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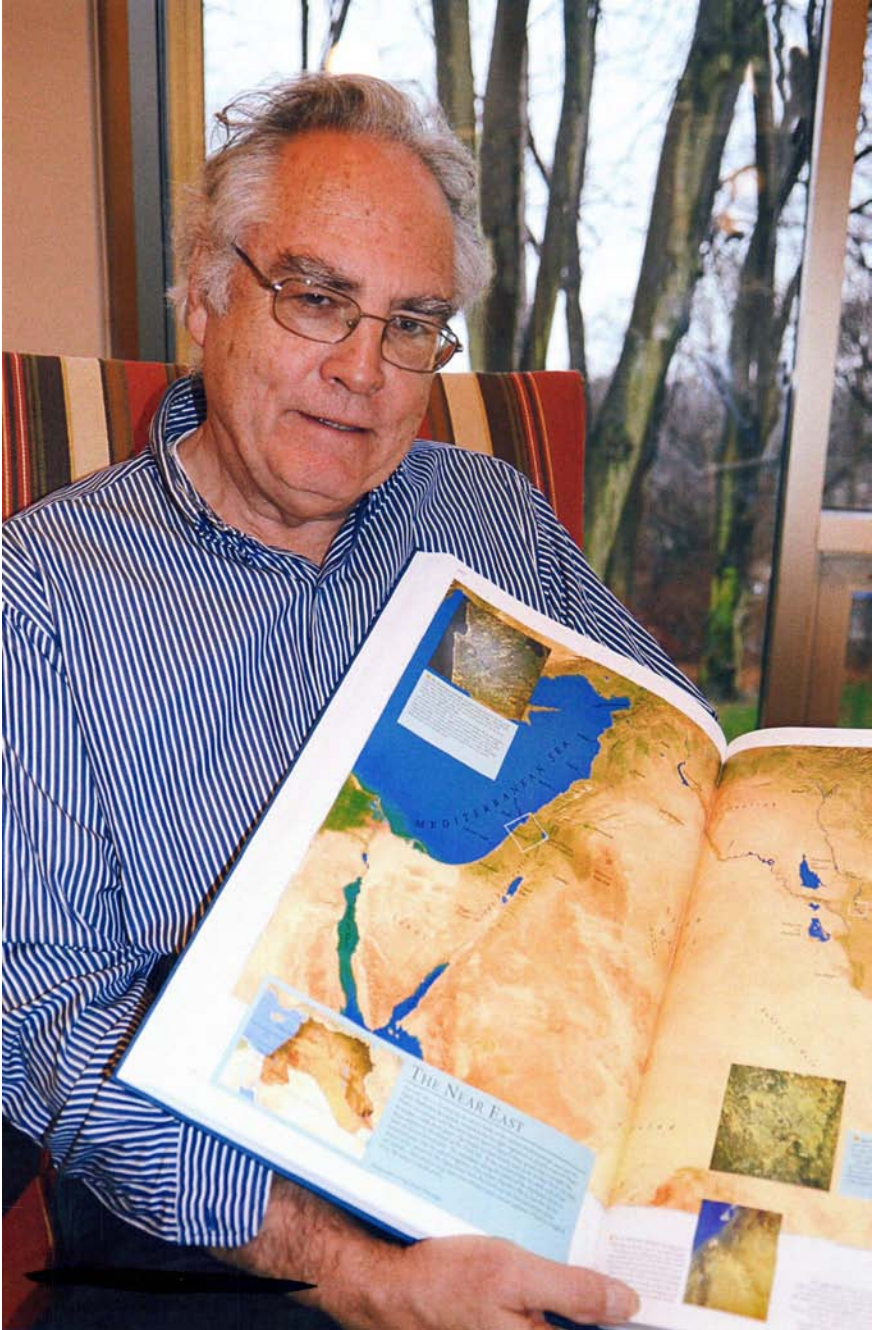
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Gerhard Bowering
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Light upon Light

*Essays in Islamic Thought and History
in Honor of Gerhard Bowering*

Edited by

Jamal J. Elias
Bilal Orfali



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Preface

Gerhard Bowering was born on October 1939 in Würzburg, Germany, right at the beginning of the Second World War. His father was taken prisoner during the war (to be released in 1947), and his family lost its home in the bombings of March 1945, when 90 percent of Würzburg was destroyed in 17 minutes. He, along with his parents, two brothers, and two sisters, then moved in with his grandparents until his family were able to reestablish their home in Würzburg.

After finishing school in his home town and completing his Abitur (high school) in 1959, Gerhard Bowering entered the Jesuit order on September 14, 1959. He first came into direct contact with the Islamic world when he hitchhiked through Morocco that summer. He studied philosophy in Munich from 1961 until 1964, receiving his Lizentiat. Immediately after finishing university, he went to Pakistan, where he lived from 1964 to 1967, first studying Urdu in Lahore, and then teaching high school in a village in Punjab province. It was in Pakistan that he was ordained as a Catholic priest, on May 5, 1970. He continued his studies at the University of Montreal (1967–1970), where he studied theology, after which he enrolled in 1970 in a doctoral program at McGill University to study Islamic studies, including Arabic and Persian. McGill was a highly regarded center for Islamic studies at the time, and he studied with renowned scholars such as Professor Hermann Landolt (who served as his dissertation advisor), Professor Charles Adams, Professor Toshihiko Izutsu, and Professor Donald Little.

Gerhard Bowering received his doctorate from McGill in 1975, but he had already begun teaching in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Pennsylvania the previous year. He taught there from 1974 to 1984, first as an assistant professor and, from 1981, as an associate professor. He joined the Department of Religious Studies at Yale University with the rank of professor in 1984, where he has been teaching ever since.

He has devoted himself to the study of medieval Sufism and has written a remarkable number of books and articles, influencing generations of scholars in the field. Even so, he has frequently branched out of this area, including as the editor of *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political Thought* (Princeton, 2013). His book on the early Sufi figure Sahl al-Tustarī (d. 283/896), *The Mystical Vision of Existence in Classical Islam: The Qur'ānic Hermeneutics of the Sūfi Sahl at-Tustarī* (Berlin and New York, 1980), represents a benchmark in the study of Sufi thought in relation to the Quran. He went on to edit numerous important works on Sufi thought, including, to mention a few, *The Minor Qur'ān Commentary of Abū 'Abd ar-Raḥmān Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn as-Sulamī* (Beirut,

1995), born out of Bowering's lifelong affection for the thinking of Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī (d. 412/1020). Together with Bilal Orfali, he also edited al-Sulamī's most important treatises, in *Sufi Treatises of Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī* (Beirut, 2009), as well as *Sufi Inquiries and Interpretations of Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī* (Beirut, 2010). Also together with Orfali, he edited an important treatise of Abū Khalaf al-Ṭabarī (d. ca. 470/1077) in *The Comfort of the Mystics: A Handbook and Anthology of Sufism* (Leiden, 2012) as well as its abridgement, *Seeking Solitude: A Short Sufi Guidebook*, a critical Arabic text edition and analysis of *Khalwat al-ākifīn* (Beirut, 2013). Most recently, together with Yousef Casewit, he edited the *Īdāḥ al-ḥikma bi-aḥkām al-ibra* of the Andalusian scholar Ibn Barraĵān (d. 536/1141) as *A Qur'ān Commentary by Ibn Barraĵān of Seville* (Leiden, 2016). In addition to these volumes, he is the author of approximately 100 articles appearing in several languages and on four continents. Many of these are important articles in major encyclopedias dealing with the Islamic world (including the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, the *Encyclopedia Iranica*, and the *Encyclopedia of the Qur'an*). As such, Gerhard Bowering has had an important impact on shaping knowledge in the broad fields of Sufism and Quranic studies, and on determining the course of study of innumerable junior scholars.

Gerhard Bowering has been a member of the American Philosophical Society since 1994, received a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2005–2006, and was a visiting fellow at the Institute of Advanced Study, Princeton, in 1992. He served as a visiting professor in Princeton University (1984) and Innsbruck University, Austria (1992), and also was a research fellow at the American Research Centers of Egypt and Turkey (1981–1982). He is the recipient of the ACLS Best Book Prize in the History of Religion (1981), the Henry Allen Moe Prize in the Humanities, Princeton (1997), and the Book Prize of Iran, awarded in 2017.

The training and mentoring of emerging scholars has been one of the greatest achievements of Gerhard Bowering's professional life. Starting with his time at the University of Pennsylvania and continuing during his years at Yale University, Professor Bowering has dedicated a significant portion of his time and energy to training graduate students. As a result, it is probable that Bowering has trained more students than any other advisor of his generation in the field. Many of them have gone on to distinguished careers of their own, such that he can rightly be called "*Ustād tarāsh*" (the carver of teachers), following the example of the great Sufi figure Najm al-Dīn Kubrā (d. 618/1221), the *Walī tarāsh* (carver of saints), on whom he continues to work. The number of students who have successfully completed doctorates under his direction is so large that the editors of this volume decided to limit the essays in this festschrift to his students, a fitting tribute to a man who has been as much a teacher as a researcher.

Both editors of this festschrift consider themselves fortunate to number among this group of students. Jamal J. Elias began his academic career as a specialist in Islamic studies when he came to study with Professor Bowering at the University of Pennsylvania. When Gerhard Bowering moved to Yale the very next year, Elias elected to follow his advisor, leaving behind a large program and cohort of fellow students for what was then a brand new program, with him as the only student. He considers it a special honor to be the first person to have completed a PhD under Gerhard Bowering. Bilal Orfali completed his PhD in Arabic literature in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at Yale University. He took Professor Bowering's Quran seminar in the spring of 2003–2004 and, since then, has worked closely with him on various projects, visiting him frequently. Together, they have formed an ongoing team to identify and edit great works of Sufism.

Publications by Gerhard Bowering

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PART 1

Quran and Early Islam



Scholarship and Folklore?

A Comparison of the Earliest Sources: ‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr and Wahb b. al-Munabbih

Mareike Koertner

The origins of *maghāzī* and, by extension, *sīra* literature are said to lie in two distinct circles. On the one hand, the field’s pioneers were scholars of *ḥadīth*, which explains the importance scholars ascribed to the *isnād* in assessing the value of individual accounts. On the other hand, narratives and popular tales about Muḥammad’s life were also passed along by word of mouth through storytellers, the *quṣṣās*, who allegedly turned them into a kind of folklore. Both medieval scholars and modern studies have distinguished these two types of literature. The tales of *quṣṣās* have often been viewed as deliberate fabrications—some orientalists in the early twentieth century held that Muḥammad’s biography constituted a product of Muslim veneration rather than an immediate historical account of his life. Scholars like Giorgio Levi Della Vida and Tor Andrae stated that increased veneration for the person of Muḥammad provoked the growth of a hagiographic legend that was crafted on the model of biblical legends and stories of Iranian origin by popular storytellers.¹ Andrae, for instance, concluded that the popular beliefs perpetuated through these tales not only disfigured the historical personality of the Prophet but also altered the very theological concept of prophecy in Islam.² Recent scholarship has established a more nuanced view of the beginnings of *sīra*, in which the ‘scholarly’ tradition and the *quṣṣās* material are not always seen as a clear-cut dichotomy of competing traditions, and *quṣṣās* are viewed as having played a crucial role in the dissemination of religious knowledge in the early Islamic period.

¹ Vida and Levi, *Sira* 441; Andrae, *Die Person Muhammeds* 26–91.

² Andrae, *Die Person Muhammeds* 92f.

1 The *Quṣṣāṣ* and the Spread of Religious Knowledge

Prior to the development of a distinct ‘scholarly’ tradition, Muḥammad’s biography was preserved in the living memory of his Companions, who had embraced Islam at later stages in their lives. Their children, by contrast, were imbibed from infancy with religious teachings and were regular consumers of preaching and religious acculturation. It was their generation’s learned elite who embarked on the promotion of religious teachings.³ During the early conquests, certain individuals circulated the biography of the Prophet along with edifying stories related to Quranic narratives of pre-Islamic peoples and other topics of religious instruction. In the first Islamic century, these individuals would be known as *wā’iz*, *mudhakkir*, or *qāṣṣ*, but the precise meaning of each of these terms remains uncertain.⁴ The Hanbali jurist and theologian Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1200) begins his treatise *Kitāb al-quṣṣāṣ wa-l-mudhakkirīn* with definitions of each of these terms but notes that *qāṣṣ* is now most commonly associated with their practice. But while Ibn al-Jawzī seems to use the terms interchangeably, they do not appear to be fully synonymous either. Only the term *qāṣṣ* appears to have gained the negative connotation of charlatanism over time.⁵ In the early period prior to Ibn al-Jawzī, the *qāṣṣ* addressed a number of religious topics through various methodologies. “They made statements about Quran recitation and commentary, issued legal rulings, transmitted hadith, and engaged in other forms of religious education, including the telling of narratives on religious topics.”⁶ These activities required a thorough education in various religious fields but oftentimes also included nonreligious expertise such as history, biography, and Arabic grammar.⁷ Armstrong has shown that the majority of *quṣṣāṣ* through the end of the Umayyad period were reputable religious scholars, whose ranks included reliable hadith transmitters, as well as Quran reciters and exegetes, jurists and judges.⁸ Even before the realms of political and legal authority had fully crystallized, they operated at the center of a network of individuals who were shaping Islamic law by answering questions concerning ritual and right behavior posed to them by members of their audiences and, thus, contributed to the process by which the nascent

3 Hallaq, *Origins and evolution of Islamic law* 42.

4 Pedersen, *Criticism of the Islamic preacher* 215.

5 Armstrong, *Quṣṣāṣ of early Islam* 4.

6 *Ibid.* 277.

7 ‘Athamina, *al-Qasas* 54.

8 Armstrong, *Quṣṣāṣ of Early Islam* 151; Hallaq, *Origins and evolution of Islamic law* 40.

religion defined itself.⁹ They became a crucial channel of instruction for newly converted individuals and the common people. But they were not merely popular preachers targeting the simple masses. Many officials were appointed to function in a double capacity of judge (*qāḍī*) and *qāṣṣ* in the garrison towns of the expanding Muslim territories, and these appointments seem to have occurred immediately after Mu‘āwīya’s ascension to power in 40/661.¹⁰ Early records of their social associations suggest that *quṣṣāṣ* during the Umayyad period were predominantly mainstream and orthodox scholars.¹¹ Given their overwhelmingly positive reputations, they do not seem to have been prone to fabrication. This stands in stark contrast to the generally held belief that *quṣṣāṣ* were lax and unreliable in hadith transmission.

That is, however, not to say that their activities went unchecked by their environment, because criticism of a few individual preachers occurred early on. The earliest critics were Sufis, who perceived the storytellers’ gatherings as inferior to their own *dhikr* circles. Later, when preaching and storytelling became closely associated with Sufis themselves, critics complained of the wild emotionalism among the audiences at popular meetings.¹² A few scholars rejected *quṣṣāṣ* as a class, claiming they were purveyors of *bid‘a* and that they had an undesirable impact on theological debates.¹³ A more generic criticism of the profession’s activities emerged in the fourth/tenth century, and took its most well-known form in Ibn al-Jawzī’s *Kitāb al-quṣṣāṣ wa-l-mudhakkirīn*.¹⁴ What earned his and other critics’ disapprobation was not the contents of their preaching per se but certain practices of those who engaged in these activities. Some scholars of hadith and jurists worried about the decorum of the *quṣṣāṣ* and certain “practices exercised during their sessions, the public nature of their pronouncements and their divisive political affiliations.”¹⁵ Some critics were also troubled that gatherings around preachers threatened the gender boundaries both among the audiences and through female preachers.¹⁶ Others were concerned by weak or untrustworthy materials that were being transmitted. The authenticity of the material spread by *quṣṣāṣ* was, therefore, only one of many complaints, and oftentimes not the predominant one. Armstrong suggested that the pervasive notion of *quṣṣāṣ* as second-rate scholars, as found

9 Berkey, *Popular preaching* 22–23.

10 Hallaq, *Origins and evolution of Islamic law* 39.

11 Armstrong, *Quṣṣāṣ of early Islam* 151.

12 Berkey, *Popular preaching* 27 f.

13 Armstrong, *Quṣṣāṣ of early Islam* 279.

14 Pedersen, *Criticism of the Islamic preacher* 217.

15 Armstrong, *Quṣṣāṣ of early Islam* 278.

16 Berkey, *Popular preaching* 27–31.

both in medieval Islamic and modern studies, was caused by the progressive categorization of the disciplines of Islamic thought (i.e. grouping scholars into categories such as hadith transmitters, legal scholars, etc.) and the accompanying evolving methodological restrictions placed on hadith transmission.¹⁷ Emerging theological doctrines also appear to have played a role. As the doctrine of the infallibility of prophets developed, for instance, traditions and stories that tarnished the reputation of prophets were rejected and their transmitters marginalized.¹⁸

Later criticism of the *quṣṣāṣ* should not obscure the fact that the majority of early *quṣṣāṣ* were reputable scholars who played an important role in the articulation and diffusion of Islam in the first Islamic centuries. Andrae assumed that *quṣṣāṣ* had operated outside of the framework of scholarship that maintained the integrity of Muḥammad's life story, which was clearly not the case. The absence of such a clear-cut distinction between *quṣṣāṣ* and *muḥaddithūn* raises the question if this proximity and close interaction between the two groups is also reflected in the contents their textual bodies. Do they share a significant number of accounts? How could differences between their narratives be explained not through deliberate fabrication on the side of the *quṣṣāṣ* to attract bigger audiences? A comparative look at the earliest available sources should shed some light on similarities and differences between both strands of engagement with Muḥammad's biography. I will borrow the terms 'scholarly' and 'unauthenticated' that Gregor Schoeler and Andreas Görke coined to designate both groups because these terms emphasize the methodological approaches rather than evaluating the authenticity of their contents.

2 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr and the 'Scholarly' Tradition

One of the 'scholarly' tradition's first main figures to employ a critical approach to the *maghāzī* material was 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr (d. 94/713). 'Urwa was a leading legal specialist of Medina and regular participant at the local *ḥalaqāt*.¹⁹ He belonged to the generation of the *tābi'ūn* and had direct family relations with some of the closest Companions of the Prophet: his mother was Asmā', the daughter of Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq; his maternal aunt was 'Ā'isha, one of the Prophet's wives, who served as his main informant; his grandmother was Ṣafīyya, the daughter of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, whose father, al-Zubayr, had been one

¹⁷ Armstrong, *Quṣṣāṣ of early Islam* 278.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Hallaq, *Origins and evolutions of Islamic law* 64.

of the earliest Companions of the Prophet; and his paternal aunt was Khadija, the Prophet's first wife.²⁰ These relationships enabled him to obtain firsthand accounts of the early days of Islam. He was generally held in high esteem among the scholars of hadith and was considered one of the seven *fuqahā'* of Medina. He lectured on hadith both in a family setting and in public at a mosque, where he is said to have attracted large crowds.²¹ Based on the materials that have come down to us, it is evident that he transmitted accounts on all significant events in the Prophet's life after his call to prophecy. As a transmitter of hadiths and a legal scholar, 'Urwa displayed the intention of compiling reliable traditions even with regards to historical material.²² Like other legal scholars of his time, his approach reflects the early stages of critical hadith studies, in that he supported the material he transmitted with a chain of transmission (*isnād*). The inclusion of *isnāds* was not yet mandatory, and there are indeed some accounts found in 'Urwa's corpus that lack a chain of transmission.²³

'Urwa's student Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī (d. 124/741) followed his teacher in his critical approach to the historical material, even though we still see instances in which he provides no *isnād* at all.²⁴ The systematization of the prophetic biography took further shape in the subsequent generation. Three of al-Zuhrī's students are known to us as the authors of books on *maghāzī*: Mūsā b. 'Uqba (d. 140/758), Ma'mar b. Rāshid (d. 153/770), and Muḥammad b. Ishāq (d. 151/768).²⁵ Mūsā b. 'Uqba presented his material mostly in long, continuous, and often anonymous reports, but he occasionally included sound traditions that were transmitted by acknowledged scholars of *ḥadīth*. Schoeler and Görke suggest that Mūsā did not provide specific *isnāds* for his longer reports, because he compiled them from various and sometimes questionable sources, while the individual reports that are preceded by an accurate *isnād* were taken from the lectures of acknowledged scholars.²⁶ Ma'mar b. Rāshid employed the stricter standards of later hadith scholars by presenting precise *isnāds*.²⁷ Other well-known pioneers of *sīra* literature were less rigorous in authenticating their accounts. Ibn Ishāq mainly used collective *isnāds*.²⁸ Colleagues also criticized Ibn Ishāq severely for various methodological shortcomings, such as using

20 Horovitz, *Earliest biographers* 15 ff.

21 Schoeler, *Charakter und Authentie* 29.

22 Görke and Schoeler, *Die ältesten Berichte über das Leben Muhammads* 270.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid. 271; cf. Motzki, *Der Fiqh des -Zuhrī* 6.

25 Horovitz, *Earliest biographers* 67.

26 Görke and Schoeler, *Die ältesten Berichte über das Leben Muhammads* 273.

27 Ibn Rāshid, *Expeditions* xxii.

28 Görke and Schoeler, *Die ältesten Berichte über das Leben Muhammads* 274.

questionable *isnāds* and accounts transmitted by the *ahl al-kitāb*, frequent citations of fabricated poetry, erroneous genealogies, and particularly for transmitting the works of contemporary scholars without having actually heard them.²⁹ Al-Wāqidī (d. 206/822) used all sources available to him, including written versions of Ibn Ishāq, Mūsā b. ‘Uqba, and ‘Abd al-Razzāq, but he presented partially fictitious collective *isnāds* rather than acknowledging these sources.³⁰ Al-Wāqidī was repudiated by the *muḥaddithūn* but respected with regards to his scholarship on *sīra*, the *maghāzī*, and *fiqh*.³¹ After Ibn Ishāq, Muḥammad b. Sa’d (d. 230/845) is the earliest author of a *sīra* that has been preserved in its entirety. His biography of the Prophet is based, for the most part, on the materials of his teacher, al-Wāqidī, and to a lesser extent on Ibn Ishāq, Abū Ma’shar, and Mūsā b. ‘Uqba.³² Scholars who have become central figures of *sīra* literature did feel a need to authenticate their material and developed standards for this process that were distinct from those used by hadith scholars.

3 Wahb b. Munabbih and the ‘Unauthenticated’ Tradition

The ‘unauthenticated’ tradition, on the other hand, finds its earliest representative in Wahb b. Munabbih (d. 728/32). As a contemporary of ‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr, Wahb also belonged to the same generation as the *tābi‘ūn*, but he lacked ‘Urwa’s formidable connections to the Companions. As a native of Ṣan‘ā’, direct studies under Companions would have required him to travel and sojourn extensively, but we know for certain only that he went on pilgrimage in 99/718.³³ Fragments of his biography of the Prophet, along with the story of David, are preserved in one of the earliest Muslim papyri. Despite this material evidence of Wahb’s concern with the Prophet’s life, a list of his works demonstrates that neither hadith nor Islamic history was his main field of expertise. Wahb’s work primarily covered elements of the pre-Islamic heritage such as the *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā’*, and he is indeed copiously cited as a source for pre-Islamic history by Ibn Ishāq and others. Both Wahb and his brother Hammām b. Munabbih transmitted traditions on the authority of Abū Hurayra and ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Abbās, but only

29 Dürī, *Rise of historical writing* 35 f.

30 Görke and Schoeler, *Die ältesten Berichte über das Leben Muhammads* 121 f.; 142 ff., 183 f.; 276. Regarding the longstanding debate over whether al-Wāqidī in fact used Ibn Ishāq’s work, see: Schoeler, *Charakter und Authentie*, 138–142.

31 Horovitz, *Earliest biographers* 116.

32 Ibid. 121.

33 Khoury, *Wahb b. Munabbih* i, 191 ff., 211; Khoury, Wahb b. Munabbih, in *ET*² xi, 34.

Hammām actually maintained close relationships to these two Companions and specialized in hadith.³⁴ From the few *isnāds* that Wahb provides in his work, we can derive that he knew and correctly employed them whenever possible. However, the vast majority of his accounts do not provide any chain of transmission. The reason for this neglect of *isnāds* probably lies in his lack of personal interaction with these acknowledged scholars; Wahb did not belong to their circles and, therefore, did not partake in their methodology. He is associated mostly with the introduction of *isrāʿīliyyāt* into the Islamic tradition. His approach to biblical material suggests that he drew his information from Jewish oral traditions rather than his own study of the Bible. From his reliance on orally transmitted Jewish material, it has often been surmised that he also took his Islamic material from the oral traditions that circulated among the popular storytellers, the *quṣṣās*, and added those few properly authenticated traditions he had received. Yet, recent scholarship has shown that he was only explicitly linked to the term *qāṣṣ* in two relatively late sources, and even biographers like al-Mizzī, al-Dhahabī, and Ibn Ḥajar, who lived after Ibn al-Jawzī and would have already associated *quṣṣās* with *isrāʿīliyyāt*, did not specifically identify Wahb as a *qāṣṣ*.³⁵ That puts Wahb in an interesting position. Neither residing in Medina nor partaking in the field's methodology of supporting his reports with an *isnād*, Wahb was not accepted among the *muḥaddithūn*. Although scholars frequently named him as a source for pre-Islamic history, his name was never linked with information on the Prophet's life, even though some of his material eventually entered the *sīra* literature anonymously.³⁶ He, therefore, takes a position among the early biographers that quite fits neither the category of *muḥaddith* nor that of *qāṣṣ* but still allows scholars a certain level of interaction with his materials. The proximity in which *quṣṣās* and scholarly material was spread in this period is further evidenced in the representation of *quṣṣās* material in works of *tafsīr*. An analysis of 'Abd al-Razzāq's *tafsīr* reveals that his commentary consisted overwhelmingly of exegesis of the early *quṣṣās*.³⁷ Heribert Horst has shown similar results in his analysis of al-Ṭabarī's *tafsīr*.³⁸ This raises the question of what actually set the two groups apart.

34 Ibn 'Abbās was named about 20 times, Ka'b al-Aḥbār was mentioned less than 10 times, and Abū Hurayra about 5 times; other names occur less frequently; cf. Khoury, *Wahb b. Munabbih* i, 211.

35 Armstrong, *Quṣṣās of early Islam* 94.

36 Khoury, *Wahb b. Munabbih* i, 277.

37 Armstrong, *Quṣṣās of early Islam*, 86 f.

38 Horst, *Überlieferung passim*.

4 Comparison of the Earliest Sources

The main distinguishing factor between the ‘scholarly’ and the ‘unauthenticated’ traditions so far appears to have been their methodological approach (i.e., whether or not they provided chains of transmission to authenticate their material). A comparison of one account common to both textual corpora will show if these traditions also differ in their contents.

‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr’s corpus of traditions on the Prophet’s life has been reconstructed by Gregor Schoeler and Andreas Görke, who traced hadiths going back to ‘Urwa in later works. Georges Khoury has edited the papyri fragments of Wahb b. Munabbih, which are held at Heidelberg. Dated 229/844, these papyri constitute some of the earliest textual evidence of Muslim culture and consist of two texts, the story of David and the biography of the Prophet. The account of the hijra is the only common narrative in both textual bodies and, thus, provides us with an opportunity to directly juxtapose the ‘scholarly’ and the ‘unauthenticated’ account of the same event, serving as a focal point to establish the kinds of narratives circulating within the two traditions.

5 The Account of the Hijra according to ‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr

‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr’s accounts of the hijra are recorded in numerous versions. Two extended accounts were handed down through ‘Urwa’s main transmitters, Hishām b. ‘Urwa and Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī.³⁹ These long versions both link a description of the situations Muslims were facing in Mecca, and the emigrations to Abyssinia and Medina. Hishām b. ‘Urwa’s recension is preserved in the form of a letter ‘Urwa sent to the caliph ‘Abd al-Malik.⁴⁰ The most extensive version of al-Zuhrī’s transmission is narrated on the authority of Ma‘mar b. Rāshid and recorded in ‘Abd al-Razzāq’s *Muṣannaf*.⁴¹ The traditions of Hishām and al-Zuhrī correspond in most central aspects but diverge in numerous details. The

39 In addition to these long versions, there is a tradition of medium length that is transmitted on the authority of Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, as well as a number of shorter traditions that only relate to the hijra itself. For a detailed analysis of these traditions see Görke and Schoeler, *Die ältesten Berichte über das Leben Muhammads* 38–77.

40 The letter is found in al-Ṭabarī, albeit not in a coherent account but interspersed with other traditions; cf. al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rikh* i, 1180 f., 1224 f., 1234 ff. A continuous version of this letter is found in: al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* vi, 246 f., 375. A shorter version of the same letter is found in Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, vi, 212.

41 ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf* v, 384 ff.; cf. Görke and Schoeler, *Die ältesten Berichte über das Leben Muhammads* 49 f.

following constitutes a summary of those elements of 'Urwa's account of the hijra that are common to both Hishām's and al-Zuhrī's transmissions.

After the Prophet starts speaking out against their deities, the Meccans begin to oppress the Muslim community, which leads many believers to revoke their faith. The Prophet advises his community to migrate to Abyssinia, a trading partner of the Quraysh ruled by a Christian ruler, the Negus. In the meantime, the number of Muslims in Mecca increases, and some of the leaders of Quraysh convert to Islam. The pressure on the Muslim community lessens for a while.⁴² The emigrants return from Abyssinia, and many of the Anṣār embrace Islam, which leads the Quraysh to increase their pressure on the Muslim community. Seventy people from Medina meet with the Prophet in al-'Aqaba and guarantee him protection.⁴³ The Prophet advises the Muslims to emigrate to Medina. Abū Bakr asks the Prophet for permission to emigrate with the others but is, in turn, asked to stay. He purchases two camels and takes care of them until the Prophet is given permission to emigrate. 'Ā'isha relates that the Prophet one day came to their house during midday, which was contrary to his custom of coming either in the morning or in the evening. Abū Bakr realizes the unusual time and anticipates something has happened. The Prophet asks other people to leave the house, and Abū Bakr assures him that he is alone with his daughters. The Prophet relates to him that he has received permission to emigrate to Medina and confirms that Abū Bakr is allowed to accompany him. Abū Bakr offers him one of the two camels, and the Prophet insists on buying it from him. 'Āmir b. Fuhayra, a maternal half brother of 'Ā'isha and 'Abdallāh b. Abī Bakr, was previously a slave of Ṭufayl b. 'Abdallāh, but after embracing Islam he was bought and released by Abū Bakr. At the time of the hijra, Abū Bakr owned a sheep. He orders 'Āmir to drive the sheep to the cave of Thawr every night, where Abū Bakr and the Prophet milk it. A man from the Banū 'Abd b. 'Adī takes the camels; he is hired as a guide despite being a pagan. 'Abdallāh b. Abī Bakr brings news from Mecca every night, and once the turmoil about the hijra subsides in Mecca, the Prophet and Abū Bakr, together with 'Āmir b. Fuhayra and their guide from the Banū 'Abd b. 'Adī, set out. Abū Bakr and 'Āmir b. Fuhayra take turns riding (the camel).⁴⁴ They reach the Banū 'Amr b. Awf before noon and are said to have stayed with them for two days, even though the Banū 'Amr b. Awf claim that it was longer. The Prophet then leads his camel until he reaches the residences of the Banū al-Najjār and points at a *mirbad*.⁴⁵

42 al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh* i, 1180 f.

43 Ibid. 1224 f.

44 The letter includes a detailed description of their route; cf. *ibid.*

45 al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh* i, 1234 ff.

6 The Account of the Hijra according to Wahb b. Munabbih

The Quraysh gather to discuss how to treat the growing threat of Muḥammad and his community. Following the advice of Iblīs, the Quraysh decide to kill the Prophet. Gabriel comes to Muḥammad and transmits a Quranic verse⁴⁶ and relates to the Prophet what happened during the meeting of the Quraysh.⁴⁷ Muḥammad comes to Abū Bakr at midday and tells him about the newly revealed verse, the meeting of the Quraysh and the presence of Iblīs, and their plot against him. Abū Bakr is then sent out to spy on the Quraysh.⁴⁸ The Prophet then tells Abū Bakr to prepare for their departure at night. Wahb then quotes ‘Alī,⁴⁹ who relates in a first-person account how the Prophet ordered him to sleep in the Prophet’s place that night. The Prophet tells ‘Alī that he will pass the Quraysh, and the latter expresses concern about Muḥammad’s safety, who then assures ‘Alī of God’s protection. ‘Alī follows the Prophet to see what happens, and Muḥammad tells him to go to Abū Bakr and convey to him that Muḥammad will be waiting for him at the cave of Thawr. Muḥammad adds that Gabriel is walking in front of him, spreading his wings to shield him from the eyes of the Quraysh. The Prophet takes a handful of soil and scatters it over the Quraysh’s heads. Then Abū Bakr comes to ‘Alī, and the latter relates to him what the Prophet had said.⁵⁰ Wahb then quotes Abū Bakr’s first-person account, stating that he followed the Prophet’s traces. The Prophet, mistaking him for one of his enemies, rushes and stumbles, causing himself to bleed. Abū Bakr, witnessing this, identifies himself to the Prophet by clearing his voice, and the Prophet continues on his way at a slower pace, until they both reach the cave of Thawr.⁵¹ Inside the cave are twelve holes, ten of which Abū Bakr fills with pieces of cloth he tears from his garments. He covers the remaining two holes with his back but is stung by a scorpion. The Prophet notices that Abū Bakr is in pain and places his hands on his companion’s leg, saying: “Through the breath of God, I will raise you up and God will heal you from everything that causes you pain.” Abū Bakr is relieved of his pain.⁵² The scene then shifts to a first-person account of ‘Alī relating how Abū Jahl and the Quraysh came in the morning to kill the Prophet. He tells them that Muḥammad passed them during the night

46 Q 8:30.

47 Khoury, *Wahb b. Munabbih* i, 136 (PB 6, 17–21).

48 Wahb supports these passages with two proper *isnāds*, the first one going back to ‘Ā’isha and the second one stopping with himself; cf. *ibid.* 136 ff. (PB 6, 21–24; PB 6, 24–27.7).

49 This time there is no *isnād* provided; cf. Khoury, *Wahb b. Munabbih* i, 140 ff. (PB 6, 24–7.13).

50 Khoury, *Wahb b. Munabbih* i, 138.

51 *Ibid.*, 142 (PB 8, 13–16).

52 *Ibid.*, 142 (PB 8, 17–22).

while they were awake.⁵³ Abū Jahl orders to send messengers all the way to Yathrib to inform the people that Muḥammad and Abū Bakr have escaped and offers a reward of 100 camels for retrieving the fugitives.⁵⁴ Umayya b. Khalaf and Abū Jahl seek Usāma b. Fāyiq to track their traces. At first he states that all traces look the same, but he then finds the place where the Prophet had passed the Quraysh, which they deny. He then finds the place where the Prophet had started bleeding and follows the traces to the cave of Thawr.⁵⁵ The narrative again switches to Abū Bakr's first-person account, stating that he began to fear when he heard a noise outside the cave but that the Prophet said: "Do not be afraid. God is with us." The narrative voice switches back to the third person, proclaiming that God sent a spider that, within an hour, through magic, made a cobweb which usually would have taken a year to be spun. God also sent an angel in the form of a dove to the cave. Then Abū Bakr hears the voices of their pursuers who reached the cave but cannot seem to find any traces of them and assume that God is shielding the Prophet. The pursuers pass the cave, and someone suggests that Muḥammad and Abū Bakr might have sought refuge in the cave but quickly reject that idea because neither the cobweb nor the dove would be in place if anyone had entered the cave.⁵⁶ 'Alī and Asmā' bt. Abī Bakr bring food to the cave. On the third day, Muḥammad orders 'Alī to rent three camels and a guide. Muḥammad specifies that the guide should be from 'Abd al-Qays, a tribe that is said to have been Christian. 'Alī hires 'Abdallāh b. Urayqaṭ, and the account makes mention that he was passionately reading books, which is most likely to indicate that he was familiar with Christian scripture. The guide sees the Prophet's 'seal of prophecy' on his shoulder. He kisses it and embraces Islam.⁵⁷

They set out, 'Abdallāh b. Urayqaṭ leading the way, and they pass the Banū Mudlij. One of them recognizes the Prophet. Surāqa mounts his racing horse and follows them. Abū Bakr realizes that they are being pursued and suggests that Muḥammad asks God to stop Surāqa. The Prophet follows his suggestion, and the legs of Surāqa's horse become paralyzed and sink into the sand. Surāqa asks the Prophet to free his horse and promises not to follow them. The horse is set free, and Surāqa talks to Muḥammad until he sees his father's men approach. Surāqa returns to them in order to divert them.⁵⁸

53 This first-person account again lacks the *isnād*; *ibid.* 142 ff. (PB 8,22–9,11).

54 *Ibid.* 144 (PB 9,12–15).

55 *Ibid.* 144 (PB 9,15–22).

56 *Ibid.* 144 ff. (PB 9,22–10,10)

57 This passage closes with some verses of poetry, presumably recited by 'Abdallāh b. Urayqaṭ, mentioning that "God protects His Messenger"; *ibid.* 146 ff. (PB 10,11–24).

58 *Ibid.* 148 ff. (PB 11,1–17).

Muḥammad continues to Medina and passes Umm Maʿbad al-Khuzāʿiyya's camp. A third-person narrator praises her generosity and kindness. The Prophet and his companions ask for food, but she cannot provide them with any due to a winter drought. Muḥammad sees a sheep and asks whether it has milk. When Umm Maʿbad denies this, he asks permission to try to milk it and renames it 'Baraka.' The milk satiates him and his men, and he milks it a second time for Umm Maʿbad. After a while, Abū Maʿbad returns home and asks about the milk, indicating that all the sheep are out in the pastures grazing. Umm Maʿbad tells him about 'a blessed man' who came by, and she gives him a description of his appearance. Abū Maʿbad realizes that it was the fugitive who the Quraysh are looking for and regrets not having met him.⁵⁹

The next morning, the inhabitants of Mecca hear an unidentified voice relating that the Prophet stopped at Umm Maʿbad's camp. Muḥammad and his Companions are praised, and the voice relates how the Prophet drew milk from a barren sheep.⁶⁰ When Muḥammad and Abū Bakr reach Medina, Abū Bakr sends a letter to the Quraysh mentioning that the people—with the exception of Surāqa—still demand a proof for the Prophet's cause and relates what happened to Surāqa's horse.⁶¹ When the letter reaches Mecca, Abū Jahl and the Banū Makhzūm go to Abū Usāma al-Fāyiq to reproach him for his behavior toward Muḥammad, but Abū Usāma states that their inability to harm the Prophet is due to God's protection. The notables of the Quraysh also seek to reproach Abū Usāma. Abū Jahl sends a letter to the Banū Mudlij blaming Surāqa, who responds with a letter explaining the situation of his horse's legs sinking into the ground.⁶²

The Prophet arrives in the oasis of Medina.⁶³ After staying in Qibā' for a couple of days, he offers Friday prayers in Medina. When various Anṣār invite him to stay with them, the Prophet asks them to return to their houses and rides his camel with loose reigns because he wants to leave the decision of his residence to God. People stop him four times asking him to stay with them, but the Prophet asserts his intention to wait until his camel kneels somewhere. His camel finally chooses a location, which the Prophet buys from two orphans, and his residential complex is built there.⁶⁴

59 Ibid. 150 ff. (PB 11,18–12,14).

60 Ibid. 152 ff. (PB 12,15–21).

61 Ibid. 156 ff. (PB 13,8–17).

62 Ibid. 156 ff. (PB 13,17–15,6).

63 The dates of the hijra are given: the Prophet left Mecca on the first day of Rabīʿ al-Awwal and arrived at Qibā' on the fifteenth of that month; cf. *ibid.* 160 (PB 15, 7–8).

