٍ لها واستحضارٍ للآخرة من خلال ذكر الموت.[67] ومن القصص ما يخبر عن رجال بنوا لأنفسهم قبورًا ولازموها سنين وتقلّدوا أحيانًا بأكفانهم.

ويشكو ابن الجلّاء للنبيّ ما كان معروفًا عنه من صفته وحاله في بيوت زوجاته. فقد «خرج رسول الله صلّى الله عليه وسلّم من الدنيا ولم يشبع من خبز الشعير.»[68] وكذلك كان حال ضجيعيه أبي بكر وعمر، وممّا يُروى في هذا الصدد أنّ رسول الله صلّى الله عليه وسلّم خرج في ساعةٍ لم يكن يخرج فيها ثمّ خرج أبو بكر فقال له رسول الله صلّى الله عليه وسلّم: ما أخرَجك يا أبا بكرٍ، فقال أخرَجني الجوعُ، قال: وأنا أخرَجني الذي أخرَجك، ثمّ خرج عمر، فقال: ما أخرَجك يا عمر؟ قال: أخرَجني والذي بعَثك بالحقّ الجوع...» إلى آخر الحديث.[69]

لقد ورد منام ابن الجلّاء في *سلوة العارفين* و*الرسالة القشيريّة* ضمن بابٍ بعنوان: «رؤيا القوم،» أمّا السيرجانيّ (ت نحو 470هـ/1077م) فقد ذكر المنام نفسه في كتاب *البياض والسواد* ضمن باب: «قولهم في الأكل وعادتهم فيه،» وهو في هذا الباب يزكّي فضيلة الجوع، ويحكي عن متصوّفة مكثوا سنين لم يأكلوا الخبز.[70] فالجوع أحد أركان المجاهدة، وإنّ أرباب السلوك وجدوا ينابيع الحكمة من خلاله.[71] يقول يحيى بن معاذ: «الجوع للمريدين رياضة، وللتائبين تجربة، وللزهّاد سياسة، وللعارفين مكرمة.»[72] ويُعدّ الجوع أفضل طريقٍ للوصول، وشرطًا أساسًا للكشف الإلهيّ.[73] وهنا شكّل الجوع بابًا للوصال النبويّ. كلّ ذلك يخوّلنا أكثر فهم قوله: «يا رسول الله بي فاقةٌ وأنا ضيفك،» وإكرام الضيف واجبٌ كما هو معلوم.[74]

لقد رأى ابن الجلّاء النبيّ يدفع إليه رغيف خبز، فأكل نصفه، فلمّا انتبه وجد في يده النصف الثاني. فما دلالة الخبز في المنام؟ ميّز أرطاميدورس بين أنواعٍ للخبز وقال: إذا رأى الأغنياء أنّهم يأكلون خبز الفقراء (الخشكار) دلّ ذلك على فقر، وإذا رأى الفقراء أنّهم يأكلون خبز الأغنياء (الحُوّارى) دلّ ذلك على مرض.[75] وفي المقابل يقول الخركوشيّ: «إنّ الخبز الحُوّارى الحارّ يدلّ على ولد، والخشكار يدلّ على حياةٍ هنيّةٍ ودينٍ واسط.»[76]

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66. Green, *Sufism: A Global History*, 113.
ولقد ساهم التصوّف في إيجاد علاقةٍ متشابكة بين القبر والمنام، فأضرحة الأولياء من الأماكن التي تظلّها البركات، ورؤيتها في المنام تشغل حيّزًا مهمًّا في الفكر الصوفيّ. كما عُرض على بعض الأولياء أحيانًا في المنام قبورهم التي سوف يُدفنون فيها. أضف إلى ذلك ثيمة ظهور وليّ في المنام ليعرّف شخصًا ما بموضع قبره ويأمره أن يبني له ضريحًا؛ شيمل، *أحلام الخليفة*، 312-313؛ وقد تناولت غير دراسة الأبعاد السياسيّة والاقتصاديّة والاجتماعيّة والدينيّة للقبور عند المتصوّفة؛ راجع: Sirriyeh, *Dreams and Visions in the World of Islam*, 163-172; Iftikhar Charan et al., "Cultural and Religious Perspective on the Sufi Shrines," *Journal of Religion and Health* 57 (2018): 1074-1094; Ato Kwamena Onoma, "The Grave Preferences of Mourides in Senegal: Migration, Belonging, and Rootedness," *Africa Spectrum* 53, no. 3 (2018): 65-88.
ومن الجدير بالذكر أنّ عليّ الوردي تناول «ظاهرة الأضرحة الوهميّة» التي غدت وسيلةً للكسب منذ العصر العبّاسيّ، راجع: عليّ الوردي، *الأحلام بين العلم والعقيدة* (بيروت: الورّاق، 2017)، 15-19.

67. تُردّ بدايات التصوّف إلى أحوالٍ من الزهد ظهرت في نهاية القرن الهجريّ الثاني؛ راجع: Karamustafa, *Sufism: The Formative Period*, 1.
68. البخاريّ، *الصحيح*، 1379، حديث رقم 5414.
69. ابن حبّان، *صحيح ابن حبّان بترتيب ابن بلبان*، تحقيق شعيب الأرناؤوط (بيروت: مؤسّسة الرسالة، 1993)، 16/12، حديث رقم 5216.
70. Al-Sīrjānī, *Sufism, Black and White*, 153.
71. القشيريّ، *الرسالة القشيريّة*، 258.
72. القشيري، *الرسالة القشيريّة*، 259.
73. آنّا ماري شيمل، *الأبعاد الصوفيّة في الإسلام*، ترجمة محمّد السيّد ورضا قطب (كولونيا، بغداد: منشورات الجمل، 2006)، 133.
74. وذلك استنادًا إلى أحاديث كثيرة منها قوله: «مَن كانَ يُؤْمِنُ باللَّهِ واليَومِ الآخِرِ فَلْيُكْرِمْ ضَيْفَهُ؛» انظر: البخاريّ، *الصحيح*، 1509، حديث رقم 6018.
75. أرطاميدورس، *كتاب تعبير الرؤيا*، 139.
76. الخركوشيّ، *البشارة والنذارة*، مخطوط المتحف البريطانيّ، أ113.

167.0 x 240.0 mm

ويندرج هذا المنام ضمن مجموعةٍ من المنامات التي تخلّف أثرًا مادّيًّا ملموسًا، وتشمل المنامات المعالِجة من الأمراض أو العاهات التي كانت محطّ عنايةٍ في التراث الإسلاميّ، الأمر الذي يرسّخ اعتقاد كثيرٍ من المسلمين بالارتباط التامّ بين عالمَي الواقع والمنام، «فلا وجود عندهم لحدودٍ فاصلةٍ بين هذين العالمين.»[77] والمنام عادةً يصعب الإتيان بدليلٍ على صحّته كونه تجربة فرديّة خاصّة، لكنّ هذا النوع من المنامات يشذّ عن القاعدة. وابن الجلّاء بقوله ذلك قد جاء بقرينتي إثبات: رؤيا النبيّ من جهة والنصف الثاني للرغيف من جهةٍ أخرى.

إنّ أثر التصوّف واضحٌ في كلامه، وإنّ أخلاق المتصوّفة—المنعكسة في مناماتهم—قد حقّقت انزياحًا دلاليًّا واضحًا لرمزيّة الخبز عند الخركوشيّ. وأدّت الأخلاق مع الأحاديث النبويّة مع كتاب الخركوشيّ في التعبير دورًا تكامليًّا في عمليّة تأويل المنام.

ج) المنام الثالث: وصيّة ابنٍ لأبيه

ورد المنام الثالث والأخير في الرسالة القشيريّة، ونصّه:

> «كان لأبي سعيدٍ الخرّاز[78] ابنٌ مات قبله، فرآه في المنام فقال له: يا بُنيّ، أوصِني. فقال: يا أبتِ لا تعامل الله على الجبن. فقال: يا بنيّ، زدني. فقال: لا تخالف الله تعالى فيما يطالبك به. فقال: زدني. فقال: لا تجعل بينك وبين الله قميصًا. قال: فما لبس القميص ثلاثين سنة.»[79]

لعلّ هذا المنام لم يشتمل على رؤيا النبيّ كالمنامين السابقين، ولكن للوهلة الأولى تبدو بنية المنام متطابقةً مع بنية عددٍ من الأحاديث النبويّة التي تبدأ بقول أحدهم: يا رسول الله أوصني، فيجيب النبيّ، ثمّ يردف السائل: زدني... وهكذا تتعدّد الإجابة ويتكرّر طلب الزيادة وتصبّ هذه الأحاديث بمعظمها في المجال الأخلاقيّ. ومن هذه الأحاديث ما ورد عن أبي ذرّ: قلتُ يا رسول الله أوصِني قال: أوصيك بتقوى الله فإنّه رأسُ الأمر كلّه، قلتُ: يا رسول الله زدني قال: عليك بتلاوة القرآن وذِكر الله فإنّه نورٌ لك في الأرض وذُخرٌ لك في السماء، قلتُ: يا رسول الله زدني: قال: إيّاك وكثرةَ الضحك فإنَّه يُميتُ القلبَ ويذهَبُ بنور الوجه...» والحديث طويلٌ وفيه وصيّةٌ بالصمت: «عليك بالصمت إلّا مِن خير،» وأمرٌ بالرضا: «انظُرْ إلى مَن تحتَك ولا تنظُرْ إلى مَن فوقَك فإنَّه أجدرُ ألّا تزدريَ نعمةَ الله عندك» وغير ذلك... وممّا يرد فيه: «أحِبَّ المساكينَ وجالِسْهم.»[80] وفي هذا عودٌ أوّل على الحبّ، وعودٌ ثانٍ على الفقر، وعودٌ ثالثٌ على التواضع والزهد، الأمر الذي يؤكّد صعوبة تفسير منام أحد المتصوّفة خارج منظومة أخلاقيّة مترابطة.

لقد كانت علاقة المنامات السابقة بالحديث النبويّ واضحة، ولكنّ هذا المنام يُظهر أيضًا ارتباطًا بالقرآن الكريم. فالوصيّة مرتبطةٌ في التراث بالأخلاق، وكذلك كانت وصيّة لقمان لابنه: ﴿وَإِذْ قَالَ لُقْمَانُ لِابْنِهِ وَهُوَ يَعِظُهُ﴾[81] واشتملت وصاياه إلى جانب التوحيد وإقامة الصلاة والأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر على جوانب أخلاقيّة، منها الصبر: ﴿وَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا أَصَابَكَ﴾[82] والتواضع: ﴿وَلَا تُصَعِّرْ خَدَّكَ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا﴾[83] وخفض الصوت: ﴿وَاغْضُضْ مِن صَوْتِكَ﴾[84] ولا تخرج وصيّة ابن الخرّاز عن السياق الأخلاقيّ أيضًا، ولكن مع قلبٍ واضحٍ في الأدوار فالابن في المنام هو الذي يوصي أباه

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77. شيمل، *أحلام الخليفة*، 489.
78. هو أحمد بن عيسى، من كبار المشايخ المذكورين بالورع والمراقبة وحسن الرعاية والمجاهدة، ولقّبه ابن الطرسوسيّ بقمر الصوفيّة. مات سنة247 هـ أو 277هـ؛ انظر: السلميّ، *تاريخ الصوفيّة*، 50-55.
79. القشيريّ، *الرسالة القشيريّة*، 615.
80. ابن حبّان، *الصحيح*، 76/2، حديث رقم 361.
81. القرآن 13:31.
82. القرآن 17:31.
83. القرآن 18:31.
84. القرآن 19:31.

167.0 x 240.0 mm

بعد أن فارق الحياة قبله، فيقول له: «لا تعامل الله على الجبن» أي قلّة الشجاعة من الفتور والكسل في الطاعات،[85] و«لا تخالف الله تعالى فيما يطالبك به» و«لا تجعل بينك وبين الله قميصًا.» فالتركيز على الجانب الأخلاقيّ يكمن في الوصيّة الثالثة، ويلي تفصيلٌ في الحديث عنها.

إنّ الحوار القائم بين الأب وابنه في المنام يُفتتح بقول الأب «يا بنيّ،» ومن ثمّ يجيب الابن: «يا أبتِ.» ويتشابه هذا الحوار مع حوار قرآنيّ بين النبيّ إبراهيم وابنه إذ قال له: ﴿يَا بُنَيَّ إِنِّي أَرَى فِي الْمَنَامِ أَنِّي أَذْبَحُكَ فَانْظُرْ مَاذَا تَرَى﴾[86] فأجاب الابن: ﴿قَالَ يَا أَبَتِ افْعَلْ مَا تُؤْمَرُ سَتَجِدُنِي إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الصَّابِرِينَ﴾.[87] إنّه المنام من جديد، وليس أيّ منام، إذ إنّه أسّس للنظرة الصوفيّة تجاه المنامات، فقد قلب ابن العربيّ في كتابه *فصوص الحكم*[88] التفسيرَ المتعارف عليه لهذا المنام، وقال إنّ المقصود في المنام هو الكبش وقد ظهر بصورة ابن إبراهيم، «ففداه ربّه من وهم إبراهيم بالذبح.»[89] ويرى ابن العربيّ أنّ تعبير الرؤيا لا يأخذ بظاهرها، «فالتجلّي الصوريّ في حضرة الخيال محتاجٌ إلى علمٍ آخر يُدرك به ما أراد الله تعالى بتلك الصورة.»[90] وكان الواجب اجتياز الصورة التي رآها إلى أمرٍ آخر. وهكذا يظهر القلب على مستوًى آخر في نصّ هذا المنام.

وأعود إلى قوله «يا أبتِ،» فهو أيضًا نداءٌ جاءَ على لسان يوسف عندما قال لأبيه: ﴿يَا أَبَتِ إِنِّي رَأَيْتُ أَحَدَ عَشَرَ كَوْكَبًا﴾[91] وقال ﴿يَا أَبَتِ هَذَا تَأْوِيلُ رُؤْيَايَ مِنْ قَبْلُ﴾.[92] إنّه المنام مجدّدًا، وإنّه كذلك النبيّ الذي كان تعبير الرؤيا معجزته التي أوتيها، وهو تفسير قوله تعالى: ﴿وَكَذَلِكَ يَجْتَبِيكَ رَبُّكَ وَيُعَلِّمُكَ مِنْ تَأْوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ﴾[93] فالتفسير الأرجح لـ «تأويل الأحاديث» هو تعبير الرؤيا،[94] وقد نصّت الآية السابقة على ارتباطه بالاجتباء.[95]

ولا يمكننا إلّا الوقوف عند هذا النبيّ لأنّ القميص ارتبط به في السياق القرآنيّ وكذلك في نصّ المنام. وقد تأثّرت كتب التعبير الإسلاميّة بالسياق القرآنيّ، إذ يقول الخركوشيّ: القميص بشارةٌ لقوله تعالى: ﴿اذْهَبُوا بِقَمِيصِي هَذَا﴾.[96] ونقرأ مثلًا عن أبي إسحاق الكرمانيّ – وهو أوّل من وضع كتابًا في التعبير عند المسلمين ولكنّه لم يصلنا[97] – «أنّه رأى يوسف الصدّيق عليه السلام في المنام فأعطاه قميصه فلبسه وجلس به، فتعلّم ما فتح الله به عليه من تعبير الرؤيا.»[98]

أمّا في سياق الحديث النبويّ، فيطالعنا منامٌ رآه النبيّ وفيه: «بينا أنا نائم، رأيت الناس يُعرضون عليّ وعليهم قمصٌ منها ما يبلغ الثديّ، ومنها ما يبلغ دون ذلك. ومرّ عليّ عمر بن الخطّاب وعليه قميصٌ يجرّه. قالوا: فما أوّلت ذلك يا رسول الله؟ قال: الدين.»[99]

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85. مصطفى العروسي، *نتائج الأفكار القدسيّة في بيان معاني شرح الرسالة القشيريّة لشيخ الإسلام زكريّا بن محمّد الأنصاريّ* (ت 926هـ) (بيروت: دار الكتب العلميّة، 2007)، 345.
86. القرآن 102:37.
87. القرآن 102:37.
88. ممّا يستحقّ الذكر أنّ ابن عربيّ قد وضع كتابه هذا بعد أن رأى في المنام أنّ النبيّ يعطيه إيّاه ويقول له: "خذه واخرج به إلى الناس ينتفعون"؛ محيي الدين ابن عربيّ، *فصوص الحكم*، تحقيق أبو العلا عفيفي (بيروت: دار الكتاب العربيّ، دون تاريخ)، 47.
89. ابن العربيّ، *فصوص الحكم*، 85.
90. ابن العربيّ، *فصوص الحكم*، 85.
91. القرآن 4:12.
92. القرآن 100:12.
93. القرآن 6:12.
94. أبو جعفر الطبريّ، *جامع البيان في تأويل القرآن*، تحقيق أحمد شاكر (بيروت: مؤسّسة الرسالة، 2000)، 560/15؛ وأبو إسحاق الزجّاج، *معاني القرآن وإعرابه*، تحقيق عبد الجليل شلبي (بيروت: عالم الكتب، 1988)، 92/3؛ وأبو الفرج بن الجوزيّ، *زاد المسير في علم التفسير* (بيروت: دار الكتاب العربيّ، 2002)، 414/2؛ وأبو القاسم الزمخشريّ، *الكشّاف عن حقائق التنزيل وعيون الأقاويل في وجوه التأويل*، تحقيق خليل شيحا (بيروت: دار المعرفة، 2009)، 505؛ وأبو سعيد البيضاويّ، *أنوار التنزيل وأسرار التأويل*، تحقيق محمّد المرعشلي (بيروت: دار إحياء التراث العربيّ، 1998)، 155/3.
95. يشير كنيش (Knysh) مرارًا في حديثه عن تفاسير المتصوّفين الأوائل إلى تعويلهم على الرؤى والمنامات عند التأويل؛ Alexander Knysh, *Sufism: A New History of Islamic Mysticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), *67-84*.
96. القرآن 93:12.
97. نرجّح استنادًا إلى من نقل عنه أنّ كتاب أبي إسحاق الكرمانيّ هو أوّل ما وُضع في تعبير الرؤيا عند المسلمين، وذلك في النصف الثاني من القرن الثاني للهجرة، ثمّ توالت من بعده التآليف؛ انظر: Lamoreaux, *The Early Muslim Tradition of Dream Interpretation*, 26.
98. خليل بن شاهين، *الإشارات في علم العبارات* (بيروت: دار الفكر، دون تاريخ)، 759.
99. البخاريّ، *الصحيح*، 16، حديث رقم 23.

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وكلّ ما سبق لا ينطبق على تأويل منام الخرّاز، فلا القميص فيه هو بشارة، ولا هو الدين، ولا هو القدرة على التعبير. والقلب يظهر هنا على مستوًى ثالث، فقد شكّل النظر في كلٍّ من كتاب الخركوشيّ وفي التناصّ مع القرآن والحديث النبويّ قاعدةً أساسًا في فهم المنامين السابقين، وبعدًا مكمّلًا للبعد الأخلاقيّ. أمّا في هذا المنام فقد قصّر كتاب الخركوشيّ في عكس رمزيّة القميص عند المتصوّفة، وكذلك لم يكن التناصّ مع القرآن والحديث كافيًا، فغدت الأخلاق وحدها مرجعًا ومرتكزًا في التأويل. إذ لا يمكن فهم وصيّة ابنه: «لا تجعل بينك وبين الله قميصًا» بمنأًى عن خُلُق الزهد الذي يُعدّ من أخلاق المريد ومن المقوّمات الأولى للطريق، ويقترن بالافتقار الحقيقيّ إلى الله. قال ابن عطاء: «إنّ الله ليحبّ العبد فيلبس الثوب الشهرة فلا ينظر إليه حتّى يضعه.»[100] وتتّضح دلالة القميص أكثر في مقابل أقوالٍ تشيد بلباس المرقّعة مثلًا، منها قولهم: المرقّعة لباس الرجال.[101]

خلاصة القول، إنّ أحلام المتصوّفة لا يمكن أن تُفهم بمنأى عن أخلاقهم، وقد كان لهذه الأخلاق أثرها على علم التعبير بدءًا من الخركوشيّ، إذ حقّقت انزياحًا دلاليًّا لعددٍ من رموز التعبير. وإنّ توسيعَ رقعة الدراسة لِتطالَ كتب تعبيرٍ أخرى للمتصوّفة من شأنه أن يغني نتائج البحث، وأن يوضح أكثر أثر الأخلاق في المنامات. لقد أدّى السياق الأخلاقيّ دورًا تكامليًّا مع سياقاتٍ أخرى في عمليّة تفكيك المنامات ومحاولة تأويلها، إلّا أنّه استغنى في المنام الأخير عن السياقات الأخرى، وكان وحده مرتكزًا أساسًا لتلقّي المنام. وفي ضوء هذا يمكننا القول: إنّ أخلاق المتصوّفة قد أسدت خدمتين جليلتين لعلم التعبير عند المسلمين، أوّلًا: أوجدت له هويّةً متفرّدة من خلال الانزياح الدلاليّ ووسّعت الفجوة بينه وبين علم التعبير في الفكر اليونانيّ، وثانيًا: خلقت له وظائف أخرى غير التكهّن بالمستقبل. فالمنامات التي عالجتها الورقة لم ترتكز على كشف مستقبل الرائي بقدر ما ارتكزت على إصلاح حاله في حاضره.

100. Al-Sīrjānī, *Sufism, Black and White*, 109.
101. Al-Sīrjānī, *Sufism, Black and White*, 106.

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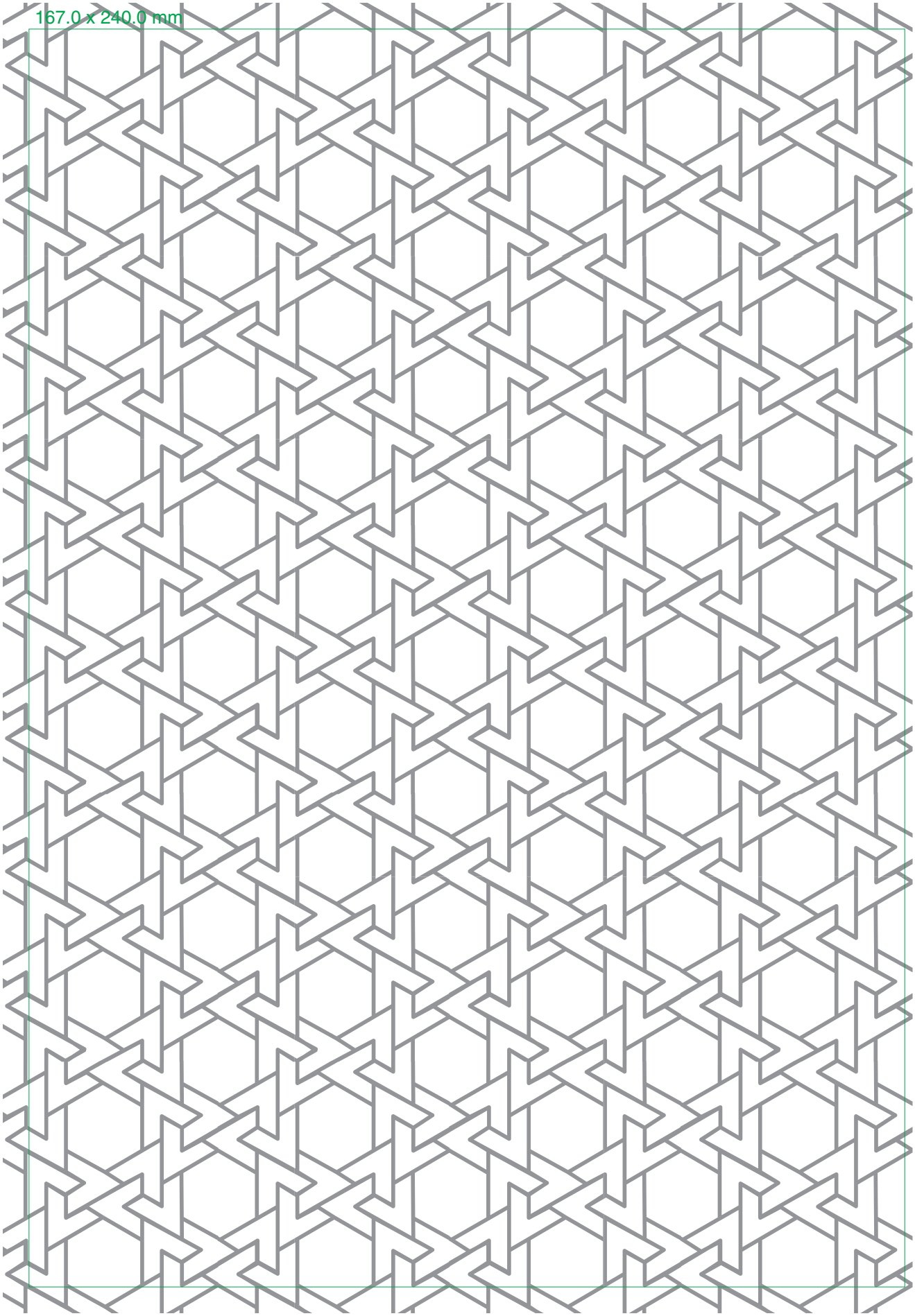
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TO GRIEVE OR NOT TO GRIEVE? THE AMBIVALENCE OF *ḤUZN* IN EARLY SUFISM

Riccardo Paredi

The present paper traces the concept of *ḥuzn* — variably translated as "sadness," "grief," "sorrow," or "affliction"[1] — in the early development of Islamic thought. It begins with an examination of how the term is used in the Quran and the canonical hadith corpus, proceeds through the time period of the early renunciants and proto-Sufi and Sufi authors, and ends with the second half of the fifth/eleventh century. At first glance, the Quranic "do not grieve!" (*lā taḥzan)* seems to stand in stark contrast to early Sufi teachings on sadness, the latter being a necessary trade (*ṣināʿa*) of the wayfarer (*sālik*) and the noblest act of devotion (*afḍal al-ʿibāda*). The question then arises, what should the believer do? To grieve or not to grieve?

1. Depending on context, we will translate *ḥuzn* as "grief," "sorrow," "affliction," "pain," and "sadness." For a brief overview of these terms in English, see Stanley W. Jackson, *Melancholia and Depression. From Hippocratic Times to Modern Times* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 311–312. See also Mary H. Kayyal and James A. Russell, "Language and Emotion: Certain English–Arabic Translations Are Not Equivalent," *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 32, no. 3 (2013): 261–271.

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Ḥuzn, one Emotion among Many

Ḥuzn, like such similar concepts as *khawf*, *faraḥ*, and *ghaḍab*, denotes an inward emotional state,[2] and is often mentioned in the Quran and in later Islamic texts.[3] It is not to be confused with its usage in other contexts as a recitational or musical technique,[4] or with its possible external manifestations.[5] Before proceeding, let us clarify what precisely is this inward state. What is *ḥuzn*? To answer this question, we briefly turn to the field of lexicography and etymology. Confronting what Louis Massignon describes as the multiple degrees of freedom of the Arabic language, we begin here with *ḥuzn*'s semantic root (ḥ–z–n).[6] The *Doha Historical Dictionary of Arabic* records one of the earliest uses of this root (*ḥazan,* defined as grief—*ghamm*), in 230 CE (–404 H), in a poem attributed to Salīma b. Mālik b. Fahm al-Azdī.[7] In "classical" lexicographical reference works such *al-Furūq al-lughawiyya* by Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī (d. c. 400/1010), *Lisān al-ʿarab* by Ibn Manẓūr (d. 711/1311), and *K. al-Taʿrīfāt* by ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Jurjānī (d. 816/1413), *ḥuzn* is defined as grief (*asaf*) dealing with real things and especially what has passed (*mā fāta*)—i.e., unpleasant events that have happened—or on account of an object of love that has gone away. It is an endurable emotion located in the heart (*fuʾād*); it is more intense than *hamm* (often translated as "affliction") and an intensification (*takāthuf*) of *ghamm* (also "grief" or "distress").[8] Finally, a glimpse into other nuances of the semantic root ḥ–z–n might give us further insight: *ḥuzn* designates "roughness," denoting a hard

2. Does *ḥuzn* correspond to one of the six basic emotional states of humanity suggested by Ekman (i.e., anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise)? See Paul Ekman, *Emotion in the Human Face* (Los Altos, California: Malor Books, 2013). There is no academic agreement upon the definition of our object of study (i.e., emotion, and specifically "grief") and the history of emotions in Islamic scholarship is still much undeveloped. See the recent contribution to the field by Julia Bray and Helen Blatherwick, eds., "Arabic Emotions: From the Qurʾān to the Popular Epic," *Cultural History* 8, no. 2 (2019). Here we rely on Bauer's "tentative working definition of emotion," which she applies to the Quranic text: "An emotion is a feeling, universal in nature, but which has learned elements that affect its expression, the triggers for it, and the meanings attributed to it. Despite these cognitive elements, an emotion is not the result of a rational process of thinking, and often involves a physiological response. Emotions are a means of social communication, and as such they are related to language and structures of social power." Karen Bauer, "Emotion in the Qur'an: An Overview," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 19, no. 2 (2017): 1–30.

3. In his thought-provoking working paper, Paul Heck makes some exploratory remarks on sadness (*ḥuzn*, but also *ghamm* and *ḥamm*) in Classical Islam. In particular, he identifies a Stoic and a Neo-Platonic trend, while arguing that an Aristotelian trend might be identified in further research. As we shall expose, sadness as a virtuous emotion might be close to Heck's "Aristotelian–Islamic" sadness "as something to be discerned for the insight it offers into the life of virtue, thus acting as a step [. . .] towards the face of God." See Paul Heck, "Sadness in Classical Islam: Its relation to the Goals of Religion," in *Emotions Across Cultures Working Papers*, proceedings of a workshop held in February 2014 at NYU Abu Dhabi. Consulted online 21 February 2020. https://archive.nyu.edu/bitstream/2451/34037/2/Heck.Emotions.NYUAD%281%29.pdf. On sadness in Persian literature, see Sylwia Surdykowska, "The Idea of Sadness. The Richness of Persian Experiences and Expressions," *Rocznik Orientalistyczny* 68, no. 2 (2014): 68–80.

4. In the genre "Manuals on the etiquette of [Quranic] recitation" (*ādāb al-tilāwa*), *ḥuzn* is considered a recitation technique concurring in creating a whole religious and aesthetic experience. See Michael Sells, *Approaching the Qurʾān: The Early Revelations* (Ashland: White Cloud Press, 1999), 28, and Kristina Nelson, *The Art of Reciting the Qur'an* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985). Compare it with Tala Jarjour, *Sense and Sadness: Syriac Chant in Aleppo* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018). *Ḥuzn* in music augments the worshippers' desire of God and their devotion, as we read in Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ, *Epistles of the Brethren of Purity. On Music: an Arabic Critical Edition and English Translation of Epistle 5*, ed. and trans. Owen Wright (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

5. We are especially referring to *bukāʾ* (weeping practices), a topic that received much more scholarly attention in Islamic studies. See, for instance, William Chittick, "Weeping in Classical Sufism," in *Holy Tears: Weeping in the Religious Imagination*, ed. Kimberley Christine Patton and John Stratton Hawley (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 132–144; Linda G. Jones, "'He Cried and He Made Others Cry': Crying as a Sign of Pietistic Authenticity or Deception in Medieval Islamic Preaching," in *Crying in the Middle Ages: Tears of History*, ed. Elina Gertsman (London: Routledge, 2012), 102–135.

6. Louis Massignon, *Opera Minora II*, ed. Youakim Moubarac (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1969), 540 ff.

7. See *Doha Historical Dictionary of Arabic*, s.v. "*ḥuzn*", date accessed October 4, 2019, https://www.dohadictionary.org/#/dictionary/□□□ .

8. See the entries on *ḥuzn*, *ḥamm*, and *ghamm* in Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī, *al-Furūq al-lughawiyya*, ed. Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Salīm (Cairo: Dār al-ʿIlm wa-l-Thaqāfa, 1997); Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿarab*, ed. ʿA. ʿA. al-Kabīr, M. A. Ḥasaballāh, and H. M. al-Shādhilī (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1985); ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī, *K. al-Taʿrīfāt*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Marʿashlī (Beirut: Dār al-Nafāʾis, 2003).

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ground, rugged mountains, a rough spirit or creation—in this case, the opposite of "plain," "flat," "smooth" (*sahl*). As Stephan Guth points out, it is difficult to establish the (causal?) relationship between the sides of this double, two-fold value of the Arabic root of *ḥuzn* as "rough ground" and "to be(come) sad." Nevertheless, if *ḥuzn* originally designated distress caused by a rocky terrain, then Arabic would be the only Semitic language to have preserved this primary value.[9]

Quranic *ḥuzn*

Moving on from this etymological prelude and from late lexicographical definitions in "classical" lexicographical references, it is based on the Quranic text that the majority of Islamic concepts like *ḥuzn* take shape. As Karen Bauer puts it, it is Revelation (*waḥy*) that moulds a new community of believers through new emotional ties and plots woven into its basic eschatological message.[10] The root ḥ–z–n is mentioned forty-two times in the Quran, in three derived forms and thirty-five times in a negative form (*lā taḥzan/ū*).[11] This leads Bauer to conclude that "the main message about grief in the Quran is that one should not grieve, because God relieves grief,"[12] taking as an example the stories of Maryam, Yaʿqūb, and Umm Mūsā. On the other hand, the nuanced conclusions of Mahshid Turner's *The Muslim Theology of Huzn* shed a more positive light on our emotion.[13] Notably, her Izutsian approach[14] highlights the strong relational meaning between *ḥuzn* and *khawf* (paired seventeen times in the Quran). Thus, Quranic *ḥuzn* is predominately portrayed as an undesirable emotional state that the believer should obviate. In fact, the true believer should not dwell and cannot actually dwell in it if he possesses faith (*īmān*), especially in Divine decree (*qadar*). The Quranic formula "do not grieve," mainly directed by God to the believer, is indeed prevalent, and God is never explicitly said to give grief, while He is often said to relieve believers of it.[15] By contrast, secret conversations (*najwā*) originating from Satan, grieve the believers (Q 58:10). Surely, as Turner underlines, *ḥuzn* felt in trials or *ḥuzn* as a tool for guidance—especially in Prophetic narrations—might lead to positive outcomes. However, Quranic *ḥuzn* remains ontologically "rough," undoubtedly linked with loss, being instrumental to higher spiritual achievements.[16]

9. Stephan Guth, "Arab(ic) Emotions – Back to the Roots," in *Reading Slowly: A Festschrift in Honour of Jens Braarvig*, ed. Lutz Edzard, Jens W. Borgland, and Ute Hüsken (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2018), 199–219.

10. Bauer, "Emotion in the Qur'an: An Overview," 10.

11. See the entry on *ḥuzn* in the *Dictionary of Qurʾanic Usage*, ed. Elsaid Muhammad Badawi and Muhammad Abdel Haleem (Leiden: Brill, 2008). Consulted online on 04 November 2019. http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1875-3922_dqu_SIM_000415.

12. Bauer, "Emotion in the Qur'an: An Overview," 24.

13. Mahshid Turner, *The Muslim Theology of Ḥuzn: Sorrow Unravelled* (Berlin: Gerlach Press, 2018).

14. A method of semantic analysis first utilized by Toshihiko Izutsu (d. 1993) that approaches the terms and concepts of the Quran as they stand in relation to each other to define the semantic boundaries of these terms through an internal analysis of the text itself. Such analysis aims at mapping out the ethical and ontological worldview of the Quran. See Atif Khalil, *Repentance and the Return to God: Tawba in Early Sufism* (Albany: University of New York Press, 2018), 23 ff.

15. As Lane notes, following the comment of al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (fl. before 409/1018) in his *al-Mufradāt fī gharīb al-Qurʾān*, the imperative *lā taḥzan/lā taḥzanū* does not actually denote a prohibition of becoming sad since sadness does not come by the will of man (*ikthiyār*). It must be interpreted as: "do not acquire (*mā yūrith al-ḥuzn wa-iktisābuhu*) sadness." However, Lane himself notes that this is "not in every case admissible." Edward William Lane and Stanley Lane-Poole, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1968), 562.

16. The bibliography on the subject, although not vast, is surely more extensive. See, for instance, Nādir Nimr Wādī, *al-Faraḥ wa-l-ḥuzn fī ḍawʾ al-Qurʾān al-karīm wa-l-sunna al-nabawiyya* (Damascus: Dār al-Muqtabas, 2018).

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Ḥuzn in Canonical Hadiths

If *ḥuzn* has a role in Prophetic narrations as well, how did the Prophet deal with it?[17] Limiting our analysis to the canonical hadith corpus—i.e., *al-kutub al-sitta*—we may safely conclude that the value of *ḥuzn* as an emotional state does not essentially diverge from the Quranic use: *ḥuzn* is an exquisitely inner emotional state[18] largely associated with death,[19] satanic inspirations,[20] sins, and hellfire—i.e., the place of *ḥuzn ilā ḥuzn*.[21] Moreover, hadith sources indicate that *ḥuzn* is an undesirable emotional state from which the Prophet himself sought refuge.[22] Thus, true believers and friends of God do not grieve.[23] However, a positive connotation of *ḥuzn* timidly emerges from the hadith corpus: nothing is purposeless or unavailing in God's creation, and *ḥuzn* is no exception. Although ontologically negative, it leads to positive outcomes; it strengthens the believer's patience and it provokes God's mercy, "purifying" the believer: "A believer is never stricken with *ḥuzn* unless God will expiate his sins as the leaves of a tree fall."[24]

Ḥuzn in *zuhd* Works from the 2nd/8th and 3rd/9th Centuries

Building on this scriptural understanding, we may now proceed to investigate *ḥuzn* through the vastness of early *zuhd* literature,[25] an essential transition point between the first/seventh century (the milieu of Revelation) and the development

17. As done with the Quranic text, we only consider the mentions of the root *ḥ – z – n* and not any other root denoting grief in the hadith corpus.

18. In the hadith corpus, *ḥuzn* is definitively portrayed as an internal emotion (felt at the level of the heart) although sometimes this internal grief is externalized, being visible on the face (see, for instance, al-Bukhārī 1299). On this internal/external relationship, Juynboll affirms that "for every point of view expressed in the debate traditions could be adduced, from harsh Prophetic commands to contain oneself to the Prophet openly weeping [. . .] In the final analysis, restraining oneself and keeping grief hidden is the preferred conduct." G. H. A Juynboll, *Encyclopedia of Canonical Hadith* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 135.

19. Muḥammad shed tears and his heart was grieved for the loss of his son Ibrāhīm (al-Bukhārī 1303) on the deathbed of his companion Saʿd b. ʿUbāda (al-Bukhārī 1304) and for the deaths of Zayd b. Ḥāritha, Jaʿfar b. Abī Ṭālib and ʿAbd Allāh b. Rawāḥa (Abū Dāwūd 3116–3122); he also grieved after the death of Waraqa b. Nawfal, when the Divine Inspiration weakened (al-Bukhārī 4953). Finally, Muḥammad's saddest appearance occurs after the death of the *qurrāʾ* (al-Bukhārī 1300). The Prophet is not the only one to grieve: some hadiths report Anas b. Mālik's intense grief (*shiddat al-ḥuzn*) over those who had been killed in the Battle of al-Ḥarra (al-Bukhārī 4906); the companions of the Prophet were overwhelmed with grief and distress on his return from al-Ḥudaybiyya (Muslim 1786); and Fāṭima's *ḥuzn* is also mentioned (Ibn Māja 1689). Generally speaking, *ḥuzn* is predominantly present in the chapters on funerals (*K. al-Janāʾiz*) of the hadith corpus, but it can also be traced to sections on food, drink, and medicine: for instance, the gruel known as *talbīna* gives comfort to the aggrieved heart and it lessens grief (al-Bukhārī 5417).

20. Muslim 2263.

21. Al-Tirmidhī 2383.

22. A common narrative on *ḥuzn* is presented *in variatio* on the following hadith directly attributed to the Prophet: "O God! I seek refuge in You from affliction (*hamm*) and grief (*ḥazan*), from incapacity and laziness, from cowardice and miserliness, from being heavily in debt and from being overpowered by (other) men." See, for instance, al-Nasāʾī 5449.

23. Numerous hadiths evoke the Quranic passages that urge one not to grieve (*lā taḥzan/ū*): Muḥammad comforts Abū Bakr, telling him not to grieve, although pagans were pursuing them; and the believer should not dwell in *ḥuzn* if God is with Him (al-Bukhārī 3652). Among the *lā taḥzan/ū* passages, the most quoted is Q 10:62, on the friends of God (*awliyāʾ Allāh*), followed by Muḥammad's explanation that these *awliyāʾ* will be envied by prophets and martyrs on the day of the resurrection and they will not grieve when [other] people will grieve" (Abū Dāwūd 3527). This passage receives much attention in ascetic and Sufi literature, both for its subject (the *awliyāʾ*) and its eschatological value.

24. Al-Bukhārī 5647.

25. Obviously, the hadith corpus previously analyzed partially overlaps with sayings traceable in *zuhd* literature. However, we prefer to present the *zuhd* literature after the hadith corpus, given the preeminent legal and moral authority of the latter. On the concept of *zuhd*, see Leah Kinberg, "What is Meant by *Zuhd*?" *Studia Islamica* 61 (1985): 27–44. On the relationship between "pietism" and "hadith literature," see Stephen R. Burge, "The 'ḥadīṯ literature': What is it and where is it?" *Arabica* 65 (2018): 64–83; Lahcen Daaïf, "Dévots et renonçants: L'autre categorie de forgeurs de Hadiths," *Arabica* 57 (2010): 201–250; Christopher Melchert, "The Piety of the Hadith Folk," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 34 (2002): 425–439.

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of later Sufi doctrines.[26] Our analysis takes into consideration *zuhd* works of the second/eighth century by ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Mubārak (d. 181/797), Muʿāfa b. ʿImrān al-Mawṣilī (d. ca. 185/801 or 204/819) and Wakīʿ b. al-Jarrāḥ (d. 197/812)[27] as well as works from the third/ninth century by Abū Bakr b. Abī Shayba (d. 235/849), Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241/855),[28] and Hannād b. al-Sarī b. Muṣʿab (d. 243/857).[29] What does this *zuhd* literature tell us about *ḥuzn*?[30]

First, *ḥuzn* is differently represented in these works:[31] some authors reserve an entire chapter or section for it, like Ibn Mubārak's *Bāb al-bukāʾ wa-l-ḥuzn* in what is deemed to be the earliest extant *zuhd* work, the *K. al-Zuhd wa-l-raqāʾiq*, or like Wakīʿ's *al-Ḥuzn wa-faḍluhu* in his *K. al-Zuhd*, while other writers treat it less systematically.

Second, *ḥuzn*, as with all other aspects in this literature, should be read in light of the *dunyā/ākhira* dichotomy: sadness of/for this world and sadness of/for the hereafter are incompatible (*lā ajmaʿ*)[32] and inversely proportional.[33] On one hand, this world, with its passions (*shahawāt*) and its inhabitants,[34] is a source of sorrow.[35] Thus, the true believer cannot but be in this world in prolonged grief and reflection[36] (we note here the strict relationship between *tafakkur* and *ḥuzn*).[37] On the other hand, God may reward *ḥuzn* (like Yaʿqūb, whose grief earned him a reward

26. *Zuhhād* and *nussāk* of the second century are widely regarded as forebears of the Ṣūfīs of the later third century. See Christopher Melchert, "Asceticism," in *EI3*, ed. Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, and Everett Rowson. Consulted online on 04 November 2019 http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_0022. In fact, authors of *zuhd* works entrust to us a multitude of sayings on *ḥuzn* which will later become the "building blocks of the later Sufi tradition." See Alexander Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism: A Short History* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 21.

27. ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Mubārak, *al-Zuhd wa-l-raqāʾiq*, ed. Aḥmad Farīd (Riyadh: Dār al-Miʿrāj al-Dawliyya, 1995) Abū Masʿūd Muʿāfa b. ʿImrān al-Mawṣilī, *K. al-Zuhd*, ed. ʿĀmir Ḥasan Ṣabrī (Beirut: Dār al-Bashāʾir al-Islāmiyya, 1991); Wakīʿ b. al-Jarrāḥ, *K. al-Zuhd*, ed. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAbd al-Jabbār al-Faryawāʾī (Medina: Maktabat al-Dār, 1984).

28. Or by Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal's school, as suggested in Christopher Melchert, "Ahmad ibn Hanbal's Book of Renunciation," *Der Islam* 85 (2008): 349–353.

29. Abū Bakr ʿAbd Allāh b. Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 12, *K. al-Zuhd*, ed. Usāma b. Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad Abū Muḥammad (Cairo: al-Fārūq al-Ḥadītha li-l-Tabāʿa wa-l-Nashr, 2007); Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ḥanbal, *K. al-Zuhd*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Salām al-Shāhīn (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1999); Hannād b. al-Sarī al-Kūfī, *K. al-Zuhd,* ed. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAbd al-Jabbār al-Faryawāʾī (Kuwait: Dār al-Khulafāʾ li-l-Kitāb al-Islāmī, 1985).

30. Given the vast bibliography, the treatment of *ḥuzn* in *zuhd* works by itself would require an independent study that could also take into consideration later texts where *ḥuzn* is quoted with different intensity. For instance, *ḥuzn* is barely quoted in *K. al-Zuhd* by al-Ḥusayn b. Saʿīd al-Ahwāzī (d. 301/913); in *Zuhd al-thamāniya min al-tābiʿīn*, attributed to ʿAlqama b. Marthad (d. 120/737–738) following Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī's (d. 327/938) version; and in *al-Fawāʾid wa-l-zuhd wa-l-raqāʾiq wa-l-marāthī* by Jaʿfar al-Khuldī (d. 348/959). On the other hand, it is abundantly quoted in *Kitāb fīhi maʿnā l-zuhd wa-l-maqālāt wa-ṣifat al-zāhidīn* by Ibn al-Aʿrābī (d. 340/951) and in *K. al-Zuhd al-kabīr* by Abū Bakr al-Bayhaqī (d. 458/1066).

31. *Ḥuzn* is not omnipresent in all minor *zuhd* works of the third/ninth century. It is absent, for instance, in Asad b. Mūsā's (d. 212/827) *K. al-Zuhd*, in the *K. al-Zuhd* within the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim (d. 261/875), and in al-Marrūdhī's (also, al-Marwazī; d. 275/888) *al-Waraʿ*, where *ḥuzn* is only reported once, quoting Q 9:40.

32. Muʿāfa n. 135.

33. For instance, Mālik b. Dīnār (d. around 127/744–5 or 130/747–8) affirms: "As much as you grieve for this world, your concern for the hereafter will leave your heart and as much as you grieve for the hereafter, the concern for this world will leave your heart," (Ibn Ḥanbal n. 1864).

34. For instance, Abū al-Dārdāʾ (d. early 30s/650s?) stresses the detachment from people and from one's own *nafs* to avoid sorrow (Ibn Abī Shayba n. 36647); similar sayings can also be traced in Ibn Ḥanbal (Ibn Ḥanbal n. 713–772) and in Ibn al-Sarī (Ibn al-Sarī n. 599).

35. Remembrance of death (*dhikr al-mawt*) (Ibn al-Mubārak n. 260–266) is associated with a positive *ḥuzn* that does not corrupt the heart, while even a short moment of worldly lust might bring long sorrows (Ibn al-Mubārak n. 290 and 850; Ibn al-Sarī n. 499). Prophets, too, developed this idea. For instance, Muḥammad is reported to have said: "Indeed, renunciation in this world relieves the heart and the body. Indeed, desire of/in this world prolongs affliction and sadness," (Ibn Ḥanbal n. 51), while ʿĪsā, depicted as a sorrowing traveler in such *zuhd* works, is reported to have commented on Q 10:62, stating that the friends of God grieve instead of rejoicing from what they gain from this world (Ibn Ḥanbal n. 339).

36. Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī (d. ca. 48/668) affirms that from this world only comes *ḥuzn* and *fitna*. (Ibn al-Jarrāḥ n. 66). Similarly, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728) affirms that the believer does not feel anything but sadness in this world (Ibn al-Mubārak n. 123). Al-Ḥasan himself later states that humble hearts do not grieve because they don't attach importance to this world nor to its people (Ibn al-Mubārak n. 397).

37. See Ibn Mubārak, n. 209. Also Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 161/778) affirms that reflection (*tafakkur*) on this world leads to sorrow and that "sadness is to the extent of one's foresight,"—i.e., on this world (Ibn al-Mubārak n. 128–167).

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equal to that of one hundred martyrs)[38] or, at least, He can relieve it (as in the case of Ibrāhīm, whose sorrow for being the only worshipper on earth was relieved).[39] Moreover, *ḥuzn* has different positive outcomes: it prevents the corruption of the heart (Mālik b. Dīnār affirms: "A heart without sorrow is like a ruined house")[40] and it augments virtuous action ("Affliction and grief augment good deeds while sin and ingratitude augment bad deeds").[41] In another anecdote, abundance of *ḥuzn* is something to hope for.[42] In a saying attributed to Ibn ʿAbbās (d. around 68/686–8), sadness caused by trials is equal in virtue to joy brought on by blessings: the first generates patience while the latter engenders gratitude.[43] Thus, in the *zuhd* literature, *ḥuzn* can be, at the same time, the best devotion to God or the sign of doubt in one's faith, a hellish punishment and an increaser of good deeds. Where does this ambiguity come from? It is caused by the direction of *ḥuzn*—i.e., the ultimate locus of our sadness. Thus, as stated by Ibrāhīm b. Adhām (d. 161/777–8), the same exact emotional state of *ḥuzn* can be counted for us (*lanā*) or against us (*ʿalaynā*), depending on where we want to direct it, on the intentionality towards the focus of the emotion.[44]

Third, in regard to the topic of *ḥuzn*, one cannot ignore the impact of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, who later became the most influential prototype of the grieving ascetic, "honoring spiritual sorrow."[45] He is often described as being of long and constant sorrow (*aṭwal al-ḥuzn*). He famously said, "The believer should wake up and retire for the night overtaken by sorrow,"[46] and "God was never better worshiped than by constant sorrow."[47] Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī's teachings have been constantly reported in the vast majority of *zuhd* works, definitively shaping a more positive perspective on *ḥuzn* as a major characteristic of the true believer and the best act of worship (*afḍal al-ʿibāda*).[48] His overwhelming presence may bias our understanding of the importance of *ḥuzn* for other contemporary *zuhhād*, causing us to overemphasize the role of this concept in Islamic piety.[49] However, we can safely affirm that

38. Ibn Abī Shayba n. 35293.
39. Ibn Abī Shayba n. 36341.
40. "A heart (*qalb*) in which there is no sorrow (*ḥuzn*) is like a ruined house (*bayt kharib*)," (Ibn Abī Shayba n. 36684). Similarly, we read in Ibn Ḥanbal: "A heart without sorrow is like an abandoned house: it will go to ruin," (Ibn Ḥanbal n. 1870).
41. Ibn Ḥanbal n. 932, attributed to Manṣūr b. Zādhān (d. between 127/745 and 129/747).
42. Ibn Ḥanbal n. 1757.
43. Ibn Abī Shayba n. 35798.
44. Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *K. al-Hamm wa-l-ḥuzn*, ed. Majdī Fatḥī al-Sayyid (Dār al-Salām, 1991), n. 31. On this *double-entendre*, see Heck, "Sadness in Classical Islam: Its relation to the Goals of Religion," 6.
45. The sorrowful pietism of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī is well known. However, as Suleiman Ali Mourad states, we must consider with caution his sayings, sermons, and anecdotes, bearing in mind the crucial role that the perceived reputation, image, words, and practices of al-Ḥasan played in the later development of Islamic thought (an observation that applies to most of the early ascetic figures that were later incorporated in a predominant Sufi narrative). See Suleiman Ali Mourad, *Early Islam Between Myth and History: al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī* (d. 110H/728CE) *and the Formation of His Legacy in Classical Islamic Scholarship* (Leiden: Brill, 2006). For a general overview, see Munʿim Sirry, "Pious Muslims in the Making: A Closer Look at Narratives of Ascetic Conversion," *Arabica* 57 (2010): 437–454.
46. Ibn al-Mubārak n. 278 and 989.
47. Ibn al-Mubārak n. 126.
48. Massignon theorized that the spiritual weeping in Baṣra was connected doctrinally to al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī's shaping of the concept of grief. See Louis Massignon, *Essai sur les origines du lexique technique de la mystique musulmane* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1968), 114. In fact, other ascetics of Baṣra are similarly described: the muʿtazilite ʿAmr b. ʿUbayd (d. ca. 144/761), disciple of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, "embodied *ḥuzn*." See Ibn al-Murtaḍā's description in Osman Aydinli, "Ascetic and Devotional Elements in the Muʿtazilite Tradition: The Sufi Muʿtazilites." *The Muslim World* 97, no. 2 (2007): 174–189.
49. Feryal Salem stresses the hadith traditions on smiling and interacting with a cheerful face as a form of charity towards other fellow believers, reporting four sayings that wish to counterbalance an exaggerated sorrowful portray of the early Muslim community. In particular, these sayings would reflect the composure of the Prophet rather than his sadness. Salem, *The Emergence of Early Sufi Piety and Sunnī Scholasticism: ʿAbdallāh b. al-Mubārak and the Formation of Sunnī Identity in the Second*

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sadness is indeed predominant in *zuhd* works and enjoys more attention, value, and virtue than its opposites—i.e., joy and happiness and their possible external manifestations, laughing and smiling. A renowned saying attributed to the Prophet should suffice: "Indeed, God dislikes joyful people; indeed, God dislikes cheerful people; indeed, God detests all overweight people and He dislikes the people who eat opulent food; indeed, God loves all sorrowful hearts."[50]

Lastly, *ḥuzn* in *zuhd* literature calls for empathy, following the idea that the believer's emotion should mirror the emotions of other believers.[51] Such an idea evokes the important role of shared/sympathetic emotions in forming (religious) communities, an idea that will accompany *ḥuzn* throughout Sufi sources.[52]

Before concluding our investigation of *zuhd* literature, we add to this variegated corpus the *K. al-Hamm wa-l-ḥuzn* by the Baghdadi *adīb*, traditionist, and *muṣannif* Ibn Abī al-Dunyā (d. 281/894),[53] who chronologically follows the texts analyzed thus far and to whom we owe the most systematic and important collection of sayings (one hundred seventy-nine) on *hamm* and *ḥuzn* in the first two centuries and a half of Islam. The work aims to cover every Islamic personality related to or reporting on *ḥuzn*, from the prophets (Muḥammad—who himself is described as being in constant sorrow and everlasting reflection[54]—Ādam, Yaʿqūb, Dāwūd, ʿĪsā, and Mūsā) up to Ibn Abī al-Dunyā's contemporaries. Beyond the well-established *ḥuzn–faraḥ/dunyā–ākhira* dichotomy,[55] the positive portrayal of sadness and its virtues is clear and well supported both by teachings and living examples[56] (for instance, pious people enduring the sorrow of all creatures—i.e., *ḥuzn al-khalq*).[57] It is beneficial for the person who prays;[58] it leads to reflection and self-control,[59]

Islamic Century (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 112–121. Indeed, balance, appropriateness and moderation are often quoted as personal traits of Muḥammad. However, in the case of emotion, it is worth noting that the Prophet's attitude to smiling is opposed to overtly laughing, which is mostly considered inappropriate throughout the *zuhd* works analyzed here, and no virtues are indicated for either of the two. Moreover, one who feels empathy with other believers, as we shall see, is not only restricted to joy or cheerfulness, but also contemplates emphatic sadness and communal weeping too (Ibn al-Mubārak n. 662).

50. Muʿāfā n. 186.

51. Al-Ḥasan states that the believer is a mirror (*mirʾāt*) for other believers. Thus he rejoices when another believer rejoices, and he grieves when the other believer grieves (Ibn al-Mubārak n. 662).

52. How did emotional ties shape ascetic and Sufi communities? Does *ḥuzn* create, for instance, a feeling of mutual belonging? Could an inner emotional state such as *ḥuzn* be shared and acquire a "communal value"? Or are communal ties inevitably linked with or proved by external manifestations, as in the case of the *bakkāʾūn*? More research on "Sufi emotions" is needed, as Arin Shawkat Salamah-Qudsi states: "recent scholarship into early Sufism lacks attempts to reveal some of the hidden facets of early Sufis' everyday lives, their emotions, concerns, interpersonal relationships, and conflicts." See Arin Shawkat Salamah-Qudsi, *Sufism and Early Islamic Piety: Personal and Communal Dynamics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

53. Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *K. al-Hamm wa-l-ḥuzn*, ed. Majdī Fatḥī al-Sayyid (Dār al-Salām, 1991). Ibn Abī al-Dunyā is also the author of a *K. al-Zuhd* and *K. al-Iʿtibār wa-aʿqāb al-surūr wa-l-aḥzān*. Many of the sayings reported in these works overlap with the ones in *K. al-Hamm wa-l-ḥuzn*, and the majority of dicta concerning *ḥuzn* elaborates on the *dunyā/akhīra* dichotomy.

54. "The Prophet of God was continuously in sorrow, in everlasting reflection, without rest (*rāḥa*), in long silence, and he would not talk unless needed," (Ibn Abī al-Dunyā n. 1). In the second saying, Muḥammad affirms: "Indeed God loves all sorrowful hearts," (Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, n. 2). Thirdly, ʿĀʾisha reports that the Prophet said: "If the sins of the servant increase, and he does not have a way to expiate them, God gives him the trial of sorrow in order to expiate them," (Ibn Abī al-Dunyā n. 3). It is interesting, here, to note how the concepts of *tafakkur* and *tawba* closely relate to *ḥuzn*, which seems to be a precondition for both actions.

55. Ibn Abī al-Dunyā n. 9, 33, 59, 62, 83, 84, 91, 92, 121, 129, 135, 138, 165.

56. A large number of sayings depict sorrowful people as models of imitation (Ibn Abī al-Dunyā n. 34, 52, 53, 76, 110, 125–128, 139–147). On the importance of ascetics and proto-Sufis' *ethos* as a criterion for recognition, reliability, and influence, see Feryal Salem, *The Emergence of Early Sufi Piety and Sunnī Scholasticism.*

57. On the sorrow of (all) creatures, see Ibn Abī al-Dunyā n. 41, 43, 132. In his work, we encounter all the previous sayings of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and new anecdotes often further exaggerating his sadness (Ibn Abī al-Dunyā n. 21, 22, 35–37, 42, 45, 93, 171, 175).

58. In fact, invocations (*al-duʿāʾ*) of the sad person are answered (Ibn Abī al-Dunyā n. 16).

59. Sorrow is the luminosity (*jalāʾ*) of hearts that facilitates the believer's reflection and it brings cautiousness and self-

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and to proximity with God;[60] and it is propaedeutic both for good deeds (increasing them) and for bad (facilitating forgiveness and regret).[61]

The idea of sadness as an amplifier of good deeds is often expressed by a suggestive metaphor: sorrow as fertilization. An early saying runs: "Prolonged sorrow in this world is fertilization (*talqīḥ*) for good deeds."[62] Similarly, Mālik b. Dīnār states: "For everything there is a seed (*laqāḥ*), and indeed this sorrow is a seed of good deeds."[63]

Finally, *ḥuzn* represents a primary, cathartic drive: it ripens the *nafs*, polishes the heart, and elevates the believer,[64] as in the words of Bishr b. al-Ḥārith (d. 227/841 or 842): "Sadness is a king that only inhabits a purified heart, and it is the first level (*daraja*) of the hereafter."[65] Being so positive, it is no surprise that a servant like Fuḍayl b. ʿIyāḍ (d. 187/803) is reported to have advised others to actively request it.[66]

Ḥuzn: From Proto-Sufism to Classical Manuals

In this last section, we explore proto-Sufi and Sufi literature's treatment of *ḥuzn*. Fatemeh Lajevardi, in her *Encyclopedia Islamica* entry on *bukāʾ*, affirms that "from the very beginning, Sufi authors, or authors with Sufi inclinations, have always paid particular attention in their writings to the subjects of fear (*khawf*), sadness (*ḥuzn*), and weeping (*bukāʾ*)."[67] However, while both *khawf* and *bukāʾ* have entries in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, *ḥuzn* does not, although it appears in various manuals of Sufism and is the subject of numerous *falsafa* treatises.[68] Indeed, from the

control (Ibn Abī al-Dunyā n. 19 and 76).

60. *Ḥuzn* brings the believer closer to God and, thus, one must not lament for sorrow, but for too little sorrow (Ibn Abī al-Dunyā n. 55, 56, 106).

61. Good deeds: Ibn Abī al-Dunyā n. 17, 18, 23; bad deeds: Ibn Abī al-Dunyā n. 28, 30, 81. Ibn Abī al-Dunyā also approaches *ḥuzn* "medically": Ibn Abī al-Dunyā n. 68–71, 97–101. He also reports sayings on the well-established relationship between *ḥuzn* and the recitation of the Quran: Ibn Abī al-Dunyā n. 87, 137, 151–154.

62. Ibn Abī al-Dunyā n. 167. In later works, this saying is often attributed to al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī.

63. Ibn Abī al-Dunyā n. 33.

64. See also: "Nothing polishes hearts as much as sadness (*ḥuzn*), nothing enflames them more than the *dhikr*" (Ibn Abī al-Dunyā n. 50). Similarly, God reveals to Mūsā that *hamm* and *ghamm* clean the heart (Ibn Abī al-Dunyā n. 131). Dreams (*manām*) play an important role in establishing such virtue (Ibn Abī al-Dunyā n. 38, 40). Eventually, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Awzāʿī (d. 157/774) affirms that sorrowful people reach the second highest degree (of closeness to God? Of devotion?), right behind the first, which pertains to the *ʿulamāʾ* (Ibn Abī al-Dunyā n. 161).

65. Ibn Abī al-Dunyā n. 162

66. Ibn Abī al-Dunyā n. 159. The day Fuḍayl b. ʿIyāḍ died, it was said: "Today sorrow left the Earth," (Ibn Abī al-Dunyā n. 149). Importantly, *ḥuzn* cannot be separated from other emotional states or attitudes (*tawba, tafakkur, bukāʾ*) nor from other believers' emotional states in a sort of common emotional tie. Although *ḥuzn* and *bukāʾ* are obviously intertwined and often quoted together, it is important to emphasize that this relationship is not unavoidable. *Bukāʾ* is certainly the most common externalization of *ḥuzn* (Ibn Abī al-Dunyā n. 78). However, as an external phenomenon, it is not easily interpreted and can acquire different meanings and values. Al-Ḥasan differentiates between weeping of the eyes and weeping of the heart, preferring the latter (Ibn Abī al-Dunyā n. 123). Weeping out of sadness is sweet, while weeping out of fear is bitter (Ibn Abī al-Dunyā n. 74). Weeping is said to bring solace and to dissipate *ḥuzn* (Ibn Abī al-Dunyā n. 73, 77), although concealing sadness in one's heart is more important (Ibn Abī al-Dunyā n. 65, 66). Interestingly, we might suggest that sadness, especially when externalized, seems to hold a "community character." Sufyān b. ʿUyayna (d. 107/725) states: "If a person in this *umma* who is overcome with sadness weeps, God Almighty will pardon the entire *umma* because of his tears." (Ibn Abī al-Dunyā n. 76).

67. Fatemeh Lajevardi and Mukhtar H. Ali, "Bukāʾ," in *Encyclopaedia Islamica*, ed. Wilferd Madelung and Farhad Daftary. Consulted online on 04 November 2019 http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1875-9831_isla_SIM_05000019.

68. As we shall analyze the finely "psychological" approach of proto-Sufis and Sufis, we at least mention that, especially from the third/ninth century, the topic of *ḥuzn* also received a remarkable amount of attention in the field of *falsafa*. Above all, al-Kindī's (d. ca. 256/873) *Risāla fī-l-ḥīla li-daf*ʿ *al-aḥzān,* the earliest Arabic text in the *consolatio* genre, deeply influenced later authors in its treatment of *ḥuzn*, such as Abū Zayd al-Balkhī (d. 322/934), Abū Bakr al-Rāzī (d. 313/925 or 323/935), and Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037).

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teachings on sadness of the proto-Sufi Rābiʿa al-ʿAdawiyya (ca d. 185/801) in the second/eighth century until Saʿīd Nūrsī's (d. 1379/1960) "theology of *ḥuzn*" in the thirteenth/twentieth century, *ḥuzn* permeates Sufi teachings.[69]

A short time before Ibn Abī al-Dunyā wrote his work on *ḥuzn*, another master and precursor of the Classical Sufis[70] was exploring the richness of the human soul, carrying reflections on *ḥuzn* from a *zuhd*-centered to a more Sufi-centered perspective. We are referring to Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī (d. 243/857), who noticeably was influenced by al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī's teachings. In two of his works, in particular,[71] *Ādāb al-nufūs* and *K. al-Qaṣd wa-l-rujūʿ ilā Allāh*, he frequently provides advice on how to obtain sadness, and he delineates its defining features and spiritual benefits (especially in overcoming passion).[72] As Picken observes, "maintaining and inculcating grief into the nafs is a major goal in al-Muḥāsibī's system of purifying the soul from the negative quality of its appetites."[73] For al-Muḥāsibī, the quality is an intrinsically valuable and necessary element for the full flourishing and refinement of the soul. His insights into how to educate the *nafs* not only help underscore the positive instrumental value of sadness, but also they are echoed in later Sufi texts.[74]

Ḥuzn in "Classical" Sufi Manuals

We conclude our investigation of *ḥuzn* by focusing on teachings extrapolated from fourth/tenth- and fifth/eleventh-century self-conscious normative Sufi literature.[75] Although many of the sayings and anecdotes overlap, each of these works lay a new "sediment of meaning" over *ḥuzn*. *Ḥuzn* is practically absent in the two seminal works of Sufism: *K. al-Lumaʿ* by al-Sarrāj al-Ṭūsī (d. 378/988) and *K. al-Taʿarruf* by al-Kalabādhī (d. 380/990 or 384/994).[76] Nevertheless, in the same period,

69. Here are a few extemporary examples: Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Junayd al-Khuttalī (d. 260/873 or 270/883) affirms that the pleasure of this worldly life consists in the *dhikr* and in the enjoyment of sadness (*taladhdhudh bi-l-ḥuzn*). See Bernd Radtke, *Materialien zur alten islamischen Frömmigkeit* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 69. In his *Tafsīr*, commenting on Q 55:19, Sahl al-Tustarī (d. 283/896) compares the human heart and soul to the sea, containing various gems among which we find *ḥuzn* (together with other important Sufi terms such as *īmān, maʿrifa, tawḥīd, riḍā, maḥabba, shawq,* etc.). See Sahl b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Tustarī, *Tafsīr al-Tustarī*, ed. and trans. Annabel Keeler and Ali Keeler (Louisville: Fons Vitae, 2011), 216. For the teachings of Rābiʿa, see Rkia Elaroui Cornell, *Rābiʿa From Narrative to Myth: the Many Faces of Islam's Most Famous Woman Saint, Rābiʿa al-ʿAdawiyya* (London: Oneworld, 2019); for Nūrsī, see Turner, *The Muslim Theology of* Ḥuzn: *Sorrow Unravelled,* 139 ff.

70. As Alexander Knysh states, he can safely be considered one of the major exponents of the mystical and ascetic tradition that flourished in Baghdad in the second part of the third/ninth to the early fourth/tenth centuries, although he never described himself as a Sufi. See Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism: A Short History*, 47–48.

71. *Ḥuzn* can also be traced in other works. See Gavin N. Picken, *Spiritual Purification in Islam: The Life and Works of al-Muḥāsibī* (London: Routledge, 2014), 131.

72. Al-Ḥārith b. Asad al-Muḥāsibī, *Ādāb al-nufūs*, ed. Majdī Fatḥī al-Sayyid (Cairo: Dār al-Salām, 1991), 126–127; al-Ḥārith b. Asad, al-Muḥāsibī, *al-Waṣāyā – al-Qaṣd wa-l-rujūʿ ilā Allāh – Badʾ man anāba ilā Allāh – Fahm al-ṣalāt – al-Tawahhum*, ed. ʿAbd al-Qādir Aḥmad ʿAṭā (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1986), 302-304. Constant sorrow is propaedeutic; it educates and purifies the soul, and contrasts with Iblīs, who seeks the destruction of the believer's heart. See al-Muḥāsibī, *Ādāb al-nufūs*, 49–51. *Ḥuzn* is nearly always coupled with *ḥamm*, and they both are associated with repentance (*tawba*), regret (*nadāma*), vigilance (*tayaqquẓ*), and hunger (*jūʿ*), and it is said that it kills desires (*raghba*) and passions (*shahawāt*). Al-Muḥāsibī often referred to hunger as a similar purifier, a juxtaposition that can be later found in Abū Qāsim al-Qushayrī's (d. 465/1072) *Risāla*, where the chapter on sadness is immediately followed by the chapter on hunger.

73. Picken, *Spiritual Purification in Islam: The Life and Works of al-Muḥāsibī,* 179.

74. Al-Muḥāsibī sometimes refers to *ḥuzn* as a *maqām*. However, the division between *aḥwāl* and *maqāmāt* is practically absent in al-Muḥāsibī's works. Later Sufi authors defined *ḥuzn* as a *maqām* (like al-Hujwīrī, d. between 465/1072 and 469/1077) or as a *ḥāl* (like al-Qushayrī).

75. Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *Sufism the Formative Period* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 83 ff.

76. In *K. al-Lumaʿ*, *ḥuzn* appears in a description of the Prophet's traits (*akhlāq*), as we have already encountered in Ibn Abī al-Dunyā. See Abū Naṣr Abū al-Sarrāj, *Kitāb al-lumaʿ fi'l-taṣawwuf*, ed. Reynold Alleyne Nicholson (London: Luzac, 1914), 100.

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we find an extensive examination of *ḥuzn* in Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī's (d. ca. 386/996) *Qūt al-qulūb*.[77] A possible reason for such a broad treatment is al-Makkī's intention to show that Sufism started in Baṣra, the home of al-Ḥasan's teachings on sorrow that later influenced al-Makkī himself.[78]

Beyond the 'classical' *zuhd* association[79] and the exaggerated sadness of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī,[80] al-Makkī noticeably recalls the necessity of sorrow for true repentance (*tawba*) and its positive value when remembering someone's sins.[81] On the other hand, *ḥuzn* has a negative connotation if the believer is actually grieving for temporary miseries or for what has passed, it being a sign of little faith and a "veil of discontentment."[82] Interestingly, in two of the many maxims attributed to the Prophet, there is a clear stress on how to avoid sorrow, especially through faith.[83] Thus, it is evident that the connotation of *ḥuzn* in the whole compendium ultimately depends on its function for the believer: it can be actively requested by the servant in prayer and given by God,[84] representing a station (*maqām*) or an effect of other stations,[85] or on the contrary, it can be considered a sign of disobedience and, even more, a crime for the gnostic (*ʿārif*).[86]

Progressing into the fifth/eleventh century, both Abu ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī's (d. 412/1021) *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya*[87] and Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣfahānī's (d. 430/1038) *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ wa-ṭabaqāt al-aṣfiyāʾ*[88] not only sum up all the facets of *ḥuzn* that we have previously encountered, but also standardize and canonize them, defining Sufi archetypes. In both works, we trace the double value of *ḥuzn* (*laka* and *ʿalayka*)[89] and we further note the predominant juxtaposition of *ḥuzn* with *khawf*,

Similarly, *ḥuzn* is barely quoted in the *K. al-Taʿarruf*: the only significant appearance can be traced in al-Nūrī's (d. 295/907) description of ecstasy (*wajd*) as a flame that agitates (*taḍṭarib*) the body with delight (*ṭarab*) or sadness (*ḥuzn*). Abū Bakr al-Kalābādhī, *K. al-Taʿarruf li-madhhab ahl al-taṣawwuf*, ed. Arthur John Arberry (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1994), 82. The absence of any relevant discussion of *ḥuzn* in the *K. al-Lumaʿ* and in the *K. al-Taʿarruf* may also simply rest on the relative brevity of these texts in relation to the *Qūt al-qulūb*, the latter of which is much closer to an all-embracing encyclopedia of Islamic spirituality.

77. Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb fī muʿāmalat al-maḥbūb wa-waṣf ṭarīq al-murīd ilā maqām al-tawḥīd*, ed. ʿĀṣim Ibrāhīm al-Kayyālī. 2 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 2005).

78. Suleiman Ali Mourad, *Early Islam Between Myth and History: al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī*, 98.

79. Al-Makkī 1:70, 1:316, 2:278.

80. See, for instance, the evolution of his sadness in al-Makkī 1:381.

81. Al-Makkī 1:325; 1:362; 2:43; 2:264. *Ḥuzn* (and especially perpetual sadness – *dawām al-ḥuzn* or *al-ḥuzn al-dāʾim*) is related to *nadam* (al-Makkī 1:303) for passions and sins (al-Makkī 1:306), and to *tawba* (al-Makkī 1:307 ff), and it is associated with *khawf* and *khushūʿ* (al-Makkī 1:401), *ḥasra*, *ghamm* and *bukāʾ* (al-Makkī 1:392), and *tafakkur* and *ishfāq* (al-Makkī 1:395).

82. Al-Makkī 1:365.

83. Al-Makkī 1:21, 1:198, 1:261, 2:66.

84. Al-Makkī 1:24, 1:25, 1:314.

85. Al-Makkī 2:101, 2:104.

86. Al-Makkī 1:312, 2:54.

87. Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥman al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya*, ed. Muṣṭafā ʿAbd al-Qādir ʿAṭā (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1998).

88. Abū Nuʿaym, al-Iṣbahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ wa-ṭabaqāt al-aṣfiyāʾ*, 10 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1985).

89. Ḥātim al-Aṣamm (d. 237/851–2) elaborates on the previously reported teaching of Ibrāhīm b. Adham on the double value of *ḥuzn* (Abū Nuʿaym 8:77, 10:49, 10:159). Evidently, as in al-Makkī, the same emotion acquires positive or negative connotations depending on its subject. For instance, in Abū Nuʿaym, sorrow over sins (Abū Nuʿaym 1:324, 8:82) is extremely encouraged (Abū Nuʿaym 5:62) and actively sought (Abū Nuʿaym 10:44) since it avoids corruption of the heart (Abū Nuʿaym 5:76) and brings proximity to God (Abū Nuʿaym 8:101) and repentance and refuge in God (Abū Nuʿaym 6:176). It is a characteristic of the obedient servant (Abū Nuʿaym 6:94, 10:160) even the most devoted (Abū Nuʿaym 8:194). It is felt by those who miss God (Abū Nuʿaym 10:95–97). It adds to the servant's good deeds (Abū Nuʿaym 3:59), and there is consolation (Abū Nuʿaym 6:51) and recompense (Abū Nuʿaym 4:47, 6:39, 6:56) to such positive sorrow. Therefore, it is better to be sorrowful (Abū Nuʿaym 8:350), and Sufis grieve for not grieving enough (Abū Nuʿaym 7:286). In sum, this sorrow must be embraced, it being the trade (*ṣināʿa*) of the Sufi (Abū Nuʿaym 1:23). On the other hand, there is a negative, more "ascetic-oriented" *ḥuzn* similar to the Quranic "do not grieve": the believer should not grieve for worldly affairs (Abū Nuʿaym 2:325, 2:337, 3:129, 3:182, 3:232, 4:69, 3:239, 8:63, 9:266); for disgraces (Abū Nuʿaym 3:244); for his poverty (Abū Nuʿaym 4:257, 5:364–365, 8:68); for worldly things he loves (Abū Nuʿaym 3:244, 4:61, 5:292), desires (Abū Nuʿaym 6:288) or needs (Abū Nuʿaym 3:134, 7:370); for things that pass or that will come (Abū Nuʿaym 2:14). The *zāhid* is indeed above these feelings (Abū Nuʿaym 8:34, 8:204)

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accordingly to an emotional plot traceable to the Quranic text: *ḥuzn* is said to be the sign of fear; a loss in sadness brings a loss in fear. Sarī al-Saqaṭī (d. c. 251/865), describing ten stations (*maqāmāt*) of the fearful believer, indicates *al-ḥuzn al-lāzim* as the first one.[90]

This last saying brings us to a second observation: in these works, *ḥuzn* timidly tries to find its place in Sufi wayfaring (*sulūk*). For example, Bunān al-Ḥammāl (d. 316/928) states that *ḥuzn* and *ḥubb* pertain to the *maqām* in the second of the seven heavens. Other Sufi sayings stress the interplay of *ḥuzn* with other states or stations, such as *qabḍ*, *shukr*, *shawq*, and *jūʿ*, which will later find a more stable standardization.[91]

For his part, Abū Nuʿaym definitively canonizes another aspect of *ḥuzn* that will later prove influential: its relationship with *bukāʾ*. Its evidently hagiographic tone, its hyperbolic praises, and its focus on manifest, external pietism result in an institutionalization of the sorrowful ascetic-Sufi,[92] often overlapping with the profile of the *bakkāʾūn*.[93]

We finally turn to *al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya fī ʿilm al-taṣawwuf*[94] by al-Qushayrī, among the most popular of Sufi manuals.[95] The powerful novelty of al-Qushayrī's treatment of *ḥuzn* lies both in content[96] and in form: content-wise, *ḥuzn* is described and canonized as a *ḥāl* and one of the necessary attributes of the Sufi wayfarer, "speeding" him towards God;[97] form-wise, al-Qushayrī's treatment of *ḥuzn* is

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and detached even from people (Abū Nuʿaym 6:345). To this world pertain long sorrows (Abū Nuʿaym 5:164, 6:172, 6:198, 6:267, 8:361), similar to Hell (Abū Nuʿaym 4:65, 4:215, 8:184). In sum, as Shaqīq al-Balkhī states, the *zāhid* should rejoice at being deprived of everything (Abū Nuʿaym 8:60). Sadness for such deprivation is something that God never taught them (Abū Nuʿaym 5:4).

90. Al-Sulamī n. 40 and 158; Abū Nuʿaym 8:207, 9:289 and 10:118.

91. On Bunān al-Ḥammāl, see al-Sulamī n. 255. On *shawq*, Dhū al-Nūn al-Miṣrī (d. 245/859 or 248/862) affirms that constant sorrow is one of the signs of burning desire for the Beloved (Abū Nuʿaym 9:342); on *shukr*, Abū Nuʿaym 6:158; and on *jūʿ*, Abū Nuʿaym 10:67 and al-Sulamī n. 372. In this emotional plot, the elements that strengthen *khawf* and *ḥuzn* are *tafakkur* and *tadhakkur* (al-Sulamī n. 61, 123 and 336). For the sake of completeness, the voice of al-Shiblī on *ḥuzn* seems to be a discordant one, giving priority to joy rather than sorrow (al-Sulamī n. 261).

92. Abū Nuʿaym definitively institutionalizes the sorrowful ascetic/Sufi. See, for instance, the description of ʿUtba al-Ghulām's (d. 167/783) sorrow, which is said to be "like the one of al-Ḥasan" (Abū Nuʿaym 6:226). The hagiographical purpose brings many admirative descriptions for (exaggeratedly) grievous people (Abū Nuʿaym 1:85, 1:142, 2:131, 4:372, 6:165, 6:169, 6:236, 6:269, 7:84, 8:87, 10:118).

93. On the *Bakkāʾūn*, see Abū Nuʿaym 1:102, 2:13, 2:13, 7:359, and 10:159. On *ḥuzn* and *bukāʾ*, see Abū Nuʿaym 2:375, 5:235, 5:113, 5:200, 6:167, 6:299, 6:302, 7:14, 9:327, and 10:295.

94. Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī, *al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya*, ed. ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd and Maḥmūd b. al-Sharīf. 2 vols. (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Ḥadītha, 1966).

95. Two other important early Sufi manuals of approximately the same period of al-Qushayrī basically show the same treatment of *ḥuzn* of al-Sulamī and al-Qushayrī with few prior sayings and anecdotes. See Abū al-Ḥasan al-Sīrjānī, *Sufism, Black and White a Critical Edition of Kitāb al-Bayāḍ wa-l-Sawād of Abū al-Ḥasan al-Sīrjānī* (d. ca. 470/1077), ed. Bilal Orfali and Nada Saab (Leiden: Brill, 2012), and Abū-Khalaf al-Ṭabarī, *The Comfort of the Mystics: a Manual and Anthology of Early Sufism*, ed. Gerhard Böwering and Bilal Orfali (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

96. Al-Qushayrī, in his *Bāb al-ḥuzn*, in addition to earlier sayings, quotes new *dicta*: Fuḍayl b. ʿIyāḍ reports that pious ancestors (*salaf*) said that constant sadness is the almsgiving (*zakāt*) of the intellect (*ʿaql*), a saying traceable in *Shuʿab al-Īmān* by al-Bayhaqī (d. 458/1066); Ibn Khafīf (d. 371/982) affirms that sadness prevents the *nafs* from increasing (*nuhūḍ*) vain pleasure (*ṭarab*); Abū ʿUthmān al-Ḥīrī (d. 298/910) reports that the sorrowful person has no time for asking about sadness; therefore, he suggests: "seek sadness, then ask questions," (al-Qushayrī 1:267 ff). Sadness is mentioned not just in this chapter, but also elsewhere: Ibn Khubayq (d. 200/815–16) states that one of the characteristics of the best kind of fear is the one that fills you with sorrow over your omissions (al-Qushayrī 1:72); al-Tustarī underlines the importance of not showing off grief (al-Qushayrī 2:433); Abū Bakr al-Kattānī (d. 322/934) recalls that *taqwā* inhabits the heart of every sorrowful person (al-Qushayrī 2:569); and, on his side, Abū Turāb al-Nakhshabī (d. 245/859) indicates the light of contentment and enjoinment of the coolness of compliance (*muwāfaqa*) as two conditions that dispel sorrow (al-Qushayrī 2:420).

97. Sorrow is also described as a mystical moment (*waqt*) and a mystical occurrence (*wārid*). More importantly, al-Qushayrī identifies *ḥuzn* as a state (*ḥāl*) while in al-Hujwīrī's *Kashf al-maḥjūb*, *ḥuzn* is a station (*maqām*) and specifically the station of Dāwūd. See ʿAlī b. ʿUthmān al-Jullābī al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-maḥjūb*, ed. and trans. Reynold Alleyne Nicholson (Leiden: Brill, 1911), 371. In this latter work, the treatment of *ḥuzn* is less systematic and evidently less extensive than in the *Risāla.*

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authoritative and systematic, and it will be highly impactful: he shows how Sufi perspectives on *ḥuzn* are well-grounded in the Quran and the Sunna, and he claims and stresses the unanimous consensus of Sufis around *ḥuzn*'s virtues, functions and features.[98] Thus, al-Qushayrī's *Risāla* has proven to be a turning point for many Sufi concepts, and sadness is no exception: *ḥuzn* has acquired an official role in the whole Sufi experience.[99]

Sediments of Sadness

To conclude our investigation, we move back to the etymological richness of *ḥuzn*—i.e., considering *ḥuzn* as rugged ground (*arḍ ḥazna* or *arḍ ḥazniyya*) composed of sediments of meaning. In describing this emotion, we have followed a chronological line—i.e., from the Quranic text until the second half of the fifth/eleventh century.[100] Textual evidence brings us to the conclusion that all the works analyzed here have attempted to "make sense" of *ḥuzn*, going beyond the Quranic major *consolatio* theme. Surely, the believer should not grieve, because God relieves grief. However, sadness is a basic and necessary component of life. It has played a role in the lives of Yaʿqūb, Umm Mūsā, Maryam, and even in Muḥammad's and other prophets' lives. Thus, every author has added layer over layer of meaning, adding *sensus* (in its etymologically *double entendre*, both "meaning" and "direction") to *ḥuzn*. First, they directed *ḥuzn* towards the "hereafter event," thus giving it the right *direction*, which in turn gives *meaning* to every worldly affair; second, they focused on the positive outcomes of *ḥuzn*—on its functions, its "virtuosity." Sediment after sediment, *ḥuzn ʿalā ḥuzn*, the believers' perceptions of *ḥuzn* have slowly changed and have been "sensified" to the point that a detestable event could be considered as a Divine gift (the mystical state—*ḥāl*)—i.e., a virtuous emotion.[101]

See, on the divergences: Abdul Muhaya, *Maqāmāt* (stations) and *Aḥwāl* (states) According to al-Qushayrī and al-Hujwīrī: A Comparative Study (PhD diss., McGill University, 1994).

98. "People have *lengthily* discussed *ḥuzn*. All of them say [. . .] Indeed, *ḥuzn* for/of the hereafter is praiseworthy, while *ḥuzn* for/of this world is not praiseworthy," (my italics). Once again, the object of *ḥuzn* determines its positive or negative value as evident in two different sayings of Abū ʿUthmān al-Ḥīrī: the latter considered sadness, in all its aspects, a virtue (*faḍīla*) and a surplus (*ziyāda*) for the believer, rectifying (*tamḥīṣ*) him. However, he also states that sadness is a virtue as long as it is not caused by sins (al-Qushayrī 1:267 ff).

99. Heck engages with both Ibn Abī al-Dunyā and al-Qushayrī. The latter treatment of *ḥuzn* leads him to conclude that sorrow is not a mere religious duty, but has a spiritual depth to it, a mark of a spiritual elevated state of the soul. See Heck, "Sadness in Classical Islam: Its relation to the Goals of Religion," 7–10.

100. Surely, Sufis have integrated *zuhd* materials into their teachings and, in turn, *zuhd* literature has drawn nearly all its vocabulary from the Revelation. However, conceptual history does not lie only on a diachronic evolution; rather, we also have to consider Reinhart Koselleck's "layers of time,"—i.e., the unfolding of history along several different but coexisting sediments of time which hold diverse features in terms of duration, speed, and intensity, where the singular (unique) and the recursive event are related. See Reinhart Koselleck, *Sediments of Time on Possible Histories,* ed. and trans. Sean Franzel and Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann (Stanford: California Stanford University Press, 2018). *Ḥuzn*—this rugged ground that causes sorrows—is hence composed of the interplay of these sediments of time. Moreover, a map of the works analyzed might also help us understand why certain authors have placed stress on particular "emotional plots."

101. "An emotion able to tap into moral value, or even the driving and sustaining force of the moral virtues." See Kristján Kristjánsson, *Virtuous Emotions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 31.

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Similar to al-Muḥāsibī's teachings that urge one to instill grief in one's *nafs* in order to educate it to virtues, *ādāb al-nufūs* can be seen, especially in its early stages,[102] as a process of sensitization to proper emotions, thus overlapping emotional and ethical development.[103] In this perspective, *ḥuzn* is both the hard ground that needs to be cultivated (worldly *ḥuzn*) and the seed, the fertilization (*talqīḥ*) through which this cultivation will be possible (hereafter *ḥuzn*). Thus, sadness is healed by more meaningful, "fruitful" sadness—i.e., sadness with/in the right *sensus*:

> Sufyān al-Thawrī once lamented: "O sadness!" Rābiʿa answered: "Do not lie. Say, instead: how little sadness! [. . .] I am not sad because of my sadness, but because of how little sadness (*qillat al-ḥuzn*) I feel."

It is remarkable that this Sufi tendency to "sensify" *ḥuzn* somehow overlaps with contemporary psychology scholarship. In his 2018 article on "the quiet virtues of sadness,"[104] Lomas identifies three major virtues of sadness, characterized by instrumental and intrinsic usefulness. First, instrumental sadness, as a protection from prompting disengagement, echoes detaching oneself from unattainable goals as the purely ascetic/philosophical approach to *ḥuzn*; second, in its intrinsic value, sadness can be an expression of care, such as a manifestation of longing, which recalls Dhū al-Nūn's concept of *shawq ḥazīn*, or compassion, and eliciting care (as in the sayings stressing the emotional bonds between believers—the "mirror" of the other believer); third, sadness is intrinsic to flourishing—i.e., as a moral sensibility or an engendering psychological development—through shifting one's locus of concern outwards to other people, which clearly recalls al-Muḥāsibī's approach and the idea of sorrow as the seed of good deeds (for God and for others).

To conclude, as this brief comparison has shown, ascetics and later Sufi writers recognized sadness as a necessary component of a sincere devotional life, moulding a rough ground into a fruit-bearing soil to the point of exclaiming, in the words of Mālik b. Dīnār: "Indeed, sadness has ripened me!"

102. We stress the virtuosity of *ḥuzn* in the early stages of wayfaring. In fact, *ḥuzn*, as a virtuous emotion closely associated with fear as well as remorse over past sins, could also become a vice in relation to the soul's effacement in God (i.e., in later stages) since it reflects an excessive preoccupation with the self, as in the saying of al-Kharrāz (d. 286/899) on the necessity of abandoning weeping upon arrival (See Khalil, *Repentance and the Return*, 100).

103. Kristján Kristjánsson, *Virtuous Emotions*, 26.

104. Tim Lomas, "The Quiet Virtues of Sadness: A Selective Theoretical and Interpretative Appreciation of its Potential Contribution to Wellbeing," *New Ideas in Psychology* 49 (2018): 18–26.

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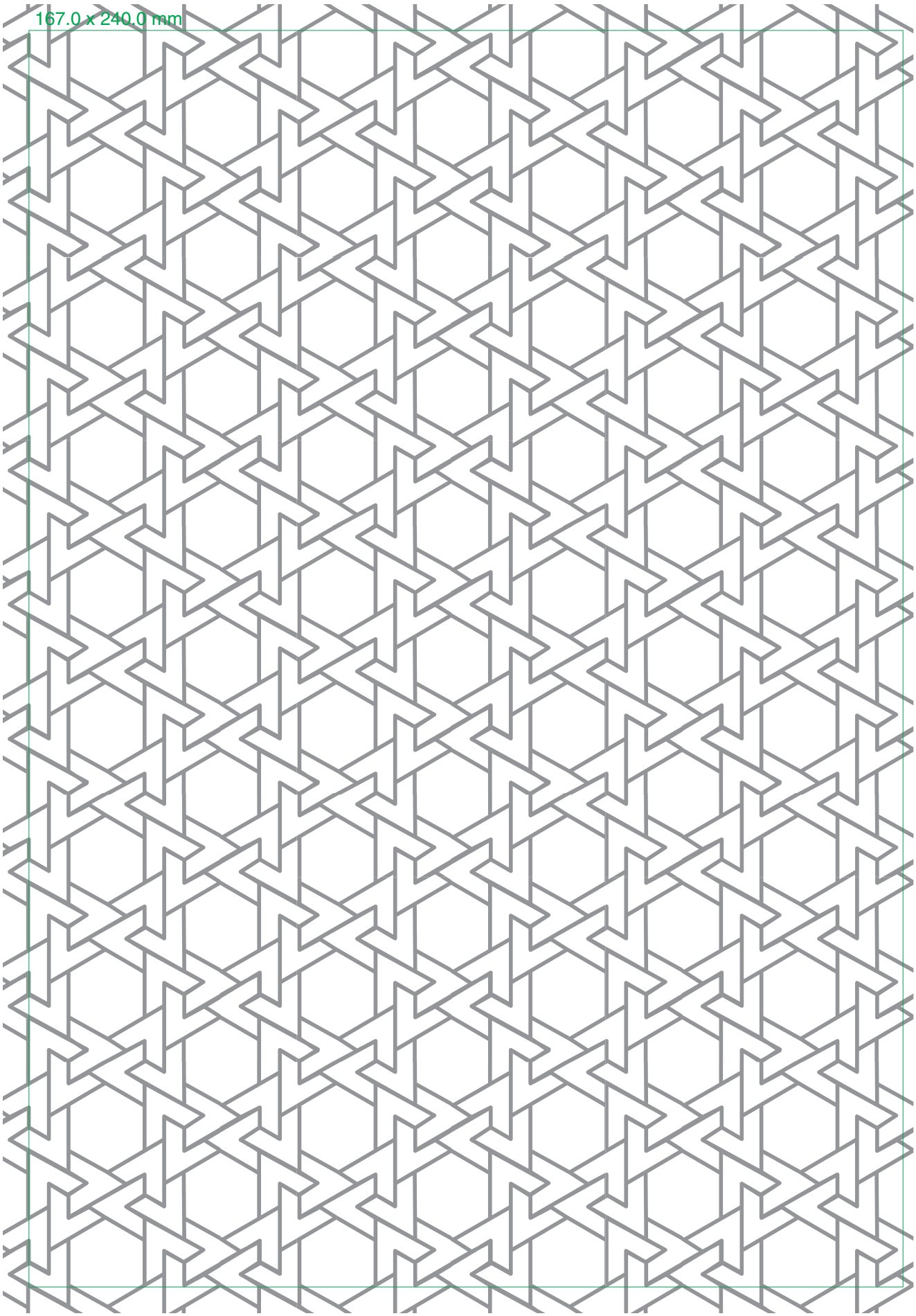
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THE TREASURERS OF GOD: ABŪ SAʿĪD AL-KHARRĀZ AND THE ETHICS OF WEALTH IN EARLY SUFISM

John Zaleski

Introduction

In the *Book on Truthfulness* (*Kitāb al-Ṣidq*), the Sufi author Abū Saʿīd al-Kharrāz (d. ca. 286/899) intervened in an early Islamic conversation concerning the ethics of wealth.[1] The fundamental issues of this conversation had emerged by the close of the second century. On the extreme end, some renunciants seem to have held that any effort at all to pursue economic gain *(kasb)* undermined the ideal of *tawakkul*, or trusting that God will provide for one's needs. According to al-Muḥāsibī (d. 243/857), the Khurāsānī *shaykh* Shaqīq al-Balkhī (d. 194/810) even asserted that "pursuit of gain is an act of disobedience [to God]."[2] Such a view, however, was a minority position, and most early Muslims, including those of an ascetic and mystical bent, accepted the legitimacy of labor and trade as means of securing a livelihood.[3]

1. The text, al-Kharrāz's longest extant work, survives in only one manuscript (Istanbul Süleymaniye MS Sehit Ali Paşa 1374), copied by Ismāʿīl ibn Sawdakīn (d. 646/1248), an important student and commentator of Ibn ʿArabī (d. 638/1240). The work was first edited and translated into English by Arthur Arberry: *The Book of Truthfulness* (*Kitāb al-Ṣidq*), ed. and trans. Arthur Arberry (London: Humphrey Milford; Oxford University Press, 1937). Citations of the *Kitāb al-Ṣidq* in this essay are to the Arabic page numbers of Arberry's edition. All translations, except for Qurʾanic passages, are my own.

2. Al-Muḥāsibī, *al-Masāʾil fī aʿmāl al-qulūb wa-l-jawāriḥ; wa-l-Makāsib; wa-l-ʿAql*, ed. ʿAbd al-Qādir Aḥmad ʿAṭā (Cairo: ʿĀlam al-Kutub, 1969), 194. Cf. John J. Wainwright, *Treading the Path of Salvation: The Religious Devotion of Shaqīq al-Balkhī, al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī, and Abū Saʿīd al-Kharrāz* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oxford, 2015), 35–39.

3. The classic treatment of debates concerning *tawakkul* and *kasb* is Benedikt Reinert, *Die Lehre vom* tawakkul *in der klassischen Sufik* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1968).

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Yet a more difficult question remained — to what extent was it legitimate to earn or retain wealth beyond that needed for daily sustenance? One of the earliest discussions of this topic is preserved in the *Book on Gain (Kitāb al-Kasb)*, a composite text, the first layer of which was produced by the Iraqi jurist Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī (d. 189/805).[4] As Michael Bonner has shown, although al-Shaybānī defended the legitimacy of economic gain (*kasb*), he also condemned extravagance and suggested that people should avoid superfluous goods (*faḍl, fuḍūl*).[5] Moreover, according to al-Shaybānī, the poor have a "right" (*ḥaqq*) to the superfluous goods of the wealthy, who thus have an obligation to distribute their surplus to the poor.[6]

In making these arguments, al-Shaybānī appealed to the example of the prophets and the early caliphs. The fact that they practiced trades and earned a living justifies the *kasb* of contemporary believers.[7] Yet several of the prophets and early Muslims were known not simply for earning a basic livelihood, but even for acquiring significant wealth. While al-Shaybānī appealed to the authority of these figures in order to defend the legitimacy of *kasb*, their very financial success could become a liability for those, like al-Shaybānī, who criticized the pursuit of superfluous goods. If the prophets and early Muslims retained wealth beyond that needed to sustain themselves, should not contemporary believers, who seek to follow their example, also seek to imitate their acquisition and retention of wealth?

This was precisely the dilemma confronted by al-Kharrāz in the *Kitāb al-Ṣidq*. In this text, composed as a dialogue between a student and a teacher, al-Kharrāz instructed Sufi novices (*murīdūn*) on how to attain "truthfulness" (*ṣidq*) in several stations (*maqāmāt*) of the Sufi path, such as sincerity, patience, and repentance.[8] In the seventh chapter, "Truthfulness concerning the permissible (*ḥalāl*) and the pure (*ṣāfī*)," the teacher in al-Kharrāz's dialogue advises the student on the proper treatment of legally permissible goods. The teacher affirms that Sufis should take whatever licit things are necessary to sustain themselves; like al-Shaybānī, however, the teacher warns against extravagance (*saraf*) and the pursuit of superfluous goods (*fuḍūl*), the retention of which reveals a lack of trust in God.[9] Yet here the student raises an objection:

4. On the composition and authorship of the text, see Michael Bonner, "The Kitāb al-Kasb Attributed to al-Shaybānī: Poverty, Surplus, and the Circulation of Wealth," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 121, no. 3 (2001): 410–27.
5. Bonner, "*Kitāb al-Kasb*," 417, 419.
6. Bonner, "*Kitāb al-Kasb*," 416–19, 423.
7. Bonner, "*Kitāb al-Kasb*," 415.
8. Al-Kharrāz, *Ṣidq*, 60. See also the discussion of the purpose and structure of the *Kitāb al-Ṣidq* in Atif Khalil, *Repentance and the Return to God: Tawba in Early Sufism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2018), 98–100 and Nada Saab, "Ṣūfī Theory and Language in the Writings of Abū Saʿīd Aḥmad ibn ʿĪsā al-Kharrāz" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 2003), 119–120.
9. Al-Kharrāz, *Ṣidq*, 17–18. While this idea is clearly connected to the concept of *tawakkul*, al-Kharrāz here uses the term *al-thiqa billāh.*

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> Then how did the prophets (upon whom be peace) own wealth[10] and estates, such as David, Solomon, *Abraham*, Job, and their peers, and Joseph (upon whom be peace) over the treasuries of the land,[11] and Muḥammad (God bless him and grant him peace), and the righteous who followed them?[12]

"This is a big question," the teacher responds, "and there is much to it."[13] Al-Kharrāz devotes the remainder of the chapter to addressing this question, attempting to justify the seemingly superfluous wealth of the prophets and their successors, the caliphs Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmān, and ʿAlī, as well as Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr.[14] Only by assessing how these pious forbears approached wealth is al-Kharrāz able to answer the broader question of how contemporary Muslims, and in particular Sufi novices, should treat superfluous goods.

Al-Kharrāz was not the only one concerned with this issue; there are several indications that the wealth of the prophets and the early Muslims and the implications of their wealth for contemporary believers were controversial topics in the third century. As we will see, al-Kharrāz's predecessor in Baghdad, al-Muḥāsibī—a figure who exercised considerable influence on Baghdadi Sufism—also discussed the wealth of the prophets and tried to square their riches with their status as renunciants. At the same time, al-Muḥāsibī was wary of those who claimed to imitate the wealth of the pious forbears. In his semi-autobiographical work al-Waṣāyā, he railed against an unnamed "maniac" (*maftūn*) who had adduced as proof (*iḥtijāj*) the wealth of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAwf and other wealthy companions of the Prophet in order to argue that amassing wealth is better than abandoning it.[15] Against this view, al-Muḥāsibī insisted that renouncing wealth is superior, for even though many of the Prophet's companions were wealthy, they were not attached to their wealth and even rejoiced in their times of want.[16] Al-Muḥāsibī's treatment of this subject seems later to have circulated as an independent work, a further indication of the interest generated by this controversial subject.[17]

10. The Arabic (and Qurʾanic) term underlying my references to "wealth" and occasionally "property" in this essay is *amwāl*. The authors I examine typically use this term in referring to goods retained beyond those necessary for a basic level of livelihood and sustenance. In some cases, as with some of the prophets, *amwāl* also indicates a very high or seemingly excessive level of riches and worldly goods.
11. Q 12:55.
12. Al-Kharrāz, *Ṣidq*, 18.
13. Al-Kharrāz, *Ṣidq*, 18.
14. On the significance of al-Kharrāz including Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr in this company, see n. 60 below.
15. Al-Muḥāsibī, *al-Waṣāyā*, ed. ʿAbd al-Qādir Aḥmad ʿAṭā (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1986), 69–94.
16. See esp. al-Muḥāsibī, *Waṣāyā*, 81.
17. It has been suggested that al-Muḥāsibī wrote a separate treatise on this subject, quotations of which are given by al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) and Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1200). Al-Ghazālī refers to the long passage he quotes as coming from "one of [al-Muḥāsibī's] books on 'The refutation of one of the wealthy scholars, inasmuch as he has adduced as proof (*iḥtajja*) the wealthy companions and the great wealth of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAwf.'" A work with this as its title is listed as a text of al-Muḥāsibī in Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums* (Leiden: Brill, 1967–2015), 1:642, no. 27 and Gavin Picken, *Spiritual Purification in Islam: The Life and Works of al-Muḥāsibī* (London: Routledge, 2011), 87. Both Sezgin and Picken (following Sezgin) refer to this work as contained in two manuscripts in Turkey: Istanbul Laleli MS 3706/20 and Çorum Hasanpaşa Kütüphanesi 701/1. In his review of Picken, however, van Ess notes that the text in this first manuscript is simply a quotation from al-Ghazālī. See Josef van Ess, "Review of *Spiritual Purification in Islam: The Life and Works of al-Muḥāsibī*, by Gavin Picken," *Ilahiyat Studies* 2 (2011): 126–32. Yet the quotations given by al-Ghazālī and Ibn al-Jawzī are themselves simply extracts from the *Waṣāyā*. *Al-Ghazālī, Iḥyā ʿUlūm al-Dīn* (Cairo: Lajnat Nashr al-Thaqāfa al-Islāmiyya, 1937–38), 3:1810–1822 (*Kitāb dhamm al-bukhl wa-dhamm ḥubb al-māl)* corresponds to al-Muḥāsibī, *Waṣāyā*, 74–93; and Ibn al-Jawzī, *Talbīs Iblīs*, ed. Aḥmad ibn ʿUthmān al-Mazīd (Riyadh: Dār al-Waṭan lil-Nashr, 2001), 1052–56 corresponds to al-Muḥāsibī, *Waṣāyā*, 77–79, 81–84, 86, and 90. It thus seems likely that al-Muḥāsibī's treatment of the wealth of the companions in the *Waṣāyā* was at some point extracted and circulated on its own; al-Muḥāsibī himself probably did not compose a distinct work on the subject. A definitive assessment of the status of this text would, however, require an evaluation of the Çorum manuscript, which I have not yet been able to consult.

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Like al-Muḥāsibī, al-Kharrāz concludes his discussion of wealth in the *Kitāb al-Ṣidq* by criticizing those of his contemporaries *(ahl zamāninā)* who appealed to the example of the prophets and early Muslims in order to justify their own riches. As al-Kharrāz writes, "One of them has even asserted that he owns just as people in the past (*man maḍā*) have owned, and he adduces them as proof (*yaḥtajju bihim*) in order to follow his own inclinations, even though his conduct stands in complete opposition to the custom of these people (*sunnat al-qawm*)."[18] Both al-Muḥāsibī and al-Kharrāz thus present themselves as articulating the correct interpretation of the wealth of the pious forbears in opposition to those who make self-serving appeals to their wealth.

In forming his own perspective on the wealth of the prophets and early Muslims, al-Kharrāz developed means for justifying their wealth that had been advanced earlier by al-Muḥāsibī. His apparent dependence on al-Muḥāsibī represents a significant and as yet unnoticed link between these two influential figures and a further indication of the important role of al-Muḥāsibī in shaping Baghdadi Sufism.[19] At the same time, al-Kharrāz introduced a more positive valuation to wealth by presenting it as a divinely sent trial, one from which anyone who owns property may ultimately derive spiritual gain. He thus developed an ethics of wealth suited to Sufis who understood their approach to God as accompanied by and advanced through trial. Al-Kharrāz's discussion of wealth thus illustrates the sophisticated ways in which Sufis wrestled with ethical dilemmas of broad relevance in early Islamic society. At the same time, his discussion shows how a matter of practical ethics—how to treat surplus goods—was intertwined with the central Sufi goal of drawing nearer to God.

God's Treasurers

At the beginning of al-Kharrāz's discussion, the student highlights the Prophet Joseph's wealth by describing him as "over the treasuries of the land" *(ʿalā khazāʾin al-arḍ)*—a Qurʾanic phrase (Q 12:55) referring to Joseph's administration of the storehouses of Egypt. Later, al-Kharrāz discusses a Hadith according to which the Prophet Muḥammad is offered the "keys to the treasuries of the land" *(mafātīḥ khazāʾin al-arḍ)*. As we will see, the notion of God's "treasuries" and of the prophets and their righteous followers as God's "treasurers" played an important role in al-Kharrāz's understanding of wealth. As the treasurers of God, the prophets and the righteous could be understood as rich renunciants, who amassed superfluous

18. Al-Kharrāz, *Ṣidq*, 26–27. John Wainwright suggests that this may be directed against al-Muḥāsibī, on the supposition that al-Muḥāsibī understood his own wealth as following the manner of the prophets. Wainwright, *Treading the Path of Salvation*, 138. Nevertheless, as we will see, the echoes of al-Muḥāsibī's writings in al-Kharrāz's treatment of wealth are so clear that it seems just as likely that al-Kharrāz is here reproducing al-Muḥāsibī's own polemic against those who "adduce as proof" the wealthy forbears in order to justify their own riches.

19. Al-Muḥāsibī does not seem to have identified himself as a Sufi or to have been named as such by his contemporaries. Nevertheless, he exercised significant influence on early Sufism both through his writings and through his personal instruction of Baghdadi Sufis like al-Junayd. See, e.g., Khalil, *Repentance*, 123–126; Christopher Melchert, "The Transition from Asceticism to Mysticism at the Middle of the Ninth Century C.E," *Studia Islamica* 83 (1996): 55–56; Josef van Ess, *Die Gedankenwelt des Ḥārit al-Muḥāsibī* (Bonn: Selbstverlag des Orientalischen Seminars der Universität Bonn, 1961), 6, 15, 20, 218–224.

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goods only to distribute them to others and who abandoned their wealth in spirit despite retaining many possessions.

These ideas had roots in the teachings of al-Muḥāsibī. In a work known as the *Masāʾil fī l-zuhd*, al-Muḥāsibī described how even a rich person might be considered a renunciant (*zāhid*) if he or she assumed the proper attitude toward wealth:

> If a person's resolution and intention is spending on the "rights" (*ḥuqūq*), and if his lower soul's refusal to assent to this spending does not prevent him from spending, then this person is one of the treasurers of God (*khāzin min khuzzān Allāh*). And if his retaining the wealth is not due to stinginess with it or greed for it, then he is a renunciant (*zāhid*), even if he has many possessions.[20]

As al-Muḥāsibī suggests, being a *zāhid* is not a matter of material possessions, but of intention. The rich may thus be considered renunciants as long as they do not retain wealth due to the stinginess and greed of their lower soul (*nafs*). Moreover, the rich are "treasurers of God" as long as they intend to spend their wealth on the *ḥuqūq*—the "rights" or "claims." Al-Muḥāsibī here invokes a complex term that signified a host of interrelated ideas about the obligations of wealth. As in the *Kitāb al-Kasb* of al-Shaybānī, *ḥaqq/ḥuqūq* could denote the "right" that the poor have to the surplus goods of the rich and so the duty of the wealthy to distribute their surplus to the poor.[21] In al-Muḥāsibī's use, the term also recalls the idea of the *ḥuqūq Allāh*—the "rights of God," and so the obligation of God's servants to render Him His due. Al-Muḥāsibī employs this concept frequently throughout his works, including, of course, in his *magnum opus*, *The Observation of the Rights of God (Al-Riʿāya li-Ḥuqūq Allāh)*. His reference to spending wealth on the *ḥuqūq* may thus be understood either to mean that the treasurers of God devote their riches to God's causes or that they devote their riches to the benefit of the poor. Al-Muḥāsibī likely would have seen these two ideas as interrelated. As al-Kharrāz will suggest, God's right to all property obliges the rich to distribute their wealth to the rest of God's servants.[22]

To illustrate the proper relationship of God's treasurers to their wealth, al-Muḥāsibī turns to the example of the prophets. Recalling a saying of the Prophet Jesus, he writes:

> It has been related by one of the learned that he read in the wise sayings of Jesus (upon whom be peace): "I have seen those who have little but who have intense love for this world, and I have seen others who have much but are without love for this world, such as the chosen ones, Abraham, Jacob, David, and Solomon. When God wanted them, they departed from every kind of possession (*kharajū min kull ramala*)."[23]

20. Al-Muḥāsibī, *Masāʾil fī l-zuhd*: edited in al-Muḥāsibī, *al-Masāʾil fī aʿmāl*, ed. ʿAbd al-Qādir Aḥmad ʿAṭā, 44. See also the discussion of this passage in Cyrus Ali Zargar, *The Polished Mirror: Storytelling and the Pursuit of Virtue in Islamic Philosophy and Sufism* (London: Oneworld, 2017), 192.

21. On this understanding of *ḥaqq/ḥuqūq*, see Bonner, "*Kitāb al-Kasb*," 416–19, 423; and M. M. Bravmann, "'The Surplus of Property': An Early Arab Social Concept," *Der Islam* 38 (1963): 28–50, at 49; repr. in Bravmann, *The Spiritual Background of Early Islam: Studies in Ancient Arab Concepts* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 229–253, at 252.

22. On the interconnection between the claims of God and of the poor to the wealth of the rich, see Michael Bonner, "Definitions of Poverty and the Rise of the Muslim Urban Poor," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 6.3 (1996): 335–344, at 337.

23. Al-Muḥāsibī, *Masāʾil fī l-zuhd*, 45. I translate the last clause, *kharajū min kull ramala*, idiomatically. Literally, *ramala* derives from *raml, rimāl*, "sand, grains of sand;" by extension, it conveys the notion of a possession, especially one that is excessive or superfluous.

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This saying of Jesus is somewhat ambiguous concerning the wealth of the prophets, describing them as "having much," but then suggesting that, as a result of their lack of worldly desire, they "departed" from their possessions. Al-Muḥāsibī explains that this departure was in mind only; the prophets and those who follow them do not literally abandon their wealth but cease to devote their attention to it. As he states:

> Those who undertake what God has commanded them to undertake by His order are mindful neither of their family nor their wealth, but [God] has made them concerned with what they were ordered to do. So they are only mindful of what they are about, due to their intense concern for it. Thus they have departed (*kharajū*) from the lowliness of ownership of family and wealth.
>
> They did not condemn their accumulation of wealth. They accumulated it neither for amusement nor pleasure in any sort of disobedience [to God]. Rather, they accumulated it in order by it to enact the rights (*ḥuqūq*). So they are only mindful of it with regard to that of which God made them mindful by it, in order to dispose of it in its proper aims. When an opportunity for spending was presented them, they did not hold it back.
>
> They are not[24] stingy with it, but if retaining it is better, they retain it, and if expending it is better, they expend it. So whoever stands in this station is in the station of the prophets and the righteous believers.[25]

As al-Muḥāsibī explains, the prophets were concerned not with their wealth *per se*, but only with how to spend their wealth in fulfilling the rights of others. In this sense, the prophets may be said to have "departed" from their wealth, even though they continued to possess many things.

Al-Kharrāz repeats these ideas in the *Kitāb al-Ṣidq*. Like al-Muḥāsibī, he describes as "treasurers of God" those who retain wealth with the intention of spending it on the "rights." This can be seen most clearly in the chapter in the *Kitāb al-Ṣidq* on "trust in God" (*tawakkul*), which appears two chapters after the section on the permissible and the pure. The two most relevant passages in al-Muḥāsibī and al-Kharrāz run as follows:

> Al-Muḥāsibī: If a person's resolution and intention (*niyya*) is spending on the rights (*ḥuqūq*), and if his lower soul's refusal to assent to this spending does not prevent him from spending, then this person is one of the treasurers of God (*khāzin min khuzzān Allāh*).[26]
>
> Al-Kharrāz: Thus when God gives possession of a worldly thing to a person who trusts in God, and it is superfluous for him, he only stores it for the morrow with the intention (*niyya*) that the thing belongs to God alone and is assigned to the rights of God (*ḥuqūq Allāh*), and he is one of the treasurers of God (*khāzin min khuzzān Allāh*).[27]

24. Literally: "there is no stinginess with them regarding it." I follow here the reading *laysa* in Istanbul Süleymaniye MS Carullah 1101, f. 2a, l. 12, rather than *labisa* in the edition of ʿAbd al-Qādir Aḥmad ʿAṭā.
25. Al-Muḥāsibī, *Masāʾil fī l-zuhd,* 45. I am grateful to Jeremy Farrell for discussions concerning the translation of these passages of al-Muḥāsibī.
26. We have seen the extended version of this passage earlier. See corresponding text at n. 20 above.
27. Al-Kharrāz, *Ṣidq*, 36.

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It is important to recall that al-Kharrāz opens the chapter on the permissible and pure by advising that one avoid superfluous goods (*al-fuḍūl*).[28] Here, however, he clarifies that it is acceptable to own something that is superfluous (*faḍala*) inasmuch as one acts as God's treasurer. His understanding of this concept follows that of al-Muḥāsibī. Being a treasurer of God implies both an attitude of detachment toward what one owns ("the thing belongs to God alone"), as well as an intention to spend one's wealth in fulfillment of the "rights" (*ḥuqūq*). In this case, al-Kharrāz identifies these explicitly as the *ḥuqūq Allāh*, the rights of God. His point is that God has a claim to wealth as its true owner. Al-Kharrāz continues by saying, "When [one of the treasurers of God] sees the proper occasion for [expending] a thing, he is quick to expend it in rendering assistance, since he and his brothers are equal (*sawā'*) in what he owns."[29] To affirm God's ownership of one's property is thus to recognize that others have an equal claim to one's wealth, and this equal right obliges the wealthy to give their surplus to those who lack.

In the chapter on the permissible and the pure, al-Kharrāz applies these ideas to the prophets and their righteous followers. As he writes:

> The prophets (God's blessings be upon them) and the righteous who came after them . . . were treasurers for God (exalted be His remembrance) in everything of which He had given them possession, spending it to fulfill the rights of God (*ḥuqūq Allāh*).[30]

Like al-Muḥāsibī, al-Kharrāz concludes from this that the prophets and the righteous may be understood as "departing" (*khārijīn*) from their wealth, even though, in a literal sense, they retain superfluous riches:

> So, these people[31] were departing from their property while amidst their property (*kānū khārijīn min milkihim fī milkihim*), taking delight in the remembrance and worship of God and not relying on what they owned. They neither despaired at its loss when they lost it nor rejoiced in anything, and they needed no remedy or effort in expending it (*ikhrājih*).[32]

Al-Kharrāz repeats this idea later in the chapter, stating "these people were departing from what they owned, even while it was in their hands (*kānū khārijīn mimmā malakū wa-huwa fī aydīhim*), counting it as belonging to God."[33] As these passages suggest, the wealthy prophets and their rich followers may be understood as "departing" from their wealth in two senses, which match the senses in which they are treasurers of God: first, they departed from their wealth by regarding God, not themselves, as the owner of what they possessed, and secondly, they made their wealth "depart" (*ikhrāj*) by spending it to fulfill God's rights.

Al-Kharrāz thus appears to draw upon al-Muḥāsibī's understanding of prophetic and pious wealth both lexically and conceptually. Following al-Muḥāsibī, he is able

28. On this term, in the sense of superfluous goods "subject to the duty of charity," see Bravmann, "Surplus of Property," 42; repr. in Bravmann, *Spiritual Background*, 244.
29. Al-Kharrāz, *Ṣidq*, 36.
30. Al-Kharrāz, *Ṣidq*, 21.
31. *Qawm*, here referring back to the prophets and their righteous successors.
32. Al-Kharrāz, *Ṣidq*, 22.
33. Al-Kharrāz, *Ṣidq*, 25.

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to justify the wealth of the prophets and righteous forbears while, at the same time, emphasizing their detachment and even "departure" from their wealth. The prophets and their righteous followers thus provide the model for contemporary "treasurers of God," who retain wealth only with the intention of distributing it, in recognition of the rights of God, who is the true owner of all property. Beyond simply justifying the retention of surplus goods, however, al-Kharrāz presents the proper treatment of wealth as bearing a positive spiritual value, one that could be shared by affluent Sufis. As we will see, al-Kharrāz indicates that wealth is not merely a justifiable by-product of the life of a prophet, caliph, or Sufi; rather, it is a divinely sent trial, designed to test a person and ultimately nourish his or her spiritual growth. In developing this idea, al-Kharrāz departed from al-Muḥāsibī, who tended to associate trial not with wealth, but with poverty.

Wealth as a Trial

The idea of wealth as a trial has Qurʾanic roots. "Your wealth and your children are only a trial (*fitna*)," God says (Q 8:28 and Q 64:15).[34] Again, "you will surely be tried (*la-tublawunna*) in your wealth and in your souls" (Q 3:186). Several Hadiths echo these Qurʾanic assertions. "Every community," the Prophet declares, "has a *fitna*, and the *fitna* of my community is wealth."[35] Yet such Qurʾanic and prophetic statements left open the question of how exactly wealth poses a trial for believers. In turn, Muslim exegetes generally articulated two senses in which the possession of wealth causes trial. It will be useful to consider these senses before examining how al-Muḥāsibī and al-Kharrāz understood the trial of wealth.

1. First, when a person possesses wealth and then loses some or all of it, this loss of wealth constitutes a trial. One passage in the Qurʾan presents this idea explicitly: "We will indeed test you with something of fear and hunger, and loss of wealth (*naqṣ min al-amwāl*), souls, and fruits; and give glad tidings to the patient—those who, when affliction (*muṣība*) befalls them, say, 'Truly we are God's, and unto Him we return'" (Q 2:155–56). Several exegetes suggest that other Qurʾanic statements about the trial of wealth also refer to loss of or afflictions in wealth. For example, al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) comments on "You will surely be tried in your wealth and in your souls" (Q 3:186) by stating "[God] means by this saying: You will surely be tested by afflictions (*maṣāʾib*) in your wealth."[36] The gloss of al-Ṭabarānī (d. 360/971) is yet more explicit: "You will surely be tried in your wealth and in your souls (Q 3:186); that is, you will surely be tested by loss (*naqṣ*) and vanishing of wealth."[37]

34. Translations of the Qurʾan are from *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary*, eds. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Caner Dagli, Maria Dakake, Joseph Lumbard, and Mohammed Rustom (New York: HarperOne, 2015), with slight modification.
35. Al-Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmiʿ al-Kabīr*, ed. Shuʿayb al-Arnāʾūṭ (Beirut: Dār al-Risāla al-ʿĀlamiyya, 2010), 4:366, no. 2490.
36. *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, ed. ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī (Riyadh: Dār ʿĀlam al-Kutub, 2015), 6:290.
37. Sulaymān ibn Aḥmad al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, ed. Hishām ibn ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Badrānī al-Mawṣilī. (Irbid: Dār al-Kitāb al-Thaqāfī, 2008), 2:172.

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2. Other exegetes, however, suggest that the very possession of wealth, even apart from its loss, constitutes the financial trial of believers. The early *mufassir* Muqātil ibn Sulāyman (d. 150/767) comments on Q 64:15—"Your wealth and your children are only a *fitna*"—by saying, "that is, a trial (*balā'*) and an occupation away from the world to come (*shughl ʿan al-ākhira*)."[38] In this sense, wealth and children constitute a trial because their presence occupies a person's attention and distracts him or her from attending to the afterlife. Al-Kharrāz's contemporary, the Sufi author Sahl al-Tustarī (d. 283/896), expands upon this idea. Commenting on the same passage, he states, "If God gives you wealth, you will occupy yourself (*tashāghalta*) in retaining it. But if he does not give it to you, you will occupy yourself in seeking it. So when will you become free for Him?"[39] For al-Tustarī, wealth is a trial not because it distracts one from the world to come, but because it distracts one from God. To be free for God, a person must avoid becoming preoccupied with either seeking or retaining wealth.

These two approaches are not, of course, incompatible or even necessarily in tension. An author could reasonably present both the loss and the acquisition of wealth as a trial, and in one place, al-Kharrāz suggests precisely this point.[40] Nevertheless, we can identify different tendencies in how al-Muḥāsibī and al-Kharrāz consider the relationship between trial and wealth. Al-Muḥāsibī, for his part, tends to associate trial with poverty or the loss of wealth. For example, in his treatment of the wealth of the early Muslims in the *Waṣāyā*, he recalls the following saying of a companion of the Prophet: "The happiest of my days is that it should be said that there is nothing in the house, neither dinars nor dirhams nor food. For when God loves a servant, he imposes trials upon him (*ibtalāhu*)."[41] So, al-Muḥāsibī explains, to be like the pious forbears (*salaf*), a person must be "content with poverty and trial" (*rāḍin bi-l-faqr wa-l-balā'*).[42] Similarly, in his treatment of wealth and poverty in the *Masāʾil fī l-zuhd*, al-Muḥāsibī associates trial with God's withholding of worldly goods:

> There can be a person who has much but who is not occupied with acquiring more . . . [such a person] is grateful for what God has given him of [worldly things]. If [a worldly thing] is given, the coming down of the blessing does not prevent him from offering thanks for it, but if it is withheld, the sending down of the trial (*baliyya*) does not prevent him from looking toward the repository of the good.
>
> So he is patient in trial (*balāʾ*), knowing that the hardship of his condition is better for him than ease, and he receives the trial (*baliyya*) with patience and thanksgiving . . . he prefers whatever God has preferred for him, and when trial (*balāʾ*) comes down upon him, he does not reject from his Master what He has preferred.[43]

38. *Tafsīr Muqātil ibn Sulaymān*, ed. ʿAbd Allāh Maḥmūd Shiḥāta (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Taʾrīkh al-ʿArabī, 2002), 4:353.
39. Sahl al-Tustarī, *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿAẓīm*, ed. Ṭāhā ʿAbd al-Raʾūf Saʿd and Ḥasan Muḥammad ʿAlī (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥaram lil-Nashr, 2004), 280.
40. See n. 46 below.
41. Al-Muḥāsibī, *Waṣāyā*, 81. Al-Muḥāsibī does not name the companion.
42. Al-Muḥāsibī, *Waṣāyā*, 90.
43. Al-Muḥāsibī, *Masāʾil fī l-zuhd*, 44.

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Al-Muḥāsibī thus tends to associate trial (*balāʾ, baliyya*) with adversity, especially financial adversity.[44] Such trials present an opportunity for believers to cultivate patience and thanksgiving by accepting, even in times of poverty, what God has chosen for those whom He loves.

In contrast, in the *Kitāb al-Ṣidq*, al-Kharrāz associates trial primarily not with the loss, but with the acquisition of wealth. This may be in part because, even more than al-Muḥāsibī, al-Kharrāz focuses on the questions of the justifiability of wealth and the obligations that possessing it entails. Much more than for al-Muḥāsibī, al-Kharrāz's reflections on trial play a central role in his evaluation of the wealth of the prophets and their followers. Near the beginning of the chapter on the permissible and the pure, al-Kharrāz describes the trial of wealth as central to God's plan for the prophets:

> These people were certain that they and their very souls belonged to God the Exalted, and thus that whatever He bestowed on them and made them own belonged only to Him, except inasmuch as they were in the abode of testing (*ikhtibār*) and trial (*balwā*), and they were created for testing and trial in this abode.[45]

Al-Kharrāz's point is that the apparently superfluous "wealth and estates" owned by the prophets were not accidental to their mission. Rather, God gave them wealth in order to try them. This trial is of such importance that al-Kharrāz even says the prophets were "created" (*khuliqū*) for testing and trial.

Yet this trial, al-Kharrāz continues, applies also to Sufis who own worldly goods. As he explains, both adversity (*ḍarrāʾ*) and divine favor (*niʿma*) can represent forms of trial (*balāʾ*).[46] The trial of adversity demands patience, while the trial of divine favor demands gratitude.[47] As a result, owning property—a form of divine favor—imposes both a trial and a demand:

> Every person of labor from God the Exalted and every person of truthfulness (*ṣidq*) who owns a worldly thing believes that the thing belongs to God, may He be glorified and exalted, not to him, except inasmuch as he is on the path of the right (*ḥaqq*) of that which God the Exalted has bestowed upon him; and he is tried (*mublā*) until he undertakes the right therein.[48]

The trial of owning property thus obliges a person to fulfill the right of others (whether God or the poor) that inheres in his or her property. In turn, the prophets and their righteous followers reveal how contemporary believers should respond to this trial. As al-Kharrāz writes:

> The prophets and the righteous who came after them, who were aware that God has tried them (*ablāhum*) in the world by means of the abundance (*saʿa*) He bestowed upon them, were reliant upon God, may He be glorified and exalted, and not on any thing.

44. Zargar identifies the trial discussed by al-Muḥāsibī here as "the trial [of poverty]." Zargar, *Polished Mirror,* 193.
45. Al-Kharrāz, *Ṣidq*, 19.
46. Al-Kharrāz thus implies that both the loss and the acquisition of wealth may present a trial.
47. Al-Kharrāz, *Ṣidq*, 20.
48. Al-Kharrāz, *Ṣidq*, 20.

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> They were treasurers for God, exalted be His remembrance, in [every] thing of which He had given them possession, spending it in the rights of God, neither falling short, nor being excessive, nor slackening, nor applying interpretation to God. They did not take pleasure in what they were made to own, and their hearts were not occupied (*mashghūlīn*) by what they owned, nor did they appropriate it to themselves at the exclusion of [other] servants of God the Exalted.[49]

Al-Kharrāz's statement that the hearts of the prophets and the righteous were not "occupied" by their wealth recalls the view advanced by Muqātil ibn Sulaymān and Sahl al-Tustarī that wealth is a trial because it occupies the heart from divine realities. The prophets and their righteous followers, however, kept their hearts and their pleasure trained on God. At the same time, they spent what they possessed on God's rights—that is, they distributed their wealth to those who lacked, "not appropriating it to themselves at the exclusion of [other] servants of God."

The ultimate fruit of the trial of wealth may thus be seen in the lives of the prophets and early caliphs, and al-Kharrāz peppers his discourse with stories of their austere manners and generous hands. Solomon, as he relates, used to eat only barley;[50] yet he would feed his family and guests bread made from pure white flour. Abraham would not eat at all unless in the presence of a guest. And although Joseph was "over the treasuries of the land," he never ate to the point of satiety.[51] What, then, of the Prophet Muḥammad? According to several Hadiths that circulated in the third century, the Prophet declared that he had been given the keys to the treasuries of the earth.[52] In the *Waṣāyā*, however, al-Muḥāsibī related a version of this account according to which the Prophet refused the keys: "Gabriel brought me the keys of the treasuries of the earth," the Prophet says, "but by Him in whose hands is the soul of Muḥammad, I did not stretch forth my hands to them!"[53] Similarly, al-Kharrāz emphasizes that the Prophet declined the heavenly offer:

> He [an angel][54] came to the Prophet . . . and said to him: "These are the keys of the treasuries of the earth, which shall make gold and silver travel in your company. In them you shall remain until the Day of Judgment, and they shall not lessen at all what you have with God." But the Prophet (God bless him and grant him peace) did not accept that, saying, "I shall hunger one time and be full another time."

49. Al-Kharrāz, *Ṣidq*, 20–21.
50. *Shaʿīr*, a diet also adopted by the Prophet Muḥammad.
51. Al-Kharrāz, *Ṣidq*, 22.
52. E.g., al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. Muṣṭafā Dīb al-Bughā (Damascus: al-Yamāma, 1990), 1:451, no. 1279 (*kitāb al-janāʾiz, bāb al-ṣalāt ʿalā l-shahid*); and 6:2568–69, no. 6597 (*kitāb al-taʿbīr, bāb ruʾyā l-layl*). Muslim, Ṣaḥīḥ, ed. Mūsā Shāhīn Lāshīn and Aḥmad ʿUmar Hāshim (Beirut: Muʾassasat ʿIzz al-Dīn lil-Ṭibāʿa wa-l-Nashr, 1987), 4:473–74, no. 30 (*kitāb al-faḍāʾil, bāb ithbāt ḥawḍ nabiyyinā wa-ṣifātih*).
53. Al-Muḥāsibī, *Waṣāyā*, 91.
54. In contrast to al-Muḥāsibī, al-Kharrāz indicates that the angel was not Gabriel, but rather an angel "who had never descended" to earth and at whose presence even Gabriel became afraid. Al-Kharrāz, *Ṣidq*, 22–23.

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> He counted that as a trial (*balwā*) and test (*ikhtibār*) from God, may He be exalted and glorified. He did not see it as a thing preferred by God the Exalted, and had it been a thing preferred by God the Exalted, he would have accepted it. But he knew that the love of God the Exalted consists in abandoning this world and turning away from its splendor and delight.[55]

Like his predecessors, the Prophet Muḥammad saw wealth as a trial and a test. Thus although he did not renounce wealth *per se*, he did reject excessive riches and submitted instead to a life of balance between wealth and poverty—to "hunger one time and be full another time." In so doing, he oriented his love toward God and away from this world.

The leaders of the Islamic community who followed the Prophet also turned their hearts away from their wealth. As al-Kharrāz relates, Abū Bakr wore only one garment held together by two pins, though the whole world lay at his feet. ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb gained the treasures of Caesar and Khusraw, yet he lived on only bread and oil.[56] ʿUthmān trained his *nafs* by humble dress and manual labor, while ʿAlī borrowed the knife of a cobbler (*kharrāz*)[57] to shorten his shirt.[58] Al-Kharrāz also emphasizes that the caliphs expended their wealth on the "rights." Abū Bakr left his children no inheritance but God and His Prophet, for whenever he saw "the occasion for the right" (*mawḍiʿ al-ḥaqq*), he gave away what he owned. ʿUmar left only half his legacy to his family. ʿUthmān expended his riches to equip the military expedition to Tabuk as well as to purchase a well in Medina for the use of the Muslim community.[59] Al-Zubayr died deep in debt, and Ṭalḥa gave away even his family jewels to whoever asked.[60] Such examples add flesh to al-Kharrāz's understanding of the trial of wealth. From Abraham to Ṭalḥa, the prophets and their righteous followers knew that they were tested by their wealth; yet throughout this trial, they took pleasure in God alone, and by distributing their wealth to the poor of their community, they rendered God His due.

The Trial of Sufis and the Trial of Wealth

At the end of the *Kitāb al-Ṣidq*, al-Kharrāz describes the meaning of trial in broader terms, connecting the trials of the prophets and their followers to those faced by contemporary Sufis. Although an examination of this final section takes us away, for a moment, from the trial of wealth, it can help us understand this trial more fully as an integral part of the testing undergone by Sufis on the path to God.

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55. Al-Kharrāz, *Ṣidq*, 23.
56. Al-Kharrāz, *Ṣidq*, 25.
57. An unusual detail, which our author, Abū Saʿīd the Cobbler, could not resist including!
58. Al-Kharrāz, *Ṣidq*, 26.
59. Al-Kharrāz, *Ṣidq*, 24.
60. Al-Kharrāz, *Ṣidq*, 26. That al-Kharrāz includes al-Zubayr and Ṭalḥa along with the "Rashidun" caliphs as the leaders who succeeded the Prophet reflects their position as candidates, rival to ʿAlī, for the succession to ʿUthmān, as well as their status as among the "ten promised Paradise," following Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmān, and ʿAlī. The connection between these figures is also reflected in the pious works known as *kutub al-zuhd*. The *kitāb al-zuhd* of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855) includes, after a chapter on the Prophet Muḥammad, chapters on Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmān, and ʿAlī (explicitly identified as "Commander of the Faithful"), with chapters on Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr following shortly thereafter. In turn, the *kitāb al-zuhd* of Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī (d. 275/889) has, in order, chapters on the Prophet Muḥammad, Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmān, ʿAlī, Ṭalḥa, and al-Zubayr.

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The context for al-Kharrāz's discussion of trial in this final chapter is his statement that once disciples have advanced through the stations (*maqāmāt*) outlined in the *Kitāb al-Ṣidq*, they will attain rest and joy in the knowledge of God.[61] This prompts the student in al-Kharrāz's dialogue to ask whether, in this exalted state, a person would practice truthfulness (*ṣidq*) almost automatically, "without occupying himself [with it] and without weariness."[62] This is indeed the case, the teacher explains. In the end, God will grant a Sufi ease and pleasure in the service of God:

> [God] makes easy for him what is hard and what he found difficult on his own, and [God] gives him sweetness in place of bitterness, lightness in place of heaviness, softness and gentleness in place of roughness. Rising up [in prayer] at night becomes easy. Converse with God the Exalted and seclusion in His service becomes pleasant after his intense suffering . . . at that time his characteristics change and his nature transforms . . . truthfulness (*ṣidq*) and its characteristics become natural to him . . . truthfulness and its characteristics become an attribute for him.[63]

Nevertheless, this self-transformation can only be attained following great struggle.[64] Al-Kharrāz emphasizes this point by recounting the trials (*balwā, balāʾ*) overcome by the prophets. Moses was hunted as an infant, Joseph cast into a pit by his brothers, Muḥammad and Abū Bakr forced to seek refuge in a cave—such were the prophets and their companions, afflicted for a season, but in the end triumphant.[65] Al-Kharrāz summarizes their travails by saying:

> God . . . imposed trial (*balāʾ*) on them, and they bore the trial (*balāʾ*) in accordance with the honor He had given them, such that He trained them (*rāḍahum*) by trial (*balāʾ*), and they gained knowledge by it and were patient in it for God, until they were given victory (*nuṣirū*).[66]

As this indicates, the trials of the prophets had a pedagogical and salvific function; through them, the prophets gained knowledge and patience and, at last, victory. Al-Kharrāz dwells on this point because, in his view, Sufis undergo their own form of trial in the pursuit of truthfulness, a trial which, though different in content from the trial of the prophets, follows a similar structure. After al-Kharrāz has related the prophets' many trials, the student asks: "Is there no escape from this trial (*balwā*) and testing (*ikhtibār*)?" The teacher responds, "There is no escape from it for a person of high value in God's sight among the people who have direct knowledge of God (*ahl al-maʿrifa billāh*)."[67]

In describing the trials that attend these knowers, al-Kharrāz draws upon a developing Sufi understanding of "trial" as a return to human realities following an elevated experience of nearness to God. As al-Kharrāz's contemporary, al-Junayd,

61. Al-Kharrāz, *Ṣidq*, 60.
62. Al-Kharrāz, *Ṣidq*, 61.
63. Al-Kharrāz, *Ṣidq*, 62–63.
64. Al-Kharrāz, *Ṣidq*, 61–63.
65. Al-Kharrāz, *Ṣidq*, 64–67.
66. Al-Kharrāz, *Ṣidq*, 68.
67. Al-Kharrāz, *Ṣidq*, 68.

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described this process, those who have undergone annihilation (*fanāʾ*) in God will then undergo a "trial" (*balāʾ*) consisting in the loss of this self-annihilation and a continued consciousness of their own human qualities.[68] Al-Kharrāz portrays an analogous, albeit less sublime, process of attainment and trial, centered not on *fanāʾ*, but rather on the effortless service of God, which is the immediate goal of the stations in the *Kitāb al-Ṣidq*. Like al-Junayd, however, al-Kharrāz describes a "trial" that consists in the loss of this exalted state and a renewed consciousness of human limitations:

> When the spirit becomes established in a person's heart, and he takes pleasure in pious works, then, after that, [God] imposes on him trial (*balāʾ*), testing (*ikhtibār*), disasters, adversity, hardship, and strain. Yes, then the sweetness that he had found is taken from him, and the energy in piety. So obedience [to God] becomes heavy for him after its lightness, and he finds bitterness after sweetness, sluggishness after energy, and turbidity after purity. That is due to the trial (*balwā*) and testing (*ikhtibār*).[69]

Nevertheless, like the trial of the prophets described by al-Kharrāz, the trial of the Sufis is temporary and leads ultimately to a form of victory. As al-Kharrāz writes:

> Then a languor befalls him.[70] But if he struggles now and is patient and endures this despised matter, he will come to the limit of rest and attainment, and his piety will be doubled in a manifest and a hidden manner (*uḍʿifa lahu l-birru ẓāhiran wa-bāṭinan*).
>
> Thus it is related in the Hadith that: "For every eagerness, there is a languor. He whose languor leads toward a *sunna* is delivered, and he whose languor leads toward an innovation is destroyed."[71] . . . And it is related in the Hadith that God commands Gabriel, saying, "Seize the sweetness of obedience from the heart of my servant. If he grieves for it, return it to him, and give him an increase (*wa-zidhu*), but if not, then leave him."[72]

Al-Kharrāz here describes the trial of the Sufis, like the trial of the prophets, as serving to aid their spiritual development. If Sufis continue their struggle despite losing their joy and ease in divine service, then their piety will be doubled. These knowers of God thus recapitulate the process of trial and spiritual growth undergone by the prophets; like them, Sufis are trained by their trial, and like the prophets, they can emerge victorious and with spiritual gain.

I suggest that al-Kharrāz sees the trial of wealth as belonging to this broader process of trial undergone by the prophets, the pious, and the Sufis, and as sharing with this broader trial a shared end of spiritual development. As Sufi novices struggle to develop "truthfulness" in all aspects of their spiritual life, they

68. Ali Hassan Abdel-Kader, *The Life, Personality and Writings of al-Junayd: A Study of a Third/Ninth Century Mystic* (London: Luzac & Company, 1962), Arabic pp. 36–38.
69. Al-Kharrāz, *Ṣidq*, 69.
70. Following the reading *fa-taʿtarīh* in Istanbul Süleymaniye MS Sehit Ali Paşa 1374, f. 26b, l. 7, rather than *fa-taʿtariya* in Arberry's edition. Arberry's translation also appears to reflect *fa-taʿtarīh*.
71. Al-Kharrāz, *Ṣidq*, 69. Cf. Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad lil-Imām Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥanbal*, ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Shākir (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 1995), 6:32, no. 6477.
72. Al-Kharrāz, *Ṣidq*, 69.

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encounter various tests. Owning superfluous goods is one of these, for the pleasure of wealth threatens to divert one's attention from God. Like the prophets and their righteous followers, however, Sufis can respond to this trial by orienting their pleasure away from their possessions and toward God, in part by using their surplus to help those in need. Wealth thus presents not only a trial, but also an occasion to advance on the path to God by cultivating truthfulness in one's material affairs. Here we may see the flowering in al-Kharrāz of a seed planted by al-Muḥāsibī. If, as al-Muḥāsibī suggested, the ethical significance of wealth is a matter of one's intentions and attachments, so for al-Kharrāz wealth is a means by which God tests the attachments of His servants and by which they, in turn, render their intention truthful by affirming God as the true owner and rightful claimant of all they possess.

Conclusion

In writing the chapter on the permissible and the pure, al-Kharrāz sought to determine the proper attitude toward and treatment of superfluous wealth and so resolve an ethical dilemma concerning the apparently excessive wealth of some of the prophets and pious forbears. In so doing, he intervened in a conversation carried on by a wide range of figures in the second and third centuries, from jurists like al-Shaybānī to ascetics and spiritual masters like Shaqīq al-Balkhī and al-Muḥāsibī as well as those, like al-Muḥāsibī's unnamed "maniac," who remain unknown to us. On the one hand, this suggests that we should not draw too stark a line between Sufi and non-Sufi ethical questions. At least in this case, a debate concerning financial ethics, which began in non-Sufi circles, was continued and deepened first by a figure who stood at the threshold of Baghdadi Sufism—al-Muḥāsibī—and later by one—al-Kharrāz—who stood squarely within the formative Baghdadi Sufi tradition.

Yet al-Kharrāz seems to have brought a distinctively Sufi perspective to this conversation. In addition to adopting many of al-Muḥāsibī's teachings on wealth, he drew upon earlier and contemporary traditions about wealth as a form of trial (*balāʾ, balwā, baliyya, ikhtibār*). These ideas, which had roots in Qurʾanic and exegetical reflection on wealth, coalesced with Sufi understandings of the trials of God's friends. As al-Kharrāz suggests, Sufis should see in wealth a trial that at first threatens to veil their hearts from God but through which they may train their hearts even more in the pleasure of divine service. In al-Kharrāz's analysis, the ethical questions concerning the legitimacy of wealth, the proper treatment of superfluous goods, and the moral status of the wealthy forbears thus also became the spiritual question of how Sufis may approach God not only through poverty, but also through property—not only through their dependence on God, but also through the devotion of their surplus to those who depend on them. In this sense, al-Kharrāz tells us, the ethical valuation of wealth is inseparable from its significance as either an obstacle to or means of progress on the mystical path.

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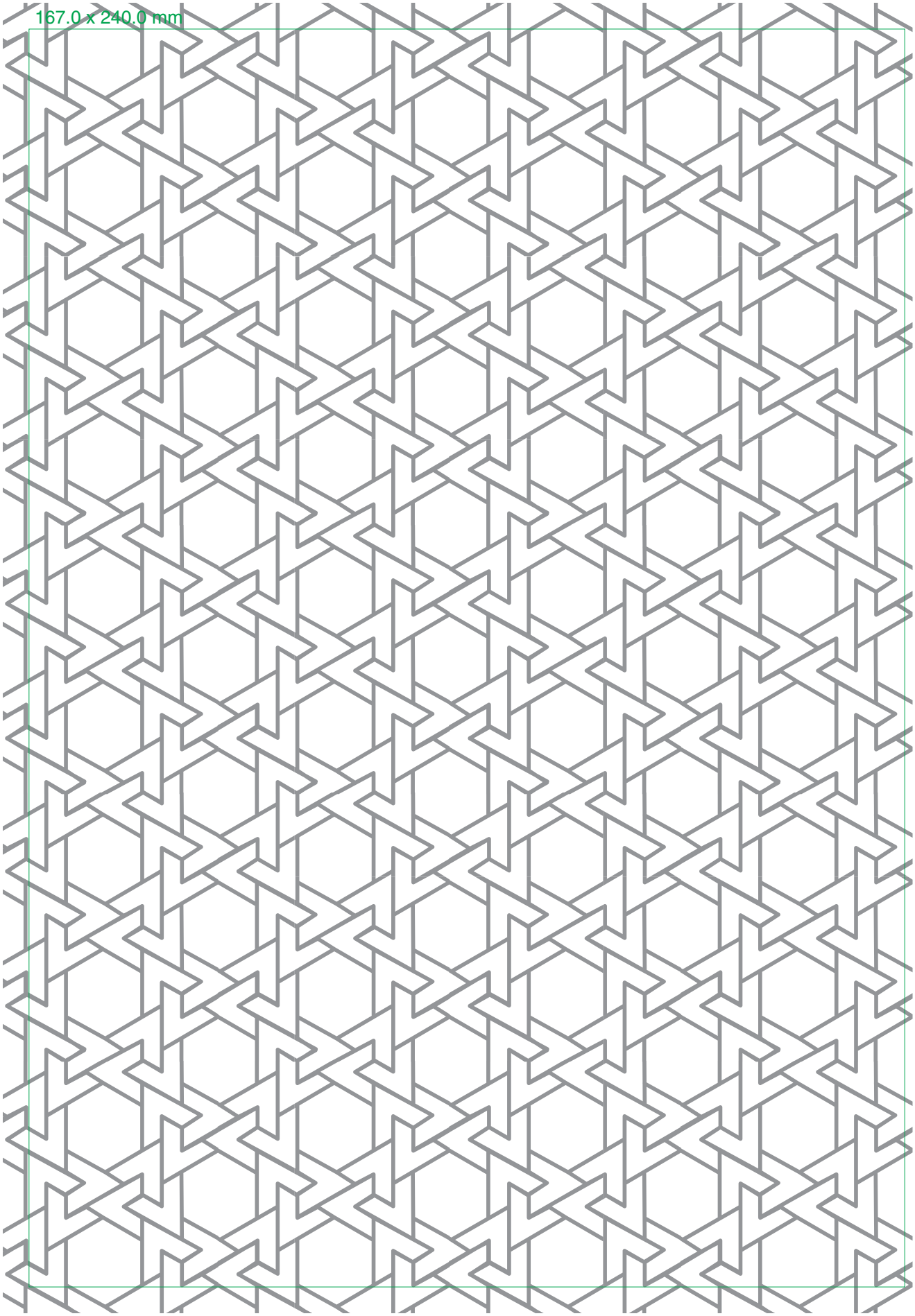
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ON PATIENCE (*ṢABR*) IN SUFI VIRTUE ETHICS

Atif Khalil

In his brief chapter on the "station of Sufism," or *maqām al-taṣawwuf* in the *Meccan Revelations*, Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 638/1240 CE) opens his inquiry by quoting a saying of the Sufis. "The Folk of the Way of God," he writes, "say that Sufism is good character, and that he who surpasses you in character has surpassed you in Sufism."[1] The word used for "character" here is *khuluq*. Indeed, this is the same *khuluq* of which we read in the Quran when the Prophet, according to Muslim tradition, is addressed by God with the words, *innaka laʿalā khuluqin ʿaẓīm*, which is to say, *Surely you are of a tremendous character* (68:4). The Prophet himself underscored the importance of the formation of *khuluq*, or character development, in his mission when he declared in a well-known hadith, "I was sent to bring beautiful character to perfection,"[2] a sentiment he reiterated on another occasion when he said, "Surely those of you most beloved to me are those of most beautiful character."[3]

If we are to take seriously the words of the "Folk of the Way of God," Sufism in the deepest sense is Islam's science of *akhlāq*, or character formation. Even the unveilings and metaphysical insights of which the Muslim mystics have often spoken and celebrated are themselves rooted and made possible by *tabdīl al-akhlāq*, the "transformation of character" required by the inner life of Islam, without which any claims to higher knowledge remain empty, at least from the vantage point of

1. Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* (Cairo, n.d.), 2:266 (chapter 164). The saying is attributed to Abū Bakr al-Kattānī (d. 322/934) in Qushayrī's *Risāla*, ed. ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd and Maḥmūd b. Sharīf (Damascus: Dār al-Farfūr, 2002), 427.
2. Mālik, *Muwaṭṭaʾ*, Ḥusn al-khuluq, 8.
3. Bukhārī, *Faḍāʾil al-ṣaḥāba*, 27; Tirmidhī, Birr, 71.

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Sufism itself. This is because only by drawing into the proximity of God through the assumption of the divine Names, or Qualities, in the form of beautiful character traits—premised on the principle that like attracts like—may the soul open itself up to celestial knowledge. To the extent that the transformation of character involves the acquisition and internalization of certain key virtues and the uprooting and divestment of corresponding vices, Sufism in so far as it is the science of *akhlāq* may also be described as a discipline that encompasses (but is not confined to) Islamic virtue ethics, and it is for this reason that the most elaborate inquiries into what outsiders might classify as Islamic virtue theory often took place within the pages of Sufi manuals (in particular, to those sections of the texts devoted to the states and stations).[4]

Generally speaking, the *akhlāq*, or virtues, central to Islamic piety may be divided into two categories. There are, first, those involving one's relationship with others, and then there are those involving one's relationship with God. The character traits are not restricted to just one's dealing with God's creatures here below, but must also define one's relation with Heaven above. Among the latter are such virtues as repentance (*tawba*), fear (*khawf*), trust (*tawakkul*), and hope (*rajāʾ*). One thus turns in repentance only to God, fears only Him, places trust only in Him, and puts all hopes in none other than Him. Among the character traits that involve interpersonal (and even inter-sentient) relations with others are such virtues as generosity (*sakhāwa*), compassion (*raḥma*), and forbearance (*ḥilm*). One thus shows generosity not to God, but to people; one is compassionate not to God, but towards His creatures; one is gentle and benevolent towards others, but not towards God. Indeed, just as we are ourselves the passive objects of divine mercy, generosity, benevolence and kindness, we actively manifest (or are at least summoned to manifest) these very qualities towards all of God's creatures. As the Prophet said, "Be compassionate to those on the earth and the One in Heaven will be compassionate towards you,"[5] and "He who does not show compassion will not be shown compassion."[6]

To these two, we can also add a third category of virtues that overlap insofar as their objects include both God and His creatures. Among them, we may identify such qualities as sincerity (*ikhlāṣ*), gratitude (*shukr*), and having a good opinion of the other (*husn al-dhann*). After all, we are to be sincere and grateful towards both God and people, just as we are to think well of them. It is true that the early Sufi manuals tend to give pride of place to the virtues centered around relations with God in light of the theocentric nature of Islam and, by extension, its mystical tradition. This, however, is not because the virtues involving others are considered less important, but rather due to the belief that by setting aright one's standing with God, one's relations with others will follow suit. Moreover, since the higher

4. For more on this theme, see my essay, "Sufism and Qurʾānic Ethics," in *The Routledge Handbook on Sufism*, ed. Lloyd Ridgeon (New York: Routledge, 2020), 159-171. On the states and stations, see idem., *Repentance and the Return to God: Tawba in Early Sufism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2018), 77-83; Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Sufi Essays* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 68-83. On Sufi ethics, see Cyrus Zargar, *The Polished Mirror: Storytelling and the Pursuit of Virtue in Islamic Philosophy and Sufism* (London: Oneworld, 2017), 15-19, 153-296.

5. Tirmidhī, Birr, 16.

6. Bukhārī, Adab, 18; Muslim, Faḍāʾil, 65.

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metaphysics of Sufism often blurs the distinction between the world and its divine origin, even in one's interactions with others, there is an awareness that one is in fact interacting with God. This point was colorfully illustrated by the famous remark of Sahl al-Tustarī (d. 283/896), "For thirty years I have been speaking to God, while people imagined that I was speaking to them."[7]

In broad terms, it would not be incorrect to suggest that the categories of the two sets of virtues just described (those involving God and His creatures) reflect two categories of acts in Islamic Law: those that lie within the domain of *ʿibādāt*, on the one hand, and those that fall within the purview of *muʿāmalāt*, on the other. The former, as we know, involve individual expressions of religious piety ranging from ritual prayer to the fast in Ramadan, the obligations of which collectively form the *ḥuqūq Allāh*, or "rights of God." The latter involve one's dealings with others and comprise what are often called the *ḥuqūq al-ʿibād*, the "rights of God's servants," that is to say, the rights others have over us or our obligations towards them. And in the same way that certain sets of religious obligations overlap, creating in effect a third category, such as the payment of the alms tax (*zakāt*), similarly, certain virtues as we just saw also intersect. Moreover, in the same way that the laws of the *sharīʿa* determine and regulate what Muḥāsibī (d. 243/857) and other moral psychologists described as the *aʿmāl al-jawāriḥ*, or "acts of the limbs," the laws of the *ṭarīqa* determine and regulate what have been described as the *aʿmāl al-qulūb*, the "acts of the heart."[8] To speak of the virtues, or what may also be called the *faḍāʾil*, is therefore to speak of a realm of human conduct that is more interiorized and less perceptible than outward activity, even though it is itself the basis of what happens even in the realm of action, much like the unseen world that is itself the ground of the seen world—like a tree whose intertwined roots lie concealed under the surface of the earth.

When it comes to the theme of *ṣabr*, or patience, we are dealing with a virtue that falls within the third category, one involving our relation with both God and others. The centrality of the virtue in Muslim piety is underscored by the frequency with which the ṣ-b-r root (from which the word stems) occurs in the Quran. Its derivatives appear in more than a hundred instances, in such verses as, *So patiently bear your Lord's judgement* (76:24), and *Surely in that are signs for every patient and thankful one* (14:5, 31:31, 34:19, 42:33).[9] And the Prophet extolled the eminence of patience in numerous traditions, as when he said, "In patience over those matters which you detest, there is much good."[10] In the hadith literature, *ṣabr* also figures as a divine quality,[11] thereby providing a basis for the inclusion of *al-Ṣabūr*, the Ever-

7. Abū Bakr Muḥammad al-Kalābādhī, *al-Taʿarruf li-madhhab ahl al-tasawwuf*, ed. Yuḥannā Ṣādir (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 2001), 107. For more on Sahl, see Gerhard Böwering, *The Mystical Vision of Existence in Classical Islam: The Qurʾānic Hermeneutics of the Ṣūfī Sahl at-Tustarī* (d. 283/896) (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980).

8. On the influence of this distinction in medieval Jewish piety, see Diana Lobel, *A Sufi-Jewish Dialogue: Philosophy and Mysticism in Baḥya Ibn Paqūda's Duties of the Heart* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 196-197. The best study of Muḥāsibī's moral psychology to date is to be found in Gavin Picken, *Spiritual Purification in Islam: The Life and Works of al-Muḥāsibī* (London: Routledge, 2011), 168-215.

9. I follow here the translation in *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary*, eds. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Caner Dagli, Maria Dakake, Joseph Lumbard, and Mohammed Rustom (New York: HarperOne, 2015).

10. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 1:307.

11. See Tirmidhī, Daʿawāt, 82; Muslim, Jihād, 68.

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Patient, among the Names of God in Islamic theology. It also became the basis for later Sufi inquiries into the precise nature of the sharing of the quality between God and the human being.[12]

While usually translated as "patience," *ṣabr* can also be mean "forbearance" and "steadfastness." In Arabic, the principal lexical sense of the word is *ḥabs al-nafs*, that is to say, "to hold the soul back" or "exercise self-restraint" with respect to what it might otherwise have a natural inclination towards. In his lexicon of Quranic vocabulary, al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (d. 443/1060) defines *ṣabr* as *"ḥabs al-nafs* with regard to what is demanded of it by the intellect or religious law—or both."[13] And in the *Qūt al-qulūb* (*Nourishment of Hearts*), Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī (d. 996 CE) states that *ṣabr* is "*ḥabs al-nafs* from moving towards passion, and it is to restrain the self so that it might struggle to earn the good-pleasure of its Master."[14] The accent on a conscious, willful, volitional, and taxing act of control and restraint cannot be overstated, and is illustrated by the word's use in pre-Islamic Arabic, where it might signify binding and holding an animal down for slaughter.[15] The etymology of *ṣabr* also allows us to identify some subtle differences with our English term "patience," a word that stems from a Latin root having to do with suffering (*patiendo*). Cicero (d. 43 BCE) writes that "patience is the voluntary and prolonged endurance of arduous and difficult things for the sake of virtue or profit."[16] And for Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274 CE), "patience, like fortitude, endures certain evils for the sake of good."[17] There is a passiveness here in the sense of enduring toil and hardship that appears to be lacking in the Arabic, whose root connotes a more active and engaged virtue.

Ṣabr also appears to be a much broader quality than what we might typically associate with patience, and this extends far beyond simply etymological considerations. In the early Sufi literature, the authorities often speak of four categories of the virtue. There is *ṣabr* in carrying out God's commandments, *ṣabr* in avoiding His prohibitions, *ṣabr* in acquiescing to His pre-eternal decree in the form of trials and afflictions, and finally, *ṣabr* in enduring injuries brought on by others without a desire for retribution.

At least some of the early masters considered self-restraint in the face of breaching divine law to be the most eminent form of the virtue. There is a tradition where Sahl said that *ṣabr* is a testament to one's veracity and sincerity (*taṣdīq al-ṣidq*), and that "the loftiest form of obedience to God entails patience in restraining oneself from sin, and then after that, in fulfilling God's injunctions."[18]

12. On *al-Ṣabūr,* see Ghazālī's discussion in *al-Maqṣad al-asnā* (Cairo: Dār al-Salām, 2008), 211. See also the recent translation of Aḥmad Samʿānī's (d. 562/1166) treatise on the divine Names by William Chittick, *The Repose of the Spirits: A Sufi Commentary on the Divine Names* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2019).
13. Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Mufradāt alfāẓ al-qurʾān*, ed. Najīb al-Mājidī (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-ʿAṣriyya, 2006), 291.
14. Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb,* ed. Saʿīd Nasīb Mukarram (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1995), 1:394.
15. See "Trust and Patience" (Scott Alexander), in *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, ed. J. D. McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2001–2006).
16. Cited in Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Allen, IN: Christian Classics, 1981), 3:1743. For the entire discussion, see 3:1743–1747.
17. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 3:1747.
18. Makkī, *Qūt*, 1:391. Since other seemingly contrary views have also been ascribed to Sahl, even in Makkī's own works, one has to be careful about absolutizing positions attributed to him. The rhetorical element (also present in the hadith literature) cannot be ignored either.

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Incidentally, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 751/1350)[19] would later explain that *ṣabr* in avoiding wrongs is superior to the patient endurance of trials because the former is governed by a person's free choice, while the latter is not. Recounting Ibn Taymiyya's (d. 728/1328) commentary on the Quranic story of Joseph, he quotes his teacher as saying, "The patience of Joseph in withholding himself from yielding to the demands of the viceroy's wife was more perfect than his patience in enduring being thrown into the well by his brothers, being sold, and being separated from his father by them. This was because he had no choice in these matters."[20] But unlike Sahl, Ibn Taymiyya considered *ṣabr* in fulfilling a positive commandment superior to avoiding a negative one, because the former brought one closer to perfection.[21]

As for *ṣabr* in carrying out divine commandments, Makkī argues that the virtue is required in three stages: before, during, and after the completion of the pious deed. *Ṣabr* before the act is to hold the soul back from misplaced and impure intentions, to strive for *ikhlāṣ* or sincerity. *Ṣabr* during its performance entails striving to bring it to perfection. And *ṣabr* in its wake is to conceal the deed from others, to hold the soul back from revealing it to the public, to avert one's own attention from it, and to belittle it in one's own eyes lest one fall into pride, self-admiration, and spiritual hubris.[22] After all, as Makkī notes, the Quran warns, *And do not nullify your deeds* (44:33),[23] which is to say, do not nullify them by displaying them before the gaze of others. Unsurprisingly, Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) elaborates upon this tripartite classification of *ṣabr* in his own book on patience and gratitude in the *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn (Revival of the Religious Sciences)*, where he also points out that because of the close relation of the virtue to volition and will, patience is altogether absent in both the angels and the beasts, and therefore unique to humans and God.[24]

Part of *ṣabr*, as noted, is to endure the harm of others. Ḥātim al-Aṣamm (d. 237/852), a disciple of Shaqīq al-Balkhī (d. 194/810), considered it one of the four requisites of the spiritual life. "Whoever desires to follow our way," he once said, "must assume four qualities of death." These include the "white death" of hunger, the "red death" of opposing the passions, the "green death" of donning patched garments, and finally the "black death" of putting up with the injuries and abuses brought upon one by others.[25] These were for Ḥātim four intertwined dimensions of the death of which the Prophet spoke when he said, "Die before you die."[26] As for the black death involving patient forbearance of the harms (*adhā*) inflicted upon one by God's creatures, this is a recurring theme in the Sufi literature on *ṣabr.* Makkī writes that, "One of the marks of patience is to restrain the self from requital against injuries brought upon by others, and to patiently endure their harms, all the while

19. For some reflections on his relation to Sufism, see Ovamir Anjum, "Sufism without Mysticism? Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah's Objectives in *Madārij al-Sālikīn*," *Oriente Moderno* 90, no. 1 (2010): 153-180.

20. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Madārij al-sālikīn* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, n.d.), 2:163.

21. Likewise, he felt that the heinousness of failing to carry out an obligatory act was greater than of performing a prohibited one. See Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Madārij*, 2:163.

22. Makkī, *Qūt*, 1:396.

23. Alternatively, *Let not your deeds be in vain* (from *The Study Quran*).

24. Ghazālī, *Book of Patience and Thankfulness*, trans. H. T. Littlejohn (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 2011), 14–16.

25. Qushayrī, *Risāla*, 83.

26. For a commentary on these deaths, see ʿAbd al-Majīd al-Sharnūbī, *Sharḥ tāʾiyyat al-sulūk ilā mālik al-mulūk* (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-ʿAṣriyya, 2011), 57.