64 Ibid. 160 ff. (PB 15, 7–17,13).

7 Comparison between Accounts of ‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr and Wahb b. Munabbih

The juxtaposition of ‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr and Wahb b. Munabbih’s accounts of the hijra shows considerable differences in terms of their content. The following table lists elements that differ between the account of ‘Urwa and Wahb, as well as the divergences among both strands of transmission for ‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr’s account of the hijra. It also indicates some divergences within the transmission of Hishām b. ‘Urwa; the recension of the letter to ‘Abd al-Malik is designated with (a); shorter traditions that were transmitted by Abū Usāma ← Hishām ← ‘Urwa are designated with (b); and a short tradition on the authority of Ḥammād b. Salama ← Hishām ← ‘Urwa is designated by (c).

The juxtaposition of ‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr and Wahb b. Munabbih’s accounts of the hijra shows considerable differences in terms of their content. The most striking difference lies in the numerous additional details and supernatural elements in Wahb’s account. In addition to those, there are a number of minor differences. It is remarkable, however, that these accounts contain little contradictory information, such as whether Muḥammad and Abū Bakr left Mecca on foot or riding camels, or the identity of their guide to Medina. In most cases, the divergence could simply result from a selective process in which the compiler decided to omit some aspects of an existing account. This is not only manifest in comparing the accounts of ‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr in comparison to Wahb b. Munabbih, but also occurs within the various recensions of ‘Urwa’s account. Regarding the provisions for the Prophet and Abū Bakr, for instance, Wahb does not mention sheep being driven to the cave; recension (a) of ‘Urwa’s account, on the other hand, mentions the sheep but not the food preparations of Asmā’ bt. Abī Bakr. Recension (b) includes an independent hadith relating to Asmā’’s food preparation, and recension (c) finally combines the two. It is therefore plausible that the two pieces of information are complementary but not always mentioned within the same tradition since ‘Urwa sometimes only transmitted some passages relating to certain themes. In his letter to ‘Abd al-Malik, for instance, references to the emigration to Abyssinia are kept general, while the recension of al-Zuhri places its focus on Abū Bakr’s encounter with Ibn al-Daghina and thus presents the Muslims’ situation in Mecca and the desire to emigrate through the personal experience of Abū Bakr.

Schoeler and Görke have suggested that the circulation of longer and shorter accounts that contain varying degrees of details indicates that ‘Urwa himself presented the material differently by combining a number of narrative ele-

TABLE 1.1 Comparison Hijra accounts of ‘Urwa and Wahb

‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr → Hishām b. al-Zubayr	‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr → Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhri	Wahb b. Munabbih
	<p>‘Urwa inserts account from ‘Ā’isha: Abū Bakr decided to emigrate to Abyssinia; he meets Ibn al-Daghina, who offers him protection. Ibn al-Daghina consults with the Quraysh, who impose a condition to Abū Bakr’s protection: he may pray and recite the Quran in his house only. Abū Bakr establishes a prayer space outside of his house; members of Quraysh insist on their requirement; Abū Bakr releases Ibn al-Daghina from his vow of protection.</p>	
<p>70 people from Medina meet with the Prophet at al-‘Aqaba and guarantee protection to the Muslims. The Prophet advises his people to emigrate to Medina. Reference to Q 8:39. Abū Bakr wishes to move to Medina but follows the Prophet’s request to stay.</p>	<p>The Prophet has a dream about the emigration’s destination: a landscape with date-bearing palm trees between two lava plains. Many Muslims emigrate to Medina.</p>	<p>Gabriel comes to the Prophet and informs him of the Quraysh’s intention of killing him. Reference to Q 8:30. The Prophet comes to Abū Bakr to tell him about the plot and the newly revealed verse. He informs Abū Bakr to prepare for their departure at night.</p>
<p>Abū Bakr has been taking care of two camels until the Prophet receives permission to emigrate. The two ride together to the cave of Thawr.</p>	<p>Abū Bakr feeds two of his camels with leaves from the Samur tree. He offers the Prophet one of the camels as a gift, but Muḥammad insists on buying the camel from Abū Bakr.</p>	<p>The Prophet leaves Mecca on foot. Abū Bakr follows him, on foot as well. ‘Alī joins them at the cave and is sent to hire three camels and a guide.</p>
<p>(a) ‘Abdallāh b. Abī Bakr brings news from Mecca every night. ‘Āmir b. Fuhayra brings Abū Bakr’s sheep (together with sheep from his own flocks) to the cave so that Abū Bakr and the Prophet can have the sheep’s milk.</p>	<p>Food for the Prophet and Abū Bakr is being prepared (possibly before they leave). Asmā’ ties the bag with her girdle, from which her nickname <i>dhāt al-niṭāqayn</i> derives. ‘Abdallāh b. Abī Bakr brings news from Medina. ‘Āmir b. Fuhayra drives sheep to the cave for the Prophet to milk them.</p>	<p>‘Alī and Asmā’ bt. Abī Bakr bring food to the cave.</p>

TABLE 1.1 Comparison Hijra accounts of 'Urwa and Wahb (*cont.*)

'Urwa b. al-Zubayr → Hishām b. al-Zubayr	'Urwa b. al-Zubayr → Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī	Wahb b. Munabbih
(b) Very similar to (a) but no messenger from Mecca mentioned. (While Asmā' is not mentioned, there is an independent <i>ḥadīth</i> relating the food preparations, Asmā's nickname, and 'Abdallāh b. Abī Bakr taking the food to the cave.)		
(c) 'Abdallāh b. Abī Bakr brings news, 'Āmir b. Fuhayra brings sheep, Asmā' bt. Abī Bakr prepares food, which she ties with her girdle and is therefore called <i>dhāt al-niṭāqayn</i> .		
(a) Hijra to Medina is undertaken by the Prophet, Abū Bakr, 'Āmir b. Fuhayra, and a guide from the Banū 'Abd al-'Adī.	A man from the 'Abd al-'Adī is trusted by Abū Bakr even though he is still a pagan; he takes care of the camels. Hijra to Medina is undertaken by the Prophet, Abū Bakr, 'Āmir b. Fuhayra, and the guide from the Banū 'Abd al-'Adī.	Hijra to Medina is undertaken by the Prophet, Abū Bakr, and their guide riding three camels. The guide is 'Abdallāh b. Urayqit, a pagan who reads books, presumably religious scripture, and thus recognizes the 'sign of prophecy' on the Prophet's shoulder. He embraces Islam.
(b) Guide from the Banū 'Abd al-'Adī is not mentioned.		
(c) Hijra is undertaken by the Prophet, Abū Bakr, and 'Āmir b. Fuhayra; Abū Bakr and 'Āmir take turns in riding one of the camels.		
(c) On their way to Medina, a present from Ṭalḥa b. 'Ubayd Allāh reaches Abū Bakr. The present consists of white garments, which they wear upon entering Medina.	The Prophet and Abū Bakr encounter al-Zubayr on their way to Medina. He is part of a caravan travelling from Syria to Mecca and presents them with white garments.	

ments and details.⁶⁵ The technique of combining various events into coherent narratives was, therefore, not restricted to the realm of 'unauthenticated' narratives like that of Wahb b. Munabbih, who presented his entire *sīra* in one continuous narrative. We find longer accounts in 'Urwa's corpus that combine the description of the Muslims' situation in Mecca, the emigration to Abyssinia,

65 Görke and Schoeler, *Die ältesten Berichte über das Leben Muhammads* 75.

and the hijra, as well as the shorter individual accounts of each of these events. Schoeler and Görke have pointed to the fact that the independent recensions of Hishām b. ‘Urwa and al-Zuhri are close enough in content to assume that ‘Urwa himself already combined various themes and elements into one narrative.⁶⁶ These acts of combining or compartmentalizing the accounts are indicative of two trends among the ‘scholarly’ tradition: (1) that even critical scholars did not necessarily transmit their material verbatim but rather attempted to encapsulate the meaning, and (2) that this process required them to select certain elements and omit others. This aspect of selectivity may explain the complete absence of certain elements in ‘Urwa’s account.

The greatest divergence between the accounts of ‘Urwa and Wahb is the plethora of supernatural elements that are only contained in the *sīra* of Wahb. As such, the presence of Iblīs among the Quraysh, the Prophet passing the Quraysh unnoticed, the healing of Abū Bakr, the concealment of the cave’s entrance with a cobweb, and the encounter with Surāqa are absent in all recensions of ‘Urwa’s account. The absence of these accounts in the earliest source has led Schoeler and Görke to conclude that the ‘scholarly’ tradition underwent a noticeable development between the earliest traditions, such as the corpus of ‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr, and later *maghāzī* works, such as those of Ibn Ishāq, Ibn Hishām, or al-Wāqidi. They state that the distinguishing features of the later works are literary embellishments, dramatic additions to the narrative, the addition of miracle stories, and the increasing significance of certain persons.⁶⁷ This conclusion is based on several observations: ‘Urwa puts his focus almost exclusively on the Medinan period, with the only events he describes preceding the hijra being the first revelation and the situation of the Muslim community in Mecca that led to the emigration to Medina.⁶⁸ Many events that form generally accepted aspects of the Prophet’s life in later *sīra* works, such as his genealogy, stories about his grandfather ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib and his father ‘Abdallāh, Muḥammad’s birth, and the years of his childhood and adolescence, are missing in ‘Urwa’s traditions. Moreover, accounts of miracles do not play any important role.⁶⁹ But the absence of both Muḥammad’s pre-prophetic period and his alleged miracles from ‘Urwa’s accounts does not necessarily have to be proof for the linear development of *sīra* literature. This view of an evolving ‘scholarly’ tradition is built on two premises. First, it presupposes that ‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr’s corpus is representative of the entire scholarly engagement

66 Ibid. 74.

67 Ibid. 264.

68 Ibid. 275 f.

69 Ibid. 264.

with the Prophet's biography at this time. Closely linked to this is the second premise, that *sīra* literature underwent a linear development that started with the original life story of the Prophet, which only encompassed his later life after his call to prophecy and did not contain any miracles. Later biographies were then supplemented with narratives of the period prior to the beginning of revelation, as well as miracles throughout his life. Thus, the biography of the historical figure was transformed into hagiographical legends. *Quṣṣāṣ* material is usually considered to be the origin of the miraculous or folkloristic material added to the 'factual' *sīra*. The period of these addenda is usually considered to have occurred in the generation subsequent to al-Zuhrī (d. 124/741).⁷⁰ This view, therefore, assumes that the 'scholarly' *sīra* tradition during 'Urwa's lifetime generally did not include prophetic miracles. For this view to maintain its validity, we have to assume that none of the miraculous narratives were in circulation prior to or contemporary with Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī and are found exclusively in *quṣṣāṣ* materials. There are, however, numerous 'miraculous' narratives that already circulated among the earliest *sīra* scholars, including 'Urwa himself.

8 Miracles in the Corpus of 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr

Although 'Urwa's account of the hijra does not include any miracles, his accounts of other events in the Prophet's life suggest that he did not generally deny the notion of prophetic miracles. 'Urwa's account of the treaty of Ḥudaybiya, for instance, recounts the Prophet's revival of a dry well. The account is transmitted in numerous long versions by al-Zuhrī, as well as in two long versions by Hishām b. 'Urwa.⁷¹ These accounts all include the narrative of the Prophet's men facing scarcity of water at Ḥudaybiya. The Prophet takes one of the arrows from his quiver and orders one of his Companions to stir the well with it. The formerly dry well then starts to overflow with water.⁷² In addition to the versions transmitted by al-Zuhrī and Hishām b. 'Urwa, there are traditions going back to Abū l-Aswad independently of al-Zuhrī.⁷³ According to this version, the Muslims reach Ḥudaybiya during intense heat but have access to

70 Dūrī, *Rise of historical writing* 30; Görke and Schoeler, *Die ältesten Berichte über das Leben Muhammads* 275 f.

71 Görke and Schoeler, *Die ältesten Berichte über das Leben Muhammads* 186.

72 Görke, *Historical tradition* 241; cf. Görke and Schoeler, *Die ältesten Berichte über das Leben Muhammads* 188, 194, 202, 208, respectively.

73 Görke, *Historical tradition* 256 ff.; cf. Görke and Schoeler, *Die ältesten Berichte über das Leben Muhammads* 186.

only one well. The Prophet rinses his mouth, pours the water into the well, and stirs it with an arrow, which leads to the well overflowing with water.⁷⁴ Görke has pointed out that this narrative may only contain certain elements of 'Urwa's account but not actually go back to him, given that it encompasses many elements that are found in no other hadith collection or historiographical work. Nevertheless, the parallels to 'Urwa's account are obvious. Finally, there is a report going back to 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr without being part of the long versions of either al-Zuhrī or Hishām b. 'Urwa that is transmitted on the authority of Yazīd b. Rūmān and Ibn Ishāq. According to this account, Gabriel miraculously punished four people for ridiculing the Prophet. Gabriel throws a leaf into the face of Aswad b. al-Muṭṭalib, which causes him to become blind; he then points at the stomach of Aswad b. 'Abdyaghūth, which begins to swell, and he dies of hydropsy. Next, Gabriel points at the inside of the foot of al-Āṣ b. al-Wā'il, who then steps on a thorn and dies from the wound. Finally, Gabriel points at the head of al-Ḥārith b. al-Ṭulāṭila, which then suppurates, leading to his death.⁷⁵

The accounts transmitted by Abū l-Aswad and Yazīd b. Rūmān may not actually go back to 'Urwa himself, given that they do not occur in any of the longer versions of 'Urwa's main transmitters. However, the references to a water miracle at Ḥudaybiya were transmitted independently by al-Zuhrī and Hishām b. 'Urwa and, therefore, provide sufficient evidence that 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr did not generally deny the possibility of miraculous events in the Prophet's lifetime. Major *maghāzī* scholars in the generation after 'Urwa, such as 'Āṣim b. 'Umar b. Qatāda (d. ca. 119/737) and Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī, include a number of references to supernatural events that occur around the Prophet. A common motif in these early accounts is that of predicting or announcing Muḥammad's prophecy. Knowledge of the future prophecy is associated with soothsayers and astronomers,⁷⁶ sacrificial animals,⁷⁷ *jinn*,⁷⁸ and Jews who identify and confirm

74 Görke, *Historical tradition* 256 ff.

75 al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* vii, 550; Ibn Hishām, *Sīra* i, 410; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya* iii, 106; cf. Görke and Schoeler, *Die ältesten Berichte über das Leben Muhammads* 71 f.

76 'Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf* v, 343.

77 al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh* i, 1065 f.

78 Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt* i, 141. The *jinn* announce the beginning of revelation or the hijra and their inability to access heaven to overhear the discourses of the angels as they used to. This account draws on the belief that, prior to Islam, *jinn* used to overhear the conversations of angels. However, from the advent of Islam, they were hindered from doing so, and those *jinn* who still tried to were chased away by shooting stars (*shihāb*), as is described in various verses of the Quran (cf. Q 15:17–18; 37:6–10; 67:5; 72:8–9).

Muḥammad based on knowledge from Hebrew scriptures.⁷⁹ There are also a number of less frequent motifs, such as the water miracle that is already found in all recensions of ‘Urwa’s corpus. In al-Zuhrī’s body of literature, this account is linked to the motif of divine protection of the Prophet, since his camel’s reluctance to proceed along a specific path is interpreted by Muḥammad as God’s protective interference.⁸⁰ ‘Āṣim’s account of Salmān al-Farīsī’s manumission details how gold increased in weight after Muḥammad touched it with his tongue and, thus, met the negotiated conditions for Salmān’s freedom.⁸¹ ‘Āṣim, furthermore, relates a story of his grandfather’s eyes being healed by the Prophet during the Battle of Uḥud.⁸²

Such a growth in material among the scholars of al-Zuhrī’s generation might be explained by assuming that the material was already in circulation among the scholars of ‘Urwa’s generation but not transmitted by ‘Urwa himself. The fact that ‘Urwa mentioned a miraculous event in passing, but related only very few such events himself, may result simply from his selective choice rather than from lack of such material among the scholarly circles. A similar process occurred with regard to Muḥammad’s life story prior to his call to prophecy. Although ‘Urwa restricted himself mostly to events of the Medinan period, all three of the major *maghāzī* scholars of the subsequent generation, ‘Abdallāh b. Abī Bakr b. Muḥammad (d. ca. 120/738), ‘Āṣim b. ‘Umar b. Qatāda, and ‘Urwa’s student al-Zuhrī, transmitted material on the Prophet’s entire life, including his youth and early years. ‘Abd al-Razzāq’s recension of al-Zuhrī’s *maghāzī*, for instance, already includes many accounts of the Prophet’s conception, birth, childhood, and adolescence, which are usually connected with later *sīra* works.⁸³ Prior to the beginning of the revelation, Muḥammad’s life may not have been under the same scrutiny and, therefore, not as rigorously attested to as it was during the prophetic era. Yet, the *tābi‘ūn*, particularly ‘Urwa himself, certainly had direct access to the collective memory of the Meccan community to draw information on the time before Muḥammad’s call to prophecy. Although ‘Urwa gained prominence as one of the earliest compilers of *maghāzī*, it has to be borne in mind that he was primarily a scholar of hadith and one of Medina’s leading *fuqahā’*. His focus on the Medinan period could thus

79 al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rikh* i, 1065f.; Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt* i, 134; Ibn Ishāq, *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh* 93. A very similar reference is found in Ibn Kathīr, *al-Sīra* i, 291.

80 ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf* v, 332f.

81 Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt* i, 156. An extended version of this account is found in Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Sīra* i, 241.

82 Qāḍī ‘Iyāq, *al-Shifā* 321f.; al-Iṣbahānī, *Dalā’il al-nubuwwa* ii, 2f.

83 ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf* v, 313–320.

simply be the result of his professional interests as a scholar. Given that the life of the Prophet prior to his call to prophecy bears hardly any legal implications, it was probably of little interest to him. The same might be true for supernatural events. The rarity of miraculous accounts in 'Urwa's corpus is therefore not as much based on the scholars' general rejection of the notion of miracles as part of Muḥammad's biography, as early Western scholars like Andrae have suggested. These kinds of narratives were already part of the scholarly discourse in al-Zuhri's generation and possibly earlier. If these assumptions are accurate, then 'Urwa's corpus might not necessarily be representative of all the accounts circulated by his generation of scholars, and supernatural events such as the ones Wahb recounts may have been part of the earliest discourse. Armstrong has shown that, although Wahb b. Munabbih came to be affiliated with stories of pre-Islamic prophets, the early sources rarely refer to him explicitly as a *qāṣṣ*. This might indicate that the earliest biographers did not view him as such.⁸⁴

9 Conclusion

The overlapping texts between 'Urwa's and Wahb's corpora on the prophetic biography are limited to the accounts of the hijra. They are, therefore, insufficient to provide a general overview of the materials that were in circulation among the earliest 'scholarly' and 'unauthenticated' traditions. Nor do they allow us to trace the trajectory of individual narratives entering the *sīra* literature over time. They do show, however, that the two strands oftentimes contain very similar materials and do not contradict, but rather complement, each other in many instances. Divergences in details occur not only between 'Urwa's and Wahb's accounts but also between various transmissions of 'Urwa's material. The greatest divergence between the two narratives lies in the numerous supernatural elements that are found only in Wahb's corpus. This does not necessarily support the view that the 'scholarly' tradition did not include such elements in its discourse, particularly given that 'Urwa himself includes at least one such event in a different account, and that scholars of the subsequent generation all included various supernatural accounts of Muḥammad in their collections. All of this suggests that the discourse on Muḥammad's biography still allowed for more flexibility in the material, depending on its intended audience or purpose, and also that there was not yet a clear-cut dichotomy between

84 Armstrong, *Quṣṣās of early Islam* 94.

the 'scholarly' and 'unauthenticated' traditions. This textual comparison thus corroborates more recent research about the religious and social roles *quṣṣās* played in the first Islamic century and suggests that religious scholars and storytellers operated in overlapping social circles.

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The Rise of Islam in a Judeo-Christian Context

Jonathan E. Brockopp

One of the hallmarks of Gerhard Bowering's minor writings is his interest in Muslims' interaction with religious others, whether conceptually in pieces on "awakening" or "tolerance,"¹ or historically at specific moments in time.² In one short article, "The Qur'ān as the Voice of God," in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*,³ Bowering observes that the Quran has "a significant relationship to the tradition of the Jewish and Christian scriptures." Rejecting the notion that biblical texts—whether canonical or apocryphal—were a direct source for the Quran, he argues for a common "oral lore" that was communicated to Muhammad in Arabic.⁴ In this article, I take up some of the challenges in this fourteen-year-old article, speculating on the tasks of collection and canonization by the early Muslim community.⁵ It is my contention, however, that Bowering's notion of a common oral lore necessarily implies that the boundaries among Muslim, Jewish, and Christian Arabs were not so clear during Muhammad's lifetime, and also that early Muslim communities still maintained significant relationships to Jewish and Christian traditions well after the death of the prophet Muhammad.

Given what we know about the history of religious emergence, this should not be a particularly controversial suggestion, but unfortunately, some modern authors misrepresent the earliest period of Islam in one of two ways. On the one hand, apologists regard the early community of the Prophet's Companions as *al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ*, a group blessed by their proximity to Muhammad and so participants in a "golden age" of correct practice.⁶ Such a view represents the past as an ideal example for Muslims to strive for—a worthy use of religious history but one that diminishes the actual challenges faced by this community. On the other hand, extreme skeptics doubt whether Muhammad existed at all

1 Bowering, *Erwachen*; Bowering with Gramlich, Heinen, Crollius, and Troll, *Toleranz*.

2 Bowering, *Jesuits*; Bowering, *Challenged*.

3 Bowering, *Qur'ān*.

4 *Ibid.* 347.

5 *Ibid.* 351.

6 Apologists hew to Fred Donner's "descriptive approach" to Muslim history. Donner, *Narratives* 5–8. I include here both popular authors, such as Karen Armstrong and Reza Aslan, as well as blogs and websites written for pious consumption.

and regard most literary sources as pious fictions.⁷ Both views miss the fact that the early accounts do not present a unified view of Muslim history; rather, they document significant disagreement about the meaning of important events, as well as widespread confusion on how to be a Muslim.⁸

The difference may largely be one of perspective. Radiocarbon dating seems to vindicate very early dates for Quran fragments, suggesting a pious devotion to this religious text already from the mid-seventh century.⁹ Recent work by Asma Hilali and others on the Sanaa Palimpsest bears witness to a historical community focused on this text, its preservation, and transmission.¹⁰ But there is no reason to believe that this community was unified in its attitude toward the Quran. Certainly, it was small, so small that it seems insignificant from the perspective of major world religious traditions, especially Christianity, which dominated this cultural area, but also Judaism and Zoroastrianism.

To be sure, the conquests happened; the Persian Empire fell, and the Byzantine Empire lost much of its territory, but what took its place in the seventh century? Certainly not a self-consciously Islamic empire on the order of Hārūn al-Rashīd's 'Abbasid caliphate. After all, Richard Bulliet estimates that the population of Iran and Syria around the year 750 was less than 10 percent Muslim, which extrapolates down to a few percent or less for earlier periods.¹¹ Bulliet's study corroborates material evidence from the Late Antique that shows a thriving network of monasteries, churches, and other institutions that have continued to serve as centers of Christian learning from the early Muslim period up until our own day.¹² They have left behind numerous examples of their activity, including richly decorated buildings¹³ and manuscripts, such as a magnificent Syriac Gospel produced in 634 and preserved in Damascus for centuries.¹⁴

7 Examples from recent scholarship include Nevo and Koren, *Crossroads* 247–251, Popp, *Early history* 53. These represent an extreme position, and most introductory texts hew to a middle ground. For discussion, see Brockopp, *Interpreting material evidence* 126–134.

8 Donner, *Narratives* 26. Shaddel, 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr.

9 Dutton, Umayyad fragment; Sadeghi and Bergmann, *Codex*. Cf. Déroche, *Qur'ans* 11–14.

10 For a fascinating insight into a trace of this work visible in a palimpsest, see Hilali, *Le palimpseste*, and Hilali, *Sanaa Palimpsest*.

11 Bulliet, *Conversion*; see the graphs on pp. 23 and 109. These numbers are made even smaller by the fact that these regions were sparsely populated to begin with and that such Muslims as may have existed were not unified in their conception of what it meant to be a Muslim. It is also important to emphasize the limitations of this data, which say nothing directly about this earliest period. See, for example, Kennedy, *Review*.

12 For examples, see contributions by Whitcomb, Griffith, al-Qāḍī, and others to Borrut and Donner, *Christians*.

13 Evans and Ratliff, *Byzantium* 118–119.

14 Brock, *Syriac views* 9; the manuscript is described in Assfalg, *Verzeichnis* 8–15. Fol. 284v

Therefore, the notion of a Muslim conquest or of a Muslim empire in the seventh century of the Common Era needs serious qualification. Even if we regard the leadership as Muslim, the majority of the population certainly was not.

With such scant data, it is all the more important that we carefully examine our theoretical presumptions, our way of seeing the information. The traditional view of the apologists, in this sense, can be regarded as a theory: God identified Muhammad as a prophet, revealed to him the religion of truth, and perfected that Islam for subsequent generations to follow. In this view, numbers of believers do not matter; neither is the cultural milieu of any importance. In fact, the surrounding culture is separated off as the *jāhiliyya*, those who are ignorant of the truth. This is not a point of view unique to Islam, since Christianity sees in Jesus's teachings a New Testament, burying his identity as a Jew. Buddhism does the same with Siddhartha Gautama rejecting Hinduism; Judaism glosses over Moses's Egyptian identity; and so forth.

We might expect sociologists to do better in providing historical explanations, but Max Weber's theory of charismatic authority actually follows this traditional view closely, seeing the founder of a religious tradition as the holder of "pure charisma," an almost antinomian figure who eschews rational economic activity.¹⁵ For Weber, then, charisma in its pure form is not a part of daily religious life at all, but rather a radical impulse that must necessarily reject the structures of society. In other words, it is not only the apologetic view of the rise of religious traditions that excludes cultural context from its account of religious origins; Weber's theory of charismatic authority also defines pure charisma as opposing itself to the "rational" economic behavior of the previous cultural system. Weber's theory seems to have more to do with how charismatic figures are remembered by later generations than how they acted in history.¹⁶

A distinction between history and memory is useful, especially when we compare literary sources about the rise of Islam with historical artifacts from that early period. I am interested in both, and I do not hold that one is somehow more important than the other, but the distinction between the two is striking. Literary sources reflect the memory of this Muslim community, and so they tend to exclude non-Muslim cultures, whereas coins, architecture, and

is depicted on the unnumbered frontispiece, while fols. 194v and 286v are depicted on plates 1 and 2, respectively. The manuscript is in Wolfenbüttel, under Cod. Guelf. 3.1.300 Aug. 2°; Heinemann-Nr. 2045.

15 Berger, *Charisma* 949; see also Weber, *Charisma* 6, for discussion of types of social action; charisma seems to fit into number three, though compare also p. 12.

16 This has been at the heart of significant criticism of Weber's model, especially from anthropological quarters. For a fascinating meditation on the definition and use of memory by early Muslim scholars, see Capezzone, *On memory*.

papyri—the artifacts of history—are full of such references. By paying more attention to the Judeo-Christian context, we do not diminish Islam, but understand both its history and also the way this history was selectively remembered in literary texts. Again, this process is not unique to Islam, as Christian memory also discounts the Jewish faith of Jesus and his disciples. Yet when speaking of the *history* of early Christianity, we would say that it is impossible to understand without the history of Judaism (specifically of Hellenic Judaism and its response to a pagan world), and that Jesus and his disciples did not make a radical break with the past so much as respond to it. Likewise, I find that to understand the *history* of Muhammad and the early Muslim movement requires us to consider the complex Judeo-Christian context that Islam inherited and to which Muslims responded.

Material objects, however, present their own limitations, and when considering artifacts, we must be cognizant of their limited ability to tell a story.¹⁷ On the one hand, it is clear that our earliest artifacts maintain the same language of symbols that was present before Muhammad. For example, our earliest dated Arabic document, a papyrus from 22/643, was composed toward the end of ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb’s reign.¹⁸ It is a short receipt prefaced with a generic inscription, “In the name of God,” both in Greek and in Arabic. It is succinct and orderly, with date and names of the parties. It is religiously inflected but bears no obvious connection to Islam. Similarly, our early coins also seem to indicate continued dependence on a bureaucracy whose authority rested upon recognizably Christian and Zoroastrian foundations, such as crosses and fire altars. The simple Arabic inscription *jayyid* (valid) on the earliest coins can be read as an appeal that nothing (much) had changed.¹⁹

On the other hand, this data can be fitted into either the apologetic or the skeptical view, but at a cost. For the apologist, these papyri and coins suggest a failure in Umayyad leadership, since these caliphs were not zealous to rid their world of non-Islamic symbols. Skeptics, in turn, seem to delight in this lack of Muslim exclusivity, but they, too, must admit that the Arabic language became widespread far earlier than was once thought possible. The fact that coins were modified at all also suggests a willingness to make a public expression of a new order, despite possible negative consequences for monetary value.

17 I have written about the problems of granting too much credence to material objects in Brockopp, *Islamic origins*.

18 Archduke Rainer Collection, Austrian National Museum, Vienna (PERF 558). See Gruendler, *Development 22*, and references there.

19 Gaube, *Arabosasanidische Numismatik* 18–37. See also Bates, *History*.

In these early artifacts, as well as in early Umayyad architecture, I see a compromise. In Weberian terms, I would argue that Muhammad and the early caliphs had charismatic authority but that their charisma was not built on a break from previous forms. Rather, their authority depended on an ability to creatively reinterpret these symbols of power. Further, the charismatic community that produced and defended these interpretations was made of individuals who themselves straddled these various worlds and were able to communicate between them.²⁰ This is the theory I mean to test in the remainder of this essay, through analysis of the Quran, literary sources, and material evidence.

The Quran is of primary importance to my argument because it is both a literary source and also a historical artifact. In my view, this means that it is a witness to both history and memory. Although research on the earliest Quran manuscripts is only beginning, the evidence thus far suggests we ought to regard the Quran as an artifact from the mid-seventh century. This means that as a literary document, the text should be taken as reflecting the beliefs of the Muslim community at that time. This is quite in contrast to sacred texts from other religious traditions, most of which are understood historically to have been written down decades or centuries after the death of the founding figure. This difference may be directly observed in the fact that the Quran does not tell the story of the community that received this new revelation. The Pentateuch, Gospels, and Bhagavad Gita all tell the tale of the central hero (Moses, Jesus, Krishna) and his companions, while the Quran is virtually silent on Muhammad.²¹ As I suggested above, however, historical charisma lies not in making a break with the past but with reinterpreting its powerful symbols. For the Quran, that powerful past is not Muhammad but the “common lore” of Christian and Jewish prophets.

Consider, for example, Quranic verses that have been interpreted as referring to the ulema, an institution central to Muslim self-understanding, yet one that I argue cannot have existed in the seventh century, at least not in the way we have come to understand it. One of these proof texts is Q 16:43, which tells the

20 With this modification of Weber's notion of charisma, I hope to avoid pitfalls discussed by Jane McAuliffe and Barry Flood. In a recent essay, McAuliffe succinctly summarized the history of placing Islam in a Judeo-Christian context, arguing that we ought to move away from the source question to how this material functions in the Quran. McAuliffe, *Connecting*. Likewise, from an art historical perspective, Flood welcomes the recent trend toward understanding early Muslim artifacts within the broader context of the Late Antique but worries about a tendency to smooth over narratives of conflict and rupture, equally visible in the material evidence. Flood, *Faith*.

21 Many verses are, of course, interpreted to refer to Muhammad and his community, but this is a matter of hermeneutics.

ignorant hearer to consult “the people of remembrance” (*ahl al-dhikr*). Later interpreters read this verse through the powerful lens of centuries of Islamic memory and see it as referring to Muslim ‘*ulamā*’ because they cannot imagine an Islamic world without these arbiters of the tradition, yet the context of the verse suggests that the “people of remembrance” refers to experts on the Hebrew scriptures.²² Moreover, the one Quranic verse that explicitly mentions the ‘*ulamā*’,²³ clearly refers to “the ‘*ulamā*’ of the people of Israel” (Q 26:197).²⁴ Such direct reference to Jewish scholars in the Quran fits well within the larger narrative focus of this text, especially the prevalence of the salvation stories of Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Mary.²⁵ But I want to go further and argue that this was the very history that mattered most to the earliest Muslims, and that this Judeo-Christian context formed the lens through which they interpreted Muhammad’s words and deeds.

Evidence in the Quranic text is vital for pointing us toward this historical context, but once it is posited, we can see that Muslim literary sources are not as opposed to this view as we might expect. In fact, they occasionally corroborate it. Written down centuries after the events they purport to represent, literary sources on the early Muslim community are often exegetical in nature. The primary purpose of these stories is the elucidation of God’s saving activity, not necessarily the transmission of historical information. They are documents of memory, but a judicious reading of these sources, in light of what we know from our analysis of the Quran and other contemporary evidence, can reveal the continuing power of Judeo-Christian history for this generation. For example, Mu‘ādh b. Jabal (d. 18/640), Ubayy b. Ka‘b (d. between 19/640 and 35/656), and Zayd b. Thābit (d. between 42/662–663 and 56/675–676) are some of Muhammad’s most illustrious Companions. All three were *anṣārī*; that is, they came from Medina, and they were among the few who were literate.²⁶ Literacy appears to have been more common in Medina, and these three Companions, along with a few others, appear to have studied writing at *bayt al-midrās* (Jewish house of study). For Zayd b. Thābit, this may have included the writing of Hebrew (or perhaps Aramaic). Zayd is recorded to have said:

22 See my argument in Brockopp, *Muhammad’s heirs* 38–40.

23 Q 26:192–199; Q 35:28 also employs the word ‘*ulamā*’, but here it is used as an adjective—God’s servants who have the characteristic of knowledge—rather than as a named group. The context, however, is also the discerning of God’s signs. Newby, *History* 57. Marlow, Scholar.

24 Brockopp, *Muhammad’s heirs* 39.

25 McAuliffe, *Connecting*.

26 Lecker, *Zayd b. Thābit*.

The Messenger of God ordered me to study for him the script of the Jews, and he said to me: “I do not trust the Jews with regard to my correspondence” [i.e., correspondence with the Jews, written in their script]. Not even half a month passed until I learned it and I used to write for him to the Jews, and when they wrote to him, I read their letter.²⁷

In this account, “the Jews” are clearly a third party, a contrast to Muhammad, Zayd, and other Muslims. It seems that Judaism, in the Muslim historical sources, was seen as both a threat and a source of wisdom.²⁸

Note here that I am not suggesting that Zayd, Mu‘ādh, and Ubayy were directly influenced by rabbis, or that they “borrowed” authority structures from Judaism. Rather, I am suggesting that in the memory of Muslim literary sources, the authority of these individuals rested, in part, on their association with the *ahl al-dhikr*, the people of remembrance, and that their knowledge of Jewish history was as important to the first generations of Muslims as their connection to the prophet Muhammad, perhaps even more so. It is worth noting here that the heart of religious leadership in Judaism concerns knowledge of the texts, of the calendar, and of religious law for the fulfillment of duties. At least for post-temple Judaism, there were no longer specific rites associated with a special class of priests. This is quite in contrast both with the local polytheistic practices of seventh-century Arabia as well as with contemporary Christianity and Zoroastrianism, where knowledge was important, but so also was the performance of specific rites (divining the future, saying mass, performing the fire rituals).

The two great empires of the region—the Byzantine and Sassanid—used Christianity and Zoroastrianism as a way of buttressing the legitimacy of their rule.²⁹ And our material evidence from this earliest period clearly demonstrates the continuing power of these symbols. Yet, Islam never developed a priesthood, nor do the central rituals of the tradition require the intervention

27 Translation from al-Balādhurī by Lecker, Zayd B. Thābit 267. See Lecker’s discussion of this story and variants. Gordon Newby (*History* 22) takes one of these variants as evidence that the Jews spoke a dialect of Arabic, not that Zayd learned Hebrew in two weeks. See also Newby, Observations.

28 This duality is extended to the persons of Zayd, Ubayy, and Mu‘ādh, as all three Medinans are prized for their literacy and knowledge and given premier positions of intimacy with both the Prophet and the Quran. At the same time, their personal connections to Judaism are a potential source of embarrassment and scorn. Lecker, Ḥudhayfa 152. Whether these negative accounts reflect seventh- or tenth-century views is hard to determine.

29 Berkey, *Formation* x, 38, 171.

of a person with the “routinized charisma” of the prophet Muhammad. Rather, the eventual focus of the ulema on the study of law, history, and exegesis, I would argue, continues a pattern set already in Medina. Therefore, it seems that Judaism, and Jewish examples, played a key role in informing Muslim ideas about the correct sphere of activity for early religious experts (whom I call proto-scholars).³⁰ Similar to the role of rabbis in post-temple Judaism, the activities of these proto-scholars were largely private, and only in the third/ninth century do they take on a public role.³¹ The ulema at this point become a social force to be reckoned with, but my interest here is in exploring what I believe is a key moment of transition, between the years 650 and 690, when the power of this Islamic story did not yet hold sway.

After the death of the prophet Muhammad in 11/632, we are told that leadership of the community passed briefly to Abū Bakr b. Abī Quḥāfa, who was succeeded by ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. ‘Umar’s ten years (634–644) saw the beginnings of an unprecedented expansion that brought both vast riches into Medina and also dissent. Although ‘Umar is remembered as a great defender of Islam, there is much evidence to suggest that the boundaries among religious traditions were fuzzy at best. Certainly, we have no suggestion (in either material or early literary sources) of a formal community of Muslim scholars, nor were there madrasas, books of Islamic law, classification of the sciences, or any of the other social institutions we commonly associate with the *‘ulamā’*. As I suggested above, the lack of these social institutions provided a very different context for understanding the Quranic dictum “Ask the people of remembrance, if you do not know.”

In some cases, Muslim historians have preserved stories that reflect this notion of authority. For example, Abū l-‘Arab al-Tamīmī (d. 333/945) records an interesting tale that features Ubayy b. Ka‘b, one of the Anṣārī companions who studied at the *bayt al-midrās* in Medina, that resolves a dispute between two of the Prophet’s most illustrious companions, ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb and al-‘Abbās, the Prophet’s uncle, during ‘Umar’s caliphate.

When he was building the Mosque of Mecca, ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb wanted to encroach upon the land of al-‘Abbās to expand the mosque, but al-‘Abbās said: My land is [...].³² So al-‘Abbās said to him: Is there a Muslim to

³⁰ Brockopp, *Muhammad’s heirs* 4.

³¹ As I have argued elsewhere (Brockopp, *Muhammad’s heirs* 131–142), this public role coincides with a rise in Muslim scholarly communities and the development of a strictly Islamic story of God’s activity in the world.

³² Half a line is missing here due to damage in the manuscript.

judge between us? ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb suggested: Would you be satisfied with Ubayy b. Ka‘b? and he replied: Yes.³³

‘Umar and al-‘Abbās then present their case to Ubayy, who responds by saying: Oh, Commander of the Faithful, surely God revealed to the prophet David: “Build me a house in the land” and David said: “Oh Lord, what sort of house [would please you?]” and God revealed to him [...].³⁴ The manuscript is damaged here, but the outline of the narrative is quite clear, and Ubayy rules in al-‘Abbās’s favor. There are two interesting aspects to this story. On the one hand, this exemplary “scholar,” one of the “*fuqahā’* of the Prophet of God,” resolves the dispute not through interpretation of a Quranic verse or recollection of an appropriate hadith of the Prophet, but by telling a story of David, Solomon, and the building of the temple in Jerusalem. On the other hand, this tale is remembered in the context of advice given to the Aghlabid amir Ziyadāt Allāh, who wanted to take pillars from an old, dilapidated mosque in order to enhance the mosque of Kairouan in the ninth century.³⁵ That mosque today is one of the rare examples of ninth-century Islamic architecture, and until quite recently it housed one of the most important collections of early Arabic manuscripts.³⁶ But the situation is even more complex than it first appears, because Ziyadāt Allāh ruled over not only a Muslim population but also a large Jewish one, and the written legacy of that community has been recently recovered and studied.³⁷ In other words, by recalling this story, the local scholarly community not only correct the amir’s action; they also favorably compare him with past kings from a history shared by both Muslim and Jewish subjects.

These Jewish communities existed throughout the Muslim world, and their impact on the rise of Muslim scholarship is still largely unknown. At the same time, of course, we have substantial evidence that Christianity in the Near East not only survived the “conquests”; in some cases, it flourished.³⁸ Several historical accounts from these eastern churches survive and provide us with

33 Abū l-‘Arab, *Ṭabaqāt* 107–108.

34 Abū l-‘Arab, *Ṭabaqāt* 108.

35 Abū l-‘Arab, *Ṭabaqāt* 107.

36 That collection is now in Raqqada, just outside of Kairouan, and forms the heart of a collection cared for by the National Laboratory for the Preservation of Parchment Manuscripts.

37 Ben Sasson, *Emergence*.

38 Cutting off of imperial support was a blow to certain institutions, but there is evidence that some continued to grow. See Ratliff, Christian communities 32–39.

a fascinating view of the early Muslim period from a different perspective.³⁹ Numerous artifacts and architectural remains help to fill out the story of these eastern Christians. In addition to the Syriac Gospel mentioned above, a rare “quintuple palimpsest” now preserved in St. Catherine’s Monastery bears witness to the changing languages of this community. The currently visible text is one of the oldest Arabic-Christian writings, a collection of hagiographies in Greek, Syriac, and Arabic. Below that is a Greek Gospel lectionary overlying a Syriac Gospel from the sixth century.⁴⁰ This Christian project of book production in the Near East may have been important for Muslim imagination of the Quran as a holy book. It is interesting to note that almost all of our earliest Qurans are produced in the codex form (the same as Christian texts), not in scrolls, as may have been typical for the Torah.⁴¹ A second parallel with Christianity may be found in the early use of the Quran as a symbol of political authority.

Both Byzantine and Sassanid emperors used public religious symbols, such as expensive books, in order to establish social cohesion. In the Byzantine system, for example, the church hierarchy worked hand-in-hand with the emperor to buttress royal and religious authority. Ceremony, monumental architecture, and rich gifts to the church were all part of this interdependence. If the literary accounts can be believed, ‘Uthmān’s compilation project could have been an attempt to produce a similar effect among Muslims, and its eventual failure may have rested, in part, on the fact that early proto-scholars considered themselves to have more in common with rabbis than with priests. Rabbis devoted themselves to the writing and preservation of the scriptures independent of any state, while Zoroastrian and Christian priests were state-supported representatives of the faith. Our earliest Quran manuscripts are witnesses to this devotional activity, including carefully written documents in epigraphic script.⁴² But our earliest Arabic papyri are witness to a second, contrasting strand of Arabic writing, the development of a trained corps of literate secretaries. While not exactly scholars, such chancery bureaucrats had to develop an expertise of sorts and, on a pragmatic basis, make decisions that would determine some legal practices for centuries. We have dated evidence for these

39 Hoyland, *Seeing Islam* 70–71; Thomas and Roggema (eds.), *Christian Muslim relations* 124–125, with references.

40 Evans and Ratliff (eds.), *Byzantium and Islam* 61, with illustration and references.

41 A Geniza fragment, however, shows that Jewish scribes also used the codex form; see Evans and Ratliff (eds.), *Byzantium and Islam* 107. The matter is further complicated by the apparent existence of Qurans in scroll form in the collection of ancient Quran manuscripts, originally from the Great Mosque of Damascus.

42 Hilali, *Palimpsest*.

chanceries all the way back to 'Umar's time. But their sphere of influence appears to have been separate from that of the Quran experts.

'Umar's appointment of Mu'āwiya as governor of Damascus in 639 appears to have been a significant turning point,⁴³ as the wealth and power of provincial governors (Mu'āwiya in Syria, 'Amr in Egypt) began to overshadow that of the Medinan caliph. Importantly, Mu'āwiya ruled not from an Arabic/Islamic garrison town (Fustāṭ in Egypt or Kufa in Iraq) but from an ancient city with a large Arab (though not yet Muslim) population and an already functioning bureaucracy. Mu'āwiya's name, in fact, is the first to be found on early coins,⁴⁴ stamped on the edge of dirhams and dinars that otherwise retain all the old Byzantine iconography. The very words *dinar* and *dirham*, of course, derive from the Byzantine denarius and drachma. Only a few Arabic papyri can be dated to Mu'āwiya's period, and these are all bi- or trilingual. However, a large number of Greek papyri can be dated to 660–680, demonstrating an active bureaucratic correspondence.⁴⁵ As others have noted, religion is largely absent from these documents, and such formulae as appear are generic. There is no mention of Muhammad, but neither do we find any mention of Jesus.⁴⁶ The surviving architecture from the period just after the end of Mu'āwiya's rule demonstrates a union of Byzantine structures with Arabic/Islamic ideals. Mu'āwiya's 40-year rule in Damascus, therefore, appears to have been marked by a pragmatic blending of Arab and Byzantine cultures. He supported no grand religious projects on the order of magnitude of his cousin's collection of the Quran but rather implemented policies that gradually strengthened and centralized his rule.

Mu'āwiya's effective separation of the state from religious affairs might have resulted in a polity that would eventually have become a vassal state of the Byzantine Empire. From the perspective of Byzantine historians, there is every reason to believe that this is precisely what they thought was happening. Commentators have long pointed to the lack of specific mention of Islam or of

43 There is some dispute in the sources over the extent of Mu'āwiya's authority. It does not appear that Mu'āwiya had control over the entire Levant until the middle of 'Uthmān's reign. Hinds, Mu'āwiya. My dates in *Muhammad's heirs* 54, should have reflected this dispute.

44 Walker, *Catalogue* i, 25–26.

45 Only after Mu'āwiya's reign would documents be written solely in Arabic. Foss, Egypt under Mu'āwiya 1–24; part II is in issue 2, 259–278.

46 This is in contrast with later Christian Arabic texts that begin, "In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit." See, for example, the Treatise of Abū Qurra, dated 877, which purports to contain a text composed in 800, now in the British Library (Or. 4950); Evans and Ratliff (eds.), *Byzantium and Islam* 120–121.

Muslims on the part of these sources as a reason for questioning any Muslim self-understanding during this period. But more important, perhaps, is the way these sources reflect Byzantine self-understanding. The claim in later polemics that Islam was a heresy and Muhammad an aberrant bishop⁴⁷ could be seen as an attempt not at separating Christianity from Islam but at connecting the two religions. Even if Mu'āwīya had been successful in conquering Constantinople, effectively replacing the Ghassanid tribes that had allied themselves with the Byzantines before the conquests, the absorptive powers of the Christian church might well have succeeded in classifying Islam as nothing more than a divergent form of Christianity, one that could be gradually brought back into the fold of orthodoxy.

It is worth noting that all the great Muslim monuments we associate with the Umayyad period—the Dome of the Rock, the Mosques of Damascus and Aleppo—were built after Mu'āwīya's reign. In fact, literary evidence points to Muslims and Christians sharing space in the Basilica of St. John the Baptist during Mu'āwīya's caliphate.⁴⁸ This close connection to Christianity may have been useful to Mu'āwīya in keeping his largely Christian population satisfied, both in Syria and also in Egypt. But literary evidence also suggests that the last of the Prophet's intimate companions—Zayd b. Ḥāritha, Zayd b. Thābit, 'Abdallāh b. Mas'ūd, and Muhammad's wife 'Ā'isha bt. Abī Bakr—were sought out by the follower generation, who asked them questions about proper religious practice. It also seems that popular storytellers regaled listeners with tales of the Prophet's exploits during this period, and some literate individuals may have written down the first rough accounts of his life story.⁴⁹ Scholarship on sacred history, prophetic sayings, and Quran interpretation, therefore, may have continued to be a private affair; unsupported by the government, it was carried out by pious individuals who were not professionals and who made their living by other means. This impression is reinforced by the response to Mu'āwīya's death, when he appointed his son, Yazīd, as his successor, perhaps in imitation of Byzantine forms. Both in the rebellion of Ḥusayn b. 'Alī and also of 'Abdallāh b. al-Zubayr, we can trace religious claims that seem to provide a contrast to Mu'āwīya's view of religion.

A glimmer of these religious claims can be seen in an ancient tombstone that was discovered many years ago in Aswan. It memorialized the life of one

47 Tolan, *European accounts* 227–232.

48 For a reconstruction of this basilica, showing the *muṣallā* used by Muslims, see Flood, *Great Mosque* 333 (figs. 1 and 2).

49 Written versions of this largely oral material appear in early manuscript fragments; see Abbott, *Studies in Arabic literary papyri* 65–99.

‘Abbāsa bt. Jurayj b. Ṣanad, who died eleven years after Mu‘āwiya. As I have argued elsewhere,⁵⁰ someone had to have instructed the stonemason what to inscribe on this tombstone; further, someone had to have instructed ‘Abbāsa in the basics of the religious beliefs and practices of the “people of Islam.” Thus, this simple tombstone gives us an indirect indication of the existence of private religious experts in upper Egypt before the year 71/691. These experts are instructing individuals in aspects of the faith (conversion, burial rites) that have no impact on the state, though some sense of their influence can be traced as we use this tombstone to interpret other material evidence from this same period. For example, remarkably similar language about Muhammad is found both on the Dome of the Rock (72/691–692) and also Umayyad coins after the “reform” of 77/696–697, where Muhammad is also called “rasūl Allāh (God’s messenger)” and where it is averred that “there is no god but God alone; he has no partner.”⁵¹ It is possible that with these remarkable public statements by political authorities, we are seeing a rising influence of religious proto-scholars among the Umayyad amirs.

It is important, however, that we see the similarities as well as the differences in this disruption of patterns. The very concept of an inscribed tombstone continues Christian and Jewish forms. Likewise, the first wholly new construction of Islamic architecture, the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, was not only built by (likely Christian) Byzantine architects, it was built on the site of Solomon’s Temple, a spot sacred to Jews and Christians alike. It is, in fact, not a mosque at all, since it surrounds an enormous outcropping of limestone; a significant congregation of Muslims cannot pray inside it. Much of the polemic in the frieze need not be understood as anti-Christian; it could certainly fit in the realm of intra-Christian debates over the nature of Jesus Christ.

As mentioned above, religious formulae on coins are another sign of change. In a multireligious environment where Muslims were a small minority, significant changes in the appearance of a coin could have resulted in a lack of confidence in the currency. Our earliest coins have only short Arabic phrases added to Byzantine and Sassanid coins that are physically quite similar to pre-Islamic coins, complete with crosses, fire altars, and other symbols of authority.⁵² The Arabic phrases that first appear here (“In the name of God” and “Praise

50 Brockopp, *Muhammad’s heirs* 65–72.

51 This coin is widely attested; see, for example, the collection of the British Museum. http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/cm/g/gold_coin_of_abd_al-malik.aspx (accessed December 13, 2012).

52 Gaube, *Arabosasanidische Numismatik* 18–37.

belongs to God”) are unobjectionable from a Christian, Jewish, or even Zoroastrian perspective and therefore would have caused no concerns about the value of the currency. The name Muhammad first appears alone in Arabic on a few eastern coins from 38 and 52 (of the Yazdgird era, so 670 and 684 CE),⁵³ and in 70/689 the statement “Muhammad is the messenger of God” first appears in Pahlavi script. In 72/691–692 (five years before the Umayyad “coin reform”) another coin appears that includes this statement plus the Pahlavi equivalent of “There is no God, but God.”⁵⁴ It is possible that the coins that have survived are only a selection of what was minted, but based on this evidence, it appears that coin inscriptions from the former Byzantine territories followed a separate trajectory from those in the former Sassanid lands, and that the western coins are responding to changes that first appeared in the east. There must be some perceived advantage to putting these statements on the coins, one that outweighs the disadvantages of making a change in the first place.

The answer to this riddle, I suggest, lies in both a dissatisfaction with the Umayyad caliphate and also the claims made by rivals (the ‘Alids and the Zubayrids, according to historical texts) to represent the increasingly influential “people of Islam” (the phrase found on the tombstone of 71/691). Whereas Mu‘āwiya developed a pragmatic and effective bureaucratic state in Damascus, the ‘Alids and Zubayrids appealed to a different form of authority, one that required the services of proto-scholars.⁵⁵ It seems reasonable to suggest that ‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwān responded to the effectiveness of this move, first, by building the impressive Dome of the Rock, and then by reforming the coinage.

If I am correct, then the changes instituted by ‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwān signal a rising influence of what I call proto-scholars in this public sphere. Also, this seems to mark a point when “the people of Islam” were differentiating themselves from the adherents of other religious traditions. Yet, material evidence demonstrates that a fruitful interplay of religious concepts continues, one that defies clear boundaries between traditions. Mosaic floors in eighth-century churches and mosaics in mosques suggest that Christians and Muslims were responding to common notions of figural representation.⁵⁶ A palimpsest

53 Ibid., 36.

54 Mochiri, Pahlavi forerunner 168–172. For discussion, see Popp, Early history 65–66. See further: Eshragh, Interesting Arab-Sasanian dirhem 45–46; Heidemann, Evolving representation; Sears, Sasanian style coins.

55 Robert Hoyland makes a similar argument in New documentary texts 397.

56 Evans and Ratliff (eds.), *Byzantium and Islam* 118–119.

under a Hebrew text shows a Jewish scribe reusing parchment that may once have held a Christian text.⁵⁷

Even beyond the eighth century, this interplay does not disappear. A survey of our earliest dated literary manuscripts in Arabic demonstrates a robust dialogue of both form and content. The oldest of these is Wahb b. Munabbih's *History of [King] David*, written down in Dhū l-Qa'da 229 (July 844).⁵⁸ Wahb b. Munabbih was a Yemenite, possibly of Persian and/or Jewish heritage, said to have died between 725 and 737. The *History* is one of only six manuscripts in Arabic with a proven date before the year 250/864, joining three Quran fragments, one fragment of the Gospel of John in Arabic, and a fragment of Saḥnūn's *Mudawwana*.⁵⁹ The fact that these particular manuscripts have survived the past 1,150 years is, of course, complete coincidence, and from them we can draw no conclusions about the relative importance of any field of study in the third/ninth century. Still, it is worth reflecting on a few interesting characteristics of this group.

First, the appearance of the Gospel of John among these earliest manuscripts is solid evidence both that Arabic remained as much a Christian as a Muslim language in the early ninth century and also that works were being translated into Arabic from surrounding cultures.⁶⁰ Historical texts tell us of dozens of books in philosophy, geography, and other areas that were translated into Arabic, beginning already in the eighth century, though we have no direct manuscript evidence of this activity.⁶¹ Second, it is interesting to note how little of the contents of Wahb's *History* mark it as a particularly Muslim text. Other than a handful of Quran citations and a few references to individual Muslim authorities (such as Ibn 'Abbās and Qatāda) the *History* could easily be a translation of a Christian, or Jewish, text. In both subject matter and order of presentation, it reads like a paraphrase of 2 Samuel in Arabic, with the addition of a few fabulous stories, such as that of the three slingshot stones that speak to David on his way to face Goliath.⁶² Gordon Newby points out that this tale (where three stones declare themselves to be the stones of Abraham, Isaac,

57 Ibid. 107.

58 Khoury, *Wahb b. Munabbih* i, 1.

59 For the first five of these, see Déroche, *Les manuscrits Arabes* 345–346. For Saḥnūn's text, see Brockopp, Saḥnūn's *Mudawwanah*.

60 Abbott, *Studies* i, 48 takes the writing of Christian texts in Arabic "to about A.D. 700 at the latest."

61 Déroche discounts the claims of early manuscripts on medicine and philosophy. Déroche, *Les manuscrits Arabes* 350.

62 Khoury, *Wahb b. Munabbih* 52. Note specific references cited by Abbott in her review Wahb B. Munabbih 103–112, at 105.

and Jacob and promise to kill Goliath) is also found in *Midrash Shmuel*, a Jewish commentary to Samuel,⁶³ and one possibility is that Wahb simply translated *Midrash Shmuel* into Arabic.

Regardless of the actual provenance of this text, these manuscripts demonstrate a shared scholarly context, one that should cause us to question any attempt to depict the early history of Islam apart from its Judeo-Christian context. Today, for example, popular biographies of Muhammad are written without reference to Christian or Jewish prophets, but the papyrus fragments of Wahb b. Munabbih's *History* were discovered with an undated *Life of Muhammad*, also on papyrus, and clearly bound together at one point. Even the famous biography of Muhammad by Ibn Ishāq was once prefaced by a history of biblical prophets.⁶⁴ In other words, proto-scholars in the seventh and early eighth centuries regarded Muhammad's life as a continuation of the lives of earlier prophets. With time, stories of King David and Moses receded, and stories of Muhammad increased in number and significance.

Conclusion

My reconstruction in this essay is an attempt to make sense out of scant data, using both historical sociology as well as material evidence as a guide. All new religions, Islam included, begin as minority traditions responding to ideas embedded in local cultural contexts. Most of those new religions fail to survive the death of the founder—those that live on, do so by connecting with, not rejecting, the surrounding context. Weber was wrong to consider the hallmark of charismatic authority to be the rejection of the “rational” behavior of the dominant culture. Rather, the charismatic community draws its strength from that dominant culture, only slowly differentiating itself. It is true that Muslim memory, as enshrined in literary accounts, sometimes erases these connections, but that was evidently not the experience of Muhammad's Companions in history.

Recovering that history of interaction is essential to a rich understanding of Islam's first centuries, but even when Muslims were the majority, that interaction had effects, and it is our task to look for them. For example, the important archive of manuscripts in Kairouan, Tunisia, where I have worked for many years, appears to utterly exclude Jewish and Christian influence. The texts

63 Newby, *Making* 158. The date of *Midrash Shmuel* is disputed, but it is thought to have been composed about this time.

64 *Ibid.*

found there engage Quran, hadith, and major figures in Muslim intellectual history such as Mālik and al-Shāfiʿī. Yet we know that the small town of Kairouan also had a flourishing Jewish community of both merchants and scholars. Reconstructing the diversity of that intellectual community may result in a very different view of the influential texts that arose in ninth- and tenth-century North Africa.

While it may be that God considered Islam to be complete before Muhammad's death in 632 (according to Q 5:3), the meaning of that Quranic statement cannot be understood outside of a perception of history, one that changed dramatically over the seventh century as the religious and social ocean of the Near East nearly drowned this new religion. But neither should we pretend that this perception of history was ever a unity. From the diverse audiences mentioned in the Quran (Arabs of various religious persuasion: Muslims, "believers," Christians, Jews, polytheists, "hypocrites," and believers only in fate) to the diversity in both the Umayyad period and thereafter, a multitude of interpretive contexts has always been part of the Islamic story. Therefore, any narrative, whether premodern or modern, that presents a unified notion of "Islam" with clear boundaries and a singular perception of past events must be considered an act of memory, not of history.

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Biblical Turns of Phrase in the Quran

Gabriel Said Reynolds

Academic scholars have long recognized that the Quran is a text closely related to the Bible and later biblical tradition.¹ Already in 1833 Abraham Geiger devoted a book, *Was hat Mohammed aus dem Judenthume aufgenommen?* (What has Muḥammad taken from Judaism?) to the question of the relationship of the Quran to Jewish tradition. The standard study of the Quran's relationship to the Bible, Heinrich Speyer's *Die biblischen Erzählungen im Qoran* (The biblical narratives of the Quran), published about a hundred years later, includes detailed discussions of the Quran's biblical material in relation to Jewish and Christian literature.

Scholars have also long recognized, however, that the Quran tends not to reproduce biblical passages closely. Indeed, by my reading, the Quran has not a single passage that we might properly consider a quotation of the canonical Bible.² The closest thing to a quotation in the Quran comes not from the Bible but from the Mishna.³

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- 1 In recent years scholars of the Quran have increasingly turned their attention to the relationship between the Quran and the Bible, and biblical literature more generally. To name only a few examples: Angelika Neuwirth incorporates an analysis of that relationship, in addition to structural and other questions, in her recent works. See most recently the first installment of a promised commentary on the entire Quranic text: Neuwirth *Der Koran*. Holger Zellentin has discussed the relationship of the Quran's legal material to biblical tradition broadly. See Zellentin, *Qur'ān's legal culture*. Emran El-Badawi, in his work *The Qur'ān and the Aramaic Gospel traditions*, looks at the relationship of the Arabic Quran and the Aramaic Gospels. In French language scholarship Guillaume Dye, Geneviève Gobillot, and Michel Cuypers have studied in different ways the Quran's references to biblical narratives. Among other works, see Dye, *Lieux saints communs*; Gobillot, *Histoire et géographie sacrées*; and Cuypers, *Festin*; English trans.: Kelly, *Banquet*. In Germany the team at *Corpus Coranicum* incorporates detailed material on the Quran's relationship to biblical traditions in their online database. I have addressed the relationship between the Quran and biblical literature in my work *The Qur'ān and its biblical subtext*.
 - 2 It is often argued that Q 21:105 ("Certainly We wrote in the Psalms, after the Torah: 'My righteous servants shall indeed inherit the earth'") is a biblical citation, but it merely resembles certain verses of Psalm 37 (see vv. 9 and 28–29). One might also compare this verse to Matthew 5:4: "Blessed are the gentle: they shall have the earth as inheritance." Cf. also 1 Enoch 5:7.
 - 3 Q 5:32 ("That is why We decreed for the Children of Israel that whoever kills a soul ..."), is a quotation of the Mishna (m. Sanhedrin 4:5).

In his *New researches into the composition and exegesis of the Qoran* (1902), Hartwig Hirschfeld attributes the absence of precise renderings of biblical passages in the Quran to the absence of an Arabic translation of the Bible at the rise of Islam. He writes:

From several almost literal quotations from the O.T. in the *Qorân* the question arose, whether an Arabic translation of the former existed in Arabia ... Had such a version existed, Muhammed would have certainly succeeded in procuring one, and his renditions of Biblical passages would consequently have been more verbal, and less intermixed with *agâdic* ornamentation. Since this was not the case, we must assume that he gained the bulk of his Biblical knowledge from intercourse with the people.⁴

Hirschfeld mentions only the Old Testament here because of his interest in comparing biblical material in the Quran with biographical reports of Muḥammad's experiences in the city of Medina, which, according to the traditional literature, was a city with a population of Jews but not of Christians. His focus on the Old Testament, in my opinion, is not justified on the basis of the Quran itself, a text that includes material related not only to the Old Testament—or Hebrew Bible—but also to the New Testament. Indeed, even some of the Quranic Old Testament material apparently reached the Quran from Christian sources; for example, the Quran has Satan—and not a serpent—lurking in the Garden of Eden, which reflects not Genesis but a Christian reading of Genesis (see Rev 12:9: “The great dragon, the primeval serpent, known as the devil or Satan”).⁵

Meanwhile, there is a related point about the biblical material in the Quran, which Hirschfeld does not mention at all. In addition to some *almost* literal quotations of biblical material, the Quran also includes a wide range of smaller biblical “turns of phrase.” It is this phenomenon that I would like to address in the present paper. I will not offer an exhaustive catalogue of these turns of phrase, but rather a discussion of ten principal examples thereof (along with some references to a number of further examples toward the end of the paper).

4 Hirschfeld, *New researches* 104. Recent research has tended to confirm Hirschfeld's position that the Bible had not been translated into Arabic by the rise of Islam. On this see further below.

5 For many more examples of this type one might consult the excellent dissertation of Witztum, *Syriac milieu*.

As we will see, there are two interesting points about these biblical turns of phrase in the Quran. First, the Quran takes them and uses them differently. This transformation, I will argue, has implications not only for our knowledge of how biblical material reached the Quran—the question that interested Hirschfeld—but also for our appreciation of the rhetorical strategies of the Quran. Second, these turns of phrase (at least on the basis of this modest survey) tend to be disproportionately connected to the New Testament and not the Hebrew Bible.

I begin with a passage in Q 7:40, a verse found in the midst of a larger section on divine reward and punishment. Here, the Quran declares:

Indeed, those who deny Our signs and are disdainful of them—the gates of heaven will not be opened for them, nor shall they enter paradise until the camel passes through the needle's eye (*ḥattā yalija l-jamalu fī sammi l-khiyāt*), and thus do We requite the guilty.⁶

The reference to a camel passing through a needle's eye is recognizable as a turn of phrase from the synoptic Gospels.⁷ It is found, for example, in a passage of Matthew 19:

- 23 Then Jesus said to his disciples, “In truth I tell you, it is hard for someone rich to enter the kingdom of Heaven.
- 24 Yes, I tell you again, it is easier for a camel (*kamēlos*) to pass through the eye of a needle than for someone rich to enter the kingdom of Heaven.”
- 25 When the disciples heard this they were astonished. “Who can be saved, then?” they said.
- 26 Jesus gazed at them. “By human resources,” he told them, “this is impossible; for God everything is possible.”

Mat 19:23–26; cf. Mar 10:25; Luk 18:25⁸

6 Quran quotations are from Ali Quli Qara'i unless otherwise mentioned.

7 There is possibly another biblical turn of phrase with the reference to the “gates of heaven” in this verse. The Book of Revelation (21) presents heaven as a city with gates, and the expression is relatively common in later Christian literature. However, the Quran seems to use this expression (n.b. its appearance in 54:11; 78:19) in line with its cosmology of heaven as a place in the sky on the other side of the firmament. The gates, then, are the doors in the firmament which can be opened and allow passage to the realm above. One travels to these gates along the “cords” or “passageways” referred to as *asbāb*. See Q 2:166; 15:14–15; 18:84–85, 89, 92; 22:15; 38:10; 40:37; and van Bladel, Heavenly cords.

8 Biblical passages are cited from the NJB unless indicated otherwise.

Earlier scholarship on “the camel and the eye of a needle” centers around two discrete questions.⁹ The first is the relationship of this maxim as it appears in Q 7:40 to its appearance in the Synoptic Gospels. The second—and indeed the question that has received more attention—involves an opinion found both in Christian exegesis on the Bible and Islamic exegesis on the Quran, according to which the maxim actually involves not a camel but a “rope” (usually described as a sailor’s rope) and the eye of a needle. In other words, both Christians and Muslims have sought to do away with the camel.

As Samir Khalil Samir explains, the first Christian commentator to speak of a rope instead of a camel appears to be Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444), who expresses this opinion in two different passages regarding the maxim as it appears in Matthew.¹⁰ In one passage Cyril writes: “By ‘camel’ (*kamēlos*) he means not the living thing, the beast of burden, but the thick rope (*kamilos*) to which sailors tie their anchors.”¹¹ The Greek *kamēlos*, incidentally, is derived from the semitic root *g/j-m-l*, probably from the Hebrew *gāmāl*, but in any case it is related to the cognate Arabic term *jamal*.¹² Opinions like that of Cyril are found among a number of later Christian interpreters, including a certain fifth-century figure named Agricola and Photius (d. 891), Bishop of Constantinople.¹³ This reading is also attested in an Armenian version of the New Testament.¹⁴

Remarkably, a similar opinion is found on the corresponding Quranic verse in Islamic tradition. According to a tradition attributed to Ibn ‘Abbās (d. 68/

9 Perhaps the most important studies are a 1978 article of Samir Khalil Samir and a 1980 article of Andrew Rippin (both summarize, and cite, earlier studies). See Samir, *Note sur le fonds sémitique*; Rippin, *Qur’an 7.40*. For earlier studies see Samir, although we might note the following: Bishop, *Eye of the needle*; Tritton, *Camel and the needle’s eye*; Watt, *Camel and the needle’s eye*; Blachère, *Regards sur un passage parallèle*; Schub, *It is easier for a cable*.

10 See Samir, *Note sur le fonds sémitique* 90–91.

11 This is a quotation from the Greek Fragment 219 of Cyril, cited from Simonetti (ed.), *Ancient Christian commentary* 102. The second passage is from Cyril’s book 16 against Julian the Apostate, preserved in Syriac. See Neumann, *Juliani Imperatoris* 56, para. 21 (see the French translation in Samir, *Note sur le fonds sémitique* 90–91). There, too, the “rope” in question is specifically associated with seafaring.

12 See Thayer, *Thayer’s Greek-English lexicon* #2715. Geiger (*Judaism and Islam* 53) notes that in the Talmud, “elephant” is used instead of “camel”—which to him suggests that the expression in the Quran must refer to an animal (a camel), and not to a rope. See b. Bava Metzi’a 38b; Berakhot 55b. Samir comes to a similar conclusion.

13 See the references in Samir, *Note sur le fonds sémitique* 91.

14 See Samir, *Note sur le fonds sémitique* 92. The Armenian version reads *malh* “rope” for the citation in Matthew. Samir also refers to a Gregorian New Testament text which offers a similar reading for the citation in Mark.

687), Q 7:40 should be read not as *ḥattā yalija l-jamalu* but instead as *ḥattā yalija l-jummalu*. The Ibn ‘Abbās tradition defines *jummal* as a “thick rope” (*qals ghalīz*). As Andrew Rippin points out, this Ibn ‘Abbās tradition is found already in the commentary (of dubious authenticity) of Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 161/778) and in that of al-Farrā’ (d. 207/822).¹⁵

As Rippin explains, later *mufasssīrūn* speculate more widely on this term.¹⁶ In his medieval commentary *Zād al-masīr fi ‘ilm al-tafsīr*, Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1201)—who shows no awareness of the biblical roots of this turn of phrase—asks why God would speak of a camel in Q 7:40. He writes:

If someone says, “Why, of all animals, would a camel be specified, especially when there are animals which are larger than it?” There are two answers to this. The first of them is that expressing this parable with a camel gets the point across ... since a camel cannot pass through the eye of a needle ... The second is that the camel is the largest pack animal among the Arabs [hence, too, Q 88:17].¹⁷

After this reflection, however, Ibn al-Jawzī also raises the possibility that the Quran is not actually speaking of a camel after all. He notes how the grammarian Ibn al-Anbārī (d. 577/1181) reports the Ibn ‘Abbās tradition mentioned above that offers *jummal* as a variant reading, and he refers to a number of other possible variants.¹⁸

Arabic *jummal* (“thick rope”) is probably not derived directly from the poorly attested Greek *kamilos* (“thick rope”). Instead, it seems to have been formed from the verbal root *j-m-l* meaning “to gather together;” that is, it refers to a number of smaller strands or cables put together to form a larger rope.¹⁹ Some lexicographers wondered if *jummal* is a genuine Arabic word,²⁰ and indeed it is used principally in speculation around Q 7:40. It is possible that

15 al-Thawrī, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān* 70; al-Farrā’, *Ma’ānī al-Qur’ān* i, 379.

16 Rippin argues that the relatively late interest in the term in question is shown by the absence of variants to *jamal* in most of the canonical *qirā’āt*. The variants are found only in the later collections of *shawādh* (isolated or deviant) readings. On this see Rippin, Qur’an 7.40 109.

17 Ibn al-Jawzī, *Zād al-masīr* iii, 197.

18 Ibn al-Jawzī (ibid.) notes the following other possibilities: *jumal*, *juml*, *jumul*, and *jaml*. Abū Ja’far al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) offers *jummal* and *jumal* as alternatives. See Rippin, Qur’an 7.40 108. As Rippin notes (110–111) the five alternate readings are also cited by al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144). See al-Zamakhsharī, *Kashshāf* ii, 103, on Q 7:40–41. For al-Ṭabarī see *Jāmi’ al-bayān* viii, 203–211 on Q 7:40.

19 See Lane (ed.), *Arabic-English lexicon* ii, 461b.

20 Lane (ibid.) refers to Ibn Durayd (d. 321/933), author of *Jamharat al-lughā*. Rippin notes

Christian exegetical speculation surrounding the Greek word *kamēlos* influenced Muslim exegetical speculation surrounding the Arabic word *jamal* and led lexicographers to develop *jummal*, an equivalent of *kamilos*, as an alternative reading of *jamal*.²¹ What seems to confirm the influence of Christian exegesis on Islamic exegesis is that, like Christian commentators, Muslim commentators report that the rope (*jummal*) in question is the sort used for seafaring. As Rippin notes, Abū ‘Ubayd (d. 286/899) comments that *jummal* means a “nautical rope” (*al-qals min qulūs al-baḥr*).²²

Rippin finds a parallel to this sort of development in the argument of Goldziher that Islamic exegesis on the Quranic term *shahīd* was shaped by the Christian idea of martyr found both with Greek *martus* and Syriac *sāhdā* (although the sense of “martyr” may already be found in Q 3:140).²³ For his part, Watt wonders if the origin of *jummal* is “polyglot nautical slang of the Eastern Mediterranean.” Rippin (with reason) finds this to be unnecessary speculation.²⁴

For our purposes, in any case, it is the first question—the relationship between the New Testament and the Quran as regards the camel and the eye of a needle—that is of particular importance. In this regard, it is noteworthy that the distinctly evangelical turn of phrase is applied in the Quran to a completely different effect. In the Gospels, this turn of phrase is meant to show how difficult it is for a rich man to enter heaven. The maxim appears after Jesus’s conversation with the rich young man who was yearning for eternal life but was too attached to his possessions to give them to the poor. In the Quran, there is no mention of this rich young man, and the topic of wealth is absent. Instead, this expression is applied to those who deny God’s signs, a concern that is prominent in the Quran.²⁵ Bishop suggests that the Quran’s use of this maxim may

that *jummal* is only found in rare recitations such as that of the Meccan Ibn al-Muḥaysin (d. 123/740).

- 21 Rudolph refers to the common variant interpretation in exegesis on both the New Testament and the Quran, commenting: “Es ist hübsch, dass das arabische *ġamal* ‘Kamel’ und ‘Schiffstau’ bedeutet.” Rudolph, *Die Abhängigkeit* 15, n. 42. One can still find Muslim scholars who follow the alternative interpretation: Muhammad Asad renders the key phrase in Q 7:40: “They shall not enter paradise any more than a twisted rope can pass through a needle’s eye.” He explains in a note: “As for the word *jamal* occurring in this sentence, there is hardly any doubt that its translation, in this context, as ‘camel’ is erroneous.” Asad goes on to discuss the variant reading *jummal* (among others) in the classical commentary literature. Asad, *Message* 238, n. 32.
- 22 Rippin, Qur’an 7.40 108.
- 23 See Goldziher, *Muslim studies* ii, 346–362, and Rippin, Qur’an 7.40 109.
- 24 See Watt, *Camel and the needle’s eye* 157–158, and Rippin’s response (Qur’an 7.40 109).
- 25 On the denial of signs of God in the Quran see Q 2:39, 2:61, 2:231, 3:4, 3:19–20, 4:56, 4:140, 5:10, 5:85 *passim*.

be related to its appearance in the Arabic translation of Tatian's *Diatesseron*. (He suggests that the Syriac original may have been known in Muḥammad's context.)²⁶ There is no way to prove such a thing, and the easier explanation is simply that this maxim was circulating orally in the milieu of the Quran's origins. Apparently, biblical language—and New Testament language at that—must have been more common in that context than is commonly assumed. This is a point to which we will return.

It is perhaps worth adding here that the Quran's allusion to the camel passing through the eye of a needle appears in a sura (7) that is traditionally classified as Meccan; that is, it is supposed to have been proclaimed in a pagan context, where Muḥammad had (according to the traditional biography) no substantial interaction with Christians. The appearance of such an evangelical turn of phrase in a supposedly pagan context is jarring.

Our second example involves the two separate passages where the Quran has the Israelites declare that they have "uncircumcised hearts." The first of these is in Sura 2:

Certainly We gave Moses the Book, and followed him with the apostles, and We gave Jesus, the son of Mary, manifest proofs, and confirmed him with the Holy Spirit. Is it not that whenever an apostle brought you that which was not to your liking, you would act arrogantly; so you would impugn a part [of them], and slay a[nother] part? * *And they say, "Our hearts are uncircumcised"* (*qulūbunā ghulf*). Rather Allah has cursed them for their unfaith, so few of them have faith.

Q 2:87–88

The second is in *al-Nisā'* (4):

Then because of their breaking their covenant, their defiance of Allah's signs, their killing of the prophets unjustly and for their saying, '*Our hearts are uncircumcised*.' Rather Allah has set a seal on them for their unfaith, so they do not have faith except a few.

Q 4:155

26 Bishop, Eye of the needle 357. For his part, Samir argues at the end of his article (Note sur le fonds sémitique 94) that the appearance of the same maxim in the New Testament and the Quran, and a similar maxim (involving instead an elephant) in the Talmud redounds not to borrowing or influence but to the possibility that such turns of phrase, or expressions, were common generally among Semites and crossed the boundaries of different Semitic languages (notably Aramaic and Arabic).

The declaration of the Israelites, “Our hearts are uncircumcised,” is one example among others of their infidelity: their breaking the covenant God made with them, denying God’s signs, and killing the prophets. For these sins, God has cursed the Israelites, which has prevented them from believing (Q 2:88). Yet, although the Quran’s polemic against the Jews is particularly vehement, its reference to their “uncircumcised hearts” is not new.

The language of an “uncircumcised heart” appears frequently in biblical passages that exhort or reprimand the Israelites. Moses urges the Israelites to live piously once they cross the Jordan River, declaring, “Circumcise your heart then and be obstinate no longer” (Deu 10:16). Similar language appears in Jeremiah: “Circumcise yourselves for the Lord, apply circumcision to your hearts, men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem” (Jer 4:4).²⁷ The same expression appears later in Jeremiah:

Look, the days are coming, Yahweh declares, when I shall punish all who are circumcised only in the flesh: Egypt, Judah, Edom, the Ammonites, Moab, and all the men with shaven temples who live in the desert. For all those nations, and the whole House of Israel too, are uncircumcised at heart.

Jer 9:24–25

In these passages, the language of circumcision of the heart is used to reprimand those who fulfill the law only superficially, those who follow its precepts but have not internalized its moral and spiritual teachings. In the New Testament, Paul uses this language to challenge the very idea that righteousness is found in obedience to the law. In Romans, for example, he argues that true circumcision is only spiritual:

Being a Jew is not only having the outward appearance of a Jew, and circumcision is not only a visible physical operation. * The real Jew is the one who is inwardly a Jew, and real circumcision is in the heart, a thing not of the letter but of the spirit. He may not be praised by any human being, but he will be praised by God.

Rom 2:28–29; cf. Phil 3:3

Similarly, Paul argues in Colossians that “circumcision according to Christ” (2:1) is “not by human hand but by the complete stripping of your natural self.”

²⁷ Cf. Jer 6:10.

The expression appears again in the book of Acts, in Stephen's speech before the Sanhedrin, in which he declares:

You stubborn people, with uncircumcised (Syr. *lā gzīrīn*) hearts and ears. You are always resisting the Holy Spirit, just as your ancestors used to do.
 * Can you name a single prophet your ancestors never persecuted? They killed those who foretold the coming of the Upright One, and now you have become his betrayers, his murderers. * In spite of being given the Law through angels, you have not kept it.