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placing one's trust (*tawakkul*) in God."[27] He also quotes one of the gnostics, "The servant of God does not become firmly rooted in the station of trust in God until he is harmed and patiently endures the harm to which he is subjected."[28] Ibn al-ʿArabī goes so far as to say that God describes Himself as *Ṣabūr* because He endures the "harm" of human beings:

> Know—God grant you success—that God says, *Those who harm God and His Messenger* (33:57). He reports that He is harmed, and this is why He is named *al-Ṣabūr.* It is on account of the harm done by His creatures. And, just as He asks His servants to avoid this harm for which He rightfully deserves His name *al-Ṣabūr*, so too is the name "patient " never lifted from the servant when he is in a state of tribulation and asks God to lift that tribulation from him. Such was the case with Job when he said [in sorrow], *harm has touched me* [21:83]—from You—*and You are the most Merciful of the merciful* [21:83]. Despite his request, God praised him and said, *Surely We found him patient* [38:44].
>
> Patience is not to restrain the self from complaining to God that He lift or avert a tribulation. Patience is merely to restrain the self from complaining to and relying upon other than God. I have made it clear to you that God requests from His servants to avoid that harm by which they cause Him harm, despite His being able to not create that quality of harming in them. Understand then the mystery of this patience, for it is among the most beautiful of mysteries![29]

In other words, just as humans exercise *ṣabr* in response to the injuries and hurt they inflict upon each other, so too does God. In fact, for Ibn al-ʿArabī, patience is only possible in this life, since the harm towards which the quality is a response is confined to this world. In other words, neither God nor humans will exercise patience in the afterlife since the conditions for its existence, namely harm, will be removed. "With the end of the world," writes Ibn al-ʿArabī, "the infliction of harm comes to an end on everyone who is harmed, and with the end of harm, patience itself comes to an end."[30] God is only *al-Ṣabūr* in this world.

Makkī ties patience with others into the virtue of humility, drawing attention to the *mukhbitīn* about whom the Quran says, *And give glad tidings to the humble* (22:34). The eminence of their rank is due in part because they seek neither vengeance nor retribution against those who do them wrong, even though it falls within their right to seek justice. They are people of *faḍl* instead of *ʿadl*,[31] argues Makkī, because they adhere to the preferred path of forgiveness described by God when He says, *And if you punish, then punish with the like of that wherewith you were punished. But if you are patient, it is better* (16:126). Of those who stand in this station, the *maqām al-mukhbitīn*, Makkī declares, "It has been said, they are those who do no wrong to

27. Makkī, *Qūt*, 1:396.
28. Makkī, *Qūt,* 1:396.
29. Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt,* 2:206.
30. Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Futūḥāt*, 2:206.
31. *ʿAdl* is "justice," while *faḍl* may be translated as "favor," "grace," or "bounty." In relation to God, the former involves giving the human being her due, while the latter entails conferring on her undeserving bounty. In interpersonal relations, *faḍl* may entail treating the other with compassion, love and benevolence even when it is entirely unwarranted. In the Quran, divine *faḍl* appears as a recurring motif.

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others, and if they are themselves wronged, they do not seek revenge."[32] In many of the Sufi meditations on patiently forbearing the belligerence of others, we find an Islamic equivalent to the Christian virtue of turning the other cheek.

Finally, there is patience in trial and hardship. When Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 161/778) was asked, "What is the best of deeds?" he replied, "Patience in the face of tribulation (*al-ṣabr ʿind al-ibtilāʾ*)."[33] This entails resignation to fate, one of the most recurring themes in Sufi literature—an ideal reflected in the prayer of the Prophet, "I ask You for contentment after the passing of decree."[34] In Sahl's commentary on the words of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/660), "God loves every sleeping slave," he explains that this is because "they remain still under the flow of divine ordinances, that is, with neither aversion, nor resistance."[35] For our Sufi authorities, *al-ṣabr ʿind al-ibtilāʾ* requires holding the soul back as much as possible from excessive distress, anxiety, and unease, that is, from *jazaʿ* (a Quranic antonym of *ṣabr*[36]). And this may be realized through meditating on the brevity of the life of this world (the arena of trials), the eternal felicity that awaits the pious after death, the wisdom behind divine decree, the cleansing and purification of the soul made possible through hardship, the raising of the soul's rank before God through patience in adversity, and of course, the fact that what God chooses for us is always better than what we might choose for ourselves. As Ibn ʿAṭāʾ Allāh (d. 709/1309) writes,

> Surely a compassionate father who makes his son undergo the rigors of a surgery never intends to inflict his son with pain! Likewise, a doctor may advise a remedy for your health calling for razor-sharp scalpels even though it may cause you intense pain. If you followed your own choice, you would avoid the treatment altogether! But you would only get more sick.[37]

Affliction is also, from the vantage point of Sufi virtue ethics, a mark of divine love,[38] and to patiently endure trials and hardships is to follow the footsteps of the friends of God and the prophets, all of whom suffered. Indeed, as the hadith states, "If God loves a people, He tries them."[39] Or as Sahl would put it, "God did not praise anyone except on account of patience exercised over trials and hardships."[40]

32. Makkī, *Qūt*, 1:395–397.
33. Cited in Makkī, *Qūt*, 1:397.
34. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad,* 5:191.
35. Makkī, *Qūt*, 1:400.
36. E. M. Badawi and M. A. Haleem, *Arabic-English Dictionary of Qurʾanic Usage* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 62.
37. Translation taken, with a slight modification, from Ibn ʿAṭāʾ Allāh, *The Book of Illumination,* trans. Scott Kugle (Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 2005), 64.
38. The most recent studies of love in Sufism include Mohammed Rustom's essay in this volume; Joseph Lumbard, "Love and Beauty in Sufism," in *The Routledge Handbook on Sufism*, 172-186; and Hany T. Ibrahim, "Love in the Writings of Ibn ʿArabi," (PhD diss., University of Calgary, 2020). See also the third chapter ("Rābiʿa the Lover") in Rkia E. Cornell's *Rābiʿa from Narrative to Myth: The Many Faces of Islam's Most Famous Woman Saint, Rābiʿa al-ʿAdawiyya* (London: Oneworld, 2019), 147-212.
39. Tirmidhī, *Zuhd*, 57.
40. Cited in Makkī, *Qūt,* 1:392.

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من نقد التصوّف إلى إصلاح الأخلاق
الكشف عن أعمال شمس الدين عبد الملك الديلميّ (ت 593هـ/1197م)

خالد محمّد عبده

اهتمّ علماء الإسلام الأقدمون بالأخلاق وضمّنوها في كتبهم، فجاءت إمّا مُدْرَجةً في كتب الفقهاء والمفسّرين والمحدّثين والمتكلّمين والصوفيّة وموصولةً بها، أو مفردةً في كتب التزكية والآداب والرقائق والمواعظ والوصايا، غير أنّها لم تصبح علمًا إسلاميًّا قائمًا بذاته له رجالاته وموضوعاته ومناهجه وخطابه ونظامه المعرفيّ. وفي المقابل، تطرّق مفكّرون إسلاميّون ومسلمون محدَثون إلى المسألة الأخلاقيّة، فعمل فريقٌ منهم على إثبات وجود نظريّة أخلاقيّة إسلاميّة تضاهي كبريات الفلسفات العالميّة، ورأى فريقٌ آخر أنّ الأخلاق عند المسلمين صارت جزءًا من الفلسفة العربيّة الإسلاميّة، وأنّها لم تتأصّل في الحقل الدينيّ باعتبارها علمًا من علوم الإسلام، بل ورأوا صعوبةَ تأصّلها. في هذا السياق أتت محاولة سعاد الحكيم لتأصيل علم إسلاميّ جديد هو "علم مكارم الأخلاق."[1]

لم يكن الفكرُ الأخلاقيُّ إذن وقفًا على طائفة من المسلمين دون أخرى، بل أسهمت غير طائفةٍ في بنائه،[2] فتنوّعت وجهات النظر — وربّما المناهج — بتنوّع ثقافة الكاتبين فيه دون أن يكونَ ذلك عاملًا

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1. راجع: سعاد الحكيم، *الموطّأ في علم مكارم الأخلاق، ضمن «موسوعة علم مكارم الأخلاق بين النظرية والتطبيق»: تأصيل علم إسلامي جديد*. (جدّة: دار المنهاج؛ بيروت: دار طوق النجاة، 2020)، 11. وهي موسوعة صدرت في ستّة عشر مجلّدًا، طرحت الحكيم فكرتها وأشرفت على تنفيذها لأعوام طوال. لخّص الدكتور السيّد هاشم محمّد عليّ مهدي — راعي الموسوعة — في المجلّد الأوّل منها فكرة العمل، وأصّلت الحكيم في المجلّد الثاني لعلم مكارم الأخلاق. أمّا المجلّدات التالية فتناول فيها الأساتذة الباحثون الآخرون موضوع الأخلاق بالدراسة والنقاش، انطلاقًا من أخلاق النبوّة وانتهاءً بالأخلاق العمليّة عند صوفيّة الإسلام.

2. راجع مثلًا: الطبرانيّ وابن أبي الدنيا، *مكارم الأخلاق*، تحقيق محمّد عبد القادر أحمد عطا (بيروت: دار الكتب العلميّة، 1989)؛ وأحمد بن حنبل، *كتاب الزهد*، تحقيق محمّد جلال شرف (القاهرة: دار النهضة العربيّة، 1981)؛ وأبو عبد الرحمٰن النسائيّ، *عمل اليوم والليلة*، تحقيق فاروق حمادة (بيروت: مؤسّسة الرسالة، 1985). وقد عُدّ بعض هذه الأعمال معجمًا للقيم أحاط بالجزئيّات الصغيرة للإسهام في تربية المجتمع الإسلاميّ وتنشئته تنشئة سليمة. وقد خلت هذه الأعمال في أغلبها من المصطلحات غير الإسلاميّة، ربّما لاعتمادها في الأساس على نصوص الأحاديث النبويّة والقرآن الكريم. لمزيد من التفاصيل حول هذه المسألة، راجع: محمّد كمال جعفر، *في الفلسفة والأخلاق* (القاهرة: دار الكتب الجامعيّة، 1968)، 240-253.

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من عوامل الاختلاف؛ فعلاوةً على المحدّثين،[3] بنى الفقهاء الفكر الأخلاقيّ بمعالجتهم موضوعات الحسبة والآداب العامّة والحرمات والحرّيّات وغيرها،[4] كما أسهم الصوفيّة بما قدّموه في باب الآداب والأخلاق النظريّة والعمليّة، الأمر الذي حثّ كثيرًا من مؤرّخي الفكر على وضعهم بين مصافّ الأخلاقيّين المسلمين،[5] والإقرار بوجود معالم نظريّة صوفيّة في الأخلاق وبانطواء نصوص المتصوّفة المسلمين على معالم تجمع بين التنظير العلميّ والممارسة العمليّة، وهو أمرٌ يمكن اعتباره مساهمة ذات شأن في مبحث علم الأخلاق أو الفلسفة الأخلاقيّة.[6]

بدءًا من تعريفات التصوّف المشهورة يستطيع المتصفّحُ لأدبيّات التصوّف أن يلمحَ مجموعةً من التعريفات التي أشارت إلى وجهته الأخلاقيّة، ففي حين ركّزت مجموعةٌ من هذه التعريفات على (المعرفة) وأخرى على (الزهد)، ركّز بعضها الآخر على (الأخلاق)، فلا تُخطئ العين مثلًا قولَ الكتّانيّ (ت 322هـ/934م): "التصوّف خُلق فمن زاد عليك في الخُلق زاد عليك في الصفاء،" أو قولَ الجُرَيْريّ (ت 311هـ/923م) ردًّا على سؤال "ما التصوّف؟": هو «الدخول في كلّ خلقٍ سنيٍّ والخروجُ من كلّ خُلقٍ دنيٍّ،» أو قولَ أبي الحسين النوريّ (ت 295هـ/907م): "الصوفيّة قومٌ صفت قلوبُهم من كدورات البشر وآفات النفوس وتحرّروا من شهواتهم، حتّى صاروا في الصفّ الأوّل والدرجة العليا مع الحقّ." وقد قال الجنيد (ت 298هـ/910م) في معنى التصوّف: "أخلاق كريمة ظهرت في زمان كريم من رجل كريم مع قوم كرام."[7] كما قال: "مبنى التصوّف على أخلاق ثمانية من الأنبياء – عليهم الصلاة والسلام —: السخاء وهو لإبراهيم، والرضا وهو لإسحاق، والصبر وهو لأيّوب، والإشارة وهي لزكريّا، والغُرْبة وهي ليحيى، ولبس الصوف وهو لموسى، والسياحة وهي لعيسى، والفقر وهو لمحمّد صلى الله عليه وعليهم أجمعين."[8]

اشتهر الصوفيّةُ بمنحاهم العمليّ وتركيزِهم على المِران والممارسة، لذا جاءت بحوثُهم في الأخلاق – من حيث إنّها جوهرُ الدين — هيكلًا جديدًا يبرز كثيرًا من المعاني الإسلاميّة التي غابت عن أذهان غيرهم من علماء العصر، فكان التصوّف علمًا للأخلاق يستمِدُّ وجودَه — كما رأوا – من واقع أنّ الأخلاقَ روحُ الإسلام، فقرن الصوفيّة الدين بالأخلاق وجعلوا الفرائض فضائل يجب القيام بها، والمحرّماتِ رذائل وأمراضًا نفسيّة يُتوقّى منها وتحتاج إلى علاج.

وقد تناول الصوفيّةُ كثيرًا من المفاهيم الأخلاقيّة بلغتهم الخاصّة،[9] فتحدّثوا عن الشخصيّة الأخلاقيّة من منطلق بيان الصفات التي ينبغي توافرها في الشيخ والمريد باعتبار أنّهما العالم والمتعلّم، وعن شروط السلوك الخلقيّ — من منظور إسلاميّ — من حيث إنّه ضرورة تعانق الصدق والإخلاص والصبر في أيّ عملٍ خُلقيّ. كما تحدّثوا عن الفضائل والرذائل، ولم تكن الرذائل عندهم أضداد الفضائل فحسب، بل سلّطوا الضوء على رذائل تفشّت في عصرهم، كالسعي إلى الخلفاء وتأويل العلم لأغراض غير علميّة، وحبّ بعض العلماء الشهرة.

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3. ناقَشَ أبو اليزيد العجمي في كتابه *دراسات في الفكر الإسلاميّ* منهج المحدّثين في التصنيف في علم الأخلاق الإسلاميّة؛ راجع: أبو يزيد العجميّ، *دراسات في الفكر الإسلامي*. (القاهرة: دار التوزيع والنشر الإسلاميّة، 1991)، 68-71.

4. للتعرّف على تناول الفقهاء لعلم الأخلاق، راجع: حمادي ذويب، "إشكاليّة منزلة الأخلاق في المدوّنة الأصوليّة الفقهيّة،" ضمن *سؤال الأخلاق في الحضارة العربيّة الإسلاميّة* (قطر: المركز العربيّ للأبحاث ودراسة السياسات، 2018)، 347، 380؛ ومعتزّ الخطيب، «البعد الأخلاقيّ والقيميّ للفقه الإسلاميّ،» ضمن أعمال ندوة سؤال الأخلاق والقيم في عالمنا المعاصر (المملكة المغربيّ: الرابطة المحمديّة للعلماء، 2011)، 249-266.

5. راجع: محمّد السيّد الجليند، *قضيّة الخير والشرّ لدى مفكّري الإسلام: أصولها النظريّة — جوانبها الميتافزيقيّة — آثارها التطبيقيّة: دراسة علميّة لمسؤوليّة الإنسان في الإسلام*: (القاهرة: دار قباء الحديثة للطباعة والنشر والتوزيع، 2006)، 123-128.

6. راجع: أحمد محمود صبحي، *الفلسفة الأخلاقيّة في الفكر الإسلاميّ: العقليّون والذوقيّون أو النظر والعمل* (القاهرة: دار المعارف، 1993)، 205-225.

7. ذكر عبد الكريم القشيريّ هذه التعريفات في *الرسالة القشيريّة* 2/551-555، تحقيق عبد الحليم محمود ومحمود بن الشريف (القاهرة: دار الكتب الحديثة، 1966)، 2/551-555.

8. راجع: سعاد الحكيم، *تاج العارفين: الجنيد البغداديّ* (القاهرة: دار الشروق، 2005)، 148-150.

9. يضرب ألكسندر كنيش بأبي الحسين النوريّ مثلًا على كون الأخلاق قاعدة ومنطلقًا للدرب الصوفيّ؛ راجع:
Alexander Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism: A Short History* (Leiden— Boston: Brill, 2000), 60-63.
وتفصّل خاتون سلمى كرشت هذه النقطة في: "أبو الحسين النوريّ: الصورة والآثار" (أطروحة ماجستير، الجامعة الأميركيّة في بيروت، 2010)، 64، 92.

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وإذا تأمّلنا الاتّجاه السائد في كتب التصوّف المشرقيّ حتّى القرن السادس الهجريّ – وفقًا لملاحظة يوسف كَاشْويت — رأينا أنّها تركّز عمومًا على علم التزكية، وعلم اكتساب الأخلاق الحميدة، واجتناب سفاسف الأعمال. وبالمقارنة مع صوفيّة المشرق، فإنّ المعتبرين في المغرب – أيضًا — اتّخذوا التزكية وعلم الأخلاق مبدأين مسلّم بهما لا يُستغنى عنهما، إلّا أنّهم جنحوا إلى تدبّر آيات الله في الآفاق وإلى العلوم الكونيّة، وأطالوا التأمّل في صنع الله، واتّخذوا العبرة من الشاهد إلى الغائب مبدأً فكريًّا ومنهجًا روحيًّا. ويفسّر هذا التباين المشربيّ بين التصوّف في المشرق من جهة ومدرسة المعتبرين في المغرب من جهة أخرى — في نظرنا — ظهور كبار العارفين في المغرب والأندلس بدءًا من القرن السابع الهجريّ، كابن عربيّ (ت 638هـ/1240م) والحراليّ المراكشيّ (ت 638هـ/1241م) وعفيف الدين التلمسانيّ (ت 690هـ/1291م) وتأثيرهم العظيم في الميدان الحضاريّ والفكريّ والروحيّ عبر القرون.[10]

مميّزات الفكر الأخلاقيّ عند الصوفيّة

أوّلًا: لم يكن البحث الأخلاقيّ عند الصوفيّة من قبيل الترف العلميّ، بل كان تطبيقًا لأوامر دينيّة وخطّة لإصلاح مجتمعاتهم التي ساءت أحوالها. لذا أُثر عنهم نقدُهم للعصر وتوجيهُهم النصحَ للعلماء الذين يتكالبون على أبواب السلاطين، كما أُثر عنهم أقوالٌ تحقّق توازن الأفراد الذين بهرتهم زخارف الترف في الحياة حولهم، وذلك بتذكيرهم بالحلال والحرام، وما توجبه رعاية الله من سلوك أو قول.[11]

ثانيًا: إنّ المتابع لنُطق الصوفيّة — في مجالسهم التربويّة أو كتاباتهم في الوصايا والنصائح — وتكلّمهم في المفاهيم الأخلاقيّة يلحظ ربط المفاهيم بالصفات الإلهيّة في كتاباتهم (صفات الفعل لا صفات الذات) وهم في هذا منطقيّون ما دام مصدرهم في كلّ نظر وسلوك الكتابَ والسنّة اللذين لم يتركا شيئًا ممّا يحتاجه المرء من الأدب مع نفسه ومع من يتّصل به من أهله وإخوانه وفي صلته بربّه إلّا شرّعا له وفصّلا القول فيه.[12]

ثالثًا: ممّا يميّز الصوفيّةَ في تناولهم للأخلاق اهتمامُهم بإصلاح الباطن، والحديث عن عيوب النفس وأمراضها، فما أُثر عنهم من أقوال ومعالجات في هذا الجانب يجعلهم من المساهمين في علم النفس الأخلاقيّ. وقد تمثّل ذلك بصورة واضحة في إنتاج متقدّمي الصوفيّة من أمثال أبي سليمان الدارانيّ (ت 215هـ/830م)، والحارث المحاسبيّ (ت 243هـ/857م)، وسهل التستريّ (ت 283هـ/896م)، وأبي طالب المكّيّ (ت 386هـ/996م)، ثمّ في إنتاج أمثال الغزاليّ (ت 505هـ/1111م) والديلميّ (ت 593هـ/1197م).

رابعًا: إنّ اهتمام الصوفيّة بالعمل والممارسة الخُلقيّة كان هدفَ أعمالهم الأوّل، ولم يكن حديثهم النظريّ إلّا تعليمًا ينبغي أن يُطبّق ليكتسب قيمته، فكما قال دي بور في *تاريخ الفلسفة في الإسلام*:

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10. راجع: يوسف كَاشْويت، «تدبّر آيات الله بين الخلق والحقّ،» *مجلّة جوهر الإسلام* 18، العدد 1-2 (2018): 49-57. وقد ألقى الأستاذ يوسف كاشويت هذا النصّ في أحد الدروس الحسنيّة في المغرب، سنة 2018/1439.

11. راجع: أبو الوفا التفتازانيّ، *مدخل إلى التصوّف الإسلاميّ* (القاهرة: دار الثقافة للنشر والتوزيع، 1991)، 15. ويرى التفتازانيّ أنّه من الخطأ أن نعزل العلم عن التصوّف أو القيم الأخلاقيّة بدعوى الموضوعيّة؛ فما الذي يمنع العالِم بالكون وموجوداته من الإيمان بالله والتخلّق بكلّ خُلق رفيع؟ ألا يكون هذا ضمانًا لعدم انحراف العلم في عصرنا عن مساره الطبيعيّ وهو نفع الإنسان؟ يحلّ إذًا الجمع بين التصوّف والعلم أزمة المسلم المعاصر. قارن: التفتازانيّ، *الإنسان والكون في الإسلام* (القاهرة: دار الثقافة للطباعة والنشر، 1975)، 96-98.

12. راجع: أبو اليزيد العجمي، *دراسات في الفكر الإسلامي*، المبحث الثاني، 51-92.

167.0 x 240.0 mm

> إذا تكلّمنا عن التصوّف فنحن نعالج نظامًا عمليًّا أساسه دينيّ أو روحيّ ولكن للأنظمة العمليّة صدًى في الفكر دائمًا، وهي تتّخذ من ذلك صيغة نظريّة، ولم يكن بدٌّ من أفعال لها أسرارُها، ومن مسلّكين يقرّبون ما بين الإنسان وربّه، ويحاول هؤلاء أن يطّلعوا على أسرار تلك الأفعال ثمّ يُظهروا خواصَّ مريديهم عليها، وأن يتّخذوا لأنفسهم في سلسلة مراتب الوجود مكانًا يصلون فيه بين الله والناس.[13]

لعلّ في هذه الإشارات المختصرة ما يدعم انتقادنا كون الصوفيّ يضع فكرة إصلاح الجماعة في مرتبة ثانويّة ويركّز على ترقّيه الشخصيّ نحو الله، ويحاول باتّحاده مع الله أن يغدوَ وحده الإنسان الكامل، ولكنّه إنسان حزين ومنعزل ومنفصل عن البيئة الاجتماعيّة،[14] ذلك أنّ الصوفيّة شاركوا فعليًّا في تغيير المجتمع ومحاولة إصلاحه بالكلمة والنصح وأحيانًا بالتمرّد عليه، ويمكن للقارئ المنصف التعرّف على عدّة تيّارات صوفيّة تبدّد ما شاع عنهم من أنّهم مهتمّون بالذات والفرد وحسب، ولا علاقة لهم بالمجتمع، ويمكن إجمال تلك التيّارات على النحو التالي:

١. تيّارات صوفيّة معنيّة بإصلاح الأخلاق — ومنها ما هو معنيٌّ بإصلاح الأخلاق الفرديّة بوصفها مدخلًا مناسبًا لإصلاح المجتمع. وتمثّل ذلك في الكتب التي خُصِّصت للحديث عن أخلاق الشيوخ، وأخلاق المريدين.

٢. تيّارات تدخّلت فعليًّا في حركة المجتمع، وحاولت تغييرها انطلاقًا من تنظيم معيّن مفعِّلةً مبدأ تغيير المنكر، والغالب على هذه التيّارات أنّ تجربتها الروحيّة مزيج من الفقه والتصوّف، فتدخّلت مباشرة في التغيير. وتروي لنا كتب التراجم والطبقات أخبارًا عن مجموعة من الصوفيّة تريق الخمر أو تعترض على سياسة حاكم من الحكّام ترى فيها مخالفة، أو مجموعة أخرى تعقد في المساجد مجالس الوعظ العامّة، ومن المعلوم أنّ حركات الوعظ هي ألصق بالمجتمع.[15]

٣. تيّارٌ عينه على المجتمع لكنّه يتمرّد عليه، محاولًا أن يدفع عن نفسه تهمة الرياء، فيكتم الفضائل ويسترها تمامًا عن الناس، وربّما يتظاهر بما قد يُفضي إلى إساءة الظنّ به، ومثال ذلك الملامتيّة، فمن أصول هذه الطريقة إخفاء المظاهر التي تنمّ عن الحياة الروحيّة — خاصّة ما يشير منها إلى الصلة بين العبد وربّه — والظهور بين الناس بالمظاهر التي يبدو أنّها لا تتّفق مع ظاهر الشرع استجلابًا لملامة الناس وتأنيبهم؛ لذا سمّوا بالملامتيّة.[16] وقد سئل حمدون القصّار عن طريق الملامة فقال: "ترك التزيّن للخلق بحال، وترك طلب رضاهم في نوع من الأخلاق والأحوال وألّا يأخذك في الله لومة لائم."[17]

إنّ مطالعتنا لكتب الأخلاق الصوفيّة توقفنا على حقيقة مُفادها أنّ أخلاق القوم لم تكن هجرانًا للعالم، بل كانت ترويضًا للنفس وتزكيةً لها ليتوافق وجودها مع الروحانيّة العميقة التي تجلّيها الكائنات وظواهرها بما في ذلك الأفعال الإنسانيّة.[18]

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13. راجع: دي بور، *تاريخ الفلسفة في الإسلام*، ترجمة محمّد عبد الهادي أبو ريدة (بيروت: دار النهضة العربيّة، 1954)، 109 .

14. راجع: جون بول شارناي، *روح الشريعة الإسلاميّة*، ترجمة محمّد الحاجّ سالم، مراجعة الطيب بوعزة (بيروت: مركز نهوض للدراسات والنشر، 2019)، 182. ويخصّص الكاتب الفصل الخامس «خطاطة أخلاقية» (173-191) للحديث عن الفكر الأخلاقيّ عند صوفيّة الإسلام، ولا يخلو هذا الفصل من الأحكام التعسّفيّة تجاه التصوّف الإسلاميّ.

15. راجع على سبيل المثال: جورج كتّوره، «التصوّف والسلطة: نماذج من القرن السادس الهجريّ في المغرب والأندلس،» *مجلّة الاجتهاد* 3، العدد 12 (1991): 198. وقارن: عامر النجّار، *الطرق الصوفيّة في مصر* (القاهرة: دار المعارف، 1993)، 55-58.

16. أبو العلا عفيفي، التصوّف: *الثورة الروحيّة في الإسلام* (القاهرة: دار المعارف، 1963)، 283، 284. وقد طوّرت الطريقة القلندريّة — التي وُصفت بالتطرّف في عاداتها – الملامتيّة، وفرّق السهروورديّ بينهما في *عوارف المعارف* قائلًا: "والفرق بين الملامتيّ والقلندريّ: أنّ الملامتيّ يعمل في كتم العبادات، والقلندريّ يعمل في تخريب العادات، والملامتيّ يتمسّك بكلّ أبواب البرّ والخير ويرى الفضل فيه، ولكنّه يخفي الأعمال ويوقف نفسه موقف العوامّ في هيئته وملبوسه وحركاته وأموره؛ سترًا للحال لئلّا يُفْطَن له، وهو مع ذلك متطلّع إلى طلب المزيد،" بخلاف القلندريّ الذي لم يقيّد نفسه بفرائض الشريعة أصلًا؛ انظر: السهروورديّ، *عوارف المعارف، على هامش إحياء علوم الدين* (القاهرة: مؤسّسة الحلبي، 1967)، 100.

17. راجع: عبد الرحمن السلميّ، *الملامتيّة والصوفيّة وأهل الفتوّة*، تحقيق أبي العلا عفيفي (القاهرة: دار إحياء الكتب العربيّة؛ عيسى البابي الحلبي، 1945)، 52.

18. راجع: عبد الحقّ منصف، «فينومينولوجيا التديّن والمسلكيّات الأخلاقيّة في ضوء التمثّل الجماليّ الصوفيّ للعالم،» *مجلّة الحياة الثقافيّة* 210 (2010): 40.

167.0 x 240.0 mm

من نقد التصوّف إلى إصلاح الأخلاق

أعلن الديلميّ عن قلقه إزاء ما تقوله الصوفيّة عن الأحوال والمقامات، وما يخضع للذوق من كلام ذي صلة بالدين لا يقوى الكثيرون على فهمه. وحتّى يستريح من عناء هذا القلق — كما هو الحال عند خصوم التصوّف — أنكر على الصوفيّة أشدّ الإنكار، ودافع عن رأيه، وكتب في نقدهم، ثمّ آل الأمر إلى غير ذلك، بعد أن أصابه مرضٌ أقعده بدنًا، إلّا أنّ روحه جالت في عوالم أخرى، فذاق شيئًا ممّا كان قد أنكره، وقال في ذلك:

> جزتُ عوالم الملكوت والجبروت في خصيرة سرّي، وأشرفتُ على فراديس القدس، وضربتُ الآزال في الآباد، وتمكّنتُ ممّا لا يعبّر التعريف عنه بعبارات الحروف والكلمات، ولا يومى إليه بالإشارات،[19] فاضطررت إلى القبول، وأيقنت بما لا يُسمع في العقول. فبعد الإيقان بمشاهدة الأرواح ومعاينة الأسرار، لم أقتصر على ما عندي، حتّى تتبّعت أقوال العرفاء وأحوال الأولياء.[20]

> وحفّزت التجربةُ الديلميَّ أن يتتبّع "آياتِ القرآن وأحاديث الرسول" ليكون حديثه عن الأحوال والمقامات وكلّ ما يتعلّق بعلوم التصوّف أَثْبَتَ في العقول وأقرب إلى القبول، لأنّه كان حريصًا على أن يُريَ الآخرين ما كان مجهولًا عنه قبل تصوّفه وانشغل بإدانته وقتًا طويلًا.[21]

> ولا شيء "يدفعُ الشبهات إذا أتت ويزيل الشكوك" – كما يقول الديلميّ — أفضل من القرآن، فقد قال الله تعالى لنبيّه عليه السلام: ﴿فَإِنْ كُنْتَ فِي شَكٍّ مِمَّا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ فَسْئَلِ الَّذِينَ يَقْرَءُونَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ﴾.[22]

بناء على ما تقدّم، أخذ الديلميّ يطالع كلّ ما وقع تحت يديه من مؤلّفات علماء التصوّف ليتعرّف على رؤيتهم لله والعالم والإنسان، ويسجّل لنا أذواقهم في التعامل مع النصوص الدينيّة، ويدعم ما وصل إليه من أفكار وآراء. وتوالت تصانيف الديلميّ، فألّف في علم الكلام، وشرح العديد من النصوص الصوفيّة الأولى، وأرّخ لعلماء التصوّف السابقين، كما ساهم في علم الأخلاق الإسلاميّة بتأليفه كتاب *إصلاح الأخلاق*. وفيما يلي تعريف بجهوده في هذا العمل الذي خصّصه لدراسة الأخلاق والعناية بها.

إصلاح الأخلاق

يتّفق أغلب من ترجموا للديلميّ على نسبة مجموعة من التصانيف الصوفيّة إليه[23] من ضمنها كتاب *إصلاح الأخلاق* الذي ألّفه بناء على طلب بعض الراغبين في معرفة طريق القوم الصوفيّة وإصلاحًا لما أفسده الفلاسفة بتشويشهم على العامّة أو كما يقول الديلميّ:

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19. في الأصل: الإشارات، والصواب ما أثبتنا.
20. راجع: الديلميّ، *تفسير فتوح الرحمن*، مخطوط تركيا: نسخة بايزيد ولي الدين أفندي، رقم 214، ورقة 1أ.
21. لتفصيل أكثر عن هذه المسألة، راجع: خالد محمّد عبده، «آثار شمس الدين الديلميّ المخطوطة،» *مجلّة علوم المخطوط* 1 (2018): 353-382.
22. القرآن 10: 94.
23. راجع: حاجّي خليفة، *كشف الظنون عن أسامي الكتب والفنون* (بيروت: دار إحياء التراث العربيّ، 1980)، 81/1، 351؛ وإسماعيل بن محمّد البغداديّ، *هديّة العارفين: أسماء المؤلّفين وآثار المصنّفين* (بيروت: دار إحياء التراث العربيّ، 1980)، 489/1؛ وإسماعيل بن محمّد البغداديّ، *إيضاح المكنون في الذيل على كشف الظنون* (بيروت: دار إحياء التراث العربيّ، 1980)، 610/2؛ والزركليّ، *الأعلام* (القاهرة: مطابع كوستا تسوماس وشركاه، 1954)، 250/6.

167.0 x 240.0 mm

> والآن أذكر ما سألني بعض إخواني من الصوفيّة أن أشرح لهم ما أظلم عليهم، وأكشف ما أبهم إليهم، وأبيّن ما لبس عليهم، من مصطلحات الصوفيّة ومعارفهم، ثمّ خلطتها الفلاسفة بفلسفتهم، وشوّش عليهم الزنادق بزندقتهم، ومزجوا سفسطتهم القبيحة بطريقتهم الطيّبة النقيّة الحسنة، وأميّز الصحيح من الفاسد، وأخلّص الحقّ من الباطل، وأخبرهم بماهيّة المسالك والمقامات، والمنازل والدرجات، في طريقة الحقيقة، والحقيقة السحيقة، ومعارج الطالبين، على مدارج السالكين، وأعلّمهم ما يعاونهم في مسالكهم إلى الله تعالى، ويقوّيهم في مراقيهم إليه جلّ وعلا، ويُصلح أخلاقهم، ويفتح أغلاقهم، مع الاحتراز عن الحشو والتطويل، والاقتصار على ما ذكرنا عليه التعويل.[24]

وذكر الديلميّ في *مرآة الأرواح* سببًا آخر لتأليفه كتابًا في علم الأخلاق، وذلك عندما سأله أحدهم شرح ماهيّة الأوصاف الحميدة والذميمة وكيفيّة إصلاحها وإزالة فسادها وأعرض الديلميّ عن ذلك. وقد علّل سبب إعراضه بأنّ همم أهل الزمان قصيرة، والكلام في إصلاح الأخلاق طويل، وأحال سائله على المشايخ المتقدّمين، ذلك أنّهم شرحوا ذلك في كتبٍ طوال، فقال:

> نحو *قوت القلوب* لأبي طالب المكّيّ، *وشرح التعرّف على مذهب التصوّف* لإسماعيل المستمليّ[25] *وإحياء العلوم* للغزاليّ رحمهم الله، فرأيتُ أنّ الأهمّ والأولى بتقدّم الشرح ما شرحت، وقد قال النبيّ عليه السلام: من عرف نفسه فقد عرف ربّه. ورُوي عن عيسى عليه السلام: اعرف نفسك تعرف ربّك. ورأيت في كلام المتقدّمين تخبيطًا في ذلك، فشرحتها تشريحًا لذلك المعنى، وسيأتيكم بشرح الأخلاق بتوفيق الله تعالى مقتصرًا أو مطوّلًا كيف ما يتّفق إن شاء الله وحده. ثمّ من بعد سنين وأعوام وفّقني الله تعالى حتّى صنّفتُ كتاب *إصلاح الأخلاق* فاطلب حيث وضعتُ في دار الكتب في المسجد الجامع العتيق بهمدان حتّى تستفيد، تجد بخطّي إن شاء الله وحده.[26]

يبيّن هذا النصّ اعتداد الديلميّ بنفسه وبما عالجه في كتابه من "تخبيط المتقدّمين" ووُفّق فيه في بيان كيفيّة إصلاح الأخلاق، وجعل من كتابه امتدادًا لتقليد صوفيّ سابق يقتضي المشاركة في علم الأخلاق.

بنية كتاب إصلاح الأخلاق

جعل الديلميّ كتابه في ثلاثة وخمسين بابًا، في كلّ باب عدّة فصول عالج فيها أمّهات الأوصاف الذميمة في بداية عمله، من خسّة ولؤم وكبر وخيلاء وهوى وعُجب وجهل وغفلة ورياء، منتقلًا من التخلية إلى التحلية بأمّهات الأخلاق الحميدة. وقد اعتمد في تقسيمه على قوى النفس كما تركها أفلاطون — أسوة بمن سبقه من علماء المسلمين — واقتفى أثر معظم علماء المسلمين في إحصاء الفضائل الفرديّة. ولم تخلُ أفكاره عن الفضيلة من عناصر تقليديّة موروثة، إلّا أنّه وسّع نطاق الفضائل لتشمل سائر أنواعها على المستويين الفرديّ والاجتماعيّ. وقد أحال كثيرًا من الفضائل إلى خصائص حيويّة تشكّل بناءً عضويًّا نابضًا مفعمًا بالحركة والحياة، الأمر الذي جعل لفلسفة الأخلاق عنده أبعادًا ثلاثة: البعد النفسيّ الذي يعني الفرد مع نفسه ومشاعره مع ربّه ومعاملاته مع الناس، والبعد الاجتماعيّ الذي يعني مجتمعه وبيئته ومعاملاته مع الناس، والبعد الميتافيزيقيّ الذي يعني عقيدته ومبادئه ومُثله.[27]

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24. راجع: الديلميّ، *إصلاح الأخلاق*، مخطوط شهيد عليّ 1346، ورقة 88ب.
25. كذا بالأصل، والصواب المستملي. والإشارة هنا إلى أبي إبراهيم إسماعيل بن محمّد بن عبد الله المستملي البخاريّ (ت 434هـ/1043) الذي شرح كتاب الكلاباذيّ (ت 380هـ/990م) في أربعة مجلّدات باللغة الفارسيّة؛ راجع: *شرح التعرّف لمذهب التصوّف* (طهران: دانشكاه طهران، 1967).
26. راجع: الديلميّ، *مرآة الأرواح*، مخطوط شهيد علي 1346، ورقة 83ب.
27. اتّسمت فلسفة الغزاليّ الأخلاقيّة بهذه الأبعاد الثلاثة، وقد درسها عبد القادر محمود في كتابه *الفلسفة الصوفيّة في الإسلام: مصادرها ونظريّاتها ومكانها من الدين والحياة* (القاهرة: دار الفكر العربيّ، 1967)، 247.

167.0 x 240.0 mm

النقول: شاع في زمنٍ بين العلماء أن يأخذوا ممّن سبقهم دون أن يشيروا إلى ذلك، وقد وجدنا هذا عند الديلميّ كما هو عند الغزاليّ في الإحياء. وتفسّر معالجة الديلميّ موضوع الأخلاق كثيرًا من الغوامض السابقة، وتفصّل ما كان موجزًا؛ ذلك أنّه ضرب أمثلة شارحة ومستمدّة من حياة الصوفيّة أو من حياته الخاصّة، حتّى أضحت تلك الموضوعات الأخلاقيّة واضحة لقارئ كتابه.

ويميّز كتابَه كثرةُ الاستشهاد بالآيات والأحاديث، فلا يطرق موضوعًا إلّا ويحشد له منها ما يؤكّد المعنى الذي يقصده، وحسبك أن تعلم أنّ نسخة المخطوطة — وهي مائة ورقة تقريبًا — تحتوي على جملة وفيرة من الأحاديث النبويّة والآيات الكريمة، وإنّ استدلاله بهذه النصوص في مجموعه جيّد ودقيق. كما يجد قارئ كتاب *إصلاح الأخلاق* أنّ الديلميّ يشير في ثنايا كتابه إلى قضايا عديدة دون أن يقف عندها، ويحيل — على عادته — إلى مؤلّفاته الأخرى التي تناول فيها تلك القضايا، ولعلّه يقوم بذلك تفاديًا لتكرار كلامه أحيانًا، ومخافة التطويل أحيانًا أخرى.

مخطوط إصلاح الأخلاق

يضمّ مجموع مؤلّفات الديلميّ المحفوظ في مكتبة شهيد عليّ بتركيا تحت رقم 1346 تسعة كتب في علم الكلام والتصوّف، أطولها كتاب *إصلاح الأخلاق* الذي يقع بين الورقة 86 والورقة 180، والذي يضمّ في الورقة الواحدة سبعة وعشرين سطرًا، في الواحد منها حوالي أربع عشرة كلمة. وقد اخترتُ نموذجًا من الكتاب تحدّث فيه الديلميّ عمّا يمكن تسميته "أخلاق العائلة الصوفيّة" والذي عبّر فيه عن رأيه في مسألة زواج المريد الصوفيّ، وهي محلّ اختلاف بين الصوفيّة؛ فمنهم من أنكر على المريد بناء أسرةٍ تصرفه عن التعلّق باللّه وتقطع عليه طريق سيره، ومنهم من رأى ذلك معينًا له واتّباعًا من المريد لسنّة الرسول صلى الله عليه وسلّم. وقد لامس البحث في هذه المسألة أغلب من كتبوا عن موضوع «المرأة الصوفيّة،"[28] أو «دور المرأة في التصوّف الإسلاميّ."[29] ويكشف لنا هذا النموذج عن صورة للمرأة لا تُعالَج بشكل دقيق في الأدبيّات العربيّة، وعلى الرغم ممّا حظيت به المرأة من مكانة وتأثير في عالم التصوّف باعتراف كبار أعلامه،[30] إلّا أنّنا لا ننتظر من الأدبيّات الصوفيّة في حديثها عن المرأة أن تكون أكثر جمالًا وإنصافًا لها، فتلك الأدبيّات ابنة عصرها، وأغلب من نقلوا لنا المرويّات المعبّرة عن ثراء تجربة المرأة الصوفيّة ومشاركتها في إعادة بناء حيوات الكثيرين وتشكيلها، نقلوا مرويّات أخرى مضادّة لا تختلف عن مرويّات المدوّنة الفقهيّة التي يندّد بها بعض المنتسبين إلى الفضاء الصوفيّ. ويكفي المرء أن يراجع الفصل الخاصّ بالتزويج وأحكام النساء في كتاب قوت *القلوب* لأبي طالب المكّيّ، ليرى أنّ المرأة هي مثال النفس الأمّارة بالسوء واللوّامة، وهي الحجاب الذي يقطع على المريد سيره إلى ربّه، والحديث عنها حديث عن مفعول لا فاعل! وقد ورث كثير من الصوفيّة أفكار صاحب القوت[31] ورسّخها في أذهان مريديه وقارئيه، وظلّ التدوين في شأنها مستمرًّا شعرًا ونثرًا.

28. راجع على سبيل المثال دراسة توفيق بن عامر، "نظرة الروميّ إلى المرأة،" ضمن *الكتاب* (120) *المولويّة والتصوّف: التاريخ – النصوص — الآفاق* (دبي: مركز المسبار للدراسات والبحوث، ديسمبر 2016)، 153-176.

29. راجع على سبيل المثال دراسة عرين سلامة قدسي، "ملاحظات حول دور المرأة ومكانتها في التصوّف الإسلاميّ المبكّر،" *مجلّة الكرمل* 32-33 (2012-2011): 146-174.

30. راجع على سبيل المثال: سعاد الحكيم، *المرأة والتصوّف والحياة* (بيروت: كنز ناشرون، 2017). قد أظهرت الحكيم في كتابها نظرة أعلام كبار من الصوفيّة للمرأة — كذي النون المصريّ وبايزيد البسطاميّ وابن عربيّ — كما كشفت عن نموذج فاعل في التأليف الصوفيّ ومسهم فيه، هو نموذج ستّ عجم بنت النفيس بن طُرَز البغداديّة (ت. بعد 686ه).

31. راجع: أبو طالب المكّيّ، *قوت القلوب في معاملة المحبوب ووصف طريق المريد إلى مقام التوحيد*، تحقيق محمود الرضواني (القاهرة: مكتبة دار التراث، 2001)، 3/1603-1648.

167.0 x 240.0 mm

[نموذج من كتاب إصلاح الأخلاق]

بابُ أمّهات الصفات [99ب] الحميدة والذميمة

اعلم أنّ الله تعالى وتقدّس ركّب في الإنسان أربع صفات، وهي كلّ ما سمّيناها: ملكيّة وبهيميّة وسبعيّة وشيطنة. هي أمّهات كثير من الصفات الحميدة والذميمة. أمّا الملكيّة فكلّ ما يأتي منه خير صالح مطلوب من الإنسان لا شرّ فيه، وهي ملازمة الطاعات ومخالفة المعاصي من كلّ وجه، وكذلك دوام القيام إلى طلب رضا الله تعالى، وإقامة ما أمر الله به، والاحتراز عمّا نهاه الله عنه، إلّا خصلة واحدة، وهي المكث والوقوف على مقام واحد من الأعمال، لا يعلو عنه، ولا ينزل منه. فأمّا ما لا ينزل منه حسن مطلوب من الإنسان. فأمّا ما لا يرتقي منه فذلك غير محمود من الإنسان، بل الله تعالى إنّما خلقه على ما خلقه من الصفات ليرتقي كلّ يوم ما دام في دار التكليف. قال النبيّ عليه السلام: "من استوى يوماه فهو مغبون، ومن كان أمسه خيرًا من يومه فهو ملعون."[32]

إذا كان كذلك فلا بدّ من تربية ذلك الصفة للسير إلى الله تعالى والارتقاء إليه تعالى، وذلك إنّما يكون بارتقاء الإنسان في كلّ يوم، بل في كلّ لحظة إلى مقام أرفع ممّا كان من قبل، وأقرب إلى الله تعالى وإلى معرفته تعالى، وطريق ذلك إنّما هو مباشرة الطاعات والأعمال الصالحة المقرّبة إلى الله تعالى، الموجبة لمعرفة ذاته وصفاته ونعوته وأنبيائه وملائكته وكتبه، وأشباه ذلك، قد أشرنا إليها من قبل.

أمّا الزهد والاحتراز عن الدنيا والمعاصي لا يُحتاج فيها إلى تربية الصفة الملكيّة، فإنّها بجبلّتها محترزة عن ذلك، وإنّما المحتاج إليها الارتقاء من مقام إلى مقام على عجل؛ كي يموت ذلك الصفة عن العكوف والوقوف على مقام واحد، ويألف الارتقاء دائمًا، ثمّ بواقي الصفات، أعني البهيميّة والشيطنة والسبعيّة والعقل والسرّ والإيمان والمحبّة، كلّ واحدة منها تعين النفس على ذلك التربية للصفة الملكيّة.

أمّا البهيميّة فلا فائدة فيها إلّا معاونة النفس على ترك الدنيا، وسائر ما لا يعنيه، ثمّ ترك الآخرة بجميع ما فيها، ثمّ ترك النفس لنفسه إلى أن يترك كلّ ما سوى الله وصفاته وطاعته تعالى وتقدّس، ويرضى بقضاء شهوة عاجلة، وسدّ جوعة حاضرة، ولا يذكر حاجة الغد، ويألف الكسل والبطالة والنوم والغفلة، بل يسلّط عليها الملكيّة بالصلاح والطاعة، والسبعيّة بالشجاعة؛ فيؤدّبها[33] بدوام أعمال الآخرة، وترك الدنيا يرتقي بها إلى ترك الآخرة، ثمّ إلى ترك النفس وحِشمة النفس إلى ترك كلّ شيء سوى الله، وسوى طاعته تعالى، فهذا هو تربية صفة البهيميّة وتقويتها وإصلاحها.

فأمّا تربية صفة الشيطنة: اعلم أنّه لا خير فيها إلّا في الأمور العظام الهائلة، والمهالك الشديدة، يقتحم الإنسان فيها بقوّتها، ولا يبالي إن هلك أو ملك، قَتل أو قُتل؛ فيسلّط المريد عليها الملكيّة، أعني أنّه يحافظ عليها بقوّة صفة الملكيّة؛ كي يصرفه عن كلّ ما لا يرضي به ربّه تعالى، ويستعمل هذه الصفة في إلقاء النفس على أعماله الدينيّة العظام الكبيرة نحو صيام [100أ] الأيّام كلّها، وقيام الليالي عمومها، والغزوات في سبيل الله، ومسافرة الحجّ في كلّ سنة راجلًا على قدر ما يقوى النفس عليها، ولا يلقيها في شيء ممّا نهاه الله تعالى. فبمثل ذلك التربية تقوية الصفة الشيطنة، واستصلاحها وتربيتها، ثمّ فوائد تربيتها بذلك إنّما تظهر في عوالم المكاشفات على ما نبيّن من بعد إن شاء الله وحده.

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32. رواه الديلميّ في *مسند الفردوس*، تحقيق السعيد بسيوني زغلول (بيروت: دار الكتب العلميّة، 1986)، 611/3، حديث رقم 5910.
33. الأصل فيؤدّيها، والصواب ما أثبتنا.

167.0 x 240.0 mm

وأمّا السبعيّة: ففيها المنافع والمضارّ، بالشجاعة والشهامة، والحدّة والسرعة، ويحتاج إليها في طريق الله تعالى، ولكن يؤدّبها ويستعملها في الأمور الدينيّة، والمعاملات المحمودة الصالحة للدين، والسير في طلب الحقّ اليقين، ويحافظ عليها كيلا تنضمّ إلى الشيطنة ويوافقها في المعاملات الباطلة، واكتساب المحظورات المحرّمة، وجمع الدنيا والمال والعياذ باللّٰه، فإنّه يهلك بذلك في الدنيا عاجلًا، وفي العقبى آجلًا أبدًا مؤبّدًا، فكان تربية هذه الصفات كلّها يشاكل بعضها بعضًا، وهي استعمالها في الأعمال الدينيّة، وفي طلب الله تعالى، إلى أن يصل إلى الله تعالى، فإذا وصل يستعملها في المعاريج في عوالم الحقّ جلّ وعلا إلى أن يموت. واعلم أنّ فوائد هذه الصفات التي ذكرناها في المعاملات الدينيّة في الشريعة والطريقة ظاهرة كما أشرنا. وأمّا في عالم الحقيقة وفي المعاريج فيها أبلغ وأعلى، وكأنّه ما خلق إلّا لذلك الفوائد.

وأمّا الملكيّة مسّت الحاجة إليها؛ لأنّ ذلك النفس الإنسانيّ لمّا خلقها الله تعالى للارتقاء والمعاريج إليه تعالى، ولتكون خليفة الله في عوالم الله تعالى، وإنّها جسمانيّة مخلوقة من التراب، لم يكن له بدّ من خواصّ الصفات والروحانيّات، وهي التي سمّيناها ملكيّة؛ كيلا يكون غريب عوالم الأرواح من كلّ وجه؛ خلق الله تعالى في الإنسان ذلك الصفة الملكيّة، بها صار أهلًا للارتقاء إلى عوالم الأرواح الروحانيّة. وقد بيّنّا في كتاب محكّ النفس أنّ الله تعالى ألقى على عجين طينة الإنسان عند ابتداء خلقته خمرة، وهي قطعة نور روحانيّة بها صار صالحًا للالتحاق بالروحانيّات، فههنا خلق فيه أيضًا ذلك الصفة الملكيّة فهذه الفائدة.

وأما البهيميّة مسّت الحاجة إليها؛ ليقوى بها على ترك الدنيا، ثمّ على ترك العقبى، ثمّ ترك كلّ شيء سوى الله تعالى، كما سبق ذكره.

وأمّا الشيطنة مسّت الحاجة إليها في أمور الدين كما ذكرنا، من الاقتحام في الأمور العظام، وأمّا في عوالم الله تعالى وعوالم الروحانيّات، فإنّه يستقبله في سيره ومعاريجه بحار النيران، وجبال الأفاعي، وأشباه ذلك من الشدائد المنكرة الشديدة، فلا يتجاسر على الاقتحام فيها، وإلقاء النفس عليها إلّا بقوّة صفة الشيطنة، فأعطاه الله تعالى هذه الصفة، حتّى إذا بلغ إلى مثل ذلك الشدائد، يفتح فاه، ويبتلع بحار النيران، وجبال الأفاعي، ولو بلغ إلى جهنّم مثلًا، يحسو سبعة أطباقها، كما يحسو أحدكم حسوًا، ويشرب كما يشرب جُلّاب السكّر [100ب].

وأمّا السبعيّة: فإنّما خلقها الله لفوائد: الشجاعة، والسرعة، والحدّة في الخيرات، كما ذكرنا، ولفائدة أعظم من ذلك، وهو أنّه خلق شريف، وله أعداء وحسّاد يقصدونه حسدًا من كلّ أنواع المخلوقات من الروحانيّات والجسمانيّات والجنّ والملك، فأعطاه الله تعالى هذه الصفة، وتجلّى له بصفة الهيبة، وألقى عليه المهابة، حتّى لو رآه جبريل أو مثله من الملائكة المقرّبين يتجاوز عنهم، ويرتقي فوقهم إلى أعلى علّيّين يهابون ويخافون منه، فلا يقصدونه هيبة منهم، فغيره منهم. إذا عرفت ذلك؛ علمت فوائد هذه الصفات، وكيفيّة تربيتها وتقويتها واستعمالها فيما خُلق لها، والله وليّ العصمة والتوفيق.

اعلم أنّ هذه ثمانية أنواع الصفات، أربعة منها في القلب وهي: العقل، والهمّة، والإيمان، والمحبّة. وأربعة منها في جملة النفس لا تختصّ بالقلب وهي: الملكيّة، والبهيميّة، والسبعيّة، والشيطنة، ثمّ تنضمّ إليها[34] صفتان كبيرتان: الشهوة والنفرة، ومقامهما وتأثيرهما في النفس والبدن جميعًا، يعني أنّهما يصيران مشتهيين، نافرين بذلك الشهوة والنفرة، فهذه عشرة أصول فيحتمل من

34. الأصل إليهما، والصواب ما أثبتنا.

167.0 x 240.0 mm

امتزاجاتها على حسب تغالبها وتساويها ثمانية أوصاف حميدة، وسبعة أوصاف ذميمة، فيكون الأولاد خمسة عشر، والأمّهات عشرة، فهي خمسة وعشرون صفة، ثمّ يتولّد منها فروع الأوصاف إلى ما لا يحصى، وسنذكر ماهيّة خمسة عشر من بعد. وهنا نذكر بعض الكلام في الشهوة والنفرة وفوائدهما ومضارهما.

فصل: في الشهوة والنفرة

اعلم أنّ الشهوة والنفرة كلّ واحدة منهما شيئان موجودان في الحيوان، لا يختصّ بالإنسان فحسب، وهما أيضًا من أمّهات الصفات الحميدة والذميمة.

أمّا الشهوة فهي ذات أنواع كثيرة، وهي شهوة البطن وهي أنواع أيضًا، فإنّه يدخل فيها أنواع الطعوم من الحلاوة والملوحة والحموضة والدسومة، فإنّ أمثالها كلّها مشتهيات، ثمّ شهوة الأكل عند وجود الجوع فذلك أمر زائد على شهوة هذه الأشياء، وكذلك شهوة اللمس، يدخل فيها شهوة التقبيل والجماع، وكذلك شهوة الشمّ، وشهوة النظر، وشهوة السماع، وشهوة الفرح والسرور في القلب، وأعظم هذه الشهوات وأشدّها وأحدّها وأغلبها على الإنسان شهوة البطن والفرج، وهذه صفات لا يمكن نفيها وقلعها بالكلّيّة، ولا يصلح نفيها من كلّ وجه؛ لأنّ الله تعالى إنّما خلقها لمصالح جمّة، لا تصلح تلك المصالح بدونها نحو التوالد والتناسل، وعمارة الدنيا، فإنّه لولا شهوة الأكل لما أكل الإنسان، ولو لم يأكل انكسر شهوة الفرج، ولولا شهوة الفرج لم يحصل الأنبياء والأولياء والعلماء وخربت الدنيا، فالله تعالى إنّما خلق هاتين العظيمتين شهوة البطن وشهوة الفرج لهذه المصالح العظيمة التي هي أصول الدنيا والآخرة، وكذلك إنّما خلق الله هذه الشهوات أنموذجة لما وعد لنا في الآخرة من أنواع النعيم الأبديّة لتفهم ذلك ههنا ثمّ نرغب فيما هو مثلها وجنسها [101أ] وأعظم منها في الآخرة فنشتغل بالأعمال الصالحة لاكتسابها في دار الخلد إذا كان كذلك فلا يجوز قلعها من كلّ وجه، ولهذا قال تعالى: ﴿قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ وَالطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ﴾الآية.[35] ولأنّها منّة الله تعالى أيضًا على عباده فإنّ قلعها بالكلّيّة يكون ردًّا لمنّة الله تعالى، فلا يجوز لأنّ المنّة إنّما يردّها الكرام إلى اللئام تكبّرًا وترفّعًا على المنعم، والله تعالى متعالٍ من اللؤم، والعبد وإن كان ملكًا، أو كان ملكًا نبيًّا أو وليًّا لا يكرّم ولا يعزّ في الدنيا، ولا في الآخرة إلّا بأن يكون أذلّ على بابه من التراب تحت أقدام عباده، وأيّ عاقل لا يفتخر بجنسه عليه نعمة، وأيّ مخلوق غير غريق في نعمه تعالى وتقدّس، وإن كان جمادًا فضلًا من أن كان حيوانًا وكذلك يتولّد من هذه الشهوات للعبد الخوف والرجاء، يرجو من الله تعالى أن يزيد هذه النعم في الدنيا والآخرة، والخوف والرجاء أصلان كبيران في طريق الله تعالى على ما نبيّن من بعد. فلأمثال هذه الأمور لا يجوز قلع هذه الشهوات فافهم. غير أنّه يجب أن يكون هو غالبًا عليها غير مغلوب، ولا هي غالبة عليه، ومعنى كونه غالبًا عليها أن يسهل عليه إمساكها عن المحرّمات والمكروهات، وألّا يحمله على الحرص في طلبها، وطلب أسبابها وتوابعها.

فأمّا شهوة البطن يسهل عليه دفع غلبتها، فإنّها تنقطع بقرصَي الشعير يأكلهما بالبقل والملح وأشباهها، وإنّما الشأن العظيم في شهوة الفرج فإنّها غالبة بمرّة. روي عن عليّ بن أبي طالب رضي الله عنه قال: "لو بتّ في بيت مملوء من قراضات الذهب، لا أخاف أن تلتزق بي حبّة منها، ولا آمن من نفسي أن أخلو في بيت مع امرأة زنجيّة." وقال النبيّ عليه السلام: "من تزوّج فقد حصّن نصف

35. القرآن7:32.

167.0 x 240.0 mm

دينه، ألا فليتّق الله في النصف الثاني."[36] فهذا دليل على أنّ في العزوبة خطر هلاك نصف الدين، ولا يعقل وجه الهلاك فيها إلّا غلبة الشهوة عليه غلبة توقعه في الزنا والفكر فيه.

وفي النكاح آفات شتّى، وآفاتها بعيد الغور، فإنّها ربّما تفضي إلى الفقر وكثرة الأولاد، ثمّ يفضي ذلك إلى أنواع السرقات والخيانات، وقطع الطريق، وفي ذلك هلاك النفس في الدنيا وفي الآخرة كما لا يخفى. فلولا أنّ آفات غلبة الشهوة أبلغ؛ لما ندب إلى النكاح. وقال النبيّ: "من كان على ديني، ودين أخي داود فليتزوّج، ومن لم يستطع فليصم فإنّ الصوم له وجاء."[37] يعني الصوم له صيانة عن الوقوع في الزنا يعني إذا صام ينكسر الشهوة فلا تغلب عليه فلا يقع في الزنا.

اعلم أنّ من كان طالب الله تعالى ساريًا في طريق الله تعالى، وهو غالب على شهوة الفرج والبطن لا رخصة له في التزوّج، ولا الاشتغال بالكسب وطلب الدنيا، وإن كانت الشهوتان غالبتين عليه فإن أمكنه كسرهما بغير الكسب نحو المجاهدات والصيام وأشباه [101ب] ذلك. فليكسر حتّى يصير هو غالبًا عليها ولا يتزوّج، وإن عجز عن كسرهما إلّا بالنكاح وكسب المال؛ فليس بأهل لطريق الله تعالى، إلّا أن يكون صاحب أموال كثيرة، وعقار جمّة يرتفع من غلاتها ما يكفيه وأولاده؛ فحينئذ جاز له التزوّج.

ولا ينبغي لطالب الحقّ أن يقيس نفسه على أنبياء الله تعالى الذين تزوّجوا، فإنّ لله تعالى مع أنبيائه ما ليس له مع الأولياء، والصدّيقين، وسائر الصالحين، وهي العصمة. فلو تزوّج المريد السالك في طريق الله تعالى مع الفقر؛ فقد انقطع له رجاء الوصول إلى الله تعالى إلّا جذبة، والجذبة ليست بطريقة حتّى يسلك فيها سالك، وأبلغ أسباب الكسر لشهوة الفرج هو النكاح، وإنّه قاطع طريق الله تعالى للفقراء.

قال النبيّ عليه السلام: "لمّا خلقت المرأة؛ قال إبليس: أنت نصف جندي، وأنت موضع سرّي، وأنت سهمي الذي أرمي به ولا أخطئ،"[38] ولم يفصل بين كونها منكوحة أو غير منكوحة. وقال عليه السلام: "النساء حبائل الشيطان."[39] فكان التباعد عنها لطالب الله تعالى واجبًا عينًا. ثمّ الصوم وقلّة الأكل، ومن الناس من يشرب دواء نحو الكافور وأمثالها فقطع شهوة الفرج، وذلك منهيّ عنه شرعًا، وفيها خطر وأنواع الأمراض، وربّما لا يحصل به المقصود. ومنهم من يجبّ الآلة، وذلك أقبح الطرق، ومحرّم في الشرع، وفي ذلك نزلت الآية حين قصد بعض أصحاب النبيّ عليه السلام أن يجبّوا آلتهم وهي قول الله تعالى: ﴿قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ وَالطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ قُلْ هِيَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا خَالِصَةً يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ﴾.[40]

وكذلك نكاح اليدّ غير صالح لذلك، فإنّها منهيّة بقوله عليه السلام: "ناكح اليدّ ملعون"[41] والظاهر أنّه لا تحصل منه الكفاية في كسر الشهوة، وقد روي أنّه سئل أحمد بن حنبل رحمة الله عليه أنّ ناكح اليدّ هل يستحق الثواب على صنيعة ذلك؟ قال: أما يرضى أن ينجو رأسًا برأس. قيل إنّ ذلك منه إجازة لهذا الشأن. فالحاصل أنّ طالب الحقّ تعالى لا رخصة له في التزوّج، إلّا أن تكون له أموال جمّة على ما ذكرنا، ومن غلب عليه شهوة الفرج، ويعجز أن يغلب عليها بطرق أُخر غير التزوّج فهو المنقطع عن طريق الله تعالى لا عن طريق الجنّة بالزهد والورع والتقوى.

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36. أورده الغزاليّ في *الإحياء* بلفظ قريب: «من نكح فقد حصّن نصف دينه فليتّق الله في الشطر الآخر» انظر: الغزاليّ، *إحياء علوم الدين*، تقديم بدوي أحمد طبانة (أندونسيا: مكتبة كرياطة فوترا—سماراغ، 1952)، 28/2.
37. أورده الديلميّ في *مسند الفردوس*، 512/3، حديث رقم 5594.
38. أورده الحكيم الترمذيّ في *نوادر الأصول*، تحقيق عبد الرحمن عميرة (بيروت: دار الجيل، 1992)، 22/3.
39. رواه القضاعيّ في *مسند الشهاب* بلفظ: "لشباب شعبة من الجنون، والنساء حبائل الشيطان والخمر جماع الإثم؛" راجع: القضاعيّ، *مسند الشهاب*، تحقيق حمدي عبد الحميد (بيروت: مؤسّسة الرسالة، 1985)، 66/1، حديث رقم 37.
40. القرآن 32:7.
41. أورده القاري في *المصنوع في معرفة الحديث الموضوع*، تحقيق عبد الفتّاح أبو غدّة (حلب، بيروت: مكتب المطبوعات الإسلاميّة، 1994)، 199، حديث رقم 378.

167.0 x 240.0 mm

فإن قال: لو تزوّج امرأة آيسة عن الولادة وقانعة معه بغير النفقة، أو كان لها من المال ما يكفيهما؟ قلت: نعم ذلك طريق إن وجد ضامنًا يضمن نفقتها على نفسه، وكفيلًا لها بذلك، ووجد ضامنًا آخر بأنّ الضامن الأوّل لا يموت قبل موت الزوجين، ولا يفلس ولا يهرب؛ فحينئذ يرخّص له في التزوّج بمثل تلك المرأة، وإن لم يكن في طبعها سلاطة ولا عنّة ولا عاهة، وفيه خطر بعد.

فإن قال قائل أليس عند أبي حنيفة رحمة الله عليه الاشتغال بالنكاح أفضل؟ قلت: نعم وكذلك عند الشافعيّ للنكاح فضيلة عظيمة. ولكن أيش يعمل مذهبهما فيما نحن فيه من طريق الله تعالى وطلبه جلّ وعلا. ومذهب أبي حنيفة في هذه المسألة طريق الجنّة والنجاة من الجحيم وكثرة الثواب والفوز من العقاب الأليم. وإنّ مذهب أبي حنيفة [201أ] لعامّة الناس، وما نحن في بيانه لنادرٍ منهم، مثلًا واحدًا من ألف ألفٍ، والفقيه لا ينظر إلى النادر من الناس، وإنّما ينظر إلى العامّ.

فإن قال قائل: أليس النبيّ عليه السلام قال: "النكاح سنّتي، فمن رغب عن سنّتي فليس منّي."[42] قلنا: بلى، ولكنّ الله تعالى قال: ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ وَأَوْلادِكُمْ عَدُوًّا لَكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوهُمْ﴾ إلى قوله تعالى ﴿إِنَّمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَأَوْلادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ﴾.[43]

وقال النبيّ عليه السلام: "يأتي على الناس زمان يكون هلاك الرجل على يد ولده وأبويه وزوجته يعيّرونه بالفقر، ويكلّفونه ما لا يطيق؛ فيدخل المداخل التي يذهب فيها دينه فيهلك."[44] وفي الخبر: "قلّة العيال أحد اليسارين، وكثرته أحد الفقرين."[45] فالحاصل لصلاح شهوة الفرج للمريد السالك في طريق الله تعالى: قلّة الأكل، وتحمّل المشاقّ من كثرة القيام، وقلّة النوم، ودوام الشكر، والنظر في طريق الله تعالى، بعد الفراغ من الفرائض والسنن. وطريق إصلاح شهوة البطن إن لم يكن جوع الكلب هو الصوم الدائم، بها تقلّ الشهوة للطعام، وكذلك قلّة النوم، وكثرة الفكر في طريق مطلوبه. وفي الجملة: الاستغراق في طريق الله تعالى، مع كمال المحبّة يقلّل شهوة الطعام.

وأمّا شهوة الذوق والشمّ والسمع والبصر واللمس وأشباهها فهي سهل وعمومها تكون مغلوبة لصاحبها لا غالبة، ولو غلبت ينكسر بأدنى مجاهدة وامتناع منها وتأديبها بأضدادها، وهي أنواع الأشياء التي ينفر عنها الطبع، كأن يزني ويؤدّب الفرج بالغمّ، والرائحة بالنتن، والحلاوة بالمرارة، والسماع الطيب بسماع غير الطيب، فافهم إن شاء الله وحده.

فإذا صارت هذه الشهوات في حكمه، بحيث يسهل عليه ترك اقتضائها، والامتناع من تحصيل مرادها، فلا حاجة إلى قلعها، بل لا يجوز قلعها؛ لما ذكرنا أنّها مخلوقة لفوائد جمّة. هذه أصول الشهوات وهي أشدّ فتنة على الناس.

وأمّا النفرة فأنواع جمّة أيضًا، وهي اسم لصفة في نفس الإنسان، بها ينفّر طبعه عن النفرة، وعمّا تعلّق به النفرة، نحو الغمّ ينفر طبع الإنسان عن شيء تعلّق به ذلك الغمّ، وعن الغمّ أيضًا كأن مات له ولد أو تلف له مال، وكالخوف ينفر عنه طبع الإنسان وعمّا يخاف منه، وكالألم ينفر طبع الإنسان عن الجراحة التي فيه الألم وعن الألم أيضًا، وكالمرارة في الطعوم ينفر طبع الإنسان عنه، وكنَتن الجيفة ينفر طبعُ الإنسان عنه، وكمسّ الخشن الحادّ نحو النار والماء الحارّ والبارد في صميم الشتاء في همدان وكالشوك وأشباهها وكالأصوات الكريهة الخاشنة، وكالنظر في أشياء مكروهة اللقاء وإلى

42. رواه ابن ماجة في *السنن*، تحقيق محمّد كامل وأحمد برهوم (بيروت: دار الرسالة العالميّة، 2009)، 54/3، حديث رقم 1846.
43. القرآن 64: 14-15.
44. قال عنه الغزاليّ في *الإحياء*، 24/2: "أخرجه الخطابيّ في *العزلة* من حديث ابن مسعود."
45. رواه القضاعيّ في مسند *الشهاب* (راجع: 54/1، حديث رقم 20) عن عليّ ابن أبي طالب. وأورده أبو طالب المكّيّ في *القوت* (397/2) على أنّه من أقوال السلف.

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ما أشبه ذلك فقس سائرها. ومن جملة ذلك الملال والكلال والضجر والسآمة من الأعمال الشاقّة، ومن جملة ذلك الأمراض والأسقام، فافهم أشباهها إن شاء الله وحده.

اعلم أنّ في هذه الأنواع كلّها منافع ومضارّ: أمّا منافعها وإن كان كثيرًا لا تحصى، نشير إليها على سبيل الاختصار، نقول: منافع الغمّ كسر البطر والشطارة، ومنافع الخوف في كسر الكبر والفخر والعجب بما له من الصحّة والقوّة والمال [201ب] والأعوان، وفيه إفادة التواضع والعدل والإنصاف ومداراة الخلق وانقياد الخالق وأشباهها، وفوائد الآلام وثمراتها هي كسر النفس الأمّارة بالسوء، والخوف من خلاف الصلاح في الدين والدنيا، والانقياد والتذلّل للخالق المعبود، والتضرّع إليه والخشوع له، والفرار من الفراغ، والخلاف والشفقة على الخلق وأشباهها هذه معظماتها. ثمّ فوائد المرارة والنتن وغيرها أسهل مع أنّها تفيد كسر النفس وكسر الشهوات والتذلّل والتواضع لله تعالى، والانقياد له جلّ وعلا خوفًا من أن يؤاخذه بها ويلازمها في نفسه، بل بأن يجبل نفسه في الدنيا والآخرة أمَرّ منها وأنتن، فهذه وأمثالها كثيرة كلّها من فوائد معنى النفرة، والأشياء المنفورة عنها.

وأمّا مضارّها أيضًا كثيرة، وأقربها تضرّر النفس في الحال بألمها وخوفها ونتنها ومرارتها وأشباه ذلك فافهم. ثمّ آثارها وثمراتها لا تحصى نحو تلف النفس بها وفوات الجوارح واختلال العقل، واختلال القوّة، والانقطاع من طريق الله تعالى بنحو الأمراض والأسقام والكلال والملال، وأشباه ذلك، فافهم إن شاء الله وحده.

فأمّا إصلاحها وتربيتها بأن تعيدها إلى حال لا يتأتّى منه الفساد، وتكون معك آلة لك تؤدّب بها نفسك إذا شطر وبطر وعلا وتكبّر، وتذكّر نفسك بها الآخرة وأهوالها والجنّة ونعيمها والجحيم وأنكالها، وتكسر بها الصفات الذميمة، وتقوى بها الأوصاف الحميدة نحو التواضع والحلم والخضوع والخشوع والعدل والإنصاف، والانطواع للمعبود والشفقة على خلق الله تعالى وأشباهها، فهذه الصفات بهذه الوجوه لا بدّ للشيخ العارف من معرفتها؛ حتّى تصحّ منه معالجة المريدين المختلفين في الخلق والخُلق، والطباع والطرق. فافهم جدًّا واحفظ إن شاء الله وحده.

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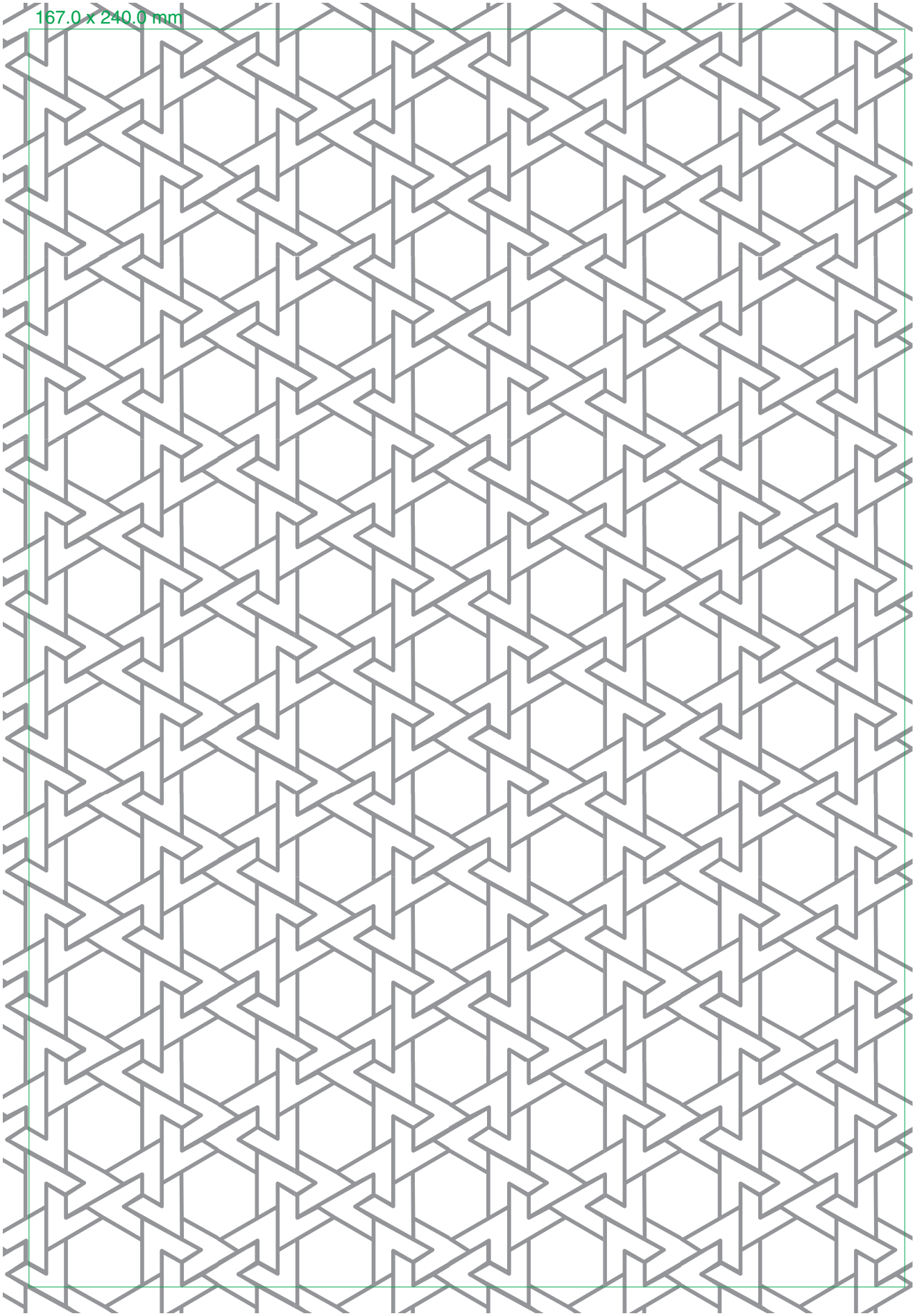
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DOES AL-GHAZĀLĪ HAVE A THEORY OF VIRTUE?

Sophia Vasalou

Introduction

Writing in 1975, the distinguished scholar George F. Hourani proposed a scheme for classifying the varieties of ethical writing in classical Islam that might serve as a compass for study of the subject. Hourani's interest was to provide a study tool that would appeal to one constituency in particular, modern philosophers. In some of his key works, notably those dedicated to the study of Muʿtazilite ethics, Hourani staked the claim that the ethical ideas developed by practitioners of *kalām* had strong affinities, and entered into an important dialogue, with questions discussed by modern moral philosophers. This was reflected in his 1975 scheme, which drew on two key distinctions—"normative" versus "analytical" and "religious" versus "secular"—to then identify *kalām* discussions as the prime exemplar of analytical ethics. Notably excluded from the category of "analytical" ethics were philosophical works on the virtues or character (*akhlāq*), such as those written by Abū ʿAlī Miskawayh, Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, and Jalāl al-Dīn Dawānī. In explaining this decision, Hourani appealed to two kinds of considerations. On the one hand, the philosophical framework of these works "offers little of general philosophical interest that is new." At the same time, they "do not enter into the controversy of *kalām* about the concepts of right and wrong, good and evil, so that these *akhlāq* books are not the place to look for ethical philosophy in any analytical style."[1]

1. George F. Hourani, "Ethics in Classical Islam: A Conspectus," in *Reason and Tradition in Islamic Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 21; reprinted from *Essays on Islamic Philosophy and Science*, ed. G. F. Hourani (Albany: State University of New York, 1975), 128–35.

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Hourani's scheme still retains some of its heuristic utility. Yet much has changed since he wrote those lines. To a large extent, his scheme reflected the intellectual priorities of philosophers in his day. As the last statement betrays, Hourani was operating with a very specific conception of what it means to do philosophy in the "analytical style," one that mirrors the engrossing interest taken by philosophers in the first few decades of the twentieth century in questions about the definition of moral terms. Since that time, the focus of moral philosophy has shifted in more ways than one. And one of the most seismic shifts has been the rehabilitation of questions about character and the virtues as a respectable subject of philosophical inquiry. This shift has slowly begun to percolate through the study of ethics in other intellectual and cultural traditions, sparking a new interest in the resources they can contribute to this investigation. Albeit more hesitantly, it has finally begun to filter into Islamic scholarship as well, with a number of recent studies focusing on ethical writings on the virtues and self-consciously locating themselves against the horizon of the philosophical renaissance of virtue ethics.[2]

This self-conscious placement, as Cyrus Ali Zargar points out in the most notable recent contribution of this kind, is not without challenge. One challenge already arises when one seeks to identify the discourse that forms the relevant interlocutor. The frameworks in which virtue was examined in the Islamic world were after all highly diverse, ranging from philosophical ethics to etiquette or literature (*adab*), works of Sufism, and many other twilight genres in between. Hence, "defining 'virtue ethics'"—in the Islamic tradition, that is—"is more difficult than defining jurisprudence and positive law, in part because a number of genres of writing and ethical methods in classical Islamic thought might qualify." For his part, Zargar draws the boundary around his subject using a minimalist chalk. Focusing on Sufi and philosophical texts, he takes their unifying concern to be a "concern with the niceties of human character and with the perfection of the human soul by acquiring good character traits through habit."[3]

There are other potential challenges in the offing which partly depend on the precise type of rapprochement one wishes to effect between Islamic writings on the virtues and philosophical perspectives, past and present. One might, for example, think of one's aim chiefly in historical terms, as helping to enlarge the intellectual (more broadly) or the philosophical (more narrowly) history of the virtues by creating a place for neglected Islamic approaches. This was partly Hourani's aim in his work on the Muʿtazilites.[4] At a minimum, this would require staking the claim that there is a reasonable degree of continuity in concepts and concerns that makes these approaches eligible for inclusion in such a history. Yet one might also think of one's aim in more openly normative terms, focusing on the potential of these works to yield new insights, tools of thinking, or more generally ways of actively pursuing a philosophical concern with the virtues. Their special interest, from this

2. Two of the most recent contributions in this vein are Cyrus Ali Zargar, *The Polished Mirror: Storytelling and the Pursuit of Virtue in Islamic Philosophy and Sufism* (London: Oneworld, 2017), and Sophia Vasalou, *Virtues of Greatness in the Arabic Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).
3. Zargar, *Polished Mirror*, 7.
4. See, e.g., the remarks in G. F. Hourani, *Islamic Rationalism: The Ethics of ʿAbd al-Jabbār* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 1–7.

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regard, would lie not in their recognisability or similarity but in their difference—because they say something distinctive which might take contemporary reflection on the virtues forward, albeit with a measure of reconstruction, and thus "help us, moderns, lead better lives," in Kristján Kristjánsson's words (apropos the choice between exegesis and reconstruction in Aristotle's virtue ethics).[5]

My discussion in this paper does not presuppose a choice between these approaches. It assumes that both are legitimate enterprises and that a minimal degree of continuity in concepts and concerns is requisite for either of them to be possible. Against this backdrop, my focus will fall on the ethical thought of the eleventh-century theologian Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111). To anyone interested in engaging with Islamic writings on the virtues, al-Ghazālī must appear as one of the most promising ports of call. His voluminous intellectual output ranges over a variety of disciplines and fields, but one of his central contributions to Islamic thought lies in the account of the moral and spiritual life he enunciated across a number of works. Two works that stand out are the *Scale of Action* and, head over shoulders above the rest, his 40-volume magnum opus, the *Revival of the Religious Sciences*. In the latter, al-Ghazālī drew on both philosophical and Sufi resources to unfold a comprehensive picture of a life lived *sub specie aeternitatis*. Divided into four parts, the book begins by detailing how to approach the two elements that make up our "external" life (*ẓāhir*), namely, ritual actions (*ʿibādāt*) and social customs or practices (*ʿādāt*). Then it turns to what many readers consider to be the heart of the book, the one concerned with the domain of the inner (*bāṭin*), or what al-Ghazālī terms "the science of the states of the heart" (*ʿilm aḥwāl al-qulūb*), which he organises through a distinction between what is blameworthy and praiseworthy. The third part of the book dissects the blameworthy or "destructive" states (*muhlikāt*) while the fourth dissects the praiseworthy or "salvific" states (*munjiyāt*).[6]

In this part of the discussion, al-Ghazālī's philosophical–Sufi synthesis (barely adumbrated in the earlier *Scale*) comes into full fruition, with many of the spiritual qualities that earlier Sufi handbooks had dwelled upon—such as gratitude, fear, hope, trust, and love—taking their seat alongside virtues more familiar from philosophical works, such as temperance, courage, justice, wisdom, and their retinue of subordinate virtues. And it is in this part of the discussion that many readers have located an ethics they have assumed can be straightforwardly identified as an ethics *of* virtue, as full-blooded as any that merit the name. One of the last books to be written on al-Ghazālī's ethics over thirty-five years ago, by Mohamed Ahmed Sherif, was explicit: "[T]he core of Ghazālī's mystical doctrine can be considered not only an ethical theory but also a theory of virtue." He has been followed in this characterisation by a number of other writers since.[7]

5. Kristján Kristjánsson, "Twenty-First-Century Magnanimity: The Relevance of Aristotle's Ideal of Megalopsychia for Current Debates in Moral Psychology, Moral Education and Moral Philosophy," in *The Measure of Greatness: Philosophers on Magnanimity*, ed. Sophia Vasalou (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 266. This is a line I tried to develop in my *Virtues of Greatness* apropos the ideal of "greatness of spirit" in the Arabic tradition.

6. For an overview of the structure and content of the *Revival*, see Kenneth Garden, *The First Islamic Reviver: Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī and His* Revival of the Religious Sciences (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), ch. 3, and at greater depth with reference to Ghazālī's ethics, see Mohamed Ahmed Sherif, *Ghazālī's Theory of Virtue* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1975), and Muhammad Abul Quasem, *The Ethics of al-Ghazālī: A Composite Ethics in Islam* (Petaling Jaya: Muhammad Abul Quasem, 1976).

7. Sherif, *Ghazālī's Theory of Virtue*, 108. The title of the book already says it all. Those who adopt this term in characterising

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On the face of it, the claim of al-Ghazālī's ethics to constitute an ethics of virtue seems intuitive. There certainly appears to be more than enough continuity in concepts and concerns to support it. Al-Ghazālī uses concepts that can be directly mapped onto the core categorial terms "virtue" (*faḍīla*) and "character trait" (*khuluq*). He defines virtue in readily recognisable terms: it is "a stable disposition (*hayʾa rāsikha*) of the soul which causes actions to issue with facility and ease."[8] The specific virtues and vices he places on his list overlap to an important extent with familiar philosophical lists. And the theoretical framework in which he analyses the virtues and vices has much in common with familiar philosophical approaches. The value of virtue is grounded in the contribution it makes to happiness (hence "destructive" and "salvific"), reprising a time-honoured eudaimonistic model. These affinities, and the ease with which they allow us to locate al-Ghazālī's ethics as an ethics of virtue, reflect the philosophical influences that condition al-Ghazālī's thinking, most obviously in the *Scale* but equally evidently in the *Revival*. The precise balance of Sufi and philosophical influences in the latter work has attracted debate, with one commentator writing that "al-Ghazālī's ethical theory may be characterized as primarily mystical in nature" and another highlighting that "the *Revival* is not a work of Sufism" and suggesting that the determination of its character is a kind of Rorschach test, with the decision "depending on the reader and each reader's inclinations."[9]

The claim that al-Ghazālī's ethics is an ethics of virtue certainly seems intuitive. Yet my aim in this paper is to raise a doubt about it. It is a doubt that arises for a variety of reasons when considering the body of al-Ghazālī's writing on ethics. It arises most specifically in connection with the expression he gives of his ethical viewpoint in the *Revival* rather than *Scale*.[10] And it arises with special force in connection with one part of the *Revival* in particular, which in many ways can be regarded as its centrepiece: the treatment of the "salvific" states, which have sometimes been designated "mystical virtues" and which I will instead refer to more openly as "spiritual virtues" (with the term "virtues" bracketed for investigation). As both of these circumscriptions indicate, the doubt arises precisely in relation to the part of al-Ghazālī's ethical oeuvre that bears the strongest traces of Sufi influence. The unpicking of this doubt will therefore have something to say to discussions about the balance of intellectual influences in al-Ghazālī's ethics.

al-Ghazālī's ethics include Garden, Abul Quasem (writing around the same time as Sherif), and Zargar.

8. Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn [The Revival of the Religious Sciences]* (Cairo: Lajnat Nashr al-Thaqāfa al-Islāmiyya, 1937–38), 8:1434.

9. For the first remark, see Abul Quasem, *The Ethics of al-Ghazālī*; for the second, Garden, *First Islamic Reviver*, 10 and 13.

10. There has been much discussion about the relationship between these two works. For some context on earlier debates and a particular position on them, see Abul Quasem, "Al-Ghazālī's Rejection of Philosophic Ethics," *Islamic Studies* 13 (1974): 111–27, and for a more recent view that emphasises the continuity between the two works, see Garden, *First Islamic Reviver*, ch. 2.

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To clarify the nature of this particular doubt, it is helpful to introduce a distinction sometimes drawn in philosophical circles between "virtue ethics" and "virtue theory." "Virtue ethics" is often taken to designate a type of ethical theory in which virtue carries evaluative primacy and represents the foundational moral concept. In this capacity, it is contrasted with other forms of ethical theory with a different foundational concept, such as duty (Kantianism/deontology) or utility (utilitarianism/consequentialism). Virtue ethics, as the philosopher Gary Watson has put it, gives "explanatory primacy" to virtue in the following sense: "how it is best or right or proper to conduct oneself is explained in terms of how it is best for a human being to be."[11] Yet philosophers whose ethical schemes are not species of "virtue ethics" on this criterion sometimes have interesting things to say about the nature and even the value of virtue; there are Kantian and utilitarian accounts of the virtues, for example. Such schemes offer a "virtue theory" in this limited sense.[12]

Using this distinction, one can ask two different types of questions about al-Ghazālī's ethics: (1) Does Ghazālī have a theory of virtue? and (2) Is Ghazālī's ethics a form of virtue ethics? The first question is evidently prior. To ask that question is to ask whether al-Ghazālī is talking about virtue at all. To ask the second is to ask whether Ghazālī makes out virtue to be the most important thing there is, morally speaking. The doubt I want to consider here concerns the first and more elementary question.[13] Unless the answer is in the affirmative, the most basic continuity in concepts, let alone concerns, between al-Ghazālī's ethics and modern virtue ethics will not have been established.

It is a doubt that might at first sight appear outlandish, given the tell-tale continuities plotted earlier. Yet this doubt, in my view, arises for very real reasons upon closer investigation of al-Ghazālī's ethics. Among other things, these reasons have to do with the categorial terms al-Ghazālī employs to talk about "virtue,"[14] with central features of his specification of the nature of character and "virtue," and with the substantive content he includes in his list of the "virtues," most especially the "spiritual virtues." In the following, I first present the main considerations as pithily as I can (section 1). In the next stage of my argument (section 2), I evaluate these considerations more critically and offer a more qualified approach to the issues they raise, before concluding with a holistic assessment of the question (section 3). The structure of my discussion, thus, has a dialectical character, yet this give-and-take should not be seen as a purely academic exercise. It offers a way of working honestly through a doubt that arises on good grounds and that reflects real features of al-Ghazālī's account. Working through this doubt therefore means shining a spotlight on these features, and is important because it helps bring some of the distinctive contours of al-Ghazālī's ethics into clearer view.

11. Gary Watson, "On the Primacy of Character," in *Identity, Character, and Morality*, ed. Owen J. Flanagan and Amélie O. Rorty (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990), 451.

12. For a brief statement of the distinction between virtue ethics and virtue theory, see Nancy E. Snow, "Neo-Aristotelian Virtue Ethics," in *The Oxford Handbook of Virtue*, ed. N. E. Snow (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 321.

13. I explore the second question in "Virtue and the Law in al-Ghazālī's Ethics," in *Islamic Ethics as Educational Discourse: Thought and Impact of the Classical Muslim Thinker Miskawayh*, ed. Sebastian Günther and Yassir El Jamouhi (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, forthcoming).

14. Through this discussion, I will place the term in scare quotes so as to retain it at investigational arm's length.

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1. Articulating Doubt

Al-Ghazālī uses the language of virtue, offers familiar definitions of virtue, and also focuses on substantive qualities that most wouldn't think twice about calling virtues or vices. So how could it ever occur to anyone to doubt that al-Ghazālī has a theory of virtue? Here are some of the principal reasons.

The Content of al-Ghazālī's List of Spiritual "Virtues"

In the fourth quarter of the *Revival*, al-Ghazālī reaches most deeply into the well of Sufi thinking to present the set of praiseworthy qualities or states that must be acquired by the individual hoping to "tread the road of the hereafter" and make her way to God. This spiritual journey starts with repentance and culminates in love. Bridging these two points is a sequence of intermediate stations (*maqāmāt*) which form prerequisites or preconditions (*muqaddimāt*) for love. Al-Ghazālī names these as patience, gratitude, fear, hope, poverty, renunciation, faith in God's unity, and trust in God. Another triad of states—longing, intimacy, contentment—are presented as corollaries (*thimār*) of love. A further four books discuss intention, sincerity, and truthfulness; vigilance and self-examination; meditation; and remembrance of death and the afterlife.[15]

For philosophers, this is the part of the book that will seem most unfamiliar. The third quarter of the *Revival*, concentrating on blameworthy qualities, showcased numerous features that philosophers would have no trouble recognising as traits of character that signify vices, such as pride, conceit, envy, miserliness, gluttony, and irascibility. Yet turning now to the content of the fourth quarter, how easy is it to locate its topics within this paradigm? The contents of this part of the book are classed as "salvific" elements (*munjiyāt*), and in the introduction to the *Revival*, al-Ghazālī refers to the "salvific" elements he will be discussing in Part 4 (and similarly the destructive elements discussed in Part 3) as "character traits" (*khuluq*).[16] It may also be worth noting that Miskawayh (d. 421/1030), with whose work al-Ghazālī was well acquainted, drew a similar connection between the two terms in his *Refinement of Character*.[17] Following this lead, some of the most prominent commentators unhesitatingly refer to all these elements as "virtues."

Yet scrutinising the topics of the books included in the fourth quarter of the Revival, it will be clear that many of them stand in an awkward relationship to this conceptual category. "Self-examination" (*muḥāsaba*) and "meditation" (*tafakkur*), for example, represent activities rather than traits of character—by which I mean that this is the understanding that emerges from al-Ghazālī's own discussion.

15. Commentators have offered different accounts of the relations (including hierarchy) between these elements. Compare, for example, Sherif's distinction between supporting and principal virtues (*Ghazālī's Theory of Virtue,* 113–15) with Abul Quasem's rather different distinction between means–virtues and ends–virtues (*The Ethics of al-Ghazālī*, 148–50).

16. Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā'*, 1:4.

17. Though slightly indirectly, referring to the need to study the illnesses of the soul and to strive to treat them so as to "save it from sources of possible destruction" (*yunajjīhā min mahālikihā*). Abū ʿAlī Miskawayh, *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*, ed. Constantine Zurayk (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1966), 222.

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"Poverty" (*faqr*) is clearly understood by al-Ghazālī to signify an objective state (a state of lacking worldly goods and resources) rather than a subjective state of an agent such as we intuitively take a virtue or a character trait to be. And to call "intention" a virtue would seem to be a pure case of category mistake. Yet the most important case is the class of "virtues" that includes hope, fear, and above all, love.

One of the first to pick up on this was Sherif in his book-length study of al-Ghazālī's ethics, where he noted that "most of the mystical qualities (in particular fear, hope, and love), are basically passions."[18] Yet for philosophers (as Sherif noted), the passions are the "stuff of virtue," and cannot be identified with virtue categorially. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* (II.5), Aristotle drew a clear distinction between affections or feelings (*pathe*) and virtues. Virtues are dispositions (*hexeis*), and these dispositions are expressed in certain patterns of acting, judging, and also feeling.[19] As one commentator puts it, emotions are not *themselves* states of character; states of character are "ways of standing well or badly toward the emotions."[20] Standing well toward the emotions involves applying the principle of the mean. Virtues and actions admit of excess and deficiency. We can be angry too little or too much, feel pity too little or too much. But "having these feelings at the right time, about the right things, toward the right people, for the right end, and in the right way, is the intermediate and best condition, and this is proper to virtue."[21]

While al-Ghazālī observes this principle in his discussion of other traits, in the spiritual "virtues," as Sherif observes, he jettisons it, much as he jettisons the theoretical framework of a tripartite faculty psychology that had informed his analysis of other virtues and vices elsewhere in the *Revival*. Following a familiar tradition, most of these virtues and vices had been associated with particular faculties—appetitive, irascible, and rational—and organised in trees of cardinal and subordinate traits. In this part of the *Revival*, this philosophical schema disappears.[22]

Sherif, for his part, seems to accept that al-Ghazālī's spiritual "virtues" are indeed passions. Yet he does not appear to consider this a problem and indeed continues to refer to these passions as "virtues" and "states of character."[23] Yet is it not a problem? To my mind, the fact that some of the most important "virtues" in al-Ghazālī's scheme, including the *Haupt*-"virtue" of love, cannot be readily located in the right conceptual category raises a serious question about its credentials as a theory of virtue.

Some of the "spiritual virtues" enumerated by al-Ghazālī could take further discussion, and would require deeper analysis to determine whether they speak

18. Sherif, *Ghazālī's Theory of Virtue*, 110.

19. As Rosalind Hursthouse puts the standard view in her entry on virtue ethics: a virtue is a "disposition, well entrenched in its possessor . . . to notice, expect, value, feel, desire, choose, act, and react in certain characteristic ways." https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics-virtue/ accessed November 3, 2019.

20. Nancy Sherman, *Making a Necessity of Virtue: Aristotle and Kant on Virtue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 53.

21. *Nicomachean Ethics* (hereafter, NE) 1106b21–23; I draw on the translation of the *Nicomachean Ethics* by Terence Irwin (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1999).

22. The schema is strongly expressed in the *Scale*, and also registers in earlier parts of the *Revival*, notably the first two books of the third quarter.

23. This applies not only to love, but also to fear, which he unhesitatingly describes as a "state of character" (Sherif, *Ghazālī's Theory of Virtue*, 111).

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to the category of virtue even when they appear not to (repentance is a good example). I will have something more to say about some of these later. It is also clear that others of these "virtues" represent textbook cases of traits. Gratitude and patience are the most obvious examples. Yet the main point of this section can be summarised as follows: *Some of the substantive content of al-Ghazālī's ethics seems to be of the wrong category*.

The Terminology of al-Ghazālī's Account of the Spiritual "Virtues"

This provides a good way of segueing to a second point. The dual presence of philosophical and Sufi ideas in al-Ghazālī's ethics and the uncertain relation between them were a subsidiary theme in the previous section. This second point takes us straight to the heart of this double influence and the questions it raises about the character of al-Ghazālī's theoretical framework. I mentioned that al-Ghazālī refers to the destructive and salvific states as "character traits" (*khuluq, akhlāq*). This is a term that appears in a number of different genres of writing on the virtues—in philosophical treatises, but also in texts closer to the scriptural tradition, such as the collections of prophetic reports about "noble traits of character" (*makārim al-akhlāq*). In philosophical texts, another key term for virtue is *faḍīla*, also used by al-Ghazālī in the *Scale* and parts of the *Revival*.[24] Yet in this central part of the *Revival*, devoted to the spiritual "virtues," both of these terms retreat into the background, and another set of terms takes the stage. Al-Ghazālī's terminological framework of choice pivots on the concepts of "states" (*ḥāl, aḥwāl*) and "stations" (*maqām, maqāmāt*).

These are terms that betray al-Ghazālī's debts to Sufism, where they had long been in use. In Sufi usage, as Louis Gardet noted in his EI² entry on the topic, the distinction between a state and a station can be tracked along two axes, (a) the role of human effort and (b) temporal duration. States are passive (or "received"), and transient; stations are, to a certain extent, the fruit of personal effort and enduring.[25] This understanding is mirrored in the account al-Ghazālī gives of the terms in the appendix to the *Revival*, the *Dictation on the Difficulties of the Revival*, and also in a key passage in *On Hope and Fear*. "A characteristic (*waṣf*) is called a station (*maqām*) if it is firmly established and endures, while it is called a state (*ḥāl*) if it is adventitious and transient."[26]

24. Note that the term *faḍīla* does not always carry the signification of "virtue" in the sense of a positive character trait in the *Revival*. Sometimes it simply means "excellence" in the sense of "value" or "high worth," in which sense it forms the contrary of the term *dhamm* (e.g., *dhamm al-ghaḍab, dhamm al-dunyā, dhamm al-jāh wa-l-riyā'*). When al-Ghazālī thus refers to *faḍīlat al-rajā'*, *faḍīlat al-khawf*, or *faḍīlat al-zuhd* (e.g., al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā'*, 12:2312, 13:2340, 13:2441), this should by no means be taken as decisive terminological evidence that he considers hope, fear, or renunciation virtues.

25. Louis Gardet, "*Ḥāl*," *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C. E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, and W. P. Heinrichs, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0254, accessed November 3, 2019. Cf. Abū l-Qāsim al-Qushayrī, *al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya*, ed. ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd and Maḥmūd ibn al-Sharīf (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Ḥadītha, 1972), 1:204–208. And see also Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 99–100.

26. Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā'*, 12:2308; cf. 16:3032. Sherif (*Ghazālī's Theory of Virtue,* 112–13) and Abul Quasem (*The Ethics of al-Ghazālī*, 152) take this statement to express a sui generis view that distinguishes al-Ghazālī's usage from Sufi convention. But that seems far from clear. Al-Ghazālī's formulation is very close to the definition from al-Jurjānī's *Taʿrīfāt*, cited by Gardet in his EI² entry: "If the *ḥāl* endures, it becomes a possession (*milk*) and is then called *maḳām*."

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Now how do these terms relate to the concepts "character trait" and "virtue"? Surprisingly, al-Ghazālī does not, to my knowledge, offer to clarify their relationship as he seamlessly drops one set and reaches for the other in the *Revival*.[27] Yet on the basis of these elementary definitions, one answer already recommends itself. If we wished to identify one of these two Sufi concepts as the correlate of the concept of virtue or character trait, "station" would be the most natural choice. States seem similar to Aristotle's affections or feelings, taken as occurrent phenomenological states over which we have no voluntary control. In fact, in many contexts, al-Ghazālī applies the term "state" where the reference is clearly to a phenomenological experience we would intuitively identify as an emotion, such as joy (in the context of gratitude) or the painful sense of remorse (in the context of repentance).[28] This conceptual translation finds support in the triadic scheme that al-Ghazālī offers in this part of the *Revival* to explain the relation between the morally relevant elements. Stations, he tells us, consist of cognitions (*maʿārif*), states, and actions; cognitions provide the foundation from which states flow and from which actions in turn follow.[29] Stations are thus the most inclusive concept. A natural way to read this scheme is as a re-articulation of the idea that dispositions are expressed in ways of judging, feeling, and acting, cementing the identification of stations with dispositions.

Yet it then comes as a great surprise to find al-Ghazālī regularly identifying the spiritual "virtues" with states in the body of his discussion, even when his account formally opens (as it often does) by referring the virtue to the triadic complex. Discussing patience (*ṣabr*), for example, he cites the triadic scheme and then immediately goes on to state: patience "is only realised through a prior cognition, and through a subsisting state (*ḥāla qāʾima*), which is what 'patience' signifies properly speaking (*al-ṣabr ʿalā l-taḥqīq ʿibāra ʿanhā*)."[30] Discussing renunciation (*zuhd*) and moving to qualify what constitutes the relevant state, he writes: "the state is what we call 'renunciation' (*ammā al-ḥāl fa-naʿnī bihā mā yusammā zuhdan*)," which involves the transfer of desire from something inferior to something superior.[31] Hope (*rajāʾ*) is defined as the "pleasure and joy in the heart" when one expects something desirable to be realised. "Hope is this sense of joy (*irtiyāḥ*) in the heart," which, as the context indicates, constitutes the relevant "state" more specifically.[32]

It is also worth recalling that it is the term "state" that figures in al-Ghazālī's description of his concern in the last two quarters of the *Revival*, devoted to the "science of the states of the heart" (*ʿilm aḥwāl al-qulūb*). This results in a sense of conceptual confusion that is well reflected in Jules Janssens' observation that al-Ghazālī's simultaneous use of "the technical vocabulary of multiple disciplines, in the present case especially *taṣawwuf and falsafa*," is fraught with ambiguities

27. And some of the few cases where the two terms do appear in close textual proximity have far from evident implications. Does apposition, for example, entail opposition? If so, al-Ghazālī's reference to *aḥwāl al-qalb wa-akhlāqihi al-maḥmūda wa-l-madhmūma* (al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, 1:29) would mark a distinction; yet then so would his reference to *al-akhlāq al-maḥmūda wa-l-maqāmāt al-sharīfa* (15:2806).

28. See, respectively, al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, 12:2206 and 11:2072.

29. Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, 12:2171.

30. Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, 12:2171–72; cf. 12:2173: "the omission of acts one desires is an action that is produced by a state (*ḥāl*) called 'self-control' (*ṣabr*)."

31. Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, 13:2436.

32. Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, 12:2309.

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stemming from his failure to clearly "indicate which meaning he prefers, or . . . is referring to."[33] Other commentators have puzzled over al-Ghazālī's usage of these Sufi terms and have sometimes arrived at diametrically opposed solutions. Sherif, for example, takes al-Ghazālī's usage to deviate from Sufi convention (a poorly substantiated claim, in my view), but in any case concludes that "only stations can be regarded as virtues, since stability is an essential characteristic of virtue" and only stations are stable in the required sense.[34] Muhammad Abul Quasem agrees that al-Ghazālī's usage is sui generis, yet arrives at the exact opposite conclusion via a somewhat mind-bending piece of textual syllogistics:

1. "many of the mystical qualities are . . . related to the element of *ḥāl*";
2. "they are also called praiseworthy character-traits";
3. "a character-trait has already been defined as an established quality of the soul";
4. "the conclusion, therefore, is that *ḥāl* is an established quality."[35]

This conclusion, of course, would place al-Ghazālī's usage at clear loggerheads with Sufi convention. We saw the evidence for (1), (2), and (3) above. Yet the two possibilities that Abul Quasem doesn't appear to contemplate are that some of this textual evidence may be weaker than others, and that al-Ghazālī's work may contain genuine tensions and inconsistencies. For now, the point made in this section can be summed up as follows: *Some of the categories that al-Ghazālī applies to his material seem to be the wrong category.*

Virtue in the Future Tense

I suggested above that some of the content al-Ghazālī includes under "virtue" appears to be of the wrong category, and that some of the concepts he employs to talk about his subject have an awkward relation to the category of virtue. My next point takes up the concern with categorial fit from a different perspective. In certain places of his writing, al-Ghazālī discusses virtue in ways that suggest a radically different conception of what it means to possess a virtue from the one that shapes most philosophical writing on the virtues.

While theorists of the virtues do not always speak in a single voice, the conception of virtue that typifies writing on the subject is one that remains true to the kernel of Aristotle's discussion in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Virtue is a disposition (*hexis*), that is to say, a stable feature of our psychological reality that disposes us to respond in certain ways (through certain kinds of actions, feelings, and so forth). Such responses *manifest* the stable underlying structure of the personality.[36] This view comes with a commitment to a robust kind of psychological realism.

33. Jules Janssens, "al-Ghazālī Between Philosophy (*Falsafa*) and Sufism (*Taṣawwuf*): His Complex Attitude in the *Marvels of the Heart (ʿAjāʾib al-qalb)* of the *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*," *Muslim World* 101 (2011): 616.
34. Sherif, *Ghazālī's Theory of Virtue*, 113.
35. Abul Quasem, *The Ethics of al-Ghazālī*, 151; the numbering of the statements is my own. Abul Quasem offers a second argument, but it is a rather weak one.
36. For a recent exposition and defence of this dispositional view, see Christian B. Miller, *Character and Moral Psychology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), ch. 1.

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As Daniel Russell puts it, virtues are psychological attributes made up of beliefs, emotions, etc., and as such "real things": they are "real ways that one's character and psychological makeup are, or can become."[37] This psychological realism must ultimately cash out in the concrete physical structure of the mind as modern science reveals it, as Owen Flanagan notes: "Virtues and vices, if they exist, and they do, are instantiated in neural networks . . . [a virtue] has characteristic activating conditions, so that tokens of a situation type activate a neural network, which has been trained-up to be activated by situations of that kind."[38] An obvious corollary of this kind of realism is that it is possible at any given moment to make true statements about the content of a person's character in the present tense. "X *is* generous," "Y *is* an unregenerate egoist."

Some of the positions that al-Ghazālī takes in his work suggest that he shares this conception of virtue and the corollary view that it is possible to make true statements concerning a person's praiseworthy or blameworthy attributes in the present time. This is implicit, for example, in his definition of positive character traits as "stable dispositions" (*hayʾa rāsikha*), which are manifested when the relevant actions "issue with facility and ease."[39] Yet in other parts of al-Ghazālī's work, a different and somewhat surprising view emerges. It emerges most distinctly in one specific context—namely, where the ethics of self-esteem comes up for consideration. By "ethics of self-esteem," I simply mean the ethical questions that arise concerning the right attitude to the self and its merits. This is a sphere that is governed by a number of familiar virtues and vices, including humility and pride.

It is easy to see why the issue of what virtue or perfection is and how perfections might be predicated of the self would come up in this context. The main ethical defects in this department, after all, depend on a person's belief that she possesses certain kinds of praiseworthy features. This is a belief that al-Ghazālī confronts as he sets out to tackle these defects in the books of the *Revival* dealing with pride (*kibr*), conceit (*ʿujb*), the quest for status (*jāh*), and dissimulation (*riyāʾ*). His response to the question, "What is the appropriate way of relating to one's praiseworthy features?" appears to come down to this: "You're in fact mistaken in thinking you really possess them." One of the key arguments he uses to dismantle the cognitive bases of pride and conceit centres on a theological trope that will come into view more fully below, the "conclusion" of life (*khātima*). The reason one should not take pride in one's presumed perfections is the ever-real risk that one's life will have a bad conclusion (*sūʾ al-khātima*). Nobody knows what the conclusion of their life will be, hence none of us should rejoice before the curtain falls.[40] This implies that the point is an epistemic one: even though we may possess certain praiseworthy features now, we don't know whether they will deliver their fruit in the future. Al-Ghazālī sometimes appears to support this interpretation.[41] But elsewhere it becomes clear

37. Daniel C. Russell, *Practical Intelligence and the Virtues* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 172–73.

38. Owen Flanagan, "Moral Science? Still Metaphysical After All These Years," in *Personality, Identity, and Character: Explorations in Moral Psychology*, ed. Darcia Narvaez and Daniel K. Lapsley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 60–61.

39. Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, 8:1434.

40. See, for example, the remarks at al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, 10:1852–53 (discussing love of praise), and 11:1980 (discussing pride).

41. Discussing praise, for example, one of the first points he makes concerns the need to ascertain whether one actually possesses the perfection being praised (*hādhihi al-ṣifa . . . anta muttaṣif bihā am-lā*, *Iḥyāʾ*, 10:1852). His remarks about the right and wrong ways of relating to one's perfections in the context of his account of conceit would also seem to rest on an acknowledgement that these perfections are present and can be accurately judged to be present. See al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, 11:1991–92.

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that for him the possession of a praiseworthy feature is in fact reduced to its "fruit" or future outcome. The clearest evidence is provided in the context of a discussion of why pride or a sense of superiority (*takabbur*) is inappropriate for humans but appropriate for God. Pride, al-Ghazālī explains, must have a proper foundation; and human beings can never be certain of that foundation, since it depends on a future eventuality. "Were a person to judge that he possesses [an] attribute (*ṣifa*) with a definiteness admitting no doubt," then pride "*would* be appropriate for him and would be a virtue (*faḍīla*) with respect to him. Yet he has no way of knowing this, for this depends on the conclusion, and he does not know what the conclusion will be."[42]

From a philosophical perspective, the idea that whether we possess an attribute now depends on something that will occur in the future will seem deeply paradoxical, and at odds with the intuitive type of psychological realism to which the view of virtues as dispositions commits us. Whether we *ascribe* a particular trait to a person of course depends on our observation of how they act and react, and future actions (an act of gross cowardice, say, from someone presumed to be a paragon of courage) may lead us to revise our judgement about the attributes we thought he possessed in the past. Perhaps the moral performance at the conclusion of life should be understood in this light: as *revealing* character, leading us to backdate our revised judgement. Yet, on the one hand, there is a question (which I will not try to answer here) whether this final performance *in extremis* is the type of event that would, in ordinary judgements of character, lead us to amend a character assessment. More relevantly, however, this point reflects the fallibility of character judgements as made by human observers. Realism, on the other hand, commits us to the view that there is a fact of the matter as to whether a person possesses a virtue even if we are ignorant of it or err in our judgements.[43] And it is this kind of realism that al-Ghazālī would here appear to flout in making true statements about a person's present attributes contingent on an unknown future event.

Summing up the main point: *Traits are not theorised as real psychological features.*[44]

42. Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā'*, 13:2415.

43. See, for example, Miller's remarks in *Character and Moral Psychology*, 19–22.

44. I have framed this point as a general one about traits and perfections, which would naturally extend to moral virtue as well. Yet one of the most surprising aspects of al-Ghazālī's discussion of the vices of self-esteem is that there is virtually no mention of *moral* traits as a basis of self-esteem. The features that al-Ghazālī typically mentions as objects of positive self-esteem—as more appropriate objects anyway, in contrast, e.g., to beauty, wealth, et al.—include knowledge (*ʿilm*), piety, and worship (*waraʿ, taqwā, ʿibāda*). Is this because al-Ghazālī thinks of moral perfection in the negative way I describe in the next section? Occasionally al-Ghazālī refers to action (*ʿamal*) as an object of self-evaluation (e.g., al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā'*, 11:1953). Now "action" may indeed be understood to include moral character in its scope; there is good evidence that al-Ghazālī uses the term in this inclusive sense (see, e.g., al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā'*, 12:2236, where he translates the expression "faith and good character (*ḥusn al-khuluq*)" into "knowledge and action (*ʿamal*)"). Cf. the definition of ʿamal in al-Ghazālī, *Mīzān al-ʿamal [The Scale of Action]*, ed. Sulaymān Dunyā (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1964), 192. Nevertheless, there is something very strange in al-Ghazālī's suppression of an *overt* reference to moral perfections in this context, and of an express concern with the pride a person might take in her moral or spiritual accomplishments. The conceptual bundling of character under "action" also gives pause for thought. Both aspects represent cases where moral character is not found where one expects it, and as such they provide additional fuel for the doubt I am considering. My discussion of the above point, in any case, rests on the assumption that al-Ghazālī also had moral perfections in mind, as would seem reasonable, in making general statements about perfection.

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The first three points have focused on issues of categorial fit—on ways in which the *substantive qualities* included in the ideals promoted, the *categorial concepts and terminology* used to speak about these qualities, and the *specification* of key concepts (such as that of a virtuous trait), appear orthogonal or at least uncertainly related to the category of virtue as widely understood. My next two points belong to a different class. The general concern they share is that the ways in which al-Ghazālī specifies, or speaks about, character yield an understanding of character and virtue that seems unusually bare or indeed negative. Character, for all its apparent importance—al-Ghazālī describes the virtues as "gateways to heaven" and the vices as "gateways to hell"—seems to become a vanishing quantity.[45] The concern here is not that we cannot recognise that talk is *of* character in a formal sense, but that the theoretical construct of character as it emerges is too thin.

The Privative Nature of Virtuous Character

Philosophers have often agreed that the value of the virtues lies in their contribution to human happiness, but they have disagreed on how this contribution should be understood. Two broad alternatives are the view that the virtues *constitute* happiness and the view that the virtues *lead* to happiness, with the latter defined independently. Aristotle is often taken to have espoused some version of the first view; David Hume is a prominent exponent of the latter.

In his writings on virtue (and "virtue"), al-Ghazālī aligns himself unmistakably with the second, instrumentalist view. This instrumentalist position emerges in both the *Scale* and the *Revival*, and is tied to al-Ghazālī's overall conception of human happiness as consisting of the fulfilment of the intellectual potentialities of human nature. The human *telos* lies in knowledge of reality and in attaining proximity to God. Our bodily appetites and passions and our attachments to worldly goods are impediments to the fulfilment of our *telos*.[46] At the most fundamental level, the virtues represent different forms of mastery over these appetites, passions, and attachments, and they are desired under their description as means to our proper *telos*. The improvement of character is thus classed with "that which is desired for the sake of something else" (*urīda li-ghayrihi*), in contrast to knowledge, which is classed with "that which is desired for its own sake" (*urīda li-nafsihi*).[47]

Yet what is especially important in the present context is how this view of the *value* of good character translates into a view of its *nature*. Its nature emerges as fundamentally privative, as a statement from the *Scale* makes particularly clear. Ethical improvement "aims at eliminating *that which should not be*," as "the elimination of that which should not be is a condition for the subject to be freed up for *that which should be*," viz. knowledge.[48] The real, positive perfection is thus

45. See al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā'*, 8:1426; I am paraphrasing slightly.
46. This view is expressed pervasively across al-Ghazālī's work, but see indicatively his *Mīzān*, 195–97, 221; and *Iḥyā'*, 8:1451. I say al-Ghazālī's alignment with the instrumentalist view is "unmistakable"; but like almost every other point in this essay, this could take deeper discussion.
47. Al-Ghazālī, *Mīzān*, 220. See also his *Iḥyā'*, 12:2297–98, for another expression of this instrumental view.
48. Al-Ghazālī, *Mīzān*, 217.

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the intellectual one. The perfection of character, by contrast, is privative in kind. It involves the removal (*izāla*, *maḥw*) and then the absence of certain kinds of drives and desires. "Acquiring" virtue, if one can appropriately apply the term, is not about putting something in, but about taking something out. The best kind of person, morally speaking, is marked not by what he has, but by what he lacks.

This privative profile is brought home in many other passages in the *Revival*, but one of the most notable is in the context of a discussion of the different possible types of perfection in the book *On the Condemnation of Status and Dissimulation*. In his list of perfections, al-Ghazālī includes: (a) being the sole existent (only available to God), (b) power (only really available to God), and (c) knowledge (available to both humans and God). Where, on this list, is *moral* perfection? A few lines down, and almost as an afterthought, al-Ghazālī tentatively adds a fourth item to the list, which he designates as "freedom" (*ḥurriyya*). This consists in "liberation from the bondage of appetites and worldly cares"—which is what moral perfection consists of in his account. Thus liberated, one emulates the impassibility of the angels, which are "*not* spurred by appetite and *not* incited by anger." One also emulates the impassibility of God, who is insusceptible to change or to being affected (*istiḥālat al-taghayyur wa-l-taʾaththur*). The negative character of this perfection, already evident in the above, is underlined again when al-Ghazālī goes on to specify it through a series of private statements. It is a matter of "*not* being changed by appetites and not submitting to them (*ʿadam al-taghayyur bi-l-shahawāt wa-ʿadam al-inqiyād lahā*)" and "*not* . . . desiring worldly assets (*ʿadam . . . irādat al-asbāb al-dunyawiyya*)." The reason he omitted this perfection from his first list, he explains, is that "it reduces to a form of privation and deficiency (*inna ḥaqīqatahu tarjiʿu ilā ʿadam wa-nuqṣān*)."[49]

In sum: *Virtue is theorised in overwhelmingly privative terms.*

The Reductive Structure of Character

I suggested in the previous section that virtuous character comes across as a privative concept in al-Ghazālī's ethics. Yet there is a further way of characterising the theoretical construct that emerges from his work. Al-Ghazālī's conception of the psychological structure of virtue appears unusually bare or reductive.

Al-Ghazālī's entire ethical vision, as it is spelled out in the *Revival*, is predicated on a dichotomy between the body, its passions, and mundane goods on the one hand, and God and the next world on the other. The most fundamental conflict, and choice, in the spiritual life is cast as the conflict and choice between these two attachments. Virtuous character ultimately appears to come down to a single orientation, which can be characterised negatively and positively. Negatively, it involves severing worldly attachments (*ʿalāʾiq al-dunyā*); positively, it involves attaching oneself to otherworldly happiness and to God. As al-Ghazālī clearly states in one place: "The end of these character traits (*akhlāq*) is that the love of the world

49. Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, 10:1844.

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be uprooted from the soul and the love of God take root in it."[50] This dichotomous, either/or view appears to rest on a particular understanding of the facts of human psychology, as a remark in *On Poverty and Renunciation* suggests. "Perfection (*kamāl*) consists in the heart's not turning to anything other than the beloved, whether in hatred or in love; for just as two loves cannot be simultaneously present in the heart, so also hatred and love cannot be simultaneously present in the heart."[51] Perfection is here clearly identified with an affective or conative state; and the claim is that it is impossible for two such states to co-exist in the human psyche.

This dichotomy and the reductive view of character it grounds can be tracked throughout the *Revival*, across the analyses that al-Ghazālī offers of particular "virtues" and vices. The reduction to this underlying structure is more obvious in some cases than in others. Vices such as miserliness, pride, or gluttony are clearly problematic insofar as they embody an attachment to mundane goods (respectively wealth, power, and physical pleasure) and the dominance of animal passions. Similarly, a virtue such as "self-control" (*ṣabr*) is directly theorised in terms of an ability to control appetite or desire (*shahwa*) and conquer the drive of passion (*bāʿith al-hawā*) through the religious drive (*bāʿith al-dīn*).[52] With other virtues, the underlying structure lies a little lower beneath the surface. Gratitude (*shukr*), for example, involves not merely acknowledging a benefit, verbally or otherwise, but rather "using this benefit to realise the purpose it was intended for," which is fundamentally the obedience of God; and this requires overturning "the sovereignty of appetite."[53] The qualities that encapsulate this dichotomous view most obviously are renunciation (*zuhd*)—which al-Ghazālī defines as a transfer of desire *away* from the mundane world (*raghba ʿan*), as the object of inferior value, and *toward* the next world and God (*raghba fī*), as the object of superior value[54]—and love of God (*maḥabba*). In this regard, these two qualities would seem to represent the master virtues of al-Ghazālī's ethics. All virtue reduces to renunciation of the world and love of God, which are but two sides of a single motivational structure.

This reductive view of the structure of virtue is starkly illustrated in a discussion that takes place in the book *On Fear and Hope*, where al-Ghazālī unpacks his view of an important theological topos, the "conclusion" (*khātima*) of life. The moment of death, it emerges, is the most portentous moment in a human life, which has the power to determine its future course. If human acts are judged by their intentions, human lives are judged by their conclusions, and more specifically, by the final instant that brings the entire play to a close, which is when the human heart gives its most fateful performance. If, at the moment the soul is being taken away, either *doubt or unbelief or desire for something worldly* enters the heart, this becomes a barrier that prevents a person from entering paradise. The heart is as it were frozen in the rictus of death; the psychological death mask taken at the moment of rigor mortis is the one that remains for all time. A person's entire lifetime of moral effort is in

50. Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, 8:1444; the "end," or "the ultimate point" (*ghāya*). Cf. Abul Quasem: "the evil qualities of the soul are but various aspects of its love of the world" (*The Ethics of al-Ghazālī*, 69).
51. Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, 13:2394.
52. Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, 12:2172–73.
53. Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, 12:2275.
54. Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, 13:2436.

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a sense a preparation for this one moral performance. "All the acts of an entire lifetime are forfeit if one does not escape unharmed at the final breath."[55] This striking picture invites many questions, among which perhaps the most interesting is whether it supports or undermines a belief in the value of character. Yet the main point to focus on is what it says about the content of character. Doubt and unbelief, and desire for worldly goods, respectively correspond to the intellectual and moral aspects of human perfection. Once again, moral perfection is reduced to a basic motivational structure determined by one of two mutually exclusive desires: desire of bodily and mundane goods versus desire for God and the next world.

The point I have been framing as a question of motivational structure can be put equally instructively as a point about the virtuous person's reasons. As Daniel Russell notes, "to have a virtue is (among other things) to be characteristically responsive to certain sorts of reasons" or considerations.[56] These reasons, he suggests, provide the most promising way of individuating virtues and explaining what makes generosity, justice, courage, or magnanimity *distinct* virtues. The kinds of things one cares about, to rephrase Russell's point, vary from virtue to virtue. To care about justice is not the same as to care about courage or generosity—which is also why it seems possible for a person to possess one virtue but lack another. It is this structural distinctness that is reflected, for example, in Aristotle's richly textured portrait of the virtuous person in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the plural traits that make up his character, each with its own distinctive sphere of operation. The Ghazālian virtuous agent appears to be responsive to a single set of reasons and to care about a single set of considerations: whether something involves or constitutes an attachment to mundane and body-based goods, or whether it involves or constitutes an attachment to God and the afterlife. Although, as Russell points out, the local or low-level characteristic reasons of individual virtues ultimately connect at a higher level, since "all ascend to a general conception of the place of the virtues in one's life," in al-Ghazālī's ethics low-level reasons appear to reduce almost frictionlessly to high-level reasons.[57]

To sum up: *The structure of character is theorised in highly reductive terms*.

The Unsituatedness of the "Virtues"

The last point I want to consider concerns a feature of al-Ghazālī's account of the spiritual "virtues" that is rather harder to categorise. It is a feature that places his account at a strange angle to a dominant way of thinking about the virtues—so dominant, in fact, that I am not sure whether it has come up for explicit comment in philosophical discussions. In one regard, it forms a natural corollary of the basic conception of what a virtue *is* that was mentioned earlier. A virtue, we saw, is usually understood as a disposition, which is manifested in certain patterns of acting,

55. Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, 13:2371; and see generally the discussion 13:2363–5.
56. Russell, *Practical Intelligence and the Virtues*, 183.
57. Ibid, 197. Which means that the present point can also be parsed as a question about how clearly the virtues are individuated in al-Ghazālī's scheme.

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feeling, judging, and so on. The concept of a disposition logically presupposes a contrast between a person possessing a disposition and that disposition being manifested or activated—a contingent manifestation occurring in particular circumstances and in response to particular occasions. Thus, a person who is generous will manifest that aspect of their character when occasions arise that provide an opportunity to respond in either a generous or a non-generous way, for example when a friend turns to them for financial help. An honest person will manifest their honesty when testifying under oath or when they are faced with the option of lying instead of disclosing an inconvenient truth.

As Christian Miller puts it, central to dispositions is that they "are sensitive to certain *stimulus events* or *stimulus conditions* specific to the particular disposition." This is analogous to the way a "vase has the disposition of being fragile, which makes it sensitive to being hit by a baseball, but not to the color of the baseball . . . Because of the way dispositions work, certain events and facts about a situation or environment will end up being relevant to a given disposition, whereas others will not. It is also common to talk of stimulus events *triggering* characteristic *manifestations* of dispositions." Character traits thus "serve as *causal mediators* between their various stimuli and manifestation events."[58]

It is this idea of dispositions as being stimulated by particular events or aspects of a situation that I want to highlight. In part, this is a purely conceptual point, as just noted. But it also mediates an important and more substantive picture of what it means to lead the life of virtue in the grainy context of everyday reality. Virtue, on this picture, is expressed in a sequence of particular, contingent responses to the particular, contingent situations and predicaments that confront us as we go about our daily lives. It is anchored in our transactions with the evolving contingencies of the social and natural world that surrounds us. This not only concretises the idea of what it means to live virtuously. By locating it in the finite context of everyday reality, it also implicitly places certain kinds of limitations on this idea. The emphasis on virtue as a negotiation of contingent particulars is reflected in a model of moral reasoning which goes back to Aristotle and enjoys broad support among contemporary philosophers of the virtues. Moral reasoning is not about following general rules but about sensitive negotiation of particulars, "fitting one's choice to the complex requirements of a concrete situation, taking all of its contextual features into account."[59] Moral judgement, it can thus be said, "depends on perception."[60]

Against this background (which I've had to spell out at slightly greater length), it is possible to explain what makes al-Ghazālī's account of the spiritual "virtues" highly unusual. In contrast to most of the vice–virtue sets discussed earlier in the

58. Christian Miller, "Virtue as a Trait," in *The Oxford Handbook of Virtue*, ed. N. E. Snow, 14–15, all emphases in original. It is difficult to overstate how deeply the emphasis on virtue-relevant situations is ingrained in philosophical thinking about what virtue is, how it is exercised and expressed, and even how it is educated. By way of purely indicative sample, consider Howard J. Curzer's Aristotelian procedure for character change: "First, determine the sorts of *situations* that elicit problematic responses . . ." "Aristotle and Moral Virtue," in *The Oxford Handbook of Virtue*, ed. N. E. Snow, 110, emphasis added.

59. Martha C. Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 67; and see generally the discussion in chapter 2.

60. *NE* 1109b23.

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Revival—such as gluttony, miserliness, or irascibility, and their opposing virtues—it seems extremely difficult to approach most of the "virtues" featured in the last quarter of the *Revival* on the terms outlined above. Many of these "virtues" are ways of responding to one very specific aspect of reality—namely, God, viewed from different perspectives. Love is a virtuous response to God's beauty. Trust is a virtuous response to God's wisdom, power, and mercy, and to the fact that God is ultimately the sole agent in the universe. Vigilance, if we follow Muhammad Abul Quasem's construction of it as a virtue, is a virtuous response to the fact of God's omniscience and his knowledge of one's inner and outer being.[61] Gratitude is a virtuous response to God's beneficence (expressed at every moment, and for us, beginning from the very fact of being alive). On a slightly different mould, renunciation is a virtuous response to the evaluative fact that the present world is inferior to the next world and the enjoyment of God's proximity.

In all these cases, the "virtues" are appropriate responses to unchanging features of metaphysical reality. There is no isolable occasion for their exercise, no determinate and delimited situation in which they are especially called for and which can serve as a "stimulus" for their activation. They are always called for. Their occasions, if we can still use the term, are always present. There is no time when it is *not* appropriate to be loving, vigilant, grateful, trusting, or renunciant.

This might seem to suggest that the main issue is simply a special case of the philosophical problem sometimes called the "demandingness of morality"—the problem posed when morality appears to ask too much of us, at the expense of goods that lie outside it. Al-Ghazālī would not have thought of this as a problem. There are no competing values outside these ethico-spiritual ones that are entitled to respect; other values (such as the needs of the body, or social needs) only command respect insofar as they enable us to realise these ones. And there is no moment at which these ethico-spiritual values do not make demands of us.[62] Yet commitment to this maximising view is compatible with recognising that certain kinds of conflict or competition can arise *within* the ethical domain. Time spent cultivating or exercising one virtue, for example, is time taken away from another. Time spent experiencing one virtuous emotion is time spent *not* experiencing another. Manifestations of the virtues and virtuous experiences of emotions compete with each other for finite resources of time and psychological space. Traditionally, resolving such conflicts and taking decisions about how to balance different demands has been considered to be the role of *phronesis*, which ensures that feelings and actions are in accordance with the mean. What makes an emotion *virtuous*—and thereby marks the presence of a *virtue*—is that it observes the mean, being felt "at the right times, about the right things, toward the right people, for the right end, and in the right way," in Aristotle's already-quoted words.[63] In his discussion of the spiritual "virtues," al-Ghazālī maintains a pointed silence concerning the principle of the mean, the role of practical wisdom, the issue of potential conflict or competition, and more

61. For Abul Quasem's discussion, see *The Ethics of al-Ghazālī*, 173–76.
62. This view is signalled especially clearly in al-Ghazālī's book *On Vigilance and Self-Examination.* See, indicatively, al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, 15:2754–55.
63. *NE* 1106b21–23.

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broadly questions about the concrete anchoring and realisation of these qualities in the finite expanse of everyday life.[64] It is the underdevelopment of this theoretical infrastructure, combined with the "unsituated" nature of the qualities he discusses (the omnipresence of their "occasion"), that generate a doubt as to whether the talk here is of virtue as we know it.

Summing up the main point of this section: *The "virtues" are unsituated responses that are not anchored in the structure of human life and practical reasoning.*

2. Re-Evaluations

In the above, I traced out some of the chief aspects of al-Ghazālī's ethical thought that provoke a doubt about the appropriateness of identifying his thought as an ethics concerned with virtue. These considerations, it may be noted, stand in somewhat uncertain relations to each other; not *all* of them, for example, could be simultaneously accepted as accurate descriptions of al-Ghazālī's scheme.[65] They are also, in themselves, a mixed sort. All of them concern high-level features of al-Ghazālī's thinking about character and what we may or may not call "virtue," but some align more clearly with the basic conceptual or categorial concern I outlined in the beginning, which bears on the fundamental question of whether al-Ghazālī has a theory of virtue in the sense of being about something we may recognise as "virtue." For some of these points (the last is the best example), one of the most pertinent questions is precisely whether they are sufficiently central to our conception of virtue to count as categorial. This, of course, foregrounds the deeper question that my references to "we" and "our" invite concerning the perspective from which these observations are made and to which these features of al-Ghazālī's account are declared to bear an awkward or orthogonal relationship.

I have been open about the fact that this perspective is one informed by philosophical ways of thinking about the virtues, past and present. Yet one thing I particularly want to underline here is that the above list of considerations—a list which is not, I should add, entirely complete—was not the result of approaching al-Ghazālī with a kind of "rulebook" of how virtue ethics should be done, and blowing the whistle upon discovering that his account deviates from this rulebook. It emerged from an attempt to reflectively articulate a more immediate sense that when one confronts al-Ghazālī's work with a view to how it might be placed in conversation with other philosophical approaches to the virtues, something catches. It was the result of trying to clarify an unprompted sense of doubt.

Yet with these considerations now in the open, it is possible to take another critical step back and ask: Do these considerations offer us *good* reasons for disqualifying al-Ghazālī's ethics as a theory of virtue? The issues raised in the

64. The closest al-Ghazālī comes to creating that anchoring is in *On Vigilance and Self-Examination*, which expresses a very strong awareness of time as a finite and quantifiable good.

65. To take one example (touched on below), even a reductive view of virtue is a positive view and involves the ascription of a real psychological feature in the present time.

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previous stage of my discussion are extremely large, and each deserves a study in its own right. I cannot hope to resolve them in the present space, and I will only try to adumbrate some of the grounds on which the force of these considerations might be questioned. Few of these considerations, in fact, appear unequivocal on closer scrutiny. I will focus on a handful of indicative points, which can help suggest the direction a fuller discussion might take. These points will also pave the way for a more holistic assessment of the question I have been pursuing.

The Privative Nature and Reductive Structure of Virtuous Character

It is convenient to start from these points, and take them together. To begin with, it may already be clear that these two points stand in tension with each other. Even a reductive view of the structure of character is after all a positive view. Focusing on the "privative" aspect first, there are in fact a number of locations where al-Ghazālī pledges himself to a more positive view of what virtue involves. A number of times he speaks of stocking or "populating" (*ʿammara*) the heart with praiseworthy traits, an achievement that rests on first "emptying" it of blameworthy ones.[66] Perhaps the clearest context that evokes a more positive view of virtuous character is al-Ghazālī's aesthetic understanding of virtue, an understanding he spells out at particular length in the book *On Love*. Virtue is beautiful, and the quest to acquire virtue is thus a quest to "adorn and beautify [one's] interior (*taḥliyat bāṭinihi wa-tajmīluhu bi-l-faḍīla*)."[67]

The connection is not unambiguous, as al-Ghazālī sometimes appears to cling to a negative view of virtue in the midst of expounding on its aesthetic character.[68] Yet perhaps the most relevant point here is one that can be made philosophically before being made textually. To understand virtue in terms of the elimination of unwanted appetites and desires (which "should not be"), of "*not* being changed by appetites," "*not* submitting to them," and "*not* . . . desiring worldly assets" is merely to say that virtue is *manifested* in an omission or privation. But this privative manifestation must be explained by reference to a state of character understood in more positive terms—to a positive psychological structure. This seems even clearer once we take into account that al-Ghazālī gives his readers little reason to think that full virtue, hence the complete privation of unwanted appetites and desires, can be achieved by most human beings in this life. An ongoing agonistic relationship to the animal parts of the self will almost always be necessary. This is reflected in al-Ghazālī's description of the virtues and the vices in the *Scale* as respectively "dispositions of domination" (*hayʾāt istilāʾiyya*) and "dispositions of subservience" (*hayʾāt inqiyādiyya*)—that is, relative to appetites.[69]

66. Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, 15:2806 (indeed populating it also with stations: *yuʿammiru qalbahu bi-l-akhlāq al-maḥmūda wa-l-maqāmāt al-sharīfa*). Cf. 2:223: *al-ghāya al-quṣwā ʿimāratuhu bi-l-akhlāq al-maḥmūda wa-l-ʿaqāʾid al-mahsrūʿa*.

67. Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, 1:89; cf. 1:127.

68. See, for example, al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, 14:2586 and 2588-89, in the context of discussing the features that ground the beauty of, and thereby our love for, exemplary people; the reference to ethical features is framed negatively in terms of the absence of or freedom from (*tanazzuh*) deficiencies.

69. Al-Ghazālī, *Mīzān*, 204.

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The worry about al-Ghazālī's privative view of character is perhaps in part a displacement of another worry, concerning the explicitly instrumental and subordinate value he assigns to character. For al-Ghazālī, it is certainly clear that moral perfection plays second fiddle to intellectual perfection. It is our intellectual achievements that al-Ghazālī principally encourages us to see as being retained in the afterlife. Whether our moral features, as opposed to our cognitive features, form part of our identity in the otherworldly context is far from obvious.[70]

If moral virtue is defined in terms of an attachment to God and the next world, the positive answer to this question would seem almost trivially true. This brings us to the issues raised by al-Ghazālī's reductive understanding of virtue (and virtuous reasons). I contrasted this understanding with the one that emerges both from Aristotle's work and from contemporary thinking about virtuous reasons and the individuation of the virtues. Yet the most obvious point to make here is that this comparison was too partial, and left out of view a rather richer range of philosophical approaches. The relationship between different virtues, and the reason-giving they involve, is a complex one, and philosophers ancient and modern have taken a lively interest in it. Among ancient philosophers, a significant number, including Aristotle, took the view that certain relations of dependence or entailment hold between apparently distinct virtues. A more radical version of this view was that having one entails having them all (the thesis usually known as the "unity of the virtues"). An important subset of ancient philosophers, which notably included Socrates and the Stoics, took an even stronger position, arguing that virtue is a single unified condition and that, as John Cooper puts it, "there [is] really no set of distinct and separate virtuous qualities at all, but at bottom only a single one," with specific virtues representing merely "distinguishable aspects or immediate effects of [this] unitary 'virtue'."[71]

Placed in this light, al-Ghazālī's reductive understanding of virtue may look rather less alien. An interesting and more substantive task would therefore be to compare his understanding with these conceptions. More broadly, this suggests that the conceptual continuity we establish between al-Ghazālī's ethics and philosophical approaches to the virtues may depend on the part of the philosophical tradition we choose to focus on; and it signals the importance of taking an inclusive view of this tradition. A more inclusive view would also uncover other parallels (how far, for example, does al-Ghazālī's privative conception of virtue lie from the ideal of a-patheia among Stoic thinkers, to say nothing of the Platonic and Neoplatonic ways of thinking about the body and emotion that lie buried in its lineage?). If one is slow to cultivate an inclusive view in this case, in considering al-Ghazālī's reductive conception of virtue, it may be wondered whether that is because this is another case of displaced concern—where the real concern is with al-Ghazālī's overtly supernaturalist specification of this conception and with how hospitable this makes his ethics to philosophical engagement and appropriation.

70. This could invite considerable discussion. For some evidence that suggests the survival of moral features, see Abul Quasem, *The Ethics of al-Ghazālī*, 149–50.

71. John M. Cooper, "The Unity of Virtue," *Social Philosophy and Policy* 15 (1998): 233.

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Virtue in the Future Tense

Al-Ghazālī's anti-realist reduction of virtue to a future outcome can be taken as a reflection of two important things: (a) how he believed people *ought* to regard the value of virtue (recall the instrumentalist view of virtue), and (b) how he believed most people he was addressing *in fact* regarded the value of virtue. In the context of the religious metaphysics he shared with his readers, perfections have powers—not simply in terms of what they cause us to do or feel (the philosophical conception of the power of virtue), but in terms of what they cause us to receive in otherworldly bliss. Since, taken as a thesis about the nature of virtue, this anti-realist position is clearly inconsistent with the view of virtue as a stable disposition that al-Ghazālī articulates elsewhere, maybe the best interpretive decision here is the most charitable one: to bury this piece of textual evidence and assume it does not represent al-Ghazālī's considered position. This evidence would not carry as much weight were it not for the environment of doubt constituted by other evidence.

Virtues as Unsituated Responses

One way of querying my portrait of the spiritual "virtues" as perpetually mandated unsituated responses to unchanging reality might be by arguing that this picture is partial. The "occasion" of these "virtues" is not God's reality, but God's reality as this intersects with some facet of human life. For instance, in the case of trust, it is not merely God's status as the sole true agent, as wise, powerful and merciful, that creates the context for the exercise of a virtuous experience of trust. It is this combined with the fact of being faced with the possibility of some specific action which opens up the space for viewing or relating to one's agency in different ways. Similarly, it is not the evaluative reality that "the mundane world is inferior to the next" that we should reasonably see as the relevant "occasion" for renunciation, but some concrete context in which we are faced with the option of choosing the next world over this one. It is these circumstances that provide the more direct stimulus or triggering condition. One difficulty with this view is that these "situations" are not delimited, to put it mildly. We are always being faced with the possibility of some action; we are always being faced with some worldly good we could prefer over an otherworldly one by virtue of simply being in the world. (This is especially true if you follow al-Ghazālī's maximising view of morality, in which morality has no gaps or work-play distinctions.) These generic possibilities are as much part of our current reality as God's attributes are part of his.

Is this a fatal difficulty? It is a question that seems well worth exploring. Exploring it would involve taking a closer look at the key assumptions that underpin philosophical thinking about these issues. Even though, as I have said, the emphasis on situations, and on the dramatic character of the manifestation of the virtues,[72] permeates philosophical thinking on the subject, this emphasis

72. "Dramatic character": this is also reflected in the suggestion that moral perception takes the natural form of a *story* or *narrative* about the relevant situation. See Susan Stark, "Virtue and Emotion," *Noûs* 35 (2001): 442, redeploying Jonathan Dancy's account in *Moral Reasons* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1993), 111–16.

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squares far more comfortably with some virtues than others. If we think there are virtues that govern self-esteem, for example, it is not obvious that they could be accommodated to this model without artificiality. Similarly, the emphasis on situations as providing discrete dramatic occasions for exercises of the virtues overlooks the fact that virtue is often expressed in seeking out relevant situations, and in recognising virtue-relevant situations even when they do not confront one with the immediate dramatic force of a baseball hitting a vase (to recall Miller's example). (This points to the potentially misleading effects of comparing virtues to the dispositions of physical objects.) It also overlooks the fact that there are countless occasions—not necessarily turning up on one's doorstep, but out there to be sought out—that create a potential demand for virtuous responses. There is always someone who could form an appropriate object for our compassion or generosity, always something for which to experience gratitude. How unusual is the diffuse construction of the "situation" I just experimented with reading into al-Ghazālī's work—which potentially creates a constant demand for the virtues—once we take this into account?

The existence of potentially infinite occasions for the virtues, set against the finitude of human life and resources, evidently requires some kind of choice. For most philosophers, making this kind of choice would be the better part of practical wisdom, providing prime testimony for why practical wisdom is indispensable to the virtuous life. The more stubborn difficulty with al-Ghazālī's account is to be found here and in the underdevelopment of theoretical infrastructure it diagnoses. This leads us to the last set of points.

The Substantive Content and Terminology of the Spiritual "Virtues"

I have left this pair of interconnected points for last, as they are the ones that seem to me to pose the deepest and most complex difficulties. The first point came down to the observation that a number of al-Ghazālī's supposed "virtues" don't appear to be virtues in the familiar sense; the second to the observation that al-Ghazālī's theoretical terms for these "virtues" don't appear to pick out virtues. The two points intersected in this claim: a number of al-Ghazālī's supposed "virtues" appear to be emotions; and al-Ghazālī's theoretical terms for these supposed "virtues" (viz. *aḥwāl*) appear to pick out occurrent phenomenological experiences that are co-extensive with emotions either in whole or in large part.

The second of these issues looks like the one that runs least deep, and that should be the easiest to clear up. Al-Ghazālī himself often expressed impatience with verbal disputes: so long as we know what we're talking about, there's "no need to quarrel over words" (*lā mushāḥḥa fī l-alfāẓ baʿda maʿrifat al-maʿānī*).[73] There are different routes one could follow here. One would be to adopt a *via media* between the views taken by Sherif and Abul Quasem, and conclude that al-Ghazālī employs

73. Al-Ghazālī, *al-Mustaṣfā min ʿilm al-uṣūl* (Būlāq: al-Maṭbaʿa al-Amīriyya, 1904), 1:28. Yet words are after all the way we know what we're talking about.

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the term *ḥāl* equivocally, sometimes using it in the Sufi sense (where it refers to a transient involuntary occurrent state) and sometimes using it in the sense of a more stable disposition.[74] Evidence for this can be gleaned in various locations, but one of the most compelling is in the context of an important discussion that takes place in *On Patience and Gratitude* where al-Ghazālī sets out to explain the relation between states (*aḥwāl*), cognitions, and actions in his triadic scheme. His account mobilises a number of ideas rooted in philosophical ethics that he has elsewhere articulated in clear reference to character traits. These include the idea that moral virtue (here *ḥāl*) is a means to intellectual illumination and hence to happiness, and the (Aristotelian) idea that moral virtue (here *ḥāl*) is acquired by habituating oneself to the relevant actions; in the same context, al-Ghazālī brings up specific qualities, such as miserliness, which represent textbook cases of character traits.[75] Philosophical ideas elsewhere decked out in the language of virtue and character are thus re-clothed here in the language of states, making a strong case for equivalence between the two sets of concepts.

Moreover, "state" is al-Ghazālī's term of choice for referring to the subject of the second half of the *Revival*, dedicated to the "science of the states of the heart" and covering both destructive and salvific qualities.[76] It is not only that he describes the same part of the *Revival* as focusing on "character traits" (*akhlāq*), as noted earlier—it is hard to know how much weight to attach to isolated pieces of nomenclatural evidence like these—but that in doing so he refers to elements that we can clearly identify as character traits (all those recognisable vices treated in the third quarter, such as miserliness, gluttony, envy, etc.). This combines with a rather broader consideration: given the Sufi understanding of "states" as transient and unwilled experiences, it is simply hard to see how al-Ghazālī could have seen his entire ethical project as centring on these. Whatever other doubts we may have, it makes no sense to doubt his interest in promoting lasting moral change (and change that lies in our voluntary control). And we certainly know from both his philosophical definitions of "character trait" and "virtue" and his Sufi definition of "station," if from nothing else, that he had a reflective concept of *that*.[77]

To this proposal I would add another point, which may help explain al-Ghazālī's seemingly wayward use of the term "state" to refer to spiritual "virtues" even where the former term appears to denote a meaning closer to its conventional Sufi usage. This usage may in fact reflect a tension between al-Ghazālī's more reflective rigorous application of terms and a more ordinary or widespread type of usage. Al-Ghazālī often opens his discussions of the spiritual "virtues" with an explicit statement that identifies these "virtues" with the tripartite complex of the "station," which comprises cognitions, states, and actions—and which as such is presumably stable once properly acquired. Thus, repentance, for example,

74. Sherif himself, in fact, appears to acknowledge this equivocal use at *Ghazālī's Theory of Virtue,* 111 (esp. n.2).
75. Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā'*, 12:2297–99. I discuss this passage at greater length in "Virtue and the Law in al-Ghazālī's Ethics."
76. See, e.g., al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā'*, 1:36.
77. Some help toward resolving this question might also be thought to be provided by al-Ghazālī's discussion of ethics in the *Munqidh*, where he identifies the concerns of philosophical ethics (viz. *ṣifāt al-nafs wa-akhlāquhā*) with the concerns of Sufi discourse (*al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl* [The Deliverer from Error], ed. Jamīl Ṣalībā and Kāmil ʿAyyād [Beirut: Dār al-Andalus, 1967], 86). But as he makes no reference to specific Sufi concepts such as stations or states there, this evidence does not take us far.

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is made up of the *knowledge* that sins cause great harm, the *state of emotional pain* at the thought of losing something desirable (which is what is called "remorse," *nadam*), and the *action* of abandoning and avoiding sins and redressing past ones. The term "repentance," he writes, "is applied to the aggregate (*majmūʿihā*)." Yet he continues: "it is often applied to the element of remorse alone." A prophetic dictum is cited to illustrate this usage ("repentance is remorse").[78] This shows al-Ghazālī distinguishing between two kinds of usage, with the former representing the theoretically normative one. That al-Ghazālī takes a normative view of the application of these terms is made especially clear in his discussion of hope, which he insists is *only* properly applied when hope is properly justified (otherwise it is called delusion or folly).[79] In ordinary usage, by contrast, the terms of the "virtues" may be used to signify only one part of this triadic complex, often the "state." Even from our own linguistic perspective, the idea that a single term may be used to refer to psychological elements that fall in distinct conceptual categories seems perfectly intelligible. A good example is "compassion," which can refer both to a state of feeling, and to a state of character. The point seems even more intelligible vis-à-vis al-Ghazālī's subject matter, given that many of his targets, such as hope, fear, and love, would be naturally taken to refer to feelings in ordinary usage; to view them as virtues would require an education of this ordinary starting point. Even then, feelings will retain a natural epistemological primacy over traits, to the extent that stable traits are ascribed to people by first observing the feelings they express and the actions they perform.

More work would need to be done to establish this proposal more firmly, and to evaluate additional or alternative interpretations. Al-Ghazālī's use of Sufi technical terms, more generally, requires far more extensive investigation. Yet this brings me to the other point I mentioned, concerning the content with which al-Ghazālī populates his list of the spiritual "virtues." I suggested above that there is a way of construing al-Ghazālī's Sufi terminology that permits us to assimilate terms that ostensibly refer to transient phenomenological states to the philosophical category of virtue, thereby supporting our ability to say that al-Ghazālī is talking about virtue. Yet this point rests in large part on considerations about the formal terminology al-Ghazālī's uses. This leaves open the possibility that the substantive things that he uses this terminology to talk *about*—or a significant fraction of these things—may resist being assimilated into the category of virtue; and this holds true even if we recognise, less formally, al-Ghazālī's fundamental interest in fostering *lasting* change. There's "no need to quarrel over words"—but that's if we *are* sure we know what we're talking about, and that we're talking about the same thing.

It is certainly hard to deny that some of the contents of Ghazālī's list of the spiritual "virtues" do not fit into the category of the virtues. Yet first of all, it is worth noting that this problem is not particular to this part of his discussion. His discussion of the "destructive" qualities in the third part of the book includes such

78. Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, 11:2072–73.

79. Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, 12:2309 ("if the expectation [of the desirable outcome] is due to the fact that most of its causes have been realised, *then* the term 'hope' correctly applies to it"). A very tall linguistic order!

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topics as excessive speech, making false promises, lying, slander, and backbiting, which we would also struggle to accommodate under the same category. A simple conclusion to draw from this is that the *Revival* is a more motley narrative universe than al-Ghazālī himself encourages us to think. The compass that al-Ghazālī volunteers to help readers navigate this universe—naming his subject in quarters 3 and 4 as "character traits" or "states"—is simply too narrow, we may say, and breeds false expectations. But to make an obvious point, just because a description doesn't apply to the whole, that doesn't mean it doesn't apply to a part. Even if it is the case that not everything that the *Revival* places under the heading of destructive and salvific elements represents a virtue or a vice, it is enough for our purposes if a sufficient subset does. More constructively, our task should be to try to come up with a better compass, one that provides a more faithful reflection of the complexity of the *Revival*'s content and concerns.

Yet that still presupposes that a sufficient subset of its content can indeed be identified as concerned with matters of virtue and character. The main problem, as I have said, arises especially in connection with the spiritual "virtues." One possible strategy here is to look for ways of interpreting or reconstructing some of the more unwieldly elements al-Ghazālī places on his list that would allow us to accommodate them to the paradigm of virtue. This move, which reflects a commitment to upholding al-Ghazālī's own compass to his subject, has been made by certain commentators. To take one example, both Sherif and Abul Quasem propose ways of reading al-Ghazālī's treatment of poverty that orient attention away from the objective state of lack (al-Ghazālī's apparent focus) to the internal attitudes involved, which might enable us to construe poverty as a disposition.[80]

The most problematic case, and the most stubborn in my view, is those "virtues" that appear to be identified with passions, a family that includes hope, fear, and most importantly, love—the flagship of al-Ghazālī's ethical vision. In some of these cases, as I have indicated, al-Ghazālī's treatment can be seen to have a normative dimension. Hope, for example, is answerable to certain justificatory standards. Similarly, present (if more implicit) in al-Ghazālī's account of love is a normative conception of the objects that *merit* that response. Yet this justificatory dimension is not enough to secure their status as traits rather than emotions. It is a familiar part of the "grammar" of emotions that they are subject to critical or rational assessment. It is true, too, that al-Ghazālī (*pace* Sherif's earlier point) in fact invokes the concept of the mean in connection with at least some of these cases; hope and fear are the best examples.[81] But again, is this enough to secure their place in the category of virtue, taken alone? One can perfectly well criticise someone for feeling too much or too little hope, too much or too little fear, without this implying anything about the relation of these feelings to their stable character.

Commenting on al-Ghazālī's reticence about the mean in his treatment of the spiritual "virtues," Abul Quasem states that "the reason is that the use of the mean

80. Sherif, *Ghazālī's Theory of Virtue*, 139; Abul Quasem, *The Ethics of al-Ghazālī*, 166–67. They offer similar reconstructive proposals for other cases where al-Ghazālī's formal triadic structure appears to be absent.

81. See al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā'*, 12:2315 for hope, and 13:2334 for fear.

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for otherworldly purposes is obviously inappropriate to all mystical virtues"—so obvious, in fact, that he does not clarify this gnomic statement any further.[82] Yet why is the mean inappropriate? Is it because there can be no reprehensible *excess* in connection with these "virtues": the more love, trust, renunciation, gratitude, etc., we exhibit, the better? This would be consistent with al-Ghazālī's maximal view of morality, as I suggested earlier. Yet as I also noted earlier, it reflects an inattention to questions of conflict and competition that diagnoses the underdevelopment of a certain kind of theoretical infrastructure, including a more explicit concern with and theoretical articulation of the role of practical reasoning. And the relevant point here is that this infrastructure would have made it easier for us to situate the topics of al-Ghazālī's concern as virtues rather than emotions—as stable and integrated parts of a person's character manifested in the concrete temporal expanse of a particular life.[83] Overall, there is little in al-Ghazālī's discussion that thematises the endurance of these passionate responses, and that encourages us to think of them as stable features of inner life. While we can ultimately make al-Ghazālī's terminology face in the right direction, as I suggested above, the absence of a strong terminology and robust theoretical framework in which these features are unambiguously and explicitly articulated as stable dispositions certainly does not help.[84]

3. Lessons of Doubt

Each of the points I have considered raises complex questions, and my brief forays, to repeat, should not be seen as attempts to fully resolve them. Part of my aim here has been to showcase their complexities and tentatively pick out the contours of a fuller treatment. Yet my main aim was to offer a more nuanced approach to the doubt I articulated along several axes in section 1. The dialectical structure I adopted for my discussion may seem like a stiff and untidy artifice. This kind of structure provides a truer representation of the uncertain course inquiry often follows before certainties crystallise. While we often clear away these antecedents in the interests of an integrated narrative and a unified viewpoint, it may sometimes be fruitful to publicly preserve them, especially where the issues are complex and certainties seem more elusive. In this case, I hope this structure can be taken as an expression of good faith, and of a commitment to genuine debate.

So at the end of this exercise, where do we stand with regard to the questions we have been pursuing? My discussion throughout has been steered by a simple question: Does al-Ghazālī have a theory of virtue, in the sense of talking about

82. Abul Quasem, *The Ethics of al-Ghazālī*, 152.

83. There may be something more to say, however, about implicit appeals to practical reasoning in the *Revival*; I hope to explore this point elsewhere. Taken alone, duration—which al-Ghazālī's above-quoted statement makes criterial for the distinction between states and stations—certainly does not seem like an adequate criterion for drawing the categorial boundary between an emotion and a virtue.

84. A fuller treatment of this question would benefit from a comparative view of how similar issues were addressed in the intellectual traditions of other faith communities. The notable case is the Christian tradition, where love and hope feature as key theological virtues. Space, and the contingencies of COVID-19, have made that impossible in the present iteration of this essay.

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something we may recognise as virtue? This question holds the key to establishing the most basic continuity of concepts required if we wish to place al-Ghazālī's ethics in dialogue with philosophical approaches to the virtues. Many of the points outlined in the previous section (section 2) offered ways of disarming the scepticism articulated in the first stage of my discussion (section 1).[85] Yet my discussion did not, it may be noticed, disarm all of the points mentioned earlier. Taking everything together, it seems clear that we can, with reasonable confidence, describe al-Ghazālī as talking *about* virtue at least in part. The degree of confidence depends on the parts of his corpus we happen to be considering. It is far stronger when considering the *Scale* than the *Revival*, and far stronger when considering the *Revival*'s discussion of the vices than the virtues. Some of the doubts raised by the latter cases could in principle be smoothed away through targeted interpretive moves, as I suggested above. For example, we can come up with plausible ways of relating al-Ghazālī's Sufi vocabulary to the conceptual categories of virtue and character. We can also build more nuanced maps of his ethical output that enable us to be more sensitive to the plural ethical concerns that animate it. Maybe, too, we can do some reconstructive work of our own, which helps anchor his ideas more firmly in a virtue-ethical framework.

All of these moves require some type of building work on our part; and to that extent all of them involve acknowledging that certain features of al-Ghazālī's ethics make such building work necessary, if the continuity at issue is to be established. The doubt I have been considering does not, after all, arise in a void. And one of its most constructive functions consists precisely in what it tells us regarding the character of al-Ghazālī's writing, and the real features of his work to which it calls attention. One such feature concerns the level of its internal integration. The coalescence of Sufi and philosophical ideas in al-Ghazālī's work has often come in for scholarly comment, as already mentioned. At an earlier time, it gave rise to a specific debate about al-Ghazālī's evolving relationship to the *Scale of Action*, and about whether he rejected the philosophical ideas expressed there after his spiritual crisis in 488/1095.[86] The consensus now is that he did not, and that many of these ideas continue to be active in the *Revival of the Religious Sciences*, albeit in subtler forms conditioned by the more composite intellectual framework of this work, and by the strong influence of Sufi ideas in particular. This influence can be tracked in many places across the *Revival*, but it expresses itself most distinctly in the last quarter, devoted to the spiritual "virtues." Although it would be highly misleading to talk about a "Sufi part" of the *Revival* and a "philosophical part," it seems to be a fact that each type of influence is not expressed equally strongly in all parts of the *Revival*. It also seems to be a fact that these two influences, and the intellectual paradigms they constitute, are not placed by al-Ghazālī in a crystal-clear relationship. They are not, in a word, fully integrated with each other.

The fact that we must resort to our own interpretive wiles to provide an account of the relation between Sufi "states" and "stations" on the one hand and

85. Partly by showing how individual pieces of evidence interact and how their weight changes in the total environment.
86. See n.10.

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philosophical "dispositions," "virtues," and "traits of character" on the other is a symptom of this lack of integration, and of al-Ghazālī's abstention from offering an unambiguous high-level account of this relation. Another symptom is the conspicuous absence of certain kinds of bridges between different parts of al-Ghazālī's discussion. A rather remarkable example of this is provided by book 2 of the third quarter of the *Revival*, the *Discipline of the Soul*. This is a book in which the philosophical paradigm expresses itself especially strongly. It is here that we find philosophically inspired definitions of character, philosophically inspired discussions of its education, and philosophically inspired taxonomies of the virtues and the vices (overlapping to a great extent with the ones given in the *Scale*) structured around the type of philosophical psychology also described in the *Scale*. In these taxonomies, remarkably, the "virtues" discussed in the last quarter of the book—representing the Sufi-influenced spiritual "virtues"—*make no appearance*.[87] From the other end, when al-Ghazālī comes to these "virtues" later, he makes no contact with the theoretical framework deployed in this book. He says little, notably, concerning how these "virtues" are to be located against the philosophical psychology detailed earlier.[88]

Al-Ghazālī's extraordinary intellectual capabilities make it natural to credit, with Taneli Kukkonen, the existence of a "unitary account" and a "theoretical backdrop" that would unify "al-Ghazālī's seemingly disjointed accounts," and to strive to locate that account.[89] Yet insofar as we as readers have to piece this unitary account together, it reflects the imperfect integration that characterises al-Ghazālī's ethical corpus. It also reflects (what is related but distinct) the imperfect articulation of his theoretical framework and the limitations in the analytical character of his discussion. This applies especially to his treatment of the spiritual "virtues" in the last part of the *Revival*, which arguably represents the heart of his ethics. Does al-Ghazālī have a theory of virtue? Ultimately there may be virtue enough; but there may be rather less of theory.

It is perhaps this feature of al-Ghazālī's ethics that explains at the deepest level the immediate sense of doubt—the sense that something "catches"—that I described as the stimulus of this inquiry. And from the perspective that has framed my inquiry—in which the quest for continuity of concepts has taken its meaning from a broader concern about the possibility of placing al-Ghazālī's ethics in conversation with philosophical approaches—it is this feature that might create the greatest complication for both modes of philosophical engagement I outlined earlier, "historical" and "normative." Focusing on the former, even if one might, for example, suggestively juxtapose al-Ghazālī's reductive view of virtue to the kinds

87. See al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā'*, 8:1436–37. The only ostensible exception is self-control/patience (*ṣabr*). This represents the most notable instance of shared territory between philosophical and Sufi lists of the virtues, and is also discussed in the *Mīzān*.

88. For a slightly different reading, at least partially, see Sherif, *Ghazālī's Theory of Virtue*, 123–24 (though compare his remarks at p. 112). Both Sherif and, to a lesser extent, Abul Quasem offer particular proposals for understanding the relationship between the more philosophical virtues and the Sufi "virtues" discussed in the *Revival*, and for thereby integrating the different parts of the work. One reason these proposals seem to me problematic is that they do not openly signal their own status as speculative rationalisations, for which al-Ghazālī himself provides precious little explicit support, transitioning seamlessly from "philosophical" to "Sufi" ideals with little to suggest that he is registering this *as* a transition.

89. Taneli Kukkonen, "Al-Ghazālī on the Emotions," in *Islam and Rationality: The Impact of al-Ghazālī*: vol. 1, ed. Georges Tamer (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 140.

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of accounts offered by ancient philosophers (as mentioned earlier), a dramatic and potentially prohibitive difference between the two would be that al-Ghazālī, unlike these philosophers, provided no explicit theoretical acknowledgement or defence of this view.

Does this mean that al-Ghazālī's ethics is placed beyond philosophical interest? This would not be my argument, and I do not consider anything that I have said here to entail it. To the extent that al-Ghazālī can be appropriately described as offering an ethics that is at least in part *about virtue*, even with some qualifications, this is sufficient licence for seeking to explore the many interesting ways in which he may be written into the history of the subject. And some of the points I have outlined in interrogating the grounds of my own scepticism also suggest that even those features of al-Ghazālī's ethics that appear to separate him most vividly from a contemporary philosophical understanding—such as his conception of "virtues" as unsituated responses—can serve as catalysts for making us more self-conscious about fundamental features of our own viewpoint. Such self-consciousness may lead us to revise some of our ideas; or it may lead us to deepen and fortify our commitment to them by forcing us to articulate them more clearly. Either way, such encounters with radical difference are productive and can bear genuine philosophical fruit.