Acts 7:51–53

Here the point is not that the law is invalid but simply that the Israelites have not been faithful to the law. The reference to the circumcision of the heart in this passage is closer to the language of the Quran. As I have argued elsewhere, moreover, this passage seems to have a particular connection to Q 4:155. In both places the allusion to “uncircumcised hearts” appears with a reference to the Israelites’ murdering the prophets and violating the covenant.²⁸

The idiom of “circumcision of the heart” is unsurprisingly found commonly in patristic Christian literature. For our purposes, it is particularly noteworthy that the Syriac fathers employed it. In his homily *On circumcision* the Persian scholar Aphrahat (d. 345) writes (in Syriac):

So it is known that whoever does not circumcise the foreskin of his heart, then also the circumcision of his flesh is of no value to him.²⁹

For his part, Ephrem (d. 373) does so in the course of his argument against Jewish observance of the law:

Ask yourself, you fool, about the observance of the law.
 What can circumcision do for a sin that lies within?
 Sin lies inside the heart;
 And you circumcise your foreskin!³⁰

It is important to note, however, a fundamental difference with the way the Bible, or the Church fathers, employ the language of the circumcision of the heart and the way the Quran does so. In both Q 2:88 and 4:155, the Quran does

28 See Reynolds, *Qurʾān and its biblical subtext* 154.

29 Aphrahat, Homily 11 (On Circumcision); trans. in Neusner, *Aphrahat and Judaism* 23.

30 Ephrem, *Sermones de fide*, Homily 3:233–237, p. 28.

not report that the Israelites have uncircumcised hearts; it has them *say* of themselves, “Our hearts are uncircumcised.”³¹ Indeed, it is not clear that the Quran means at all to invoke a distinction between the circumcision of the flesh and circumcision of the spirit, or the heart, which is central to all of the biblical passages in which this expression appears. Instead, the Quran seems to make the very declaration “Our hearts are uncircumcised” into an act of infidelity. This might be compared to the way the Quran condemns the Israelites for *declaring*, “We killed the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, the apostle of Allah” (Q 4:157) and of their unnamed declaration (Q 4:156) against Mary (presumably an allusion to Jewish accusations that Mary begot Jesus through an act of fornication).

Muslim exegetes have an explanation for why saying “Our hearts are uncircumcised” (*qulūbunā ghuluf*) would be an act of infidelity. A number of reports make this the response of the Jews in Medina to Muḥammad’s invitation to accept Islam. The early commentary *Tafsīr Muqātil*, for example, relates that the Jews said to Muḥammad *qulūbunā ghuluf*, with the meaning: “Our hearts have shelters and wrappings on them. They do not comprehend or understand what you say, O Muḥammad.”³² Al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144) compares this interpretation to the way the Quran elsewhere (Q 41:5) declares, “Our hearts are in shelters” (*qulūbunā fī akinna*).³³

According to another line of interpretation, however, this phrase is instead to be read *qulūbunā ghuluf* (s. *ghilāf*, on the pattern of *kitāb/kutub*), meaning, “Our hearts *are* containers.” An “occasion of revelation” anecdote is also provided for this variant reading: what the Jews of Medina actually meant to tell Muḥammad is that their hearts are “containers of knowledge” (of the Torah) and they do not need anything that he has to offer them.³⁴

It seems to me that these stories of Muḥammad’s conversations with the Jews of Medina should be taken as haggadic exegesis and not as “what really happened.” Indeed, it is notable that we have two different *asbāb al-nuzūl* (or “occasions of revelation”) accounts depending on which Quranic variant is followed. This suggests that both accounts were the product of storytellers. However—and this is a revision of what I have said earlier³⁵—it does seem to

31 This might be compared to the way the Quran alludes to the Christians as “those who say, ‘We are Christians’” (Q 5:82).

32 Muqātil b. Sulaymān, *Tafsīr* i, 419, on Q 4:155; cf. Ibn al-Jawzī, *Zād al-masīr* i, 113.

33 al-Zamakhsharī, *Kashshāf* i, 163–164, on Q 2:87–89. See also Q 6:25, which declares that “over” the hearts of unbelievers are shelters/veils (*akinna*); also 17:46; 18:57.

34 For examples of this tradition see al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘ al-bayān* i, 523–524, on Q 2:88. cf. Ibn al-Jawzī, *Zād al-masīr* i, 113.

35 Reynolds, *Qur‘ān and its biblical subtext* 153.

me right that the Quran (as with the case of the “camel passing through the eye of the needle”) is using this biblical turn of phrase in a new way. It has no concern for the relationship of fleshly and spiritual, or inward, circumcision. In fact, the Quran does not have any concern for circumcision at all. Although circumcision is a part of Islamic law and practice, it is never mentioned in the Quran.³⁶

In other words, the basic sense of Muslim interpreters is correct here. The Quran uses this biblical turn of phrase in order to have the Jews themselves declare that they refuse to hear the word of God, that their hearts are covered.³⁷ It happens to use a biblical, and richly symbolic, turn of phrase to express the idea of being covered. This, of course, suggests that biblical language was “in the air,” a point to which we will return. Nevertheless, in the Quran the expression is basically parallel, as al-Zamakhsharī suggests, to the declaration of the unbelievers in Q 41:5: “Our hearts are in shelters” (*qulūbunā fi akinna*),³⁸ and it has similarities with those passages that speak of God’s “sealing” the hearts of the unbelievers.³⁹

A third example of the Quranic reapplication, or transformation, of biblical turns of phrase is found in its references to a mustard seed. The Gospel authors have Jesus speak of a “mustard seed” in a parable on the nature of the kingdom of God:

- 31 He put another parable before them, “The kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed (*Syr. la-predtā d-ḥardlā*) which a man took and sowed in his field.
- 32 It is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the biggest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air can come and shelter in its branches.”

Mat 13:31–32; cf. Mar 4:30; Luk 13:18–19

36 See Wensinck, *Khitān* 20–22.

37 One might compare to this idea to 2 Co 3:

¹⁴ But their minds were closed; indeed, until this very day, the same veil remains over the reading of the Old Testament: it is not lifted, for only in Christ is it done away with.

¹⁵ As it is, to this day, whenever Moses is read, their hearts are covered with a veil,

¹⁶ and this veil will not be taken away till they turn to the Lord.

¹⁷ Now this Lord is the Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

(2 Co 3:14–17)

38 I would agree then, with the way Arthur Droge renders this expression: “Our hearts are covered.” Droge also helpfully refers to the literal meaning of the expression—“Our hearts are uncircumcised”—in a note with corresponding biblical references.

39 Q 2:7; 4:46, 155; 6:25, 46; 7:101; 17:45–46; 18:57; 41:5; 47:23.

Elsewhere, the Gospels have Jesus refer to the “mustard seed” in the course of a different argument. In Matthew 17 the disciples ask Jesus why they were unable to drive a demon out of a boy. Jesus responds: “Because you have so little faith. In truth I tell you, if your faith is the size of a mustard seed you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; nothing will be impossible for you” (Mat 17:20).⁴⁰

For its part, the Quran refers in two separate passages to a mustard seed (using a term for “mustard” that is cognate with Syriac *ḥardlā*). However, neither passage corresponds to the Gospels’ use of this expression:

We shall set up the scales of justice on the Day of Resurrection, and no soul will be wronged in the least. Even if it be the weight of a mustard seed (*mithqāla ḥabbatin min khardal*),⁴¹ We shall produce it and We suffice as reckoners.

Q 21:47

The Quran here refers to a mustard seed in order to emphasize a common Quranic lesson, namely that God records every deed of humans—even the smallest—and will judge every individual according to those deeds on the Day of Resurrection. This passage shares a phrase with Q 36:54, where the Quran declares: “Today no soul will be wronged in the least, nor will you be requited except for what you used to do.”

The second Quranic reference to a mustard seed is similar, although it occurs in the midst of a passage where the wisdom figure Luqmān (a figure perhaps based on the Assyrian sage Aḥiqar) is speaking to his son about the Day of Judgment.⁴² He declares:

O my son! Even if it should be the weight of a *mustard seed*, and [even though] it should be in a rock, or in the heavens, or in the earth, Allah will produce it. Indeed Allah is all-attentive, all-aware.

Q 31:16⁴³

40 The saying of Luke 17:6 is similar, although it is made to be the response of Jesus to the demand of the apostles that he increase their faith.

41 The term for weight (Ar. *mithqāl*) is also related to a cognate Syriac term, *mathqālā*. See Jeffery, *Foreign vocabulary* 258.

42 On Luqmān see Zahniser, Luqmān 242–243.

43 Q 4:40; 10:61; 34:3; and 99:7 all speak instead of an “atom’s weight” (*mithqāl dharra*) to represent something small. Q 4:53 speaks of a “date-stone” or a “speck on a date-stone” (*naqūr*).

In this passage, the Quran puts into the mouth of Luqmān the same message that it has God express in Q 21:47. Again, we find that the Quran has taken a biblical expression and used it quite differently. It makes no mention at all of the evangelical idea of faith as a mustard seed that grows into a great tree. Emran El-Badawi comments to this effect, “In the Quran, however, the mustard seed is dogmatically re-articulated to signify the absolute, microscopic reach of God’s justice.”⁴⁴

A fourth example of the Quran’s reapplication of a biblical turn of phrase is perhaps found with the reference in Q 16:77 to the “twinkling of an eye.” This turn of phrase, as pointed out by the team of *Corpus Coranicum*,⁴⁵ may be based ultimately on 1 Corinthians 15:51–52:

51 Now I am going to tell you a mystery: we are not all going to fall asleep,
52 but we are all going to be changed, instantly, in the twinkling of an eye, when the last trumpet sounds. The trumpet is going to sound, and then the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.

1Co 15:51–52

Paul here uses the expression “twinkling of an eye” (Gk: ἐν ῥιπῇ ὀφθαλμοῦ; Syr. *rfāf ʿaynā*) to describe the change that will come over those who are living at the moment of the resurrection. A similar idiom is used in the Quran, although it is employed in a different manner:

To Allah belongs the Unseen of the heavens and the earth. The matter of the Hour is just like the twinkling of an eye (*lamḥi l-baṣar*) or [even] swifter. Indeed Allah has power over all things.

Q 16:77

The Quran may be adapting the biblical expression “twinkling of an eye” (this is Qara’i’s rendering, but, as we will see, it is better rendered “glance of an eye”) in order to express the idea that the Day of Resurrection will come suddenly; one might say like a “thief in the night” (1Th 5:2) or as birth pangs come upon a woman (1Th 5:3). Ibn al-Jawzī concludes, “This means that the speed of the appearance of the Resurrection, and the calling forth of all beings, will be like the glance of an eye (*lamḥi l-ʿayn*).”⁴⁶ Muhammad Asad comments that the

44 El-Badawi, *Qurʾan and the Aramaic Gospel* 151.

45 <http://www.corpuscoranicum.de/kontexte/index/sure/16/vers/77>. They refer to Andrae, *Der Ursprung* 142; Speyer, *Die biblischen Erzählungen* 454.

46 Ibn al-Jawzī, *Zād al-masīr* iv, 474, ad 16:77.

Quranic expression means that the coming of the Day of Resurrection “will be characterized by utter suddenness and unpredictability.”⁴⁷

It is worth adding that the Arabic expression *lamḥi l-baṣar* is not exactly equivalent to the Greek expression ἐν ῥίπῃ ὀφθαλμοῦ or, for that matter, the Syriac translation of this phrase in the Peshitta as *rfāf aynā*. The Greek *ripe* (ῥίπῃ from ῥίπτω), like the Syriac *rfāf*, refers to the sudden closing, or blinking, of the eye, whereas the Arabic *lamḥ* actually refers to a glance, or quick look. The English rendering “twinkling” does not seem to correspond well to either, as it means something like “shining” or “sparkling.” However, it has become the standard English rendering of the New Testament turn of phrase thanks to the King James Version. One might compare the better rendering of the French Jerusalem Bible: “En un instant, en *un clin d’oeil*” (1 Co 15:52).

It is interesting that most English translations of the Quran render the Arabic *lamḥi l-baṣar* as “twinkling of an eye” (thus Yusuf Ali, Pickthall, Arberry, Asad, Quli Qara’i; Droge has “blink”). Hamidullah, not surprisingly, follows the standard French rendering of the biblical expression and renders “clin d’oeil.” Such renderings reflect a certain assumption of the translators, perhaps an unconscious one, that the Quran is indeed using a biblical turn of phrase when it speaks of *lamḥi l-baṣar* in Q 16:77. The one English translation I have found that renders this expression literally, and not biblically, is that of Sahih International (to my understanding, principally composed by a woman known as Umm Muḥammad), which renders “glance of the eye.” Still, it seems to me that, although different, Quranic *lamḥi l-baṣar* is a reflection of the biblical language in 1 Corinthians.⁴⁸ The point of all of these expressions is something that takes only a moment, as does blinking the eye, or a quick glance of the eye.

There is, however, an alternative scenario that has been suggested to me by Holger Zellentin, who referred me to a note in the work *Jews and Arabs* by Goitein, according to which the reference to *lamḥi l-baṣar* in Q 16:77 is better explained in light of a line in the Jewish Amidah prayer, which relates that God “resurrects the dead in the twinkle of an eye” (Hb. *herep ayn*).⁴⁹ The Palestinian Amidah prayer is generally dated from the first century BCE to the first century CE and thus possibly would have been known in the context in which

47 Asad, *Message* 253, n. 91.

48 A similar expression using a “glance” to express a quick moment is found in Q 27:40: “I will bring it to you in the twinkling of an eye” (*qabla an yartadda ilayka ṭarfuka*; the expression is different from Q 16:77, although it is rendered similarly in English by Qara’i). I am grateful to Bilal Orfali for this reference.

49 See Goitein, *Jews and Arabs* 50. The text of the Amidah prayer can be found in Schechter and Abrahams, *Genizah specimens* 656. A translation can be found in Heinemann, *Prayer in the Talmud* 27.

1 Corinthians was written. Alternatively, we can imagine that both the Amidah prayer and 1 Corinthians reflect the presence of this turn of phrase in the Semitic milieu of the eastern Mediterranean.

A fifth example of the way the Quran transforms biblical turns of phrase is found in its two reflections on how birds manage to fly. The first occurs only two verses after the reference to the “twinkling of an eye” in the previous example (which suggests that the two sayings might have been incorporated in the Quranic text together):

Have they not regarded the birds disposed in the air of the sky: no one sustains them except Allah. There are indeed signs in that for a people who have faith.

Q 16:79

Q 67:19 is similar:

Have they, then, never beheld the birds above them, spreading their wings and drawing them in? None but the Most Gracious upholds them: for, verily, He keeps all things in His sight.

Q 67:19

The first passage precedes a reflection on other natural signs (Q 16:80 discusses the use of animal hides as a gift from God). The second passage on the flight of birds appears in a section with similar themes (Q 67:15 mentions the sustenance that God provides).⁵⁰ The Quran’s reference to the flight of birds in both passages seems to owe something to Jesus’s reference to birds in the Gospels:

Look at the birds in the sky. They do not sow or reap or gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they are?

Mat 6:26; cf. Luk 12:24

The Quran (in both passages) asks its audience to “look” (Ar. *yaraw*) at birds, much as Matthew has Jesus ask his audience to do the same (*emblemsate*). However, whereas Jesus speaks of the way birds do not need to sow or harvest and

⁵⁰ Bell (*Commentary* ii, 403), following Barth (*Studien zur Kritik* 113–148) suggests that verses 18–19 might be “out of place” because the discourse here is in the third person (whereas what precedes and follows is in the second person). He notes, however, that the content of vv. 18–19 seems to fit this context.

yet still find food, the Quran insists that they fly only by the power of God. The lessons that these two texts draw from the example of birds are also different. In Matthew, Jesus is making a point about trust in God, while the Quran is pointing to birds as a sign that indicates God's sovereignty.⁵¹ It is perhaps relevant, then, to note that the Quran elsewhere teaches a lesson about God's omniscience by speaking of God's omniscience and declaring, "No leaf falls without His knowing it" (Q 6:59). This might be compared to another passage in Matthew, where Christ speaks of a bird falling: "Can you not buy two sparrows for a penny? And yet not one falls to the ground without your Father knowing" (Mat 10:29).

A sixth example of a biblical turn of phrase in the Quran is a curious expression we find in Q 49:12. In the midst of that verse, the Quran warns against "spying" and "backbiting," with the following language: "And do not spy on one another or backbite (*wa-lā tajassasū wa-lā yaghtab ba'ḍakum ba'ḍan*). Will any of you love to eat the flesh of his dead brother (*ya'kula laḥma akhihi maytan*)? You would hate it." The language of "eating flesh" in this passage is striking and is unique in the Quranic text. Tellingly, however, in the letter to the Galatians, Paul addresses his audience as "brothers" and tells them not to eat each other up:

- 13 For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not use your freedom as
an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another.
14 For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, "You shall love your neighbor as
yourself."
15 But if you bite and devour (in Syriac, "eat": *wā-klittūn*) one another take
heed that you are not consumed by one another.

Gal 5:13–15, RSV

Our seventh example comes from Q 9:80, where the Quran, in line with a common message that believers should not pray for the forgiveness of unbelievers, declares that God would not forgive them even if Muḥammad asked 70 times for their forgiveness:

Whether *you* plead forgiveness for them or do not plead forgiveness for them, even if *you* plead forgiveness for them seventy times, Allah will never forgive them because they defied Allah and His Apostle; and Allah does not guide the transgressing lot.

Q 9:80

51 The Quran's reflection on birds here might be compared to the way it speaks of boats floating on water elsewhere: "Among His signs are the ships [that run] on the sea [appearing] like landmarks" (42:32; cf. 2:164; 10:22; 14:32; 17:66; 22:65; 31:31; 45:12; 55:24).

This might be compared to Matthew 18, where we find the following dialogue:

- 21 Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?”
 22 Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven.”

Mat 18:21–22

It is possible that the correspondence is only coincidental, as the Quran uses the number 70 on two other occasions. One of these (Q 7:155), however, simply follows a biblical report (the number of elders that Moses selects in Numbers 11:25). In the other (Q 69:32), the Quran speaks of a chain in hell that is “70 cubits” long. However, since both Q 9:80 and Matthew 18:21–22 are concerned with forgiveness (although admittedly in different ways—the Quran is concerned with God’s forgiveness; Matthew, with human forgiveness), it seems likely that the Quran is in conversation with its biblical subtext here.

Our eighth example is the phrase “We hear and disobey” (Ar. *samī’nā wa-‘aṣaynā*), which the Quran puts into the mouth of the Israelites on two occasions (Q 2:93; 4:46). Here, the Quran seems to follow quite closely the wording of a phrase in the Hebrew Bible, which, however, has quite the opposite sense:

Go nearer yourself and listen to everything that the Lord our God may say, and then tell us everything that the Lord our God has told you; we shall listen and put it into practice (*we-shāma’nū wa-‘āsīnū*)!

Deu 5:27; cf. Exo 24:7

The Quran also uses a positive version of this phrase, “We hear and obey” (Ar. *samī’nā wa-‘aṭā’nā*), on three occasions (Q 2:285; 5:7; 24:51) in order to refer to its own followers’ obedience to God. Tellingly, however, it is the negative version (Ar. *samī’nā wa-‘aṣaynā*) that matches the positive version in Hebrew (*we-shāma’nū wa-‘āsīnū*). Here, we have one of the relatively rare cases where Hebrew phraseology seems to have influenced the Arabic text of the Quran.⁵²

52 One might compare also the appearance of *ḥiṭṭa* in Q 2:58, perhaps connected to Num 14:40, which has the Israelites declare “we have sinned” (Hb. *ḥāṭā’nū*). On this see Speyer, *Die biblischen Erzählungen* 337. Another possible example is 2:104, which reads: “O you who have faith! Do not say *rā’inā*, but say *unẓurnā*, and listen! And there is a painful punishment for the faithless.” The idea of not saying *rā’ina* (which in Arabic means “watch over us”) might be because it is close to Hebrew *rā’*, “evil.” Horovitz (Jewish proper names 204, following Geiger, *Was hat Mohammed 17; Judaism and Islam* 12–13) argues that through

Finally, our ninth and tenth examples might be discussed together. The first involves an image in the Quran of the heavens being rolled up “like a scroll” on the Day of Judgment:

The day We shall roll up the heaven like rolling of the scrolls (*sijill*) [meant] for writings. We will bring it back just as We began the first creation—a promise [binding] on Us. [That] indeed We will do.

Q 21:104⁵³

The metaphor of the skies being rolled up like a scroll is used in both Isaiah and Revelation:

The heavens will be rolled up like a scroll [Hb. *sēper*; Syr. *magaltā*] and all their array will fade away, as fade the leaves falling from the vine, as fade those falling from the fig tree.

Isa 34:4b

The sky disappeared like a scroll [Gk. *biblion*; Syr. *kātbā*] rolling up and all the mountains and islands were shaken from their places.

Rev 6:14

The imagery of Revelation is no doubt dependent on that of Isaiah. However, whereas the context of Isaiah is Yahweh’s vengeance against the Gentiles in particular, the context of Revelation is apocalyptic and universal. The Quran similarly deploys this imagery for the sake of depicting the scene of a universal apocalypse. In other words, the Quranic application of this turn of phrase seems to connect it to the New Testament.

It is also worth noting that Q 21:104—with its image of the heavens rolled up like a scroll—appears immediately before the well-known reference to something God has written in the *zabūr* (our tenth example of a Biblical turn of phrase): “Certainly We wrote in the Psalms (*zabūr*), after the Remembrance (*dhikr*): ‘My righteous servants shall indeed inherit the earth’” (Q 21:105). Scholars have often described this Quranic verse as a quotation of a verse in the Psalms.⁵⁴ To this end, they cite most often Psalm 37:9 (“For evil-doers will be

the influence of Jews in Medina, *rā’ina* must have taken on a secondary, pejorative, sense because of its proximity to Hebrew *rā’*.

53 One might compare 39:67, where the heavens are said to be “rolled” or “folded” (*maṭwīyyāt*) in the right hand of God, although the term *sijill* does not appear.

54 Note, for example, the comment of Saleh: “It is not insignificant that Psalm 37:29 hap-

annihilated, while those who hope in the Lord shall have the land for their own" [NRSV: "shall inherit the land"]) and Psalm 37:29 ("but the upright shall have the land for their own [NRSV: "shall inherit the land"], there they shall live forever"). It is worth noting, however, that neither verse of Psalm 37 corresponds precisely to Q 21:105.

Moreover, the rendering of *zabūr* as "Psalms" is not certain. It depends on two elements: first, two Quranic passages that have God "give" the Psalms to David (Q 4:163; 17:55), which seems to reflect the traditional Jewish and Christian association of the Psalms with David, evident in the Mishnah (*Avot*, 6:9) and the New Testament (e.g. Mar 12:36–37); second, a supposed etymology of *zabūr* from Syr. *mazmūrā* or Hb. *mizmōr* "Psalm."⁵⁵ However, it should be remembered that the Quran elsewhere uses the plural *zabur* to mean generally "books" or "scriptures": Q 3:184; 16:44; 23:53; 26:196; 35:25; 54:43; 54:52. Moreover, the passage at hand (Q 21:105) also has a certain resemblance (like 21:104) to a New Testament passage, namely one of the Beatitudes (Mat 5:4): "Blessed are the gentle: they shall have the earth as inheritance." Once again, it is possible that the Quran is in conversation with a Christian rendering of a Hebrew Bible expression.

Finally, it is interesting to note that these two biblical expressions ("We shall roll up the heaven like rolling of the scrolls" and "My righteous servants shall indeed inherit the earth") occur together in the Quranic text (Q 21:104, 105). There is no clear thematic connection between the two verses (indeed, translations often indicate some kind of a break between the two), and it could be that the two biblical expressions were incorporated into the Quranic corpus simultaneously (which explains why they appear together despite the absence of any thematic connection). The situation is analogous to the appearance of our fourth ("twinkling of an eye"; Q 16:77) and fifth ("Have they not regarded the birds disposed in the air of the sky: no one sustains them except Allah"; Q 16:79) examples in close proximity in the Quranic text.

Another similar case—perhaps especially intriguing because it involves one Quranic sura and one New Testament book—is a correspondence between several passages in Q 24 and 2 Peter: Q 24:35 (2 Pe 1:19); Q 24:39–40 (2 Pe 2:17); Q 24:45 (2 Pe 3:5).⁵⁶

We are left with the question of what these examples of biblical turns of phrase in the Quran tell us of the relationship between the Quran and the

pens to be the only instance of an explicit verbatim quotation from the Bible in the Quran (Q.21:105)." Saleh, *Psalms in the Qur'an* 282.

55 See Jeffery, *Foreign vocabulary* 149.

56 For brief descriptions of these three passages see the table at the end of this paper.

Bible. Perhaps the principal argument of this paper is that the Quranic reapplication of biblical material is a common phenomenon in the text. Indeed, we could have pointed to still more examples of places where the Quran seems to use biblical language in a new way. Thus the Quran's reference to Jesus as a "word" of God (Q 3:39, 45; 4:171; 19:34); its reference to heaven as a "tillage" (Q 42:20; cf. Luk 8:15; Mat 13:23; 2 Co 9:10; Gal 6:8); the description of God's "face" (Ar. *wajh*; Gk. *prosōpon*; Syr. *afā*) remaining while other things pass away or flee (Q 55:27; cf. Rev 20:11); or a Quranic passage related to the parable of the wise and foolish virgins (Q 57:12–15; Mat 25:1–23). Some of these examples might reflect nothing more than idioms common to Semitic languages. Taken together, however, these examples seem to teach three lessons: first, that the Quran (even in so-called Meccan passages) is infused with biblical language; second, a disproportionate amount of these biblical turns of phrase come from the New Testament, which might suggest that Christians were a dominant element in the context of the Quran's origins; third, the Quran tends to use this biblical language in a new manner.

This "newness" could be explained in different ways. It could be that the Bible was simply not well known to the Quran's author. Perhaps he heard certain biblical sayings but was unaware of their context in the canonical Bible, or perhaps he once knew the Bible well but when the time came to compose the Quran his memory failed him. In his comments on the Quran's reference to a mustard seed in Q 31:16, Bell wonders if this turn of phrase is "a confused reminiscence of the parable of the sower and that of the mustard seed."⁵⁷ Although it has gone out of style even to consider such things, Bell's idea is not per se unreasonable. Perhaps the Quran's author did not know, or no longer knew, the Bible well.

For his part, Hartwig Hirschfeld argues that the variations on biblical names and terms in the Quran prove that the Quran's author did not have access to a written version of the Bible. Hirschfeld argues that some of the changes of biblical names and words in the Quran are due simply to "misreadings in his own notes made with unskillful hand."⁵⁸

57 Bell, *Commentary* ii, 83.

58 "Muhammed had undergone what I should like to call a course of Biblical training. This, of course, did not consist of systematic study nor regular instruction from teachers, but was much rather from gathering here and there sayings, tales, prescriptions, warnings, laws, morals, and parables, and supported by occasional notes gleaned by stealth and learned in seclusion. Clothed, then, in Arabic speech, adapted to the views, customs, and wants of the country the originals of the revelations are frequently hidden beyond recognition. This autodidactical method of studying accounts for nearly all the peculiarities of the Quran. It influenced Muhammad's ideas and affected his style. The Quran thus betrays

Alternatively, one could attribute agency to the Quran and see its reapplication of biblical material as a thoughtful rhetorical move. Sidney Griffith has persuasively argued that when the Quran speaks of Christians as “Nazarenēs” (*naṣārā*) instead of “Christians” (*masīḥiyyūn*), it is not “influenced” by some peculiar sectarian group but rather is intentionally referring to Christians with a label that had pejorative connotations.⁵⁹

The phenomenon that we have studied in this paper might be explained in a similar manner. Perhaps the Quran’s author knew the original context of biblical turns of phrase quite well and intentionally sought to use them in an original manner. Perhaps, in these examples, the Quran’s author was particularly interested in distinguishing his scripture from the Bible. We might note that on other occasions the Quran does seem to use biblical turns of phrase in the way the Bible uses them, for example when it speaks of Abraham as a “friend” of God (Q 4:125; cf. Isa 41:8; 2 Chr 20:7; cf. Dan 3:[35]; Jam 2:23), of “tasting” death (Q 3:185, 21:35, 29:57, 44:56; cf. Mat 16:28; Joh 8:52), of condemnation in hell as a “second death” (Q 40:11; 44:35, 56; Rev 2:11; 20:6, 14; 21:8) of the faithless seeking to hide on the Day of Judgment (Q 4:42; Rev 6:16); or of God as “the first and the last” (Q 57:3; Isa 41:4; 44:6; 48:12; Rev 1:17; 22:13).⁶⁰ These examples suggest that the Quran’s author *could* follow the Bible but on certain occasions chose not to do so.

Still, it seems to me that the best explanation is somewhere in the middle. As suggested already by Hirschfeld and recently argued convincingly by Sidney Griffith, all evidence suggests that the Bible was not yet translated into Arabic at the time of the Quran’s origins.⁶¹ This means that the Quran’s author

Biblical colouring even in those portions, in which Muhammed expressed views which were undoubtedly original, or when he promulgated laws, which grew out of the incidents of the day.” Hirschfeld, *New researches* 13.

59 See Griffith, *al-Naṣārā* in the Qur’an 301–322. I have argued something similar about other Quranic passages in Reynolds, *On the presentation of Christianity* 42–54.

60 If one were inclined to argue that the Quran incorporated these biblical turns of phrase from written sources, this position would involve a new problem, namely whether the Quran is most in conversation with the text of the canonical Bible itself or rather with biblical language in other Jewish and Christian texts. For example, as for the case of the “twinkling of an eye,” Tor Andrae points to the use of this expression in Greek Ephrem. See Andrae, *Origines* 148.

61 Griffith, *Bible in Arabic*. Griffith reviews the relevant earlier literature in chap. 1 (esp. pp. 41 ff.). Note the work of Kashouh, *Arabic versions of the Gospels*. Griffith continues: “Perhaps the best evidence in support of this hypothesis is the Arabic Quran itself, in which, as we shall see in the next chapter, detailed knowledge of biblical and ecclesiastical narratives is evident, along with an almost complete lack of textual detail in the form of direct quotations or even substantial retellings of the biblical stories; the focus being instead

TABLE 3.1 Select biblical turns of phrase in the Quran

Biblical turn of phrase in the Q	Quranic reference	Biblical reference
Uncircumcised hearts	Q 2:88; 4:155	Deu 10:16; Jer 4:4; 9:24–25; Act 7:51; Rom 2:28–29; Phi 3:3; Col 2:1
“We hear and disobey”	Q 2:93; 4:46	Exo 24:7; Deu 5:27
Jesus as a “word” of God	Q 3:39; 45; 4:171; 19:34	John 1:1 <i>passim</i>
“Tasting” death	Q 3:185, 21:35, 29:57, 44:56	Mat 16:28; Joh 8:52
Seeking to hide on the Day of Judgment	Q 4:42	Rev 6:16
Abraham as “friend of God”	Q 4:125	Isa 41:8; 2 Ch 20:7; cf. Dan 3:35; Jam 2:23
“Eye for an eye”	Q 5:45	Exo 21:23–25; Lev 24:19–21, Deu 19:21; Mat 5:38–42; Luk 6:27–30
Leaf falling	Q 6:59	Mat 10:29
God is indeed the splitter of the grain and the pit	Q 6:95	Joh 12:24
Add an hour to one’s term	Q 7:34	Luk 12:25
The camel and the eye of a needle	Q 7:40	Mat 19:23–26; Mar 10:25; Luk 18:25
God will not forgive them even if you ask 70 times	Q 9:80	Mat 18:21–22
Twinkling of an eye	Q 16:77	1 Co 15:51–52
Birds in the sky	Q 16:79; 67:19	Mat 6:26; Luk 12:24
Mustard seed	Q 21:47; 31:16	Mat 13:31–32; 17:20; Mar 4:30; Luk 13:18–19
The heavens rolled up like a scroll	Q 21:104 (39:67)	Isa 34:4; Rev 6:14
The righteous shall inherit the earth	Q 21:105	Psa 37:9, 29; Mat 5:4
A day with God is a thousand years	Q 22:47	2 Pe 3:8–9
God and light	Q 24:35	2 Pe 1:19
A mirage	Q 24:39–40	2 Pe 2:17
Creation out of water	Q 24:45	2 Pe 3:5
Part-owners and one owner	Q 39:29	Mat 6:24/Luk 16:13
Hell as a “second death”	Q 40:11; 44:35, 56	Rev 2:11; 20:6, 14; 21:8
“Tillage” of the hereafter, “tillage” of the world	Q 42:20	Luk 8:15; Mat 13:23; Mar 13:20; 2 Co 9:10; Gal 6:8

on the patriarchal and prophetic *dramatis personae*.” Griffith, *Bible in Arabic* 52. Norman Stillman shows that the Jews of Arabia from Muḥammad’s time left behind no literature (Stillman, *Judeo-Arabic* 271–278). Griffith (*Bible in Arabic* 53): “It may well have been the case the appearance of the collected, written Quran in the second half of the seventh century provided the impetus for the first written translations of the Bible into Arabic.” In addition, see Witztum, Ibn Ishāq and the Pentateuch 1–71. Witztum argues, on the basis of citations from Abū Ja’far al-Ṭabarī, that Ibn Ishāq had access to an Arabic translation of the Peshitta in the second/eighth century. See also Vollandt, *Arabic versions of the Pentateuch*, especially chap. 3.

TABLE 3.1 Select biblical turns of phrase in the Quran (*cont.*)

Biblical turn of phrase in the Q	Quranic refer- ence	Biblical reference
Like a tillage that sends out its shoots	Q 48:29	Mar 4:28
Eating the flesh of one's brother	Q 49:12	Gal 5:13–15
God's face remains	Q 55:27	Rev 20:11
God as "first and last"	Q 57:3	Isa 41:4; 44:6; 48:12; Rev 1:17; 22:13
"Go back and grope for light"	Q 57:13	Mat 25:9

would have heard biblical material only orally, and then in the form of Arabic paraphrases of the Aramaic Bible. What we actually find in the Quran matches this scenario well. Brief expressions, such as the camel and the eye of a needle, or the mustard seed, are reproduced closely, but their larger biblical context is not. In other words, the cases that we have studied in this paper do not point to any direct influence of the Bible on the Quran. Instead, they point to something about the culture in which the Quran was proclaimed, namely that biblical expressions (in particular, expressions from the New Testament) circulated widely therein.

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The Interpretation of the Covenant Verse in Classical Imami Theology

Hussein Ali Abdulsater

The concept of a divine covenant that binds both humans and God is central to the interpretation of history in the Islamic tradition, especially in the classical works of al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923), al-Yaʿqūbī (d. 284/897), and al-Masʿūdī (d. 345/956).¹ This observation serves to situate Islam in the context of other Abrahamic religions, namely, Judaism and Christianity, where the interest in understanding the divine covenant mentioned in both the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament gave rise to “dual-covenant theology.”² Going further back in time, it is also possible to trace the influence of suzerainty treaties, prepared in the Late Bronze Age by ancient Mesopotamian and Hittite kingdoms, on both the idea and the textual form of the covenant espoused by all three religions.³ Within the Islamic tradition, the concept was discussed in various schools of thought, including traditionalist, theological, and mystical. In this article, the main concern is with how Imami Shiʿi theologians handled the concept in their classical period (third-fifth/ninth-eleventh centuries), especially in light of its theological consequences. But first, it is important to consider the Quranic roots of the covenant, before proceeding to a discussion of theological interpretations.

The Quran is replete with references to covenants, principally employing two terms, *mīthāq* and *ʿahd*, which occur 25 and 29 times, respectively. Together with other, less common terms, these two terms cover a number of semantic fields, such as theological questions, political compacts, civil agreements, and legal contracts.⁴ Given this frequency of occurrence, the paucity of scholarship

1 This is the view of S. Humphreys (Qurʾānic myth 272). Other scholars reject this proposition, arguing that while such a covenant is indeed referenced in the Quran, proposing its centrality results in a strained view of Islamic historiography; see, for example, Shoshan, *Poetics of Islamic historiography* 90.

2 Lumbard, Covenant and covenants 1.

3 Hylén, Hand of God 61.

4 Böwering, Covenant 464–467.

on the concept of covenant in the Quran, particularly in its theological dimension, is surprising.⁵

From a theological standpoint, the debates centered on a divine covenant that was anchored in an original event, that is, in a distant past. Predictably, the ambiguity surrounding the concept gave rise to many interpretations of, and conflicting positions on, the exact nature of this covenant and its temporal dimension. The positions taken include belief in a single eternal or primordial covenant, affirmation of many covenants corresponding to various groups of people at different points in time, and rejection of the idea of an eternal or primordial covenant altogether.⁶

Somewhat paradoxically, the fulcrum of Quranic interpretation of the covenant is a verse that refers neither to *mīthāq* nor to *'ahd*,⁷ although it came to be known as the Covenant Verse (*āyat al-mīthāq*).⁸ It is Q 7:172: "And when thy Lord took from the Children of Adam, from their loins, their seed, and made them testify touching themselves, 'Am I not (*alastu*) your Lord?' They said, 'Yes, we testify'—lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, 'As for us, we were heedless of this'" (trans. Arberry). The day to which the verse refers is named the "Day of *alast*."

The concept of a divine covenant is very significant because it falls at the intersection of history and theology. The Quranic accounts that refer to primordial times or cosmogonic events "are founding stories of the never-changing pattern of divine-human interaction."⁹ Nevertheless, the highly allusive nature of the verse poses a unique threat for a rationalist¹⁰ reading because of its

5 Lumbard, *Covenant and covenants* 1–3, provides a succinct survey of the little work done so far. His article, published in 2015, is the first to address the question in over 25 years.

6 Ebstein, *Covenant* 74–78.

7 Böwering, *Covenant* 464–467.

8 al-Qadi, *Primordial covenant* 333.

9 Neuwirth, *Negotiating justice* 16.

10 In the present article, "rational," "reason," and "rationality" are all intended as translations of the term *'aql* and its derivatives in the usage of the authors whose works are discussed here; they are characterizations issuing from within their systems. Only "rationalist" and "rationalism" are used as characterizations of their systems from without. In either case, the terms do not indicate agreement with the authors' definition of reason. Also, the term "traditionists" refers to scholars involved in transmitting reports and not merely studying them; "traditionalists" refers to scholars who subscribed to the view that reports, even if not known with certainty to be authentic, override other sources for human intellectual activity. See Abrahamov, *Islamic theology* 52–53, who argues that there are degrees of rationalism in Islamic theology but not a clear-cut distinction, although the Mu'tazila admittedly are the most rationalist of theologians; see also Reinhart, *Before revelation* 151–

theological consequences.¹¹ Based on this, it has been argued that to make full use of the verse's enormous potential, one must accept it at its face value and set aside rational scrutiny; for the text's power to inspire lies in its appeal to the imagination and to the mysterious therein.¹² This explains why the Covenant Verse attracted much more attention in mystical circles than it did among theologians.