My aim in this paper has not been to settle the conversation but to open one. At the very least, I hope to have shown the many questions about al-Ghazālī's oeuvre that remain unexplored; and I hope that some of what I have said will provide an impetus for others to don their boots, strap on their headlamps, and start making their own way through its lush wilderness.

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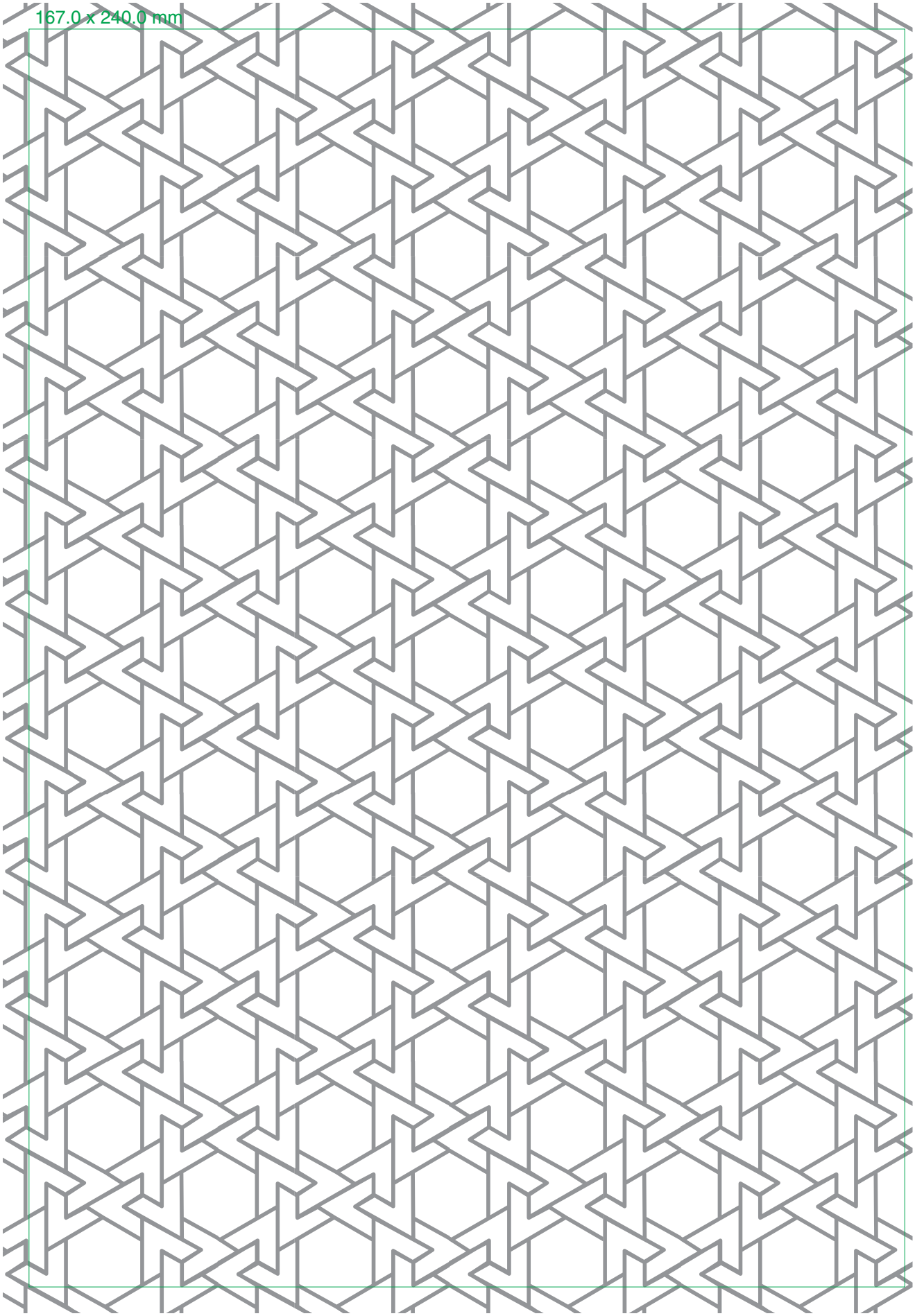
SECTION II
CLASSICAL PERIOD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THEO-FĀNĪ: ʿAYN AL-QUḌĀT AND THE FIRE OF LOVE

Mohammed Rustom

Introduction

When we think of love in Islam, we normally associate this virtue with the likes of the great Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (d. 672/1273).[1] Yet there were many authors well before Rūmī's time, a number of whom supplied much of the stock imagery and symbolism that would become common in Rūmī's own day. Figures such as ʿAbd Allāh Anṣārī (d. 481/1089), Aḥmad Ghazālī (d. 520/1126), Rashīd al-Dīn Maybudī (d. ca. 520/1126), and Aḥmad Samʿānī (d. 534/1140) were major theologians of love in Islam.[2] And they were seen in this way by their contemporaries, their successors such as Rūzbihān Baqlī (d. 606/1209), Farīd al-Dīn ʿAṭṭār (d. 617/1220),[3] and Rūmī, and generations of Muslims from the subcontinent, Central Asia, Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, and other regions right up to our own times.

1. The clearest exposition of Rūmī's theology of love remains William Chittick's *The Sufi Path of Love: The Spiritual Teachings of Rumi* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983).

2. For whom, see respectively, Rawan Farhadi, *ʿAbdullāh Anṣārī of Herāt (1006–1089 C.E.): An Early Ṣūfī Master* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 1996); Joseph Lumbard, *Aḥmad al-Ghazālī, Remembrance,* and *the Metaphysics of Love* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2016); Annabel Keeler, *Ṣūfī Hermeneutics: The Qurʾān Commentary of Rashīd al-Dīn Maybudī* (Oxford: Oxford University Press in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2006); Aḥmad Samʿānī, *The Repose of the Spirits: A Sufi Commentary on the Divine Names*, trans. William Chittick (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2019).

3. For an excellent recent study of Baqlī, see Kazuyo Murata, *Beauty in Sufism: The Teachings of Rūzbihān Baqlī* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2017). A new approach to ʿAṭṭār can be found in Cyrus Zargar, *Religion of Love: Farīd al-Dīn ʿAṭṭār and the Sufi Tradition* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, in press).

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It would have been rather normative for the people just mentioned to have viewed the goal of life through the lens of love. After all, the fundamental human experience of love is central to the Quranic worldview and hence to Islamic spirituality, as has been demonstrated by William Chittick in his groundbreaking book, *Divine Love: Islamic Literature and the Path to God*.[4] Among these authors, one of the greatest lovers was the Persian sage, philosopher, jurist, and martyr ʿAyn al-Quḍāt Hamadānī (d. 525/1131), who was the famous student of Aḥmad Ghazālī. So renowned was he for his emphasis on divine and human love that he earned the title "Sultan of the Lovers" shortly after his death.[5] Like the love theologians who came before and after him, ʿAyn al-Quḍāt spent a great deal of time writing about the nature and full implications of a life given over to love for God and God's creatures.

Since ʿAyn al-Quḍāt was heir to a long tradition of theoretical reflection on love and was himself an important conduit for the transmission of love theology for the many major poets and prose writers who came after him, his writings on love represent one of the most coherent and profound treatments of the topic in all of Islamic and even human civilization. In what follows, I will therefore present one dimension of ʿAyn al-Quḍāt's multifaceted and complex understanding of love.[6]

Seeking Love

Readers of Rūmī will be familiar with his emphasis on the inability of language to define love. Consider, for example, these famous lines from his *Masnavī*:

> Whatever I say about love by way of commentary and exposition,
> when I get to love, I am ashamed at that.
> Although the explanation with the tongue is clear,
> that love which is tongue-less is even clearer.[7]

Like Rūmī, ʿAyn al-Quḍāt never attempts to define love on the grounds that the reality of love is simply ineffable. This means that our ordinary ratiocinative faculties do not have a way of access to the mysteries of love. And that explains why he says that "when the sun of love comes, the star of the intellect is obliterated."[8] Since rational theologians and legal scholars both engage in intellectual hair-splitting, their trade is entirely insufficient for the business of love:

> Here, what can "do" and "don't do" do? The rulings of lovers are one thing, and the rulings of intellectuals quite another![9]

4. Chittick, *Divine Love: Islamic Literature and the Path to God* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).
5. For his life and teachings, see Mohammed Rustom, *Inrushes of the Heart: The Sufi Philosophy of ʿAyn al-Quḍāt* (Albany: State University of New York Press, in press).
6. For the full range of ʿAyn al-Quḍāt's love theory and its relationship to other aspects of his thought, see Rustom, *Inrushes of the Heart,* chapter 10.
7. For this poem in context, see Rustom, "The Ocean of Nonexistence," *Mawlana Rumi Review 4* (2013): 188–199 (at pp. 188–189).
8. ʿAyn al-Quḍāt, *Nāma-hā,* ed. ʿAlī Naqī Munzawī and ʿAfīf ʿUsayrān (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Asāṭīr, 1998), 2:219, § 327.
9. ʿAyn al-Quḍāt, *Nāma-hā*, 2:219, § 328.

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> Do not think that you and your likes have known love, apart from its trappings without reality! Love is only obtained by the one who obtains recognition [*maʿrifat*].[10]

Rather than attempt to define love, ʿAyn al-Quḍāt insists that we must make do with our imperfect resources of human expression:

> An explication of love cannot be given except through symbols and images, and this so that love can be spoken of. If not, what could be said of love and what should be spoken?[11]

In one instance, ʿAyn al-Quḍāt tells us that love is a veil between the lover and the Beloved.[12] In another, he characterizes the cosmos as being filled with tragic actors on the stage of love:

> The world cannot obtain the secret of love, but is enamored and confounded by love. And love knows what has been done to the world—it is always in a state of sadness and grief.[13]

When ʿAyn al-Quḍāt discusses the characteristics of love, his first point of entry is in identifying its primary indicator: that of leaving one's own selfish and egotistical inclinations and preferring the object of love, and indeed love itself, over oneself:

> Alas! What can be said of love? What trace should be given of love, and what indication can be provided? In taking the step of love, a person is submitted for she is not with herself. She abandons herself, and prefers love over herself.[14]

> The derangement [*sawdāʾī*] of love is of better worth than the cleverness of the world! . . . Whoever is not a lover is a self-seer . . . . To be a lover is to be without selfhood and without a path.[15]

Since love is of such a totalizing nature, ʿAyn al-Quḍāt explains that it consumes the lover entirely: "Love has a power that, when it permeates the beloved, the beloved spreads itself and consumes the entirety of the lover."[16] Yet before being consumed by love, one must seek to cultivate love within oneself:

> The seeker's task is to search in himself for nothing but love. The lover's existence is from love. How can he live without love? Recognize life from love, and find death without love![17]

Seeking love within the self is an abstract concept and a distant possibility for most people. Thus, the surest way into the world of love is to develop a relationship with God, and the easiest way this can be done is to foster love in one's heart for God's creatures. In other words, through loving people and other sentient beings, one can come into the purview of the vast scope of love: "One loves every existent

10. ʿAyn al-Quḍāt, *Nāma-hā*, 2:153, § 224.
11. ʿAyn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhīdāt*, ed. ʿAfīf ʿUsayrān (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Manūchihrī, 1994), 125, § 174.
12. ʿAyn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 127, § 176.
13. ʿAyn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 108, § 153.
14. ʿAyn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 96–97, § 137.
15. ʿAyn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 98, § 140.
16. ʿAyn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 100, § 141.
17. ʿAyn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 98, § 139.

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thing since every existent thing is His act and handiwork."[18] Insofar as human beings exist and love is a synonym for existence (as indeed it has been for so many of Islam's foremost sages), human beings are characterized by love, just as they are characterized by existence:

> For every person, love is an obligation upon the path. Alas! If you do not have love for the Creator, at least cultivate love for the creatures so that the worth of these words are obtained by you.[19]

Wimps and Worthies

The notion of cultivating love naturally raises the question of how this can be done. For ʿAyn al-Quḍāt, as with so many other authors in the Persianate Sufi tradition, the answer is rather straightforward. One must let love be his guide and master: "Be a student! Love itself suffices as your teacher."[20] Love, which is God, will take one to God, who is the ultimate Beloved. The better one's training in the school of divine love, the more beautiful (and thus beloved) will the Beloved be to the student:

> The first collyrium with which the seeking wayfarer [*ṭālib-i sālik*] must be anointed is love. Our master[21] said, "There is no master more penetrating than love"—there is no master more perfect for the wayfarer than love. One time, I asked the master, "What is the guide to God?" He said, "Its guide is God Himself."[22]
>
> I say that, for the beginner, the guide to knowledge of God is love. Whoever does not have love as a master is not a traveler upon the Path. Through the Beloved, the lover can reach love, and by virtue of love, he can see the Beloved. The more perfect one's love, the more beautiful does the Beloved appear.[23]

Becoming a student of love is a rather tall order. This is why ʿAyn al-Quḍāt frankly states that love is "forbidden to wimps [*na-mardān*]."[24] By definition, "wimps" are not cut out for enduring difficulties, and there is nothing more difficult than the trials and tribulations that accompany the path of love. Rather than merely endure the trials of love, one must welcome tribulation and indeed become tribulation itself. That is to say, one must become nothing so that he can take steps towards becoming everything:

> Alas! You imagine that tribulation is given to every person? What do you know of tribulation? Wait until you reach a place where you sell your spirit for God's tribulation.[25]
>
> The believer must suffer from tribulation so much that he becomes tribulation itself, and tribulation becomes his very self. Then, he will be unaware of tribulation.[26]

18. ʿAyn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 140, § 191.
19. ʿAyn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 96, § 137. See also *Tamhīdāt*, 107, § 151.
20. ʿAyn al-Quḍāt, *Nāma-hā*, 2:128, § 188.
21. That is, Aḥmad Ghazālī.
22. ʿAyn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 283, § 368.
23. ʿAyn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 284, § 367.
24. ʿAyn al-Quḍāt, *Nāma-hā*, 1:22, § 24. See also *Tamhīdāt*, 110–111, § 157.
25. ʿAyn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 243, § 318.
26. ʿAyn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 244, § 318.

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But why must the path of love come with such tribulation, the greatest of which is the pain of separation from God Himself? Half of the answer, ʿAyn al-Quḍāt tells us, is because it allows for the would-be lover to ripen and mature so that he may transform from being a lover in potentiality to being a lover in actuality:

> The sign of love is sincerity. You do not know what I am saying? In love, harshness and faithfulness are needed until the lover becomes cooked by the gentleness and severity of the Beloved. If not, he will be raw, and nothing will come of him.[27]
>
> Alas! Do you know why all of these curtains and veils are placed upon the Path? So that, day by day, the lover's vision ripens until he can bear the burden of encountering God without a veil.[28]

The other half of the answer to why tribulation must obtain on the path of love is that it allows the men to be distinguished from the boys. That is, there are many who make claims about love for God, but there are very few who are really willing to endure the hardships that are entailed by this love relationship. To illustrate his point, ʿAyn al-Quḍāt draws on the well-known imagery of the rose (*gul*) and the nightingale (*bulbul*). The nightingale cries and laments out of separation from the rose. Since it cannot bear separation from the rose, it naturally throws itself into it. But in the rose bed there are also deadly thorns. Seeing these thorns, the nightingale who claims love for the rose halts its flight in an attempt to save itself. It claims love, but when it comes to accepting the suffering that comes with love, it remains concerned with itself more than with love. In ʿAyn al-Quḍāt's words, the nightingale is not fit for the business of love because it remains a self-seer who has not yet become nothing:

> Have you not seen that the nightingale is a lover of the rose? When the nightingale gets close to the rose, it cannot bear it—it lunges into the rose. But the thorns under the rose have a station—they cause the rose to kill the nightingale. . . . If the rose were without the thorns' torment, every nightingale would have made the claim of being a lover [*daʿwā-yi ʿāshiqī*]. But given the thorns, not a single one out of a hundred thousand nightingales can make the claim of being a lover of the rose.[29]

Yet there are those rare nightingales who make good on their claim of love for the rose, accepting the pain, suffering, and annihilation that accompanies their flight into the rose bed.[30] When one is like that nightingale who prefers the rose over itself, he is no longer a "wimp" with respect to love as he has gladly accepted love's tribulations. This brings about a certain quality of soul in the lover—worthiness (*ahliyyat*).[31] On account of this worthiness, one can then enter into a love relationship with God. As the pre-Socratic doctrine tells us, only like can know like. On this logic, the true lover will naturally know the language of love and

27. ʿAyn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 221, § 283.
28. ʿAyn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 104–105, § 148.
29. ʿAyn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 341–342, § 453.
30. See ʿAyn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 207, § 266.
31. ʿAyn al-Quḍāt develops the notion of "worthiness" in another context, namely his treatment of the Quran. See Rustom, "'Ayn al-Quḍāt's Qur'anic Vision: From Black Words to White Parchment," in *Routledge Handbook on Sufism*, ed. Lloyd Ridgeon (London: Routledge, 2021), 75–88.

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consequently be able to speak as lovers speak:

> Whoever is not deserving of love is not deserving of God. Whoever is not worthy of love is not worthy of God. Love can speak to the lover, and the lover knows the worth of love.[32]

The Path of Majnun

As should be clear from the foregoing, ʿAyn al-Quḍāt's key insight about the path of love for God is that it will inevitably come with pain and suffering, the worst of which is the agony of distance from the Beloved. This is because the so-called lover, insofar as he is other than the Beloved, still maintains some kind of independent ontological status in his own eyes. He is still in search of the Beloved. And insofar as he remains an aspirant in search of the Beloved, he will suffer. ʿAyn al-Quḍāt succinctly states the problem like this: "The lover is still an aspirant, and in this world, the aspirant is placed atop the tree of separation."[33]

The more the gap is closed between lover and Beloved, that is, the less of the lover there is and the more of the Beloved there is, the less separation there will be. And the less the separation, the less the pain of separation. But, by the same token, the less the separation, the more are the categories of "subject" and "object" and "I" and "You" done away with. And the more these categories are done away with while an affirming subject still remains, the more will love reveal itself to be an affair of drunkenness, stupor, bewilderment, and madness. With this point in mind, ʿAyn al-Quḍāt draws on the trope of the proverbial lovers Layla and Majnun. He tells his readers that if they want to reach God, they have to be like Majnun—eternally beholden to the very mention of his beloved in spite of himself:

> O dear friend! Reaching God is obligatory. And, undoubtedly, whatever it is through which one reaches God is itself obligatory for seekers. Love causes the servant to reach God. Thus, for this reason, love is an obligation upon the path. O dear friend! One must be of the quality of Majnun [*majnūn ṣifātī*], who, by hearing the name of Layla, could lose his spirit! For the unattached one, what concern and care for the love of Layla would he have? It is not an obligation for the one who is not a lover of Layla—it is an obligation upon the path for Majnun.[34]
>
> O dear friend! Do you know what the beauty of Layla said to the enamored love of Majnun? It said, "O Majnun! If I give a wink, even if there are a hundred thousand people like Majnun who all come forth by foot, they will be slain by my wink." Listen to what Majnun said: "Worry not! If your wink will annihilate Majnun, arrival and your generosity will give him subsistence."[35]

32. ʿAyn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 111, § 157.
33. ʿAyn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 222, § 285.
34. ʿAyn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 97–98, § 138.
35. ʿAyn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 110, § 156.

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ʿAyn al-Quḍāt undoubtedly took on the qualities of Majnun, and in one place in his writings he offers a commentary on his situation as he is overcome by the madness of love. He paradoxically proclaims that "Love's madness has left me so selfless and entranced that I do not know what I am saying!"[36] Notice how ʿAyn al-Quḍāt says that the madness of love has left "him" selfless to such an extent that "he" does not know what "he" is saying. This kind of love in ʿAyn al-Quḍāt's lexicon is known as in-between love (*ʿishq-i miyāna*). It is an as yet imperfect form of love insofar as it still operates within the confines of a subject-object dichotomy, however much the distinction between these two is blurred:

> In in-between love, a difference can be found between the witness and Witnessed. As for the end of love, it is when a difference cannot be found between them. When the lover at the end of the path becomes love and when the love of the witness and the Witnessed become one, the witness is the Witnessed and the Witnessed the witness. You consider this to be a form of incarnationism [*ḥulūl*], but this is not incarnationism. It is the perfection of union and oneness! According to the religion of the realizers, there is no religion other than this.[37]

Elsewhere, ʿAyn al-Quḍāt explains that at the end of love "there remains neither madman, nor lover, but only madness and love."[38] He also calls the end of love "major love," which is defined as God's love for His creatures.[39] Although this form of love seems to imply the existence of subject and object, in reality, it is the highest form of unity. This is because it takes us to love itself which, properly speaking, is concerned with neither subject nor object. To illustrate this point, ʿAyn al-Quḍāt offers a unique reading of Q 5:54, *He loves them and they love Him*:

> O dear friend! Listen to *He loves them and they love Him* [Q 5:54]. When *they love Him* is put in place, it can face *He loves them* in its entirety. Then it says *He loves them*, for it has arrived with all that it is. The sun can illumine the entire earth since its surface is vast. But, so long as the house of your heart does not turn the entirety of its face towards the sun, not a single ray of the sun can be its share. "And among His signs is the sun"[40] itself testifies that *He loves them* has such an attribute of vastness that it can be for every person. But, as long as the entirety of *they love Him* is not given to it, the house of your heart will not find the rays in their entirety. In the cloister [*khalwat-khāna*] of *they love Him, He loves them* itself speaks of what love is, and of who the Beloved is.[41]

36. ʿAyn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 237, § 307.
37. ʿAyn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 115, § 162.
38. ʿAyn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 237, § 307.
39. See ʿAyn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 101–102, § 143.
40. Cf. Q 41:37.
41. ʿAyn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 128, § 177.

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All is Fire

Nowhere is ʿAyn al-Quḍāt clearer on the implications of the end of love than when he equates love to fire. Fire is a perfect symbol for love because it is all-consuming: whatever it comes across it burns and reduces to nothing. Thus, ʿAyn al-Quḍāt says, "Love is a fire—every place where it is, none but it can remain; every place that it reaches, it burns and turns into its own color."[42]

In explaining the final end of love, ʿAyn al-Quḍāt most commonly draws on the stock pairing of moth (*parvāna*) and candle (*shamʿ*). The moth, which symbolizes the human soul, is by nature a lover of the candle's flame, which symbolizes God/love. As a moth is wont to do, when it sees the candle's flame it cannot but plunge into the flame with the entirety of its being:

> Without the fire, the moth is restless, but in the fire it does not have existence. So consumed is the moth by the fire that it sees all of the world as fire. When it reaches the fire, it throws itself in its midst. The moth itself does not know how to differentiate between the fire and other than the fire. Why? Because love itself is all fire . . . . When the moth throws itself in the midst of the fire it becomes burned—all becomes fire. What news does it have of itself? So long as it is with itself, it is in itself.[43]

Since love consumes everything, in the final analysis there can be no talk of a separate lover. This is because when there is a lover, there is a separate "I" which is posited next to God, the supreme "I." As long as one insists on his own "I-hood," he remains trapped within the confines of his own ego and is, in reality, dead. But when he steps outside of himself he can then live, not as a separate "I," but as his real "I":

> Alas! What will you hear?! For us, death is this: one must be dead to all that is other than the Beloved until he finds life from the Beloved, and becomes living through the Beloved.[44]
>
> Whoever does not have this death does not find life. I mean, what you know to be death is not that real death, which is annihilation. Do you know what I am saying? I am saying that when you are yourself and are with your self, you are not. But when you are not with yourself, you are all yourself.[45]

True love therefore does not implicate the lover in the relationship of love because the lover is nothing in the face of love. Insofar as he is, he is not a lover. And insofar as he is not, there is nothing but love. Since love entails complete selflessness, which also means losing one's own sense of self, the moth is a perfect symbol of the ideal lover: looking to neither the right nor the left, and with neither consequence nor prize in mind, it simply throws itself into the fire, which is its sole goal. The very fire that receives the moth reduces it to nothing, and is all that there is:

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42. ʿAyn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 97, § 137.
43. ʿAyn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 99, § 141.
44. ʿAyn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 288, § 374.
45. ʿAyn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 287, § 374.

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> If you want me to give an example of this, listen! The moth, who is a lover of the fire, has no share at all of it so long as she is distant from the fire's light. When she throws herself into the fire, she becomes self-less and nothing of moth-hood remains—all is fire.[46]

Conclusion

Listening to what ʿAyn al-Quḍāt has to say about love can help inform the academic study of Islamic mysticism. At the same time, it very much pertains to our own lives, especially since love for many people today is regarded as nothing but a fleeting human sentiment. As we have seen, for ʿAyn al-Quḍāt, nothing could be further from his vision of love. Love is not merely to be found among people in their everyday lives, nor is it just an expression of the human longing for the divine. It is far more expansive, taking in all of reality because it itself is the ground and stuff of all reality.

Where most human beings find themselves along the continuum of love has everything to do with their situatedness at that particular moment as individual lovers. The further along they move in their specific encounters with love, the more prepared they become for the encounter with Love itself, which is God. Yet for ʿAyn al-Quḍāt, the sooner one can see that it is none other than the Beloved that he loves even in his objects of love, the quicker will his experience of love be more deeply rooted and self-less. This can only happen when one is totally consumed by the fire of love. It is then that he will come to see himself and all things as so many fleeting traces of the image of the eternal Beloved.

46. ʿAyn al-Quḍāt, *Tamhīdāt*, 242, § 316.

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MARĀTIB AL-TAQWĀ: SAʿĪD AL-DĪN FARGHĀNĪ ON THE ONTOLOGY OF ETHICS

William C. Chittick

Given the philosophical tradition's explicit acknowledgment that "the Necessary in Existence" (*al-wājib al-wujūd*) is a proper designation for God per se, and given the fact that this acknowledgment came to be shared by various forms of Sufism and Kalam, it should come as no surprise that many scholars who investigated the reality of the human, "created upon the form of God," concluded that ethical perfection amounted to the soul's harmonious conformity with the Real Existence (*al-wujūd al-ḥaqq*).[1] Early on, philosophers tended to keep ontology separate from *ʿilm al-akhlāq*, the science of ethics, but they used expressions like *al-tashabbuh bi'l-ilāh*, "similarity to the God," and *taʾalluh,* "deiformity," to designate the state of human perfection. Achieving perfection demanded transformation of *khulq*, "character," the singular of the word *akhlāq*, and books on philosophical ethics were full of implicit and explicit instructions on how to achieve balance among the diverse character traits found in the human soul. In Quranic usage, *khulq* can be understood as the invisible and internal configuration of human qualities, as contrasted with *khalq* or "creation," the visible structure of the human. This is suggested, for example, by the Prophet's prayer, "O God, just as You made my creation beautiful, so also make my character beautiful." The various individual traits that make up a person's character may then be termed ugly (*masāwiʾ al-akhlāq*)

1. This is a typical designation for God by Ibn al-ʿArabī and his followers. As Avicenna says in *The Metaphysics of the Healing*, ed. and trans. Michael Marmura (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 2005), 38–39 (my translation): "By Its essence, the Necessary in Existence is the Real constantly, and the possible in existence is real through something else, but unreal [*bāṭil*] in itself. Hence everything other than the One Necessary in Existence is unreal in itself."

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or beautiful (*maḥāsin al-akhlāq*). Any discussion of ethics—i.e., character traits—has to address vice as well as virtue, and both of these are inevitably rooted in reality per se, which is to say that they go back to the Real Existence. As al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) often says in *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*, "There is nothing in existence but God and His acts."

Al-Ghazālī sometimes uses the phrase *al-takhalluq bi-akhlāq Allāh*, "characterization by the character traits of God," to designate the ethical perfection that is achieved by actualizing the divine form. He devotes a good portion of his commentary on the divine names, *al-Maqṣad al-asnā*, to explaining how the soul needs to actualize a share (*ḥaẓẓ*) of each of the divine and human character traits that are designated by God's names. For his part, Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 638/1240) developed this way of explaining the roots of character in numerous contexts. If authors like Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328) began to criticize the vision of things associated with Ibn al-ʿArabī's name, stigmatizing it—in their minds—as "*waḥdat al-wujūd*," this is because they understood it as something like what we would call pantheism. One of their arguments was precisely that Ibn al-ʿArabī and like-minded authors traced not only the beautiful but also the ugly and despicable back to God. They saw this as tantamount to nullifying the Shariah, for, if "All is He" (*hama ūst*), as Persian-speaking Sufis liked to put it, then all must be allowable.

Historians have generally recognized that Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī (d. 673/1274), Ibn al-ʿArabī's stepson, was the most important conduit through which Ibn al-ʿArabī's teachings were transmitted and given a certain systematic rigor. One of Qūnawī's outstanding students was Saʿīd al-Dīn Farghānī (d. ca. 700/1300), author of the first commentary on the great *Poem of the Way* (*Naẓm al-sulūk*) by Ibn al-Fāriḍ (d. 632/1235). Qūnawī explains in a foreword to Farghānī's book that he lectured in Persian on the poem to a group of scholars over a period of several years. Farghānī then rewrote the notes that he had taken during the lectures as *Mashāriq al-darārī*.[2] Later he translated the Persian text into Arabic with many modifications and additions, giving it the title *Muntaha'l-madārik*.

Farghānī is also the author of two short Arabic treatises, *Taḥrīr al-bayān fī taqrīr shuʿab al-īmān wa-rutab al-iḥsān* and *Marātib al-taqwā*, both of which have often been ascribed to Ibn al-ʿArabī. [3] When I first came across the two in the Süleymaniye Library in 1979, I assumed that they were by Qūnawī because of the style and content. My wife Sachiko Murata wrote out copies of both, and I collated them with several manuscripts, thinking that I would publish them, but events took me in other directions. Recently I brought them out from the bottom of a drawer and translated them into English. Having completed the translation of *Marātib*, I realized that it was especially relevant to the topic of Sufism and ethics. I continued to think that Qūnawī was the author, even though Richard Todd ascribed the two to Farghānī on the basis of a single manuscript.[4] Then Stephen Hirtenstein of the Ibn Arabi Society kindly sent me another copy of *Taḥrīr*, which also ascribes it to Farghānī. When I looked closely at *Muntaha'l-madārik*, I realized that several

2. Edited and published by Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (Mashhad: Chāpkhāna-yi Dānishgāh-i Mashhad, 1978).
3. For the first of these, see Chittick, "*Taḥrīr al-bayān*: Saʿīd al-Dīn Farghānī on the Psychology of *Dhikr*," *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society* 66 (2019): 1–32.
4. Richard Todd, *The Sufi Doctrine of Man: The Metaphysical Anthropology of Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 185.

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passages in *Taḥrīr* covered the same ground with the same terminology, though in a manner that showed shared authorship rather than borrowing.

Both *Taḥrīr al-bayān* and *Marātib al-taqwā* discuss ethics with a view toward the well-known tripartite division of the religion into submission (*islām*), faith (*īmān*), and beautiful-doing (*iḥsān*). Farghānī devotes the last part of the introduction of *Muntaha'l-madārak* to the same topic, but *Taḥrīr* and *Marātib* are complementary to that discussion rather than repetitive. In *Muntahā*, he summarizes the three levels in these terms:

> First is to undertake the voyage [*sayr*] of turning away from the domiciles of the properties [*aḥkām*] of the soul's habits and from clinging to the search for the soul's passing, disappearing, natural and animal shares, appetites [*shahawāt*], and desires [*murādāt*]. The soul does this by clinging to the command and prohibition in all of its movements and stillnesses, in both word and deed. This is to undertake the voyage connected to the station of submission.
>
> Second is for the soul in respect of its inward [*bāṭin*] to enter into exile [*ghurba*] by cutting off from its animal domicile, the station of its familiar appetites, and the homestead of its manifestation in the forms of its bodily and satanic manynesses [*katharāt*] and deviations [*inḥirāfāt*]. The soul conjoins [*ittiṣāl*] with the presence [*ḥaḍra*] of its inward and the properties of its inward's balance [*ʿadāla*] and oneness [*waḥda*], namely, the angelic and spiritual descriptions and character traits. This is connected to the level of faith.
>
> Third is for the soul in respect of its secret core [*sirr*] to gain the witnessing [*mushāhada*] that attracts to *tawḥīd* itself by way of being annihilated [*fanā'*] from the properties of the veils and bonds that overcame it when it descended and became clothed by the levels [of existence]. It is to shake off the dust of the traces of its createdness [*khalqiyya*] from the skirt of its realness [*ḥaqqiyya*]. This is connected to the station of beautiful-doing.[5]

Farghānī makes frequent reference to the ascending levels of self that are mentioned in this passage, namely, soul, spirit, and secret core (*sirr*), terms that had been discussed for centuries. At one place in Muntahā, he specifies that they are the animal soul (*al-nafs al-ḥayawāniyya*), the spiritual spirit (*al-rūḥ al-rūḥāniyya*),[6] and the existential secret (*al-sirr al-wujūdī*), the third of which he also calls "the inward of the spirit" (*bāṭin-i rūḥ*).[7] He correlates the three levels with the religion's three dimensions as follows:

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5. *Muntaha'l-madārik*, ed. ʿĀṣim Ibrāhīm al-Kayyālī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 2007), 1:126. Farghānī's discussion of the subsections of these three levels continues to p. 143. The Kayyālī edition, like the edition by Wisām al-Khaṭāwī (vol. 1; Qum: Kitābsarā-yi Ishrāq, 2007), simply transcribes the 1876 Bulaq edition along with most of its errors and some new ones. One should consult the excellent Süleymaniye manuscripts, such as Carullah 1107 (copied in 741) and Ragip Paşa 670 (copied in 763).

6. *Muntahā*, 1:124. The repeated use of the term *al-rūḥ al-rūḥāniyya* in *Muntaha'l-madārik*, *Taḥrīr al-bayān*, and *Marātib al-taqwā* is one piece of evidence that helped convince me of Farghānī's authorship of all three works. The expression is not found in the *Futūḥāt* or in the writings of Qūnawī, nor does Farghānī use the Persian equivalent in *Mashāriq al-darārī*.

7. This is what Qūnawī calls *al-sirr al-ilāhī*, which, he says, is "the self-disclosure of the specific face" (*tajallī al-wajh al-khāṣṣ*); see *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*, ed. Muḥammad Khwājawī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Mawlā, 1995), 109. The specific face, in turn, is the innermost of the five faces of the heart (each face corresponding to one of the Five Divine Presences). The specific face gazes upon God's knowledge of its own reality. See Qūnawī, *Iʿjāz al-bayān* (Hyderabad-Deccan: Osmania Oriental Publications Bureau, 1949), 240. According to Ibn al-ʿArabī, the specific face is God's face turned toward a thing in order to give it existence, which may be why Farghānī calls it the "existential" face. For Ibn al-ʿArabī's explication of its role, see Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn al-ʿArabī's Cosmology* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), 134–54.

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> Each has a configuration [*nashʾa*] specific to it. The configuration of the soul is sensory [*ḥissiyya*] and witnessed [*shahādiyya*]; its property is specific to the level of submission. The configuration of the spirit is unseen [*ghaybiyya*], ascribed,[8] and pertaining to being [*kawniyya*]; its property is specific to the inward and secret of faith. The configuration of the secret core is unseen, true [*ḥaqīqiyya*], and real [*ḥaqqiyya*]; its property is beautiful-doing.[9]

Farghānī structures *Taḥrīr al-bayan* as a commentary on a Hadith that says faith has seventy-some branches. He speaks in detail about the difference between *islām* and *īmān*, but he pays relatively little attention to *iḥsān*. In *Marātib al-taqwā*, he continues the discussion of the three levels, but he focuses on the beautiful-doing that is the goal of both submission and faith. He presents the text as a commentary on the Quranic verse about *taqwā* that he quotes at the outset. I translate *taqwā* as "godwariness" when it is a noun and as "to be wary" as a verb. The verb takes three objects in the Quran, namely, God, the Lord, and the Fire. Quran translators have rendered the word in a variety of ways, most of which pay little regard to the literal meaning.

In *Muntaha'l-madārik*, Farghānī discusses *taqwā* twice. In the body of the commentary, he explains its meaning while explicating a verse that mentions two derivatives from the same root: "I oppose the first [the blamer] in his blame out of godwariness [*tuqā*], just as I agree with the second [the slanderer] in his malice out of protectiveness [*taqiyya*]."[10] Farghānī explains that both *tuqā* and *taqiyya* derive from the word *wiqāya*, "protection," which means "to preserve a thing from that which harms and diminishes it." He writes,

> *Taqwā* is to put the soul under the protection of the Shariah, or of everything that preserves it from settling down in the two worlds. *Tuqā* means the same. God's words, *Be wary of God* [5:35] mean: Make obeying Him and avoiding disobedience toward Him your own protection against the trace of His wrath and punishment. Or, make your souls His protection by ascribing blameworthy things to them and not to Him, even though all of them are His acts.
>
> As for *taqiyya*, it is a word used by some Shiis to refer to ʿAlī because they suppose that he did not manifest opposition to the rightly guided caliphs before him because of protectiveness, that is, he made his agreement with them a protection against the appearance of trial [*fitna*] among the people, defect in their religion, and the enemies' gaining mastery over the egg of the submission [*bayḍat al-islām*].[11]

Farghānī then offers a detailed explanation of the meaning of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's verse. He says that *tuqā* refers to the station of godwariness, which is "to avoid all deviated

8. As Farghānī mentions later on, the spirit is called "ascribed" (*iḍāfī*) because it is ascribed to God with the pronoun "My" in the Quranic verse, *I blew into him* [*Adam*] *of My spirit* (15:29).

9. *Muntahā*, 1:130.

10. Th. Emil Homerin translates the verse like this: "I break with the first and his blame / out of righteousness / while tactfully I appear to bond / with the second, low-born and mean." *ʿUmar Ibn al-Fāriḍ: Sufi Verse, Saintly Life* (New York: Paulist Press, 2001), verse 52.

11. *Muntahā*, 1:207–208. By calling submission an "egg," Farghānī is pointing out that it achieves its purpose only by hatching as *īmān* and *iḥsān*. Otherwise, it is simply a potentiality.

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properties in belief, word, act, and state; and to make the Beloved and attentiveness [*tawajjuh*] toward Him protection against letting those deviated properties dominate over the soul."[12] Protectiveness then means to make conformity (*muwāfaqa*) and the lack of any show of opposition (*mukhālafa*) a protection against the trial that would occur if people were to believe in indwelling (*ḥulūl*) and embodiment (*tajsīm*), ideas that they are apt to have when they do not have a proper understanding of *tawḥīd*.[13]

Farghānī's other discussion of *taqwā* comes in the introduction while explaining the significance of the divine names. After quoting the Hadith that says that God has ninety-nine names and that "Whoever enumerates them will enter the Garden," he says that enumeration (*iḥṣā'*) has three ascending levels: connection (*taʿalluq*), characterization (*takhalluq*), and realization (*taḥaqquq*). These are the same three levels that provide the organizing scheme of Ibn al-ʿArabī's short commentary on the divine names called *Kashf al-maʿnā ʿan sirr asmā' Allāh al-ḥusnā*. Farghānī links "connection" with the animal soul and "characterization" with the spiritual spirit. As for "realization," he says, "It comes about through *taqwā* and casting off [*inkhilāʿ*] all forms, meanings, and traces that are marked with the stamp of new arrival [*ḥudūth*] and that abide and become manifest in someone; and through his being concealed [*istitār*] by the glories [*subuḥāt*] of the entities, secrets, and lights of the names."[14] In simplistic terms, this is to say that *taqwā* can be understood as the realization of the stations of *fanā'* and *baqā'*, annihilation and subsistence.

In *Marātib al-taqwā,* Farghānī clarifies the manner in which all character traits, whether beautiful or ugly, are rooted in the names of the Real Existence, a discussion he also undertakes in many other places in his writings. Like Ibn al-ʿArabī, he does not refrain from giving credit where credit is due, which is to say that he acknowledges that God is both the Guide (*hādī*) and the Misguider (*muḍill*). In the following paragraph, for example, he is explaining the meaning of these two lines in Ibn al-Fāriḍ's poem:

> Nothing is vain, nor are the creatures a futile creation,
> even if their actions fail to hit the mark.
> Their affairs flow with the features of the names
> driven to their properties by the wisdom of the Essence's description.[15]

> Surely the realness [*ḥaqqiyya*] that accompanies existence itself [*ʿayn al-wujūd*] is nondelimited [*muṭlaq*]. It pervades all the divine names and their requisites. This is because every divine name—like the Guide and the Misguider, the Ever-Merciful [*raḥīm*] and the Severe [*qahhār*]—is nothing other than the Real Existence, but in respct of a description ascribed to the Divine Presence, like guidance and misguidance, mercy and severity, exalting [*iʿzāz*] and abasing [*idhlāl*]. For, just as He ascribes the description of guidance to that Presence with His words, *And God guides whomever He wants to a straight path* [2:213, 24:46], so also He ascribes misguidance to It with His words, *And God misguides the wrongdoers* [14:27].[16]

12. *Muntahā*, 1:208.
13. *Muntahā*, 1:209.
14. *Muntahā*, 1:48.
15. My translation. For Homerin's translation, see *ʿUmar Ibn al-Fāriḍ*, verses 744–45.
16. *Muntahā*, 2:287.

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All reality is strictly determined by the names, which designate the universal attributes governing the beginningless knowledge of the Real Existence. Nothing can be anything other than what it is *sub specie aeternitatis*. Nonetheless, once the manifestation of ontological perfections in the created realm is taken into account, free choice and human responsibility have major roles to play, so the moral obligation to conform to divine guidance remains. Farghānī makes this eminently clear not only in *Marātib al-taqwā* but also in his other works. From his standpoint, it would be absurd to suggest that *waḥdat al-wujūd*—a term that he was the first to use in something like a technical sense[17]—demands indifference to ethics and the Shariah.

The translation here is based on the collation of four manuscripts from the Süleymaniye Library (Şehid Ali Paşa 1340/3, Carullah 1001/3, Halet Efendi Ilavesi 66/7, Feyzullah 2163), supplemented by one manuscript from the Berlin State Library (Or. Oct. 2460). There are no discrepancies in the manuscripts that would have an effect on the translation, though three of them (Şehid Ali Paşa, Carullah, and Berlin) are missing the last "Section" and also share a few dropped phrases and sentences.

The Levels of Godwariness

In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful

The praise belongs to God, who singled out those sincere in praising and lauding Him and those specified for His proximity and friendship for the realization of the realities of guidance and godwariness; who made them climb the roads of the religion on the ladders of certainty from the nadir of the precincts of distance and from the brink of destruction and annihilation to the zenith of the presences of love, proximity, and subsistence; and who accepted and welcomed them with the most generous welcome and the most beautiful acceptance by bestowing the descriptions of His mercy and the varieties of His generosity.

I bear witness that there is no god but God alone, without associate. This is the bearing witness of one upon whom have been cast words from his Lord, so he understood and accepted. And I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger. He was created as the beloved, gazed upon as the goal and the sought, and made known by witnessing and encounter. He is the elected and chosen whom He carried in ascent to the station of *Or Closer* [53:9], which is the most eminent ascent and the highest climb.[18] God bless him and his household and companions, those ennobled by the nobility of limpidness, loyalty, godwariness, and purity, and give them abundant peace!

17. On Farghānī's technical use of the term, see Chittick, "A History of the Term *Waḥdat al-Wujūd*," in Chittick, *In Search of the Lost Heart: Explorations in Islamic Thought*, ed. Mohammed Rustom, Atif Khalil, and Kazuyo Murata (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2012), 79–80. This chapter, and the one following it, are derived from an earlier article which can be found at http://www.williamcchittick.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Rumi-and-Wahdat-al-Wujud.pdf.

18. Farghānī discusses "*Or closer*" as a Quranic designation for the unique perfection achieved by the Prophet in *Taḥrīr* (see Chittick, "*Taḥrīr al-bayān*," 12, 22, 29) as well as in his longer works.

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Now to begin: This is what the moment [*waqt*] and state [*ḥāl*] generously gave and presented to thought [*khāṭir*] and mind [*bāl*] concerning the meaning of "godwariness" and "the means of approach" [*wasīla*] along with their degrees, the eminent secrets of their origins and final ends, the clarification of how they are arranged in the struggle on the road to the Presence of the He-ness [*ḥaḍrat al-huwiyya*], and the mention of how a formula of hopefulness [*tarajjī*][19] follows as their consequence. And from God aid is sought in manifesting truthfulness and coinciding with the Real in the pen's flow and speech's explanation. And He is *an excellent patron, an excellent helper* [8:40].

> God says, *O you who have faith, be wary of God, and seek the means of approach to Him, and struggle in His road. Perhaps you will prosper* [5:35].

You should know that we have spoken at length in clarifying the levels of faith, its inward and its outward, the root of its tree, its branches, and its taproots in our book designated as *Drafting the Clarification: Establishing the Branches of Faith and the Levels of Beautiful-Doing*. So let us explain in this book the levels of godwariness, the ways of seeking the means of approach, and the struggle consequent upon that. We say, seeking help from God in introducing what we have undertaken, that three introductions will help in the understanding of what will come after this, God willing.

The First Introduction. Know that despite the manyness of their entifications [*taʿayyunāt*],[20] all of the most beautiful divine names are comprehended [*jamʿ*] by two names, the name God[21] and the name *All-Merciful*.

As for the name *God*, it comprehends all of them in two respects. One is in respect of the Essence; or, call it "the Existence," for His Existence—high indeed is He!—is identical with His Essence. It is not an attribute or a description added to the Essence.

The second is in respect of the affirmed levels, which comprehend all attributes of both the Real and creation, attributes of both perfection and deficiency. These are like knowledge, life, desire, and power; contraction and expansion, guidance and misguidance, benefit and harm, unneediness [*ghināʾ*], mercy [*raḥma*], approval [*riḍā*], and so on; and also like anger [*sakhaṭ*], obstinacy [*lajāja*], wrath [*ghaḍab*], derision [*sukhriyya*], deception [*makr*], guile [*khidāʿ*], and their like.

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19. The reference is to the last sentence of the verse in question, i.e., *Perhaps you will prosper.*

20. Entification (*taʿayyun*) means to be or become an entity (*ʿayn*), that is, a specific thing as distinct from other specific things. Ibn al-ʿArabī uses the term on occasion but pays no special attention to it. Qūnawī turns it into a technical term typical of this school of thought. He often talks of Non-Entification (*lā taʿayyun*), which is the Essence or Sheer Existence. The first and second entifications are then descending levels of the Real's self-disclosure. See, for example, my translation of his *Nuṣūṣ*, "The Texts: The Keys to the *Fuṣūṣ*," 3, which can be found at http://www.williamcchittick.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Sadr_al-Din_Qunawi_The_Texts_al-Nusus.pdf.

21. Farghānī suggests one of many reasons why the word Allāh should be translated rather than reproduced in English as if it were a proper name: "The reality of the name *Allāh* is simply the self-disclosure and entification of the Essence in the respect that It is one while comprehending all the self-disclosures and entifications that stand through the Essence. This vocable is an Arabic word whose meaning is identical with the meaning of the word *khudāy* in Persian and the word *tangarī* in Turkish" (*Muntahā*, 1:44).

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The "level" [*martaba*] is that which affirms the relation and tie between the Lord [*rabb*] and the vassal [*marbūb*], the Creator and the created. So the name *God* is identical with the Essence and Existence in respect of the level, which is the Divinity [*ulūha*]. This can also be called "the Essential Knowledge" connected to all known things, both the necessary among them and the possible. For in respect of the Essence's nondelimitation [*iṭlāq*] and inasmuch as It is It, no property [*ḥukm*] whatsoever is given to It, nor is anything whatsoever related [*irtibāṭ*] or ascribed [*intisāb*] to It. Rather, properties are given to It and things are related and ascribed to It only in respect of Its entification, level, and attributes.[22]

As for the name *All-Merciful* [*raḥmān*], it comprehends the names in respect of Existence Itself, nothing else. But, this is in respect of Its receptivity [*qābiliyya*] to the entifications in keeping with the attributes, like the names Knowing, Alive, Desiring, and Powerful, for each of these is a name of Existence, but in respect of Its entification by the attribute of knowledge, life, desire, and power. So the All-Merciful is a name of the Real inasmuch as It is Sheer Existence, for it is an intensive mode derived from the mercy that embraces everything, and nothing but Existence with Its entifications embraces everything. Hence it is a name of Existence in the respect that It is entified by and utterly inclusive of all entifications and inasmuch as all of Its entifications are related to It equally, for It is entified by guidance and misguidance, pardon and gentleness, vengeance and severity, hiding and manifesting, unveiling and curtaining.

As for the name *Ever-Merciful* [*raḥīm*], it also is a name of Existence and is derived from this all-embracing, all-inclusive mercy, but in respect of the inclination of Existence Itself away from Its nondelimitation [*iṭlāq*]—in which the relation of guidance and misguidance, unveiling and curtaining, are equal—toward Its entification in respect of guidance, luminosity, and unveiling; and also Its inclination toward giving predominance to the property of the attributes of gentleness [*luṭf*] over the properties of the attributes of severity [*qahr*] that are their opposites, by virtue of *I shall write* [*mercy*] *for those who are godwary and give the alms-tax* [7:156]. Existence inclines toward ever-mercifulness through Its entification in respect of guidance, unveiling, gentleness, and clemency, so It has a kind of exaggeration in making the property of these attributes general for all those who are the objects of Its mercy in the varieties of their fluctuations in states. Know this! You will be rightly guided, if God alone wills.

The Second Introduction. Know that the existent things are related to the One Real Existence only in respect of Its entifications, which are Its names. So every existent thing is related to one of the names in as much as the existential portion [*al-ḥiṣṣat al-wujūdiyya*] effused [*mufāḍa*] on the reality of that existent thing, ascribed to it, and bringing it into existence becomes entified only from the Presence of one of the divine names. In the second instant [*ān*], the assistance that reaches it and through which it subsists reaches it only by means of that name. And its return [*rujūʿ*] is only to that name. Yes, and it will see—if that is ordained for it—nothing but it in the next world. So this name is its Lord [*rabb*] in reality.[23]

22. For some of Qūnawī's remarks on the distinction between the Essence and the Divinity, see "The Texts," 27.
23. For a similar explanation of Lord, see *Muntahā*, 1:40.

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But, the Lord of the possessors of resoluteness [*ulu'l-ʿazm*] among the messengers and of the perfect among the friends [*awliyāʾ*] is only the outward [*ẓāhir*] of the name *God*, and the Lord of our most perfect prophet is the inward [*bāṭin*] of the name *God*. The name *God* is the Lord of all existent things in respect of its all-comprehensiveness [*jamʿiyya*], but its lordhood is ascribed to those other than the perfect in respect of and by the intermediary of its names; and [it is ascribed] to the perfect by the name *God* itself, not by the intermediary of any other, particular name. Hence His words, *Faces that day will be radiant, gazing upon their Lord* [75:22–23] alludes to the fact that everyone will see the Real in respect of the name that is his Lord. The levels of the companions of vision—namely, the pulpits, chairs, and dunes of musk—alludes to this.[24] So understand!

Each of the names has a specific sort of trace [*athar*] in the vassal [*marbūb*]. For example, the trace of the Knowing in its vassal is inclination [*mayl*] toward various kinds of sciences and artisanries. The trace of the Desiring is inclination toward expectations and wishes of many sorts. The trace of the Powerful is various sorts of displaying traces [*taʾthīr*] and the like.

So the attribution of godwariness to "God" [in the Quran] goes back to every sort of trace. Its attribution to the "Lord" goes back to the traces specific to this name. As for the "Fire," this goes back to the realization of the reality of faith, sincerity in deeds, and the elimination from the servant of the open and hidden traces of unbelief and hypocrisy that result in the Fire.

The Third Introduction. Know that just as God described Himself in His exalted book with the description of guidance, approval, gentleness, beneficence, bringing near, and benefit, so also He described Himself with misguidance, anger, severity, chastisement, and vengeance. Each of these descriptions has a specific trace and designated result that appears in the soul of the servant in keeping with a state that is dominated either by the property of oneness, all-comprehensiveness, and balance between the property of the spiritual trace and the animal, natural, elemental spirit; or a state that inclines and deviates from this oneness and all-comprehensiveness toward the animal, natural, elemental spirit and its properties. In the first state the traces of the description of guidance, approval, and their like appear in the soul. In the second state, the traces of the description of misguidance, anger, and similar things appear in it. So know this! You will be rightly guided, God willing.

Section. Know then, after keeping these three introductions in mind, that literally godwariness—*taqwā*, *tuqāh*, and *tuqā*—consists of making one thing the protection [*wiqāya*] of something else so as to preserve the latter from blights, traces, and characteristics that are opposed to it. In the Shariah, the word is used for leaving aside and guarding against forbidden things, doubtful things, and all forms of deviation in word and deed. The manner in which the literal meaning corresponds with Shari'ite usage is that guarding against forbidden, doubtful,

24. Reference to various places from which people will gaze upon God in paradise. Ibn al-ʿArabī offers a diagram with detailed explanation in *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya* (Cairo, 1911), 3:428, 442–443.

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and deviated things is the cause that necessitates the soul's coming under the protection of God's approval. This protects it and guards it from joining with the traces of God's anger. So the Shari'ite use takes into account the cause, and the literal meaning takes into account the effect.

The explanation of this is that the human soul, which is described as being *inspired* in *its depravity and godwariness* [91:8], is a guise [*hayʾa*] that combines the animal spirit and the human trace and substance. The reality of the animal spirit is a foggy vapor arising from the inward of the formal, pineal heart, which is configured from the elemental nature that appears in the form of nourishment in the bodily constitution. The nourishment is altered in the stomach, and then in the liver, into the form of a subtle blood that reaches the heart by the intermediary of the tie that connects the liver to the inward and cavity of the pineal heart. From this subtle blood, which is strongly dominated by and filled with the quality of heat, there arises a vapor in the cavity of the heart.

This vapor's correspondence with subtlety and heat carries the trace of the light of life [*nūr al-ḥayāt*]. It is named an "animal" [*ḥayawān*] spirit because of [the life] it carries. Thereby the proportioning [*taswiya*] of the human body's constitution [*mizāj*] is completed. Then God configures within the constitution another configuration by the inblowing [*nafkh*] of the trace of the spiritual spirit, whose entification is fixed in the World of the Spirits within the Guarded Tablet, which is the Ascribed Spirit [*al-rūḥ al-iḍāfī*] meant by His words, *of My spirit* [15:29]. The "trace" is the governing gaze [*al-naẓar al-tadbīrī*] from the Spirit, and it is the human substance [*al-jawhar al-insānī*]. So the light of life is a mirror that is polished because of this trace, gaze, and substance. Thereby it keeps apart from the animal, elemental spirit and it becomes substantiated and separate from the spirits of all other animals.[25]

The "inspired soul" [*al-nafs al-mulhama*] consists of this combinational, equilibrious guise [*al-hayʾa al-ijtimāʿiyya al-iʿtidāliyya*]. The entering place for the inspiration of *its depravity*—which is manifestation in the form of deviations and things deemed ugly by the intellect and the Shariah and inclination toward letting the soul loose in appetites, some of which are forbidden and others of which are dubious [*mushtabaha*]—is only its animal spirit. This is because the soul inclines and deviates away from its combinational, equilibrious guise toward one of its sides, namely, the animal, natural, elemental spirit, for the characteristic of the animal, natural, elemental spirit is only to become engrossed [*inhimāk*] in the appetites in keeping with its root, which is elemental nature, since one of its characteristics is letting itself loose in manifestation with the description of manyness, whether this is deviated [*munḥarif*] or equilibrious [*muʿtadil*].

The starting point for the inspiration of *its godwariness* is nothing but the intermediateness [*wasaṭiyya*] of the equilibrious guise and the human substance, for these two protect the soul through the manifestation of unitary, equilibrious traces, which are some of the traces of God's approval. They shield it from the

25. For a similar discussion of the configuration of the human soul, see *Muntahā*, 1:124.

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manifestation of the traces of its natural, elemental deviations and their results, which are the traces of God's anger within it.

When you have recognized this, you should know that whatever becomes manifest in the soul and its locus of manifestation [*maẓhar*], which is the body—namely, the movements and stillnesses, the words and deeds, the guises and states, and all the attributes—is nothing but the traces of the divine names included in the name *God*. For example, its hearing is the trace of the name *Hearing*, its seeing is the trace of the name *Seeing*, its smelling is the trace of the name *Finder* [*wājid*], its tasting is the trace of the name *Provider*, its touching is the trace of the name *Alive*, its eating and drinking are the trace of the name *Nourisher*, its sleep is the trace of the name *Death-Giver*, its waking, moving, and striving are traces of the name *Upraiser* [*bāʿith*], its astuteness, presence, and regaining consciousness [*ifāqa*] are traces of the name *Witness*; its heedlessness, forgetfulness, and absence through swooning [*ighmāʾ*], madness, and intoxication are traces of the name *Curtainer* [*sattār*]; its pains and illnesses are traces of the name *Harmer* [*ḍārr*], its health and comfort are traces of the name *Benefiter* [*nāfiʿ*], and so on. Gauge in a similar way all the outward and inward attributes and seek by correspondence [*munāsaba*] the names of which they are the traces. Then ascribe the traces to the names.

Thus has been opened to you a door of recognition [*maʿrifa*]. For "He who recognizes his soul" in this way—constantly and moment by moment, not empty for one instant of the traces of the names of his Lord, displaying His traces within himself—"will have recognized his Lord" as constantly active and leaving traces within him. He will recognize the secret of God's withness [*maʿiyya*] through pervasion [*sarāya*] by the traces of His names. He will recognize the secret of the non-cessation of His assistance through existence, both with intermediary and without intermediary, for if it were to cease coming from Him for one instant, he would join with nonexistence. And other things as well.

Now let us come back and say: You have come to know that the inspired soul is the locus of manifestation and theatre [*minaṣṣa*] for the manifestation of the traces of God's most beautiful names, constantly and without cease, and that it is a combinational guise bringing the animal, natural, elemental spirit together with the human substance, the spiritual trace, and the governing gaze. Sometimes the trace of the animal, natural, elemental spirit dominates over it so that it becomes "the soul commanding to ugliness" [*al-nafs al-ammāra bi'l-sūʾ*]. Sometimes the spiritual, unitary trace dominates, so it becomes "serene" [*muṭmaʾinna*]. Sometimes the trace of all-comprehensiveness dominates, so it becomes "blaming" [*lawwāma*].[26]

Know then that when the soul deviates from its all-comprehensive guise and inclines toward the side of the animal, natural, elemental spirit, the traces of the divine names within it will accord with the description of its deviation. Their results and fruits within it will be colored by the property of the deviation that necessitates the manifestation of the trace of God's misguidance, wrath, anger, severity, harm, and vengeance within it. In this world and in the next, the traces of all these names

26. Farghānī explains these three levels in some detail in *Taḥrīr al-bayān*. See Chittick, "*Taḥrīr al-bayān*," 8.

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manifest within it will become manifest in forms disagreeable to the soul—pains or chastisement, illness, punishment, distance, and the veil. So its movements and stillnesses will not be straight; its sleep will not result in truthful, goodly dreams; its food and drink will not give ease and assistance in worship; and its children will not be configured as wholesome in existence, for the property of deviation will have been manifest and dominant over it in the state of insemination. Gauge all traces in a similar way. God is rightly-guiding.

In the state of the soul's equilibrium, or of the dominance of the spiritual trace over it, the traces of the names will become manifest within it only in the description of the oneness and balance that necessitate the manifestation of the trace of God's approval, guidance, gentleness, and benefit within it. The results and fruits within it will be colored by the property of these gentle attributes, which will become manifest in this world and the next in agreeable forms, such as ease, health, blessing, proximity, and unveiling. All the traces of the names will become manifest as agreeable to the soul, in contrast to what we mentioned concerning the domination of the property of deviation over it. God is the guide.

Faith is a divine light that may arrive at the inward of this soulish, combinational guise—which is the true [*ḥaqīqī*], meaning-related [*maʿnawī*] heart, not the formal [*ṣūrī*]—and at its outward, which is the inspired soul. When it becomes established in the heart and the soul, they become receptacles, first for faith and submission, and second for the Real's rulings, His Shariah, and His command and prohibition. They turn toward receiving them and acting in keeping with their requirements, which are performance of the incumbent and recommended acts and leaving aside and guarding against forbidden things [*muḥarramāt*], doubtful things [*shubuhāt*], and deviations.

The sensory configuration of this world, however, demands—at times in relation to some, and at most times in relation to others—that the soul incline and deviate from its combinational guise to the side of the animal, natural, elemental spirit along with heedlessness and absence from that turning and receiving. So the traces of the divine names will become manifest within it in the description of deviation; they will demand the manifestation of their results within it in the deviated description that necessitates pain and distance. Hence the trace of God's solicitude toward His faithful servants demands that He awaken them from the sleep of heedlessness and address them with His words—exalted and majestic is the speaker!—*O you who have faith, be wary of God!* [3:102]. This means, and God knows better [what it means]:

Once you have been guided to faith in God, His messenger, His angels, His books, the Last Day, and the measuring out, both the good of it and the evil of it, you should be on guard with your godwariness—by means of following God's command and prohibition and being present with them and with their requirements, which are performance of the incumbent and recommended acts, and leaving aside the forbidden, doubtful, and deviated things—against the soul's inclination and deviation from its oneness and all-comprehensiveness toward the side of the manyness of its animal, natural, elemental spirit, lest the deviations dominate over you.

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Being on guard like this, place your souls under the protection of the oneness of God's command, the property of His prohibition, and being present with the mentioned requirements of these two; and under the protection of the oneness of your souls' spiritual trace and the balance of their all-comprehensiveness. Then the traces of God's names will be colored in your souls with the color of the oneness and equilibrium that require God's approval and proximity. This property, oneness, balance, proximity, and approval will protect you from the manifestation within you of the traces of God's anger, which is one of the results of the traces of God's names that are colored by the properties of your souls' deviation and their inclination away from the spiritual trace, from the balance of all-comprehensiveness, and from presence with the command and prohibition and acting in keeping with their requirements, [while they incline] toward the manyness of the animal, natural, elemental spirit and domination by heedlessness of the command and prohibition and what these require for them.

When you enter under this protection and take shelter in it, the complete trace of the name *Security-Giver* [*al-muʾmin*] will reach you and He will give you security from the domination of the evils of your souls, from which the Prophet sought refuge with his words, "We seek refuge in God from the evils of our souls."[27] At this point you will gain the preparedness for voyaging [*sayr*], wayfaring [*sulūk*], and advancing [*taraqqī*] from the level of faith to the level of beautiful-doing. In this state you will be addressed with seeking *the means of approach* by means of performing the inward rightful dues [*ḥuqūq*] connected with indifferent acts [*mubāḥāt*], both those that are to be done and those that are to be left aside. Thereby you will be seeking arrival at the station of beautiful-doing and its realization after performing the rightful dues of the incumbent and recommended things and leaving aside the forbidden, doubtful, and deviated things and entering under the protection of God's command and prohibition, seeking realization of the reality of the station of faith. So seeking *the means of approach* is identical with seeking nearness to God by means of supererogatory works [*nawāfil*] until God loves him such that He is his hearing, his seeing, his tongue, his hand, and his foot.[28] This is entrance into the circle of the station of beautiful-doing. God is rightly-guiding.

Completion. There remain secrets of godwariness and its levels that we will draft, and then we will be free to establish *the means of approach*, God willing.

We say: Know—God confirm you with sound understanding!—that in His Exalted Book God arranged godwariness according to three levels that are the levels of the journey to the place of return to God. These are submission, faith, and beautiful-doing. This is in His words—exalted is He who said them—*There is no fault in those who have faith and do wholesome deeds in what they eat, if they are godwary, have faith,*

27. This is part of a supplication taught by the Prophet and found in the standard Hadith collections, and other sources. A typical version reads like this: "The praise belongs to God. We praise Him, seek help from Him, and ask forgiveness from Him. We seek refuge in God from the evils of our souls and from our ugly deeds. When God guides someone, no one will misguide him; and when God misguides someone, no one will guide him. I bear witness that there is no god but God, He alone, without associate, and that Muhammad is His servant and His messenger." The Hadith goes on to say that one should then recite three specific passages from the Quran that begin with *Be wary of God* (3:102, 4:1, 33:70–71).

28. Reference to the famous Hadith of *nawāfil*, parts of which Farghānī will quote later. The Hadith plays a major role in discussions of "union" with God, especially for Ibn al-ʿArabī and his followers.

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and do wholesome deeds, and then are godwary and have faith, and then are godwary and do what is beautiful [5:93].

Then He made reaching proximity with Him through love—which is what brings the servant into proximity with his Lord by negating distinguishing properties from him—a consequence of the level of beautiful-doing with His words, *and God loves the beautiful-doers* right after His words, *and then are godwary and do what is beautiful*. This has also come in the midst of a divine Hadith, namely, his words narrating from his Lord: "The servant never ceases gaining proximity to Me through supererogatory works until I love him. Then when I love him, I am his hearing with which he hears, his seeing through which he sees," and so on.

What is eaten—that is, what sustains human life and subsistence—is of two sorts, formal and meaning-related. The formal is connected to the body, to which the properties of the station of submission are connected. The meaning-related is connected to man's heart, spirit, and secret core, to which the properties of the levels of faith and beautiful-doing are connected.

The formal is of two sorts. One sort supports man's subsistence in this world. This is the sensory nourishment that supports his body. The other sort supports his subsistence in the next world. It is performing the incumbent and recommended acts by the body's acquiescence to the Shari'ite commands and prohibitions.

What is eaten by spirit and heart—the two of which connect the properties of the inward to faith—is remembrance, reflection [*fikr*], unveiling [*kashf*], and bringing the character traits into balance, or putting their deviated dispositions to use in ways that will beautify their ugliness, as designated by the Law-giver[29]—God's blessings be upon him!

What is eaten by the secret core—to which are connected the properties of the level of beautiful-doing—are like perfect attentiveness and the secret core's constant companionship, witnessing, and presence with the remembrance of its witnessed object along with witnessing it.

It follows that in the station of submission, which is the outward of faith, godwariness is guarding against leaving aside the mandatory and recommended acts that support one's subsistence in the next world; and also guarding against partaking of forbidden, doubtful, and deviated things through wrongdoing and non-Shari'ite things in the formal livelihoods and the nourishments that support one's subsistence in this world; and making observance of God's command and prohibition a protection that protects against the manifestation of the names that require severity, anger, and harm because of the inspired soul's deviation from all-comprehensiveness and from the spiritual trace toward the side of the animal spirit and following its natural, elemental appetites, whether on purpose, or by negligence and heedlessness.

29. On the manner in which the Shariah turns ugly character traits into beautiful traits, see Ibn al-ʿArabī's explanations cited in Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-ʿArabī's Metaphysics of Imagination* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 286–288.

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In the station of the inward of faith and in keeping with it, godwariness comes only by guarding the heart and spirit against being negligent and heedless of remembrance and sound reflection [*fikr*] on the Real's blessings and benefits; especially guarding the spirit against inclination toward the two sides of excess [*ifrāṭ*] and falling short [*tafrīṭ*] in its character traits and [guarding it] against inclination away from what necessitates its curtaining and being veiled from its world and the wonders of the sciences, recognitions, and secrets therein. That which necessitates this is for it to turn away from being heedless of its own essence and world and from occupation with the properties of the world of composition.

By means of guarding like this, the heart and the spirit will enter under the protection of being characterized by the names of God that are *Watcher* [*raqīb*], *Guardian* [*ḥafīẓ*], *Witness* [*shāhid*], *Just* [*ʿadl*], and *Light*. This characterization will protect it from the manifestation within it of the traces of the names *Curtainer, Misguider, Severe, Abaser,* and *Harmer*, whose traces are negligence, heedlessness, the lack of presence, and reflection's occupation with what does not concern it,[30] namely, being's properties [*al-aḥkām al-kawniyya*], expectations, wishes, and inclination toward the two sides of excess and falling short in character traits.

As for godwariness in the station of beautiful-doing, it is for the secret core to guard against being present with its entification and being delimited by this entification and by the properties of the Real and creation; against ascribing its witnessing and its presence with its Lord to its entification, not to its Lord; against its seeing that witnessing and presence in respect of its entification and delimitation by it; and against making manifest anything of the states gained in that witnessing and presence. By means of immersion in his witnessing of his Lord and complete presence with Him, he makes these guardings a protection that protects him in that seeing from seeing others and otherness, nonrecognition [*tanakkur*], and veiling [*iḥtijāb*]. Thus one of the great ones sought refuge from this with his words, "We seek refuge in God from nonrecognition after recognition and from the veil after self-disclosure." So understand!

Know that "godwariness with the rightful due of godwariness"[31] is only in the stations and states. It is established and fixed within them by performing their rightful dues, undertaking their preconditions and requisites, and guarding against defects in any of them or deviation from the customs of straightness [*istiqāma*] within them. This is like realization of the realities of the station of submission, then realization of the realities of the station of faith and the stations that these two comprise, like repentance, renunciation, watchfulness, trust, delegation [*tafwīḍ*], approval, and their like; and then also the realization of the realities of the beginning of the station of beautiful-doing with which the journey *to* God is completed and finalized. As for the end of the station of beautiful-doing connected with the journey *in* God, godwariness with the rightful due of godwariness is connected with the realization of the universals of the outward and inward names as well as all-comprehensiveness.[32]

30. Allusion to the Hadith, "One beauty of a man's submission is his leaving aside what does not concern him."
31. Reference to 3:102, *Be wary of God with His rightful due of wariness.*
32. For Farghānī's explanations of these two as well as the third and fourth journeys, see Chittick, "*Taḥrīr al-bayān*," 27–29.

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As for godwariness in keeping with ability [*istiṭāʿa*] and its property—as expressed in His words, *Be wary of God as far as you are able* [64:16]—it is connected only with states that are the results of other states in the voyages to God and in God in every state that appears, except that this ability must result in the appearance of a state higher than it. The Imam Abu'l-Qāsim al-Junayd alluded to this when he said, "If a servant approaches God for seventy years and is heedless of Him for one hour, what escapes him will be greater than what he gained." He spoke truthfully in this, for what escapes him will be the result of seventy years and an hour, but what he gained will be the result of seventy years alone. Seventy years and an hour are more than seventy years alone.

So it is known that every state results in another state more eminent than it because it includes the one before it. The manifestation of this result depends upon gaining the ability and preparedness for the manifestation of what comes after. Hence the property of *Be wary of God as much as you are able* never comes to an end in voyaging in God's particular names, which cannot be calculated or enumerated. So this ability is renewed until the last breath left for the voyager, for at every instant his voyage is renewed by his realization of a particular name, and this realization bestows upon him a preparedness and ability to realize another particular name, until his last breath. In each renewal of a state, he is addressed by godwariness in performing the rightful dues of that state. Hence the property of *Be wary of God as much as you are able* will never come to an end. Godwariness within it is guarding against the thought of making it manifest to others or ascribing it to oneself by reason of the soul's stealing something of it. God is rightly guiding.

Section. Now you have come to know that faith is a light arriving in the heart and soul and receptive to everything that arrives from the Real, namely, the lights of command and prohibition, which bring about proximity to God, eliminate the darkness of elemental nature, and make manifest the road of proximity to Him—high indeed and holy is He! You have also come to know that godwariness is wayfaring in that road and gaining proximity to Him by undertaking [*irtikāb*] the commands and performing [*adāʾ*] the incumbent and recommended acts that they require; and by desisting [*intihāʾ*] from the prohibitions and leaving aside [*tark*] the forbidden, doubtful, and deviated things that are among what they require. By means of this undertaking and desisting, it is to enter under the protection of God's approval, guidance, benefit, and gentleness, a protection that protects the submitting, faithful person from the manifestation within him of the traces of God's anger, misguidance, severity, and harm.

Know now that the indifferent things and gaining proximity to God by means of them were passed over in silence when the property of godwariness was mentioned. Hence the Real called His servants' attention to them and commanded them to gain proximity to Him by bringing forth the indifferent things and by employing them or leaving them aside with intentions pure [*khāliṣ*] of the stains of this-worldly and next-worldly shares of the soul. All of this follows after His commanding them to seek proximity to Him by performing the mandatory and recommended acts

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in order to observe His command and by leaving aside and guarding against the forbidden, doubtful, and deviated things in order to observe His prohibition. This is in His words, *Be wary of God, and seek the means of approach to Him* [5:35]. Hence the property of seeking the means of approach to Him includes performing the mandatory and recommended acts and leaving aside the forbidden, doubtful, and deviated things in word, deed, character, and state. Bringing the indifferent things or avoiding them is linked to an intention purified [*mukhallaṣ*] of the stains [*shawāʾib*] of the soul's shares in this world and the next world. "*To Him*" in the verse alludes to this purification/sincerity [*ikhlāṣ*], except that the property of seeking the means of approach by bringing the indifferent things is more specific, for what is understood from it is not designated by the command to godwariness.

Then know that seeking the means of approach is to eat and drink, or to leave these two aside, for the sake of God, not for the sake of the soul's desire and appetite, nor to follow the soul's thought to do that indifferent thing and partake of it or to leave it aside. In the same way one does not partake of any of the indifferent things or leave them aside except with the intention of proximity to God, for every indifferent thing is a blessing [*niʿma*] from God and the organ [*āla*] with which one partakes of that blessing is also a blessing from Him. So also the power to leave it aside is a blessing from Him. Thus no one should partake of or leave aside any indifferent thing, or say or do any of this, or leave aside thoughts of saying or doing, except with the intention of showing gratitude for God's blessings, not for the sake of the soul's appetite or following its thought and desire. This should not make one heedless of remembering God or of showing gratitude for His blessings. For, when the voyager is assiduous [*mujidd*] and sincere [*mukhliṣ*], then immersion [*istighrāq*] in the remembrance of God and in the requirement to show gratitude for His blessings in every state and every time of bringing or leaving aside the indifferent will divert him from remembering food and drink and other things and from the thought of them. Thus it has been narrated from Ruwaym that he said, "For twenty years no thought whatsoever of food and drink has entered my mind, nor of partaking of them or leaving them aside."

When someone is constant in this, then his indifferent words and deeds and his partaking of or leaving aside all goodly [*ṭayyib*], longed-for [*marghūb*], indifferent things will be counted as supererogatory deeds and worshipful acts and will be joined with performing the incumbent and recommended acts and with leaving aside the forbidden, doubtful, and deviated things. This is because all of this will come by the intermediary of presence [*ḥuḍūr*] and pure intention, purified of the stains of the soul's shares, appetites, and thoughts; it will bring proximity to God and eliminate the properties of the distinctions [*imtiyāzāt*] between him and his Lord. This is because the soul—through its entification and resulting delimitation, its egoity through its shares, thoughts, appetites, and desires; and its gratification [*istīfāʾ*] of these in respect of the fact that they are the soul's appetites and desires—is the [sum total of the] properties of distinction between the servant and his Lord. So, when the soul's appetite, share, and desire withdraw, and when one seeks the soul's enjoyment by bringing and partaking of the indifferent things or leaving

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them aside, the indifferent things will join with the mandatory and recommended things as well as with leaving aside the forbidden and doubtful things. This is because of the mentioned intention, remembrance, presence, and negation of the soul's thought of partaking of its enjoyment, appetite, and share.

At this point, the properties of distinction between the servant and his Lord become few and there becomes manifest the correspondence between him and the divine love, whose root is "I loved to be recognized."[33] For, the specific property and trace of love is the negation of the properties of the distinction [*mumāyaza*] between the lover and the beloved so that love may bring about proximity between the two or unify them by negating from the lover the traces of the distinctions between the two.[34]

Therefore "seeking the means of approach" is the same as gaining proximity through supererogatory works for the sake of being welcomed by God's love. Then all the properties of distinction may disappear through that welcome [*istiqbāl*]; it is what is meant by His words, "until I love him," right after His words, "The servant does not cease gaining proximity to Me through supererogatory works." This is because the elimination of some of the properties of the distinctions, such as the servant's entification and egoity, is not within the capacity of the servant unless God's love welcomes him and attracts him away from himself to Him. When all the distinguishing properties disappear through this welcome, the annihilation of the servant's acts is realized; then his attributes; then his egoity itself and the ascription of any act, attribute, or existence to him. This is what is meant by His words, *Everything is perishing but His face* [28:88] and His words, *Everything upon it is annihilated* [55:26]. Then Existence itself, which is the face of the subsistent Real, will become manifest. It is meant by His words, *And there subsists the face of thy Lord, possessor of majesty* through His inward and nondelimitation *and generous giving* [55:27] through His most beautiful names and the manifestation of their traces in the worlds.

At this point, it will become manifest that what was manifest from the lights of this Existence and Face in the form of the servant's hearing, eyesight, tongue, hand, and foot—while it was imagined, by virtue of delimitation by the levels and their veilness [*ḥijābiyya]* that it was ascribed to the servant while manifest in the attributes of his essence in respect of his createdness—was nothing but this very Face, Existence, and Light becoming manifest through him in the attribute of entification and delimitation and in the description of createdness. This is by the property of the levels, which are the loci of His manifestations, not through the property of His Essence and His essential requirement, for the levels have a property in that which becomes manifest within them, whether creature or Real.

But in this state, he was not aware of the property of the mentioned veilness. He supposed something that was not congruent with what was happening in actual

33. Allusion to the famous divine saying, "I was a Hidden Treasure, so I loved to be recognized . . ."

34. Compare this passage from *Muntahā* (2:264): "Know that love is an inner inclination toward one of the perfections. Its secret and reality is a tie between lover and beloved and a unifying and all-comprehending relation between them. Its trace is the elimination of the distinction between the two."

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fact. So when the veilness disappears because of the negation of all the properties of distinction, what was fixed and manifest before that becomes manifest with the property of the nondelimitation of His radiance without delimitation by the levels. His supposition and its trace are negated in the midst of the negation of the properties of distinction. Its falseness appears when the Real, the Subsistent becomes manifest. For with this nondelimited, radiant manifestation, He does not become delimited by the property of any level whatsoever. Nothing appears to the recipient of self-disclosure but His nondelimitation and His lack of delimitation. This is why the taster of this tasting said, "I have seen nothing without seeing God before it."[35] So understand!

This, then, is the meaning of what He said: "I am his hearing, his eyesight, his tongue, his hand, and his foot." He did not say, "I become." So know this! You will be guided, God willing.

Section. Know—may He confirm you!—that submission, faith, godwariness, and seeking the means of approach are all traces of the name *God* in respect of the fact that He is a guide. The prophets and messengers and possessors of resoluteness among them; those who have faith in God, in them, and in Gabriel inasmuch as he delivered the message and manifested the Shariah; or rather, everything whose relation to the side of necessity is more complete—all of these are loci of manifestation for the name *Guide* and those who make manifest its properties and traces. The revealed divine books speak on behalf of its properties. All mosques, congregational mosques, monasteries, retreat centers, madrasahs, and khanaqahs are the instruments for listening to its traces, namely, remembrance, glorification, and reciting *tawḥīd* in the differentiated macrocosm.

The serene soul whose godwariness is inspired; the heart, which is the inward of the combinational guise named a soul that is *inspired in its depravity and godwariness* [91:8] and which is latent within [the soul] just as fire is latent in stone and iron, and just as blackness is latent in gall nuts and vitriol; and the intellect illumined by the light of the Shariah and named "kernel" because of this illumination—all these are also loci of manifestation for the name *Guide*. Sound inspirations and all-merciful and spiritual thoughts[36] all speak on behalf of its properties and its invitation inside the undifferentiated, human microcosm.

As for unbelief, rebellion, disobedience, being engrossed in the gratification of pleasures and appetites, undertaking forbidden and doubtful things, forgetfulness, and heedlessness of remembering God and of reflecting on His blessings and benefits—all are traces of the name *God*, but in respect of the attribute of His misguidance and His name the *Misguider*. The satans of jinn and men, the unbelievers, the disobedient, the rebellious, the leaders of unbelief—all are loci of manifestation for the name *Misguider* and those who make manifest its properties and traces. All forms of singing and instruments of diversion and song are among the instruments

35. Ibn al-ʿArabī ascribes this saying to Abū Bakr (see "Chittick, "*Taḥrīr al-bayān*," 12, note 17).

36. Thoughts (*khawāṭir*) are commonly divided into four sorts: all-merciful (*raḥmānī*), spiritual (*rūḥānī*), soulish (*nafsānī*), and satanic (*shayṭānī*). As indicated here, the two higher sorts come from the side of the Guide, the two lower from the side of the Misguider.

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of making manifest its invitation; and all forms of vintners and taverns are loci of witnessing the traces of accepting its invitation in the differentiated macrocosm.

So also the commanding soul, caprice [*hawā*], the intellect of this world's livelihood [*al-ʿaql al-maʿīshī al-dunyawī*], and sense-intuition [*wahm*] inasmuch as it follows corrupt imaginings; or rather, everything whose relation to the side of possibility [*imkān*] is more complete—all are loci of manifestation for the name *Misguider* and those who make manifest its properties and traces. All intrusions [*hujūmāt*] by the soul's talk, soulish and satanic fancies [*hawājis*], the accumulation of thoughts and reflections connected with being [*al-kawn*] and distracting from remembrance and from sound, beneficial reflection and immersion in and occupation with them; and the voyager's domination by heedlessness instead of what is most important for his moment and state—all these are among the properties of the manifestation of the traces of the name *Misguider* in the human microcosm.

Between these two names—I mean *Guide* and *Misguider*—there are requitals [*mujāzāt*], contentions [*mughālabāt*], and contrapositions [*muqālabāt*] in manifesting their properties and traces. Each desires to manifest its requirements so that the perfection specific to it will be connected to the manifestation of its specific requirements, properties, and traces. So wherever the properties of the name *Guide* become manifest and it dominates through the manifestation of its traces and requirements—namely, faith, submission, godwariness, and seeking the means of approach in respect of its loci of manifestation and those who make manifest its properties and traces, such as the faithful, the wholesome, the prophets, the messengers, and the wayfarers on the road of the Real—then inescapably the name *Misguider* will stand forth in respect of its loci of manifestation and those who make manifest its properties and traces—such as the satans of men of jinn, the unbelievers, their leaders, and their headmen—to repel and prevent the manifestation of the traces and requirements of the name *Guide* and the manifestation of the domination of its ruling authority.

Hence the small and the great struggle [*jihād*] will become established against Satan and his assistants, helpers, and party, namely, the unbelievers and their leaders, to remove their evil and break their appetite; and against the soul and caprice and their helpers, namely, appetite, wrath, and the potencies that follow them in the differentiated macrocosm and the human microcosm. This is why God placed the mention of the command to struggle immediately after the mention of the command to godwariness and seeking the means of approach. So know this!

As for the secret of the fact that the struggle against the soul, Satan, and their helpers in the human microcosm is the "greater struggle," as he said—God bless him and give him peace!—"We have returned from the smaller struggle to the greater struggle" when he occupied himself with the ritual prayer after his return from the struggle against the unbelievers, this is because the final goal of giving existence to creation is only the Real's recognition of His all-comprehensive perfections, as He said, "I loved to be recognized, so I created creation that I might be recognized."

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This goal will not be realized completely without struggle in the human microcosm and without the domination by spirit and heart—through presence, remembrance, reflection, witnessing, and sound and unitary attentiveness toward the Real—over the commanding soul, Satan, and their assistants and helpers. The struggle in the differentiated macrocosm is a means and an intermediary to that objective.

This objective will not be reached without pure and sincere worship of God. There can be no performance of worship without repelling outward obstacles. These obstacles are the aim of the enemies of the religion, namely, that they oppose and prevent the manifestation of the rites of the Shariahs [*shaʿāʾir al-sharāʾiʿ*][37] and having faith and submitting, and they are antagonistic to that and fight against it. So the struggle against the soul in the human world is sought and intended for itself, but the struggle in the differentiated world is a means and an instrument, sought for the sake of other than itself. Something that is intended and sought for the sake of itself is greater and higher than something that has the rank of a means and an instrument and is being sought for the sake of other than itself.

So the struggle in God's road includes the two struggles, the smaller and the greater. *Struggle in God with the rightful due of His struggle* [22:78] is specific to the greater struggle, which is the struggle against the soul by holding it back from its shares in all the levels, stations, states, character traits, and knowledges; by turning it away from gratifying every one of its shares, pleasures, and desires; by severing its expectations and wishes and by severing its gaze from awareness [*taṭallu*ʿ] of any part in the acts of heart and body; by blocking the gate of seeing anything of this ascribed to itself and thereby uprooting its hardships by stealing hidden shares of what is bestowed upon the heart, the spirit, and the secret core—namely, the gifts of self-disclosures, knowledges, unveilings, contemplations, and so on.

Struggle is also against the properties of the createdness [*khalqiyya*] of the spiritual spirit when it becomes manifest in the property of the sensory configuration. So also it is against the properties of the delimitation of the secret core by entification when the property of the mortal configuration becomes manifest, that which is meant by His words, *Surely I am but a mortal like you* [18:110]. Striving and effort are to prevent the domination of these properties over it and to repel their manifestation, except in the measure that is necessary.

37. Like Ibn al-ʿArabī, Farghānī uses the plural of Shariah in a broad sense to designate all the religions brought by the prophets (see, for example, *Muntahā*, 1:110). In the singular, he often contrasts the word with Tariqah and Haqiqah.

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As for the secret of using the formula of hopefulness in attaining the causes of triumph and success by gaining the sought object—which is becoming adorned with the adornment of proximity and eradicating the reality of love[38]—this is an allusion to the fact that all causes are preparations; they do not leave traces. That which leaves traces is the Real through His power over the causes. This is because the act of the actor does not become manifest until after gaining complete receptivity and preparedness to receive the act. Gaining complete receptivity and the preparedness to receive the manifestation of the Real's act in respect of His power is something hidden from the servant because of the plausibility that some hidden precondition of complete causation remains.

Gaining complete preparedness through the formula of hopefulness goes back to gaining complete receptivity and the preparedness to receive the acts of prosperity and success and the gift of the sought object and goal. It is as if He is saying, "Attain and acquire the preparedness to receive the act of My proximity within you by means of godwariness, seeking the means of approach, and struggle in My path. Perhaps you will completely gain preparedness and receptivity and all of their preconditions. Then your prosperity and your triumph through proximity to the manifestation of the act of My proximity within you will follow upon that." Everything that comes in the Exalted Book with a formula of hopefulness goes back to this meaning. So know this. *And God speaks the truth, and He guides on the road* [33:4].

The book is complete, and with God is protection and success in what is correct.

38. By "eradicating" (*istīṣāl*) love's reality, Farghānī seems to mean overcoming the lover-beloved duality, as indicated toward the end of the previous section (see note 34).

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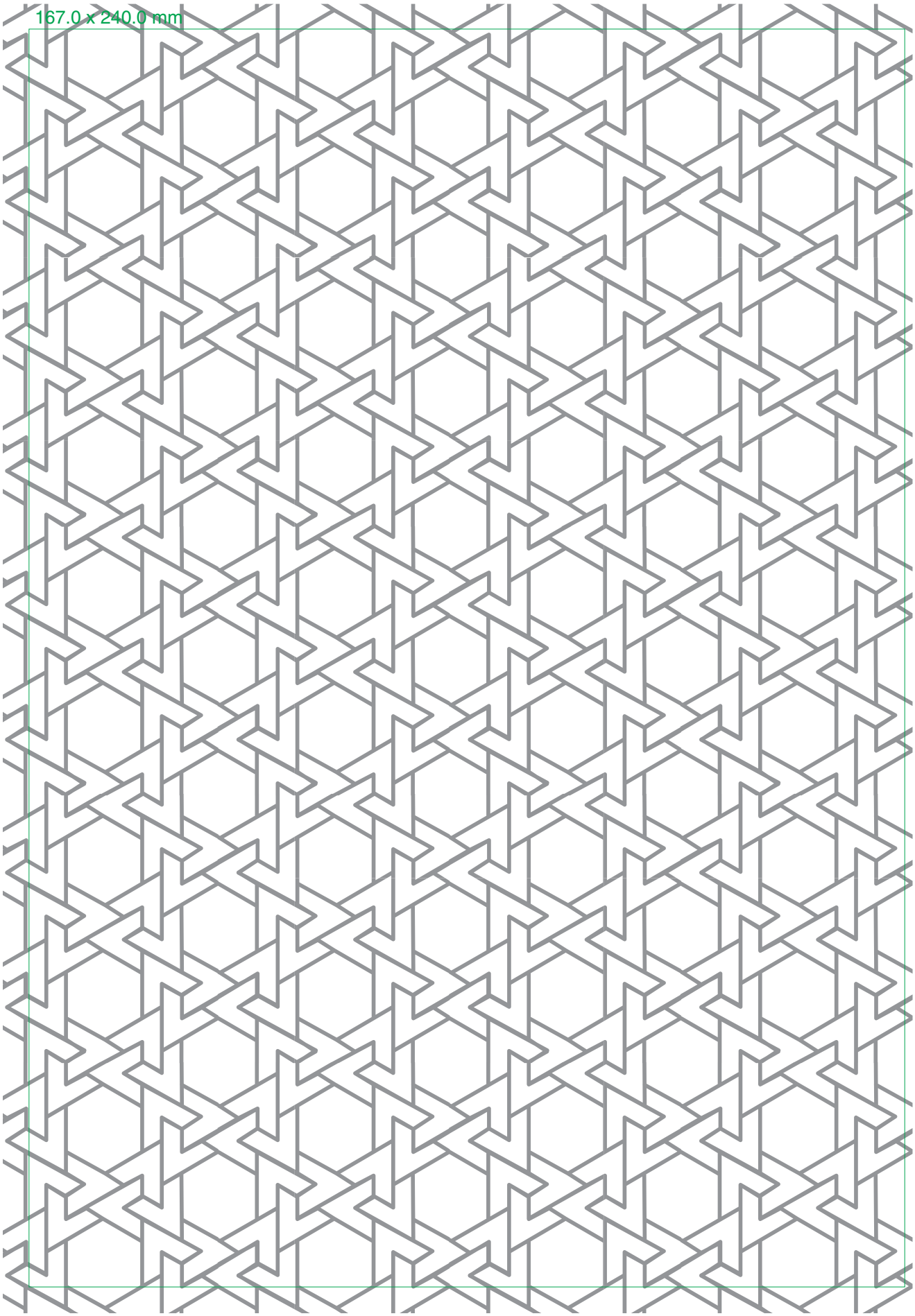
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TRANSCENDING CHARACTER AND THE QUEST FOR UNION: THE PLACE OF UNION (*AL-JAMᶜ*) IN COMMENTARIES ON ANṢĀRĪ'S *WAYSTATIONS*

Cyrus Ali Zargar

Introduction

Abū Ismāʿīl ʿ*Abdallāh* al-Harawī al-Anṣārī's (d. 481/1089) *Manāzil al-sāʾirīn ilā al-ḥaqq* (*Waystations of the Travelers to the Real*) offers an arrangement for one hundred detailed yet enigmatic modes of ethical perfection ending in union with the divine. Much of the text's success lies in the author's ability to structure the various waystations that are the subject of the work. In al-Anṣārī's one hundred short chapters, each waystation leads to the next and yet also relates to those waystations proximate to it, giving readers a sense of cohesion lacking in other similar manuals on the science of the Sufi states and stations. Al-Anṣārī (or, simply, Anṣārī) presents the transformation of the human subject as an evolution that begins with awareness—becoming "awakened" to one's shortcomings and one's need for God—followed by a progression that can be divided into two halves. The first half, the former part of the journey, requires seeking completion of the soul, or acquiring excellent character traits. The second half, the latter part of the journey, requires "being sought," that is, removing qualities of selfhood in order to receive divine qualities.

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Anṣārī places the refinement of human character traits, what we would call "the virtues," toward the middle of one's journey, following in this placement models of the Sufi states and stations that preceded him. By considering the structure and logic of Anṣārī's waystations, readers of Sufi texts can appreciate the place of the refinement of character traits as transitional. The wayfarer proceeds from a perfection of the bodily heart to a more receptive and sublime perfection of the spirit, from action to reception. That receptive state ultimately becomes union (*al-jamᶜ*), which Anṣārī calls "the terminus of the stations of the wayfarers and the outermost, coastal portion of the ocean of *tawḥīd*," that is, it is the periphery of knowing God's oneness (*tawḥīd*), that side or edge of God's oneness accessible to humans.[1] In this, Anṣārī frames the Sufi stations as a pathway to union and direct knowledge. While this structure, one leading to union, proved inspiriting to many commentators, it also aroused the condemnation of two Ḥanbalī thinkers who opposed what some have called "monist" (or, from their perspective, *al-ittiḥādiyya*, the "People of Unification") resonances in Islamic ethics, namely, Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328) and Shams al-Dīn ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 751/1350).[2] Indeed, weighty epistemological differences come out in the various commentaries despite the brevity of Anṣārī's treatise. The key concern here will be to consider commentators' responses to the structure of Anṣārī's treatise vis-à-vis its most disputed proclamation—namely, that the waystations end with union with God.

As one of the foremost Ḥanbalī scholars of the East, residing in Nishapur and Balkh, Anṣārī trained a generation of spiritual aspirants and ḥadīth scholars, often raising controversy for his public repudiations of speculative theology. While a number of very influential texts have been attributed to him, some in Persian, the only text verified indisputably as his and which we know he meant to be distributed in writing is the Arabic *Manāzil al-sāᵓirīn ilā al-ḥaqq*, or, simply, the *Waystations*.[3] This treatise has been considered by writers in the Sufi tradition to be the preeminent text outlining the path to human completion. The subject of numerous commentaries, Anṣārī's detailed description of the one hundred ethical stages to unity with the divine has been noted for its precision, incorporation of the insights of previous writers, structure, and insightful observations on the human condition. The text had wide appeal among Muslim intellectuals of varying

1. Anṣārī, *Manāzil al-sāᵓirīn* (Tehran: Mawlā, 2010), 282. This paper will cite Muḥammad ᶜAmmār Mufīd's dual-language edition (Arabic-Persian) of *Manāzil al-sāᵓirīn*, as in the bibliography, though only the Arabic portion pertains here. There is a commonly available Arabic-only edition, edited by Ibrāhīm ᶜAṭwa ᶜAwaḍ (Cairo: Maktabat Jaᶜfar al-Ḥadītha, 1977), but Mufīd's edition is more exacting and has made use of multiple manuscripts. Indeed, Mufīd, with the help of Rawān Farhādī, made use of and improved the edition of the Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, published in 1962 (Cairo), edited and translated (into French) by Serge de Beaurecueil. This 1962 edition replaced an uncritical edition published in Cairo in 1909 by Maṭbaᶜat al-Saᶜāda. The manuscripts used by de Beaurecueil numbered forty-one, and in his long French introduction to this edition, he includes an analysis of the merits and challenges they present. While usually accurate, de Beaurecueil's French translation does not always aim for clarity. There is also an English translation, published in 2011 by Dar Albouraq (Paris), undertaken by Hisham Rifai. For clarity and consistency, however, all translations of the *Manāzil* and other texts in this paper are my own.

2. Sometimes Ibn Qayyim's readings, like contemporary scholars of religion who read Ibn ᶜArabī's ontology as a sort of "pantheism," seem to miss the importance of transcendence in Ibn ᶜArabī's thought and the emphasis placed therein on the essential dissimilarities between God and creation. On this, see Mohammed Rustom, "Is Ibn al-ᶜArabī's Ontology Pantheistic?" *Journal of Islamic Philosophy* 2 (2006): 53–67, especially pp. 66–7.

3. See Bo Utas, "The *Munājāt* or *Ilāhī-nāmah* of ᶜAbduᵓllāh Anṣārī," in *Manuscripts of the Middle East*, ed. Jan Just Witkam, co-edited by J. T. P. De Bruijn and Barbara Flemming, vol. 3 (papers read at the Symposium on Textual Tradition and the Editing of Persian and Turkish Texts, Leiden, 16–18 October 1986) (Leiden: Ter Lugt Press, 1988, 83–87, here p. 83 especially).

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and even opposing ethical-theoretical perspectives; the commentaries discussed below are a testament to that.[4]

Waystations puts on display its author's erudition in four traditional sciences: the Sufi "states" and "stations," practical Islamic ethics, Quranic exegesis, and, in terms of the terseness of its style, Arabic rhetoric. To clarify, "states" (*al-aḥwāl*) refer to passing conditions of the soul one experiences on the spiritual journey. Such states contribute to more lasting conditions, which the Sufis call "stations" (*al-maqāmāt*). When seen in terms of a progression in which an individual passes from station to station, these lasting conditions are called "waystations," (*manāzil*). Sufi writers derive the language of stations and waystations from classical Arabic poetry, which described a journey wherein the poet would stop at the deserted campgrounds (or "waystation," *manzil*) where he once had encountered his beloved. It is also noteworthy that classical Arabic used the phrase "waystations" (*manāzil*) to catalogue the "mansions" of the moon, which references the moon's locations relative to certain stars for each of the approximately twenty-eight days of its orbit around the earth. There is little evidence that Anṣārī had this mapping of the moon, often used for talismans, in mind at all. Metaphorically speaking, however, to think of the human soul as progressing through a moon-like waxing and waning describes quite elegantly Anṣārī's structure: the soul becomes complete through traits, and then retreats into union, shedding the traits it cultivated.

Commentaries on and adaptations of this text have become more widely read than the text itself. On one hand, drawing from Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn al-ʿArabī's (d. 638/1240) school of philosophical Sufism, there are the commentaries of ʿAfīf al-Dīn Sulaymān al-Tilimsānī (d. 690/1291) and ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī (d. ca. 736/1335), to name the two most well- known.[5] On the other hand, there is the very long commentary by Shams al-Dīn ibn Qayyim, written less to explain Anṣārī's treatise than to rectify it. Its title is *Madārij al-sālikīn bayna manāzil iyyāka naʿbud wa iyyāka nastaʿīn (*Ranks of the Wayfarers Between the Waystations of "You we worship" and "You we beseech for aid"*)*. This book has become popular of recent and is among the most popular spiritual treatises in Sunni Islam today because of renewed interest in its author, a student of Ibn Taymiyya, but also, no doubt, because of the literary and ethical merits of the book itself. Interpreting Anṣārī's *Waystations*—for Ibn Qayyim—is not only about resolving ambiguities in the text, but also about debating the proper function of Sufi interpretation vis-à-vis theological doctrine and Sharia—that is, God's revealed system of beliefs, prescriptions, and boundaries.

4. An excellent discussion of the states (*al-aḥwāl*) and their relationship to the stations (*al-maqāmāt*) or waystations (*al-manāzil*) can be found in Atif Khalil, *Repentance and the Return to God: Tawba in Early Sufism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2018), 77–81.

5. On that school, see Mukhtar H. Ali, *Philosophical Sufism: An Introduction to the School of Ibn al-ʿArabī* (London: Routledge, 2021) and Mohammed Rustom, "Philosophical Sufism," *The Routledge Companion to Islamic Philosophy*, ed. Richard C. Taylor and Luis Xavier López-Farjeat (New York: Routledge, 2016), 399–411. For the larger context of Ibn al-ʿArabī's intellectual contributions, see Caner K. Dagli, *Ibn al-ʿArabī and Islamic Intellectual Culture: From Mysticism to Philosophy* (New York: Routledge, 2016).

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Early Sufi Writings on Character

It is important, first, to establish the ways in which Anṣārī himself was writing a commentary of sorts, or at least an elaboration, on the earlier tradition. The reverence he had for that earlier tradition can be assumed even though he probably did not compose, at least not directly, the Persian hagiographical text traditionally attributed to him, the *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya (Generations of the Sufis)*.[6] Still, that text, the *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya*—based on lecture notes from his circle—represents discussions of virtuous Sufi saints honored within Anṣārī's school. While he revered those saints, Anṣārī saw a missed opportunity to comment on the Sufi paths of ethical completion. Anṣārī took issue with what existed, with the writings of these bygone saints on the science of the heart, in that they failed to elaborate fully on its stations, contenting themselves with very general principles. Either that or, Anṣārī noted, they told stories of saints devoid of any generally applicable theory. When some earlier writers did present theories of ethical development, Anṣārī complained, it was not clear in their writings what applied to the masses and what to the elite. Some mistakenly made use of the ecstatic utterances of drunken Sufis—such as Bāyazīd Biṣṭāmī (d. 234/848 or 261/875) and Ḥusayn ibn Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj (d. 309/922). Such utterances could not be applied to the science of stations. Most Sufi writers, Anṣārī lamented, did not think of the stations in any sort of systematic way at all, as part of a charted progression.[7]

Despite his objections to the deficiencies of those earlier treatises, Anṣārī's text shows quite an indebtedness to them. One of the earliest such texts is the *Ādāb al-ʿibādāt* (*Rules of Conduct for Worshipful Acts*) of Shaqīq ibn Ibrāhīm al-Balkhī (d. 194/810).[8] Shaqīq's four stages include renunciation (*zuhd*), fear of God (*khawf*), desire for Paradise (*al-shawq ilā al-janna*), and the love for God (*al-maḥabba li-Allāh*). This marks out a path that one still sees—in its most general sense—by the time Anṣārī writes in the fifth/eleventh century. The path begins with acts of asceticism and worship, but ends in love, to which Anṣārī will add union. A similar pattern exists in the very short treatise, *the Stations of Hearts (Risālat Maqāmāt al-qulūb)* by the early tenth-century writer Abū al-Ḥusayn Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Nūrī (d. 295/907). Al-Nūrī hailed from Herat, like Anṣārī, and, like him, was interested in structured presentations of the path, even if much simpler than what Anṣārī presented almost two centuries later:

> The stations of hearts are four because God Himself named the heart with four terms: breast (*ṣadr*), heart (*qalb*), hidden heart (*fuʾād*), and core (*lubb*). The breast is the mine of submission (*islām*) for He has said, exalted be He, "What of the one whose breast God has expanded for submission . . .?" [Q 39:22]. The heart is the mine of belief (*īmān*), for He has said, "But God has made belief beloved of you and rendered it beautiful within

6. *On the Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya,* see Jawid Mojaddedi, *The Biographical Tradition in Sufism: The Ṭabaqāt Genre from al-Sulamī to Jāmī* (London: Curzon, 2001), chapter 3.

7. Anṣārī, *Manāzil al-Sāʾirīn*, 4.

8. Annabel Keeler has recently brought into question the authenticity of the title of this treatise, raising the possibility that it was added by a later copyist. See Annabel Keeler, "The Concept of *adab* in Early Sufism with Particular Reference to the Teachings of Sahl b. ʿAbdallāh al-Tustarī (d. 283/896)," *Ethics and Spirituality in Islam: Sufi adab*, ed. Francesco Chiabotti, Eve Feuillebois-Pierunek, Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen, and Luca Patrizi (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 63–101, here p. 65n25.

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> your hearts" [Q 49:7]. The hidden heart is the mine of intimate knowledge (*maʿrifa*), for He has said, "The hidden heart did not lie about what he saw" [Q 53:11, referencing the Prophet's vision on the Miʿrāj]. And the core is the mine of recognizing oneness [*tawḥīd*], for He has said, "Signs for those possessing cores of reasoning" [Q 3:190].[9]

Here one notices two striking similarities to Anṣārī's later text, as well as, thereby, the commentaries and expansions on Anṣārī that followed. First, there is the progression from submission to a realization of God's oneness. Anṣārī interprets this as transcending human traits to achieve near unity with God. After a long process of striving, one can see God in things. Moreover, after learning how to see, one then can *unsee*—relinquishing that vision for a sense of unity. Second, there is the use of Quranic verses in a careful way that assumes universal significance for Sufi technical terms. After all, al-Nūrī's readings rely on the differences between these terms for heart as part of a progression. This same distinction between these terms for "heart" in Arabic can be found in the *Bayān al-farq bayn al-ṣadr wa-l-qalb wa-l-fuʾād wa-l-lubb* (*An Elucidation on the Difference between the Breast, Heart, Seat-of-Passion, and Human Core*) attributed to al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī (d. ca. 300/912), but which might also belong to al-Nūrī.[10] In al-Nūrī's text, the text quoted above, each of these mines, or sources, for an ethical trait is also a vessel for that reality. Each trait begins in its corresponding rendition of the heart, but emanates from that dimension of the heart as well. *Tawḥīd*, for al-Nūrī, is to declare God transcendent (*tanzīh*) from any understanding (*darkihi*). This comes after affirming God (*ithbāt al-Ḥaqq*) in his sublime attributes and beautiful names, again a pattern that will appear with Anṣārī.

Like Anṣārī's treatise, the germinal declarations of al-Nūrī occur in a social context that might help us understand why there was such interest in mapping out the spiritual path so scientifically and so carefully. Al-Nūrī wrote in eastern Iran at a time of great competitiveness when it came to programs of piety. This was especially pronounced in Nishapur, where the Malāmatiyya and Karrāmiyya schools had been in competition, and where Baghdadi Sufism was becoming more prevalent. Literature on the Sufi stations began at the end of the second century Hijrī, or the early ninth century of the Common Era, and represented a staking out of authority regarding maps of the path. This has some similarities to the way in which Anṣārī actively presented his *Waystations* as the ultimate causatum of intense and inspired hadith study. Anṣārī wrote as an avid advocate of the Ḥanbalī approach to Islamic learning, hadith-based and opposed to theological speculation, especially the speculation of the Ashʿarīs whose influence in Nishapur waxed and waned depending on the predispositions of whoever ruled. From prison to exile, Anṣārī found himself at the center of this conflict—or, rather, thrusted himself into the center of the conflict and was perceived as especially threatening to the

9. Abū al-Ḥasan al-Nūrī, *Risālat Maqāmāt al-qulūb*, ed. Paul Nwyia, as in "Textes mystiques in édites d'Abū-l-Ḥasan al-Nūrī (m. 295/907)," *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph*, 44:9 (1968), 117–154, here p. 92.

10. See Ḥakīm Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad Tirmidhī (attrib.), *Bayān al-farq bayn al-ṣadr wa-l-qalb wa-l-fuʾād wa-l-lubb*, tr. with introduction by Nicholas Heer and Kenneth L. Honerkamp, in *Three Early Sufi Texts* (Louisville: Fons Vitae, 2003), 57.

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theologians on account of his prominence.[11] His relationship with the famous vizier Niẓām al-Mulk (d. 485/1092), an advocate of the Ashʿarīs, but also a pragmatist, had its ups and downs precisely because of Anṣārī's popularity as a Ḥanbalī teacher. Adversarial methods and schools, of course, continued into the era of commentaries, when it became a matter of claiming Anṣārī's discoveries, either for philosophically-inclined Sufism or later Ḥanbalī approaches, and not a matter of contesting with the scholar himself.

There are other earlier treatises that might have helped shape Anṣārī's *Waystations,* such as that attributed to Muḥammad Niffarī (d. ca. 366/976–7), or the *Book of Flashes* (*al-Lumaʿ*) by Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj (d. 378/988), specifically a section therein titled "The Book of States and Stations."[12] Most interesting is one such text called *The Roads of the Knowers* (*Manāhij al-ʿārifīn*) by Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī (d. 412/1021). Al-Sulamī begins with a sort of awakening, one that he calls a "rousing from heedlessness," that resembles Anṣārī's first waystation of "awakening" (*yaqẓa*). Like al-Nūrī before him and Anṣārī after him, al-Sulamī's progression has the human being engage in striving, to be followed by a more receptive purification. [13] Perhaps most important, al-Sulamī divides the path into three major categories. There are acts of good conduct (*ādāb*), followed by character traits (*akhlāq*), finally followed by spiritual states (*aḥwāl*). While traits are acquired, states are received.[14] The contrast between acquisition and divine bestowal (the very dynamic one finds in al-Sulamī) allows Anṣārī to create a much more complex structure of the stations that is, in the end, based on this model.

The Structure of the *Waystations*

It is the structure of Anṣārī's text, in fact, coupled with its brevity, that has made it so worthy of commentary, judging from the expressed interests of the commentators themselves. Each of the one hundred waystations represents a separate mode of ethical completion, and yet each is related to the preceding waystation, to the next waystation, and even to waystations in distant parts of the treatise. There are three major divisions to consider in the book:

1. First, in the introduction to his *Waystations*, Anṣārī divides his readership into two different groups: those who seek (*murīd*) and those who are sought (*murād*), declaring all those who espouse some other way to God's proximity to be false claimants.[15] The seeker (*murīd*) strives before God,

11. Serge de Laugier de Beaurecueil, *Khwādja ʿAbdullāh Anṣārī (396--481 H./1006–1089); mystique Ḥanbalite* (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1965), 87–9.

12. For an English translation of the former, see Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Jabbār al-Niffārī, *The Mawāqif and Mukhāṭabāt of Muhammad Ibn ʿAbd 'L-Jabbār al-Niffārī: with other Fragments*, tr. Arthur John Arberry (London: Trustees of the E. J. W. Gibb Memorial, 1978).

13. See al-Sulamī, *Majmūʿat Āthār ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Sulamī*, ed. Nasrollah Pourjavady and Muḥammad Sūrī (Tehran: Iranian Institute of Philosophy and the Institute of Islamic Studies at the Free University of Berlin, 2009), 2:135–157, here p. 2:143–5. The *Manāhij* as reprinted here was originally edited by Etan Kohlberg in 1979.

14. Al-Sulamī, *Majmūʿat Āthār*, 2:156–7. See also Bīdārfar's introduction in ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī, *Sharḥ Manāzil al-sā'irīn*, ed. Muḥsin Bīdārfar (Qum: Bīdār, 2006), 17. Later developments in Sufi ethics further established the state (ḥāl) as a temporary and bestowed condition of the heart. See Atif Khalil, "*Ḥāl*," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Three*, ed. Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Everett Rowson. Leiden: Brill, Online, forthcoming.

15. Anṣārī, *Manāzil* 4.

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impelled by love, guarded by modesty, and wavering between the two extremes of fear of God's displeasure and hope in God's mercy. The sought (*murād*) has made it to the beginning phases of union, progressing closer and closer, and eventually relinquishing all that he or she has accomplished in favor of absolute self-loss. In this process, fear and hope become replaced by contraction and expansion of the heart.[16] One becomes less concerned with extrinsic chastisements and rewards and more concerned with God's distance and nearness. The struggles at the very highest waystations have to do with moving beyond one's own erasure in unification with the Real. Thus, the waystations proceed from activity to receptivity, from seeking completion of the soul to being sought, or from *willing* changes to oneself to realizing God's will for oneself. One goes from acquiring virtuous traits to negating those traits of the self to see them replaced by the traits of God.

2. Second, there is the grouping of the one hundred waystations into clusters of ten. This too hints at precision. One can see the path as a progression from preliminaries to gateways, to interactions, then character traits, followed by foundations, then valleys, states, modes of sainthood, realities, and finally the ultimate attributes. These are the ten major groupings, but within each are ten stations. If one stops at any of the stations, it is just a station, a *maqām*; but if one is passing through, learning from that station to reach higher stations, then it becomes a *manzil*, or a waystation.

3. The third division, one that occurs in each of his one hundred chapters, is between three ranks. In the later chapters, those three ranks represent three ranks of those who have reached the status of being "sought." That is, they are three ranks for achieved or advanced wayfarers, describing nuances therein. In the earlier stations, those three ranks describe the differences between beginners, advanced, and elite wayfarers. Beginners—in accordance with al-Anṣārī's Ḥanbalī intellectual proclivities—are encouraged to abide by the literal prescriptions of the prophetic narrations (*aḥādīth*). Advanced and elite wayfarers, however, are to accept an invitation to become godlike. This classical tripartite distinction—*al-ʿāmma, al-khāṣṣa,* and *khāṣṣat al-khāṣṣa*, that is, between beginner, advanced, and elite—was used by others well before Anṣārī.[17] What makes it remarkable here, though, is that he applies a threefold division to each chapter, despite the fact that he has already divided his book into two parts, as well as into ten sections, and into one hundred waystations.

Such intentionality and complexity might help explain why commentators might have embraced the challenge of elucidating this manual, as well as why aspirants would have needed commentaries. More than simply intending elucidation, commentators found this framework an ideal model for advancing interpretations

16. Anṣārī, *Manāzil* 142, no. 44. As William Chittick indicates, love frames the entirety of Anṣārī's stations and is located as a later waystation (no. 61) only because of the preliminaries involved. See Chittick, *Divine Love: Islamic Literature and the Path to God* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 292–3. Mukhtar Ali has discussed the topic of love in Anṣārī's ethical system, as treated by commentators (especially Kāshānī), in "The 'Doctrine of Love' in ʿAbd Allāh al-Anṣārī's *Manāzil al-sāʾirīn* with Critical Paraphrase of ʿAbd al-Razzāq Kāshānī's Commentary," *Journal of Sufi Studies* 5, no.2 (2016): 140–155.

17. See Jonathan A. C. Brown, "The Last Days of al-Ghazzālī and the Tripartite Division of the Sufi World: Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazzālī's Letter to the Seljuq Vizier and Commentary," *The Muslim World* 96, no. 1 (2006): 89–113. Abū al-Faḍl Rashīd al-Dīn Maybudī (fl. 520/1126), who dedicated himself to Anṣārī's unfinished Quran commentary, mentions the existence of this threefold division among earlier Sufis. See Annabel Keeler, *Sufi Hermeneutics: The Qurʾan Commentary of Rashīd al-Dīn Maybudī* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 161–2.

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of Islam, interpretations that often dealt with matters more detailed than those that occur in Anṣārī's work. So, for example, the Akbarian commentator ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī (d. ca. 736/1335) divides Anṣārī's treatise into three parts.[18] The first part deals with the soul, the *nafs*. The second part deals with the heart, the *qalb*. And the final part deals with the spirit, the *rūḥ*. His use of the first two of these three terms—as he himself admits—relies on a Sufi psychology with resonances in Arabic philosophy: In his commentary on the *Waystations*, al-Kāshāni tells us that the Sufi conception of heart *(al-qalb)* can also be called "the rational soul" *(al-nafs al-nāṭiqa)*, using a philosophical term to describe this "incorporeal intermediary between the realm of divinity and the realm of creation."[19] Aware of a growing body of shared terms and concepts between philosophy and Sufism, al-Kāshāni elsewhere explains that the Sufi term for "soul" *(al-nafs)* largely corresponds to that which a philosopher (*al-ḥakīm*) might call the "animal soul" or "animal spirit," namely, the "vaporous substance that bears the faculty of life, love, and volitional movement."[20] Al-Kāshānī recognizes and to some extent advances parallels between Sufi and philosophical psychological terms. His interpretation of the *Waystations* hence relies on a more terminologically defined and even philosophically influenced psychology than that presented by al-Nūrī or by Anṣārī and yet remains fully justified by his reading of Anṣārī's work. Al-Kāshānī can thus proceed as though Anṣārī intuited these complexities, stating them entirely by implication, even if the letter of the book presents a more simplified psychology.[21]

Chapter Ninety-Nine of the *Waystations:* On Union

Points of variance regarding Anṣārī's structure of ethical development stand out in relief at the second-to-last waystation, Chapter 99, that of "union" or *al-jamʿ*. Anṣārī begins this chapter, as he does every other chapter, with a quotation from the Quran, here Q 8:17: "You did not throw, when you threw, but it was God who threw." Even before entering upon his discussion, the import of juxtaposing this verse with the topic of union makes its meaning clear. Muhammad has become so devoid of human selfhood that his action is God's action—God throws when he throws. It is not to say, of course, that God somehow acts through the Prophet, but rather, that Muhammad has realized God's omnipresence in his actions. Muhammad has become aware that God is the actor in a way that the spiritual wayfarer should imitate. This verse confirms one of the more controversial claims within Sufism, namely, that a person can achieve some sort of union in which he or she becomes virtually stripped of human subjectivity. Rendering the passage even

18. An excellent example of the style and method of al-Kāshānī's commentary appears in Ali, "*Futuwwa* as the Noblest Character Traits (*Makārim al-akhlāq*) in Anṣārī's *Manāzil al-Sāʾirīn* with al-Kāshānī's Commentary," *Journal of Islamic Ethics* 4, no. 1–2 (2020): 8–24.

19. Al-Kāshānī, *Sharḥ Manāzil al-sāʾirīn*, 424.

20. ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Ṣūfiyya, wa yalīhi Rashḥ al-zulāl fi sharḥ al-alfāẓ al-mutadāwala bayn arbāb al-adhwāq wa-l-aḥwāl*, ed. ʿĀṣim Ibrāhīm al-Kayyālī al-Ḥusaynī al-Shādhilī al-Darqāwī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 2005), 82.

21. I discuss Anṣārī's own psychology in Zargar, *The Polished Mirror: Storytelling and the Pursuit of Virtue in Islamic Philosophy and Sufism* (London: Oneworld, 2017), 212–3.

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more tantalizing for later Akbarian commentators, Anṣārī uses the term *wujūd* in his elaboration of this waystation, though what he means by that requires elaboration. Before discussing varying interpretations of this chapter and ways in which it helps us understand models of ethical development among Sufi commentators, let us consider the chapter itself.

What follows is a translation of the entire chapter on "union," Chapter 99 of the *Waystations*.

> God, mighty and glorified, has said, "You did not throw, when you threw, but it was God who threw" (Q 8:17). Union (*al-jamᶜ*) occurs when separations fall away and when the need for indications ends. A person rises above the water and clay from which he or she is composed after confirmation of what has been established [in terms of the wayfarer's perceptive experiences] and after distancing oneself from all ongoing variations. It occurs after the person has nothing to do with witnessing secondary entities, after terminating one's sense of being between two things [sensory and supersensory, created and eternal], and after the termination of one's witnessing of God's witnessing of these things.
>
> Union has three degrees: Union of knowing, followed by union of finding, and then union of identifying. The union of knowing is the gradual disappearance of the varieties of knowledge relating to what testifies [about God], replaced entirely by immediate, God-given knowledge (*al-ᶜilm al-ladunnī*). The union of finding is the gradual disappearance of what occurred for the person in the final stages of connection [*al-ittiṣāl*, at the eighty-ninth waystation, described earlier] in terms of self-annihilation, completely effaced, instead, in the very source of finding. The union of identifying is the gradual disappearance of anything that might be conveyed through indication within the very actuality of the Real. Union is the terminus of the stations of the wayfarers and the outermost, coastal portion of the ocean of *tawḥīd* [realizing God's oneness].[22]

This is an especially difficult passage in large part because of its concision. Much of that concision does not come through because, in order to render this passage comprehensible, I have had to take liberties and add a number of words and phrases. It is also difficult because its topic—the final stage of what might guardedly be called "mystical experience"—escapes description even according to the author himself. Let us consider, then, the commentators, beginning with one Akbarian commentator who makes free use of terms and concepts from the school of Ibn al-ᶜArabī. Throughout this paper, I have referred in passing to the commentary of ᶜAbd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī, whose approach resembles the commentator I consider next insofar as both authors embrace Anṣārī's structure but also bring it into their distinctively philosophical Sufi tradition, the Akbarian tradition. This commentator— Sulaymān ibn ᶜAlī ᶜAbdallāh al-Qūmī al-Tilimsānī (d. 690/1291)— lived about half a century earlier than al-Kāshānī. More important, his commentary was circulating among the students of Ibn Taymiyya. Read alongside

22. Anṣārī, *Manāzil*, 281–282.

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Ibn Qayyim's reaction to it, al-Tilimsānī's commentary provides a telling setting in which to consider the structure of the *Waystations* with "union" as its terminus.

Al-Tilimsānī's Reading of Anṣārī's Waystation of Union

Al-Tilimsānī, as indicated by his name, was known by the city in which he was born, Tlemcen, as well as the Berber tribe to which he belonged, al-Qūmī. He is referenced most often as ʿAfīf al-Dīn al-Tilimsānī.[23] He represents, in his writing, the direction that the Akbarian school of theoretical Sufism would take, namely, its use of philosophically informed vocabulary along with its emphasis on the terms and methods that had become established in Sufism. His companionship with Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī (d. 673/1273–4), Ibn al-ʿArabī's foremost disciple and stepson, places him well within that circle of commentators who would influence generations of metaphysically minded Sufis to come. The texts upon which he focused received commentaries by other Akbarian scholars as well—the *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* (*Bezels of Wisdom*) of Ibn al-ʿArabī, the poem by ʿUmar ibn al-Fāriḍ (d. 632/1235) known as *Naẓm al-Sulūk* (*The Poem on Wayfaring*), and also known as *al-Ṭāʾiyya al-kubrā* (*the Greater Poem Rhyming in "Ṭ"*), and, his commentary on the *Kitāb al-Mawāqif* (*Book of Standings*) of Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Jabbār al-Niffarī (d. ca. 354/965), which stays true to Ibn ʿArabī's interest in al-Niffarī.[24] While some have attributed to him a commentary on a poem on the human soul attributed to Abū ʿAlī Ḥusayn ibn Sinā, or Avicenna (d. 428/1037), Yousef Casewit makes the case that this attribution is farfetched.[25] Aside from a *dīwān* of poetry and a short treatise on Arabic prosody, his other two compositions are also commentaries: one on the first chapter of the Quran (and part of the second), and one on the divine names.[26] Yet al-Tilimsānī's most prominent composition—one that would serve as a model to other adherents to Ibn ʿArabī's thought commenting on the *Manāzil*—was his commentary on Anṣārī's treatise.[27]

Al-Tilimsānī's reading of Anṣārī's chapter on union is best represented by his gloss on the very first part of Anṣārī's definition of union. "Union (*al-jamʿ*)," according to Anṣārī, "occurs when separations (*al-tafriqa*) falls away." Al-Tilimsānī comments that what falls away is the differentiation (*al-farq*) between Being (*al-wujūd*) and existent things (*al-mawjūd*).[28] This occurs from the perspective of the one who

23. See Bīdārfar's introduction to al-Tilimsānī's commentary for the biographical information I offer in this paragraph. See ʿAfīf al-Dīn Sulaymān al-Tilimsānī, *Sharḥ Manāzil al-sāʾirīn*, ed. Muḥsin Bīdārfar (Qum: Bīdār, 2011), 1:46–52.

24. See Paul Nwyia, "Une cible d'Ibn Taimiya: Le moniste al-Tilimsānī (m. 690/1291)," *Bulletin d'études orientales* 30 (1978): 127–145.

25. My appreciation goes to Yousef Casewit for his comments on details concerning al-Tilimsānī as well as for sharing an early draft of his introduction to a translation of al-Tilimsānī's *Maʿānī al-asmāʾ al-ilāhiyya* (forthcoming in the Library of Arabic Literature, New York University Press). A number of biographical notes on al-Tilimsānī included here come from this aforementioned introduction. The commentary on Avicenna is attributed to al-Tilimsānī in Bīdārfar's introduction, al-Tilimsānī, *Sharḥ Manāzil al-Sāʾirīn*, 1:46–52. Orkhan Musakhanov attributes the commentary to al-Tilimsānī while raising doubts about Avicenna's authorship of the poem on the soul. See his introduction to al-Tilimsānī, *Meâni'l-esmâi'l-ilâhiyye (Maʿānī al-asmāʾ al-ilāhiyya)*, ed. with an introduction by Orkhan Musakhanov (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 2017), 35–6.

26. Again, see Casewit's introduction to al-Tilimsānī.

27. Casewit numbers the total commentaries on Anṣārī's treatise to twelve, with al-Tilimsānī's serving as "an inspiration for many of the others."

28. Al-Tilimsānī, *Sharḥ Manāzil al-sāʾirīn*, 2:693.

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witnesses, the *mushāhid*—that is, the perceiver of supersensory things in the forms of sensory things. This notion of perception is a pivotal concept in the school of Ibn al-ʿArabī: a person discovers, through the imagination and through perception, what corresponds to a reality beyond sensory perception. The lifting of differentiation is why, in al-Tilimsānī's readings of the words of Anṣārī, "the need for indications ends." There is no need to indicate, or allude, to things when the gap between existence and the existent has been closed. Of course, by *wujūd*, Anṣārī does not mean "existence" or "Being," in the philosophical sense developed by Ibn ʿArabī. Avicenna had established that *wujūd* or "existence" was self-evident and could be categorized as necessary, possible, or impossible.[29] For Avicenna, God was the Necessary Existent, whose self-love permeated a universe of possible existents—that is, all existent things. This claim shaped the way others after him—especially Sufis willing to engage with Avicennan philosophy—would read the word *wujūd*.[30] On the other hand, for Sufis using the term *wujūd* before this shift, or for those with no interest in the philosophical sense of *wujūd* as existence, the term signified an ecstatic finding. One sees this usage (ecstatic finding) clearly in the writings of Abū al-Qāsim ʿAbd al-Karīm ibn Hawāzin al-Qushayrī (d. 465/1072) and ʿAlī ibn ʻUthmān al-Jullābī Hujwīrī (d. ca 465/1071–72), to give two prominent examples.[31] Even with certain later figures, such as Najm al-Dīn Kubrā (d. 618/1221), the term *wujūd* references an experiential state, a realization—that is, an ecstatic finding and only, perhaps, rarely "existence."[32] It was Ibn ʿArabī who most famously brought these two usages into correspondence, so that a knower-of-God's awareness can unlock a cosmological reality of the emanation of God's essential being through His attributes: ecstatic finding occurs when one transcends a false sense of selfhood, realizing instead that all is the Real. In other words, in Ibn ʿArabī's writings, *both* senses of *wujūd* appear, and his students or the students of his students—such as al-Tilimsānī—wrote and commented on writings in a manner strongly influenced by the marriage of these two usages of *wujūd*. Anṣārī's intended meaning vis-à-vis *wujūd* is no mystery, as he spells it out quite clearly in Chapter 96 of the *Waystations*. He clarifies this using three instances of *wujūd* or its variants in the Quran, each of which describes a person finding or realizing God, followed by his own definition of *wujūd*: "*Wujūd* means successfully attaining the reality of a thing."[33] While the profundity of the comments that follow are arguably unmatched by al-Qushayrī or Hujwīrī, what Anṣārī communicates remains consistent with *wujūd* as "ecstatic finding."

For the most part, al-Tilimsānī is sensitive to the fact that *wujūd* for Anṣārī

29. Parviz Morewedge, "Philosophical Analysis and Ibn Sīnā's 'Essence-Existence' Distinction," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 92, no. 3 (1972): 425–435.

30. Parviz Morewedge, "The Logic of Emanationism and Ṣūfism in the Philosophy of Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna), Part I," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 91, no. 4 (1971): 467–476.

31. Abū al-Qāsim ʿAbd al-Karīm ibn Hawāzin al-Qushayrī, *al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya*, ed. Muḥsin Bīdārfar (Qum: Bīdār, 1995), 132–133. ʿAlī ibn ʻUthmān al-Jullābī Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*, ed. Valentin A. Zhukovskiĭ, introduction by Qāsim Anṣārī, 10th edition (Tehran: Ṭahūrī, 2008), 538–541.

32. I discuss problems of interpretation surrounding the term *wujūd* in Kubrā's writings in my "The Ten Principles: Theoretical Implications of Volitional Death in Najm al-Dīn Kubrā's *al-Uṣūl al-ʿAshara* (A Study and Translation)," *The Muslim World* 103, no. 1 (2013): 107–130, especially pp. 113–121. See also Gerhard Böwering, "Mystical Circles and Colors in Kubra's Philosophical Kaleidoscope," in *Beyond Conventional Constructs: Essays in Honour of Professor Dr. C. A. Qadir,* ed. Ghazala Irfan (Lahore: Qadir Presentation Committee, 1987), 82–101.

33. Anṣārī, *Manāzil*, 273. Those verses are Q 4:110, Q 4:64, and Q 24:39.

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is ethical, so that the commentator's focus is on the perceptive process of "witnessing" much more than a larger metaphysical conception of existence. He glosses Anṣārī's definition of *wujūd*—namely, "attaining the reality of a thing," as "witnessing" that thing or "becoming annihilated in it."[34] *Wujūd* corresponds, in al-Tilimsānī's reading of Anṣārī's three levels of *wujūd*, to levels of experiential knowledge beyond *maʿrifa* ("acquaintance") because all distance between the seeker of familiarity and the objective of that seeking has disappeared.[35] This ends in *fanāʾ*, or annihilation of the self in the Real, a point that becomes clearer in Anṣārī's chapter on "union." Indeed, for al-Tilimsānī, the path of annihilation is the shortcut of the knowers of God. This is his interpretation of Anṣārī's promise in his own introduction to the *Waystations*—that he will guide his readers to "the shortest of routes to the primordial track."[36] "The 'shortest of routes' for God's knowers," al-Tilimsānī comments, "occurs when the Real, may He be exalted, acquaints them with the manner in which the boundaries of their selfhood and the traces of their acts become annihilated, one after another, as they set out toward the realm of erasure."[37] This is indeed a highly attuned reading of the structure of Anṣārī's book; it describes precisely such a process, one ending in union.

Despite such care, however, al-Tilimsānī does occasionally read Anṣārī through an Akbarian lens. In his commentary on *wujūd*, for example, he must interpret and explain for his audience the word *wujūd* in Anṣārī's third and most achieved sense of *wujūd*: "The third rank," Anṣārī says, "is discovering a station (*wujūd maqām*) in which the trace of *wujūd* becomes obliterated by becoming drowned in primordiality."[38] The trace of *wujūd*—if *wujūd* is the Real—cannot become obliterated, nor would that be Anṣārī's intended meaning for al-Tilimsānī. Thus, the commentator corrects this by noting that "by *wujūd*, he probably means *mawjūd* (existent)"—that is, the trace of an existent ... disappears.[39] Anṣārī seems to mean more precisely, however, that it is the trace of one's ecstatic finding that disappears. What disappears is awareness of presence: Anṣārī is interested in charting a path that ends with a realization of God's oneness, omnipresence, and the transitory nature of everything else, including selfhood. While al-Tilimsānī's move toward seeing one's created or transitory nature as "existent" might seem like a minor alteration, it superimposes a metaphysical view that is neither in the text nor native to Anṣārī's ethical frame. Nevertheless, as a whole, as a commentator, unlike al-Kāshānī, al-Tilimsānī often stays close to the text, using one part of the text to explain another part, or using his vast knowledge of the many connotations of Arabic words, sometimes even obscure words. He can be a careful reader and yet still present an Akbarian perspective because, in many ways, the difference often hinges on one word. In this case, the simple move of drawing a connection between two senses of the word *wujūd*, the Sufi–ethical sense and the philosophical sense, alters the import

34. Al-Tilimsānī, *Sharḥ Manāzil*, 2:686.
35. Al-Tilimsānī, *Sharḥ Manāzil*, 2:686–7.
36. Anṣārī, *Manāzil*, 3.
37. Al-Tilimsānī, *Sharḥ Manāzil*, 1:88.
38. Anṣārī, *Manāzil*, 273. Al-Tilimsānī has *al-azaliyya* instead of *al-awwaliyya*—that is, "becoming drowned in pre-eternity (eternity *a parte ante*)." Al-Tilimsānī, *Sharḥ Manāzil*, 2:687.
39. Al-Tilimsānī, *Sharḥ Manāzil*, 2:687.

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of Anṣārī's observations on union. Ibn al-ʿArabī's students, including al-Tilimsānī, saw in perspectives like Anṣārī's the metaphysical implications of realizing God's oneness and omnipresence. It is this, in part, to which Ibn Qayyim reacts in his commentary.

Ibn Qayyim's Rebuttal to Anṣārī and al-Tilimsānī

Living about half a century after al-Tilimsānī, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, from Damascus, was incredibly close to his teacher, Ibn Taymiyya, imprisoned with him during the latter's last stay in the Citadel of Damascus.[40] He and Ibn Taymiyya offered an interpretation of Sufism both Ḥanbalī and Junaydī in its sobriety—so sober regarding adherence to the Sunna and so skeptical regarding certain later developments in Sufi theory and practice that it sometimes has not been recognized as Sufism at all, although that has less to do with Ibn Qayyim than it does with modern and often Western expectations of Sufism.[41] Ibn Qayyim's interest in the shaykh from Herat began with a text called *Ṭarīq al-hijratayn wa bāb al-saʿādatayn (The Path of the Two Migrations and the Gate of the Two Forms of Felicity)*, in which he commented on the *Waystations*, as well as on a treatise that contains portions of the *Waystations*—namely, the *Maḥāsin al-majālis* (*The Alluring Merits of [Edifying] Gatherings)* by Ibn al-ʿArīf (d. 535/1141).[42] Again, two journeys—just as we will see later in his *Madārij al-sālikīn* (*Ranks of the Wayfarers*, henceforth *Ranks*)—describe Ibn Qayyim's view of the path to God, which begins with worship, is followed by grace, but never becomes the ecstatic loss of selfhood that Anṣārī describes. To understand Ibn Qayyim's interest in Anṣārī, one must remember that Anṣārī was not merely a Sufi. He was a major Ḥanbalī scholar revered in Ḥanbalī prosopographies. Ibn Qayyim's project—an extension of Ibn Taymiyya's project—was to reclaim Anṣārī's charting of the pathway of spiritual perfection, which seems to have been the most celebrated version of such texts at this time, one with a reach that extended far beyond the Ḥanbalī school. Ibn Qayyim, thus, shows respect for Anṣārī, while often gently discrediting him at the same time. He quotes Ibn Taymiyya's assessment of Anṣārī as someone whose "practice was better than his knowledge."[43] That is, while Anṣārī was pious, his lack of knowledge led to the sorts of misunderstandings that had crept into Sufism and into interpretations of his work.

40. Abdul Hakim I. al-Matroudi, *The Ḥanbalī School of Law and Ibn Taymiyya: Conflict or Conciliation* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 132–6. See also Hasan Qasim Murad, "Ibn Taymiyya on Trial: A Narrative Account of his Miḥan," *Islamic Studies* 18, no. 1 (1979): 1–32, here p. 24.

41. George Makdisi, "The Ḥanbalī School and Sufism," *Boletín de la Asociación Española de Orientalistas* 15 (1979): 115–126.

42. See Ovamir Anjum's introduction to Ibn Qayyim, *Ranks of the Divine Seekers*, tr. with annotations and introduction by Ovamir Anjum (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 1:49.

43. Ovamir Anjum, "Sufism without Mysticism? Ibn Qayyim al-Ǧawziyyah's Objectives in *Madāriǧ al-Sālikīn*," *Oriente Moderno* 90, no. 1 (2010): 153–180, here p. 164.

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According to Ibn Qayyim, the most egregious of those misunderstandings was a "unifying" (or "monist," *ittiḥādī*) interpretation of the soul as part of an emanational descent of being—the sort of interpretation one finds in Akbarian readings of his work. Of course, neither Ibn ʿArabī nor those affiliated with the school of interpreters that followed him would have agreed that the unity and emanation described constituted *ittiḥād*; in fact, they explicitly rejected *ittiḥād* as a theological model.[44] Ibn Qayyim describes Akbarian readings of Anṣārī as perversions of the master's intended meaning:

> This [third degree of inspiration] is the sort of inspiration that, when it comes upon a person, undoes all intermediate phenomena, obliterating them and bringing them to a sort of nothingness. Nevertheless, this is in terms of witnessing [in terms of perception, *shuhūd*], not existence [not in terms of reality, *wujūd*]. The People of Unification (*al-ittiḥādiyya*) claim that there is a oneness of being (*waḥdat al-wujūd*), and thus attribute this undoing and sense of nothingness to [the all-encompassing oneness of] existence. Moreover, they include the writer of the *Waystations* among them in sharing this view, while he is innocent of such charges in terms of his understanding, his religion (*dīn*), his spiritual state, and his acquaintance with God. God, of course, knows best.[45]

On the other hand, though, Ibn Qayyim is well-aware that Anṣārī's structure, the very progression of the *Waystations*, has created this opportunity for Akbarians, and it is with that structure that he takes issue. Ibn Qayyim says, quoting Anṣārī, that a "contemplation on the essence of God's oneness" that requires "disavowal" of all else is "basically the very foundation upon which he [Anṣārī] founds the path, and his book brings this path to its terminus in annihilation."[46] In other words, as I have indicated throughout this paper, the underlying structure of the *Waystations* builds upon an acquisition of traits that prepares the wayfarer for a relinquishing of them, ending in self-annihilation. Ibn Qayyim disapproves of this design, a design of a manual on ethics that ends in a loss of any sense of creation, created entities, and selfhood by being absorbed in a realization of God's oneness, for this confuses the necessary boundaries between Lord and servant:

> May God have mercy on Abū Ismāʿīl [Anṣārī]. He opened the door of disbelief and atheism for the heretics, so they entered from it and "swore by God with their most powerful oaths" [Q 6:109] that he was one of them. But he was not one of them. No; rather, he was deluded by the mirage of annihilation *(al-fanāʾ)*. He mistook it for a chasm in the sea of acquaintance with God and for the utmost achievement of God's knowers. This brought him to exaggerate the significance of realizing annihilation and maintaining it, which led him inevitably to what you see.[47]

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44. See, as one of many examples, Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1968), 4:372. Also see Zargar, *Sufi Aesthetics: Beauty, Love, and the Human Form in the Writings of Ibn ʿArabi and ʿIraqi* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2011), 44.

45. Shams al-Dīn ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Madārij al-sālikīn bayn manāzil "iyyāka naʿbud" wa "iyyāka nastaʿīn*," ed. Muḥammad al-Muʿtaṣim bi-llāh al-Baghdādī (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 2003), 1:73. Unfortunately, an excellent new edition of this text, edited by Ovamir Anjum, had not been published in time for me to use it here, although I have included the editor's insights—in his introduction—as often as possible. See *Ranks of the Divine Seekers*.

46. Ibn Qayyim, *Madārij al-sālikīn*, 1:167.

47. Ibn Qayyim, *Madārij al-sālikīn*, 1:168.

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In terms of structure, most troublesome to Ibn Qayyim, and yet paramount to Anṣārī, are the final ten of Anṣārī's *waystations*, which make up "the Section on Ultimates" (*qism al-nihāyāt*). Here, the *Waystations* culminate in the servant's utter realization of *tawḥīd* in a series of stations where he describes nuances in the undoing of selfhood, including annihilation (*al-fanāʾ*), subsistence (*al-baqāʾ*), verification (*al-taḥqīq*), attiring (*al-talbīs*), finding (*al-wujūd*), isolating (*al-tajrīd*), making singular (*al-tafrīd*), and, finally, union (*al-jamʿ*). Beyond all these lies *tawḥīd*, knowing God's oneness, which—in its most perfect sense, for Anṣārī—is a divine act exclusively: "His knowing oneness, and none else, is the knowing of His oneness / so one who describes Him can be described as a heretic."[48] Knowledge of oneness is God's entirely, for Anṣārī. Human knowledge of God's oneness forms "in what is learned through annihilation (*al-fanāʾ*), which is purified in what is learned through union (*al-jamʿ*), attracting them to the knowledge of oneness (*tawḥīd*) of those who have undergone union (*al-jamʿ*)."[49] In other words, that which lies beyond union is only intimations, intimations of *tawḥid* accessible to those who have realized union. For Anṣārī, annihilation and union are necessary to have the highest human conception of God's oneness. It is because of this view of practical *tawḥīd*, one ending in union, that Ibn Qayyim comments that "the author of the *Waystations* has acted impetuously here."[50]

Ibn Qayyim offers less of an alternative to union than a refutation of misunderstandings tied to it. He begins his commentary on Chapter 99, on union, by contradicting al-Tilimsānī's interpretation, which he quotes throughout. His assessment of al-Tilimsānī, as he states elsewhere in the *Ranks*, is decidedly negative, calling him "the most extreme in taking unification as a pathway" and "the most hyperbolic and hostile to those who believe in separations [between God and creation]."[51] Although he admits that al-Tilimsānī is "articulate of tongue," he includes him among those "to whom God has given no light," as the Quran describes (Q 24:40), largely because al-Tilimsānī perverts Anṣārī's "union in witnessing" to support a deviant "union in existence."[52] With such deviance in mind, Ibn Qayyim tackles the crux of the issue he has with Anṣārī's *Waystations*, namely, union. He begins with the Quranic verse at the center of Anṣārī's discussion:

> Some people say that what is meant by the verse, "You did not throw, when you threw, but it was God who threw" (Q 8:17), is a negation of the Messenger's action, attributing it instead to the Lord, exalted be He. They have rendered it, thereby, a foundation for divine compulsion, invalidating the relationship between God's servants and their own actions. . . . This reveals an error in their comprehension of the Quran. Were it a sound perspective, it would be necessary to dismiss [Muhammad's] participation in all actions, so, it would be said, "You did not pray when you prayed, or fast when you fasted, or sacrifice when you sacrificed, nor did you perform any action when you did it, but it was God performing that action."[53]

48. Anṣārī, *Manāzil*, 286.
49. Anṣārī, *Manāzil*, 285.
50. Ibn Qayyim, *Madārij al-sālikīn*, 1:167.
51. Ibn Qayyim, *Madārij al-sālikīn*, 1:276.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibn Qayyim, *Madārij al-sālikīn*, 3:394–5.

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Ibn Qayyim offers, instead, an explanation that these actions originate with God, as the creator of all things. The verse is God's way of reminding His audience that behind any human military victory lie unseen divine causes. The original context of the verse is, after all, the Battle of Badr.

Ibn Qayyim's concern with such understandings of union, as well as the teleological structure of the *Waystations*, is an ethical one. The risk involved in transcending character traits and shedding acquired human qualities is related to antinomianism, as he explains in a lengthy passage.[54] Commentators such as al-Tilimsānī and even Anṣārī himself seem to read union in such a way that human actions have become God's actions. The problem is that if God bears responsibility for human actions, then the person aware of it would enjoy license to do whatsoever he or she wills. He clarifies this in his rebuttal to al-Tilimsānī's reading of the meaning of "union." "Union only occurs," Ibn Qayyim says, "between God's will and human seeking."[55] "Any sort of union that undoes the separation between Lord and servant, or Creator and created, or eternal and formed in time," Ibn Qayyim declares, "is the most invalid of invalid opinions."[56] Here separation is in order, he says, and it is upheld by the "people of Islam, belief, and excellent action,"—that is, *al-islām, al-īmān,* and *al-iḥsān*—"while those who advocate union are the people of deviance, disbelief, and paganism,"—that is, *al-ilḥād, al-kufr*, and *al-wathanīyya*. The problem, of course, is that it is not clear where Anṣārī should be situated in all this. His use of the verse and his definition of union seem to indicate that he prescribes, at least, a sense of visionary confusion between the identities of Lord and servant. Moreover, al-Tilimsānī does not need to do much with Anṣārī's words to bring out this sense of the text. On the other hand, Ibn Qayyim's commentary veers—for page after page—from Anṣārī into a discussion of appropriate interpretations of *tawḥīd*.

In fact, Ibn Qayyim offers a rather radical reread of Anṣārī. He equates the terminus of the wayfarer's path not with union, but with "repentance"—translating Anṣārī's description of union into "nothing more than the perfection of the rank of servitude."[57] His justification for this resides in a voluntarist reading of unification (*al-ittiḥād*) and annihilation (*al-fanāʾ*), wherein the wayfarer takes aim at becoming unified with and annihilated in God's will (*al-irāda*), and not God: "The utmost aim of love is unification between what the lover wills and what the Beloved wills, an annihilation between the will of the lover and that which the Beloved wills."[58] For Ibn Qayyim, one's constant focus must be on an alignment of wills without the ontological implications raised by Ibn ʿArabī or al-Tilimsānī. Ibn Qayyim is unequivocal about maintaining one's sense of distance, even in visionary matters of witnessing (*shuhūd*), which figures into his reconceptualization of annihilation. One should "witness one's worshipful servitude (*ʿubūdiyyatahu*) while also witnessing the Worshipped (*al-maʿbūd*)," never losing sight of the distance between the servant and his or her Lord. One must always remember and even

54. Ibn Qayyim, *Madārij al-sālikīn*, 1:179–182.
55. Ibn Qayyim, *Madārij al-sālikīn*, 3:396.
56. Ibid.
57. Ibn Qayyim, *Madārij al-sālikīn*, 3:407 for *tawba* and p. 3:408 for servitude.
58. Ibn Qayyim, *Madārij al-sālikīn*, 1:185.

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witness one's own witnessing as a result of God's kind grace.[59] This is what is lost among those Ibn Qayyim criticizes.

Applying this view, in the chapter on union and the chapter on *tawḥid* that follows, he takes issue with the Muʿtazilis, the Ashʿarīs, Avicenna, Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274), and the Akbarian school of thought (the "People of Unification," *al-ittiḥādiyya*). Avicenna and Ṭūsī saw God as absolute existence, while the People of Unification see Him as the reality behind all created things.[60] The philosophers have denied God's essence as described in the scriptures.[61] The People of Unification have described a universe where all things are equal, stripping God's commands of any universal validity. Secretly, he says, they hold that forbidden things and actions are only forbidden to those who lack awareness of this realization of oneness.[62] Ibn Qayyim cites Ibn Taymiyya in arguing that all of these groups have fallen short in their understanding of the oneness of God, which must be in accordance with the Quran and the way of His prophet, or Sunna. It is a point of view commonly known today, but one that he expresses in an adversarial and even subversive tone, doubtless because of the intellectual resistance that he and his teacher faced. Fittingly, this is a resistance not unlike what Anṣārī encountered in eastern Iran, despite the differences that remain between Ibn Qayyim and his Ḥanbalī predecessor Anṣārī.

Conclusions

A closer consideration of Ibn Qayyim's revisions of the *Waystations*, his reaction both to Anṣārī and to al-Tilmsānī's reading of Anṣārī, allows us to think about the work's structure as reflective of a larger Sufi tradition of mapping the path to perfection and, following that, to proximity with God. It becomes clear that Ibn Qayyim tackles the issue of annihilation early on in his *Ranks* so that he can reject Anṣārī's structure altogether; that is, so that union in annihilation does not serve as the terminus of the knower's journey through the waystations. His reading of annihilation as completely divorced from Akbarian assertions about existence and as mere perception relies on an argument that Ovamir Anjum has rightly described as going "beyond what might be excused as interpretive license."[63] His rearrangement of the ethical journey defies not only Anṣārī's treatment, but also the texts preceding it and upon which Anṣārī based his own work to such a great extent that we can consider his commentary to be counter-canonical. Doing so allows us to appreciate the intellectual innovativeness behind Ibn Qayyim's project, a continuation of Ibn Taymiyya's, but—even more important—it also allows us to discern ways in which Anṣārī's structure gave form to an ethical program that he inherited from previous Sufi writers.

59. Ibn Qayyim, *Madārij al-sālikīn*, 1:281.
60. Ibn Qayyim, *Madārij al-sālikīn*, 3:415.
61. Ibn Qayyim, *Madārij al-sālikīn*, 3:415.
62. Ibn Qayyim, *Madārij al-sālikīn*, 3:416.
63. Ibn Qayyim (ed.), *Ranks of the Divine Seekers*, 56.

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A final consideration of Ibn Qayyim's project is now in order. The most striking move that Ibn Qayyim makes is to shift away from annihilation and, following that, union as the terminus of the ethical path. While his issues, as he states, are both theological and moral in nature, his rejection of the Akbarian interpretation of Anṣārī would not, by necessity, have spelled a rejection of the structure and logic of the *Waystations*. Ibn Qayyim's reading of annihilation as a perceptive affair, independent of ontological matters, need not negate it as the end of the path. After all, clearly even in the longstanding Junaydī tradition—one that Ibn Qayyim reveres—annihilation is a more advanced achievement, lacking the later philosophical connotations that the Akbarians attached to it. The original master of sober and Sharia-abiding Sufism whom Ibn Qayyim calls one of the "imams of the Way," Abū al-Qāsim al-Junayd al-Baghdādī (d. 298/910), in his treatise "*On Annihilation*" (*Kitāb al-Fanāʾ*), establishes that annihilation is a primordial state to which the knower returns, often equated, in al-Junayd's and subsequent writings, with the pre-eternal moment of fealty described in Q 7:172, when God asked the souls, "Am I not your Lord (*a-lastu bi-rabbikum*)?"[64] Rather, it seems, Ibn Qayyim's goal is to minimize Anṣārī's structured mapping of the waystations to union, replacing it with something grounded in his interpretation of scripture and far less dangerous. In that way, it is not a commentary at all or even a critique, but rather more along the lines of a systematic and subtle revocation or even refutation.

Yet the pull of that existing structure, amazingly, reappears in subtle ways in Ibn Qayyim's writings. He structures his commentary on the *Waystations* on two sayings, two halves of a Quranic verse: "You we worship, / and You we beseech for aid" (Q 1:5). These two halves shape the very title of his commentary: *Madārij al-sālikīn bayn manāzil iyyāka naʿbud wa iyyāka nastaʿīn* (Ranks of the Wayfarers between the Waystations of "You we worship" and "You we beseech for aid"). Ibn Qayyim explains that "the entirety of the path can be summed up" in this one verse, just as the entirety of the Quran can be summed up in its first chapter. He refers to the two halves of this verse as "two sentences": The first—"You we worship"—describes worship as belonging to God alone, attributing to humans striving and effort.[65] The second—"and You we beseech for aid"—describes a process whereby the person learns to rely on God, and where "the will of the seeker becomes one with the will of the sought."[66] Were one to see this in light of Anṣārī's treatise, one might say that striving here ends, replaced by a more receptive approach to God, and the seeker becomes the sought. Instead, Ibn Qayyim's interest in framing these two as matters of reliance on God and worship of God exclusively comes through clearly throughout his commentary. Still, Ibn Qayyim's very division of the path into two parts retains hints of that longstanding Sufi structure that becomes "seeker" and "sought" in Anṣārī's language. Certainly, Ibn Qayyim must be aware, for example, of Sahl b. ʿAbdallāh al-Tustarī's (d. 283/896) interpretation of the verse Ibn Qayyim uses for his title. After all, al-Tustarī is another early Sufi figure named by Ibn Qayyim as numbering among the "imams of the Way."[67] In al-Tustarī's description,

64. Al-Junayd al-Baghdādī, *Rasāʾil al-Junayd*, ed. Jamāl Rajab Sayyid-Bay (Damascus: Dār Iqraʾ, 2005), 140. For Ibn Qayyim's quotation and assessment of al-Junayd, see *Madārij*, 1:158–9.
65. *Madārij*, 3:409.
66. Ibid.
67. *Madārij*, 1:158–9.

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the two halves of this verse require what might be called seeking, in the form of worship and servitude, and hoping that one will receive God's aid; that is, one might say, hoping to be sought by God for His aid:

> "You we worship," that is, we yield and are humble, confessing Your lordship, declaring Your oneness, and serving You. From this [reality] is derived the noun "servant" (*al-ʿabd*). "And You we beseech for aid," that is, aid in that with which You have tasked us, as per Your right. Yours is both the wish and the will in all that. All knowledge is Yours, and all sincerity due to You. We cannot succeed in this but by aid and direction, from You to us. Thus, there is no might for us, nor power, except from You.[68]

There are perhaps intimations of Anṣārī's reading of the entirety of the path as a progression between two dynamics, seeking and being sought, but (a) al-Tustarī only comments here on this verse, not on the path as a whole, and (b) there is no direct mention of anything close to annihilation leading to union. The later writer, al-Qushayrī, however, discerns precisely both those points in his reading of the verse:

> The servant cannot escape union (*al-jamʿ*) and separation (*al-farq*). One who has no separating distinction (*tafriqa*) has no servitude (*ʿubūdiyya*), yet one who has no union has no intimate acquaintance (*maʿrifa*). His saying, "You we worship," alludes to separation. His saying, "You we beseech for aid," alludes to union.[69]

Here, too, there are differences between Anṣārī's structure and al-Qushayrī's.[70] Most important is that al-Qushayrī presents not a progression from separation to union, but rather a constant and necessary tension between the two. Regardless, it becomes difficult to imagine that Ibn Qayyim was unaware of these resonances in the verse he chose for his title. He seems, rather, to have been reappropriating the verse for his reading of the duality of the path in a manner that highlights not annihilation and union as objectives, but obedience and servitude.

Ibn Qayyim's interest lies in reframing the twofold path made famous by Anṣārī through an emphasis on the Sunna and without union as an objective. Such is also the emphasis in his *Ṭarīq al-hijratayn wa-bāb al-saʿādatayn (The Path of the Two Migrations and the Gate of the Two Forms of Felicity)*. There he describes two migrations "at every moment."[71] One migration is "to God, through seeking and love, servitude, trust, repentance, submission, and entrusting, as well as fear and hope, attentive advancement toward Him, sincere seeking of shelter, and spiritual poverty at every breath." The other migration is "to His messenger, in his movements and moments of stillness, both outward and inward, with the purpose of aligning oneself with his law (*sharʿ*), which delineates that which God loves and brings God satisfaction." Ibn Qayyim underlines the necessity of seeing the way of ethical advancement in exactly these terms:

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68. Sahl b. ʿAbdallāh al-Tustarī, *Tafsīr al-Tustarī*, ed. Muḥammad Bāsil ʿUyūn al-Sūd (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1423 AH), 23.

69. Al-Qushayrī, *al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya*, 136.

70. Anṣārī seems not to have held al-Qushayrī in high regard on account of the latter's efforts to reconcile Sufism and Ashʿarī theology. See Anjum's introduction in Ibn Qayyim, *Ranks of the Divine Seekers*, 1:46–7.

71. For this and what follows, see Ibn Qayyim, *Ṭarīq al-hijratayn wa-bāb al-saʿādatayn*, ed. Muḥammad Ajmal al-Iṣlāḥī (Mecca: Dār ʿĀlim al-Fawāʾid, 2008), 8–9.

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> God will not accept a religion (*dīn*) other than that. Every action outside of God's law merely sustains the lower soul and its claims [to this lower world], without serving as a provision for the next life.[72]

By using the language of a prophetic migration (*hijra*), Ibn Qayyim encapsulates his mission to redeem original forms of piety as found in the Quran and the Sunna. Anṣārī, too, takes great interest in this, beginning every chapter of his *Waystations* with a Quranic quotation, consistently advising adherence to the dicta of the Hadith and warning against rational speculation. Yet Anṣārī also presents the science of Sufism as having an innermost application for elite wayfarers, one that informs the structure of his treatise as it informed many Sufi treatises before his. While Anṣārī interpreted that innermost application as justified by both experience and scripture, viable as a hidden core to be accessed by the elect, Ibn Qayyim's turn away from it is arguably a much larger statement about what qualifies as Islamic.

Ibn Qayyim identifies an excessive unification in al-Tilimsānī's reading of Anṣārī and, in fact, in the entire school of Ibn ʿArabī, which he identifies as the "People of Unification," *al-ittiḥādiyya*. His issue with Anṣārī is that ambiguities in the Ḥanbalī master's text open the door to what he perceives to be a corrupt theology with dangerous implications, as we have seen. Those implications—especially antinomianism and an ontological conflation of God and creation—drive his commentary, which de-emphasizes union and its complementary stations, such as annihilation. His concerns are not new, shared by Sufi writers before him, who were careful to discuss union using allusive or guarded language, such as that of al-Junayd. Those figures, again, such as al-Junayd, presented neither union nor even *wujūd* as ontological matters, but as matters of perception and experience (*dhawq*). Among them was Anṣārī himself. After all, if centering union has dangerous implications, Anṣārī can be implicated in Ibn Qayyim's charge: His path, as has been mentioned, begins with a sense of effort and the cultivation of virtue. The virtuous character traits are placed in the first part of the journey—in the decade of the thirties in the one hundred waystations. As one proceeds on the path, those character traits become negated—rather, transcended—in favor of receiving whatever God decides to give. At the end is union, an imperfect one, but as close to negating selfhood as one can be.

Here, then, al-Tilimsānī's concern with reality becomes useful—the Real, and existence—that is, with the underlying truths that might be said to govern the injunctions and recommendations of scripture. Even if its ontological validity is in question, union might very well have some degree of "psychological validity." All one would need to do is to consider the ethical structure of numerous other philosophies and religions, as well as theories of mystical experience, to appreciate that point. In Neoplatonic ethics, for example, Plotinus (d. 270 CE) divides virtues into two categories: civic virtues and purifications.[73] Civic virtues (wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice), as their name suggests, serve a communal role,

72. Ibid.
73. Zargar, *The Polished Mirror: Storytelling and the Pursuit of Virtue in Islamic Philosophy and Sufism* (London: Oneworld, 2017), 238–9.

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maintaining a sense of harmony in society.[74] Purifications (again, wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice, but in a different sense) bring a person to disassociate from the body, align the self with the intellect, and ultimately become godlike.[75] Each of the virtues as "purifications" requires a realization that the human reality is something other than what is embodied. This leads to union with the One, or *henōsis*. This can inform our view of annihilation in Sufi ethics, not only because of similarities, but also points of contrast: Nodding to the pivotal place of Islamic law in Anṣārī's (and Ibn ʿArabī's or al-Tilimsānī's) theory of union, and very much unlike Plotinus, each detailed treatment of Anṣārī's one hundred waystations begins from within the textual domain of the Quran and, often, the Sunna. Each is put in conversation with nine other waystations, three levels of application, and two major divisions. In both practice and theory, Anṣārī relies on generations of Muslim interpreters, as well as his own experience, to relay this structure. The issue of union, in Anṣārī's case, is not rational like Plotinus's, but grounded in the visionary organ of the heart. Nevertheless, when one appreciates the similarities, the ethical pattern, one begins to see that to debate union as a psychological, experiential, or perceptive end might mean grappling with more than Islam, Islamic texts, or Islamic law.

Anṣārī's structure, with union as a pinnacle of achievement, has analogues in Indian philosophy, Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism, and other traditions as well as in contemporary studies of what is called "religious experience" or "mystical experience." The keys to understanding this shared phenomenon better, some have argued, might lie in the neurological study of emotions.[76] This is not to say that psychological approaches to religion are completely distinct from the historical.[77] Nor is it to equate *nirvana* with either annihilation (*al-fanāʾ*) or union (*al-jamʿ*), since, for example, differences between Christian, Muslim, and Hindu experiences of union have been considered using statistical analysis.[78] Nevertheless, union as the pinnacle of an ethically informed mode of self-transformation seems to have special significance for human beings outside of an Islamic context. Indeed, even Ibn Qayyim, as has been mentioned, recognized its power. He acknowledged the legitimacy of both union and annihilation when seen as matters of perception (*shuhūd*), not matters of objective reality or existence (*wujūd*). It is possible that, at the very least from a psychological perspective, if not something much more profound than that, Anṣārī's structure is neither un-Islamic, nor monistic, but rather extraordinarily human, and it is for this reason that the treatise has captured the imagination of so many—admirers and detractors alike.

74. Plotinus, *Enneads*, with an English translation by A. H. Armstrong (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1966–1988), I.2.1, pp. 1:127–9.

75. Plotinus, *Enneads* I.2.1, pp. 1:127–9, as well as I.2.3, p. 1:135.

76. See, for example, Jason N. Blum, "The Science of Consciousness and Mystical Experience: An Argument for Radical Empiricism," *The Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 82, no. 1 (March 2014): 150–173. On experience, more broadly, using an approach that brings the study of religion into conversation with psychology and neuroscience, see Ann Taves, *Religious Experience Reconsidered: A Building-Block Approach to the Study of Religion and Other Special Things* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009).

77. As an example, Adam Afterman has made a case that Philo Judaeus's (d. 45–50 CE) neoplatonism was the origin of mystical union (or *unio mystica*) in early Jewish thought and practice. See, especially, Afterman's chapter, "Unio Mystica and Ancient Jewish Mysticism," in "*And They Shall Be One Flesh": On The Language of Mystical Union in Judaism* (Leiden: Brill), 49–59.

78. Francis-Vincent Anthony, Chris A. M. Hermans, and Carl Sterkens, "A Comparative Study of Mystical Experience Among Christian, Muslim, and Hindu Students in Tamil Nadu, India," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 49, no. 2 (2010): 264–277.

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SEEING IS BELIEVING: SUFI VISION AND THE FORMATION OF THE ETHICAL SUBJECT

Richard McGregor

Islamic poetics has long recognized that the eyes do more than passively relay to the mind the images that fall upon them. Love poetry often refers to the language of the eyes and their capacity to communicate a variety of emotions. In their subtlety, the eyes express intimate feelings better and, we may assume, less dangerously than words do. Ibn Ḥazm tells us that lovers have a complete code, but as befits affairs of the heart, reversals and contradictory emotions are never far off. Through its intimations, the eye "cuts off, but connects; it promises yet threatens; it scolds, but welcomes; it commands and forbids; it promises secrecy, but then betrays; it causes joy and grief; it asks and answers; it holds back and yet gives generously."[1] Ibn Ḥazm describes some of these signs and their associated meanings—for example, to close the eyelid in a wink signifies consent—but also admits that the majority of these gestures cannot be described, although he implies that we can all intuitively grasp their meanings.

I begin with this description not to promise an inventory of body language or a pre-modern theory of the gaze, but rather to draw attention to an important dimension of Islamic practice: the vast and complex range of devotional vision. If you've ever been in love, you know what Ibn Ḥazm is talking about when he

1. Ibn Ḥazm, *Ṭawq al-ḥamāma fī'l-ulfa wa'l-ullāf* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 2014), 18.

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describes the power of the beloved's eyes to say important things. A quick glance over the literature will reveal that there are many ways to approach the phenomenon of vision, and the Sufi tradition has developed a wide variety of them. After all, mystics not only look at mundane things, as do you and I, but they also strive to see more, to look beyond. Mysticism and religion itself promise that there is more to this world than its immediate appearance. In the following pages, I propose an overarching framework within which these Sufi explorations of vision take place, paying special attention to how vision is linked to the ethical and, more specifically, to the construction of the virtuous self. To begin, I turn to an account in the Quran of ecstatic vision in which Moses tries to see God and of the drama that ensues. This is the departure point for an exploration of the relationship of Sufi conceptions of the self and their relation to vision, which brings me, finally, to a claim about the central role of virtue in the evolution of a Sufi's visionary ability. In addition to discussing the classical and medieval Sufi masters, these explorations draw upon key insights from modern philosophy, and in particular, upon theories of the sublime and virtue ethics as developed in the latter half of the twentieth century. This discursive and conceptual framing will show how vision and ethics have been woven together through the Sufi understanding of the structure of the self and the nature of the divine Other, a connection the equivalent of which has yet to be found in modern philosophy.

According to the scriptures, while wandering in the desert after having escaped Pharaoh, the children of Israel asked Moses for a graven image to worship, similar to the idols they had seen other communities worshipping. Moses was summoned to his Lord and commanded to complete a month's fasting to which were added ten additional days. These forty days of self-denial prepared him for his meeting (*mīqāt*) with God: "And when Moses came at Our appointed time, and his Lord addressed him, he said, 'Lord show Yourself to me, that I may look upon you (*anẓur ilayk*).' He replied, 'You will not see Me, but look upon the mountain. If it remains in place, then you shall see Me.' But when his Lord revealed Himself (*tajallā*) to the mountain He turned it to rubble, and Moses fell to the ground unconscious; when he recovered, he exclaimed, 'Glory unto You! I turn to You in repentance; I am the first among believers.'" (Q 7:143) This account is dramatic—as any attempt to actually see the face of God would be—and it brings out several notions that will be key to our discussion. The first is the preparation for the meeting. By virtue of his prophetic mission, Moses was summoned to meet his lord, but he was further prepared by forty days of fasting. Moses then asked to see God, at which point he was told such a request was hopeless. However, in a curious formulation, God told him that if the mountain stood firm, his request would be granted. Quite obviously, the most literal sense here does not hold; God knows full well it will not remain in place. It seems the destruction of the mountain is intended not as a test, but rather as a visual communication to Moses. In other words, the Lord answers that Moses will not see Him, but that he will see the destruction of the mountain, the force and drama of which will overwhelm him. Moses emerges from the encounter chastened but not disappointed. God's answer was not a simple "no." Indeed, Moses has been

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granted a divine vision. The encounter may have been mediated—by Moses's swooning, and the standing in of the ill-fated mountain—but Moses's reaction makes it clear that this was a transformative visionary event. The implication here is that a divine "vision" is rather more complex than simply laying eyes on God.

Practice Makes Perfect, or *Riyāḍat Al-Nafs*

Progress along the mystical path is a complicated phenomenon. One key concept is that of *riyāḍat al-nafs*, or training of the self. Every aspirant must undergo a transformation, often over several stages, in order to approach the divine. As Sufism became institutionalized in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, refined models for spiritual improvement formed around various saintly founders. These mystical orders were called *paths*, or *ṭuruq*, each one offering a distinct approach to the stages of ascension and the states of spiritual transformation that await the adept. The connection between religious experience and techniques of disciplined behavior has been known in the Near East from ancient times. Seclusion, fasting, and control of the senses have long been bridges to visionary, liminal, and transformative experiences. As we saw above, a long period of fasting prepared Moses for his visionary encounter. Subsequent Sufi disciplines have incorporated supererogatory prayer, fasting, and forty-day retreats (*khalwa*) among their practices.

Of course, the adept's task is to make headway along her prescribed *ṭarīqa*, but progress is never guaranteed. Human fallibility, as we know, can thwart even the most noble of intentions, but more importantly, a question of agency arises. Specifically, the Sufi theories of spiritual progress embrace an ambiguity inherent in an encounter that makes room for both the effort of the seeker and an omnipotent divine grace. Individual commitment is part of the picture, but divine will is essential. The Sufi path may be a human construction, but providence will ultimately determine one's success or failure. Some devotees were famous for their discipline on the path, while a few others were essentially gifted their spiritual states. This system accommodates both human initiative and divine will. Significantly, vision is also negotiated within this theatre of contested agency.

A statement by al-Hujwīrī (d. cir. 465/1073), on the one hand, privileges vision that does not come thanks to human initiative. Of the two kinds of contemplation (*mushāhada*), he tells us, one results from the individual's perfect faith, which leads his bodily eye to a vision beyond which his spiritual eye discerns the divine Agent. This, he calls the demonstrative (*istidlālī*) approach, founded upon the evidences of God, but centered on human achievement. He contrasts this with a second kind of contemplation which tilts more fully toward the divine and is the fruit of an ecstatic state (*jadhbī*).[2] Here, the human agent, as the subject of rapture, is transported and sees only the divine. Contending with the same binary, Ibn ʿAṭāʾ

2. ʿAlī ibn ʿUthmān al-Jullābī al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb of al-Hujwīrī "The Revelation of the Veiled": An Early Treatise on Sufism*, trans. Reynold A. Nicholson (Wiltshire, England: Gibb Memorial Trust, 2000), 330.

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Allāh al-Iskandarī (d. 709/1309), distinguishes between a lesser form of sanctity (*walāya*) and a greater.[3] Although the forms are on a continuum rather than being diametrically opposed, the lesser is centered around pious action (*aʿmāl*), while the higher is largely a gift of God (*minan*). Thus, by virtue of one's commitment to the discipline of the path, spiritual progress can be made toward one's lesser walāya. In Ibn ʿAṭāʾ Allāh's lesser sanctity, one sees nothing other than God, while the perspective from greater sanctity (*walāya kubrā*) includes creation within one's vision of the divine. Here the binary has been reversed. As Ibn ʿAṭāʾ Allāh puts it, "God does not want you to look upon creation with an ordinary eye; you must see creation as a theophany (*ẓuhūr*) . . . He who contemplates God in creation is an elite (*mukhaṣṣaṣ*) and perfected servant."[4] The essential insight here is that the Sufi path offers ways to spiritual improvement that are mirrored in complex visionary capacities.

We shall return to the procedures of ethical training shortly, but first, let us consider the training of the Sufi eye. The third-/ninth-century master Abū Yazīd al-Bastāmī described his own progress, saying "'On my first pilgrimage, I saw only the temple; the second time, I saw both the temple and the Lord of the temple; and the third time, I saw the Lord alone.'" To which al-Hujwīrī adds, ". . . what is truly valuable is not the Kaʿba, but contemplation and annihilation in the abode of friendship, of which things the sight of the Kaʿba is indirectly a cause."[5] A cursory reading might want to see the Kaʿba here as an empty symbol—something that fulfills its purpose by pointing to its otherworldly referent. However, I would suggest that there is more at play here than simple sign reading. The real significance of the passage is that it describes Abū Yazīd's development as an accomplished mystic. As he refines his vision, he isn't looking at different or better things; he is simply seeing better. Al-Hujwīrī explains the significance, saying, ". . . the true object of pilgrimage is not to visit the Kaʿba, but to obtain contemplation (*mushāhada*) of God."[6] How then does one train the eye to its greatest potential? Al-Hujwīrī's answer, in short, is *mujāhada*, or the struggle of self-mortification. Abū Yazīd was looking at the same thing, but now he was seeing it differently thanks to his developing spiritual capacity. We shall consider this capacity more systematically below, along with what it means to "see" God.

Pulling back to a wider perspective, let us consider more carefully the implications and the boundaries at play between the viewer and the divine subject. We shall see in the following pages that within Sufi viewing practices, the existential division between God and creation is maintained, and yet despite this categorical boundary, higher vision remains possible. More specifically, while the human viewer cannot grasp the divine as a representational form, a form of aesthetic experience—in particular, that of sublime vision—will allow for substantive visual interactions.

3. For a survey of the levels of *walāya*, see pages 37–41 of Richard McGregor, *Sanctity and Mysticism in Medieval Egypt: the Wafāʾi Sufi Order and the Legacy of Ibn ʿArabi* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2004).
4. Ibn ʿAṭāʾ Allāh al-Iskandarī, *Laṭaʾif al-minan fī manāqib al-Shaykh Abī al-ʿAbbās al-Mursī wa-shaykhihi al-Shādhilī Abī al-Ḥasan* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Qāhira, 1979), 40.
5. Al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf*, 327.
6. Al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf*, 329.

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To say that God is simply beyond the scope of human vision doesn't seem very controversial. Al-Hujwīrī dismisses some unnamed Sufis who, he says, mistakenly claim that ". . . spiritual vision and contemplation represent such an idea (*ṣūra*) of God as is formed in the mind by the imagination either from memory or reflection." This belief, he concludes, ". . . is utter anthropomorphism (*tashbīh*) and manifest error."[7] Any rendering or representation, no matter its source, will fail to encompass God, reducing the divinity to the imaginary capacities of the human. Ibn ʿArabī (d. 638/1240) describes this divide in terms of an inescapable incommensurability between God and creation: "The Divine Reality is elevated beyond the reach of every contemplating eye, for there is always a trace of creation in the eye of the contemplator."[8] By nature, the divine is categorically distinguished from His creation, and known only indirectly by signs of His dominion and rule.[9] Ibn ʿArabī and other Sufis would wrestle endlessly with this challenge, preserving the distinction between God and creation while exploring modes of knowing and models of being that might bridge that gap. One of the challenges is for humanity to escape the paradigm in which it conceives of divinity simply in terms that make sense to our capacities as limited and created beings. We are, thus, forever veiled from God, as Ibn ʿArabī puts it, by our own natures.[10]

This divide, nevertheless, may be crossed by those who have achieved an advanced spiritual station, whether it be by self-annihilation, indirect vision, or seeing by an alternate interior faculty. Although our eyes will forever be limited in their capacities, Ibn ʿArabī tells us that attaining the final stages on the spiritual path—the condition of self-annihilation—in effect releases us from that condition and, hence, those limitations. In a hadith report, the Prophet Muhammad advises the following: "Worship God as if you see Him, for although you do not see Him, He sees you."[11] Ibn ʿArabī reads the middle of this passage against its received meaning, turning "for although you do not see Him," into "if you are not, then you see Him" (*fa-in lam takun tarāhu*). From this, he concludes: "seeing Him only happens with your extinction from yourself," (*bi-fanāʾika ʿan-ka*).[12] It is this new or altered state of the self that is the seat of a visionary capacity that can overcome the existential chasm separating the Creator from creation.

In an echo of the classic Sufi binary of the interior/esoteric versus the exterior/exoteric, others indicate this capacity by distinguishing between vision centered in the eye and vision of the heart. In an overview of positions that exegetes and jurists have taken on the possibility of seeing the divine in this world, al-Qurṭubī (d. 671/1273) lists arguments supporting it, predicating it on vision by the heart (*qalb or fuʾād*), distinct from common vision (*biʾl-abṣār*).[13] According to al-Tustarī (d. 283/896), the beatific visions of the afterlife are presaged in this world, but only for

7. Al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf*, 332.
8. Ibn ʿArabī, *Kitāb al-Fanāʾ fiʾl-mushāhada* in *Rasāʾil Ibn ʿArabī* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 2001), 17.
9. Ibn ʿArabī, *al-Futuḥāt al-Makkiyya* (Cairo: Bulaq, 1911): 4:39.
10. Ibn ʿArabī, *al-Futuḥāt al-Makkiyya* 4:2.
11. *Sunan al-Nasāʾī*, Kitāb al-īmān wa sharāʾiʿihi (47); bāb ṣifat al-īmān waʾl-Islām (6).
12. Ibn ʿArabī, *Kitāb al-fanāʾ fiʾl-mushāh*ada, 22–23.
13. Al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmiʿ li-aḥkām al-Qurʾān* (Cairo, Dār al-Kutub al-Misriyya, 1938), 7:54 (on Qur'an 6:103).

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the spiritual elite. As he puts it, this is the, "unveiling of the heart here below."[14] Ruzbihān Baqlī (d. 606/1209), an enthusiastic visionary himself, qualified Moses's experience on Mount Sinai along just such lines. Recognizing the existential barrier between God and Moses, Ruzbihān claimed the prophet received an indirect vision in which the crumbling mountain acted as mirror of eternal power and limitless beauty.[15] Regarding his own visions, Ruzbihān is more explicit. He relates one episode in which he approached God seated on a holy mountain, telling us "he was unveiled and there manifested from him the lights of the beautiful attributes . . ." Ruzbihān provides these and other details, but in the final analysis, he confesses that the subject cannot be reduced to any representation or discursive form. Despite the rich imagery provided, Ruzbihān says, "He graced me in a form that I cannot tell to any of God's creatures . . ."[16]

Ruzbihān described a kind of seeing beyond saying. Within the mystical system developed by Ibn ʿArabī, this phenomenon is explained with the help of the idea of the predispositions (*iʿtiqādāt*). These are the divinely ordained inclinations or tendencies that determine the existential forms. In his system—known in shorthand as that of the oneness of being (*waḥdat al-wujūd*)—the predispositions serve the crucial function of distinguishing creation in its particulars from "being" more widely conceived. One implication of this doctrine is that as individuals we tend to see the world and, thus, make sense of it in accordance with our predispositions. This isn't necessarily a bad thing; it distinguishes us as individuals. We imagine and try to "see," divinity in our peculiar and delimited ways. However, Ibn ʿArabī tells us, those of the highest spiritual stature, at the station of divine proximity (*ahl al-qurba*), can escape the delimiting frames of their predispositions and embrace undifferentiated divine self-manifestations.[17] However, as was the case with Ruzbihān's experience, this is not an engagement that leads to language or images. Ibn ʿArabī would remind us that we need our predispositions—our subjecthood, our limited individual perspectives—in order to communicate. If we ascend to undifferentiated phenomena, we will literally have nothing to say about it.

I suggest a useful comparison here may be made with the modern idea of the sublime. Briefly, the term "sublime" was coined to describe the indeterminacy of certain experiences out of which arise impressions that cannot be formed into ideas, images, or words. In such interactions, our everyday representational thinking fails us, yet we remain deeply engaged even to the point of being overwhelmed in the face of such phenomena.[18] Modern accounts tend to describe sublime reflection in relation to the wonders of nature and exceptional artwork or architecture, but the concept also captures nicely the power (and the discursive limitation) of what, as we saw earlier, the Sufis call the eye of the heart, or vision beyond any "predisposition." The sublime addresses some of the philosophical

14. Gerhard Böwering, *The Mystical Vision of Existence in Classical Islam* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980), 165–75.
15. Kazuyo Murata, *Beauty in Sufism: The Teachings of Ruzbihan Baqli* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2017), 114.
16. Ernst, C. *Ruzbihan Baqli: Mysticism and the Rhetoric of Sainthood in Persian Sufism* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1996), 55.
17. Ibn ʿArabī, *al-Futuḥāt al-Makkiyya* 3:116–118. Chodkiewicz makes much the same point in his article "The Vision of God," trans. Cecilia Twinch, *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society* 14 (1993): 53–67.
18. Kirk Pillow, *Sublime Understanding: Aesthetic Reflection in Kant and Hegel* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), 294.

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challenges of engaging with a timeless and immaterial deity. In the Sufi account of such engagements, where the otherness of God must be preserved and yet bridged, a sublime vision that makes room for the reality of the experience while keeping it beyond conceptual reduction works rather well. I will return to the sublime in later sections of this paper to point out some of its weaknesses as a comparative concept, but in the interim, let us return to the Sufi visionary and, more specifically, to the viewer's faculties that are enlisted in the construction of the virtuous self.

The Structure of the Self

In light of the modern conflation of mind with self, the complexity of the premodern and ancient models of the self/soul (*nafs*) would benefit from some elaboration. As we shall see, complicating the situation was the variety of positions on the form and capacities of the self within Islamic discourse. The Quran presents at least three different characteristics of the *nafs*.[19] The first is the self that "incites to evil" (*al-ammāra bi'l-sū'*) (Q 12:53) and is presented as suffering from perpetual temptation. The second is the "blaming self" (*al-lawwāma*) (Q 75:2), which carries with it a sense of self-reproach and thus introspection. The third characteristic is serenity, yielding the "soul at peace," (*al-muṭma'inna*) (Q 89:27), which is reassured of its abode in the hereafter with God. In the Quran, these three references are disconnected, describing the soul in rather different contexts. Nevertheless, the reception of this typology may be divided into two camps. The first is the ascetic world-view, which saw the blaming and inciting selves as the worldly characteristics of the soul, which at the Resurrection would be transformed into "souls at peace" and reassured of a beatific afterlife. The second was the Sufi perspective, which took these three characteristics as the stages through which the soul might rise if properly trained in mystical exercises.[20] The Islamic understanding of the self and its components, however, typically developed rather more complex models.

In his tenth-century *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*, perhaps the most important philosophical treatment of ethics, Miskawayh describes the soul as consisting of three faculties: that of rational reflection, that of desire and appetite, and that of anger. When properly exercised, each faculty (*quwwa*) will attain a specific virtue. When the rational faculty pursues sound knowledge, it will achieve the virtue of wisdom. When the desiring faculty is harnessed, it yields temperance, and when the faculty of anger is moderated, it attains to the virtue of courage. If these faculties and their virtues are together cultivated successfully, the virtue of justice will emerge.[21] These four virtues are entities in their own right, but they also include the many lesser virtues that lead to a life well lived.

19. For an in-depth survey of the *nafs* in its Quranic context, see Gavin Picken, "*Tazkiyat al-nafs*: The Qur'anic Paradigm," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 7, no. 2 (2005): 101–127.

20. Sara Sviri, "The Self and Its Transformation in Ṣufism," in *Self and Self-Transformation in the History of Religions*, ed. David Shulman and Guy S. Stroumsa (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 196–197.

21. Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Miskawayh, *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*, ed. Constantine Zurayk (Beirut: AUB Press, 1966), 15–16. The Greek formulations of the self are clearly part of the Islamic inheritance but remain beyond the scope of this discussion. See Majid Fakhry, *Ethical Theories in Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 61–66.

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Various models were developed, and some represented significant departures from their precedents. In the eleventh century, ʿAbd Allāh al-Anṣārī (d. 481/1089) developed a structure of the self that mirrored a cosmology, beginning with the corporeal and extending upwards to the celestial. For al-Anṣārī, the most basic element of the self was the soul, which, when subjected to discipline, would support the capacities above it. The heart was the next capacity, which was less corporeal, and could take in God's blessings through its capacity of gaze. The third aspect, the most ethereal, was that of the spirit (*ruḥ*), capable of a more direct visionary encounter with God.[22] This model of the self would lie behind later developments in Sufism, which all, in one way or another, were predicated on the ascension and improvement of the self beyond the material and towards the divine.

The great commentator on Ibn ʿArabī, ʿAbd al-Razzāq Kāshānī (d. 730/1329) attempted to reincorporate the Quranic model, noted above, into al-Sulamī's (d. 412/1021) structure of progressive capacities. For Kāshānī, the *nafs* inciting to evil must be kept in check by its capacity for self-reproach (*nafs lawwāma*). This control will allow the loftiest dimension, the *nafs muṭmaʾinna*, or peaceful *nafs*, to dominate.[23] While these are three dimensions of the same entity, *Kāshānī* insists that only the third and highest level represents the divine breath that was blown into inert clay when God created Adam (Q 38:72). As we shall see below, Sufi models of the self often held disparate and apparently distinct components together in such uneasy combinations.

The structures and layers of the self, as we have seen, have appeared in various models, and yet an internal tension has persisted in all. A problem clearly suggests itself here, which pits one aspect of the self (the higher) against other aspects (the lower). We might be wondering how one part of the self can gain any real distance from other parts of the same self. How can the higher self of the Sufis subdue, discipline, or overcome the things that make it what it, itself, is? The strength of the modeling we have been discussing, however, lies in its embrace of that tension. In fact, a shifting and evolving core of the self is celebrated as a marker that sets humanity above the perfected and celestial angels. Al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī (d. 320/932) illustrates this by comparing the static nature of the angels to that of the changing states of humans. In their worship of God, the angels are "blissful but unchanging, while humanity serves Him, changing from one state to another (*min ḥāl ilā ḥāl*), each of which is (a form of) service."[24] Thus, the only fixed condition is humanity's relation to the divine, not the human self, which is subject to change. We shall return to the structures of these changes below.

In his description of the *nafs*, al-Ghazālī points to a similarly divided structure. On the one side, there are the lower inclinations and desires, and on the other stands the subtle but permanent self. We are told there are several meanings at

22. Cyrus Zargar, *The Polished Mirror: Storytelling and the Pursuit of Virtue in Islamic Philosophy and Sufism* (London: Oneworld, 2017), 213.

23. Zargar, *Polished Mirror*, 214. For a modern version amplifying the stages of the *nafs* from three to six, see ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd, *al-Madrasat al-Shādhiliyya al-ḥadītha wa-imāmuhā Abū al-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī* (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Ḥadītha, 1968), 402–407.

24. Al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, *Kitāb al-Riyāḍa wa-adab al-nafs*, ed. A. J. Arberry (Cairo: Maktabat al-Ādāb al-Ṣūfiyya, 1947), 78.

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play around the term *nafs*, and that two are directly relevant to the discussion at hand. "By one meaning, the *nafs* consists of the faculties of anger and desire . . . This usage prevails among Sufis since, by *nafs*, they mean that in which the blameworthy qualities are gathered. They say one must fight against the *nafs* and break it." The second meaning of *nafs*, al-Ghazālī tells us—although it is not obvious that it is less prominent among Sufis than anyone else—is the true and essential self. We are told the *nafs* is also "the subtle substance (*laṭīfa*), which . . . is the true human (*hiya al-insān bi'l-ḥaqīqa*)." This *nafs* is the essence and self of humanity (*hiya nafs al-insān wa dhātihi*), but it also changes in aspect or, as al-Ghazālī says, in its state. It may be the essence, and yet ". . . it is described in various ways because of its various states (*aḥwālihā*)." The higher *nafs* will attain to better states as it resists its lower counterparts. The three-part Quranic schema we saw earlier is put forward, but here the soul at rest (*muṭmaʾinna*) is a state the higher *nafs* may attain to. The contrast with the lower self is again rather dramatic, and seems to be a difference in kind, and not simply of degree. These tensions within the *nafs* suggest that only one part of it can attain to salvation and perfection, while the others cannot. Al-Ghāzālī tells us the lower self, whether it be self-reproaching (*lawwāma*) or inciting to evil (*al-ammāra bi'l-sūʾ*), will never approach divinity and must remain among the party of Satan.[25]

The self remains internally complex, with its various parts at odds with each other. The goal however is not for one part to utterly displace or destroy its rivals. It is the self's engagement with this inhering tension that is an opportunity for the Sufi. Al-Sulamī records inherited wisdom on the matter; thus: "Ibrāhīm Ibn Shaybān was asked: 'What is the sign of one who admonishes (*yanṣaḥ*) his *nafs*?' He said, 'He pushes it toward what it hates and what is contrary to its inclination, never satisfied with it. To each who works to bring his *nafs* into harmony and resists his selfish desires, God will grant success.'"[26] Here, the prescription is for continuous engagement between one's competing aspects. Parts of the *nafs*, then, are a permanent counter-weight to the attainment of virtue; more an ecosystem of balanced rivals than a drive for conquest and purity. It may never be possible to attain full reconciliation of faculties and impulses—but, al-Sulamī's shaykh tells us, it is precisely such efforts that God encourages. As we shall see, it is out of this work that the virtuous self may emerge.

Self, Praxis, and Back to Self Again

With its internal tensions, this structure is the jumping-off point in a sequence that links the faculties of the self to ethical action and, in turn, reconnects those acts back to the character of the self. As we shall see, this dynamic solves the problem of how the *nafs* can be the initiator of its own changes, which is to say how the self that is the essence—as we saw al-Ghāzālī call it—of the human can engineer its own transformation.

25. Abū al-Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn* (Beirut: Dār al-Hādī, 1992) 3:10.
26. Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī, *Jawāmiʿ ādāb al-Ṣufiyya,* ed. Ethan Kohlberg (Jerusalem: Hebrew University Press, 1976), 33.

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We noted above Miskawayh's classification of the faculties. In his discussion of the state of the soul, which he calls its character (*khulq*), he notes first that there are two kinds, one malleable and the other unchanging. He gives examples of the unchanging: the irascibility of the short-tempered individual and the timidity of a coward. However, the other "is that which is acquired by habit and self-training. It may have its beginning in deliberation and thought, but then it becomes, by gradual and continued practice, an aptitude and a trait of character."[27] A similar connection is made by al-Ṭusī (d. 672/1274) who likens the returning motion, the impact of the inculcation of a virtuous habit, to a brand. He tells us, ". . . virtue is a matter of discipline . . . the student of virtue must advance to the acts demanded by that virtue in order that an affection and a habit may appear in his soul, represented by his ability to cause such acts to proceed perfectly and with ease. At that moment, he is marked by the brand of the virtue in question."[28] Thus, in search of virtue, once our faculties are in balance and we manage to regularly take right actions, those practices will imprint the virtues they represent upon us as if they were indelible.

Al-Fārābī (d. 339/950) also frames the virtuous in this outward and return movement. He tells us that the individual intentionally cultivates dispositions (*istiʿdādāt*) which, when oriented toward the good, beget and ingrain virtuous habits. If we set up evil dispositions, we will invite vicious habits in return.[29] Al-Ghazālī tells us that virtues are not single gestures coming from our knowledge (*maʿrifa*) or a single act (*fiʿl*), but rather represent a condition that has taken hold in the *nafs*. It is as if a loop has developed in which the self is the seat of the virtues, which generate virtuous acts, which in turn reinforce their integration, their anchoring (*hayʾa rāsikha*), in the self.[30] Elsewhere, on the same theme, he describes the impact of these deeds and thoughts as traces left upon the heart.[31] Three centuries later, Ibn Khaldūn would identify this trace in terms of an aspirant's deeds imprinting images upon the self.[32] Elsewhere, he provides more detail on the process. When the self initiates a deed, it feels the effect of that deed as an attribute (*ṣifa*), but when the deed is repeated, it becomes a condition (*ḥāl*), which, when often repeated, becomes a habit (*malaka*). These attributes and conditions in turn, "give the self its special coloring (*lawn*) that defines it."[33]

For the Sufi tradition, the outward expression of virtues became a significant concern. Many systems were developed, as we noted earlier, which schematized these states, conditions, and their stages. Scholars have explored the connections between virtues and the steps on the Sufi path in some detail, so here I will leave them aside.[34] Instead, I would like to explore further the procedure I've been

27. Miskawayh, *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*, 31.
28. Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Tūsī, *The Nasirian Ethics*, trans. G. M. Wickens (New York: Routledge, 2011), 111.
29. Majid Fakhry, *al-Fārābī, Founder of Islamic Neoplatonism* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2002), 94.
30. Ira Lapidus, "Knowledge, Virtue, and Action: The Classical Muslim Conception of Adab and the Nature of Religious Fulfillment in Islam," in *Moral Conduct and Authority: The Place of Adab in South Asian Islam*, ed. Barbara Metcalf (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 58.
31. Lapidus, "Knowledge, Virtue, and Action," 47.
32. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ibn Khaldūn, *Shifāʾ al-sāʾil li-tahdhīb al-masāʾil* (Beirut: al-Maṭbaʿa al-Kāthūlīkiyya, 1959), 38.
33. Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima*, ed. ʿAbd al-Salām al-Shiddādī (Casablanca: Bayt al-Funūn wa'l-ʿUlūm wa'l-Ādāb, 2005) 3:250, 293.
34. Zargar, *Polished Mirror*, 8 and Atif Khalil, "Contentment, Satisfation and Good-Pleasure: *Rida* in Early Sufi Moral Psychology," *Studies in Religion* 43, no. 3 (2014): 372.

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describing in which when the self initiates a virtuous action, that action is realized, and finally—if the deed becomes a habit—there is a feedback effect upon the *nafs*. Some Sufis have called this feedback a marking of the self which, on each occasion, leaves a trace, while another has called it the branding of the heart. I point to this imprinting upon the *nafs* since it is a key moment in the construction of the ethical subject. My claim is that the Sufi ethical tradition, thus conceived, aligns with what modern philosophy, following an Aristotelian model, has come to call virtue ethics.

In brief, virtue ethics can be contrasted with two rival ethical models: the first is deontology (from the Greek *deon,* or "being necessary"), which measures actions in relation to a set of rules or stated duties; the second revolves around the outcomes of acts, and can be called "consequentialism." Plato and Aristotle developed virtue ethics, prioritizing the formation of a virtuous self through education and training over the inculcation of rules.[35] This model does not speak directly to what is the proper act in a specific circumstance, but rather to how a virtuous self can be formed which will respond ethically to future events.

Although marginalized in the nineteenth century, by the mid-twentieth century, virtue ethics had made a comeback. The appeal, Julia Annas argues, was the model's reclaiming the value of the self in relation to the coercive and often inflexible logic of rule systems. An opening presents itself here to consider that relation and the benefit of the individual selves involved, against a one-size-fits-all approach.[36] This version of ethics mirrors the complex theory of the *nafs* considered above. Rather than a self that operates in a straight line, as a monolithic agent, the *nafs* is constantly in flux, with its relationship to its outward acts and the world around it constantly evolving. Annas also underlines the value of habituation or training. Virtue ethics embraces the complexity of ethical training that is at play in the cyclical looping we saw above with the self both initiating and being deeply marked in turn by ethical actions. Of a virtue put into practice, we are told, "You need to learn it from other people, but you need to learn how to do it for yourself."[37] This learning is more than the acquisition of a concept or the will of an ego. Annas is making a point here about the origin of the ethical impulse, which sheds light on the *nafs* that is at once the initiator of acts and is marked by them. She is saying that virtue isn't just a concept we acquire which makes us virtuous; it must also be taken into ourselves and allowed to transform us.

The Virtue of the Sublime Gaze

At the outset of this discussion, we noted the drama of Moses at Sinai and pointed out that his vision of God was not a case of seeing in the same sense we commonly

35. Rosalind Hursthouse and Glen Pettigrove, "Virtue Ethics," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2012 edition online). See also Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (London: Duckworth, 1981), 220, and chapter 11 of Robert Pippin, *Interanimations: Receiving Modern German Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).

36. Julia Annas, "Being Virtuous and Doing the Right Thing," in *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 78, no. 2 (2004): 70.

37. Annas, "Applying Virtue to Ethics (Society of Applied Philosophy Annual Lecture 2014)," *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 32, no. 1 (2015): 3.

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use the term. My position there was that the Moses story demonstrates a seeing that cannot be said—that is, a vision across the existential divide which, therefore, cannot rationally encompass or represent its intended object. We saw earlier the Prophet's enjoining to worship God as if you see Him—*as if* such a vision were possible. Ibnʿ Arabī and others claimed this is possible, but only after one's extinction from one's self (*fanāʾ*). This is how some of the exegetes we noted understood Moses to have "seen" God—i.e., through his swoon. Thus, such seeing is possible, yet it remains beyond our ordinary sensate and discursive boundaries.

When one has made progress along the Sufi path, and the virtues have become habitual, Ibn Sīnā tells us, we become "one of the people of witnessing and not of speaking." For this gnostic, the moments of overwhelming self-extinction are constant. That is to say, the self, the virtuous impulse, and right action are in a continuous cycle with one another. Here, one becomes "bright-faced, friendly, and smiling," continually acting in virtuous ways: "The gnostic has no inclination to anger toward the misdeeds of others, and is, instead, filled with mercy . . . The gnostic is courageous . . . He is generous . . . and forgiving." The ethical and visionary are bound up in this perspective, for the gnostic now "sees in everything the (divine Truth)."[38]

Earlier, I noted the usefulness of the concept of the sublime in describing these phenomena. The sublime helps illustrate the procedures of Sufi visionary practices but, we shall see, it fails to account for the ethical. The act and the ethical subject are essential components of the dynamic equation of the components of the Sufi self. Kirk Pillow calls the human responses to the overwhelming sensory experience "sublime reflection," which assume an indeterminacy because they escape conceptual determination. However, Pillow makes room for the imaginative productions resulting from these encounters. One of these productions that Paul Crowther identifies is "mystical discernment," which involves an understanding of the indirect meaning of these sublime communications. Though such sublime communications are indeterminate, a mystic brings with her a world-view and religious tradition and its ways to interpret the uncontrollable and inexpressible sublime.[39] Pillow and Crowther, however, do not address this grounding of the indeterminate sublime in the mystical or, indeed, in any other form of discernment.

One interesting intervention, headed in the right direction but still rather preliminary, is Iris Murdoch's suggestion that an ethical space is opened up where visionary experience approaches the sublime, which generates a self-forgetting within the subject.[40] This opening, however, seems to be more descriptive than explanatory. It describes a space that, elsewhere in the tradition of aesthetic theory, is filled right back up with an ego-centered ethics. Putting a finer point on earlier Kantian positions on the implications of sublime experiences, Crowther tells us the "moral insight" that is generated confirms and recognizes the individual as

38. Ibn Sīnā, *al-Ishārāt wa'l-tanbīhāt* (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1996) 4:829, 843, 846–848.
39. Kirk Pillow, *Sublime Understanding,* 294, and Paul Crowther, *How Pictures Complete Us: The Beautiful, the Sublime, and the Divine* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016), 85.
40. Iris Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good* (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), 2.

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superior in spite of being overwhelmed by their sublime experiences. Those selves come away from the encounter with overwhelmed senses, but confirmed in their rational thought. With our capacity to live through and then reflect upon our experience with the sublime, "we feel ourselves, accordingly, as transcending the limitations imposed by our embodied existence." And elsewhere, those selves survive the encounter and are then taken to be the, "ultimate and infinite in humans," and thus, "the human being is more than mere nature."[41]

The ethical substance emerging from these claims appears rather flimsy in comparison with the Sufi models we have been tracking in this study. Murdoch's appeal to a selfless opening awaits substantive ethical content, while the Kantian-inspired triumph of the thinking subject who survives the discombobulating encounter with the sublime keeps us within ourselves, trapped with our own subjectivity. In contrast, as we have seen above, the Sufi construction of the ethical self was a foundational and substantive starting point. Sufi reflection on the phenomenology of vision recognized the limited dimensions of the sublime and made way for a more fulsome practice. That is to say, it recognized the key role of the self in the sublime, but also aspired to connect that self out to the world and beyond.

Al-Suhrawardī's (d. 549/1191) comments on liminal experiences make this point clear. He tells us that it is possible for someone who does not undertake spiritual exercises to occasionally attain ecstatic or sublime mystical flashes (*lawāʾiḥ*). One can do so if "one waits on festival days, when people go out to the prayer-field and great noises, exaltations, and loud shouts take place, and the sound of cymbals and clarions prevails. If one is endowed with vision and a sound nature and recollects holy states, one will experience a very pleasant sensation." At this point, we only need to be attentive and open to the possibility of the overwhelming of our senses. In the heat of battle, if one's "mind is slightly clear, even though one may not be ascetically disciplined, one will experience something of this state—provided that one recollects, during that time, holy states, and recalls the souls of the departed, the vision of the divine might, and the ranks of the hosts of heaven." Galloping on a warhorse, rushing into battle, "in such a state, too, an effect will be produced in one, even though one may not be an ascetic adept." We need only be in the proper mindset and open to our supersensible dimension in order to engage with the sublime. However, if one were to embark on the Sufi path, one should know that these experiences are best woven into one's devotional practices and ethics. Al-Suhrawardī tells us that, "These flashes do not come at all times, as there are periods when they cease altogether. But the more ascetic exercise is increased, the more the flashes come until one reaches the stage wherein one recalls something of other-worldly conditions in everything one sees." Integrating, or reconnecting, one's spiritual discipline with the deeper dimensions of the self not only colors our vision of the world, but also encourages spiritual discipline. In fact, such reintegration is the solution to apathy or spiritual weariness: "When the ascetic practitioner is afflicted by languor, he seeks assistance through subtle contemplations and pure

41. Paul Crowther, *Critical Aesthetics and Postmodernism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 153, 137, 138.

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recollection against impure thoughts in order to regain his former state."[42] Al-Suhrawardī's examples confirm what our modern philsophers would identify as sublime encounters, but his is a system that includes the Sufi conception of the *nafs*, which embraces a two-way connectivity between the virtuous self and proper actions.

The Sufi visionary practice that I have surveyed above began with a statement about seeing the divine. Here, a theological issue presented itself: from our creaturely perspective, the divine is categorically removed from us. In the afterlife, things might be different, but for now, we stand at an existential distance from our Creator. Sufi visionary practices, however, have developed resolutions to this challenge, but also, in fact, have constituted part of the intertwining of the human self with the divine. We saw that virtue ethics, with its emphasis on the production of an ethical self, brought the link between the self and the practice of virtuous acts into focus. Virtue of act and self thus becomes a single phenomenon. Here visionary practice, which attains to God by *fanā'*, or a similar non-representational encounter, is predicated upon virtuous capacity. Mystical vision, then, like any other virtuous gesture, is as much about the self as it is about its object—an object that remains in view, but also forever unseen in this life.

42. Shihābuddīn Yahya Suhrawardī, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises,* trans. Wheeler Thackston (Costa Mesa: Mazda, 1999), 95–96.

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DISCIPLINING THE SOUL, FREEING THE MIND: SPIRITUAL PRACTICE (*AL-RIYĀḌA*) IN FAKHR AL-DĪN AL-RĀZĪ'S *SHARḤ AL-ISHĀRĀT WA-L-TANBĪHĀT*[1]

Nora Jacobsen Ben Hammed

Introduction

One of the key features of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's (d. 606/1210) developed philosophical theology is his repeated description of two ways to approach knowledge of God—namely, through the exercise of discursive reasoning (*al-naẓar wa-l-istidlāl*), and spiritual practice and striving (*al-riyāḍa wa-l-mujāhada*). While each way is distinct, the two are most effective when combined, each supplementing the other to allow the seeker to approach the Divine and to ensure eternal felicity of the soul. Although the way of theoretical reasoning, modeled on a fusion of the intellectual traditions of theology and philosophy, is relatively clear, what exactly al-Rāzī intends by *riyāḍa* remains obscure, most often stated without concrete explanation in his theoretical works.

1. I am immensely grateful for the feedback that I received from generous colleagues on drafts of this article. In particular, I'd like to thank Loumia Ferhat, Lara Harb, Salimeh Maghsoudlou, Arjun Nair, Oludamini Ogunnaike, Elizabeth Sartell, Cyril Uy, and Cyrus Zargar for generously workshopping this chapter, and Mohammed Rustom and Atif Khalil for their incisive comments and edits.

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The first reference point for the use of *riyāḍa* is naturally the Sufi tradition, which developed various forms of *riyāḍa* to tame the lower self (*nafs*) and aid seekers in their quest for knowledge of and union with the Divine. In his doxography of beliefs that fall within and outside of Islam, *Iʿtiqādāt firaq al-Muslimīn wa-l-mushrikīn (The Beliefs of Muslim and Non-Muslim Sects),* al-Rāzī writes that it is a mistake to leave the Sufis out of an account of Islamic groups (*firaq*) for "the Path to knowledge (*maʿrifa*) of God is purification (*taṣfiya*) and detachment (*tajarrud*) from bodily connections."[2] Al-Rāzī's description of the dual utility of the Sufi tradition for extraction from the material realm and refinement of the self are indeed emblematic of his understanding of the use and efficacy of spiritual practice (*riyāḍa*) in the pursuit of knowledge of God.[3]

Yet the most resounding influence on al-Rāzī's developed notion of the two-fold Path and its use of *riyāḍa* is *al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt,* Ibn Sīnā's (d. 428/1037) last work that melds Sufi terms and concepts with the philosophical tradition (*falsafa*), and upon which al-Rāzī wrote a commentary early in his career in the year 576/1180.[4] Along with a number of his contemporaries, al-Rāzī was a careful reader of Ibn Sīnā's works, and follows his lead in merging philosophical ideas with Sufi concepts and practices as made explicit in the *Ishārāt*.[5] His commentary certainly integrates various aspects of Ibn Sīnā's philosophy, such as his understanding of the need for moderation in the self, the taming of the lower faculties of the soul, and the turning of the intellect towards the upper realm to ensure eternal felicity. Aspects of the *falsafa* tradition with which al-Rāzī evidently disagreed, such as the existence of the Active Intellect (the final intellect in the emanationist system which governs generation and decay in the sublunar realm and enables abstract human thought), are largely absent in al-Rāzī's commentary (though, in this, he follows Ibn Sīnā's omission of explicit reference to the Active Intellect in this section).[6]

2. Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar al-Rāzī, *Iʿtiqādāt firaq al-Muslimīn wa-l-mushrikīn,* ed. ʿAlī Sāmī al-Nashshār (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahḍa al-Miṣriyya, 1938), 72.

3. It was common practice to present many views on the meaning of Sufism in Sufi handbooks. Writers pondered not only the various standard practices of the Sufis, but also the etymology of the term. Here, notably, al-Rāzī is uninterested in giving his reader a consideration of the numerous theories on the origin of "Ṣūfiyya," which included the name being derived from their wearing of course wool (*ṣūf*), their being of the first rank (*al-ṣaff al-awwal*), the covered room adjacent to the Prophet's mosque (*al-ṣuffa*), or, as is al-Rāzī's interpretation, a signal of the people's purity (*ṣafāʾ*). He instead binds both the term, and the essence of their practice, to self-purification, and limits their goal to *maʿrifa*.

4. For an excellent overview of al-Rāzī's methodology and organization of his exegetical commentary as well as a careful argument against its negative reception as a supposed attack on Avicennan philosophy, see Ayman Shihadeh, "al-Rāzī's (d. 1210) Commentary on Avicenna's Pointers," in *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Philosophy,* ed. Khaled El-Rouayheb and Sabine Schmidtke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 296–325. For further analysis of the reception of al-Rāzī's commentary and various contemporary views of the role of the commentator in relation to the text, see Robert Wisnovsky, "Avicennism and Exegetical Practice in the Early Commentaries on the *Ishārāt*," *Oriens* 41, no. iii–iv (2013): 349–78. See, too, Wisnovsky's contextualization of al-Rāzī's negative reception within larger intellectual currents of Shiʿī-Sunnī polemics in Robert Wisnovsky, "Towards a Genealogy of Avicennism," *Oriens* 42 (2014): 323–63.

5. A broad intellectual history of the increasing tendency towards syncretism that merged philosophy with Sufism, a trend that was already flourishing in al-Rāzī's time with such thinkers as ʿAyn al-Quḍāt al-Hamadhānī (d. 526/1131), Suhrawardī al-Maqtūl (d. 587/1191), and Ibn ʿArabī (638/1240), is beyond the scope of this article. Deep and thoughtful comparison between al-Rāzī and his contemporaries is, however, an essential task as we continue to mine the rich development of philosophical thought in Islam. For instance, al-Suhrawardī, like al-Rāzī, distinguished between what he termed presential (*dhawqī*) and discursive (*baḥthī*) knowledge, and integrated practical acts of asceticism and self-purification with theoretical inquiry in the path to illumination. So too did al-Suhrawardī critique the Avicennian epistemology that relied on the abstraction of essences and, like al-Rāzī (though in a more sophisticated and developed way), argued for knowledge by presence. For a comparison between al-Rāzī and al-Suhrawardī's epistemologies, see Heidrun Eichner, "'Knowledge by Presence', Apperception and the Mind-Body Relationship: Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī and al-Suhrawardi as Representatives and Precursors of a Thirteenth-Century Discussion," in *In the Age of Averroes: Arabic Philosophy in the Sixth/Twelfth Century,* ed. Peter Adamson, Warburg Institute Colloquia 16 (London: Warburg Institute, 2011), 117–40.

6. Al-Rāzī briefly addresses the theory of the Active Intellect in the fourth volume of the *Maṭālib* in a discussion of the emanation of creation as posited by the *falāsifa*. There, he points out the inconsistencies in the doctrine; he raises the

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In contrast to other scholars who have dismissed al-Rāzī's turn to Sufism as a late, non-intellectual conversion or who have falsely subsumed it under the Avicennian concept of intellectual intuition (*ḥads*), this article engages in a careful examination of al-Rāzī's *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt* and argues that al-Rāzī, at an early stage, repurposed various concrete forms of spiritual practice (*riyāḍa*) as vital for the completion of the seeker's intellectual-spiritual ascent to God.[7] Given the vastness of the category of Sufism and the vagueness of the term "mysticism," I am uninterested in arguing whether Ibn Sīnā's text or al-Rāzī's commentary should or should not be classified as Sufi or mystical. What I am interested in is what al-Rāzī means when he introduces the *Ishārāt* as a text that "systematized the sciences/knowledge of the Sufis (*ʿulūm al-ṣūfiyya*) in an unprecedented manner,"[8] and how he understands the last sections of the work to be a representative description of a peak human experience undergone by the seeker on the Path (*al-ṭarīqa*).[9] Given themes that recur in later texts, it is apparent that the *Ishārāt* and the writing of this

objection, for instance, that there is no logical reason why the continued threefold production of intellect/soul/sphere should cease with the production of the Active Intellect rather than continue *ad infinitum*. See *al-Maṭālib al-ʿāliya min al-ʿilm al-ilāhī,* ed. Aḥmad Ḥijāzī Aḥmad Saqqā, vol. 4 (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1987), 395–6. Shihadeh also notes that al-Rāzī rejects the theory of the Active Intellect in his monograph; see Ayman Shihadeh, *The Teleological Ethics of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī,* Islamic philosophy, theology and science vol. 64 (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 42. Al-Rāzī's early dismissal of this theory is also noted by Bilal Ibrahim; see Bilal Ibrahim, "Freeing Philosophy from Metaphysics: Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's Philosophical Approach to the Study of Natural Phenomena" (PhD diss., McGill University, 2013). While beyond the scope of this article, al-Rāzī's refusal to incorporate the Active Intellect into his epistemology connects intimately with his understanding of knowledge by presence and his rejection of the mind's abstraction of universal essences.

7. Ayman Shihadeh has argued that al-Rāzī "converted" to Sufism in the last years of his life, though he notes the early discussion of the "dichotomy of methods" in the *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt* while still describing the text as uncharacteristic in its treatment of *riyāḍa*. He writes that "[Rāzī] reads this section as an essentially Sufi text and gives it a fittingly Sufi interpretation," which I maintain overgeneralizes al-Rāzī's approach to the text and fails to note the ways in which al-Rāzī is already forging a unique and lasting approach at this early stage that appropriates and redefines Sufi terms within his own framework through the commentary. I agree with Shihadeh that the existential doubt regarding the efficacy of the intellect is not evident at this stage, but I am skeptical that al-Rāzī's turn to Sufism was limited to his later years, and doubt as well that we can appropriately characterize him as converting to Sufism rather than simply continuing to develop his project of adopting and intellectualizing Sufi thought while simultaneously increasingly wrestling with the inadequacy of discursive reasoning as an means to access knowledge of God. I agree with Damien Janos's critique of Shihadeh's strict dichotomy between the intellectual and spiritual ways of knowing as producing two kinds of knowledge that are "unrelated and autonomous," and his argument that "mystical" and "philosophical" knowledge, along with Sufism and philosophy, are intimately related for al-Rāzī and overlap in their search for a singular object. Janos, however, distinguishes between discursive thought (*fikr*) and intuition (*ḥads*, Ibn Sīnā's term for the immediate realization of the middle term in a syllogism through conjunction with the Active Intellect) as the intellectual and spiritual modes of thought in al-Rāzī's *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt,* which I contend fundamentally misunderstands al-Rāzī's theorization of the twofold path to metaphysical knowledge. In my reading of al-Rāzī's commentary, he follows Ibn Sīnā in distinguishing between *fikr* and *ḥads*, but does not ultimately incorporate *ḥads* into his own developed philosophical system (though one could argue that *ḥads*—sans Active Intellect—is absorbed into his understanding of the ideal third type—i.e., those who combine perfect inborn capacity with intellectual and spiritual striving). Al-Rāzī describes *fikr* and *ḥads* in his commentary as distinct modes of the theoretical intellect, associated explicitly with the discursive approach to knowledge of God. Put simply, *fikr* accesses the middle term of the syllogism after searching for it, while *ḥads* lands first and immediately upon the middle term without seeking it out. Far from being equated with the perfect intellectual operation of *ḥads*, *riyāḍa* and the second approach of spiritual practice and striving are linked to the practical intellect and directed towards the proper alignment and purification of lower aspects of the self. See al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt,* ed. ʿAlī Riẓā Najafʾzādah (Tehran: Anjuman-i Āṯār va Mafākhir-i Farhangī, 2005), 2:268–72; Ayman Shihadeh, "The Mystic and the Sceptic in Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī," in *Sufism and Theology* (Edinburgh University Press, 2007); Damien Janos, "Intuition, Intellection, and Mystical Knowledge: Delineating Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's Cognitive Theories," in *Islam and Rationality: The Impact of al-Ghazali: Papers Collected on His 900th Anniversary* (Boston: Brill, 2015).

8. Al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt,* 2:589.

9. Damien Janos translates this singular, all-encompassing *ṭarīqa* described in al-Rāzī's *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt* as a discipline, a way, and a method, and interprets it to be a "single cognitive tree" with two branches (the rationalist and spiritual), leading "to a kind of knowledge that, while intuitive, remains intrinsically intellectual and syllogistic in nature." Janos, "Intuition, Intellection, and Mystical Knowledge," 207. While I agree that the knowledge accessed is fundamentally intellectual, I doubt that al-Rāzī, even at the point of writing this early work, would have described it as syllogistic. His understanding of the Path and its ultimate goal of unity with God aligns better with Neoplatonic descriptions of the intellectual visions that fill the pages of such texts as *The Theology of Aristotle,* an Arabic rendering of books IV–VI of Plotinus's *Enneads* attributed to Aristotle. The *Theology* similarly describes the delving into the intelligible realm as a kind of intellectual witnessing which allows for comprehension through unity with the object of thought. As such, the knowledge accessed is intellectual while not being syllogistic. See, for instance, the description of the person's unity with the intellectual "lord" (*sāda*) in ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Badawī, ed., *Aflūṭīn ʿinda al-ʿArab* (Kuwait: Wakālat al-Maṭbūʿāt, 1977), 116–17.

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commentary were formative for al-Rāzī, and that he viewed Ibn Sīnā as partaking in the Path (*ṭarīqa*) that properly pursues the same higher Truth (singular and universal) sought by both more traditional forms of Sufism and by the metaphysical investigations of the philosophers (Muslim and otherwise).

Borrowings, Variations, and Amalgamations

Before delving into the concrete forms of *riyāḍa* explored in the *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt,* it is worth noting major Sufi terms and concepts that al-Rāzī follows Ibn Sīnā in reinterpreting through a philosophical framework. Though al-Rāzī's work reflects the desire for the inner transformation of the seeker as advocated by contemporary Sufis, what al-Rāzī describes is not an erasure of lower aspects of the self as described by some but rather a reordering and harmonization such that the true nature of the soul—immaterial, holy—may orient itself towards the higher realm. "The commanding soul" (*al-nafs al-ammāra*) represents not traits that can be removed with one's union with the Divine and subsequent evolution, but rather aspects of the self that must be tamed and brought under the command of the rational faculty. It is not replaced by the tranquil soul (*al-nafs al-muṭmaʾinna*), representing the rational faculty, but rather co-exists with it.

Rāzī's cosmology, too, represents a unique mixture of diverse influences. While he employs the ubiquitous dichotomy between this world and the next, the lowly and the lofty, his understanding of this duality is rooted in the philosophical tradition's division between the material and the intelligible realms (in sharp contrast with the strict atomism of traditional Ashʿarite theology).[10] He most often describes this duality as "the loftier world" (*al-ʿālam al-ʿālā*) or "the loftier side" (*al-jānib al-ʿālā*), as opposed to the lowly world/side (*al-jānib al-suflī*)—terms that follow *The Theology of Aristotle*'s descriptions of the material and intelligible realities—and we find ample evidence in the *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt* for his understanding of this division as fitting within the material/immaterial, sensible/intelligible cosmology of the *falāsifa*. The knower, for instance, may "become accustomed to the true intellectual beauty" and realize, upon returning to the world of sense (*ʿālam al-ḥiss*), that anything that is beautiful is closer to the intelligibles (*al-ʿaqliyyāt*).[11] Al-Rāzī dismisses those pleasures which are immediately present (and sensible) as enticing but vacuous, whereas the true pleasure is that which is intellectual (*ʿaqliyya*).[12] Indeed, it is the soul's ultimate goal to become like a polished mirror turned to "the holy side," upon which are ever-etched "the pure engravings," the cause of these "intellectual pleasures (*ladhdhāt ʿaqliyya*)."[13] It is this world that al-Rāzī describes as "the holy world of separates" (*ʿālam al-mujarradāt al-qudsiyya*), a reality of intelligible beings abstracted beyond the material world.[14] While the Path

10. For an extensive discussion of al-Rāzī's cosmology, see Nora Jacobsen Ben Hammed, "As Drops in Their Sea: Angelology through Ontology in Faḫr al- Dīn al-Rāzī's *al-Maṭālib al-ʿāliya*," *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 29, no. 2 (2019): 185–206.
11. Al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt,* 2:628.
12. Ibid., 2:607.
13. Ibid., 2:620.
14. Ibid., 2:612.

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to the divine is by no means purely intellectual, the intellect itself is not a barrier to accessing this ultimate reality (though al-Rāzī's contemplation of the power and limitations of the intellect continues throughout his later corpus, and represents an irresolvable anxiety voiced on his deathbed).

Intimately connected to this material/immaterial cosmology is al-Rāzī's view of the *sirr,* the Sufi term for the innermost self employed by Ibn Sīnā and exposited by al-Rāzī. In his commentary on Ibn Sīnā's third reason for practicing *riyāḍa*, namely the "the refinement (*talṭīf*) of the innermost self (*al-sirr*)," al-Rāzī elides *sirr* with *dhihn*, the mind, and interprets the ultimate goals of this practice to be intellectual in nature. The attainment of "intellectual perception" (*al-idrākāt al-āqliyya*) requires the "refinement of the mind (*talṭīf al-dhihn*), stripping itself away (*tajrīdihi*) from moments of forgetfulness *(ghaflāt*), and fixing the gaze of the intellectual faculty *(al-quwwa al-ʿāqila*) on its goal, turning itself towards it."[15] The mind is the inner self (*sirr*) that must be refined, and it is this refinement through self-correction by way of *riyāḍa*, resulting too in the shifting of its inner locus towards its goal (i.e., the divine and the immaterial), that allows it to grasp absolute metaphysical truths.

Fundamental to this reframing of the innermost self is al-Rāzī's view of knowledge, which is simultaneously informed by and at odds with contemporary Sufi views of intellectual (*ʿilm*) versus spiritual (*maʿrifa*) knowing.[16] Al-Qushayrī, for instance, defines the *sirr* as that which allows for the vision of God (*al-mushāhada*), rather than knowledge (*al-maʿārif*), which is seated in the heart (*qalb*).[17] He also notes that *ʿilm* and *maʿrifa* are employed indiscriminately by scholars (*al-ʿulamāʾ*); Sufis are careful to distinguish these types of knowing.[18] *Maʿrifa* he describes as an advanced state of being in which God makes His secrets known (*taʿrīf*) to the practitioner; such a blessed seeker is then understood to be a knower (*ʿārif*) in a state (*ḥāl*) of *maʿrifa*.[19] In a similar vein, al-Hujwīrī (d. ca 465/1073) demarcates *maʿrifa* as being either cognitional (*ʿilmī*) or that which is, itself, a state (*ḥālī*).[20] In such handbooks, *maʿrifa* emerges primarily as a state of witnessing that is bestowed rather than grasped by the mind through meditative exercises.[21] In *maʿrifa*, one turns to God alone rather than to one's mind or heart. Al-Qushayrī writes:

> Just as the intelligent person (*al-ʿaqil*) turns to his heart, his contemplation, and his memory in dealing with all that arises for him, the knower (*al-ʿārif*) turns to his Lord. If he has been preoccupied with nothing save his

15. Ibid., 2:616.

16. For an expansive enumeration of definitions of knowledge in Sufism and in other disciplines in medieval Islam, see Franz Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant the Concept of Knowledge in Medieval Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 46–69.

17. ʿAbd al-Karīm ibn Hawāzin al-Qushayrī, *al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya fī ʿilm al-taṣawwuf* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1998), 155.

18. Al-Hujwīrī also writes that "Theologians, lawyers, and other classes of men give the name *maʿrifa* to the right cognition *(ʿilm)* of God, but the Sufi Shaykhs call right feeling (*ḥāl*) towards God by that name." ʿAlī Ibn-ʿUthmān al-Jullābī al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb: An Early Persian Treatise on Sufism*, trans. Reynold Alleyne Nicholson, New edition, reprinted with corrections (Havertown, PA: Gibb Memorial Trust, 2014), 267.

19. Al-Qushayrī, *al-Risāla al-qushayriyya*, 390. Similarly, al-Kalābādhī conveys that Junayd taught of two types of *maʿrifa*, one occurring through God's making Himself known to (*taʿarruf*) the elect, and the other of instruction (*taʿrīf*) to the majority of believers. Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Kalābādhī, *Kitāb al-Taʿarruf li-madhhab ahl al-taṣawwuf* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1933), 37.

20. Al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*, 267.

21. Al-Hujwīrī writes, for instance, "If reason were the cause of gnosis, it would follow that every reasonable person must know God, and that all who lack reason must be ignorant of Him, which is manifestly absurd." Al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*, 268.

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> Lord, he turns not to his heart. So, how can a notion enter the heart of one who has no heart?[22]

Maʿrifa is a certain kind of knowing, distinguished by being in the full presence of God to the exclusion of all else. It is explicitly separate from thought and reflection, for it is caused by God, and God alone. It contains no marker of the individual self that would distinguish the seeker as knower, and God as known.[23] *Maʿrifa* is, instead, an all-consuming witnessing through which the knower is unaware of all else save the Divine. *ʿIlm* appears as its opposite; in distinguishing the two, al-Hujwīrī writes that while *maʿrifa* is intimately connected to practice and one's state (*ḥāl*), *ʿilm* is knowledge which is lacking both.[24]

What role does the mind play in acquiring knowledge in such Sufi handbooks? As in every other aspect of the tradition, there is a wide variety of opinion. Al-Kalābādhī (d. ca 380/990), for instance, relays the view that the intellect is incapable of accessing God with the admission that it is still the necessary tool for acquiring knowledge, though it nonetheless must be enlightened by God to access the highest truths (and which it alone cannot perceive).[25] Al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) praises the intellect, too, as the source of all knowledge, while maintaining the necessity of coupling knowledge with practice.[26] At best, the intellect may only encounter God through God's grace and intervention. In the estimation of many, the intellect is utterly incapable of approaching God at all. It is bound to the world of creation and time—so how could it access the timeless Creator?[27]

How does al-Rāzī describe the knowledge that is the ultimate goal of the seeker? As was cautioned by a number of Sufi thinkers (though similarly unheeded by numerous others), he often fails to differentiate between *ʿilm* and *maʿrifa*, but focuses on knowledge of "the separates,"—i.e., of a metaphsical reality that approaches the Divine. In his introduction to his commentary on the *Ishārāt*, al-Rāzī writes:

> Know that intellects are in accord and minds in agreement that knowledge (*al-ʿilm*) is the most excellent of felicities, the most perfect of perfections and ranks, and that its possessors are the most excellent people in repute and the most handsomely clothed, the best of them in strength and stock, the highest of them in dignity and glory, most notably [the possessors of] the true knowledge (*al-ʿulūm al-ḥaqīqiyya*) and pursuits characterized by certainty (*al-maṭālib al-yaqīniyya*) which do not differ with variances in time and place, and do not change with the shifting of religious codes and religions. The most excellent of these is knowledge of existences abstracted from material reality (*al-ʿilm bi-l-mawjūdāt al-mujarrada ʿan al-mawādd*) which are far from faculty and preparedness (*al-*

22. Al-Qushayrī, *al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya*, 390.
23. See, for instance, al-Kalābādhī, *Kitāb al-Taʿarruf li-madhhab ahl al-taṣawwuf*, 40.
24. Al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*, 382. He further writes that Sufis go so far as to disparage the possessor of knowledge (*dānishmand*), not insofar as they possess knowledge, but insofar as their knowing is disconnected from practice, for "the *ʿālim* depends on himself, but the *ʿārif* depends on his Lord." Al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*, 383. On the dismissal of *ʿilm* as a barrier on the path of the seekers, see Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 140.
25. Al-Kalābādhī, *Kitāb al-Taʿarruf li-madhhab ahl al-taṣawwuf*, 39.
26. Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2005), 98–100.
27. For a range of opinions presented on the intellect and forms of knowing, see al-Kalābādhī, *Kitāb al-Taʿarruf li-madhhab ahl al-taṣawwuf*, 37–40.

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> *quwwa wa-l-istiʿdād*). For the difference between the ranks of knowledge derives from the variation in their objects. The more elevated the object of knowledge, the more beneficial is knowledge attained of it in the two abodes (*fī l-dārayn*). There is no doubt that the Self of God exalted, and His attributes, is the most perfect of existing things.[28]

Here, the highest goal is *ʿilm*, with no differentiation between one type of knowledge and another. Rather than distinguishing between an earthly knowledge (*ʿilm*) and a divine state of knowing (*maʿrifa*), al-Rāzī paints knowledge as a continuum the ranks of which are determined by the object, with the highest type of knowledge being that of the immutable. This, then, is the goal of *riyāḍa*: to come to know the immaterial reality by turning towards this lofty realm through spiritual practice and the assiduous pursuit of truth, ultimately losing one's sense of self and otherness entirely through complete and utter absorption in God. As we have encountered, the Path is not solely intellectual, but it also does not exclude, discard, or devalue intellectual ways of knowing. Instead, it integrates them as a key means towards this lofty goal.

One subpoint on the ability to express the nature of these states of unity with God is particularly telling of al-Rāzī's wedding of this immaterial reality with the intellect. On Ibn Sīnā's statement that "speech cannot convey, nor expressions explain" the arrival of the seeker (a justification in part for the brevity of the *Ishārāt*), al-Rāzī comments that this inability of speech to express the experience is due to the fact that "phrases have only been set to those intentions which have been conceptualized. As those stations [of the knower] have not been conceptualized by the linguists (*ahl al-lugha*), how could they have invented words for them?"[29] Further, he writes, even if they were to have produced words that express the experience, only those who had partaken in the experience could use those signifiers effectively. "It is known that the masses do not conceptualize those ranks; this being the case, it is impossible that the verbal expression (*al-ʿibāra*) successfully produce an understanding of those stations."[30] What is well worth noting is what al-Rāzī is not arguing. He does not say (as he well could have) that the experience is beyond the mind altogether, and therefore cannot be conceptualized or expressed in language at all given the gulf between the reality embodied and that which is comprehended and thus conceptualized by the intellect. He instead argues that the experience is "conceptualized" (*taṣawwara*) but only by an elite few, and thus it defies the conventions of language, which require universal experience of the signified to allow for universal signifiers.[31] Certainly, one who wishes to grasp this

28. Al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*, 1:1–2. Any awkwardness in translation is absent in the original Arabic, which focuses on stylistics more than literal meaning. The phrases rhyme in the Arabic and form a kind of loose panegyric to those possessors of this highest form of knowledge.

29. Al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*, 2:624.

30. Ibid.

31. Al-Rāzī rejects the theory of abstraction of essences as posited by Ibn Sīnā, proposing instead a theory of knowledge by presence in which knowledge is formed through a direct relation between the knower and object known. However, he continues to employ the term *taṣawwara* (to conceptualize) in the general sense of obtaining knowledge of an object. On al-Rāzī's theory of knowledge by presence and a comparison with al-Suhrawardi, see Eichner, "'Knowledge by Presence', Apperception and the Mind-Body Relationship: Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī and al-Suhrawardi as Representatives and Precursors of a Thirteenth-Century Discussion," 126. On further analysis of al-Rāzī's critique of abstraction and his alternative epistemological theory, see Bilal Ibrahim, "Faḫr Ad-Dīn Ar-Rāzī, Ibn al-Hayṯam and Aristotelian Science: Essentialism versus Phenomenalism in Post-Classical Islamic Thought," *Oriens* 41, no. 3–4 (2013): 379–431.

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reality must "become one of those who arrive at the source (*al-wāṣilīn ilā al-ʿayn*), not those who hear of its effects"—but this is due not to the inability of the mind to conceptualize the immaterial realm, but rather to the inherent limitation of conveying an elite experience through universal forms of expression.[32]

Types of Seekers

Thus, we see here and elsewhere in the commentary that al-Rāzī follows Ibn Sīnā in warning that the Path to the Truth is not universally tread. Yet al-Rāzī does not limit the ways of treading the Path to one, either; he not only divides the means to knowledge of God into the intellectual and the spiritual, but also the seekers of God into four types, each of whom benefits from different forms of *riyāḍa*.

In the second part of the ninth *namaṭ* of Ibn Sīnā's *al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt* entitled "On *riyāḍa* and its qualities," *al-Rāzī* begins with the qualification that the exact use of *riyāḍa* depends on the person's innate disposition (*fiṭra*) and outward development. Here, we immediately encounter al-Rāzī's concept of a two-fold way to knowledge, each buttressing the other, indicating an early synthesis of *al-falsafa* with *al-taṣawwuf* that is rooted in Aristotle's division between theoretical and practical intellect. For each type of person, *riyāḍa* is different. There is no single type of person – no universal human form—al-Rāzī writes, but rather different types that vary in their preparedness for this path. Al-Rāzī's descriptions of the various ways in which intellectual pursuits and innate dispositions intersect with *riyāḍa* inform us of the breadth of his term.

Neither the use, nor the effects, of *riyāḍa* are uniform. Al-Rāzī writes that "the effect of *riyāḍa* is nothing other than the removal of obstacles and the lifting of veils," but what is ultimately attained depends on the soul of the seeker. If the soul is well prepared (*mustaʿadda*), then it will benefit from riyāḍa in its pursuit of felicity (*saʿāda*), and if it is not, some degree of safety (*al-salāma*) is still available to it—for "when the bodily connections are reduced and weakened, the soul will not suffer after separation with a longing for the body."[33] *Riyāḍa* in some form is beneficial to all, but the types of *riyāḍa* prescribed depend upon the nature of the seeker.

The first type of person is one whose approach to the metaphysical is through the mind. Their assiduous devotion to the study of lofty topics has produced in them an orientation towards what al-Rāzī calls "the upper world," i.e., the immaterial realm. Al-Rāzī writes:

> They applied themselves to the metaphysical sciences (*al-ʿulūm al-ilāhiyya*), and strove in their study, arriving at (*wuṣūl ilā*) their intricacies with meticulous discernments and profound reflection, such that there came upon them an intense longing and complete attraction (*injidhāb*) towards the loftier side. Thus, their love of perfection carried them to *riyāḍa*.[34]

32. Al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*, 2:624.
33. Ibid., 2:606.
34. Ibid., 2:603.

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A few aspects of this concise description are well worth noting. The first is the description of the seeker applying themselves to, or "practicing" (*mārasa*), the metaphysical sciences. The study, then, must be active and all-consuming to produce the result of which al-Rāzī speaks. Secondly, the attraction to the lofty realm occurs *after* significant progress has been made in the study of metaphysics, an inner orientation that is righted due to the pursuit, and attainment, of higher truths.[35] And lastly, *riyāḍa* is not an immediate aspect of this path, but rather occurs after some degree of progress, enough that the import of the practice is recognized. It is the love of perfection and the realization of these higher truths that produces in these seekers a recognition of the role that *riyāḍa* plays in further progress.

The second type of person in al-Rāzī's taxonomy is one who is blessed with an innate nature (*fiṭra*) that draws them immediately to that which is lofty without the need for any kind of learning or critical inquiry. Whereas the knowledgeable person lacking in *fiṭra* is privy to quantitatively more unveilings through their devotions in *riyāḍa*, al-Rāzī writes that the ignorant yet naturally blessed accesses unveilings of higher quality (an assertion stated both in the *Sharḥ al-Ishārā*t as well in the *Maṭālib*).[36] Here too, *riyāḍa* supplements what is already present. The innate nature of these seekers, already turned towards what is lofty, is amplified by their use of *riyāḍa*.

The third type combines these two paths to knowledge in an ideal form, an amalgam of both innate capacity and outward application. "These, on the basis of their nature (*fiṭra*), are formed longing for the side of glory. That yearning was then perfected by concerted practice (*irtiyāḍ*) of divine signs (*al-maʿālim al-ilāhiyya*) and true investigations (*al-mabāḥith al-ḥaqīqiyya*)."[37] Combining the inborn attraction to the immaterial with devotion to *riyāḍa* and intellectual investigations, this ideal, though rare, person attains the highest reaches of perfection and felicity. In this ideal type, one witnesses a combination of inborn *fiṭra* with devotion to the higher truths of metaphysics. It is these blessed few who al-Rāzī elsewhere describes as "the venerated prophets (*al-anbiyāʾ al-muʿaẓẓamūn*) and the perfect sages (*al-ḥukamāʾ al-kāmilūn*)."[38]

The last type of person is void of both an innate disposition and outer refinement, yet they have heard enough of the perfection of this Path (*ṭarīqa*) and of the heights of human felicity associated with it that they were convinced of and drawn to it. For them, the focus is not internal but rather external; they must improve their actions and follow ethical behavior in the hopes of awakening from "years of negligence and the sleep of ignorance."[39] While al-Rāzī does not explicitly deny their use of *riyāḍa*, his later statement that one of the requirements for the benefits of *riyāḍa*

35. This particular order in the rationalist way is echoed in al-Rāzī's commentary on Sūrat Yūsuf in *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*. See Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-kabīr* (Cairo: al-Maṭbaʿa al-Bahiyya al-Miṣriyya, 1934), 18:111.

36. Al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*, 2:604. See also al-Rāzī, *al-Maṭālib al-ʿāliya,* 2:604.

37. Al-Rāzī, 2:603.

38. Al-Rāzī, *al-Maṭālib al-ʿāliya*, 7:280.

39. Al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt,* 2:605. A similar description of the first stage of awakening and repentance *(tawba)* is provided by al-Qushayrī, who writes that "at first, the heart awakens from the slumber of heedlessness and the servant becomes aware of his evil condition." Al-Qushayrī, *al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya,* 157. For extensive analysis of the theme of tawba in the Quran, and in the writings and narratives of early Sufis, see Atif Khalil, *Repentance and the Return to God: Tawba in Early Sufism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2018).

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is the soul's preparation and suitability for it implies that any person who has not already awakened an innate desire for perfection through the Path will find not benefit from its ways.[40]

Forms of *Riyāḍa*

In contrast with al-Rāzī's later works, we find an exploration of concrete practices in the *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt* as well as theoretical musings on how various forms of *riyāḍa* allow the seeker to disconnect from the material realm and purify themselves in pursuit of divine knowledge. In sections of his commentary on the ninth class (*namaṭ*) that treat *riyāḍa*, al-Rāzī discusses the practices of seclusion (*ʿuzla*), reflection (*fikr*), audition (*samāʿ*), and asceticism (*zuhd*), and merges Sufi tradition with philosophical psychology and cosmology in an amalgam that emerges as the hallmark particularly of his last magnum opus of philosophical theology, *al-Maṭālib al-ʿāliya*, completed between 603–605/1207–1209.[41]

This key dichotomy between intellectual and spiritual ways to approach God is primarily rooted in Aristotle's division between theoretical and practical knowledge. This is made explicit in al-Rāzī's *al-Tafsīr al-kabīr*, in which he contrasts theoretical with practical wisdom and states that "the companions of *al-riyāḍāt* are occupied with practical wisdom (*al-ḥikma al-ʿamaliyya*) then ascend to theoretical wisdom (*al-ḥikma al-naẓariyya)*, while the companions of intellectual thoughts and spiritual contemplations first reach theoretical wisdom, then descend from there to practical wisdom."[42] As we will see, each various form of *riyāḍa* is employed to promote inner harmony of the lower aspects of self with the rational faculty at the helm, meant to purify the seeker from desires towards the lower, material realm, and to increase one's "pull" towards the lofty reality. As such, despite the fact that the second way is described as that of spiritual practice and striving (*al-riyāḍa wa-l-mujāhada*), these practices are of key importance for *both* the intellectual and the spiritual approaches to the Path, aiding both the intellectual and the spiritual seeker in their pursuit of knowledge of the Divine.

The association between *riyāḍa* and the practical intellect in the *falsafa* tradition is noted by al-Ghazālī in his summary of philosophical terms and systems, *Miʿyār al-ʿilm fī l-manṭiq*. In his discussion of the theoretical and practical intellects, al-Ghazālī writes that the practical intellect (*al-ʿaql al-ʿamalī*), which is associated with the body and its desires, is strengthened by spiritual practice and striving (*al-riyāḍa wa-l-mujāhada*)—al-Rāzī's exact formulation describing the second path.[43] Al-Rāzī thus develops the impulse of his predecessors in intellectualizing Sufi *riyāḍa* as a development of the practice of philosophy as a way of life, providing a rich exploration of various types of Sufi *riyāḍa* to be employed in the dual intellectual-

40. Al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*, 2:605–6.
41. Eşref Altaş, "Fahreddin er-Razi Eserlerinin Kronolojisi," in *İslam düşüncesinin dönüşüm çağında Fahreddin er-Razi*, ed. Ömer Türker and Osman Demir (Istanbul: İSAM Yayınları, 2013), 154.
42. Al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-kabīr*, 18:111.
43. Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *Miʿyār al-ʿilm fī l-manṭiq*, ed. Ahmad Shamseddin (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 2013), 278.

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spiritual path to knowledge of God in his commentary on Ibn Sīnā's already syncretic *al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt.*[44]

ʿ*Uzla*

Seclusion from society (ʿ*uzla*) requires a certain degree of self-sufficiency and, for al-Rāzī, this comes not in the form of innate *fiṭra*, but rather in knowledge, "for there is no greater guide than knowledge (ʿ*ilm*)."[45] It is thus only prescribed for the first type of seeker (and, presumably, the third and ideal type). However, one who is ignorant is in danger of going astray if entirely alone – for this type, ʿ*uzla* is inappropriate.[46]

Al-Rāzī expresses no anxiety, however, about the danger one may pose to others, or that others may pose to the seeker, in advocating for the use of seclusion. This initial goal of guarding against one's own potential to harm others is emphasized in al-Qushayrī, who presents tales emphasizing the impurity of those who are at the beginning of their journey, and the use of seclusion as a means of protecting others from their untamed lower selves.[47] Alternatively, al-Ghazālī's section on ʿ*uzla* in *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn* emphasizes that it is a way to preserve oneself from the sinful habits of others, including slander and hypocrisy.[48] Al-Ghazālī, too, warns that there are both benefits, and dangers, associated with seclusion, depending on the seeker. One must have achieved a certain degree of education (for education can only be achieved in society) for seclusion to be an effective tool for self-purification and spiritual achievement. As is echoed in al-Rāzī, al-Ghazālī warns that without a sound mind and basic teachings, one will lose their way in seclusion from society.[49]

Unsurprisingly, while the initial goal of seclusion as treated by al-Qushayrī is self-purification, the ultimate goal of the practice is the achievement of greater intimacy with God.[50] In al-Ghazālī's consideration, this is achieved through the ability to devote oneself fully to acts of obedience, and to reflection and the cultivation of knowledge.[51] Al-Rāzī's larger view of the goals and efficacy of *riyāḍa* incorporate these sentiments, but his understanding of the use of seclusion is specific and unique. Far from dismissing the knower (*al-ʿālim*) as inferior and knowledge (ʿ*ilm*) as a false guide, he writes that the person who benefits from seclusion possesses "primary knowledge," the first principles that constitute the

44. For the iconic study of the ways in which Greek and Hellenic philosophy consisted not purely of discursive thought but also of bodily discipline and spiritual exercises, see Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, ed. Arnold Davidson, trans. Michael Chase (New York: Blackwell, 1995). For the continuation of this project through a rich exploration of the ways in which Islamic philosophy consisted, too, of the practice of spiritual exercise, see Mohammad Azadpur, *Reason Unbound: On Spiritual Practice in Islamic Peripatetic Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2011).

45. Al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*, 2:604.

46. Ibid., 2:604. Further, the need for a shaykh is also prescribed specifically for one who is not learned. Al-Rāzī, 2:606.

47. Al-Qushayrī, *al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya*, 170–72.

48. Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*, 692.

49. Al-Ghazālī, 702–4. Al-Qushayrī, too, warns of the dangers of seclusion for the impure and untrained. "One of the rules of seclusion," he writes, "is that one must acquire that knowledge by which one solidifies one's conviction in the oneness of God (in order not to be seduced by Satan's whisperings), then that knowledge of the Divine Law by which one may fulfill one's religious duties (such that what one's undertaking rests on a solid foundation)." Al-Qushayrī, *al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya*, 170.

50. Al-Qushayrī, *al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya,* 170.

51. Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn,* 692.

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building blocks of sound syllogistic reasoning.[52] In a significant break with the Sufi tradition, for al-Rāzī, seclusion provides the opportunity for uninterrupted reflection upon apodictic knowledge already achieved in order to produce further certain knowledge (a process of the production of theoretical knowledge which he details, too, in the introduction to his *Sharḥ*).[53]

Fikr

Reflection (*fikr*) is not explicitly prescribed for all types of seekers, but rather for the second type of person who is blessed with an innate *fiṭra* but who lacks knowledge. For these, both *fikr* and *samāʿ*, al-Rāzī writes, allow them to disconnect from the sensible realm (*al-maḥsūsāt*). They use these forms of *riyāḍa* to ignite a state of ecstasy (*wajd*) and longing (*ḥanīn*), becoming enveloped in spiritual states and holy reflections that cause them to further detach from the physical realm above their already natural propensity to incline towards the "loftier side" and away from the material.[54] In a separate discussion of "subtle reflection" (*al-fikr al-laṭīf*), al-Rāzī writes that thinking aids in the refinement of one's inner being (*talṭīf al-sirr*), assisting the intellect as it "fixes its gaze" upon its goal of attaining "intellectual graspings."[55] With practice, *fikr* becomes easy and itself refined (*laṭīf*), though it is remarkably difficult for novices.[56] Thus, just as in al-Rāzī's positive evaluation of Sufism in the *Iʿtiqādāt*, we see the twin goals emerge in the text of disconnecting from the sensible realm and refining the self through the use of reflection.

In these brief passages, *fikr* does not emerge as an examination of the conscience in the vein of Ḥasan al-Basrī or al-Muḥāsibī.[57] *Fikr* in al-Rāzī's explanation serves rather to disconnect from the material realm and to attain knowledge of the immaterial. While these are certainly not at odds with the Sufi tradition, they are also not entirely cohesive with explanations of *fikr* such as that of al-Ghazālī, who focuses on the use of *fikr* as a tool for self-examination and admonishment, and for reflection on the glory of the Creator, with the ultimate goal being the attainment of knowledge as that which informs virtuous action.[58]

52. On al-Rāzī's understanding of first principles and certain knowledge, see Nora Jacobsen Ben Hammed, "Meno's Paradox and First Principles in Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī," *Oriens* 48 (2020): 320–44.
53. Al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*, 1:4–5.
54. Ibid., 2:603.
55. Ibid., 2:616. Al-Hujwīrī, too, warns against heedlessness *(ghafla)*—a careless ignorance—as a severe obstacle to the cultivation of religion and morality. See al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*, 86.
56. Al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*, 2:616.
57. Louis Massignon, *Essay on the Origins of the Technical Language of Islamic Mysticism* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), 132.
58. See al-Ghazālī's chapter on *tafakkur* in al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*, 1798–1824.

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Samāʿ

As we have noted, al-Rāzī prescribes *samāʿ* and *fikr* for the second type of person who has an innate *fiṭra*—i.e., who is naturally drawn to the upper realm, and yet is ignorant of the ways and concepts of philosophy. *Samāʿ* is a communal, ritualized auditory and bodily practice, widespread by al-Rāzī's time; a non-discursive practice that, for al-Rāzī, taps into this potential through the use of rhythmic poetry and melody, employed with the goal of reigning in the lower faculties (primarily the appetitive and irascible aspects of the soul). Al-Rāzī speaks both of the practice of *samāʿ* (which he writes results "in ecstasy, longing, and moaning the likes of which are not found outside of the time of *samāʿ*"),[59] and of listening in general terms, writing that the seeker should be balanced in their speech and in their hearing, decreasing the amount that they talk (which al-Rāzī, longwinded himself, admits to be difficult) while focusing on those objects of audition that will aid them on the Path.[60]

Following Ibn Sīnā's lead in asserting the power of tune and lyric to render the commanding soul (*al-nafs al-ammāra*) obedient to the tranquil soul (*al-nafs al-muṭmaʾinna*), al-Rāzī writes that melody (and particularly that which is set with poetry, for exhortative speech is fundamental for the use of *samāʿ* in *riyāḍa*)[61] pulls the heart away from all else and towards that to which it already inclines. Used well, listening (*samāʿ*) brings forth feelings of longing for the Beloved in a unique way.

Al-Rāzī's recognition of the power of melody to draw the listener in multiple directions—towards the divine, or towards the worldly—echoes numerous Sufi handbooks.[62] Certainly, just as Abū ʿAlī al-Daqqāq maintained (as relayed by al-Qushayrī), when used by the common folk who "remain under the influence of their [lower] souls," listening to music is deleterious, while for ascetics who "engage in the spiritual struggle" it is permitted, and for others still, it is recommended.[63] Or, as Bundār b. al-Ḥusayn said, "There are those who listen by their [lower] nature, then those who listen by their spiritual state, and those who listen truly (*bi-l-ḥaqq*)."[64] For both the Sufi tradition and for al-Rāzī, the effects of *samāʿ* vary depending on one's temperament and spiritual advancement, as do the resulting states produced by the experience.[65]

Al-Rāzī writes that melodies themselves can be employed towards various means, and each variation affects different aspects of the self in divergent ways.

59. Al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt wa l-tanbīhāt*, 2:609. In addition to noting ecstasy (*wajd*) as a particularly emblematic state of one participating in *samāʿ*, al-Rāzī's reference to moaning signals that he has in mind not only listening in general terms but also the communal practice of the Sufis in which "a variety of inarticulate sounds . . . can be seen as symptomatic of dissociative states in which there is a greater or lesser relinquishing of conscious control over utterances and audible respirations." Kenneth S. Avery, *Psychology of Early Sufi Samāʿ: Listening and Altered States* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), 115.

60. Ibid.

61. While melody is important, al-Rāzī writes that the words set to the melody, or recited without melody, are the most powerful aspect of the experience which cause one to fully experience the greatness of God, for human beings are "of the [same] essence of the angels." Al-Rāzī, 2:613.

62. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, 181–82.

63. Al-Qushayrī, *al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya*, 418.

64. Ibid., 422.

65. See, for instance, al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*, 402–10; al-Kalābādhī, *Kitāb al-Taʿarruf li-madhhab ahl al-taṣawwuf*, 126.

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Some melodies dampen one's anger, and others are a remedy for anxiety and sorrow.[66] Thus, each melody should be employed to increase or decrease a particular state in a given stage. Regarding the efficacy of various melodies, al-Rāzī writes:

> If one were in the station of awe (*khawf*) of God Exalted, and we wished to increase that [in the seeker], then we would make them listen to heart-rending melodies (*alḥān shajiyya*). And if we wished to shift them into hope, we would make them listen to lively melodies (*alḥān muṭriba*); and if we wished to strengthen their soul such that it becomes overwhelming and masterful, we would make them listen to melodies suitable for that.[67]

Thus, melody itself is a tool—like many forms of *riyāḍa*—that can be used to shape the seeker's inner states.

Zuhd

In his commentary on the eighth section, al-Rāzī elaborates on the "acquired" (*muktasaba*) things necessary for *riyāḍa* to benefit the seeker, which he divides as either spiritual (*nafsāniyya*) or bodily (*badaniyya*). Here we see prescriptions for a life lived in moderation and balance much in line with the *akhlāq* genre exemplified by the writings of Miskawayh and al-Ghazālī, rather than in denial and asceticism.[68] Far from encouraging fasting and sleeplessness (as was practiced, often in the extreme, particularly by early Sufis as a means of training the lower self, the *nafs*),[69] al-Rāzī warns of the adverse effects of hunger on the mind and body.

His enumerations of various requirements here are clear and precise. The seeker should dispense with all excess, and correct that which is inescapable, namely, the senses. Excess can comprise a range of objects, including wealth but also honor and mastery over others, as well as even "knowledge (*al-ʿulūm*) that does not bring one closer to God Exalted."[70] This step is indeed difficult, al-Rāzī admits, because those pleasures which are present are enticing whereas "intellectual pleasure is absent . . . and unfamiliar."[71]

Al-Rāzī addresses how the seeker should treat the objects of each form of sense perception in succession. In much of his discourse, al-Rāzī emphasizes the importance of an internal harmony. One should seek to reduce the amount that one eats, but focus on what is nourishing, for "intense hunger produces weakness in the main organs, causing imbalance, which then disturbs the soul and muddles the mind."[72] While a tendency towards a middle way was common among his

66. This description of the effects of melodies regardless of their pairing with poetry echoes al-Ghazālī's note that "some sounds make one happy, while others make one sad; some evoke slumber, others incite laughter and delight, while still others elicit rhythmic movements from the limbs." Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn,* 746.

67. Al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*, 2:615.

68. See, for instance, al-Ghazālī's chapter on *riyāḍa* in the *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*, which stresses a popularized form of self-discipline characterized by moderation. Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*, 929–63. For a thorough discussion of virtue ethics in Miskawayh and al-Ghazālī, see Cyrus Ali Zargar, *The Polished Mirror: Storytelling and the Pursuit of Virtue in Islamic Philosophy and Sufism* (London: Oneworld, 2017), 79–105.

69. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, 114–17.

70. Al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*, 2:607.

71. Ibid.

72. Ibid.

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contemporaries, al-Rāzī's warning against intense hunger as deleterious for the mind's clarity and focus comes in direct contradiction with other Sufi valorizations of fasting. Al-Hujwīrī, for instance, writes in his section on fasting (*ṣawm*) that "hunger sharpens the intelligence and improves the mind and health."[73] For al-Hujwīrī, fasting is particularly useful as a means of taming the sensual aspects of the self.[74] For al-Qushayrī, too, hunger and fasting are characteristic of the Sufis. Though they differ in the extent of their adherence to these practices, "they have found the wellsprings of wisdom in hunger."[75]

Al-Rāzī further emphasizes inner harmony in his discussion of smells and climate, a key factor in the balance of the humors. He warns of putrid air and a variable climate, encouraging living in a vast desert with its unchanging environment "which acts as a remedy for any imbalance that occurs because of *riyāḍa*."[76] His discussions of sight and touch further stress moderation rather than asceticism. Rather than encouraging the use of dreary colors, al-Rāzī writes that bright colors support the spirit, gladden the heart, and delight the soul—it is these that should then be used, albeit simply, in one's clothing and home. He urges the seekers to take in the glorious visions of God's creation that expand one's knowledge of God, and discourages sights of pomp and circumstances that may lead one to desire earthly power and possessions. Regarding touch, he warns that while abstinence from sex is required if possible, for many it merely increases one's desire (a point made by al-Hujwīrī as well).[77] For such a person, marriage is preferable.

Al-Rāzī's focus on the importance of inner harmony comes to the fore in his emphasis on inner practice being the seeker's goal, aided only by the external. "Real asceticism" is that which is internal, and bodily asceticism is primarily meant to produce this inner alignment. Yet "external asceticism is necessary first in order for true [*asceticism*] to occur."[78] At this point, al-Rāzī writes that the external may even be dispensed with entirely as long as the inner devotion remains. Al-Rāzī's interpretation highlights a clear dialectic between the form and essence, external action and inner virtue. Just as al-Rāzī has described the taming of the senses not as a process of denial but rather one of refinement, he interprets Ibn Sīnā's phrase "true asceticism" to mean that which is purely internal, with outer asceticism, like other outer forms of spiritual practice (*riyāḍa*), being merely a means of producing an inner ethical mode of being.[79]

73. Al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*, 324.

74. Al-Hujwīrī writes, "The more the natural humours are nourished by food, the stronger does the lower soul become, and the more impetuously is passion diffused through the members of the body; and in every vein a different kind of veil is produced. But when food is withheld from the lower soul it grows weak, and the reason gains strength, and the mysteries and evidences of God become more visible until, when the lower soul is unable to work and passion is annihilated, every vain desire is effaced in the manifestation of the Truth, and the seeker of God attains to the whole of his desire." Al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*, 325.

75. Al-Qushayrī, *al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya*, 210.

76. Al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*, 2:610. The motif of the desert as a powerful and pure setting has deep roots in the Arabic tradition. It is relayed that the Prophet Muhammad, like other sons of wealthier families in Mecca, was sent to the Bedouins in the desert for a period of time to learn pure Arabic and be raised by a foster mother (Ḥalīma Bint Abī Ḏhuʾayb) in a climate thought to be healthier for young children. Interestingly, al-Rāzī also prescribes retreat to the desert as that which may strengthen the practitioner of magic in his treatment of the subject in *al-Maṭālib al-ʿāliya*. Al-Rāzī, *al-Maṭālib al-ʿāliya*, 8:166.

77. Al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*, 361.

78. Al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*, 2:611.

79. Al-Rāzī's emphasis on the importance of inner practice is by no means unusual and brings to mind al-Hujwīrī's

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The Goals of *Riyāḍa*

It is well worth noting that al-Rāzī follows Ibn Sīnā's lead in his intellectualization of Sufi *riyāḍa*. It is Ibn Sīnā who, in the third section of the ninth *namaṭ*, writes that the knower (*al-ʿārif*) employs worship as a habitual form of *riyāḍa* to draw their faculties away from the side of error to the side of Truth (*jānib al-ḥaqq*). As such, these lower faculties become subordinate to the innermost *sirr* and allow it to fully arrive at "the light of Truth" (*nūr al-ḥaqq*).[80] Further, while Dimitri Gutas and others argue that the object of conjunction (*al-ittiṣāl*) in Ibn Sīnā's *Ishārāt* is purely the Active Intellect, al-Rāzī's interpretation of the Truth (*al-ḥaqq*) as representing God alone is perfectly reasonable.[81] In the fifth section of the ninth *namaṭ*, for instance, Ibn Sīnā remarks:

> The knower seeks the First, the Real (*al-ḥaqq al-awwal*), not for anything else, and nothing compares to knowing It (*ʿirfānihi*). Their worship is to It alone, for It is deserving of worship. For [worship] is a noble relation to It—not for desire, nor for fear. If it were for the sake of these . . . the Truth would not be the end, but rather a means towards an end.[82]

Ibn Sīnā explicitly adopts *riyāḍa* as a necessary tool for the knower. Absorbed in transcendental moments (*awqāt*) through a combination of will (*irāda*) and the use of *riyāḍa*, the knower (*al-ʿārif*) comes to see the Truth in everything. By way of *riyāḍa*, the seeker becomes like a polished mirror turned towards the Truth, thus transforming and ultimately abandoning attention to all save the Truth.[83]

Ibn Sīnā's enumeration of three goals for the use of *riyāḍa* guides al-Rāzī's understanding of the utility of these forms of practice. In the eighth section of the ninth *namaṭ*, Ibn Sīnā writes:

> Furthermore, [the knower] needs *riyāḍa*. *Riyāḍa* is directed at three goals, namely: 1) The removal of influence from all other than God; 2) the obedience of the commanding soul (*al-nafs al-ammāra*) to the tranquil soul (*al-nafs al-muṭmaʾinna*), such that the faculties of the imagination and the estimation will be drawn to those ideas proper to the holy, and away from the lowly; and 3) the refinement (*talṭīf*) of the innermost self (*al-sirr*) to wakefulness. The first goal is aided by true asceticism (*al-zuhd al-ḥaqīqī*). The second is aided by a number of things, including worship accompanied by reflection (*al-fikra*), then tunes employed by the faculties of the soul to render speech set to melody acceptable to the mind, then, finally, the same exhorting speech from a pure speaker by smooth expression, a pleasant melody, and a right manner. All three goals are aided by subtle reflection and virtuous love that is led by the nature of the beloved and not by the reign of desire (*shahwa*).[84]

descriptions of the essence and the form of numerous Sufi practices. See, for instance, al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*, 38.

80. Al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*, 2:592.

81. On the interpretation of arrival signifying constant contact with the Active Intellect, see for instance Dimitri Gutas, "Intellect Without Limits: The Absence of Mysticism in Avicenna," in *Intellect et Imagination Dans La Philosophie Médiévale*, ed. M. C. Pacheco and J. Meirinhos, vol. 11 (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2006), 351–72; Michael A. Rapoport, "Sufi Vocabulary, but Avicennan Philosophy: The Sufi Terminology in Chapters VIII–X of Ibn Sīnā's *al-Išārāt Wa-l-Tanbīhāt*," *Oriens* 47, no. 1–2 (2019): 145–96.

82. Al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*, 2:598–99.

83. Ibid., 2:620.

84. Ibid., 2:605.

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Al-Rāzī's commentary follows Ibn Sīnā by considering each of the three goals of *riyāḍa* in succession. Briefly addressing the need to remove the influence of all other than God, al-Rāzī notes the requirement for "true asceticism." For al-Rāzī, as we have noted, "true asceticism" entails an internal mode of being that is formed first by external asceticism. The external form becomes superfluous once true asceticism is achieved, "for God does not look at your forms nor your acts but rather at your hearts."[85]

Rather than rendering Ibn Sīnā's text comprehensible within a traditional Sufi framework in his analysis of the second goal of *riyāḍa*, al-Rāzī follows Ibn Sīnā in interpreting these two Sufi terms through philosophy. "What is meant by the commanding soul (*al-nafs al-ammāra*)," al-Rāzī writes, "is the faculties of sensation, appetite (*shahwa*), and irascibility (*ghaḍab*), as well as imagination and estimation." Similarly, the tranquil soul (*al-nafs al-muṭmaʾinna*) is none other than "the rational faculty (*al-quwwa al-ʿāqila*) which seeks knowledge (*maʿrifa*) of God Exalted and love of Him."[86] As elsewhere, al-Rāzī supports his interpretation with the Quran and hadith, signaling his own agreement with Ibn Sīnā's ethics. Here, he quotes a hadith that relays that even the Prophet admitted to being born with a companion from Satan, as is every human being, which God alone can help the person overcome.

Given the inescapable difficulties of embodied life with the lower faculties which are tied to the sensual realm, is *riyāḍa* even possible? Al-Rāzī believes that it is, for he relays the sentiments of those who have arrived at the correct position (*al-muḥaqqiqūn*), who said:

> The goal of *riyāḍa* is *not* that the faculties of sensation, appetite, and irascibility come to seek that which is separated from matter (*al-ʾumūr al-mujarrada*) but rather that they neither overpower nor dominate the rational faculty. For if the rational faculty is not overcome by these faculties, its very nature is to turn towards the holy immaterial realm (*ʿālam al-mujarradāt al-qudsiyya*].[87]

Further, the imagination and estimation do not, by their nature, turn towards the sensibles, but can rather be bridled by either the lower faculties or by the rational faculty. "If what dominates in the person is disconnecting from this world, and turning towards God Exalted, then the activity [of the imagination and estimation] would follow such that one may even see the forms of angels in one's sleep."[88] The lower faculties must be, therefore, tamed and harnessed by the intellect through *riyāḍa* in order for it to fully turn towards the higher realm, but there is no expectation that these aspects of the self would either be abandoned in life, or would be made themselves to pursue the goals of the higher realm. Al-Rāzī reiterates that submission to the rational faculty is aided by different forms of *riyāḍa*, including: worship accompanied by reflection, with the goal being a remembrance of those separate beings; the use of melody; and exhortative speech spoken by a pure person in eloquent language (*bi-ʿibāra balīgha*).

85. Ibid., 2:611.
86. Ibid.
87. Ibid., 2:612. Emphasis added.
88. Ibid.

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The third goal stated by Ibn Sīnā is "the refinement (*talṭīf*) of the innermost self (*al-sirr*) to wakefulness." This al-Rāzī interprets to mean "making the innermost self prepared (*mustaʿadd*) to turn towards that direction (*qibla*)."[89] Al-Rāzī makes it clear that the ultimate attainments are intellectual, writing that "the intellectual graspings are preceded by refinement of the mind (*talṭīf al-dhihn*), stripping itself away (*tajrīdihi*) from moments of forgetfulness (*ghafalāt*), and fixing the gaze of the intellectual faculty (*al-quwwa al-ʿāqila*) on its goal ... a state that the intellect finds in reflection and thinking."[90] Thus the seeker employs *riyāḍa* to refine their inner self, further aided by reflection (*al-fikr*) that focuses the mind and by pure love (*al-ʿishq al-ʿafīf*) that heightens the seeker's attentiveness to their Beloved and propels their care over their own actions and speech.[91]

With greater devotion to practice (*al-irtiyāḍ*), the seeker experiences flashes (*lawāmiʿ*) of "pleasurable divine lights" (*anwār ilāhiyya ladhīdha*). As the seeker progresses, and with greater devotion to practice, these flashes or "moments" (*awqāt*) may appear even when they are not practicing *riyāḍa*. Following Ibn Sīnā's description in the sixteenth section, al-Rāzī writes of the soul becoming like a polished mirror turned to "the holy side" upon which are eternally rendered "the pure engravings" which are the reason for eternal "intellectual pleasures (*ladhdhāt ʿaqliyya*)."[92] Notable here is the emphasis on external practice as a preparatory stage, with the true experience being one that is internal, an ontological shift in the very nature of the seeker.

As the seeker disengages from their self, the experience turns from a "traveling to God (*sulūk ilā Allah*)" to attaining "complete arrival at God (*al-wuṣūl al-tāmm ilā Allah*)," that is, "being entirely beyond all that is other than God and residing (*baqāʾ*) entirely in Him, and as such actualizing *wuṣūl*."[93] While he retains the fundamental division between the lower world of sense and the intellectual world in which true beauty and goodness reside, he does not mention the Active Intellect, a key hypostasis in Ibn Sīnā's cosmology (which is also left unnamed by Ibn Sīnā in these sections of the *Ishārāt*).[94] Whereas al-Rāzī has elsewhere incorporated the philosophical vision of a separate intelligible realm and pleasure experienced by the intellect, here he replaces the contact with the Active Intellect to which Ibn Sīnā potentially refers by his use of *wuṣūl* with an arrival at and residing in God. The ultimate goal, writes al-Rāzī (and following Ibn Sīnā's eighteenth *faṣl*), is being completely absorbed in attention to God alone, cutting oneself off from all that is other than God, including one's pleasure in one's own arrival at God. There is no room here for the consideration of any other beings in this climax of the seeker's journey, no sensation beyond the pure and perfect felicity found in arriving at the Divine.

89. Ibid., 2:616.
90. Ibid.
91. Al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*, 2:616.
92. Ibid., 2:620.
93. Ibid.
94. Al-Rāzī writes, for instance, that the knower may "become accustomed to the true intellectual beauty" and realize, upon returning to the world of sense (*ʿālam al-ḥiss*), that anything that is beautiful is closer to the intelligibles (*al-ʿaqliyyāt*). Al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*, 2:628.

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In this ultimate goal of a complete absorption in the Divine, al-Rāzī's description of the station of "union" (*jamʿ*) fits well within the Sufi discourse of al-Rāzī's time. Of the ultimate goal of union, al-Qushayrī, for instance, writes:

> Thus, separation is witnessing all that is other than God Exalted; unification (*jamʾ*) is witnessing all that is other *through* God; and the unification of unification is utter self-dissolution [*in* God] and the annihilation (*fanāʾ*) of perception of anything other than God Exalted as Reality (*al-ḥaqīqa*) overwhelms.[95]

Al-Kalābādhī too writes of this narrowing—or alternatively, absolute broadening—of the perception of the seeker. He offers an image of dual receptivity in which the seeker reaches God, while simultaneously no other aspect of worldly existence reaches the seeker. "One of the great Sufis said, union (*al-ittiṣāl*) is when the servant witnesses none but his Creator, and when no thought reaches his inner self (*bi-sirrihi*) save that of his Maker."[96] Al-Hujwīrī also emphasizes a simultaneous narrowing and broadening of vision, writing that "shutting the eye to the phenomenal world leaves the spiritual vision subsistent." Al-Ghazālī echoes utter devotion as the essence of Sufism—"an expression of the heart's *singular* attention to God Exalted, and disdain for all else."[97] As al-Rāzī later affirms, reaching the stage of ultimate union entails a complete unawareness of a lesser reality.

The Path

Of particular interest regarding the Path to God is the final *faṣl* of the ninth *namaṭ* of the *Ishārāt* in which Ibn Sīnā writes that the Truth is accessible to only a few, and that the ignorant may find these sections of the *Ishārāt* laughable. Ending his commentary on the ninth *namaṭ*, al-Rāzī writes:

> What is meant is that there are only a very few who are worthy of this Path. Undoubtedly, the discussions contained in this section are laughable to the simple-minded. But let this be a warning: if one finds in one's heart aversion to this, then he should understand that that is due to his own deficiency, not to any deficiency in this matter. Truly, Aristotle said as much when he advised, "Whoever wishes to begin in this discipline (*ṣināʿa*) must invent another *fiṭra* for himself."[98]

Who, then, are those few who are able to tread this particular Path (themselves named using Sufi terms for seekers, including, *ṭālib*, *sālik*, and *murīd*)? Al-Rāzī's differentiation between various types of wayfarers, and the suitability of differing kinds of *riyāḍa* depending on the person, illustrates that there are few who would not benefit from *riyāḍa* at all. For any seeker who can progress along the path, some form of *riyāḍa* is essential to their preparation and progress, and may only be dispensed with (carefully, and if at all) once the heights of the experience of the Divine are achieved and maintained without continual practice.

95. Al-Qushayrī, *al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya*, 128. Emphasis added.
96. Al-Kalābādhī, *Kitāb al-Taʿarruf li-madhhab ahl al-taṣawwuf*, 79.
97. Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*, 719.
98. Al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*, 2:629.

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We find additional clues as to al-Rāzī's understanding of the ideal intellectual–spiritual path in his *Iʿtiqādāt firaq al-Muslimīn wa-l-mushrikīn* in which he elaborates on various types of Sufi groups, some of which he critiques and others of which he endorses. His descriptions are brief, but rich, and he is free with his opinion regarding the various approaches to the Sufi way. Al-Rāzī names one of the branches of the Sufis "The Companions of the Truth (*ḥaqīqa*)," and writes that they are "the best group of all humanity."[99] "They are a group," he writes, "who, when they complete their religious duties, do not commence to complete supererogatory acts of worship but rather occupy themselves with reflection (*fikr*) and the abstraction of the soul (*tajrīd al-nafs*) from bodily associations."[100] In his introduction to his commentary on the *Ishārāt*, al-Rāzī clarifies that it is "the soul's abstraction from the lowly bodily connections" that allows it "to be adorned with the embellishment of the Truth, the immaterial forms thus revealed to it (*tajallī la-hā*)."[101] His emphasis on intellectual pursuits is further illustrated in the *Iʿtiqādāt* when he describes a group who have lost their way by subscribing to incarnation (*ḥulūl*)—a note of caution that also appears in the *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*.[102] These folk "lack the abundance of the rational sciences (*al-ʿulūm al-ʿāqliyya*), and thus they imagined (*yatawahhamu*) that there occurred in them incarnation (*al-ḥulūl*) or divine identification (*al-ittiḥād)*."[103] Thus, al-Rāzī maintains that the ideal path combines not only the spiritual practices characteristic of the Sufis, but also the intellectual pursuits of the philosophers.

Al-Rāzī's melding of philosophical and Sufi conceptions of the same Truth is explicit in the *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*. In his explanation of the nineteenth *faṣl* of the ninth *namaṭ*, in describing one of the stages of the ascent, he provides both the philosophical and Sufi terminology. He writes:

> In the tongue of the Philosophers (*al-falāsifa*), they are "the degrees of negative practices (*darajāt al-riyāḍāt al-salbiyya*),"[104] and in the tongue of the True Sufis (*muḥaqqiqī al-ṣūfiyya*), they are "the levels of being shaped by the characteristics of Majesty." "The degrees of positive practices (*darajāt al-riyāḍāt al-ījābiyya*)" are called by the True [Sufis] "rising through the ranks of beauty," this being molded with the noble manners of God to the degree possible for the human being. That is, the human being becomes benevolent, beneficent, gentle, and compassionate, this being the station (*maqām*) of union (*jamʿ*).[105]

While the terminology cited by al-Rāzī differs, the signified remains the same. Al-Rāzī's cosmology is a melding of the philosophical and theological, recognizing the material and immaterial realities presented by the philosophical tradition yet with union with God being the ultimate goal of the seeker's journey. For al-Rāzī, *jamʿ*

99. Al-Rāzī, *Iʿtiqādāt firaq al-Muslimīn wa-l-mushrikīn,* 73.
100. Ibid., 72–73.
101. Al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt,* 1:5.
102. Al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt,* 2:606.
103. Al-Rāzī, *Iʿtiqādāt firaq al-Muslimīn wa-l-mushrikīn,* 73.
104. In Ibn Sīnā's *Kitāb al-Hidāya,* he describes moderation (*al-tawassuṭ*) of one's lower faculties as in some sense "negative" (*salbun min wajh*) because it allows the soul to fully separate from the body and experience eternal pleasure, receiving the full impression of the eternal beauty of the intelligible realm. Abū ʿAlī Ḥusayn Ibn Sīnā, *Kitāb al-Hidāya,* ed. Muḥammad ʿAbduh (Cairo: Maktabat al-Qāhira al-Ḥadītha, 1974), 305.
105. Al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt,* 2:622.

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(union) signifies a "complete absorption" (*istighrāq tāmm*) in the Divine such that one's attention to all else fades to nonexistence; along with *farq* (separation), he writes, it is a key concept (though interpreted in many ways) common to all Sufis.[106]

That true Sufis tread the Path to God is obvious. But what of the philosophers? We may return to his initial taxonomy of the four kinds of "seekers of the Path (*ṭarīqa*)" to further probe the way in which al-Rāzī understands philosophical pursuits to be part and parcel of the Path to God. Again, the first type of seeker is one who "practiced" metaphysics such that they were drawn to the loftier realm and carried, ultimately, to the practice of *riyāḍa*.[107] In the initial taxonomy, al-Rāzī fully incorporates those who arrive at a super-rational connection with God through study of metaphysics into the Path.

Al-Rāzī chooses, too, to conclude his commentary on these sections on the stations of the seekers and the use of *riyāḍa* with a quote which he attributes to Aristotle: "Whoever wishes to begin in this discipline (*ṣināʿa*) must invent another *fiṭra* for himself."[108] This quotation resurfaces as a favorite in other works; in *Taʾsīs al-taqdīs,* written roughly twenty years after the *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt,*[109] al-Rāzī concludes his first chapter on the inability of the senses to prove the existence of God with the same quotation, which he there attributes to Aristotle's book on metaphysics (*al-ilāhiyyāt*),[110] and we will later discuss the citation of the same saying in his discussion of *riyāḍa* in his last work, *al-Maṭālib al-ʿāliya*. We may speculate that the meaning of this new *fiṭra* is the turning, particularly of the intellectual seeker, towards the immaterial realm; in some, this orientation is innate, while in others, this new *fiṭra* is formed and developed through assiduous study accompanied, subsequently, with the use of *riyāḍa*.

In the continuous emphasis on this saying of the great Stagirite, al-Rāzī implies that Aristotle, too, was a seeker on this Path. Such an open-minded vision of the Path is stressed from the very beginning of al-Rāzī's commentary, as he states in his introduction that the best of all humanity are those in possession of "true knowledge (*al-ʿulūm al-ḥaqīqiyya*) and certain pursuits (*al-maṭālib al-yaqīniyya*) which do not differ with variances in time and place, and do not change with the shifting of religious codes and religions."[111] Indeed, while the Divine object is singular and the Path moves in one direction, the ways are many.

Not all philosophers are welcomed into this elite fold. For one, the ultimate goal is not the knowledge of God itself, but purely God; knowledge of God is merely a means to the Divine.[112] Knowledge, too, can be a form of excess, when what is

106. Ibid.
107. Ibid., 2:603.
108. Ibid., 2:629.
109. Altaş dates *Taʾsīs al-taqdīs* to 598/1202, and Griffel to 596/1199–1200. Altaş, "Fahreddin er-Razi Eserlerinin Kronolojisi," 153; Frank Griffel, "On Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's Life and the Patronage He Received," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 18, no. 3 (2007): 344.
110. Al-Rāzī, *Asās al-taqdīs* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Kulliyyāt al-Azhariyya, 1986), 25. I have not been able to find this quotation in extant translations of the Metaphysics which are preserved in Ibn Rushd's *Tafsīr*. On the translations of the *Metaphysics* into Arabic (extant and not extant), see Amos Bertolacci, "On the Arabic Translations of Aristotle's Metaphysics," *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 15, no. 2 (2005): 241–75.
111. Al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*, 1:1–2.
112. Ibid., 2:623. In this, al-Rāzī follows Ibn Sīnā, who states in the twentieth section of the ninth *namaṭ* that "he who

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amassed does not feed one's striving towards the immaterial and the divine.[113] The division between rationality and wisdom is further emphasized in al-Rāzī's consideration of the intellectuals' (*al-ʿuqalāʾ*) doubt of the efficacy of *riyāḍa*, as opposed to the view of those who have achieved truth (*al-muḥaqqiqūn*) on the matter. There, however, the *muḥaqqiqūn* endorse the philosophical ethics and psychology by which the external senses and the irascible and concupiscent faculties must be made submissive to the rational faculty, realizing that *riyāḍa* is a means to ensure the intellect's domination of lower aspects of the self.[114]

Not all philosophers, then, are wayfarers—and not all wayfarers are philosophers. The second type of seeker is unstudied and naïve, and yet their innate *fiṭra* naturally inclines towards the upper realm, a leaning further refined by certain types of *riyāḍa* (such as *samāʿ* and *fikr*) and the guidance of a true Shaykh. At some points in his commentary, we see al-Rāzī referencing traditional Sufi figures as authorities in the Path. In doing so, he is following Ibn Sīnā's lead. When Ibn Sīnā refers to Sufi terminology, he frames it in the third person plural ("they say," "they call this," etc.). In his commentary upon the text, al-Rāzī attributes these references to "the companions of this path."[115] This does not confer absolute reliability, for some "companions of *riyāḍa*" have gone astray from the Path and thus suffered from such false imaginings as incarnation (*al-ḥulūl*) and divine identification (*al-ittiḥād*), and some supposed shaykhs are in fact false peddlers of religion.[116] Al-Rāzī does reference, though sparsely, stories of Sufis past, and quotes some sayings of those to whom he refers as True wayfarers, though often without attribution—an unusual choice when it comes to relaying stories of the Sufi masters.[117]

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prefers knowledge (*ʿirfān*) for its own sake [stops short of the One]. Yet he who finds knowledge (*ʿirfān*) as if it is not found, but rather finds purely the object of knowledge, delves into the depths of arrival (*wuṣūl*)." Al-Rāzī, 2:623.

113. This sentiment echoes that of al-Hujwīrī, who balances a valuing of knowledge and warnings of the danger of ignorance with the simultaneous admonition that knowledge must always be coupled with action (and vice versa). Knowledge is obligatory insofar as it aids in correct action, yet so too should useless knowledge be avoided. Al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb,* 11. While much of al-Qusharyī's *al-Risāla fī ʿilm al-taṣawwuf* is devoted to the veneration of knowledge, this is either the specific type of knowledge (*ʿilm*) that informs correct belief and practice, or it is the cognition (*maʿrifa*) of God that is the goal of Sufi practice. Al-Ghazālī, later influenced by both seekers, warns too of spiritually useless knowledge in the *Kitāb al-ʿilm* of his *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*. He admonishes that only knowledge that is beneficial for the hereafter, and that draws one to acts of obediences (*ṭāʿāt*), should be pursued. Knowledge that is unconnected to this spiritual aim, and that instead encourages worldly debates, should be avoided.

114. Al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*, 2:612.

115. See also al-Rāzī's treatment of the term *awqāt* in the ninth section, ibid., 2:617.

116. Al-Rāzī, 2:606. Al-Rāzī's denial of *ḥulūl* and *ittiḥād*, and his implicit critique here of al-Ḥallāj's legacy (though received more positively in his *Tafsīr*), echoes al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn,* in which he remarks that the stage of unveilings in which one's self becomes like a mirror of the Divine can lead to the "imagining (*khayāl*) of those who claim incarnation (*ḥulūl*) and divine identification (*ittiḥād*), and say, 'I am the Real' (*anā al-ḥaqq*)." Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn,* 765.

117. In his treatment of the fifteenth section, for instance, al-Rāzī writes, "Those who have realized the Truth (*al-muḥaqqiqūn*) of this Path said, 'We have seen nothing after which we did not see God.' And when they ascended a bit, they said, 'We saw nothing with which we did not see God.' They ascended a bit more, then said, 'We saw nothing before which we did not see God.' They then ascended to the point at which they saw nothing save God." Al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt,* 2:619. A similar description of levels of vision of seeing God in, or before, all else perceived is to be found in al-Kalābādhī; see al-Kalābādhī, *Kitāb al-Taʿarruf li-madhhab ahl al-taṣawwuf,* 38. Al-Rāzī's primary sources for the handful of stories that he relays are likely al-Qushayrī and al-Ghazālī. He quotes al-Qushayrī's tale of Majnūn banī ʿĀmir word for word; see al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt,* 2:616; al-Qushayrī, *al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya,* 400. He also paraphrases a story (a clever quip about the buying of cucumbers) told by both, though its phrasing is closer to that of al-Ghazālī; see al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt,* 2:617; al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn,* 755; al-Qushayrī, *al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya,* 427.

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Continued Influence and Development on *Riyāḍa*

Al-Rāzī's commentaries on Ibn Sīnā's works are in some ways problematic. It is difficult at times to decipher whether al-Rāzī is giving his own opinion or merely elucidating what he understands to be Ibn Sīnā's position. Yet there are clues, even before we look to al-Rāzī's absorption of these ideas in his later works, that he fully endorses the use of *riyāḍa* to strengthen the mastery of the rational soul in an intellectual-spiritual Path that leads one through the upper realm and to God.

Al-Rāzī introduces *al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt* as a text that is dense, terse, and obscure, but that also contains wonderous wisdom. The task of mining the secrets of this work is one taken up and failed by many, and it represents a challenge to which al-Rāzī rises after, he notes, having already studied much of Ibn Sīnā's corpus.[118] Beyond his general praise for the *Ishārāt,* the ninth *namaṭ* stands apart as particularly worthy of al-Rāzī's interest. Describing this section in his later summary of the *Ishārāt (Lubāb al-Ishārāt),* he writes, "This chapter does not readily accept being excerpted, for it is already truly excellent. And what are the most beautiful parts of a thing that is entirely beautiful? We have, however, still gleaned the choicest sections of it."[119]

His explorations in these sections of the *Ishārāt* grant an interpretation that is entirely centered within al-Rāzī's, rather than Ibn Sīnā's, cosmology—this being a view that fully incorporates philosophical, theological, and Sufi concepts and ideas. Al-Rāzī adopts the philosophical understanding of distinct sensible and intelligible realms with the human being existing in between these worlds, and advocates for the use of *riyāḍa* to achieve closeness to God. The ultimate goal is not to arrive at uninterrupted conjunction with the Active Intellect to actualize a pure state of knowing (as some have interpreted the object of Ibn Sīnā's text to be), but rather the pure arrival at the Divine, losing consciousness of all else.

We also find meaningful developments in later texts that indicate the long life of the ideas explored in his *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt.* Written over twenty years after his *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt,* al-Rāzī echoes many of the same notions regarding the various natures of human beings in these holy pursuits, and the use of *riyāḍa* to aid one in the Path, in *al-Maṭālib al-ʿāliya.* In a section of the introduction to the *Maṭālib* devoted to the question of paths (*ṭarīqa*) to holy cognitions, al-Rāzī explicitly divides the way (*ṭarīq*) into two routes (*wajhayn*) as revealed to "the masters of insight" (*arbāb al-baṣāʾir*). The first is the path (*ṭarīqat*) of the companions of theoretical inquiry and inferential reasoning (*al-naẓar wa-l-istidlāl*), and the second is the path (*ṭarīqat*) of the companions of spiritual practice and striving (*al-riyāḍa wa-l-mujāhada*).[120] The first path is explicitly those of the philosophers, the "sages of metaphysics" who infer the existence of the Necessary of Existence by virtue of its Essence (*wājib al-wujūd li-dhātihi*) from the states of the contingent beings (*al-mumkināt*). Describing the second path of those who employ *riyāḍa*, al-Rāzī writes:

118. Al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt,* 1:2.
119. Al-Rāzī, *Lubāb al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Kulliyyāt al-Azhariyya, 1986), 187.
120. Al-Rāzī, *al-Maṭālib al-ʿāliya,* 1:53.

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> It is the verified, conquering, wondrous path, for if the human being labors in purifying (*bi-taṣfiya*) their heart of the invocation (*dhikr*) of not-God (*dhikr ghayr illāhi*), and persists with the tongue of both their body and their spirit in the invocation (*dhikr*) [of God], light, illumination, an overpowering state, and a lofty power occur in their heart, and lofty lights and divine secrets are revealed to the substance (*jawhar*) of the soul.[121]

As in the *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt,* al-Rāzī writes of the varying innate capacities for these holy pursuits, with some naturally inclining towards the spiritual realm, and others towards that which is lowly and material. He compares these innate natures to the contents of mountains, with some harboring deposits of various types of material, from the precious to the base, and some void of any deposits entirely. Depending on the value of their innate natures, *riyāḍa* may prove much work and little gain—yet it is still the tool of choice by which to mine the valuable spiritual inclinations and cognitions within.[122]

In this section of the *Maṭālib* in which al-Rāzī describes the inculcation of innate inclination towards the immaterial, al-Rāzī refers to the same quote from Aristotle as is cited in the conclusion of his commentary on the ninth *namaṭ* of the *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*. In the *Maṭālib*, he writes:

> Aristotle said that whoever wishes to begin seeking these divine cognitions (*al-maʿārif al-ilāhiyya*) must invent another *fiṭra* for themself. His intending meaning is that the person exerts themselves in abstracting their intellect from the connections of sensation, estimation, and imagination.[123]

A clear continuation between the *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt* and al-Rāzī's last work is evident in this section, both in the use of the same saying and in the framing of *riyāḍa* as working to subordinate the lower faculties to the intellect. The parallels continue in the *Maṭālib,* as al-Rāzī details the soul's disengagement with the body and the material realm in the second station to allow it to become occupied solely with God.

As in the *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt,* in which al-Rāzī writes that the ideal seeker combines the metaphysical pursuits with innate capacity, in the *Maṭālib*, he notes that the ideal way combines the path of theoretical inquiry with that of *riyāḍa*. He writes:

> As for the third station of those considered in this matter: if the master of *riyāḍa* were lacking the path (*ṭarīq*) of theoretical inquiry (*al-naẓar*) and inferential reasoning (*al-istidlāl*), then perhaps, in [their traversing] the degrees of *riyāḍāt*, powerful unveilings and lofty, overpowering states may be revealed to them, which they would be convinced represented the absolute end of the unveilings, and the terminal states of the degrees [of cognitions]. And that [conviction] would become a hindrance for their arriving at that which they seek. But if they were to practice the path (*ṭarīqat*) of theoretical inquiry (*al-naẓar*) and inferential reasoning (*al-istidlāl*), and were to distinguish the station that is impossible from that which is possible, they would be preserved from this deception. If the person were destined to be perfect in the path of intellectual reasoning,

121. Ibid., 1:54.
122. Ibid., 1:55–56.
123. Ibid., 1:57.

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> was blessed with perfection in the path of self-purification (*al-taṣfiya*) and *riyāḍa*, and their soul was innately (*fī mabdaʾ al-fiṭra*) supreme in aptness for these states, then that human being would reach the absolute heights in these paths of ascent. It was transmitted from Aristotle that he said, "I was drinking without being sated. When I drank from this sea, I was sated with such satisfaction that after that there was no thirst."[124]

Thus, al-Rāzī's explorations in the *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt* of two ways on the Path to God are born out again in his last work. While he does not detail the kinds of *riyāḍa* to be practiced in the *Maṭālib*, we may look back to the *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt* for clues as to the types of Sufi practices that he theorized one could adopt to produce the inner harmony required for the fullest achievements of these metaphysical pursuits.[125]

Conclusion

Al-Rāzī's development of a two-fold path to knowledge of God accessible through both the intellect and spiritual striving integrates *riyāḍa* as a fundamental practice for both the intellectual and spiritual ways on the Path to God. While a source of tension in his later writings, al-Rāzī maintained the possibility in his *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt* for the intellect, when aided by *riyāḍa*, to delve into the Divine presence and attain the singularly transformative knowledge of God.

The power ascribed to the intellect when combined with *riyāḍa* proved the source of considerable tension with contemporary Sufi thinkers.[126] Included in the polemic against al-Rāzī is one popular story that al-Rāzī searched out the great Sufi Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā (d. 618/1221) and asked that he guide him, yet when al-Kubrā began to extract al-Rāzī's knowledge that he had gained by book learning from his soul, al-Rāzī could not abide it and fled.[127] While the details of such a meeting are of doubtful authenticity, we do have access to two letters written to al-Rāzī by two important Sufi thinkers of the time, Ibn ʿArabī (d. 638/1240) and Shihāb al-Dīn ʿUmar al-Suhrawardī (d. 632/1234). In his letter to al-Rāzī, al-

124. Ibid., 1:58–59.

125. Al-Rāzī does, however, write in the *Maṭālib* of dietary restrictions as a tool for self-purification. One who seeks to perfect this science must be vegetarian, and should also limit intake of bread, salt, and vegetables, for limiting enjoyment of food allows the soul to separate from this-worldly desires and to return to its original nature (*fiṭra*). Ibid., 8:164.

126. As Rustom notes, al-Rāzī had "become a sort of representative of the excessively cerebral scholar who was blind to spiritual truths because he could not see past his bookishness." Mohammed Rustom, "Ibn ʿArabī's Letter to Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī: A Study and Translation," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 25, no. 2 (2014): 115. For instance, while also recognizing his intellectual prowess, Rūmī's (d. 672/1273) spiritual guide, Shams-e Tabrizi, dismissed al-Rāzī as the most arrogant of apostates, for al-Rāzī would say "Mohammed-e Tāzi"—Mohammed the Arabian, i.e., the Prophet—"says this, and Mohammed-e Rāzī says thus" (Rūmī M4:3354–7 as translated in Franklin Lewis, *Rumi: Past and Present, East and West* (Oxford; Boston: Oneworld, 2000), 58). Rūmī himself alludes to al-Rāzī as a prideful hyper-rationalist in two poems in his *Masnavi*. In the first, he refers to "the philosopher" who repented on his deathbed (as al-Rāzī debatably did, but famously so, in his *waṣiyya*) and admitted that "We charged our mental steed too hard and fast / In pride we raised our head above all men / and swam in vain imagination's sea / But nothing here, in the vast sea of soul, / can swim; Noah's ship's the only savior." (M4:3354–7, Lewis, 59). The second refers to al-Rāzī by name. Rūmī writes: "If reason clearly saw its way along, / then on faith's truth had Rāzī zeroed in! But 'he who has not tasted does not know,' / and so his fancy reason just confused him" (M5:4144–5, ibid.). Nor did Bahāʾ al-Dīn (d. 661/1262) approve of al-Rāzī, specifically finding fault with his closeness to various rulers; Bahāʾ al-Dīn referred to both al-Rāzī and the Khwarazmshah as theological "deviants" (*mobtadeʿ*) (Bah 1:82, 245–6, ibid.).

127. Rustom, "Ibn ʿArabī's Letter to Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī," 1. Shihadeh treats two accounts of this meeting, one recorded by Muṣannifak, a descendent of al-Rāzī, and another by Ibn Taymiyya, who relied on the account of al-Maqdisī. He concludes that there can be little doubt that al-Kubrā and al-Rāzī did meet at an earlier stage in al-Rāzī's life, though he doubts that this had a lasting influence on al-Rāzī's later Sufi developments. See Shihadeh, "The Mystic and the Sceptic in Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī," 103–6.

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Suhrawardī subtly exhorts al-Rāzī to join knowledge with action, and action with knowledge; his intellectual understanding should not exist abstracted from the world but should be manifested as lived expression. He also writes against apodictic demonstration in favor of observing the rites of the community, saying, "For apodictic demonstration (*burhān*) is for thoughts, and witnessing (*ʿiyān*) is for [divine] secrets. No demonstration-sign (*burhān dalāla*) nor demonstration-reason (*burhān ʿilla*), but rather, observance is for the rites (*shaʿāʾir*) of the community (*umma*)."[128] He stresses humility, writing that one must undergo exoneration and atonement to ascend the ladder of apology, and only then dive into the secrets of the divine.[129]

Ibn ʿArabī's letter to al-Rāzī explicitly chastises him for theorizing the intellect's access to God through discursive thought. He echoes al-Rāzī's impulse that obtaining knowledge is the height of human perfection,[130] but writes that he should not waste his life in the pursuit of knowledge (*maʿrifa*) of that which is created and its intricacies. Ibn ʿArabī exhorts al-Rāzī to recognize the weakness of the single human intellect, and its inability to ascend to the Creator through rationality alone. Knowledge of God is different from knowledge of the existence of God, and "God (great and glorious) is too exalted to be known by the intellect's [powers of] reflection and rational consideration (*naẓar*). An intelligent person should empty his heart of reflection when he wants to know God by way of witnessing (*mushāhada*)."[131] Specifically addressing al-Rāzī's understanding of the mechanics of divine inspiration, Ibn ʿArabī insists that the intellect, whose knowledge is illuminated through the Universal Soul (*al-nafs al-kulliyya*), is a poor substitute for knowledge of God revealed through unveiling (*kashf*). Further, knowledge of God cannot be attained by the intellect; one should rather commit oneself to "the path (*ṭarīq*) of self-discipline (*riyāḍa*), inner-struggle (*mujāhada*), and spiritual retreat (*khalwa*)."[132]

Ibn ʿArabī's letter goes to great lengths to convince al-Rāzī by a number of arguments attempting to illustrate that his faith in the power of rationality is misplaced. The letter firstly clarifies Ibn ʿArabī's own understanding of the role of intellect as well as the trend among Sufis of limiting the role of intellectual inquiry in spiritual practice. Yet it also serves as confirmation that even in his own lifetime, al-Rāzī was perceived to be actively attempting to merge the spiritual with the intellectual in his pursuit of knowledge of the divine.[133]

128. Nasrollah Pourjavady, *Dū mujaddid: pizhūhish-hāʾī dar bāra-yi Muḥammad-i Ghazzāli va-Fakhr-i Rāzī* (Tehran: Markaz-i Nashr-i Dānishgāhī, 2002), 516.

129. Ibid.

130. Ibn ʿArabī writes, "My friend (God grant him success) already knows that the beauty of the human subtle reality (*al-laṭīfa al-insāniyya*) can only be [attained] through the divine knowledge (*al-maʿārif al-ilāhiyya*) that it bears, while its ugliness is the opposite of this." Mohammed Rustom, "Ibn ʿArabī's Letter to Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī," 16; Ibn ʿArabī, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil Ibn ʿArabī*, ed. Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn ʿArabī al-Ḥātimī al-Ṭāʾī (Beirut: Dār al-Maḥajja al-Bayḍāʾ, 2000), 1:608.

131. Rustom, Mohammed, "Ibn ʿArabī's Letter to Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī," 17; Ibn ʿArabī, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil Ibn ʿArabī*, 1:609.

132. Rustom, Mohammed, "Ibn ʿArabī's Letter to Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī," 20; Ibn ʿArabī, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil Ibn ʿArabī*, 1:615.

133. As Shihadeh has noted, the letter also portrays al-Rāzī as one plagued by uncertainty, as it includes an anecdote relayed by a trusted mutual acquaintance who witnessed al-Rāzī weeping due to recognizing the falsity of a position he had held for thirty years, and thus becoming plagued by self-doubt. Shihadeh, "The Mystic and the Sceptic in Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī," 102–3.

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Such contemporary accounts of al-Rāzī help us to clarify both his intersections with other thinkers, and his innovations. He pursued an active merging of philosophy with Sufism, carefully considering the ways in which Sufi forms of *riyāḍa* can strengthen the intellect's control over lower, material aspects of the self as per Avicennian psychology, and increase its access to the intelligible realm, as per Neoplatonic cosmology. In its melding of Sufi concepts with the psychology and cosmology of the *falāsifa*, al-Rāzī's commentary on the *Ishārāt* is far more nuanced than previously noted. These sections of his commentary further underscore the importance of Ibn Sīnā as a spiritual and intellectual leader for al-Rāzī, as the intellectual-spiritual *ṭarīqa* encompassed in the *Ishārāt* left a lasting imprint on the development of al-Rāzī's particular philosophical theology.

The merging of Sufi concepts and practices with Avicennian philosophy that emerges in al-Rāzī's early commentary represents nascent ideas that al-Rāzī continues to ponder and develop over a lifetime. In particular, al-Rāzī's later writings exhibit a tension in his view of the capacity of the intellect to access spiritual heights, and, as Shihadeh has noted, an increasing propensity towards skepticism with an acknowledgement of the limits of syllogistic reasoning.[134] This early commentary demonstrates, however, that the intellectual-spiritual approach to the Path to God that is a robust feature of al-Rāzī's philosophical theology takes root early in his career, along with concrete practices (details of which are largely absent in later theoretical discussions) that viscerally connect Sufism with Avicennian philosophy.

We may lastly note that al-Rāzī's early creative reinterpretation of key Sufi practices and concepts through synthesis with the philosophical tradition should also caution our approach to his use of Sufi terms in his later works. Given that the Sufi tradition itself is so broad as to defy simple definitions, we should be all the more meticulous as we read al-Rāzī's use of such terms as *sirr, maʿrifa, al-nafs al-ammāra,* and *al-nafs al-muṭmaʾinna,* or his prescription of such forms of *riyāḍa* as *ʿuzla and fikr*, all of which are provided a unique interpretation in his *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*.

134. Shihadeh, "The Mystic and the Sceptic in Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī."

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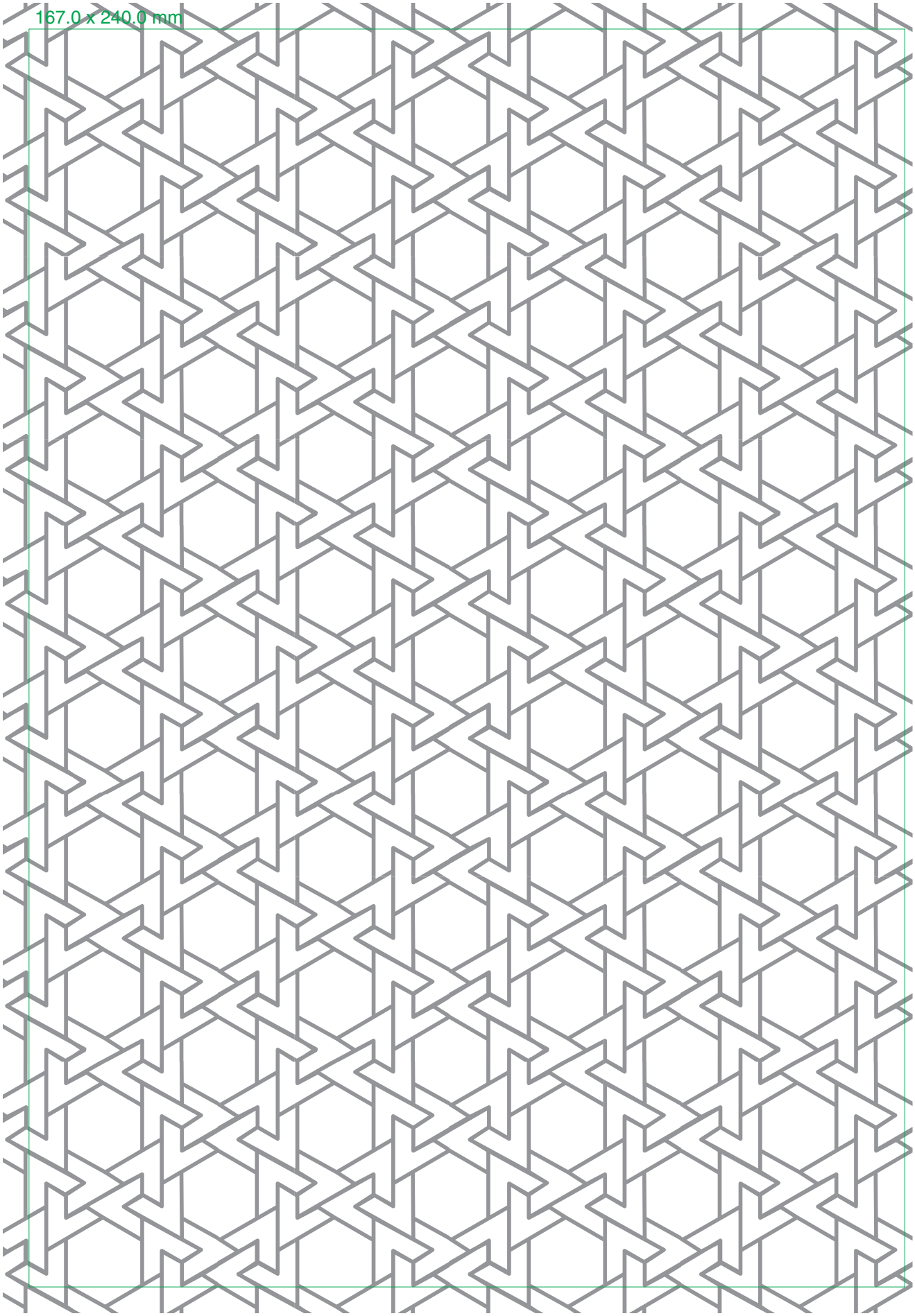
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النسق المعرفيّ لإعادة إنتاج المفاهيم الأخلاقيّة عند الصوفيّة: «الأمانة» نموذجًا

شفيقة وعيل

المقدّمة

تسعى هذه الورقة إلى تلمُّس النسق الذي يتبنّاه التصوّف أثناء إعادته إنتاج المفاهيم الأخلاقيّة في صميم التجربة الروحيّة، وتنطلق من التساؤل حول إمكانيّة وجود فكرة النسق فيها أساسًا. ولأنّ الرؤية النسقيّة هي محاولة لنمْذجَة الوجود فإنّ هذه الورقة تحاول تتبّع ملامح الإدراك المعرفيّ/العرفانيّ من خلال قياس المسافة النسقيّة في القيمة الأخلاقيّة بين تصوّرها خارج التصوّف وبينها في التجربة الصوفيّة. والمعضلة هنا تكمن في أنّ التجربة الصوفيّة تجربة روحيّة غير خاضعة للتصوّرات الذهنيّة ومنفتحة على الاحتمالات الغيبيّة وعلى التجاوز وعدم التحديد، وعليه، فهل يمكن أن تؤطّرها رؤيةٌ كبرى تنضبط فيها مفاهيمها الأخلاقيّة بما أنّ الأخلاق في أصلها ترتكز إلى القياس العقليّ؟ وكيف يمكن أن نفهم حركة انتقال النموذج العقليّ المحايث لبناء القيمة الأخلاقيّة إلى نسقٍ روحيّ يستثمر في المعقول ليتجاوزه؟ وهل هذا التجاوز يتمّ وفق رؤية محدّدة وموحَّدة ومخصوصة؟ أم يتّسم بالمرونة والتعدّد والخروج عن النمذجة؟ وإذا كان هذا التجاوز مرِنًا متعدّدًا فهل يمكن التفكير في أن يكون وفق نسق أعلى قابل للتشكّل حسب طبيعة التجربة ومعطياتها الروحيّة والأخلاقيّة والإدراكيّة؟ وإن وُجِدَ فهل هو نسق حقيقيّ أم متوهَّم؟ وقبل ذلك كلّه، هل التصوّف بحاجة فعلًا إلى نسقٍ معرفيّ تنتظم فيه رؤيته الأخلاقيّة؟

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١. إشكاليّة سؤال النسق في التصوّف

النسَق — في اللغة — من كلّ شيء هو «ما كان على نظام واحد عامّ في الأشياء.»[1] وهذا يعني أن تنتظم الأشياء وفق تصوّرٍ يمنحها شكلًا محدَّدًا يمكن البناء عليه لاحقًا للقياس والاستنتاج. أمّا فلسفيًّا ومعرفيًّا فلا يمكننا تقديم تعريف جامع مانع للنسق بسبب عدم وجود ماهيّة ثابتة لكلّ من النسق والفلسفة والمعرفة،[2] وإن كان يعرَّف في بعض المعاجم الفلسفيّة بأنّه «مجموعة أفكار علميّة أو فلسفيّة مترابطة منطقيًّا من حيث تماسكها لا من حيث حقيقتها،»[3] بحيث تصير ذاتَ وحدة عضويّة منسَّقة ومتماسكة. فيكون النسق بذلك أعمّ من النظريّة.[4]

إذًا، فالنسق قد يمكن مقاربته بما هو الرؤية الكلّيّة التي تنتظم فيها مجموع المقولات في إطار معيّن، يتفاعل بعضها مع بعض في إنتاج مفاهيمها الخاصّة من حيث جزئيّتُها منفردةً ومن حيث كلّيّتُها مجتمعةً.

ولربّما وجدنا النسق يُستعمل في بعض المصادر بمعنى المذهب،[5] مع ما بينهما من اختلاف جذريّ.[6] فالمذهب – وفق لالاند – هو «ما يُعلَّم بالتعميم وما يُقَرَّر أنّه صحيح في موضوعات لاهوتيّة كلاميّة، ويدلّ على مجموعة من حقائق منتظَمَة متكاملة،»[7] بينما النسق يبدو أقرب إلى الرؤية الفلسفيّة القائمة على التفكير المنفتح منه إلى المذهب القائم على الوثوقيّة، لذلك يتميّز بالتحرّك والانفتاح على التأويل بينما يتميّز المذهب بالانغلاق وثبات أصوله.

ويدور الجدل حول تداول اللفظتَين للدلالة على النموذج الذي هو كلٌّ متكامل منسجم من الأفكار والآراء يأخذ بعضه بحُجُز بعض، وهذا بناءً على أنّ النسق قائم على فروض ومسلَّمات عقليّة يقوم العقل على تسويغها وإثباتها داخل النظام، بينما المذهب هو تسليمٌ محض ابتداءً قبل الانطلاق إلى البناء على هذه الفروض المسلَّمة. وهذا ما يجعل النَّسق وعيًا إدراكيًّا من حيث المنطلَق بينما يكون المذهب وعيًا إدراكيًّا من حيث الغاية.

وعلى سبيل التأطير يمكننا أن نلحظ أنّ خيار الحديث عن النسق لا يبدو منسجمًا كلّيًّا مع إطار التجربة الصوفيّة، من حيث إنّ النسق بوصفه مفهومًا فلسفيًّا يقوم على البرهان والمنطق العقليّ بينما التصوّف حالة جوّانيّة لا ترتكز بالضرورة على رؤية انتظاميّة. ومع هذا، لا أبتغي حصْرَ المفردة في نطاق الفلسفة (رغم أنّه يقترب منها أكثر)، بل أستعمله بمعنى نموذج واضح المعالم في رؤية الوجود التي يستوعب التصوّفُ فيها القيم الأخلاقيّة ويعيد إنتاجها.

وأنا إذّاك أقف على حدود الإطار الأعمّ للنسق بما هو النموذج المتحرّك أو النموذج الأعلى، ولا أنحو نحو فكرة انطلاق التجربة الصوفيّة من نسقٍ عقليّ مبنيّ على القياس والحجاج. وهذا المنحى يتماهى مع المعرفة الصوفيّة القائمة على التغيّر والمنفتحة على التجربة الروحيّة، والتي ينشأ عنها بالضرورة تحرّك النسق وتعدّده وعدم تكرّره وعدم جمود قالبه المعرفيّ. وهذا التعدّد لا يحكمه فقط تعدّد التجارب بل وأيضًا ينسجم مع تغيّر الرؤية في التجربة الواحدة من حال إلى حال ومن مقام إلى مقام.

وهنا، لن أتحدّث – كما قد يتبادر من التعارض بين طبيعة التصوّف وطبيعة النسق الانتظاميّة — عن عدم جدوى فكرة النسق لأنّ مفهومه هو الذي تغيّر،[8] ولكن سأقترح أن أتعامل معه بوصفه موقفًا «وجوديًّا عرفانيًّا» وليس بالضرورة موقفًا «فكريًّا فلسفيًّا.» ذلك أنّ:

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1. الخليل بن أحمد الفراهيديّ، *العين*، ترتيب وتحقيق عبد الحميد هنداوي (بيروت: دار الكتب العلميّة، 2003)، 218/4.
2. سليمان أحمد الضاهر، «مفهوم النسق في الفلسفة—النسق: الإشكالات والخصائص،» *مجلّة جامعة دمشق* 30، العدد 3-4 (2014): 373.
3. أندريه لالاند، *موسوعة لالاند الفلسفيّة*، ترجمة خليل أحمد خليل (بيروت: عويدات، 2001)، 1417/3.
4. جميل صليبا، *المعجم الفلسفي* (بيروت: دار الكتاب اللبنانيّ، 1979)، 361/2.
5. *الموسوعة الفلسفيّة العربيّة*، رئيس التحرير معن زيادة (بيروت: مركز الإنماء العربيّ، 1986)، 812/1-813.
6. يُنظَر: الضاهر، «مفهوم النسق في الفلسفة—النسق: الإشكالات والخصائص،»371-373.
7. لالاند، *موسوعة لالاند*، 1417/3.
8. جيل دولوز وفيليكس غاتاري، *ما هي الفلسفة*، ترجمة مطاع صفدي (بيروت: مركز الإنماء القوميّ، 1997)، 33.

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> كلّ ممارسة نظريّة فكريّة أو فنّيّة تفترض مفهومَين: مفهومًا له علاقة بالممارسة ذاتها [وأسقِطُ ذلك على المفهوم الأخلاقيّ في التجربة الصوفيّة بوصفها ممارسةً]، ومفهومًا آخر يتعلّق بوضع تلك الممارسة في تعالُق معيَّن، سواءٌ فيما بينها أو بين أمور خارجة عنها [وأسقِطُ هذا الشقّ على النسق الكلّيّ الذي تنتظم فيه المفاهيم الأخلاقيّة في التجربة الصوفيّة وجدانًا وممارسةً].[9]

تنبني هذه الرؤية على مفهوم رئيس واحد هو القَولة المركزيّة في النسق والتي تشغّل مجموعة عناصر مفهوميّة جزئيّة يصنع بعضُها بعضًا ويؤثّر بعضُها في بعض.[10] ومن أمثلة هذه القَولة المركزيّة «المثال» عند أفلاطون و«الكوجيتو» عند ديكارت،[11] و«البرزخ» عند ابن العربيّ (ت 1240/638) و«الموقف» عند النفّريّ (ت ق 10/4). ويكون المفهوم الرئيس المحرّك للنسق ورؤيته الكلّيّة — عندئذٍ – مركّبًا غير بسيط، وهذا ما يجعله متحرّكًا مفتوحًا لا مغلقًا جامدًا، ليتماهى مع طبيعة التجربة الصوفيّة ويمكّنها من استيراد المفاهيم الأخلاقيّة المعرفيّة المحايثة ونقلها إلى مستوى روحيّ عرفانيّ قابل للخروج من أحاديّة الرؤية العُرفيّة واللغويّة التداوليّة إلى تعدّديّة الرؤية الروحيّة.

وكون النسق يتّسم بالكلّيّة لا يجعل منه تصوُّرًا موحّدًا جامدًا، بل «كثيرًا ما أسيءَ فهم كلّيّة النسق system، فهذه الكلمة لا تشير إلى الفلسفة ذات المبدأ الضيّق المتميّز عن غيره، بل على العكس، إنّ الفلسفة الأصليّة الحقّة هي التي تجعل من النسق مبدأً يشمل جميع المبادئ الجزئيّة الأخرى.»[12]

والفرق بين النسق المتحرّك المفتوح والنسق الجامد المغلق هو أنّ الأوّل «يتّصف بوجود علاقة أساسيّة بينه وبين البيئة المحيطة به،»[13] أمّا الثاني فهو افتراضيّ يمكن أن نتخيّل وقوعه في حالة القطيعة مع الظروف التاريخيّة والاجتماعيّة والشخصيّة والأيديولوجيّة. وهذا التمييز يحصر تصوّر النسق المغلق في العمل المخبريّ بالمكوّنات المجرّدة، أمّا في العلوم الإنسانيّة بشكل عامّ فيبدو هذا النسق المغلق غير قابل للوجود من حيث ارتباط الظاهرة الإنسانيّة بجملة من الظروف والمعطيات غير القابلة للانفصال عنها والمتغيّرة والمتكيّفة مع الإنسان في عمقه الاجتماعيّ والروحيّ والفكريّ.

وقد قلت هذا، فالسؤال الذي أتناوله هنا ليس سؤال المفاهيم التي تشغّل النسق في صناعة القيمة الأخلاقيّة في التصوّف، وإنّما سؤال كيفيّة تلقّي التصوّف للقيم الأخلاقيّة العربيّة في رؤيتها الكلّيّة، وكيفيّة إعادة إنتاجها في إطار نموذجٍ مفاهيميّ متعالٍ يمتح من الأصل العربيّ ما قبل الإسلاميّ ومن الانزياح المفاهيميّ الإسلاميّ. وللتوصّل إلى ذلك أقترح مفهومًا أخلاقيًّا أساسيًّا حرّك النسق الهويّاتيّ العربيّ قبل الإسلاميّ والنسق الإسلاميّ الممارساتيّ والنسق التجريبيّ الصوفيّ، ألا وهو مفهوم «الأمانة» الذي يأخذ حمولة السياق المُتداوَل فيه. فقد وجدناه مسيطرًا ومؤطّرًا لكثير من التجارب الصوفيّة المختلفة بتعدّد مشاربها وتوجّهاتها (الإشراقيّة، والعرفانيّة، والمدرسيّة...) بل ووجدناه مركّزًا فيها كلّها بوصفه المفهوم الأساس المحرّك لكلّ الرؤى الجزئيّة والمفاهيم الثانويّة.

ولكي أتحدّث عن نسقٍ ما في استثمار المفهوم الأخلاقيّ لإعادة إنتاجه في الرؤية الصوفيّة، أعي أنّ مفهوم الأمانة ركيزة في التصوّف، لكنّه بلا شكّ يحتاج إلى اختبارات مفهوميّة أخرى كي تتجلّى فاعليّته ضمن الحراك الدلاليّ والمفاهيميّ لجملة من المفاهيم الثانويّة ومنها مفهوم المسؤوليّة والاختيار والخلافة. ولذلك لا أزعم أنّي أقدّم في هذه الورقة «النَسَق» المعرفيّ لإعادة إنتاج المفاهيم الأخلاقيّة في التصوّف وإنّما أقدّم نسقًا معرفيًّا يمثّله مفهوم الأمانة بوصفه نموذجًا أخلاقيًا كلّيًّا.

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9. أحمد بو حسن، *العرب وتاريخ الأدب: نموذج كتاب الأغاني* (الدار البيضاء: توبقال، 2003)، 32.
10. دولوز وغاتاري، *ما هي الفلسفة*، 39.
11. الضاهر، «مفهوم النسق في الفلسفة—النسق: الإشكالات والخصائص،» 375.
12. جورج فيلهلم فريدريش هيجل، *موسوعة العلوم الفلسفيّة*، ترجمة إمام عبد الفتّاح إمام (بيروت: دار التنوير، 2007)، 71.
13. Jasser Auda, ***Maqasid al-Shariah as Philosophy of Islamic Law: A Systems Approach*** (London, Washington: The International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2008), 47.

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إنّ الأمانة بوصفها ملمحًا رئيسًا من ملامح المروءة العربيّة التي كانت دينًا أخلاقيًّا عند العرب قبل الإسلام، تحوّلت في الإسلام — كغيرها من القيَم — إلى قيمة أخلاقيّة ذات بُعد إيمانيّ من حيث صار المراعَى فيها هو وجه الله وليس وجه القبيلة، وصار الثواب المنتظر فيها هو الخلود الأخرويّ في الجنّة بديلًا عن خلود الذِّكر بين القبائل. لكن في التصوّف، تحوّلت إلى مفهومٍ أنطولوجيّ أساسيّ في إدراك حقيقة الوجود وضابطٍ للعلاقة بين الإنسان والله.

٢. تأثيل خلق الأمانة بين الإسلام وما قبله

تعيد المعاجم العربيّة الجذر «أمن» إلى أصلَين:[14] الأمانة التي هي ضدّ الخيانة (وتعني سكون القلب)؛ وإلى التصديق وهو ضدّ التكذيب. أمّا الأوّل فيرتبط بمعنى الكمال، لأنّ الخيانة من الخون وهو النقص وضدّه الكمال؛ وأمّا الثاني فيؤول إلى الأوّل من حيث كونه سكون القلب وطمأنينته بما وقر فيه، أي اكتمال حالة السكينة الوجدانيّة الإيمانيّة.

وتحيط بكلمة الأمانة سحابة دلاليّة تضعها مقياسًا للكمال الذي يقابل النقص الدلاليّ والمفهوميّ عند غيابها، ونجد في هذه السحابة: الأمن ضدًّا للخوف، والإيمان ضدًّا للكفر، والتصديق ضدًّا للتكذيب، والأمانة ضدًّا للخيانة، والاطمئنان والسكينة ضدّين للارتباك والهلع، والدين والخلُق ضدّين لفراغهما، والتحمّل لمسؤوليّتها ضدًّا لتضييعها.[15] فالأمانة، إذًا، مفهوم يشتغل في إطار كمالٍ إنسانيّ كونيّ وكمال اجتماعيّ وكمال دينيّ عقديّ. أمّا الكونيّ فإذا انتقص وقع الظلم، وأمّا الاجتماعيّ فإذا انتقص وقعت خيانة العهود والالتزامات، وأمّا الدينيّ فإذا انتقص وقعت المعصية، وهذه الثلاثة هي الاستعمالات القرآنيّة التي بنتْ عليها الرؤية الصوفيّة واستثمرتها بأبعاد متجاوِزة كما سنرى.

وارتباط الأمانة بالكمال يتحقّق من خلاله مفهوم جوهر الجبلّة (الفطرة)، ولذلك ارتبطت في الهويّة العربيّة بمفهوم المروءة. والمروءة من كلمة «مرء» التي تعني جوهر المثاليّة الإنسانيّة من حيث إنّها تتحقّق «بمحاسن جمّة من مكارم الأخلاق وممادِح الأوصاف»[16] بشكلٍ عامّ. وهو مفهوم في مجمله يؤول إلى توخّي التخلّق بالأخلاق المحمودة والابتعاد عن الأخلاق السيّئة[17] حتّى لا يظهر منها قبيح عن قصد ولا يُتَوَجَّه إليها ذمٌّ باستحقاق.[18]

ونسق المروءة في مفهومها ما قبل الإسلاميّ يقوم على معنى العناية بالآخرين لمن يملك القدرة (السلطة) على ذلك، فصاحب المروءة يرعى من يحتاجون لرعايته وفق التزام أخلاقيّ ذي طابعٍ اجتماعيّ قبليّ. وأداء الأمانة عُدَّ من خصائص المروءة وهو في الحقيقة جوهرها، لأنّه لا يعني فقط ردّ الرعاية لأصحابها — كما قد يُفهم ظاهريًّا — بل تحقيق المروءة هو في حدّ ذاته خلُق الأمانة اجتماعيًّا وربّما روحيًّا أيضًا.

أمّا كونها أمانة اجتماعيّة فلأنّ أخلاق المروءة كانت تُتوارث بوصفها دينًا.[19] وأراها وإن كانت تتعلّق اجتماعيًّا بالحظوة والسلطة فهي تتعلّق وجوديًّا بمفهوم الرعاية التي تعني إدارة ما توفّر من موارد الحياة وثرواتها في البادية العربيّة طلبًا للاستمرار في ظلّ قحط الصحراء وقلّة مواردها والنزاعات الناشئة عن هذا القحط.

وقد بلغت المروءة مبلغ الدين في مجتمعات ما قبل الإسلام،[20] إذ كان الدين يعني الخضوع أنطولوجيًّا لفكرةٍ ما قصد رجاء الجائزة التي كانت استمرار الذكر الحسن، بحيث يمكن أن يدفع الإنسان حياته لقاء

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14. أحمد بن فارس، معجم *مقاييس اللغة*، تحقيق عبد السلام محمّد هارون (بيروت: دار الفكر، 1979)، 1/133-134.
15. محمّد بن منظور، *لسان العرب* (الرياض: وزارة الشؤون الإسلاميّة والأوقاف والدعوة والإرشاد، 2010)، 16/160-168، مادّة (أمن).
16. أبو منصور الثعالبيّ، *مرآة المروءات*، تحقيق محمّد خير رمضان يوسف (بيروت: دار ابن حزم، 2004)، 11.
17. أبو حاتم البُستيّ، *روضة العقلاء ونزهة الفضلاء*، تحقيق محمّد حامد الفقي (القاهرة: مكتبة السنّة المحمّديّة، 1374هـ)، 229-234.
18. أبو الحسن عليّ بن محمّد الماورديّ، *أدب الدنيا والدين*، شرح وتعليق محمّد كريم راجح (بيروت: دار اقرأ، 1985)، 325.
19. من هذا القبيل ما ذكره الأبشيهيّ من أنّه «من الشرف والرياسة حفظ الجوار وحمى الذمار وكانت العرب ترى ذلك دينًا تدعو إليه وحقًّا واجبًا تحافظ عليه؛» بهاء الدين الأبشيهيّ، *المستطرف في كلّ فنّ مستظرف*، تحقيق محمّد خير طعمه الحلبي (بيروت: دار المعرفة، 2008)، 203.
20. See: Ignac Goldziher, «Muruwwa and Dīn,» in ***Muslim Studies***, ed. S.M. Stern, trans. C.R. Barber and S.M. Stern, 3rd ed. (London: George Allen and Unwin LTD, 1967), 11-44.

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تحقيق هذه المبادئ ولو لم تكن لغاية مثاليّة، كأن يدافع عمّن استجار به ولو كان قاتلًا، أو كأن يدافع عن كائن لاذَ به ولو كان غير عاقل.[21] فالمروءة بوصفها دينًا تعني خضوع المرء لمتطلّباتها وتوارُثَها فكرةً أنطولوجيّةً هويّاتيّة جيلًا عن جيل، حتّى تصير ممّا ينبغي أداؤه أمانةً لتحقيق جوهر الوجود العربيّ.

وقد احتفظ الإسلام بأخلاق المروءة ممارساتيًّا وإن أعاد توجيه القصد منها، ففي الحديث «انُظر إلى أخلاقِك التي كنت تصنَعُها في الجاهليّة فاجْعَلْها في الإسلام: أقْرِ الضيفَ وأَكْرِمِ اليتيمَ وأَحْسِنْ إلى جارِك،»[22] لكن ربَطَها بالإيمان مباشرة وأثّلها مفهوميًّا على نسق التأثيل اللغويّ الذي ذكرناه آنفًا، وفق الحديث النبويّ الشريف: «لا إيمانَ لِمَنْ لا أَمانَةَ لَهُ»[23] حيث نجد أنّها تحوّلت من نسقٍ دينيّ اجتماعيّ إلى نسقٍ دينيّ اجتماعيّ آخر ولكن بقصديّة غيبيّة. فمن دين اجتماعيّ يطلب الاستمرار المحايث (هنا والآن) لمواجهة الموت بدوام الذكر وبقاء الأعراف وروح الجماعة—القبيلة إلى دين متعالٍ يتوق إلى الاستمرار فيما بعد الموت، ومن طلب استحسان الإطار الاجتماعيّ (القبيلة، العرب) إلى طلب رضا الله ليلغي سلطة القبيلة ويتحوّل المرء من مشغّل لمبدأ الائتمان الاجتماعيّ القبليّ إلى مشغّل لمبدأ الائتمان التعبّديّ الإنسانيّ ﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الأَمَانَاتِ إِلَى أَهْلِهَا﴾،[24] فتتوسّع الدائرة أنطولوجيًّا وتعامليًّا. وتحقيق الأمانة هنا يعني تحقيق كمال المروءة في المعيش اليوميّ (الخير ونشر المعروف) مضافًا إليها تمام القصد في الغيب (النيّة التعبّديّة).

وتمامًا مثل المفهوم ما قبل الإسلاميّ، لم ينظر الإسلام إلى الأمانة بما هي حقّ، بل نظر إليها بما هي واجب، وهذا يعني أنّه لم يربطها بمواصفات من يتلقّاها وشروطه، بل ربطها بالمانح لها من منطلق كونه مسلمًا. ففي الحديث «ما من شيء في الجاهليّة إلّا وهو تحت قدميّ إلّا الأمانة فإنّها مؤدّاة إلى البرّ والفاجر،»[25] كما أنّها استقرّت فعلًا غير جزائيّ حيث يستحقّها حتّى من خانها، فقد ورد في الحديث «أدِّ الأمانة لمن ائتمنَك ولا تخُنْ من خانَك.»[26]

ولأنّ النموذج الصوفيّ منبثق من صميم التجربة الدينيّة ولكن أيضًا يستلهم قيمه من الوجدان العربيّ في عمقه، فإنّ هذه الملامح هي في أصلها متعلّقة بمفهوم الأمانة بوصفه رؤية عربيّة قبل إسلاميّة، ولكن اكتست أبعادًا تتجاوز فكرة القبيلة والمجتمع كما قلنا. ولا نعني بتجاوزها نسخها ومحوها بل نعني أنّ الهدف الأقرب صار البنية المجتمعيّة لكنّ الهدف الأبعد والأجلّ هو فكرة التديّن لله تعالى. بل واستوعب الهدف الغيبيّ فكرة الهدف المحايث لدرجة أن صار اعتبار الهدف المحايث وحده منافيًا كلّيًّا لأصل التديّن المنبثق من الهدف الأبعد. أي أنّ من يتبنّى الأمانة الأخلاقيّة المجتمعيّة فيبتغي الذكر الحسن لدى الناس دون أن يكون ذلك مقترنًا بأن يرضى الله عنه فإنّه ينزلق في مخاطر منافية لأصل التديّن، وهو ما يسمّى الرياء، والذي يعني أن يقصد من إظهار الخُلق وجه الناس لا وجه الله وأن ينتظر المكافأة منهم (سواء أكانت جزاءً ماديًّا أو اجتماعيًّا أو قيَميًّا) لا من الله. وقد عَدّت المنظومة الحديثيّة الرياء منافيًا للدين وسمّته «الشرك الأصغر.»[27]

كما ارتبط نموذج الأمانة في المنظومة الحديثيّة بمفهوم النفاق أيضًا، والذي يعني إبداء الدين وإضمار الكفر. وكلٌّ من النفاق والرياء هو المنعكَس التطبيقيّ لفكرة الخيانة التي تقوم الأمانة على معارضتها مبدأً وسلوكًا وانتهاءً سواءٌ من حيث المنطلق الدلاليّ اللغويّ – كما رأينا – أو من حيث المنطلق

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21. من هذا القبيل ما يرويه ابن العربيّ عن بعض مشايخه في ذكر مناقب بعض الأعراب: «أنّ جرادًا نزل بفناء بيته، فخرجت الأعراب إليه بالعُدّة ليقتلوه ويأكلوه، وصاحب البيت ما عنده خبر بما يريدون، فخرج إليهم من خبثه فسألهم: ما تبتغون؟ فقالوا: نبتغي قتْلَ جارِك (يريدون الجراد)، فقال لهم: بعد أن سمّيتموه جاري فوالله لا أترك لكم سبيلًا إليه، وجرّدَ سيفه يذبّ عنه مراعاةً لحقّ الجوار؛» ابن العربيّ، *الوصايا*، بوّبه وخرّج أحاديثه ووضع فهارسه لجنة التأليف والنشر في دار الإيمان (دمشق: دار الإيمان، 1988)، 76.

22. أحمد بن حنبل، *المسند*، هذا الجزء شرح وفهرسة حمزة أحمد الزين (القاهرة: دار الحديث، 1995)، 208/12، حديث رقم 15439.

23. المصدر نفسه، 438/10، حديث رقم 12324.