Among the rationalist commentators and exegetes who were supposedly discomfited by the verse's *prima facie* reading, the Mu'tazilis and some Shi'is—Imamis in particular—top the list. The association of these two groups is no surprise, as it is evidenced in both their concurrence on many fundamental theological presumptions¹³ and the fact that Imami works of Quranic exegesis preserved much material compiled by Mu'tazilī exegetes.¹⁴

As for Imami views on the Covenant Verse during the classical period of Imami theology, the verse became the center of a heated debate among leading scholars of the time. They offered conflicting interpretations that demonstrated their different theological systems, ranging from thoroughgoing rationalism to complete traditionalism. This diversity reflected the ideological concerns of the Imami community facing the challenge of both Sunni discourses and other Shi'i discourses. The article focuses, in particular, on the views of al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq (d. 381/991–992), al-Shaykh al-Mufid (d. 413/1022), al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā (d. 436/1044), and al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067–1068). Al-Ṣadūq

155, 167–171, for a critical appraisal of scholarship on *ʿaql* and an analysis of the concept's role in mischaracterization of the debate between the Mu'tazila and their opponents.

11 Böwering, *Covenant* 464–467.

12 al-Qadi, *Primordial covenant* 337.

13 For the purposes of this article, the debate about the origins of the concurrence between Mu'tazilism and Imami Shi'ism is set aside. Whether it was mere concurrence or the result of an act of appropriation of external teachings by either party, it suffices here to say that by the time of al-Ṣadūq, the agreement between the two groups had become established. For the view that it was the Imamis who appropriated Mu'tazilī positions see, for example, Madelung, *Imāmism and Mu'tazilite theology* 15, 28; Kohlberg, *Shi'ism* xxiv; Bayhom-Daou, *Shaykh Mufid* 23; Schmidtke, *al-'Allāma al-Ḥilli* 154, 156; Halm, *Shi'ism* 49–50; Momen, *Introduction to Shi'i Islam* 79–82; Newman, *Formative period* 20, 26. For the view that Imami positions were independent from Mu'tazilism see Amīn, *Aḡyān al-Shi'a* i, 342; Mughniyya, *Shi'a* 110–111; Abrahamov, *Attitude of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq* 208; Ali, *Imamite rationalism* 9–10.

14 See, for example, Mourad, *Survival of the Mu'tazila tradition* 84–86, for the relationship between the exegesis of the Imami al-Ṭabrisī (d. 548/1154) and that of the Zaydī Mu'tazilī al-Jishumī (d. 494/1101). Although Mourad also discusses the similarity between the exegesis of the Ash'arī al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210) and that of the Mu'tazilī al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144), it must be noted that al-Ṭabrisī is much more approving of al-Jishumī's views than al-Rāzī is of al-Zamakhsharī's.

is a traditionalist traditionist, considered moderate by later authorities¹⁵ and described as the last representative of the original Imami tradition by a recent scholar.¹⁶ Al-Mufid, al-Murtaḍā, and al-Ṭūsī are all considered rationalists. Al-Murtaḍā is renowned for his uncompromising rejection of non-prevalent reports.¹⁷ Al-Mufid, while also rejecting these reports, in practice held a much more accommodating position that allowed him to invoke reports more often in his discussions.¹⁸ Al-Ṭūsī, on the other hand, offered a theoretical framework for accepting non-prevalent reports as a legitimate component of religious experience, specifically law.¹⁹

Though offering different interpretations of the Covenant Verse, these scholars shared an acute awareness of its unique appeal to “extremist” groups of various types (*ghulāt, mufawwiḍa*),²⁰ whom they wanted to renounce, together with their gnostic teachings.²¹ By investigating the possible assumptions that gave rise to these various interpretations and situating them in the context of an evolving Imami discourse, this article aims to examine the much-debated connection between Shi‘ism and gnosticism from the perspective of both the social and the intellectual development of the Imami community. Relying on a close reading of the texts, it seeks to trace the details that reflect each author’s position vis-à-vis the gnostic teachings within the Shi‘i community, on the one hand, and his departure, or lack thereof, from his predecessors, on the other.

15 See, for example, al-Mufid, *Taṣḥīḥ* 135–136, and al-Murtaḍā, *Rasā’il* iii, 310.

16 Amir-Moezzi, *Divine guide* 18.

17 Madelung, ‘Alam al-Hodā 791–795.

18 McDermott, *Theology of al-Shaikh al-Mufid* 298–299.

19 Modarressi, *Introduction to Shi‘i law* 44–45.

20 See a summary of their views in Modarressi, *Crisis and consolidation* 20–28. The Arabic terms here translated collectively as “extremists” are polemical, originating in the discourse of their opponents; also polemical is the term “shortcomers” (*muqaṣṣira*), which the “extremists” used to describe their opponents. See *ibid.* 36–37.

21 In the present article, the term “gnostic” is preferred to “esoteric,” which is usually the choice of Amir-Moezzi; see Amir-Moezzi and Jambet, *Qu’est-ce que le Shi‘isme?* 31–41; Amir-Moezzi, *Tafsīr* of al-Ḥibārī 128; Amir-Moezzi, Only the man of God 279–280. Other scholars endorse the term gnostic; see, for example, Crone, *Nativist prophets* 215–219; Daf-tary, *Short history of the Isma‘ilis* 52–59. Although the typological value of gnosticism has been questioned (King, *What is gnosticism?* 218), it is deemed a better choice here because the said groups do share many of the typical characteristics of gnostic movements, such as the belief that religious knowledge suffices for salvation; that a spark of divine element is latent within members of certain classes; that such knowledge is brought forth by a revealer; and that the world is governed by a dualist dichotomy (Pearson, *Ancient gnos-ticism* 12–14). Throughout this article, I use gnosticism as opposed to Gnosticism, since the former term refers not to a specific religious movement but to the features generally shared by such phenomena.

Because the issue of the covenant is not intimately related to questions that are at the heart of theological and sectarian disputes, it can be seen as one of low sensitivity. Therefore, it provides an apt venue to examine each author's maximal commitment to his method in understanding Imami Shī'ism. The interpretation of the Covenant Verse can be joined to similar "low-sensitivity" discussions, such as the highly pertinent one concerning the essence of the human being (*māhiyyat al-insān*), to fit into the larger historiographical project of addressing the so-called rationalist turn in Imami Shī'ism during the Būyid period (335–447/946–1055).²²

The concept of "antidiscipline" is employed here as an analytical framework. Briefly put, this concept was proposed to emphasize the adversarial relationship between fields of study at adjacent levels of organization. The antidiscipline is the more basic field of study; for example, chemistry as opposed to molecular biology. Because scholars are committed to their own methods and ideas in their approach to other disciplines, the scholars of the antidiscipline have an exploitive interest in the discipline, since they believe it must be reformulated according to its own laws. This breeds tension, leading to "a predictable mixture of aversions, misunderstandings, overenthusiasm, local conflicts, and treaties." However, full complementarity eventually results from this creative interaction.²³

Although the concept of the antidiscipline originated in the context of studying the relationship between disciplines of the natural sciences, and bearing in mind the difference between natural sciences and the disciplines that formed the classical Islamic world of learning, the paradigmatic relationship can still be applied, *mutatis mutandis*, to yield fruitful outcomes. The main difference to be accounted for is that the classical Islamic case lacks any objective criterion to determine which discipline is most fundamental, and thus experts in each discipline would claim theirs to be the one whose laws must govern other disciplines—that is, the "antidiscipline." This is certainly the case for the scholars who constitute the focus of the present study, namely, experts in traditions and theology. Both believed in the epistemic sufficiency of their own discipline and showed merely exploitive interest in the other: theologians used traditions sparingly to compensate for the occasional lack of rational arguments, whereas traditionalists employed arguments whenever they wanted to prefer a particular report over less desirable ones.

22 See Abdulsater, *Traditionalist spirits* 1–37.

23 Wilson, *On human nature* 7–8.

But before embarking on a detailed analysis of their positions, a schematic exposé may help explain the broader setting of the discussion.

1 Overview of the Interpretations of the Covenant Verse

The general exegetic responses to the Covenant Verse can be classified into two basic categories of reading. The first is the literal, which affirms that the verse refers to an event that did take place at a past moment. The second is the metaphorical, which rejects the reality of such an event. Each of the two categories contains a variety of interpretations. Thus, among literal responses, views diverge on a number of matters.²⁴ These include the exact time of the event: Was it just after the creation of Adam²⁵ or just after his exile from Paradise?²⁶ The place is also a matter of controversy: If on earth, was it on the mountain of ‘Arafāt²⁷ or in India?²⁸ Likewise, the nature of the parties involved is also controversial: Was the covenant made between God and human souls/spirits,²⁹ or between Him and specks (*dharr*) like mustard seeds (*khardal*)?³⁰ Moreover, the content of the presumed covenant is questioned: Did God ask the other party to accept His lordship,³¹ or to worship Him only,³² or to also accept His messengers?³³ The human reaction to God’s address is also reported in differing ways: Did they acquiesce—as in most reports³⁴—or did some of them answer in an insincere affirmative?³⁵ But despite all these disagreements, it may safely be concluded that traditionalists, both Sunni and

24 In this brief summary of literal views, I rely on al-Ṭabarī’s *Tafsīr* because of its early date, the amount of material it contains, and its wide acceptance. The editor of the work provides references to these reports in Sunnī compendia. The Shi‘ī parallels will be referenced later.

25 al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* x, 549–550, 53, 54, 55.

26 al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* x, 548–549.

27 al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* x, 547–548, 50.

28 al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* x, 548.

29 al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* x, 562. The translations provided here for *nafs* and *rūḥ* as “soul” and “spirit,” respectively, are meant to reflect the dominant understanding of the later Islamic tradition. As a rule of thumb, the common usage in English prefers to translate *nafs* as “soul” and *rūḥ* as “spirit.”

30 al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* x, 556.

31 al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* x, 550, 55, 60, 61.

32 al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* x, 555.

33 al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* x, 557.

34 al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* x, 546, 555.

35 al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* x, 560–561.

Shi'i, opted for the literal interpretation of the verse. In addition, many theologians, both Sunni and Shi'i, also accepted the literal reading, though the heavy philosophical layer added to the interpretation by some later Imami theologian-philosophers makes their literal reading very different from others within this category.³⁶

The scholars who championed the metaphorical interpretation were driven by considerations that made the literal interpretation unacceptable. These considerations can be termed theological inasmuch as theology is a rough translation of *ilm al-kalām*, which itself includes many discussions that extend beyond theology proper to include matters related to linguistics, epistemology, and natural philosophy, among others.³⁷ Nine types of such considerations can be listed:³⁸

1. *Hermeneutic*: The literal interpretation is not congruous with the prima facie reading of the verse. It needs extra-Quranic details to complete the account of a past event, even in its minimal versions.
2. *Exegetical*: The literal interpretation contradicts other Quranic expressions concerning the creation of the human species or the life cycle of individual humans.
3. *Epistemic*: Though abundant, the reports on which the literal reading depends are not reliable, either because they are still non-prevalent (*āḥād*) or because their chains of transmission are unsound.
4. *Observational*: It is unreasonable to assume that collective forgetfulness afflicts whole groups. But since nobody seems to remember this past event, it must not have happened in the first place.
5. *Teleological*: Even if this covenant did take place, the fact that it is not remembered absolves all presumed individuals from its consequences.
6. *Moral*: If the whole point of the covenant is to hold humans accountable for breaking their commitment whenever they do so, then the parties to the covenant must have been mature rational beings—for only they are eligible for accountability. But this cannot have been the case, because the physical parts mentioned in the reports could not have possibly been rational.
7. *Spatial*: Adam's loins are too small to hold the required aggregate of particles, since each human who will be born must be present as a speck.

36 See, for example, al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr* xv, 54–55; al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Tafsīr* ix, 319–336.

37 Frank, *Science of kalām* 9–12, elaborately discusses the problem of translating the term *kalām*.

38 See al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr* xv, 50–53, and al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Tafsīr* ix, 316–318, for the details of these objections.

8. *Biological*: Life, which is a requisite for the existence of reason, cannot possibly inhere in a particle whose dimensions cannot provide the necessary structure of blood and flesh.
9. *Doctrinal*: The literal interpretation comes too close to affirming belief in the transmigration of souls (*tanāsukh*).

The interpretations of the Imami scholars whose work this article examines also fall within the two basic categories outlined above. But in addition to their value for contextualizing Islamic intellectual history, their contributions are distinct in that they provide many details that are peculiarly Imami on issues ranging from the provenance of the reports relevant to the discussion to the substance that these reports provide.

2 The Plain Literal Interpretation: al-Ṣadūq

Al-Ṣadūq's own voice is rarely heard in his writings; he prefers to express himself by transmitting pertinent reports on whichever topic he is addressing. Even his succinct statement of Imami beliefs, *I'tiqādāt al-Imāmiyya* (The doctrines of the Imamis),³⁹ is no more than a thematically organized anthology of reports that he deems authoritative for the whole Imami community.

When it comes to the Covenant Verse, he touches on it incidentally; that is, it only comes up in traditions. Even when the reports are hard to reconcile with one another, he does not interfere to point out the difficulty. Thus he reports that the covenant was made with the shadows (*azilla*) of human beings before their birth (*mīlād*),⁴⁰ leaving the impression that the covenant was not a singular event at the dawn of human creation but is rather repeated every time before an individual is born. In a different context, the time and place of the covenant are specified: it was after the creation of Adam, in the corner of the Ka'ba where the Black Stone is placed.⁴¹ The same report, a relatively lengthy one, contains material that reflects belief in God's corporeality (*tajsīm*), since it affirms twice that God appeared/manifested Himself (*tarā'ā*) in that place and time to Adam and his progeny.⁴² Despite his assertion elsewhere that God

39 The book is a transcription of al-Ṣadūq's dictation in Naysābūr on Friday, 12 Sha'bān 368/March 12, 979; Āghā Buzurg, *Dharī'a* ii, 226. It is titled *Kitāb dīn al-Imāmiyya* in al-Ṭūsī, *Fihrist* 157. The book was translated into English in 1942 by Asaf A.A. Fyzee as *A Shi'ite creed*.

40 See the two reports in al-Ṣadūq, *Ḥal* i, 84–85.

41 al-Ṣadūq, *Ḥal* ii, 429.

42 al-Ṣadūq, *Ḥal* ii, 429, 431.

is incorporeal and that He cannot be perceived by eyesight,⁴³ al-Ṣadūq ignores this aspect of the report. Besides a somewhat defensive remark that betrays a skeptical view of the report's soundness, his only comment concerns a phrase that reveals an anthropomorphic position: al-Ṣadūq interprets the statement that God placed the Black Stone in its place with His hand to mean that the placing was done with God's power (*qudra*).⁴⁴ A similar report states that the covenant was made with Adam in Paradise, where the Black Stone was initially placed, and that Adam remembered the covenant when he saw the stone after his fall.⁴⁵ The report contains elements that are very much amenable to deterministic views, stressing that unbelievers who never encounter God's message will end up in Hell, and that this was God's purpose in creating them.⁴⁶ The content of these reports reinforces the sectarian view, for the covenant included the belief in God's lordship, Muḥammad's prophethood, and 'Alī's legateship (*waṣīyya*); as such, only the Shī'a fully meet its requirements—as attested by the Black Stone itself.⁴⁷

3 The Compound Literal-Metaphorical Interpretation: al-Mufid

In line with his scathing critique of al-Ṣadūq in his *Taṣḥīḥ I'tiqādāt al-Imāmiyya* (Correction of *The doctrines of the Imamis*),⁴⁸ al-Mufid denies the existence of souls/spirits before individual bodies, let alone before the creation of the whole species. For him, material that speaks of primordial shadows and images is all fabricated by the "extremists," and he singles out Muḥammad b. Sinān al-Zāhirī (d. 220/835) as the possible culprit.⁴⁹ The same Muḥammad b. Sinān is actually a narrator of the aforementioned lengthy report quoted by al-Ṣadūq. The most al-Mufid is willing to concede is that after the creation of Adam, he was shown luminous representations (*'alā mithl ṣuwarihim*) of the Prophet, 'Alī, Fāṭima, Ḥasan, and Ḥusayn and informed of their virtue and of people's obligation to revere and obey them. These representations, he repeatedly asserts, were not animate—let alone rational or morally responsible.⁵⁰

43 al-Ṣadūq, *I'tiqādāt* 21–23.

44 al-Ṣadūq, *ʿIlal* ii, 431.

45 al-Ṣadūq, *ʿIlal* ii, 426.

46 al-Ṣadūq, *ʿIlal* ii, 425.

47 al-Ṣadūq, *ʿIlal* ii, 430–431.

48 See McDermott, *Theology of al-Shaikh al-Mufid* 315–365, for a comparative survey of al-Ṣadūq's and al-Mufid's works.

49 al-Mufid, *al-Masā'il al-Sarawīyya* 37–38. On him see al-Najāshī, *Rijāl* 328; al-Ṭūsī, *Fihrist* 143.

50 al-Mufid, *al-Masā'il al-Sarawīyya* 39–40.

As for Adam's progeny taken out of his loins, al-Mufid does affirm the authenticity of some reports, despite their different wording and meaning. According to him, in the authentic reports (*ṣaḥīḥ*), which he paraphrases, the conversation takes place not between God and the particles of *dharr*, but between Adam himself and God. In this conversation, God informs Adam that some of his offspring will be of pure faith and will end up in paradise; others will be of no faith and will end up in hell; and the remainder will have a mixed status, and it will be God's prerogative to judge them either way.⁵¹ Al-Mufid's paraphrased report, interestingly, allows room for neither deterministic connotations nor gnostic elements. He entertains the possibility (*yuh-tamal*) that from Adam's loins essential particles of each of his descendants' bodies were extracted (*ūṣūl ajsām dhurriyyatihi*).⁵² This possibility reflects the belief that there are essential parts in the human body that cannot be altered; this view is shared by many Muslim scholars who, like al-Mufid, did not identify the human being with the body. The reason for such a belief, apparently, was to guard against a scenario of resurrection in which human souls cannot be mapped to any remaining part of the decaying body, therefore jeopardizing the necessary continuity between the formerly living body and the resurrected body on the Day of Judgment.⁵³ But contrary to his probabilistic tone, al-Mufid is categorical in refusing the literal interpretation of the covenant and the dialogue mentioned in the verse, branding any such reports as the handiwork of people who believe in the transmigration of souls.⁵⁴ He is more comfortable reading the *dharr*, mentioned in the reports he deems authentic, to mean an aggregate of particles taken from Adam's loins as an analogy to the abundance of his offspring.⁵⁵ For him, the dialogue in the verse is a mere metaphor for God's creation of an intellect in human beings that is capable of leading them to know Him and to acknowledge His oneness,⁵⁶ which is the content of the covenant for al-Mufid. In his view, it is the mark of superficial traditionalism (*ḥashwiyya*) to confuse reports concerning

51 al-Mufid, *al-Masā'il al-Sarawīyya* 45. The editor of the text refers readers to al-Kulaynī, *Kāfi* ii, 6, noting that the text there is more detailed. Nevertheless, the referenced report in *Kāfi* is not merely longer, but its wording is strongly deterministic. Al-Mufid is actually summarizing the report in al-Kulaynī, *Kāfi* ii, 8 (itself in al-Ṣadūq, *ʿIlal* i, 10–11); but his choice of words is not an act of simple abridgment or neutral paraphrasing but rather reflects a conscious selection of theological themes.

52 al-Mufid, *al-Masā'il al-Sarawīyya* 46.

53 Vasalou, *Moral agents* 167–168.

54 al-Mufid, *al-Masā'il al-Sarawīyya* 46; al-Mufid, *Ṭaṣṣīḥ*, 84–87.

55 al-Mufid, *al-Masā'il al-Sarawīyya* 45.

56 al-Mufid, *al-Masā'il al-Sarawīyya* 48.

souls and spirits with those that mention *dharr*, and then to believe that both refer to rational beings that predate the existence of the human species.⁵⁷

4 The Pure Metaphorical Interpretation: al-Murtaḍā

Employing his characteristically harsh tone against traditionalists, al-Murtaḍā describes those who interpret the Covenant Verse literally as people who lack both insight (*baṣīra*) and wit (*fiṭna*).⁵⁸ In the many places where he addresses the issue, he himself adopts the metaphorical interpretation. Elsewhere, he even alludes to the report that al-Ṣadūq narrated concerning the Black Stone, describing it as repugnant and unreasonable (*mustaqbaḥa khārija ‘an al-ma‘-qūl*).⁵⁹ Nevertheless, the apparent constancy of his position does not conceal the fact that his approach seems to have undergone two changes.

First, his commitment to the metaphorical interpretation is less categorically exclusive in some writings than in others. Therefore, in what amounts to a particularization of the literal reading, he entertains on occasion the possibility of the following scenario: after creating a specific group of humans, God completed their intellects and addressed them, through His messengers, in a manner that made them assent to obedience to Him.⁶⁰ Al-Murtaḍā then goes on to propose the metaphorical reading, that is, that God created people in such a way that they will get to know Him once they investigate their own creation and the signs that fill the surrounding world.⁶¹ Although al-Murtaḍā does not clearly prioritize either of the two interpretations over the other, one can surmise from his tone that he prefers the metaphorical one (as in his invocation of the multitude of analogous instances in the Quran and Arabic literature). In other texts, he either expresses his preference explicitly⁶² or restricts himself to the metaphorical interpretation.⁶³

Second, al-Murtaḍā uses different strategies to justify his rejection of the literal interpretation. In one place he invokes the hermeneutic, then the obser-

57 al-Mufid, *al-Masā’il al-Sarawīyya* 47; al-Mufid, *Ṭaḥḥīh* 81–82.

58 al-Murtaḍā, *Amālī* i, 28.

59 al-Murtaḍā, *Rasā’il* iii, 276–277; the printed text reads, rather awkwardly, *mustaftaḥa* (or *mustaftiḥa*) *khārija ‘an al-‘uqūl*.

60 al-Murtaḍā, *Amālī* i, 29; without the reference to God’s messengers in al-Masā’il al-Ṭarābulusiyya in *Mawsū’a* i, 33–34.

61 al-Murtaḍā, *Amālī* i, 30.

62 al-Murtaḍā, al-Masā’il al-Ṭarābulusiyya, in *Mawsū’a* i, 34.

63 al-Murtaḍā, *Rasā’il* i, 114.

vational, then the moral;⁶⁴ in another place he moves from the moral to the observational;⁶⁵ in yet a third place he proceeds from the doctrinal to the observational to the moral to the epistemic.⁶⁶ This variance reflects the priorities of the respective venues and the expectations of their audience. The first approach describes al-Murtaḍā's *Amālī* (Dictations), a transcription of his scholarly sessions that were not exclusively attended by an Imami audience and furthermore centered on literary and linguistic discussions.⁶⁷ In such a context it is only natural that the hermeneutic be given a place of priority. By contrast, the "al-Masā'il al-Ṭarābulusiyya al-Ūlā," in which al-Murtaḍā prioritizes the doctrinal, consists of seventeen questions, all of which address doctrinal points. In addition, some of them relate to matters that are not only exclusive to the Imami community but also commonly associated with the less moderate trends within it; for example, the ninth question discusses reports that praise or vilify specific animals, foods, or localities; and the tenth is a detailed discussion concerning the integrity of the text of the Quran. It is therefore logical that al-Murtaḍā starts his answer by emphasizing the doctrinal, focusing especially on refuting the belief in the transmigration of souls, which seems to have been common among the "extremists" whom he and his rationalist predecessors strongly condemned.⁶⁸ As for "Jawābāt al-masā'il al-Rāziyya," in which he avoids the doctrinal and restricts himself to the moral and observational, the fifteen questions that constitute the collection are a mixture of legal and doctrinal points. However, the latter are generally not specific to Imāmism but rather betray interest in discussions typical of the various trends of Islamic theology at the time. Their topics include the putative superiority of prophets over angels, the possibility and modality of knowing God, the reason God's actions are all morally good, the wisdom of creation, and the question of whether a slave will enter paradise by virtue of his deeds just like a free person. The only one of the fifteen questions that might be construed as Imami-focused is the fifth one, which concerns the possibility of a change in divine decision (*badā'*), traditionally associated with Imami Shī'ism;⁶⁹ but even here the tone of the

64 al-Murtaḍā, *Amālī* i, 28–30.

65 al-Murtaḍā, *Rasā'il* i, 113–114.

66 al-Murtaḍā, al-Masā'il al-Ṭarābulusiyya, in *Mawsū'a* i, 33–34.

67 See the detailed study of the *Amālī* from a literary perspective in Ma'tūq, *Sharīf al-Murtaḍā* 107–156.

68 See al-Mufīd's protest against any belief that could possibly be linked to the belief in the transmigration of souls in al-Mufīd, *Taṣḥīḥ* 134; cf. al-Ṣadūq, *I'tiqādāt* 47. See also al-Najāshī, *Rijāl* 64, where he mentions a book by the rationalist Imami theologian Ḥasan b. Mūsā al-Nawbakhtī (d. between 300/912 and 310/922) dedicated to refuting this view.

69 For an overview, see Madelung, *Badā'*; see also Hakyemez, *Bada* and its role 34–35, for a

question is not far from endorsing this belief.⁷⁰ Therefore, al-Murtaḍā's ordering of priorities reflects the expectation of an audience that shares the broader moral theory articulated by his theology.

It should also be noted that, though the evidence is not conclusive, the *Amālī* is likely to be the oldest of these texts, followed by "al-Masā'il al-Ṭarābulusiyya al-Ūlā" and then "Jawābāt al-masā'il al-Rāziyya."⁷¹ The change in al-Murtaḍā's emphasis across these three works indicates that over time, he developed increasing confidence in the validity of the metaphorical interpretation, to the detriment of the literal one.

5 Parallel Metaphorical and Literal Interpretations: al-Ṭūsī

Al-Ṭūsī's Quranic exegesis, *al-Tibyān fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān* (Expounding the exegesis of the Quran), is the earliest extant complete work of its genre representing the views of Imami rationalists. As such, it is a precious trove, preserving much of the debates within Imami circles and with the Mu'tazilis, whose exegetical views al-Ṭūsī consults repeatedly.⁷²

Al-Ṭūsī's rationalist leanings are most obvious in his dismissal of the literal interpretation in a manner that reveals the various considerations that dictated this dismissal, starting from the moral and proceeding to the hermeneutic, then the epistemic, then the observational, then the doctrinal, and finally the exegetical. In most of these considerations, he echoes al-Murtaḍā's objections, except when it comes to the epistemic; since al-Ṭūsī, unlike al-Murtaḍā, accepts non-prevalent reports, he cannot reject the reported material of the literal interpretation on the grounds that it lacks prevalence (*tawātur*), as al-Murtaḍā did. He thus engages in a brief discussion of the chain of transmission, arguing that the original narrator is an individual who cannot be trusted.⁷³

list of Imami views on the question, although the article relies heavily on confessional non-Imami sources.

70 al-Murtaḍā, *Rasā'il* i, 116.

71 The *Amālī* is mentioned in the three oldest bibliographies of al-Murtaḍā's works compiled by his students and contemporaries: his license (*ijāza*) for Muḥammad al-Buṣrawī (d. 443/1051) (published in al-Afandī, *Riyāḍ* iv, 34–39, and Muḥyī al-Dīn, *Adab* 164n, and reprinted in the introduction to al-Murtaḍā's *Dīwān* i, 126–132) and the entries on al-Murtaḍā in al-Ṭūsī's *Fihrist* 98–101 and al-Najāshī's *Rijāl* 270–271. The "al-Masā'il al-Ṭarābulusiyya al-Ūlā" is mentioned only by al-Buṣrawī and al-Ṭūsī, whereas the "Jawābāt al-masā'il al-Rāziyya" is mentioned by neither.

72 See his introduction to the *Tibyān* i, 1–2.

73 al-Ṭūsī, *Tibyān* ix, 29.

Though it suffers from inaccuracy regarding the name of this individual narrator, al-Ṭūsī's critique can be substantiated by non-Imami sources.⁷⁴ But his critique applies only to one specific report;⁷⁵ he is silent about the fact that other reports that seem to convey the same message as that of the one he finds objectionable are transmitted through chains that do not include this problematic narrator and are found in the major compendia. Writing on the issue of the divine decree and determination (*al-qaḍā' wa-l-qaḍar*), some Sunni authors, aware of the faulty chain of transmission but nonetheless convinced of the deterministic substance of the report, provide ample documentation through material with canonically sound chains of transmission. That this theme is usually encountered in texts dealing not with creation but with divine decree and determination is not insignificant.⁷⁶ Given al-Ṭūsī's close familiarity with the broader tradition of Islamic learning, which led him to model many of his most important works on Sunni works, it is implausible that he was unaware of these corroborating reports.⁷⁷ His silence can be explained by keeping in mind that he is working within the genre of Quranic exegesis; therefore, he can dismiss those other reports, none of which is worded as a commentary on the Covenant Verse, as irrelevant for his purposes. This allows him to focus on the aspects of the report that are irreconcilable with the Covenant Verse on the grounds previously enumerated, without having to address the question of divine decree and determining, on which his view is diametrically opposed to the deterministic undertones of those other reports.⁷⁸

74 Al-Ṭūsī is not certain about the identity of this narrator, stating that his name is either Sulaymān b. Yasār (d. 107/725–726) or Muslim b. Yasār al-Juhānī (dates unknown) (in both cases the editor misreads “Yasār” as “Bashshār”). Al-Ṭūsī invokes the view of the famous authority Yaḥyā b. Maʿīn (d. 233/847) to the effect that Sulaymān b. Yasār is not reliable, but this is contrary to Yaḥyā b. Maʿīn's testimony as preserved in the source (see Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾriḫ* lxxii, 237; al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb* xii, 104; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* iv, 446). Al-Ṭūsī's hesitation about the narrator's name was shared by earlier authorities (see, for example, al-Ḥākim, *ʿAwālī* i, 98, where he notes that he originally thought the narrator of this report to be Sulaymān b. Yasār but then realized it is in fact Muslim b. Yasār, so he opted to refer to him simply as Ibn Yasār). On Sulaymān b. Yasār, see Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾriḫ* lxxii, 223–244; al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb* xxii, 100–105; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* iv, 444–448; on Muslim b. Yasār, see al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb* xxvii, 556–557; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* iv, 514. The comment of Yaḥyā b. Maʿīn that al-Ṭūsī quotes is actually about Muslim b. Yasār; see Ibn Abī Khaythama, *Taʾriḫ* ii, 239, iii, 227.

75 That is, the one in al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* x, 553; it is also in al-Ḥākim, *ʿAwālī* i, 98. See the editor's note in al-Ṭabarī's *Tafsīr* for a list of the report's sources.

76 See, for example, the comments and survey of reports provided by Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *Istidhḳār* viii, 261.

77 Modarressi, *Introduction to Shīʿī law* 44.

78 al-Ṭūsī, *Iqtisād* 54–59.

Consistent with his accommodation of non-prevalent reports, al-Ṭūsī does not restrict himself to the metaphorical interpretation. He provides the same metaphorical reading that al-Murtaḍā does, but with the valuable addition of the comment that this was the view of both Abū l-Qāsim al-Kaʿbī al-Balkhī (d. 319/931)⁷⁹ and ʿAlī b. ʿĪsā al-Rummānī (d. 384/994).⁸⁰ The same applies to the particularization of the literal reading that al-Murtaḍā mentions and seems to have gradually abandoned; al-Ṭūsī ascribes it to Abū ʿAlī al-Jubbāʾī (d. 303/915–916).⁸¹ Therefore, al-Ṭūsī provides textual evidence confirming the Muʿtazilī provenance of al-Murtaḍā’s positions. But his views are not congruous with his teacher’s, for he expresses no preference, leaving the impression that both interpretations, the metaphorical and the particularized version of the literal, are acceptable to him.⁸²

Nevertheless, al-Ṭūsī adds a peculiar interpretation that neither al-Mufīd nor al-Murtaḍā mention. This interpretation is grounded in what al-Ṭūsī refers to as “our reports” (*akhbārūnā*), that is, the exclusively Imami corpus. According to this interpretation, it is possible that God addressed a specific group of people and took their testimony to His lordship after their intellects were completed; these people still remember the event today (*al-yawm*).⁸³ The fact

79 It must be noted that it is possible, though unlikely, that al-Ṭūsī is referring to another famous Muʿtazilī exegete of the time, Abū Zayd al-Balkhī (d. 322/934). This assumption was favored by a scholar who dealt with al-Ṭūsī’s exegesis in a different context; Rubin, Muhammad’s message 58. But al-Ṭūsī usually means Abū l-Qāsim al-Balkhī whenever he uses “al-Balkhī” without qualification, because (1) the latter also authored a work of Quranic exegesis (el Omari, *Theology* 104); (2) al-Ṭūsī frequently compares al-Balkhī’s views to those of the Baṣran Muʿtazilis; and (3) al-Sharīf al-Raḍī (d. 406/1015) and al-Ṭabrisī (d. 548/1153) both ascribe to Abū l-Qāsim al-Balkhī the views that al-Ṭūsī ascribes to al-Balkhī (cf. Raḍī, *Ḥaqāʾiq* 202, 227, with al-Ṭūsī, *Tibyān* ii, 543, 559; also compare al-Ṭūsī, *Tibyān* iv, 182, with al-Ṭabrisī, *Majmaʿ*, iv, 93). As an example of al-Ṭūsī’s dependence on al-Balkhī, a recently published work in Beirut, inaptly titled *Tafsīr Abī l-Qāsim al-Kaʿbī al-Balkhī*, collects passages ascribed to al-Balkhī by late exegetes, namely, al-Ṭūsī, al-Ṭabrisī, and al-Rāzī.

80 On al-Rummānī, see Kulinich, *Beyond theology*; Flanagan, *al-Rummānī*. See also Gimaret, *Avant Abū Jaʿfar, passim*, for the connection between al-Ṭūsī’s and al-Rummānī’s exegeses. The editor of the aforementioned *Tafsīr al-Balkhī* took a partial manuscript of al-Rummānī’s exegesis, annexed to it passages preserved by the same later exegetes, and published the result under the title *Tafsīr Abī l-Ḥasan al-Rummānī*. Unfortunately, the Covenant Verse is not among the passages covered in the extant manuscript.

81 al-Jubbāʾī’s exegesis is not extant. However, the aforementioned editor collected passages of it from the same later exegeses and published them under the title *Tafsīr Abī ʿAlī al-Jubbāʾī*.

82 al-Ṭūsī, *Tibyān* ix, 27–28.

83 al-Ṭūsī, *Tibyān* ix, 29.

that al-Ṭūsī quotes this interpretation from the Imams makes it very likely that the present tense he uses refers not to his time only but to a perennial occurrence.⁸⁴ Although he does not relate the reports that impart this position, they can be found in earlier Imami collections. This material indicates that the specific group intended is the group of prophets who were made to accept the covenant at the dawn of creation.⁸⁵

Given al-Ṭūsī's methodology with respect to reports, his comment that this is the interpretation narrated in the Imami corpus cannot be taken lightly. Because he does not explicitly endorse any of the possible interpretations but leaves the matter open, it may be assumed that this comment is the closest he gets to an endorsement and, as such, reflects his chosen interpretation. al-Ṭūsī's lack of decisiveness on this issue tallies well with his tendency to accommodate various trends within Imami intellectual circles—except, that is, for gnosticism.

6 Conclusion

The changes in the interpretation of the Covenant Verse reflect the trajectory of Imami Shī'ism in the critical century of Būyid rule. In the measure possible for one specific debate, tracing these changes in the works of the four scholars discussed here provides a sketch of the overall trajectory of the movement away from the gnostic elements that troubled the Imami community in earlier periods.

Al-Ṣadūq's approach can best be described as plain: there are no layers to his reading of the verse, and he is not concerned with the considerations that dictated the positions of the later three scholars in their rejection of the literal

84 It is tempting to assume that this view of al-Ṭūsī is the one al-Murtaḍā hints at in his "al-Masā'il al-Ṭarābulusiyya," in *Mawsū'a* i, 33–34. Although this is quite possible, two of al-Murtaḍā's omissions are very significant. First, he ignores the reference to Imami reports, instead speaking of the position as the view of scholars. Second, he does not mention that the specific group that is party to the covenant still remembers it today. These omissions make al-Murtaḍā's wording remarkably similar to his view in *Amāli*, i, 30. On the other hand, if one assumes that his omission of the reference to God's messengers is intended to separate this group from ordinary people, then his position comes very close to al-Ṭūsī's view as outlined above. In the latter case, al-Murtaḍā's extreme caution in wording his position would reflect a desire on his part to dilute the strictly Imami interpretation. However, this reading is not very compatible with the general tone of the "al-Masā'il al-Ṭarābulusiyya," as noted previously.

85 See, for example, al-Kulaynī, *Kāfi* i, 441, ii, 12; al-Ṣadūq, *ʿIlal* i, 124; al-Ṣaffār, *Baṣā'ir* 103.

interpretation. Although his lone comment on the report shows a sensitivity to anthropomorphic undertones and a willingness to interpret them away by recourse to metaphor, these tendencies have nothing to do with the theological considerations pertinent to the covenant itself. On the other hand, all four scholars concur on faulting the literal interpretation that reads the covenant as issuing from a conversation that actually took place at the beginning of time. This rejection amounts to the repudiation of a basket of typically gnostic beliefs, such as the preexistence of humankind, the chronological precedence of the soul/spirit over the body, the transmigration of souls, and conceptions of the godhead that border dangerously on corporealism and/or anthropomorphism. But this is the extent of the four scholars' agreement, leaving much space for disagreement.

For al-Mufid, the Covenant Verse can be dissected in a manner that allows him to separate the necessarily metaphorical from the possibly literal. He is therefore willing, though hesitantly, to accept the literality of God's extracting particles from Adam's loins, since it does not contradict his theological considerations, especially the moral, observational, and doctrinal ones. The same does not hold true for the part concerning the actual conversation and the subsequent covenant, whose literal reality al-Mufid categorically dismisses. What emerges is a compound approach that integrates the literal and metaphorical readings by allocating to each a specific function within the exegetical space. The complexity of this approach is transparent, for it is still possible to see al-Mufid's priorities through it; namely, the uncompromising rejection of gnostic elements and the accommodation of reports within a flexibly fashioned framework of rationalist theology.

Al-Murtaḍā's position constitutes the farthest departure from the authority of reports. Unlike al-Mufid, he is unwilling to accommodate any aspect of the literal interpretation of the verse, preferring instead to dispense with all reports that support such an interpretation. In its total disavowal of gnostic ideas, this position is a natural continuation of al-Mufid's. But al-Murtaḍā is an outlier, in the sense that his view has nothing distinctly Imami to it. Instead of attempting to salvage the substance of the pertinent reports by applying it to the parts of the verse that do not pose a theological challenge, he remains safely on the side of avoiding any such risk. His framework of rationalist theology is both rigid and exclusive.

The view of the last of these four scholars, al-Ṭūsī, reflects the maturation of the Imami response to the gnostic challenge, on the one hand, and a rapport with the broader Islamic context, on the other. His openness to non-prevalent reports and his willingness to connect with the wider public lead him to address the literal interpretation and to engage with it. His rejection of the literal inter-

pretation common in traditionalist circles invokes the criteria of traditionalist hadith criticism that were becoming widespread in Sunni scholarship, a far cry from his teachers' approaches. While faithful to the metaphorical reading championed by his two teachers al-Mufid and al-Murtaḍā, he is not bound by it, and he is willing to allow another literal interpretation that is exclusively Imami—although one that is free of any gnostic hints. If the views of al-Ṣadūq and al-Murtaḍā are purist and al-Mufid's is compound, then al-Ṭūsī's is hybrid. Instead of trying to integrate theological desiderata and transmitted reports into one interpretation that he deems correct, al-Ṭūsī is more multivalent: the metaphorical interpretation might be correct, but so might a literal interpretation that meets the requirements of the theological desiderata to which he also subscribed. The incorporation of these reports must have been made easier by the firm establishment of rationalist theology by his time, which eliminated the threat posed by gnostic elements.