24. القرآن 58:4.

25. عصام الدين إسماعيل بن محمّد القونويّ، *حاشية القونويّ على تفسير البيضاوي*، ضبطه وصحّحه عبد الله محمود محمّد عمر (بيروت: دار الكتب العلميّة، 2001)، 194/6.

26. أبو عيسى الترمذيّ، *الجامع الكبير (السنن)*، تحقيق بشّار عوّاد معروف (بيروت: دار الغرب الإسلاميّ، 1998)، 542/2-543، حديث رقم 1264.

27. الحديث «أخْوَفُ ما أخاف على أمّتي الشركُ الأصغر – فسئل عنه فقال: الرياء؛» رواه: سليمان بن أحمد الطبرانيّ، *المعجم الكبير*، تحقيق حمدي عبد المجيد السلفي (القاهرة: مكتبة ابن تيمية، 1976)، 253/4، حديث رقم 4301.

167.0 x 240.0 mm

الروحيّ كما سنراه لاحقًا. والنفاق هو مرتبة أخطر من مرتبة الرياء على مستوى معنى الخيانة، فالنفاق – وفق المنظومة الحديثيّة – هو الوعي بالكفر الداخليّ ولكنّه خيانة للمجتمع بإظهار مظاهر الإسلام. فهو إذًا معنًى ذو بُعد هادم لنموذج الأمانة المجتمعيّة، حيث يمكن تخيّل وجود فرد غير مسلم في البنية المجتمعيّة المسلمة ولكن بشرط أن يكون أمينًا مع المجتمع ببيان حقيقته وتحمّل نتائج هذه الحقيقة. بينما الرياء لا يعني وجود الكفر منطلَقًا، بل شرط وقوعه أن يتحقّق مفهوم الإيمان أساسًا في المرائي ولكن يحصل في توجيه إيمانه انزياحٌ في مؤشّر الإخلاص بحيث يقتصر القصد على طلب الذكر المجتمعيّ (وهو ما يعيدنا — ولو بشكل بعيد — إلى النموذج القَبَليّ ما قبل الإسلاميّ للقيَم الأخلاقيّة) دون استحضار القصد الأخرويّ الغيبيّ الموضوع تحت مظلّة رضا الله.

ولذلك ورد سياق عرض الأمانة في القرآن مقرونًا بالشرك والنفاق والإيمان ﴿إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا ٱلْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى ٱلسَّمَـٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ وَٱلْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَن يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا ٱلْإِنسَـٰنُ إِنَّهُۥ كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا (*) لِّيُعَذِّبَ اللَّهُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ وَالْمُشْرِكَاتِ وَيَتُوبَ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا﴾.[28] والسياق ظاهره يعزّز فكرة أنّ قبول تحمُّل مسؤوليّة الاختيار في حَمل الأمانة هو محض جهل وظلم للنفس، وأنّه لا ناجي من الظلم والجهل بحال. فالمشرك الكافر ظلَمَ وجهِلَ تحقّقًا بالكفر ظاهرًا وباطنًا، والمنافق ظلم وجهل تحقّقًا بالكفر باطنًا وإن أبدى الإيمان، والمؤمن يتحقّق فيه الظلم والجهل من باب المعصية لا من باب الكفر ولذلك خُتِم السياق بأنّه بسبب إيمانه الباطن فهو آيلٌ إلى التوبة، وثمّةَ يتوب الله عليه إعانةً له على تحقيق الأمانة وأدائها لأنّه بتوبته يجدّد العهد بتحمّلها من جديد.

فإذًا الانتقال من الإطار ما قبل الإسلاميّ العربيّ إلى الإطار الإسلاميّ مدّ مفهوم الأمانة إلى الغيب وعلّقها باللّه غايةً دون تجاوز النموذج المجتمعيّ.

٣. استرجاع الأمانة بوصفها نسقًا معرفيًّا أخلاقيًّا في التصوّف

استُثمر التصوّف في نموذج الأمانة بشكل جوهريّ، وعزّز الرؤية الإسلاميّة والرؤية ما قبل الإسلاميّة ببُعدَين، بعدٍ اجتماعيّ وبعد دينيّ غيبيّ، وهما بُعدان مرتهنان لبعض لا يمكن الفصل بينهما. وتحرّكت ملامح هذا النموذَج أيضًا من خصوصيّة البعد الاجتماعيّ واجتزائه إلى اتّساع البعد الغيبيّ وشموليّته كما سنرى ولكن وفق نموذج روحيّ أخصّ. وهنا لم تقتصر الأمانة على كونها تجربة فرديّة ذات خصوصيّة عرفانيّة بل تلبّست بكونها تجربة فرديّة وجدانيًّا ولكنّها جماعيّة ممارساتيًّا، قائمة على الوعي المستمرّ الرابط بين لحظة وجوديّة قبليّة (لحظة الميثاق أو موقف «بلى») ولحظة راهنة (هي لحظة الاستمرار في الالتزام بالعهد القديم) ولحظة بعديّة (هي لحظة العرض والحساب عند الوقوف أمام الله للمحاكمة حول مدى تحقّق مقتضيات العهد الأوّل في الحياة بتفاصيلها).

كما ربَط التصوّف البُعدَين المذكورَين في الأمانة سلوكيًّا، فجعل البعد الاجتماعيّ يرتفع إلى أن يصير رؤية سلوكيّة خاصّة تجعله مقامًا أو حالًا،[29] وجعل البعد الدينيّ الغيبيّ ضمن رؤية وجوديّة في نسق كلّيّ تجعل منه منطلقًا وغاية أنطولوجيَّين. أمّا الإطار الأوّل فهو إطار التجربة الوجدانيّة ويختلف بحسب اختلاف التجربة وحيثيّاتها العرفانيّة، وأيًّا كانت الأمانة في هذه التجربة فهي ليست سوى اليقظة العرفانيّة التي تستوجب تلقّي المعارف الإلهيّة والوعي بتبعات تحمّلها، مع دوام الشعور بالخوف من الإخلال بها.[30]

واليقظة التي نفهمها هنا هي جوهر مفهوم الوعي بالخطاب الإلهيّ ونعني به خصوص الاستعداد

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28. القرآن 33:72-73.
29. يُنظَر: علاء الدين عليّ بن إسماعيل القونويّ، *شرح التعرّف لمذهب أهل التصوّف*، تحقيق السيّد يوسف أحمد (بيروت: كُتّاب—ناشرون، 2019)، 2/70-71.
30. المصدر نفسه، 2/71.

167.0 x 240.0 mm

الكامل من العبد لتلقّي المعارف الإلهيّة ومتعلّقاتها الدنيويّة. واعتبر الصوفيّة أنّ تجلّي صفة كلام الله (الخطاب الإلهيّ) في موقف العرض هو من جملة الأمانة، والتي هي:

> تجلّي الذات والصفات، فلم يُطِق حملها إلّا الإنسان الكامل، وهو العارف الحقيقيّ. أمّا عن تجلّي الذات فقد أشفقت من حمله السموات والأرض والجبال [...] أمّا تجلّي الصفات فذكر هنا أنّه لو تجلّت للجبل لخضع وتشقّق ولم يُطِق حملها، فلو زالت حُجُب الغفلة عن القلوب لذابت من هيبة تجلّي صفة كلامه وخطابه تعالى، إلّا أنّ الله تعالى قوّى قلوب أوليائه حتّى أطاقوا شهود ذاته وسماع خطابه بعد انقشاع الحُجُب عن قلوبهم.[31]

وعند قراءة هذا المقطع عندَ ابن عجيبة (ت1809/1224) ينبغي أن نضع في الحسبان أنّ المعروضين على الميثاق هم كلّ بني آدم بما يشمل من آمن في الحياة الدنيا بالتوحيد ومن لم يؤمن. وهذا يعني أنّ نموذج الإنسان الكامل الذي قَبِل الأمانة هو نموذج متضمَّن في كلّ إنسان، أيًّا كان معتقده اللاحق، ولكنّه لا يكون متحقّقًا إلّا إذا وعى ميثاقه في الشهادة وحقّقه فيها كما قبله في الغيب. وهذا ما يستدعي التساؤل حول الجمع بين كون نموذج الإنسان الكامل الموفي بالأمانة متضمَّنًا فطريًّا في الإنسان وبين حتميّة ظلمه وجهله التي تقرّها الآية كما ذكرنا سابقًا. وأرى أنّ سياق الآية يعرض حالة من التوازي والتعادل في المقوّمات والاستعدادات: استعدادٌ للكمال وأداءِ الأمانة يوازيه استعداد للظلم والجهل فيها، ليبقى كسب الإنسان وسعيه مسؤولَين عن تغليب كفّة الكمال في أدائها أو كفّة الجهل في خيانتها، وهو ما يتّسق كلّيًّا مع مفهوم المسؤوليّة الذي يستوعبه مفهوم الأمانة ومفهوم الاختيار في قبول تحمُّلِها.

وإذا أخذنا هذا الكلام خارج سياق الميثاق الغيبيّ تحديدًا وعمّمناه على كلّ موقف خطابٍ إلهيّ، يلوح مفهومٌ مخصوص للأمانة يمنح بُعدًا آخر لغيابها في الخيانة والتي تصير «إفشاء أسرار الربوبيّة لغير أهلها.»[32] وهذا يرفع الأمانة إلى أن تصير حالةً عرفانيّة أخصّ بين السالك وربّه تستوجب الاستحضار الدائم للخوف من الإخلال بخصوصيّتها من خلال إفشاء مضمونها لمن لا يستحقّ حملها.

أمّا الإطار الأنطولوجيّ الأوسع، فالأمانة فيه هي رؤية وجوديّة كلّيّة لا تتعلّق بالتجربة العرفانيّة المخصوصة، ولكنّها تتعلّق بحقيقة الوجود. أي أنّها لا تعني اليقظة لتلقّي المعارف الإلهيّة والخوف من وضع هذه المعارف في غير محلّها، ولكن تعني أن يعيش المرءُ بمسؤوليّة تحقيق وجوده بوصفه حاملًا لأمانة العبوديّة في عمارته للأرض وسعيه فيها. ولذلك لم يتحدّد معنى الأمانة التي حُمِّلها الإنسان وتُركت مبهمة بقصد الشمول حتّى سُمّيت سرًّا، وفي هذ السياق نجد أحد العارفين يقول:

> إنّ لله — عزّ وجلّ — إلى عبده سرّيْن يُسِرّهما إليه، يُوجِده ذلك بإلهام يُلهَمهُ، أحدهما: إذا وُلِد وخرج من بطن أمّه يقول له ‘عبدي قد أخرجتُك إلى الدنيا طاهرًا نظيفًا واستودعتك عُمرك ائتمنتك عليه، فانظر كيف تحفظ الأمانة، وانظر كيف تلقاني كما أخرجتُك؛’ وسِرٌ عند خروج روحه يقول له: ‘عبدي، ماذا صنعتَ في أمانتي عندك؟ هل حفظتَها حتّى تلقاني على العهد والرعاية فألقاك بالوفاء والجزاء؟ أو أضعتَها فألقاك بالمطالبة والعقاب؟’ فهذا داخل في قوله عزّ وجلّ: ﴿وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمَانَاتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُونَ﴾[33] وفي قوله عزّ وجلّ: ﴿وَأَوْفُوا بِعَهْدِي أُوفِ بِعَهْدِكُمْ﴾.[34] [35]

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31. أحمد بن عجيبة، *البحر المديد في تفسير القرآن المجيد*، تحقيق أحمد عبد الله القرشي رسلان (القاهرة: على نفقة حسن عبّاس زكي، 1999)، 17/7.
32. المصدر نفسه، 323/2.
33. القرآن 23: 8.
34. القرآن 40:2.
35. ابن عجيبة، *البحر المديد في تفسير القرآن المجيد*، 564/3.

167.0 x 240.0 mm

فإذًا، نتكلّم هنا عن الأمانة بوصفها جسرًا زمنيًّا وجوديًّا ممارساتيًّا يختصره نموذج «الإنسان الكامل» ويستند إلى أربعة ملامح: (1) كون الأمانة من صميم الذاكرة الأنطولوجيّة، أي مبدأً أصليًّا في الوجود الإنسانيّ؛ (2) كونها مسؤوليّة فرديّة تقوم على مبدأ الحرّيّة في الاختيار؛ (3) ارتباطها بمبدأ المحاسبة من جهة كونها محاسبة إلهيّة جزائيّة بَعديّة ومحاسبة ذاتيّة محاينة؛ (4) كونها جوهر فكرة الخلافة في الأرض.

أ) الأمانة بوصفها ذاكرةً أنطولوجيّة

قدّم القرآن الأمانة بكونها المنطلق الوجوديّ للإنسان في آية الميثاق السابقة الذكر.[36] وتتوجّه التفسيرات التراثيّة إلى كونها هنا الأوامر الإلهيّة التفصيليّة، أو إلى أنّها فكرة التكليف (أي قبول الالتزام وتحمّل الجزاء) الذي عرضه الله على الإنسان عندما كان في عالم الأرواح قبل الخروج إلى عالم الأبدان والشرائع. وحملها بعض المفسّرين على أمانة الجوارح من حيث إنّه ينبغي أن تُستعمَل في الطاعات وتُصان عن المخالفات.[37]

وفي المقابل يذهب التفسير الإشاريّ إلى أنّ الأمانة هي الأمر الإلهيّ الإجماليّ الأوّل، أي «المعرفة الخاصّة التي هي شهود عظمة الربوبيّة في مظاهر العبوديّة.»[38] وتأدية الأمانة وفق ذلك تعني «تسليمها إلى الله — سبحانه — سالمة من خيانتك فيها، فالخيانة فى أمانة القلب ادّعاؤك فيها، والخيانة فى أمانة السرّ ملاحظتُك إيّاها.»[39]

وتَجمع بعض الرؤى الإشاريّة بين كون الأمانة حالة وجدانيّة محض وبين كونها سلوكًا اجتماعيًّا، فتكون «التوحيد في الباطن والقيام بوظائف الدين في الظاهر من الأوامر والنواهي. فالإيمان أمانة والشريعة بأنواعها كلّها أمانة، فمن قام بهاتين الخصلتَين كان أمينًا وإلّا كان خائنًا.»[40] وعلى هذا التقدير تكون الأمانة على ثلاثة مستويات: الخيانة في الأعمال «الدعوى فيها بأنّها من قِبَلِك دون التحقّق بأنّ مُنشئها الله. والخيانة في الأحوال ملاحظتك لها دون غيبتك عن شهودها باستغراقك في شهود الحقّ.»[41] والخيانة بينك وبين الخلق بما يشتمل إرادة القلب والمعاملة، وتكون بإيثار نصيب نفسك على نصيب المسلمين.[42]

إنّ الأمانة عارية مستردّة، فهي منطلَق وغاية في الوقت نفسه لأنّها تتجاوز إشكاليّة الزمن التي كان يواجهها هذا المفهوم فيما قبل الإسلام حين كان مرتبطًا بجزاء الثناء الحَسَن بين الناس وتجاوُز الموت بالبقاء في الوجدان الجمعيّ العربيّ والحفاظ على الكينونة العربيّة التي تُعتَبَر الأخلاقيّاتُ جوهرَها. فمن حيث إنّ الأمانة تكليف فهي متعلّقة بالثواب والعقاب الذي يتحقّق عند المثول بين يدي الله الديّان — لكون الديّان هو الذي يملك السلطة التي تخوّل له الإثابة والمعاقبة —، كما تختزل كلَّ المسافة الزمنيّة بين لحظة البدء ولحظة المنتهى والعَود، وتربط عالم الغيب بعالم الشهادة. ولذلك عَدّ الله من يفرّط فيها «ظلومًا جهولًا،» فالظلم هو التصرّف فيما ليس لك،[43] والأمانة ليست ملكًا للإنسان وإنّما يتصرّف فيها عن جهل بعدم ملكيّته لها أو عن تعمّد بادّعاء ملكيّته لها. فإذا كان الثاني وقع الشرك بظلم الإنسان نفسه،[44] وزكاته العودة إلى الإيمان والوفاء بالأمانة، وإذا كان الأوّل وقع الجهل، وزكاته

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36. يُنظَر: القرآن 172:7.
37. يُنظَر مثلًا: محمّد بن أبي بكر القرطبيّ، *الجامع لأحكام القرآن*، تحقيق عبد الله عبد المحسن التركي وآخرين (بيروت: مؤسّسة الرسالة، 2006)، 246/17 فما بعدها.
38. ابن عجيبة، *البحر المديد في تفسير القرآن المجيد*، 64/2.
39. عبد الكريم القشيريّ، *لطائف الإشارات*، تحقيق إبراهيم بسيوني (القاهرة: الهيئة المصريّة العامّة للكتاب، 2000)، 341/1.
40. ابن عجيبة، *البحر المديد في تفسير القرآن المجيد*، 4/ 468 .
41. القشيريّ، *لطائف الإشارات*، 618/1.
42. المصدر نفسه، 618/1 .
43. محمّد السفاريني، *لوامع الأنوار البهيّة وسواطع الأسرار الأثريّة* (بيروت: دار الكتب العلميّة، 2008)، 289/1.
44. ورد استعمال تعبير ظلم النفس وصفًا لمن أعرض عن أمر الله في عدّة محالّ منها: القرآن 231:2؛ والقرآن 97:4؛ والقرآن 32:35 ؛ إلخ.

167.0 x 240.0 mm

التوبة والتمسّك بالأمانة.[45] ومن هنا، رأى الصوفيّة أنّ معنى ﴿وَمَن يَرْغَبُ عَن مِّلَّةِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِلَّا مَن سَفِهَ نَفْسَهُ﴾[46] هو «من جهل نفسه في معنى الأمانة،»[47] أي من لم يقم بحقّها عليه في التوحيد فلم يؤدّها.

وهذا التأطير الأنطولوجيّ للوجود من لحظة قبول الأمانة يقابله في المفهوم ما قبل الإسلاميّ تأطير وجوديّ للشخصيّة العربيّة التي تنطلق من كون العربيّ ملتزِمًا بما التزمت به الجماعة من المروءة وأخلاقها من باب كون هذه الالتزامات أمانةً مؤدّاةً من منطلق طبيعة الوجود العربيّ. فالعيب يلحق من لم يلتزم بهذه الأخلاق بوصفها أمانةً وجوديّة تعمل على تثبيت الروح القبليّة، وهو ما يُعدُّ كفرًا وجوديًّا بالذات العربيّة. بينما صنّف الإسلام من يخون الأمانة في مراتب من الإثم، بين كونها خيانة عقائديّة (خيانة الله ورسوله) وكونها خيانة مجتمعيّة سلوكيّة تتراوح في مراتبها بين الكفر والنفاق والمعصية. أمّا التصوّف، فلأنّه يمنح المفاهيم بُعدًا زمنيًّا ممتدًّا قبليًّا وبعديًّا، وفّق بين المفهوم العربيّ سلوكيًّا والمفهوم الإسلاميّ عقديًّا ومنح خيانة الأمانة بُعدًا وجوديًّا كونيًّا مركّبًا.

وفي هذا المفهوم الوجوديّ المركّب يجتمع عالم الغيب وعالم الشهادة في نفس اللحظة الوجوديّة، بحيث تُستحضَر في كلّ سلوك ذاتيّ وجدانيّ أو جمعيّ لحظةُ العهد الأوّل القبليّة ولحظة المحاسبة البعديّة على هذا العهد. وبين لحظة قبول الالتزام ولحظة الجزاء يتحقّق مفهوم المسؤوليّة القائمة على الاختيار.

ب) المسؤوليّة بوصفها اختيارًا

إنّ عرض الأمانة الذي ذكره القرآن هو عرض تخيير لا عرض إلزام، وهو ما يجعل منها قيمة أخلاقيّة واختيارًا يتعلّق به الثواب والعقاب لكونها «تكليفًا.» وهذا يضعنا في مواجهة «تكليفيّة خُلُق الأمانة» وارتفاعه من قيمة اختياريّة بمقتضى تكليف اجتماعيّ قَبَليّ إلى قيمة أنطولوجيّة بمقتضى التكليف الإلهيّ. ويميّز التصوّف بين نوعَين من الأمانات المعروضة في موقف الميثاق الأوّل «ألستُ/بلى» هما: الأمانة الاختياريّة والأمانة الجبريّة. فيجعل الأولى أعلى مقامًا لارتباطها بالاختيار والكسب الإنسانيَّين ويمثّلها قبولُ الإنسان لمسؤوليّة التكليف، بينما يجعل الثانية إباء الأمانة الاختياريّة ويمثّلها انصياع السماوات والأرض لأمانة الجبر وإلزامها بمقتضاها من الطاعة. ويتعلّق بقبول مسؤوليّة الاختيار تحمّل نتائجها واستحقاق أدوات العون عليها، وهو محض الإنسانيّة التي كرّمت الإنسان وجعلته مختلفًا متفوّقًا عن أنواع المخلوقات الأخرى ومنها الأجرام عظيمة الخَلق.

إنّ الإنسان مكلَّفٌ أن يدير الكون بالائتمار بأوامر الله، وتحقيقُه لخلُق الأمانة إنسانيُّ التحقّق وإن كان إلهيّ المنطلق. بينما السماوات والأرض وسائر من فيهنّ تؤدّي أمانتها في الائتمار بأوامر الله من لدن الله، أي أنّها لا تملك أن لا تستجيب. قال ابن العربيّ:

> ائتيا طوعًا أو كرهًا [يقصد الآية ﴿ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ وَهِيَ دُخَانٌ فَقَالَ لَهَا وَلِلْأَرْضِ ائْتِيَا طَوْعًا أَوْ كَرْهًا قَالَتَا أَتَيْنَا طَائِعِينَ﴾[48]] أي تهيّآ لقبول ما يُلقى فيكما، فلمّا أتيا طائعين وتهيّآ لقبول ما شاء الحقّ أن يجعل فيهما مستسلمين خائفين فقدّر في الأرض أقواتَها وجعلها أمانةً عندها حمّلها إيّاها جبرًا لا اختيارًا وأوحى في كلّ سماء أمرَها وجعل ذلك أمانة بيدها تؤدّيها إلى أهلها حَمَّلَها إيّاها جبرًا لا اختيارًا.[49]

45. تعبّر عنها الآية ﴿إِنَّمَا ٱلتَّوْبَةُ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ لِلَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ ٱلسُّوٓءَ بِجَهَـٰلَةٍ ثُمَّ يَتُوبُونَ مِن قَرِيبٍ فَأُو۟لَـٰٓئِكَ يَتُوبُ ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَكَانَ ٱللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا﴾ القرآن 17:4.
46. القرآن 130:2.
47. نجم الدين الكبرى، *التأويلات النجميّة في التفسير الإشاريّ الصوفيّ* تحقيق أحمد فريد المزيدي (بيروت: دار الكتب العلميّة، 2009)، 88/5.
48. القرآن 11:41.
49. ابن العربيّ، *الفتوحات المكّيّة*، ضبطه وصحّحه أحمد شمس الدين (بيروت: دار الكتب العلميّة، 1999)، 4/5.

167.0 x 240.0 mm

وإذا كان الله قد تكفّل بضمان أداء أمانة الموجودات فلأنّها لم تختر الأمانة الاختياريّة واستعفت مشفقةً فأعفاها منها،[50] ومن ثمّة فأداؤها لها غير منوط بها بل منوط بمن جبلها على أدائها، ولذلك لا تترتّب عليها أيّ تبعات جزائيّة. ولأنّ الإنسان اختار أن يكون طرفًا وجوديًّا في هذا الميثاق عند قبوله إيّاه، فقد زوّده الله بأدوات لتحقيق أمانته لكونه مختارًا متحمّلًا لمسؤوليّة الاختيار، حيث منحه من أوصافه (أي من أوصاف الله) «مِنْ قدرة، وإرادة، وعلم، وحياة، وسمع، وبصر، وكلام، [وهي الصفات الإلهيّة عند المتكلّمين] وهيّأهُ لحضرة القدس ومحلّ الأنس، وسخّر له جميع الكائنات، وهيّأهُ لحمل الأمانة.»[51]

فالفطرة أصيلةٌ في الإنسان الذي يحمل في جبلّته فكرة الأمانة، ولذلك لا يستطيع أن ينكرها أو يجهلها أو ينكر أو يجهل اختياره لها (حتّى خارج تصوّره لموقف الميثاق لكون فكرة الاختيار متجذّرة فيه وهو واعٍ بها)؛ أمّا العقل فيستبدل بالمعرفة ومقتضياتها الجهالة ومتعلّقاتها. والعقل كما يقول الترمذيّ خادم للإنسان وجوديًّا لتحقيق أمانته، لأنّه لم يزل «يمهّد له، ويزيّن له، ويدبّره بالأخلاق الكريمة [...] حتّى وفّقه على حدّ الأمانة، فصار أمين الله تعالى في أرضه، مبلغ سرّه ومحلّ نجواه ومعدن حكمته.»[52] ولأنّ الإنسان اختار فهو يتحمّل نتائج هذا الاختيار بوقوع الجزاء عليه.

ج) الأمانة بوصفها مناطًا للمحاسبة

نموذج الأمانة يتحرّك في كلّيّته وفق سياق الآيتين ﴿فَإِنْ أَمِنَ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا فَلْيُؤَدِّ الَّذِي اؤْتُمِنَ أَمَانَتَهُ وَلْيَتَّقِ اللَّهَ رَبَّهُ وَلَا تَكْتُمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ وَمَن يَكْتُمْهَا فَإِنَّهُ آثِمٌ قَلْبُهُ واللَّهُ بِما تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ (*) لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وإِن تُبْدُوا مَا فِي أَنفُسِكُمْ أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ يُحَاسِبْكُم بِهِ اللَّهُ فَيَغْفِرُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَاءُ واللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ﴾.[53] فترتبط في نسق تراتبيّ تفاعليّ مع الشهادة ثمّ المحاسبة ثمّ التوبة،[54] أي أنّ خلُق الأمانة لا يتحقّق ما لم تؤدَّ الشهادة ومقتضاها (المسؤوليّة والتكليف)، ثمّ المحاسبة على تمام أداء هذه المسؤوليّة (تبعات التكليف وقبول المسؤوليّة)، ثمّ التوبة عند التعرّف على التقصير في الأداء (مسؤوليّة الاستدراك في رأب النقص المخلّ بقيمة أدائها).

وقد سمّى القرآن موقف الميثاق شهادةً للإنسان على نفسه ﴿وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ﴾[55] وهي بمثابة الاعتراف الذي يُعَدّ سيّد الأدلّة. ومن خيانة الأمانة كتمان الشهادة المأخوذة على النفس في الميثاق والتي قيل في معناها أيضًا «أن يكون شهودك من غير شواهد ربّك [...] فمهما يكن اتّقاء قلبك في حفظ أمانة ربّك فلا يشاهد قلبك إلّا شواهد ربّك ولا يؤذي شرُك حقيقة أمانتك إلّا إلى ربّك.»[56] والشهادة تستدعي الحضور الكامل والوعي والإحاطة بما يُشهَد فيه وبه.

ولأنّ الوعي فعلٌ حيّ مستدام فهو يستدعي «استدامة المراقبة واستصحاب المحاسبة.»[57] لأنّ المحاسبة الذاتيّة هي فعل تصحيحيّ استباقيّ للمحاسبة البَعديّة في الوقوف بين يدي الله لمراجعة مدى موافقة شواهد الأعمال في الحياة لشواهد النيّات في موقف «بلى.» وإذا كانت الشريعة تجعل العقل مناطَ التكليف، فإنّ التصوّف يوحي بما هو أبعد، حيث يجعل الوعي مناط التكليف، فالأرواح التي ليست عاقلة (بالمفهوم الحسّيّ للعقل) قد التزمت بقبول المسؤوليّة وتحمُّل الأمانة، وهذا يجعل الوعي حالة تتجاوز حالة العقل، وهو ما يسمّيه الصوفيّة حالة «الشهود.» «فالحَمل» هنا تحمله القلوب التي «قد تعمى»[58] حين لا تعي-تشهد حقيقة التجلّيات الإلهيّة من حولها. ذلك أنّ العرض

50. ابن عجيبة، *البحر المديد في تفسير القرآن المجيد*، 468/4.
51. المصدر نفسه، 389/4.
52. الحكيم الترمذيّ، *شرح كتاب الأمثال من السنّة والكتاب*، إعداد عليّ أحمد الطهطاوي (بيروت: دار الكتب العلميّة، 2007)، 155-156.
53. القرآن2:283-284.
54. الكبرى، *التأويلات النجميّة في التفسير الإشاريّ الصوفيّ*، 376/1.
55. القرآن 172:7.
56. الكبرى، *التأويلات النجميّة في التفسير الإشاريّ الصوفيّ*، 376/1.
57. المصدر نفسه، 377/1.
58. نعني الآية ﴿أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَتَكُونَ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ يَعْقِلُونَ بِهَا أَوْ آذَانٌ يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى الْأَبْصَارُ وَلَكِن تَعْمَى الْقُلُوبُ الَّتِي فِي الصُّدُورِ﴾ القرآن 46:22.

167.0 x 240.0 mm

كان حتّى على ما لا يَعقل من المخلوقات وقد أبَينه، فلذلك «يُحتمَل أن يكون الإباء بإدراكٍ خَلَقَه الله فيها؛»[59] لأنّ الوعي ليس محصورًا فيما نعرفه من أدواته كالعقل والحواسّ — وفق الصوفيّة —، بل «إنّ هناك أرواحًا وعقولًا لا يعلمها إلّا الله [...] ولولا أنّ هناك ما يقبل الخطاب لما خاطبها.»[60]

د) الأمانة بوصفها خلافةً

تعليقًا على آية عرض الأمانة على السماوات والأرض والجبال يقول ابن العربيّ: «وأيّ أمانة أعظم من النيابة عن الحقّ في عباده فلا يصرفهم إلّا بالحقّ، فلا بدّ من الحضور الدائم ومن مراقبة التصريف.»[61] والنيابة عن الله هنا هي الوعي بالمسؤوليّة المنجرّة عن قبول التكليف في موقف «بلى» والوعي بآثار هذا القبول الوجوديّة تجاه الموجودات (وهو ما سمّاه ابن العربيّ بالتصريف) واستمراريّة هذا الوعي باليقظة. وهذا يعني أنّ النيابة عن الله هي الخلافة عنه والتي تخوّل للإنسان أن يقوم بمهمّته الكبرى في هذا الوجود وهي «معرفة الله» (غيبيًّا) و«عمارة الأرض» (كونيًّا).

ذلك أنّه بتحقّق مراتب النسق الائتمانيّ (الشهادة، والمحاسبة، والتوبة) يحقّق الإنسان الغاية من وجوده ويبلغ مقام العبوديّة الحقّة التي تخوّله أن يتصرّف في أمور الحياة. فإذا كان المجتمع ما قبل الإسلاميّ ينظر إلى الأمانة على أنّها رعاية تنظيميّة لإدارة الحياة وتوزيع مواردها بآليّة أخلاق المروءة، فالتصوّف ينظر لها بما هي نيابة عن الله في إدارة شؤون الحياة وفق مفهوم «الخلافة عن الله.» وليست الخلافة هنا المصطلح السياسيّ الذي يعني شكل الدولة والحكم بمعنى أن يخلِف الناسُ بعضهم البعض في إدارة شؤونهم السياسيّة والاجتماعيّة والاقتصاديّة المنحصرة، بل شأنها في التصوّف أعظم لأنّه تكليف كونيّ من الله للإنسان بالتصرّف في شؤون المخلوقات وسياسة أمورهم الكونيّة في عمومها من خلال تعمير العالم تجلّيًا للأمر الإلهيّ «كن.»

«فكُنْ» تحتمل أن تكون من (كان الناقصة) أو من (كان التامّة)، فحالة كونها من كان التامّة تستدعي الإنسانَ إلى «الكونيّة،» بينما كونها من كان الناقصة يستدعيه إلى «الكينونة.» والفرق بينهما أنّ الكينونة تعني أن «يكون» الإنسانُ (من كان الناقصة) منفعِلًا باحثًا عن اكتمالٍ في ذاته، بمعنى أن يمارس حالةَ «كونه» كاشفًا للوجود ومتفاعلًا معه وفيه ومنفتحًا على حالات متجدّدة يستوعبها «خبر كان» الذي يحمل نقصًا ساعيًا إلى الاكتمال، وهو ما تعنيه الكينونة في الفلسفة الحديثة. وهذه الحالة هي على العكس تمامًا من «الكونيّة» (من كان التامّة)، والتي هي قيمة أنطيقيّة (فطريّة) لأنّها تعيُّنٌ سكونيّ مكتمِلٌ للإنسان من حيث كونه أثر الفعل الإلهيّ. فالكونيّة وجودٌ راضخ passive لأنّ الكائن لا يملك أمرَ وجوده، أمّا «الكينونة» فهي وجود فاعل active. ومن هنا، يمكنني أن أقارب بين فعل الأمر «كُنْ» المُحرِّك لوَعْي الإنسان بمسؤوليّته عن أمانته الوجوديّة، وبين أوّل فعل أمر أنطولوجيّ نزل في القرآن وهو «اقرأ» في الآية ﴿اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ﴾.[62]

ولذلك أرى أنّ فَهْمَ بعض المفسّرين في التراث الإسلاميّ لفعل الأمر «اقرأ» في آية بدْء الوحي بما هو مجرّد استظهار صوتيّ يبْخَسه حقَّه. فما هذا المنحى إلّا احتفاءٌ آخر بالناطقيّة في الإنسان، وهي قولةٌ لا تناسب جوهر الرؤية التي جاء بها القرآن. ذلك أنّ الإنسان ليس ناطقًا فحسب، فخصوصيّتُه تكمن في ممارسته كينونته المتعلّقة بالتكليف.[63] وإذا كان القرآن قد كرّم الإنسانَ فلأنّه ميّزه بالعقل دون

59. ابن عجيبة، *البحر المديد في تفسير القرآن المجيد*، 468/4.
60. المصدر نفسه، 17/7.
61. ابن العربيّ، *الفتوحات المكّيّة*، 272/7.
62. القرآن 96: 1.
63. أقصد أنّ فعل الكلام ليس مُحَدِّدًا لجوهر الإنسان في المنظومة الإسلاميّة. أن تكون إنسانًا في الإسلام ليس معناه أن تقول، ولكن معناه أنّك «مُكَلَّفٌ» أي مُزوَّدٌ بأدوات التكليف التي يُعدُّ العقل والفطرة أهمَّها، وهذا يعني أنّك مهيّأٌ لخلافة الله في الأرض. فالتكليفُ، في القرآن، قيمة فطريّة، خُلِقت في الإنسان منذ أن أُخِذ عليه العهد الأوّل قبل وجوده المادّيّ، وفي ذلك قوله: ﴿وإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِن بَنِي آدَمَ مِن ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وأَشْهَدَهُمْ على أَنفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ، قالُوا بلى شَهِدْنا، أن تَقُولوا يَوْمَ القِيامةِ إنّا كُنّا عَنْ هذا غافِلِينَ﴾ القرآن 172:7. ويرتبط التكليف بسُلطةٍ وعِلْمٍ يقرّران التكاليف، ويمثّلهما القرآن الذي يقدّم نفسَه بما هو دستور الإنسان في استعمال فِطْرَته للوصول إلى الممارسة المثلى لإنسانيّته. والتكليف ليس انكماشًا للإنسان على ذاته، بل هو، كما أفهمه، حركة القيم والقوانين التي يتمثّلها الإنسان في ممارسة «الوجود— مع» الكون، أي أنّه الإطار الأنطولوجيّ الأمثل لكي يعرف الإنسان نفسَه والغايةَ من وجوده.

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سائر المخلوقات وأناط التكليف بهذا العقل. وفي ظِلّ ذلك، هل يصلح فِعْلُ «النطق» أن يكون مُحدِّدًا مركزيًّا لإنسانيّة الإنسان ومنطَلَقًا أساسًا لرسالة القرآن وأوّلَ أوامره وأحكامِه؟

أقول هذا واعيةً بأنّ الصوت مرتبطٌ ارتباطًا وثيقًا بكلمة «قراءة» في المنظومة التراثيّة، ولا أعني بما أطرحه تهميش الصوت بما هو مكوّنٌ من مكوّنات دلالة الفعل «اقرأ» بل أعني تجاوُز مركزيّته نحو مركزيّة أخرى، هي مركزيّة «ممارسة الكينونة» أو «الوعي وطلب الإدراك» من خلال فِعْل اكتشاف الذات والعالَم. وهذه الممارسة هي إخراجٌ للكينونة القَبْليّة للإنسان سلبًا أو إيجابًا تحت مسؤوليّة الاختيار. أقول سلبًا أو إيجابًا بناءً على تفسير آية الميثاق السابقة الذِّكر، حيث يرى التراث أنّ كلّ الناس أخذوا العهد على الإيمان بالله حين قالوا «بلى» لكنّ منهم من قالها إيمانًا وهم الذين يؤمنون في الدنيا (وهو ما أعنيه بالخروج الإيجابيّ للكينونة) مستجيبين لمبدأ الخلافة عن الله على وجهها المحدّد في آية الميثاق وهو التوحيد وقبول شرائع الله في إدارة شؤون المخلوقات نيابةً عنه تعالى، ومنهم من قالها إذعانًا لسلطان المشهد لا إيمانًا وهم من سيكفرون في الدنيا (وهو ما أعنيه بالخروج السلبيّ) رافضين للخلافة عن الله على وجهها المطلوب في موقف الميثاق.[64]

وإذا نظرنا إلى «القراءة» في أوّل أمرٍ أنطولوجيّ قرآنيّ ﴿اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ﴾ ومن منظور التأصيل السابق نجد أنّها تعني عمليّةَ إخراجٍ للفَهم إخراجًا يُعْلِن نفسَه في ممارسة الإنسان كينونتَه. فيكون معنى «اقرأْ» هو مارس كينونتَك في الإدراك: افهم واعرف وانفتح على ما ستعرفه من القراءة، أي توصَّل إلى الإيمان بالتفاعل والتصرّف الوجوديّ مع الموجودات من خلال القرآن ورسالته.

وإنّما منح الإنسان هذه المكانة في التصرّف في الموجودات المسخَّرة له لأنّه منها بمثابة القلب من الشخص، وبمثابة من يملك سلطان «القيّوميّة النيابيّة» عن الله، فمع المسؤوليّة لا بدّ من سلطانٍ ما تتحرّك به صفة التصريف وهو سلطان الوعي. فالإنسان بوصفه مؤهّلًا لتلقّي الفيض الإلهيّ والفهم عن الله هو بمثابة القلب الذي يسيّر الجوارح بالإرادة والقصد.[65] فقد مثّل الصوفيّ لهذه الإدارة بتشبيه علاقة الإنسان بسائر المخلوقات بالشرايين والعروق، فمن خلالها يستطيع أن يبلّغ الأمانة لسائر المخلوقات وذلك عن طريق بثّ الفيض الإلهيّ فيها.[66] وهذا البثّ لا يُتخيّل بين إنسان عاقل وموجودات غير معقولة إلّا بكونه تجلّيًا للأسماء الإلهيّة المستفيضة آثارها على المخلوقات جميعًا. ويعني ذلك أن يتلقّف الإنسان فهمَه لأسماء الله ويتصرّف وفقها، ففهمه لصفة الرحمة مثلًا يعني أن يرحم المخلوقات وفهمه لصفة العدل يعني أن يكون عادلًا معها، يقول ابن العربيّ: «كذلك العبد أوصاف الحقّ عنده أمانة لا يزال العارف بكونها أمانةً عنده تَثقُل عليه بمراقبة كيف يتصرّف بها وأين يصرفها ويخاف أن يتصرّف فيها تصرّف المُلّاك،»[67] أي بكونه نائبًا عن الله في التصرّف في مخلوقاته وفق مقتضى شرائعه،لا بكونه متصرّفًا أصيلًا.

64. يُنظَر في ذلك: أحمد الغزّاليّ، *التجريد في كلمة التوحيد*، تحقيق أحمد مجاهد (بيروت: منشورات الجمل، 2012)، 71.
65. الكبرى، *التأويلات النجميّة في التفسير الإشاريّ الصوفيّ*، 87/1.
66. المصدر نفسه، 87/1.
67. ابن العربيّ، الفتوحات، 389/4.

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الخلاصة:

سواءٌ تحقّقت الأمانة في الإنسان أم لم تتحقّق، تتجلّى عليه من خلالها صفةٌ من صفات الله:

- مَنْ لم يتحمّلها اختيارًا وتحمّلها جبْرًا (سائر الموجودات عدا الإنس والجنّ) فقد وقع عليه نعت «الطوعيّة،» لتتجلّى فيه صفة العدل الإلهيّ من حيث إنّ الله زوّده بأمداد تحقيق الأمانة وجعلها من لدنه هو جلّ وعلا.

- مَنْ تحمّل الأمانة اختيارًا في موثق الميثاق ولم يؤدّها في الحياة من الناس، فقد كَفَر ووقع عليه نعْت «الظَّلوميّة» المطلقة، لتنعكس فيهم صفة عدل الله الذي ألزمَهم الحجّة بتزويدهم بأدوات تحقيق الأمانة (العقل والفطرة) ومع هذا لم يستجيبوا لمقتضياتها (التوحيد)، كما تنعكس فيهم صفة قهر الله من حيث إيقاعه جزاء الإخلال بالأمانة عليهم بسلطة عليا قاهرة.

- مَنْ تحمّلَ الأمانة وأدّاها شوقًا ومحبّةً فتنعكس فيه صفة فضل الله ولطفه ويتحمّل نعْتَ «الجهوليّة» التي تجعله يتعثّر مِنْ ثقلها أحيانًا (وهي أيضًا «الظلوميّة» النسبيّة)، ولذلك يرتبط تمامُ أدائه لها بالمحاسبة الذاتيّة والمراقبة المستمرّة والتوبة.

لقد رفع التصوّف الأمانة من كونها مفهومًا اجتماعيًّا قد يكون ذا بعدٍ أنطولوجيّ أو طبيعيّ يعكس صراع البقاء إلى معنًى أنطولوجيّ لا يصارع ليبقى بقدر ما يسالم ليبقى. وتوسّعت دائرته من أمانة الأخلاق القبليّة (ذات الإلزام القيميّ الاجتماعيّ) إلى أمانة الأخلاق التي تتأسّى بأسماء الله لتصريف شؤون الحياة وتدبيرها نيابةً عن الله تعالى مع الوعي بالجانب الكسبيّ المتعلّق بالمسؤوليّة في ذلك. فالأمانة في التصوّف تشغّل المفاهيم العقديّة والأخلاقيّة وتضع الإنسان في موقع المحرّك للسنن الإلهيّة الاجتماعيّة التي تتعلّق فيها الأسباب بمسبّباتها بوصفه خليفةً لله في تدبير مقدّرات الكون وعمارة الأرض وفق مسؤوليّة ناجمة عن اختيار أنطولوجيّ قبليّ واثَقَ فيه الإنسان ربّه على التوحيد والالتزام بتشريعاته.

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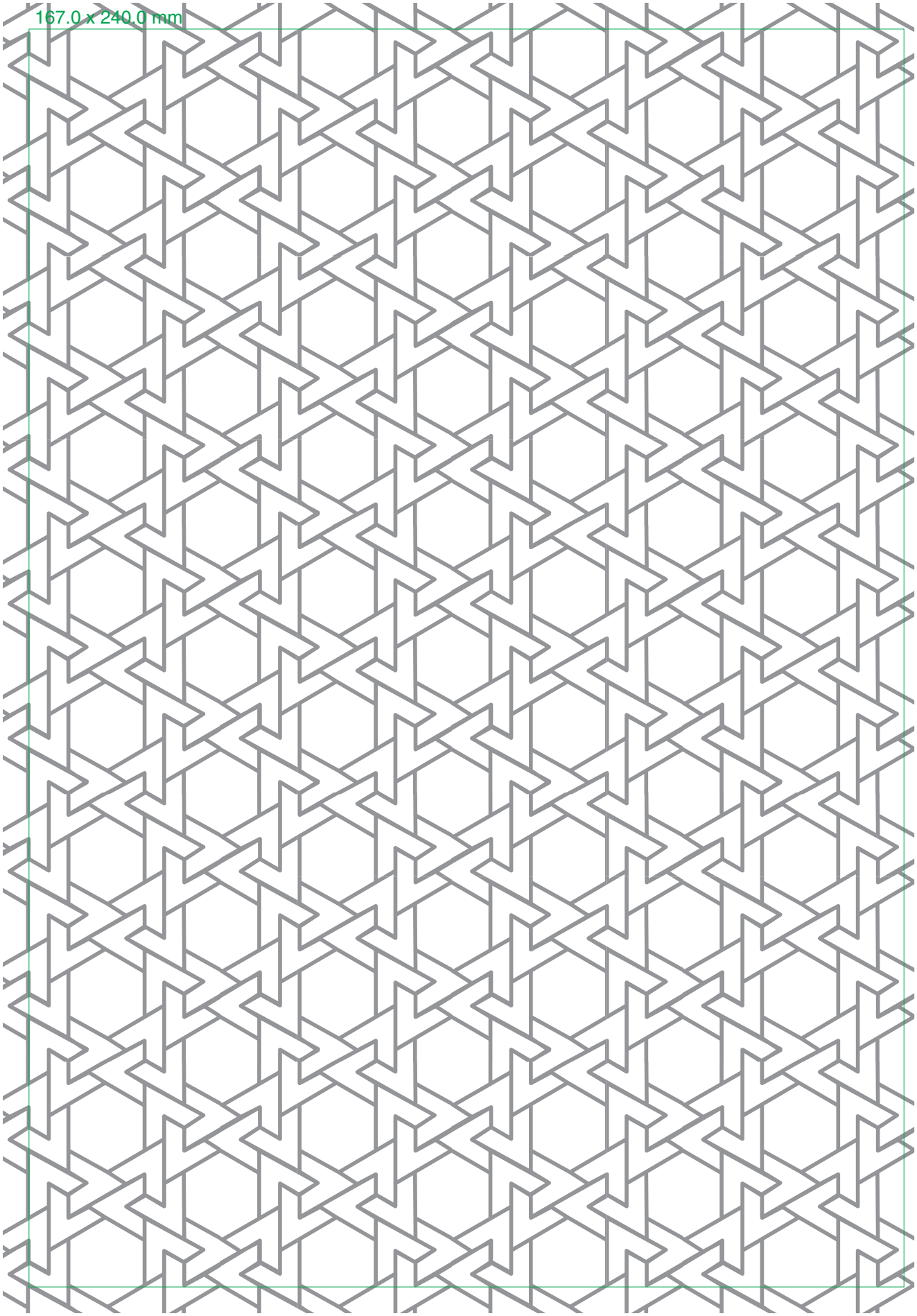
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ʿAḌUD AL-DĪN ĪJĪ'S ETHICS: A TRANSLATION OF *AL-AKHLĀQ AL-ʿAḌUDIYYA* AND SOME NOTES ON ITS COMMENTARIES

Feryal Salem

Abū al-Faḍl ʿAḍud al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥman b. Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Ghaffār al-Ījī (d. 756/1355) was born in the town of Īj near Shiraz around 680/1281. His father was a respected jurist (*qāḍī*) who claimed lineage back to the second Muslim caliph, Abū Bakr (d. 13/634).[1] In his formative years, al-Ījī traveled to Tabriz, where he spent time studying grammar and the rational sciences with Fakhr al-Dīn al-Jārbardī,[2] who was a student of the renowned scholar and exegete, al-Bayḍāwī (d. 685/1286). Al-Ījī also studied with Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shirāzī (d. 711/1311), who was one of the key students of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 673/1274).[3] There is also a record of him having studied philosophy as a youth in the Ilkhanid capital of his time, Ṣultāniyya, under the patronage of the vizier Rashīd al-Dīn (d. 718/1318). During the reign of Uljaytu (1304–1316), al-Ījī is reported to have been both a judge in Sultāniya as well as a teacher in the mobile madrasas that had become prevalent at the time.

1. Tahsin Güngör, "Îcî, Adudüddin Kadı Ebü'l Fazl Abdurrahman b. Rükneddin b. Abdurrahman (ö. 756/1355)," in *Islam Düşünce Geleneğinde Adudüddin el-Îcî,* ed. Eşref Altaş (Istanbul: ISAM, 2017), 21–73. Tahsin Güngör, "Îcî, Adudüddin," in *Islam Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1988), vol. 21, 410–414. Joseph van Ess, "al-Īd̲jī," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, and W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on September 15, 2020. <http://dx.doi.org.aic.idm.oclc.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_3486> Joseph van Ess, "ʿAżod al-Dīn Īji," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. e, no. 3, 269–271; available online at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/azod-al-din-iji (accessed online on September 15, 2020).

2. Charperdi in Persian sources. He was likely of Turkic or Persian ancestry.

3. Cf. "al-Ījī, ʿAḍud al-Dīn." *Encyclopedia of Religion*. Encyclopedia.com. (August 13, 2020). https://www.encyclopedia.com/environment/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/iji-adud-al-din-al.

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ʿAḍud al-Dīn eventually became one of the most central figures of what may be called the post-classical (*muta'akhkhirīn*) era of Islamic thought following al-Ghazālī (505/1111). One of the distinctions of al-Ījī's scholarship is in his work of verification or "*taḥqīq*." Verification was a form of scholarship in which earlier Islamic texts were revisited and commentaries were written to assess whether the contents of earlier works of Islamic theology could withstand the scrutiny of rational arguments developed in the field of Islamic philosophy. While al-Ījī wrote a number of texts within a variety of the fields of what might be known as the trivium of philosophical theology, legal hermeneutics, and grammar (*uṣul al-dīn, uṣūl al-fiqh*, and *uṣūl al-lugha*) in the Seljuk and Ottoman *madrasa* curricula, al-Ījī's most lasting legacy was his text on Islamic theology, *al-Mawāqif fī ʿilm al-kalām*.[4] Al-Ījī's two most prized students, Sayyid Sharīf al-Jurjānī (d. 816/1413) and Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftazānī (d. 791/1390), who wrote valuable commentaries on this work, ensured that the framework set forth in al-Ījī's *al-Mawāqif* would become foundational to Sunni theology for the centuries that followed.

Al-Ījī's *al-Akhlāq al-ʿAḍudiyya*[5] is among his other writings that were not known as theological masterpieces, yet nevertheless had a significant impact on the study of moral philosophy in the Islamic world. The *Akhlāq al-ʿAḍudiyya* has also been largely overlooked in contemporary academic writings and often eclipsed by the attention given to the *Nasirean Ethics* upon which it is based. Mustakim Arıcı claims that this scholarly indifference may be explained in the words of van Ess, who described al-Ījī's abridged works as not containing anything that was new to previous writings, such as Ṭūsī's ethics.[6] Arıcı challenges this view by asserting that it is in fact the brevity of this ethical treatise that makes it distinctive. The *Akhlāq al-ʿAḍudiyya* follows a sequence of works that examined ethics from a perspective of philosophical ethics rooted in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. The *Nicomachean Ethics* had a lasting impact on many Muslim thinkers, such as al-Farābī (d. 339/950), Avicenna (d. 428/1037), Miskawayh (d. 412/1030), Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, al-Dawwānī (d. 908/1502), ʿAḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī, and their countless students who expanded upon and redefined Aristotle's work in Islamic terms while composing a great many new annotations and commentaries.[7]

Mustakim Arıcı writes that the importance of the *Akhlāq al-ʿAḍudiyya* lies not in the contents of the treatise, which indeed summarizes Ṭūsī's more detailed work, but rather in its format.[8] The condensed form of al-Ījī's *Akhlāq* is what gave

4. Mustakim Arıcı, "Adududdin el-Îcî'nin Ahlak Risalesi: Arapça Metni ve Tercümesi," *Kutadgubilig Felsefe Bilim Araştırmaları* 15 (March 2009): 137; and Cf. Tahsin Güngör, "Îcî, Adudüddin Kadı Ebü'l Fazl Abdurrahman b. *Rükneddin b. Abdurrahman* (d. 756/1355)," in *Islam Düşünce Geleneğinde Adudüddin el-Îcî*, ed. Eşref Altaş (Istanbul: ISAM, 2017), 21–73.

5. Brockelmann names the *Akhlāq al-ʿAḍudiyya as "Risālat al-shāhiya fī ʿilm al-akhlāq,"* Cf. *GAL* II, p. 270. Mustakim Arıcı writes that upon examination of the various manuscripts in Turkish libraries, he was unable to find evidence of the treatise being known with this title. Arıcı writes that the following variations to the title of this treatise are found, "*Risāla-i-ʿAḍud al-Dīn, Akhlāq-i-ʿAḍudiyya, Akhlāq-i-ʿAḍud al-Dīn, Risālat al-ʿAḍudiyya fī ʿilm al-akhlāq, Risālat al-akhlāq li-Qāḍī ʿAḍud al-Dīn wa ḥikmat al-ʿamaliyya bi aqsāmihā min al-khulqiyya wa al-manziliyya wa al-madaniyya.*" Cf. Mustakim Arıcı, "Adududdin el-Îcî'nin Ahlak Risalesi: Arapça Metni ve Tercümesi," *Kutadgubilig Felsefe Bilim Araştırmaları* 15 (March 2009): 139.

6. Mustakim Arıcı, "Adududdin el-Îcî'nin Ahlak Risalesi: Arapça Metni ve Tercümesi," 141.

7. For a historical survey of Islamic moral philosophy, see Majid Fakhry, *Ethical Theories in Islam*, (Leiden: Brill, 1991). Also see A. A. Akasoy and A. Fidora (eds.), *The Arabic Version of the "Nicomachean Ethics,"* with an English translation by D. M. Dunlop (Leiden: Brill, 2005). Joep Lapeer, *The Arabic Version of Ṭūsī's Nasirean Ethics with an Introduction and Explanatory Notes* (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

8. Mustakim Arıcı, "Adududdin el-Îcî'nin Ahlak Risalesi: Arapça Metni ve Tercümesi," 141.

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it the flexibility to be adopted in *madrasa* networks where it could be memorized easily at a time when short versified writings (*mutūn*) were learned by heart and studied with teachers who would write commentaries on them. As a result of al-Ījī's restructuring of the *Nasirean Ethics* into a short treatise, al-Ījī's moral philosophy (and by extension that of Ṭūsī) became studied on a far wider scale.

Another important distinction of the *Akhlāq al-ʿAḍudiyya* is that it is composed in Arabic, which made it available to an entirely new audience of students for whom Arabic was a common language for religious learning.[9] Similar works, such as the *Akhlāq al-Nāṣirī* of Ṭūsī or the *Akhlāq al-Jalālī* of Dawwānī, were originally written in Persian and only later were translated into Arabic. The *Akhlāq al-ʿAlāʾī* of Kınalızade Ali Efendi was authored in Turkish.[10] The *Akhlāq al-ʿAḍudiyya* is originally in Arabic and almost all of its many commentaries are also in Arabic, making Islamic moral philosophy a mainstream field that was studied by students of religious learning. The conciseness of the *Akhlāq al-ʿAḍudiyya* allowed it to be interpreted from a variety of frameworks, as will be seen in the brief survey of the commentaries in this study.

Recent academic work on al-Ījī's ethics began among Turkish academics, who have made extensive progress in directing attention to the significance of the *Akhlāq al-ʿAḍudiyya*. This focused research over the past decade took the form of various master's theses, doctoral dissertations, and a concerted effort by various specialists who each composed critical editions and Turkish translations of all of the commentaries known to be extant today. Specifically, the Turkish Manuscript Association (Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu) and the Religious Knowledge Foundation (Ilmi Etüdler Derneği) set out on a joint project to publish all of the commentaries of al-Ījī's *Akhlāq* into critical Arabic editions with Turkish translations. Additionally, the first critical edition of the *Akhlāq* without any commentary appeared in an article published by Mustakim Arıcı in 2009 and later again in a book chapter.[11] This study relies on Arıcı's critical edition of the *Akhlāq.*

Special mention should be made of the earliest academic studies of the *Akhlāq al-ʿAḍudiyya* by Elzem Içöz and Derya Topalcık, who both wrote master's theses in 2007 which published forgotten manuscripts of commentaries on the *Akhlāq al-ʿAḍudiyya*.[12] Içöz and Topalcık's groundbreaking research in this field laid the foundation for the numerous studies that followed. Asiye Aykıt's doctoral thesis on Müneccimbaşı's commentary, in which she composes a critical edition of his extensive work along with a valuable analysis, is also among the most significant

9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Cf. Mustakim Arıcı, "Adududdin el-Îcî'nin Ahlak Risalesi: Arapça Metni ve Tercümesi," 135–-172; and Mustakim Arıcı, "Ahlak-ı-Adudiyye Literatürü ve Şerhlerde Yöntem Sorunu," in *Islam Düşünce Geleneğinde Adudüddin el-Îcî*, ed. Eşref Altaş (Istanbul: ISAM, 2017), 631–655. The Arabic critical edition contained within this chapter in the compendium edited by Eşref Altaş was used for this study.
12. Elzem Içöz, *Taşköprizāde'nin Şerhü Ahlak-ı Adudiyye Adlı Eseri* (master's thesis, Sakarya Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2007) and Derya Topalcık, *Kirmānī'nin Şerhu Ahlak-ı Adud Adlı Eseri* (master's thesis, Sakarya Universitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2007). Içöz later published her dissertation in co-authorship with Mustakim Arıcı as Ṭaşköprüzāde Aḥmad Efendi, *Şerhu'l Ahlaki'l Adudiyye: Ahlak-ı Adudiyye Şerhi*, edited and translated by Elzem Içöz and Mustakim Arıcı (Istanbul: Turkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu, 2014).

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studies of the various commentaries on al-Ījī's ethics.[13] Mustakim Arıcı has also published extensively on both the *Akhlāq al-ʿAḍudiyya* with a focus on Ṭaşköpüzāde's commentary as well as more general studies in the field of Islamic ethical philosophy that examine various new facets of this field.[14] Arıcı's extensive research in Islamic moral philosophy has made consulting his writings indispensable for further study on this topic. Other scholars who have contributed to this joint project on al-Ījī's ethics are: Ömer Türker, Mervenur Yılmaz, Selime Çınar, Kübra Bilgin Tiryaki, and others, as will be seen. This study builds upon their work through translating the *Akhlāq al-ʿAḍudiyya* into English while also providing a broad survey of the various commentaries which have been composed on al-Ījī's work.

THE ETHICS OF ʿADUD AL-DĪN AL-ĪJĪ

In the name of God the Compassionate and Merciful.

Thanks to God for His blessings. And blessings upon His Prophet Muhammad and his family. To proceed, this is an abridgement of the study of ethics that has been arranged into four parts:

Part One: Theoretical (*al-Naẓarī*) Ethics

Character is a disposition from which actions are manifested easily without deliberation. [The belief in its] ability to change is based on experience, the revelation of divine injunction regarding it, and the consensus of intelligent [people]. The affinity for its change differs based on different temperaments (*amzija*). The faculties (*quwwa*) of the human soul (*nafs*) are three. [The first is] reasoning (*al-nuṭq*). Its moderate form is wisdom (*al-ḥikma*). Its excessive form is deceitfulness (*jarbaza*). Its deficiency is stupidity (*ghabāwa*).

[The second faculty of the human soul is] anger (*al-ghaḍab*). Its moderation yields courage (*al-shujāʿa*). Its excess yields recklessness (*al-tahawwur*). And its deficiency is cowardice (*al-jubn*). [The third faculty of the human soul is] desire. Its moderation is temperance (*ʿiffa*). Its excess is debauchery (*fujūr*), and its deficiency is apathy (*jumūd*). The virtues are the moderate [forms] of [each of the three faculties listed] and they are three. The extremes of each of these forms are vices and they are six.

These [three virtues] can also be corrupt due to the way [they are implemented]. As for [corruption of] wisdom, there is the example of one who learns in order to dispute with scholars and to debate with fools. As for courage, an example is one who displays it to gain repute and booty. As for temperance, an example is those

13. Asiye Şen (Aykıt), *Müneccimbaşı Ahmed Dede'nin Şerhu Ahlak-ı-Adud Adlı Eseri: Metin Tahkiki ve Değerlendirme* (Ph.D. dissertation, Marmara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2013).

14. In addition to the works by Mustakim Arıcı previously cited, the following works are also related to his research in the field of Islamic ethics and the *Akhlāq al-ʿAḍudiyya*: Mustakim Arıcı, "İlimler Tasnifi Literatüründe Ahlâk İlmi" [Ethics in the literature of classification of sciences], *Mukaddime* 7, no. 1 (2016): 1–29; Mustakim Arıcı, *Taşköprîzâde Ahlâk ve Siyaset Risaleleri* [*al-Rasāil fi'l-akhlāq va's-siyāsa*] (İstanbul: İstanbul Medeniyet Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2016); Mustakim Arıcı, "Adudüddin el-Îcî'de Huy ve Erdem Problemi," *Nazariyat İslam Felsefe ve Bilim Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi* 4 (2016): 31–56; and Mustakim Arıcı, "Ahlak-ı-Adudiyye Literatürü ve Şerhlerde Yöntem Sorunu," in *Islam Düşünce Geleneğinde Adudüddin el-Îcî*, ed. Eşref Altaş (Istanbul: ISAM, 2017), 631–655.

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who abandon pleasures, seeking more of it in the afterlife or prestige in this life. These are virtues if they are not tainted by ulterior motives and manifest without effort because this (combination of virtues) is goodness (*khayr*) and perfection (*kamāl*).

Subsequently, there are several subcategories of each virtue. There are seven for wisdom. They are: 1) Clarity of mind (*ṣafāʾ al-dhihn*), which is the ability of the soul to discern what is desired without confusion; 2) Excellence in comprehension (*jawdat al-fahm*), which is the ability to reach accurate conclusions from evidence; 3) Intelligence (*dhakāʾ*), which is speed in deriving conclusions; 4) Brilliance in conceptualization (*ḥusn al-taṣawwur*), which is the ability to envision things to their proper extent; 5) Ease in learning (*suhūlat al-taʿlīm*), which is the power of the soul to grasp ideas without excessive effort; 6) Memory (*ḥifẓ*), which is the ability to retain images which have been captured [by the mind]; and 7) Recollection (*al-dhukru*), which is the ability to recall that which has been preserved [in the mind].

Courage has eleven subcategories. They are: 1) Magnanimity (*kibar al-nafs*), which is to disregard both ease and poverty, greatness and insignificance; 2) High aspirations (*ʿiẓam al-himma*), which is a lack of excessive concern with the delights of the world and its hardships; 3) Perseverance (*ṣabr*), which is the capacity to resist pain and fears; 4) Undauntedness (*najda*), which is to not become anxious in times of fear; 5) Forbearance (*ḥilm*), which is composure during times of anger; 6) Calmness (*al-sukūn*), which is equilibrium during quarrels and battles; 7) Humility (*tawāḍūʿ*), which is reverence towards those of virtue and those who lack wealth and prestige; 8) Resolve (*shahāma*) in one's determination to do extraordinary tasks that are commemorated as beautiful [actions]; 9) Endurance (*al-iḥtimāl*), which is to bear exhaustion for the sake of [doing] good; 10) Protectiveness (*al-ḥamiyya*), which is to possess a sense of defensiveness against attacks on the sacred and on religion; and 11) Soft heartedness (*al-riqqa*), which is to experience empathy towards the harms encountered by others.

Temperance (*al-ʿiffa*) has eleven subcategories. They are: 1) Shyness (*al-ḥayāʾ*), which is to restrict oneself out of fear of doing vile actions; 2) Patience (*al-ṣabr*), which is to hold one's self back from acting upon one's desires; 3) Self-control (*al-daʿa*), which is stillness when one's desires are aroused; 4) Integrity (*al-nazāha*), which is earning wealth without disgrace or oppression and to spend it in on good causes; 5) Contentment (*al-qanāʿa*), which is to be content with what is sufficient; 6) Dignity (*al-waqār*), which is derived from giving desired matters their due attention (i.e., without haste); 7) Gentleness (*al-rifq*), which is excellence in commitment to that which leads to what is beautiful; 8) Excellence of one's pursuits (*ḥusn al-samt*), which is the love of things that will cultivate the soul's perfection; 9) Piety (*waraʿ*), which is to hold steadfast to beautiful acts; 10) Prioritization (*al-intiẓām*), which is to value matters and rank them according to their good outcomes (*maṣāliḥ*); and 11) Munificence (*al-sakhāʾ*), which is giving what is appropriate to those for whom it is appropriate. This (munificence) has another six subsections: 1) Generosity (*al-karam*), which is giving with ease and good spirits; 2) Altruism (*īthār*), which is to

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forgo one's own needs [to give to another]; 3) Magnanimity (*al-nubul*), which is to give with a happy heart; 4) Openhandedness (*al-muwāsāt*), which is to share [one's blessings] with one's friends; 5) Liberality (*samāḥa*), which is to spend extra [on others] when one is not obliged to spend; and 6) Leniency (*musāmaḥa*), which is letting go of things one does not need out of self-discipline.

Justice is a term that combines all of the other virtues. Its subcategories are: 1) Sincere friendship (*ṣadāqa*), which is to love one's friends with sincerity without ulterior motives and to prefer him to oneself in good things; 2) Compatibility (*al-ulfa*), which is the agreement of views to cooperate in managing worldly affairs; 3) Loyalty (*al-wafāʾ*), which is to commit to fulfilling the needs of others and to keep one's oaths to one's allies; 4) Seeking affection (*al-tawaddud*), which is to seek the affection of one's peers through [actions] that engender this; 5) Reciprocity (*al-mukāfaʾa*), which is to return goodness with its likeness or better; 6) Excellence in partnership (*ḥusn al-sharika*), which is to uphold fairness in one's interactions; 7) Excellence in recompense (*ḥusn al-qaḍāʾ*), which is to compensate others without causing them remorse or reminding them of one's favors; 8) Maintaining bonds of kinship (*ṣilat al-raḥim*), which is to direct goodness towards one's relatives; 9) Empathy (*al-shafaqa*), which is to exert energy to remove things which are disliked from others; 10) Conflict resolution (*al-iṣlāḥ*), which is to be an intermediary between people to remove enmity among them; 11) Reliance on God (*al-tawakkul*), which is to leave striving for things that it is not humanly possible to change; 12) Submission (*al-taslīm*), which is to follow God's commands and abandon objection to what one does not like; 13) satisfaction (*al-riḍā*), which is to maintain a calmness of spirit towards afflictions and losses without change; and 14) Servitude (*al-ʿubūdiyya*), which is to show reverence to God and His people and to follow their directives.

Part Two: Preserving and Acquiring Virtues

Whoever attains a virtue, either through its acquisition or through one's nature, should preserve it through proximity to those who [possess similar virtues] and avoidance of the company of corrupt individuals. He should be wary of excessive amusement, jesting, and disputation. He should occupy himself with learning and intellectual pursuits while keeping in mind the clarity, permanence, and purity of that virtue as well as the degradation of the world, its temporality and hardships. He should select sincere friends who will point out his flaws as well as examine the words of his enemies about himself and learn from them his own faults and leave them. He should [also] look at the faults of others in order to avoid the [same errors]. If he detects in himself a shortcoming, he should correct this with challenging self-disciplinary exercises. Whoever has acquired a [spiritual] illness should counter it [in the following order of progression starting] with its opposite virtue, then with harshness, then with its opposite vice in order to cure himself [of this spiritual illness] while being careful not to cross into the opposite extreme, and then with arduous spiritual exercises.

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We will list some of the commonly occurring [spiritual] illnesses with their cures. Bewilderment (*al-ḥayra*) is caused by having contradictory evidence, and its cure is through the application of intellectual principles. [Another common spiritual illness is] simple ignorance (*al-jahl al-baṣīṭ*). Those who possess it are like cattle due to having lost the [quality of knowledge] that distinguishes humans from animals. In fact, they are even more astray due to [the tendency of cattle] to seek what is in their interests. This is cured by keeping the company of scholars in order that one's shortcomings become manifested through conversing with them. As for compound ignorance (*al-jahl al-murakkab*), if one accepts a remedy, then it is through working with mathematics that he tastes the delights of certainty, and then through paying attention to syllogistic reasoning following [a process of] progression.

As for anger (*al-ghaḍab*), it is [cured] by extinguishing its roots, which are vanity and arrogance. They (vanity and arrogance) emerge from an individual that has passed through the urinary tract twice (the father's leading to conception and the mother's, at birth) and who will die tomorrow and be in need of his own kind [for burial].[15] Supremacy (*al-iftikhār*) is even farther [than self-importance] because it is [derived from the association with the] honor of another person. The extent of one's insignificance is realized through travel to a location in which one is unknown. Fame and competition (*al-marāʾ wa-l-jāh*) disrupt the order [of societies]. [As far as] jest and mockery (*al-mizāḥ wa-l-istihzāʾ*), along with giving little benefit and diminishing one's dignity, they invite animosity and disrupt [societal] order. Whoever is incapable of moderation in jest, should abandon it [altogether]. Deception and injustice (*al-ghadr wa-l-ḍaym*) are derived from [desire] for the delights of the world [despite their] insignificance. [To cure oneself], one should imagine this being done to them by others in order to realize its maliciousness. [Another cause for the spiritual diseases of deception and injustice] is seeking to rival others with material objects. Along with the repugnance [of material objects], they multiply one's enemies. In times of need, one finds that [these objects] do not benefit one at all. Even if they remain for you, you will not remain [immortal to enjoy] them.

As for anger, once it is aroused, it becomes difficult to shield the mind from its dark smoke, and everything that comes near it serves as fuel for it. Perhaps what might benefit one is to change his environment, drink cold water, and sleep. Anger could be the result of a desire that was not met. It (anger) could boil over (*radʾat kayfiyyatan*) until one curses animals and inanimate objects. Observing these actions and the arousal [of rage] in another person [helps] one draw attention to the vileness [of this behavior]. As for cowardice (*al-jubn*), it elicits degradation, deficiency, and the loss of respect. Its cure lies in facing one's fears, taking on dangers, and remembering the inevitability of death. As for fear (*al-khawf*), [its cure is in] leaving its causes if possible; if not, then in adapting [oneself].

15. This is an allusion to Qur'an, 77:20-26.

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Diseases Derived from the Power of Desire (*Shahwa*)

[The first is] covetousness (*al-ḥirṣ*), [which can be cured] through reflection on how it is shared with animals, [how material] pleasures are trivial and short-lived, as well as through [reflection] on how foul are the things which are sought. [Additionally, one may find a remedy in] considering the wisdom behind the presence of the faculty of desire, and in possessing a sound mind during [times of] temptation to the soul (*nafs*) as well as becoming preoccupied with learning and other matters that distract one [from temptations] and avoiding what will cause one to become overtaken by them.

Laziness (*al-baṭāla*) [is another spiritual disease rooted in desire and it] leads to the destruction of the soul and body and resembles paralysis in terms of incapacity and the loss of wisdom. [It may be cured] through keeping company with people of motivation and reflecting on the fruits of their labors as well as through listening to their [success] stories and the debasement of lazy individuals and their unfavorable outcomes.

Sadness (*al-ḥuzn*) is derived from believing that all of one's desires will happen and that this will last. This is ignorance. One should direct [attention to] good actions [that genuinely] have permanence.

Envy (*al-ḥasad*) is derived from ignorance and greed that comes from not knowing that one single person cannot have all that is good. Its result is continuous sadness, and its most wretched [form is when it manifests among religious] scholars. If one of them (scholars) is fortunate, it does not cause the deprivation of another (scholar).

Longing (*al-ghibṭa*) is to wish for acquiring good without wishing for the same goods to be lost to another. It is praiseworthy in matters of religion and a form of covetousness (*ḥirṣ*) in matters of the world. Avarice (*al-ṭamaʿ*) is a debased [state] which comes from [the combination] of greed, laziness, and ignorance of the wisdom of God the most Exalted in [creating a] need for cooperation. Resentment (*al-ḥiqd*) is remedied through imagining true brotherhood [with the person one is resentful towards]. Lying (*al-kadhib*) is worse than not speaking due to the expression of ideas that are not true and possibly might incite harm. [To remedy this spiritual illness], one should reflect on the debasement that lying elicits as well as the distrust and loss of respect [that results from lying]. From it (lying) and from self-admiration (*al-ʿujb*) emerge boasting (*al-ṣalaf*) and hypocrisy (*al-nifāq*).

Part Three: Household Management

This analysis consists of four matters.

The first [is with regard to] wealth and a consideration of livelihood, preservation, and spending. As for income, [we will discuss] what is related to [its] management of trade and crafts. Craftsmanship is more enduring and entails fewer losses.

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It is necessary to uphold justice and honor. As for the preservation [of wealth], spending must be less than earnings without miserliness or exploitation. Ideally, one should divide his property between cash, trade goods, and real estate property as a precaution. As for spending, one must avoid what is reprehensible, reminding others of one's favors, harm, or showing off when spending in the path of God. And one should focus [attention on helping] those who conceal their poverty. In terms of honorable [giving], one should give hastily, conceal [what he gave], regard [what he gave as] insignificant, do so continuously, and be selective about where to give. In terms of what is essential spending, it is what one must pay a tyrant [to prevent harm] or to secure a benefit. In this case, one must limit oneself to paying the minimal amount necessary. As for what is spent on daily needs, one should [aim to be] economical; [if this is not possible] then he should incline towards extra spending (rather than miserliness).

Second: Spouses are not sought merely to fulfill base desires; [they are also sought] to form a household for one's progeny and to create a household structure. [Seeking in one's potential spouse] intellect, temperance, and modesty are indispensable. If there is room for extra [characteristics then one should also seek] a good lineage, beauty, and wealth, for this is even better [when combined with the former virtues]. One should avoid [a woman] who is excessively beautiful because of the number of suitors she has and the tendency [of such women] to be weak in intellect. This is also the case [in seeking a woman solely] for her wealth. [A husband should] prompt esteem for himself in her heart through exhibiting virtuous [behavior], concealing flaws, limiting [his] opening up to her, ornamenting her with what is appropriate, seeking her counsel in particulars, giving her authority in the household, showing generosity to her relatives, avoiding what might stoke her jealousy, and keeping her thoughts busy with matters related to the household. He should avoid excess in loving her, and if he is infatuated by her, he should conceal this. He should not reveal his secrets to her nor consult with her on universal matters. He should conceal from her the amount of his wealth. He should distance her from wasteful entertainment and sitting with old women. As for women, they should manifest temperance (*al-ʿiffa*), exhibit fulfillment [with what their husbands provide], reverence, and good companionship with little criticism. Whoever senses corruption (*fasād*), should permanently break [with his wife].

Third: [The third element of household management are] servants. They are like the limbs of the household, and so one should give attention to [their] circumstances and benefits as a whole. Then he should [give similar attention] to each of them individually in order to facilitate their lives and be familiar with their conditions. He must not deprive them of kindness without weakness or firmness without oppression. One must never be excessive in reprimands and must be helpful in every task. One must not overburden them with excessively harsh [work]. Slaves have an even greater priority [than servants in these obligations towards them].

Fourth: As for children, one must choose a good name for them and then have them breastfed by one who is balanced in temperament and beautiful in character.

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One must improve their character and remedy them [in ways] mentioned earlier. One must ensure the child keeps the company of good people and becomes busied with a craft that is appropriate for them. One must incline them to perfect their craftsmanship and [be able to] earn a living through it. As for the child, he should know that his parents are the ones who brought him into existence and they are his temporal lords (i.e., the true permanent Lord being God). In fact, [a child's] need for [his] parents makes great care for them incumbent upon him. [A child] should spare no effort to gain their pleasure and love through obedience and benevolence to the best of his ability. Teachers are a child's lords who guide him to the perfection of his human image and [to] immortal life [through refining his character and spirit].

Part Four: Political Philosophy (*Tadbīr al-Mudun*)

The need for [human] cooperation has led to urbanization. The best of them (city communities) are those which are built upon affection (*maḥabba*). This exists either for [a communal] good, benefit, pleasure, or a combination of them. The two sides [of an urban community] are either equal or unequal in their share [of mutual affection] and their continuity is dependent upon this [point]. Its components are a ruler and the ruled, or those who are both ruler and ruled.

As for rulers, they must have firmness of character, high aspirations, clear thinking, strong resolve, patience, and persistence, and must be supportive [of their subjects]. Nobody should have primacy [in implementing their affairs] except for those seeking the repayment of a debt or retribution [for a crime committed against them]. The ruler must adhere to the following three [strategies]: 1) To ensure justice among the scholastic, martial, working, and farming classes. One group should not have supremacy over the other groups; 2) To honor the [pious] elites (*al-akhyār*) and to strengthen them, and then to deter those who commit evil (*al-ashrār*) and to discipline them with penalties, followed by imprisonment, and finally followed by the removal of the instrument of evil. As for death, it is not to be implemented for anything except what has been commanded by religious law; 3) To ensure equity among [the different classes] in the distribution of provisions and benefits. This is facilitated through the adherence to religious laws, ease of access [by the ruled to the ruler], guarding the frontier posts, and making the roads safe. A ruler must remain focused [on good management] while leaving personal special interests [that pose a conflict of interest with the state] while consulting with those of superior intellect and precaution.

As for the ruler's inner circle of servants and advisers, they must be as reverent and compliant as possible while remaining near the ruler without causing annoyance. Compliments and praise should be reserved only for when one is in private residence. [A person in the ruler's inner circle] must exercise flexibility for [the ruler's] change of mind, keep his secrets private, and avoid those who make accusations and [seek to] come between him and [the ruler through sowing division]. He must attribute what is good to [the ruler] at every opportunity as well as be agreeable with him in all matters and abandon greed, and thus be of benefit

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[to the ruler without seeking benefit] from him. He should demonstrate that his wealth and blood are sacrificed for [the ruler's] sake and make this sacrifice an ornament for [the ruler]. He should not participate with him in matters that are specific [to the ruler]. He should avoid him when he is angry and never complain about him, not even in his heart. He should extend continuous service to [the ruler]. Even if [the ruler] makes him as though he were his brother, the [member of the ruler's inner circle] maintains him (the ruler) as his lord. He should avoid controversy through being upright and should not be distressed by what is said about him. He should not try to have revealed that which was not disclosed to him nor should he be secretive in the presence [of the ruler]. He should not seek to be promoted to another [authority] who is superior in rank.

There are three archetypes of [human relationships]:

Friends (either true or false ones): One must do good to them, show them a pleasant face, give them gifts, show them cheer, support those connected to them (relatives, etc.), assist them, and reciprocate goodness to them. One must overlook their faults and limit one's admonishment [of one's friends] except if one believes it will lead to improvement. One should not disclose one's wealth and personal secrets to them. All of this is for a someone who is not a true friend. As for true friends, then all formalities are dropped because they are one and the same.

Enemies: One should be lenient with them, circumvent [their harm] through managing them, and inform the authorities about them so that they are aware of their animosity, that they do not accept their statements, and so that they investigate their plans and faults while keeping this discrete. One must hold fast to honesty and justice [in dealing with enemies] and mingle with those they mingle with. There is nothing better than surpassing them in a virtue [or an ideal they share with you]. Stay away from slander, cursing, rejoicing in misfortune, and using profanities [towards one's enemies]. If [an enemy entrusts or] relies on you, do not betray their trust. The harms [of enemies] are repelled through a truce, then avoidance, then defeat without oppression or humiliation [of one's enemies].

As for those in the middle of friendship and animosity (*al-maʿārif*): One must support and have good companionship with all of them. One should be proud with the arrogant while being charitable with those who are sincere and with people of good [character]. One should benefit from the people of virtue through assisting them with material aid and service to them. One must work to improve the character of students and have compassion towards them. One must give to those who ask except if they are asking persistently out of greed and without need. One must have mercy on the weak and be benevolent towards them and fulfill the needs of others to the best of one's capacity. One should be present for customary gatherings of condolence, celebration, and commemoration while showing happiness at their joy and sadness at their sorrow to the extent that it does not reach a point of hypocrisy.

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Commentaries upon al-Ījī's *Ethics*

Shams al-Dīn al-Kirmānī (d. 786/1384)[16]

The earliest commentary on the *Akhlāq al-ʿAḍudiyya* was composed by Abū ʿAbd Allāh Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Yūsuf b. ʿAlī al-Kirmānī (d. 786/1384). He was born in Kirmān in (717/1317), where he started his studies under the tutelage of his father Bahā al-Dīn. He later spent twelve years as a student of Aḍuḍ al-Dīn al-Ījī in Shirāz, where he studied Islamic theology and grammar. Kirmānī also travelled to Egypt, where he studied the hadith compilation of al-Bukhārī with Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Farūqī. He eventually settled in Baghdad, where he taught for the last thirty years of his life.[17]

In addition to his commentary on al-Ījī's *Akhlāq*, he also wrote a commentary on al-Ījī's text of theology, *al-Mawāqif fī ʿilm al-kalām*, as well as al-Ījī's work on rhetoric, *al-Fawāʾid al-Ghiyāthiyya*. After, perhaps, Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftazānī and Sayyid Sharīf al-Jurjānī, al-Kirmānī is one of Aḍuḍ al-Dīn al-Ījī's most prominent students. Al-Kirmānī's other written works include a commentary on al-Bukhārī's hadith, titled *al-Kawākib al-darārī fī sharḥ ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, and a commentary on Bayḍāwī's tafsīr, *Anwār al-tanzīl wa asrār al-taʾwīl*.[18]

Al-Kirmānī's commentary is distinguished by being the earliest commentary on the *Akhlāq al-ʿAḍudiyya* as well as one of only two commentaries known to have been written by a direct student of al-Ījī.[19] This means that much of the interpretation of al-Ījī's short treatise can be assumed to generally align with his experience of the vision of al-Ījī himself. Additionally, this commentary is also distinguished in that it lays the groundwork on which subsequent commentaries expand upon or are shaped through its influence.[20]

A critical edition and Turkish translation of Shams al-Dīn al-Kirmānī's commentary was published by Mervenur Yılmaz in 2016. Prior to that, Derya Topalcık wrote a master's thesis in which she produced another critical edition and translation in 2007.[21] The work of Topalcık laid the groundwork for efforts to compile critical editions of the *Akhlāq al-ʿAḍudiyya* in the decade that followed Topalcık's thesis work. Yılmaz expands upon this foundation by examining a number of new manuscripts of Kirmānī's commentaries and offers some correctives to a number of ambiguities extant in Topalcık's master's thesis.

Yılmaz notes that she has consulted the following manuscripts in the course of composing her critical edition of Kirmānī's commentary: 1) Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, H. Hüsnü Pasa, 744; 2) Rāşit Efendi Kütüphanesi, 1115; 3) Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Ömer Işbilir, 49; 4) Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Şehit Ali Paşa, 2815; and

16. Shams al-Dīn al-Kirmānī, *Sharḥ al-Akhlāq al-ʿAḍudiyya*, trans. and ed. Mervenur Yılmaz (Istanbul: Nobel Yayın, 2016).
17. Al-Kirmānī, *Sharḥ al-Akhlāq*, 13–14.
18. Ismail Hakkı Ünal, "Kirmani, Şemseddin," in *Islam Ansiklopedisi,* 26:65–66. https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/kirmani-semseddin (29.08.2020).
19. Al-Kirmānī, *Sharḥ al-Akhlāq*, 15.
20. Ibid.
21. Cf. Derya Topalcık, *Kirmāni'nin Şerhu Ahlak-ı Adud Adlı Eseri* (Master's thesis, Sakarya Universitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2007).

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5) Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Reşit Efendi, 696.[22] Additionally, she writes that the format of al-Kirmānī's commentary is based on a "*qāla-aqūl*" structure in which al-Kirmānī cites al-Ījī saying "*qālā*" and responds to him saying "*aqūl*," making it easy to follow which sections are from the author and which sections are explanatory notes added by his student, Kirmānī.[23]

Sayf al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Abharī (d. 780/1397)[24]

Ömer Türker has compiled a critical edition and Turkish translation of the commentary of Sayf al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Abharī (d. 780/1397) on the *Akhlāq al-ʿAḍudiyya*. There is a lack of sufficient biographical information on Sayf al-Dīn al-Abharī, who may commonly be confused with the more famous Athīr al-Dīn al-Abharī (d. 663/1265). Türker examines the various reports from which a death date for Sayf al-Dīn al-Abharī can be determined, setting the death date for al-Abharī between 780/1378 and 800/1397. He cites Katip Çelebi's *Kashf al-ẓunūn* as mentioning al-Abharī three times without providing a death date for him. He objects to Çelebi's attribution of a death date to around 700/1300, arguing that evidence of his having been another direct student of al-Ījī, like al-Kirmānī, indicates that such an early death date would have been impossible. According to Türker's assessment, al-Abharī's written works and commentaries on al-Ījī's writings appear to indicate that they would have had to have been produced sometime between 767 and 777, which in turn would make a death date for al-Abharī most likely sometime after 777/1375.[25]

Brockelmann's attribution of 800/1397 as a death date is also acknowledged by Türker.[26] The late death date claimed by Brockelmann is based on a section in al-Abharī's *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif* in which he is referred to as being a teacher to both Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftazānī and Sayyid Sharīf al-Jurjānī. Türker claims that a probable explanation for this is the common practice of advanced and beginner students sharing a teacher, in this case al-Ījī, and the common practice of the advanced student, at the end of his studies with the same teacher, tutoring the students early in their studies. Nevertheless, if this statement in the Süleymaniye manuscript of al-Abharī's commentary on al-Ījī's *al-Mawāqif* is accurate, it would indeed push his death date later. Based upon this evidence, Türker sets the death date for al-Abharī as anywhere between 780/1378 and 800/1397.[27]

Along with his commentary on the *Akhlāq al-ʿAḍudiyya*, some of the more prominent works of Sayf al-Dīn al-Abharī are: 1) *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*, among the earliest commentaries on al-Ījī's *al-Mawāqif fī ʿilm al-kalām*. The text indicates that it was completed in 767/1365;[28] 2) *Ḥāshiya ʿalā sharḥ mukhtaṣar al-muntaha*, which is a

22. Al-Kirmānī, *Sharḥ al-Akhlāq*, 18.
23. Al-Kirmānī, *Sharḥ al-Akhlāq*, 17–18.
24. Sayf al-Dīn al-Abharī, *Sharḥ al-Akhlāq al-ʿAḍudiyya*, trans. Ömer Türker (Istanbul: Nobel Yayın, 2016).
25. Al-Abharī, *Sharḥ al-Akhlāq*, 11–12.
26. Cf. Carl Brockelmann, *The History of the Arabic Written Tradition*, trans. Joep Lameer, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 324.
27. Al-Abharī, *Sharḥ al-Akhlāq*, 12.
28. Ibid., 13.

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supercommentary on an Islamic law text; 3) *Sharḥ al-Maṭāliʿ*, which is a commentary on al-Urmawī's (d. 682/1365) work on logic;[29] 4) *Ḥāshiya ʿalā Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*, which is a supercommentary on Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāzī's (d. 766/1364) commentary on al-Ṭūsī's famous text;[30] and 5) *Sharḥ Fawāʾid al-ghiyāthiyya*, which is a commentary on al-Ījī's text on rhetoric. There is only one known copy of this manuscript at the Hacı Selim Ağa Kütüphanesi in Istanbul. Because there is no explicit mention of al-Abharī as the author within the text, the attribution to him is uncertain.[31]

As mentioned, this commentary is significant in its shared status with al-Kirmānī's commentary for having both been composed by direct students of al-Ījī. Al-Abharī refers to al-Ījī as his teacher in the introduction to his *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*.[32] The structure of this commentary is that it is the shortest of all the commentaries. It does not appear to add anything significantly new to other commentaries that are more extensive. Both the commentaries of al-Abharī and al-Kirmānī on al-Ījī's *Akhlāq* have many overlapping similarities that later commentators, particularly in the Ottoman Era, further develop over time.

An Unknown Author (9th/15th Century)[33]

This commentary was published by Kübra Bilgin Tiryaki as both a critical edition and Turkish translation. It has been attributed to an "unknown author" because no reference has been found to the author's name. The text, however, contains important historical references that enable us to give an approximate date for its composition. The commentator's introduction dedicates the text to the governor Baysungur (d. 837/1433), who was the son of the Timurid ruler Shahrukh and the governor of Herat. Baysungur was known for being a patron of the arts, and commissioned the building of architectural structures, productions of art, collections of libraries, and provided support for religious scholarship.[34]

In her introduction, Tiryaki highlights the Sufi elements evident throughout the text. For example, the anonymous author of the commentary criticizes the Muslim scholars of his era whom he claims focus on debates pertaining to Islamic rationalism while abandoning the cultivation of good character and religious practice. The author describes the cultivation of good character, which he says is the aim of studying the *Akhlāq al-ʿAḍudiyya*, as a process that includes struggle and spiritual discipline (*riyāḍa wa-l-mujāhada*). Furthermore, the author describes good character using mystical terminology such as "the treasures of certainty and the symbols of proper understanding (*kunūz al-taḥqīq wa-rumūz al-dirāya*)," "the

29. Reza Pourjavady, "The Legacy of Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī," in *Philosophical Theology in Islam: Later Ashʿarism East and West*, eds. Ayman Shihadeh and Jan Thiele (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 358.

30. Al-Abharī, *Sharḥ al-Akhlāq*, 14; Pourjavady, "The Legacy of Aḍuḍ al-Dīn al-Ījī," 358. According to Pourjavady, "The glosses were collected from the margins (*al-mujtamaʿa min al-ḥawāshī*) of manuscripts of the *Muḥākamāt*. However, in other copies of these glosses, such as MS Leiden Or. 190 and MS Feyzullah 1184, the work is attributed to al-Sayyid Sharif al-Jurjānī."

31. Pourjavady, "The Legacy of Aḍuḍ al-Dīn al-Ījī," 357; al-Abharī, *Sharḥ al-akhlāq*, 14.

32. Al-Abharī, *Sharḥ al-Akhlāq*, 12.

33. *Muʿallif al-majhūl, Sharḥ al-akhlāq al-ʿAḍudiyya*, trans. Kübra Bilgin Tiryaki (Istanbul: Nobel Yayin, 2016).

34. *Muʿallif al-majhūl, Sharḥ al-akhlāq al-ʿAḍudiyya*, 14–15.

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secrets of spiritual ranks (*asrār al-maqāmāt*)," and "the aim of purification (*maqāsid al-tajrīd*)," which, Tiryaki argues, further indicates the influence of Sufism upon the author's framework in defining Islamic ethics.[35]

The prevalence of this type of language also appears to demonstrate the extent of the influence of Islamic spirituality and Sufism within the curriculum of Islamic education in Herat during Baysungur's time. Baysungur was the son of Shahrukh, who was distinguished from his father, Timur, for favoring traditional Islamic piety and spirituality over the laws of Genghiz Khan, as followed by his predecessors. Under Shahrukh and his son's governorship in Herat, Islamic learning is reported to have flourished in Central Asia and Iran.

The text also appears to demonstrate a partisanship to Sunni political philosophy in a way that other commentaries do not. When offering an explanation of al-Ījī's initiation of the *Akhlāq al-ʿAḍudiyya* with praise of the Prophet Muhammad and his family, the anonymous author of this Timurid commentary dedicates an extensive amount of space to defining the term "family" as encompassing the entirety of the Muslim community rather than the direct relatives of the Prophet Muhammad.[36]

ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn al-Kāzarūnī (d. unknown)

The commentary on the *Akhlāq al-ʿAḍudiyya* by ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn al-Kāzarūnī (d. unknown) was critically edited from manuscripts by Mehmet Aktaş, and translated into Turkish by Mehmet Demir and Güvenç Şensoy. It was published as one of three commentaries on al-Ījī's *Akhlāq* by the Turkish Manuscript Association (Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu Baskanligi). In his foreword, Mehmet Aktaş writes that there is only one known manuscript of this particular commentary. The author is known because he is mentioned by name in Kāzarūnī's introduction to his commentary. However, there is no other information to be found anywhere in biographical dictionaries or the text itself regarding the identity of Kāzarūnī or the date this commentary was written.[37] Nevertheless, the text itself contains some distinguishing features worth noting.

Al-Kāzarūnī opens his introduction to his commentary by using distinctly philosophical references to God by offering thanks to God who brings out contingent beings (*mumkināt*) from non-existence (*ʿadam*) into the realm of existence (*wujūd*). He then goes on to give praise to the Prophet, his family, and his Companions (*ṣaḥbihi*), which he qualifies by saying they offered the best of companionship. From this opening to the text, we can gather that the author is writing at a time in which the philosophical theology of the later Ashʿarīs became prevalent. His praising the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad, and his emphasis on the excellence of their companionship, appears to indicate that he is likely writing in a milieu in which Sunni and Shia polemics were not uncommon. This tone differs from the

35. Ibid., 15.
36. Ibid., 28–29.
37. ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn al-Kazārūnī, *Sharḥ al-Akhlāq al-ʿAḍudiyya*, ed. and trans. Mehmet Aktaş, Mehmet Demir, and Güvenç Şensoy (Istanbul: Turkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu, 2014), 11–12.

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Ottoman commentaries, which use references to ʿAlī and praises of the family of the Prophet with ease throughout the text. Al-Ījī was writing during a time in which, after the Ilkhanate of Uljaytu converted to Shi'ism, a number of polemical works against Sunnis appeared, particularly through the scholarship of al-Ḥillī.[38] The adaptation of a tone which seeks to distance itself from Shi'ism may indicate that this text was also a commentary that predates the Ottoman era, similar to that which was written for Baysungur.

Al-Kāzarūnī then proceeds to name himself in the introduction as Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Khiḍr, who is known as (*al-mulaqqab bi*) ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn al-ʿUmarī al-Shāfiʿī al-Kāzarūnī. His title indicates that he is a Shāfiʿī like al-Ījī and apparently a descendant of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. He continues to say that the study of ethics (*ʿilm al-akhlāq*) is among the most important of the religious sciences (*al-ʿulūm al-sharʿiyya*) and the most prestigious of the rational sciences (*al-ʿulūm al-ʿaqliyya*). Considering the divisions between the approaches of the Mamluk madrasa education systems that focused on the scriptural religious sciences (*ʿulūm al-naqliyya*) and the emerging Saljuk *madrasa* systems that focused on the rational sciences (*ʿulūm al-ʿaqliyya*), this framing of the study of ethics as being the best of both approaches would appear to also indicate a pre-Ottoman date for this text. While it is true that the Ottoman *madrasa* systems also focused on the rational sciences over the transmitted sciences, by the Ottoman era the issue of *naqlī* vs. *ʿaqlī* sciences was not a substantial matter of debate.

Al-Kāzarūnī notably spends an extensive section of his commentary expanding upon the definition of the "family of the Prophet" in the opening section of the text written by al-Ījī. He comments upon al-Ījī, who began with prayers for the Prophet and his family (without mentioning the Companions, as al-Kazārūnī does in his introduction), by stating that the family of the Prophet are the entirety of the sons of ʿAbd al-Manāf, from the sons of Hāshim and Muṭṭalib. He continues, saying that, when used in the general sense, the term includes the Companions of the Prophet and the followers of the Companions (*al-tābiʿīn*) who follow the Companions in the best way. Al-Kāzarūnī continues by saying that if one were to intend the term "family" in the religious sense, then all believers and those of piety would be included in the family of the Prophet. He plays on two similar Arabic words to assert that one can be a member of the Prophet's family either by lineage or affiliation (*man yuʾawwal ilayhi immā nasaban wa immā nisbatan*). There is more to this discussion, but the amount of space dedicated to the issue of defining the family of the Prophet appears to further indicate that this text was written in a period of tension between Sunnis and Shias that predates the Ottoman era, when Sunni scholars were in a position of power within the realm of Ottoman lands. The tone of al-Kāzarūnī's text appears distinct from those of the Ottoman era commentaries.[39]

Finally, it is noteworthy that al-Kāzarūnī makes several references to Aristotle throughout the text. At times, he quotes ʿAlī b. Abū Ṭālib and Aristotle simultaneously to further expand on a matter. This is yet another distinguishing factor that

38. Cf. Pourjavady, "The Legacy of Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī", 337–341.
39. Al-Kazārūnī, *Sharḥ al-Akhlāq*, 25.

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makes this commentary appear to predate the Ottoman era commentaries. By the Ottoman era, references to Peripatetic philosophy are made with reference to Avicenna, whose philosophy replaced Aristotle in the Sunni philosophical theology of this later period. By the Ottoman era, the *Nicomachean Ethics* of Aristotle had become thoroughly Islamized in such a way that it was viewed through the lens of Avicenna.

Taşköprüzāde Ahmed Efendi (d. 968/1561)[40]

Taşköprüzāde Ahmed Efendi (d. 968/1561) is the earliest known Ottoman-era commentator on the *Akhlāq al-ʿAḍudiyya*. His prominence as a scholar made his lengthy commentary on al-Ījī's ethics even more widely known in Ottoman intellectual circles. Taşköprüzāde Ahmed Efendi was born in Bursa in 900/1495 to a family known for its many prominent scholars.[41] This included his own father, Muṣliḥ al-Dīn Muṣṭafa Efendi, who served as a preceptor to Sultan Selim I. Ṭaşköpüzāde's access to the leading scholars in the Ottoman era was significant to his formation as a scholar of Islamic sciences. His autobiography in the *Miftāḥ al-saʿāda* indicates that he taught at various renowned Ottoman madrasas of his time. He published extensively in the fields of philosophical theology (*kalām*), philosophy, and Sufism. His most well-known contribution is *al-Shaqāʾiq al-Nuʿmaniyya fī ʿulamāʾ al-dawla al-ʿUthmāniyya* in which, following the genre of biographical dictionary works, he lists the religious scholars of the Ottoman era through his time. Another important work of Ṭaşköprüzāde is *al-Miftāḥ al-saʿāda*, which ranks the fields of Islamic knowledge up to his time. Additionally, he was a prolific scholar who published various treatises and texts in the fields of logic, Arabic language (*ṣarf*, *naḥw*, and *balāgha*), history, philosophy, and theology.

Ṭaşköprüzāde's is the most thorough commentary up to his time. It was only superseded in its extensiveness by the work of Müneccimbaşı, which was compiled centuries later, building upon the substantive foundation established by Ṭaşköprüzāde. Ṭaşköprüzāde's commentary becomes one which incorporates much of the same concepts in the earlier commentaries on the *Akhlāq al-ʿAḍudiyya* while substantially enriching these earlier commentaries with new material that illustrates Islamic spirituality, practice, and thought during the Ottoman era.

Ṭaşköprüzāde's commentary arguably reworks the original Nicomachean Ethics from which much of the framework for the first two sections of al-Ījī's *Akhlāq* was derived through the medium of al-Ṭūsī and Miskawayh into a distinctly Islamic philosophy of ethics that seamlessly incorporated scriptural evidence and Islamic thought, and thus transformed Aristotle's ideas and surpassed them in sophistication of development. One noteworthy element of this commentary is the

40. Ṭaşköprüzāde Ahmed Efendi, *Sharḥ al-Akhlāq*, edited and translated by Elzem Içöz and Mustakim Arıcı (Istanbul: Turkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu, 2014).

41. Fleming, Barbara, G. Babinger, and Christine Woodhead, "Ṭashköprüzāde," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 04 July 2020 http://dx.doi.org.aic.idm.oclc.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_7429, and Yusuf Şevki Yavuz, "Taşköprizâde Ahmed Efendi," in *Islam Ansiklopedisi*, 40:151–2.

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extent to which sayings of ʿAlī b. Abū Ṭālib appear simultaneously with hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad and Qurʾanic verses to support various themes in the first section focused on theoretical ethics. Additionally, unlike al-Kāzarūnī's commentary, references to Aristotle are absent. It appears that, by Ṭaşköprüzāde's Ottoman era, reverence for ʿAlī as a figure of piety and model of virtue were integral aspects of Ottoman Sunni thought. Some of the elements of polemics found in the Ilkhānid and Timurid era commentaries are absent in Ṭaşköprüzāde's commentary in which Sunni scholarship was perhaps coming from a more securely grounded position.

Additionally, Ṭaşköprüzāde's commentary on the section on household management reveals many details about Ottoman life in terms of family structure and gender relations. Similarly, elements of political thought during Ṭaşköprüzāde's time are also revealed in his discussion on political philosophy. His introduction to this commentary reveals that by his time the *Akhlāq al-ʿAḍudiyya* had been forgotten and that Ṭaşköprüzāde intended in writing his commentary to compose a robust piece that was worthy of the al-Ījī's work.[42] Ṭaşköprüzāde's commentary is indeed rich in its contents and sets the course for making the *Akhlāq al-Aḍuḍiyya* an important text on ethical philosophy in Ottoman lands.

Müneccimbaşı Derviş Ahmed Dede (d. 1113/1702)[43]

Ahmed b. Luṭfullāh Raʿīs al-Munajjimīn al-Rūmī al-Mawlawī (d. 1113/1702) was born in Selanik in 1041/1631. His family originated from Konya before later moving to his birth city. Ahmed Luṭfullāh took to Islamic learning at a young age and became a disciple of the Mawlawī Shaykh of Selanik, Mehmed Efendi. After many years under his tutelage, Müneccimbaşı became a master in the field of Sufism based in the Mawlawī order and a scholar of the Islamic sciences. Additionally, he studied natural sciences, mathematics, and astrology with leading scholars of his time. His expertise in these fields eventually drew the attention of Sultan Mehmed IV, who appointed him as the chief court astrologer, whence he gained the title "Müneccim başı," or chief astrologer.[44]

During his years serving the Ottoman court as chief astrologer, Müneccimbaşı published a variety of works which gained him notoriety as a leading figure in Sufism, Islamic scholarship, and imperial service. Among them are: 1) *Jāmiʿ al-duwal*, a comprehensive Islamic history that provides much detail about the Ottoman era; 2) *Ḥāshiya ʿalā tafsīr al-Bayḍāwī*, a commentary on al-Bayḍāwī's famous exegesis of the Qurʾan; 3) *Taʿliqāt ʿalā Yuqlidīs*, a book devoted to Euclid's geometry; and 4) *al-Risālat al-mūsiqiyya*, a treatise on music.

Müneccimbaşı's commentary on the *Akhlāq al-ʿAḍudiyya* is by far the most detailed of all of the extant commentaries and has been made available through the PhD dissertation of Asiye Aykıt. Aykıt's contribution to this field has been invaluable

42. Ṭaşköprüzāde, *Sharḥ al-Akhlāq*, 25.
43. Asiye Aykıt, *Müneccimbaşı Ahmed Dede'nin Şerhu Ahlak-ı Adud Adlı Eseri: Metin, Tahkiki, ve Değerlendirme*, (PhD diss., Marmara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2013).
44. Aykıt, *Müneccimbaşı Ahmed Dede'nin Şerhu Ahlak-ı Adud Adlı Eseri*, 6–8.

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in that she composed a critical edition of this lengthy text that had only existed in manuscript form in Turkish libraries prior to her scholarship. Furthermore, her PhD dissertation also provides valuable analysis of Müneccimbaşı's work.

Details about social life and history can be derived from Müneccimbaşı's references throughout the text. His introduction begins with what he saw as corruption that had become prevalent in society due to the abandonment of the study of ethics. He wrote that his intention in composing the commentary was to create a resource which could be used to alleviate this societal neglect of the study of ethics.

Among the noteworthy elements of Müneccimbaşı's commentary is his extensive discussion of Illuminationist (*Ishrāqī*) epistemology and its method of knowing reality as being superior to the epistemology of the rationalist philosophers, whom he criticized for their approach to understanding the world that was derived solely through the mind. Müneccimbaşı's perspective, as a Sufi scholar from the Mawlawī path, is evident in his discussion of the purpose of studying ethics. He asserted that the purpose of studying the *Akhlāq al-ʿAḍudiyya* was to acquire virtuous traits that would impact one's spiritual status. He wrote that the path to achieving the status of spiritual perfection (*al-insān al-kāmil*) begins with self-examination as to whether one behaves in the manner of a person of perfection. He wrote that altering one's behavior and ridding oneself of character flaws are conditional to spiritual growth. According to Müneccimbaşı, through the acquisition of good character, one ascends through the degrees of illumination until one reaches a stage where one is a direct recipient of light from the source of light. This is clearly a mystically inclined framing of the ethics of al-Ījī that permeates Müneccimbaşı's commentary.

According to Aykıt, Müneccimbaşı used al-Dawwānī's *Lawāmiʿ al-ishrāq* as one of the sources for his commentary on the *Akhlāq* of al-Ījī.[45] She writes that al-Dawwānī's influence on Ottoman intellectual history contributed to the three foundational fields of Ottoman Islamic studies of philosophy, theology (*kalām*), and Sufism.[46]

Furthermore, the influence of al-Dawwānī's methodology of using Ṭūsī's ethical treatise as a framework for further discussion in his *Akhlāq al-Jalālī* where elements of late Ashʿarī philosophical theology (*kalām*), Ibn ʿArabī's conceptions of divine unity (*waḥdat al-wujūd*), and Suhrawardī's Illuminationist views can be traced, is also reflected in Müneccimbaşı's commentary on the *Akhlāq al-ʿAḍudiyya*. Aykıt writes, however, that it would be inaccurate to characterize Müneccimbaşı's work as featuring Illuminationism as prominently as al-Dawwānī does. Müneccimbaşı presents himself throughout the text as first and foremost an adherent of Sufism. The cognitive framework through which he comments on al-Ījī's ethics is thus centered on a Sufi methodology of spiritual purification. The diseases of the heart and their cures are discussed as spiritual diseases, and the necessity for a spiritual guide in assisting one in curing these diseases is emphasized throughout

45. Ibid., 189.
46. Ibid.

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Müneccimbaşı's commentary.[47]

Aykıt also examines Müneccimbaşi's political philosophy in relation to comparable works on ethics. She notes that the *Akhlāq al-ʿAlāʾī* of Kinalızade idealizes the rule of Sultan Süleyman in terms of governance and state organization while al-Dawwānī similarly idealized Uzun Hasan in his *Akhlāq al-Jalālī*.[48] The lack of this type of mention of any specific ruler is assumed to reflect the period in Müneccimbaşı's life in which it was written, when he had been removed from his status as head astrologer to the court and sent into exile. Aykıt compares this with Müneccimbaşı's earlier work, Jāmiʿ al-duwal, in which he centered the Ottoman Empire in his history as the most sophisticated form of political governance.[49]

Ismāʿīl Mufīd Isṭanbūlī (d. 1802)[50]

There is not a lot of information on the biography of Ismāʿīl Mufīd al-Isṭanbūlī (d.1802). He was originally from Istanbul, hence his title Isṭanbūlī. He was also a member of the Naqshabandi spiritual path with the high rank of *khalīfa*, which meant that he was the representative of the leading shaykh of this Order.[51] His various extant works in Turkish libraries seem to indicate that he was a prominent scholar during the end of the Ottoman era.

Some of his publications available in manuscript form are: 1) *Hadiyyat al-afkār al-ʿabīd Ismāʿīl mufīd*, which was also known as *al-risālat al-Naqshbandiyya*. This treatise is a survey of the foundational principles of the Naqshabandi path written in Ottoman Turkish; 2) *Ḥāshiya ʿalā tafsīr al-Bayḍāwī*, which is a commentary on the al-Bayḍāwī's exegesis of the first five chapters of the Qurʾan; 3) *Sharḥ al-shamāʾil al-nabawiyya*, which is an Arabic commentary on al-Tirmidhī's text on the descriptions of the Prophet Muhammad; 4) *Terceme-i-Muhtasariʾl-kuduri*, which is a translation of Qudūrī's famous Hanafi manual into Ottoman Turkish; 5) *Risāla fī al-siyāsa al-sharʿiyya*, which is an Ottoman Turkish translation of the treatise by Dede Jongi Efendi (d. 975/1567) on political philosophy; and 6) *Terceme-i-asʾila al-sāmāniyya li-Sayyid al-Sharīf*, which is a translation from Persian into Ottoman Turkish of various answers on metaphysics given by Sayyid Sharīf al-Jurjānī.[52]

Ismāʿīl Mufīd's text was first critically edited by Kevser Kösem as a master's thesis.[53] Since its completion, Selime Çınar has been able to locate new manuscripts of this commentary, which she has used to produce another critical edition and translation, published by the Turkish Manuscript Association. She writes that a manuscript that she found in the Nadir Eserler Kütüphanesi appears to be an

47. Ibid.
48. Aykıt, *Müneccimbaşı Ahmed Dede'nin Şerhu Ahlak-ı Adud Adlı Eseri*, 60.
49. Ibid.
50. Ismāʿīl Mufīd Isṭanbūlī, *Sharḥ al-akhlāq al-ʿAḍudiyya*, ed. and trans. by Selime Çınar (Istanbul: Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu, 2014).
51. Bursalı Mehmed Tahir, *Osmanlı Muellifleri*, ed. Ali Fikri Yavuz and Ismail Ozen (Meral Yayinlari, Istanbul, n.d.), i:362. Originally cited by Mufīd Isṭanbūlī, *Sharḥ al-Akhlāq*, 12.
52. Cf. Mufīd Isṭanbūlī, *Sharḥ al-Akhlāq*, 12–17.
53. Kevser Kösem, *Ismail Müfit b. Ali el-Istanbuli'nin Şerhu'l Ahlakı'l Adudiye Adlı Eseri* (Master's thesis, Sakarya Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2008).

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original manuscript that belonged to the author himself. Selime Çınar has relied on this manuscript in her work.[54]

As a practitioner and leader of the Naqshabandi Order, Ismāʿīl Mufīd Efendi's Sufi outlook is evident throughout his commentary.[55] In his discussion of the vices and virtues in the section on al-Ījī's theoretical virtues, Ismāʿīl Mufīd adopted a similar tone to Müneccimbaşı in framing them as spiritual diseases of the heart or spiritual virtues, hence aligning with Ismāʿīl Mufīd's own Sufi-based outlook on character development. Ismāʿīl Mufīd also commonly used references to the Qurʾan throughout his discussions to provide scriptural evidence for vices and virtues. Additionally, his references to debates and perspectives offered by the Illuminationists and the philosophers illustrate his familiarity with Müneccimbaşı's commentary and what appears as the continued relevance of these discussions during his time.[56]

Mehmed Emin Istanbūli (d. unknown)[57]

The identity of Mehmed Emin al-Iṣṭanbūlī is unclear. In his introduction, the commentator names himself and writes that he is the son of Shaykh al-Sayyid Mehmed Asʿad al-ʿAyntābī. He also describes himself as "*aḥqar al-ʿibād*" or the "lowliest of God's slaves."[58] This text, composed by Mehmed Emin, is a translation of the *Akhlāq al-ʿAḍudiyya* from Arabic into Ottoman Turkish. The author also provides some Turkish explanation of the treatise in its first two sections on theoretical and applied ethics. He does not provide much commentary beyond translation for the last two sections of the treatise on household management and politics. In the introduction, Mehmed Emin dedicates his work to Sultan Abdül Aziz (d. 1876).[59]

This translation of the *Akhlāq* into Turkish has been transliterated into Latin script by Melek Yıldız Güneş and Aliye Güler. According to them, this text was completed in the year 1864. It appears that the main purpose in the composition of this text was to make al-Ījī's treatise available in Turkish. The historical circumstances in which the Ottoman Empire was transitioning during the post-Tanzimat reforms may explain the need to translate an Arabic text into Turkish. Before the nineteenth century, fluency in the Arabic language appears to have been more foundational to one's education. This movement to translate Arabic texts into Turkish is also evident in the commentator Ismāʿīl Mufīd al-Iṣṭanbūlī, who lived not much earlier than Mehmed Emin. The list of Ismāʿīl Mufīd's publications demonstrates an extensive momentum during his time to translate foundational Arabic texts into Turkish for the first time in the Ottoman era. The historical context in which Ottoman society and politics are radically changing may also explain

54. Mufīd Iṣṭanbūlī, *Sharḥ al-Akhlāq*, 17–18.
55. Ibid., 12.
56. Ibid., 47.
57. Mehmed Emin Istanbuli, *Şerhu'l Ahlakı'l Adudiye: Melzemetü'l ahlak*, transliteration Melek Yıldız Güneş and Aliye Güler (Istanbul: Nobel Yayın, 2016).
58. While there was a minister who lived around this time period named Mehmed Emin Ali Pasha (d. 1871), nothing in this description indicates that they are the same individuals. Mehmed Emin was a common name in the Ottoman era.
59. Mehmed Emin Istanbuli, *Şerhu'l Ahlakı'l ʿAḍudiyya*, 12–14.

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the lack of commentary on the sections on family life and political philosophy by Mehmed Emin Isṭanbūlī.

Conclusion

New research in the past decade has brought to light the extent to which ʿAḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī's abridged treatise on moral philosophy has played a pivotal role in the study of ethics in the Muslim world. Muslim thinkers such as Miskawayh and Ṭūsī—who benefitted from the structure of the *Nicomachean Ethics* in terms of examining virtues from a lens of moderation, excess, and deficiency—were not content to simply rely on mere translations of Aristotle's ethics without significantly restructuring the text to have relevance to Muslim practitioners. Not only did they add sections on household management and political philosophy, sections which are not a part of the *Nicomachean Ethics,* but also they redefined aspects of theoretical and practical ethics on Islamic terms.

Al-Ījī's genius in his contribution to this field was to produce an abridged treatise of the Nasirean ethics that had the flexibility to permit its use in vast networks of *madrasas* from Central Asia and Iran to the Ottoman lands. The stature of ʿAḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī as a giant of later Ashʿarī theology also ensured that his treatise would be received with attention. In the brief survey of the numerous commentaries on the *Akhlāq al-ʿAḍudiyya,* it is evident that Muslims with inclinations for Islamic spirituality and mysticism explicitly defined virtue through the framework of Sufi thought. Vices were considered diseases of the heart. Virtues were regarded as spiritual states of being, and progression on the spiritual path was defined through the extent to which one implemented the virtues in al-Ījī's ethics that were elaborated on by lengthy commentaries. Islamic scriptural evidence in the form of Qurʾanic verses, hadiths, and sayings of ʿAlī and other early Companions of the Prophet are woven seamlessly throughout the commentaries of al-Ījī's ethics, demonstrating how premodern Muslims regarded ethics and virtue to be mainstream to foundational Islamic teachings and practice.

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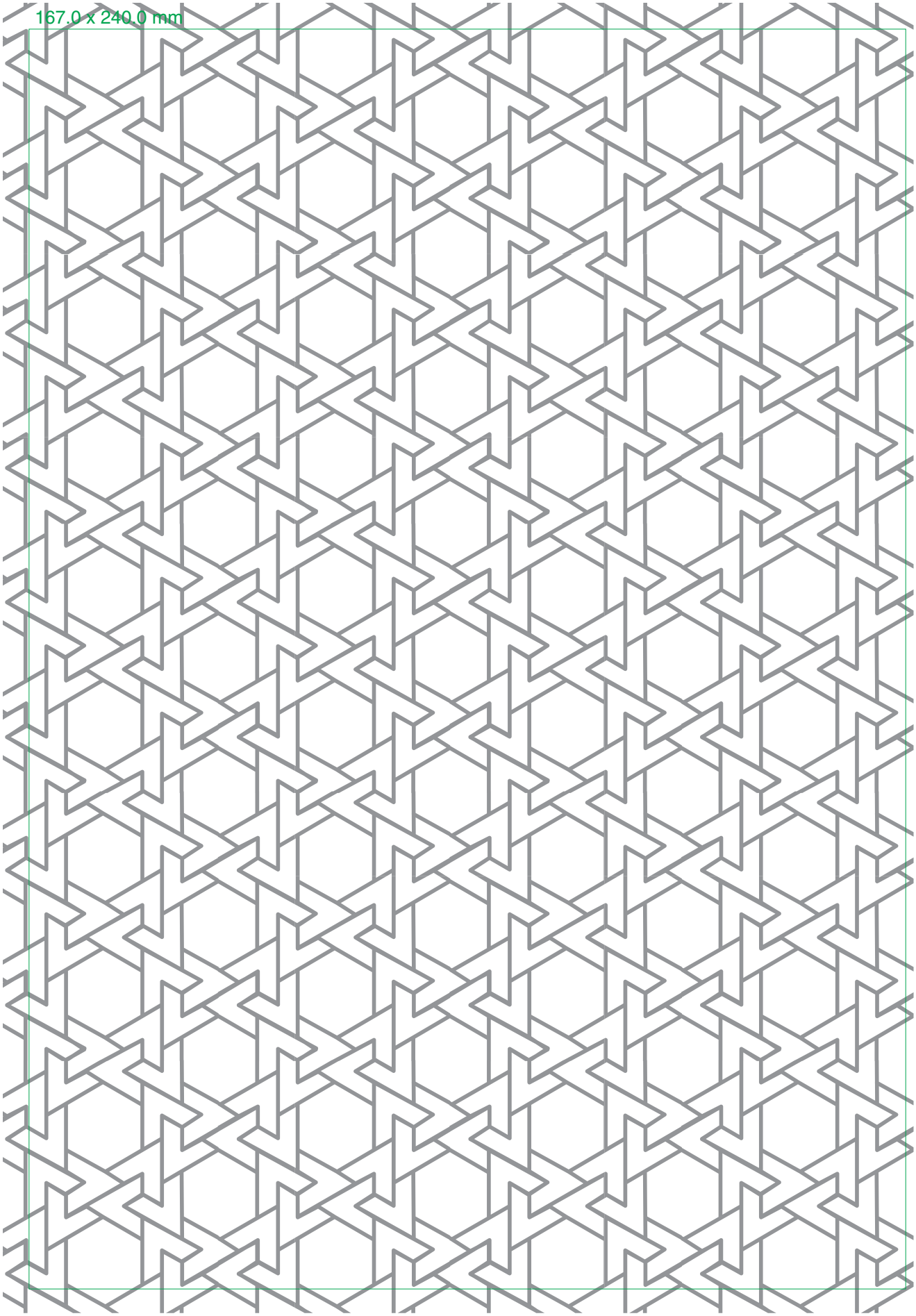
SECTION III

LATE PRE-MODERN PERIOD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ʿABD AL-WAHHĀB AL-SHAʿRĀNĪ'S *LAṬĀʾIF AL-MINAN* AND THE VIRTUE OF SINCERE IMMODESTY

Matthew B. Ingalls

Introduction

The essay below analyzes the substance and rhetoric of ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʿrānī's (d. 973/1565) book *Laṭāʾif al-minan wa-l-akhlāq* (Subtle Blessings and Morals). While giving particular attention to the text's introduction and concluding sections, in my analysis here I use the *Laṭāʾif* as a case study to illustrate how Sufi authors like al-Shaʿrānī attempted to relieve the tension between the antipodal Sufi virtues of, on the one hand, concealing one's spiritual state to preserve the purity of one's intention and, on the other, speaking openly about God's blessings upon one as a demonstration of gratitude to God and a means to guide others along the Sufi Path.

ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʿrānī was an Egyptian Sufi and legal thinker who lived in Cairo during the final years of the Mamlūk Sultanate and the first half-century of Ottoman rule in Egypt. He is best remembered today for his writings in comparative Islamic law (*ikhtilāf al-madhāhib*), Sufi ethics, and Sufi hagiography. Several of his texts would generate controversy during his lifetime owing to what he claimed

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were libelous passages that jealous peers had falsely attributed to him.[1] During his early years, al-Shaʿrānī studied Islamic law and other scholarly disciplines under Egypt's Chief Shāfiʿī Justice Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī (d. 926/1523); a charismatic and illiterate figure named ʿAlī al-Khawwāṣ (d. 939/1532–3) served as his primary guide in the study and practice of Sufism.[2] By the second half of his life, al-Shaʿrānī's acumen and reputation had earned him the attention of Egypt's Ottoman rulers, who gifted him with a Sufi hospice (*zāwiya*) that made him independently wealthy through the revenues that it generated.

Written in 960/1553, when al-Shaʿrānī was around sixty years old and nearing the last decade of his life, the *Laṭāʾif* remains difficult to categorize as a text within the conventional genres of Islamic scholarship, though it would be reasonable to classify it as autobiography, albeit autobiography written in a non-traditional form. About the *Laṭāʾif*, al-Shaʿrānī writes: "I do not know of anybody from the early or later generations who has preceded me in writing something like it."[3] I would agree with the author's assessment, as my research to date has led me to no antecedent text in Arabic that resembles the *Laṭāʾif* in form or content.[4] As an historical autobiography, the text paints a detailed portrait of the daily life of a scholar-Sufi in sixteenth-century Egypt and, for this reason alone, merits more scholarly attention than it has received to date.

As for its structure, the *Laṭāʾif* contains an extended introduction in which al-Shaʿrānī presents his justifications for writing his book along with a compelling argument for the book's merits. This introduction is then followed by sixteen chapters that correspond with sixteen categories of blessings that God has bestowed upon the author throughout the phases of his life. According to al-Shaʿrānī, the particular blessings that he cites and the length of each of his chapters were dependent upon the nature and length of the "in-rush" (*al-wārid*) that appeared to him at the time of writing.[5] The *Laṭāʾif's* conclusion records the indignities that al-Shaʿrānī suffered at the hands of his peers and is followed by an index written by the author to help those who wish to search his book for a specific virtue.

1. For an overview of al-Shaʿrānī's life and thought, see The [*Oxford*] *Encyclopedia of Islam and Law* (*Oxford Islamic Studies Online*), s.v. "Shaʿrānī, ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-" (by Matthew B. Ingalls), http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/ article/opr/t349/e0012 (accessed February 2019); Michael Winter, *Society and Religion in Early Ottoman Egypt: Studies in the Writings of ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʿrānī* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1982). For al-Shaʿrānī's legal thought, see Ahmed Fekry Ibrahim, "al-Shaʿrānī's Response to Legal Purism: A Theory of Legal Pluralism," *Islamic Law and Society* 20, no. 1–2 (2013): 110–40; cf. Samuela Pagani, "The Meaning of *Ikhtilāf al-Madhāhib* in ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʿrānī's *al-Mīzān al-Kubrā*," *Islamic Law and Society* 11, no. 2 (2004): 177–212.

2. For al-Shaʿrānī's debt to al-Anṣārī in his legal training, see Muḥammad al-Malījī al-Shaʿrānī, *Manāqib al-quṭb al-rabbānī sayyidī ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʿrānī* (Cairo: Dār al-Jūdiyya, 2005), 62–3. For his primary shaykhs in Sufism, see ibid., 63–76; Winter, *Society and Religion in Early Ottoman Egypt*, 56–8, and passim.

3. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʿrānī, *Latāʾif al-minan wa-l-akhlāq fī wujūb al-taḥadduth bi-niʿmat Allāh ʿalā l-iṭlāq* (Subtle Blessings and Morals: On the Necessity of Speaking Unrestrictedly about God's Grace), ed. Aḥmad ʿIzzū ʿInāya (Damascus: Dār al-Taqwā, 2004), 835. Elsewhere the author says that he wrote an abridgement of the text (*al-Minan al-ṣughrā*) and a version of intermediary length (*al-Minan al-wusṭā*). The latter has been published, although with a confusing twist in that the composition date mentioned in its colophon falls exactly one year before that found in the published edition of the *Laṭāʾif*. See idem, *al-Minan al-wusṭā*, ed. Aḥmad Farīd al-Mizyadī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 2010), 28, 99, 443. Al-Shaʿrānī's *Laṭāʾif al-minan* should also not be confused with the book bearing a similar title written by Ibn ʿAṭāʾ Allāh al-Sakandarī (d. 709/1309).

4. Cf. Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī's *al-Taḥadduth bi-niʿmat Allāh*, which functions more like a traditional autobiography. E. M. Sartain, *Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī*, 2 vols. (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975), vol. 2 (=Arabic text of *al-Taḥadduth bi-niʿmat Allāh*). Al-Shaʿrānī was familiar with al-Suyūṭī's autobiography and mentions reading a holograph copy of it. Al-Shaʿrānī, *Laṭāʾif al-minan*, 61.

5. Ibid., 16.

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As al-Shaʿrānī explains in his introduction, many of his students and disciples believe that the Sufi virtues listed in the *Laṭāʾif* are nonexistent in their particular age, and thus they see themselves as living without a human exemplar who might provide a practical illustration of how to apply what they have studied in theory.[6] This introduction was written at a later stage, after al-Shaʿrānī had arranged the book's main chapters and shown a draft of them to an unnamed scholar who objected that the virtues enumerated within reflected the qualities of the prophets and not those of everyday people. Al-Shaʿrānī mentions this comment multiple times throughout the *Laṭāʾif*, while he excuses the scholar who said it on the grounds that the latter's rudimentary spiritual standing did not permit him to realize that these were merely the character traits of the very beginners on the path.[7]

The Fundamental Tension at the Heart of the *Laṭāʾif*

The contents of the *Laṭāʾif's* first chapter provide a fair representation of the tone and substance of the book's remaining fifteen chapters; they also reveal a fundamental tension within the text which the author recognizes from the outset. Detailing those virtues and blessings that God bestowed upon al-Shaʿrānī during his youth and early studies, the first half of the chapter lists the following as examples:

> The author's genealogical descent from Muḥammad Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya (d. 81/700); his memorizing the Quran at a young age; his having never neglected the five prayers since the age of eight; that he was protected from harm notwithstanding his vulnerability as an orphan; the time in which a crocodile saved him from drowning in the Nile; his migration to Cairo from the countryside for the sake of his studies; his memorization of more base texts (*mutūn*) than any of his peers; his commenting upon these texts under the greatest scholars of his day; his reading of many texts—more than any of his peers—under the guidance of these same scholars; his adopting the most cautious position in law whenever possible; that he was never a *madhhab* chauvinist in that he followed his school according to the legal proofs that were most persuasive while continuing to believe that all other Muslims of other *madhhab* affiliations were still upon righteous guidance; the degree to which he interpreted the words of the Sufis in the most generous light and defended them from their detractors, etc.[8]

A reader of this content could be excused for viewing it as a pretense for boasting. In fact, such a reading is supported by the author's concern for his posthumous legacy, revealed throughout his *Laṭāʾif*, which he composed towards the end of his life when he found himself surrounded by many jealous peers who had plotted against him in the past whenever the opportunity presented itself.

6. Ibid., 11.
7. Ibid., 46–7, and passim.
8. Ibid., 16–17, 66–79.

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In reality, the *Laṭāʾif* demonstrates self-awareness of the tension between the Sufi imperative to conceal one's own spiritual state and the imperative to speak openly about God's blessings upon one. In fact, the tone and structure of al-Shaʿrānī's introduction reveal an author who is conflicted and wary of the controversy that his book was likely to generate. Towards the end of the *Laṭāʾif's* introduction, for example, al-Shaʿrānī writes, "By God! And again by God! I did not intend to brag before my brothers by relating my virtues and pious feats in this book."[9] The author's tone here and elsewhere clearly anticipates readers who will interpret his words in a cynical light that paints his book as an extended boast. Throughout the *Laṭāʾif*, al-Shaʿrānī appears to be addressing his students, his critics, and himself all at the same time as he alternates between his justifications for speaking openly about his good deeds and morals and his discussions of the perils of ostentation and conceit.

The remainder of the study below analyzes the theory and rhetoric that al-Shaʿrānī employs to relieve the fundamental tension that emerges in the *Laṭāʾif* from his attempts to balance between the competing Sufi virtues of concealing God's blessings and speaking openly of them. Does al-Shaʿrānī's self-awareness of this tension help or impede us when we seek to draw lessons from the book today? Moreover, how do al-Shaʿrānī's pedagogical impulses figure into his theory and rhetoric? To answer questions like these, my analysis focuses particularly on the author's introduction, which covers the first sixty-five pages of the published edition of the *Laṭāʾif*, and on his conclusion, in which he is most explicit about his motives for writing his book, his anxieties about his potential readership, and the methods that he used to weigh the relative merits of concealing God's blessings versus the merits of sharing them with the public. Throughout this analysis, my goal has been to get inside al-Shaʿrānī's mind to the best of my abilities without succumbing to the easy temptation of reading his words through a cynical lens, as he anticipated that many of his readers would do.

Al-Shaʿrānī's Motives and Intended Audience

In order to dissect al-Shaʿrānī's arguments for speaking unrestrictedly about God's blessings upon him and to assess the sincerity behind these arguments, it is first necessary to understand the author's motives for writing his book and to identify his anticipated readership, which includes both his sympathizers and his detractors. Al-Shaʿrānī's motives and the audience that he envisioned can be gathered from his direct statements about these matters and extracted in their subtler forms from the author's rhetoric and tone.

In his introduction, al-Shaʿrānī lists five motives for writing his *Laṭāʾif.* The first and most important of these is that his students and disciples—whom he refers to as his "brothers"—might view him as a practical illustration of how to embody

9. Ibid., 65.

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the lofty virtues that he has taught them, as these students mistakenly believed that such virtues had long been abandoned in their day and age. Because God graced al-Shaʿrānī with these virtues that he had previously lacked, the author felt an obligation to guide others to them out of gratitude to God, "just as the person whom God has saved from drowning feels an imperative to save everyone he sees drowning."[10] As a separate but related motive, al-Shaʿrānī explains that he wrote the *Laṭāʾif* to demonstrate his knowledge and piety to his scholarly peers so that they too might take him as an exemplar. Moreover, he chose to record his virtues in writing as a means of expressing constant and eternal gratitude to God, as a book endures through time and thereby gives its author a type of immortality. By recording his virtues in the *Laṭāʾif*, he similarly spares his peers the need to inquire about them later and reduces the likelihood of embellishment or garbled retelling in the future. Finally, al-Shaʿrānī explains that he has been motived to emulate the practice of the righteous Muslim progenitors (*al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ*) who would mention their good deeds and virtues to those around them in order to proclaim the blessings that God had bestowed upon them. He mentions the names of many famous Muslim scholars and saints who preceded him in this regard.[11]

An additional motive appears elsewhere in al-Shaʿrānī's introduction. As he explains it, "Everything I have mentioned in this book is like the weapon of obliteration to the pretenders and light-minded ones. Were they to possess it, they would incinerate it because it reveals to them and to everyone their ignorance of the Path that they claim to adhere to . . ."[12] What becomes clear from these words and from similar sentiments in the author's introduction is that al-Shaʿrānī believed that some or all of his unnamed rivals were false Sufis whose actions fell far short of the standards that he was setting for his disciples. The contents of his book are thus intended to give lie to such false Sufis, who the author seemed to expect would read his *Laṭāʿif* or, at least, would hear about it.[13]

Beyond these explicit motives, we can extract two unstated motives from al-Shaʿrānī's text without resorting to speculation. The first of these appears in the apologetics of the *Laṭāʾif*, which, though infrequent, suggest that al-Shaʿrānī intended to use his book to persuade some members of his society of the legitimacy of Sufism and to demonstrate how it is inextricably linked to the Sharīʿa.[14] A second unstated motive stems from al-Shaʿrānī's reflections on his own mortality and his concerns for his posthumous legacy. In this light, he intended his *Laṭāʾif* to serve as a record of his life, realizing that he would not be around for long to set that record straight. At one point in the *Laṭāʾif*, for example, al-Shaʿrānī mentions a traumatic event that he had never before mentioned to his friends and he explains that "because I am in my final years when the time for training the *nafs* has reached its end," it would now be reasonable to tell others about it.[15]

10. Ibid., 11.
11. Ibid., 11–13.
12. Ibid., 46. See also 47, 64–5.
13. On al-Shaʿrānī's rivals among the Sufis of his time, see Winter, *Society and Religion in Early Ottoman Egypt,* 83–8 and passim.
14. Al-Shaʿrānī, *Laṭāʾif al-minan*, 52–3.
15. Ibid., 834.

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From the abovementioned motives, we can glimpse the audience that al-Shaʿrānī anticipated as he wrote his *Laṭāʾif*. Of course, his students and disciples would form his primary audience, as he explains in his introductory words, and it is his sense of responsibility to them that accounts for most of the *Laṭāʾif's* structure and content. Similarly, al-Shaʿrānī expected his book to be read by sympathetic peers—that is, by those who looked to the author as an equal and friend but who might not have possessed as full a picture of his spiritual standing as would accord with his own self-perception. Though infrequent, the apologetic passages of the *Laṭāʾif* also suggest that al-Shaʿrānī expected his book to be read by some critics of Sufism—those who would presumably bear no ill-will towards the author himself and would thus remain receptive to his arguments in defense of a Sharīʿa-bound Sufism. Al-Shaʿrānī's concerns for his posthumous reception, moreover, reveal that he expected many generations of future readers to pour over the pages of his *Laṭāʾif*. Finally, as is mentioned above and is further seen in the uneasy tone that characterizes the text, al-Shaʿrānī anticipated that his enemies, including those who had already slandered him, would read his *Laṭāʾif* and project the worst of intentions onto its author. How then would al-Shaʿrānī respond, especially to this latter category of readers? The next section analyzes al-Shaʿrānī's defense of speaking openly of his virtues, good deeds, and blessings as he might have presented it to the most hostile members of his readership.

Al-Shaʿrānī's Justification for Speaking Openly of His Virtues and Morals

Al-Shaʿrānī justifies his choice to disclose his virtues to his readership on the basis of four parallel arguments: an argument from authority, a scriptural argument, a rational argument, and a legal argument.

In presenting his argument from authority, al-Shaʿrānī quotes over a dozen eminent Muslim scholars and Sufis from the first to the tenth Islamic centuries. Their quoted words either encourage others to speak openly of God's blessings upon them and to thank Him for these, or they are examples of these scholars and Sufis speaking of their own virtues in a manner that might be construed by the uninitiated as boasting.[16] As an example of the former, the author quotes Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 161/778), who said, "Whoever does not speak about a blessing exposes it to extinction."[17] As an example of the latter, al-Shaʿrānī cites a story in which "a man pinched the foot of Abū l-ʿAbbās al-Sayyārī [(d. 342/953)], one of the men of al-Qushayrī's *Epistle,* to which Abū l-ʿAbbās said, 'Do you pinch a foot that has never once walked towards the disobedience of God?'"[18] After citing these saintly authorities, the author explains:

16. For more on early Sufis' attitudes towards this theme, see Atif Khalil's discussion of the "gratitude of the tongue" in "The Embodiment of Gratitude (*Shukr)* in Sufi Ethics," *Studia Islamica* 11, no.2 (2016): 164–7, esp. 166.
17. Al-Shaʿrānī, *Laṭāʾif al-minan*, 60.
18. Ibid., 61.

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> This is some of what has been transmitted of the speech of the righteous Muslim progenitors, making it known that the scholars and righteous do not praise themselves for the sake of boasting or eye-service. Far be that from them! Rather, they have based their behavior in sound principles and lawful objectives. Now that you have read these evidences and reports that we have mentioned above, my brother, don't you dare rush to censure one of the *ʿārifūn* (experiential knowers of God) when he praises himself by your interpreting this as a function of egotistical objectives. It is incumbent upon you to interpret such people in the most generous manner. God, the Exalted, has praised those who hear a statement and follow the best of it—These are the people whom God has guided; these are the people of insight.[19]

Of course, the strength of the author's argument rests upon his definition of the "*ʿārifūn*," a category of people who would appear to include all the figures whom he cites within his argument from authority. More is said about the *ʿārifūn* below, as they form an integral ingredient in al-Shaʿrānī's epistemology and in his broader justifications for writing his *Laṭāʾif.* For now, it is noteworthy that the author's words here anticipate readers who might still interpret the words of the early Muslim saints as emanating from a place of ego.

As for his scriptural argument, al-Shaʿrānī cites for his readers six verses of the Quran in which the angels along with the prophets Joseph, David, Solomon, and Jesus mention their own virtues and the blessings that God has bestowed upon them. The Prophet Joseph, for example, said to the king of Egypt, "*Appoint me over the granaries of the land. I am an attentive guardian and knowledgeable*."[20]

The author's use of hadith texts within his scriptural argument is slightly more sophisticated. Among the hadiths that he cites are the words of the Prophet: "I am the leader of the children of Adam on the Day of Judgment, and this is no boast." According to al-Shaʿrānī, the Prophet added "and this is no boast" to clarify that his exalted status is not a function of his own power but rather is a function of his servitude to God.[21] Moreover, taking hadiths like this as examples of the Prophet's speaking openly of God's favor upon him, al-Shaʿrānī explains:

> In summary, God, the Exalted, has ordered us to emulate the Prophet of God—God's blessings and peace be upon him—in every matter that was not made particular to him. Part of emulating him is that we speak of every blessing that God has bestowed upon us and not conceal it. We do not speak secretly about it but rather announce it for everyone to see. In this light, speaking openly of one's virtues becomes an act that accords with the Sunna of the Prophet and is thus the correct application of the words of the Quran, *And as for the blessing of your Lord, speak.*[22]

19. Ibid., 62. The words translated in italics are taken from Q 39:18.
20. Ibid., 58. The quote is taken from Q 12:55. Al-Shaʿrānī mistakenly writes that Joseph was addressing ʿAzīz and not the king.
21. Ibid. For this exact version of the hadith, see Muḥammad b. ʿĪsā al-Tirmidhī, *Jāmiʿ al-Tirmidhī, kitāb al-manāqib* (#3975).
22. Al-Shaʿrānī, *Laṭāʾif al-minan*, 59. Q 93:11.

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As for al-Shaʿrānī's rational argument for speaking openly of his virtues, the author provides three examples of inductive reasoning to convince the reader that his intention must be sound. First, al-Shaʿrānī explains that it was his thinking good of God (*ḥusn al-ẓann*) and his belief in God's unbounded magnanimity that ultimately freed him to recount his virtues to his readers. If his true motive were status or legacy, and not the fulfillment of God's command, then his virtues would all be rendered invalid owing to his insincerity, and God would have effectively stripped him of them. He believes that this would not reflect the true nature of God's boundless benevolence. Second, al-Shaʿrānī explains that God does not strip a person of true experiential knowledge (*al-maʿārif*), but rather strips a person of spiritual states (*aḥwāl*) owing to their ephemeral nature. Everything that he has mentioned in his *Laṭāʾif* are virtues based in experiential knowledge and not passing states, and are thus enduring, whether one speaks of them or not. Finally, al-Shaʿrānī writes:

> Had the friends of God, the Exalted, not known—by virtue of God's magnanimity and bounty—that He would never strip them of the experiential knowledge and the virtues that He had bestowed upon them, they would never have put them in a book nor mentioned them in their gatherings. For, if the opposite were the case, then their actions and words would belie their claims.

In other words, that the friends of God spoke of their virtues orally and in writing implies that they knew with certainty that God would not strip them of their virtues and experiential knowledge of Him. Had the case been otherwise, then they never possessed true experiential knowledge of God in the first place and were never His saintly elect.[23]

Finally, though he does not dwell on it, al-Shaʿrānī includes a passing legal argument to justify the contents of his *Laṭāʾif*. The author explains that he has chosen to begin each of his chapters with the phrase, "And among the things that God has blessed me with is . . .," to demonstrate that he does not intend to boast when he lists the virtues that follow. Rather:

> My intention with this is merely to declare principally my degree of gratitude to God, glorified and exalted. If this should require that I praise myself, then this is not what is intended in principle. It is merely by necessity. According to the dominant position of the scholars of jurisprudence, what is made necessary by the madhhab is not itself part of the dictates of the *madhhab*. Supporting this is the position of our scholars that if a person in a state of major ritual impurity were to recite the Quran without intending thereby to recite the Quran, this would be permissible. They say this is so because the Quran is not the Quran except through intention. Thus, the intent behind my words, 'And among the things that God has blessed me with . . .,' for example, is the declaration that this thing is from the bounty of God, glorified and exalted, not through my power or strength nor because I deserve any of it.[24]

23. Ibid., 13.
24. Ibid., 15.

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Within the legal analogy at the heart of this passage at least, al-Shaʿrānī would appear to acknowledge that he has engaged in acts of self-praise within his *Laṭāʾif* and he does not simply shift the blame onto his reader for misunderstanding him. However, it is his true goal of praising God that renders his acts of self-praise necessary and therefore permissible, if not obligatory.

Nevertheless, the author does not cite his four arguments as an absolute justification for speaking openly about one's virtues. Rather, people who manifest their good deeds do so within one of three contexts, and these contexts determine whether they are justified or not. The first context occurs when some members of the general populace, particularly those without a shaykh to guide them, manifest their deeds for the sake of ostentation and reputation.[25] This, of course, is unjustified. A second context occurs whenever a person senses that his actions have been done solely for the sake of God, but he is not well established in his spiritual station (*maqām*) and thus frets about making his actions manifest to others. According to al-Shaʿrānī, this person is also unjustified in making his actions known to others and should not do so. A third context occurs whenever a person is "firmly established in the realities of *tawḥīd*" and has no fear of making his actions manifest "as he witnesses his actions as belonging to God to the same extent that he witnesses his essence as a creation belonging to God." Such a person remains "unable to attribute to himself any of his actions" as they all belong to God with the exception of some degree of moral accountability; he sees himself as "the empty vessel that the Mover moves within emptiness." For those who have reached this spiritual station, it is obligatory that they manifest all of their actions and virtues while acknowledging them as blessings from God, for "all actions that the person sees as a means of thanking God are also part of God's blessings upon that person."[26]

Akhlāq al-muridīn vs. *Akhlāq al-ʿārifīn*

As the previous paragraph demonstrates, a person's spiritual station determines whether the imperative is for him to reveal or conceal his virtues. Within this relative framework, al-Shaʿrānī must necessarily place himself within the third context of those "firmly established in the realities of *tawḥīd*," or the contents of his *Laṭāʾif* would be illegitimate according to his own standards.

Elsewhere in his introduction, al-Shaʿrānī describes the *ʿārif* in similar terms. It is the unwavering stability of the *ʿārif*'s spiritual station that distinguishes him from the *murīds* (aspirants), who, by definition, are not well established in their spiritual stations and thus correspond with the second context mentioned above. Moreover, upon reaching a higher *maqām*, the *ʿārif* recognizes that his previous station was merely that of the *murīds*.[27] The *ʿārif* thus reaches his lofty and stable

25. Ibid., 62.
26. Ibid., 63.
27. Ibid., 46–7.

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maqām with a concomitant certainty that he is, in fact, an *ʿārif*. If we put this theory in conversation with the three contexts outlined above, then al-Shaʿrānī clearly considered himself an *ʿārif* who was free—if not obligated—to speak openly of his virtues.

That said, the author repeats over and over in his introduction that the virtues he listed in his *Laṭāʾif* are merely those of the *murīds* (*akhlāq al-murīdīn)*—i.e., virtues that he exhibited at an earlier phase in his life but that he has now transcended. Any mention of the virtues of the *ʿārifs* (*akhlāq al-ʿārifīn*) that he might have inadvertently included in his *Laṭāʾif* are "mere slips of the pen."[28]

An example from the text helps to illustrate how these distinctions can yield wildly different behaviors from the Sufis depending upon which side of the *ʿārif–murīd* divide they fall. Al-Shaʿrānī explains that *murīds* are instructed to abandon all worldly things that distract them from God. However, once these Sufis attain the unshakeable station of *maʿrifa*, they are free to re-embrace worldly possessions and manifest other behaviors that were previously forbidden to them, such as vying with others for positions of leadership, bickering with others and keeping aloof from them, taking others to task for their abuses, and not forgiving others unless God so wills it. The outward behavior of the *ʿārif* might thus resemble that of worldly-minded people, though his intention is completely different from theirs. In fact, al-Shaʿrānī holds that this new behavior is not merely permissible for the *ʿārif* but rather is the best means of perfecting his state. Were he to oppose it, he would risk regressing to a lower spiritual station. The *ʿārif's* reason, for example, in vying with others for positions of leadership is not because he is enamored with himself, but rather it is with the intention to embody one of God's own character traits, to maintain justice, fulfill the rights of all, and make his words more influential in society.[29]

Al-Shaʿrānī's theory here helps him to explain why his students believed that the Sufis of their day had failed to live up to the lofty virtues found in the hagiographies of earlier Sufis. Al-Shaʿrānī replies, in effect, that not only *did* he live up to these virtues towards the beginning of his Sufi training, but he had since transcended them for the very sake of his spiritual advancement. Moreover, the author identifies a methodological problem among many Sufi writers who record the words and deeds of the saints: they are usually oblivious as to whether these words and deeds come from the beginning, middle, or terminal phase of a saint's spiritual path. Because these writers rarely taste for themselves anything close to what the saint has experienced, they remain ignorant of this subtle point and record everything that they hear about a saint. Thus, a saint might report on a matter and *then* enter into a state of erasure such that his perspective on the matter could change completely. Unless he is asked about the matter again, the reader will be left with a less mature mystical perspective that they ascribe to the saint in an unequivocal manner. It is for this reason that al-Shaʿrānī advocates

28. Ibid., 15, 46 and passim.
29. Ibid., 49.

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for Sufi biographers to limit their stories to those that occurred at the terminal phase of a saint's journey. According to his own assessment, al-Shaʿrānī claims to have employed this method when he wrote his famous *Ṭabaqāt* hagiographical dictionary.[30]

As the analysis above has shown in various places, al-Shaʿrānī's *Laṭāʾif* reveals an author who is fully aware that many of his readers will misinterpret his text as an extended boast, while in many places his tone betrays a clear anxiety over his decision to write it. His introduction devotes ample space to discussions of his intentions and to his theories on the permissibility of speaking openly of one's virtues and good deeds, all of which lay bare an author who is struggling to assuage some degree of cognitive dissonance.

One explanation for this cognitive dissonance is that perhaps the author remains confident in his spiritual station, but not in how it will be perceived by others. But why should he care about the latter? Al-Shaʿrānī's genial personality does come across readily to those who are familiar with his writings, so it stands to reason that an agreeable person like him would, in fact, care about others' opinions of him, as all of us do to one degree or another, regardless of what we tell ourselves.

That said, the alarm bells of cynicism do sound in my mind when I read passages in support of the *ʿārif's* vying with others for positions of power and similar things, as these mundane matters appear so easy to justify in light of al-Shaʿrānī's spiritually relativistic method. This is not to suggest that my cynical impulses are correct or warranted, but they do point to some larger questions that we historians—and readers, in general—might consider when approaching unique texts like the *Laṭāʾif*.

What is the correct balance to strike between a cynical and a generous reading of a text like the *Laṭāʾif*? Should we—or even *can* we—leave our personal experiences and baggage at the door when approaching a text like this in order to avoid projecting our fears and misanthropy onto an author who deserves to be taken on his own merits? Does al-Shaʿrānī's self-awareness of the tension at the heart of his *Laṭāʾif* entitle him to a more charitable reading, as it is difficult to question the intentions of an author who devotes so much space to a discussion of his very intentions? As al-Shaʿrānī was a human being full of inconsistencies, like the rest of us, how do we grapple with the possibility that the author's motives and intentions may have differed at various stages of his writing process? Finally, are we contemporary historians and readers fundamentally the same as any reader from any point in earlier history? Or, does the cultural and historical gap between us and al-Shaʿrānī make us especially ill-suited to give the author's true intentions a fair assessment?

30. Ibid., 47.

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FINDING NEW LIFE AMONG THE DEAD: THE ETHICAL MYSTICISM OF *THE BOOK OF PURE GOLD*

Paul L. Heck

The figure of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Dabbāgh (d. 1132/1719), a spiritual virtuoso of Morocco whose life overlapped with the long and formidable reign of Ismāʿīl Ibn al-Sharīf (r. 1672–1727), presents us with a compelling yet unusual illustration of the relation of the mystical and the ethical in Islam. In the sayings of al-Dabbāgh, as collected by his disciple, Aḥmad b. al-Mubārak al-Lamaṭī (d. 1156/1743), the human being is marked by darkness (*ẓalām*), a condition intrinsic to the state of being a creature. As such, this darkness cannot be overcome by acts of worship, however many one performs. Indeed, given this state, one's worship—and, with it, one's ethical integrity—remains deficient. To overcome the darkness that inheres in one's being, making it possible for satanic forces to spoil one's religion, one must receive a new spirit, the spirit of the Prophet Muhammad as transmitted over the centuries through the bodies of saintly figures, known in Islam as the friends or allies of God (*awliyāʾ Allāh*). However, for a body to bear the spirit of the Prophet, it has to be, as it were, the body of the Prophet. Thus, what the saints carry in their bodies—and transmit to disciples—is not only the spirit but also the body of the Prophet. Significantly, the saints, while playing this role in life, do so most effectively in death because in death they are at their strongest in terms of their spiritual effect.

The mystical vision of al-Dabbāgh points to aspects of ethical life in Islam that are not limited to his own period, including 1) the purpose of mysticism as preserving

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the integrity of worship, 2) the fact that the integrity of worship—as purpose of religion—includes spiritual renewal and not only the correct performance of ritual actions, and 3) the impact of the righteous dead in their graves on the spiritual renewal of the living and even on the integrity and efficacy of their worship. We treat these questions in what follows with a focus on the third. Before doing so, we begin with a very brief reflection on the idea of accompanying the dead in their graves.

People across time and place have sought communion with the dead: ancestors, saints, and martyrs. Even in the so-called modern world with its allegedly disenchanted outlook, the nation's dead heroes are alive in its collective memory, strengthening the feeling of national glory and inspiring citizens to sacrifice for it. When it comes to religious community, the way of relating to the dead depends on the character they exhibited in this world—the extent to which they are remembered as having perfected righteousness. For example, Christians have always offered prayers *for* the dead who are remembered as not having perfected righteousness. Such imperfect believers undergo a process of being sanctified after having passed—and therefore stand in need of the prayers of the living. In contrast, Christians have always prayed *to* the righteous dead (saints and martyrs), invoking them for help in growing in sanctity in their own earthly journey.[1]

Believers recognize that the righteous are spiritually strongest in death. They can impact one's life, especially one's spiritual life. If, then, the righteous dead are able to impact the living in this sense, they are actually alive in their graves, even more alive—spiritually if not physically—than they had been while in this world.[2] For this reason, believers across traditions visit the shrines of the righteous dead in the hope of acquiring a blessing from their presence. The practice has become controversial but features prominently in the history of Islam. We have ample documentation of the practice, including literature that instructs people on the norms of shrine visitation and the travelogues of those, such as the famed Ibn Battuta, whose itineraries were composed with visits to the friends and allies of God—living and dead—very much in mind.

What, then, is a shrine—the space that houses one of the righteous dead? And what is the point of visiting one? Shrines have long been part of the landscape of Islam across time and place. While the faithful visit them for diverse reasons, a common feature of a shrine is the power it represents. At the shrine, social status disappears. To be sure, rulers may patronize a shrine with the aim of harnessing its otherworldly sovereignty to their own claims to rule. However, such patronage is not received without rulers establishing their own pious credentials. Indeed, the otherworldly power of the shrine can serve either to buttress or to counter the claims of rulers that their rule is aligned with the purposes of God.

1. See Robert Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things? Saints and Worshippers from the Martyrs to the Reformation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 3.

2. See, for example, Uzma Rehman, "Spiritual Powers and 'Threshold' Identities: The Mazārs of Sayyid Pīr Waris Shāh Abdul Latīf Bhitāi," in Clinton Bennett and Charles M. Ramsey (eds.), *South Asian Sufis: Devotion, Deviation, and Destiny* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2012), 61–81. For the idea of the dead as alive, see p. 66: "The tomb . . . contains the essence of that [unseen] power and a part of the Divine. In this sense, the tomb is a living tomb. It is the tomb where the person who became one with the Divine lies. He lives in God."

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It is also true that shrines are not simply places of refuge for society's outcasts. A shrine attracts the needy who hope for a share in its blessing, a charitable offering from devotees, but a shrine cannot be defined as a pre-modern soup kitchen. Rather, it is more accurate to speak of a shrine as a liminal space—a space between this world and the next—where divine power of a kind is accessible. Most fundamentally, the divine power of the shrine exists for spiritual and ethical ends.[3] Visitors are purified (sanctified) by the blessing of the shrine. The shrine thus allows for a more enhanced experience of worship. Prayer in the extraordinary space of the shrine has a more palpable impact on the soul than it does in the ordinary space of the world. The holiness of the shrine preserves one, at least for a time, from the powers of the world. As one takes on the sadness or joy of others, so the presence of the righteous dead becomes the object of one's identification, imbuing one with the saint's righteousness. At the shrine, one is purified of the effects of the world that diminish one's righteousness. The shrine's fundamental purpose is thus renewal of spiritual and ethical character. The body of the righteous occupant of the shrine, which is inaccessible to Satan's power (cf. Q 16:99), possesses a lordly character that establishes a holy space beyond the power of Satan so that visitors themselves might experience life beyond the power of Satan.

If one goal of religion is purification of worldliness, a shrine serves that purpose, doing so as a spiritual alternative to purification by the law. Is one to be purified of the effects of one's sins by being punished—paying the price—for them as stipulated by the law? Or is one to be purified of them by the saintly blessing one experiences at the shrine? The shrine offers purification by the latter, saintly, method, granting the devotee a sense of divine favor. That is, the saintly body, as object of divine favor, offers visitors the experience of divine favor through association with the righteous dead. To be sure, a shrine has a varied social function, but it exists primarily as a place of spiritual power by which the soul is purified of the corrupting effects of worldly life. How exactly does such spiritual impact work? What takes place within the workings of the soul in the presence of the living dead? The many studies on shrine culture notwithstanding, there is room for further analysis of the impact of the righteous dead on the soul and the way the encounter with the dead in their graves ennobles the ethics of the living.

How do the righteous dead impact one's soul to its spiritual and ethical benefit? Muslims have long acknowledged that the dead in their graves hear the living,[4] but the religious benefit that one gets from companioning the righteous dead remains to be explained. We pursue the question here through the lens of *The Book*

3. For the essentially spiritual and ethical purpose of shrines, see Rian Thum, "The Shrine" = chapter three in *The Sacred Routes of Uyghur History* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2014), 96–132. Of course, the dynamics of shrines are not static, but shift across time and place. For one example of changing meanings around shrine-related practices, see John Rasanayagam, "Healing with spirits and the formation of Muslim selfhood in post-Soviet Uzbekistan," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 12, no. 2 (2006): 377–393.

4. Of the countless examples, we mention the case of Abu Sālim al-ʿAyyāshī (d. 1090/1697), a scholar and traveler from Morocco. In one of his travelogues, he advises his readers, when passing through Misrata (Libya), to visit the shrine of Aḥmad Zarrūq (d. 899/1493) and to entrust their lives, animals, and goods to his protection, since "nothing harms those [who do so] on their journey until they return to him [Zarrūq's shrine] safely." Al-ʿAyyāshī also advises his readers to recite the divine office (*waẓīfa*) composed by Zarrūq at his grave, acknowledging the presence of his gravity (*hayba*), "because he hears" (*li-anna-hu yasmaʿ*). See Abu Sālim al-ʿAyyāshī, *Riḥlat al-ʿAyyāshī al-ḥajjiyya al-ṣughrā*, ed. ʿAbdallāh Ḥammādī al-Idrīsī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 2013), 78.

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of Pure Gold from the Words of the Master ʿAbd al-Azīz al-Dabbāgh (al-Ibrīz min Kalām Sayyidī ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Dabbāgh).[5] The hero of the book, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Dabbāgh, introduced above, spends time in the company of the righteous dead as we see in the reports at the beginning of the book that describe his journey to mystical illumination. Across the rest of the book and its reports, enough clues are given as to the impact that visitation to the righteous dead has on one's soul. (Of course, we are not referring to impact on the brain, a question for neuroscience to pursue, but rather impact on the soul as conceived by the religious community, which, in this case, is the community of the Prophet Muhammad.)

The impact does not lie simply in the fact that the righteous dead represent ethical models worthy of emulation, nor in the fact that they carry the prophetic light in their bodies. More profoundly, the impact lies in the possibility that the bodies of the righteous dead are passed on to living devotees; there is a corporeal effect on the bodies of the living, thereby allowing them to manifest the prophetic light in their bodies. For this reason, the community of Muslims is not just a community of believers but actually represents the prophetic body insofar as the bodies of its righteous members not only carry the spirit of the Prophet but are his body—a religious state that is confirmed by their ethical character manifesting the prophetic character, notably its identification with divine mercy. Thus, the community of believers can claim to be the prophetic body to the extent that divine mercy is manifest in its members, making the manifestation of divine mercy the final proof of the integrity of the community's worship.

A short word on why I decided to read this book from this angle. During a year (2018–2019) spent teaching at the Faculty of the Principles of Religion (*Kulliyāt Uṣūl al-Dīn*) in Tetouan, Morocco, I happened to be at the well-known bookstore, Dār al-Amān, in Rabat. While I was browsing the section on Sufism in Morocco, a man entered the bookstore, elderly and evidently weak-sighted, since a daughter of his, who was with him, guided him as he walked. Immediately upon entering, he announced his goal as if addressing the bookstore itself: *The Book of Pure Gold*, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Dabbāgh. His voice suggested a man seeking not merely a good book, but a friend he had not seen for a long time. He was presented with two editions of the book, chose one of them, and then asked his daughter to read out the titles of books in the section on Sufism in Morocco. He selected a handful of them, but it was clear that his chief purpose had been to procure *The Book of Pure Gold*. He repeatedly asked his daughter—until they exited the store—if the book was still in their possession, as if fearful his purpose might be thwarted.

It was also clear that his aim was not simply to peruse a book on the history of Sufism in Morocco but, rather, to accompany al-Dabbāgh by reading his words, as one would converse with a friend. I felt that this aged man, attired in the clothing of spiritual adepts of a past age, had realized that in this world there was no longer

5. Aḥmad b. al-Mubārak al-Lamaṭī, *Pure Gold from the Words of Sayyidī ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Dabbāgh*, trans. John O'Kane and Bernd Radtke (Leiden: Brill, 2007). I know of two editions: *al-Ibrīz min kalām Sayyidī ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Dabbāgh*, ed. Muḥammad Bashīr Ḥasan al-Hāshimī (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1424/2004); and *al-Ibrīz min kalām Sayyidī ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Dabbāgh*, ed. unmentioned (Beirut and Tyre: al-Maktaba al-ʿAṣriyya, 1433/2012), hereafter referred to as *al-Ibrīz(1)* and *al-Ibrīz(2)*, respectively. I use the latter—*al-Ibrīz(2)*—when referring to and citing the text. Translations are my own, but I do benefit from O'Kane and Radtke.

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anyone left in whose company one might grow spiritually, and so he decided to accompany one no longer in this world, al-Dabbāgh. What would transpire, I wondered, in this man's soul by reading the words of a soul long dead?[6]

The Book of Pure Gold is a complex work. It was compiled by a disciple of al-Dabbāgh, Aḥmad b. al-Mubārak al-Lamaṭī (d. 1156/1743), who collected the statements of his master on a variety of religious questions and also added his own comments and observations throughout the course of the book.[7] Our goal is not to separate al-Lamaṭī's views from al-Dabbāgh's, but simply to understand the work's overall vision—or one aspect of it, namely, the religious benefit of accompanying the dead. We first discuss the issue in general and then turn to relevant details as derived from the variegated reports that make up *The Book of Pure Gold*.

The religious benefit of accompanying the dead comes from what I call ethics transference. For better or worse, our companions impact our character. Ethics transference might make sense in terms of the living, but does it apply to the dead? Are the righteous dead also able to impact the character of the living? If so, are they really dead or are they as alive as one's living companions, at least in a spiritual if not a physical sense? And what's the point of being ethically impacted by the dead, however righteous they be? What purpose does it serve?

Of course, we remember loved ones who have passed. We feel that they remain with us. If righteous, their memory inspires us to be righteous. In our case, however, we are dealing not with reverent memories of ancestors but with a theistic mysticism. At stake is the efficacy of our worship of God. How does the company of the dead help purify our worship of God? After all, the goal of religious life is integrity of worship (*al-ʿibāda bi-l-ikhlāṣ*).[8] But such worship is difficult when one's soul remains subject to this world's trials and temptations. The ways of the world—its stresses in addition to one's sins, both of which weaken one's character—weigh down the soul, leaving marks on it. One might call them spiritual scars. As a result, one becomes disoriented and needs the help of other souls, decidedly purer than one's own, to help reorient towards one's true end. In other words, the integrity of our worship links to the integrity of our character, which transcends the world's harmful effects to the extent that one's worship is sincere, that is, free of the effects of the world's forces that drag it down.

The Book of Pure Gold begins by narrating al-Dabbāgh's own journey to pure worship. Featuring prominently in the narrative is his accompaniment of past spiritual masters. Those whom he companioned were not dead but alive with God.

6. It is worth noting that *The Book of Pure Gold* continues to be read today in Morocco's pious circles. Also, while some Muslims today condemn the book's vision, it is worth noting that his ideas have attracted interest beyond the world of Sufism. We thus need to be careful about positing strict divisions between one strand of Islam and another before undertaking a broad reading in the scholarly heritage. For example, Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī (d. 1332/1914), the Syrian scholar seen as a forerunner of contemporary Salafism, does not hesitate to rely on al-Dabbāgh's distinction of the three kinds of revealed speech: qur'anic scripture, prophetic saying, and prophetic transmission of divine statement (*kitāb, ḥadīth,* and *ḥadīth qudsī*). See Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī, *Qawāʿid al-taḥdīth fī funūn al-ḥadīth*, ed. Muḥammad Bahja al-Bīṭār (Damascus: Maṭbaʿat Ibn Zaydūn, 1935), 41–44.

7. The introduction to the translation by John O'Kane and Bernd Radtke sufficiently explains this and other matters.

8. Needless to say, there is disagreement on the meaning of religion, to say nothing of its purpose. Some speak of religion as friendship with God and experience of the love of God, others in terms of obedience to the commands of God. In either case, love or obedience, devotion is central. Is the goal of religion devotion to other than God?

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In other words, they were physically dead but spiritually active. They had achieved salvation, that is, perfect purification of the soul, something possible only after one has passed from this world, since souls in this world are never safe from its trials and temptations. In other words, in this world, however righteous you seem to be, there is always the chance of sin overpowering you. Your righteousness can therefore only be established with certainty in death. Hence, the righteous exert greater spiritual impact after they have passed from this world. Thus, the company of the righteous dead, whose souls have been perfectly purified as indicated by their having reached their final destination, works to purify one's soul and, in turn, the quality of one's worship.

Of course, such a process is to be described in language familiar to one's own tradition. Al-Dabbāgh describes the righteous dead as conveyors of the prophetic light to believers in this world, enabling them to achieve purity of worship (*al-ʿubūdiyya al-khāliṣa*), which, he notes early on, is his goal. A key concern of his, then, is the means by which to achieve purity of worship. Significantly, one cannot do so through one's own efforts. Indeed, even thinking that one can attain purity of worship leads to excessive scrupulosity, which is sometimes noticeable in mosques today: Worshippers are occasionally seen starting to pray only to restart from the beginning a moment later. Something didn't feel right externally or internally. One could leave it to God to accept one's worship, however imperfectly performed, but Muslims have long looked to holy figures whose company works to enhance the purity of the imperfect worshipper's worship.

One might ask why one needs to accompany the righteous dead in order to receive the light by which worship is purified. Why not go directly to the prophetic source? Religion, of course, is not only a prophetic message. It is also a tradition that conveys it. How might one be certain of accessing the prophetic life without engaging the tradition that conveyed it? Al-Dabbāgh does eventually encounter the Prophet, even seeing him while awake, but only after he has accompanied the righteous dead who make the prophetic light available to the *umma*.

A note on mysticism: The theistic mysticism of Islam diverges from other kinds of mysticism where a sense of oneness with all existence is experienced. Such mystical experience might follow from communion with nature or from the use of psychedelic drugs. Islam's mysticism, like Jewish and Christian mysticism, may include this sense of existential oneness, but it is primarily at the service of purity of worship, namely, worship of God not only by correctly moving one's limbs as specified by ritual law but also by doing so with inner purity. The question is, of course, closely connected to the question of character. How might one purify one's soul so that one's worship be pure? For worship to be pure, to be done with *ikhlāṣ*, you have to confirm that your soul is rightly oriented—oriented to God rather than to something else, and yet it is a complex process that involves both body and soul. Each needs to have spiritually correct orientation. The term for the spiritually correct orientation of outer (physical) action is *niyya*, whereas *ikhlāṣ* is the term

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for the spiritually correct orientation of inner (psychological) action.[9] The first, *niyya*, applies to the ritual state of the body. Are your limbs spiritually prepared for worship? That is something that you can do by your own effort. You simply need to do ablutions (*wuḍūʾ* or *ghusl*). The second, the spiritually correct inner action of worship, involves overcoming the so-called evil aspect of one's soul (*sūʾ al-nafs*). That's something you cannot do on your own. You need the help of other souls, more ethically elevated than you, whose company will have the effect of elevating your soul, and the most ethically elevated of souls are those alive with God even if physically dead in their graves. The fact that purity of worship is a primary concern of *The Book of Pure Gold* is apparent in its several references to the orientation of the heart (*wijhat al-qalb*).[10] For prayer to be pure, a correct orientation of the heart necessarily accompanies correct bodily movements of prostration.

However, correct orientation of the heart is easier said than done because, as explained in *The Book of Pure Gold*, demons seek to corrupt one's inner orientation out of envy and hatred for humans. In other words, they don't want us to be spiritually successful. In this regard, mysticism in Islam is not at all about out-of-body experiences. At stake in the mysticism of Islam is the integrity of the worship of the *umma*—and thus its ethical integrity, which follows from the integrity of its worship. Islam certainly recognizes the possibility of a moral life apart from faith, but Islam also insists that worship makes for a purer goodness since without it one's motive for doing good is suspect. The mind alone can distinguish good from evil, but do you do the good for God or for some less pure impulse?

In short, the ethical integrity of the *umma* depends upon the existence in its ranks of souls that have been perfectly purified, that is, that have realized the end of the mystical journey and so worship God purely. Not all are expected to achieve a perfectly pure state, but it would be odd for the message of religion to be revealed without anyone fulfilling it. One might wonder why God had revealed a way of life that no one can fully live out in both body and soul.

It is up to a saintly elite to realize the religious message—to worship God as the Prophet did—on behalf of the *umma*, thereby ensuring its ethical integrity, a point to which we return below. What does one do to enter into the ranks of the saintly elite? In a nutshell, acts of worship, no matter how many, are not enough to purify one's inner being. You need to defeat the demons that seek to corrupt

9. The basic idea, which is widespread even if variously explained in the scholarly heritage, is that one's inner being no less than one's outer must be endowed with ritual intention for worship to be worship. Sometimes intention of the inner being—that is, the work of the heart (*ʿamal al-qalb*)—is conceived in terms of correct doctrine (*iʿtiqād*). However, in the case of al-Dabbāgh, given his concern for attaining purity of soul without which one's worship is deficient, the intention of the inner being is not reducible to correct doctrine, but includes orientation of the heart. Moreover, to conflate *niyya* and *ikhlāṣ*, which some do, would not adequately represent his vision. He speaks of *ikhlāṣ* in relation to *wijhat al-qalb*, which is the equivalent of what others call *qaṣd wajh allāh* and the like. For one example within the heritage of Sufism in Morocco to which al-Dabbāgh was heir, see Abu ʿAbdallah al-Sāḥilī (d. 754/1355), *Bughyat al-sālik fī ashraf al-mamālik*, ed. ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-ʿAlamī (Manshūrāt Wizārat al-Awqāf wa-l-Shuʾūn al-Islāmiyya, 2003), 293–294, where he explains that while some conflate *niyya* and *ikhlāṣ*, it is correct to distinguish them; he describes *niyya* as "the spirit of the outer works," *ikhlāṣ* as "the spirit of the inner ones."

10. Indeed, there are numerous statements and reports throughout the book that make it clear that al-Dabbāgh's foremost concern is purity of worship. For example, in one section, he repeats what seem to be all the narrations of the story of a young man who appears to be a model of pious worship but who actually has a demonic stain in his heart—excessive pride. The Prophet Muhammad's companions don't see it, but he does and orders them to kill him, since he'll only cause division in the community. Of course, they're not able to kill a man at prayer. The point of the story is that the community won't be united with the existence of duplicitous piety. See al-Lamaṭī, *al-Ibrīz(2)*, 410ff.

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your spiritual orientation. A mystical battle is at stake! As earlier noted, it is not possible to defeat the demons by one's own efforts. *The Book of Pure Gold* insists that the human state, including its corporeal, psychological, and spiritual dimensions, is essentially darkened. (Only the Prophet is preserved from this darkened state.) One's human state thus needs to be renewed for one to be preserved from the demons that seek to corrupt one's worship. This is achieved by mystical victory (*fatḥ*) whereby your being (*dhāt*) is united to the being of the Prophet. Of course, the demons are not able to play with your human state once it has been fortified (illuminated) by the being of the Prophet. With this mystical victory, the prophetic being is operative in one's soul, allowing one to worship God with the prophetic spirit, and no worship in Islam is purer than that undertaken with the prophetic spirit. In short, purity of worship in Islam is contingent upon the assumption of prophetic character. For al-Dabbāgh, this is confirmed by his vision of Muhammad while awake. In other words, his vision of the body of Muhammad confirms that he has wholly assumed the prophetic character.

How does such mystical victory take place? It's all about the power of companionship. We see this in the account of al-Dabbāgh's own mystical journey. It is especially by accompanying the souls of the righteous dead that he advances on the path, and that's because they're not dead in any final sense. Rather, existing beyond this world's trials and temptations, they are now more spiritually active than they were in this world. The spiritual aspect of their existence is now fully established. As a result, their otherworldly (spiritual) existence has impact on those in this worldly (physical) existence. In the world of al-Dabbāgh, spirits impact bodies.[11]

We see several references to this. For example, al-Dabbāgh attributes the disturbance of the body that sometimes occurs during worship to a spirit that casts light on the body; its response to this light depends on one's religious state. Is one obedient or disobedient to God?[12] He also says that the recollection of Hell stirs up one's blood and vapor (i.e., one's bodily temperament). However, he doesn't explain *how*, exactly, spiritual things impact bodily things, including the impact of the spirits of the dead on the bodies no less than the souls of the living. In other words, the character of the dead impacts the character of the living, the righteous dead imbuing living devotees with prophetic character. Is this a version of spirit possession? How are we to explain it beyond attributing it to a belief that is foreign to the modern mind?

The idea of spirit impacting body would have been consistent with medical assumptions in the milieu in which *The Book of Pure Gold* was composed.[13] One example of such assumptions comes from *The Book of the Spirit* by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 751/1350). Ibn al-Qayyim and al-Dabbāgh lived in different times and places, and even if they differ in religious outlook, it would be wrong to place them in opposing religious worlds. Even today, believers read both without feeling

11. He is explicit in the corporeality of spiritual phenomena. For example, see al-Lamaṭī, *al-Ibrīz(2)*, 312, where he speaks of divine light that, upon entering a human's *dhāt*, penetrates its flesh and bone. In his view, *dhāt* is clearly bodily.

12. See ibid., 270.

13. For a study on shifting medical sensibilities in Morocco during the colonial period, see Ellen J. Amster, *Medicine and the Saints: Science, Islam, and the Colonial Encounter in Morocco, 1877–1956* (University of Texas Press, 2013).

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schizophrenic. *The Book of the Spirit* suggests that a medical worldview informs the rationality behind the idea that the spirits of the dead impact the character of the living.

At one point in *The Book of the Spirit*,[14] Ibn al-Qayyim responds to those who deny that the body experiences torment and reward in the grave. The naysayers claim that when a grave is opened, there is no evidence of angels who oversee torment and reward. Nothing has changed at all in terms of the physical situation in the grave. How, then, can it be said that the dead experience torment and reward? Ibn al-Qayyim counters: The grave is the realm of *barzakh*; things work differently there. In this world, spirits are subordinate to bodies, whereas in the grave, bodies are subordinate to spirits. In this world, the body is the active element of life, whereas the spirit is hidden, and yet the spirit is impacted by bodily activities. In the grave, the spirit is the active element, while the body remains motionless. And yet, just as the spirit in this world, even if hidden, is impacted by what happens to the body, so, too, in the grave, the body feels judgments (*aḥkām*)—torment and reward—as applied to the spirit.

In sum, it is the body of the living that impacts the spirit but the spirit of the dead that impacts the body. All this is background to Ibn al-Qayyim's medical outlook as articulated in works written after *The Book of the Spirit*. In several places in works such as *The Book of Illness and Remedy* (*Kitāb al-Dāʾ wa-l-dawāʾ*) and *Stations of the Wayfarers* (*Madārij al-sālikīn*), Ibn al-Qayyim discusses the salutary effect on the body of reciting the *Fātiḥa*, which heals, he attests, physical and not only psychological illness. In other words, spiritual remedy can heal the body. That is, the spiritual impacts the corporeal. It is important to emphasize that Ibn al-Qayyim's medical outlook is not wholly prophetic, but includes Hellenistic ideas on the temperaments, including their relation to character. It is through a particularly Hellenistic lens that Ibn al-Qayyim includes the character of the patient in his discussion of the impact of spiritual phenomena (such as recitation of the *Fātiḥa* and the *sakīna* verses in the Quran) on one's physical condition.

Such a view resonates with the mystical journey of al-Dabbāgh.[15] Of course, he and Ibn al-Qayyim diverge on the idea of companioning the righteous dead as ethically edifying, and yet they share a common worldview when it comes to the impact of spiritual goods on the body. The difference between the two is that Ibn al-Qayyim limits spiritual goods to items specified in revealed texts, whereas al-Dabbāgh has a more expansive view of spiritual goods, including the righteous dead. Spiritual benefit is to be had from companioning the righteous dead. Not only do their spirits have impact on their own bodies, as Ibn al-Qayyim explained in *The Book of the Spirit*, but they also have impact on the bodies—and soul and character—of the living believers who companion them.

14. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Kitāb al-Rūḥ*, ed. Muḥammad Ajmal Ayyūb al-Iṣlāḥī (Mecca: Dār ʿĀlam al-Fawāʾid, n.d.), 185–187.
15. For echoes of the spiritual-corporeal outlook in question, see al-Lamaṭī, *al-Ibrīz(2)*, 232: "What arrives first to minds in this world arrives first to bodies in the next world." In other words, spirit-body reality is reversed in the next world. See also ibid., 350, where reference is made to a sheikh: "This world of his is hidden to him, the next unfolded."

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Of course, al-Dabbāgh did not visit the graves of ordinary believers, those still in the process of being purified, but those of the righteous, who are in a spiritually perfect state, are thus wholly purified, and, in turn, are able to have a purifying impact on those who accompany them. (Recall the statement at the beginning of this article on the Christian practice of praying *for* ordinary believers in the next world who are still in the process of being sanctified but *to* extraordinary believers who have been wholly sanctified and have reached the Throne of God.) Indeed, the righteous dead may have greater impact than a living spiritual master whose job is not only to teach but also to be purifier (*muzakkī*) of his disciples. However, so long as he is alive in this world with its trials and temptations, his spiritual state cannot be finally established. In contrast, in the grave, beyond this world's trials and temptations, the righteous are able to convey a divine power to their companions even more effectively than they did while in this world. In other words, precisely because they are in the grave, the place where spiritual activity prevails over physical activity, the truly righteous are able to exert a spiritually powerful impact on the physical no less than the spiritual existence of those still in this world. They influence the character of their disciples, allowing them to advance on the path to mystical victory. In the language of *The Book of Pure Gold*, they act as conveyors of the prophetic light that alone illuminates the human soul, thereby fortifying it against the world's demons so that it might advance towards mystical victory.

It is no secret that one's soul gets wearied by the world's weight with negative effect on the character of one's worship and, ultimately, one's ethical capacity. You need to be renewed—even remade—through the special graces afforded by the companionship of the truly righteous. The idea is nicely captured in a statement by a Moroccan scholar, Abū Bakr al-Bannānī (d. 1284/1867),[16] who says that when a great calamity strikes you, a share of your soul becomes accessible to powers other than divine power, but the lights of divine providence protect your soul. However, such protection comes through a human process: companionship of the people of God. In other words, good company keeps you good.

It is worth emphasizing that the mysticism we encounter in *The Book of Pure Gold* is very much a communally oriented mysticism.[17] The goal is to access the prophetic light not for individuals to be personally illuminated but for the ethical capacity of the *umma* as a whole to be fortified, and in Islam, ethics is prophetic ethics. Thus, the community of the Prophet is to represent the character of the Prophet, but for character to be represented, a body is needed. In other words, the community of the Prophet is the representation of the prophetic body and, in turn, the representation of the prophetic character. And at least in our case, it is especially the bodies of the righteous dead that represent the prophetic body since, as we've seen, it is the bodies of the righteous in their graves that most powerfully convey

16. Abū Bakr al-Bannānī, *Bughyat al-sālik wa-irshād al-hālik*, ed. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Ḥaddāwī and Ismāʿīl al-Masāwī (Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 2013), 117.

17. See al-Lamaṭī, *al-Ibrīz(2)*, 476, where the *umma* is depicted as a single body: "As for the spirits of believers, they benefit from one another, give (spiritual) drink to one another, and intercede for one another, such that it is as if you see in some spirits the effects of the sins that their being has acquired and you see those effects manifest on the spirit; then those effects go away because of a spirit that is dear to God the Exalted, near to the soul with the effects."

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to the *umma* the prophetic light by which its ethical capacity is to be preserved and fortified. Of course, there have been a host of other strategies—past and present—by which prophetic character might be embodied in the living members of the prophetic community. For example, another figure from the Islamic West, Ibn al-Khaṭīb (d. 776/1374), whose religious outlook differs in significant ways from that of al-Dabbagh, spoke of intellect as the agent by which the names that God taught to Adam (meaning the divine names) are assumed by believers for their mystical illumination (i.e., victory) and ethical edification.[18] The ethically elevating mystical journey is more philosophically informed in the case of Ibn al-Khaṭīb and more ritually informed in the case of al-Dabbagh. However, it is worth noting that Ibn al-Khaṭīb also makes purity of soul a stipulation of victory.

To convey the prophetic light is no simple matter. What kind of body is required in order to convey the prophetic light? In fact, the only body that can bear the prophetic light is the prophetic body. Thus, to bear and, in turn, convey the prophetic light, your body actually has to be transformed into the prophetic body. The idea, strange at first glance, is fundamental to the mystical vision of *The Book of Pure Gold*. As we've seen, the prophetic light is necessarily conveyed via the bodies of the righteous dead, and without the conveyance of that light, which constitutes the divine mystery, the mystical victory is unattainable, that is, the mystical victory by which your body is united to the prophetic body, thereby immunizing your worship from the demons that seek to corrupt it. Without that victory, the demons will succeed in corrupting the worship of the *umma* as a whole. As a result, no one in the *umma* will be righteous, and so its ethical capacity as a whole will be exhausted. In the final analysis, conveyance of the prophetic light is the lynchpin of the whole system. In other words, some bodies have to be transformed into the prophetic body for that light to be borne and conveyed to the rest of the *umma*. The bodies of the righteous dead play that role in a special way. Even in this world, the righteous represent the prophetic character, but it is only in the grave that the righteous fully represent the prophetic body that conveys the prophetic life to the *umma*, because, as we've seen, it is in the grave that their spiritual power is fully active. For this reason, al-Dabbāgh notes on several occasions that the body of the righteous is only transferred to their companions upon death.[19]

As recounted in the introduction to *The Book of Pure Gold*, al-Dabbāgh advances on the mystical journey—the path to mystical victory—in stages; in each of them, the righteous dead feature prominently. The journey begins when he receives the trust (*al-amāna*) from his maternal grandfather, Sayyidī al-ʿArabī al-Fishtālī (d. 1090/1679), who was considered one of the great saints of his day in Fez, but who had died before al-Dabbāgh was born. How, then, did al-Dabbāgh receive the trust from someone he never met? It is the memory of his grandfather as conveyed to al-Dabbāgh by his mother that is the link. Having received a message from the Prophet in a vision, al-Fishtālī entrusted his skullcap to his daughter, who would convey it to al-Dabbāgh in his youth. It is the reception of this prophetically designated

18. See Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Rawḍat al-taʿrīf bi-l-ḥubb al-sharīf*, ed. Muḥammad al-Kattānī (Casablanca: Dār al-Thaqāfa, 2004), 276.
19. For example, see al-Lamaṭī, *al-Ibrīz(2)*, 25.

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artefact that prompts him to aspire to pure worship (*al-tashawwuf ilā al-ʿubūdiyya al-khāliṣa*). He thereupon sets out in search of a spiritual master through whose companionship he might achieve his goal. However, he does not find what he seeks. His chest becomes constrained each time he accompanies a spiritual master for a period. Who in this world can guide him to the prophetic light that will open his soul to receive the divine mystery by which pure worship is achieved? He will find such a master in due time but not until after he has accompanied the righteous dead.

It was al-Dabbāgh's custom to spend time at the shrine of Sayyidī ʿAlī Ibn Ḥirzihim (d. 559/1163), where he would recite poems in praise of the Prophet. A mysterious figure, Khiḍr as he'll later learn, comes to him one night, disclosing al-Dabbāgh's inner state and bestowing upon him a litany by which he will successfully beseech God to unite his being with the being of the Prophet in this world for the purpose of achieving pure worship. In other words, the company of the righteous dead, the likes of Sayyidī al-ʿArabī al-Fishtālī and Sayyidī ʿAlī Ibn Ḥirzihim, is critical for al-Dabbāgh's advancement on the path.[20] The mystical victory is achieved as a result of the companionship of a third figure, namely, al-Dabbāgh's spiritual master, a figure by the name of ʿUmar Ibn al-Hawwārī (d. 1125/1713), who, it turns out, had been a disciple of Sayyidī al-ʿArabī al-Fishtālī, a fact he discloses to al-Dabbāgh only on his deathbed. Moreover, Ibn al-Hawwārī had been custodian of the shrine of Sayyidī ʿAlī Ibn Ḥirzihim, which, as noted, al-Dabbāgh would frequent. For this reason, al-Dabbāgh credits Sayyidī ʿAlī Ibn Ḥirzihim with drawing him to his spiritual master.

However, it is important to note that the disclosure of the mystical victory occurs only after the death of Ibn al-Hawwārī. Here is the point: The impact of the spiritual master one accompanies in this world is complete only once he passes from this world because it is in death that he is able to transfer the fullness of his spiritual being, shaped by the prophetic spirit, to the *umma*. (As we saw with Ibn al-Qayyim, it is one's spiritual aspect that is most fully active in the grave.) In the world of al-Dabbāgh, the process is to be taken quite literally. In death, the spiritual master is fully alive, enjoying full life in the prophetic spirit, which can only be represented by the body proper to it, namely, the prophetic body. Thus, in death, the spiritual master actually conveys the prophetic body to his companions in this world. Fortified by the Prophet's being, they are now able to bear the divine mystery and, in time, hand it down to a subsequent generation of believers. In this respect, the worship of the *umma* will be preserved/represented by the prophetic character proper to it.

Another mysterious figure (described as black) by the name of ʿAbdallah al-Barnāwī, comes to Fez to mediate the disclosure of the mystical victory. It should be noted that nothing is known of this figure, and there is no evidence of anyone by that name in the lifetime of al-Dabbāgh. What are we to make of this enigma? Such figures, especially Khiḍr, play a symbolic role in the narrative, signaling that a spiritually powerful development is taking place. Whether such figures

20. See ibid., 19–20.

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actually existed or not is beside the point. (A parallel exists in the way al-Dabbāgh speaks of the Syriac language. Of course, history attests to the existence of the Syriac language, but not in the way al-Dabbāgh conceives it. In his world, it exists symbolically, signaling a cognitive space beyond the physical realm, which is defined by the Arabic of the Quran.)[21]

The important point for our purposes is the odd physical situation that al-Dabbāgh experiences following the death of his spiritual master, including bodily convulsions. It was not the result of sorrow. Rather, it indicates transference of the prophetic body to him from his now dead master, allowing him to bear the divine mystery and achieve mystical victory. Why does he receive the prophetic body from his spiritual master only after his spiritual master has passed from this world to the next? On the one hand, when it comes to the process of spiritual succession, a disciple only takes his master's place once he has passed. On the other hand, there is still the question of the mechanics of the process. As we've seen, it is after death that the righteous are most spiritually efficacious. The prophetic character is thus only fully transferable after death, but the prophetic character can only be communicated by the prophetic body, and so the prophetic body is conveyed to the disciple after death, allowing the disciple, here al-Dabbāgh, to bear the divine mystery, which only the prophetic body can bear; as a result, he is able to achieve mystical victory. His worship is now free of satanic intrusions,[22] allowing him to be the bearer of the prophetic light to the world, and the prophetic light is the prophetic character, which in essence is divine mercy. We will return to this point, but let's first delve into the relevant passages from *The Book of Pure Gold* that illustrate the spiritual goods in question.

Of chief interest is the impact of al-Dabbāgh's dead master, ʿUmar Ibn al-Hawwārī, on his body and soul. The massive expansion of al-Dabbāgh's body, a phenomenon that is well known from other hagiographical accounts, is an indication of his reception of the prophetic body:

> Three days after the death of Sayyidī ʿUmar I underwent the mystical victory . . . and God made known to us the truth of ourselves. . . . When I reached the Gate of Victory (in Fez), a trembling seized me, then a great shudder, and then my flesh began to tingle greatly. . . . The condition increased until I reached the grave of Sayyidī Yaḥyā Ibn ʿAllāl, may God benefit us by him, which is on the way to (the shrine of) Sayyidī ʿAlī Ibn Ḥirzihim. The condition intensified, and my chest began to be greatly agitated. Then something emerged from my being, like the steam from tossed couscous, and then my being began to grow tall until it became taller than the tallest of men. Then things were disclosed to me as if in my presence. . . . Then, by a great light, as if a flash of lightening that comes from every side, that light came . . . and from it a great coldness struck me, and I thought I would die. . . . I looked at the robes that were on me, and I saw that they did not veil (that is, impede) that glance which spread within my being. . . . When it was the third day of the Feast of

21. See ibid., 181ff.
22. See ibid., 449.

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> the Sacrifice, I saw the lord of existence, God's blessing and peace upon him. Sayyidī ʿAbdallah al-Barnāwī said to me, "O Sayyidi ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (al-Dabbāgh), before today, I feared for you, but today, when God has joined you with His, the Exalted's, mercy, namely, the lord of existence [the Prophet], God's blessing and peace upon him, my heart was reassured and my mind is at peace, and so I entrust you to God the Mighty and Majestic." Thus he went to his country and left me. He had stayed with me in order to preserve me from the intrusion of darkness upon me during the (unfolding of the) mystical victory which I underwent until I underwent it, beholding the Prophet, God's blessing and peace upon him, because there is then (no longer) any fear for those illuminated by the victory, but there is fear for them before that (that is, before they should behold the Prophet).[23]

Later in the work, explanation is given as to why mystical victory occurs only after the death of one's spiritual master—and the impact it has on the quality of one's worship. On the one hand, it grants one the spiritual strength—the power of the prophetic light that comes with transference of the prophetic body to one's soul—by which to bear the prophetic being without harm. On the other hand, with this victory, one prays purely with the prophetic spirit. It is thus through the bodies of such saintly figures that the *umma* is marked by the prophetic spirit and character:

> The *walī* (saint) is only illuminated by the mystical victory after the life of his father (that is, spiritual master), because the mystical victory descends only upon the mystery of the (prophetic) being (*al-dhāt*).[24] Thus, if the mystery of the being is transferred to the son (that is, the spiritual disciple), he will undergo illumination by mystical victory. However, as long as the sheikh is alive, the mystery of the being does not transfer to anyone, and so no victory by mystical illumination will take place. . . . If the mystical victory is made to descend on one's being prior to (reception of) the light of the power (that is, the light that comes with the transference of the prophetic body), a defective and weakened state occurs in one's being. . . . But if the light of power is made to descend on one's being first, then the light of the mystical victory (that is, the light of the prophetic character) descends after it, and so one's being won't be harmed by the mystical victory. . . . As for the people who've undergone the great victory . . . no act of disobedience issues from them . . . since . . . they are always in the state of beholding the divine truth, and beholding the divine truth is fortification against disobedience. . . . If the *walī* prays with this apparent (prophetic) being (that is, the prophetic body), then the being of the (prophetic) spirit (that is, the prophetic character) prays with him in his (the *walī*'s) being. It (the prophetic spirit) prostrates when he prostrates and bows when he bows. . . . At the time of the mystical victory, something resembling a black snakeskin, that is, the darkness that totally surrounds one's body, withdraws from the one who has undergone the mystical victory. If that snakeskin withdraws, the light of victory pours out on his being.[25]

23. See ibid., 20–22.
24. It is important to recall that in this work, *al-dhāt* is very much a bodily phenomenon. See footnote 11 above.
25. See al-Lamaṭī, *al-Ibrīz(2)*, 262–268.

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Of course, the transference is not a transference of flesh per se but of the master's mystery (*sirr*), that is, his prophetically illuminated being (*dhāt*), a term that in *The Book of Pure Gold* embraces one's corporeal as well as psychological existence, since, here, ethics transference includes prophetic corporeality; without such corporeality, it is not possible to bear the prophetic spirit and character. In other words, with mystical victory, the prophetic being of the spiritual master is transferred to the disciple, with bodily impact on the disciple:

> If God the Exalted grants mystical victory to the servant, He assists him with one of the lights of the divine truth, which enters into his being from all sides, penetrating it until it penetrates his flesh and bone, so that he suffers from its coldness and the hardship that comes with its entrance into his being, which is akin to the throes of death. . . . If God has promised a servant mystical victory in terms of beholding the noble (prophetic) being, he won't see it until he is given to drink of the mysteries which are in the noble (prophetic) being. Let's suppose that one's being before the mystical victory is like something darkened and that the noble (prophetic) being is like a light with diverse branches that number one-hundred thousand or more. If God wants to show mercy to that darkened being, then the light that He extends to him and gives him to drink comes to it (one's being) one time, penetrating it with those branches, one after another. Let's suppose that (the branch of light to be given) is the branch of patience, and so the blackness of its opposite goes away, that is, fear and anxiety. Another time the light comes to one's being with another branch. Let's suppose it's the branch of mercy, and so the blackness of its opposite goes away, that is, the lack of mercy. . . . And so on until you come to all the branches which are in the illuminated and purified (prophetic) being. Thus, all the blackened characteristics depart from one's darkened being. Only then is the servant able to behold the noble (prophetic) character because, if any of the blackness remains, that is blackness in one's being, and one cannot behold the noble (prophetic) being until the blackness has entirely departed from one's being.[26]

Such illumination, a process both spiritual and bodily, is vital in giving correct orientation to disoriented souls. Acts of worship do help orient souls to God,[27] but ritual action alone is not enough, since demons have access to the soul at prayer, necessitating fortification against them. And it's not enough to read pious literature to be so fortified.[28] One must seek the companionship of ethically elevated souls:

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26. See ibid., 312–313.

27. See ibid., 259, where it is explained that works of worship yield rewards and that those rewards bring lights. To summarize the passage: If works of worship are purely for God (i.e., in accordance with the mystery of the truth of the prophetic being), then the lights that follow such works shine on one's being with bodily manifestation. Is he saying that pious works illuminate the soul? For purity of worship, one must be spiritually and ethically elevated by the companionship of the righteous, as we highlight in this article. So, the above report does not mean that illumination comes from ritual action alone but rather that the bodily affections—al-Dabbāgh mentions humility, shaking, and weeping (all effects of the impact of the lights on the soul)—indicate one's worship is pure and thus accepted by God. How does one know that God views one's worship favorably? It is not clear. See footnote 10.

28. It is not enough to read the manuals of Sufism. You need to accompany one who bears a light that extends from the prophetic light and, in turn, from divine truth, making him heir to the prophetic character and thus capable of illuminating your interior state. Debate did arise, notably in the fourteenth century (no less a scholar than Ibn Khaldun entered the foray), about the possibility of advancing on the spiritual path by reading the manuals of Sufism apart from accompanying a divinely illuminated sheikh. The consensus was negative. For example, Abu 'Abdallah al-Sāḥilī (d. 754/1355) is very clear that you need a divinely illuminated sheikh. See al-Sāḥilī, *Bughyat al-sālik fī ashraf al-mamālik*, ed. 'Abd al-Raḥīm al-'Alī (Manshūrāt

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> The orientation of the hearts to God is their prayer, just as the prostrating and bowing of the physical being is its prayer. . . . If demons see a person who wants to become so oriented by doing such things as recalling God and listening to spiritual speech, they penetrate his heart and so corrupt his (spiritual) orientation out of jealousy and hatred for the Children of Adam.[29]
>
> In the being of the believer is a thread of light that emerges through a hole in his being, and that light is connected to the gift of the divine truth, may He be glorified, and it increases (in efficacy) when one associates with His, the Exalted's, *awliyāʾ*, and decreases when one does not do so, and it is feared that such a one will be wholly cut off (from the light as a result of not associating with them). The hole is blocked when one associates with those possessed of (worldly) superiority, because they will overpower his being with their superiority, wealth, and prestige. His being will be hostage to them and under their control, and he'll not cease to listen to them inwardly and outwardly. He remains in that condition for a long time, and so the divine truth, may He be glorified, doesn't enter his thought or mind, and thus he ends by giving himself over to his own goals, being cut off from God, until the hole is entirely blocked.[30]

Again, as the second of the above two passages indicates, believers in the world are ceaselessly under the influence of trials and temptations, chief of them being association with the powerful whose company disorients one's soul. One thus needs another kind of companionship to reorient the soul, the companionship of the *awliyāʾ*, and it is the dead *awliyāʾ* who are more effective in extending spiritual goods to believers,[31] and that is because the grave of the righteous dead is the place where the prophetic spirit is most active. We see this in al-Dabbāgh's recollection of the graves of the *awliyāʾ* in Fez, whose mystical lights he associates with the light of the grave "of our Prophet." The former extends from the latter:

> How many a time I gaze at the graves of Fez . . . and see lights emerging from the ground. . . . So, I know that the possessors of those lights are the best *awliyāʾ*. . . . It is similar at the grave of our Prophet and master Muhammad, God's blessing and peace upon him, for the pillar of the light of the faith of him, God's blessing and peace upon him, extends from the noble grave (in Medina) to the dome of the *barzakh*, where the pure spirit (of the Prophet) exists. The angels come in groups to circumambulate that noble grave. . . . When God wished to grant me the mystical victory and join me to His mercy (that is, the prophetic being), I gazed, while I was in Fez, at the noble grave (in Medina). Then I gazed at the noble grave, and it began to draw close to me while I gazed at it, and when it drew close to me, a man emerged from it, and lo, it was the Prophet, God's

Wizārat al-Awqāf wa-l-Shuʾūn al-Islāmiyya, 2003), 126; and al-Sāḥilī, *Bughyat al-sālik fī ashraf al-mamālik*, ed. Rashīd Muṣṭafā (Casablanca: Maṭbaʿat al-Khalīj al-ʿArabī, 2004), 18. This latter edition is based on the editor's dissertation from Complutense University in Madrid.

29. See al-Lamaṭī, *al-Ibrīz(2)*, 270.

30. See ibid., 263.

31. See ibid., 290, where it is explained that it is more beneficial to ask for the help of a dead saint (*walī mayyit*). See also 292 for a story of the efficacy of visiting a shrine in meeting one's needs. This recalls a story as told by the Syrian scholar, Muḥammad Ramaḍān al-Būṭī (d. 2013): For the longest time, he was unable to understand the point of one of the aphorisms (*ḥikam*) of Ibn ʿAtāʾallāh (d. 1310) until he visited his shrine in Cairo.

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> blessing and peace upon him. Sayyidī ʿAbdallah al-Barnāwī said to me, "God has united you . . . with His mercy, and he is the lord of existence, God's blessing and peace upon him, and so I no longer fear that the demons might deceive you."[32]

The ultimate purpose of this schema—where saintly figures who embody prophetic character ensure the community's favorable standing before God by undertaking the community's worship with inner and outer purity—is the ethical character of the *umma* as a whole. The souls of those who worship God purely are pure souls of the noblest character, which in the case of Islam means the prophetic character as animated by the divine names:

> And so the being of him, God's blessing and peace upon him, embraces all that is correct in that vision and is assisted by all its mysteries—mercy for people, love of them, pardoning them, forbearance, beseeching God to grant them what is good for them. . . . (Here al-Lamaṭī comments.) When we assume that the vision embraces all of the beautiful names (of God) and we assume . . . that the (prophetic) being of him, God's blessing and peace upon him, is given to drink from all the lights of the beautiful names and is assisted by their mysteries, then there is in the being of him, God's blessing and peace upon him, the light of patience, the light of mercy, the light of forbearance, the light of pardon, the light of forgiveness, the light of knowledge, the light of capacity, the light of hearing, the light of seeing, the light of speaking, and so on until you come to all the beautiful names; and thus their lights are in the noble (prophetic) being perfectly. Then the sheikh (al-Dabbāgh), may God be pleased with him, said: In looking at other than he (the Prophet Muhammad), at angels, prophets, saints, we find that they have been given a portion of what is in his noble being because they have been given to drink from the noble being; thus, the mysteries present in their beings are derived from him, God's blessing and peace upon them.[33]

In sum, the Prophet's character is illuminated by the lights of the divine names, and all other spiritually elevated beings are illuminated by virtue of being related to the Prophet. What is al-Dabbāgh's purpose in envisioning this elaborate mystical-ethical system? As earlier noted, he is concerned about the harmful effects of worldly powers on the ethical character of the *umma*.[34] Worldly powers somehow mediate satanic impact on the soul, which is countered by companioning righteous souls. Thus, to offset the harm of worldly powers on the soul, al-Dabbāgh envisions a spiritual realm as an abode of prophetic authority by which to guide the community, thereby maintaining its religious integrity. In other words, the true rulers of the *umma* are not the sultans but the saints. A story illustrates the point.[35] A man has been assigned to a post at the court (*al-makhzan*).[36] He has no choice but

32. See al-Lamaṭī, *al-Ibrīz(2)*, 479–480. The idea is clearly stated: If you see the Prophet while awake, you are secure from demonic deceptions. In other words, Satan no longer has any power over your being.

33. See ibid., 390–391. In other words, all prophets and saints share in the being of the Prophet Muhammad and so there is religious benefit in gazing at them.

34. See the passage cited in footnote 30 (ibid., 263).

35. See ibid., 282–283.

36. For historical perspective on this concept, see Roman Loimeier, "The Bilād al-Maghrib: Rebels, Saints, and Heretics" (chapter two) in *Muslim Societies in Africa: A Historical Anthropology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 35–53.

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to accept the assignment. Not doing so would put his life at risk, but he's concerned about the effect it will have on his soul and so seeks the advice of al-Dabbāgh. The first point worth noting is the identification of the court with injustice—in echo of the earlier idea of worldly power as mediating satanic impact on the soul. Such is the nature of worldly power. Thus, working at court is a trial—a test of the purity of one's conscience and thus of one's religious integrity: If you have to work for the court, will you be troubled by doing so or not? Al-Dabbāgh teaches: If you have a righteous character, your soul will be troubled by working for the court. If you don't, you'll actually take pleasure in the injustice of the work. In short, if you work for the court, you're bound to be implicated in injustice, and so your soul should be troubled by it. Al-Dabbāgh tells the man to accept the job but to serve the deprived (*al-masākīn*) as atonement, so to speak, for working for the court. However we take the story, it illustrates that the saints, not the sultans, are the ones who preserve the ethical integrity of the *umma* by their character and the advice they dispense.

It would therefore be wrong to see *The Book of Pure Gold* as merely affirming a spiritual hierarchy as associated with the prophetic being. The *umma* is a community not of injustice but of divine mercy, and if such character is not manifest, the integrity of its worship is in question, since its character flows from its worship. In other words, the *umma* is the place where divine mercy is to appear. After all, the prophetic character, which is divine mercy, runs in its veins, as it were. If its worship is pure, divine mercy will appear as its character. Hence, if divine mercy is not apparent in the *umma*, the purity of its worship is suspect. The *umma* is thus the prophetic body as seen in its worship and its ethics. Its character in that sense is preserved not by the sultans but by divine lights conveyed to it by the *awliyāʾ*.

The entire scheme, placing the character of the *umma* in the hands of the saints, is not to justify their privileged place but to lay out what is expected of them, especially given the fact that the rulers of the *umma*—holders of worldly power—pose a threat to its ethical integrity. In short, you cannot claim spiritual virtuosity—and thus the right to educate believers—if you do not display the character of the Prophet, which al-Dabbāgh describes as divine mercy. He is critiquing saintly pretenders who have stature in society but don't display divine mercy. It is in this respect that we must understand the idea of seeing the Prophet while awake. Doing so is what guarantees prophetic character. Thus, if you don't see him, your spiritual purity is suspect. But if you do see him, as a true saint should as proof of his possession of prophetic character, your claims to see him, al-Dabbāgh makes clear, must be confirmed by display of his character, the pure qualities of which (*shamāʾiluh al-muṭahhara*) are well known from scholarly writings.

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The overall vision of al-Dabbāgh, which is complex and even apparently eccentric at times, is rooted in the overall scholarly and spiritual heritage of Islam and offers a message for today. Who you accompany effects your worship and, in turn, the orientation or disorientation of your ethical character. There is a connection—with ethical implications—between companionship and worship. Worship under the influence of ignoble companions yields no ethical benefit. (One might think of worship that leads to violence.) *The Book of Pure Gold* invites us to think about the nature of worship: the spirit with which we pursue it and also its ethical fruits. We might find its reports odd, but it is worth thinking about its emphasis on the transmission and reception of divine light. How is a worshipper to be sure that the light he or she receives in prayer is not a demonic deception or psychological delusion? Whose souls effectively transmit the divine light? And what does that say about their bodies? For al-Dabbāgh, companionship extends to the righteous dead. One accompanies them by visiting their graves, reading their writings, or actually seeing them. They are not dead but alive, wholly purified, making companionship with them vital for the ritual and ethical integrity of the *umma*.

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SUFISM AND ETHICS IN THE WORKS OF SHĀH WALĪ ALLĀH

Marcia Hermansen

Let me introduce this chapter on Shāh Walī Allāh and Sufi ethics in the eighteenth century by taking note of the distinction made in Sufism between the concepts of purifying the soul (*tazkiyat al-nafs*) and following a spiritual path (*sulūk*). This distinction sets up a fundamental conceptual issue in the study of Islamic Sufi ethics—that between ethical theories grounded in the "given-ness" of the human soul versus those drawing on the potential for individual movement and mutability through following a "path." The teleological element of whether this path is ultimately a return to what was set in pre-eternity or whether it incorporates a transformative element that may even transcend determinism is both a cosmological and an ethical issue. The cosmological element leads us to discussions of temporality and its relationship to eternity. For Sufis, conceptualizations of the individual person or soul as well as its place in cosmology have continued to be elaborated in the light of advances in Islamic philosophy and theology to which Sufis, as thinkers within a particular historical context, have responded. The ethical element, in turn, draws on the resources of the Quran and sunna while incorporating insights drawn from the *akhlāq* tradition derived from the insights of Greek philosophy and its Muslim interpreters.

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Reasons for Looking at Sufi Ethics

A stated aim of the conference on which this volume is based was to address the precise connection between mysticism and ethics in pre-modern, early modern, and contemporary Islam. In my view, there are three main aspects of this project:

- First, a historical approach that considers the sources, development, and periodization of the mystical ethical tradition in Islam.
- Secondly, a project of revisiting and possibly revisioning how mystical ethics have been situated within Islamic discourses, for example, challenging an over-emphasis on philosophical ethics (*akhlāq)* alone or the privileging of law as the basis of morality in Islam.
- Third, a constructive element through which we can explore the relevance of mystical or Sufi ethics to Islamic ethics/thought today.

This chapter will therefore consider the case of Shāh Walī Allāh's ethical thinking in terms of these three aims. In terms of the historical strand, this chapter will attempt to situate, summarize, and analyze the contributions to ethical reflection of an eighteenth-century mystical thinker, Shāh Walī Allāh of Delhi (d. 1762). Let us briefly consider the positionality of that historical epoch. For example, in periodizing Sufi ethics within the development of Islamic thought, Michael Sells offers the following schema:

1. Pre-Sufi (sources-Quran, hadith, asceticism (*zuhd*))
2. Early Sufi sayings and writings—for example those of Ḥasan of Basra, Rabiʿa, al-Muḥāsibī, and Junayd (728–965).
3. A formative phase of Sufi literature, often in the form of manuals, that expound on the Sufi path, terminology, stages and states, and so forth, from al-Sarrāj (d. 988) to al-Qushayrī (d. 1072/3).
4. Sufi synthetic works such as those of Ibn ʿArabī, Rūmī, and ʿAṭṭār. [1]

Like many introductions to Islamic thought, this work on early Islamic mysticism concludes at the high point of the thirteenth century, leaving us with the impression that whatever comes after is either commentary on or expansion of previous achievements, hampered in originality and significance by the onset of decline and stagnation.

Shāh Walī Allāh's case provides an example of Islamic mysticism and ethics in the eighteenth century, a period of transition, pivotally situated at the time variously known either as late pre-modern or early modern Islam. It is hoped that this chapter will contribute a sense of the continued vitality of mystical ethical thinking within Islam even in the later periods. Shāh Walī Allāh is a figure who thought systematically,[2] making especially clear for us the frameworks within which he developed his understanding of the elements necessary for constructing a "systematic" ethics grounded within the broader schemata of ontology, cosmology,

1. Michael Sells, *Early Islamic Mysticism* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1996), 17–18.
2. A. J. Halepota, "Shāh Walīullāh and His System," *Systematics* 6 (1968): 141–155.

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psychology, and even a sort of proto-sociology that he strove to make coherent and congruent with one another. In terms of periodization, Shāh Walī Allāh is located fairly late in the historical development of Sufism—either late in the pre-modern or in the early modern period. The significance of this temporal location bears further reflection.

As Dipesh Chakrabarty observes,

> . . . historians, when they have not abjured the word "modernity," have been busy democratizing its use, distributing the epithet over a wide period of time (thus the "early modern period") or between classes. Others have discovered alternative, multiple and vernacular modernities in an attempt to rid the idea of modernity of all exclusivist and judgemental pretention.[3]

Chakrabarty further cites historian Randolph Starn's observation that, "the conceptual muddle surrounding the category 'early modern' is symptomatic of a 'democratic' temperament that has come to pervade the discipline of history over the last several decades."[4] Thus, "early modernity has become a patent remedy for the problem of periodizing the time between medieval and modern history."[5] In the study of Islamicate and other non-European civilizations, sensitivities around the demarcation and provenance of the modern further lead to ambiguity in establishing exactly what modernity consists of.

> While European historians rejected epochal divides on "high cultural" grounds, historians of precolonial India in the late 1980s and the 1990s began to reject descriptions of the eighteenth century as a period of decline or disorder in pursuit of two historiographical objectives: rescuing the precolonial centuries in the subcontinent from the stigma of being "premodern," and denying the colonial period any exclusive claims on "modernity."[6]

Noting that this was a strategy adopted by those who wished to give the so-called modern period a longer and "indigenous" past extending into the centuries before British rule, Chakrabarty quotes Randolph Starn's remark that "'Early, partly, sometimes, maybe modern, early modernity is a period for our period's discomfort about periodization' thereby indicating the terminological and conceptual ambiguity around what is late pre-modern as opposed to early modern."[7]

Another scholar of South Asia, Sheldon Pollock, cautioned that we need to distinguish the clear participation of the non-European world in the material transformations that marked modernity as a global phenomenon from more uncertain evidence regarding corresponding and contemporary developments in thought in Asian cultures. "Should this asymmetry turn out to reveal continuity and not rupture, no need to lament the fact. There is no shame in premodernity."[8]

3. Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Muddle of Modernity," *The American Historical Review* 116, no. 3 (2011): 665.
4. Chakrabarty, "Muddle of Modernity," 666; quoting Randolph Starn, "The Early Modern Muddle," *Journal of Early Modern History* 6, no. 3 (2002): 296–307.
5. Chakrabarty, "Muddle of Modernity," 666, quoting Randolph Starn, "Early Modern Muddle," 299.
6. Chakrabarty, "Muddle of Modernity," 666.
7. Chakrabarty, "Muddle of Modernity," 667.
8. Sheldon Pollock, "Pretextures of Time," *History and Theory* 46 (2007): 364–381; cited in Chakrabarty, "Muddle of Modernity," 671.

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Chakrabarty's argument is that from our own limited and historically situated vantage point, we inevitably make judgments—in this case, about what exactly constitutes the "modern," and that this category of the modern both informs and distorts our conceptualizations, especially in the post-colonial environment, for indeed we are "presentists."[9] Interestingly, Shāh Walī Allāh, in his preface to *Ḥujjat Allāh al-Bāligha*, acknowledges a similar limitation of his own situatedness: "I am only a person on his own, waiting for his death, subject to his times, a student before his destiny, a prisoner of his fate, who takes advantage of what comes to him easily."[10]

We may observe that certain elements in Shāh Walī Allāh's mystical thought continue earlier themes and concepts in Islamic Sufi ethics while at the same time they suggest, if not ruptures with the past, a trajectory that inclines towards forms of modernity. This element in particular will be important for our consideration of revisionist and constructive potentials of his contributions to Islamic mystical ethics. Scholarly and not so scholarly evaluations of the legacy of Shāh Walī Allāh in Islamic thought usually emphasize his contributions as a reformer, Hadith expert (*muḥaddith*), or, most broadly, as a polymath who wrote in multiple sub-disciplines of the Islamic sciences—rather along the lines of al-Ghazālī. This is not to say that Shāh Walī Allāh did not position himself within a Sufi framework or even a philosophical Sufi framework that was at the same time eclectic and practical. However, many twentieth-century interpreters of South Asian Islam have been more interested in the potentially political, nationalist, and communal relevance of his ideas and were distant from, if not outright hostile to Sufism, and therefore they downplayed or simply overlooked the mystical elements of Shāh Walī Allāh's thought.

Scholars of mysticism and ethics across religious traditions have identified a problem, or tension, that exists for exponents of monism in taking practical ethical positions with regard to others and society at large, in the sense that all is ultimately One. Qualified non-dualism of some sort is often posed as the ontological solution to the dilemma since in such a schema, there is a rationale for judgment and human action at the level of the world and embodied experience despite the fact that ontologically all is one.[11] In later Sufism, especially in the Indian sub-continent, this was often framed as the debate between the *wujūdī* and the *shuhūdī* positions, identified respectively with Ibn ʿArabī (d. 1240) and the Akbarian school and Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī (d. 1624) and the Naqshbandī-Mujaddidī Sufi Order. In this schema, the unity of existence, *waḥdat al-wujūd* (the unity of Being),[12] was refined or supplanted by *waḥdat al-shuhūd* (the unity of experiencing or witnessing). Perhaps we may term the latter a Sufi ethics of baqā' (subsistence) after *fanā'* (annihilation in the divine),[13] subsistence identified as the modality of the prophetic path that comprehends and then integrates the *fanā'* of the saints. We know that this tension

9. Presentism is discussed by Pollock in "Areas, Disciplines, and the Goals of Inquiry," in *The Journal of Asian Studies* 75, no. 4 (2016): 913–928, 922.

10. Shāh Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat Allāh al-Bāligha*, trans. Marcia K. Hermansen (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 7.

11. G. William Barnard and Jeffrey J. Kripal (eds.), *Crossing Boundaries: Essays on the Ethical Status of Mysticism* (New York: Seven Bridges Press/Chatham House, 2002).

12. But see William Chittick's important corrective with respect to the South Asian context in "*Waḥdat al-Wujūd* in India," in *Ishraq: Islamic Philosophy Yearbook* 3. ed. Yanis Esots, 29–40 (Moscow: Institute of Philosophy, Russia Academy of Sciences, 2012).

13. Fazlur Rahman (trans.), *Selected Letters of Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī* (Karachi: Iqbal Academy, 1968).

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or debate was current in the time of Shāh Walī Allāh since he wrote a treatise in the form of a letter attempting to reconcile the two positions as ultimately encapsulating the same truth.[14]

A notable feature of Shāh Walī Allāh's ethics, then, will be the way in which he conceptually effects a reconciliation of monism and dualism in presenting a concept of the person, the soul, and the universe through a microcosm/macrocosm analogy that retains a concept of a pre-eternal and determined form of the soul yet also leaves room for change to be effected at both individual and cosmic levels through intentional human effort as well as wisdom and spiritual realization acquired both through the refinement of habit and contemplative exercises and disciplines.

This reconciliation is conceptually accomplished by Shāh Walī Allāh through developing a model of the person along the lines of qualified non-dualism or a stage theory that posits the realm of conflict as existing at lower levels of the soul embedded in the physical world and the animalistic passions. These, in turn, can be intentionally sublimated and refined (*tazkiya*) at the middle levels of the human heart and intellect so as to open up to increasingly higher spiritual realizations and influences once balance among conflicting elements or tendencies at the lower stages is achieved.

Shāh Walī Allāh

The figure of Shāh Walī Allāh is one of a relatively limited set of Muslim thinkers featured in introductions to the study of Islam, perhaps due to the comprehensive nature of his writings and also because his contributions to Islamic thought are presented as "reformist" in the midst of what was previously considered an age of stagnation and decline.

By way of a brief introduction to Shāh Walī Allāh, a major influence in his formation was his father, Shāh ʿAbd al-Raḥīm (1056/1646–1131/1719), a notable Naqshbandī Shaykh as well as a jurist. Shāh Walī Allāh (1114/1703–1174/1762) was one of the towering figures of the Islamic intellectual tradition in South Asia. His major work, *Ḥujjat Allāh al-Bāligha* [The Conclusive Argument from God] has been compared to Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyāʾ ʿUlūm al-Dīn* [Revival of the Religious Sciences] in terms of its project of explicating the "inner" or deeper spiritual and transformative aspects of complying with the injunctions of the sharīʿa. Shāh Walī Allāh authored works in Arabic and Persian across a number of genres and fields including Quranic and Hadith studies, Sufi theory and practice, and Islamic law. A two-year stay in Arabia, where Shāh Walī Allāh studied with the prominent Sufi Shaykh and Shāfiʿī scholar, Muḥammad Abū Ṭāhir al-Kurdī, (d. 1145/1732), was formative in his spiritual and intellectual development.[15] He returned to India in 1732, continuing his career as head of the Raḥīmiyya madrasa in Delhi and known

14. See the extensive discussion found in Muhammad U. Faruque, "Sufism contra Shariah? Shāh Walī Allāh's Metaphysics of *Waḥdat al-Wujūd*," *Journal of Sufi Studies* 5, no. 1 (2016): 27–57. A translation of the original is found in Shāh Walī Allāh, *al-Tafhīmāt al-Ilāhiyya II*, ed. G. M. Qāsimī (Hyderabad, Sindh: Shāh Walī Allāh Academy, 1967), 263.

15. John 0. Voll, "Hadith Scholars and Tarīqahs: An 'Ulema' Group," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 15 (1980): 262–273.

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as a muḥaddith, or expert in Hadith studies. Among his primary areas of interest, as evidenced by his writings, are: Quranic Studies, Hadith and Legal Studies, practical and philosophical Sufism, and to an extent, social and political theory.

In his two lengthy and comprehensive works, *Ḥujjat Allāh al-Bāligha* and *al-Budūr al-Bāzigha* [*The Rising Full Moons*],[16] Shāh Walī Allāh lays out comprehensive and overarching schemas of cosmology, human societal and political orders, and individual human development, both moral and spiritual. Pertinent to our concerns here, sections of these works feature multiple and extensive lists and descriptions of virtues that should be cultivated for the attainment of human felicity, as well as how these should be developed. Shāh Walī Allāh also authored a range of texts with a more explicitly Sufi focus, some with details of *sulūk*, including a discussion of the characteristics of specific Sufi *tariqas* and the cultivation of virtues,[17] and some more cosmological. As part of this chapter, reference will be made to two other Sufi works of Shāh Walī Allāh, one on spiritual psychology, *Alṭāf al-Quds*,[18] and the other, *al-Tafhīmāt al-Ilāhiyya*, a collection of shorter writings that contain significant mystical theory.

Broadly traced, the sources of Shāh Walī Allāh's Sufism were his family and childhood education, most particularly his father, but also other close relatives;[19] these included both Chishtī Sufi influences and the teachings of the Naqshbandī-Mujaddidī Order. The list of works read as part of his education includes a number of works representative of the *ḥikmat* school of Shiraz following Mullā Saḍr al-Shīrāzī that were popular among Indian Sufis of that period. A further exposure to diverse Sufi orders occurred during his stay in Arabia, where Walī Allāh was part of the circle of the aforementioned Muḥammad Abū Ṭāhir al-Kurdī, son of Ibrahīm al-Kurānī. Shāh Walī Allāh's multiple *tariqa* affiliations are listed and enumerated in his work *Anfas al-ʿārifīn*.[20]

In attempting to understand the Sufism of Shāh Walī Allāh, then, we have evidence of both a theoretical and practical nature derived not only from his own writings, but also from biographical observations, especially those made by his cousin and closest disciple, Muḥammād ʿĀshiq (d. 1773).[21] Despite a certain hyperbole in his works not untypical for Sufis of that epoch, it is unclear what the practical implications are of Shāh Walī Allah perceiving himself as ushering in a new era of Sufi potential. While he functioned during his lifetime as the Sufi master to a limited number of disciples and maintained correspondence with some of them that has been preserved in collections of letters, evidence for his intention of creating a distinct "Walīullāhī" Sufi *ṭarīqa* is somewhat sparse. His closest disciple preserved a practice of devotional litanies and readings from the works of the master, but this does not seem to have persisted, at least not among any broader circle.

16. Shāh Walī Allāh, *al-Budūr al-bāzigha* (Hyderabad: Shāh Walī Allāh Academy, 1970); English translations by J. M. S. Baljon (Lahore: Ashraf, 1988) *and G.* H. Jalbani (Islamabad: Hijra Council, 1985).
17. In particular, *Hamaʿāt* (Hyderabad: Shāh Walī Allāh Academy, 1964).
18. Shāh Walī Allāh, *al-Tafhīmāt al-Ilāhiyya* and *Alṭāf al-quds* (Gujrānwālā: Madrasa Nuṣrat al-ʿUlūm, 1964).
19. Maulānā Ḥakīm Maḥmūd Aḥmad Barakātī, *Shāh Walī Allāh aur un kā khāndān* (Lahore: Majlis Ishāʿat-e Islām, 1976).
20. Shāh Walī Allāh, *Anfās al-ʿārifīn* (Urdu translation of the Persian original), ed. Sayyid Muḥammad Farūqī al-Qādirī (Lahore: Al-Maʿārif, 1974).
21. See Marcia Hermansen, "Shāh Muḥammad ʿĀshiq: The Closest Disciple of Shāh Walī Allāh of Delhi," *Oriente Moderno* XCII, no. 2 (2012): 420–436.

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Shāh Walī Allāh's Ethics as Revisionist

As the present volume so clearly shows, scholars can and should interrogate not only the discourses of Sufi ethics, but also the forms of their expression. Indeed, while the term for ethics in Arabic is "*akhlāq*," the term *akhlāq*, itself, and its variations of *khuluq, khalq*, *takhalluq* and the like provide rich ramifications of meaning that point to diverse emphases regarding the processes involved in the human experience of ethical development as being cultivation, realization, self-fashioning, and so on in addition to the contemplation of the good and the virtuous as conveyed in the Hellenic tradition of philosophical ethics. Alongside the content of *akhlāq* we must acknowledge the important additional component of Sufi *adab* both as a practical method for cultivation and a moral system, as well as its contributions toward achieving the highest ontological as well as moral stature for a human soul.[22]

It is natural that we find explicitly Islamic philosophical and, in particular, Sufi influences on Shāh Walī Allāh's formulations of the means to the acquisition of virtue and the reasons for distinctions and differences among people in terms of these virtues. Of course, much of the conceptual framework within which Shāh Walī Allāh lays out his ethical theory is familiar to us from earlier periods in Islamic Sufism and, in fact, al-Ghazālī's articulation of the inner aspects of faith and the tension between the animalistic and angelic aspects of the person provide the background to some aspects of ethical theorizing and explaining human differences and potentials in the acquisition of virtue. At the same time Walī Allāh tends to favour a mystical philosophical orientation to both ontology and ethics. Intellectually formed in a Persianate environment in early eighteenth-century India, Shāh Walī Allāh also imbibed and in some cases taught a curriculum that included a number of works of the school of Shiraz.[23]

Shāh Walī Allāh's Frameworks of Purpose, Virtue, and Reconciliation

As previously noted, Shāh Walī Allāh authored certain comprehensive works in which Sufism, while not the central focus, is treated within broader frameworks. These also feature significant sections on ethical and virtue theory. The most prominent is *Ḥujjat Allāh al-Bāligha*, a two-volume work on hadith studies that features a systematic/integrative approach combining the traditional Islamic disciplines of qur'anic and hadith studies with more rational and speculative approaches that adopt historical, sociological, and psychological perspectives in explaining difference in perspectives in the light of individual and societal development over time. While the early chapters of the first volume of the two-volume work that deal with creation, destiny, and the spirit are symbolic and mystical, subsequent sections address topics of human flourishing, virtue theory,

22. With this point on adab in mind, one may profitably consult this volume: Francesco Chiabotti et al., *Ethics and Spirituality in Islam: Sufi Adab* (Leiden: Brill, 2016).
23. See Hermansen, "Shāh Muḥammad ʿĀshiq," 420–436.

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and the development of human societies through increasingly complex socio-political stages (*irtifāqāt*), leading to a discussion of religious systems in human history. A concept undergirding this work is "*asrār al-dīn*," the secrets or inner dimensions of religion. In explaining not only specific religious symbols, practices, and rulings but also the cosmology and cosmic sacred history underlying their establishment, Shāh Walī Allāh invokes broader frameworks of the secrets (*asrār*) as well as the greater purposes (*maṣāliḥ*) of sharī'a regulations.

If we step back to gain a broader sense of Shāh Walī Allāh's approach to explaining the spiritual dimensions as well as benefits to the individual and society of conforming to sharīʿa regulations, we find that maṣlaḥa (beneficial purpose) is a seminal concept. This beneficial purpose is often not explicit in the revealed sources—therefore ʿaql, or reason, must be invoked. Recognizing that historical context and individual inclinations can lead to differences of opinion and practice, from the perspective of Shāh Walī Allāh these differing opinions and views of scholars initially need to be analyzed and understood, and based on this analysis, many misunderstandings and tensions can be resolved. The approach to this analysis may be historical—as when assessing the development of Hadith studies, law, or Sufism. It may further be rhetorical, as in his work on Quran interpretation (tafsir), or it may even be epistemological.

Recently, numerous scholars have employed the concept of political theology and, in particular, sovereignty, in pointing out the parallelisms between real world human affairs and the models through which intellectuals—in this case, religious scholars—have grappled with architectures of meaning in their respective epochs. This framing is apposite in identifying the source of Shāh Walī Allāh's reconciliatory ethic. In this vein, recognizing the context of the turbulent times in which he lived and wrote, the noted scholar of Islam, Fazlur Rahman, in a brief but insightful 1950s article, coined the epithet "thinker of crisis" for Shāh Walī Allāh.[24] Commenting on the political situation of the early eighteenth century (Shāh Walī Allāh was born in 1707), Sajjad Rizvi observes that,

> As the central authority of the Mughal Empire collapsed and was replaced with multiple centers of power and culture, in historiography the eighteenth century in India is often considered through the lens of crisis, disintegration, and instability. Along with this decentering, provincial towns rose to prominence and often became sites for further contestation across Sunni vs. Shi'i, scripturalist vs. rationalist, nomocentric vs. mystical views.[25]

Indeed, this political and intellectual context of fragmentation may have given rise to Shāh Walī Allāh's approach to reconciliation, which we may consider to be an ethical principle on his part in which he explicitly aims to reconcile differences of epistemology, perspective, and method. Shāh Walī Allāh highlights an emergent issue that was becoming increasingly apparent in his time of a growing disjuncture

24. Fazlur Rahman, "The Thinker of Crisis: Shāh Waliy-Ullah," *The Pakistan Quarterly* 6 (1956): 44–48.

25. Sajjad Rizvi, "Faith Deployed for a New Shiʿi Polity in India," in *The Shiʿa in Modern South Asia: Religion, History and Politics*, eds. J. Jones and A. Qasmi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 12.

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between the content and the methodology of the Islamic sciences, as well as increasingly exclusivist epistemological claims made by scholars who specialized in one of the Islamic sciences, whether Hadith studies, jurisprudence, or Sufism. He, on occasion, presents a schema of three broad epistemological categories: *burhān* (demonstrative proof), *kashf/wijdān* (visionary experience in the Sufi mode), and *naql* (transmitted, revealed sources—Quran and sunna) that each may have a place in determining truth. Similarly ʿAbd al- ʿAal observed:

> Again, in his *Tafhīmāt*, he [Shāh Walī Allāh] explains the totality and comprehensiveness of the approach which he adopts in his mission when he declares that his system of thought is compatible with the findings of demonstrative proof, *burḥān;* intuition, *wijdān;* and the science of traditions, *al-manqūl.*[26]

But Sufism itself is not a static system, and Shāh Walī Allāh offers more than one way of viewing its changes over time. Shāh Walī Allāh may thus be understood as "revising" Sufi ethics through taking a developmental approach in explaining the changing emphasis or mode of Sufi practice and theory as evolving over time. For example, in the work Hamaʿāt, he describes the early generations of mystics as being characterized by pious devotions, sobriety, and the fear of God. Shāh Walī Allāh then identifies Junayd al-Baghdādī (d. 910 CE) as a pivotal figure whose era initiated a shift beyond piety towards connecting the heart to Allah, thereby introducing an emotional aspect to ascetic Sufism. Subsequently, according to Shāh Walī Allāh, the Sufis of eleventh century Khurasan ushered in the ecstatic mode in Sufism through a process of eradicating the *nafs* and striving for the achievement of *fanāʾ* (annihilation in the divine). The next stage of development is that of philosophical Sufism, epitomized by Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī, based on a refined understanding of the process of emanation from the Necessary Being and the divine self-disclosure.[27]

Shāh Walī Allāh's Ethics

One of the correctives to prevailing constructions of the Islamic ethical tradition that is offered by considering Shāh Walī Allāh as a Sufi ethicist is his incorporation of *akhlāqī* elements as just one implement in a multifarious tool box for ethical reasoning. This is primarily evident in his iteration of the classical four virtues in Islamicized garb: purity, humbling oneself before God, magnanimity, and justice augmented by additional virtues unique to his formulation—*al-raʾy al-kullī* (a comprehensive outlook), *zarāfa* (refinement), and *takammul* (the urge to perfection or wholeness).

As outlined in Mohamed Ahmed Sherif's treatment of al-Ghazali's theory of virtue, the Islamicate tradition of ethics, for example, Ibn Miskawayḥ, following Aristotle through Ibn Sīnā, listed the four cardinal virtues as wisdom (*ḥikma*),

26. Shāh Walī Allāh, *Tafhīmāt*, 2:217; cited in Khalīl ʿAbdel Ḥamīd ʿAbdel-ʿAal, "God, the Universe, and Man in Islamic Thought: The Contribution of Shāh Walīullāh of Delhi (1702–1762)" (Ph.D. diss., University of London, 1970), 481.
27. Shāh Walī Allāh, *Hamaʿāt* (Hyderabad: Shāh Walī Allāh Academy), 1964.

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courage (*shajāʿa*), temperance (*ʿiffa*), and justice (*ʿadl*).[28] Shāh Walī Allāh varies somewhat from this model in identifying the four cardinal qualities (*khiṣāl*) as purity (*ṭaḥāra*), humility (*khushūʿ*),[29] magnanimity (*samāḥa*), and justice (*ʿadl*). The attempt to reconcile Islamic lists of virtues towards norms resonant with Muslim theological values had occurred in earlier Sufi writings on this topic. Various strategies could effect this, for example, developing subsidiary traits under each of the categories. In the case of al-Ghazālī, Sherif terms this move an elaboration of "theological virtues" as opposed to the "philosophical virtues."[30] In his other works, including *al-Budūr al-bāzigha*, Shāh Walī Allāh proposed an additional three important virtues that had been on occasion mentioned as subsidiary traits within the previous tradition. He identifies these distinctive human virtues or qualities as *al-raʾy al-kullī* (comprehensive outlook), *zarāfa* (refinement), and *takammul* (urge to perfection/wholeness).

While laying out the character of these virtues as part of his comprehensive works, Walī Allāh emphasizes strategies for their cultivation, at the same time noting the causes and manifestations of human variation in the natural affinity for one or another trait. For example, in the fourth section of the *Ḥujjat Allāh al-Bāligha*, Shāh Walī Allāh discusses ways to achieve ultimate human felicity through the cultivation of four main virtues that he lists as being purity, humbling oneself before God, magnanimity, and justice. Subsequently, he considers three barriers or veils to this felicity: the veils of custom, conventions, and misunderstanding the nature of God, as well as ways to overcome these veils.[31]

Similar to Plato and Aristotle, Shāh Walī Allāh's model of the just social and political order was that of a healthy organism, where all the parts function for the benefit of the whole, and the whole benefits the parts. For the Hellenic tradition, justice meant sticking to one's role, doing one's own work and not interfering with others. Justice, along with the other virtues of a state, temperance, courage, and wisdom, contributed to the excellence of that state. Indeed, justice is necessary for the other three virtues. According to the concept of person within the Platonic model, rationality, the passions and the "spirit" needed to be maintained in harmony with one another. Thus the human virtue of *ʿadl* (justice) had a Quranic resonance with the idea of an order that should be based on justice, ultimately the order and apportionment of the divine plan. The term *ʿadl* is frequently paired in Islamic thought with *iḥsān* (righteousness, doing things beautifully) based on the Quranic verse (16:90): "God enjoins justice and righteousness, and giving to relatives, and he forbids immorality, abomination and rebellion. He exhorts you so that you may be reminded."

In the Sufi tradition, *iḥsān* is equated with Sufism itself as being the deepest or ultimate level of spirituality, as in the famous Hadith of Gabriel according to which Muhammad is sequentially questioned about *islām*, *īmān*, and *iḥsān* by a mysterious visitor who is ultimately revealed to be the angel himself. The Prophet provides the

28. Mohamed Ahmed Sherif, *Ghazali's Theory of Virtue* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1975), 38ff.
29. For Aristotle, humility was not a virtue. In the West, humility came to prominence largely with Christianity.
30. Sherif, *Ghazali's Theory of Virtue*, 78 ff. Al-Ghazālī associates theological virtues with divine assistance in the forms of *hidāya* (divine guidance), *rushd* (direction), *tasdīd* (leading), and *taʾyīd* (support).
31. Hermansen, preface to the translation of *Ḥujjat Allāh*, xx.

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answer that "*iḥsān* is worshipping God as if you see Him, for even if you do not see Him He sees you."

In terms of the ultimate goal of *akhlāqī* ethics—felicity (*saʿāda*)—Shāh Walī Allāh conceives that inherent human capacity determines the manner in which individuals may be expected to attain it. Chapter [30] of *Ḥujjat Allāh* presents "The Differences among People in Felicity." According the Shāh Walī Allāh, in some people a virtue—for example, "courage"—is completely lacking and will not be attainable. Others, although deficient in this virtue, may be trained to acquire it through education, imitation, and being exposed to accounts of the brave. Yet other persons have the virtue inherent in them and only need exposure and encouragement to abundantly manifest it. Finally, there are those who will neither need training nor encouragement to master and embody a certain virtue that is naturally easy and abundant for them. It is such people who should teach and lead others in acquiring this virtue.[32] Another source of individual distinctiveness is that a particular person's ultimate felicity may depend on a specific virtue.

In summary, some of the main points made by Walī Allāh in his chapter about differences in felicity are:

1. There is an innate variation in human capacity for specific virtues.
2. Individuals will further differ in the traits that will bring them ultimate felicity.
3. Based on these differences, an assessment can be made of the means and methods for the refinement of the soul (in other words for mystical cultivation and ethical training).

Such methods are based on a certain cosmology as well as a particular theological anthropology. The following passage synthesizes the Aristotelian idea of cultivating virtue through habitus or practice in perfecting virtue, the Platonic ideal of the form of the soul, and Islamic elements of both the Primordial covenant and eschatological reckoning.

> As for virtues going back to the rational soul, it is because when some person carries out an action, the habituation of his soul to it increases, and it is easier for this action to originate from the soul, as he will need no deliberation and have no need to take up a (fresh) motivation. Inevitably, the soul will be influenced by this and accept its tone. Unavoidably, each one of these similar acts participates in this influence even if it is minute and its role is obscure. This is the import of his saying, may peace and blessings be upon him, "Temptations strike the heart in the way that a reed mat is woven stick by stick. Any heart that is influenced by them becomes marked with a black dot, and any heart which rejects them becomes marked by a white dot. The result is two hearts; one like a white stone, and no calamity or test can harm it "as long as the heavens and earth endure;"[33] while the other heart becomes black and clouded, like an inverted jug, which neither knows good (*maʿrūf*) or evil (*munkar*) but only

32. Shāh Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat Allāh al-Bāligha*, 81.
33. Quran 11:107–8.

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> what it absorbs of its own desire."[34]
>
> As for acts clinging tenaciously to the soul, this is because initially a soul is created as prime matter, free from everything with which it later becomes tinged. Thereafter it continues to emerge from potentiality into actuality, day by day, and every subsequent one of its states is prepared for it, and all of the preparations constitute an ordered sequence, and later states cannot precede the earlier ones. Associated with the attitude of the soul existing now is the decree of everything which preceded, although this may be hidden from the soul due to its preoccupation with what is external to it. Indeed, [one does not expect changes] unless whatever supports the faculty which produces these acts from the soul fades away, as we already mentioned in the case of the old man and the sick man,[35] or if an attitude from Above should assail it, changing its regime, such as the change cited in the case mentioned above.
>
> As God, may He be Exalted, said, "The good deeds will wipe out the evil ones,"[36] and He said, "If you associate others with God, then all your acts will be futile."[37]
>
> As for the soul being held accountable, its secret, according to what I have learned through mystical experience (*dhawq*), is that in the high realm (the World of Images) a form for every human manifests what the higher order has bestowed on him, and that which appeared in the account of the Primordial Covenant is a ramification of this.[38] When this person comes into existence, this form is congruent with him and is merged with him. When he performs a (good) action, this form rejoices due to this act with an involuntary natural happiness. Perhaps the soul will appear in the afterlife such that its actions will be counted for or against it from Above, for example, through the reading of the scrolls. Perhaps it will appear with its acts clinging to its limbs, and this would be the (meaning) of the hands and feet "speaking."[39]

Sufi Psychology as a Background to Mystical Ethics

Sufi psychology was by the eighteenth century building on a long and extensive mystical ethical tradition that incorporated psychology in the sense of the science of the soul, psychological type theory, and concepts of subtle spiritual centers (*laṭāʾif*) or a spiritual body that paralleled the physical organs while connecting the person to higher dimensions of the "soul."

34. Hadith found in Muslim Īmān 231, for example; cited in Muḥammad al-Khaṭīb al-Tabrīzī, *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ* II, trans. James Robson (Lahore: Muhammad Ashraf, 1999), 1120.
35. This refers to Hadith reports that Shāh Walī Allāh cites earlier in the book to the effect that certain rulings can change according to the age or other circumstances of a person.
36. Quran 11:114.
37. Quran 39:65.
38. The Primordial Covenant (*mīthāq*) refers to the occasion in pre-eternity when all of the human souls to ever come into being acknowledged Allah as their Lord. Thus, Shāh Walī Allāh associates the pre-existing form of the soul in the World of Images with this covenant mentioned in Quran 7:172.
39. Shāh Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat Allāh al-Bāligha*, trans. M. Hermansen, 81. These are all elements of Islamic eschatology. The hands and feet speaking (i.e., bearing witness) is referred to in Quran 24:24. The reading of the scrolls is mentioned in Quran 81:10.

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Shāh Walī Allāh, as previously noted, saw the existence of difference at multiple levels as part of the nature of human composition and experience, yet he needed to investigate its sources as a prelude to presenting an ethics of reconciliation. The idea of contesting animal and angelic sides to human nature had been articulated by earlier mystical thinkers. What Walī Allāh adds is a more detailed presentation of how this contestation plays out in distinctive ways in individual persons while maintaining that there are possibilities to recognize and therapeutically intervene as part of Sufi training and moral cultivation so as to maximize individual potential. Even Sufi training itself needs to start from the recognition of innate disposition.

Shāh Walī Allāh explains that there are two distinct ways to obtain felicity.

> The first is by sloughing off the animalistic side. This, however, requires a suspension of the demands of nature, turning with complete attention to what lies beyond even the World of Omnipotence (*jabarūt*), and avoiding human contact. This is the method sought after by the philosophers of illuminative wisdom (*al-mutaʾallihūn min al-ḥukamāʾ*) and by the mystics who are overwhelmingly drawn to the divine (*al-majdhūbūn min al-ṣūfiyya*). This way is only for the few whose angelic and animalistic sides are in strong opposition or contention with one another, since they neglect their own livelihood and worldly affairs.[40]

The second way is by reforming one's animal faculties. This is primarily achieved, according to Shāh Walī Allāh, through a person's holding the animalistic side to the imitation of acts, attitudes, and memories of the rational soul. The teachings of the prophets were directed to inculcating this second way since it is the best course for maintaining the order of society and it is also the most practical and attainable. Furthermore, the model guides or Imams to the second way are the *mufahhamūn* (those made to understand) who take on the governing of religion and the world at the same time.[41]

In his work *Hamaʿāt*, a manual of practical Sufism, Shāh Walī Allāh states that some intrinsic human differences might be due to cultural proclivities and thus human attitudes and cultures might be seen as responding to physical or geographical "environments"[42] as per the pre-modern theory of the more temperate regions being most suitable for producing moderate temperaments, which we might imagine as a formulation of nature combined with nurture, or even culture as being formative components of personality—in this case, including its "soulful" or spiritual dimension.

As a further example of Sufi ethics developing in the eighteenth century, we may cite the *laṭīfa* theory of Shāh Walī Allāh. The idea of *latāʾif*, or subtle spiritual centers, is based on Quranic references and goes back to Junayd or even further in a discussion of the soul, or nafs. The well-known schema of souls "blaming," "commanding to evil," or being "contented" became, for Sufis, associated with stages along the spiritual itinerary.

40. Shāh Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat Allāh al-*Bāligha, 153.
41. Paraphrased from Shāh Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat Allāh al-Bāligha*, 153–155.
42. Shāh Walī Allāh, *Hamaʿāt*, 68–69.

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By the eighteenth century, the numbers of these spiritual centers and the descriptions of their specific functions and inter-relationships combined humor theory, a psychology of the levels of the *nafs*, and itineraries of respective paths of prophethood and saintship as developed, in particular, by Indian Naqshbandi Sufis.[43] Searching for cosmological parallels across systems was characteristic of Shāh Walī Allāh's mystical thinking.[44] Combined with his proclivity to see history, in general, and the history of disciplines of the Islamic sciences, in particular, as developmental led him to a unique and systematic explanation of how and why Sufi discourses, schemas, and emphasis had evolved up to his time. Just as he had previously associated epochal moments in Sufi theorizing with specific figures who might be taken as emphasizing asceticism, ecstasy, or gnosis in terms of *laṭīfa* theory, he pairs the "opening," or accessibility, of higher spiritual centers with prophetic and even saintly dispensations associated with the spiritual opening of the era of their initiators.

In his mythic explanation of the progressive awakening of human spirituality in *al-Tafhīmāt al-ilāhiyya*, Shāh Walī Allāh describes the relationship of the microcosmic (human) world (*al-ʿālam al-ṣaghīr*) to parallel developments at the level of the macrocosm (*al-ʿālam al-kabīr*). According to his description, at the creation of Adam, God emanated the ideal human form with three spiritual centers—the Heart, Intelligence, and the Lower Soul—as its foundation. As the human species progressed and humanity's spiritual capacity developed, Muhammad came as the seal of this (the Adamic) age and the opener of a new era elaborating and explicating the first one. Therefore, at the time of Muhammad, "God's glance of mercy" turned to the higher *laṭāʾif, the rūḥ* (spirit) and *sirr* (mystery).[45] These were then awakened at the level of the ideal form of the human species. This permitted further spiritual development which continued even without a new revelation so that by the time of Ibn ʿArabī (d. 1240), the possibility of awakening the future spiritual center (*laṭīfa)*, the arcane (*khafī*), was granted by God. At this time, "the People of Guidance," i.e., the Sufis, were inspired with the unity of the divine (*tawḥīd*) and the fading of the world into the One Reality.[46] This refers to Ibn ʿArabī's development of the philosophy that his followers were to elaborate as the Unity of Existence (*waḥdat al-wujūd*) and indicates also how highly Ibn ʿArabī was ranked by Shāh Walī Allāh. Finally, in this schema, Shāh Walī Allāh himself was designated by God to be the spokesperson and wise man of the era in which the final spiritual centers, "the Philosopher's Stone" (*ḥajar-i-baḥt*) and "Selfhood" (*anāniyya*) might be awakened.[47] While previous Sufi theories might be said to feature an interiorization of prophetic modes and qualities, Shāh Walī Allāh reverses the direction of this process in a movement of exteriorization from the developed saintly person, so that transformation of one individual in history can come to influence the ideal form which in turn expands

43. Arthur Buehler, *Sufi Heirs of the Prophet: Indian Naqshbandiyya and the Rise of the Mediating Sufi Shaykh* (University of South Carolina Press, 1998), 105ff.

44. As discussed in Hermansen, "Mystical Visions as 'Good to Think': Examples from Pre-Modern South Asian Sufi Thought," *Religion* 27, no. 1 (1997): 25–43.

45. Shāh Walī Allāh, *Tafhīmāt*, 1:167–68.

46. Shāh Walī Allāh, *Tafhīmāt*, 1:168.

47. Shāh Walī Allāh, *Tafhīmāt*, 1:168–9.

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the potential of all persons.[48] Although mystical in cosmology and conception, an underlying message is the capacity of individual effort to transform the world.

The Constructive Potential of Mystical Ethics in Modernity

Finally, as a theological rather than a historical project, one may ask this question: Can the insights garnered from the Sufi ethical tradition be used in contemporary discussions of ethics, moral agency, and ontology? One example of such contemporary analysis is the use of Ibn ʿArabī's teachings by some contemporary Islamic feminists.[49] In favour of the constructive aspect, it is clear that having more developed articulations of Sufi moral and ethical theory would provide alternative resources for theologizing in the present.

For modern interpreters Sufism offers a way of understanding and addressing individuality and acknowledging personal spirituality within a single religion. In his ground-breaking study, Cyrus Zargar comments on Sufism as a resource for our contemporary need for a philosophy of psychology that probes human intentions and desires.[50] An important point that Zargar makes is that if the *akhlāq* tradition is positioned as Islamicate virtue ethics, this resonates with the turn, at least in Anglo-American philosophy, to considering virtue ethics as a mode of ethical reflection in addition to deontology and consequentialism. If an appeal of virtue ethics as that it is agent centered rather than act centered,[51] the cultivation and, in Sufi terms, "perfection" of that agent become a moral, as well as a spiritual and mystical project.

In this chapter, we have shown how Shāh Walī Allāh, an eighteenth-century Sufi, presents mystical ethics as a way of understanding and addressing individuality and developing personal spirituality within Islamic Sufi religious practice. He further lays out a broader "ethic" of reconciliation of epistemological and interpretive conflict through appreciating the situatedness of any particular view as well as its historical development and context.

While Shāh Walī Allāh's critical historical approach to elements of Islamic tradition strikes us, in some ways, as "modern," its epistemology is grounded in mystical understandings of "being," and its purposes are simultaneously Islamic legal (*sharʿī*), rational, and grounded in the inwardly spiritual "*asrār*," while further envisioning a cosmic aspect to the goal of Sufi self-perfection as ultimately transformative of all of humanity.

48. See Hermansen, "Shāh Walī Allāh's Theory of the Subtle Spiritual Centers (*Laṭāʾif*): A Sufi Model of Personhood and Self-Transformation," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 47, no. 1, (1988): 24.

49. For example, in Saʿdiyya Shaikh, *Sufi Narratives of Intimacy: Ibn Arabi, Gender, and Sexuality* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

50. Cyrus Zargar, *The Polished Mirror: Storytelling and the Pursuit of Virtue in Islamic Philosophy and Sufism* (London: Oneworld, 2017), 10.

51. Ibid.

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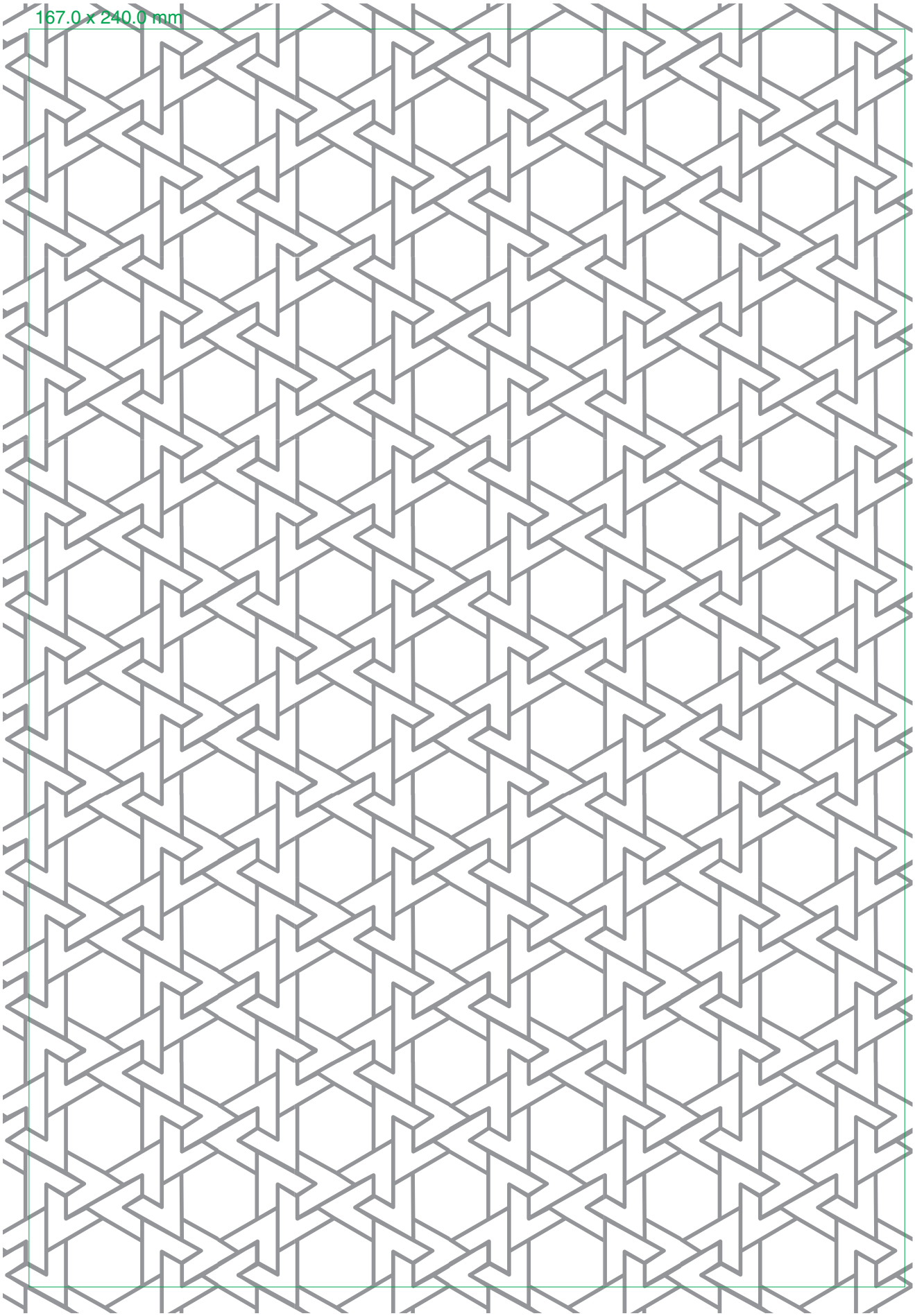
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"DOGS HAVE LEFT YOU IN THE DUST!" MOCKERY IN PANJABI SUFI POETRY[1]

Syed Rizwan Zamir

Introduction

A rich poetic tradition in its own right, Panjabi Sufi poetry is an illustration and a case in point for observing a complex marriage between the universal themes of Sufi Islam and the particularities of a distinct regional and localized cultural heritage. In other words, while a participant in the recurring patterns of Sufism, in the echoes of its songs and recited poetry, Panjabi Sufism is also deeply rooted in its land of origin.

This short chapter is an illustration of late Professor Annemarie Schimmel's perceptive account of vernacular poetry in Sufism,[2] and brings attention to yet another important feature of vernacular Sufi poetry, namely mockery and social critique. It seeks to highlight a certain dimension of Panjabi Sufi poetry, mentioned by Schimmel only in passing,[3] which although well-known to those familiar with Panjabi Sufi poets, still remains markedly underappreciated. My focus will be on

1. I owe my gratitude to Mr. Ali Galestan's wisdom, Ms. Sarah Aziz's assistance, Prof. Andrew Lustig's insights, and Prof. Mohammed Rustom's support during different stages of the development of this book chapter.

2. "The Voice of Love: Mystical Poetry in the Vernaculars," in *As through a Veil: Mystical Poetry in Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 135–170. This chapter can be read as one long footnote to Prof. Schimmel's study of vernacular Sufi poetry.

3. A reference to the passage of Sharafuddin Maneri cited in the opening page of her essay, which will be discussed later.

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these poets' ridicule, mockery, and critique of their societies. Besides exhortations and didactic moments, the highest expressions of the religion of love and ecstatic affirmations of Divine omnipresence, Panjabi Sufi poetry has also served as the arena of the poets' provocative and incisive unmasking of what they observed at two distinct but interrelated levels of human experience: pervasive hollowness and decadence at the societal level, and widespread conceit at the level of personal piety, rendering the latter, at best, artificial and, at worst, hypocritical. If on the one hand, these poets upheld a mirror to higher spiritual realities, they also upheld mirrors to their readers' and listeners' souls and the social world that they inhabited, forcing them to confront the ugliness around them and within themselves. In other words, lending an attentive ear to our poets reveals a special weapon in their arsenal, one they use often without hesitation: the "sword of mockery," which cuts quite deeply. Directly confronting the reader in an unrestrained and incisively blunt manner, these poets call out over and over again all that they saw as blatantly superficial in human affairs, whether personal or collective. Such directness and bluntness seem to be what also distinguishes folkloric, popular Panjabi poetry from the more refined canons of Persian and Urdu poetry. Before we turn to illustrations of mockery in the Panjabi Sufi poetic tradition, however, an overview of this poetic tradition, its key features and its place within Schimmel's account of vernacular Sufi folk poetry are in order.

The Panjabi Sufi Poetic Tradition

Panjabi language and literature, especially in the early centuries—that is from the time of Baba Farid (d.664/1265), who is considered by many to be the first major figure of this literary tradition—are deeply intertwined with Sufi Islam.[4] Sayyed Akhtar Ja'fary, for one, invokes the religious origins of this language and traces these origins and early developments back to mosques and the Sufi lodges of dervishes.[5] In his view, it is precisely this rootedness in Sufi Islam that provided the language with an unmistakably ascetic, spiritual, ecstatic, and religious sensibility and flavor, especially in its formative years. That is why, when literary voices emerged employing the Panjabi language, they first articulated Sufi mysteries and concepts, religious and juridical notions, and prayers. "It is established that the beginning phase of Panjabi literature is the era of Sufi poets," he notes.[6] He further observes certain characteristic features of the Panjabi Sufi poetic tradition. In his account, this poetic tradition is realistic in its imagery, avoids exaggeration, and is simple and accessible for lay Panjabi audiences. Furthermore, it reveals a strong intimacy and connection with the land of Panjab, which is expressed not only through extensive references to and imagery of its folk songs, folk characters, seasons, agricultural landscape and produce as well as its deserts and rivers,

4. For a survey of Panjabi Sufi poetry, see Christopher Shackle's "Panjabi Sufi Poetry from Farid to Farid," in *Panjab Reconsidered: History, Culture, and Practice*, ed. Anshu Malhotra and Farina Mir (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012), 1–34.

5. See "Panjābī shā'arī kī ibtadā' awr classical shā'ir," in *Panjābī zabān awr adab kī mukhtaṣar tarīkh* (Islamabad: Muqtadara Qawmi Zaban, 2006), 40–46, *passim*. For a predominantly similar overview of salient features that emphasizes "nonconformism" of this poetic tradition, see Singh and Gaur's introduction to *Sufism in Punjab: Mystics, Literature and Shrines* (Delhi: Aakar Books, 2009), 19–23.

6. Ja'fary, 46.

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but also through a rich depiction of the integrated web of life of Panjab and its inhabitants. Finally, this strong grounding in the earthly and cultural landscape of Panjab is even more closely witnessed in how extensively the poets draw on folk romances—a new development that occurs in the seventeenth century—so that *human* love (*'ishq-i majāzī*) of these folk characters becomes invariably *the* symbol of the *real* love [of God] (*'ishq-i ḥaqīqī*).[7] Overall, in Ja'fary's account and those of others, *Panjabi* Sufi poetry is shown at once to be deeply rooted in Sufi spirituality and also in earthly realities of the land of the "five rivers" (*Panj-āb*), and in the everyday lives and vocations of the inhabitants of this land. Most important, however, according to Ja'fary, is the fact that poetry in this tradition, as witnessed both in its origins and its growth, is a sincere, unceremonious pursuit of religious, ethical, and spiritual aims, one that disregards poetic embellishments, on the one hand, and the ambition to establish literary reputation or achieve poetic fame, on the other.

That this rise and pervasiveness of Sufi folk poetry goes well beyond the land of Panjab and is a much wider phenomena within the Muslim world is well evidenced in Annemarie Schimmel's study of "mystical poetry in the vernacular" or "mystical folk poetry."[8] Schimmel observes that from the late thirteenth century until the twentieth century, the vernacular Sufi poetic tradition was widespread in Muslim cultures and existed side by side with "highly Persianized urban poetry."[9] Interestingly, Schimmel's reading of the mystical folk poetry of other Islamic cultural zones agrees, almost point by point, with Ja'fary's account of Panjabi Sufi poetry. Various similarities can straightforwardly be parsed out between Ja'fary's description of salient features of Panjabi Sufi poetry and Schimmel's account of prominent traits of vernacular poetry of Sufi folk tradition, among which is Panjabi poetry. These strong parallels demonstrate that various features mapped out by Schimmel in her study of the mystical folk poetry of Muslim lands ring largely true for Panjabi Sufi poets as well. Yet Schimmel provides illustrations and delves much deeper into the details of the major themes within these poetic tradition(s). Let us turn to some of the prominent motifs and distinct poetic particularities that she notes.

In mystical folk poetry, there is a strong emphasis on the immediate and essential experiential knowledge of God, one which stands in stark contrast to and exudes a deep disdain toward the rather bookish and scholarly approach to acquired religious knowledge. As a consequence, an anti-intellectual bias is often directed against the 'ulama. Primacy of immediate knowledge meant not only that inspired words (*wāridāt*) are ubiquitous, but that this poetry is replete with paradoxes, riddles, cryptic messages, and even logical absurdities, all because these poets intended to create a certain mystical mood or evoke mystical states rather than follow logical reasoning. By virtue of its articulation in accessible folk

7. According to Farina Mir, "a number of Panjabi poets took to the *qiṣṣa* as their principle genre from the early seventeenth century onward. By the late nineteenth century, *qiṣṣe* accounted for an overwhelming preponderance in the Panjabi publishing industry, suggesting their popularity as a literary form (735–6)". Furthermore, confirming other scholarly observations, "representations of piety," notes Farina Mir, is "a central motif of *qiṣṣa* narratives" (728). See her "Genre and Devotion in Punjabi Popular Narratives: Rethinking Cultural and Religious Syncretism," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 48, no. 3 (2006): 727–58.

8. Schimmel (1982).

9. Ibid, 137–8.

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language, this poetry teaches the *core* of religion without relying on or making references to the erudite scholarship of the 'ulama. Such a thorough grounding in the earthly and cultural realities of a particular landscape, however, means that an appreciation of the poetry itself demands grounding in and deep familiarity with the land itself. In its native setting, poetry was orally performed; words were meant to be recited or sung, rather than read or studied.[10] Structurally, Panjabi poetry followed simple rhyming patterns that rendered it memorable, allowing it to be easily spoken and sung among townfolk.

Other noteworthy patterns noted by Schimmel include a central role accorded to the spiritual master (*pīr*), to the founder and patron of the Sufi lineage,[11] and to certain Quranic prophets, the family of the Prophet, and the Prophet of Islam himself, as well as a tendency to spiritualize the external acts of devotion since religious rituals are often posited as impediments upon the path. She also observes that these poets occasionally confront and even quarrel with God, a point to which I shall turn later in this essay. Finally, in the case of India (to which Panjabi Sufism belongs), Schimmel observes certain other special traits—for example, assigning to each saint a spiritual territory (*wilāya*), evidencing an influence of Hindu spirituality and literature, and a reversal of gender roles—i.e., male poets speaking as women.[12]

Particularly relevant for our purposes in this essay are two other universal features of Sufi folk poetry, as noted by Schimmel: 1) the marked influence of Ibn 'Arabi (d. 638/1240) that is evidenced, among other ways, by the prevailing idea in this poetry that "everything that happens is nothing but a manifestation of the One Reality";[13] and 2) a clear articulation of an explicit "religion of love" over and above a "religion of an immutable Law" in which the borders of faith and infidelity were somewhat blurred. Regarding the latter point, one could simply point to the opening verses of the magnum opus of Panjabi literature, *Hīr* of Waris Shah (d. 1180/1766):

> *Let us praise God first; He loved and so began creation, O' friend!*
> *It was the Lord who first loved; and the Prophet was his beloved, O' friend!*
> *Love is honor of a saint, of a wayfaring dervish; a worthy man of love grieves, O' friend!*
> *Their gardens of the heart blossomed inwardly; those who embraced love, O' friend!*[14]

10. It should therefore not surprise us that the musical composition of Waris Shah's (d. 1180/1766) *Hīr* and Sultan Bahu's (d. 1102/1691) poetry have remained the same throughout the centuries and are still sung in the same form. For folk singers, it is the poets themselves who composed these melodies.

11. A good illustration of homage to a great saint of the poetic tradition itself is Waris Shah's tribute to Baba Farid (d. 664/1265) in the following words:

Maudud's endearing saint Chishti—
Masud, Sugar Treasure,—abides everywhere;
He marks the excellence of the Chishti clan,
He has made his city Pakpattan famous;
This saint is the zenith of perfection,
His humility and piety are renowned;
With his advent in the Punjab,
Pain and sorrow departed.

(see Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh, *Of Sacred and Secular Desire: An Anthology of Lyrical Writings from the Punjab*. (London: I. B. Tauris, 2012), 109)

12. Ibid, 151, 152, 161.

13. Ibid, 158.

14. *Hīr Wāris Shah*, 17.

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Altogether, in Panjabi Sufi poetry, too, we have a folkloric poetic tradition that for centuries has stood side by side with the court- (and now state-)funded, high culture poetic traditions (i.e., the literary traditions of Persian and Urdu), flipping gender roles, involving the invoking of colloquial metaphors and images from the day-to-day lives of peasant men and women of the Panjabi world, and the evincing of the notable influence of Ibn 'Arabi and others. With the exception of confronting God, a rare occurrence in Panjabi Sufi poetry, one cannot agree more with Schimmel.

Mockery in Panjabi Sufi Poetry

This discussion of the place and role of mockery in Panjabi Sufi poetry sheds light on the interweaving of various salient features observed by Schimmel and Ja'fary. I also intend to show that a careful analysis of mockery within the Panjabi Sufi poetic tradition offers essential insights into its ethical concerns and unique sensibilities. As mentioned earlier, Schimmel observes within mystical folk poetry an anti-intellectual bias toward scholarly elites, especially the 'ulama. In the case of Panjabi Sufi poets, ridicule and mockery hardly single anyone out; these poets shoot arrows of mockery and critique almost indiscriminately, whether as self-critique, toward the powerful and the laypeople, toward the 'ulama and the rich, or even toward their fellow Sufis. Yes, the 'ulama are often criticized, but they are certainly not the only ones on the receiving end of mockery.

Before we encounter instances of mockery from some Sufi poets of Panjab, however, an exposition of what makes mockery the preferred weapon of choice for social critique for these poets is necessary. We then consider a few instances where mockery is employed by Panjabi Sufi poets before considering the question of how these reflections speak to the central theme of this volume, the relationship between mysticism and ethics.

Allow me, then, to offer a preliminary characterization of mockery within the context of Panjabi Sufi poetry. Of the various shades of meaning offered by dictionary definitions for the word "mockery," there are some, such as "imitation," for example, that are not relevant to our context or concern. The primary meaning which concerns us here is that of scorn, contempt, derision, and ridicule. No doubt, to mock is to ridicule, but to mock well, the ridicule must be made so apparent and manifest that those on the receiving end of it cannot escape being bruised or burnt by it. In its essence, all good mockery must uphold a mirror so lucid that one cannot help but face the absurdity of what is being shown (and through that facing-of-the-mirror, being mocked or ridiculed); and inasmuch as what is revealed is recognized in our inner and outer social worlds, one inevitably is implicated by it as well. This *recognition* of oneself in the words intended to mock by the listener-reader is what makes this act of critique so incisive.

The holding up of mirrors by our mystical poets seems to involve certain techniques, but particularly: 1) the comparison of loyalty to God offered by human beings as God's "chosen" creatures with that offered by those deemed by them

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the "lesser ones in creation"; 2) an unrelenting commitment to authenticity and sincerity of intentions that must underlie all outward acts, no matter how pious or spiritual they may appear; and beyond this, 3) the evocation of deeper spiritual and religious callings and truths to expose hypocrisies that abound in individual and collective human lives. Let me illustrate the first point through a poem by the "Rumi of Panjab," Bulleh Shah (d. 1171/1758),[15] the opening line of which inspired the title of this essay:

"Dogs have left you in the dust!"[16]

Dogs have left you in the dust!
You wake up at night and say your prayers
Dogs stay awake as well
They have left you in the dust!
No matter what, they never cease to bark,
They sleep then on a dung heap
They have left you in the dust!
They never abandon their master's door
Even when beaten with boots
Bulleh Shah, go buy yourself gear for the journey,
or else the race will be won
by dogs who'll leave you in the dust!

Sultan Bahu (d. 1102/1691)[17] speaks in the same vein:

If the Lord were found by bathing and washing, He would be found by frogs and fish.
If the Lord were found by having long hair, He would be found by sheep and goats.
If the Lord were found by staying awake all night, He would be found by the cuckoo.
If the Lord were found by being celibate, He would be found by gelded oxen.
The Lord is found by those, Bahu, whose intentions are good.[18]

The message is simple and to the point: unless those who claim to be God's obedient servants wake up to their ultimate calling of being *truly* devoted and loyal servants to their Creator, they will inevitably lose—and in fact, appear to have already lost—to dogs, cattle, and fish.

Hardly anyone escapes the indictment and wrath of these poets, be they learned religious scholars, *muftīs, qāḍīs* (judges), *ḥājjīs*, the pious, the rich and the powerful, or for that matter, their own Sufi brethren! In fact, the higher the status

15. For a general overview of Bulleh Shah's life and poetry, see Christopher Shackle's introduction to *Sufi Lyrics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), vii–xxx.

16. A note on translation: Like this poem, when without a citation, the translation is by the author. In my translations, to the extent possible, I have sought to bring out the "rawness" of poetic expressions. In the case of this poem, for example, one could have translated "kutte tain thee uttay" as "dogs are better than you" or dogs have surpassed you", but compared to those, I believe "dogs have left you in the dust" is a better choice in conveying the intended meaning combined with the expressive confrontational tone.

17. For an overview of the life, poetry, and legacy of Sultan Bahu, see "Some Prominent Strands in the Poetry of Sultan Bahu" in Singh and Gaur, *Sufism in Punjab: Mystics, Literature and Shrines* (Delhi: Aakar Books, 2009), 278–302. See also Jamal J. Elias's introduction to *Death before Dying: The Sufi Poems of Sultan Bahu* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 1–18.

18. Elias, 55. Another version of Sultan Bahu's *Abyāt* puts forth a different last verse which can be translated as follows: "The Lord is not found in these ways, Bahu, He is found by those of pure and good hearts." See *Abyāt-i bahū*, 29. These variants are expressions of an inherently oral and folkloric transmission of this poetry. Elias's introduction to *Death before Dying* addresses the challenge of finding a definitive text for any major Punjabi Sufi poet.

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and worldly rank of the one in question, the sharper the criticism targeted at him. Here are some more examples:

The mullah *and the lantern bearer both are just the same*
They radiate light for people, yet dwell themselves in the dark

Cease now your quest for learning, O' friend!

Cease now your quest for learning, O' friend!
All you need is an Alif *. . .*

Cease now your quest for learning, O' friend!
You read and write endlessly, pile up stacks
Books surround you, all around you
Light surrounds you, yet you live in deep darkness
If probed "where are you going?" you have no answers, no clue!
Cease now your quest for learning, O' friend!

You pray extra prayers at long lengths
You yell at the top of your voice
You mount the pulpit and scream your sermons
Your learning has led you to abject ruin
Cease now your quest for learning, O' friend!

Your obsessive learning won you the title "Shaykh"
You cook up religious mazes in your home
You rob and steal from the unlearned
True, false, you claim it all!
Cease now your quest for learning, O' friend!

You read and read, preach religious riddles
You eat the food of doubt and conjecture
You preach one thing and practice another
Impure inside, you are pure on the outside
Cease now your quest for learning, O' friend!

This learning creates a thousand hurdles
The wayfarers are held up on their path
Afflicted with separation, their hearts are broken
The Beloved's separation burdens the soul
Cease your quest for learning, O friend![19]

Similar themes are found in another poem, "Deliverance lies in learning one *Alif*"

Why do you look like an executioner?
Why do you study cartloads of books,
carrying on your head these bundles of troubles?
The journey ahead is most arduous!
Deliverance lies in learning one Alif
In vain is rubbing the forehead on the ground

19. Bulleh Shah, *Bulleh shah kahnday nay*, tr. and ed. Maqbul Anwar Da'udi (Lahore: Ferozsons: 1989), 50–52.

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The long arch formed on it is to flaunt
Reciting shahada is to invite crowd's applause
Wisdom shall never enter your heart

On the indulgences of pilgrims who take pride in their *Hajj*, the poet utters:

Many return from Makka saying "I am a hājjī", "I am a hājjī", look!
"I am wearing fancy blue garments, look!"
The Hajj is traded but for a few coins, look!
But who wants to hear such truth?
Can the truth be concealed forever?[20]

And just so the rich, the oppressors, and the looters are not left out (as if beyond the reach of Bulleh Shah's trenchant critique), the poet mounts the following offensive:

Tell me your address! From where have you come?
Where are you going?

The house you are so proud of will not go with you
You oppress, you harass people
You plunder, steal, and amass
Go, be haughty for now,
In the end you will be lifted up
Let's take our abode in the city of silence
To where the entire world will retreat
Where the Unrelenting One takes boatloads and boatloads
The boatman, the Angel of Death . . .

Tell me your address! From where have you come?
Where are you going?[21]

Ailments and Cure

Now that we have seen illustrations of mockery within this tradition of Sufi poetry, it is time to draw out an aspect of it that appears particularly significant with regard to the theme of this volume. The following questions shall guide my inquiry: (1) Where are the root causes of ailments and crises that afflict human beings ultimately located? (2) How does the critique of the individual in Panjabi Sufi poetry relate to the societies that the poets in question inhabited? (3) Are root causes to be sought in social structures and systems, or within human souls, in both, or elsewhere?

The case of Bulleh Shah is particularly significant in probing the aforementioned questions because he lived during the turbulent era that marks the decline of the Indian Mughal Empire. In the words of Nikky-Guninder Singh:

20. *Bulleh shah kahnday nay*, 16. While consulted closely, this is a heavily revised and modified version of Puri and Tilaka Raja's translation of this poem. See their *Bulleh Shah: The Love-intoxicated Iconoclast*. 1st ed. (Amritsar: Radha Soami Satsang Beas, 1986), 415.
21. *Bulleh shah kahnday nay*, 9.

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> Bulleh Shah and Waris Shah lived in an eighteenth century Panjab that was fraught with internal battles and external invasions by the Persian Nadir Shah and the Afghani Ahmad Shah Durrani . . . Panjab became a battleground for the Persians, Afghanis, the British, and the Sikhs—each group fighting to establish its own empire. Against such a violent external backdrop, our Sufi poets found peace in the inner world of love. They desire the Divine most romantically, most tenderly.[22]

Bulleh Shah's poetry itself acknowledges and bears witness to the troublesome political and social times, whether it is the Mughal Empire, the region of Panjab, or his hometown of Kasur. He speaks of the Mughals in the following words:

You made the Mughals drink cups of poison
You turned beggars, wearing tatters, into king
The genteel watch in quiet
With what finesse You have reproved them all!

Regarding what was transpiring in Panjab, he states:

The tides of time are in spate
Panjab is in a terrible state
We have to share a hell of a fate
Love! Come sometime to meet me!

And even when he turns to his own hometown, there is hardly any relief:

O Bullha, the real name of Kasur is "fault"[23]
It is a place where people cannot speak openly
Where the truthful have their necks severed
And where the false have a merry time![24]

Bullha, Kasur is lawless, we go there because we must
There is no merit or charity there
nor do any regulations operate.[25]

All in all, we find Bulleh Shah disenchanted and, in fact, lamenting everything around him to be a total inversion of the normal order of things:

Bullha, robbers live in the lodge, and thugs live in the temple.
The impure live in the mosques, but lovers live their separate lives.[26]
Bullha, we are sacrificed to those who talk big.
If they find a penny they give it back,
But they hang on to the purse.[27]

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22. Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh, 6. For a detailed account of political, religious, and cultural developments of the eighteenth-century Panjab, see Karamjit K. Malhotra, *The Eighteenth Century in Sikh History: Political Resurgence, Religious and Social Life, and Cultural Articulation* (Oxford University Press, 2016), and Muzaffar Alam, *The Crisis of Empire in Mughal North India: Awadh and Punjab, 1707–48*. 2nd ed. (Oxford University Press, 2013).
23. This is a play on the etymology of the word "Qasūr".
24. *Sufi Lyrics*, 339
25. Ibid, 341.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.

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Here's another example:

> ***Topsy-turvy times have come***
> *Thus I unearthed the Beloved's secrets.*
>
> *Crows hunt hawks now, sparrows take down falcons*
> *Horses graze on litter, donkeys are fed fine grains.*
> *No kindness left among the relatives; be it younger or elder uncles*[28]
> *There is no unity between fathers and sons,*
> *Or between a mother and her daughters.*
> *Those who are honest are shoved aside,*
> *But those deceitful are offered seats of prestige.*
> *Nobles sit penniless while commoners spread their carpets*
> *Those with ragged clothes were made*
> *kings, and kings are made to beg for alms.*
> *O Bullha, the decree that came from the Lord, who can ever alter it?*
>
> *Topsy-turvy times have come,*
> *Thus I unearthed the beloved's secrets.*

Topsy-turvy times, yes, but what about the unalterable decree? Schimmel's concluding words of her survey of the mystical folk poetry of Islam offers a relevant insight in this regard:

> Popular mystical "nonsense poetry" is a very genuine expression of poets—partly literate—who were confronted with the confusing world of senses and knew, either by tradition or by experience, of the world of unity behind it; of poets who often lived in restless times, and during the turmoil of wars and insurrection, retired into the tranquility of the inner life to discover the one calm and unchangeable source in which all seeming contradictions were resolved . . . The Islam which they taught the masses was that of *tawakkul*, of complete trust in God's eternal wisdom as reflected in many of the folk tales in the Islamic lands.[29]

Put simply, despite the clear sense that the natural order of life is all upside down, these poets entrust all affairs to God; rarely, if ever, do they quarrel with Him or question His wisdom.[30] As was noted earlier, this is where Panjabi Sufi poets form an exception to Schimmel's account of mystical folk poets. And what about the "Beloved's secrets"? These "topsy-turvy times" seem to offer our poet insight into the Beloved's secrets: "*Thus* I unearthed the Beloved's secrets". While the readers are left quite bewildered—after all, the secret was concealed from them as well—there is no doubt that such topsy-turvy times are indeed revealing of God's secrets. The notion of God's mysterious and perplexing ways comes out even more clearly in another poem of Bulleh Shah:

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28. This is a window into the honor and reverence with which kinship ties are held within this culture. Paternal and maternal elders (uncles and aunts) each have a unique reverential title in Panjabi and are modified further on the basis of whether the uncle or aunt is younger or elder from one's parent.

29. Schimmel, 168.

30. For an overview of these quarrels with God in Sufism, see Hellmut Ritter, "Muslim Mystics' Strife with God," *Oriens* 5, no. 1 (1952): 1–15.

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Someone, please go ask the Beloved, what is He up to?
"He does what He wills"!
He prays inside a mosque, enters then an idol temple.
He is One, and in many thousand houses, but He owns each one them . . .
Wherever I look, there He is, keeping company with all
Bullha, the Lord's love is a tiger; it drinks blood, eats flesh.
Someone please go ask the Beloved, what is He up to?
"He does what He wills"![31]

Finally, while such political and social upheavals are expressly acknowledged in Bulleh Shah's poetry, for better or worse, nowhere in his poetry or that of other Panjabi Sufi poets have I found any suggestions to the effect that cures for these topsy-turvy and miserable times need to be sought in structures or institutions, or within the realms of politics or social life.

So where, then, are they to be found? These poets' ridicule never stops halfway; they do not abandon us in the quest for adequate answers. In their poetry, one always finds remedies to the problems pointed at, usually in the concluding thought of the poem. There is also consistency to the cures prescribed. In fact, without exception, these "cures" invariably invoke the time-honored perennial convictions of Sufi teachings. Here again, their answers are frank and as hard-hitting as they are astute: our souls need to be purified; we need to rid ourselves of our egos; we ought to fear and love God; the world and worldliness need to be renounced; we need to seek a Sufi master who will take us through it all; and lastly, we need constant reminders of our inevitable deaths and the Day of Reckoning. Let me illustrate the poets' diagnosis of human ailments and their corresponding prescriptions for cure by referring to a few examples from Bulleh Shah and Sultan Bahu:

Of no gain is going to Mecca
Even if one performs a hundred pilgrimages;
Of no gain is going to the Ganges
Even if one dives a hundred times in it
Bulleh Shah, you will only succeed
When your ego is stripped from the heart

In this case, the invaluable cure is found in the stripping of one's ego and purification of the heart.

You became a reputed scholar through your constant study
But you have never studied your own heart
You frequently enter temple and mosque
But you never entered your own being
In vain, you fight Satan,
You never fight your own ego
For the skies above, Bulleh Shah, you keep striving

31. *Bulleh shah kahnday nay*, 62.

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The cure here is reached through an intimacy with the "divine spark within" and by gaining knowledge of one's true Self. On another occasion, the ailment is diagnosed as human pride:

> *Bullha, A is for arrogance. Destroy it, and throw pride down the well.*
> *Lose consciousness of body and mind, and the guide will let himself be found.*[32]

Sultan Bahu speaks in almost the same vein. Ills are diagnosed to be entrenched in worldly desires and our vain pursuits; the cure is found in renunciation of the *dunyā*, in loving others, and in embracing divine remembrance (*dhikr*):

> *Seekers of this world are like dogs, wandering from door to door.*
> *Their attention is riveted on a bone, their lives wasted in bickering.*
> *Short on intelligence and unable to understand, they set out in search of water.*
> *O Bahu, apart from recollection of the Lord, all else is idle chatter!*[33]

> *Half the curses on the world, and all of them on the worldly*
> *Whoever does not sow in the path of the Lord will reap the lashes of torment*
> *Burn, evil world, which causes fathers to sacrifice their sons!*
> *Those who give up this world, Bahu, will gain gardens in bloom*[34]
> *Through study and learning, they earn the pleasures of princes.*

> *What comes of such learning?*
> *Butter never rises from boiling sour milk*
> *Speak, bird! What do you gain by pecking newly sprouted grain?*
> *O Bahu, nursing one broken heart is equal to the worship of many years.*[35]

Even religious and spiritual rituals, unless accompanied by deepest sincerity, remain scorned and ridiculed.

> *Neither am I a yogi nor am I a dervish, nor have I completed a forty-day retreat.*
> *Neither have I rushed to enter a mosque nor have I rattled a big rosary.*
> *"Whoever is heedless for an instant is a disbeliever in an instant," so said my guide.*
> *The guide has done a beautiful thing, Bahu, transporting me there in an instant.*[36]

> *Neither am I a sage, nor am I a scholar, nor a cleric, nor a judge Neither does my heart ask for hell, nor is it content with fondness for paradise Neither did I keep the thirty fasts, nor am I a pure praying person. Unless you attain Allah, Bahu, this world is but a game.*[37]

> *The rosary spun but the heart did not spin; what's the point of holding a rosary?*
> *You learned all the sciences but you didn't learn manners; what's the point of learning sciences? You sat for long vigils but experienced nothing; what's the point of doing vigils?*
> *Yogurt doesn't set without starter, Bahu, even if you boil milk until it browns.*[38]

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32. *Sufi Lyrics*, 343.
33. Elias, 22.
34. Ibid, 39.
35. Ibid, 47.
36. Ibid, 117 with slight modification.
37. Ibid, 29.
38. Ibid, 51.

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Lay Muslim piety, the hallmarks of daily regimens of pious Muslims (*zāhid*), the rituals of Sufis, and the endeavors of religious scholars have all been ridiculed and nullified in one stroke.[39]

These are but just a few illustrations. In brief, then, in Panjabi Sufi poets' diagnosis and prescriptions, political and social evils and ills are traced back not to political and social structures, but to the human *psychopolis*—i.e., the inner world-structures of the human soul. In other words, there is only one structural problem and that is with the structures of the inner world of a human person. This is an unambiguous and persistent motif in this poetic tradition that confronts and unmistakably implicates its listener-reader.[40]

Concluding Remarks

The enduring popularity of Panjabi Sufi poets in the land of Panjab is well evidenced in the now-famous lines of Amrita Preetam in the wake of the tragedies, horrors, and devastations of India's partition in 1947. She invoked and complained directly to Waris Shah, whose poetic rendition of the folk romance of Rānjhā and Hīr—the Romeo and Juliet of Panjab—have come to define Panjab:[41]

> *Today I ask Waris Shah to speak from his grave,*
>
> *And turn to the next page of his book of love You saw one Panjabi daughter weep, you wrote page after page Today countless daughters weep, they cry out to you, Waris Shah: Rise! O sympathizer of the afflicted! Rise! Look at your Panjab! The land is sheeted with corpses, the [river] Chenab is full of blood . . .*
>
> *Today everyone is a villain, a thief of beauty and love. From where can we bring today another Waris Shah?*[42]

Witnessed again in and through the increased popularity of South Asian folk and Sufi *qawwālī* music[43]—both historically important vehicles for the dissemination of Panjabi Sufi poetry—but also in the music of the younger generation of pop

39. Though outside the scope of this essay, it is worth probing whether the critique made of the religious scholars, fellow Sufis, and the rich and the powerful is intended to undermine the vocations and roles played by these actors of the society, or instead to provoke them to embody the highest ideals of their respective vocation. Put simply, are the ʿulamāʾ being asked to abandon being an *ʿālim* or are they invited to become a true *ʿālim*?

40. In passing, one cannot help but notice that the mockery and criticism in the Panjabi Sufi poetry outlined here displays strong parallels with that of Shams-i Tabrizi. See William Chittick's "The Real Shams-i Tabrīzī" in *In Search of the Lost Heart: Explorations in Islamic Thought*, ed. Mohammed Rustom, Atif Khalil, and Kazuyo Murata (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2012), 49–55. What makes these parallels even more intriguing is the unmistakable presence of the legend of Shams in Panjabi Sufi poetry. Furthermore, in South Panjab, in the city of Multan, there is a prominent tomb, a celebrated site of pilgrimage that in popular Sufi piety is thought to be his burial place.

41. Regarding the significance of Waris Shah and his Hīr to the Panjabi poetic tradition, Christopher Shackle notes: "At the heart of the 'matter of Panjab', on which so much pre-modern Panjabi literature naturally draws for its chief inspiration, lie the local romantic legends, such as those of Mirza-Sahiban, Sohni-Mahinval, or Sassi-Punnun (effectively naturalized from its Sindhi origins)—above all, that of Hir–Ranjha. The narrative treatment of this legend by the poet Varis Shah in his Hir (dated AH 1180 = AD 1766–67) continues to enjoy immense popularity on both sides of the international frontier that now divides the Panjab, and is widely regarded as constituting Panjabi literature's most glorious master-work." See "Transition and Transformation in Vāris Shah's Hīr" (241) in The *Indian Narrative: Perspectives and Patterns* (Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1992), 24. For a critique of trends in the study of Vāris Shah's Hīr and a fresh appraisal for the poem, see Jeevan Deol, "Sex, Social Critique and the Female Figure in Vāris Shah's Hīr," *Modern Asian Studies* 36 (2002): 141–71.

42. Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh, 206.

43. Especially the famous *qawwāl* Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan and folksinger Abida Parveen, who sang the poetry of almost all the major Panjabi Sufi poets—i.e., from Baba Farid of the thirteenth century to Pir Mehr Ali Shah (d. 1356/1937) of the twentieth century.

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and rock musicians of South Asia (e.g., *Rabbi, Junoon* and *Coke Studio* recordings in Pakistan and India), there has been an overwhelming resurgence of these Panjabi Sufi poets in recent decades. To the best of my judgment, this renewed interest owes much to an attraction among these musicians and their audiences to this uninhibited, blunt, and critical attitude. It is also a function of the inherent simplicity, straightforwardness, and directness of the vernacular language. In fact, the immense inherent potential of the vernacular was not lost to these Sufi poets either. What Sharafuddin Maneri said about Hindwi has remained true for various other vernaculars, including Panjabi:

> *Hindwi* compositions are very forthright and frank in expression. In purely Persian verses, there is a judicious blend of allusions and what can be fittingly expressed whereas Hindwi employs very, very frank expressions. There is no limit to what it explicitly reveals. It is very disturbing. It is extremely difficult for young men to bear such things. Without any delay, they would be upset.[44]

All in all, ridicule, mockery, and critique of the individual and human societies by Panjabi Sufi poets are perhaps the most unambiguous and categorical positing of the perennial Sufi diagnosis and concomitant cure of the plight of humanity. It also seems clear that to the extent that these poets live on, their voices will continue to insinuate a certain "culture of authenticity and accountability", inspire and force the probing of human intentions and sincerity, and thus keep their listeners perpetually on their "spiritual toes" in ways that only plain old mockery can do.

Relating the mystical poetry of the Panjab to ethics (and especially virtue ethics), it must be obvious from the preceding discussion that these poets operate within the premodern (and perennial Sufi) conceptions of correspondence between the microcosm and the macrocosm. It is this conception of the interrelatedness of the *world-out-there* and the *world-within* that seems to incline our poets to see the human social world (*the metropolis*) as an inevitable extension of our inner human world (*the psychopolis*). Put simply, for Panjabi Sufi poets, our social worlds inevitably mirror our inner human worlds: The world without turns with the turning of the heart within. The etymological connection that revolution (*inqalāb*) has to heart (*qalb*) in Arabic was not lost to them. It is this way of viewing the world—the *worldview*—that establishes a strong link between the works of Panjabi Sufi poets and the tradition of virtue theory. Because social and political ills and evils in the Panjabi Sufi tradition are traced back to the workings of the *soulscape* (the inner human landscape) in this way of thinking, the primary "human task" inevitably involves the cultivation of certain cardinal virtues. These patterns within the mystical thought of Panjabi Sufi poets seem congruent with a broadly conceived theory of Islamic virtue ethics or virtue ethics in general.[45]

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44. Cited in Schimmel, 136.

45. A strong intersection between Sufi ethics and virtue theory has been noted in passing by Bucar in her overview of Islamic virtue theory through Ibn Miskawayh (d. 421/1030): "Islamic ethics is the result of a long process of cultural assimilation of values and theories from pre-Islamic Arabia, Qur'anic teaching, historical examples of the Prophet recorded in hadith, Greek ideas of happiness, customs of conquered people, and other religious ethical systems. Therefore Miskawayh's understanding of virtue cannot represent Islamic thought on the theme entirely, but his work is an example of cultural assimilation, especially Greek philosophy, Islamic theology, and Sufism (218)." See Elizabeth M. Bucar, "Islamic Virtue Ethics" in *The Oxford Handbook of Virtue,* ed. Nancy Snow (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 206–223.

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But fast-forwarding to 2022 and listening to these poets today also forces us to face an intellectual challenge and dilemma. If my reading of these poets is correct, then it is worth probing and asking how this view of ethical life might address the contemporary crises of our age—crises that appear to have, at least in the prevalent popular social imagination, immense structural and institutional dimensions. How would those dealing with mystical traditions—or virtue ethics, generally—respond to the institutional and structural evils of the modern world? Are the ridding of one's ego, renouncing of the *dunyā*, devotion to God through intense love (*'ishq*) and being led by a spiritual guide, and so forth, still *the* first and foremost answers to ills that plague us today? Are Bulleh Shah's words a satisfactory diagnosis and consolation for those who suffered during the partition of India:

> *Bullha, good times have been left behind,*
> *since we did not practice love for the Lord*
>
> *What use is it to be sorry now,*
> *when the birds have stripped the field?*[46]

Any constructive engagement with Sufi ethics (and by extension virtue ethics), and with the dilemmas of our contemporary life, will inevitably have to deal with these looming questions.[47]

46. Sufi Lyrics, 349

47. For further probing of these questions—that is, virtue theory's potential role in the organizational and structural aspects of human society and the challenges of its application to society—one may point to Alasdair MacIntyre's work and his influence. His discussion (mostly critique) of corporate culture and the rise of experts as civil bureaucrats and social scientists in chapters 6 & 7 of *After Virtue* has inspired some debate within the business and corporate world. See especially Ron Beadle and Geoff Moore, "MacIntyre on Virtue and Organization" *Organization Studies* 27, no. 3 (2006): 323–340, and Geoff Moore, "On the Implications of the Practice-Institution Distinction: MacIntyre and the Application of Modern Virtue Ethics to Business," *Business Ethics Quarterly* 12, no. 1 (2002): 19–32.

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CHURNING NECTAR ON THE PATH OF MUHAMMAD: OF ETHICAL IMAGINARIES IN KASHMIRI SUFI POETRY

Peter Dziedzic

The ego is the knotted wood of the forest—
Not good enough for making the frame of a cradle.
He who chops it down, brings it home, and burns it in the kitchen fire,
He follows the path of Muhammad.

— Nund Rīshī[1]

Introduction

While interest in Islam in South Asia has expanded over the past decade, the voluminous Kashmiri corpus of Sufi poetry remains underexplored in academic contexts. Given the important geographical and historical location of the Kashmir Valley as a cultural nexus between Persia, Central Asia, and South Asia, a polyvalent literary ecology informed by a plurality of literary, philosophical, and ethical frameworks developed in the late-medieval and early modern periods.[2] While

1. Jaishree Odin, *Lalla to Nuruddin: Rishi-Sufi Poetry of Kashmir: A Translation and Study* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2013), 132.
2. "Literary ecology," a term I have coined for my own research on Kashmiri literary history, describes any milieu in which multiple literary traditions flourishing in shared geographical and historical boundaries creatively and productively interact to potentially rearticulate linguistic, intellectual, aesthetic, and poetic horizons.

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the Kashmir Valley was home to expansive traditions of both Sanskritic Śaiva and Persianate Sufi literatures for centuries, an indigenous, vernacular tradition of Kashmiri, or Kāshur,[3] poetry also flourished beginning in the fifteenth century with a group identified as the Rīshī Sufis. This vernacular literature, which developed at a time of historical transition in Kashmir from a predominantly Sanskritic, brahamanical, Śaiva society to a Persianate, Islamic, Sufi society, displays a fascinating array of styles, motifs, and themes also present in the extensive archives of Persian and Sanskrit literary imaginaries.[4]

Given this plurality of frameworks, Rīshī Sufi poetry is often at the heart of debates on the nature and character of Kashmiri Islam. In modern and contemporary scholarship, the uniqueness of Kashmiri Islam, defined by a purported Rīshī Sufi ethos of eclecticism, unorthodoxy, and syncretistic openness,[5] leads to a constructed dichotomy between the "non-scripturalist" Rīshī Sufis, a syncretic phenomenon, and the orthodox narratives of normative Sunni Islam.[6] The uniqueness of Kashmiri Islam is often identified as *kashmīriyyāt*, or the perceived, premodern communal harmony in Kashmir.[7] Such a reading portrays the Rīshī Sufis as an unorthodox and, thus, un-Islamic community whose insights cannot be reconciled with Islamic narratives. This is a problematic assumption based on colonial frameworks and cursory engagements with the Rīshī Sufi tradition, particularly its literary archive.

In this paper, I will explore the contours of Rīshī Sufi poetry as a tradition of Islamic devotional literature inculcating unique religious and ethical visions nourished by an encounter of the Sanskritic Śaiva and Persianate Sufi imaginaries. I argue that Rīshī Sufi poetry is a multiform environment—that is, a space where the conceptual alignment of two premodern literary and religious imaginaries produces localized, unique visions of religious identity, practice, and conduct.[8] I begin with a brief introduction to Kashmir's literary history, followed by a survey of the theoretical frameworks guiding this investigation. I then move into a close reading of the verses of three major Kāshur poets—Lal Ded, a fourteenth-century Śaiva ascetic (d. 1392); Nund Rīshī, a fifteenth-century Rīshī Sufi (d. 1440); and Shamas Faqīr, a nineteenth-century Qādirī Sufi (d. ca. 1901). These close readings will lead us to concluding remarks on Kashmiri Sufi poetry as a site of alignment, fostering polythetic ethical and religious imaginaries.

3. I use this term in context to avoid confusion with "Kashmiri" as a general adjective. Thus, I use "Kāshur" to refer to literature written in the Kashmiri language, and "Kashmiri" as an otherwise general adjective.

4. I am indebted to Sonam Kachru and Jane Mikkelson for their articulation of the "imaginaries" at play in early modern Kashmir. Fuller analyses of these concepts will come later in this paper.

5. Chitralekha Zutshi, *Kashmir's Contested Pasts: Narratives, Sacred Geographies, and the Historical Imagination* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014), 304–5.

6. Mufti Mudasir, "Holy Lives as Texts: Saints and the Fashioning of Kashmir's Muslim Identity," *Philological Encounters* 2 no.1 (2016): 289–290.

7. Dean Accardi, "Embedded Mystics: Writing Lal Ded and Nund Rishi into the Kashmiri Landscape," in *Kashmir: History, Politics, Representation*, ed. Chitralekha Zutshi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 247–248.

8. Again, I am indebted to Kachru and Mikkelson for these conceptualizations.

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In the Garden of Nightingales: A Brief Literary History of Kashmir

Kashmir has long been a historical, geographical, intellectual, and cultural nexus linking Persia, Central Asia, and South Asia. Kashmir has long been an epicenter of a prolific and renowned culture of Sanskrit and Vedic learning, particularly in the medieval period, to the extent that it is only Kashmir and Varanasi which receive special mention as intellectual centers in al-Bīrūnī's survey of India.[9] Kashmir was home to many great luminaries of the tradition of Sanskrit poetics and aesthetics, including Ānandavardhana, the author of the *Dhvanyāloka*, a seminal work on the theory of aesthetic suggestion (*dhvani*); Mammata, the author of an integral work on Sanskrit poetic theory, *Kāvyaprakāśa*; and Abhinavagupta, a famed philosopher and Śaiva tantric theoretician who synthesized reflections on *rasa* (aesthetic taste or affect), *dhvani* (aesthetic suggestion), and religious experience in his commentary on the *Dhvanyāloka*. The works of these and other Kashmiri intellectuals writing in Sanskrit shaped the tradition of Sanskrit aesthetics and poetics for succeeding generations of Sanskrit scholars. In addition to Kashmir being a center of Vedic study and philosophical reflection, Kashmiri authors produced literature in a variety of genres. We have examples of chronicles, such as Kalhana's history of the Kashmiri kings in the *Rājataraṃgiṇī*;[10] of satire, such as Kṣemendra's plays; and of courtly poetry, or *kāvya*. Kashmir, "[b]etween the ninth and twelfth centuries . . . was arguably the most dynamic hub of Sanskrit literary production in South Asia, and it continued to be the site of new production even after this heyday."[11] This attests to the renowned Sanskrit literary culture of Kashmir flourishing in the premodern period.

Aside from this significant Sanskrit literary heritage, Kashmir was an epicenter of Śaiva metaphysical reflection and tantric practice.[12] Kashmiri Śaivas were a tantric community centered around devotion to Śiva as the primary deity. Kashmiri Śaivas developed an extensive metaphysical schema detailing the relationship of essential unity between Śiva and the created world as a play of absolute divine consciousness. This schema is rooted in a doctrine of metaphysical vibration (*spanda*).[13] In particular, there was a prolific culture of stotra production among Kashmiri Śaiva practitioners. *Stotras*—variously translated as "hymns of praise," "praise-poems," "devotional hymns," "prayers," "devotional lyric poems," and "hymns of adoration"—were central to the *devotional life* of many Śaiva practitioners.[14] Important collections of *stotras* include the Śivastotrāvalī of the eleventh-century Śaiva scholar Utpaladeva. Many *stotra* collections have been lost or remain untranslated.

9. Michael Witzel, "The Kashmiri Paṇḍits: Their Early History," in *The Valley of Kashmir: The Making and Unmaking of a Composite Culture?* ed. Aparna Rao (Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 2008), 83.
10. Luther Obrock, "History at the End of History: Śrīvara's Jainataraṅginī," *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 50, no. 2 (2013): 222.
11. Hamsa Stainton, "Poetry and Prayer: Stotras in the Religious and Literary History of Kashmir" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2016), 59.
12. Unfortunately, space is insufficient for a detailed survey of Śaiva metaphysics.
13. Mark Dyczkowski, *The Doctrine of Vibration: An Analysis of the Doctrines and Practices of Kashmir Shaivism* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2000), 17.
14. Stainton, "Poetry and Prayer," 14.

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In the fourteenth century, there was an expanding influx of immigrants to Kashmir from Central Asia, particularly scholars escaping Timurid persecution.[15] Gradually, with the establishment of the first Muslim dynasty in Kashmir, the Shahmirī dynasty, Persian became the dominant, elite language of the Kashmir Valley, and a prolific culture of Persianate, Islamic, and Sufi poetry thrived, earning the region the titles "Iran Minor" (*Irān-i ṣaghīr)* and "Garden of Nightingales" (*Bāgh-i bulbul*) among early modern Persianate litterateurs. Particularly in the fifteenth century under the rule of the Shahmirī sultan Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, there were court-sanctioned translation efforts between Sanskrit and Persian, including translations of the Sanskrit epics into Persian and even a translation of Jāmī's celebrated *Yūsuf u Zulaykhā* into Sanskrit.[16] Through the spread of both Jāmī's poetry and the activities of the fourteenth century Kubrawī Sufi master, Mīr Sayyid ʿAlī Hamadānī, the Akbarī school of philosophical Sufism shaped the intellectual and literary horizons of Persian literary production in Kashmir.[17]

Concurrently, at this moment of transition from a mainly Sanskritic culture to a largely Persianate culture, a significant body of literature in the local vernacular, Kāshur, began to take shape, particularly among the early Rīshī Sufi ascetics.[18] The primary genre of this early vernacular literature, known as *vākhs* (Sanskrit: "vāc," or speech) or *shrūks* (Sanskrit: "śloka", verse, and "śru," hear), was derived from meters and forms of Sanskrit prosody. Kāshur poetry was largely an oral corpus at its inception, though there are manuscripts documenting these verses in subsequent centuries. Modern collections of the early poets were compiled formally in the nineteenth century during British colonial rule.[19] In the eighteenth century, Kāshur poetry became increasingly influenced by the Persian language and its poetic genres. Over time, the *vākh* and *shrūk* were replaced by the Persianate genres of *qaṣīda, masnavī*, and *ghazal*.

Given this history, I posit that there are six frameworks which inform the milieu of Kāshur vernacular poetry. These are:

Linguistic Frameworks:	*Sanskrit*	*Persian*
Philosophical Frameworks:	*Kashmir Śaivism*	*Akbarī Sufism*
Literary Frameworks:	*Indic*	*Arabo-Persianate*

There is, of course, overlap between these categories, but this division reveals the polyvalence of the various concepts and ideas which inform the imaginal world of Rīshī Sufi poetry.

The Rīshī Sufis became synonymous with the Sufi group founded by Nund Rīshī, who was both a Kubrawwī disciple and, according to the hagiographical tradition,

15. G. L. Tikku, *Persian Poetry in Kashmir*, 1339–1846: An Introduction (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 9.
16. Tikku, *Persian Poetry in Kashmir,* 16.
17. William Chittick, "Notes on Ibn 'Arabī's Influence in the Subcontinent," *The Muslim World* 82, no. 3/4 (1992): 223-24.
18. Odin, *Lalla to Nuruddin*, 4–5.
19. These integral and important aspects of orality, textuality, colonialism, and power dynamics create interesting concerns regarding textual authority and authenticity which I do not have the space to explore in this paper. I hope to expand this analysis elsewhere.

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a spiritual successor to Lal Ded, a famed Kashmiri Śaiva ascetic.[20] It is said, ". . . Nund Rīshī accumulated a number of ardent devotees and founded the Rīshī Order of Sufis."[21] The choice of the term Rīshī by Nund Rīshī was supposedly a conscious one, meant to link his group with the rīshī of Kashmir's ancient past.[22] These Rīshī Sufis are also acknowledged in later Persian chronicles, pointing in some way to their historic success in the Kashmir Valley. In the *Tariḫ-e Ḥassan,* an important Kashmiri Persian chronicle, the Rīshī are divided into three orders: the "Hindu" Rīshī, who preceded Nund Rīshī; Nund Rīshī and his contemporaries; and Nund Rīshī's successors, who continued as a formal order until the eighteenth century.[23] "Rīshī Sufis" is thus not a modern, colonial term, but one indigenous to the sense of communal self-identification.

Given this conscious link with pre-Islamic, Śaiva, "Hindu" rīshīs, the Rīshī Sufi order developed an image in modern discourse as a syncretic religious movement defined by *kashmīriyyāt*. *Kashmīriyyāt*, a nebulous term in Kashmiri studies, has been defined as ". . . an ethos of religious and cultural tolerance and harmony between the majority Muslims and the minority Hindus peculiar to Kashmir," ". . . a syncretic tradition created by the indigenous mystical tradition of Kashmir," and, ". . . communal harmony, multiculturalism, and tolerance . . ."[24] Such a term is still used positively in contemporary scholarship on the Rīshī Sufis.[25] What this reveals is a problematic dichotomy between Kashmiri Islam qua the Rīshī Sufis and orthodox Sunni-normative Islam. The reflections of the Rīshī Sufis, most noticeable in their poetic corpus, are thus shunned as non-Islamic innovations. This is an inherently problematic discourse. I posit it is necessarily more nuanced; the Rīshī Sufi corpus enacts unique moments of Islamic religious and ethical reflection.

Rīshī Sufism as Polythetic Tradition: Considering Theoretical Frameworks

Several recent theoretical interventions may help reframe the discourse on the Rīshī Sufis. In considering an analysis of the Rīshī Sufi corpus, I propose several different, though mutually symbiotic, theoretical frameworks for thinking through Rīshī Sufi poetry as a religio-literary tradition: Carl Ernst's concept of polythetic traditions, Tony Stewart's theory of translation, and Shahab Ahmed's notion of Islamic identity formation. Furthermore, the concept of Kashmiri poetry as a "multiform environment," an analysis developed by Sonam Kachru and Jane Mikkelson, will prepare us for reading Kashmiri Sufi poetry as loci of fruitful, immanent alignment of literary horizons.

20. Odin, *Lalla to Nuruddin*, 20.
21. Accardi, "Embedded Mystics," 249.
22. Accardi, "Embedded Mystics," 249.
23. Mudasir, "Holy Lives," 294.
24. Mudasir, "Holy Lives," 289.
25. See, for example, the introduction to Jaishree Odin's text, *Lalla to Nuruddin: Rishi-Sufi Poetry of Kashmir: A Translation and Study.*

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Carl Ernst, an influential contemporary scholar of South Asian Islam, overturns two important intellectual categories in the conceptualization of religion since the Protestant Reformation: religions as unconditioned essences and notions of religious syncretism. Through a textual and historical analysis of *The Pool of Nectar*, which, ". . . made available to Muslim readers certain practices associated with the Nath yogis and the teachings known as hatha [sic] yoga,"[26] Ernst argues that neither conceptualizations of religions as static entities nor theories of influence and syncretism among stable traditions can fully explain the porous practices and narratives which have emerged. Religions, when treated as homogeneous entities, are reified and oversimplified, making any historical change or internal complexity and diversity a deviation from a perceived norm. A polythetic analysis allows for ". . . numerous examples of . . . multiplex symbols, practices, and doctrines [to] be at work in any particular religious milieu."[27] The polythetic approach encourages us to move beyond the search for source, influence, and stable boundaries which are "troubled" in different contexts.[28] Thus, I propose thinking with Ernst's model in identifying the Rīshī Sufi tradition as a polythetic tradition, informed by a variety of linguistic, philosophical, and literary frameworks giving rise to traditions always informed by local contexts.

In addition to Ernst's proposals, Tony Stewart's scholarship offers a helpful employment of translation theory which may enhance this study. In Stewart's analysis of premodern, precolonial religious identity formation in Bengal, Stewart, like Ernst, recognizes the problematic issue of essentializing religious traditions and positing syncretic influence—". . . syncretism assumes at the outset its own conclusions . . . by articulating the inappropriate alliance of two things that in their essential form are mutually exclusive . . ."[29] Stewart proposes a translation theory of textual and intellectual interaction among religious groups which more accurately portrays a dynamic process of encounter while not assuming syncretistic products of static entities. Stewart posits four models of religious encounter as translation: formal literal equivalence, refracted equivalence, dynamic equivalence, and metaphoric equivalence. While literary equivalence aims for literal translations of concepts, and reflection suggests a concern for approximations of meaning, the most interesting interactions come in the latter two stages. Dynamic equivalence accounts for both overlapping semantic systems and priority of cultural contexts which give meaning to various terms. The focus shifts from a concern for relaying precise content to one of honoring social contexts. Lastly, in intersemiotic interaction, extended, metaphorical constructs become shared metaphorical worlds where constellations of reference become increasingly tangled to the point where no single discourse or construct can account for all lived experience.[30] Such

26. Carl Ernst, "Situating Sufism and Yoga," in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 15, no. 1 (2005): 21.
27. Ernst, "Situating Sufism and Yoga," 21.
28. "Polythetic," is defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as, "[r]elating to or sharing a number of characteristics which occur commonly in members of a group or class, but none of which is essential for membership of that group or class." While a polythetic analysis of religions does not originate with Ernst, he shapes the model by applying it to the specific case study of Sufism and Yoga. As such, I use this as a theoretical model for analysis.
29. Tony Stewart, "In Search of Equivalence: Conceiving Muslim-Hindu Encounter through Translation Theory," in *History of Religions* 40, no. 3 (2001): 270.
30. Ibid., 278–283.

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a theory of interpretation helps us move from conceptualizing religions as the cross-breeding of static entities to one of fluid porosity, a model which echoes and enhances Ernst's concept of polythetic tradition.

To complement these theoretical frameworks, Shahab Ahmed offers new ways to think about traditions, literatures, and cultures which might be classified as "Islamic." Ahmed attempts to account for both plurality and apparent contradiction in phenomena identified as "Islamic" by proposing a tripartite system of hermeneutical engagement and meaning-making among Muslims with the spatiality of Revelation as Pretext (the Unseen, the *lawḥ maḥfūẓ*), Text (the Quranic and Prophetic revelations), and Con-Text (the various ways humans have engaged with Pre-Text and Text in various cultural and historical milieux).[31] Such a system suggests, ". . . meaningful ambiguity and . . . contradiction are inherent to, and arise directly from, the structural spatiality of the very phenomenon of Revelation itself."[32] Such a proposal allows us to identify Rīshī Sufism not only as a polythetic tradition engaged in intersemiotic translation processes, but also as a fully and authentically *Islamic* tradition.

Lastly, these theoretical insights can be applied not only to the historical, religious phenomenon of Rīshī Sufism, but also to the literary corpus they have produced. Sonam Kachru and Jane Mikkelson's recent scholarship on the poetry of Lal Dad offers helpful frameworks for this. In the corpus of Lal Ded, Kachru and Mikkelson see an example of an indigenous, immanent comparative form of poetics which ". . . afford[s] the conceptual and aesthetic alignment of two pre-modern cosmopolitan literary and religious imaginaires, Sanskrit and Persian."[33] Lal Ded's Kāshur verses foster "multiform environments," suggesting to the reader, ". . . not to think of them as being plagued by variants but, rather, as being blessed by being sites of variants."[34] This opens a space for textual alignment, ". . . the interpretively generous and reciprocal repositioning of two thought systems . . ."[35] This framework of multiform environments allows for an inherently productive navigation of difference—symbolic, lexical, or otherwise—in the space of a Kāshur poem.

My analysis assumes that Rīshī Sufism is a polythetic tradition marked by the creation of an inter-semiotic imaginal religio-literary landscape. As such, it is an authentically Islamic tradition, defined by a Kashmiri Con-Text with a Pre-Textual episteme informed by both Persianate Islamic and Indic Śaiva metaphysical concepts. Rīshī Sufi poetic texts serve as shared metaphorical worlds and multiform environments, becoming productive sites of navigating and integrating different imaginal horizons. With the dichotomy between Rīshī Sufism and Sunni Islam now untenable, previous anxieties ". . . about textual authority, and about the very nature of Islam,"[36] fade away. It is in this context we will pursue a close reading of Rīshī Sufi verses.

31. Shahab Ahmed, *What is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 349.
32. Ahmed, *What is Islam?* 544.
33. Sonam Kachru and Jane Mikkelson, "The Mind Is Its Own Place: Of Lalla's Comparative Poetics," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 88, no. 2 (2019): 125.
34. Kachru and Mikkelson, "The Mind Is Its Own Place,"127.
35. Ibid.
36. Ernst, "Situating Sufism and Yoga," 42.

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Our "Spiritual Grandmother":[37] The Poems of Lal Ded

Having situated the Rīshī Sufi tradition, we now look at three figures and their poetic verses. The first figure is Lal Ded (d. 1392), a renowned Śaiva yogini in the lineage of the famed teacher, Vasugupta. She was known for wandering the Kashmiri hills, singing her *vākhs* to anyone who would listen. Lal Ded, an endearing term which means, "our dear granny," was also known as Lalleshwari by those writing in Sanskrit and Lalla ʿĀrifa (the woman gnostic) or Rābiʿa al-thānawiyya (the second Rābiʿa)[38] in the Persian chronicles. According to these chronicles, she apparently took Sufi teachings from the great Akbarī teacher, Mīr Sayyid ʿAlī Hamadānī.[39]

Another important hagiographic note concerns her role as both spiritual teacher and mother of Nund Rīshī.[40] The popular tale in the Persian hagiographies is that Nund Rīshī, as a newborn, refused his mother's milk and was on the verge of starving to death. It was not until Lal Ded passed by and offered her milk that he ate and was nourished. Whether or not such an event happened is of little importance; it affirms, in the communal imagination, both Nund Rīshī's initiation as a Muslim disciple of a Śaiva ascetic and Lal Ded's initiation as the first rīshī of the Rīshī Sufi order.[41] What is also interesting is the way in which these premodern texts initiate a Śaiva yogini poetess into a lineage of famous female Islamic mystics and gnostics. Lal Ded's works reveal a dazzling array of influences that came to define Rīshī Sufi poetry. Her verses were widely popularized and are chanted even today in Kashmiri mosques and shrines.[42] I pursue several aspects of Lal Ded's verses—an expressed religiosity, polythetic articulations, and ethical reflection in a multiform environment.

First,[43] Lal Ded, in several verses, expresses her practice as a Śaiva yogini:

> *Lord! I've never known who I really am, or You.*
> *I threw my love away on this lousy carcass*
> *And never figured it out: You're me, I'm You.*
> *All I ever did was doubt: Who am I? Who are you?*[44]

This *vākh* reveals both her Śaiva yogic practices ("I threw my love away on this lousy carcass") and her familiarity with Śaiva metaphysical drama of the unity of Śiva and creation as expressions of a singular absolute consciousness ("You're me, I'm You). Elsewhere, her verses admit an abiding familiarity with Śaiva cosmology:

37. These subtitles are inspired by a quote from a Kashmiri friend, Mushtaq ul-Haq Raqeeb, during an encounter in Srinigar in August 2018, "If Lal Ded is our spiritual grandmother, and Nund Rīshī is our patron saint, then Shamas Faqīr is our national poet."

38. This is an allusion to the famous female Sufi figure, Rābiʿa al-ʿAdawiyya.

39. Hamid Naseem Rafiabadi, *Islam and Sufism in Kashmir: Some Lesser Known Dimensions* (Delhi: Sarup Book Publishers, 2009), 133.

40. Nund Rīshī, the second poet for analysis, will be discussed in the next section of the paper.

41. Again, according to the Persian chronicles, the rīshī are ancient. However, Lal Ded becomes the first person to initiate the new "era" of the Rīshīs as Nund Rīshī's teacher and spiritual mother.

42. While in Kashmir in summer 2018, I visited the shrine of Mīr Sayyid ʿAlī Hamadānī for the anniversary of his death. At the base of the tomb, a visitor sat reading from a booklet of Lal Ded's poems.

43. I am unable to analyze the full poetic corpus of any Rīshī Sufi poet. I only offer an analysis of examples which I think contribute to our understanding of Rīshī Sufi poetry as a polythetic tradition.

44. Lal Ded (trans. Ranjit Hoskote), *I, Lalla: The Poems of Lal Ded* (Delhi: Penguin Books, 2011), 25.

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Word or thought, normal or Absolute, they mean nothing here.
Even the mudrās of silence won't get you entry.
We're beyond even [Ś]iva and [Ś]akti here.
This Beyond that's beyond all we can name, that's your lesson![45]

Referencing the Śaiva doctrine of absolute consciousness beyond conceptualizations of either divine transcendence (*Śiva*) or immanence (*Śakti*), Lal Ded firmly establishes her grounding in a Kashmiri Śaiva metaphysical framework. Many of her words, drawing on earlier Sanskrit poetry and philosophy, also root these verses in a predominantly Sanskritic linguistic framework. In particular, this verse seems to echo an earlier Sanskrit Śaiva *stotra*, found in Utpaladeva's *Śivastotrāvalī*:

This is a state where nothing remains to be known,
Nothing to be done, no other yoga nor any perceptivity;
What knowledge remains is the offering of the universe to be consummated
In the fire of pure consciousness which reigns supreme.[46]

Both verses echo a Śaiva spiritual ideal of seeking union with Śiva in absolute consciousness, which is the ground of being.

Elsewhere, Lal Ded develops an ethical vision rooted in antinomian evaluations of brahmanical puritanical religious authority:

An idol is but a lump of stone, a temple is but a lump of stone
From crown to sole, each is of the same substance.[47]
O, learned Pandit! What is this to which you offer worship?
Bind your mind and your vital airs.[48]

Here, religious learning and practice without inner experience is foolish and empty. This antinomian, experience-based discourse is developed in several poems. Despite these ethical suggestions in the poems, it does not reveal a great deal of lexical or literary alignment. However, we see the expansion of these Sanskritic, Śaiva frameworks and a polyvalent, polythetic tradition emerging in other poems:

Śiva is everywhere, know Him as the sun
Know not the Hindu different to the Muslim
If truly wise, know your own self
That alone is the way to [Ṣaḥeb].[49]

Here, we see the creation of a direct equivalence between Śiva and Ṣaḥeb, a Persianate word for God, along with a verse which may reveal some resonance between Śaiva and Akbarī metaphysical concepts of Divine unity. The lexical intermingling of both Sanskritic and Persianate concepts of deity is significant for,

45. Lal Ded (trans. Ranjit Hoskote), I, Lalla, 115.
46. N. K. Kotru, *Śivastotrāvalī of Utpaladeva: Sanskrit Text with Introduction, English Translation and Glossary* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1985), 60.
47. I have edited Grierson's translation slightly to reflect the norms of contemporary English usage.
48. Lal Ded (trans. George Grierson and Lionel Barnett), *Lallā-Vākyāni, or the Wise Sayings of Lal Ded, a Mystic Poetess of Ancient Kashmir* (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1920), 39.
49. Neerja Mattoo, "Syncretic Tradition and the Creative Life: Some Kashmiri Mystic Poets," in *The Parchment of Kashmir: History, Society, and Polity*, ed. Nyla Ali Khan (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 94.

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as Kachru and Mikkelson remind us, "[a]n entire literary history resides in [each] small word."[50] Śiva and Ṣaḥeb are not merely words; they carry entire significant histories about what the deity is and how it operates in the world.

Additionally, she sings:

> *I can't believe this happened to me!*
> *A hoopoe cut off my claws with his beak.*
> *The truth of all my dreams hit me in one line:*
> *I, Lalla, find myself on a lake, no shore in sight.*[51]

The mention of the hoopoe bird here is also a significant allusion to an important symbol in the Persian Sufi tradition. It is an image not found in Sanskrit poetry, but in Farīd ud-Dīn ʿAṭṭār's famous work, the *Manṭiq al-ṭayr*, one of the most influential Persian Sufi *masnavīs*. Again, this simple word carries with it an entire imaginary of meaning, reference, and textual interweaving. The hoopoe is a representative of the spiritual guide, leading the birds—the readers of the text—on the path of spiritual cultivation. The cutting of Lal Ded's claws is significant as it more closely alludes to the Śaiva yogic practice of sensory control. There is an interesting alignment occurring in this verse—the hoopoe as a representative Islamic figure is engaging in a representative Śaiva practice of yogic sensory control. Here we see the embodiment of a multiform environment where the lexical range and the archives to which they are linked flourish in creative ways. The imaginaries are rearticulated to express new ethical visions and values.

These two poems reveal the boundaries of a unique Rīshī Sufi ethical imaginary. In the former, an ethical imperative of self-cultivation is forwarded, and fixation on caste and communal boundaries is eschewed. The image of Ṣaḥeb—derived from the Arabic root *ṣ-ḥ-b,* which, along with its lexical variants, connotes friendship, companionship, and stewardship—adds a depth of intimacy to the poem. The poem, in its lexical and imaginal choices, performs the ethical vision it attempts to convey: differences—between Ṣaḥeb and Śiva, between Hindu and Muslim—are subsumed in the quest to know oneself. This is an ethical vision that inherently results from the polyvalent, multiform environment created by this meeting of the Sanskritic Śaiva and Persianate Sufi imaginary horizons. Such visions are developed further in the writings of Nund Rīshī.

Our "Patron Saint": The Poems of Nund Rīshī

Our second figure of analysis is Nund Rīshī (d. 1440), also known as Sheikh ul-ʿĀlam, who was the formal founder of the Rīshī Sufi order and supposedly was a contemporary of both Mīr Sayyid ʿAlī Hamadānī and Lal Ded. Again, Nund Rīshī was writing at a time of socio-political transition during the ascendance of the Shahmirī dynasty, so his works reflect an antinomian spirit in opposition to rigid

50. Kachru and Mikkelson, "The Mind Is Its Own Place," 129.
51. Lal Ded (trans. Hoskote), *I, Lalla,* 70.

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religious authority and mirrors themes in the verses of Lal Ded. He cultivated a wide following in Kashmir, "... both Kashmiri Pandits and Kashmiri Muslims claim him as their spiritual guide, the former referring to him as Shazanand (one who has attained ultimate truth) and the latter calling his verses the *Koshur* [sic] Quran."[52] The Persian hagiographies offer a nebulous portrayal of Nund Rīshī, casting him in a number of seemingly conflicting ways as both a standard-bearer for "Islamic orthodoxy" in the Valley and as someone initiated into both Śaiva and Sufi lineages while espousing an antinomian message against the Islamic mullahs, or religious authorities.[53] Let us consider how a polythetic tradition is constructed in his poetic universe.

First, he roots himself in a seemingly "orthodox" Islamic identity:

Knowledge is great, so recite the sacred word [kalima].
On following Muhammad, you will walk on the path awake.
A year of good deeds, a heap of pearls.
A feast of devotion—He is on that path.[54]

The mention and celebration of the *kalima*, here a clear reference to the *shahada*,[55] represents Nund Rīshī's perceived location as an orthodox Muslim in the corpus. Elsewhere, we see reference to Nund Rīshī's admiration for his Śaiva spiritual teacher, Lal Ded, with particular praise for her excellence as a tantric yogic practitioner. There are two versions of a popular verse as they developed as an oral tradition:

That Lalla of Padmānpura—
She drank nectar by mouthfuls.
She saw Śiva everywhere.
O, Lord, bestow a similar boon upon me.[56]

or

It was Lalla of Padmanpora
Who drank nectar by mouthfuls.
A beloved avatar she was to us, too.
O, Lord, bestow a similar boon upon me![57]

Nund Rīshī, in the space of these verses, links himself directly to the Śaiva tradition of his teacher. There is an element of inherent canon formation occurring here. Lal Ded, as a Śaiva yogini, is incorporated into the framework of Rīshī Sufism, and thus, so are her spiritual insights and visions. Lal Ded's consumption of nectar (*amṛta*)—an important Hindu and Śaiva image—occurs in several places in the corpus. Here, the consumption of nectar becomes a boon, a spiritual gift to be sought. That this

52. Chitralekha Zutshi, *Languages of Belonging: Islam, Regional Identity, and the Making of Kashmir* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 23.
53. Odin, *Lalla to Nuruddin*, 13-14, 114-15.
54. Odin, *Lalla to Nuruddin*, 106.
55. Odin, *Lalla to Nuruddin*, 78.
56. Odin, *Lalla to Nuruddin*, 79.
57. T.N. Dhar, "Saints and Sages of Kashmir," in *Kashmir and Its People: Studies in the Evolution of Kashmiri Society,* ed. M.K. Kaw (New Delhi: A.P.H. Publishing Corporation, 2004), 195.

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is the stable concern in both variants is telling, as is the fact that both variations—seeing Śiva everywhere and becoming an avatar—frame Islamic devotion within the religious imaginary of Śaiva practice. Elsewhere, acquiring this nectar becomes central to the goals of Islamic worship. The image of churning is taken up by Nund Rīshī in referring to his own student:

> *My Zaina churns the nectar—*
> *He renounced samsara [the world] with honor.*
> *The disciple surpassed his preceptor.*
> *Bless me like that, God!*[58]

Though the image of churning nectar figures prominently in several of Nund Rīshī's verses, here it is framed as a matter of spiritual pedagogy. The goal of Nund Rīshī in raising his student was to teach him to "churn nectar"—to churn the vital life force in Śaiva cosmology. He even wishes this for himself. The acquisition of nectar so that one may cross *samsara*, a concept of cyclical suffering and rebirth derived solely from the Śaiva imaginary, becomes the pinnacle of Islamic Sufi spiritual development. That a symbol drawn from the Sanskritic Śaiva imaginary serves as the summation of Nund Rīshī's devout Muslim student is another example of the performance of this polyvalence. Churning nectar becomes the goal on the path of Muhammad, nectar, the goal of Islamic devotion.

Like Lal Ded, Nund Rīshī offers an ethical vision rooted in antinomian rejection of hypocritical religious authority:

> *You are Mullahs—why are you divided?*
> *You are ready to cheat one another.*
> *You acquire knowledge to fulfill your desires.*
> *You get angry on seeing a guest.*
> *You are proud that you are the chosen ones.*
> *Not one in a thousand amongst you will escape there.*[59]

and

> *Caste is of no use in fancy gatherings.*
> *Caste is not written on one's face.*
> *Caste won't make your body parts impure.*
> *If you perform your duties—there is no caste.*[60]

The messages are clear—traditional structures of religious authority have become corrupted, and there is a need to return to a purer spirituality that is not based solely on transmitted religious authority. There is an antinomian spirit to the disparaging of caste, echoing Lal Ded's own ethical concerns with communal boundaries restricting inner contemplative experience.

58. Odin, *Lalla to Nuruddin*, 104.
59. Odin, *Lalla to Nuruddin*, 115.
60. Odin, *Lalla to Nuruddin*, 125.

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It is interesting to compare the image and wording of the former poem with Lal Ded's *vākh*. Here, Nund Rīshī speaks of the need to "perform your duties," (*aʿmāl*), which is an Arabo-Persian word meaning acts in the world. This differs slightly from Lal Ded's call to "know your own self." These are two divergent ethical visions, drawn from different frameworks of the Kashmiri polyvalent tradition. Lal Ded is drawing from the Śaiva concepts of yogic practice as a way of cultivating true spiritual vision, whereas Nund Rīshī is drawing from rich prophetic and Quranic references to *aʿmāl* as acts accruing merit. These different choices skillfully reveal the range of possibilities of ethical vision based on where and when the imaginal horizons encounter.

Elsewhere, cross-pollinated multiform environments are cultivated:

> *If you listen to truth, curb the five [senses]*
> *Otherwise, you bend the body and call it Namaz!*
> *If you unite Śiva with the void*
> *That is the inner Namaz, indeed.*[61]

In this critical verse, we see the intertextual overlay of an explicitly Islamic image of ritual prayer (*namaz*) and Śaiva concepts of consciousness and emptiness (*Śivasta/Śunyahas*) within a single *shrūk.* The culmination of Islamic practice, *namaz*, is framed within a Śaiva paradigm of tantric union. Here, we see the potential revelation of an intersemiotic world developing in Nund Rīshī's poetry, where practices associated with Śaivism and Islam are incorporated into a single devotional poem. This verse aligns with the ethical vision inculcated in both Lal Ded's and Nund Rīshī's verses analyzed above; there is an emphasis on personal experience and inner practice. Whereas we noticed a divergence of ethical vision above, based on the figures drawing from distinct frameworks, here there is the creation of a multiform ethical vision, one in which ritual action (*namaz*) becomes a yogic practice ("curb the senses"). New ethical visions are formed by an integration of various imaginal possibilities in the space of a few, short verses.