Going back to the earlier discussion concerning the relationship between discipline and antidiscipline, one might note that it is only al-Mufid's work that reveals the anticipated complementarity of theology and traditions. Al-Ṣadūq and al-Murtaḍā provide exemplary cases of the tension and adversity between these disciplines: both adhere to the contours of their disciplines, showing a predictably exploitive interest in the other. Al-Ṭūsī's case is more difficult to classify, for it seems to belong to a different stage in the development of the Imami tradition. His approach has nothing of the explicit tension of al-Ṣadūq's and al-Murtaḍā's, nor does it display the smooth complementarity of al-Mufid's. Rather, it keeps the two disciplines at a safe distance from each other. This preempts both tension and, a priori, integration. Nevertheless, it paves the way for a new phase of interaction between more refined versions of these disciplines.

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Kitāb intizā‘āt al-Qur’ān al-‘aẓīm

*A Compendium of Quranic Quotations Attributed to the Fatimid Secretary
Abū l-Qāsim ‘Alī Ibn al-Ṣayrafī (d. 542/1147)*

Bilal W. Orfali

1 Quoting the Quran

Scholars have applied a variety of terms to describe various types of Quranic usages and borrowings, such as *sariqa* (theft), *ikhtilās* ([mis]appropriation), *naz‘/intizā‘* (extraction), *taḍmīn* (insertion), *‘aqd* (knotting), *istishhād* (citation), *talwīh/talmīh* (allusion), *ishāra* (reference), *istī‘āra* (borrowing), *istinbāḥ/istikhrāj* (extraction), or the most common term, *iqtibās* (quotation).¹

Incorporating Quranic quotations in prose and poetry was a common practice as early as the lifetime of the Prophet, as attested by the statements and poetry of the Prophet’s Companions.² Because the verses of the Quran do not usually fit within the Arabic metrical system, allusions are more common in poetry than direct quotations.³

There is no single explanation as to why litterateurs quoted the Quran in their literary works. Studying and memorizing the Quran was part of schooling from childhood, and with repeated practice, students became accustomed to the Quran’s vocabulary and used it naturally. Also, the preeminence of Arabic as the language of the state, society, and religion encouraged the pervasive knowledge of the Quranic text.⁴ Moreover, the Quran has been revered as a religious guide and a source of eloquence that possesses miraculous attributes.⁵ Ibn Khalaf al-Kātib (d. fifth/eleventh century) stated that the main motivation for

1 For a general treatment of the topic of quoting the Quran, see Kadi and Mir, *Literature and the Qur’ān*; Macdonald and Bonebakker, *Iqtibās*; Orfali, *Iqtibās*; Sanni, *Arabic theory* 135–153; Orfali and Pomerantz, “I see a distant fire.” For a discussion on the legal permissibility of *iqtibās*, see Orfali, *In defense of the use of Qur’ān*.

2 al-Ṣaffār, *Athar al-Qur’ān*; Kadi and Mir, *Literature and the Qur’ān* 215.

3 For the use of the Quran in poetry, see al-Fukaykī, *Iqtibās*; Audebert, *Emprunts*. Ḥikmat Faraj Badrī compiled a dictionary of all of the Quranic verses and phrases used in poetry (i.e. those Quranic phrases that conform to the system of poetic meters). See Badrī, *Muʿjam*.

4 Kadi and Mir, *Literature and the Qur’ān* 215.

5 For a discussion of the miraculous nature (*iʿjāz*) of the Quran, see Vasalou, *Miraculous*.

Quranic borrowing is seeking divine favor.⁶ Others, such as secretaries, adorned their works with Quranic references to prove their talent and skill in appropriating the Quranic language and themes. This is not limited to the Quran. The practice of incorporating verses from poetry, the Quran, and proverbs (*amthāl*) developed into an artistic technique, an acceptable touchstone by which to test the competence of a *kātib*.⁷ A reference to or quotation from the Quran, however, had the advantage of being recognizable and appreciated by a wide audience. Moreover, as al-Qalqashandī (d. 821/1418) noted, the Quran is often used to furnish evidence for arguments, aiding the author in establishing definitive proofs for his claims with concision and force.⁸

Quoting the Quran, however, was not always an act of piety or a means of demonstrating proof or winning an argument. In some cases, quoting the Quran served to lampoon or parody, or even to ridicule, the concepts and themes of the sacred text, such as in the *mujūn* poetry of Bashshār b. Burd (d. 168/784) and Abū Nuwās (d. ca. 200/815). The Quran was also sometimes used in a humorous context, as is the case in stories of party-crashers (*ṭufayliyūn*) and penurious men (*bukhalā*), where the religious text is used to protect or produce food, often through sexual references or suggestive innuendos. In such narratives, the sacred text moves from a world of authority to a world of play or parody, as Fedwa Malti-Douglas, Geert Jan van Gelder, and Ulrich Marzolph have noted.⁹ Van Gelder adds that when poets, and by extension the litterateurs, are being frivolous, they usually intend to shock their audience, an effect that can be achieved by using Quranic references especially because they are “readily recognized, blatant, and unsubtle.”¹⁰

Bearing in mind the belief in the eloquence of the Quran, litterateurs employ Quranic verses in order to raise the stylistic register of the literary piece. Al-Thaʿālibī (d. 429/1039) emphasized that the practice of quoting the Quran is a conscious decision of the writer. He alluded to earlier attempts to challenge the literary preeminence of the Quran, the so-called *muʿāraḍāt al-Qurʿān*. In this early period, a *kātib* could prove his talent by imitating the Quran just as a poet might prove his mastery by imitating a famous ode. After the *ijāz* dogma started to take shape with al-Nazzām (d. after 220/835), litterateurs became more wary of Quranic imitation.¹¹

6 Ibn Khalaf al-Kātib, *Mawādd* 44–45.

7 See Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Mathal* i, 101.

8 al-Qalqashandī, *Subḥ* i, 191–193.

9 van Gelder, *Forbidden firebrands*; Marzolph, *Qoran and jocular literature*; Malti-Douglas, *Playing with the sacred*.

10 van Gelder, *Forbidden firebrands* 4.

11 For al-Thaʿālibī's book, see Orfali and Pomerantz, “I see a distant fire.”

Premodern litterateurs and critics devoted chapters and compilations to the practice of incorporating the Quran in literature. The earliest known work on *iqtibās* is Muḥammad Ibn Kunāsa's (d. 207/822) *Sariqāt al-Kumayt min al-Qur'ān*, which, unfortunately, has not survived.¹² Its title suggests, though, that this scholar understood the practice of quoting the Quran in poetry as a theft (*sariqa*), a term that does not necessarily convey a pejorative sense.¹³ Ibn Dāwūd al-Iṣfahānī (d. 297/909) devoted the ninety-third chapter of his *Kitāb al-zahra* to the topic: "Dhikr mā ista'ārathu l-shu'arā' min al-Qur'ān wa mā naqalathu ilā ash'arihā min sā'ir al-ma'ānī" (A discussion of what poets borrowed from the Quran and what they incorporated into their poetry from common motifs).¹⁴ Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī (d. 360/970) dedicated a chapter to Abū Nuwās's employment of Quranic expressions and ideas in poetry.¹⁵

The earliest comprehensive book on *iqtibās* as an independent subject that is extant is Abū Maṣṣūr al-Tha'ālibī's *al-Iqtibās min al-Qur'ān al-karīm*. The term employed by al-Tha'ālibī (*iqtibās*) became the conventional one for quoting or using the Quran in literary texts. *Iqtibās* (lit., taking a live coal or a firebrand [*qabas*] from a fire) denotes a quotation or borrowing from the Quran or hadith with or without explicit acknowledgement. The regrettably lost *Kitāb intizā'āt [min] al-Qur'ān*, attributed to al-Tha'ālibī's contemporary Abū Sa'd al-'Amīdī (d. 433/1042 or 443/1051), was likely also devoted to the issue of borrowings from the Quran.¹⁶ A similar title, *Kitāb intizā'āt al-Qur'ān al-'aẓīm*, by the Fatimid secretary Ibn al-Ṣayrafī (d. 542/1147), survives and is the focus of this article. Later, the practice of *iqtibās* was a common subject in *adab* and rhetorical works.¹⁷

12 Ibn Rashīq, *Qurāḍa* 99 (as quoted in Sanni, *Arabic theory* 139).

13 Wolfhart Heinrichs explains that for the Arab critics "there is a stable and limited pool of motifs or poetical themes (*ma'ānī*) that is worthy to be expressed in poetry," thus, *sariqa* became "a way of life for later poets." Therefore, judgement on a particular *sariqa* depends on how elegantly a poet employed the borrowed meaning and whether he introduced a change or improvement in structure (*lafz*), content (*ma'nā*), or context (e.g. use in a different genre). See Heinrichs, Evaluation of *sariqa* 358–360.

14 al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-zahra* ii, 815–820.

15 Sanni, *Arabic theory* 137.

16 See al-Ḥamawī, *Mu'jam al-udabā'* vi, 328 (ed. Margoliouth, as quoted in Sanni, *Arabic theory* 142); *Mu'jam al-udabā'* vi, 2348–2349 (ed. 'Abbās). Sanni mentions that this work may be taken as the third part of al-'Amīdī's trilogy on the subject of textual borrowings, if we take into consideration his two other works: *al-Irshād ilā ḥall al-manẓūm* and *al-Hidāya ilā naẓm al-manthūr*.

17 See Sanni, *Arabic theory* 143 ff.

2 *Kitāb intizā'āt al-Qur'ān al-'aẓīm*

The work lists the Quranic verses that could be used by the state secretaries in the presentation of a various topics.¹⁸ It does not include any introduction or conclusion. A total of 117 chapters are included:

1. On prophets and imams
2. On using the terms “king” and “kingdom” to refer to the leaders and their succession
3. Obeying those set in authority
4. On viziership
5. The one set in authority can decide for the subjects
6. People need someone to drive them away from sins
7. Not to question is a condition of obedience
8. People rarely agree
9. Recalling God’s blessings
10. Seeking shelter in God and holding fast to God’s rope
11. Trust in God
12. On God’s subtle gifts and sufficiencies
13. Virtue of the intellect and the intellectuals
14. Piety, righteousness, and faith
15. Virtue of wisdom
16. Virtue of knowledge
17. Praising the truth
18. Praising justice
19. On truthfulness
20. Fulfilling the covenant
21. Returning the trust
22. Courage and strife
23. Praising patience
24. Preparation [for expeditions]
25. Praising generosity
26. Inducement to do good
27. Praising comforting people
28. Giving alms in secret
29. Those who deserve the alms
30. Helping oneself after having been wronged
31. Praising forbearance and patience

18 See Kadi and Mir, *Literature and the Qur’ān* 216.

32. Modesty
33. Commanding good
34. Doing good
35. Gratitude
36. Securing the acceptance of repentance
37. Joining hands to do good
38. Signs of rejoice
39. He who commits a sin, repents, and gains the reward of the world and the hereafter
40. Support comes from God
41. Success and guidance come from God
42. He who has good inner thoughts benefits from exhortation and increases in goodness
43. There is no guard better than remaining safe
44. Praising bringing together of the hearts and hands under the word of God
45. Following the superior is better than following the inferior
46. Reliance should be on articulation rather than appearance
47. Exhorting people to build upon the earth
48. The repented sinner should not be reproached
49. Recollection of God
50. Praising easiness
51. On good ending
52. Promoting he who combines integrity and abundance
53. Taking advice seriously
54. Seeking ascertainment
55. Praising compassion towards the poor
56. The reward of doing good
57. On the affairs of kings
58. Praising gaiety and gentle words
59. Commanding making peace
60. Obligation of returning the greeting
61. Giving care and advice
62. Intercession
63. Patience while at hardship in doing good
64. The growth in the benefits of doing good
65. The difficulty of being patient
66. He who commanded good should do it, and he who has forbidden wrong should refrain from doing it
67. Charging someone with a burden that cannot be borne

68. Every person is held to account for his own sin
69. Testing people by their actions
70. God intends good for creation
71. On the diversity of sustenance
72. The blessings and enjoyments of this world
73. On the scarcity of enjoyment in the world
74. The world is ups and downs
75. The attributes of the inhabitants of paradise
76. Things are by their origins
77. On the separation between distinct things
78. What looks alike until tested
79. On the scarcity of good people
80. Inspection is more cogent
81. He who intends good is excused
82. He who is righteous in most of his actions will be rewarded
83. People are graded in ranks in religion and the world
84. That which the good ones learn from it and has bad consequences on the evil ones
85. Charging people with what defames them causes them to sin
86. On exhortation
87. The world is an abode of preparation to the hereafter
88. Forbidding wasting wealth
89. Forbidding killing oneself
90. The inevitability of approximation in many matters of the world
91. The good might come from that which is hated and the harm from that which is desired
92. The unseen is concealed from humans
93. People are safe as long as there is a good thing among them
94. Chapter [on reminding people]
95. Freedom of choice between punishing fairly or leaving out
96. Chapter [on removing the harm]
97. Chapter [on being upright]
98. Avoidance when in doubt
99. Differentiating between good and evil people, in reward and punishment
100. Praising and blaming people in matters they cannot achieve
101. Destiny diverges from the expectations of humans
102. On making the enemies busy with other enemies
103. Lowering the voice is a condition to glorifying the addressee
104. No blame attaches to the one whose excuse is clear

105. Chapter [on fearing not]
106. God did not compel people to obey or sin
107. Recognition is via form then character
108. Striving to save the innocent from punishment
109. On self-inspection
110. On submissiveness
111. The need of people to God in their religion and their world
112. A chapter on the emigrant and the neighbor
113. On consultation
114. Seeking matters appropriate manners
115. Chapter [on making room for others]
116. On the necessity of gifts
117. Section on obedience

3 Authorship of *Kitāb intizā'āt al-Qur'ān al-'aẓīm*

The cover page of the manuscript of *Kitāb intizā'āt al-Qur'ān al-'aẓīm* attributes the work to Ibn al-Ṣayrafī 'Alī b. Munjib (d. 19 Ṣafar 542/20 July 1147). He was one of the most prominent secretaries to head the Fatimid *dīwān al-inshā'*.¹⁹ He started his training as a secretary under Abū l-'Alā' Ṣā'id b. Mufarrij. He was recognized for his excellent style in epistolary writing. A number of his letters are quoted in the sources.²⁰ Ibn al-Ṣayrafī compiled a guide to the proper deportment and procedure for the chancery, *al-Qānūn fī dīwān al-rasā'il*, and a history of the Fatimid vizierate, *al-Ishāra ilā man nāl al-wizāra*. Seven of his short treatises are collected in one volume, *al-Afdaliyyāt*, all dedicated to the vizier al-Afdal (r. 487–515/1094–1121). Ibn al-Ṣayrafī also compiled a number of poetry anthologies that are lost today.²¹ The title of *Kitāb intizā'āt al-Qur'ān* does not appear in any bibliography of Ibn al-Ṣayrafī.

A similar title, *Kitāb intizā'āt al-Qur'ān*, appears in the bibliography of Abū Sa'd (or Sa'id) al-'Amīdī (d. 433/1042 or 443/1051). Al-'Amīdī was a litterateur, philologist, and grammarian who lived in Fatimid Egypt and served the chancellery of Cairo. He held the office of head of *dīwān al-inshā'* for the caliph al-Mustaṣfir bi-llāh (r. 427–487/1035–1094). Al-'Amīdī is the author of a num-

19 For Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, see Brockelmann, *GALS* i, 489; Walker, Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Tāj al-Ri'āsa*; el-Shayyāl, Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Tādj al-Ri'āsa*; and the editors' introduction to Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *al-Afdaliyyāt*.

20 Walker, Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Tāj al-Ri'āsa*.

21 Ibid.

ber of books on prosody and stylistics.²² Al-Ḥamawī, in his entry on al-ʿAmīdī, includes these titles: *Ḥall al-manẓūm*, *al-Hidāya ilā naẓm al-manthūr*, *K. Intizāʿāt al-Qurʿān*, *K. al-ʿArūḍ*, and *K. al-Qawāfī al-kabīr*.²³ These titles demonstrate that al-ʿAmīdī was especially interested in different forms of intertextuality. The content of *K. Intizāʿāt* does not provide any evidence on whether the book is by Ibn al-Ṣayrafī or by al-ʿAmīdī.

4 Manuscript of *Kitāb intizāʿāt al-Qurʿān al-ʿaẓīm*

The only known manuscript of the work survives in the Yahuda Collection of the National Library of Israel (no. 407).²⁴ The manuscript was copied for or hosted in al-Khizāna al-ʿĀliya al-Mawlawiyya al-Sayyidiyya al-Mālikiyya al-Ṣāhibiyya al-Tājiyya. An ownership note at the beginning of the text reads:

للخزانة العالية المولوية السيدية المالكية الصاحبية التاجية
 ولد المقرّر²⁵ الأشرف الصاحبي الأميني
 أمتع الله ببقائه

The manuscript was copied by Muḥammad b. Tammām, who could be identified as Muḥammad b. Tammām b. Yaḥyā b. ʿAbbās b. Yaḥyā b. Abī l-Futūḥ b. Tamīm al-Ḥimyarī al-Dimashqī (d. 669/1270).²⁶ The manuscript consists of 49 leaves, glazed oriental paper, 140 × 194 mm.²⁷

22 Bauer, al-ʿAmīdī, Abū Saʿīd.

23 al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ* vi, 2349.

24 I thank Wadad Kadi for providing me a copy of the manuscript.

25 “al-Miḡarr” is an epithet used for dignitaries; see Ḥ. ʿĀṣī, *Ibn Iyās* 178.

26 See Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī* ii, 277 (reference from Wust, *Catalogue* i, 644).

27 See Wust, *Catalogue* i, 645.

5 Edition

انتزاعات القرآن العظيم
لعلي بن منجب، عرف بابن الصيرفي

للخزانة العالية المولوية السيديّة المالكيّة الصاحبيّة الناجية
ولد المقرّ الأشرف الصاحبيّ الأمينيّ
أمتع الله ببقائه

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

في الرّسلي صلواتُ الله عليهم والأئمّة عليهم السلام
أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَ وَالنُّبُوَّةَ (الأنعام: 6: 89)
أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ فَبِهِدَاهُمُ اقْتَدِهْ (الأنعام: 6: 90)
وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً (البقرة: 2: 30)
وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ فَقَالَ أَنْبِئُونِي بِأَسْمَاءِ هَؤُلَاءِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ
(البقرة: 2: 31)

كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِيكُمْ رَسُولًا مِنْكُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِنَا وَيُزَكِّيكُمْ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُم مَّا لَمْ
تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ (البقرة: 2: 151)

كَانَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ النَّبِيِّينَ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ وَأَنْزَلَ مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ
(البقرة: 2: 213)

وَلَوْلَا دَفَعُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لَفَسَدَتِ الْأَرْضُ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ
(البقرة: 2: 251)

في تسمية الإمام ملكًا وخليفة ملكًا
قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ مَالِكَ الْمُلْكِ تُؤْتِي الْمُلْكَ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتَنْزِعُ الْمُلْكَ مِمَّنْ تَشَاءُ (آل عمران: 3: 26)
فَقَدْ آتَيْنَا آلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَآتَيْنَاهُمْ مُلْكًا عَظِيمًا (النساء: 4: 54)

اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ جَعَلَ فِيكُمْ أَنْبِيَاءَ وَجَعَلَكُمْ مُلُوكًا (المائدة: 20)

في طاعة أولي الأمر

أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ (النساء: 59)
فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ وَأَسْمِعُوا وَأَطِيعُوا وَأَنْفِقُوا خَيْرًا لَأَنْفُسِكُمْ (التغابن: 64: 16)
وَلَوْ رَدُّوهُ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ وَإِلَى أُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْهُمْ لَعَلِمَهُ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَنْبِطُونَهُ مِنْهُمْ (النساء: 4: 83)
إِنَّمَا كَانَ قَوْلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذَا دُعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ أَنْ يَقُولُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ (النور: 24: 51)

وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُولَئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ (النساء: 4: 69)
وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا لِيُطَاعَ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ (النساء: 4: 64)
وَيَقُولُونَ طَاعَةٌ فَإِذَا بَرَزُوا مِنْ عِنْدِكَ بَيَّتَ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْهُمْ غَيْرَ الَّذِي تَقُولُ وَاللَّهُ يَكْتُبُ مَا يُسِرُّ
(النساء: 4: 81)

في الوزارة

وَاجْعَلْ لِي وِزِيرًا مِنْ أَهْلِ هَارُونَ أَخِي اشْدُدْ بِهِ أَزْرِي وَأَشْرِكْهُ فِي أَمْرِي (طه: 20: 29-32)
وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ وَجَعَلْنَا مَعَهُ أَخَاهُ هَارُونَ وَزِيرًا (الفرقان: 25: 35)

فِي أَنَّ لَوْلِي الْأَمْرِ أَنْ يَخْتِيرَ لِلرَّعِيَّةِ مَا يَحْمَدُ فِيهِ رَأْيَهُ
إِنَّمَا جَزَاءُ الَّذِينَ يُحَارِبُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَسْعَوْنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَسَادًا أَنْ يُقَتَّلُوا أَوْ يُصَلَّبُوا أَوْ تُقَطَّعَ أَيْدِيهِمْ
وَأَرْجُلُهُمْ مِنْ خَلْفٍ أَوْ يُنْفَوْا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ (المائدة: 33: 5)

في حاجة الناس إلى من يرعاهم عن السيئات

وَلَوْلَا دَفَعُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ لَفَسَدَتِ الْأَرْضُ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ
(البقرة: 2: 251)

وَلَوْلَا دَفَعُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ لَهْدَمَتْ صَوَامِعُ وَبِيَعٌ وَصَلَوَاتٌ وَمَسَاجِدُ يُذْكَرُ فِيهَا اسْمُ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا
(الحج: 22: 40)

أَيَحْسَبُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنْ يُتْرَكَ سُدًى (القيامة: 75: 36)

أَحْسِبْتُمْ أَنَّمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ عَبَثًا (المؤمنون 23: 115)

من شروط الطاعة ترك الاعتراض على الأمر
فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّىٰ يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا
تَسْلِيمًا (النساء 4: 65)

لَا يُسْأَلُ عَمَّا يَفْعَلُ وَهُمْ يُسْأَلُونَ (الأنبياء 21: 23)

فِي أَنَّهُ قَلَّ مَا اتَّفَقَتْ آرَاءُ النَّاسِ وَأَهْوَأُ لَهُمْ إِلَّا لِلْأَمْرِ يَخْفَرُهُمْ أَوْ جَامِعٍ يَجْمَعُهُمْ
وَلَوْ تَوَاعَدْتُمْ لَا خْتَلَفْتُمْ فِي الْمِيعَادِ (الأنفال 8: 42)

الإذكار بالنعمة

وَأَذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَىٰ شَفَا
حُفْرَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُمْ مِنْهَا (آل عمران 3: 103)

أَذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ أَنْ يَسْطُوا إِلَيْكُمْ أَيْدِيَهُمْ فَكَفَّ أَيْدِيَهُمْ عَنْكُمْ (المائدة 5: 11)

وَلَقَدْ مَكَنَّاكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَجَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا مَعَايِشَ قَلِيلًا مَا تَشْكُرُونَ (الأعراف 7: 10)

وَإِنْ تَعَدُّوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ لَا تُحْصُوهَا إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لظَلُومٌ كَفَّارٌ (إبراهيم 14: 34)

وَمَا يَكْفُرُ مِنْ نِعْمَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ (النحل 16: 53)

الَّذِي خَلَقَنِي فَهُوَ يَهْدِينِ وَالَّذِي هُوَ يُطْعِمُنِي وَيَسْقِينِ وَإِذَا مَرِضْتُ فَهُوَ يَشْفِينِ وَالَّذِي يُمِيتُنِي ثُمَّ
يُحْيِينِ وَالَّذِي أَطْمَعُ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ لِي خَطِيئَتِي يَوْمَ الدِّينِ رَبِّ هَبْ لِي حُكْمًا وَالْحَقِّينِ بِالصَّالِحِينَ

(الشعراء 26: 78-83)

الانتصار بالله تعالى والاعتصام بحبله

وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا (آل عمران 3: 103)

وَاللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ (المائدة 5: 67)

وَمَنْ يَعْصِمْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ هَدَىٰ إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ (آل عمران 3: 101)

قُلْ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ إِنْ أَرَادَ بِكُمْ سُوءًا أَوْ أَرَادَ بِكُمْ رَحْمَةً وَلَا يَجِدُونَ لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ

وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا (الأحزاب 33: 17)

التَّوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى

وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَالِغُ أَمْرِهِ (الطلاق 65: 3)
 إِنَّ كُنتُمْ آمَنْتُمْ بِاللَّهِ فَعَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلُوا إِنْ كُنتُمْ مُسْلِمِينَ²⁸ فَقَالُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا فِتْنَةً لِّلْقَوْمِ

الظَّالِمِينَ (يونس 84-85)

وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا (يونس 10: 81؛ الأحزاب 33: 3، 48)

رَبَّنَا عَلَيْكَ تَوَكَّلْنَا وَإِلَيْكَ أَنَبْنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ (المتحنة 60: 4)

قُلْ حَسْبِيَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ يَتَوَكَّلُ الْمُتَوَكِّلُونَ (الزمر 39: 38)

وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى الْحَيِّ الَّذِي لَا يَمُوتُ (الفرقان 25: 58)

فَتَوَكَّلْ²⁹ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّكَ عَلَى الْحَقِّ الْمُبِينِ (النمل 27: 79)

إِنَّ الْحَكْمَ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَعَلَيْهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُتَوَكِّلُونَ (يوسف 12: 67)

قُلْ هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ أَمَنَّا بِهِ وَعَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا (الملك 67: 29)

رَبِّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَاتَّخِذْهُ وَكِيلًا (المزمل 73: 9)

وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى الْعَزِيزِ الرَّحِيمِ الَّذِي يَرَاكَ حِينَ تَقُومُ وَتَقْبَلُكَ فِي السَّاجِدِينَ (الشعراء 26: 217-219)

في بعض لطائف الله عز وجل وكفائاته

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ أَقَامُوا التَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ لَأَكْلُوا مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ وَمِنْ تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِهِمْ مِنْهُمْ

أُمَّةٌ مُّقْتَصِدَةٌ وَكَثِيرٌ مِنْهُمْ سَاءٌ مَا يَعْمَلُونَ³⁰ (المائدة 5: 66)

وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ الْقُرَى آمَنُوا وَاتَّقَوْا لَفَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِم بَرَكَاتٍ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَكِنْ كَذَّبُوا

(الأعراف 7: 96)

وَأَنْ لَوْ اسْتَقَامُوا عَلَى الطَّرِيقَةِ لَأَسْقَيْنَهُمْ مَاءً غَدَقًا (الجن 72: 16)

وَرَدَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِغَيْظِهِمْ لَمْ يَنَالُوا خَيْرًا وَكَفَى اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الْقِتَالَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ قَوِيًّا عَزِيزًا

(الأحزاب 33: 25)

28 في الأصل: مؤمنين.

29 في الأصل: وتوكل.

30 في الأصل: يحكون.

فَضْلُ الْعَقْلِ وَأَهْلِهِ

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي النَّهْيِ (طه 20: 54، 128)
الَّذِينَ يَسْمَعُونَ الْقَوْلَ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ أَحْسَنَهُ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَاهُمُ اللَّهُ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمْ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

(الزمر 39: 18)

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَذِكْرَى لِمَنْ كَانَ لَهُ قَلْبٌ أَوْ أَلْقَى السَّمْعَ وَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ (ق 50: 37)
إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ (الرعد 13: 4، النحل 16: 12، الروم 30: 24)
فَإِنَّمَا لَا تَعْمَى الْأَبْصَارُ وَلَكِن تَعْمَى الْقُلُوبُ الَّتِي فِي الصُّدُورِ (الحج 22: 46)
قَدْ بَيَّنَّا لَكُمُ الْآيَاتِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ (آل عمران 3: 118)
إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ (الرعد 13: 19، الزمر 39: 9)
إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ (الرعد 13: 3، الروم 30: 21، الزمر 39: 42، الجاثية 45: 13)
إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ³¹ (الرعد 13: 4، النحل 16: 12، الروم 30: 24)

الْبِرُّ وَالتَّقْوَى وَالْإِيمَانُ

لَيْسَ الْبِرَّ أَنْ تُوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ
وَالْكِتَابِ وَالرَّسُولِ وَآتَى الْمَالَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَفِي
الرِّقَابِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَالْمُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ
وَحِينَ الْبَأْسِ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ (البقرة 2: 177)

وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ يُسْرًا (الطلاق 65: 4)
إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ (الحجرات 49: 13)
وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَكْفُرْ عَنْهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِ وَيُعْظِمْ لَهُ أَجْرًا (الطلاق 65: 5)
وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ (الطلاق 65: 2-3)
يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ (آل عمران 3: 102)
إِنَّمَا يَقْبَلُ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْمُتَّقِينَ (المائدة 5: 27)
إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ مُحْسِنُونَ (النحل 16: 128)
وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ (البقرة 2: 194، التوبة 9: 36، 123)

وَتَزَوَّدُوا فَإِنَّ خَيْرَ الزَّادِ التَّقْوَى (البقرة 2: 197)
 وَالَّذِينَ اهْتَدَوْا³² زَادَهُمْ هُدًى وَآتَاهُمْ تَقْوَاهُمْ (محمد 47: 17)
 وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلتَّقْوَى (طه 20: 132)
 وَالزَّمَنُ كُلُّهُ لَكُم مَّا مَنَئِتُمْ أَن تَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا (الفتح 48، 26)
 فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ (آل عمران 3: 76؛ التوبة 9: 4، 7)
 وَلَيْسَ الْبِرُّ بِأَن تَأْتُوا الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهَا³³ (البقرة 2: 189)
 اسْتَعِينُوا بِاللَّهِ وَاصْبِرُوا إِنَّ الْأَرْضَ لِلَّهِ يُورِثُهَا مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ (الأعراف 7: 128)
 وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ (البقرة 2: 82)
 وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَنُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ (النساء 4: 57، 122)
 إِنَّمَا يُؤْمِنُ بِآيَاتِنَا الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرُوا بِهَا خَرُّوا سُجَّدًا وَسَبَّحُوا بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَهُمْ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ تَتَجَافَى جُنُوبُهُمْ
 عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مِمَّا أُخْفِيَ لَهُمْ مِنْ
 قُرَّةِ أَعْيُنٍ جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ (السجدة 32: 15-17)
 الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فِي رَوْضَاتِ الْجَنَّاتِ لَهُمْ مَا يَشَاءُونَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَضْلُ الْكَبِيرُ
 (الشورى 42: 22)

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أُولَئِكَ هُمْ خَيْرُ الْبَرِيَّةِ (البينة 98: 7)

فَضْلُ الْحِكْمَةِ

يُؤْتِي الْحِكْمَةَ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُؤْتَ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا (البقرة 2: 269)
 ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ (النحل 16: 125)
 وَاتَّبِعْنَا الْفَصْلَ الْخَيْرَ (ص 38: 20)
 فَقَدْ آتَيْنَا آلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ (النساء 4: 54)
 وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا لُقْمَانَ الْحِكْمَةَ (لقمان 31: 12)
 وَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَكَ مَا لَمْ تَكُن تَعْلَمُ وَكَانَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ عَظِيمًا
 (النساء 4: 113)

32 في الأصل: اتقوا.

33 في الأصل: أبوابها.

فَضْلُ الْعِلْمِ

يَرْفَعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ (المجادلة: 58؛ 11)
 إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ (فاطر: 35؛ 28)
 هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ (الزمر: 39؛ 9)
 فَوَجَدَا عَبْدًا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا آتَيْنَاهُ رَحْمَةً مِنْ عِنْدِنَا وَعَلَّمْنَاهُ مِنْ لَدُنَّا عِلْمًا (الكهف: 65؛ 18)
 أَفَمَنْ يَعْلَمُ لَمَّا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ مِنَ رَبِّكَ الْحَقَّ كَمَنْ هُوَ أَعْمَى (الرعد: 13؛ 19)
 وَتِلْكَ الْأَمْثَالُ نَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ وَمَا يَعْقِلُهَا إِلَّا الْعَالِمُونَ (العنكبوت: 29؛ 43)
 وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ وَيَلَكُمْ ثَوَابُ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لِمَنْ آمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا (القصص: 28؛ 80)
 لَكِنَّ الرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ مِنْهُمْ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكَ (النساء: 4؛ 162)

مَدْخُ الْحَقِّ

الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِينَ (البقرة: 2؛ 147؛ يونس: 10؛ 94)
 وَقُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ إِنَّ الْبَاطِلَ كَانَ زَهُوقًا (الإسراء: 17؛ 81)
 لِيُحِقَّ الْحَقَّ وَيُبْطِلَ الْبَاطِلَ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُجْرِمُونَ (الأنفال: 8؛ 8)
 وَلَوْ اتَّبَعَ الْحَقُّ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ لَفَسَدَتِ السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ (المؤمنون: 23؛ 71)
 وَلَا تَلْبَسُوا الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتَكْتُمُوا الْحَقَّ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ (البقرة: 2؛ 42)
 قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ 34 قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَمَنْ اهْتَدَى فَإِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ
 عَلَيْهَا (يونس: 10؛ 108)

يَا دَاوُودُ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاكَ خَلِيفَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ فَاحْكُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ (ص: 38؛ 26)
 فَاحْكُمْ بَيْنَنَا بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا تَشْطِطْ وَاهْدِنَا إِلَى سَوَاءِ الصِّرَاطِ (ص: 38؛ 22)
 فَمَاذَا بَعْدَ الْحَقِّ إِلَّا الضَّلَالُ (يونس: 10؛ 32)
 مَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ (الأحقاف: 46؛ 3)
 قُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَمَا يُبْدِي الْبَاطِلُ وَمَا يُعِيدُ (سبأ: 34؛ 49)
 مَا نُنزِّلُ 35 الْمَلَائِكَةَ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ (الحجر: 15؛ 8)

34 في الأصل: الذين آمنوا.

35 في الأصل: تنزل.

بَلْ نَقْذِفُ بِالْحَقِّ عَلَى الْبَاطِلِ فَيَدْمَغُهُ (الأنبياء 21: 18)

مَدْحُ الْعَدْلِ

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ (النحل 16: 90)
 وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعَدْلِ (النساء 4: 58)
 وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَةُ رَبِّكَ صِدْقًا وَعَدْلًا (الأنعام 6: 115)
 يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوِ الْوَالِدِينَ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ إِنْ يَكُنْ غَنِيًّا أَوْ فَقِيرًا فَاللَّهُ أَوْلَىٰ بِهِمَا فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا الْهَوَىٰ أَنْ تَعْدِلُوا (النساء 4: 135)
 يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا اعْدِلُوا هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ (المائدة 5: 8)

وَإِذَا قُلْتُمْ فَاعْدِلُوا وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَىٰ (الأنعام 6: 152)
 وَإِنْ حَكَمْتَ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَهُم بِالْقِسْطِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ (المائدة 5: 42)
 قُلْ أَمَرَ رَبِّي بِالْقِسْطِ (الأعراف 7: 29)
 وَأُمِرْتُ لِأَعْدِلَ بَيْنَكُمُ (الشورى 42: 15)

في الصدق

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ (التوبة 9: 119)
 وَالَّذِي جَاءَ بِالصِّدْقِ وَصَدَّقَ بِهِ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ (الزمر 39: 33)
 مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ رِجَالٌ صَدَقُوا مَا عَاهَدُوا اللَّهَ عَلَيْهِ (الأحزاب 33: 23)
 هَذَا يَوْمٌ يَنْفَعُ الصَّادِقِينَ صِدْقُهُمْ (المائدة 5: 119)
 وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ لِسَانَ صِدْقٍ عَلِيًّا (مريم 19: 50)
 فَلَوْ 36 صَدَقُوا اللَّهَ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ (محمد 47: 21)

في الوفاء

وَأَوْفُوا بِالْعَهْدِ إِنَّ الْعَهْدَ كَانَ مَسْئُولًا (الإسراء 17: 34)

وَبِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ أَوْفُوا (الأنعام 6: 152)
يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَوْفُوا بِالْعُقُودِ (المائدة 5: 1)
وَأَوْفُوا بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ إِذَا عَاهَدْتُمْ (النحل 16: 91)
الَّذِينَ يُوْفُونَ بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَنْقُضُونَ الْمِيثَاقَ (الرعد 13: 20)
وَمَنْ أَوْفَىٰ بِمَا عَاهَدَ عَلَيْهِ اللَّهُ فَمِيسُوتِهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا (الفتح 48: 10)

تأدية الأمانة

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا (النساء 4: 58)
فَإِنْ أَمِنَ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا فليؤدِّ الَّذِي أَوْثَمَنَ أَمَانَتَهُ وَلِيَتَّقِ اللَّهَ رَبَّهُ (البقرة 2: 283)
إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ
إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا (الأحزاب 33: 72)
وَمِنْ أَهْلِ الْكُتَابِ مَنْ إِنْ تَأْمَنَهُ بِقِنطَارٍ يُؤَدِّهِ إِلَيْكَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ إِنْ تَأْمَنَهُ بِدِينَارٍ لَا يُؤَدِّهِ إِلَيْكَ إِلَّا مَا
دُمَّتْ عَلَيْهِ قَائِمًا (آل عمران 3: 75)

الشجاعة والجهاد

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِهِ صَفًا كَانَهُمْ بَنِيَانٌ مَرصُوصٌ (الصف 61: 4)
يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا لَقِيتُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا زَحْفًا فَلَا تُولُوهُمُ الْآدْبَارَ وَمَنْ يُولُوهُمْ يَوْمئذٍ دُبرُهُ إِلَّا مُتَحَرِّفًا
لِقِتَالٍ أَوْ مُتَحَيِّزًا إِلَىٰ فِتْنَةٍ فَقَدْ بَاءَ بِغَضَبٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَمَأْوَاهُ جَهَنَّمُ وَبئسَ المَصِيرُ (الأنفال 8: 15-16)
وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَحِينَ الْبَأْسِ (البقرة 2: 177)
انْفِرُوا خِفَافًا وَثِقَالًا وَجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ
(التوبة 9: 41)

لَوْلَا دَفَعُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بَعْضُهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لَهَدَمَتْ صَوَامِعُ وَبِيَعٌ وَصَلَوَاتٌ وَمَسَاجِدُ يُذَكَّرُ فِيهَا اسْمُ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا

الحج 22: 40

وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ يُقْتَلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمُوتَ بَلْ أحيَاءٌ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ (البقرة 2: 154)
يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَاتِلُوا الَّذِينَ يَلُونَكُمْ مِنَ الْكُفَّارِ وَلْيَجِدُوا فِيكُمْ غِلظَةً (التوبة 9: 123)
وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا فِي ابْتِغَاءِ الْقَوْمِ إِنْ تَكُونُوا تَأْمِنُونَ فَإِنَّهُمْ يَأْمِنُونَ كَمَا تَأْمِنُونَ وَتَرْجُونَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَرْجُونَ
(النساء 4: 104)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا خُذُوا حِذْرَكُمْ فَانفِرُوا ثُبَاتٍ أَوْ انفِرُوا جَمِيعًا (النساء: 71)
 أُذِنَ لِلَّذِينَ يُقَاتَلُونَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ظَلَمُوا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ نَصْرِهِمْ لَقَدِيرٌ (الحجج 22: 39)
 يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ تِجَارَةٍ تُنْجِيكُمْ مِنْ عَذَابِ أَلِيمٍ تُوْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ (الصَّف 61: 11-10)
 إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَىٰ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ بِأَنْ هُمْ الْجَنَّةَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَيَقْتُلُونَ وَيُقْتَلُونَ وَعَدًّا عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ وَالْقُرْآنِ وَمَنْ أَوْفَىٰ بِعَهْدِهِ مِنَ اللَّهِ فَاسْتَبْشِرُوا بِبَيْعِكُمُ الَّذِي بَايَعْتُمْ بِهِ وَذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ (التوبة 9: 111)
 الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ الطَّاغُوتِ فَقَاتِلُوا أَوْلِيَاءَ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّ كَيْدَ الشَّيْطَانِ كَانَ ضَعِيفًا (النساء: 76)

فَقَاتِلْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَا تُكَلَّفُ إِلَّا نَفْسَكَ وَحَرِّضِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَسَىٰ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَكْفِيَ بِأَسِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
 وَاللَّهُ أَشَدُّ بِأَسًا وَأَشَدُّ تَنكِيلًا (النساء: 84)
 يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ حَرِّضِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَى الْقِتَالِ إِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ عَشْرُونَ صَابِرُونَ يَغْلِبُوا مِائَتِينَ وَإِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ مِئَةٌ يَغْلِبُوا أَلْفًا مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ الْآنَ خَفَّفَ اللَّهُ عَنْكُمْ وَعَلِمَ أَنَّ فِيكُمْ ضَعْفًا فَإِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ مِئَةٌ صَابِرَةٌ يَغْلِبُوا مِائَتِينَ وَإِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أَلْفٌ يَغْلِبُوا أَلْفِينَ يَا ذَنْبَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ (الأنفال 8: 65-66)

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ (البقرة 2: 190)
 وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ لِلَّهِ فَإِنْ انْتَهَوْا فَلَا عُدْوَانَ إِلَّا عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ (البقرة 2: 193)
 إِلَّا تَتَفَرَّقُوا يُعَذِّبِكُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا وَيُسْتَبَدَّلَ قَوْمًا غَيْرَكُمْ وَلَا تَضُرُّهُ شَيْئًا وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ
 (التوبة 9: 39)

لَا يَسْتَوِي الْقَاعِدُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ غَيْرُ أُولِي الضَّرَرِ وَالْمُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ عَلَى الْقَاعِدِينَ دَرَجَةً وَكُلًّا وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ الْحَسَنَىٰ وَفَضَّلَ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ عَلَى الْقَاعِدِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا (النساء 4: 95)

وَمَنْ يُقَاتِلْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَيَقْتُلْ أَوْ يَغْلِبْ فَسَوْفَ نُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا (النساء 4: 74)
 وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتًا بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ فَرِحِينَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَيُسْتَبْشِرُونَ بِالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ أَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ
 (آل عمران 3: 169-170)

إِنْ يَمْسَسْكُمْ قَرْحٌ فَقَدْ مَسَّ الْقَوْمَ قَرْحٌ مِثْلُهُ وَتِلْكَ الْأَيَّامُ نُدَاوِلُهَا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
وَيَتَّخِذَ مِنْكُمْ شُهَدَاءَ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ (آل عمران 3: 140)
كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ وَهُوَ كُرْهُ لَكُمْ وَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ وَعَسَى أَنْ تُحِبُّوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ
لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ (البقرة 2: 216)

مَا كَانَ لِأَهْلِ الْمَدِينَةِ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهُمْ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ أَنْ يَتَخَلَّفُوا عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَرْغَبُوا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ عَنْ
نَفْسِهِ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ لَا يُصِيبُهُمْ ظَمَأٌ وَلَا نَصَبٌ وَلَا مَخْمَصَةٌ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَطْئُونَ مَوْطِئًا يَغِيظُ
الْكُفَّارَ وَلَا يَنَالُونَ مِنْ عَدُوِّ نِيْلًا إِلَّا أُنِيبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ لَا يَصْنَعُ الْإِنْسَانُ مِنَ الْإِحْسَانِ
(التوبة 9: 120)

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا وَجَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ
هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ (الحجرات 49: 15)
فَإِذَا لَقِيتُمْ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَضَرْبَ الرِّقَابِ حَتَّى إِذَا أَثْمَتْتُمُوهُمْ فَشُدُّوا الْوَتَاكَ فَإِمَّا مَنَابِدٌ وَإِمَّا فِدَاءً حَتَّى
تَضَعَ الْحَرْبُ أَوْزَارَهَا (محمد 47: 4)

وَيَوْمَ حُنَيْنٍ إِذْ عَجَّبَكُمْ كَثْرَتُكُمْ فَلَمْ تُغْنِ عَنْكُمْ شَيْئًا وَضَاقَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحُبَتْ ثُمَّ وَلَّيْتُم مَدْيَنَ
(التوبة 9: 25)

وَإِنْ نَكُوثُوا أَيْمَانَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ عَهْدِهِمْ وَطَعَنُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ فَقَاتِلُوا أُمَّةَ الْكُفْرِ إِنَّهُمْ لَا إِيمَانَ لَهُمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ
(التوبة 9: 12)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَا لَكُمْ إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ اتَّقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَنْتَاقَلْتُمْ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ أَرْضَيْتُمْ بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا
مِنَ الْآخِرَةِ فَمَا مَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ (التوبة 9: 38)
فَاتْلُوهُمْ يُعَذِّبُهُمُ اللَّهُ بِأَيْدِيكُمْ وَيُخْزِيهِمْ وَيُنْصِرْكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَيَشْفِ صُدُورَ قَوْمٍ مُؤْمِنِينَ وَيُذْهِبْ غَيْظَ
قُلُوبِهِمْ وَيَتُوبُ اللَّهُ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ (التوبة 9: 14-15)

فَاتْلُوا الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَا بِالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَلَا يُحَرِّمُونَ مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَلَا يَدِينُونَ دِينَ الْحَقِّ
مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ حَتَّى يُعْطُوا الْجِزْيَةَ عَنْ يَدٍ وَهُمْ صَاغِرُونَ (التوبة 9: 29)

وَقَالُوا لَا تَنْفِرُوا فِي الْحَرِّ قُلْ نَارُ جَهَنَّمَ أَشَدُّ حَرًّا لَوْ كَانُوا يَفْقَهُونَ (التوبة 9: 81)
فَإِذَا أَسْلَخَ الْأَشْهُرَ الْحُرْمَ فَاقْتُلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَيْثُ وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ وَخُذُوهُمْ وَأَحْصُرُوهُمْ وَأَقْعُدُوا لَهُمْ
كُلَّ مَرْصِدٍ فَإِنْ تَابُوا وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ نَفَلُوا سَبِيلَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ
(التوبة 9: 5)

فَقَاتِلُوا أَوْلِيَاءَ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّ كَيْدَ الشَّيْطَانِ كَانَ ضَعِيفًا (النساء 4: 76)

وَإِنْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتِلُوا فَاصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا فَإِنْ بَغَتْ إِحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الْأُخْرَى فَقَاتِلُوا الَّتِي تَبْغِي
حَتَّى تَفِيءَ إِلَى أَمْرِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ فَاءَتْ فَاصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ
(الحجرات 49: 9)

وَكَأَيِّن مِّنْ نَّبِيٍّ قَاتَلَ مَعَهُ رِبِّيُّونَ كَثِيرٌ فَمَا وَهَنُوا لِمَا أَصَابَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَمَا ضَعُفُوا وَمَا اسْتَكَانُوا وَاللَّهُ
يُحِبُّ الصَّابِرِينَ (آل عمران 3: 146)

وَأَعِدُّوا لَهُمْ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ وَمِنْ رِبَاطِ الْخَيْلِ تُرْهِبُونَ بِهِ عَدُوَّ اللَّهِ وَعَدُوَّكُمْ وَأَخْرِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِمْ
لَا تَعْلَمُونَهُمُ اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُهُمْ (الأنفال 8: 6٥)

لَا يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ جَمِيعًا إِلَّا فِي قُرَى مُحَصَّنَةٍ أَوْ مِنْ وَرَاءِ جُدُرٍ 37 بِأَسْهُمٍ بَيْنَهُمْ شَدِيدٍ تَحْسِبُهُمْ جَمِيعًا وَقُلُوبُهُمْ
شَتَّى ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ 38 (الحشر 59: 14)

فَإِنْ لَمْ يَعْتَزِلُوكُمْ وَيُلْقُوا إِلَيْكُمُ السَّلْمَ وَيَكْفُوا أَيْدِيَهُمْ فخذوهم واقتلوهم حيث توفىتموهم وأولئكم جعلنا
لكم عليهم سلطاناً مبيناً (النساء 4: 91)

مدح الصبر

الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ (النحل 16: 42؛ العنكبوت 29: 59)

إِنَّمَا يُوَفَّى الصَّابِرُونَ أَجْرَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ (الزمر 39: 10)

وَالَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِمْ (الرعد 13: 22)

وَلَئِن صَبَرْتُمْ لَوْ هُوَ خَيْرٌ لِّلصَّابِرِينَ وَأَصْبِرْ وَمَا صَبْرُكَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ (النحل 126-127: 16)

سَتَجِدُنِي إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ صَابِرًا وَلَا أَعْصِي لَكَ أَمْرًا (الكهف 18: 69)

وَإِنْ تَصَبَّرُوا وَيَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ (آل عمران 3: 186)

وَمَا يُلْقَاهَا إِلَّا الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَمَا يُلْقَاهَا إِلَّا ذُو حَظٍّ عَظِيمٍ (فصلت 41: 35)

وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ (البلد 90: 17؛ العصر 103: 3)

وَأَصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَاهْجُرْهُمْ هَجْرًا جَمِيلًا (المزمل 73: 10)

37 في الأصل: جدار.

38 في الأصل: يفقهون.

الاستعداد

وَلَوْ أَرَادُوا الْخُرُوجَ لَأَعَدُّوا لَهُ عُدَّةً وَلَكِنَّ كَرِهَ اللَّهُ انبِعَاثَهُمْ فَثَبَّطَهُمْ وَقِيلَ اقْعُدُوا مَعَ الْقَاعِدِينَ
(التوبة 9: 46)

مدح السخاء والإفضال

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمْ يَوْمٌ لَا يَبِيعُ فِيهِ وَلَا خَلَّةٌ وَلَا شَفَاعَةٌ
(البقرة 2: 254)

الَّذِينَ يَنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ
يَحْزَنُونَ (البقرة 2: 274)

وَأَنْفِقُوا مِمَّا جَعَلَكُمْ مُسْتَخْلِفِينَ فِيهِ فَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَأَنْفَقُوا لَهُمْ أَجْرٌ كَبِيرٌ (الحديد 57: 7)
وَأَنْفِقُوا خَيْرًا لَأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَمَنْ يُوَقِّ شَيْخًا نَفْسَهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ (التغابن 64: 16)
يَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ قُلْ مَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلِلَّوَالِدِينَ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ وَالْيَتَامَى وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا
تَفَعَّلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ (البقرة 2: 215)

لَنْ تَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَ (آل عمران 3: 92)
وَيُؤْثَرُونَ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ (الحشر 59: 9)
وَأَتَى الْمَالَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَى وَالْيَتَامَى وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ
(البقرة 2: 177)

لَا تَجْعَلْ يَدَكَ مَغْلُولَةً إِلَى عُنُقِكَ (الإسراء 17: 29)

في الحِصِّ على الإحسان

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ (النحل 16: 90)
هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ (الرحمن 55: 60)
وَأَحْسِنْ كَمَا أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ (القصص 28: 77)

مدح المواساة

وَلَا يَأْتَلِ أُولُو الْفَضْلِ مِنْكُمْ وَالسَّعَةِ أَنْ يُؤْتُوا أُولِي الْقُرْبَى وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
(النور 24: 22)

وَاللَّهُ فَضْلَ بَعْضِكُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ فِي الرِّزْقِ فَمَا الَّذِينَ فُضِّلُوا بِرَادِي رِزْقِهِمْ عَلَى مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَهُمْ فِيهِ سَوَاءٌ أَفَبِنِعْمَةِ اللَّهِ يَجْحَدُونَ (النحل: 71)

إسرار الصدقات

إِنْ تَبَدُّوا الصَّدَقَاتِ فَنِعْمًا هِيَ وَإِنْ تُخْفَوْهَا وَتَوْتَوْهَا الْفُقَرَاءُ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ وَيَكْفُرْ عَنْكُمْ مِنْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ (البقرة: 271)

الذي يجب أن يُخصَّصوا بالصدقات

لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الَّذِينَ الَّذِينَ أَحْصَرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ ضَرْبًا فِي الْأَرْضِ يَحْسَبُهُمُ الْجَاهِلُ أَغْنِيَاءَ مِنَ التَّعْفُفِ تَعْرِفُهُمْ بِسِيمَاهُمْ لَا يَسْأَلُونَ النَّاسَ إِخْفًا (البقرة: 273)

الانتصار بعد الظلم

وَلَمَنْ أَنْتَصَرَ بَعْدَ ظُلْمِهِ فَأُولَئِكَ مَا عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ (الشورى: 42)

أُذِنَ لِلَّذِينَ يُقَاتَلُونَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ظَلَمُوا (الحج: 22)

فَمَنْ أَعْتَدَى عَلَيْكُمْ فَأَعْتَدُوا عَلَيْهِ بِمِثْلِ مَا أَعْتَدَى عَلَيْكُمْ (البقرة: 149)

وَإِنْ عَاقَبْتُمْ فَعَاقِبُوا بِمِثْلِ مَا عَاقَبْتُمْ بِهِ وَلَئِنْ صَبَرْتُمْ لَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لِلصَّابِرِينَ (النحل: 16)

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَانْتَصَرُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا ظَلَمُوا (الشعراء: 227)

مدح الحلم والصبر

خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ (الأعراف: 199)

وَلَمَنْ صَبَرَ وَغَفَرَ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ لَمِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ (الشورى: 43)

ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ السَّيِّئَةِ نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَصِفُونَ (المؤمنون: 23)

ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ (فصلت: 43)

وَأَنْ تَعْفُوا أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَى (البقرة: 237)

وَيَذَرُونَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ السَّيِّئَةَ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عُقْبَى الدَّارِ (الرعد: 13)

وَلْيَعْفُوا وَلْيَصْفَحُوا أَلَا تُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (النور: 24)

فَاصْفَحْ الصَّفْحَ الْجَمِيلَ (المحجر: 15)

فَنُ عَفَا وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ (الشورى 42: 40)
 وَالكَاطِمِينَ الْغَيْظَ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ (آل عمران 3: 134)
 وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلَامًا (الفرقان 25: 63)

التواضع

وَإِخْفِضْ جَنَاحَكَ لِمَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (الشعراء 26: 215)
 وَأَقْصِدْ فِي مَشْيِكَ وَاغْضُضْ مِنْ صَوْتِكَ إِنَّ أَنْكَرَ الْأَصْوَاتِ لَصَوْتُ الْحَمِيرِ (لقمان 31: 19)
 وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلَامًا (الفرقان 25: 63)

الأمر بالمعروف

وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ
 (آل عمران 3: 104)

الْأَمْرُ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَالنَّهْيُ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَالْحَافِظُونَ لِحُدُودِ اللَّهِ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (التوبة 9: 112)
 وَأْمُرْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَانْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأَصْبِرْ عَلَى مَا أَصَابَكَ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ (لقمان 31: 117)
 الَّذِينَ إِنْ مَكَتَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَمَرُوا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَوْا عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَلِلَّهِ عَاقِبَةُ
 الْأُمُورِ (الحج 22: 41)

فعل الخير

وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلَنْ يُكْفَرُوهُ (آل عمران 3: 115)

وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ يَعْلَمُهُ اللَّهُ (البقرة 2: 197)

وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِهِ عَلِيمًا (النساء 4: 127)

إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ (الأنبياء 21: 90)

وَأَفْعَلُوا الْخَيْرَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ (الحج 22: 77)

وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ (البقرة 2: 215)

وَمَنْ عَمِلْ صَالِحًا فَلَا نَفْسَ فِيهِ يَجْعَلْهُ اللَّهُ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِهِ مُنْقَلِبًا (الروم 30: 44)

فَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ (الزلزلة 99: 7)

الشكر

نَفَّذْ مَا آتَيْتَكَ وَكُنْ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ (الأعراف 7: 144)
 وَأَرْزُقْهُمْ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَشْكُرُونَ (الرعد 13: 37)
 وَمَنْ يَرِدْ ثَوَابَ الْآخِرَةِ نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا وَسَنَجْزِي الشَّاكِرِينَ (آل عمران 3: 145)
 وَاشْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ (النحل 16: 114)
 وَمَنْ شَكَرَ فَإِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ رَبِّي غَنِيٌّ كَرِيمٌ (النمل 27: 40)
 أَعْمَلُوا آلَ دَاوُودَ شُكْرًا وَقَلِيلٌ مِّنْ عِبَادِيَ الشَّاكِرِينَ (سبأ 34: 13)
 وَإِذْ تَأَذَّنَ رَبُّكُمْ لَئِن شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ وَلَئِن كَفَرْتُمْ إِنَّ عَذَابِي لَشَدِيدٌ (إبراهيم 14: 7)
 كُلُوا مِنْ رِزْقِ رَبِّكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لَهُ بَلْدَةٌ طَيِّبَةٌ وَرَبٌّ غَفُورٌ (سبأ 34: 15)

الأمن بقبول التوبة

فَإِنْ تَابُوا وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ سَلَفُوا سَبِيلَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ (التوبة 9: 5)
 قُلْ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ يَنْتَهُوا يُغْفَرْ لَهُمْ مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ (الأَنْفَالُ 8: 38)
 حَتَّىٰ إِذَا ضَاقَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحُبَتْ وَضَاقَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ أَنْفُسُهُمْ وَظَنُّوا أَنْ لَا مَلْجَأَ مِنَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا إِلَيْهِ
 ثُمَّ تَابَ عَلَيْهِمْ لِيَتُوبُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ (التوبة 9: 118)
 يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ
 الرَّحِيمُ (الزمر 39: 53)

وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ سُوءًا أَوْ يَظْلِمْ نَفْسَهُ ثُمَّ يَسْتَغْفِرِ اللَّهَ يَجِدِ اللَّهَ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا (النساء 4: 110)
 وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَذُو مَغْفِرَةٍ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَىٰ ظُلْمِهِمْ وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَشَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ (الرعد 13: 6)
 إِلَّا مَنْ ظَلَمَ ثُمَّ بَدَلْ حَسَنًا بَعْدَ سُوءٍ فَإِنِّي غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ (النمل 27: 11)

التعاون على الخير

وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ (المائدة 5: 2)
 هَا أَنْتُمْ هَؤُلَاءِ جَادَلْتُمْ عَنْهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا فَمَنْ يُجَادِلُ اللَّهَ عَنْهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ (النساء 4: 109)
 وَلَا تَكُنْ لِلخَائِنِينَ خَصِيمًا (النساء 4: 105)

بشائر الخير

تَعْرِفُ فِي وُجُوهِهِمْ نَضْرَةَ النَّعِيمِ (المطففين 83: 24)
 وَمَا جَعَلَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بُشْرَىٰ لَكُمْ وَلِتَطْمَئِنَّ قُلُوبُكُمْ بِهِ (آل عمران 3: 126)
 فَإِذَا أَصَابَ بِهِ مِنْ يَسَاءٍ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ إِذَا هُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ (الروم 30: 48)

فِيمَنْ أُوْتِيَ ذَنْبًا فَكَتَسَبَ بِهِ خَيْرَ الدَّارِ الْأُخْرَى
 فَأَتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا وَحَسَنَ ثَوَابِ الْآخِرَةِ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ (آل عمران 3: 148)

فِي أَنَّ النَّصْرَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ
 إِنْ يَنْصُرْكُمُ اللَّهُ فَلَا غَالِبَ لَكُمْ وَإِنْ يَخْذَلْكُمْ فَإِنَّ ذَا الَّذِي يَنْصُرْكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ (آل عمران 3: 160)

فِي أَنَّ التَّوْفِيقَ وَالهُدَى مِنَ اللَّهِ
 قُلْ إِنْ الْهُدَىٰ هُدَىٰ اللَّهِ هُدَىٰ اللَّهِ (آل عمران 3: 73)
 وَاللَّهُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ (البقرة 2: 213؛ النور 24: 46)
 فَمَنْ اتَّبَعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا يَضِلُّ وَلَا يَشْقَىٰ (طه 20: 123)
 وَمَنْ يَهِنِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ مَكْرَمٍ إِنْ اللَّهُ يَفْعَلُ مَا يَشَاءُ (الحج 22: 18)
 وَكَفَىٰ بِرَبِّكَ هَادِيًا وَنَصِيرًا (الفرقان 25: 31)
 الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي هَدَانَا لِهَذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لِنَهْتَدِيَ لَوْلَا أَنْ هَدَانَا اللَّهُ (الأعراف 7: 43)

مِنْ حَسَنَتِ سِرِّيَّتِهِ انْتَفَعَ بِالْوَعظِ وَتَزِيدَ فِي الْخَيْرِ
 إِثْمًا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِذَا تَلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُهُ زَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ
 (الأنفال 8: 2)

فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فزَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَهُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ (التوبة 9: 124)
 وَالَّذِينَ اهْتَدَوْا زَادَهُمْ هُدًى وَآتَاهُمْ تَقْوَاهُمْ (محمد 47: 17)
 إِنْ يَعْلَمِ اللَّهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ خَيْرًا يُؤْتِكُمْ خَيْرًا مِمَّا أَخَذَ مِنْكُمْ (الأنفال 8: 70)
 يَتَّبِعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِالْقَوْلِ الثَّابِتِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ (الرعد 13: 27)
 وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ (آل عمران 3: 57، 140)

وَيَزِيدُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ اهْتَدَوْا هُدًى (مريم: 19: 76)
 إِنَّ فِي هَذَا لَبَلَاغًا لِقَوْمٍ عَابِدِينَ (الأنبياء: 21: 106)
 وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ لَمْ يَخِرُّوا عَلَيْهَا صُمًّا وَعُمْيَانًا (الفرقان: 25: 73)
 قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِي آمَنُوا هُدًى وَشِفَاءً (فصلت: 41: 44)
 وَذَكَرْ فَإِنَّ الذِّكْرَى تَنْفَعُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (الذاريات: 51: 55)
 لِنَجْعَلَهَا لَكُمْ تَذْكِرَةً وَتَعِيًّا أذن وَأَعِيَّةً (الحاقة: 69: 12)

لا حِرْزَ أَحْرَزُ مِنْ لُزُومِ السَّلَامَةِ
 فَمَنْ آمَنَ وَأَصْلَحَ فَلَا خَوْفَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ (الأنعام: 6: 48)

مدح اجتماع القلوب وتظافر الأيدي على كلمة الله
 لَوْ أَنْفَقْتَ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا مَا أُنْفِقْتِ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ أَلْفَ بَيْنَهُمْ إِنَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ
 (الأنفال: 8: 63)

وَأذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا (آل عمران: 3: 103)
 مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ أَشِدَّاءُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ رُحَمَاءُ بَيْنَهُمْ تَرَاهُمْ (الفتح: 48: 29)
 وَنَزَعْنَا مَا فِي صُدُورِهِمْ مِنْ غَلٍّ إِخْوَانًا عَلَى سُرُرٍ مُتَقَابِلِينَ (الحجر: 15: 47)
 فَمَنْ يَرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَهْدِيَهُ يَشْرَحْ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ وَمَنْ يَرِدْ أَنْ يَضِلَّهُ يَجْعَلْ صَدْرَهُ ضَيِّقًا حَرَجًا كَأَنَّمَا يَصْعَدُ
 فِي السَّمَاءِ كَذَلِكَ يَجْعَلُ اللَّهُ الرِّجْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ (الأنعام: 6: 125)
 آمَنَ شَرَحَ اللَّهُ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ فَهُوَ عَلَى نُورٍ مِنْ رَبِّهِ فَوَيْلٌ لِلْقَاسِيَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ مِنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ
 (الزمر: 39: 22)

في اتباع الأفضل أولى من اتباع الأدون
 أَفَنَنْ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ أَحَقُّ أَنْ يَتَّبِعَ آمَنَ لَا يَهْدِي إِلَّا أَنْ يَهْدِي فَمَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ
 (يونس: 10: 35)

أَرْبَابٌ مُتَفَرِّقُونَ خَيْرٌ أَمِ اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ (يوسف: 12: 39)

فِي أَنْ الْعَمَلَ عَلَى الْخَيْرِ دُونَ الْمَنْظَرِ
وَلَا أَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ تَزْدَرِي أَعْيُنُهُمْ لَنْ يُؤْتِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ خَيْرًا اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ إِنِّي إِذَا لَمِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ
(هود: 31)

وَمَا نَرَاكَ اتَّبَعَكَ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ هُمْ أَرَادُوا بِادِّئِ الرَّأْيِ (هود: 27)
قَالُوا أَنْتُمْ مِنْ لَكَ وَاتَّبَعَكَ الْأَرْذَلُونَ قَالَ وَمَا عَلَيَّ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ (الشعراء: 26: 111-112)
وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ تُرِيدُ زِينَةَ
الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا (الكهف: 28)
وَلَا تَطْرُدِ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ (الأنعام: 6: 52)
وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَهُمْ تُعْجِبُكَ أَجْسَامُهُمْ وَإِنْ يَقُولُوا تَسْمَعُ لِقَوْلِهِمْ كَأَنْهُمْ خُشْبٌ (المنافقون: 4: 63)

الترغيب في العمارة

يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ هُوَ أَنشَأَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَاسْتَعْمَرَكُمْ فِيهَا (هود: 61)

فِي أَنْ لَا يَتَعَقَّبَ الْمُعْتَذِرَ فِيمَا أَذْنَبَ وَاعْتَذَرَ مِنْهُ
قَالَ لَا تَثْرِبَ عَلَيْكُمْ أَيُّومٌ يَغْفِرُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَهُوَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ (يوسف: 92)

في التذكير بالله تعالى

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ (الرعد: 28)

في حمد التآلف والتيسر

لَا تَوَاخِذُنِي بِمَا نَسِيتُ وَلَا تَرَهِّقْنِي مِنْ أَمْرِي عُسرًا (الكهف: 73: 18)
وَسَنَقُولُ لَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِنَا يُسرًا (الكهف: 88: 18)
يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ (البقرة: 2: 185)
لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا (البقرة: 2: 286)
لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا مَا آتَاهَا سَيَجْعَلُ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ عُسْرٍ يُسرًا (الطلاق: 7: 65)
فَإِنَّمَا يُسْرِنَاهُ بِلِسَانِكَ لِتُبَشِّرَ بِهِ الْمُتَّقِينَ وَتُنذِرَ بِهِ قَوْمًا لُدًّا (مريم: 19: 97)
قَالَ رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي وَيَسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي (طه: 20: 25-26)

في حسن العاقبة

قال الله جلّ ذكره: وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلتَّقْوَى (طه 20: 132)

الترغيب فيمن اجتمع له الأمانة مع الغنى

إِنَّ خَيْرَ مَنْ اسْتَأْجَرَ التَّقْوَى الْأَمِينُ (القصص 28: 26)

في الأخذ بالحزم في استماع النصائح

وَأَنْ يَكُ كَاذِبًا فَعَلَيْهِ كَذِبُهُ وَأَنْ يَكُ صَادِقًا يُصِبْكَ بَعْضُ الَّذِي يَعِدُكُمْ (غافر 40: 28)

في التثبيت

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنْ جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَنْ تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصِحُّوا عَلَى مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ

(المحجرات 49: 6)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا ضَرَبْتُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَتَبَيَّنُوا وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ آتَىٰ إِلَيْكُمُ السَّلَامَ لَسْتَ مُؤْمِنًا تَبْتَغُونَ

عَرَضَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا (النساء 4: 94)

مدح الخنوع على الضعفاء

فَأَمَّا الْيَتِيمَ فَلَا تَقْهَرْ وَأَمَّا السَّائِلَ فَلَا تَنْهَرْ وَأَمَّا بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ فَحَدِّثْ (الضحى 93: 9-11)

جزاء الحسنات

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ (الرحمن 55: 60)

مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يُقْرِضُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا فَيُضَاعِفَهُ لَهُ وَلَهُ أَجْرٌ كَرِيمٌ (الحديد 57: 11)

وَمَا تَقْدُمُوا لَأَنفُسِكُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ تَجِدُوهُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ هُوَ خَيْرٌ وَأَعْظَمُ أَجْرًا (المزمل 73: 20)

فَمَنْ عَفِيَ لَهُ مِنْ أُخِيهِ شَيْءٌ فَاتَّبِعْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَأَدَاءٌ إِلَيْهِ بِإِحْسَانٍ (البقرة 2: 178)

في بعض سياسات الملوك

إِنَّ الْمُلُوكَ إِذَا دَخَلُوا قَرْيَةً أَفْسَدُوهَا وَجَعَلُوا أَعْرَافَ أَهْلِهَا آذِلَّةً وَكَذَلِكَ يَفْعَلُونَ (النمل 27: 34)

قَالُوا أَنَّى يَكُونُ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ عَلَيْنَا وَنَحْنُ أَحَقُّ بِالْمُلْكِ مِنْهُ وَلَمْ يُؤْتَ سَعَةً مِنَ الْمَالِ قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَاهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَزَادَهُ بَسْطَةً فِي الْعِلْمِ وَالْجِسْمِ (البقرة 2: 247)
 وَقَتَلَ دَاوُدُ جَالُوتَ وَآتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَهُ مِمَّا يَشَاءُ (البقرة 2: 251)

حَمْدُ الْبَشَرِ وَلَيْنُ الْكَلِمَةُ

فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ
 وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ (آل عمران 3: 159)
 فَقُولَا لَهُ قَوْلًا لَيْنًا لَعَلَّهُ يَتَذَكَّرُ أَوْ يَخْشَى (طه 20: 44)
 ضَرَبَ 39 اللَّهُ مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ أَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ وَفَرْعُهَا فِي السَّمَاءِ تُؤْتِي أَكْلَهَا كُلَّ حِينٍ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهَا وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ وَمِثْلُ كَلِمَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ كَشَجَرَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ اجْتُثَّتْ مِنْ فَوْقِ الْأَرْضِ مَا لَهَا مِنْ قَرَارٍ (إبراهيم 14: 24-26)
 وَقُلْ لِعِبَادِي يَقُولُوا الَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ (الإسراء 17: 53)
 وَسَنَقُولُ لَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِنَا يُسْرًا (الكهف 18: 88)
 وَهَدُّوا إِلَى الطَّيِّبِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ (الحج 22: 24)

الأمر بالإصلاح بين الناس

وَأَنْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا فَأَصْلَحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا (الحجرات 49: 9)
 إِذَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلَحُوا بَيْنَ أَعْيُنِكُمْ (الحجرات 49: 10)
 لَا خَيْرَ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِنْ نَجْوَاهُمْ إِلَّا مَنْ أَمَرَ بِصَدَقَةٍ أَوْ مَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ إِصْلَاحٍ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ (النساء 4: 114)
 إِنْ أُرِيدُ إِلَّا الْإِصْلَاحَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُ (هود 11: 88)
 فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا أَنْ يُصْلِحَا بَيْنَهُمَا صُلْحًا وَالصُّلْحُ خَيْرٌ (النساء 4: 128)

وَجُوبُ رَدِّ السَّلَامِ

وَإِذَا حُيِّمَتْ بِحَيَّةٍ فَيُؤَا بِأَحْسَنِ مِنْهَا أَوْ رُدُّوهَا (النساء 4: 86)
 وَأَمَّا مَنْ جَاءَكَ يَسْعَى وَهُوَ يَخْشَى فَاَنْتَ عَنْهُ تَلَهَّى (عبس 80: 8-10)

الإسفاق والنصيحة

إِنِّي أَخَافُ أَنْ يَمْسَكَ عَذَابٌ مِنَ الرَّحْمَنِ فَتَكُونَ لِلشَّيْطَانِ وَلِيًّا (مريم: 45)
 وَنَصَحْتُ لَكُمْ وَلَكِنْ لَا تُحِبُّونَ النَّاصِحِينَ (الأعراف: 7: 79)
 وَأَنَا لَكُمْ نَاصِحٌ أَمِينٌ (الأعراف: 7: 86)
 فَلَا تَذْهَبْ نَفْسُكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَسْرَاتٍ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ (فاطر: 35: 8)
 وَلَا تَحْزَنْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا تَكُ فِي ضَيْقٍ مِمَّا يَمْكُرُونَ (النحل: 16: 127)
 إِنَّ الْمَلَائِكَةَ يَتَمَرَّوْنَ بِكَ لَيَقْتُلُونَكَ فَأَخْرَجَ إِنِّي لَكَ مِنَ النَّاصِحِينَ (القصص: 28: 20)

الشفاعة

مَنْ يَشْفَعُ شَفَاعَةً حَسَنَةً يَكُنْ لَهُ نَصِيبٌ مِنْهَا وَمَنْ يَشْفَعُ شَفَاعَةً سَيِّئَةً يَكُنْ لَهُ كِفْلٌ مِنْهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّقْتَبًا (النساء: 4: 85)
 وَلَا يَشْفَعُونَ إِلَّا لِمَنِ ارْتَضَىٰ وَهُمْ مِنْ خَشْيَتِهِ مُشْفِقُونَ (الأنبياء: 21: 28)
 يَوْمَئِذٍ لَا تَنْفَعُ الشَّفَاعَةُ إِلَّا مَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُ الرَّحْمَنُ وَرَضِيَ لَهُ قَوْلًا (طه: 20: 109)

الصبر على المشقة في عمل الخير

وَيُؤْتُونَ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ (الحشر: 59: 9)
 وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَحِينَ الْبَأْسِ (البقرة: 2: 177)
 الَّذِينَ يَنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَالْكَاظِمِينَ الْغَيْظَ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ
 (آل عمران: 3: 134)

زكائهم في الخير

مِثْلُ الَّذِينَ يَنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَمِثْلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنْبَتَتْ سَبْعَ سَنَابِلَ فِي كُلِّ سُنْبُلَةٍ مِثَّةٌ حَبَّةٍ
 (البقرة: 2: 261)
 كَرَزِعٌ أَخْرَجَ شَطْأَهُ فَآزَرَهُ فَاسْتَغْلَظَ فَاسْتَوَىٰ عَلَىٰ سُوقِهِ يُعْجِبُ الزُّرَّاعَ لِيَغِيظَ بِهِمُ الْكُفَّارَ
 (الفتح: 48: 29)
 وَمَا تَقَدَّمُوا لِأَنفُسِكُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ تَجِدُوهُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ هُوَ خَيْرٌ وَأَعْظَمُ أَجْرًا (المزمل: 73: 20)

لِّلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا الْحُسْنَىٰ وَزِيَادَةٌ وَلَا يَرْهَقُ وُجُوهَهُمْ قَتَرٌ وَلَا ذِلَّةٌ أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ
(يونس 10: 26)

مَنْ جَاءَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهُ عَشْرُ أَمْثَالِهَا وَمَنْ جَاءَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ فَلَا يُجْزَىٰ إِلَّا مِثْلَهَا (الأنعام 6: 160)
هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ (الرحمن 55: 60)

صُعُوبَةُ الصَّبْرِ عَلَىٰ مَا لَمْ تُوطِّنْ عَلَيْهِ النَّفْسُ
وَكَيفَ تَصْبِرُ عَلَىٰ مَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِ خُبْرًا (الكهف 18: 68)
فَلَا تَسْأَلْنِي عَنْ شَيْءٍ حَتَّىٰ أُحَدِّثَ لَكَ مِنْهُ ذِكْرًا (الكهف 18: 70)

مَنْ أَمْرٌ بِمَعْرُوفٍ فَلْيَفْعَلْهُ وَمَنْ نَهَىٰ عَنْ مُنْكَرٍ فَلْيَنْتَهَ عَنْهُ
أَتَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبِرِّ وَتَنْسَوْنَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ نَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ (البقرة 2: 44)
وَمَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ أُخَالِفَكُمْ إِلَىٰ مَا أَنْهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ إِنِّي أُرِيدُ إِلَّا الْإِصْلَاحَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُ وَمَا تَوْفِيقِي إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ
تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ (هود 11: 88)

تَكْلِيفُ مَا لَا يُطَاقُ

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ (البقرة 2: 286)
لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا مَا آتَاهَا (الطلاق 65: 7)
يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ (البقرة 2: 185)

فِي أَنْ لَا يُؤَاخِذَ أَحَدٌ إِلَّا بِذَنْبِهِ
فَكُلًّا أَخَذْنَا بِذَنْبِهِ (العنكبوت 29: 40)
وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ الَّذِي وَفَّى الْأَتْرُوقَ وَازْرَأَةً وَزُرًّا أُخْرَىٰ وَأَنَّ لَيْسَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَىٰ وَأَنَّ سَعْيَهُ سَوْفَ يُرَىٰ
(النجم 37-40: 53)

وَلَا تُكْسِبُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ إِلَّا عَلَيْهَا (الأنعام 6: 164)
كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ رَهِينَةٌ (المدثر 74: 38)
وَمَنْ يَكْسِبْ إِثْمًا فَإِنَّمَا يَكْسِبْهُ عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِ (النساء 4: III)

كُلُّ امْرِئٍ بِمَا كَسَبَ رَهِينٌ (الطور 52: 21)
 عَلَيْهِمْ أَنْفُسُهُمْ لَا يَضُرُّكُمْ مِنْ ضَلَّ إِذَا اهْتَدَيْتُمْ (المائدة 5: 105)
 فَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَعَلَيْهِ كُفْرُهُ (فاطر 35: 39)
 وَمَنْ عَمِلْ صَالِحًا فَلَا نَفْسَ لَهُ يَهْدُونَهُ (الروم 30: 44)
 لَا تُسْأَلُونَ عَمَّا أَجْرَمْنَا وَلَا نُسْأَلُ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ (سبا 34: 25)
 مَنْ يَعْمَلْ سُوءًا يُجْزَ بِهِ (النساء 4: 123)
 أَتَهْلِكُنَّ بِمَا فَعَلَ السُّفَهَاءُ مِنَّا (الأعراف 7: 155)
 وَلَا تَكْسِبُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ إِلَّا عَلَيْهَا وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَى (الأنعام 6: 164)
 قَالَ مَعَاذَ اللَّهِ أَنْ نَأْخُذَ إِلَّا مَنْ وَجَدْنَا مَتَاعَنَا عِنْدَهُ إِنَّا إِذًا لَظَالِمُونَ (يوسف 12: 79)
 إِنْ تَكْفُرُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنْكُمْ وَلَا يَرْضَى لِعِبَادِهِ الْكُفْرَ وَإِنْ تَشْكُرُوا يَرْضَهُ لَكُمْ وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ
 أُخْرَى (الزمر 39: 7)