Nund Rīshī's verses expand the perceived contours of what it means to be a Sufi, reflecting a hybridity of themes and attitudes that would come to define the Rīshīs in the hagiographies and by later scholars. The verses become a means for navigating the imagined limits of religious and ethical vision, enacting a practice that is both wide enough to accept the "*kalima*" of Islam while striving for the tantric insights attained by Lal Ded, the beloved Śaiva avatar who drank nectar by the mouthful, culminating in an image of Islamic ritual prayer fulfilled in Śaiva tantric practice. These poems serve as archives of communal memory and imagination, allowing for the flourishing of a polythetic, multiform ethical environment.

61. Odin, *Lalla to Nuruddin,* 133. I am thankful to M.H. Zaffar for providing this alternative rendering of the verse.

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Our "National Poet": The Poems of Shamas Faqīr

The third poet I wish to analyze briefly is a modern Kashmiri poet, Shamas Faqīr (d. ca. 1901). Very little scholarship is available in English on his life and work; yet, he remains an enduringly important figure in Kashmir's literary history. Faqīr is one of the most beloved Rīshī Sufi poets in Kashmir today,[62] and his poetry is recited at gatherings and shrines across the Valley. He was an initiate into the Qādiriyya Sufi order and is reported to have travelled south to study with religious teachers, *pīrs*, in the Punjab and elsewhere. In imitation of his spiritual ancestors, Lal Ded and Nund Rīshī, he was also a wandering ascetic. His verses, too, reveal a wide range of ideas, concerns, and themes, and illustrate the construction of a polythetic multiform. I present here a yet unpublished translation of one of Shamas Faqīr's *ghazals*:

I lost my poverty in the Poverty, and no one cares about the poverty,
I followed the Śāstras that melted the iron within,
And I was left as tempered gold.
I travelled from one birth to another,
I would have told you, but you don't pay heed.
I would have told you all that happened,
I would have told you that I came back with empty hands.
The enlightened one taught me only one lesson,
and let all knowledge and ignorance be swept away.
I thought again and again about purity,
my passion bestowed me with the vision divine.
I am you and you are me
as I attained the sixth sense (ṣaṣkal)—
It was a journey through the six forests
As I measured the soul,
As I drank the nectar,
and witnessed the divine light at the very beginning.
Where sun and the moon are one and the same,
I was blessed there with the vision divine.
My search for You took me to Emptiness (Śūnya),
The whole sky came in my lap.
I left the body and attained purity,
And I witnessed the time of Brahman.
I traveled through expanses and depths,
Following the ways of the brahmin sage.
I lived in the dream and attained both turiya (turya) and soshaph (suṣuptiḥ),
I travelled the world with full honor,
I held my beliefs and faith dear,
And offered prayers with deepest love,

62. While Persian chronicles depict the Rīshī Sufi order ending formally in the eighteenth century, individual figures, religious teachers (*pīrs*), and poets continue to be identified as "Rīshī Sufis" to the present day.

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I served Him in the best ways.
I extinguished the burning pyre
and he went underground carrying the oven
I met Lord Shiva with deep passion
and received immortal bliss.
Shamas Faqīr emerges by imbibing Om
as my tongue is tied to it
I burned myself and took control
Of all the seven holes (senses)
I became the pearl chain of the royal swan.[63]

As a modern Qādirī Sufi, Shamas Faqīr displays a stunning familiarity with Śaiva ideas and concepts. We are confronted by a dazzling array of images drawn from the local Śaiva Con-Text. In the first stanza, he explicitly refers to *Śāstras*, not the Quran, as a referent religious text. He mentions his travel through *samsaric* rebirths and his control of a sixth spiritual sense espoused in Śaivism. Most interestingly, he mentions highly theoretical concepts from Upanishadic (and thus, both Vedantic and Śaiva) metaphysics: *turya* and *suṣuptiḥ*, the highest states of consciousness in Śaiva thought. He meets Śiva (not Ṣaḥeb), imbibes the sacred Vedic mantra, *Om*, and drinks nectar before engaging in yogic practices. Interestingly, this poem almost exclusively draws from the Śaiva imaginary for its impactful and significant metaphors and allusions. Conversely, what is essential yet untranslatable is that this poem is a finely crafted *ghazal*, following all the major conventions of classical Persian literary composition, including a *qāfiya* (ending rhyme) and *takhalluṣ* (self-referent of the poet in the final verse). The poem thus represents a significant enfolding of several religious and literary frameworks, pointing toward the polythetic nature of this tradition.

Like his literary and spiritual ancestors, Lal Ded and Nund Rīshī, Faqīr continues to weave an ethical imaginary rooted in cultivating personal religious experience (with constant allusions and repetitions of the first person "I" along with the image of drinking nectar). Like the verses of Lal Ded and Nund Rīshī, he cultivates a polyvalent ethical vision rooted in both Śaiva yogic sensory control and Sufi practices of devotional prayer. His use of polyvalence as a multiform environment is overwhelming with layers of reference, symbol, and allusion. As a later Rīshī Sufi, he draws on the earlier imaginal alignments of Lal Ded, Nund Rīshī, and dozens of other Rīshī Sufi poets in-between. In his poetry, Shamas Faqīr comes to embody the churning of nectar on the path of Muhammad's followers.

63. Faqīr, Shamas, *Kullityāt Shamas Faqīr , ed. Āfāq ʿAzīz* (Srinagar: Nund Rishi Cultural Society, 2002), 207-208. I am thankful to Dr. Sajad Wani of the University of Kashmir for supplying his original working translation of this text. I have modified his translation in certain lines for lexical clarity.

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Conclusion

Here, I have attempted to explore how the Rīshī Sufi poetic corpus constructs multiform environments rooted in a localized polythetic tradition. Rīshī Sufism is defined by the creation of an inter-semiotic religio-literary landscape and an authentically *Islamic* tradition, defined by a Kashmiri Con-Text with a Pre-Textual episteme informed by both Persianate Islamic and Sanskritic Śaiva imaginaries. Such theoretical reevaluations of the Rīshī Sufi tradition deconstruct a vision of *kashmīriyyāt* as a dichotomy between Rīshī Sufi Islam as a "syncretic" Islam and a Sunni-normative, orthodox Islam. A close reading of three Kashmiri Rīshī Sufi poets—Lal Ded, Nund Rīshī, and Shamas Faqīr—illustrates the polythetic tradition at work, producing unique ethical and religious insights at the heart of its multiform, intertextual environment. As only partial representatives of a much larger corpus, these readings just scratch the surface of the productive sites of rearticulation and imaginal encounter in Rīshī Sufi poetry. While much more work remains to be done, this initial analysis may pave the way for further studies of the Kashmiri Sufi corpus.

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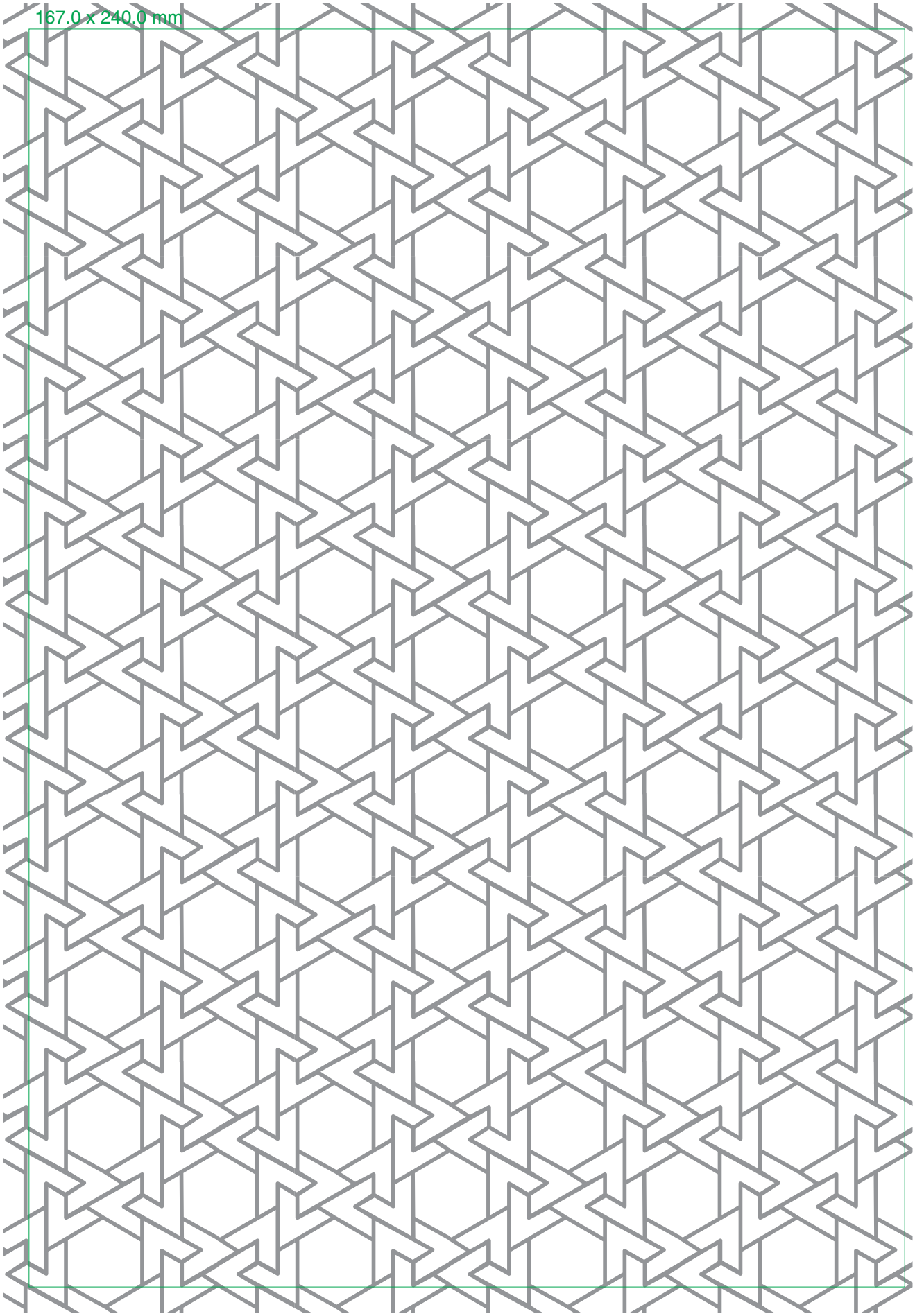
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THE CHINESE CLASSICS IN THE LIGHT OF IBN AL-ʿARABĪ'S METAPHYSICS

Mukhtar H. Ali

Although Islam arrived in China as early as the Tang dynasty (618-907), Islamic and Chinese civilizations have historically produced independent yet analogous cosmologies and philosophies. This study explores some of the metaphysical foundations of Chinese thought through the lens of Sufism, particularly the school of Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 1240). Besides Toshihiko Izutsu's *Sufism and Taoism*[1] and Sachiko Murata's works, there are very few studies on the subject.[2] Murata's *Chinese Gleams of Sufi Light* explores Islam in China mediated through certain Sufi texts, showing how Confucianism, Neo-Confucian metaphysics, Buddhism, and Taoism were assimilated into Islamic thought by Muslim scholars in China. Her earlier opus, *The Tao of Islam,* is one of the most compelling works of scholarship in the field of Sufi metaphysics, analyzing the gender dynamics found in Islamic philosophy and mysticism through the Taoist concepts of Yin and Yang. This groundbreaking work shows that much of Islamic cosmology is reminiscent of Chinese cosmology in that it is based upon a complementarity of the polarity of active and receptive principles.[3]

1. Toshihiko Izutsu, *Sufism and Taoism* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1983).
2. See Sachiko Murata, *Chinese Gleams of Sufi Light* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000); Sachiko Murata, *The First Islamic Classic in Chinese: Wang Daiyu's Real Commentary on the True Teaching* (Albany: State University New York Press, 2017); Sachiko Murata, William Chittick, and Tu Weiming, *The Sage Learning of Liu Zhi: Islamic Thought in Confucian Terms* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).
3. Sachiko Murata, *The Tao of Islam: A Sourcebook on Gender Relationships in Islamic Thought* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 7.

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Muslim authors might describe this duality as the transcendence and immanence of the divine Essence, or in Quranic terms, the divine names of Beauty and Majesty, which form the very fabric of existence. In the same way that Yin and Yang, which originate from the undifferentiated Tao, or "The Great Ultimate," they are complementary opposites, each transforming into the other while at the same time containing an aspect of the other. God is also described in the Quran in complementary opposites: "He is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden,"[4] and created phenomena as "heaven and earth." As the Sufi saying goes, "For every beauty, there is a majesty within it, and for every majesty, there is a beauty within it."[5]

The earliest scholar to forge a common ground between Islamic thought and Chinese philosophy was Wáng Dàiyú (d. 1658). He wrote a work entitled the *Great Learning*, which is both named and modeled after a Confucian classic. It is clear from this work that Wang was a supporter of Confucian teachings and wished to harmonize them within the framework of Islamic doctrines. As Murata notes, "Wang depicts Islam in a way that makes it appear largely in agreement with Confucian ideas. He often quotes from the Chinese classics and sometimes employs Buddhist terminology to make his points."[6] The second most important figure of Chinese Islam is the Neo-Confucian thinker, Liú Zhì (d. 1739).[7] He is particularly significant for our purposes since he translated into Chinese ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī's (d. 1492) *Lawāʾiḥ*, which is a summary of Ibn ʿArabī's teachings. Liú Zhì incorporated other classic Sufi works such Najm al-Dīn Razī's (d. 1256) *Mirṣād al-ʿibād*, ʿAzīz al-Dīn Nasafī's (d. ca. 1300) *Maqṣad-i aqṣā*, and Jāmī's *Ashiʿʿat al-lamaʿāt*,[8] which had already been translated before Liú Zhì penned his own translation of the *Lawāʾiḥ*.[9] With respect to Ibn al-ʿArabī's influence in China, Murata writes, "The fact that Jāmī is the author of two of the four Islamic works translated into Chinese certainly suggests that it was difficult to study Islam in Chinese without being exposed to Ibn al-ʿArabī."[10]

The themes discussed here are common to both Islam and Chinese philosophy, namely, the oneness of existence, the model human or sage, and the hierarchy of being, referred to as the triad of Heaven, Earth, and Man. Just as the Taoist mystic Zhuāng Zhōu (d. 286 BCE) says, "Heaven and earth and I live together—all things and I are one,"[11] there are similar expressions in Islamic philosophy and mysticism concerning God, the macrocosm, and the microcosm. Beginning with two early

4. Quran 57:3. For translations from the Quran, I have used *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary,* eds. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Caner Dagli, Maria Dakake, Joseph Lumbard, and Mohammed Rustom (New York: HarperOne, 2015), with emendations.

5. Qayṣarī, Dāwūd b. Maḥmūd, and Mukhtar H. Ali. *The Horizons of Being: The Metaphysics of Ibn al-ʿArabī in the Muqaddimat al-Qayṣarī*, (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 69.

6. Murata, *Chinese Gleams of Sufi Light,* 22.

7. Neo-Confucianism is a philosophical movement from the beginning of the tenth century that aimed to revive Confucian thought after its having competed with Taoism and Buddhism for centuries. Zhū Xī sought to assimilate key Taoist and Buddhist teachings with Confucian thought in his great synthesis.

8. The Chinese scholar P'o Na-Chi'h translated R*ays from the 'Flashes' (Ashiʿʿat al-lamaʿāt)* into Chinese under the title *Chao-yüan pi-chüeh* [The mysterious secret of the original display]. See Murata, *Chinese Gleams of Sufi Light,* 33.

9. Murata, *Chinese Gleams of Sufi Light,* 25.

10. Sachiko Murata, "The Unity of Existence: Ibn 'Arabi and His School" held at Worcester College, Oxford 2003.

11. Zhuāng Zhōu, *The Equality of Things*, 2.6. Zhuāng Zhōu (between 399 and 295 BCE) was a follower of Lǎozī and wrote the second most important book of Taoism.

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Confucian[12] works, the *Great Learning and the Doctrine of the Mean*, both of which were selected by Zhū Xī (1130–1200)[13] as the "four books"[14] and the main source for Neo-Confucianism, and taking my lead from the likes of Liú Zhì, this study examines a number of key passages from *The Classic of the Way* (*Dàodé Jīng*) in light of Ibn al-ʿArabī's metaphysics.

Ethics in the *Great Learning* (Dà Xué大学)

Let us begin our inquiry with one of the earliest Confucian classics, the *Great Learning.*[15] It is a treatise on the Confucian educational and moral paradigm. As a work on morality and practical life, its main thrust is the Confucian principles of humanism and altruism, manifesting in the "three things": clear character, renewing the people, and abiding in the highest good. These are applied in the eight steps, which is the investigation of things, extension of knowledge, sincerity of the will, rectification of the mind, cultivation of the personal life, regulation of the family, natural order, and world peace. According to Zēng Shēn, the main text is a single page comprising the words of Confucius:

> The Way of learning to be great consists of manifesting illustrious character, renewing the people, and abiding in the highest good.[16]
>
> The ancients who wished to manifest illustrious virtue to the world would first bring order to their states. Those who wished to bring order to their states would first regulate their families. Those who wished to regulate their families would first cultivate their personal lives. Those who wished to cultivate their personal lives would first rectify their hearts. Those who wished to rectify their hearts would first make their wills sincere. Those who wished to make their wills sincere would first extend their knowledge. The extension of knowledge consists in the investigation of things. When things are investigated, knowledge is extended. When knowledge is extended, the will becomes sincere. When the will is sincere, the heart is rectified. When the heart is rectified, the personal life is cultivated. When the personal life is cultivated, the family will be regulated. When the family is regulated, the state will be in order. When the state is in order, there will be peace throughout the world.
>
> From the Son of Heaven (*Tiānzǐ* 天子)[17] down to the common people, all must regard the cultivation of the personal life the root or foundation. There is never a case when the root is in disorder and the branches are in

12. Confucius (c. 551–c. 479 BCE) is the most celebrated Chinese philosopher. His teachings are preserved in the *Analects* (Lúnyǔ 論語).

13. Zhū Xī is regarded as one of the most influential Chinese philosophers along with Confucius, Mencius, Lǎozǐ, and Zhuāng Zhōu. See Wing-Tsit Chan, *A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 588.

14. The four books are the *Analects of Confucius*, the *Book of Mencius*, the *Great Learning*, and the *Doctrine of the Mean*. From 1313 to 1905, they formed the basis of civil service examinations in China. See Chan, *A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy*, 589.

15. The author is now believed to be Zēng Shēn 曾參, a disciple of Confucius who is often referred to as "Master Zēng" or Zēngzǐ 曾子. It is a one-page chapter in the *Book of Rites* (Lǐjì 禮記), the authoritative canon during the Former Han era (202 BCE–9 CE). Zhū Xī remarks, "Master Ch'eng I said, 'The *Great Learning* is a surviving work of the Confucian school and is the gate through which the beginning student enters into virtue'" (Chan, *A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy*, 85).

16. There are various translations of this statement: manifesting clear character and brilliant virtue.

17. The Son of Heaven is the king who has been given a divine right to rule. This doctrine stemmed from the Mandate of Heaven, first used by the Zhou dynasty (1046–256 BCE) to justify their rule.

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> order. There has never been a case where when what is treated with great importance becomes a matter of slight importance or what is treated with slight importance becomes a matter of great importance.[18]

All transformations begin with self-cultivation, or manifesting illustrious character. Commentators suggest that this is Heavenly character, or the contemplation of the illustrious mandate of Heaven. In other words, man's character is endowed with essential goodness founded on Heavenly or divine principles. When this character is refined, it becomes brilliant and luminous and is able to guide others. The refinement of character is brought about by knowledge and sincerity. Knowledge develops the intellect, and sincerity rectifies the heart. What remains thereafter is to abide in the highest good and reach the station of tranquility. The order in the world depends on the order in the human being, since all levels of organization are interconnected, as a single tree connects the branches to the root.

Islamic teachings share the very same principles of the highest good found in the *Great Learning* since Prophetic wisdom states that man was modelled after divine principles; "God created Adam in His own image."[19] Furthermore, the prophetic prescription to attain the highest morality is found in his statement, "Assume the divine character" (t*akhallaqū bi akhlāq 'llāh*).[20] The divine character is described by the divine names and attributes, a central theme to which Sufi authors such as Qushayrī, Ghazālī, and Ibn al-ʿArabī devoted many writings.[21] Ibn al-ʿArabī opens his work, *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, with the idea that God created the human being to manifest the totality of divine attributes. "Man was the epitome of the divine presence, so He selected him to be [His] image, saying, 'God created Adam in His own image,' or in another tradition, 'in the form of the Merciful.'"[22]

Sincere will resides in the heart, the center of the human reality. The heart's centrality in virtually all spiritual traditions including Islam is well established. The Prophet said, "There is in the body of the son of Adam a piece of flesh which, if it be sound, causes the rest of the body to be sound, and if it be corrupt, causes the rest of the body to be corrupt. Indeed, it is the heart."[23] "God does not look at your forms but looks at your hearts and deeds."[24] However, in Islam, nothing in existence has been ennobled by the vision of God like the heart, since, "Neither My heaven nor My earth embraces Me, but the heart of My servant with faith does embrace Me."[25] Although the ethical actor, or *jūnzǐ* 君子, as early as the *Great Learning,* cannot be equated with the concept of the vicegerent of God (*khalīfa*) mentioned in the Quran, or the perfect human (*al-insān al-kāmil*) in Ibn al-ʿArabī's writings, there is a clear connection between living in accordance with the divine order and attaining the highest good.

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18. Chan, *A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy,* 86.
19. Muḥammad b. Ismaʾīl b. Ibrahim al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Beirut: ʿĀlam al-Kutub, 1986), 6227 and Muslim Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr, 1999), no. 2841. See also Genesis 1:27 in the Bible.
20. Abū Hāmid al-Ghazali, *al-Maqṣad al-asnā* (Beirut: Dār el-Machreq, 1971), 150.
21. See ʿIzz al-Dīn b. ʿAbd al-Salām, *Shajarat al-maʿārif* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1998), 53; Muḥyī-l-Dīn Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Kashf al-maʿnā ʿan sirr al-asmāʾ al-ḥusnā* (Qum: Manshūrāt Bakhshāyish, 1998); *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya* (Beirut: Dar Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1998), chapter 558.
22. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī, *Naqd al-nuṣūṣ fī sharḥ Naqsh al-fuṣūṣ*, ed. W. C. Chittick (Tehran: Iranian Institute of Philosophy, 2001), 394.
23. Muḥammad b. Ismaʾīl b. Ibrahim al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Beirut: ʿĀlam al-Kutub, 1986), vol. 1, Book 2, Hadith 50.
24. Muslim Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr, 1999), no. 2564.
25. Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn* (Cairo: al-Maṭbaʿa al-Sharafiyya, 1908), 3:1.5 and 3:12.

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As for the social responsibility of one who follows the Way after having rectified the self, he renews the people and brings order to the family and state. Imam ʿAlī describes the spiritual trajectory of the enlightened sage who has made contemplation of God the mainstay of his life's activity. Having been awakened by divine light, he is steadfast on the path of Truth and impervious to worldly enticements. In turn, he is guided and becomes a guide for others, reaching ultimately at the station of tranquility as the Quran states, "O tranquil soul, return to your Lord, pleased, well-pleasing. Enter among My servants, enter My paradise."[26]

Explaining the verse, "Men whom trade does not divert," Imam ʿAlī says, "Truly, God has made remembrance (*al-dhikr*) a polish for the hearts, by which they hear after being deaf, and see after being blind and yield after being resistant. There have always been servants of God throughout the ages with whom He held intimate discourse in their thoughts and spoke with them through their intellects. They diffused light through an awakened illumination in their hearing, their sight and their minds, calling unto the remembrance of the days of God and invoking reverence for His status, like guideposts in the desert. Whoever adopts the Way, they praise his path and give him glad tidings of deliverance, but whoever goes right and left, they disparage his ways and warn him of ruin. Thus, they serve as lamps in darkness and guides through doubts."[27]

Metaphysics in the *Doctrine of the Mean* (Zhōng yōng 中庸)

If the *Great Learning* is moral and practical, the D*octrine of the Mean* is religious and, at times, mystical. It is a discourse on psychology and metaphysics, concentrating on human nature and the Way of Heaven. It is a precursor to the full mystical ontology of Taoism and a bridge between Confucian and Taoist thought. The treatise revolves around Heaven and Man, namely the superior man, or the ideal human being who is in harmony with the principle of Heaven. In Chinese, the work is called *zhōng yōng; zhōng* means central, referring to human nature, and *yōng* means universal and harmonious. Together it signifies: "there is harmony in human nature and [that] this harmony underlies our moral being and prevails throughout the universe."[28]

> What Heaven (*tiān* 天) imparts to man is called human nature. To follow our nature is called the Way (Tao). Cultivating the Way is called education. The Way cannot be separated from us for a moment . . . Equilibrium is the great foundation of the world, and harmony is the universal path. When equilibrium and harmony are realized to the highest degree, heaven and earth will attain their proper order and all things will flourish.[29]

What Heaven imparts to man is called *fiṭra* in Islamic terms, as the verse of the Quran states, "So turn your face to religion, in pure faith—with God-given nature

26. Quran 89:27–30.
27. Imām ʿAlī b. Abū Ṭālib, *Nahj al-balāgha* (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Aʿlamī liʾl Maṭbūʿāt, 1996), Sermon 221.
28. Chan, *A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy,* 96.
29. Chan, *A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy*, 98.

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(*fiṭra*) upon which He has fashioned mankind; There is no modifying of God's creation. That is the true religion, but most people do not know."[30] Islam is known as the natural religion (*dīn al-fiṭra*). *Fiṭra* means creation, initiation and origination, *dīn* literally means *way* and *islām* means submission. Taken together, this idea can be expressed as submission to the Way of original nature, fashioned by the divine order. Just as the Way cannot be separated from us for a moment, there is no changing in God-given nature or *fiṭra*. The Quran refers to the human reality as originating from the divine spirit, "When I have fashioned him and breathed into him of My spirit . . ."[31] When that spirit enters the body, it is called *fiṭra*, since its root meaning is to split open; that is, the reality of the spirit opens up in the human frame, rather than remaining hidden in the immaterial world. *Fiṭra* also refers to the Intellect, which is one of the aspects of the spirit. Both spirit and intellect have been used interchangeably in the Hadith, referring to different aspects of the same reality, namely, the first creation, "The first thing that God created was my spirit,"[32] and, "The first thing that God created was the Intellect."[33]

Because of the pervasiveness of humanism in Chinese philosophy, the concept of a Supreme Being has been sublimated in ideas such as the Tao, Heaven, and Principle (*lǐ* 理). In contrast, nothing can be more central in Islam than the concept of God. These are not competing ontologies nor contraries. They are simply terms that are specific to a particular cultural and linguistic context. As we will see in the next section, the Sufis also describe God in philosophical or mystical terms such as Being and the Truth, expressing what the Chinese describe as the Way. The Chinese emphasized the unity of Man and Heaven or the supreme spiritual reality, rather than the Lord, a term which was used in pre-Confucian times. Why this shift occurred from a personal deity to the more philosophical concept of the Way or Heaven is beyond the scope of this study. Nevertheless, to suppose that Chinese philosophical and religious thought does not subscribe to a Supreme Being is to lose sight of its fundamental ontology, becoming lost in terminological differences. The reality that the Abrahamic religions called God, the Chinese referred to as the Tao, and the divine cosmic order as Heaven.

Following your nature is cultivating the Way (Tao), and this is education. Knowledge is intrinsic to human nature, and true education is to unearth those inward realities. Imam ʿAlī says, "Knowledge is not in the heavens that it might descend upon you nor in the depths of the earth that it may ascend to you, but it is forged in your natures, so assume the characteristics of the spiritual and it will become manifest to you."[34] The text also indicates the true nature of education, which is cultivating the self before seeking knowledge externally. In this regard, the Prophet has said, "He who knows himself knows his Lord."[35] If we were to restate this in ancient Chinese idiom, it might sound like, "he who cultivates himself,

30. Quran 30:30.
31. Quran 38:72.
32. Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī. *Biḥār al-anwār li-durar akhbār al-aʾimma al-aṭhār* (Beirut: al-Wafāʾ, 1983), 1:97, no. 7.
33. Muḥammad b. Bābawayh al-Qummī (Ṣadūq), *al-Khiṣāl* (Qum: Muʾassasat Nashr al-Islāmī, 2003), 589, no. 13.
34. Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī, *al-Maḥajja al-bayḍāʾ* (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Aʿlamī liʾl Maṭbūʿāt, 1983), 158.
35. ʿAbd al-Wāḥid Āmidī, *Ghurar al-ḥikam wa-durar al-kalim* (Qom: Dār al-Kitāb al-Islāmī, 1990), no. 8946.

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knows the Way." *The Doctrine of the Mean* posits the essential goodness of human nature, because it arrives from Heaven itself and all things reach their perfection through its equilibrium. Islamic moral philosophy revolves around man's return to his divine, original nature after having transcended his lower, earthly nature.

In the next section, the text describes the superior man, the sage or the one who exemplifies the Way.

> The superior man exemplifies the Mean. The inferior man acts contrary to the Mean . . . He rectifies himself and seeks nothing from others, hence he has no complaint to make. He does not complain against Heaven above or blame men below.[36]

Imam ʿAlī says, "He who honors his soul, the world becomes small in his eyes,"[37] and, "The greatness of their Creator is seated in their Hearts so all else appears small in their eyes."[38] Muslim scholars might refer to this as spiritual chivalry, as Anṣārī says, "The essence of *futuwwa* is that you do not see yourself being owed any favor, nor that you demand any right."[39]

> Great is the way of the sage! Overflowing, it produces and nourishes all things and rises up to the heights of Heaven . . . Therefore it is said, "Unless there is perfect virtue, the perfect Way cannot be materialized." Therefore, the superior man honors moral nature and follows the path of inquiry and study.[40]

The concept of the sage, or superior man, is pervasive in Chinese thought as it is in Islam. Ibn al-ʿArabī describes the perfect human (*al-insān al-kāmil*) as the prophets, saints, and sages. In Quranic terminology, it is the divine vicegerent (*khalīfa*) and those who have at least arrived at the level of the tranquil soul (*al-nafs al-muṭmaʾinna*).

Through the perfect human, God maintains and nourishes the world. He writes:

> The Pole is both the center of the universe and its circumference.[41] He is the mirror of God and the pivot of the world. He is bound by subtle links to the hearts of all created beings and brings them either good or evil, neither one predominating . . . some are superior to others, but this superiority relates only to their spiritual knowledge, and there is no distinction to be made between them as regards their office (*quṭbiyya*) and the government of the universe (*tadbīr al-wujūd*).[42]

Furthermore,

> No one was entitled to be the vicegerent except the Perfect Man, for God created his outward form out of all the realities and forms of the world, and his inward form on the model of His own form. Nothing in the world possesses the comprehensiveness that is possessed by the

36. Chan, A *Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy,* 101.
37. Āmidī, *Ghurar al-ḥikam*, no. 9130.
38. Imam ʿ*Alī, Nahj al-balāgha*, Sermon 193.
39. ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī, *Sharḥ manāzil al-sāʾirīn*, ed. M. Bīdārfar (Qom: Bīdār, 1993), 248.
40. *Chan, A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy,* 110.
41. The Pole (*quṭb*) is the highest individual in existence and in the hierarchy of sainthood.
42. Ibn al-ʿArabī, "Kitāb manzil al-quṭb," in *Rasāʾil Ibn ʿArabī* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 2001), 2, 6.

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> vicegerent. In fact, he has obtained (his vicegerency) only because of his comprehensiveness.[43]

Thus, the sage in the *Doctrine of the Mean* has a counterpart in Islam. It is through this individual that the Way is known and the world is maintained. This is why Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."[44]

> Finally, the essence of the Way is sincerity. Only those who are absolutely sincere can fully develop their nature. If they can develop their nature, they can fully develop the nature of others. If they can fully develop the nature of others, they can fully develop the nature of things. If they can fully develop the nature of things, they can assist in the transforming and nourishing process of Heaven and Earth. If they can assist in the transforming and nourishing process of Heaven and Earth, they can thus form a trinity with Heaven and Earth.
>
> Only those who are absolutely sincere can order and adjust the great relations of mankind, establish great foundations of humanity and know the transforming and nourishing operations of Heaven and Earth . . . How earnest and sincere—he is humanity! How deep and unfathomable—he is abyss! How vast and great—he is Heaven! Who can know him except he who really has quickness of apprehension, intelligence, sagacity, and wisdom, and understands the character of Heaven?[45]

God revealed to the Prophet, "No sooner do I look into a servant's heart and find that he has the love of sincere obedience for My sake, seeking My satisfaction, than I take charge of his plans and affairs."[46] Sincerity is also the highest principle in Islam, as Imam ʿAlī says: "sincerity is the aim of religion,"[47] "sincerity is the criterion of worship,"[48] and "the fruit of knowledge is sincerity of action."[49]

The Prophet said, "People will be ruined except the knowledgeable. The knowledgeable will be ruined except those who act. Those who act will be ruined except the sincere, and the sincere are in grave danger."[50] He also correlates wisdom with sincerity in his saying, "He who becomes sincere for God for forty days, wellsprings of wisdom emerge from his heart onto his tongue."[51]

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43. Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1980), 23–24.
44. The Holy Bible: New International Version (Hodder & Stoughton, 1996), John 14:6.
45. Chan, *A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy*, 112.
46. Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār,* 85:136, no. 16.
47. Āmidī, *Ghurar al-ḥikam*, no. 727.
48. Āmidī, *Ghurar al-ḥikam*, no. 859.
49. Āmidī, *Ghurar al-ḥikam*, no. 4642.
50. Ghazālī, *Ihyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn,* 4:157. In another version, Imam ʿAlī says: Those who act will perish except for those who worship; those who worship will perish except for those who know; those who know will perish except for those who are truthful; those who are truthful will perish except for those who are sincere; those who are sincere will perish except for those who have precaution; those who have precaution will perish except for those who have certainty; and those who have certainty are of exalted character (Imam Jāʿfar al-Ṣādiq, *Miṣbāḥ al-sharīʿa,* on *Ikhlāṣ*.).
51. Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār,* 67:249; Muḥammad b. Bābawayh al-Qummī (Ṣadūq), *ʿUyūn akhbār al-Riḍhā* (Qum: Muʾassasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī, 1958), 2:69, no. 321.

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Mysticism in the *Classic of the Way* (Dàodé Jīng 道德經)

It is not until Lǎozǐ's *The Classic of the Way* do we find a truly transcendental spirit in Chinese thought.[52] If Confucianism reflects on humanism, then Taoism contemplates pure Being. Taoist philosophy is remarkably similar to Ibn al-ʿArabī's metaphysics. Let us now turn our attention to some seminal passages of the *Dàodé Jīng* through the lens of Ibn al-ʿArabī and his commentators.

> The Tao (Way) that can be told of is not the eternal Tao;
> The name that can be named is not the eternal Name.
> The Nameless is the origin of Heaven and Earth;
> The Named is the Mother of all things.[53]

Whatever can be said about the Tao is not the Tao itself, since the nameless Tao refers to the absolute divine Essence, which is incomparable. The Essence is unknowable because "there is nothing like Him."[54] Essence means existence and reality. The Essence of God refers to His very existence because He exists through Himself. Ibn al-ʿArabī's says, "His Essence is the Unseen Singularity (*ghayb al-aḥadiyya*). It also means absolute Being divested of conditions, attributes, and entities."[55] Qayṣarī writes, "If the reality of Being is not conditioned by anything, it is an exclusive oneness called the Degree of Singularity (*al-aḥadiyya*). If it is conditioned by something, either universal or particular, which are the names and attributes, it is called the Degree of Divinity (*al-ulūhiyya*), the Unity (*al-wāḥidiyya*), and the Station of Union (*maqām al-jamʿ*)."[56] Thus, the Nameless is the unknowable Essence, divested of all attributes, and the origin of every subsequent divine and contingent degree.[57] Imam ʿAlī eloquently states the purest expression of divine unity here: "The perfection of affirming His oneness is positing His transcendence, and the perfection of positing His transcendence is divesting Him of attributes—because of the testimony of every attribute that it is other than the attributed, and that the attributed is other than the attribute."[58]

The Named refers to the Degree of Unity, which is the union of the divine names. It refers to the name Allah, which sometimes refers to the collectivity of the divine names and sometimes to the unknowable Essence, as in the verse, "Say: He is Allah, the One."[59] The word Allah is derived from the Arabic root *alif, lām* and *hā*, which means "to be perplexed," from the verb *aliha*,[60] so Allah is that about which the minds are perplexed. The divine names are uncreated realities of the Singular Essence and all things originate from the names. Therefore, the Degree of Unity is the Mother of all things to which Imam ʿAlī alludes, "[I ask You] by Your Names,

52. Lǎozǐ was believed to be a native of Ch'u and contemporary of Confucius.
53. Chan, A *Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy*, 139.
54. Quran 42:11.
55. ʿAbd al-Karīm Jīlī, *al-Insān al-kāmil* (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Tārīkh al-ʿArabī, 2000), 1:13.
56. Ali, *The Horizons of Being*, 55.
57. The divine degrees are emanations of the Essence and are not created. One can make a mental distinction between absolute, singular Being, and Being with distinct manifestations.
58. Imam ʿ*Alī, Nahj al-balāgha*, Sermon 1.
59. Quran 112:1.
60. Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab* (Beirut: Dār Ṣubḥ, 2006), 1:96.

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which have filled the foundations of all things,"[61] and in the Quran, "To Him belong the Most Beautiful Names."[62]

The opening paragraph of the *Dàodé Jīng* can be considered one of the greatest discourses on divine unity (*tawḥīd*). It posits that existence emanates from pure Being, *not* non-being as some interpret. Pure Being is absolute and cannot be named because it does not have distinctions. Because it is all-pervasive one might imagine that it does not exist. In his enigmatic description of Reality, Imām ʿAlī says, "Reality (*al-ḥaqīqa*) is the unveiling of the splendors of divine Majesty (*subuḥāt al-jalāl*) to which no allusion is possible (*min ghayr al-ishāra*)."[63]

The Nameless and the Named are two degrees of Being that allude to the divine Essence and subsequently its relationship to creation. In Islamic theology, God is both transcendent and immanent, and this fact cannot be fathomed by the intellect alone. Imam ʿAlī describes this relationship here: "God is in all things but not admixed within them and separate from all things but not isolated from them."[64] Thus, as the Quran states, "He is the First, the Last, the Visible, and the Hidden."[65]

> Therefore, let there always be non-being so we may see their mystery.
> And let there always be being so we may see their outcome.
> The two are the same.
> But after they are produced, they have different names.
> They both may be called deep and profound.
> The door of all mysteries.[66]

Here, non-being does not refer to absolute non-being, which has no existence. This is why the text reads "let there always *be* non-being." Positing non-being is a contradiction, unless it is used metaphorically to mean *pure* Being, which is all-inclusive. It is called non-being because it is without distinction and thus invisible. God's invisibility is due to the intensity of His manifestation, and His remoteness is due to His extreme proximity. That is why non-being is the same as Being. They have different names when there is manifestation, or when they are "produced." Qayṣarī writes, "Thus, if you hear a gnostic say, 'The created itself is non-being, and all existence belongs to God,' then accept it, for his statement relates to this aspect."[67] Furthermore, he says, "His being other than them is through His invisibility in His Essence, His exaltedness by His attributes above all deficiency and dishonor, His transcendence from limitation and specification, and His being sanctified from the characteristics of origination and creation. His being identical with all things is by manifesting Himself in the raiment of the divine names both in the [divine] knowledge and the external world."[68] Thus, the door to all mysteries is to fathom God's transcendence and immanence simultaneously.

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61. Abbas Qummī, *Mafātīḥ al-jinān* (Beirut: Dār al-Aḍwāʾ, 2014), 86. See the Supplication of Kumayl.
62. Quran 7:180.
63. Ḥaydar Āmulī, *Jāmiʿ al-asrār wa-manbaʿ al-anwār,* eds. Henry Corbin and Osman Yahia (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Taʾrīkh al-ʿArabī, 1969), 170.
64. Imam ʿAlī, *Nahj al-balāgha,* Sermon 1.
65. Quran 57:3.
66. Chan, *A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy*, 139.
67. Ali, *The Horizons of Being*, 111.
68. Ali, *The Horizons of Being*, 37.

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There was a beginning of the universe
Which may be called the Mother of the Universe.
He who has found the Mother (Tao)
And thereby understands her sons
And having understood the sons,
Still keeps to its mother
Will be free from danger throughout his lifetime.[69]

The equivalent idea of the Mother of the Universe in Islamic thought is the Mother of the Book (*umm al-kitāb*), which is mentioned in the Quran and Hadith.[70] According to the gnostics, it refers to the plane of divine knowledge, which engenders the First Intellect and the Universal Soul. Alternatively, it can be said that the Mother of the Universe is the Supreme divine name, which encompasses all other names. Ibn al-ʿArabī's followers refer to the Universal names of Life, Knowledge, Will, Power, Speech, Generosity, and Justice as the Mothers, and the subordinate names as the daughters. The sons, therefore, are the manifestation of those names, or the sons are the branches and the mother is the root. Thus, having understood the sons, one keeps to the mother. That is, to know creation is to know the names that engender it. This way, the branch is always nourished by the root and one is free from danger and destruction.

Therefore, the sage manages affairs without action (*wǔ wèi* 無爲)
And spreads doctrines without words.
All things arise, and he does not turn away from them.
He produces them but does not take possession of them.

He acts but does not rely on his own ability.[71]
He accomplishes his task but does not claim credit for it.
It is precisely because he does not claim credit that his accomplishment remains with him.[72]

There is a perceived disagreement between the Confucians and the Taoists on whether action or non-action takes precedence. Confucians maintain that the sage becomes the "model of the world" or "adopts the virtue of Heaven," and the Taoists assert that the sage "manages affairs without action" and "spreads doctrines without words." The Islamic spiritual tradition reconciles these seemingly contradictory views of active and passive reformation in the doctrine of annihilation and subsistence in God. Annihilation is the disappearance of selfhood through the transformation of human qualities by divine attributes, and subsistence is the return of selfhood through the investiture of divine attributes. In the latter, God becomes the servant's hearing and vision, as the Hadith states: "The servant does not cease approaching me through supererogatory works until I love him, and when I love him, I become his hearing through which he hears, his sight by which he sees, his tongue by which he speaks, his hand by which he seizes, and

69. Chan, A *Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy*, 152.
70. "God effaces what He wills and establishes; to Him belongs the Mother of the Book" (Quran 13:39).
71. Chan, *A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy,* 140.
72. Chan, *A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy*, 140.

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his foot by which he walks."[73] Reconciling both Confucian and Taoist perspectives, the perfect human "adopts the virtue of Heaven," and "manages affairs without action" by becoming the locus of divine receptivity and activity.

Taoist ideas of vacuity (*xū* 絮), non-being (*wǔ* 五), and non-action (*wǔ wèi* 五味) are not nihilistic but reveal a profound ontology founded on the unity of Being. Taoism is not the doctrine of non-action or pure determinism. On the contrary, it is effortless action, flowing naturally with existential currents. The sage works but does not take credit for it; he acts but does not rely on his own ability; thus, he unifies his act with the divine act. Therefore, he sees that his acts are more worthy of being attributed to God than himself. He is the greatest divine manifestation, and it is precisely because he witnesses the divine in himself that he is a sage.[74]

> Can you keep the spirit and embrace the One without departing from them?
> Can you concentrate your vital force (*qì* 氣) and achieve the highest degree of weakness like an infant?
> Can you clean and purify your profound insight so it will be spotless?
> Can you love people and govern the state without cunning?[75]

Embracing the One also reveals the spirit of Islamic divine unity (*tawḥīd*). Many believe that it applies only to God's Essence, but in reality, it applies to Being in general. The true monotheist believes that there is nothing in existence but God and His manifestations. As Mullā Ṣadrā writes, "The Sufis, among the monotheists, are of the view that there is nothing in existence except the Real Being and the world is only the theophany, manifestation, and individuation of Being. They see nothing in existence except God and His manifestations, and they do not view the manifestations as an independent reality."[76] This is the principle of unity within multiplicity.

Concentrating one's vital force and achieving the highest degree of weakness like an infant is equivalent to the Islamic notion of submission to God, the lexical meaning of the word "*islām*". The highest station of the human is that of servanthood, as Imam Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq says, "Servanthood is a reality whose innermost aspect is Lordship. Whatever is missing in servitude is found in Lordship, and whatever is hidden in Lordship is attained in servitude."[77] God addresses the Prophet as the servant when he takes him on the spiritual ascent (*miʿrāj*): "Glory be to Him who made His servant ascend . . ."[78] Truly in this conception do we see the trinity of Heaven, Man, and Earth, or in Islamic terms, God, His creation, and the perfect human who is the manifestation of all the divine names; "We taught Adam all the

73. Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, ed. M. D. al-Bughā, 6 vols. (Damascus: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1987), 5: 2384–85 (*kitāb al-riqāq*).
74. Zhuāng Zhōu says, "The perfect man is a spiritual being. Even if great oceans burned up, he would not feel hot. Even if the great rivers are frozen, he would not feel cold. And even if terrific thunder were to break up mountains and the wind were to upset the sea, he would not be afraid. Being such, he mounts upon the clouds and forces heaven, rides on the sun and the moon, and roams beyond the four seas. Neither life nor death affects him. How much less can such matters as benefit and harm?" (Chan, *A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy,* 188).
75. Chan, *A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy,* 144.
76. Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shirāzī, *Sharḥ al-hidāya al-Athīriyya* (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Tāʾrīkh al-ʿArabī, 2001), 245.
77. Imām Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq, *Misbāḥ al-sharīʿa* (Beirut: Muʾassasa al-Aʿlamī liʾl Maṭbūʿāt, 1983), 7.
78. Quran 17:1.

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names."[79] Ibn al-ʿArabī explains this verse, "He taught him all the divine names. As the spirit is the commander of the bodily powers, the divine names are like those powers in the Perfect Human. For this reason, it is said that the world is the Great Man but with man within it. Man was the epitome of the divine presence, so He selected him to be [His] form, saying, 'God created Adam in His own form,' or in another tradition, 'in the form of the All-Merciful.'"[80]

> When the great Tao declined,
> The Doctrines of humanity (*rén*) and righteousness (*lǐ*) arose.
> When knowledge and wisdom appeared,
> There emerged great hypocrisy.[81]
>
> Abandon sagacity and discard wisdom;
> Then the people will benefit a hundredfold.
> Abandon humanity and discard righteousness;
> Then the people will return to piety and deep love.[82]

To abandon sagacity and wisdom is to transcend learning. This is because the true sage receives directly from God and does not rely on his own learning as the Quran states, "Be God-conscious and God will teach you."[83] With respect to this type of divine knowledge, Imam Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq said, "Knowledge is not extensive learning, it is but a light that God casts in the heart of whomever He wishes to guide."[84] Lǎozǐ rejects the Confucian preoccupation with the concepts of humanity and righteousness where the former is seen as pretense and the latter blind adherence to rituals. The Taoist criticism is that when man became forgetful of the Tao, he invented doctrines, rituals, and ceremonies to organize society. These did not originate from the Tao itself but from the minds of men and the promulgation of various philosophical schools. Then these pseudo-spiritual teachings were passed from one generation to the next until the true meaning of the Tao was lost. Similarly, in Islam, Imam ʿAlī said, "Knowledge is a single point, the ignorant made it multiple."[85] These teachings reflect advanced stages of spirituality whereby one relinquishes knowledge and learning.

Having examined a few salient passages of the *Dàodé Jīng* that concern ontology, humanity, and the nature of knowledge, we conclude by contemplating on some timeless maxims found in this text.

> He who knows others is wise;
> He who knows himself is enlightened.
> He who conquers others has physical strength
> He who conquers himself is strong.
> He who is contented is rich.

79. Quran 2:31.
80. Jāmī, *Naqd al-nuṣūṣ fī sharḥ Naqsh al-fuṣūṣ*, 394.
81. Chan, *A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy*, 148.
82. Chan, *A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy*, 149.
83. Quran 2:282.
84. Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār,* 1:225.
85. Ibn Abī Jumhūr al-Aḥsāʾī, *ʿAwālī al-laʾālī*, ed. Mujtabā ʿIrāqī (Qom: 1984–85), 4:129; Ismāʿīl b. Muḥammad ʿAjlūnī, *Kashf al-khafāʾ* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1968), 2:67.

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He who acts with vigor has will.
He who does not lose his place with the Tao will endure.
He who dies but does not really perish enjoys long life.[86]

The best (person) is like water
Water is good; it benefits all things and does not compete with them.
It dwells in (low) places that all disdain.
This is why it is so near the Tao.
(The best person) in his dwelling loves the earth.
In his heart, he loves what is profound.
In his associations, he loves humanity.
In his words, he loves faithfulness.
In government, he loves order.
In handling affairs, he loves competence.
In his activities, he loves timeliness.
It is because he does not compete, he is without reproach.[87]

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to survey three classical Chinese philosophical texts that have had the greatest impact on Chinese civilization, interpreting them through the lens of Islamic teachings and the Sufism of Ibn al-ʿArabī, in continuation of the project started by the likes of Wáng Dàiyú and Liú Zhì. The *Dàodé Jīng* is the longest of the three works we have considered in this article. In many passages, Lǎozǐ plays on contradictions and contravenes common sense. For example, how can one abandon sagacity and discard wisdom? Is the sage not characterized by these very qualities?

These statements sublimate hidden meanings or those that contradict popular imagination. It is the very nature of a mystical text to lend itself to various interpretations, its real intent hidden and full meaning always out of grasp. Which principle is being implemented in these paradoxical statements? The answer is that Being embraces contraries, and because every reality has an outward and inward aspect, a statement can be both true and false depending on which aspect is being highlighted. For example, when Lǎozǐ says, "He who knows does not speak, he who speaks does not know," what he possibly means is that silence is closer to wisdom and speaking is closer to folly. It is similar to Imam ʿAlī's words, "Silence is the sign of nobility and fruit of the intellect,"[88] and, "Silence is the garden of thought."[89] He also says, "Silence is one of the doors of wisdom. It secures love and leads to

86. Chan, *A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy*, 156.
87. Chan, *A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy*, 143.
88. Āmidī, *Ghurar al-ḥikam*, no. 1343.
89. Āmidī, *Ghurar al-ḥikam,* no. 546.

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every good,"[90] and, "Do not speak all that you know for that will only prove your ignorance."[91] At the same time, the sage uses words to teach wisdom. Therefore, context is essential in interpreting these types of contradictory statements.

The three selected texts progress from ethics, metaphysics, and mysticism. These are, indeed, overlapping and unifying themes, but a comparison reveals that the methodology of mysticism differs from that of ethics and metaphysics. Islamic ethics focuses on virtue, human character and dispositions; metaphysics on God, Man and the nature of existence; and mysticism on attainment, transcendence, and union.

90. Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 2:113, no. 1.
91. Āmidī, *Ghurar al-ḥikam*, no. 10187.

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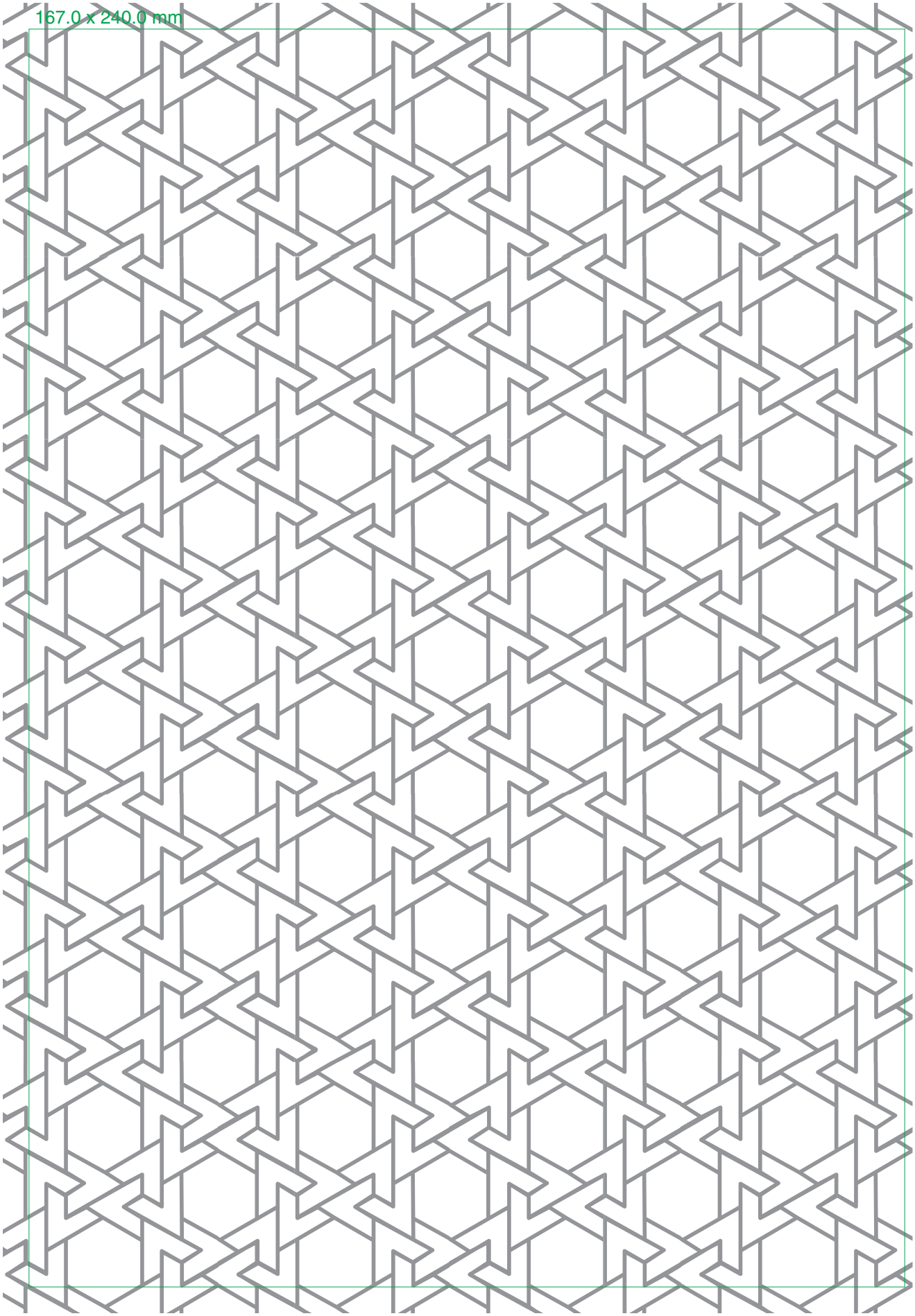
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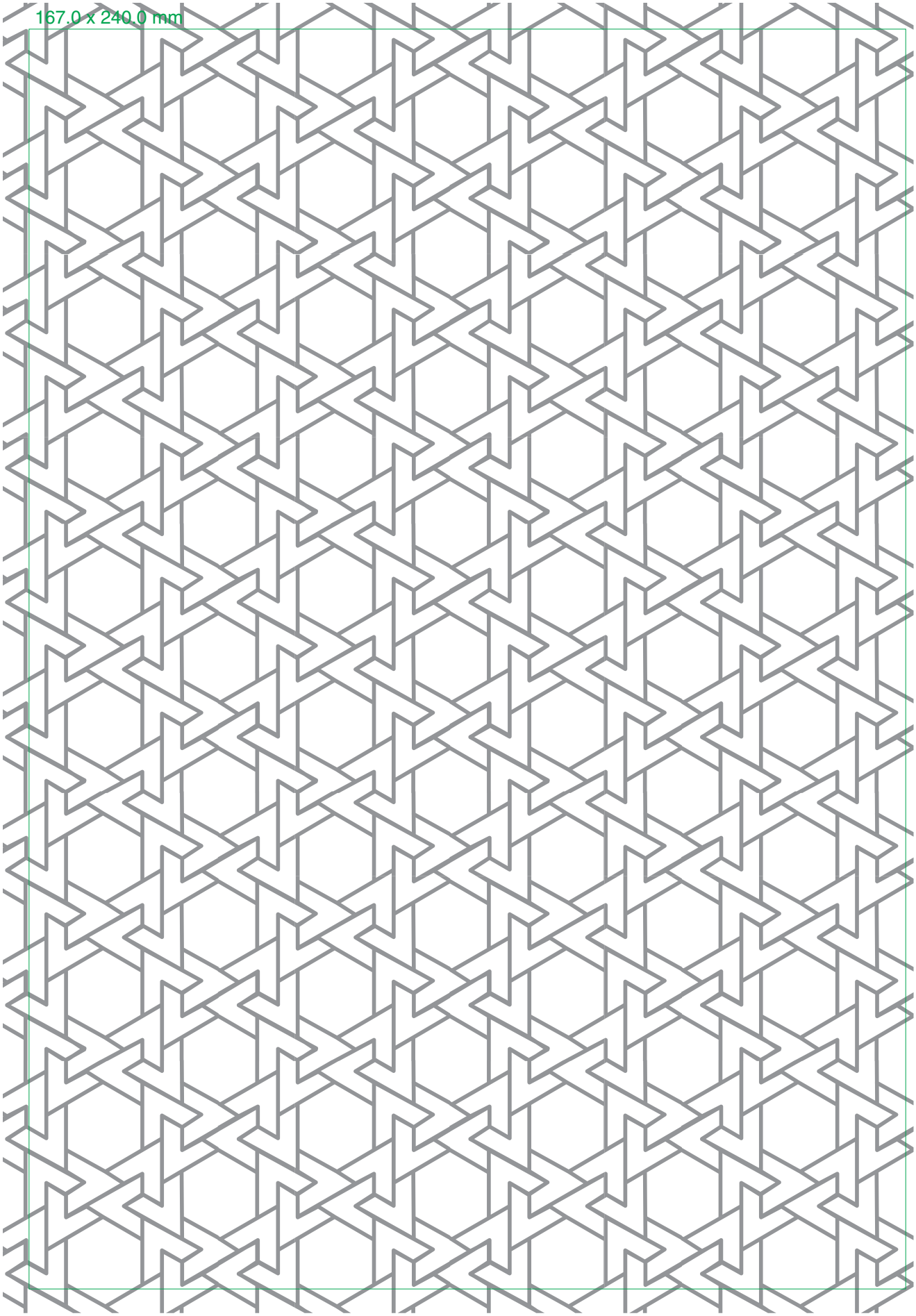
SECTION IV

MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY PERIODS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SUFISM AND ETHICS IN CENTRAL ASIA: ṢŪFĪ ALLĀHYĀR'S *THABĀT AL-ʿĀJIZĪN* AND ITS LEGACY

Alexandre Papas

It is fairly well-known that, alongside the theoretical discussions on the virtues and their spiritual meanings, historically speaking, Sufis have produced a wide range of writings dealing with the everyday morality and concerns of pious Muslims. Although "the popularization of the moral vision of Sufism" has taken place,[1] these writings have been perhaps more influential than Sufi theoretical treatises. Using relatively simple language with straightforward statements and illustrative narratives, these writings were rooted in daily practical wisdom rather than theology or metaphysics. In early modern and modern Central Asia, Ṣūfī Allāhyār, who was a Naqshbandī Mujaddidī, particularly distinguished himself in this respect. His most famous work, entitled *Thabāt al-ʿājizīn* (Strengthening the weak), is a didactic treatise in *mathnawī* form. The book, composed in Turkic verses, includes explanatory sections (*bayān*) and didactic tales (*ḥikāyat*) along with a few supplication poems in which Ṣūfī Allāhyār discusses the articles of faith, observances, morals, and ethics from a Sufi perspective and in a rather austere tone. It is the form as much as the contents that explains the immense popularity of the *Thabāt al-ʿājizīn* in Central Eurasian madrasas from the eighteenth century onwards, making the treatise something of a Sufi digest for Turkic-speaking Muslim youth.

1. To use Paul Heck's expression in his article "Mysticism as Morality: The Case of Sufism," *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 34, no. 2 (2006): 253–286.

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In this paper, I present the author and his writings, focusing on the *Thabāt al-ʿājizīn.* I then discuss the main characteristics of this text in terms of its doctrine and rhetorical forms, and finally show how Ṣūfī Allāhyār frames Sufism as a primarily ethical enterprise. In order to assess the social impact of the treatise, I detail the intellectual history of the book through its commentators, who have spread Allāhyār's views among Uzbek, Tatar, Bashkir, Kazakh, and Uyghur students up until the early twentieth century.

The Life and Works of Ṣūfī Allāhyār

Ṣūfī Allāhyār is often said to have been born in 1025/1616, and his death dates range from 1117/1706 or 1124/1713 to 1133/1721 or 1136/1724; the date 1133/1721 tends to be widely accepted but remains uncertain. If we can accept the 1025/1616 birth date and the 1133/1721 death date, he would have lived to well over 100 years. In any case, Allāhyār was born in the village of Kattakurgan, northwest of Samarkand, and was active from the second half of the eleventh/seventeenth century to the turn of the twelfth/eighteenth century. His father, Temiryār Allāhqulī, sent his son at the age of ten to a madrasa in Bukhara. There, after having studied for fifteen years, Allāhyār became the chief of the commercial tax administration (*bāj maḥkemesi*).[2] The rest of his biography consists mostly of hagiographical anecdotes coming from a source written in Tatar in 1211/1796, and to which I will return in due course.

In one of these anecdotes, we read that, because of Allāhyār's brash behavior and arrogant personality, after an altercation in the bazaar of Bukhara with a merchant who was actually the disciple of the Naqshbandī Mujaddidī sheikh Ḥājjī Ḥabībullāh Bukhārī (d. 1111/1699), the latter came to see Allāhyār. Having regretted his actions, Allāhyār became the sheikh's disciple.[3] According to another account, the sheikh ordered him to walk around Bukhara to sell liver and tripe on the streets in order to treat his arrogance.[4]

After twelve years in the service of his master, Allāhyār got his surname (*laqab*) Ṣūfī and became the deputy (*khalīfa*) of Ḥabībullāh, thus continuing the Mujaddidī lineage in the region. Ḥabībullāh was himself a *khalīfa* of the famous master Muḥammad Maʿṣūm (d. 1079/1668), who had firmly established the Mujaddidiyya in Central Asia.[5] Ṣūfī Allāhyār opened a lodge in Kattakurgan, where he initiated people. He then moved to the village of Vakhshivar, next to the city of Denau in the Surkhandarya region. According to some sources, Sūfī Allāhyār was also the disciple of Nawrūz Shahrisabzī, a *khalīfa* of Ḥabībullāh. After the death of Sūfī Allāhyār, only two *khalīfas* perpetuated the lineage: Shaykh Kūlābī (d. 1174/1760) and Ghāyib Naẓar Miyānkālī.[6]

2. Nigora Niiozova, *Sufi Olloiorning khaioti va ijodi* (Qarshi: Nasaf, 1995), 3–5; Abid Nazar Mahdum, "Mâverâü'n-nehir mutasavvıflarından Sûfî Allahyâr'da nakşibendî ve müceddidî merkezli irfân," *Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları* 221 (2016): 2; Necdet Tosun, "Sûfî Allahyâr," *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Islâm Ansiklopedisi*, suppl. 2 (2016): 528.

3. Tāj al-Dīn b. Yalchïghul al-Bashqordï, *Risāle-yi ʿazīze, sherḥ-i thabāt al-ʿājizīn* (St. Petersburg: n.p., 1897), 6.

4. Bāshqordï, *Risāle-yi ʿazīze*, 7.

5. Hamid Algar, "*Tarîqat and Tarîq*: Central Asian Naqshbandîs on the Roads to the Haramayn," in *Central Asian Pilgrims: Hajj Routes and Pious Visits between Central Asia and the Hijaz*, eds. Alexandre Papas, Thomas Welsford, and Thierry Zarcone (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz, 2011), 67.

6. Anke von Kügelgen, "Die Entfaltung der Naqšbandīya Muğaddidīya im Mittleren Transoxanien vom 18. bis zum

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Ṣūfī Allāhyār authored four works devoted to the fields of jurisprudence, theology, and Sufism:

1. *Maslak al-muttaqīn* (The path of the god-weary), a work of Hanafi *fiqh* and creedal theology written in Persian verse in 1112/1700 and published in Lucknow (or Kanpur) in 1290/1873 and in Tashkent in 1311/1893 (or 1318/1900).[7] Ṣūfī Allāhyār is said to have read his treatise and obtained the approval of scholars in Samarkand and Bukhara. Kūzī Khwāja Ḥāfiẓ Khwāja Oghlï translated the work into Chagatai Turkish under the title *Hidāyat al-muttaqīn.*
2. *Makhzan al-muṭīʿīn* (The treasury of the obedient), also a work of *fiqh* but written in Arabic.[8]
3. *Murād al-ʿārifīn* (The gnostics' goal), a short Sufi essay in Persian published in Moscow in 1274/1858 and reprinted in Tashkent in 1330/1912.[9] ʿAbd al-Ḥakīm b. Mullā ʿAbd al-Rashīd translated the book into Tatar and published it in Kazan in 1860. ʿAbd al-Raḥīm Utïz-Imani al-Bulghārī (d. 1249/1834), to whom I shall return, wrote a commentary in Persian and Arabic entitled, *Tuḥfat al-ṭālibīn fī sharḥ-i abyāt-i murād al-ʿārifīn*, and was printed in Kagan in 1326/1908.
4. *Thabāt al-ʿājizīn*, a didactic treatise in *mathnawī* form (as already noted). The work consists of 1,800 Turkic distiches in which Ṣūfī Allāhyār discusses articles of faith, observances, morals, and ethics from a Sufi perspective.[10] It is the only work of our author written in Chagatai Turkish. In addition to numerous manuscript copies, the *Thabāt al-ʿājizīn* has been printed in lithograph form several times from the beginning of the thirteenth/nineteenth to the beginning of the fourteenth/twentieth century in Kashgar, Tashkent, Bukhara, Kazan (printed in 1300/1882), and Istanbul (ed. by Shaykh Sulaymān Bukhārī in 1299/1881).[11]

In the *Thabāt's* introductory chapter, Sūfī Allāhyār suggests that his epistle could be either a "translation" or an extension of the *Murād al-ʿārifīn*, and that he started writing the piece in Persian but eventually preferred to use Turkish, following his friends' advice. In any case, besides the usual literary trope of the book, resulting at the request from friends, we understand that the book has been written to concisely teach Sufi doctrine to Turkic-speaking Muslims. As we will see in the next section, this doctrine is mainly related to ethical issues experienced in the everyday lives of believers.

Beginn des 19. Jahrhunderts: Ein Stück Detektivarbeit," in *Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia from the 18th to the Early 20th Centuries*, eds. Anke von Kügelgen, Michael Kemper, and Allen J. Frank (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz, 1998), 2:113–118.

7. http://afghandata.org:8080/xmlui/handle/azu/17265.
8. http://www.kadl.sa/Browse.aspx?id=sgxjowirutja7woporkqmhku5z9g2matbfedu6f1zdvlxsztuod5kdoacszj6pe&p=1&m=556.
9. https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.aa0003466463;view=1up;seq=4.
10. Ṣūfī Allāhyār, *Thabāt al-ʿājizīn* (Bukhara: Mullā Muḥammadī Makhdūm, 1911).
11. Henry F. Hofman, *Turkish Literature:* A *Bio-bibliographical Survey*, *Section III* (Utrecht: The University of Utrecht under the auspices of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 1969), 71–81; Ludmila V. Dmitrieva, *Opisanie tiurskikh rukopisei Instituta Vostokovedeniia. III* (Moscow: Nauka, 1980), 92–96. Three additional writings were attributed to Sūfī Allāhyār but this is doubtful. Paolo Sartori notes the existence of manuscript copies in remote areas such as the Qaraqalpaq region; see his "*Ijtihād* in Bukhara: Central Asian Jadidism and Local Genealogies of Cultural Change," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 59 (2106): n. 78. Further manuscript copies and prints can be found in Gansu, Eastern Turkestan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, and Syria: see ʿAbd al-Jabbār Nīknahad, *Ṣūfī Allāhyār manẓūma-yi Thabāt al-ʿājizīn* (Gonbad-e Kāvus: Ḥājī Ṭalāʾī, 1994), and Abudurehemu Wubuli, "Doğu Türkistan medreselerinde islam düşüncesi: Sûfî Allayhar'ın *Sebatü'l-âcizin* adlı eseri ekseninde inceleme" (unpubl. MA Thesis, Ankara Üniversitesi, 2015), 105.

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Sufism as Ethics

To develop his teachings and provide them with a solid basis, Sūfī Allāhyār made use of various sources in the *Thabāt*. Alongside a few Qurʾānic verses and hadiths quoted from the *Mishkāt al-masābīḥ* by al-Khaṭīb al-Tabrīzī (written in 737/1336) and references to traditionists such as ʿĀmir al-Shaʿbī (d. ca. 104/723) and Abūʾl-Layth al-Samarqandī (d. 373/983), we find allusions to Sufi masters, and especially Naqshbandī Mujaddidīs: Aḥmad Sirhindī (d. 1034/1624), Muḥammad Maʿṣūm, and Ḥabībullāh Bukhārī. There are also Central Asian Sufis quoted such as Aḥmad Yasawī (d. 562/1166) and Khwāja Yūsuf Hamadānī (d. 535/1140). Lastly, Ṣūfī Allāhyār mentions the *Tanbīh al-ḍāllīn* that he attributes to Abūʾl-Ḥasan Kharaqānī (d. 425/1033), although the book seems to have been composed by a Naqshbandī author named Dūst-Muḥammad b. Nawrūz Aḥmad al-Kīshī Fālizkār (tenth/sixteenth century, a disciple of the famous master Aḥmad Kāsānī, d. 949/1542).[12]

As a book of advice and education in which the form is as important as the content, the *Thabāt al-ʿājizīn* first urges its reader in very direct and explicit terms to be a good Muslim—that is, a follower of the Sunna in his acts and intentions, and a strict observer of the *sharīʿa*.[13] For our author, a good Muslim is a Sunni and someone who works and remains active but never neglects his religious duties. He is also a moral person, a pious but not ostentatious believer, and a Sufi who follows the examples of the prophets as perfect adherents of the sacred law. Allāhyār's tone is straightforward and the work's general content fits squarely into the genre of Sufi didactic literature.[14] Yet, there is an allusion to unruly, antinomian, or at least controversial Sufis who declare themselves to be above the law and commandments when they attain proximity to God. This is a leitmotiv in the treatise due to a particular context that we will encounter again.

For Allāhyār, a good Muslim is also a good Sufi in the sense that Sufism offers the most complete model of ethics and morality. Allāhyār stresses the necessity of spiritual leadership for pious Muslims, but equally the necessity for the master to apply the precepts of law and to be knowledgeable.[15] The good Sufi should practice renunciation. However, rather than the usual *tark-i dunyā* (renunciation of the world) stricto sensu or any *contemptus mund*i resulting from renunciation, it is moral behavior and ethical uprightness which, paradoxically, define "renunciation."[16]

Playing with the conceptual couple of *himmat* and *minnat* (spiritual aspiration and moral obligation), Allāhyār interprets renunciation as a struggle against covetousness, and calls for a moral reform of oneself, rather than a psycho-ontological purgation of the self. In a chapter in which he recounts his advice to his own sons, Allāhyār, the now-transformed chief of the tax administration, offers his admonitions about bad (but lucrative) professions and, again, covetousness, both major forms of temptation for youth.[17]

12. Abid Nazar Mahdum, "On the sources of *Sebâtü'l-âcizîn* by Sûfî Allahyâr," *Türkiyat Mecmuası* 21 (2011): 239–53.
13. Allāhyār, *Thabāt*, 58–59. An equivalent emphasis on Sunna can be found in distiches on p. 31.
14. Abid Nazar Mahdum, "Sûfî Allahyâr'da tasavvufî tenkit," *Turkish Studies* 10, no. 12 (2015): 845–68.
15. Allāhyār, *Thabāt*, 38.
16. Allāhyār, *Thabāt*, 49–50.
17. Allāhyār, *Thabāt*, 104.

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Promoting a sort of ascetic morality, Sūfī Allāhyār describes aspects of self-discipline in both personal and interpersonal contexts. His main point of emphasis is upon spiritual exercises (sing. *riyāḍat*), considered as acts of obedience rather than acts of disciplining the body per se.[18] As for the language which Sufis should use, the author tells us that the aspiring Sufi should refrain from inappropriate or excessive utterances (with, perhaps, an allusion to *shaṭaḥāt*), and defends sober, beautiful, and calculated forms of expression.[19]

Alongside the cultivation of one's speech, gentleness of behavior is a requirement in the everyday life of a Sufi who lives alongside the community of believers.[20] Our text is thus a basic manual of Sufi ethics which carefully delineates the limits of Sufism as a spiritual lifestyle. Social relationships through proper personal discipline, language, and conduct make the Sufi individual a complete human being, socially speaking. In a sense, Allāhyār reinforces the trend of the early modern Naqshbandiyya towards social responsibility and politico-religious involvement.[21] Nowhere do we find references to bodily practices, mystical experiences, or even esoteric teachings. That is not to say that these notions are denied by Allāhyār, but rather are cast aside on account of the fact that they would be harmful for the masses. This also explains why the text also includes a chapter which criticizes the antinomian tendencies among contemporary Sufis in Central Asia. The chapter in question is tellingly entitled, "On Detachment from the World" (*dunyādïn tajarrud bolmaghnïng bayānï*).[22]

The Naqshbandī sheikh isolates two groups that he considers to be fake Sufis—namely Rawshanīs (not to be confused with the Ottoman Ruşenīs, a branch of the Khalwatiyya/Halvetiyye, or the Afghan Sufi movement known as Rawshaniyya) and pseudo-Yasawīs, about whom we have little to no information. Comparable to either Qalandars or Sufis on the fringes of Islamic society, these two antinomian groups apparently flourished at this time in Central Asia.[23] They were usually accused of immoral attitudes, illegitimate exercise of authority, secret Shiite tendencies, and so forth. Once again, Sūfī Allāhyār categorically rejects such expressions of "Sufism," which are not only unruly but also unethical.

There is no need to further outline the content of the *Thabāt al-ʿājizīn,* as we understand that its author had one main goal in mind: to present Sufism in simple and practical terms as the ethical tradition of Islam, a tradition that is transmitted to students and is not concerned with profound Sufi metaphysical doctrines, on the one hand, or deviant practices by marginal dervishes on the other. Beyond the simplicity of the writing style and the somewhat proverbial expressions preferred

18. Allāhyār, *Thabāt,* 64. See also the distiches on p. 59 on the necessity to perform *riyāḍat* within the framework of law.
19. Allāhyār, *Thabāt*, 73.
20. Allāhyār, *Thabāt*, 75–76.
21. On this trend, see my *Soufisme et politique entre Chine, Tibet et Turkestan. Etude sur les Khwâjas naqshbandîs du Turkestan oriental* (Paris: Jean Maisonneuve, 2005).
22. Allāhyār, *Thabāt,* 55–56.
23. Alexandre Papas, *Mystiques et vagabonds en islam. Portraits de trois soufis qalandars* (Paris: Cerf, 2010). It might be of interest to note that seventeenth-century marginal Sufis authored treatises on Sufi manners (*ādāb*); for a detailed study of one of them, see my *Thus Spake the Dervish: Sufism, Language, and the Religious Margins in Central Asia, 1400–1900* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), ch. 2.

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throughout the text, what strikes the historian anxious to contextualize the *Thabāt* is the huge success the book has encountered in the long run and over a vast geographic expanse.

The *Thabāt al-ʿājizīn* and Its Commentators in Central Eurasia

In addition to the spread of manuscript copies and lithographic prints, the *Thabāt al-ʿājizīn* became extremely popular thanks to commentaries written by prominent literati of the time, especially in the Muslim provinces of Russia. We know of at least five *shurūḥ*, the first three of which circulated in the madrasas of Central Eurasia, thus drawing a rough but fascinating cartography of the social reception of the *Thabāt al-ʿājizīn*. Thanks to trans-regional Sufi networks, Sufi authors themselves circulated many texts in the area and suggested that Sūfī Allāhyār's treatise was key to the intellectual and educational exchanges which were taking place from Turkey to Western China, including places such as Istanbul, St. Petersburg, Kazan, Bukhara, Kabul, and Kashgar.

As early as 1211/1796, the Bashkir Sufi and historian Tāj al-Dīn b. Yalchïghul al-Bashqordï (d. 1254/1838) wrote a commentary upon the *Thabāt* in Tatar entitled *Risāle-yi ʿazīze, sherḥ-i thabāt al-ʿājizīn*. The commentary was printed in St. Petersburg in 1264/1847 and again in Kazan in 1267/1850.[24] The word *ʿAzīze* in the title serves a double-function: it seeks to honor the author, Sūfī Allāhyār, while also making an allusion to the name of the commentator's daughter, who had asked her father to write a commentary upon the *Thabāt*.

Tāj al-Dīn was born in 1180/1767 or 1181/1768 and studied in the province of Ufa, but left Bashkiria at a young age with his father for the Hajj. After several years in the regions of Daghestan and Astrakhan, both arrived in Diyarbakir (in southeastern Anatolia), where Tāj al-Dīn received an education over a period of four years. After two years in Istanbul, they returned to Astrakhan. Later, he taught in the province of Ufa for seven years, after which he became *mudarris* there, where he spent the rest of his life and wrote most of his works.

At least fourteen editions of Tāj al-Dīn's *Risāle* were published in addition to his many other writings.[25] This commentary was one of the most influential and popular works in the *maktab* curriculum of the Volga-Ural region and Siberia. Such a work fostered proselytism among animist and baptized Tatar children, given that Allāhyār's poetry was a part of their schooling curriculum and they were expected to memorize it.[26] As noted previously, Tāj al-Dīn b. Yalchïghul compiled a short biography of Allāhyār made of hagiographical anecdotes, along with a list of his

24. Manuscript references in Ludmila V. Dmitrieva, *Opisanie tiurskikh rukopisei*, 99–100.

25. Allen J. Frank, *Islamic Historiography and 'Bulghar' Identity among the Tatars and Bashkirs of Russia* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 95–99; A. Deniz Abik, "*Sebâtü'l-Âcizîn'* in Kazan sahasında bir şerhi: *Risâle-i 'Azîze*," *Modern Türklük Araştırmaları Dergisi* 4, no. 4 (2007): 28–44.

26. Allen J. Frank, *Bukhara and the Muslims of Russia: Sufism, Education, and the Paradox of Islamic Prestige* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 79; Agnès Nilüfer Kefeli, *Becoming Muslim in Imperial Russia: Conversion, Apostasy, and Literacy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014), 69.

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writings.[27] He also explained that he had composed his commentary to make the treatise more widely understandable with the aide of glosses and explanations.[28]

The second commentary of the *Thabāt al-ʿājizīn* fuses Turkish and Arabic, and was composed by the aforementioned Utïz-Imani al-Bulghārī.[29] Born in 1165/1752 or 1167/1754 in Chistay/Chistopol (in Tatarstan), he studied in the Molla Vildān madrasa in Utïz-Iman, then in the Velīd b. Muḥammad el-Emīn madrasa in Kargala. Later, he became a teacher at the Sterlibash madrasa in Bashkortostan. Despite Bulghārī's position, he went to Bukhara and Samarkand in 1202/1788 with his family to deepen his learning, and on to the cities of Herat and Kabul in 1210/1796. He studied in Bukhara under ʿAbd al-Qayyūm b. ʿAbd al-Karīm b. Allāhyār, who was evidently the grandson of Ṣūfī Allāhyār.[30] In Kabul, Bulghārī was initiated into the Naqshbandiyya Mujaddidiyya by Fayḍ Khān Kābūlī (d. 1216/1802); like other Tatars, he was attracted by the scholarly reputation of the city in general and the sheikh in particular.[31] In 1212/1798, after the death of his wife, he returned to Utïz-Iman. However, he went to Karaçeşme after having been unfavorably received by the local population in the city. After staying there for a year, Bulghārī became a professor at the madrasas of Ebi and Kuakbaş. For a while, he remained in Timeş (his father's village) and eventually migrated to the village of Mereç in Bashkortostan, where he stayed until the end of his life. A reader and copyist of Aḥmad Sirhindī's works, Utïz-Imani al-Bulghārī was famous for his stern religious indictments against the consumption of alcohol and, more generally, borrowings from Russian traditions.[32]

A third commentary contributed to the popularity of the *Thabāt al-ʿājizīn*. Entitled *Aʿyān-i māzī* or *Dibācha-yi fāʾiza*, it was authored by Muḥammad ʿAlī al-Chuqurī (d. 1306/1889), who also produced Sufi poems and many prose works. Chuqurī was born in 1241/1826 near Ufa in Tatarstan; his father was an imam and sheikh in Eski Chuqur village and was a member of a rich and deep-rooted Bashkir family. Chuqurī began his education in various nearby village madrasas when he was seventeen years old. In 1265/1849, he went to Bukhara with the intention of improving his education, but upon the passing of his father, who had introduced him to Sufism at a young age, he was compelled to return to his hometown.

After the death of his father, both Muḥammad Murād Badakhshānī and Hāris Ishān (Muḥammad Hāris Isterlibashi Tokayev, d. 1287/1870) continued to provide Muḥammad ʿAlī al-Chuqurī with a Sufi education. Chuqurī married the daughter of a sheikh named Jalāl al-Dīn. When he was twenty-three, he returned to Chuqur and became an imam. In 1289/1872, he went on his first Hajj, thus following in the footsteps of the Tatars who established contacts with centers of Islamic learning in the Middle East rather than with Bukhara.[33] He met several sheikhs in Istanbul. In

27. Tāj al-Dīn b. Yalchïghul, *Risāle-yi ʿazīze*, 7.
28. Tāj al-Dīn b. Yalchïghul, *Risāle-yi ʿazīze*, 3.
29. Manuscript references in Ludmila V. Dmitrieva, *Opisanie tiurskikh rukopisei*, 98.
30. Allen J. Frank, *Bukhara and the Muslims of Russia*, 128–129.
31. Hamid Algar, "Shaykh Zaynullah Rasulev, the Last Great Naqshbandi Shaykh of the Volga-Urals Region," in *Muslims in Central Asia*, ed. Jo-Ann Gross (Durham-London: Duke University Press, 1992), 113.
32. İsmail Türkoğlu and İbrahim Maraş, "Otuz-İmeni, Abdürrahim," *Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi* 34 (2007): 11–12; Necdet Tosun, *Türkistan dervişlerinden yadigâr. Orta Asya türkçesiyle yazılmış tasavvufî eserler* (Istanbul: Isan Yayınları, 2011), 82–83; Agnès Nilüfer Kefeli, *Becoming Muslim in Imperial Russia*, 71–72, 132–133.
33. Hamid Algar, "Shaykh Zaynullah Rasulev," 115.

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Medina, he received an *ijāza* from the Indian Mujaddidī master Muḥammad Maẓhar (d. 1301/1883). Then he started to train disciples. He made no less than four major pilgrimages between 1289/1872 and 1304/1886.[34]

The two last commentaries on the *Thabāt al-ʿājizīn* are Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn b. Rāvil al-Salīmī al-Kirānī's *Irshād al-ʿājizīn, sherḥ-i thabāt al-ʿājizīn* (written in Tatar Turkish and printed in Kazan in 1311/1893 and 1328/1910) and Sayyid Ḥabībullāh b. Sayyid Yaḥyā Khān's *Hidāyat al-ṭālibīn*. Unfortunately, we do not have much information about their authors or their works' contents. What we do know is that the influence of *Thabāt al-ʿājizīn* and its various *sharḥs* extended far beyond Central Asian Sufi circles and families. Indeed, the German Orientalist Martin Hartmann reports that the son of his host in Ghulja (in eastern Turkestan) was learning the *Thabāt*, which had been printed in Kashgar as early as 1312/1894.[35] In this city during the 1350s/1930s, Ṣūfī Allāhyār's poetry was apparently taught to teenagers in *maktab* classes along with basic Arabic, Persian, and Turkic, the Qurʾān, and the poetry of Ḥāfiẓ (d. 792/1389) and Navāʾī (d. 907/1501).[36] Other scholars think that the *Thabāt* was an intermediate level textbook for madrasas in eastern Turkestan. The fact is that the treatise was a part of madrasa education in Russia and the Kazakh steppe in the beginning of the fourteenth/twentieth century and even figured in an academic program for the "new-method" (*uṣūl-i jadīd*) schools established by Muslim Reformists in Tashkent in 1328/1910.[37]

Conclusion

Far from being a dense theoretical treatise destined to remain in the hands of a reified intellectual and spiritual elite, the *Thabāt al-ʿājizīn* was a basic, widespread manual of Sufism for successive generations of madrasa students in Central Eurasia. Thanks to the emergent Sufi networks, the more classical methods of the intellectual transmission (i.e., the *sharḥ* tradition), and new means of knowledge production (i.e., print), Ṣūfī Allāhyār's moral Sufi vision has had a strong influence on the Muslim intelligentsia in the region. Such a vision was of course certainly not new to the history of Sufism,[38] but what gives *Thabāt al-ʿājizīn* pride of place in the annals of Sufi literature is that it offers a unique Sufi ethical vision in a unique historical context, while also pointing up the importance of a moral (rather than a legal) emphasis in Central Asian Sufi thought in the modern period.

34. Necdet Tosun, *Türkistan dervişlerinden yadigâr*, 97–99; Allen J. Frank, *Islamic Historiography*, 140.
35. Martin Hartmann, "Das Buchwesen in Turkestan und die türkischen Drucke der Sammlung Hartmann," in *Mitteilungen des Seminars für Orientalische Sprachen* (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1904), 95.
36. Haji Nur Haji and Chen Guoguang, *Shinjang islam tarikhi* (Urumqi: Millätlär Näshriyati, 1995), 364.
37. Adeeb Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 168, 171.
38. For overviews, see Francesco Chiabotti, Eve Feuillebois-Pierunek, Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen, and Luca Patrizi, eds., *Ethics and Spirituality in Islam: Sufi* Adab (Leiden: Brill, 2017); Saeko Yazaki, "Morality in Early Sufi Literature," in *The Cambridge Companion to Sufism*, ed. Lloyd Ridgeon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 75–98.

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SUFISM, ETHICS, AND THE MUSLIM MODERNIST PROJECT

Ahmed El Shamsy

One of the central categorizations in the study of modern Islam is the binary between Sufism and Salafism. Definitions and understandings of this binary vary: its poles may be characterized in terms of, for example, esoteric doctrines versus exoteric practices, innovation versus tradition, heterodoxy versus orthodoxy, equality versus hierarchy, or tolerance versus rigidity. But all accounts tend to assume that the two contrasting phenomena have stable and incompatible identities.[1] This assumption has generated straightforward intellectual genealogies of the opposing camps. Sufis' spiritual lineage is traced via Yūsuf al-Nabhānī (1275–1350/1849–1932) and Ibn ʿArabī (d. 638/1240) back to al-Junayd (d. 298/910), whereas Salafis are thought to owe their identity to the legacy of Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328), as transmitted by individuals such as Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb (1115–1206/1703 or 1704–1792) and Rashīd Riḍā (1282–1354/1865–1935). As a result, the study of individual thinkers has often involved the exercise of identifying their place in these genealogies and slotting them into the appropriate category within the Sufi/Salafi binary. Was the Egyptian reformer Muḥammad ʿAbduh (1266–1323/1849–1905) a "Salafi" or wasn't he?[2] Did ʿAbduh or the Damascene scholar ʿAbd al-Razzāq

1. For two very different accounts of the binary, see Ernest Gellner, "A Pendulum Swing Theory of Islam," *Annales de sociologie marocaines* 5 (1968): 5–14, reprinted in *Sociology of Religion: Selected Readings*, ed. Roland Robertson (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969); and Stephen Schwartz, *Two Faces of Islam* (New York: Doubleday, 2002), esp. 45–60.

2. Henri Lauzière, in *The Making of Salafism: Islamic Reform in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), makes the former case. Frank Griffel's critique of Lauzière's hypothesis seems to take "Salafi" as more an etic term; Griffel, "What Do We Mean by 'Salafī'? Connecting Muḥammad ʿAbduh with Egypt's Nūr Party in Islam's Contemporary Intellectual History," *Die Welt des Islams*, n.s., 55, no. 2 (2015): 186–220.

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al-Bīṭār (1253–1335/1837–1917) start out as a "Sufi" and then either transform into a "Salafi"[3] or get turned into one in later portrayals?[4]

I am, of course, oversimplifying the much more sophisticated arguments and positions of the studies I refer to here and ignoring their unquestionable scholarly contributions.[5] But I maintain that the logic of the simple Sufi/Salafi binary inevitably colors our perception of the materials and personalities we seek to understand, especially since it informs current views of Islam itself. Further, this supposedly analytic binary can easily deteriorate into a moral scale of what Mahmood Mamdani has called "good" and "bad" Muslims.[6] For most of the twentieth century, Sufism largely stood for superstition and irrationality in scholarly discourse, while Salafism represented a rationalist return to the egalitarian and protestant roots of Islam. But toward the end of the century and particularly after the events of 9/11, Salafism became emblematic of puritanical, primitivist, and intolerant religiosity, whereas Sufism is increasingly seen as the tolerant, culturally vibrant form of Islam.[7]

Aware of this charged debate but determined to reach beyond it, I seek in this essay to eschew preconceived notions of the Sufi/Salafi binary and instead to investigate how prominent modernist reformers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries who have often been labeled "Salafis" (including by themselves) conceived of Sufism. What role did Sufism, as they understood it, play in their analysis of Muslims' collective problems and in their prescriptions for remedying these problems? The primary axis of my investigation is ethics, which these modernists approached both on the individual level of personal ethical formation, especially through the cultivation of virtue, and on the collective level of embodying ethical principles in social structures and interactions. What I intend to show is that Muslim modernists of this period distinguished between elements of Sufism that they disapproved of and attacked and elements that they actively embraced and tried to harness to the service of their own reform projects. The latter aspect of the modernist agenda has received little attention, even though—as I argue below—Sufi ethics played a key role in the formation and activities of prominent Arab modernist figures around the turn of the century.

I begin with a historic encounter that took place in Tripoli in the 1880s between Muḥammad ʿAbduh, who was at the time teaching in the Sulṭāniyya School in Beirut after having been expelled from Egypt for his involvement in the ʿUrābī revolt, and Rashīd Riḍā, the young man who would go on to found the influential journal *al-Manār*. The two eventually became close friends, and Riḍā's later account

3. Itzchak Weismann, *Taste of Modernity: Sufism, Salafiyya, and Arabism in Late Ottoman Damascus* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 273–78; Elizabeth Sirriyeh, *Sufis and Anti-Sufis: The Defense, Rethinking and Rejection of Sufism in the Modern World* (Richmond: Curzon, 1999), 86–97; Mohamed Haddad, "Les oeuvres de ʿAbduh: Histoire d'une manipulation," *IBLA* 60, no. 180 (1997): 201–2.

4. ʿAbduh was posthumously turned into a Salafi by Rashīd Riḍā according to Haddad, "Oeuvres," 221. ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Bīṭār was made into a Salafi by his son Muḥammad Bahjat al-Bīṭār according to David Commins, *Islamic Reform: Politics and Social Change in Late Ottoman Syria* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 40.

5. I exclude Schwartz's book, which is merely a post-9/11 polemic, from this praise.

6. Mahmood Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2004).

7. Compare Henry Laoust's characterization of Salafis in "Le reformisme orthodoxe des 'Salafiya,'" *Revue des études islamiques* 6 (1932): 175–224 with the current discourse on the topic. For a polemical example, see Schwartz, *Two Faces of Islam*; for an analysis of this phenomenon, see Mark Sedgwick, "Sufis as 'Good Muslims': Sufism in the Battle against Jihadi Salafism," in *Sufis and Salafis in the Contemporary Age*, ed. Lloyd Ridgeon (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).

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of this first meeting depicts an instant affinity born of the discovery of deep shared concerns with the state of education in the Arab world. According to Riḍā, ʿAbduh asked him whether the curriculum in Tripoli included Quran commentaries (*tafsīr*), and he answered, "No, but someone is reading [a commentary] to the people that contains fanciful stories, unsubstantiated lore, and superstitions. He is reading the commentary titled *Rūḥ al-bayān* by Ismāʿīl Ḥaqqī the Sufi."[8] Ismāʿīl Ḥaqqī of Bursa (d. 1127/1725) was an Ottoman scholar and intellectual whose Quran commentary is relatively obscure today.[9] But it was hugely important in the nineteenth century; indeed, it was the first *tafsīr* to be printed in the Arab world, published by the Egyptian government's press in Bulaq in 1839, a quarter of a century before the now famous commentary of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209) was printed, and a full sixty-four years before the publication of al-Ṭabarī's (d. 310/923) magisterial commentary.[10]

What were the "fanciful stories" that Riḍā decried? A look at the very beginning of Ismāʿīl Ḥaqqī's commentary offers some insight.[11] The first section addresses the question of why the Quran begins with the letter *bāʾ* (in *bismillāh*) and proposes ten reasons, all of which are of a vaguely edifying but utterly speculative type. For example, according to Ismāʿīl Ḥaqqī, the *alif* stands tall and arrogant, which is why God did not allow it to begin the Quran, whereas the *bāʾ* is low and humble and was therefore raised to a place of honor. Further, the *bāʾ* carries the short vowel *kasra* (*bi-*); God is said to be with the brokenhearted, *al-munkasira qulūbuhum*,[12] so the *bāʾ* with its *kasra* (which shares a root with the word *munkasira, k-s-r*) is close to God. The other reasons cited are of a similar nature. The author also claims that Muḥammad's son-in-law ʿAlī is the dot under the *bāʾ*. This comment is a reference to a longer tradition according to which all knowledge is contained in the Quran, all knowledge in the Quran is contained in its first chapter, all that knowledge is in turn contained in the dot under the initial *bāʾ*, and ʿAlī is this dot. The origins of this statement lie in Shiʿi doctrine, but it came to be embraced fully by Sunni Sufis.[13]

Ismāʿīl Ḥaqqī's work contains countless other instances in which he interprets the Quran using elements that we today would consider only marginally related to

8. Rashīd Riḍā, *Tārīkh al-ustādh al-imām al-shaykh Muḥammad ʿAbduh* (Cairo: Dār al-Manār, 1907–31; repr. Cairo: Dār al-Faḍīla, 2006), 1:390.

9. The *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, for example, has no entry on Ismāʿīl Ḥaqqī or his exegesis. However, a recent English-language translation of and commentary on the Quran draws extensively on Ismāʿīl Ḥaqqī's work; see Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Caner K. Dagli, Maria Massi Dakake, Joseph E. B. Lumbard, and Mohammed Rustom, eds., *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary* (New York: HarperOne, 2015).

10. Ahmed El Shamsy, *Rediscovering the Islamic Classics: How Editors and Print Culture Transformed an Intellectual Tradition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020), 70, 78, 162.

11. Ismāʿīl Ḥaqqī, *Rūḥ al-bayān* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, n.d.), 1:7.

12. This *ḥadīth qudsī* is a staple of Sufi and pietistic literature, despite its seemingly universal rejection by actual *ḥadīth* scholars. For endorsement of the *ḥadīth*, see, e.g., Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn* (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifa, 1987), 4:199; for its rejection, see, e.g., Ismāʿīl al-ʿAjlūnī, *Kashf al-khafāʾ*, ed. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd Hindāwī (Beirut: al-Maktabat al-ʿAṣriyya, 2000), 1:230.

13. William Graham, "Basmala," in *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill Online, 2015), http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1875-3922_q3_EQCOM_00024. By the time of ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Jīlī (d. 832/1428), the statement had reached the status of a *ḥadīth*; see al-Jīlī, *al-Kahf al-raqīm* (Hyderabad: Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif al-Niẓāmiyya, 1918), 5–6. Riḍā would later point out and critique this crossover from esoteric Shiʿism into Sunni Sufism in a series of articles titled "Debates between a Reformist and a Conformist" that he published in his journal, *al-Manār*. See especially Rashīd Riḍā, "Muḥāwarāt bayn al-muṣliḥ wa-l-muqallid," part 4, *al-Manār* 3, no. 32 (February 6, 1901): 795–809.

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Islamic fields of scholarly inquiry. For example, he refers approvingly to esoteric sciences such as letterism (*ʿilm al-ḥurūf*)[14] and to the hugely popular medieval author of works of magic Aḥmad al-Būnī (d. 622/1225), quoting the latter's statement that the tree of existence grows out of the *basmala*.[15] Al-Būnī was an extremely controversial figure because he explicitly acknowledged that at least part of his teaching consisted of black magic.[16] It is thus not difficult to imagine why Riḍā might have found the work rather ill-suited to serve as a teaching text on Quranic exegesis, particularly as the sole work on the subject to be taught in his home town.

This part of ʿAbduh's and Riḍā's exchange supports the general idea of modernist hostility to Sufism. But immediately afterward, according to Riḍā's account, the discussion turned to ethics, with Riḍā lamenting, "The study of ethics has disappeared; neither students nor teachers can be found for it," and ʿAbduh replying, "This is how religion disappears."[17] Riḍā describes being pleased with this statement, because it corresponded to his own conviction in the importance of ethics. He reports having a keen interest in ethical literature, particularly al-Ghazālī's (d. 505/1111) *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*, arguably the most famous Sufi work in Arabic.[18]

In his description of his encounter with ʿAbduh, Riḍā mentions the personal importance of al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyāʾ* for him only briefly, but he fleshes it out in full in an autobiographical sketch of his youth, which he published one year before his death. The *Iḥyāʾ* is the most often cited and discussed work in Riḍā's book, and on several occasions Riḍā dwells on the centrality of al-Ghazālī to his own intellectual and spiritual development. He says, for example:

> My favorite work on Sufism was *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn* by the "proof of religion" Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī. I read it in full and returned countless times to some of its chapters. Then I read it out to people. It had the most profound impact on my religiosity, my morals, my knowledge, and my actions. Its effect was overwhelmingly positive; it was negative only in traces, which I remedied as I learned more. The mistakes in it I abandoned gradually after immersing myself in the study of *ḥadīth,* particularly its determinism, speculative interpretations of Ashʿarī and Sufi provenance, extreme forms of worldly renunciation, and some ritual innovations.[19]

Riḍā thus indicates that al-Ghazālī's work was formative for him but simultaneously stresses that his enduring admiration of the work was not uncritical and that over the years he came to disagree with parts of it. A little later, he remarks:

> Sufism was made dear to me by the "proof of religion" Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī. I was disciplining my soul according to the Sufis by abstaining from the best foods, making do with a little zaatar, salt, and sumac, sleeping on the bare ground, and other such things. Eventually it was no

14. Ismāʿīl Ḥaqqī, *Rūḥ al-bayān,* 6:7, 8:511.
15. Ismāʿīl Ḥaqqī, *Rūḥ al-bayān*, 1:9, 4:373.
16. Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Būnī, *Shams al-maʿārif al-kubrā* (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Nūr, 2005), 69.
17. Riḍā, *Tārīkh al-ustādh al-imām*, 1:390.
18. I admit that there is no single genre of "Sufi works," and the *Iḥyāʾ* has also been described as primarily a work on ethics. But the Sufi element in it is clear enough, and as I show below, Riḍā considered it a work of Sufism.
19. Rashīd Riḍā, *al-Manār wa-l-Azhar* (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-Manār, 1934), 140.

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> longer difficult for me to abstain from good food in front of me. But when I attempted to neglect physical hygiene in my body and clothes, I could not do it; it was contrary to the divine law.[20]

This passage makes it clear that Riḍā not only absorbed al-Ghazālī's intellectual arguments but also used the *Iḥyāʾ* as a practical handbook for his own spiritual struggle, which included engaging in practices of worldly renunciation. But he reports that he could not bring himself to adopt certain practices advocated by some Sufis of his time, such as disregard for physical cleanliness.[21] Interestingly, Riḍā notes that when he told ʿAbduh about his use of the *Iḥyāʾ* as a spiritual handbook, ʿAbduh replied that he, too, had used the book in the same way and had balked at the same elements of Sufism that Riḍā had. The parallel suggests that Riḍā and ʿAbduh underwent similar formative experiences, which may help explain why they became so close.[22]

Riḍā clearly assigns a formative and overall positive role to Sufi literature and practices in his personal development, and his autobiographical sketch as a whole reads very much like a Sufi autobiography. Yet he wrote the sketch at the end of his life, by which time he had, according to the standard account of his trajectory, become a religious conservative, if not an outright Wahhābī. Clearly, then, this evidence of his strong Sufi inclinations complicates the Sufi vs. Salafi dichotomy through which figures such as Riḍā and ʿAbduh are usually perceived.

A further challenge to the dichotomy comes from the evidence contained in ʿAbduh and Riḍā's collaborative Quranic commentary, *Tafsīr al-Manār*. The commentary was based on ʿAbduh's famous lectures on Quranic exegesis at al-Azhar, which Riḍā subsequently published with his own comments—first in his journal, *al-Manār*, and later as a separate publication.[23] In the commentary, ʿAbduh's analysis of a Quranic verse on people who set up equals beside God digresses into a discussion on Sufism.[24] He reports that some thinkers have blamed Sufism for the pitiful state of the contemporary Muslim world, but he rejects this blanket claim, instead providing a historical account of the origins and development of Sufism. According to ʿAbduh, Sufism began as a movement of ethical self-cultivation and experiential exploration of the human soul that attracted the ire of jurists who conceived of religion as a formalistic system of outward performance of obedience to God. These jurists enlisted the help of political authorities to suppress Sufism, which prompted Sufis to develop a system of apprenticeship and initiation that tested the seriousness of each aspiring apprentice and only gradually familiarized him or her

20. Riḍā, *al-Manār wa-l-Azhar*, 147.

21. Whereas al-Ghazālī himself promoted hygiene and criticized cleanliness only when it is deployed as an outward show of piety (*Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*, 3:297 [*Kitāb fī dhamm al-jāh wa-l-riyāʾ*]), ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʿrānī's biographical dictionary of Sufis contains tales of saints for whom uncleanliness of their persons and their surroundings was an essential spiritual practice. See, e.g., al-Shaʿrānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā* (Bulaq, 1870), 2:159 (entry on Barakāt al-Khayyāṭ).

22. Riḍā, *al-Manār wa-l-Azhar*, 147. On ʿAbduh's spiritual development, see Muḥammad ʿAbduh, "Sīratī," in *al-Aʿmāl al-kāmila li-l-imām Muḥammad ʿAbduh*, ed. Muḥammad ʿImāra (Beirut: al-Muʾassasa al-ʿArabiyya li-l-Dirāsāt wa-l-Nashr, 1980), 2:315–37.

23. Muḥammad ʿAbduh and Rashīd Riḍā, *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ḥakīm al-mushtahar bi-ism Tafsīr al-Manār* (Cairo: Dār al-Manār, 1906–35). See also Johanna Pink, "ʿAbduh, Muḥammad," in *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill Online, 2015), http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1875-3922_q3_EQCOM_050483.

24. For a discussion of this passage, see ʿĀdil Sālim Jād Allāh, "Mawqif al-Imām Muḥammad ʿAbduh al-naqdī min baʿḍ mumārasāt al-mutaṣawwifa fī ʿaṣrih," *Islāmiyyat al-maʿārif* 82 (2015): 79–110.

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with Sufi teachings. Over time, however, the initiative system of masters/shaykhs and aspirants/*murīd*s created a system of personal authority (*sulṭa khāṣṣa*) in which the apprentice was expected to submit to the master blindly, like "a corpse in the hands of a corpse washer,"[25] and to follow without question any command issued by the master, to the point that "even if [the master] ordered [the apprentice] to disobey God, [the apprentice] was obligated to believe that this was the right thing to do."[26] ʿAbduh's description of the absolute authority enjoyed by the Sufi master was not mere hyperbole or polemics: his contemporary Muḥammad Amīn al-Kurdī (1265–1332 /1865–1914) stated definitively in a popular handbook of Sufism that the Sufi apprentice "does not object to anything [the shaykh] does, even if it is seemingly impermissible."[27] Sufi masters' spiritual authority endured beyond their deaths, giving rise to a flourishing culture of grave veneration and a robust cult of saints who were believed to exercise hidden power over the affairs of this world and its inhabitants.

In ʿAbduh's view, the Muslim religious establishment's acceptance of such inflation of the Sufi master's authority was a detrimental accommodation because it wrongly accepted a hierarchy that subordinated the science of the sacred law or revelation more broadly (*ʿilm al-sharīʿa*), which was the province of the *ʿulamāʾ*, to the "science of reality" (*ʿilm al-ḥaqīqa*), which was the realm of the Sufis.[28] For ʿAbduh, the coup of Sufism was the culmination of the gradual deterioration of Muslim legal discourse into empty formalism:

> Once Sufism had become inverted into its polar opposite, in contradiction to its original purpose, and the study of sacred law had turned into terminological squabbling about expressions in the later legal literature, the narrow-minded jurists and the ignorant Sufis came to an understanding. The former attributed to the latter secret knowledge and miracles, accepting from them what contravenes both revelation and reason because it was based on the "science of true reality"; so you would see a scholar who had studied the Quran, the Sunna, and the sacred law pledge his allegiance to an ignorant illiterate, thinking that the latter will lead him to God. If the Book of God, the example of His Prophet, the understandings of the imams, and the derivations of the jurists are not enough for knowledge of God, or what is referred to as "reaching God," why did God establish this religion in the first place if people have no need of it because of such illiterates and quasi-illiterates? And does this then mean that the inadequacy lies in what God has revealed, or in what the Prophet has explicated, or in the explanations of the imams of what God has revealed and the Prophet brought? God forbid! There is no path to knowing God and attaining His pleasure beyond the clarification and guidance that He has revealed. The original aim of the true Sufis was to

25. For this trope, see ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʿrānī's formative statement in *al-Anwār al-qudsiyya fī maʿrifat qawāʿid al-ṣūfiyya,* ed. Ṭāhā ʿAbd al-Bāqī Surūr and al-Sayyid Muḥammad ʿĪd al-Shāfiʿī (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-ʿIlmiyya, 1992), 1:189. For its influence, see ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jamal, *Naṣīḥat al-murīd fī ṭarīq ahl al-sulūk wa-l-tajrīd wa-yusammā ayḍan al-Yawāqīt al-ḥisān fī taṣrīf maʿānī al-insān*, ed. ʿĀṣim al-Kayyālī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 2005), 351, and Shahzad Bashir, *Sufi Bodies: Religion and Society in Medieval Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), chap. 7.

26. ʿAbduh and Riḍā, *Tafsīr al-Manār*, 2:73.

27. Muḥammad Amīn al-Kurdī, *Kitāb Tanwīr al-qulūb fī muʿāmalat ʿallām al-ghuyūb* (Aleppo: Dār al-Qalam al-ʿArabī, 1991), 587.

28. ʿAbduh and Riḍā, *Tafsīr al-Manār,* 2:73 (on Quran 2:166).

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> understand the Book and the Sunna, to realize what these two contained, to improve their character and manners through them, and to transform the soul by acting according to them, without blindly following those concerned with mere superficialities and without focusing narrowly on the outward.[29]

At this point, one might legitimately ask whether ʿAbduh is not in fact endorsing the claim he ostensibly set out to refute, namely, that Sufism bears significant responsibility for the present situation of, as he puts it, "Muslims falling into ignorance regarding their religion." But ʿAbduh's argument is a historical one: he contends that although Sufism began as an ethical movement of individual self-cultivation, over time it developed institutions, beliefs, and practices that were inimical to this original mission. Foremost among these, for ʿAbduh, was the new role of Sufi saints: their insights were deemed superior to those of religious scholars, they were not held accountable by any external standard, and they acted as powerful intermediaries between God and ordinary believers, since they were thought capable of influencing the lives of their followers even from beyond the grave. ʿAbduh thus distinguished two distinct and incompatible phenomena within Sufism—the original religious and intellectual movement, whose profound ethical mission was an important aspect of the development of Islamic religiosity, and later Sufism, which had, for contingent reasons, abandoned its ethical mission in favor of establishing an absolutist model of religious authority. This model entailed compromising Islamic teachings, subjecting natural ethical sentiments to inscrutable Sufi authority, and substituting the ideal of illiteracy for the previous appreciation for learning.[30]

The later parts of *Tafsīr al-Manār* do not rely on ʿAbduh's lecture notes and seem to have been written entirely by Riḍā. These sections nonetheless paint a similar historical picture of Sufism with even clearer outlines. In his discussion of the concept of "God's friends" (*awliyāʾ Allāh*), the term that came to be used for saints, Riḍā draws a comparison between the great Sufis described in al-Qushayrī's eleventh-century epistle on Sufism, such as al-Muḥāsibī (d. 243/857) and Sarī Saqaṭī (d. 253/867), and the Sufis mentioned in ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʿrānī's sixteenth-century biographical dictionary. Whereas in al-Qushayrī's time, he argues, "you will not find significant differences between the lifestyles of *ḥadīth* scholars, jurists, and prominent Sufis in terms of devotion, piety, knowledge and wisdom," "the saints of al-Shaʿrānī's time are madmen, shameless and filthy, with lice dripping from their hair and clothing, which they do not wash except maybe once a year [...] yet they consider themselves superior to prophets, some claiming unity with God, or even divinity."[31] Riḍā then provides examples of particularly objectionable behavior by Sufis in al-Shaʿrānī's work. One, he reports, lived in a brothel and detained its patrons on their way out in order to intercede for them with God until

29. ʿAbduh and Riḍā, *Tafsīr al-Manār,* 2:74.
30. Adam Sabra, "Illiterate Sufis and Learned Artisans: The Circle of ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʿrānī," in *Le développement du soufisme en Égypte à l'époque mamelouke = The Development of Sufism in Mamluk Egypt,* ed. Richard McGregor and Adam Sabra (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 2006).
31. ʿAbduh and Riḍā, *Tafsīr al-Manār*, 2:73 (on Quran 10:64), 11:421.

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they were forgiven. Another once began his Friday sermon with the words, "I bear witness that you have no God but Satan, peace and blessings be upon him," but the congregants excused his apparent blasphemy when they discovered that he had miraculously given thirty parallel sermons in different locations. A third Sufi was in the habit of sitting in mosques and reciting verses that the common people believed to be from the Quran but that were in fact composed by him. Given his saintly charisma, no one dared to criticize him.[32] Riḍā concludes:

> If al-Shaʿrānī, one of the greatest Azharī scholars and authors, considered this madman a saint, invoking God's pleasure on him whenever mentioning him even when he is mentioned several times on one line, and his [al-Shaʿrānī's] master ʿAlī al-Khawwāṣṣ received from this man the solutions to divine mysteries and relied on his unveilings, would we be mistaken in saying that anyone who testifies to his saintliness and miracles is a superstitious madman like him? What value did reason, knowledge, and religion have in his age? And what stronger evidence could there be that this madness was due to satanic influence rather than divine inspiration than the fact that the man compared his incoherent rantings to the Quran, as al-Shaʿrānī himself witnessed?[33]

Riḍā's discussion of Sufism, including his comparison of earlier and later models of piety, has to be understood in the context of mainstream Sufism as encountered by Muslim modernists such as ʿAbduh and Riḍā. Al-Shaʿrānī was arguably the most widely read author of religious literature in Arab lands in the centuries before ʿAbduh,[34] and his importance in defining the image of Sufism and exporting Akbarian Sufism[35] into other disciplines cannot be overstated.[36] Riḍā's juxtaposition of early and later forms of Sufism is aimed at exposing later Sufi authorities such as al-Shaʿrānī for having deviated from the original purpose and foundational doctrines of Sufism and for having normalized unethical behavior through the excuse of saintly immunity from ethical norms.

Al-Shaʿrānī's works were by no means unique in this respect. Another illustrative example, compiled around the same time as Riḍā was writing his critique of al-Shaʿrānī, is Yūsuf al-Nabhānī's collection of stories about saintly miracles, *Jāmiʿ karāmāt al-awliyāʾ*. One of the miracles recounted in al-Nabhānī's book, performed by a certain ʿAlī al-ʿUmarī, who died at the very beginning of the twentieth century, consisted of al-ʿUmarī's growing his penis to an extraordinary length, whipping his servant with it, and then shrinking it back to its normal size. Al-Nabhānī reports having been told the story in al-ʿUmarī's presence, and at its conclusion al-ʿUmarī grabbed al-Nabhānī's hand and pushed it into his pants, where, al-Nabhānī says, he could not feel anything at all; the implication was that al-ʿUmarī was also able to retract his penis into complete nonexistence, "as if he wasn't a man at all," as

32. ʿAbduh and Riḍā, *Tafsīr al-Manār*, 11:424–26. See al-Shaʿrānī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 2:165 (entry on ʿAlī Waḥīsh), 2:118 (entry on Muḥammad al-Khuḍarī), 2:205 (entry on Shaʿbān al-Majdhūb).
33. ʿAbduh and Riḍā, *Tafsīr al-Manār*, 11:426.
34. Leila Hudson, "Reading al-Shaʿrānī: The Sufi Genealogy of Islamic Modernism in Late Ottoman Damascus," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 15, no.1 (2004): 39–68.
35. "Akbarian Sufis" refers to followers of Ibn ʿArabī, who was known as *al-shaykh al-akbar*.
36. El Shamsy, *Rediscovering the Islamic Classics*, 45–46.

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al-Nabhānī puts it.[37] What is particularly noteworthy about this remarkable account is that al-Nabhānī does not seem to have questioned al-ʿUmarī's actions or expressed any shock at them—not at al-ʿUmarī's whipping of his servant, not at his obscene manner of doing so, nor at his forcing of al-Nabhānī's hand into his pants to feel for his genitalia.

This normalization of behavior that would ordinarily be considered unacceptable is also evident in the hagiography of the influential eighteenth-century Moroccan Sufi ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Dabbāgh. The work contains pages and pages of descriptions of al-Dabbāgh's miracles, which consisted primarily of knowing every detail of his followers' sex lives; he even assured them that he was always with them when they had sex with their wives.[38] The aim of such stories is clearly not to model or promote ethical behavior in any ordinary sense. Rather, they serve to reinforce the principle that Sufi saints are not subject to ordinary moral rules and standards. Such stories were not considered merely fanciful fictions or metaphors. For example, in the nineteenth century, the shaykh of the Saʿdiyya Sufi brotherhood in Egypt participated in important religious festivals by riding his horse over the prostrated bodies of his disciples. The fact that most of his disciples emerged with no obvious wounds was celebrated as a miracle enacted by the shaykh; meanwhile, those who did sustain injuries (even deaths were reported) were blamed for their insufficient spiritual preparation.[39] The practice was eventually outlawed in Egypt. ʿAbduh lauded the ban—not because he objected to Sufi practices in general, but because for him the issue was first and foremost an ethical one. In his view, the shaykh's actions not only endangered the apprentices' health but, more fundamentally, violated the Quran-mandated dignity of all humans by subjecting the apprentices to the hooves of the shaykh's horse. Such public spectacles thus represented the sacrifice of ethical norms in the quest to bolster saints' authority and display their alleged miracles.[40] On a more quotidian level, Sayyid Quṭb's (1323–85/1906–66) memoir of his childhood in an Egyptian village in the early twentieth century features a madman whom the villagers deemed a potential saint despite his habit of running around naked and caked in filth, attacking children. The young Quṭb was bewildered to see that the adults around him willfully ignored the man's behavior, choosing to see it as supernaturally inspired and thus beyond the norms applicable to normal social conduct.[41] It is this facet of the Sufism of their time—the unquestioned authority attributed to saintly figures and its use to justify seemingly unethical conduct—that drew repeated criticism from modernists of ʿAbduh's and Riḍā's generation.

The basis of the saints' authority lay primarily in their performance of miracles, and by the fourteenth century accounts of such miracles had become the principal

37. Yūsuf al-Nabhānī, *Jāmiʿ karāmāt al-awliyāʾ*, ed. Ibrāhīm ʿAṭwa ʿIwaḍ (Porbandar: Markaz Ahl-i Sunnat Barakāt-i Riḍā, 2001), 2:396–97.

38. Aḥmad b. al-Mubārak al-Sijilmāsī, *al-Ibrīz min kalām sayyidī ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Dabbāgh* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 2002), 31. I am grateful to Jonathan Brown and Janan Delgado for the references to al-Nabhānī and al-Dabbāgh.

39. Meir Hatina, "Religious Culture Contested: The Sufi Ritual of *Dawsa* in Nineteenth-Century Cairo," *Die Welt des Islams*, n.s., 47, no. 1 (2007): 41–42; Sirriyeh, *Sufis and Anti-Sufis*, 93.

40. Riḍā, *Tārīkh al-ustādh al-imām*, 2:136–43. See also Kei Takahashi, "The Abolition of *Dawsa* and the Rise of the *Ṭarīqa* Criticism in Modern Egypt," *Bulletin of the Society for Near Eastern Studies in Japan* 53, no. 1 (2010): 58–81.

41. Sayyid Quṭb, *Ṭifl min al-qarya* (Beirut: Dār al-Shurūq, 1973), 8–15.

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staple of Sufi biographies. The idea was that saints proved their sainthood by means of saintly miracles, the same way that prophets proved their prophethood through prophetic miracles. Once somebody was determined to be a saint, the person's actions became for all intents and purposes unquestionable. Later Sufi writers developed arguments to render such accounts unassailable by conflating the standard Sunni position on the possibility of saintly miracles (namely, that they are possible) and the credibility and truthfulness of individual miracle reports. An example is found in the work of a contemporary of ʿAbduh's, Abū al-Hudā al-Ṣayyādī (1266–1328/1849–1909), the Syrian shaykh of the Rifāʿiyya brotherhood, who led the Sufi shaykhs in Istanbul under ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II.[42] Al-Ṣayyādī ridicules Ibn Taymiyya's (d. 738/1328) position of accepting the occurrence of saintly miracles in principle while rejecting the miraculousness of the fire-walking Sufis of his day:

> This really is a most curious thing, as if Shaykh Ibn Taymiyya, may he be forgiven, conceded the existence of and believed in some miracles but denied others; this is more than enough [to show his error]! All might and power belongs to God! It is clear that the existence of saints among the Muslims is established by the text of the Quran and that the miracles of these saints are a miracle of the Prophet Muḥammad, peace and blessings be upon him; to deny the miracles of the saints is tantamount to denying the saints, and denying them constitutes disbelief, since it contradicts the clear text of scripture.[43]

ʿAbduh responded to this conflation forcefully:

> What is imperative to keep in mind is that both Sunnis and others agree that there is no obligation to believe in any particular claimed miracle on the part of any particular "saint" since the rise of Islam. By communal consensus, it is permissible for every Muslim to deny the occurrence of any particular "miracle" performed by any saint, whoever he be. Such denial in no way contravenes anything in the fundamentals of Islam, in no way diverges from the authentic tradition, and in no way deviates from the straight path. … How far this unanimously held principle is from the ill-considered tendency of great numbers of Muslims today to suppose that miracles and supernatural phenomena are produced at will, with "saints" in mutual rivalry and competition! None of this has anything whatsoever to do with God, religion, the saints, or any rational intelligence.[44]

What I hope to have established thus far is that ʿAbduh and Riḍā held a positive view of what they saw as the "original" form of Sufism and believed in its power to effect ethical improvement, but that they objected vehemently to certain aspects of Sufism in their own day. But how did they conceive of the connection between these positive and negative aspects of Sufism? On this issue, ʿAbduh and Riḍā parted ways. ʿAbduh's writings indicate that he embraced the theory of Akbarian Sufism

42. On al-Ṣayyādī, see Butrus Abu-Manneh, "Sultan Abdulhamid II and Shaikh Abulhuda al-Sayyadi," *Middle Eastern Studies* 15, no. 2 (1979): 131–53.

43. Abū al-Hudā al-Ṣayyādī, *Qilādat al-jawāhir* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, n.d.), 207–11.

44. Muḥammad ʿAbduh, *Risālat al-Tawḥīd* (Cairo: Dār al-Manār, 1949), 207; translated as *The Theology of Unity,* trans. Isḥāq Musaʿad and Kenneth Cragg (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1966), 158 (my translation diverges slightly).

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and absolved it of blame for the excesses of contemporary Sufis. *Risālat al-Wāridāt,* an early work of ʿAbduh's, contains philosophical, theological, and Sufi elements, including a section in which ʿAbduh affirms his belief in the oneness of being (*waḥdat al-wujūd*), the key ontological doctrine of the school of Ibn ʿArabī.[45] ʿAbduh wrote the book at the age of twenty-five, and, as he admits in the introduction, its ideas were shaped by his mentor Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (1254–1314/1838 or 1839–1897). The book was not published during ʿAbduh's lifetime but only posthumously by Riḍā in 1908 and again in 1925. No direct statement from an older ʿAbduh regarding the doctrine of the oneness of being survives, so we do not know whether he maintained his youthful position on this particular issue, but we do have a transcript of a 1904 conversation between ʿAbduh and a Sufi called al-Dalāṣī that suggests that ʿAbduh's mature stance toward Akbarian Sufism remained favorable.[46] In the transcript, ʿAbduh states:

> The books of Muḥyī al-Dīn b. ʿArabī are littered with statements that contradict the doctrines and fundamentals of religion, and the book "The Perfect Man" [*al-Insān al-kāmil*] by Shaykh ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Jīlī is, on the surface, closer to Christianity than it is to Islam, but this surface is not what is intended; rather, the text consists of allusions that only those able to unlock them can understand. If I were in charge of book publishing, I would forbid the publication of "The Meccan Openings" [*al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya*, by Ibn ʿArabī] and similar works, because these books should not be read by the unqualified.[47]

This statement appears to reaffirm the theory that Sufism emerged as an underground movement that had to develop a specialized terminology that would be incomprehensible and even dangerous to non-initiates. ʿAbduh acknowledges that the writings of Akbarian Sufis contain elements that seem to violate basic principles of Islam, but he insists that such violations are illusory, not reflective of the works' true essence, which can be accessed only by the select. ʿAbduh also gives credence to al-Shaʿrānī's strategy of invoking "credible deniability,"[48] arguing that seemingly problematic sections in Ibn ʿArabī's work must in fact have been inserted there by others, and extending this excuse also to other Sufi writers of controversial material, including al-Shaʿrānī himself.[49] Through these two maneuvers, ʿAbduh effectively shields the revered figures of Akbarian Sufism from critique and responsibility for the failings that he criticizes in Sufis contemporary to himself.

Riḍā, by contrast, took a different stance, drawing a direct link between the doctrines of Ibn ʿArabī and Sufi practices in his day. It is plausible that the shift in attitude is connected to Riḍā's publication, through his Manār Press, of a collection of writings by Ibn Taymiyya shortly after ʿAbduh's death. The most relevant text for the present context is Ibn Taymiyya's *Bughyat al-murtād*, a critique

45. Muḥammad ʿAbduh, *Risālat al-Wāridāt*, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-Manār, 1925), 6; see also Oliver Scharbrodt, "The Salafiyya and Sufism: Muḥammad ʿAbduh and His *Risālat al-Wāridāt* (Treatise on Mystical Inspirations)," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 70, no. 1 (2007): 100. ʿAbduh also wrote an early *Risāla fī waḥdat al-wujūd*, but this work appears lost. See Riḍā, "Tatimmat sīrat al-ustādh al-imām," *al-Manār* 8 (1905): 492.

46. Muḥammad ʿAbduh, "Ḥiwār fī al-taṣawwuf wa-l-wilāya," in *al-Aʿmāl al-kāmila*, 3:541–49.

47. ʿAbduh, "Ḥiwār fī al-taṣawwuf wa-l-wilāya," 3:547.

48. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʿrānī, *al-Yawāqīt wa-l-jawāhir* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, n.d.), 16–17.

49. ʿAbduh, "Ḥiwār fī al-taṣawwuf wa-l-wilāya," 3:546–47.

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of Akbarian Sufism.[50] As Alexander Knysh has argued, Ibn Taymiyya's treatment is one of the most extensive critiques of Akbarian Sufism ever written, but his writings were still being discovered at the time of ʿAbduh's death and were not yet available to ʿAbduh.[51] Ibn Taymiyya's aim in the *Bughya* is to refute Ibn ʿArabī's cosmology, to demonstrate its incompatibility with Abrahamic scripture, to reveal the genealogical indebtedness of its core ideas to Neoplatonic philosophy, and to trace its pernicious consequences—ethical relativism and belief in saintly powers. In other words, Ibn Taymiyya connects the high theory of Akbarian Sufism with the phenomena of popular Sufism that ʿAbduh and Riḍā had criticized on ethical grounds in their own time. Whereas ʿAbduh had harbored misgivings about the printing of Ibn ʿArabī's writings, fearing that ordinary people might misunderstand them and wrongly think that they supported current superstitious practices,[52] Riḍā seems to have become convinced that the Akbarian intellectual tradition had in fact given rise to these practices. Tellingly, in his second printing of ʿAbduh's *Risālat al-Wāridāt*, which came out after Ibn Taymiyya's *Bughya*, Riḍā changed the subtitle from "on the secret of God's self-disclosures" (*fī sirr al-tajalliyyāt*) to "on the opinions of the Sufis and the philosophers," thereby creating the impression that the book described the opinions of these groups rather than ʿAbduh's own ideas.[53] The rediscovery of Ibn Taymiyya's critique closed the distance that ʿAbduh had still defended between the theory and contemporary practice of Sufism by arguing persuasively for a direct connection between the two. Nevertheless, even as Riḍā criticized the concept of *waḥdat al-wujūd* as "the fundamental doctrine of Sufi extremists … with manifold corrupting effects,"[54] he did not reject it outright but rather took the Sufi experience of the world as a unified phenomenon seriously. In his journal, he reprinted sections of Sufi works by al-Ghazālī and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 751/1350) that discussed theorizations of this experience but did so in terms that avoided Akbarian metaphysics.[55]

The belief in the centrality of ethics that animated ʿAbduh's and Riḍā's engagement with Sufism is also discernible in the work of a number of other Muslim modernists. Ṭāhir al-Jazāʾirī (1268–1338/1852–1920), a descendant of Algerian immigrants who is well known for his role in establishing the Ẓāhiriyya Library in Damascus, shared ʿAbduh's and Riḍā's interest in classical ethical literature as well as their criticism of certain elements of contemporary Sufi practice. An anecdote recounted by his student Muḥammad Kurd ʿAlī (1293–1372/1876–1953) illustrates the subtle way in which al-Jazāʾirī sought to divert Sufi practitioners from what he saw as objectionable ideas toward an emphasis on ethics:

50. Ibn Taymiyya, *Bughyat al-murtād*, published in *Kitāb Majmūʿat fatāwā shaykh al-islām Taqī al-Dīn b. Taymiyya al-Ḥarrānī* (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat Kurdistān al-ʿIlmiyya, 1908–11), vol. 3.

51. Alexander Knysh, *Ibn ʿArabī in the Later Islamic Tradition: The Making of a Polemical Image in Medieval Islam* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), ch. 4; El Shamsy, *Rediscovering the Islamic Classics,* 187.

52. ʿAbduh, *al-Aʿmāl al-kāmila*, 3:547.

53. Haddad, "Oeuvres," 202; Scharbrodt, "Salafiyya and Sufism," 95.

54. Rashīd Riḍā, "al-Taʿrīf bi-kitābay Manāzil al-sāʾirīn wa-Madārij al-sālikīn," *al-Manār* 19 (1916): 53. It is noteworthy that Riḍā never mentions Ibn ʿArabī in these discussions but rather points to ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Jīlī's *al-Insān al-kāmil* as an example of the worst excesses of the theory.

55. Rashīd Riḍā, "Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī wa-raʾyuhu fī al-tawḥīd wa-l-tawakkul wa-yadkhul fīhi bayān waḥdat al-wujūd wa-l-jabr wa-l-kasb" [excerpt from al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*], *al-Manār* 12 (1909): 833–55; and Riḍā, "Maqām al-mushāhada wa-ʿayn al-jamʿ: al-Darajat al-ʿulyā fī al-mushāhada wa-l-farq fīhā bayn al-tawḥīd wa-takhayyulāt waḥdat al-wujūd" [excerpt from Ibn al-Qayyim's *Madārij al-sālikīn*], *al-Manār* 18 (1915): 372–79.

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> [Al-Jazāʾirī] once encountered a group that had attached itself to a Sufi brotherhood, reciting its litany. He found in some of [the group's members] a readiness to learn. So he kept the company of their master, acting as his student, until he could convince the group to spend their time reading a work on Sufism that both was good literature and called for virtuous conduct [*al-akhlāq al-fāḍila*]. He had to endure suspicious looks, so he entered their gatherings claiming that he was seeking to learn, eager to listen to their master's lesson. Meanwhile, he brought manuscripts of the work to collate them with the printed copy [that they were reading]; then he tried to teach some of them how to use linguistic reference works, so misreadings could be corrected and the work would receive the service it deserved. In this way, he managed to bring those of them who were ready from books on Sufism to works on other Islamic sciences and literature. [...] Capable intellectuals emerged from this group, yet before that [intervention] they had been entirely occupied with inspirations, imaginings, and dreams.[56]

This anecdote illustrates the complex and ambiguous attitude of modernists such as al-Jazāʾirī toward Sufism: on the one hand, they acknowledged the ethical value of Sufi literature, but on the other, they decried what they saw as the intellectual "deficiencies" of institutional Sufism and its preoccupation with mystical experience.

Another Damascene modernist with an interest in Sufi ethics was Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī (1283–1332/1866–1914), the author of a Quranic commentary and various works on theology who was, like ʿAbduh, Riḍā, and al-Jazāʾirī, involved in the discovery, editing, and publication of a wide range of classical works.[57] One of his central concerns was to find and edit important works on ethics, some of which clearly belonged to the Sufi intellectual tradition. Among the latter was a collection of epistles that included, among others, ethical works by al-Ghazālī and Ibn Sīnā (d. 427/1037) and a text misattributed to Ibn ʿArabī that was in fact authored by Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī (d. 363/974).[58]

Al-Qāsimī also composed abridgments of two Sufi works, *Qūt al-qulūb* by Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī (d. 386/996) and al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*. Al-Qāsimī's account of his decision to abridge the *Iḥyāʾ* is interesting. In the introduction to the abridgment, he reports that he had experimented with various texts in his classes and had found excerpts from the *Iḥyāʾ* particularly useful. When he visited Egypt in 1903, he had mentioned this experience to Muḥammad ʿAbduh, who had encouraged him to write an abridgment of the *Iḥyāʾ* to make it more suitable for teaching. Al-Qāsimī agreed, noting that the work also contained many elements that were obscure and of little relevance to ordinary people.

56. Muḥammad Kurd ʿAlī, *Kunūz al-ajdād* (Damascus: Maṭbaʿat al-Taraqqī, 1950), 15.
57. El Shamsy, *Rediscovering the Islamic Classics*, chap. 7.
58. *Hādhihi majmūʿat al-rasāʾil* (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat Kurdistān al-ʿIlmiyya, 1910).

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The mention of "ordinary people" is important because it points to a key reason for the interest of al-Qāsimī and his fellow reformers in editing, publishing, and popularizing classical works and particularly ethical texts: social reform in an age in which expanding education and literacy were rapidly making written texts accessible to a growing portion of the population. In a letter, al-Qāsimī explains:

> This service is necessary these days given all the schools that are about to be opened; they cannot be established except with such [texts].... The idea is that in the present time it is obligatory for everyone to consider what they can contribute to the raising of the community. If people like us cannot bring about political reform, then at least [we should bring about] intellectual reform.[59]

In a parallel vein, Ṭāhir al-Jazāʾirī edited and published a small but significant ethical treatise written by the early Abbasid secretary Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ (d. ca. 139/756). In his introduction to the booklet, al-Jazāʾirī stresses the importance of the field of ethics (*ʿilm tahdhīb al-akhlāq*) for society and individuals alike. Al-Jazāʾirī also advocated for the publication of Ibn Ḥibbān al-Bustī's (d. 354/965) *Rawḍat al-ʿuqalāʾ*, a work containing reports about virtuous conduct throughout early Islamic history. The work's editor, Muḥammad Amīn al-Khānjī (1282–1358/1865–1939), recounts that he initially became aware of the work through al-Jazāʾirī, who lauded the work's potential for wide-reaching social benefits—not only for men but also for women.[60] Neither Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ nor Ibn Ḥibbān were Sufis, but the modernists' focus on these works illustrates the importance they attributed to classical works dealing with ethics of any kind.

In 1883, ʿAbduh laid out his view on the status of ethics, and especially virtue ethics, in a series of lectures at the Sulṭāniyya School which were subsequently published as *Risālat al-Tawḥīd*. ʿAbduh connected virtue ethics, religion, and the fate of society to argue that virtues lay at the heart of every true religion, and God bestowed His favors on societies that nurtured and enacted these virtues:

> The spirit which God has implanted in all of His Divine laws for the right ordering of thought and reflection, the discipline of desire and the curbing of ambition and lust. It is the spirit which bids us to assess every question on its proper merits and pursue all objectives soundly, keeping faith, holding brotherly affection and co-operating in right dealing, with mutual loyalty through thick and thin, *and other fundamental virtues*.[61] ... God will never deprive a nation of His favor as long as this spirit animates them. Rather He will multiply their blessings in proportion to its strength and diminish them when it is weak.[62]

59. Muḥammad b. Nāṣir al-ʿAjmī, ed., *al-Rasāʾil al-mutabādala bayn Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī wa-Maḥmūd Shukrī al-Ālūsī* (Beirut: Dār al-Bashāʾir al-Islāmiyya, 2001), 78–79.
60. Ibn Hibbān al-Bustī, *Rawḍat al-ʿuqalāʾ*, ed. Muḥammad Amīn al-Khānjī (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat Kurdistān al-ʿIlmiyya, 1910), *bāʾ*.
61. The translation is missing the phrase in italics.
62. ʿAbduh, *Risālat al-Tawḥīd*, 177–78; *Theology of Unity*, 137–38.

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This statement illustrates the importance that ʿAbduh and other Muslim modernists attributed to ethics on a societal scale and casts their ambiguous attitude toward Sufism into sharp relief. In their view, the subjugated position of Muslim peoples, their poverty and backwardness vis-à-vis Europe, and their obvious decline relative to the early centuries of Islam could be explained as products of a deficiency in collective virtue. They attributed some responsibility for this state of affairs to recent and contemporary Sufi thought and institutions, because these had given rise to a system of religious authority that precluded challenge and critique and that, instead of teaching and nurturing virtue, promoted obscurantism and holy ignorance, to the point of violating ethical sensibilities in the name of claims to inspired knowledge. For the modernists, then, the way to reform religious discourse and improve Muslim societies was to accomplish an ethical reformation through, among other things, the rediscovery of the ethical heritage of Islam as found in the various branches of Islamic literature—including, importantly, early Sufi literature. None of the figures discussed here rejected Sufism wholesale. They were engaged in a project of reconstructing Islamic thought that entailed a continuous evaluation of what elements to pursue and what to dismiss.

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SUFISM AND MODERN MUSLIM ETHICS IN 14TH/20TH CENTURY RUSSIAN ISLAMIC THOUGHT

Leila Almazova

The first Russian Revolution of 1905 opened a whole set of new opportunities for different segments of society. For the first time in Imperial Russia, ten million Muslims received the right to establish religiously or ethnically based institutions, such as political parties, print media, and different social and cultural associations.[1] Wide discussions were initiated about reform of the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly (est. in 1789)[2] and issues related to native languages.[3] The key point of all these debates was the question of educational reform.[4] It is noteworthy that this theme concerned a very wide range of problems, including the proportion of religious vs. secular subjects in the *maktab* and *madrasa* curricula, the content of

1. The vast majority of Imperial Muslims were Turkic-speaking (82%), followed by speakers of Caucasian languages (14%), and of Persianate languages (4%). These estimates by the author are based on data published in the book *On the Eve of the All-Russian Census. An Alphabetical List of Peoples Living in the Russian Empire* (Saint-Petersburg: Office of the Committee of Ministers, 1895).

2. Catherine the Great (1729–1796) established this institution in 1789 with the goal of gaining control over the Muslim population.

3. The Turkic-speaking population of the Volga region, Siberia, and the Urals played a leading role in the discussion of public issues. The language (Volga-Ural Tatar) that had developed by the beginning of the twentieth century in this geographical area was understood by a vast majority of the Muslim population of the Russian Empire: Azerbaijanis, Bashkirs, Kazakhs, Karachais, Crimean Tatars, Kumyks, Nogays, Tatars, Uzbeks, and other Turkic-speaking peoples. In general, up to the twentieth century, Russians commonly called all these peoples Tatars. M. Z. Zakiev, *Deep Roots of the Turkic Nations* (Astana: Kantata Press, 2011).

4. The topic of education and upbringing was the main theme in the newborn Muslim press. For example, the popular magazine *Shura* (Assembly), published in Tatar from 1908–1917, had the obligatory section "Upbringing and Education" (*Tarbiya va Taglim*); each of the 240 issues featured several articles on the issue of educational reform. Over just ten years, at least eighty articles on education were published. D. Brileva, "Public Discussions on Social Reform in the Tatar Press (based on the materials in the *Shura* magazine, 1908–1917)" (PhD thesis, Kazan Federal University, 2012).

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courses, the production of new textbooks, reinterpretation of traditional concepts of Muslim theology (*kalam*) and Sufism (*taṣawwuf*), and many others.[5] The discussion on education represented a sort of mirror that reflected all of the social problems and issues of the time.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, Russian Muslims had two competing systems of education: "Qadimist" and "Jadidist." The first drew its name from the Arabic word '*qadīm*' (old), and the second from the Arabic '*jadīd*' (new). The Qadimist system, traditionally common in the Muslim world, included two levels of education—the *maktab/kuttab* and the *madrasa.*

Maktab-based schools were established in the Islamic world by the ninth and tenth centuries. A limited range of subjects were taught in maktab[6] that usually concentrated on reading and memorizing the Quran. Their main task was to teach children to read, write, and calculate numbers as well as to accustom them to discipline and obedience.

The development of the *madrasa* system began in the tenth and eleventh centuries, and then quickly spread throughout the Muslim world.[7] The subjects taught in the *madrasa* were divided into two categories: *ʿulūm naqliyya* (knowledge of tradition transmitted in writing or orally), and *ʿulūm ʿaqliyya* (the rational sciences). The range of traditional knowledge included theology (*tawḥīd/ ʿaqā'id*), Islamic Law (*fiqh*), interpretation of the Quran (*tafsīr*), recitation of the Quran (*qirā'at*), sayings of the Prophet (*hadīth*), and Arabic (*al-lugha*). The rational sciences consisted of grammar (*naḥw*), logic (*manṭiq*), mathematics (*ḥisāb*), medicine (*ṭibb*), philosophy (*falsafa*), and rhetoric (*balāgha*).[8] Given the wide range of topics considered in the classical curriculum, an education in a *madrasa* could take from four to twenty years.

The traditional (Qadimist) educational system by the 19th century no longer met the needs of the society. The military, economic, and intellectual superiority of the West had grown. It became obvious for every Muslim country's political and intellectual elites that the previous system of education did not train the professionals needed for the development of Islamic communities. They therefore started preparing their own "response" to this civilizational challenge.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, as part of its modernization process, Turkey began to implement European educational standards.[9]

5. This chapter will use two different systems of transliteration: one for the Arabic-based content and one for Tatar. The latter is simpler and does not have any additional symbols except for the *'ayn and hamza*.

6. E. Hassim, *Elementary Education and Motivation in Islam. Perspectives of Medieval Muslim Scholars 750–1400 CE* (New York: Cambria Press, 2010), 41.

7. The expansion of the caliphate required a large number of literate people. Ibn Haukal (d. 988), a geographer and tenth-century traveller, counted 300 teachers/*kuttabs* alone in the city of al-Madina/Palermo. It was called al-Madina during the Muslim period of Sicily (827–1091). A. Shalaby, *History of Islamic Education* (Karachi: Indus Publications, 1979), 22.

8. Bradley J. Cook (ed.), *Classical Foundations of Islamic Educational Thought. A Compendium of Parallel English-Arabic Texts* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2010), xx.

9. The Military Medical School was opened in 1827. The *Musika-i Humaiyun Mektebi* (School of Music) was opened in 1831 to provide the army with drummers and trumpeters. The School of Military Surgeons was established in 1832, the Military Command School (*Harbiye*) in 1834, and the Law School in 1837. L. Wolff, *The Singing Turk* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2016), 361.

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Reforms such as the Arab Renaissance (*al-Nahḍa*) in Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon rapidly gained attention throughout the Muslim world, and seekers of knowledge (*shakird*) from the Russian Empire subsequently changed their usual education practices. In the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries, their scholars generally had studied at the traditional *madrasas* of Bukhara and Samarkand. However, by the end of the nineteenth century, the *madrasas* of Istanbul and Cairo had replaced those of Bukhara and Samarkand in popularity. For example, the renowned Tatar theologian and journalist Musa Bigiev studied in Turkey, India, Syria, and Egypt in addition to studying at the *madrasa* in Bukhara.[10] Zakir Kadyry, a famous Tatar scholar, *mudarris*,[11] and journalist, studied in the educational centers of Bukhara, Mecca, Istanbul, and Cairo.[12] Ziyaaddin Kamali, a philosopher and director of the High Muslim *Madrasa* "Galiya" (1906–1919/Ufa), studied in Turkey and Egypt. These scholars of the early twentieth century led educational reforms in the Russian Empire.

Muslim society in Russia did not have the same resources as the other more or less independent Muslim States, so it was forced to reform its educational systems solely within the means of local religious communities (*maḥalla*).[13] Russian Muslim intellectuals followed Ismail Bey Gasprinsky (Gasprali) in the development of the *Jadid* system. Gasprinsky, in 1884, established a first New Method school in Bahchysarai (Crimea), where teaching was conducted in Crimean Tatar language instead of Arabic or Persian, as in a traditional *maktab* or *madrasa*; where children were forced to cram without understanding the meaning of the subject; and where, alongside the traditional religious disciplines, natural sciences—geography, geometry, and arithmetic were added.[14] By the first decade of the twentieth century, the *Jadid* educational system had become more prevalent and, despite the fact that the Qadimist *madrasas* still played a prominent role in the society, students increasingly gave preference to the New Method (*jadīd*) schools, especially in the Volga–Urals.[15]

As previously mentioned, Tatar newspapers and magazines published many articles on the subject of Islamic educational reform. Many scholars (*'ulamā'*) wrote special treatises criticizing the curricula of the *maktab* and the *madrasa.* One of them was Ziyaaddin Kamali (1873–1942), whose essay "Management in the Sphere of Religion" (*Dini Tadbirlar*), written in 1913, aroused negative responses from a wide audience. Much of the criticism was published in magazines such as Religion and Life (*al-Din va ma'ishat*) and Assembly (*Shura*), where the author was criticized not only by his opponents from the Qadimist camp, but also by his colleagues, the

10. M. J. Bigiev, *Selected Works*, 2 vols. (Kazan: Tatar Publishing House, 2005), 16.
11. A *mudarris* is a teacher in a *madrasa.*
12. I. Turkoglu, "Adding a Few More Touches to Zakir Kadyri-Ugan's Creative Biography," *Tatarica* 1 (2019): 122.
13. The Russian State viewed the policy of educating non-Russian populations exclusively as a colonial project. See more about the topic in R. Geraci, *Window on the East: National and Imperial Identities in Late Tsarist Russia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001).
14. Z. Khayretdinova, "Reform of the System of Ethno-Religious Education of the Crimean Tatars in the 19th and early 20th centuries in the Activities of the Taurian Mohammedan Spiritual Assembly." In *Islamic Education in Crimea: Historic Milestones and Avenues of Renewal* (Simferopol: Tarjuman Publishing House, 2016), 162.
15. In the Ufa governorate 61.1% of all confessional schools, which comprised 73% of all students, were new method schools by 1914. D. Iskhakov, *The Phenomenon of Tatar Jadidism: Introduction to Socio-Cultural Reflection* (Kazan: Iman, 1997), 26.

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Jadids. Muslim reformer Musa Bigiev[16] (1875–1949) wrote a critical essay, "Small Thoughts about Big Problems" (*Boek Mauzuglarga Ufak Fikerlar*) on Kamali's treatise. Rizaaddin Fakhraddin also commented on the topics raised by Z. Kamali and M. Bygiev in his works "Religious and Public Questions" (*Dini va Ijtima'i Fikerlar*) and "Commentaries on the Compendium of Sayings of the Prophet" (*Gavami' al-kalim sharhi*).

Kamali's treatise is a 75-page critical response (*raddiya*) to the textbooks that were used in traditional Qadimist *madrasas* to teach students Muslim Creed, a subject that played a crucial role in shaping the mindsets of young people. The course covered the basics of Islam: the question of the unity of God (*tawḥīd*), the problem of the creation of the world (*ḥudūth*), the essence of the Quran, and the concepts of the believer (*Muslim*), faith (*īmān*) and disbelief (*kufr*), principles of seeking the truth, predetermination and freedom of the will (*qadar and ikhtiyār*), and good and evil. Among the *'Aqīda* textbooks usually used in Tatar *madrasas* were the following medieval treatises: "The Great Fiqh" (*al-Fiqh al-akbar*) attributed[17] to Imam Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 767),[18] the "Commentary on the Doctrine of al-Nasafī" (*Sharḥ ʿaqāʾid al-Nasafiyya*)[19] by Sa'd ad-Dīn al-Taftazānī (d. 1390),[20] and the "Commentary on the Doctrine of ʿAḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī" *(Sharḥ ʿaqāʾid al-ʿaḍudiya*)[21] by Jalāl ad-Dīn al-Dawānī (d. 1501);[22] the latter textbook was called "*Mullah Jalāl*." Such essays on *'Aqīda* are very common in the Muslim world and can vary in length from one page to many volumes. In his criticism, Kamali discussed a rather traditional range of issues that are described in detail in Islamic doctrinal literature. Thus, his work comprises the following sections:

16. A few words about this author: he was born in 1875 in the Russian city of Rostov-on-Don, studied in Kazan, Istanbul (military school), then left his military career and entered the famous al-Azhar University in Cairo. In al-Azhar, Bigiev met the chief mufti of Egypt at that time, Muḥammad Abduh, and the publisher of *al-Manar* magazine, Rāshid Riḍā. After some time, he left Egypt and traveled to India. In 1904, Bigiev returned to Russia, settling in Petersburg. He even became a law student at the University of Saint Petersburg. Bigiev joined the political struggle, the national liberation movement, and participated in the first Congresses of Muslims of the Russian Empire. Thus, before the Revolution of 1917, Bigiev led an active public life, working as a Muslim theologian, religious thinker, teacher, newspaper publisher, and journalist. In 1930, he emigrated from the Soviet Union and traveled to China, India, Japan, Turkey, and finally Egypt, where he died, in poverty, in 1949.

17. Andrey Smirnov claims that the text of this book deals with issues not discussed during the time of Abu Hanifa; therefore, he denies the possibility that this treatise was composed by this author. A. Smirnov, "The Emergence of Muslim Doctrinal Thought and Early Islamic Philosophy (on the issue of mutual influence, as exemplified in *al-Fiqh al-akbar* by Abū Ḥanīfa), introduction, translation from Arabic and comments by A. Smirnov." *Newsletter of Russian State University of the Humanities* 4 (2000): 52–86.

18. Abū Ḥanīfa (699–767) was a Muslim jurist, after whom the Hanafi school (*madhhab*) of fiqh was named.

19. Najm al-Dīn al-Nasafī (1067–1142) was a Central Asian Muslim scholar and the author of a very short (only 4 pages) but famous treatise on Islamic Creed (*ʿAqāʾid al-Nasafiyya*). This work played a decisive role in spreading the Maturīdī school of *kalām* in the region. D. Shagaviev, *Introduction to Sh. Margani "Kitāb al-Ḥikma al-bāligha"* (Kazan: Tatar Publishing House, 2008), 93.

20. Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftazānī (1322–1390) was a theologian (*mutakallim*) and Islamic scholar known for his writings on religion, logic, grammar, and mathematics, which were used in the Middle Ages as teaching aids. His treatise "Commentary on the teachings of an-Nasafī" was written within the framework of the Maturīdī school of *kalām.* As time unfolded, this school became firmly established in the Volga–Urals and Siberia.

21. 'Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī (1281–1355) was an illustrious representative of Ash'arī Kalām, judge (*qāḍī*) of the Shafi'ī *madhhab*, and the author of numerous works. The most popular was the four-volume "Book of Spiritual Stages" (*kitāb al-mawāqif*), in which the problems of *kalām* were dealt with in detail. His book on the doctrine of "'*Aqīda al-'aḍudiya*" is a textbook on the main problems of Muslim dogmatics.

22. Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawānī (1426–1502) was a leading Iranian theologian, Sufi shaykh, and faqīh of the 15th century. One of his most famous works was "The Essay on Ethics" (*Akhlāq Jalālī*). He taught at the "Begum" *madrasa* in Shiraz. His treatise "*Sharḥ 'aqā'id al-'Adūdiya*" was apparently used as a teaching aid for students, and was widely distributed in the Tatar Qadimist *madrasas*. R. Safiullina-al Ansi, *Islamic Doctrine in Textbooks and Writings of Tatar Authors at the Beginning of the 20th Century:* Anthology (Kazan: Kazan University Publishing House, 2012).

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1. The concept of a "believer" (*muslim*),
2. Increase and decrease of faith (*īmān*),
3. The category "People of the Prophet's Way and the Community" (ahl al-sunna wa-l-jamā'a) and the division of law schools in Islam (*madhāhib*),
4. The inclusion of the issue of Allah's attributes (*al-ṣifāt*) in the textbooks on Islamic doctrine (*'aqīda*),
5. The question of whether prohibited food could serve as a meal for a Muslim,
6. The question of the imposition of responsibilities on a person which are beyond his or her capabilities,
7. The degree/supremacy of an angel over a human being,
8. Saints (*awliyā'*) and miracles (*karāmāt*),
9. The imamate and the caliphate,
10. The Companions (*ṣahāba*) and their ranking over each other,
11. The faith of the Prophet Muhammad's parents, and
12. Sufism (*al-taṣawwuf*).

Since the subject of this chapter is the attitude of Kamali towards Sufism and Sufi ethics, the most relevant to consider here will be the sections on saints and miracles and on Sufism.

Sufism in Tatar Religious Thought

Sufism has played a very significant role in the history of the Tatar people. Historical analysis of the early literature of the Bulgar Khanate (10th century–1236)[23] indicates the spread of a moderate (sober) form of Sufism.[24] Since the twelfth century, the Yasaviyya Order gained the support of much of the Tatar population. In the fourteenth century, the Naqshbandiyya also began to spread and later successfully co-existed with the Yasaviyya in the region.[25] After the conquest of the Kazan Khanate by Ivan the Terrible in 1552, all the traditional religious and political institutions were destroyed and the Sufi networks were the only uniting thread nationwide:

> Sufism, as a popular version of Islam, previously [before 1552] performed the social and ideological function of a counterweight to the official religion and canonical theology. After the demolition of all institutions of Muslim statehood, Sufism remained the only ideologically organized force in the Muslim community capable of resisting Orthodox missionaries. This is why the social ideology and literature of the Muslim

23. The official adoption of Islam by Volga Bulgaria took place in 922, but there is reason to believe that Sufism influenced society at the earliest stages of the spread of Islam in the region. I. L. Izmailov, "Islam in Volga Bulgaria: Dissemination and Regional Features," *History and Modernity* 2, no. 2 (2011): 48.
24. R. Amirkhanov, *Turko-Tatar Medieval Philosophical Thought (XIII–XVI Centuries)* (Kazan: Master-Line, 2001), 40.
25. L. Borodovskaya, "Traditions Reflected in the Islamic-Sufi Symbolism of Tatar Folklore Munajates," *Islamic Studies* 7, no. 2 (2016): 106.

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> Turks demonstrate the growth of Sufi ideas and the expansion of their social functions in the life of the Muslim community.[26]

Much later, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Russian Muslims developed very strong relationships with Central Asian intellectual circles. Young people from the Volga region traveled to Bukhara and Samarkand in pursuit of knowledge.[27] The most prominent shaykhs at that time were Faizkhan al-Kabuli (d. 1802) and Niyaz-Kuli al-Turkmani (d. 1821), both followers of the *tariqa* Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya. According to Michael Kemper, each of the above-mentioned shaykhs had at least a dozen pupils in the Volga–Ural region who had received special permission (*ijāza*) to disseminate Naqshbandiyya–Mujaddidiyya teachings among the local population.[28]

When we consider Central Asian society in the nineteenth century, we can actually see its gradual stagnation and decline. The Russian Empire had conquered vast territories of the Kazakh Juzes and Khanate of Kokand and, in 1865, had established Russian Turkestan. In 1868, the Emirate of Bukhara fell and became a Russian vassal state and, in 1873, the Khanate of Khiva also acknowledged its dependence on the empire. Muslim society went through a bitter period of reflection about the causes of its defeat. Intellectuals blamed themselves and their contemporaries for distortions of the faith. They opined that the Islam that they followed was overburdened by non-Islamic elements, including ritualistic forms of Sufism, which had transformed into the phenomenon of īshānism:[29]

> Over time, Sufism has been transformed into 'īshānism—i.e., a phenomenon in which mystical philosophy has been relegated to second place, and in the first place, ritual and social aspects of the relationship between the Sufi master (*murshid*) and his followers (*murīds*) have emerged. Gradually, the activities of the *īshāns* consisted of healing (especially of the mentally ill), making and issuing protective charms, and organizing regular collective rituals. In the nineteenth century, each major *īshān* was the de facto founder of an independent Sufi community.[30]

These old traditions, to a certain extent of utilitarian and folk Sufism, were brought home from Central Asia to Volga-Urals by the Tatars, and then spread among their compatriots. The deep and inner aspect of intellectual Sufism was neglected, which is why some authors condemned Sufis and their practices. For example, Tatar scholar Gabdrahim Utyz-Imyani (1756–1836), himself a practicing shaykh and disciple of Faizkhan al-Kabuli, opposed the following Sufi statement: "Whoever does not have a Shaykh, his Shaykh is a Satan."[31] He believed that following a Sufi path was not

26. R. Amirkhanov, *Turko-Tatar Medieval Philosophical Thought*, 86.

27. According to the data provided by Rizaaddin Fakhraddin in his four-volume biography, *Asar,* approximately two-thirds of Muslim scholars (170 out of 250) had acquired their training in Central Asia, and many of them had permissions (*ijāza*) from Central Asian shaykhs. R. Fakhraddin, *Asar*, 4 vols. (Kazan: Ruhiyat, 2001).

28. M. Kemper, *Sufis and Scholars in Tatarstan and Bashkortostan. Islamic Discourse Under Russian Dominance* (Kazan: Russian Islamic University, 2008), 141–144.

29. *Īshān*, the Persian extremely polite form of the third person, is used in Central Asian Sufism as a respectful term for a Sufi master.

30. S. Abashin, "Īshān," in *Islam in the Territory of Former Russian Empire. Encyclopedia,* ed. I. S. Prozorov (Moscow: Vostochnaya Literatura, 2006), 165.

31. It was a widespread expression, attributed to Abū Yazīd al-Bastāmī. 'Umar al-Kharbūtī, *'Aṣīda al-shahda* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutūb al-'Ilmiyya, 2017), 70. Some scholars interpret it as meaning that it is a necessity to have a teacher for understanding Islam correctly, because Islam began with an oral tradition, transmitted from person to person. Sufis interpret it in the sense that every person should have a Sufi master to attain the Truth.

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obligatory. He was confident that "nowadays it is all the more necessary to avoid the search for Sufi shaykhs," and argued that it was due to the attitude prescribing the need for a shyakh that unscrupulous mentors or pseudo-shaykhs could mislead ignorant followers.[32]

In the Muslim world, meanwhile, a powerful movement for renewal and reform had begun. Some of the Muslim reformers, following Muḥammad ibn ʻAbd al-Wahhāb (1703–1792), had started to criticize Sufi rites and customs, such as the practice of building shrines and tombs above graves and viewing Sufi saints as intermediaries between God and human beings. It is noteworthy to mention here, as Natana DeLong-Bas had emphasized: "The founder of Wahhabism barely mentioned Sufis in his writings, and the word "Sufi" was never used in his works. Without referring to Sufism in general, he denounced certain rites and rituals and explained why he considered them sinful."[33]

However, while Muḥammad ibn ʻAbd al-Wahhāb, whose life spanned the entire eighteenth century, did not encounter colonialism and the West directly,[34] the next generation of reformers, including Jamāl al-Dīn Afghānī (1838–1897), Muḥammad Abduh (1849–1905), Rashīd Riḍā (1865–1935), Aḥmad al-Fatānī (1856–1908), Ahmad Khatib Minankabawi (1860–1916), and many others, were faced with a somewhat different context. They, as well as their Muslim sympathizers in the Russian Empire, drew attention to the fact that Muslims, despite their religious beliefs that were intended to lead people to happiness, lagged behind advanced nations in terms of living standards, scientific achievements, technology, and even morals.

Reflecting on the reasons for all this and analyzing the basic tenets of the faith according to the Quran and Sunna, they concluded that the practice of their co-religionists had little to do with what Muhammad preached. They contended that it is only by returning to the original principles of Islam that Muslims can take their rightful place among civilized humanity. It should be noted, however, that they intended to have much more nuanced views towards Sufism than we see in the teachings of Muḥammad ibn ʻAbd al-Wahhāb.

In chapter 7, "Reconfigurations of Law and Ethics in Colonial Egypt," of his monograph *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*, Talal Asad writes about Muḥammad Abduh's criticism of Sufis who promoted doctrines and practices that he considered contrary to the *Sharīʿa* (*ghulāt al-ṣūfiyya*) and who served the political ambitions of rulers by providing them what he called "corrupt fatwas." He also mentions Abduh's condemning the "vicious" practices of drumming, dancing, and loud *dhikr* in mosques, and the worshipping of Sufi saints (*awliyāʾ*) and holy places. Yet it is important to note that Abduh strongly endorsed the Sufi understanding of ethics and spiritual education. He even said, "All the blessings of my religion that I received—for which I thank God Almighty—are due to Sufism."[35] In turn, Rashīd Riḍā denied the truth of the Sufi state of *fanāʾ*, and criticized the relationship between the shaykh and *murīd* for submerging the latter's identity and

32. G. Utyz-Imyani, *Selected Essays* (Kazan: Tatar Publishing House, 2006), 63.
33. N. DeLong-Bas, *Wahhabi Islam: From Revival and Reform to Global Jihad* (*Moscow: Ladomir, 2010*), 97.
34. Ibid., 245.
35. T. Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford University Press, 2003), 224.

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for introducing non-Islamic practices into Islam. Jamāl al-Dīn Afghānī condemned Sufi religious leaders for their passivity. All these leaders represented an intellectual trend that was united "by the desire to uphold Islam against unlawful innovations (*bidʿa,* plural *bidaʿ*) and the claim to represent a correction (*iṣlāḥ*) to its original message."[36]

In the Tatar context, Kamali's opinion of *taṣawwuf* was distinguished by some radical views in comparison to other contemporary scholars. In fact, his attitude towards Sufism was entirely negative. The most significant drawback of mystical teachings, according to his view, was that Sufism created a whole series of concepts, practices, and relationships that did not exist in the original Islam, and that Sufism was responsible for the emergence of innovations in religion. Among the accusations of religious innovations that had emerged due to Sufis, he lists:

"In our faith Islam there is no chain of carriers of spiritual authority (power) and monasticism (*rahbāniyat*)."[37]

"The religion of Islam requires that its followers seek the help and protection of God alone. Meanwhile, the Īshāns teach to ask for help from the shaykhs ("Oh, my shaykh, help!") (*al-tawaṣṣul*)."[38]

"God Almighty Allah has said: Allah wants relief for you but does not want difficulties for you. That is, He has declared that Islam is religion of easiness, and this is the manifestation of the divine will. Meanwhile everyone knows: Īshānism is nothing but an additional burden for Muslims."[39]

"And take the so-called '*dhikr*', accompanied by playing on musical instruments! It is impossible to describe the damage that was caused to Islam by all this."[40]

"The Sufi brotherhoods (*ṭarīqa/ṭurūq*) divide Islam into different segments which is forbidden in our religion (*harām*)."[41]

Another set of criticisms was caused by the Sufis' fascination with miracles. It is known that in Sufism, various miracles (*karāma*) performed by Sufi shaykhs serve as proof of proximity to God.[42] Meanwhile, Kamali appears in his writings as an extreme rationalist. First, he focuses on the rationality of Islam as a religion. He wrote that the Prophet Muhammad had no supernatural powers other than a revelation from Allah—the Holy Quran. This gave Kamali the right to claim that Islam is the most rational religion compared to the other two Abrahamic religions, in which there are constant appeals to miracles to confirm the prophetic gifts of Moses and Jesus and many others.

36. A. Kateman, *Shared Questions, Diverging Answers. Muhammad 'Abduh and his Interlocutors on 'Religion' in a Globalized World* (Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam, 2016), 36.
37. Z. Kamali, *Dini Tadbirlar* (Ufa: Shariq Matbagasi, 1913), 59.
38. Z. Kamali, *Dini Tadbirlar*, 61.
39. Z. Kamali, *Dini Tadbirlar*, 62.
40. Z. Kamali, *Dini Tadbirlar*, 69.
41. Z. Kamali, *Dini Tadbirlar*, 59.
42. A. Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism. A Short History* (Saint-Petersburg: Dilya, 2004), 143.

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Second, he believed that there are no supernatural phenomena, in principle, in this world. It is only limited human knowledge that prevents people from understanding the nature of what is considered to be a miracle.[43] Accordingly, it is logical for him to deny the claimed Sufi ability to produce miracles (*karāmāt*). He wrote:

> Our *īshān-Karāmatist* Sufis who trade in miracles "ascend" and float up there, "cross" the territory of the seven climates, "rise" to the empyrean (*'arsh*), and together with Allah secretly recite prayer litanies (*munājāt*). And one shaykh with his *murīd* crossed the sea, not on a boat, but on a prayer rug! And when the *murīd* addressed the shaykh with the words "Oh, my shaykh, help!", that rug did not sink, and only when he thought that he could also, like the shaykh, mention the name of the Almighty and pronounce the words "Oh Allah!", then the rug sank.

It also turns out that the *īshāns*, through prayer, can summon troubles and attack people and thus leave them without legs or eyes, or dispossess them of their belongings . . . By telling such tales, they spread the poison of hatred and harm the sacred and pure spirit of Islam. Astonishingly, if our masters of miracles are going to ascend to heaven, why aren't they using their powers and serving as air carriers for others? Why aren't they floating in the sky, doing aerial reconnaissance for the Islamic world? And why, when they sail on a prayer rug on the sea, do they not use this miracle to organize an entire fleet of such "handymen"? Or how do they have the honor "in the name of Islam" to deprive people of sight, to immobilize them, to make them weak and helpless, and to bring on them other troubles and misfortunes?[44]

Another point of Kamali's criticism of Sufis was their ideology of renouncing the material world (*zuhd*) and promoting poverty (*faqr*), which was originally the essence of *taṣawwuf*.[45] Meanwhile, the peculiarity of Tatar society was that the funding of the entire system of Muslim education was entrusted to the local Muslim community (*mahalla*). It is obvious that the richest members would provide the bulk of the funds. Thus, the success of the Muslim reformers themselves (regardless of whether they were editors of newspapers and magazines – as were Rizaaddin Fakhraddin or Ahmad-Hadi Maqsudi or directors/lecturers in *madrasas*, as were Hasan-Gata Gabashi or Ziyaaddin Kamali) directly related to the generosity of the patrons and their prevalence in society. The wealth and prosperity of *mahalla* members had led to educational and cultural development, and an increase in poverty would thus entail cultural decline. The reformers were keen to popularize such qualities as entrepreneurship and the ability to earn money.

Kamali was sharply against the adage, popular among Sufis, that "poverty is my pride" (*al-faqr fakhrī*). To prove the desirability of material wealth for a pious Muslim, he turned to the basics of the Muslim Creed. According to his argumentation, one of the pillars of Islam is alms-giving (*zakāt*), which consists of the one-fortieth of

43. Z. Kamali, *Falsafa Islamiyya* (Ufa: Shariq Matbagasi, 1910), 220.
44. Z. Kamali, *Dini Tadbirlar* (Ufa: Shariq Matbagasi, 1913), 31.
45. A. Schimmel, *The World of Islamic Mysticism* (Moscow: Sadra, 2013), 85; A. Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism. A Short History* (Saint-Petersburg: Dilya, 2004), 42.

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disposable property that Muslims pay annually for the needs of society. As a rule, the money is transferred to a mosque and then distributed according to the needs of the poor. Every Muslim is obliged to pay a certain amount, but if he is a debtor himself, payment of the *zakāt* is not considered permissible and becomes *harām*. From this perspective, poverty becomes an obstacle to the realization of one of the most important tenets of Islam. Furthermore, Islam prescribes good deeds for Muslims, and the lack of material means would deprive the believers of the opportunity to perform this charitable act. Thus, the biblical thesis that "it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of Heaven" is replaced in the teachings of the Tatar reformers with the justification of the need to increase in wealth in order to use it for the benefit of society. There is an obvious similarity here with the ethics of Protestantism, where the desire to be poor . . . is not only a sin of omission, but also a violation of the will to love your neighbor.[46]

In addition to accusing Sufism of inventing innovations, criticizing the performance of miracles (*karāmāt*) by the Sufis, and denouncing calls for poverty (*faqr*) and asceticism (*zuhd*), Kamali was emotionally opposed to the phenomenon of īshānism as an established institution, including being opposed to its practices and ideology:

> Īshāns! You agree that your *murīds* are turning into holy fools and even bragging about it! This is amazing! Is the purpose of a religion, sent by God, to make people holy fools? Of course not! Since people who are not in control of their mental state are not obliged to perform religious duties . . . Or perhaps you want the Islamic *umma* to become a community of mad and holy fools?[47]
>
> Oh world of Islam! Answer me for God's sake! Wherever the *īshān's* footfalls, the light of Islam fades, its purity disappears, morality and ethics fade, and their place is replaced by immorality; human qualities such as thoughtful, a serious approach to work, industriousness, diligence, courage, and fearlessness disappear; and laziness, idleness, cowardice, and lethargy thrive . . .[48]
>
> Dear *īshāns*! You cannot cite any evidence of the legality and validity of īshānism, its terminology and structure, because the Quran declared this phenomenon an unacceptable innovation. Allah did not legitimize it. The Messenger of Allah did not practice īshānism. Furthermore, he (the Messenger of Allah) banned īshānism and asked not to follow this path. The terms "Sufi" and *"al-taṣawwuf"* did not exist in the era of happiness (*ʿaṣr al-saʿāda*), and the word "*ṣūf*" is borrowed from the Greek language. Īshānism under the guise of *taṣawwuf* has penetrated the Muslim environment from Brahmins, Persians, and Greeks. This is a proven historical fact. And if so, what conscience allows you to patronize the apparent *bid'a* and protect it?[49]

46. M. Weber, *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Moscow: Progress, 1990), 191.
47. Z. Kamali, *Dini Tadbirlar,* 67.
48. Z. Kamali, *Dini Tadbirlar*, 68.
49. Z. Kamali, *Dini Tadbirlar*, 66.

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Kamali's contemporary, Musa Bigiev, agrees with his colleagues on the sad state of modern Sufism: "Yes, modern monasticism is only laziness and begging. Yes, the modern *taṣawwuf* has degenerated from a good thing into the disgraceful cult of absolute poverty and rubbish."[50] However, in general, his opinion is quite the opposite of Kamali's. First of all, he draws the attention of the reader to the spiritual and intellectual aspects of Sufism, which Kamali completely ignored in his essay. For example, Bigiev wrote:

> Sufism is the brightest beam of light among philosophical currents. . . . is a unique Islamic path of mystical enlightenment (*kashf*). If we speak of enlightenment, it means a special form of intellectual contemplation (*naẓar 'aqlī*). So, enlightenment is the penetration (*nufus*) of the mind on the other side of the veil (*parda*) of everyday life.[51] . . . Having achieved freedom of mind and purity of heart, a person acquires such abilities as observation (*murāqaba*). Observation is the constant and attentive contemplation (*naẓar*) of signs and manifestations (*āthār*) of Allah; that is, of each individual object, state, and event occurring in the world of existence. A memory (*dhikr*) is when a person, observing big and small things, does not remain unaware about the nature of their appearance, when he realizes the causes of their origin and their intrinsic significance.[52]

Bigiev also draws attention to the educational role of Sufism in medieval Islam:

> The functions performed by these Sufi brotherhoods (*ṭarīqa*) in the first centuries of Islam were very important and beneficial to the lives of people and the society. Sufi lodges (*zāwiya*) at that time were either schools or religious–political societies that spread Islam around the world. Although Sufi brotherhoods differed because of their environment and region, they all had the same objectives. Ṭarīqas were . . . educational centers that developed Islamic philosophy and thought. Many theologians . . . were educated in the Sufi lodges. Sufi brotherhoods raised the great sages of Islam: Junayd, Manṣūr, Basṭāmī, Ibn 'Arabī, Shams Tabrīzī, Jalāl Rūmī, Ḥafiz Shirāzī, Mawlawī Jāmī.[53]

He also drew attention to the role of Sufi institutions in the context of nomadic communities:

> There are no schools, no *madrasas*, no courts in the nomadic world. There are no hospitals, no hotels. In the world of nomads, there have never been orphanages or shelters for the destitute. Their world does not know the public charitable organizations, the interest clubs, where like-minded people of religion or politics would gather.
>
> In the world of the Bedouin, there are only the lodges (*zawiyya*) of Sufi brotherhoods (*ṭarīqa*). For children, these lodges are schools; for theologians and Quran readers (*ḥāfiẓ*), — *madrasas*; for disputes and discord, - places for a fair trial; for the sick, - hospitals; for travelers, — hotels; for orphans, — places of upbringing; for the poor, — homes.[54]

50. M. Bigiev, "*Ufaq fikerlar*," in M. Bigiev, *Selected Works*, ed. A. Khayrutdinov (Kazan: Tatar Publishing House, 2014), 259.
51. M. Bigiev, "*Ufaq Fikerlar*," 263.
52. Ibid., 266.
53. Ibid., 269.
54. Ibid., 277.

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With regard to the statement about the "honor of poverty," Musa Bigiev argued that this statement implies not material poverty, but rather human dependence on God.

Further to the Issue of Sufism

The publication of Kamali's essay and Bigiev's criticisms of it in the pages of the popular magazines of the time sparked a discussion on the whole range of problems. The greatest number of articles and reviews on this topic can be found in two periodicals: *Religion and Life (Din wa Mashishat)* and *Assembly (Shura)*. Both were published in Orenburg and were closed when the Bolsheviks came to power. Meanwhile, the former, edited by M. Husainov, served as a voice for the conservative Muslim clergy; its content was mainly devoted to religious issues. In it, religious leaders criticized Jadid reforms, discussed theological problems and issued *fatwas* on various questions of *fiqh*. The second, edited by R. Fakhraddin, was financed by the brothers Ramiev, rich goldminers who supported progressive mass media and founded in Orenburg a Jadid *madrasa*, the "Husainiya." This *madrasa* offered education at the level of the Russian State Gymnasium. The journal *Shura* contained articles on a wide range of subjects, including problems of education, science, philosophy, human and women's rights, and, of course, religious issues.

It is only natural that *Din wa Mashishat* condemned Ziyaaddin Kamali for his book and strongly supported Sufism in its local form of īshānism:

> In the very foundation of Sufism, there are many deep meanings: first, the light of knowledge (*maʿrifat nuri*), and then the abstinence that allows this knowledge to shine, the ability to comprehend internal (*baṭin*) knowledge through the external (*ẓāhir*) book"; "Sufi scholars have two decrees: they follow the holy shari'a and they are repositories of inner knowledge.[55]

In the journal *Shura*, we find a more balanced criticism of both authors, Ziyaaddin Kamali and Musa Bigiev:

> I agree with what Musa Afande wrote about Sufism, but there is an urgent need to reform Sufism itself, and there is no need for all this secret knowledge (*ʿilm bāṭin*). And all these ideas about *quṭb, faṣṣ, awtād, abdāl*[56] do not exist in Islam and there is no need of them. These false representations simply create black spots on the face of Islam.[57]

The editor of the magazine, Rizaaddin Fakhraddin, did not remain on the sidelines during the discussion of *taṣawwuf*. Among his books dedicated to the great scholars of the Islamic world are biographies of Ibn 'Arabī and al-Ghazālī. The works of Rizaaddin Fakhraddin may be among the first scholarly research on the heritage of these mystical thinkers. In another work, his 600-page "Comments

55. Z. Ikbaev, "On [the treatise] "Management in the Sphere of Religion" (*Dini Tadbirlar*)," *Religion and Life* (*al-Din va Ma'ishat*) 27, (July 11, 1914): 423–424.

56. Different ranks in the Sufi hierarchy.

57. M. H. Muzaffar, "Assessment on Books of 'Management in the Sphere of Religion' (*Dini Tadbirlar*) and 'Small Thoughts' (Ufak Fikerlar)," *Assembly* (*Shura*) 4 (1916).

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on the Collection of the Prophet's Words" (*Gawami al-kalim sharhi*), Fakhraddin dedicates many pages to topics related to Sufism, with questions, for example, about the worship of holy places, visits to the tombs of saints, and problems of darvishhood.[58]

Among religious innovations (*bida'*), along with the celebration of *'ashūra*, he treats taking money for reading the Quran in honor of the soul of the deceased, forbidding women to visit the mosque, and visiting graves for the purpose of making vows and requests which had become common among his contemporaries.[59]

On the ideology of poverty, commonly promoted in Sufism, Fakhraddin agreed with Zyaaddin Kamali. He wrote that, for the development of a nation, people needed three components: 1) education and professions, 2) wealth, and 3) energy and harmony among themselves.[60]

Analyzing the unfavorable state of the Muslim *umma* at the beginning of the twentieth century, he concluded that, in the life of each nation, depending on the time, there may be an excess of some qualities as well as a shortage of others. Moreover, the task is to bring all this into balance, through which the *umma*, the Muslim community, can harmoniously develop.

The most important thing preventing the Tatars from development, according to Fakhraddin, was a lack of self-confidence. Concerning his own people, he wrote that they had become accustomed to believing in their ancestors, seeking their blessings and prayers, and asking for help from the dead and the saints.

> In a situation where it is necessary to find a solution, people, instead of courageously taking matters in their own hands, are running to the graves of saints or asking for help from shaykhs and *īshāns*. This is a clear sign of disbelief. Moreover, the problem is also deepened by the fact that this habit is passed on to young people. They are not independent; they constantly await external assistance.

At the same time, in the developed countries, people are extremely confident, although they are no different from us in terms of intelligence or talent. This is the key to their success. A man who is self-confident, in the event of obstacles in his way, will not despair, but will simply do his best to overcome them.[61]

Conclusion

The debate about the attitudes towards Sufism among Turkic-speaking Russian Muslims is, to a large extent, a regional picture of the broader debate taking place throughout the Muslim *umma*. The range of issues was largely formulated in the eighteenth century in the teachings of Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb. Later, in

58. Darvishes are Sufi aspirants who usually lived wandering lives. Reformers claimed that supporting such Sufis had placed an inordinate burden on the lay people.
59. R. Fakhraddin, *Commentaries on the Compendium of Sayings of the Prophet* (Kazan: Iman, 1995), 481.
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid., 292.

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the nineteenth century, the same issues were discussed by the next generation of Muslim scholars: Muḥammad Abduh, Rashīd Riḍā, Jamāl al-Dīn Afghānī, Aḥmad al-Fatānī, Ahmad Khatib Minankabawi, and many others.

In the process of the major economic, social, and political changes that accompanied the inclusion of the Islamic civilization into the world processes of a developing capitalist society, there was a powerful lobby for maintaining the established social relations represented by the institution of īshānism in the regions of Central Asia and the inner regions of the Russian Empire. They were confronted by those who understood that such changes were inevitable, and that if Muslims wanted to compete in this new world, they would have to re-examine all of their old traditions and reinterpret seemingly immutable religious concepts, including those of religious authority, science, teachings of religion, and so forth.

The question they all faced was, "Who would determine the right opinion or a new orthodoxy?" While the institution of īshānism had remained virtually intact among Russian Muslims in the nineteenth century, by the beginning of the twentieth century, very gradually, a leading role in shaping public opinion began to be played by new leaders. Among them, however, there was no consensus on the full range of issues related to Sufism. The only thing they did agree upon was a negative attitude to the phenomenon of īshānism, which had become an obstacle to the development of Muslim society. In all other questions, the range of opinions varied considerably from admiration for the Sufi spiritual heritage and appreciation of the role of Sufism in education, charity, and ethics to criticism of forbidden innovations such as worship of the tombs of shaykhs, *dhikr,* the darvish movement, mediation between God and humans, and the performance of miracles.

The criticism of Sufism by all of the above-mentioned authors was caused by the impulses of the time. Instead of fostering the qualities of the ascetic (*zāhid*), poverty (*faqr*), contentment (*riḍā*), trust in God (*tawakkul*), and so forth, priority turned to striving for material well-being and belief in one's own strength, determination, and healthy competition—in fact, exactly those qualities which determine business ethics and entrepreneurship: the old traditional passive worldview, long associated with Sufi teachings, was gradually replaced by the purposeful and rational ethics of capitalism.

At the same time, like their foreign colleagues among the Islamic reformers, and with rare exceptions, Russian Muslims appreciated Sufi teachings as a source of intellectual and spiritual development. Ibn ʻArabī, al-Ghazālī, Rūmī, and other Sufi masters continued to inspire Muslims as well as non-Muslims all across the world.

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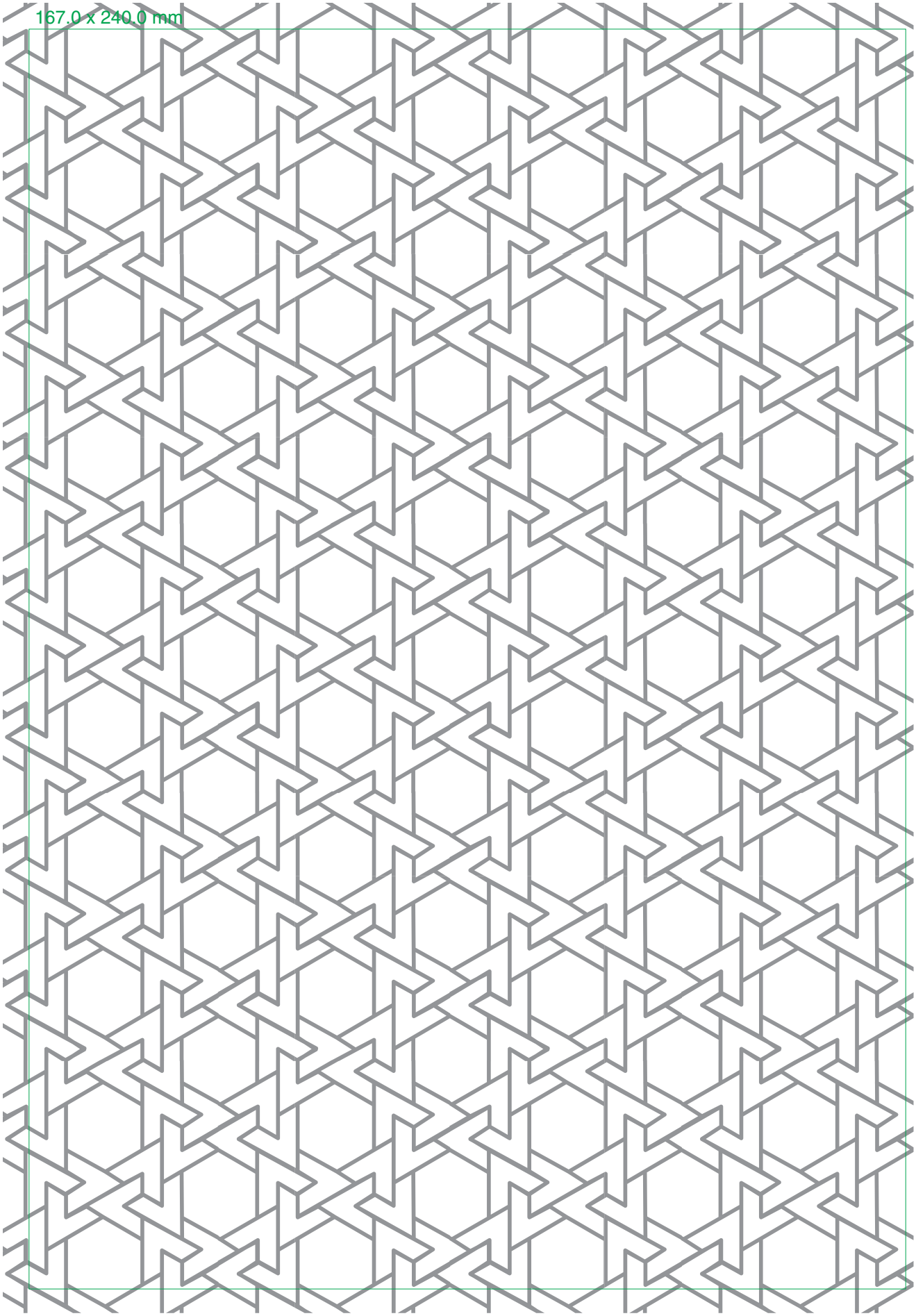
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A NIETZSCHEAN MYSTIC: MUHAMMAD IQBAL ON THE ETHICS OF SELFHOOD

Muhammad U. Faruque

Introduction

Although he died nearly a century ago, Muhammad Iqbal (d. 1938) is one of the most influential figures of Islamic modernism—a strand of Islamic thought that emphasizes a reformist paradigm to meet the challenges of modern society, including its institutions and technology. Appearing at a crucial juncture of history in colonial India, Iqbal, who was at once a poet, philosopher, social commentator, and part-time politician, wrote on a wide array of topics ranging from philosophy and economics to science, mysticism, and public policy. He is also regarded as the spiritual father of what came to be known as Pakistan.

In this article, I aim to provide a thorough investigation of Iqbal's ethics of selfhood in light of his encounter with the Islamic mystical tradition. When his famous *Asrār-i khūdī* was translated into English in 1920, it received a mixed reception both in India and abroad. Critics of the *Asrār* accused Iqbal of adopting the German philosopher Nietzsche's theory of the *Übermensch* to reinterpret the mystical doctrine of the perfect human (*al-insān al-kāmil*).[1] In a letter to R. A.

1. For a detailed analysis of Nietzsche's influence on Iqbal, see section 4. The perfection of the *Übermensch* is attained through overcoming the human, or the everyday, self, as Nietzsche says in his *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*: "I teach to you the *Übermensch*. The human is something that shall be overcome." Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke *Zarathustra,* trans. Graham

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Nicholson, Iqbal claimed that "the philosophy of the *Asrār* is a direct development out of the experience and speculation of old Muslim Sufis and thinkers."[2] Yet the substantiation of this claim rested on thin air since a close reading of his treatises shows how a misinterpretation of the classical texts informed his ethics of selfhood.

In the remainder of the paper, I will first sketch Iqbal's socio-cultural context and then draw attention to his articulation of the crisis of modernity. This will pave the way for understanding why he thought a new expression of the self is necessary to tackle the crisis of modernity. Following this, I will offer a critical analysis of Iqbal's ethics of selfhood to show how, despite his claim that his theory has been developed from the writings of the great Sufis, he misconstrues various Sufi doctrines. Overall, this study will show that Iqbal's ethics of selfhood emerges from forging some kind of middle ground between Nietzsche's philosophy and Islamic mysticism.

The Crisis of Modernity

It is instructive to note that the context of Iqbal's writings was shaped by the forces of colonial modernity, and especially the struggle for self-definition that had occupied the minds of subcontinental Muslims. It was a period when various Muslim groups were trying to define "Muslimness," which explains Iqbal's motivation for a new articulation of the self. Broadly speaking, Iqbal aimed to instill self-confidence in the Muslim mind under colonial rule. He felt that Muslim self-confidence was severely undermined by both colonial rule and by centuries of intellectual inactivity.[3] The medicine that he prescribed to cure the Muslim self was a novel concept of subjectivity based on self-affirmation and dynamism.[4]

Iqbal, who was well-versed in the Hegelian tradition, uses the term "modernity" to speak of the crisis of which Muslims and others need to be aware. For instance, in the *Reconstruction*, he articulates the global nature of the "modern crisis:"

> Surely the present moment is one of great crisis in the history of modern culture. The modern world stands in need of biological renewal. And religion, which in its higher manifestations is neither dogma, nor priesthood, nor ritual, can alone ethically prepare the modern man for

Parkes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 11. This means the *Übermensch* emerges from our going beyond the human perspective and transcending the anthropocentric worldview. For Nietzsche's exposition of the *Übermensch,* see his *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 11–16, 18, 21, 31, 33, 45, 49, 54, 57, 62, 67, 123, 171, 184, 193, and 250–51.

2. Muhammad Iqbal, "In Defense of the Self," in *Discourses of Iqbal,* compiled and edited by Shahid H. Razzaqi (Lahore: Ghulām ʿAlī, 1979), 196.

3. As will be seen, Iqbal's assessment of the Islamic intellectual tradition was based on the problematic (and now-proven untenable) Orientalist thesis that the Islamic philosophical tradition ceased to be of relevance after the famous attack of al-Ghazālī on the philosophers in the eleventh century. Cf. Sajjad Rizvi, "Between Hegel and Rumi: Iqbal's Contrapuntal Encounters with the Islamic Philosophical traditions," in *Muhammad Iqbal: Essays on the Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, ed. Chad Hillier and B. Koshul (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 123.

4. There are several notable difficulties when it comes to Iqbal scholarship that seem to impede a serious academic study of his reformulation of the Muslim self. In terms of scholarly attitude, there are two interrelated approaches that one may identify in Iqbal studies—namely, what can be called "the adulatory approach" and "the nativist approach," both of which are equally problematic. As regards "the adulatory approach," the problem lies in overstating the novelty and brilliance of Iqbal's thought, while "the nativist approach" starts from the premise that Iqbal's ideas must be defended and justified against those whom he criticized because of his political importance in shaping Muslim identity in the subcontinent. For a full-scale treatment of the problems in Iqbal studies, see Muhammad Faruque, "The Crisis of Modern Subjectivity: Rethinking Iqbal and Iqbal Studies," forthcoming.

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> the burden of the great responsibility which the advancement of modern science necessarily involves, and restore to him that attitude of faith which makes him capable of winning a personality here and retaining it hereafter. It is only by rising to a fresh vision of his origin and future ... that man will eventually triumph over a society motivated by an inhuman competition, and a civilization which has lost its spiritual unity by its inner conflict of religious and political values.[5]

In this text, we are told that modern humanity faces a crisis because of progress in modern science, which challenges the conventional understanding and interpretation of religion. This situation is exacerbated by unrestrained economic competition and the conflict of church and state or the separation of religion and politics. In the same passage, Iqbal also notes that neither the techniques of Sufism, nor nationalism, nor Marxist atheism can cure the ills of a despairing humanity. In Iqbal's view, the remedy to this desperate situation lies in offering a "fresh" articulation of one's origin and return—i.e., religious metaphysics. At any rate, since Iqbal's attitude to modernity seems to be complex, and since much of the motivation of articulating a new conception of selfhood results from this *attitude*, we need to look at what he considers to be the threats posed by modernity. Iqbal writes:

> Thus, wholly overshadowed by the results of his intellectual activity, the modern man has ceased to live soulfully, i.e., from within. In the domain of thought he is living in open conflict with himself; and in the domain of economic and political life he is living in open conflict with others. He finds himself unable to control his ruthless egoism and his infinite gold-hunger which is gradually killing all higher striving in him and bringing him nothing but life-weariness . . . The technique of medieval mysticism by which religious life, in its higher manifestations, developed itself both in the East and in the West has now practically failed ... No wonder then that the modern Muslim in Turkey, Egypt, and Persia is led to seek fresh sources of energy in the creation of new loyalties, such as patriotism and nationalism, which Nietzsche described as "sickness and unreason," and "the strongest force against culture."[6]

No doubt, in the above passage, Iqbal paints a very dark picture of the world in which the modern human has lost her sense of a higher spiritual purpose.[7] It is important to note that, according to Iqbal, such a bleak picture of modernity has led Muslims to seek ideological inspiration in "nationalism," which he rejects *in*

5. Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, edited and annotated by M. Saeed Sheikh (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), 149.

6. Cf. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science: With a Prelude in German Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*, trans. Josefine Nauckhoff (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), book V, where Nietzsche denounces "nationalism and race-hatred (as) a scabies of the heart and blood poisoning." See also his *The Twilight of the Idols,* trans. Anthony M. Ludovici (New York: Russell & Russell, 1964), Chap. viii, where he considers nationalism to be "the strongest force against culture."

7. The literature on modernity—a contested category—is vast. Some major studies that are relevant to the present concern are: Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourses of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*, trans. F. Lawrence (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987); R. W. Hefner, "Multiple Modernities: Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism in a Globalizing Age," *Annual Review of Anthropology 27 (1998): 83–104;* Charles Taylor, "Two Theories of Modernity," *The International Scope* 3, no. 5 (2001): 1–9; Bruce Lawrence, "Modernity," in *Key Themes for the Study of Islam,* ed. Jamal J. Elias (Oxford: Oneworld, 2010), 245–262; Enrique Dussel, "Beyond Eurocentrism: The World-System and the Limits of Modernity," in *The Cultures of Globalization*, ed. Fredric Jameson and Masao Miyoshi (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), 3–31.

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toto.[8] Moreover, Iqbal believes that the condition of modernity has caused Muslim youth to lose hope in a purely religious method of renewal, which alone, for Iqbal, can guarantee the everlasting fountain of life by expanding our thoughts and emotions.[9] Thus, "the modern man, with his philosophies of criticism and scientific specialism, finds himself in a strange predicament" and "his Naturalism has given him an unprecedented control over the forces of Nature, but has robbed him of faith in his own future."[10]

In his important essay "What is Enlightenment?" Michel Foucault explains the phrase, "attitude of modernity" "as a mode of relating to contemporary reality; a voluntary choice made by certain people; in the end, a way of thinking and feeling; a way, too, of acting and behaving that at one and the same time marks a relation of belonging and presents itself as a task."[11] Foucault likens this to the Greek idea of *ethos*. Drawing on Baudelaire, Foucault continues to describe the "attitude of modernity" in various terms such as a consciousness of the discontinuity of time, a break with tradition, and a feeling of novelty or of vertigo in the face of the passing moment.[12]

As noted, Iqbal's "attitude of modernity" is complex and marked by internal tensions and contradictions. On the one hand, he admires modern science, but on the other, he is critical of its naturalism.[13] Likewise, although he thinks the techniques and metaphysics of Sufism have failed to provide any viable alternative to the crisis of modern subjectivity, he goes on to defend the cognitive value of mystical experience.[14] Likewise, he calls upon religious scholars to be open to *ijtihād* (independent reasoning) and modern education on the one hand, but does not hesitate to label them "modern," in the sense of being influenced by the West, if he cannot come to an agreement with them, as is shown by his famous debate with the Deobandī scholar al-Madānī over Muslim politics.[15] Above all, Iqbal does not embrace a concept of modernity that foresees a complete break with the past or rejection of the tradition as a whole. As he says:

> The task before the modern Muslim is, therefore, immense. He has to rethink the whole system of Islam without completely breaking with the past. Perhaps the first Muslim who felt the urge of a new spirit in him was Shāh Walī Allāh of Delhi . . . The only course open to us is to approach modern knowledge with a respectful but independent attitude and to appreciate the teachings of Islam in the light of that knowledge, even though we may be led to differ from those who have gone before us.[16]

8. For more information, see Iqbal S. Sevea, *Political Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 126ff. See also Faisal Devji's recent reflections on Iqbal's political thought vis-à-vis nationalism and liberalism, idem., "Illiberal Islam," in *Islam after Liberalism*, ed. Faisal Devji and Zaheer Kazmi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 65–90.
9. Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 148–49.
10. Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 147.
11. Michel Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" in *The Foucault Reader,* ed. P. Rabinow, trans. Catherine Porter (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 32–50, at 38.
12. Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" 38.
13. On Iqbal's remarks on naturalism, see his *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 147.
14. See, e.g., Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 17–19, 150.
15. For more information on this, see Muhammad Q. Zaman, *Islam in Pakistan: A History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 38; cf. Sevea, *Political Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal,* 133–55.
16. Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 78. One wonders if such a statement (i.e., interpreting Islam in light of

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The above text would be crucial while navigating through Iqbal's ethics of selfhood. Although it is unclear whether or not Walī Allāh himself also felt "the urge of a new spirit," Iqbal conveniently aligns himself with him.[17] So, unlike Walī Allāh, Iqbal proposes that the teachings of Islam be understood and interpreted "in light of modern knowledge"—a feature that he shares with other modernists.[18] In any event, the Iqbal who wants to preserve some form of continuity with the past also maintains that "[w]e must criticize our values, perhaps transvaluate them; and if necessary, create new worths; since the immortality of a people, as Nietzsche has so happily put, depends upon the incessant creation of worths."[19] This is because although things certainly bear the mark of divine manufacturing, their meaning is all too human.[20]

An Anatomy of the Term "Self"

In the preceding section, I described Iqbal's complex attitude toward modernity and his motivation for a reconstruction of the Muslim self. In what follows, I will investigate Iqbal's ethics selfhood, showing how it departs from the Sufi model, even though Iqbal claims that he has developed it directly out of the experience and speculation of classical Muslim mystics and thinkers. Iqbal uses a number of terms to talk about the self, including the word "self" itself since he also wrote in English. Although one might think that his primary term for self is "*khūdī* (self)," it is not the only term he uses. He is aware of the existence of other terms that have been employed to render the English word "self" such as *nafs* (self/soul), *anā* (I), *shakhṣ* (person), and *anāniyyat* (selfhood).

"The word *'khūdī'* was chosen with great difficulty and most reluctantly," Iqbal informs the reader, because "from a literary point of view it has many shortcomings and ethically it is generally used in a bad sense both in Urdu and Persian." Moreover, in his view, "the other words for the metaphysical fact of the 'I' are equally inconvenient—e.g., *anā, shakhṣ, nafs*, and *anāniyyat*." So "what is needed," Iqbal says, "is a colorless word for self, ego, having no ethical significance." But since "there is no such word in either Urdu or Persian"— the word *man* (I) in Persian being equally inappropriate—"I thought that the word *'khūdī'* was the most suitable."[21] Iqbal then claims that there is some evidence in the Persian language of the use of the word *khūdī* in the simple sense of self, i.e., to say the colorless fact of affirming the "I." So the phenomenological use of the term *khūdī* expresses an "indescribable feeling of I, which forms the basis of the uniqueness of each individual."[22] In Iqbal's usage,

modern knowledge) is *self-contradictory* because Iqbal castigates Islamic philosophers for interpreting the Qur'an in light of the then "scientific knowledge," i.e., Greek philosophy. See Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 102–3.

17. For more information on this, see Muhammad Faruque, *Sculpting the Self: Islam, Selfhood and Human Flourishing* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2021).

18. Majid Fakhry expresses disappointment over the role that science holds in Islamic modernist thought with particular reference to Iqbal because of his universal appeal as well as the erudition of Western thought. For a sustained analysis, see Majid Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 355.

19. Muhammad Iqbal, *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal*, edited by Latif Ahmad Sherwani (Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 1995), 121.

20. Iqbal, *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal*, 121.

21. Iqbal, "An Exposition of the Self," in *Discourses of Iqbal,* 201–02.

22. Iqbal, "An Exposition of the Self," 201–02.

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then, *khūdī* does not convey any ethical significance for those who cannot get rid of its ethical undertone.[23]

Nonetheless, *khūdī*, in Iqbāl's philosophy, does bear an "ethical" connotation in addition to its "phenomenological" usage. Iqbal himself categorically states this by saying, "Ethically, the word '*khūdī*' means (as used by me) self-reliance, self-respect, self-confidence, self-preservation; even self-assertion when such a thing is necessary, in the interests of life and the power to stick to the cause of truth, justice, duty, etc. even in the face of death."[24] For Iqbal, such usage of *khūdī* is ethical "because it helps in the integration of the forces of the Ego, thus hardening it, as against the forces of disintegration and dissolution."[25] In all, Iqbal makes it clear that *khūdī* has both phenomenological and ethical connotations, and it does not mean the egotistical self, full of pride.

Selfhood via Nietzsche

It is to be noted that Iqbal's philosophy of the self marks a departure from classical Muslim thought even though he claims to have derived the ingredients of his theory from classical Sufism.[26] Moreover, although like some Muslim philosophers Iqbal focuses on the self from a first-person perspective, underscoring the irreducibility of its first-person character, his account of the self's moral development leading to the degree of the perfect human highlights his differences with them. Relatedly, very early on after the publication of *Asrār-i khūdī,* critics accused Iqbal of incorporating Nietzschean themes into his exposition of the self and the perfect human, which Iqbal denied vehemently. Even so, some aspects of Iqbal's self and the perfect human do seem to show a clear Nietzschean influence (see below). It is true that Iqbal at times chastises Nietzsche for his materialism, but one does not fail to notice his admiration and sympathy for the German philosopher throughout his career.[27]

At any rate when critics pointed out the resemblance between Iqbal's perfect human and Nietzsche's *Übermensch*, Iqbal retorted by saying that the conception of the Overman in Nietzsche is purely materialistic, which is the same as the idea of the Over-soul in Emerson.[28] More intriguingly, Iqbal surmises that Nietzsche might have borrowed the concept from the literature of Islam and then tainted it with his materialism.

But Iqbal's articulation of the three stages of the growth of the self appears suspiciously similar to Nietzsche's "three metamorphoses," or the three stages of progress toward the *Übermensch* in his *Also sprach Zarathustra (Thus Spoke*

23. Iqbal, "An Exposition of the Self," 201–02.
24. Iqbal, "An Exposition of the Self," 203.
25. Iqbal, "An Exposition of the Self," 203.
26. *By classical Sufism, I have in mind such figures as al-Ghazālī, Rumi, Ibn ʿArabī, et al., whom Iqbal engages in dialogue from time to time.*
27. See Faruque, *Sculpting the Self,* chap. V.
28. Iqbal, "An Exposition of the Self," 200. On "over-soul," see Ralph W. Emerson, *Essays: First and Second Series* (New York: Vintage Books: Library of America, 1990), chap. IX.

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Zarathustra). In Iqbal's rendering, the representation of the first metamorphosis of life is the camel, which is a symbol of load-bearing strength. The second is the lion, which symbolizes the strength to kill without pity, for pity is a vice and not virtue for Nietzsche. The representation of the third metamorphosis is the child, which is the Superman passing beyond good and evil like the child and becoming a law unto himself. In Iqbal's view, this is materialism turning the human ego into a monster, which, according to Nietzsche's idea of immortality, has repeated itself and will repeat itself infinitely.[29] Iqbal claims that the similarities between Nietzsche and himself are superficial, since the former does not believe in the spiritual fact of the self and its will to power.[30]

However, Iqbal fails to explain why his theory of the self also has exactly three stages, as opposed to four or five. He rightly notes that, for Nietzsche, the "I" is a fiction because there is no autonomous self standing behind the drives, capable of constructing their order; there is only the play of drives that mold the ego.[31] According to Iqbal, Nietzsche followed Kant's lead in the *Kritik's* (i.e., *Kritik der reinen Vernunft)* conclusion that God, immortality, and freedom are more of a fiction, though useful for practical purposes. Against this view, he reiterates the Bergsonian intuition of the self, saying that, from the viewpoint of inner experience, the "I" is an indubitable fact, which stares at us in spite of our intellectual analysis of it. Moreover, Iqbal argues that the perfection of the perfect human in Islam consists of realizing the eternal Now, which one does not find in Nietzsche.[32] Also, Iqbal suggests that Nietzsche's *Übermensch* is a biological product, whereas the Islamic perfect human is the product of moral and spiritual forces such as virtue, justice, duty, and love.[33] In addition, Iqbal denies that his coal–diamond analogy in the *Asrār* has anything to do with Nietzsche since, unlike the latter, he does not mean callousness or pitilessness when he says, "Be as hard as the diamond."[34]

Despite all Iqbal can say in self-defense, there is no denying that his conception of the perfect human as the highest mode of self-development shows influences from Nietzsche. Even though Iqbal claims that he adopted the doctrine from the Sufis, his exposition of the perfect human bears only a superficial resemblance to the original Sufi doctrine. Iqbal significantly modifies the doctrine of the perfect human when he asserts that it represents the "completest ego, the goal of humanity, and the acme of life both in mind and body" in whom "the discord of our mental life becomes a harmony."[35] Moreover, according to Iqbal, the perfect human is the last fruit of the tree of humanity, who justifies "all the trials of a painful evolution"

29. See Iqbal, "An Exposition of the Self," 200. For Nietzsche's explanations of the "three metamorphoses," see Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 23–24; cf. *Beyond Good and Evil*, translated by Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1966).

30. Iqbal, "An Exposition of the Self," 198–99.

31. On some interpretations of the Nietzschean self, see Alexander Nehamas, *Nietzsche: Life as Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985); Robert Miner, "Nietzsche's Fourfold Conception of the Self," *Inquiry* 54, no. 4 (2011): 337–360; Daniel Breazeale, "Becoming Who One Is: Notes on Schopenhauer as Educator," *New Nietzsche Studies* 2–3/4 (1998): 1–25.

32. Iqbal, "An Exposition of the Self," 200.

33. Iqbal, "An Exposition of the Self," 200–01. However, the Nietzschean influence is clearly traceable in his doctrine, as in the following: "You must give up all those modes of activity which have a tendency to dissolve personality, e.g., humility, contentment, slavish obedience, modes of human action which have been erroneously dignified by the name of virtue. On the other hand, high ambition, generosity, charity and a just pride in our traditions and power fortify the sense of personality." See Muhammad Iqbal, *Stray Reflections: A Notebook of Allama Iqbal*, ed. Javid Iqbal (Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 2008), 29.

34. Iqbal, "An Exposition of the Self," 202.

35. Iqbal mentions Nietzsche in this regard, saying he had a glimpse of the concept. See Muhammad Iqbal, *Asrār-i khūdī,* translated by Nicholson (Lahore: Muhammad Ashraf, 1964), xxviii–xxix.

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because he is to come at the end. Iqbal's evolutionist interpretation of the perfect human becomes evident in the following:

> The more we advance in evolution, the nearer we get to him. In approaching him we are raising ourselves in the scale of life. The development of humanity both in mind and body is a condition precedent to his birth. For the present he is a mere ideal; but the evolution of humanity is tending towards the production of an ideal race of more or less unique individuals who will become his fitting parents. Thus the kingdom of God on earth means the democracy of more or less unique individuals, presided over by the most unique individual possible on this earth.[36]

Needless to say, such an interpretation of the perfect human would hardly make sense to the Sufis for whom the doctrine is primarily understood in its spiritual and metaphysical context. Iqbal's idiosyncratic understanding of the perfect human becomes even more apparent when one analyzes his views on the self's freedom and immortality. According to Iqbal, the end of the self's journey is not freedom from the limitations of individuality; it is, rather, a more precise definition of it.[37] As Iqbal says:

> Whatever may be the final fate of man it does not mean the loss of individuality. The Qur'an does not contemplate complete liberation from finitude as the highest state of human bliss . . . It is with the irreplaceable singleness of his individuality that the finite ego will approach the infinite ego to see for himself the consequences of his past action and to judge the possibilities of his future.[38]

Iqbal then goes on to add that "pantheistic Sufism"[39] cannot accept such a view, because this would imply the mutual exclusion of the Infinite and the finite self, which contravenes God's infinitude. Iqbal responds by arguing that such difficulties rest on a misunderstanding of the true nature of the Infinite. In his view, true infinity does not mean infinite extension, which cannot be conceived without embracing all available finite extensions. Rather, its nature consists of intensity and not extensity; hence the moment we hold our attention on intensity, we begin to see that the finite ego must be distinct, though not isolated, from the Infinite.[40] Moreover, Iqbal maintains that it is highly unlikely that "a being whose evolution has taken millions of years should be thrown away as a thing of no use." Rather, "it is only as an ever-growing ego," Iqbal says, "that he can belong to the meaning of the universe."[41]

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36. Iqbal, *Asrār-i khūdī*, translated by Nicholson, xxvii–xxviii.
37. Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 156–7.
38. Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 93.
39. Iqbal's pejorative term for the metaphysical-minded Sufis.
40. Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 56.
41. He then quotes the verses from Q 91: 7–10: "By the soul and He Who hath balanced it, and hath shown to it the ways of wickedness and piety, blessed is he who hath made it grow and undone is he who hath corrupted it." Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought,* 95.

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Yet there is little evidence to suggest that Sufi metaphysicians (whom Iqbal calls pantheists) considered God's infinitude extensively in spatial form.[42] Consider, for instance, Mullā Ṣadrā's (d. 1640) expression "*ʿidda, mudda wa-shidda*" (numericality, duration, and intensity), in relation to *mā lā yatanāhā be-mā lā yatanāhā* (intrinsic infinity)—i.e., God, is well known.[43] As for the loss of individuality, it is clear from the writings of many Sufi metaphysicians that for them, there is no "individuality" to begin with because, as Shams al-Dīn Lāhījī (d. 1506–07) explained, "there is no room for duality in the divine unity" (*dūʾī rā aṣlan dar maqam-i tawḥīd rāh nīst*). That is, all conceptions of "individuality" separate from the Divine are ultimately illusory, arising due to the Absolute's self-determination.[44] Thus, even though Iqbal claimed that his philosophy of the self is a direct development out of the experience and speculation of the classical Sufis, a close reading of the texts shows completely the opposite.

Conclusion

In all, Iqbal is concerned with the crisis of modern Muslim subjectivity, and he puts forth an ethics of selfhood to overcome this crisis. His influence can be seen in different Muslim camps that have sought to respond to the challenges of modernity. Among his admirers was Sayyid Quṭb, who is known for his fundamentalist ideology. In one of his later works, Quṭb, for instance, praises Iqbal's concept of selfhood as a time-honored idea that Muslims needed in order to cope with the challenges of the modern world.[45] He also approves of Iqbal's criticism of the Sufi doctrine of annihilation (*fanāʾ*) as being the cause of Muslim passivity.[46] Apart from the likes of Quṭb, Marxist Arab thinkers such as Ḥasan Ḥanafī also draw from Iqbal, as can be seen in his recent six-hundred-page work in Arabic titled *Muḥammad Iqbāl: Faylasūf al-dhātīyya.*[47]

As for Iqbal's ethics of selfhood, one can certainly detect similarities between him and his Sufi predecessors when it comes to their distinction between the higher and lower self, pious rejection of worldliness, and an emphasis on the immortality of the self, but their worldviews remain significantly different in terms of the true nature of the self and of Ultimate Reality. The Iqbalian self stands out for its emphasis on immanence, individuality, dynamism, activity, life, and self-affirmation, so much so that Iqbal conceives of God as the most Individual Ego. In Iqbal's view, regardless of the self's development and spiritual progress, it always retains its individuality and egohood in its encounter with God. There is no place

42. On the misunderstanding of Sufi metaphysics as pantheism, see Mohammed Rustom, "Is Ibn al-ʿArabī's Ontology Pantheistic?" *Journal of Islamic Philosophy* 2 (2006): 53–67. Also, it is to be noted that Iqbal's critique of Sufi metaphysics was borne out of the Indian reception of Ibn ʿArabī via Aḥmad al-Sirhindī's polemic against *waḥdat al-wujūd*. See Muhammad Faruque, "Sufism *contra* Shariah? Shāh Walī Allāh's Metaphysics of *Waḥdat al-Wujūd.*" *Brill Journal of Sufi Studies* 5, no. 1 (2016): 27–57.

43. Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya fī manāhij al-sulūkiyya,* ed. Muḥaqqiq Dāmād (Tehran: Bunyād-i Ḥikmat-i Islāmi-yi Ṣadrā, 2003), 135.

44. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā Lāhījī, *Mafātīḥ al-iʿjāz fī sharḥ Gulshan-i rāz*, ed. Maḥmūdī Bakhtiyārī (Tehran: ʿIlm, 1998), 233.

45. Sayyid Quṭb, *The Islamic Concept and its Characteristics*, trans. Mohammed M. Siddiqui (Oak Brook: American Trust Publications, 1991), 13–16; cf. *idem., al-ʿAdālah al-ijtimāʿīyah fi-l-Islām* (Beirut: Dār al-Shurūq, 1975), 32–43.

46. Ibid.

47. See Ḥasan Ḥanafī, *Muḥammad Iqbāl: Faylasūf al-dhātīyah* (Beirut: Dār al-Madār al-Islāmī, 2009).

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for a non-dual conception of the self and the Divine in Iqbal's thought. That is why Iqbal says that the ultimate goal of the self is to see God as an Ego and as an Other. However, in asserting such a view of the self, Iqbal does not address the question of how it might be possible for human vision to encompass and comprehend the Infinite, especially in light of the Qur'an (6:103), that states, "Vision comprehendeth Him not, but He comprehendeth (all) vision. He is the Subtle, the Aware."

In contrast, Sufis such as Ibn ʿArabī (d. 1240), ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Jīlī (d. 1424), and others draw a non-dualistic conclusion from such a verse, which is the reason they categorically aver that one cannot perceive the Divine Essence.[48] That is, the "I" as a "subject" cannot perceive the Ultimate Reality as an "object." Nonetheless, they maintain that God can manifest His infinite nature in the heart (i.e., the deepest core of the self) of His believing servants when it is completely polished and purified so that it can reflect all the countless divine names and attributes—and this for them is represented by the doctrine of the perfect human. As was evident from the preceding analyses, Iqbal seems to be unaware of the complexity of much of such classical thought.

The tale of love is something which no tongue may exhaust
O Sāqī, hand me the wine and make this discourse short.[49]

48. See, for instance, William Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-'Arabī's Metaphysics of Imagination* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989).
49. Hafez, *The Divan of Hafez*, trans. Reza Saberi (Lanham: University Press of America, 2002), 98.

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THE TRANSCENDENT ETHICS OF *TARBIYA:* IBRAHIM NIASSE'S *MAQĀMĀT AL-DĪN AL-THALĀTH*

Oludamini Ogunnaike

Highest virtue is not virtuous and that is why it is virtuous. — Lao Tzu[1]

Virtues, I take leave of you for evermore. Now shall mine heart be more free and more in peace than it hath been before . . . Oh I was then your servant, but now I am delivered out of your thraldom. — Marguerite Porete[2]

[The final outcome of the knower (ʿārif)] is when he is just as he was where he was before he was — Dhūʾl Nūn al-Miṣrī[3]

A 2012 Pew Charitable Trust study found that Sufism is more popular in West Africa than any other region in the world,[4] and this fact is due in large part to the efforts of Shaykh Ibrahim Niasse (d. 1395/1975), the founder of the largest branch of the Tijāniyya, the most popular Sufi order in Sub-Saharan Africa. Current estimates put membership of Niasse's branch of the Tijānī order, called the Fayḍa, between the tens of millions to 100 million,[5] making it one of the largest Sufi movements

1. Lao Tzu, *Lao-Tzu: Te-Tao Ching: A New Translation Based on the Recently Discovered Ma-Wang Tui Texts,* trans. by Robert Henricks (New York: Ballantine Books, 2010), 7.
2. Marguerite Porete, *The Mirror of Simple Souls*, translated by M. N. (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1927), 12.
3. Mohammed Rustom, "The Sufi Teachings of Dhu'l-Nun," *Sacred Web* 24 (2009), 74.
4. With 92% of Senegalese Muslims, 55% of Chadian Muslims, 47% of Nigerien Muslims, and 37% of Nigerian and Ghanaian Muslims reporting that they belong to a Sufi order. See Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, "The World's Muslims: Unity and Diversity," accessed April 28th, 2019, https://www.pewforum.org/2012/08/09/the-worlds-muslims-unity-and-diversity-1-religious-affiliation/.
5. Ibrahim Niasse [Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās], *The Removal of Confusion Concerning the Flood of the Saintly Seal Aḥmad al-Tijānī,* trans. Zachary Wright, Muhtar Holland, and Abdullahi Okene (Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 2010), vi.

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in the world. The popularity of this movement is largely due to Shaykh Ibrahim Niasse's unique spiritual training, or *tarbiya,*[6] which is supposed to bring disciples to the realization of *maʿrifat Allāh*, direct knowledge of God, much more rapidly and with less difficulty than other methods. While the exact process and litanies of this method are kept secret, Niasse has described the process in several works, one of the most influential of which is entitled "The Three Stations of Religion" (*Maqāmāt al-dīn al-thalāth*). Based on an earlier Tijanī manual of spiritual training (the Mauritanian Tijānī scholar, Ibn Anbūja's (d. 1283/1867) *Mizāb al-raḥma,* which is in turn based on the Andalusian scholar Muḥammad al-Anṣārī al-Sāḥilī's (d. 754/1353) *Bughyat al-sālik fī ashrf al-masālik*),[7] it describes the stations (*maqāmāt*) on the spiritual path to *maʿrifa* according to the ternary of the hadith of Gabriel: *Islām, Īmān,* and *Iḥsān*. Niasse further divides each station (*maqām*) into three stages (*manāzil*), yielding the following nine stages (*manāzil*): Islām: repentance, integrity, reverence; *Īmān:* sincerity, pure devotion, serenity; *Iḥsān:* observing, witnessing, and knowledge. Each of these nine stages is divided according to its meaning and nature for the masses (*al-ʿawāmm*), the elite (*al-khāṣṣa*), and the elite of the elite (*khāṣṣat al-khāṣṣa*). The stages from serenity onwards are only for the elite.

In this short treatise, Niasse describes the state of consciousness and behavior corresponding to each stage, characterizes each with a verse or verses of the Qurʾan, and associates each stage with a particular ontological/cosmological presence (*ḥaḍra*). The path to *maʿrifa* is described in terms in which the ethical, existential, and epistemological are intimately intertwined until they are completely inseparable in the attainment of *maʿrifa*—a station which admits of no division or duality. In this article, I will briefly discuss the relationship between ethics, epistemology, and ontology in Sufi practice and theory before turning to the particular genre of *maqāmāt* literature to which Niasse's work belongs and its unique perspective on ethics, then presenting a translation of the work. I will conclude with a brief discussion of Tijānī (and broader Sufi) *maʿrifa*-based moral epistemology, contrasting the ethical paradigm exemplified in Niasse's treatise with contemporary academic ethical paradigms.

Ethics, Epistemology, and Ontology in a Sufism and Philosophy

One of the more difficult aspects of studying and translating Sufi ethical works in the contemporary academic context is the way in which these Sufi works combine and even unite discussions of epistemology, ontology, and ethics, which are usually considered separately in contemporary academic discourses. *Maʿrifa*, the direct knowledge of God, which is the subject of most Sufi discourse, is described

6. For more on the history and controversies surrounding *tarbiya* in West African Sufism, see Niasse, *The Removal of Confusion,* 1–16, 89–98, and 151–168, and Rüdiger Seesemann, *The Divine Flood: Ibrahim Niasse and the Roots of a Twentieth-Century Sufi Revival* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 67–94.

7. See Rüdiger Seesemann, "A New Dawn for Sufism? Spiritual Training in the Mirror of Nineteenth Century Literature," in Chih, Rachida, Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen, and Rüdiger Seesemann, eds. *Sufism, Literary Production, and Printing in the Nineteenth Century* (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2015), 279–298, and Rüdiger Seesemann, *The Divine Flood,* 67–94.

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as existential and sometimes even as a mode of being (or Being itself),[8] as well as having ethical and moral prerequisites and concomitants. Ethical perfection is typically described as a prerequisite of *maʿrifa* or as being identical with or a result of *maʿrifa* itself.[9] This stands in sharp contrast to modern academic discussions about knowledge in which knowledge of certain facts (such as the practices of the meat industry or the environmental cost of certain goods or activities) may affect and influence one's ethical life, but forms of knowledge are rarely, if ever, described as having ethical prerequisites (e.g., being cruel or a jerk does not prevent one from learning mathematics, logic, or philosophy (even ethics)).

However, within Sufi discourse and practice, the tight connection and ultimate inseparability of knowledge, being, and ethics is perhaps best summed up in the following aphorism of Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 638/1240), which plays with the semantic range of the Arabic root, *w-j-d*: "Know that Being [*wujūd*], amongst the Folk, is finding/consciousness [*wijdān*] of the Real in ecstasy [*wajd*]."[10] In other words, since *maʿrifa* is existential knowledge, it is a mode of being—in fact, it is an ideal mode of being—and since virtue is defined as the perfection of the human mode of being and the source of felicity (*saʿāda*), this blissful, noetic, and ethically ideal mode of being is identified with the being/consciousness of the Real Itself. *Maʿrifa* is not just knowledge of God; it is, in a sense, God's knowledge,[11] and thus requires the annihilation of the knowing subject and the realization of its conformity to or identity with the Divine Reality. Elsewhere in his *Fūtūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, Ibn al-ʿArabī, like al-Ghazālī and numerous Sufi authors both before and after him, equates the descriptions of attaining human perfection through realization (*taḥaqquq*) with "assuming the traits of the Divine Names" (*takhalluq bi-akhlāq/asmāʾ Allāh*), and the more philosophical concept of "becoming similar to the God" (*tashabbuh biʾllāh*):

> This is why the philosophers allude to the fact that the servant's desired goal is becoming similar (*tashabbuh*) to the God, while the Sufis say concerning the same thing, "assuming the traits [*takhalluq*] of the names." The expressions are different, but the meaning is one. We beseech and implore God that He not veil us from our servitude when we assume the traits of the divine names![12]

As this quote suggests, this perspective was not foreign to the world of ancient philosophy, whose various schools characterized their goal of wisdom (*sophia*) as an ideal human state that combined knowledge, virtue (*aretê*),[13] and happiness (*eudaimonia*). As Pierre Hadot writes:

> Thus, philosophy was a way of life, both in its exercise and effort to

8. William Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-ʿArabī's Metaphysics of Imagination* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1989), 3 and 148–149.

9. Ibid., 380–381.

10. Quoted in William Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 212. Annemarie Schimmel writes, "In the overwhelming happiness of having found Him, man may be enraptured in ecstatic bliss. Nwiya has proposed . . . calling this state 'instasy' instead of 'ecstasy' since the mystic is not carried out of himself but rather into the depths of himself into the 'ocean of the soul,' as the poets might say." See Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 178.

11. This is why a possessor of *maʿrifa* is known as a "knower by God" (*ʿārif biʾllah*) instead of a "knower of God" since "only God knows God."

12. Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 326.

13. The semantic range of the Greek *aretê* is also somewhat similar to that of the Arabic *iḥsān.*

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> achieve wisdom, and in its goal, wisdom itself. For real wisdom does not merely cause us to know: it makes us "be" in a different way. . . . Wisdom, then, was a way of life which brought peace of mind (*ataraxia*), inner freedom (*autarkeia*), and a cosmic consciousness. . . . Although their methodologies differ, we find in all philosophical schools the same awareness of the power of the human self to free itself from everything which is alien to it, even if, as in the case of the Skeptics, it does so via the mere refusal to make any decision.[14]

The strong equation, in Plato's Socratic dialogues (particularly the *Charmides, Meno, Gorgias, Euthydemus, Laches, Protagoras, Laws,* and *Apology*) of knowledge and virtue, can be understood in a similar way.[15] Wisdom, as an ideal mode of being, knowing, and life, unites ethics, epistemology, and ontology. According to Hadot, ancient philosophical texts, like Sufi works, tended to place a premium on the practice of philosophy over philosophical discourse. As Aristotle argued (and the Neo-Platonists and Islamic philosophers repeated), the purpose of ethics is to become good, not merely to know about "goodness"; but in becoming "good," new vistas of knowledge and divine contemplation open up to a sound intellect unimpaired by passions or base attachments.[16] As Hadot writes,

> But philosophy itself—that is, the philosophical way of life — is no longer a theory divided into parts, but a unitary act, which consists in *living* logic, physics, and ethics. In this case, we no longer study logical theory—that is, the theory of speaking and thinking well — we simply think and speak well. We no longer engage in theory about the physical world, but we contemplate the cosmos. We no longer theorize about moral action, but we act in a correct and just way.[17]

Given this "practical" nature of ancient philosophy and Sufism alike, it is important to recognize that texts from these traditions emerge from typically in-person and oral or epistolary teaching and training contexts and that these texts were and are used *ritually* in order to cultivate a particular mode of being, instead of merely as a doctrinal exposition or discussion of the ethical life. They were and are intended to be used more like a GPS than an atlas. Turning to Hadot again, we find:

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14. Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 265–266.

15. See Lorraine Smith Pangle, *Virtue is Knowledge: The Moral Foundations of Socratic Political Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 5–11.

16. As he writes in *The Nichomachean Ethics*, "But such a life would be too high for man; for it is not in so far as he is man that he will live so, but in so far as something divine is present in him; and by so much as this is superior to our composite nature is its activity superior to that which is the exercise of the other kind of virtue. If intellect is divine, then, in comparison with man, the life according to it is divine in comparison with human life. But we must not follow those who advise us, being men, to think of human things, and, being mortal, of mortal things, but must, so far as we can, make ourselves immortal, and strain every nerve to live in accordance with the best thing in us; for even if it be small in bulk, much more does it in power and worth surpass everything. This would seem, too, to be each man himself, since it is the authoritative and better part of him. It would be strange, then, if he were to choose not the life of his self but that of something else. And what we said before will apply now; that which is proper to each thing is by nature best and most pleasant for each thing; for man, therefore, the life according to intellect is best and pleasantest, since intellect more than anything else is man. This life therefore is also the happiest." (Aristotle, *The Nichomachean Ethics*, trans. W. D. Ross (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 195–196.). Moreover, in both Aristotle and Sufi accounts, the sweetness of all that is morally good and the repugnance of all that is morally bad becomes innately or even intuitively clear. See Atif Khalil, R*epentance and the Return to God: Tawba in Early Sufism* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2018), 159.

17. Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life,* 267.

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> We can immediately foresee the consequences of this distinction, formulated by the Stoics but admitted by the majority of philosophers, concerning the relationship between theory and practice. An Epicurean saying puts it clearly: "Vain is the word of that philosopher which does not heal any suffering of man." Philosophical theories are in the service of the philosophical life. That is why, in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, they were reduced to a theoretical, systematic, highly concentrated nucleus, capable of exercising a strong psychological effect, and easy enough to handle so that it might always be kept close at hand (*procheiron*). Philosophical discourse was not systematic because it wanted to provide a total, systematic explanation of the whole of reality. Rather, it was systematic in order that it might provide the mind with a small number of principles, tightly linked together, which derived greater persuasive force and mnemonic effectiveness precisely from such systematization. Such sayings summed up, sometimes in striking form, the essential dogmas, so that the student might easily relocate himself within the fundamental disposition in which he was to live.[18]

Much of Sufi literature shares in this characterization, as its systemization serves the similar functions of enhancing the persuasive force, mnemonic effectiveness, and reorientation of the reader, listener, or reciter of the text.

Sufi Ethical Texts in Context: The *Maqāmāt* Genre

This dynamic can especially be observed in the *Maqāmāt* genre of Sufi literature, to which Niasse's *Maqāmāt al-dīn al-thalāth* belongs. Often written in terse, aphoristic, or rhymed prose or poetry with more expansive prose commentaries,[19] this genre of literature divided up the Sufi path to spiritual and ethical perfection into various fleeting states (*aḥwāl*) and more permanent stages (*manāzil*) and stations (*maqāmāt*) of spiritual–ethical–epistemic development. Typically, these works describe in detail the virtues or inner dispositions (*akhlāq*), comportment (*adab*), psycho-spiritual states (*aḥwāl*), and forms of knowledge (*maʿārif*) that characterize and are appropriate for those occupying each station, with reference to verses of the Qurʾan, ḥadīth, sayings of Sufi masters, and reference to the author's own experiences and those of his disciples and colleagues. One of the earliest genres, or tropes, of Sufi literature, the *maqāmāt* appear in the writings of Shaqīq al-Balkhī (d. 194/810), Abū Sulaymān al-Dārānī (d. 215/830), al-Muḥāsibī (d. 243/857), Abū Yazīd al-Basṭāmī (d. 234/874), and especially, Dhūʾl-Nūn al-Miṣrī (d. 248/861), who, according to the early Sufi hagiographer, al-Sulamī (d. 412/1021), was the first to classify "the order of the states and the stations of the folk of sanctity."[20] They feature prominently in the next generation of Sufi "classics": Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī's (d. 386/996) *Qūt al-qulūb* [The nourishment of hearts], Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj's

18. Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 267.
19. Such as ʿAbd Allāh al-Anṣārī's (d. 481/1089) classic of the genre, *Manāzil al-sāʾirīn*, which is written in rhymed prose.
20. See Khalil, *Repentance*, 80.

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(d. 378/988) *Kitāb al-taʿarruf li-madhhab ahl al-taṣawwuf* [The book of acquaintance with the path of the Sufis], several of al-Sulamī's works including *Jawāmiʿ ādāb al-ṣūfiyya* [A collection of Sufi modes of conduct] and *Masʾalāt darajāt al-ṣādiqīn fī'l-taṣawwuf* [The degrees of the Righteous in Sufism],[21] al-Qushayrī's (d. 465/1072) *al-Risāla,* al-Hujwīrī's (d. 469/1077) *Kashf al-maḥjūb* [Unveiling of the veiled], and especially ʿAbd Allāh al-Anṣārī's (d. 481/1089) *Ṣad Maydān* [One hundred plains] and *Manāzil al-sāʾirīn* [Stages of the travelers]. This genre of Sufi literature has remained popular, featuring prominently in the works of al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), Ruzbihān Baqlī (d. 606/1209), Shihāb al-Dīn ʿUmar al-Suhrawardī (d. 632/1234), Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 638/1240), and virtually all major later Sufi authors.[22] These classics continue to be studied, taught, and commented upon, and new works in this genre (such as Niasse's) continue to be produced to the present day. But how are these texts used?

Typically, these texts describe their own schemas as somewhat heuristic; for example, Anṣārī states in the introduction to his *Manāzil al-Sāʾirīn,* "A few devoted seekers wanted to learn about the stages (*manāzil*) of the people who take the journey towards God . . . So I wrote this book in chapters and sections . . . and arranged these stages into one hundred stations (*maqāmāt*), and divided the book into ten sections."[23] Most of the *maqāmāt* literature appears to describe a linear progression of permanent stations, typically beginning with the station of *tawba* (repentance) and ending with that of *maḥabba* (love) or *maʿrifa* (knowledge), achieved by the efforts of *sulūk* (spiritual wayfaring/discipline), with each subsequent station including and building upon those that came before. However, in his introduction to his *Manāzil*, al-Anṣārī quotes Junayd (d. 297/910) to explain that, "the servant may be transported from one state to a higher one, though a remnant of the previous state may remain in him whereby he would oversee the previous state and rectify it."[24] Furthermore, in the same introduction, al-Anṣārī mentions that different spiritual wayfarers may go through the stations in different orders depending on their constitution, conditions, and determination.[25] So while, at first glance, much of the *maqāmāt* literature may seem to describe the path to ethical perfection as an almost mechanical, step-by-step process, these stations and their structure should not be taken as a literal description of temporal development, but rather as descriptions of related modes of ethical perfection. Indeed, a closer look at the *maqāmāt* genre reveals that its portrayal of the spiritual path is significantly more nuanced and complex than such a linear reading would suggest, especially in expansive works like Ibn al-ʿArabī's massive *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya*, but also in shorter works like al-Sulamī's *Darajāt*.

21. Kenneth Honerkamp, "A Sufi Itinerary of Tenth Century Nishapur Based on a Treatise by Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 17, no. 1 (2006): 43–67.

22. For a summary of later (8th–14th / 14th–20th) *maqāmāt* and related Sufi literature, see J. Spencer Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 151–161.

23. See Mukhtar Ali, "The 'Doctrine of Love' in ʿAbd Allāh al-Anṣārī's *Manāzil al-sāʾirīn* with Critical Paraphrase of ʿAbd al-Razzāq Kāshānī's Commentary," *Journal of Sufi Studies* 5, no. 2 (2016), 142, and ʿAbd Allāh al-Anṣārī, *Stations of the Sufi Path*, trans. Nahid Angha (Cambridge, UK: Archetype, 2010), 50.

24. Ali, "The 'Doctrine of Love' in ʿAbd Allāh al-Anṣārī's *Manāzil al-sāʾirīn*," 143.

25. Ibid.

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Thus the systematization and structure of *maqāmāt* literature functions to orient and frame Sufi ritual practices and onto–epistemo–ethical development within the context of the Qurʾan, hadith and other canonical literature, serving as an encouragement and enticement for novices; a diagnostic guide for initiates seeking orientation, understanding, and discursive expressions of their own experiences; and a discursive tool for masters seeking to help guide their disciples towards the goal of the Sufi path. In my own research among Ibrahim Niasse's branch of the Tijāniyya in Senegal in 2013–2014, I noticed that the schemas represented in Niasse's works (of which *Maqāmāt al-dīn al-thalāth* is but one) were used not only by disciples to describe their evolution and experiences during and after the often-bewildering process of *tarbiya,* but that these schemas were also used by masters to assign different spiritual exercises such as invocations (*adhkār*) and recitations of verses of poetry to disciples depending on the *maqām* or *ḥaḍra* (presence) or *daraja* (level) they were perceived to be occupying at the time. Thus, while it is important not to conflate such heuristic discursive descriptions of the Sufi path with the individual experiences of initiates, these kinds of texts can sometimes not only describe, but also structure Sufi ritual practice and ethical development. Most importantly, however, such *maqāmāt* texts are not meant to develop a merely theoretical notion of ethics, but rather to facilitate the existential journey through these various stations towards ethical perfection.

Another nearly ubiquitous feature of the *maqāmāt* genre is that traversing these various stations and stages is described as following in the footsteps of the Prophet, with the verse, *If you love God, then follow me, God will love you* (3:31), being frequently cited in this regard. The *ḥadīth al-nawāfil* is often cited alongside this verse to describe this state of "belovedness" as the end or goal of the path: "The most beloved things with which My servant draws nearer to Me is what I have enjoined upon him; and My servant keeps drawing nearer to Me through performing supererogatory devotions until I love him, and when I love him, I am his hearing with which he hears, his sight with which he sees, his hand with which he grasps, and his leg with which he walks . . ."[26] Thus, the tremendous character (*khuluq ʿaẓīm* (68:4)) of the Prophet, which is the model and end of the Sufi path of ethical perfection, is equated with the Divine characteristics (*akhlāq Allah*), especially in the school of Ibn al-ʿArabī.[27] A fascinating concomitant of this transcendent characterization of the end of the Sufi path of ethical perfection is that it is often described in apophatic terms, which sometimes turn the linear structure of the *maqāmāt* back upon itself to form a circle. For example, in al-Sulamī's *Darajāt,* the "final" station of *maʿrifa* is "marked by a return to the initial stages of the journey after the journeyer has traversed all the stations a first time."[28] At the end of his *Ṣad Maydān* [Hundred fields], al-Anṣārī writes, "These one hundred fields are all drowned in the field of love (*maḥabbat*); the one-hundred and first field is love: '*He loves them and they love Him*' (Q 5:54).

26. See Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Caner Dagli, Maria Dakake, Joseph Lumbard, and Mohammed Rustom, eds., *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary* (New York: Harper Collins, 2015), 787.
27. Michel Chodkiewicz, "The Banner of Praise," trans. Cecilia Twinch, *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn ʿArabi Society* 21 (1997): 45–58.
28. Honerkamp, "A Sufi Itinerary of Tenth Century Nishapur," 53.

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'Say: "If you love God"' (Q 3:31). Love is three stations: the first is truthfulness, the middle drunkenness, and the last nonbeing."[29] To Dhūʾl Nūn is also attributed the saying, "[The first step taken by the gnostic] is bewilderment, then poverty, then union, and then bewilderment again."[30]

The Station of No Station

This circular, apophatic description of the end of the Sufi path is a central theme of the tremendously influential writings of Ibn al-ʿArabī, who calls this transcendence of all stations the "station of no station" (*maqām lā maqām*). Deriving this term from the Qurʾanic verse, *O People of Yathrib, you have no station* (*lā muqām*), *so return!* (33:13),[31] Ibn al-ʿArabī explains that each station, by virtue of being one station and not another, is limited, and thus true perfection can only be attained by transcending all stations to become nondelimited, just as the Real is nondelimited:

> The highest of all human beings are those who have no station. The reason for this is that the stations determine the properties of those who stand within them, but without doubt, the highest of all groups themselves determine the properties. They are not determined by properties. They are the divine ones (*al-ilāhiyyūn*), since the Real is identical with them, and He is "the strongest of those who determine properties" (95:8). This belongs to no human being except only the Muḥammadans . . . Hence the possessors of stations are those whose aspirations (*himma*) have become limited to certain goals and ends. When they reach those goals, they find in their hearts other, new goals, and these goals which they have reached become the beginning stages for other goals. Hence the goals determine their properties, since they seek them, and such is their situation forever. But the Muḥammadan has no such property and witnesses no goal. His vastness is the vastness of the Real, and the Real has no goal in Himself which His Being might ultimately reach. The Real is witnessed by the Muḥammadan, so he has no ultimate goal in his witnessing . . .[32]

Occupying this "station of no station," the Muḥammadans are those who best follow in the footsteps of their namesake and are best characterized by the Divine attributes of "vastness" and "nondelimitation." Thus, the path of these Muḥammadans is not a linear one of progressive knowledge, but rather a continuous circular orbit of "bewilderment" (*ḥayra*) since they have no particular goal toward which they are striving, as their goal is the omnipresent Real. As Ibn al-ʿArabī writes in his *Ringstones of Wisdom*:

> That is the bewilderment [*ḥayra*] of the Muḥammadan
> "Lord, increase me in bewilderment in you . . ."
> For the bewildered one has a round [*dawr*]
> and a circular motion around the axis

29. Ali, "The 'Doctrine of Love' in ʿAbd Allāh al-Anṣārī's *Manāzil al-sāʾirīn*," 144.
30. Mohammed Rustom, "The Sufi Teachings of Dhuʾl-Nun," *Sacred Web* 24 (2009): 73.
31. He also equates it with the "Praiseworthy Station" (*al-maqām al-maḥmūd*) of 17:79. See Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 376-379.
32. Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge,* 376.

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which he never leaves
But the master of the long path
tends away from what he aims for
seeking what he is already in
A master of fantasies which are his goal

He has a "from" and a "to"
and what is between them

But the master of the circular movement
has no starting point
that "from" should take him over

and no goal that he should be ruled by "to"

He has the more complete existence
And is given the totality of the words and wisdoms.[33]

To give a tangible analogy, if we liken each station to a color, for Ibn al-ᶜArabī, the goal is not to achieve the color violet (the highest frequency), since even this station is limited by being one color and not another. Instead, the "highest station" and best goal is to become transparent—to become capable of taking on all colors (or stations), being limited by none of them, and transforming with them at every instant. Ibn al-ᶜArabī describes the dynamic perfection of the "station of no station" playing on the Arabic root (*q-l-b*) of the word for heart (*qalb*) and fluctuate (*taqallub*):

> The most all-inclusive specification is that a person not be delimited by a station whereby he is distinguished. So the Muḥammadan is only distinguished by the fact that he has no station specifically. His station is that of no station. The meaning of this is as follows: A man may be dominated by his state so that he knows only by means of it, is attributed to it, and is designated by it. But the relationship of the stations to the Muḥammadan is the same as the relationship of the names to God. He does not become designated by a station which is attributed to him. On the contrary, in every breath, in every moment, and in every state he takes the form which is required by that breath, moment, and state. Hence his delimitation does not last. For the divine properties are diverse at every moment, and he is diverse in accordance with their diversity. God is "each day upon some task" (55:29), and so also is the Muḥammadan. This is indicated by God's words, "Surely in that there is a reminder for him who has a heart" (50:37). He did not say "rational faculty," which would delimit the person. The "heart" only has this name because of its fluctuation in states and affairs continuously and with each breath.[34]

Ibn al-ᶜArabī also describes this dynamic state of perfection as "destitution" since the Muḥammadan is completely transparent and passive before the Divine, and its epistemic dimension as "bewilderment" (*ḥayra*) since it is formless, not fixed, and undefinable. In several places, Ibn al-ᶜArabī equates this bewilderment (*ḥayra*) with

33. Quoted in Michael Sells, *Mystical Languages of Unsaying* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 101–102.
34. Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 377.

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the highest knowledge of God,[35] since the Real is so transcendent that it can neither be defined, delimited, represented, reached, or exhausted, but It also transcends this transcendence, taking on all definitions, delimitations, representations, and so forth. Similarly, the Muḥammadan possessor of the "station of no station" transcends all stations and states by taking them all on or flowing through all of them, being neither delimited by them nor their absence. Ibn al-ʿArabī writes,

> The bewilderment of the gnostic in the Divine Side is the greatest of bewilderments, since he stands outside of restriction and delimitation . . . He possesses all forms, yet no form delimits him. That is why the Messenger of God used to say, "God, increase my bewilderment in Thee!" For this is the highest station, the clearest vision, the nearest rank, the most brilliant locus of manifestation, and the most exemplary path . . .[36]

Ibn al-ʿArabī's successor and stepson, Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī (d. 673/1274), describes his own experience of the bewilderment of the "station of no station" in the following way:

> The tasting of the perfect human beings has affirmed that everything is in everything. Nothing has any essential stability in something from which it cannot change. On the contrary, everything is on the verge of being transformed into something else . . . This is the situation of all of *wujūd* [being/consciousness] . . . This constant flow is the divine journey from the first, nonmanifest Unseen to the realm of the Visible . . . No one tastes this journey and reaches its source except he whose essence has come to be nondelimited. Then the bonds are loosened—the contingent properties, states, attributes, stations, configurations, acts, and beliefs—and he is not confined by any of them. By his essence he flows in everything, just as *wujūd* [being/consciousness] flows in the realities of all things without end or beginning . . . When the Real gave me to witness this tremendous place of witnessing, I saw that its possessor has no fixed entity and no reality.[37]

Thus, the linear progression of a hierarchy of stations of ethical perfection, which the *maqāmāt* literature seems to present at first blush, is transcended and complicated by Ibn al-ʿArabī's formulation of the "station of no station" of the bewildered Muḥammadans.[38] In one form or another, this "station of no station" is found in much of the *maqāmāt* literature, both before and after Ibn al-ʿArabī, such as Niasse's treatise.

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35. In fact, Ibn al-ʿArabī declares that, "It is the purpose of Divine Guidance to lead humankind to bewilderment (*ḥayra*), so that they learn that the Divine Order Itself is entirely bewilderment"; Ibn al-ʿArabī, T*he Ringstones of Wisdom,* trans. Caner Dagli (Chicago: Kazi Publications, 2004), 256.

36. Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 381. The passage concludes, "One of the Sufis said, 'Whatever you imagine within yourself or give form to in your imagination, God is different from that.' He is both right and wrong. He makes manifest and he veils. Another one said, 'God is not proven by any proof, nor conceived of by any rational faculties. Rational faculties reach Him not with their reflective powers, and gnostic sciences fail to call Him down with their invocations.' For when He is invoked, He is invoked through Him. And through Him He is reflected upon and conceived of. He is the rational faculty of the rational thinkers, the reflection of the reflectors, the invocation of the invokers, the proof of the provers. Were He to come out of a thing, it would cease to be. And were He to be within a thing, it would cease to be."

37. William Chittick, "The Central Point: Qûnawî's Role in the School of Ibn ʿArabî." *Journal of Muhyiddin Ibn ʿArabi Society* 35 (2004), 40.

38. In fact, one could extend Ibn al-ʿArabī's identification of the Sufi "characterization by Divine traits" (*takhalluq bi akhlāq/asmāʾ Allāh*) with the philosophical "similarity to the God" (*tashabbuh biʾllāh*) to include "bewilderment in God" (*taḥayyur fīʾllāh*): *Takhalluq = tashshabuh = taḥayyur*. In fact, this Akbarī bewilderment bears some resemblance with the Socratic ignorance and *aporia* (*ḥayra* and *aporia* are also linguistically similar), and Ibn al-ʿArabī's anti-systematic dialectic of bewilderment is also similar in some ways to Plato's aporetic dialogues.

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Transcendent Ethics: The Virtue of no Virtues

Ibn al-ʿArabī was far from the first or only author to describe the goal of the Sufi path and the perfection of the human state in such ways. The Shaykh al-Akbar frequently quotes sayings of the early Sufis Abū Yazīd al-Basṭāmī and Sahl al-Tustarī (d. 283/896) to indicate that they had attained this "station of no station." For example, he writes, "The people of perfection have realized all stations and states and passed beyond these to the station above both majesty and beauty, so they have no attribute and no description. It was said to Abū Yazīd, 'How are you this morning?' He replied, 'I have no morning and no evening; morning and evening belong to him who becomes delimited by attributes, and I have no attributes.'"[39] Several sayings of Dhūʾl Nūn al-Miṣrī have also been interpreted in this regard such as the previously cited, "[The first step taken by the gnostic] is bewilderment, then poverty, then union, and then bewilderment again"; "[The final outcome of the gnostic] is when he is just as he was where he was before he was"; and "the gnostic does not adhere to a single state—he only adheres to his Lord in every state."[40] In the *Sirr al-Asrār* [Secret of secrets], ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (d. 561/1166) (or more likely, Yūsuf al-Kūrānī (d. 768/1367)[41]) writes, "the one who reaches the limits of this path has neither form nor shape nor colour."[42] Al-Buṣīrī's *Qaṣīdat al-Burda* declares, "For the virtue of the Messenger of God has no limit, so it cannot be expressed by the mouth of any speaker,"[43] and Ibn al-Fāriḍ's (d. 632/1235) *Naẓm al-sulūk* is even more explicit:

> Let all names and allusions fall from me, stop stammering such nonsense
> They are only marks of the shape I fashioned
> For my arrival is my parting, my nearness, being far;
> My loving, my loathing, my beginning, my end. . .
> I have no attribute; that is a stamp, as a name is a brand
> But if you must, speak of me allusively or with metaphor[44]

As Chittick notes, Ibn al-ʿArabī defines perfection as "being removed from attributes and effects,"[45] and this negative definition of ethical perfection is not unique to Sufism, but can also be found in the similarly Abrahamic–Neoplatonic mysticism of Meister Eckhart (d. 1328) and especially his older contemporary, Marguerite Porete (d. 1310), whose *Mirror of Simple Souls* controversially advanced a similar transcendence or abandonment of the virtues for the superior non-virtue of "love" and/or "humility"—nothingness before, and annihilation in,

39. Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 376.
40. Rustom, "The Sufi Teachings of Dhuʾl-Nun," 74.
41. See Ahmed El Shamsy, "Returning to God through His Names: Cosmology and Dhikr in a Fourteenth-Century Sufi Treatise," in *Essays in Islamic Philology, History, and Philosophy*, eds. William Granara, Roy P. Mottahedeh, Wheeler M. Thackston, and Alireza Korangy (Berlin: DeGruyter, 2016), 204–28.
42. ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, *The Secret of Secrets*, translated by Shaykh Tosun Bayrak (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1992), 69.
43. Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad al-Buṣīrī, *The Mantle Adorned: Imam al-Bûsîrî's Burda*, trans. Abdal Hakim Murad (London: The Quilliam Press, 2009), 61. The translation is mine.
44. Emil Homerin, *ʿUmar ibn al-Fāriḍ: Sufi Verse, Saintly Life* (New York: Paulist Press, 2001), 165, 167.
45. Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 375.

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God. As is the case of most Sufi literature, Porete's "virtue of no virtue" is not an incitement to immorality, but rather a call to go beyond the idolatry of the virtues and the individual human self to realize one's nothingness and transparency before God.[46] For Porete (as for many Sufis and Neoplatonist philosophers), the ordinary cultivation of the virtues is but a preparatory step for their transcendence.[47] She writes, "So may not the virtues be against virtues, but above them. If this may not be then were God subject to his virtues, and the virtues should be against the soul; but they have being from our Lord, for the profit of the [soul]."[48] Similar perspectives can also be found in the *Tao Te Ching* and the *Chuang Tzu*; for example, "Therefore I say, the Perfect Man has no self; the Holy Man has no merit; the Sage has no fame."[49]

This perspective of transcendent ethics or the "virtue of no virtue" is assumed and posited by many later Sufi ethical texts, such as Niasse's *Maqāmāt al-dīn al-thalāth*, and differs markedly from the kind of neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics advanced by the likes of Anscombe, Williams, MacIntyre, and Nussbaum. While both transcendent ethics and neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics are primarily concerned with the *telos* of human flourishing,[50] the conceptions of the human and the broader metaphysics assumed in these approaches differ markedly. Approaches of transcendent ethics (ranging from the very different contexts of Taoism to Hellenic/Roman Neoplatonism, Christian mysticism, and Sufism) appear to share a view of human flourishing characterized by contemplative union with God, the One, or the Tao in which the greatest virtue and felicity is to be found not in cultivating particular virtues or a balance of character traits, but rather transcending all of them (and ordinary, individual identity and traits) to be transparent before or united with the

46. See David Kangas, "Dangerous Joy: Marguerite Porete's Good-bye to the Virtues," *The Journal of Religion* 91, no. 3 (2011): 299–319 and Danielle DuBois, "Natural and Supernatural Virtues in the Thirteenth Century: The Case of Marguerite Porete's *Mirror of Simple Souls*," *Journal of Medieval History* 43, no. 2 (2017): 174–192. In Porete's own words:

First: when a soul giveth herself to perfection she laboureth busily day and night to get virtues, by counsel of reason, and striveth with vices at every thought, at every word and deed that she perceiveth cometh of them, and busily searcheth [out] vices, them to destroy. Thus the virtues be mistresses, and every virtue maketh her to war with its contrary, the which be vices. Many sharp pains and bitterness of conscience feeleth this soul in this war. And these pains and passions be not only in the exercise of the spirit, by putting away vices in getting of virtues, but they be also of bodily exercise by commandments of virtues and by counsel of reason; to fast and wake, and to do penance in many sundry wises, and forsake all her own pleasures and all lusts and likings; and in the beginning of all this, it is ofttimes full sharp and full hard. But this she did all by commandments of virtues that were first ladies and mistresses of this soul. And she was subject to them all the while that she felt this pain and war within herself. But so long one may bite on the bitter bark of the nut, that at last one shall come to the sweet kernel. Right so, ghostly to understand, it fareth by those souls that be come to peace. They have so long striven with vices and wrought by virtues, that they may come to the nut kernel, that is, to the love of God, which is sweetness. And when the soul hath deeply tasted this love, so that this love of God worketh and hath his usages in her soul, then the soul is wondrous light and gladsome, and that is no marvel, for the sweet taste of love driveth out from the soul all pains and bitterness and all doubts and dreads. Then is she mistress and lady over the virtues, for she hath them all within herself, ready at her commandment, without bitterness or painfulness of feeling to the soul. And then this soul taketh leave of virtues [in respect] of the thraldom and painful travail of them that she had before, and now she is lady and sovereign, and they be subjects. When the soul wrought by commandment of virtues, then the virtues were ladies and she subject. And now that the virtues work by commandment of this soul, they be subjects to this soul, and this soul is lady over virtues. And thus it is meant that this soul taketh leave of virtues. (Marguerite Porete, *The Mirror of Simple Souls*, trans. M. N. (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1927), 12–13).

Porete's account bears a resemblance to Ibn al-ʿArabī's previously cited description of the Muḥammadans determining the stations and not being determined by them.

47. For example, Plotinus writes of civic virtue as a kind of preparation for the higher virtues of purification, contemplation, and identity with the Divine Intellect. As he writes, the concern of the wise is "not to be out of sin, but to be God" (Enneads I 2.6.2–3) (see Giannis Stamatellos, "Plotinus: Virtue Ethics," *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* <https://www.iep.utm.edu/plot-v-e/#SH4d>, accessed April 14, 2020).

48. Marguerite Porete, *The Mirror of Simple Souls*, 228.

49. Burton Watson, *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013).

50. Although, strictly speaking, the former posits a *telos* of no *telos*, a goal of abandoning all goals.

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Real, or God, or the Tao, which both transcends and flows through all virtues and all things. It is not to do good things with one's hand or to think good thoughts, but rather for God to be one's hand, thoughts, and thinker.[51] As Ibrāhīm Niasse writes in his *Removal of Confusion*,

> The heart has become the abode of the Manifest Truth, and God is his tongue with which he speaks. If such a person remembering [God in this way] were to strike a blow, God becomes his hand with which he strikes, and if he hears, God is his ear with which he hears. The Most High who is remembered has taken possession of the heart, so He controls it. He has taken possession of the limbs of the body, so He uses them for what is pleasing to Him. He has taken possession of the servant's character traits, so He operates them however He wills for the sake of His pleasure.[52]

In the famous parable of the Greek and Chinese painters found in al-Ghazālī, Ibn al-ʿArabī, and Rūmī, it is to be the polished mirror (having no qualities itself) instead of the beautifully painted wall.[53] This is the depiction of the end and perfection of the Sufi path of ethical perfection in much of the *maqāmāt* literature, such as Niasse's short treatise, "The Three Stations of Religion," to which we will now turn.

Maqāmāt al-dīn al-thalāth

As mentioned at the beginning of this article, this short treatise is one of the most popular and influential descriptions of the process of *tarbiya* as practiced by Ibrahim Niasse's branch of the Tijāniya. As described in this text and others as well as interviews with disciples,[54] this process of *tarbiya* consists of a set of litanies (*awrād*) and invocations (*adhkār*) which Tijānī disciples practice (in addition to the ordinary Tijānī *wird* and *waẓīfa* (daily litanies), the five daily prayers and other obligations of the *sharīʿa*) with the authorization and transmission (*talqīn*—literally "implantation") from and under the supervision and guidance of a qualified

51. To use another metaphor, Aristotelian virtue ethics often speaks about the cultivation of virtue like exercising to get a set of "six-pack" abs, something that is present in *potentia,* but takes intentional, disciplined exercise in order to actualize. Whereas in much of Sufi ethics, God is the possessor of all virtues, including real existence and agency, such that in the process of the "cultivation" of virtue, the agent, the acted upon, and the virtues are nothing other than God. In Aristotelian ethics, the moral agent acquires virtues, whereas in much of Sufi ethics, God "acquires" the moral agent, which never had any existence apart from God in the first place. Much as a "possessor" of *maʿrifa* is called a "knower by God" (*ʿārif biʾllāh*) instead of "a knower of God" in the Sufi tradition (because only God knows God) from an ethical standpoint, Sufi ethics means to be "good by God" because only God is good, and ultimately, only God is. Or in the language of the famous ḥadīth of *nawāfil,* "God is the virtue by which the Sufi is virtuous." However, this perspective does not negate the relative reality of the perspectives of personal and collective struggles and efforts to combat vices and practice virtues, which are also often discussed in Sufi literature; it rather provides an important metaphysical framework for these struggles and a perspective to which such efforts are hoped to lead.

52. Niasse, *The Removal of Confusion*, 47–48.

53. As the story goes, a certain king held a competition between Greek and Chinese artisans to see who could better decorate a room, with a curtain dividing the room into the two halves on which they were to work. The Greeks set about painting the most beautiful of compositions on their side of the room, but the Chinese artisans simply polished the walls of their side (Rumi reverses the nationalities of the artisans in his version). When time was up, the king marveled at the realistic paintings and decorations of the Greek side, but saw nothing on the Chinese side of the room. The Chinese artisans told the king to lift the curtain, and on those polished surfaces, the king saw all that the Greeks had painted in an even more beautiful form, and moreover, within those walls, he saw his form and those of the artisans, and the royal wonder increased. See Muḥyiddīn Ibn al-ʿArabī, *The Alchemy of Human Happiness*, trans. Stephen Hiretenstein (Oxford: Anqa Publishing, 2017), 116.

54. See Oludamini Ogunnaike, *Deep Knowledge: Ways of Knowing in Ifa and Sufism, Two West African Intellectual Traditions* (College Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2020); Zachary Wright, *Living Knowledge in West African Islam: The Sufi Community of Ibrāhīm Niasse* (Boston: Brill, 2015); Joseph Hill, *Wrapping Authority: Women Islamic Leaders in a Sufi Movement in Dakar, Senegal* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018); and Seesemann, *The Divine Flood*.

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spiritual master (*shaykh murabbī*) who has already undergone the process him- or herself. *Tarbiya* is supposed to lead the disciple to spiritual, noetic, ontological, and ethical maturity through the attainment of *maʿrifa,* direct, existential knowledge of the Real, in which the Real is both the knower and the known. Drawing on a long tradition of similar works,[55] Shaykh Ibrahim's "Three Stations of Religion" describes the ternary from the ḥadīth of Jibrīl—*Islām, Īmān,* and *Iḥsān*—as three consecutive stations (*maqāmāt*) of the spiritual path. He further divides each station (*maqām*) into three stages, yielding nine stages: *Islām:* repentance, integrity, reverence; *Īmān:* sincerity, pure devotion, serenity; *Iḥsān:* observing, witnessing, and Knowledge. Each of these nine stages is divided according to its meaning and nature for the masses (*al-ʿawāmm*), the elite (*al-khāṣṣa*), and the elite of the elite (*khāṣṣat al-khāṣṣa*). The stages from serenity onwards are only for the elite. However, these divisions between common and elite are not fixed; in fact, the text implies and oral commentaries confirm that this schema involves a kind of spiraling motion in which the disciple can go through the stages of the masses, then the stages of the elite, and then the stages of the elite of the elite. The work describes ever-increasing stages of ethical, noetic, and existential perfection, culminating in the transcendence of all such stages in an apophatic description that joins together the last (*maʿrifa*) and first (*tawba*) stages. In its portrayal of the spiritual path as following in the footsteps of the Prophet, structural integration of ḥadīth and Qurʾanic verses, its spiraling and circular structure, and apophatic description of the "final" stage of *maʿrifa*, this dense work illustrates many of the features discussed in the previous sections. It is important to remember, however, that these distinctions are largely descriptive and heuristic, and that some disciples do not experience *tarbiya* as a gradual step-by-step process. While the initiating shaykhs will give disciples different instructions at different stages in the process, *tarbiya* appears to be more like the blooming of a flower or the cooking of rice than the construction of an Ikea chair. The "Three Stations of Religion" was written as a letter in response to a request from a disciple to outline the stages of the spiritual path. Below is a translation of the entire text.

55. As previously noted, Seesemann has demonstrated that Niasse's treatise is a creative synthesis of an earlier Tijānī work, Ibn Anbūja's *Mīzāb al-raḥmah*, which is in turn largely based on a fourteenth-century work by the Andalusian scholar Muḥammad al-Anṣārī al-Sāḥilī. A similar schema can be found in Ibn ʿAjība's *Book of Ascension to the Essential Truths of Sufism* (and in his commentary (*Īqāẓ al-himam*) on the Wisdoms of Ibn ʿAṭā Allāh). ʿAbd Allāh Anṣārī's *Manāzil al-sāʾirīn* also divides each station into three degrees, or levels (the generality, the elite, and the elite of the elite). Seesemann takes this work of Niasse's as being constitutive of the method or process of *tarbiya*, writing, "Drawing on earlier models within and outside the Tijani tradition (most notably the Andalusian fourteenth-century mystic Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad al-Sāḥilī), Niasse devised a method of spiritual training (*tarbiya*) . . ." (Rüdiger Seesemann, "Sufism in West Africa," *Religion Compass* 4, no. 10 (2010), 611). However, I contend that this work is not a particular program of spiritual training, but rather one description amongst many of the process of this transformation. While Niasse's description in "The Three Stations of Religion" is indirectly derived from the description given Sāḥilī's work, these descriptions should not be confused with the process itself, which can be, and is, divided up into several different conceptual schemas.

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The Three Stations of Religion

In the Name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate. The blessings of God and peace be upon our Lord Muḥammad and his family and companions.

All praise to God, the Peace (*al-Salām*), the Believer (*al-Muʾmin*), the Excellent (*Muḥsin*)[56]—He is the King (*al-Mālik*), the Repenter (*al-Tawwāb*), the Compassionate (*al-Raḥīm*), the Watcher (*al-Raqīb*), the Guardian (*al-Muhaymin*)—and greetings of peace upon the straight path (*al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*), the conscientious (*al-taqī*), the pure (*al-naqī*), the truthful (*al-ṣādiq*), the purely devoted (*al-mukhliṣ*), he who is perfumed by a magnificent character, the observer (*al-murāqib*), the witness (*al-mushāhid*), the source of the most perfect divine knowledge (*maʿrifa*), the slave, and the master to whom is attributed the attributes of the Supreme Master.[57] May the complete favor (*riḍwān*) of God be on the helper of the Truth by the Truth, the guide along the straight path, and upon his family in accordance with the reality of his rank and his tremendous degree.

I came upon your noble letter and sound discourse, O beloved [. . .] ʿUmar ibn Mālik [. . .], and I came upon your question regarding the three stations of religion and their stages, and the reality of these descriptions. And you have mentioned that the Sayyid, the Knower (*ʿārif biʾllāh*), ʿUbayda ibn Anbūja has discussed this in the *Mīzāb*, but that after a long study of it, you didn't find anything convincing, so I will respond to you from what occurs to my mind . . .

And he said: "There is no god but God" (*Lā ilāha illāʾllāh*) makes up the three stations of religion: *Islām*, and *Īmān*, and *Iḥsān*. And *Islām* (Submission) is saying "There is no god but God," *Īmān* (Faith) is knowing "There is no god but God," and *Iḥsān* (Excellence) is the flowing of "There is no god but God" through the appropriate channels, and it is that which is said in a spiritual state, and the speech is God's. It is the noble word, the word of repentance (*tawba*), the word of reverence (*taqwā*), the word of excellence (*iḥsān*), the word of unity (*tawḥīd*), the word of goodness (*ṭība*). It has three levels, the first of which is the level of *Islām* (Submission), and it is establishing the appropriate speech and rulings in the earthly plane (*ḥaḍrat al-nāsūt*). The second level is the knowledge of it ["There is no god but God"], and it is the station of *Īmān* (Faith). The third level is that which is the speech of God, and this is the station of *Iḥsān* (Excellence). And these stations differ [from one point of view] and they do not differ insofar as they all revolve around "There is no god but God."

But as for their own distinct stages, the first stage of *Islām* is *tawba* (repentance), and it is to abandon being ungrateful (*kufr*)[58] for blessings. For each blessing, the blessed should thank and acknowledge the bestower of blessing; the opposite of

56. Here the author is foreshadowing the description of the three stations of *Islām*, *Īmān*, and *Iḥsān* with these three Divine Names.

57. Here the author is foreshadowing the nine stages of t*awba, istiqāma, taqwā, ikhlāṣ, ṣidq, ṭumaʾnīna, murāqaba, mushāhada,* and *maʿrifa* through these appellations of God and the Prophet, explaining that the Prophet's attributes are those of God.

58. The root *k-f-r* literally means to cover over, and *kufr*, translated as disbelief in other contexts, is contrasted to *Īmān*, faith or belief.

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thankfulness is ungratefulness (*kufr*). And the Sufi scholars say, it [repentance] is leaving behind every base trait for every resplendent trait. I say that in the case of the masses, the base [trait] is abandoning the obligatory and committing the forbidden (*ḥarām*) acts, and in the case of the elite, it is leaving the preferable (*mustaḥabb*) [acts] and committing disliked (*makrūh*) acts, and in the case of the elite of the elite, it is turning away from the [Divine] Presence, and this is forgetfulness. And this repentance (*tawba*) [of the elite of the elite] is the reality of repentance (*tawba*), because its reality is slaying of the *nafs* (carnal soul/ego) as God says, *Repent unto your Creator and slay your selves* (2:54). It is not seen, and it is not seeing your soul as really having any state or station, and that is the repentance from repentance (*al-tawba min al-tawba*). *Verily God loves the repenters* (2:222).

The second stage is integrity (*istiqāma*), and it is traveling along the straight path (*al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*) in ten qualities which God has numbered in Surat al-Anʿām: *Say: Come, I will recite that which your Lord has forbidden for you: That you ascribe no thing as partner unto Him and that you are virtuous to parents, and that you slay not your children out of fear of poverty—We provide for you and for them—and that you do not approach indecencies, whether open or concealed. And that you slay not the life which God hath made sacred, save in the course of justice. This He has commanded you, in order that you may understand. And approach not the wealth of the orphan, except in the best manner, till he reach maturity. Give full measure and full weight, in justice. We task no soul beyond its capacity. And if you give your word, do justice thereunto, even though it be (against) a kinsman; and fulfill the covenant of God. This He has commanded you that haply you may remember. And this is My straight path, so follow it* (6:151–3). The straight path is thus described, meaning that it is the appropriate actions that characterize it. The first of these is not associating anything with God, and the lack of ingratitude (*kufr*), and not killing a soul which God has forbidden, and not killing children out of fear of poverty, and leaving lewdness, apparent and hidden, and so forth.

And integrity (*istiqāma*) is being established on the straight path, and this is the integrity of the masses. And the integrity (*istiqāma*) of the elite is traveling on the straight path which is the Messenger of God, [which is] annihilation in him, loving him, and adopting his character outwardly and inwardly, and remembering and invoking blessings on and praying for him fervently and constantly—this is integrity. And the integrity (*istiqāma*) of the elite of the elite is that there remains neither reticence nor grief, as God says, *Those who say: 'Our Lord is God,' and afterward have integrity, the angels descend upon them, saying: 'Fear not, nor grieve, but hear good tidings of the paradise which ye are promised'* (41:30).

And the third stage [of *Islām*] is reverence (*taqwā*), and it is conforming to the commands (of God) and distancing oneself from His prohibitions outwardly and inwardly, in secret and openly. It is the greater part of integrity insofar as the commands are obligatory, recommended, prohibited, and forbidden, and the like. Conforming to the commands absolutely and avoiding the prohibitions absolutely, this is the reverence (*taqwā*) of the masses. And for the elite, it is that they remember Him, and do not forget Him; and thank Him and are not ungrateful to Him, and they

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obey Him, and do not disobey Him. God says, *O you who believe, revere God as He should be revered* (3:102), and this is the level of the elite. Likewise, God says, *so revere of God as best you can* (64:16) and this is the level of the common. And the reverence (*taqwā*) of the elite of the elite is the absence of any thoughts other than God in the mind, even for a moment. As the knower (*al-ʿārif*) said:

> If a desire other than you
> Occurred to my mind inadvertently
> I would consider it
> As my apostasy[59]

But this is the state of the knower (*ʿārif*) and the station of the unique, comprehensive pole (*quṭb*), and this is the versification of the speech of his state. However, that state is not necessary for the knower (*ʿārif*), and this reverence (*taqwā*) is what is alluded to in God's saying, "Very God loves the reverent (*muttaqīn*)" (3:76).

The second station of religion is the level of Faith (*Īmān*). Its first stage is sincerity (*ṣidq*) and it is righteous action out of obedience for God's sake; God says, *It is not righteousness that you turn your faces to the East and the West; but righteous is he who believes in God and the Last Day, the angels, the Scripture, and the prophets; and gives wealth, for His sake, to kinsfolk and to orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and to those who ask, and to set slaves free; and performs the prayer and gives alms. And those who keep their oaths when they pledge them, and those who are patient in misfortune and adversity and time of stress. Such are they who are sincere* (2:177). This is the sincerity of the masses. The sincerity of the elite is sincerity in loving the Divine Essence, in that union with It is more beloved to him than everything in existence, Its Name is more beloved to him than any other name, and both of them are more beloved to him than all speech, and Its pleasure is more beloved to him than all pleasure, and Its beloved is more beloved to him than his beloved. This is the sincerity of the elite. God says, "*Be with the sincere*" (9:119). The possessor of this station does not fix his mind on the love of anything other than God, and *that is the bounty of God, which he gives to whomsoever He wills, and God is the possessor of bounty supreme* (62:4). The sincerity of the elite of the elite is the confirmation (*taṣdīq*) of everything that the Prophetic presence received from the Divine, in terms of knowledge, spiritual states, mysteries, comportment (*adab*), rights, and functions, for whosoever's sincerity attains this level, his is the title of the truly sincere (*ṣiddīq*).[60]

The second [stage of *Īmān*] is pure devotion (*ikhlāṣ*) and it is performing all the commands [only] for the sake of God, the Generous, and likewise leaving the prohibitions. And wherever hypocrisy, concern for reputation, or self-satisfaction is found in a soul, that person is not truly devoted. And this is the pure devotion of the masses, and the pure devotion of the elite is not for the sake of reward nor out of fear of punishment, nor for the sake of arriving at a spiritual station, rather it is acting out of servitude (*ʿubūdiyya*) and longing. Servitude is acting for no reason

59. A verse of Ibn al-Fāriḍ.

60. This was the title of the first caliph and close friend of the Prophet, Abu Bakr, as well as a Qurʾanic category of the best of the saints, second only to the Prophets and Messengers as described in 4:69: *And he who obeys God and the Messenger, they are with those whom God has favored: the prophets, the sincere (ṣiddiqīn), the martyrs, and the righteous. What lovely companions they are.*

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other than that God is deserving of worship. You are the servant, and only service is befitting for you, so do it for this reason. Don't see yourself as being deserving of anything in addition to the witnessing of blessings. It is simply witnessing actions that are from God to you. He created you and connected you to grace and blessing. The pure devotion of the elite of the elite is leaving aside all other than God in dealings with the Real, and you yourself are other than God, so therefore you see that actions are from God to God and by God, and you have no entrance to this and no exit [from it]. "God loves the purely devoted (*mukhliṣīn*)."

The third [stage of *Īmān*] is serenity (*ṭumaʾnīna*). It is tranquility of the heart by God, independence through God, and certainty by God, in that nothing remains of the heart's turning towards what benefits the soul or harms it. Rather it casts itself, peacefully, in the hands of God. The tongue of this state says, "My God, on you I rely." This is serenity *(ṭumaʾnīna*) and none possess it except for the elite. And the serenity of the elite of the elite is their certain knowledge that God alone exists, so there is no repose except in Him, and no return except to Him, and He says, "*O serene soul, return to your Lord*" (89:27).

The third station of the stations of religion is *Iḥsān* (excellence/perfection/beauty). Its first stage is watchfulness (*murāqaba*), and it is being perpetually present with God, and knowing that He is aware of the totality of the servant. This fact never leaves his mind because he sees the reality from behind a fine veil, and he understands with the understanding of taste (*dhawq*).

The possessor of this station may speak in such a way that one who has not attained perfect discrimination may think that he has arrived [at the end of the spiritual path], but he has not [yet] arrived. Rather, he sees the reality from behind a fine veil, and he understands knowledge with the comprehension of tasting, not witnessing (*mushāhada*). This is the watchfulness (*murāqaba*) of the elite before witnessing. And the watchfulness (*murāqaba*) after witnessing (*mushāhada*) is the watchfulness (*murāqaba)* of the elite of the elite. And the watchfulness (*murāqaba*) of the breaths[61] is a station among the stations of the spiritual heroes (*rijāl*),[62] and it is the result of Knowledge (*maʿrifa*).

The second stage (of *Iḥsān*) is witnessing (*mushāhada*), and it is vision of the Truth/the Real (*al-Ḥaqq*) by the Truth/the Real as it is without doubt or uncertainty

61. The breaths (*anfās*) is a technical term in Sufism which simultaneously alludes to the verbal creative act through which God perpetually recreates the cosmos (The Breath of the Merciful, *nafas al-Raḥmān*) and the subtle states of the most accomplished Sufis who are perpetually aware of their (and the entire cosmos's) reabsorption and recreation through these breaths. In his Sufi lexicon, Ibn ʿAjība writes, "al-Qushayrī says, by breath (*nafas*), the Sufis mean the repose which hearts find in the subtle emanations of the unseen. Someone who is granted a breath is at a higher level than someone granted a state (*ḥāl*) or a moment (*waqt*). We could say that the one granted moments is at the beginning [of the way], the one granted breaths is at its end, and the one granted states is intermediary, [or that] 'moments' are for people of the heart, 'states' are for people of the spirit, and 'breaths' for people of the innermost being (*sirr*). A breath, then, is more delicate than a moment. Keeping moments from being wasted is for devotees and ascetics, keeping breaths from being wasted is for gnostics who have reached the goal, and making use of states is for aspirants." (Ibn ʿAjība, *The Book of Ascension to the Essential Truths of Sufism: A Lexicon of Sufic Terminology*, trans. Mohamed Fouad Aresmouk and Michael Fitzgerald (Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 2012), 64–5.

62. While this term literally means "men," it does not refer to gender, but rather significant spiritual achievement. ʿAttar famously wrote that on the Day of Judgement, God will call for the men (*al-rijāl*) to stand forth, and the first to step forward will be Mary, the mother of Jesus. For more on this notion, see Joseph Hill, "All Women are Guides: Sufi Leadership and Womanhood among Taalibe Baay in Senegal," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 40, no. 4 (2010): 375–412.

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or fantasy. There only remains the Truth by the Truth, in the Truth, and not one hair of the slave remains in existence. None arrive at this station except that he has been annihilated from his soul and from other and otherness, and on the tongue of this state it is said:

> Nothing remains except God, and nothing other than Him
> And so, there is no connection, and nothing is separated[63]

As here there is no name, no description, and no limit. This vision occurs without any "how" or "definition" or "unification" or "direction" or "comparison" or "beginning" or "union" or "separation." There is no invocation (*dhikr*) or invoker (*dhākir*) or invoked (*madhkūr*). *The Truth has come and the false has vanished, verily the falsehood is ever vanishing*" (17:81). And this level is close to that of the opening (*fatḥ*), but what comes before this is not the opening—it is the door to Knowledge (*maʿrifa*), but it is not Knowledge. Every Knower (*ʿārif*) is open [has achieved *fatḥ*], but the opposite is not true.

The third stage [of *Iḥsān*] is Knowledge (*maʿrifa*), and it is the spirit being deeply rooted and firmly established in the presence of witnessing (*mushāhada*) with complete annihilation and subsistence through God. So the knower (*al-ʿārif*) among the Sufis is he who sees the other [in and by] the Essence—that is, he witnesses the Truth (*al-Ḥaqq*) in the other. For me, the Knower [*al-ʿārif*] is he who is annihilated in the Essence once, and in the Attribute twice or three times, and annihilated in the Name once. He confirms the existence of these three realities, and he confirms the Names by the Name.[64] And this stage is extremely difficult to reach [literally, "it tears livers to shreds, and neither wealth nor children are of any avail in obtaining this."] The possessor of this station is perfectly awake and aware of God and His rulings and His commandments and satisfied with the unfolding of His decrees. For the one who is perfectly satisfied and is satisfying, it is appropriate that he address his soul with the saying *Enter among my servants, enter into My garden* (89:29–30).[65] And Knowledge (*maʿrifa*) is the last of the stations of religion, and repentance (*tawba*) is its first. However, the reality of repentance is the absence of repentance and that is only achieved through Knowledge (*maʿrifa*). In this regard, our shaykh, the seal, al-Tijānī (may God be pleased with him and us) used to say that, "by God, I have not reached the station of repentance." He, may God be pleased with him, meant that he had repented from seeing repentance. So long as the slave regards himself as repentant [in *tawba*], he has not reached the station of repentance.

This concludes the summary explanation of the stages, and if we were to continue

63. A variant of a verse found in Ibn al-ʿArabī's *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, likely composed by Ibn al-ʿArabī himself: *fa lam yabqa illā al-ḥaqq lam yabqa kāʾin / fa mā thamma mawṣūl fa mā thamma bāʾin.*

64. See Ibn ʿAṭāʾ Allāh's *Ḥikam*, no. 250: "The finding/existence (*wujūd*) of His traces points to the finding/existence of His names. The finding/existence of His names points to the establishment (*thubūt*) of His attributes. The establishment of His attributes points to His Essence since it is impossible for an attribute to subsist by itself. For the enraptured ones (arbāb al-jadhb), the perfection of His Essence is unveiled to them; then, He makes them witness His attributes. Then, He returns them to attachment to His names. Then, He makes them witness His traces. And it is the reverse for the wayfarers (al-sālikūn). So the end of the wayfarers is the beginning of the enraptured ones. And the beginning of the wayfarers is the end of the enraptured ones, but not in the same sense. So, perhaps the two groups may meet on the path, these ascending and those descending." (Ibn ʿAṭāʾ Allāh al-Iskandarī, *Kitāb al-ḥikam* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Azhariyya lil-Turāth, 2011), 148).

65. The full context of this verse is as follows: *O you serene soul, return to your Lord, well-pleased and pleasing, enter amongst my servants, enter into My garden* (89:27–30).

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with this, it would require a whole book. As discussed above, the reality of the stations are *Islām, Īmān*, and *Iḥsān. Islām* is saying "There is no god but God" (*Lā ilāha illā'llāh*), and *Īmān* is *so know there is no god but God* (47:19), and *Iḥsān* is *Say: "Allāh"* [*and leave them to their vain prattle*] (6:91) or *Say: He is God, the One, God the Eternally Self-Sufficient, He neither begets nor is begotten, and none is like unto Him* (112)—*but none will grasp their meaning save the wise* (29:43).

These are the nine stages of religion, and if you meditate upon them you will find the essence of the stations in the realities, and that they correspond to the nine Presences (*Ḥaḍarāt*), and they are the same. For if you enter the pretemporal Presence (*al-ḥaḍra al-azaliyya*), you fulfill your desire for God, for the Messenger of God, and for the Shaykh [al-Tijānī]; and if you arrive at the Muḥammadan Presence (*al-ḥaḍra al-Muḥammadiyya*), you fulfill your desire for God, for the Messenger of God, and for the Shaykh [al-Tijānī]; and if you arrive at the Aḥmadī Presence (*al-ḥaḍra al-Aḥmadiyya*), you fulfill your desire for God, for the Messenger of God, and for the Shaykh [al-Tijānī], and so the Presences are nine: three within three, just as the stages [of religion] are nine: three within three. The presence of the shaykh is the station of *Islām*, the presence of the Messenger is the station of *Īmān*, and the Presence of God is the station of *Iḥsān. And verily unto your Lord is the final end* (53:42). Peace.

P.S.

The reality of the repentance of repentance (*ḥaqīqat al-tawba min al-tawba*) is that God is *the Repenter, the Merciful* (*al-Tawwāb al-Raḥīm*—2:128, 2:160, 4:64, 49:12). The reality of integrity is subsistence (*baqā'*) after annihilation (*fanā'*): *for God ordains what he wills* (5:1). The reality of reverence (*taqwā*) is the absence of the occurrence of any thought other [than God], even for a moment, *that is because God is the Real* (22:62). The reality of sincerity (*ṣidq*) is singularity of facing towards Him for *everything is perishing save his face* (28:88), *His is whatsoever is in the Heavens and whatsoever is in the Earth—Behold! To God all affairs are journeying* (42:53); *His is the sovereignty and His is the praise* (64:1). The reality of serenity (*ṭuma'nīna*) is not wishing for the cessation of what is or the existence of what is not: *God knows and you do not know* (2:216); *He is not questioned about what He does* (21:23). The reality of watchfulness (*murāqaba*) is the perpetual attachment of the heart to God (89:14): *truly your Lord is ever watchful; You are not engaged in anything, nor do you recite any of the Qur'an, nor do you do any action, but that We are a witness over you when you are engaged therein* (10:61)*; We did indeed create man, and We know what his soul whispers to him and We are closer to him that his jugular vein* (50:16); *Have you not considered that God knows whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth; there is no secret counsel of three but he is their fourth [nor of five, but he is their sixth, nor less than, nor more, but the He is with them wherever they are. Then on the Day of Resurrection He will inform them of what they did. Truly God is knower of all things*] (58:7); *He knows what lies within the breasts* (57:6). The reality of witnessing (*mushāhada*) is the actual vision of the Real: *for wheresoever you turn, there is the face of God* (2:115). The reality of Knowledge (*ma'rifa*) is the witnessing of the Essential Perfection: *There is nothing like unto Him* (42:11).

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This concludes what he dictated to the aforementioned [. . .]. All praise is due to God in every state, and the blessings and peace of God upon our Lord Muḥammad and upon his family and companions.[66]

Conclusion

Niasse's short text provides an excellent example of contemporary (twentieth-century) Sufi *maqāmāt* literature that synthesizes many features of the classical tradition into a highly concentrated and allusive account of the Sufi path to ethical perfection. Studies of works such as this one should, hopefully, put to rest Trimingham's lingering theses of the "decline" of "mystical" Sufism into "ethical-ascetic" Sufism and the distinction between the two in his otherwise useful account of the *maqāmāt* and other schemas of spiritual development in Sufi literature.[67] Moreover, studies of such Sufi texts in contemporary contexts can shed light on the important and involved relationship between ethical texts and ethical practice in Sufism. But perhaps most interestingly, the transcendent ethics of *maʿrifa* developed in this work (like that of much Sufi literature) unites moral, ontological, and epistemological development into an inseparable unity that ultimately identifies with the Real itself. As such, it cannot be equated to or described by the academic categories of deontological, virtue, or consequentialist ethics as typically understood. For example, while in the early stages of the masses and the elite, "The Three Stations of Religion" seems to present a kind of *sharīʿa*-based deontic ethics. The later stages transcend such characterizations in descriptions such as that of the pure devotion (*ikhlāṣ*) of the elite of the elite as "leaving aside all other than God in dealings with the Real, and you yourself are other than God, so therefore you see that actions are from God to God and by God, and you have no entrance to this and no exit [from it]." Moreover, against a consequentialist paradigm, Niasse writes that "pure devotion is not for the sake of reward nor fear of punishment, nor for the sake of arriving at a spiritual station." And in contrast to typical paradigms of virtue ethics, Niasse describes the higher stages of the "elite of the elite" in terms such as, "not one hair of the slave remains in existence . . . as here there is no name, no description, and no limit" and "it is not seeing your soul as really having any state or station."

66. Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās, *Maqāmāt al-dīn al-thalāth* in *Saʿādat al-anām* (Cairo: al-Sharika al-Dawliyya 2006), 123–130.

67. Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, 151–161. While some Sufis such as Aḥmad al-Zarrūq (d. 899/1493) and ʿUthman ibn Fūdī (d. 1232/1817) did draw a distinction between the ethical Sufism of character refinement (*taṣawwuf al-takhalluq*) which they identify with the writings and ascetic traditions of al-Ghazālī and al-Muḥasibī, and metaphysical Sufism of realization (*taḥaqquq*) which they identify with Abu'l-Ḥasan al-Shadhilī, this distinction had more to do with method (typically characterized as asceticism (*zuhd*) as opposed to gratitude (*shukr*)), and if anything, the latter form of Sufism only seemed to increase in prominence in the post-classical period. See ʿUthman ibn Fūdī, *Fatḥ al-baṣāʾir li-taḥqīq waḍʿi ʿulūm al-bawāṭin wa'l-ẓawāhir*, ed. and trans. Muhammad Shareef (Sudan: Sankore Institute of Islamic-African Studies International, 1996), 11.

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This fact is important to remember, as certain other studies of Sufi ethics tend to treat these contemporary categories of philosophical ethical theories as universals[68] instead of particulars with their own cultural history—one could easily imagine that were the geo-political structure different, we could be arguing about whether Kant, Hume, or Nietzsche were more Ashʿarī or Muʿtazilī, or perhaps describe them as Mohist, Xunzian, Confucian, or Taoist.

In any event, texts such as Niasse's "The Three Stations of Religion" were and continue to be used to describe, prescribe, and inscribe onto-epistemo-ethical transformations within Sufi communities. While these discursive accounts should not be conflated with the states and stations they describe, their ritual use makes them more than mere maps, representations, or descriptions of paths to ethical perfection. These works do not stand outside of these processes of ethical development, but rather emerge from the pens and mouths of Sufi masters actively engaged in this endless evolution of perpetual transformation, and are actively used by Sufis of all levels of experience in paradoxically pursuing the ever present Prophetic "station of no station."

68. For example, the otherwise excellent monographs of Atif Khalil, *Repentance and the Return to God*, and Cyrus Zargar, *The Polished Mirror: Storytelling and the Pursuit of Virtue in Islamic Philosophy and Sufism* (London: Oneworld, 2017). The following erroneous pronouncement is typical of less-detailed studies, "Sufi ethical thought is primarily teleological, and so the quality of an act may be seen to lie in its effect. It is not that one is an observant Muslim so as to be obedient to God, but one cultivates virtue to rise in station to the *unio mystica*. Obedience is not only a deontological good, but it is also a technique that produces spiritual progress. The good that which produces spiritual results"; Kevin Reinhart, "The Ethics of Muslims: Islamic and Islamicate Ethics" in *A Bibliographic Guide to the Comparative Study of Ethics*, John Carman and Mark Juergensmeyer, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 523. This consequentialist reading of Sufi ethics is directly contradicted by Niasse's treatise as well as much of the classical tradition of Ibn al-ʿArabī, Rūmī, al-Anṣārī, and others.

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BECOMING WHAT ONE IS: LIBERATIVE KNOWLEDGE AND HUMAN PERFECTION IN THE WRITINGS OF SEYYED HOSSEIN NASR

Justin Cancelliere

Introduction

Seyyed Hossein Nasr, whose career now spans well over half a century of vigorous scholarly activity, is among the contemporary world's most well-known and influential Muslim intellectuals. Born in Tehran in 1933 into a distinguished family, he was immersed in the culture and intellectual heritage of his homeland from an early age while also being exposed to Western philosophical ideas beginning at around age ten.[1] Upon emigrating to the United States in 1945, he enrolled in the Peddie School in New Jersey, where he excelled and became valedictorian in his graduating year. For college, Nasr studied physics at MIT before earning an MA in geology and geophysics from Harvard, where he went on to complete his doctorate in the history and philosophy of science under the supervision of I. Bernard Cohen, H. A. R. Gibb, and Harry Wolfson.

1. All biographical information has been drawn from Nasr's "intellectual autobiography" written for the Library of Living Philosophers as well as William Chittick's helpful summary thereof. See, respectively, *The Philosophy of Seyyed Hossein Nasr*, ed. Lewis Edwin Hahn, Randall E. Auxier, and Lucian W. Stone, Jr. (Chicago: Open Court, 2001), 3–85, and *The Essential Seyyed Hossein Nasr*, ed. William C. Chittick (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2007), ix–xiv.

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After graduating in 1958, Nasr decided to return permanently to Iran. There, he quickly established himself as a prominent academic and, at the age of thirty, became the youngest full professor in the University of Tehran's history. He also undertook intensive study of the Islamic sciences, especially philosophy and gnosis (*ʿirfān*), under traditional masters, including the saintly polymath ʿAllāma Ṭabāṭabāʾī. Nasr would continue to deepen his knowledge in this way for two decades until the revolution of 1979, an event that would lead to his exile and return to the United States, where, since 1984, he has held the position of University Professor of Islamic Studies at George Washington University.

Regarding Nasr's published work, which now amounts to some fifty books and five hundred articles, its impact is in large part attributable to its characteristic harmonization of erudition and "extra-academic" insight, which he has brought to bear on an impressive array of subdisciplines within the field of Islamic Studies.[2] But if Nasr's contribution to the contemporary study of Islam is distinctive, it is so somewhat paradoxically given what one might say is the exceptional "normalcy," and hence relative anonymity,[3] of his perspective vis-à-vis the Islamic tradition itself when the latter is taken in the fullness of its historical breadth and depth.[4] As William Chittick has so aptly described them, Nasr's writings "offer a fresh interpretative stance not found earlier in the academic mainstream," but his basic position "was already familiar to those involved in careful readings of pre-modern Islamic texts, because it was simply an articulate re-expression, in a more universal and contemporary language, of the underlying presuppositions of the writings."[5]

Incidentally, this quality of Nasr's work is no less apparent in his treatment of ethics than it is in other domains about which he has written more by comparison.[6] In fact, the subject subtly permeates his entire oeuvre—appropriately so in light of Nasr's characterization of his own principal concern. For even if, as he says, "that quest after a knowledge which liberates and delivers us from the fetters and limitations of earthly existence . . . dominates my intellectual life and is central to all my endeavors,"[7] Nasr makes a point of emphasizing that "to speak of sacred knowledge without mentioning the crucial importance of the virtues as the *conditio sine qua non* for the realization of this knowledge is to misunderstand completely the traditional sapiential perspective."[8] Said simply, Nasr is fully committed to the idea that what we know and what we do are intimately interrelated, and indeed

2. It is worth noting that Nasr's ideas have exerted considerable influence not only in Western academic circles, but also throughout the Islamic world and, indeed, globally. At present, his writings have been translated into over thirty foreign languages. For the most recent and currently definitive bibliography of his works, see Muhammad U. Faruque, ed., *The Pen and the Tablet: Works by and about Seyyed Hossein Nasr through His 85th Birthday* (Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 2019).

3. In contrast to what has been referred to as the "cult of genius" characterizing modern, individualistic attitudes toward human achievement, Nasr affirms the principle according to which the realization of a person's most profound potentials entails a certain effacement before realities that transcend his or her individuality (see, e.g., Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islam in the Modern World: Challenged by the West, Threatened by Fundamentalism, Keeping Faith with Tradition* [New York: HarperOne, 2012], 252). For the cult of genius, see Frithjof Schuon, *To Have a Center: A New Translation with Selected Letters*, ed. Harry Oldmeadow, trans. Mark Perry and Jean-Pierre Lafouge (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2015), 7ff.

4. Some readers will no doubt take issue with this impression, which can be disputed from two main angles: (i) a confessional point of view wary of Nasr's universalism (see n. 54), and (ii) an "anti-essentialist" position that prefers to speak of Islams, in the plural.

5. Chittick, introduction to *The Essential Seyyed Hossein Nasr*, xiii.

6. See Nasr's comments in *The Philosophy of Seyyed Hossein Nasr*, 585 and 761.

7. Nasr, *Philosophy of Seyyed Hossein Nasr*, 85.

8. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1989), 312 (punctuation modified).

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no reader of his books, whether sympathetic to his underlying commitments or not,[9] can fail to notice the thoroughgoing holism governing his approach to the exposition of Islamic teachings. In reading him, one is struck by his conviction that everything really is connected to everything else, and not in the manner of a vague, cosmic-consciousness-style New Ageism.[10] On the contrary, Nasr takes the traditional metaphysical and cosmological views he espouses—with all that they imply on the plane of human action and comportment—to be no more (or less) than elaborations of Islam's fundamental insight, that of *tawḥīd*.[11]

In what follows, I will set forth the key features of Nasr's understanding of the relationship between mysticism and ethics. First, however, we should get a basic sense of what he means by each term. For Nasr, Islamic mysticism,[12] or Sufism, is "the inner or esoteric dimension of Islam"[13] and as such comprises a spiritual path or method (*ṭarīqa*) that leads those who walk it with sincerity to the Truth (*al-ḥaqīqa*),[14] which is God, the Real (*al-ḥaqq*). Interestingly, it also fundamentally concerns knowledge of our own selves, or the mystery of our real identity:

> Sufism seeks to lead adepts to the heart, where they find both their true self and their Beloved, and for that reason Sufis are sometimes called "the people of the heart" (*ahl-i dil* in Persian). Of course, the phrase "both their true self and their Beloved" does not mean any ultimate duality, for as Rūmī also said, in the heart there is room for only one I, which is both the root of our true self and the Self as such. Who am I? I am the I that, having traversed all the stages of limited existence from the physical to the mental to the noumenal, has realized its own "nonexistence" and by virtue of this annihilation of the false self has returned to its roots in the Divine Reality and has become a star proximate to the Supernal Sun, which is ultimately the only I. Having passed through the door of nothingness and annihilation, I come to the realization that at the root of my consciousness, of what I call I, resides the only I that can ultimately say I and that ultimately alone is.[15]

As for ethics, Nasr uses the term straightforwardly and without distinguishing, as some do, between the categories of the ethical and the moral, and nor would one expect him to given the association of this distinction—whether in scholarly circles or merely colloquially—with attempts to make sense of the normative dimension of non-religious modes of human life.[16] Indeed, Nasr denies the very possibility of a properly secular ethics, since for him all real values are perforce of religious

9. In the interest of readability, I will err on the side of minimally qualifying my presentation of Nasr's views. The relevant language (e.g., "for Nasr," "according to Nasr," etc.) should therefore be taken as implicit in passages where noticeably absent.

10. For "cosmic consciousness," see Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred*, 241.

11. See, e.g., Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Philosophy from Its Origin to the Present: Philosophy in the Land of Prophecy* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2006), 74; idem, *Islamic Life and Thought* (Chicago: ABC International Group, 2001), 1.

12. Nasr is comfortable with the term mysticism, though he does, in various places, address its ambiguity. See, e.g., *Knowledge and the Sacred*, 287–88.

13. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *The Garden of Truth: The Vision and Promise of Sufism, Islam's Mystical Tradition* (New York: HarperOne, 2007), 5.

14. Nasr, *Garden of Truth*, 5.

15. Nasr, *Garden of Truth*, 10.

16. See, e.g., Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*, trans. William Rehg (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), 95ff.

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provenance,[17] and any notion of an ethics divorced from this basis in authentic tradition is rendered meaningless thereby.[18] Since for Nasr only religion is capable of providing objective criteria of discernment,[19] all would-be secular ethical schemes are devoid of genuine authority *ab initio* and so forced to seek surrogate foundations in philosophically dubious premises that, as the passage of time has shown, are not liable to win the assent of the same broad swathes of human beings that have been and clearly still are inclined to accept traditional religious doctrines.[20]

But if one were to single out the points of greatest importance to Nasr's perspective, two are most decisive. The first is that ethics is related in a fundamental way to metaphysics[21]—that is, to "the science of the Real"[22] and not just to exoteric jurisprudence—and the second is the all-encompassing nature of the ethical domain, which embraces not only the internal behavioral dynamics of human collectivities but also man's[23] relationship to the totality of his terrestrial and even cosmic environment. I will take each in its turn.

No Virtue without Knowledge

In what he has described as his most important philosophical work,[24] *Knowledge and the Sacred*, Nasr seeks to revive an epistemology based on revelation and gnosis.[25] Besides endeavoring to elucidate the respective natures of these twin sources of knowledge, Nasr both offers etiologies and suggests remedies for what he perceives as their neglect among modernist intellectuals. Significantly for our purposes, Nasr singles out the Greeks for special comment given the "providential role" played by their sages in the historical unfolding of the intellectual and esoteric dimensions of all three Abrahamic monotheisms.[26] As he says, the tradition of Orphic-Dionysian provenance associated with figures like Pythagoras, Plato, and Plotinus was to provide the sapiential schools of these religions with their broadly overlapping conceptual apparatuses, and it is for this reason that "the rediscovery of the sacred character of knowledge today would lead, almost before anything else, to a rediscovery of Greek wisdom."[27] If this is true for Nasr, it is not on account of some Greek monopoly on philosophical truth; rather, it is simply the case that, in the Western context in which he is writing, what we call "Platonism" just happens to provide the time-honored theoretical "scaffolding" for the task of realizing in one's own being the truths with which he is most fundamentally concerned.

17. Nasr, *Essential Seyyed Hossein Nasr*, 31.
18. Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred*, 80. For Nasr's special use of the term "tradition," see chap. 2.
19. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islam: Religion, History, and Civilization* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2003), 36.
20. Nasr, *Essential Seyyed Hossein Nasr*, 31.
21. Nasr, *Essential Seyyed Hossein Nasr*, 227.
22. See Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred*, 132-33.
23. As a rule, this word is intended in the sense of "humankind."
24. Nasr, *Philosophy of Seyyed Hossein Nasr*, 78.
25. Nasr describes gnosis—his preferred translation of the Arabic *al-maʿrifa* and Persian *ʿirfān*—as "the unitive knowledge of God not by man as an individual but by the divine center of human intelligence which, at the level of gnosis, becomes the subject as well as object of knowledge" (*Knowledge and the Sacred*, 12). Cf. Wouter J. Hanegraaff, "Gnosis," in *The Cambridge Handbook of Western Mysticism and Esotericism*, ed. Glenn Alexander Magee (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 381–92.
26. Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred*, 44–45.
27. Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred*, 35.

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Like his immediate intellectual predecessors, then, Nasr avails himself of the Platonic distinction between being and becoming in characterizing the path of spiritual realization as one of "becoming what one is."[28] For him, the truth of the *shahāda*—"there is no god but God"—is perfectly well expressible in terms of *being*, in which case it arguably does no violence to Islam to affirm that only God really is,[29] hence the proliferation of debates among Muslim philosophers, Sufis, and rational theologians (*mutakallimūn*) concerning the identification of nondelimited Being (*al-wujūd al-muṭlaq*) with divinity.[30] In any case, since Nasr wishes to root right action in knowledge, without which latter one would simply lack any criteria for determining what the former is supposed to be,[31] any serious discussion of his ethical views has to begin with his epistemology, which, as we are coming to see, is thoroughly metaphysical.[32] Indeed, for Nasr, to be is ultimately to know,[33] and "to know is to be delivered."[34]

Now, if only God actually possesses being, what explains the existence of the world? Remarkably, it is here—in the question of cosmogony—that one finds the key to Nasr's ethics along with the pith of his "metaphysical anthropology," which in turn grounds his approach to Sufism as a "path of knowledge."[35] According to the influential Akbarī formulation of Sufi doctrine commended by Nasr,[36] God creates the world out of love,[37] and this love is thinkable in terms of mercy toward the objects of His own knowledge (*maʿlūmāt*)—a mercy whose principial "movement" is symbolized by the breath, in this case that of God Himself.[38]

In this profound doctrine, the divine Breath constitutes the isthmus (*barzakh*) between God and what is other than Him, and this "Reality of Realities" is none other than the very substance of Man, which for Muslims is made known most eminently through the person of the Prophet Muḥammad.[39] In Chittick's lucid summary:

> The Reality of Realities, or the Highest Barzakh, exists as the object of God's knowledge but, like any other reality, its *wujūd* is nothing but the *wujūd* of God. It is not identical with God, nor is it different from Him. Likewise, it is not identical with the total cosmos, nor is it different from

28. Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred*, 167, 182–83, 245, 274, 328.
29. See Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred*, 7, 134, 326.
30. See, e.g., Khaled El-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History in the Seventeenth Century: Scholarly Currents in the Ottoman Empire and the Maghreb* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 315ff.
31. Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred*, 177.
32. See Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Standing before God: Human Responsibilities and Human Rights," in *Humanity Before God: Contemporary Faces of Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Ethics*, ed. William Schweiker, Michael A. Johnson, and Kevin Jung (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006), 320.
33. See Nasr, *Essential Seyyed Hossein Nasr*, 117.
34. Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred*, 309.
35. For which see Nasr, *Garden of Truth*, 30. For the relation of this "gnostic" path to the other dimensions of the integral spiritual life, namely faith, virtue, grace, etc., see Nasr, *Philosophy of Seyyed Hossein Nasr*, 662–63.
36. Albeit not in any narrow, partisan manner, it is important to note, since his perspective is first and foremost based on what he forcefully asserts is an essentially universal metaphysics. For Nasr's avowal of the foundational status of the Akbarī doctrines of the "oneness of being" (*waḥdat al-wujūd*) and Universal Man, see Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Ideals and Realities of Islam* (Chicago: ABC International Group, 2000), 133, and Nasr, *Garden of Truth*, 230.
37. For discussion of the famous *ḥadīth qudsī* likening God to a "hidden treasure" (*kanz makhfī*) who "loves to be known," see Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity* (New York: HarperOne, 2004), 10–11, and *Garden of Truth*, 18–19, 42–43.
38. For discussion of this doctrine—that of the "Breath of the All-Merciful" (*nafas al-Raḥmān*)—in Nasr, see *Garden of Truth*, 15, 44, 93.
39. See Nasr, "The Prophet and Prophetic Tradition—the Last Prophet and Universal Man," chap. 3 in *Ideals and Realities*.

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> the total cosmos. The cosmos makes manifest in differentiated detail all the realities that the Reality of Realities embraces, but its most perfect loci of manifestation are the perfect human beings and, most specifically, the prophet Muhammad. Hence the Reality of Realities, also called "the Breath of the All-Merciful," is identical with the Muhammadan Reality. Those who come to know it as their own reality are the Muhammadan friends of God.[40]

Such is the famous doctrine of the Perfect or Universal Man (*al-insān al-kāmil*).[41] According to Nasr, this reality is the "androgynic prototype" both of the human state and of the cosmos, hence the correspondence between the microcosm and the macrocosm;[42] it contains all possibilities[43] and degrees[44] of existence within itself; and it is the unique locus of disclosure for all the divine Names,[45] or the mirror in which they are reflected and in which God contemplates Himself.[46] Through it, in virtue of a function "both revelatory and initiatic,"[47] man "is able to follow that path of perfection which will finally allow him to gain knowledge of the sacred and to become fully himself."[48] It is "in that theophanic prayer of Universal Man in which the whole creation, both Heaven and earth, participate" that man "realizes his full pontifical nature" as the vicegerent (*khalīfa*) of God on earth.[49]

To sum up what has been said thus far: to realize the goal of human life is to become what one already is, and "what one is" is at once poverty and perfection. Or rather, in spite of man's being nothing and God's being everything, man is able to know God, and this through his ceasing to be other than what he is. To know everything—a totality to which he is beckoned by the hidden heart of his own intelligence[50]—man must become nothing. For Nasr, all the various ethical demands made on man are rooted ultimately in his being "condemned" to undertake this becoming by the reality of his own immutable identity.[51] In other words, the specifically ethical mores by means of which the Muslim orients him or herself toward spiritual excellence (*iḥsān*) are simply the outward marks of this unitary, principial reality,[52] which is mercy itself.[53] Islamic ethics are therefore not the result of an arbitrary divine will à la divine command theory. Rather, the injunctions of the Sharīʿa and norms of the prophetic Sunna follow rigorously from the nature

40. William C. Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn al-'Arabī's Cosmology* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1998), xxvii.
41. Although intimately related to the Quranic notion of *al-fiṭra*, or our "primordial human nature," which also appears in the Hadith, the specifically Sufic doctrine of the Perfect Man is distinct from it on account of the properly transcendent aspect of its (i.e., the Perfect Man's) integral meaning, which nonetheless embraces the individual domain by way of its "outward face." In a word, the term *fiṭra* connotes the individual level of the human state in spite of its denoting a universal reality, the fullness of which is brought out and made explicit by the Sufis.
42. Nasr, *Garden of Truth*, 21.
43. Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred*, 187n36.
44. Nasr, *Essential Seyyed Hossein Nasr*, 65.
45. Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred*, 180.
46. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Sufi Essays* (Chicago: ABC International Group, 1999), 35.
47. Nasr, *Garden of Truth*, 21.
48. Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred*, 166–67.
49. Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred*, 176. For man's vicegerency, see Quran 2:30.
50. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Man and Nature: The Spiritual Crisis in Modern Man* (Chicago: ABC International Group, 1997), 96.
51. Nasr, "Standing before God," 319.
52. See Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred*, 168.
53. Since for Nasr, following Sufi tradition, the transcendent reality of man coincides with the Breath of the All-Merciful, man is the nexus of the amorous relations described above and thus the root of all love. To realize fully one's humanity is to lose oneself in Love (*Garden of Truth*, 93), since man *is* the love God has for His own Self.

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of things, and this without excluding other possible prescriptive expressions of realities whose transcendent nature precludes their being exhaustible by any one given formulation or code.[54] Furthermore, even if Nasr accepts the idea that the reality of goodness in a sense precedes and determines God's willing activity (*irāda*), such a doctrinal heuristic does not contravene divine freedom, since ultimately God is that goodness which appears to us under the guise of a universal nature or archetype. Who He is and what He knows are distinguishable from one another only in being conceptualized *ab extra*—that is, from within the limitations of the discursive envelope of the integral intellect, which latter, according to Nasr, is capable of immediately apprehending the nondual nature of the divine Principle.[55]

As vertiginous as Nasr's metaphysical epistemology no doubt is, its ethical import is seemingly alluded to by even the most commonplace colloquialisms, for example that of the "ethical bind." If revelation and tradition furnish the principles and provide the guidelines necessary[56] for living a moral life, the task of actually applying them in this or that situation is often far from straightforward, hence the need for cultivating the discernment that alone is capable of resolving the relevant antinomies. Notwithstanding the sophistication achieved by the Islamic legal tradition as a result of centuries' worth of sincerely striving to uncover and make known the nuances implicit in an all-comprehensive Law of divine origin, mastery of jurisprudence can only take one so far, since living well requires in the first instance a sound inward state—something attainable only through purification. For Nasr, real safety from the pitfalls attending the moral quandaries human beings inevitably find themselves in comes only through loosening the knots of one's own ignorance.[57] To live ethically therefore requires intimacy with our truest nature—the human norm or Perfect Man—as exemplified for Muslims by the Prophet. In entering existentially into the prophetic mold, the Muslim courts the moment (*waqt*) in which all oppositions find their resolution through the synthetic, reconciliatory power of a sanctified intellect, or rather that of the Intellect as such. For Nasr, to become truly human means to become simple, whole, one.[58] And, as he explains, the genuinely integrated person benefits not only himself through his purity but also the whole of society. He or she is "the hidden source for the regeneration of Islamic ethics and the integration of the Islamic community."[59]

54. For Nasr's universalism, see "Principial Knowledge and the Multiplicity of Sacred Forms," chap. 9 in *Knowledge and the Sacred*, and "The *Philosophia Perennis* and the Study of Religion," chap. 5 in *The Need for a Sacred Science* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1993).

55. Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred*, 134. It is important to emphasize that, according to Nasr, this special form of knowledge or gnosis involves the collapse of the distinction between the knowing subject and known object (see n. 25) and is thus eminently non-ordinary. Being comprised as it is of the most intense bliss (pp. 1–2), it is an ecstatic, supra-rational mode of consciousness.

56. For Nasr, there is no access to the inward dimension of religion in the absence of its "outward," exoteric practice. He is firmly committed to the idea that involvement in initiatic spirituality presupposes adherence to an orthodox religious tradition. See, e.g., Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred*, 77–80, 316–18.

57. See Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred*, 312.

58. Having retreated from the potency of past and future into the pure act of the "eternal now," the "knower through God" (*'ārif bi'llāh*) "does not either act or think; rather his contemplation and meditation is combined with the purest and most intense activity" (Nasr, *Sufi Essays*, 50).

59. Nasr, *Sufi Essays*, 51.

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A Mercy to the Worlds

Since the Perfect Man is "the quintessence of all creation," there is a very real sense in which the cosmos is a "great man" (*al-insān al-kabīr*)[60]—a correspondence that throws the teachings of the Quran into wide relief when it affirms repeatedly that God does not wrong anyone, rather human beings wrong themselves.[61] In comprising a reflection of us[62]—or an exteriorization of our own essential, inward reality—the cosmos participates in our *raison d'être,* which is worship (*ʿibāda*).[63] As it is said in the Quran, "The seven heavens, and the earth, and whosoever is in them glorify Him. And there is no thing, save that it hymns His praise, though you do not understand their praise" (17:44).[64] If the prism of Man refracts the divine Light such that it is able to be reflected in the "mirror of non-being,"[65] it is only because man is nothing before God, and if the Perfect Man is perfect, it is due solely to his having become mysteriously qualified by God's perfections[66] through the absoluteness of his poverty. So the vocation of man, one could say, is to be poor (*faqīr*).[67] If he fulfills it, the whole cosmos benefits, and if he puffs himself up with pride, all the creatures placed under his vicegerency sooner or later suffer for it.[68] As Nasr frankly states, "The history of the modern world is witness to the fact that the type of man who negates the Sacred or Heaven in the name of being a purely earthly creature cannot live in equilibrium with the Earth."[69]

From the outset it was said that Nasr sees the ethical domain as all-encompassing. Although its root consists in the relationship between each individual human being and God, the momentousness of this timeless encounter reverberates throughout the whole of manifested existence, which is to say that man bears responsibilities toward all things in virtue of his primordial responsibility before God. In the Quran one reads that the Creator "offered the Trust unto the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to bear it, and were wary of it—yet man bore it" (33:72). According to Nasr, they "could not bear it precisely because to be human implies the possibility of both the affirmation and the negation of the Divine Principle, and therefore the possibility of perdition in the deepest sense of the word, which other creatures do not face."[70] The Quran further recounts the sempiternal occasion of man's embracing his status as servant and yea-sayer as follows: "When thy Lord took from the Children of Adam, from their loins, their progeny and made them bear witness concerning themselves, 'Am I not your Lord?'

60. See Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1993), 57, 67; Sachiko Murata, *The Tao of Islam: A Sourcebook on Gender Relationships in Islamic Thought* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992), 23.
61. As at 3:117, 10:44, etc.
62. Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred*, 167, 196.
63. Quran 51:56.
64. All Quranic translations are taken from *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr et al. (New York: HarperOne, 2015).
65. See Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages* (Delmar, NY: Caravan Books, 1976), 111–12; *Garden of Truth*, 43–44; *Islamic Life and Thought*, 185.
66. For this notion of "becoming imbued with the Qualities of God" (*al-takhalluq bi-akhlāq Allāh*), see Nasr, *Garden of Truth*, 136, 246.
67. See Quran 35:15, 47:38.
68. For what Nasr himself says is his most complete treatment of the subject of the environment (*Philosophy of Seyyed Hossein Nasr*, 80), see Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Religion and the Order of Nature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).
69. Nasr, *Order of Nature*, 271. See also *Knowledge and the Sacred*, 167.
70. Nasr, "Standing before God," 301.

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they said 'Yea, we bear witness'—lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, 'Truly of this we were heedless'" (7:172).

Now, if "wheresoever you turn, there is the Face of God"[71]—if the cosmos is a theophany—the affirmational, witnessing aspect of man's cosmic function normatively demands his "seeing God everywhere,"[72] which in turn obviously necessitates treating all existent entities with the respect due to them as revelations of the Divine. Indeed, in Nasr's view, ethics presupposes and is thus inextricably bound up with man's sense of the sacred, which "is none other than his sense for the Immutable and the Eternal, his nostalgia for what he really *is,* for he carries the sacred within the substance of his own being and most of all within his intelligence which was created to know the Immutable and contemplate the Eternal."[73] For Nasr, nature's having become desacralized for "modern, but not necessarily contemporary, man"[74] is the result of the former's loss of this spiritual sensitivity—an atrophy that in many cases applies just as much to professed believers as it does to agnostics and atheists. Concerning the intellectual-historical backdrop for this situation—one with its origin in the Christian West but which has since become global in scope—he explains how Christianity, in its struggle to establish itself as a vehicle of salvation for an entire civilization, found itself confronted by a world whose spiritual integrity had become compromised by widespread naturalism, hence this religion's tendency toward distinguishing strictly between the natural and supernatural domains.[75] It is as though the "safe distance" from idolatrous dispositions established by this compensatory maneuver was destined to become unsafe, as it were, since it ended up resulting (generally and de facto) in a neglect of the role of nature in the Christian spiritual life.[76]

The implication of Nasr's analysis, which he makes explicit throughout his work, is that affirming and cultivating awareness of the transcendence of God is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the inspiration and maintenance of the moral dimension of any normal human civilization.[77] According to the well-nigh universal metaphysical doctrine, the Ultimately Real is immanent to its cosmic self-disclosures on precise account of its categorically transcending them. God enjoys the sovereignty of transcendence without being bound by it.[78] So to be truly pious and God-conscious finally requires being aware of God here and now, in all things. Like other traditionalist authors, Nasr severely criticizes both Cartesianism[79] and Kantianism[80]—perhaps the two philosophical impulses most responsible for undermining modern man's sense of the sacred[81]—while emphasizing the need

71. Quran 2:115.
72. See Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred*, 191, 214. "Normatively" should be taken in a technical sense here as alluding to the *fitra*, or, more profoundly, to the Perfect Man (see n. 41), since Nasr is the first to acknowledge that Sufism is not for everyone.
73. Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred*, 76.
74. Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred*, 43. See also *Man and Nature*, 18.
75. Nasr, *Man and Nature*, 55. See also *Knowledge and the Sacred*, 35.
76. Nasr, *Man and Nature*, 55.
77. See Nasr, *Need for a Sacred Science*, 119–21.
78. See Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred*, 134, 137.
79. See, e.g., Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred*, 41–42; *Man and Nature*, 70–71.
80. See esp. Nasr, *Order of Nature*, 105, where he refers to Kantianism as "an intellectual suicide."
81. "Most responsible," that is, in terms of sheer historical decisiveness, since many of the most influential thinkers following in the wake of Descartes and Kant represent more serious stages of intellectual decline by comparison (see Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred*, 28, 42–43, 45).

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for adopting traditional, holistic doctrines in their place if a society is to hope to even roughly approximate the ethical ideal, which entails an underlying attitude of mercy toward all beings,[82] whether human or nonhuman, and indeed whether overtly animate or something as humble as a rock or patch of clay.[83] From Nasr's Islamic perspective, God intends and is pleased by man's availing himself of the bounties of nature,[84] but, like all things, she has her rights and will even "convey her chronicles" on the Day of Judgment.[85] Better, then, to listen even now—to "the 'silent music' to which Plato alluded,"[86] or to the truth proclaimed by all things—that we might be edified by the natural world,[87] and this ultimately for the sake of remembering who we are—"the highest goal" to which a person can aspire.[88]

Conclusion

For Seyyed Hossein Nasr, man by his very nature stands before God, whether he realizes it or not, and this fact, for our author, contains the whole of ethics. By virtue of his "secret" (*sirr*), he is condemned to a perfection whose implications for the human state as lived by the individual radiate from the hidden center thereof out through the whole of manifestation. Although the infirmity characteristic of fallen humanity necessitates prophecy and revelation to apprise people of their ultimate end—with all that it demands of them—man as such is mysteriously already in possession of what it is he seeks through the facilitative grace and protective framework of divinely ordained religion. Indeed, the latter's profoundest possibilities converge in their actualization precisely on the attainment of that supreme, changeless knowledge in whose absence the outward, communal practice of Islam can only ever lose its vitality and equilibrium.[89]

Since "gnosis lies at the heart of the Islamic tradition,"[90] Islamic ethics cannot consist solely in legal scrupulosity despite its clear importance from Nasr's point of view. On the contrary, "the destruction of the wholeness of human life so decried today, and the ever increasing and greater compartmentalization of the human mind and disintegration of the human psyche, are ultimately related to the loss of principial knowledge and the subsequent segmentation of what men learn and know. It is related to the loss of sacred science."[91] So for Nasr, religious values depend

82. Hence the Quran's description of the Prophet as "a mercy unto the worlds" (21:107). The Hadith especially is replete with accounts of Muḥammad's tender behavior toward all manner of creatures—a disposition that traditional Islamic piety has not seen as being in any way at odds with his evident virility. For an explanation of the harshness required of the Prophet in certain circumstances, see Nasr, *Ideals and Realities*, 61–62.

83. Nasr, *Garden of Truth*, 94.

84. As at, e.g., Quran 36:33–35, 71–73.

85. Quran 99:4. "She" here then would technically refer to the earth (*al-arḍ*).

86. Nasr, *Philosophy of Seyyed Hossein Nasr*, 21 (see also pp. 305, 734). For what came to be called *musica universalis* in Plato, see *Republic* 617b–c, and, somewhat more allusively, *Timaeus* 35b–37a.

87. Nasr, *Need for a Sacred Science*, 121.

88. Nasr, *Philosophy of Seyyed Hossein Nasr*, 667.

89. Contra the claims of various reformist and "fundamentalist" Muslims, whose views Nasr so ably criticizes. For the relationship between gnosis and the religious collectivity, see Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred*, 320.

90. Nasr, *Philosophy of Seyyed Hossein Nasr*, 680.

91. Nasr, *Need for a Sacred Science*, 81 (punctuation modified).

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for their survival on the presence of genuine sagacity, just as the latter presupposes the acquisition of the virtues, which literally comprise our mode of participation in a truth at once supra-human and more "us" than we are ourselves.[92]

Given what for Nasr and the tradition he represents is man's central, axial status in the universe, all things in a sense proceed from and return to him, by God's leave. The realized human being is therefore the opening through which mercy, grace, and spiritual luminosity overflow out into creation from the realm of the Unseen. As for the collective or societal plane, the exemplary state of the Perfect Man serves to orient the aspirations of an entire sector of humanity[93] toward the truth of its own being, or toward "that illimitable spiritual freedom and liberation which alone is worthy of man if only he were to realize who he is."[94]

92. Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred*, 311–12.
93. I.e., that of his or her fellow "religionists."
94. Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred*, 328.

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AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

Khaled Mohammed Abdo is a scholar of Sufi studies whose doctoral work focused on the writings of Rūmī and Muhammad Iqbal. Among his publications are several editions of important Sufi texts, such as Shams al-Dīn al-Daylamī's *Muhimmāt al-wāṣilīn min al-ṣūfiyya al-bālighīn* and Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī's *Rasāʾil*.

Mukhtar H. Ali is Lecturer in Islamic Studies at the University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign. He specializes in Sufism, Islamic philosophy, and ethics, and has published in a wide variety of peer-reviewed venues. His published works include *The Horizons of Being: The Metaphysics of Ibn al-ʿArabī in the Muqaddimat al-Qayṣarī* (2020) and *Philosophical Sufism: An Introduction to the School of Ibn al-ʿArabī* (2021).

Leila Almazova is Associate Professor in the Department of Oriental and Islamic Studies at Kazan Federal University. Her publications include *The Problem of a Man in Tatar Theology* (2003), a translation of Kamali's *The Philosophy of Islam* (2010), and a co-authored textbook for students entitled *Islamic Ethics in Tatar Intellectual Tradition* (2018).

Nora Jacobsen Ben Hammed is Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies at Bard College. Her research focus is on the life and works of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī and his impact on the development of post-Avicennian Islamic philosophy. She is currently writing a book on the relationship between knowledge and the eternal felicity of the soul in al-Rāzī's *al-Maṭālib al-ʿāliya*.

Justin Cancelliere is a student of religion and philosophy, with a special interest in the Islamic and Platonic-Aristotelian traditions. He studied languages in Iran and Egypt before completing graduate work at the University of Georgia, where his research addressed the problem of universals in Islamic metaphysics.

William C. Chittick is Distinguished Professor in the Department of Asian and Asian American Studies at Stony Brook University. His more recent publications include *In Search of the Lost Heart: Explorations in Islamic Thought* (2012), *Divine Love: Islamic Literature and the Path to God* (2013), and *The Repose of the Spirits* (2019), which is a complete translation of Aḥmad Samʿānī's influential Persian Sufi commentary on the Divine names.

Peter Dziedzic is a doctoral candidate in the Study of Religion at Harvard University, where he researches the development of Kashmiri Islamic poetry in early modern and contemporary contexts.

Ahmed El Shamsy is Associate Professor of Islamic Thought in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at the University of Chicago. His publications include *The Canonization of Islamic Law: A Social and Intellectual History* (2013) and *Rediscovering the Islamic Classics: How Editors and Print Culture Transformed an Intellectual Tradition* (2020).

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Muhammad U. Faruque is Inayat Malik Assistant Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University of Cincinnati. He is the author of numerous articles on Islamic philosophy and theology, subjectivity research, and Sufism. His recently published monograph with University of Michigan Press is entitled *Sculpting the Self: Islam, Selfhood and Human Flourishing.*

Paul L. Heck is Professor in the Department of Theology at Georgetown University and founding director of The Study of Religions Across Civilizations (SORAC), a project at Georgetown that brings together graduate students based in the US, Europe, and Arab contexts for programs geared towards a cross-cultural study of religion. His book publications include *Skepticism in Classical Islam: Moments of Confusion* (2014).

Marcia Hermansen is Professor of Theology and Director of the Islamic World Studies program at Loyola University Chicago. Her published books include the co-edited volumes, V*arieties of American Sufism* (2020), *Religion and Violence: Theological Reflections* (2017), and *Muslima Theology: The Voices of Muslim Women Theologians* (2013), as well as a translation of Shāh Walī Allāh's *Ḥujjat Allāh al-Bāligha* under the title *The Conclusive Argument from God* (1996).

Matthew Ingalls is Associate Professor of Middle Eastern Studies at the American University in Dubai. His research examines developments in Sufism and Islamic law from the later Islamic Middle Period with a particular focus on pre-modern Muslim commentary texts and their role in intellectual change. He is the author of *The Anonymity of a Commentator: Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī and the Rhetoric of Muslim Commentaries* (2021).

Lina Jammal is a PhD candidate in Arabic and Near Eastern Languages at the American University of Beirut. She is interested in dreams and dream manuals in Islamic societies, and is currently working on critical editions of some important Arabic dream manuals. Her publications include "Bayna al-manām wa-l-riḥla" (2019) and "Maqāmāt al-Hamadhānī: masraḥ bilā khashaba" (2017).

Atif Khalil is Associate Professor of Religious Studies in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Lethbridge, where he teaches courses on Islamic mysticism, theology, philosophy, and art. The author of *Repentance and the Return to God* (2018) and numerous articles on Sufism, he is currently writing a monograph on *dhikr* in classical Islam.

Richard McGregor is Associate Professor of Religious Studies and Islamic Studies at Vanderbilt University. He is the author of *Sanctity and Mysticism in Medieval Egypt*: *The Wafāʾ Sufi Order and the Legacy of Ibn ʿArabī* (2004), co-translator of the tenth-century Iraqi philosophical fable, *The Case of Animals versus Man before the King of the Jinn* (2014), and author of *Islam and the Devotional Object: Seeing Religion in Egypt and Syria* (2020).

Oludamini Ogunnaike is Associate Professor of African Religious Thought and Democracy in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Virginia. His published books include *Poetry in Praise of Prophetic Perfection: A Study of West*

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African Arabic Madīḥ Poetry and Its Precedents (2020) and *Deep Knowledge: Ways of Knowing in Sufism and Ifa, Two West African Intellectual Traditions* (2020).

Bilal Orfali is Sheikh Zayed Chair for Arabic and Islamic Studies at the American University of Beirut and previously held the M. S. Sofia Chair in Arabic Studies at The Ohio State University. Alongside being the co-editor of the journal *al-Abhath* and Brill's *Texts and Studies on the Qur'an* series, Professor Orfali is author and editor of more than twenty books in the fields of Arabic literature, Sufism, and Qurʾānic studies.

Chafika Ouail holds a PhD in Islamic Studies from the American University of Beirut. In her research she focuses on viewing the Qurʾān, Arabic literature, and Sufism from interdisciplinary angles, and has published articles on al-Niffarī, theological debates in Maghribi/Andalusian Qurʾānic commentaries, and Toshihiko Izutsu's approach to the Qurʾān.

Alexandre Papas is Senior Research Fellow at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) in Paris and Executive Editor of the *Journal of Sufi Studies*. His publications include *Soufisme et politique entre Chine, Tibet et Turkestan* (2005), *Mystiques et vagabonds en islam: Portraits de trois soufis qalandar* (2010), and *Thus Spake the Dervish: Sufism, Language, and the Religious Margins in Central Asia, 1400-1900* (2019).

Riccardo Paredi is a PhD candidate in the Department of Arabic and Near Eastern Languages at the American University of Beirut. His research focuses on Sufism, Qur'ānic sudies, and Islamic Philosophy.

Mohammed Rustom is Professor of Islamic Thought at Carleton University. He is author of the award-winning book *The Triumph of Mercy: Philosophy and Scripture in Mullā Ṣadrā* (2012), co-editor of *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary* (2015), and author of *Inrushes of the Heart: The Sufi Philosophy of ʿAyn al-Quḍāt* (2022).

Feryal Salem is Associate Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the American Islamic College. Her publications include *The Emergence of Early Sufi Piety and Sunnī Scholasticism: ʿAbdallāh b. al-Mubārak and the Formation of Sunnī Identity in the Second Islamic Century* (2016). She is currently working on a monograph on Kalam in the post-classical period.

Sophia Vasalou is Senior Lecturer and Birmingham Fellow in Philosophical Theology at the University of Birmingham. Her published work includes the award-winning book *Moral Agents and Their Deserts: The Character of Muʿtazilite Ethics* (2008), *Schopenhauer and the Aesthetic Standpoint: Philosophy as a Practice of the Sublime* (2013), *Wonder: A Grammar* (2015), *Ibn Taymiyya's Theological Ethics* (2016), *and Virtues of Greatness in the Arabic Tradition* (2019).

John Zaleski is Lecturer in the Department of Theology at Loyola Universty Maryland. He is currently writing a monograph that examines Muslim and

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Christian views on asceticism in the early Islamic world. A major focus of his research for this project is the writings of figures connected to the development of Sufism in Baghdad, including al-Muḥāsibī and al-Kharrāz.

Syed Rizwan Zamir is Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Davidson College. He has served on the Board of the Society for the Study of Muslim Ethics and is currently writing a textbook on Islamic ethics, as well as a monograph on Sayyid ʿAlī Naqī al-Naqvī, a seminal and prolific religious figure from South Asia.

Cyrus Ali Zargar is Al-Ghazali Distinguished Professor of Islamic Studies at the University of Central Florida. His published books include *Sufi Aesthetics: Beauty, Love, and the Human Form in Ibn ʿArabi and ʿIraqi* (2011), *The Polished Mirror: Storytelling and the Pursuit of Virtue in Islamic Philosophy and Sufism* (2017), and *Religion of Love: Farīd al-Dīn ʿAṭṭār and the Sufi Tradition* (2022).