اختبار الناس بأعمالهم

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تُدْخَلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُمْ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ مَسْتَهْمِبِينَ وَالضَّرَّاءُ
 (البقرة 2: 214)
 أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تُتْرَكُوا أَنْ تَقُولُوا لَمْ يَلْمِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا مِنْكُمْ وَلَمْ يَتَّخِذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلَا رَسُولِهِ وَلَا
 الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَبِجَهَةِ (التوبة 9: 16)
 وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ حَتَّى نَعْلَمَ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ فِي سَبْعِ مَوَاقِعٍ وَاللَّذِينَ
 وَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِالنَّفْسِ وَالْخَيْرِ فَنَتَّبِعُ النُّبُوَّةَ الْكُبْرَى (الأنبياء 21: 35)
 أَحْسَبَ النَّاسُ أَنْ يُتْرَكُوا أَنْ يَقُولُوا آمَنَّا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْتَنُونَ (العنكبوت 29: 2)
 وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِبَشِيرٍ وَمِنْ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ
 (البقرة 2: 155)
 لَتَبْلُوَنَّ فِي أَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَلَتَسْمَعَنَّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا أَذًى
 كَثِيرًا وَإِنْ تَصْبِرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ (آل عمران 3: 186)
 أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تُدْخَلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَعْلَمِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا مِنْكُمْ وَيَعْلَمِ الصَّابِرِينَ (آل عمران 3: 142)

وَبَلَوْنَاهُمْ بِالْحَسَنَاتِ وَالسَّيِّئَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ (الأعراف 7: 168)
 وَلَوْ يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ لَآتَيْنَهُمْ مِنْهُمْ وَلَكِنْ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ بَعْضُكُمْ بِبَعْضٍ (محمد 4: 47)
 مَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيَذَرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَىٰ مَا أَنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ حَتَّىٰ يَمِيزَ الْخَبِيثَ مِنَ الطَّيِّبِ (آل عمران 3: 178)

فيما يريد الله تعالى للخلق من الخير

يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ لَكُمْ وَبِهِدْيَكُمْ سُنْنَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَيَتُوبَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ وَاللَّهُ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَتُوبَ
 عَلَيْكُمْ وَيُرِيدُ الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الشَّهْوَاتِ أَنْ تَمِيلُوا مَيْلًا عَظِيمًا (النساء 4: 27-26)
 وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ (الذاريات 51: 56)
 مَا يَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ بِعَذَابِكُمْ إِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ وَأَمَنْتُمْ (النساء 4: 147)
 قُلْ مَا يَعْجَبُكُمْ بِرَبِّي لَوْلَا دَعَاؤُكُمْ فَقَدْ كَذَّبْتُمْ فَسَوْفَ يَكُونُ لِزَامًا (الفرقان 25: 77)

في اختلاف الأرزاق

لَهُ مَقَالِيدُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ إِنَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ (الشورى 42: 12)
 وَاللَّهُ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ (البقرة 2: 212؛ النور 24: 38)
 وَلَوْ بَسَطَ اللَّهُ الرِّزْقَ لِعِبَادِهِ لَبَغَوْا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَكِنْ نُنزِلُ بَقْدَرٍ مَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّهُ بِعِبَادِهِ خَبِيرٌ بَصِيرٌ
 (الشورى 42: 27)

وَاللَّهُ يَقْبِضُ وَيَبْسُطُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ (البقرة 2: 245)
 وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ عَيْلَةً فَسَوْفَ يُغْنِيكُمْ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ (التوبة 9: 28)
 وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ عَاهَدَ اللَّهُ لَنْ لَا تُنْفِكُوا عَنْهُ لِقَاءِ أَهْلِهِمْ لَمَنْ يَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْكُمْ فَذُرُّواهُمْ لَأُولَئِكَ عِلْمٌ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ
 وَتَوَلَّوْا وَهُمْ مُعْرِضُونَ فَأَعْقَبَهُمْ نِفَاقًا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ يَلْقَوْنَهُ بِمَا أَخْلَفُوا اللَّهَ مَا وَعَدُوهُ وَبِمَا كَانُوا
 يَكْذِبُونَ (التوبة 9: 75-77)

اللَّهُ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ وَفَرِحُوا بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا مَتَاعٌ
 (الرعد 13: 26)

في نعم الدنيا ومتاعها

الْمَالُ وَالْبَنُونَ زِينَةُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا (الكهف 18: 46)

أَمَّا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعَبٌّ وَهُوَ وَزِينَةٌ وَتَفَاخُرٌ بَيْنَكُمْ وَتَكَاثُرٌ فِي الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَوْلَادِ (الحديد 57: 20)

زِينٌ لِلنَّاسِ حُبُّ الشَّهَوَاتِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ وَالْبَنِينَ وَالْقَنَاطِيرِ الْمُقَنْطَرَةِ مِنَ الذَّهَبِ وَالْفِضَّةِ وَالْخَيْلِ الْمُسَوَّمَةِ
وَالْأَنْعَامِ وَالْحَرْثِ ذَلِكَ مَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ حُسْنُ الْمَاِبِ (آل عمران 3: 14)

وَجَعَلْتُ لَهُ مَالًا مَمْدُودًا وَبَنِينَ شُهَدَاءَ وَمَهَّدْتُ لَهُ تَمْهِيدًا (المدثر 74: 12-14)

في أن متاع الدنيا قليل

مَا عِنْدَكُمْ يَنْفَدُ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ بَاقٍ⁴² (النحل 16: 96)

في أن الدنيا دُولٌ بين الأبرار والأشرار

كَلَّا تَمُدُّ هُوْلَاءُ وَهَوْلَاءُ مِنْ عَطَاءِ رَبِّكَ وَمَا كَانَ عَطَاءُ رَبِّكَ مَحْظُورًا (الإسراء 17: 20)

من صفات نعم أهل الجنة

إِنَّ لَكَ أَلَّا تَجُوعَ فِيهَا وَلَا تَعْرَىٰ وَأَنَّكَ لَا تَظْمَأُ فِيهَا وَلَا تَصْحَىٰ (طه 20: 118-119)

رجوع الأمور إلى أصولها

وَالْبَلَدُ الطَّيِّبُ يَخْرُجُ نَبَاتُهُ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِ وَالَّذِي خَبثَ لَا يَخْرُجُ إِلَّا نَكِدًا (الأعراف 7: 58)

قُلْ كُلُّ يَعْمَلُ عَلَىٰ شَاكِلَتِهِ (الإسراء 17: 84)

إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ (الرعد 13: 19، الزمر 39: 9)

إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ (فاطر 35: 28)

إِنَّمَا تُنذِرُ الَّذِينَ يُخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَيْبِ (فاطر 35: 18)

إِنَّمَا تُنذِرُ مَنِ اتَّبَعَ الذِّكْرَ وَخَشِيَ الرَّحْمَنَ بِالْغَيْبِ (يس 36: 11)

في التفرقة بين المتباينين

قُلْ لَا يَسْتَوِي الْخَبِيثُ وَالطَّيِّبُ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكَ كَثْرَةُ الْخَبِيثِ (المائدة: 5: 100)
 قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ (الزمر: 39: 9)
 ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا رَجُلًا فِيهِ شُرَكَاءُ مُتَشَاكِسُونَ وَرَجُلًا سَلَمًا⁴³ لِرَجُلٍ هَلْ يَسْتَوِيَانِ مَثَلًا
 (الزمر: 39: 29)

وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَى وَالْبَصِيرُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَلَا الْمُسِيءُ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ
 (غافر: 40: 58)

وَلَا تَسْتَوِي الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ (فصلت: 41: 34)
 ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا عَبْدًا مَمْلُوكًا لَا يَقْدِرُ عَلَى شَيْءٍ وَمَنْ رَزَقْنَاهُ مِنْ رِزْقِنَا حَسَنًا فَهُوَ يَنْفِقُ مِنْهُ سِرًّا وَجَهْرًا
 هَلْ يَسْتَوِيَانِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا رَجُلَيْنِ أَحَدُهُمَا أَبْكَمٌ لَا يَقْدِرُ عَلَى
 شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ كَلٌّ عَلَى مَوْلَاهُ أَيْمَانًا يُوجِّهُهُ لَا يَأْتِ بِخَيْرٍ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي هُوَ وَمَنْ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَهُوَ عَلَى
 صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ (النحل: 16: 75-76)

وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَى وَالْبَصِيرُ وَلَا الظُّلُمَاتُ وَلَا النُّورُ وَلَا الظِّلُّ وَلَا الْحُرُورُ وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْأَحْيَاءُ وَلَا
 الْأَمْوَاتُ (فاطر: 35: 19-22)

لَا يَسْتَوِي أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ وَأَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ (الحشر: 59: 20)
 أَمْ نَجْعَلُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ كَالْمُفْسِدِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَمْ نَجْعَلُ الْمُتَّقِينَ كَالْفُجَّارِ
 (ص: 38: 28)

أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ اجْتَرَحُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ أَنْ نَجْعَلَهُمْ كَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَوَاءً مَحْيَاهُمْ وَمَمَاتِهِمْ
 سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ (الجمعة: 45: 21)

أَفَمَنْ اتَّبَعَ رِضْوَانَ اللَّهِ كَمَنْ بَاءَ بِسَخَطٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ (آل عمران: 3: 162)
 أَفَمَنْ أَسَّسَ بُنْيَانَهُ عَلَى تَقْوَى مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٍ خَيْرٍ أَمْ مَنْ أَسَّسَ بُنْيَانَهُ عَلَى شَفَا جُرْفٍ هَارٍ فَانْهَارَ بِهِ
 فِي نَارٍ جَهَنَّمَ (التوبة: 9: 109)

مَثَلُ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ كَالْأَعْمَى وَالْأَصَمِّ وَالْبَصِيرِ وَالسَّمِيعِ هَلْ يَسْتَوِيَانِ مَثَلًا أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ (هود: 11: 24)
 أَفَمَنْ كَانَ مُؤْمِنًا كَمَنْ كَانَ فَاسِقًا لَا يَسْتَوُونَ (السجدة: 32: 18)
 وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْبَحْرَانِ هَذَا عَذْبٌ فُرَاتٍ سَائِعٌ شَرَابُهُ وَهَذَا مِلْحٌ أُجَاجٌ (فاطر: 35: 12)

أَفَمَنْ كَانَ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّهِ كَفَرَ بِهِ كُنَّا نُزِقُ لَهُ سُلُوسًا مِمَّا يَكْتُمُونَ لَهُ مِنَ الْأَنْعَامِ وَلَا يَخَافُونَ أَنَّكُمْ أَشْرَكْتُمْ بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزَّلْ بِهِ عَلَيْكُمْ سُلْطَانًا فَأَيُّ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ أَحَقُّ بِالْأَمْنِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ (الأنعام: 81)

أَفَمَنْ يَمِشِي مِجَابًا عَلَىٰ وَجْهِهِ أَهْدَىٰ أَمَّنْ يَمِشِي سَوِيًّا عَلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ (الملك: 67: 22)

ما يتشابه حتى يُختبر

كَلِمًا رَزَقُوا مِنْهَا مِنْ ثَمَرَةٍ رِزْقًا قَالُوا هَذَا الَّذِي رَزَقْنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَأَتُوا بِهِ مُتَشَابِهًا (البقرة: 25)

في قلة عدد الأخيار وأن أكثرهم من الجهال الذين هم آيات الأخيار وخول للأفاضل

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَقَلِيلٌ مَا هُمْ (ص: 38: 25)

وَقَلِيلٌ مِنَ عِبَادِيَ الشَّاكِرُونَ (سبأ: 34: 13)

كَمْ مِنْ فِئَةٍ قَلِيلَةٍ غَلَبَتْ فِئَةً كَثِيرَةً بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ (البقرة: 2: 249)

وَأَنْ تَطْعَ أَكْثَرُ مِنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ يُضِلُّوكَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ (الأنعام: 6: 116)

وَأَنْ كَثِيرًا لِيُضِلُّوا بِأَهْوَاءِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ (الأنعام: 6: 119)

قُلْ رَبِّي أَعْلَمُ بِعِبَادَتِهِمْ مَا يَعْلَمُهُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ (الكهف: 18: 22)

وَلَكِنْ أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ (الأعراف: 7: 187؛ يوسف: 12: 21، 40، 68؛ النحل: 16: 38؛ الروم

30: 6، 30؛ سبأ: 34: 28، 36؛ غافر: 40: 57؛ الجاثية: 45: 26)

وَمَا وَجَدْنَا لِأَكْثَرِهِمْ مِنْ عَهْدٍ وَإِنْ وَجَدْنَا أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَفَاسِقِينَ (الأعراف: 7: 102)

وَمَا أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ وَلَوْ حَرَصْتَ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ (يوسف: 12: 103)

أَمْ تَحْسَبُ أَنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ أَوْ يَعْقِلُونَ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا (الفرقان: 25: 44)

لَقَدْ جِئْنَاكُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَكُمْ لِلْحَقِّ كَارِهُونَ (الزخرف: 43: 78)

في أن المعاينة الصق بالقلب

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ ارْنِي كَيْفَ تُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى قَالَ أُولَئِكَ تُؤْمِنُ قَالَ بَلَىٰ وَلَكِنْ لِيَطْمَئِنَّ قَلْبِي

(البقرة: 2: 260)

من كان ملجأً إلى خير فهو معذورٌ
 فَمَنْ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاطِلٍ وَلَا عَادَ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ (البقرة 2: 173)
 لَيْسَ عَلَى الضُّعَفَاءِ وَلَا عَلَى الْمَرْضَى وَلَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ مَا يَنْفِقُونَ حَرَجٌ (التوبة 9: 91)
 مَنْ كَفَرَ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ إِيمَانِهِ إِلَّا مَنْ أُكْرِهَ وَقَلْبُهُ مُطْمَئِنٌّ بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَكِنْ مَنْ شَرَحَ بِالْكُفْرِ صَدْرًا فَعَلَيْهِمْ
 غَضَبٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ (التحلل 16: 106)

في آثما يجزى الخير من استقام في جمهور أمره
 قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ (البقرة 2: 124)
 إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُذْهِبْنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ (هود 11: 114)

تفاضل الناس في الدين والدنيا
 هُمْ دَرَجَاتٌ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ (آل عمران 3: 163)
 فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ عَلَى الْقَاعِدِينَ دَرَجَةً وَكَلَّا وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ الْحُسْنَى وَفَضَّلَ اللَّهُ
 الْمُجَاهِدِينَ عَلَى الْقَاعِدِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا دَرَجَاتٍ مِنْهُ وَمَغْفِرَةً وَرَحْمَةً (النساء 4: 95-96)
 وَلِكُلِّ دَرَجَاتٍ مِمَّا عَمِلُوا وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ (الأنعام 6: 132)
 وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَكُمْ خَلَائِفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَكُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ لِيُبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ
 (الأنعام 6: 165)
 انظُرْ كَيْفَ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَلَآخِرَةُ أَكْبَرُ دَرَجَاتٍ وَأَكْبَرُ تَفْضِيلًا (الإسراء 17: 21)
 وَقَطَعْنَا فِي الْأَرْضِ أُمَّامًا مِنْهُمْ الصَّالِحِينَ وَمِنْهُمْ دُونَ ذَلِكَ (الأعراف 7: 168)

ما يتعظ به الأخيار وهو وبال على الأشرار
 وَلِيُمِحَّصَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَيُخَيِّقَ الْكَافِرِينَ (آل عمران 3: 141)
 لِيُنذِرَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا وَيُبَشِّرَ لِلْمُحْسِنِينَ (الأحقاف 46: 12)

في أن تكليف الناس ما يقدحهم قد يلجئهم الى المعصية
 وَلَوْ أَنَّا كَتَبْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ أَنْ اقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ أَوْ ائْخُذُوا مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ مَا فَعَلُوهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ مِنْهُمْ (النساء 4: 66)

في الوعظ

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ فَعَلُوا مَا يُوعَظُونَ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ وَأَشَدَّ ثَبَاتًا (النساء: 66)

في أن الدنيا دار عمل لما بعدها

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ وَإِنَّمَا تُوَفَّقُونَ أُجُورَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَمَنْ زُحِرَ عَنِ النَّارِ وَأُدْخِلَ الْجَنَّةَ فَقَدْ فَازَ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لَمَتَاعٌ الْغُرُورِ (آل عمران 3: 185)

النهي عن إضاعة المال

وَلَا تُؤْتُوا السُّفَهَاءَ أَمْوَالَكُمُ الَّتِي جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ قِيَامًا (النساء: 4)

النهي عن التعزير بالنفس

وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُمْ رَحِيمًا (النساء: 29)
 قَالَ لَوْ أَنَّ لِي بِكُمْ قُوَّةً أَوْ آوِي إِلَى رُكْنٍ شَدِيدٍ (هود: 80)
 وَلَا تَلْقُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ (البقرة: 195)
 وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ لَا تَسْفِكُونَ دِمَاءَكُمْ وَلَا تُخْرِجُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ (البقرة: 84)

في أن كثيراً من أمور الدنيا لا يمكن فيها إلا التقريب

وَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيعُوا أَنْ تَعْدِلُوا بَيْنَ النِّسَاءِ وَلَوْ حَرَصْتُمْ فَلَا تَمِيلُوا كُلَّ الْمِيلِ (النساء: 129)
 قَالَ هَلْ أَمِنَكُمْ عَلَيْهِ إِلَّا كَمَا أَمِنْتُكُمْ عَلَى أَخِيهِ مِنْ قَبْلُ (يوسف: 64)

في أن الخيرة قد تكون فيما يكره والضرر فيما يحب

وَإِنْ يَتَفَرَّقَا يُغْنِ اللَّهُ كِلَا مِنْ سَعَتِهِ (النساء: 130)

في أن الغيب محبوب عن البشر

قُلْ لَا أَمْلِكُ لِنَفْسِي نَفْعًا وَلَا ضَرًّا إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ وَلَوْ كُنْتُ أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبِ لَاسْتَكْثَرْتُ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ وَمَا مَسَّنِيَ السُّوءَ (الأعراف: 188)

وَمَا يُعْزُبُ عَنْ رَبِّكَ مِنْ مِثْقَالِ ذَرَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَلَا أَصْغَرَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ وَلَا أَكْبَرَ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ (يونس 10: 61)

وَأَسْرَوْا قَوْلَكُمْ أَوِ اجْهَرُوا بِهِ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ خَلَقَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ (الملك 67: 13-14)

وَإِنْ تَبَدُّوا مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوْ تُخْفُوا بِحَاسِبِكُمْ بِهِ اللَّهُ (البقرة 2: 284)
وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنْ وَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا حَبَّةٌ فِي ظُلُمَاتِ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا رَطْبٍ وَلَا يَابِسٍ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ (الأنعام 6: 59)
اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَحْمِلُ كُلُّ أُنْثَىٰ وَمَا تَغِيضُ الْأَرْحَامُ وَمَا تَزْدَادُ وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ عِنْدَهُ بِمِقْدَارٍ عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ الْكَبِيرُ الْمُتَعَالِ (الرعد 13: 8-9)

وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَيَعْلَمُ مَا تُكِنُّ صُدُورُهُمْ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ وَمَا مِنْ غَائِبَةٍ فِي السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ (النمل 27: 74-75)

وَمَا تَحْمِلُ مِنْ أُنْثَىٰ وَلَا تَضَعُ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَمَا يَعْمُرُ مِنْ مُعَمَّرٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَمَا يَنْقُصُ مِنْ عُمُرِهِ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ (فاطر 35: 11)

يَعْلَمُ مَا يَلِجُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا يَخْرُجُ مِنْهَا وَمَا يَنْزِلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَمَا يَعْرُجُ فِيهَا (سبأ 34: 2؛ الحديد 57: 4)

في أن لا يزال الناس بخير ما شاع فيهم خير ما
وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَأَنْتَ فِيهِمْ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ مُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ (الأنفال 8: 33)

بَابُ

وَمَا عَلَى الرَّسُولِ إِلَّا الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ (النور 24: 54؛ العنكبوت 29: 18)
فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُلْ آذَنْتُمْ عَلَىٰ سَوَاءٍ وَإِنْ أَدْرِي أَقْرَبُ أَمْ بَعِيدٌ مَا تُوعَدُونَ (الأنبياء 21: 109)
فَذَكَرْ إِنْ نَفَعَتِ الذِّكْرَى (الأعلى 9: 87)

فَذَكَرْ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُذَكَّرٌ لَسْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِمُصَيِّرٍ (الغاشية 88: 21-22)
عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَكُونَ قَدِ اقْتَرَبَ أَجْلُهُمْ فَبِأَيِّ حَدِيثٍ بَعْدَهُ يُؤْمِنُونَ (الأعراف 7: 185)

فِي أَنْ التَّخْيِيرِ بَيْنَ أَخْذِ بِحَقِّي أَوْ تَرْكِ بِحَقِّي
 إِنَّ تَعَذُّبَهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ عِبَادُكَ وَإِنْ تَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ فَإِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ (المائدة 5: 118)
 وَإِنَّمَا أَنْ تَتَّخِذَ فِيهِمْ حُسْنًا (الكهف 18: 86)

بَابُ

وَإِنْ يَمْسَسَكَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ فَلَا كَاشِفَ لَهُ إِلَّا هُوَ وَإِنْ يَمْسَسَكَ بِبُخَيْرٍ فَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ
 (الأنعام 6: 17)

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي وَهَنَ الْعَظْمُ مِنِّي وَاشْتَعَلَ الرَّأْسُ شَيْبًا وَلَمْ أَكُنْ بِدُعَائِكَ رَبِّ شَقِيًّا (مريم 19: 4)
 مَا يَفْتَحُ اللَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ مِنْ رَحْمَةٍ فَلَا مُمْسِكَ لَهَا وَمَا يُمْسِكُ فَلَا مُرْسِلَ لَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ
 (فاطر 35: 2)

قُلْ فَمَنْ يَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا إِنْ أَرَادَ بِكُمْ ضُرًّا أَوْ أَرَادَ بِكُمْ نَفْعًا (الفتح 48: 11)
 لَئِنْ لَمْ يَرْحَمْنَا رَبُّنَا وَيَغْفِرْ لَنَا لُنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ (الأعراف 7: 149)
 مَنْ يَضِلَّ اللَّهُ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ وَيَذَرُهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ (الأعراف 7: 186)
 لَا عَاصِمَ الْيَوْمَ مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا مَنْ رَحِمَ (هود 11: 43)

بَابُ

مَا عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِينَ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ (التوبة 9: 91)
 فَمَا اسْتَقَامُوا لَكُمْ فَاسْتَقِيمُوا لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ (التوبة 9: 7)
 إِلَّا الَّذِينَ عَاهَدْتُمْ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَنْقُصُوا شَيْئًا وَلَمْ يُظَاهِرُوا عَلَيْكُمْ أَحَدًا فَأَتُوا إِلَيْهِمْ عَهْدَهُمْ
 إِلَىٰ مُدَّتِهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ (التوبة 9: 4)
 إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا فَلَا خَوْفَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ (الأحقاف 46: 13)
 وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ لِيُهْلِكَ الْقُرَىٰ بِظُلْمٍ وَأَهْلِهَا مُصْلِحُونَ (هود 11: 117)

في معنى ذر ما يريك إلى ما لا يريك

وَذَرُوا ظَاهِرَ الْإِثْمِ وَبَاطِنَهُ (الأنعام 6: 120)

في تفرقة بين الأخيار والأشرار بالثواب والعقاب
 اَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (المائدة 5: 98)
 نَبِيُّ عِبَادِي أَنِّي أَنَا الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ وَأَنَّ عَذَابِي هُوَ الْعَذَابُ الْأَلِيمُ (الحجر 15: 49-50)
 وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَذُو مَغْفِرَةٍ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى ظُلْمِهِمْ وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَشَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ (الرعد 13: 6)

في إثمًا يُمجد الناس ويؤمنون على ما لا يقدرُونَ عليه ولهم الخيار
 إِنَّ أَحْسَنَ مَا أَحْسَنْتُمْ لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَإِنَّ أَسْأَمَ فَلَهَا (الإسراء 17: 7)

في أن المقادير تخالف تقدير البشر
 وَلَا تَقُولَنَّ لِشَيْءٍ إِنِّي فَاعِلٌ ذَلِكَ غَدًا إِلَّا أَن يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ (الكهف 18: 23-24)

في شغل العدو بعضهم ببعض
 أَنَا أَرْسَلْنَا الشَّيَاطِينَ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ تَوَذُّعُهُمْ أَزًا (مريم 19: 83)

من شريطة الإعظام للمخاطب أن تُخفِّض له الأصوات
 يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَرْفَعُوا أَصْوَاتَكُمْ فَوْقَ صَوْتِ النَّبِيِّ وَلَا تَجْهَرُوا لَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ كَجَهْرِ بَعْضِكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ أَن تَحْبَطَ أَعْمَالُكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ (الحجرات 49: 2)
 إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ينادُونَكَ مِنْ وَرَاءِ الْحُجُرَاتِ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ (الحجرات 49: 4)

في أن من كان عذره ظاهراً فقد سقط اللوم عنه
 لَيْسَ عَلَى الْأَعْمَى حَرْجٌ وَلَا عَلَى الْأَعْرَجِ حَرْجٌ وَلَا عَلَى الْمَرِيضِ حَرْجٌ (النور 24: 61؛ الفتح 48: 17)

بَابُ

لَا تَخَفْ نَجَوْتَ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ (القصص 28: 25)
 لَا تَخَافُ دَرْكًا وَلَا تَخْشَى (طه 20: 77)
 لَا تَخَفْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْأَعْلَى (طه 20: 68)

فِي أَنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى لَمْ يُلْجِئِ الْخَلْقَ إِلَى طَاعَةٍ وَلَا مَعْصِيَةٍ
وَلَوْلَا أَنَّ يَكُونُ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً لَجَعَلْنَا لِمَنْ يَكْفُرُ بِالرَّحْمَنِ لِبُيُوتِهِمْ سُقْفًا مِنْ فِضَّةٍ وَمَعَارِجَ عَلَيْهَا
يَظْهَرُونَ وَلِبُيُوتِهِمْ أَبْوَابًا وَسُرَرًا عَلَيْهَا يَتَكَبَّرُونَ وَزُخْرَفًا وَإِنَّ كُلَّ ذَلِكَ لَمَّا مَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةُ
عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ (الزخرف 43: 33-35)

فِي أَنَّ التَّخَلُّقَ يَأْتِي دُونَهُ الْخَلْقُ
وَلَوْ لَشَاءَ لَأَرَيْنَاكُمُ فَعَرَفْتَهُمْ بِسِيمَاهُمْ وَلَتَعْرِفَنَّهُمْ فِي لَحْنِ الْقَوْلِ (محمد 47: 30)

فِي اجْتِهَادِ تَخْلِيصِ مَنْ كَانَ بَرِيئًا مِنْ عِقَابَاتِ الْمَجْرِمِينَ
وَلَوْلَا رِجَالٌ مُؤْمِنُونَ وَنِسَاءٌ مُؤْمِنَاتٌ لَمْ تَعْلَمُوهُمْ أَنْ تَطَّوَّهُمْ فِتْصِيْبِكُمْ مِنْهُمْ مَعْرَةٌ بَغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ لِيُدْخِلَ اللَّهُ
فِي رَحْمَتِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ لَوْ تَزَيَّلُوا لَعَذَّبْنَا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا (الفتح 48: 25)

فِي أَنَّهُ يَجِبُ أَنْ يُحَاسِبَ الْإِنْسَانُ نَفْسَهُ فِيمَا يَقُولُ وَيَفْعَلُ كُلَّ ذَلِكَ عَنْهُ مَا ثَوَّرَ
مَا يَلْفِظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ عَتِيدٌ (ق 50: 18)

فِي الْخُشُوعِ
أَلَمْ يَأْنِ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْ تَخْشَعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ لِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ (الحديد 57: 16)

فَقَرَّ النَّاسَ إِلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى فِي دِينِهِمْ وَدُنْيَاهُمْ
رَبِّ إِنِّي لَمَّا أَنْزَلْتُ إِلَيْكَ مِنَ خَيْرٍ فَكَيْفَ (القصص 28: 24)
عَشْرًا إِنَّ النَّاسَ أُنْتُمْ الْفُقَرَاءُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ (فاطر 35: 15)

بَابُ فِي الْمُهَاجِرِ وَالْجَارِ
وَالَّذِينَ تَبَوَّءُوا الدَّارَ وَالْإِيمَانَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ يُحِبُّونَ مَنْ هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَا يَجِدُونَ فِي صُدُورِهِمْ حَاجَةً مِمَّا أُوتُوا
وَيُؤْتُونَ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ (الحشر 59: 9)

في المَسُورَةِ

وَشَاوِرُهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ (آل عمران 3: 159)
مَا كُنْتُ قَاطِعَةً أَمْرًا حَتَّى تَشْهَدُونَ (النمل 27: 32)

في طَلَبِ الْأُمُورِ مِنْ وُجُوهِهَا وَالتَّوَجُّحِ بِهَا مَقَادِيرِهَا وَأَوْقَاتِهَا

وَلَيْسَ الْبِرُّ بِأَنْ تَأْتُوا الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهَا (البقرة 2: 189)
وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ إِذْ ظَلَمُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ جَاءُوكَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا اللَّهَ وَاسْتَغْفَرَ لَهُمُ الرَّسُولُ لَوَجَدُوا اللَّهَ تَوَّابًا رَحِيمًا
(النساء 4: 64)

بَابُ

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ تَفَسَّحُوا فِي الْمَجَالِسِ فَافْسَحُوا يَفْسَحِ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَإِذَا قِيلَ انشُرُوا فَانشُرُوا
(المجادلة 58: 11)

في استِجَابِ الْهُدَايَا

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا نَاجَيْتُمُ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدِمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ بِحُجُومٍ صَدَقَةَ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ وَأَطْهَرٌ فَإِنْ لَمْ
تَجِدُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (المجادلة 58: 12)

فصل في السَّمْعِ وَالطَّاعَةِ

وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ (البقرة 2: 285)
إِنَّمَا كَانَ قَوْلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذَا دُعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ أَنْ يَقُولُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ
الْمُقْتَدِرُونَ (النور 24: 51)
وَإِنْ تَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ لَا يَلِتْكُمْ مِنْ أَعْمَالِكُمْ شَيْئًا (الحجرات 49: 14)

تَمَّ كِتَابُ الْإِنْتِزَاعَاتِ

على يد محمد بن تمام عفا الله عنهما بكرمه

الحمد لله وحده وصلى الله على النبي محمد وآله صحبه وسلم

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PART 2

Sufism, Shi'ism, and Lettrism



*Risāla fī l-ṣifāt wa-‘ilm al-tawḥīd**A Sufi Treatise Attributed to Abū Sa‘īd Aḥmad b. ‘Īsā al-Kharrāz (d. 286/899)*

Nada Saab

A unique Arabic manuscript (MS 17018), currently among the holdings of al-Assad National Library in Damascus, contains several Sufi epistles collected by the close and faithful student of Ibn al-‘Arabī (d. 638/1240), Shams al-Dīn Ismā‘īl b. Sawdakīn al-Nūrī (d. 646/1246).¹ The collection is entitled *Majmū‘ rasā’il fī l-taṣawwuf* (A collection of epistles on Sufism) and contains a few works attributed to the famed third/ninth-century Sufi master Abū Sa‘īd Aḥmad b. ‘Īsā al-Kharrāz (d. 286/899). This essay addresses one of these epistles, *Risāla fī l-ṣifāt wa-‘ilm al-tawḥīd* (On attributes and unification) and provides an edited version of the text. Given that only a few of al-Kharrāz’s complete works have survived, it is hoped that this epistle will add a significant contribution to the current Sufi lore of al-Kharrāz.

1 The Life of al-Kharrāz

Abū Sa‘īd Aḥmad b. ‘Īsā al-Kharrāz al-Baghdādī al-Ṣūfī was born in Baghdad early enough in the third/ninth century to have been a disciple of Bishr b. al-Ḥārith al-Ḥāfi al-Ṣūfī (d. 226/840 or 227/841–842).² By profession, he was a cobbler or tailor, hence his nickname *al-kharrāz*.³ Like many of his companions,

1 He is Abū l-Ṭāhir Shams al-Dīn Ismā‘īl b. Sawdakīn b. ‘Abdallāh al-Nūrī, born in Egypt in 579 or 578/1184 and died in Aleppo in 646/1249. Ibn Sawdakīn became a faithful and close companion of Ibn al-‘Arabī in Cairo in 603/1207. He is credited with being a scribe and having written commentaries on several works by Ibn al-‘Arabī. For Ibn Sawdakīn see Profitlich, *Terminologie* 6–25; al-Ḥanbalī, *Shadharāt al-dhahab* vii, 404. For listings of Ibn Sawdakīn’s compilations or commentaries on Ibn al-‘Arabī’s works consult Yahya, *Histoire*.

2 See al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya* 223, and al-Qushayrī, *Risāla* i, 129.

3 Derived from the root *kh-r-z*, “to stitch or string together.” Al-Kharrāz’s profession as cobbler and tailor is linked to several stories that demonstrate his piety, not unlike many of his contemporary Sufis. Al-Junayd, for example, remarks that we would perish if God were to ask us to maintain al-Kharrāz’s state of self-mortification. He adds that al-Kharrāz spent several years at his profession in constant recollection of God, never missing the remembrance of

he belonged to the small artisan community of Baghdad to which the development of Sufism in the third/ninth century is accredited.⁴ Very little, however, is known about al-Kharrāz's early life, let alone its course in general. The image portrayed of him in medieval sources is that of a full-fledged Sufi with legendary qualities. Hagiographies describe his beginnings on the Sufi path in elaborate stories that mark his life with wondrous events and miracles (*'ajā'ib wa-karāmāt mashhūra*).⁵ Sources do name some of the Sufi masters who served as his early guides, but they fail to give any information that describe the nature of such guidance, or its approximate dates and duration. In Baghdad, he accompanied Sarī al-Saqaṭī (d. 253/867). He is said to have sought other Sufi masters outside Baghdad, such as Dhū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī (d. 246/860) in Egypt, and Abū 'Abdallāh al-Nibājī (death date not recorded) and Abū 'Ubayd al-Busrī (d. 245/859) in Syria. Al-Kharrāz also recounted the tradition of Ibn Adham (d. 161/778) through the latter's student Ibrāhīm b. Bashshār al-Khurāsānī (d. 240/855). Similar to Ibn Adham, stories speak of al-Kharrāz leading an itinerant lifestyle in total reliance on God and sustained by the fruits of his own labor for "clean," permissible food. Also similar to Ibn Adham, he described himself ingesting clay if he could not find any food that was untainted by a human hand.⁶

Sources, however, mostly confer that al-Kharrāz was one of the most eminent Sufis of his time. He is credited with expounding the theory of annihilation of self and subsistence in the divine (*fanā' wa-baqā'*) and is said to have delivered his Sufi doctrine in various compositions and in teaching sessions to faithful companions. He was nicknamed "the tongue of Sufism" (*lisān al-taṣawwuf*) for articulating and sharpening the Sufi doctrine of his time.⁷ Ibn al-'Arabī goes further in interpreting al-Kharrāz's nickname and remarks that he "is an aspect of the Reality and one of His tongues by which He expresses

God between one stitch and the next. See al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Ta'riḫ Baghdad* v, 455, and Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'riḫ madīnat Dimashq* v, 131.

4 Zarrinkoob argues that the Sufi movement of third-century Baghdad originated from the class of small artisans and traders to which al-Kharrāz, among others, belonged. He concludes that the conversion of craftsmen "may have led to mass conversions of various local or provincial guilds and corporations, who would find in the new teaching moral support against the tedious formalism of the ulema." See Zarrinkoob, *Persian Sufism in historical perspective* 177–178.

5 The remark is copied by Ibn al-'Imād al-Ḥanbalī from al-Sulamī's *Ta'riḫ al-Ṣūfiyya*, which is now lost. See al-Ḥanbalī, *Shadharāt al-dhahab* iii, 359. The lengthy biography of al-Kharrāz in *Ta'riḫ madīnat Dimashq* contains a good number of such stories. See Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'riḫ madīnat Dimashq* v, 129–143.

6 Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'riḫ madīnat Dimashq* v, 135–136.

7 al-Kalābādhī, *Ta'arruf* 11.

Himself.”⁸ Ibn al-‘Arabī adds that God cannot be known except by uniting the opposites, as evidenced by al-Kharrāz’s statement that “He is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Unmanifest.”⁹

Al-Kharrāz’s views did not spare him persecution and led to his expulsion from several cities. Accusations of heresy are reported by Ibn ‘Asākīr in his *Ta’rīkh madīnat Dimashq* on the authority of a student of al-Kharrāz, Abū Bakr al-Kattānī, who states that al-Kharrāz spoke in Mecca on a matter of Sufi science. The governor sent the order that al-Kharrāz leave Mecca. Al-Kattānī’s offer to mediate in al-Kharrāz’s favor to reverse such a verdict was vehemently refused by al-Kharrāz, who considered it enough validation for his own “flawlessness.” Al-Kharrāz also appears to have been the subject of harassment early in his career while still in Baghdad and is said to have left the city for Egypt as a result of the tribulation endured by its Sufi community at the hands of Ghulām al-Khalīl (d. 275/888). Al-Anṣārī al-Harawī comments that “when Kharrāz went to Egypt during the afflictions of the Sufis (in Baghdad), they asked him, ‘Why do you not speak, O chief of the (Sufi) folk?’ ‘These people’ he said, ‘are absent (*ghāyib*) from God. To mention God to the absent is (like) backbiting (*ghībat*).’”¹⁰ The most infamous incident of persecution, however, appears to have been the result of statements he made (*kaffarūh bi-alfāzih*) in his *K. al-Sirr*, as al-Sarrāj notes,¹¹ where he was accused of heresy and banished from Egypt. Al-Harawī remarks that al-Kharrāz was asked about why he was banished from Egypt. He replied, “I said to them (that) there is no screen between me and God.”¹²

Primary sources that collected the scattered biographical information and dicta of al-Kharrāz often presented them in a disjointed form that rarely focused on their specific contexts or time frames. The image thus rendered of the historical al-Kharrāz is quite hazy and lacking. For example, we cannot determine at which stage in al-Kharrāz’s life he was banished from Mecca, nor can we tell the exact issue that was contested. Similarly, we are unable to discern the date of his banishment from Egypt, though it may have occurred in the later, rather than the earlier, stages of his life. His legacy was continued in that region by his student Abū l-Ḥusayn b. Bunān (d. 310/922–923). Al-Kharrāz had also lived in Mecca for a period of time that stretched for eleven years

8 Austin (trans.), *Ibn al-‘Arabī* 85–86.

9 Ibid.

10 al-Harawī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Şūfiyya* 183. Translated text in Farhadi, *Abdullah Ansari of Herat* 51–52.

11 al-Sarrāj, *Pages from the Kitāb al-luma’* 8.

12 al-Harawī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Şūfiyya* 52.

before he was banished from that city.¹³ Stories reveal that he was on a continuous mission of performing the hajj during the Mecca period and was thus constantly moving between Mecca and Medina.¹⁴ Stories locate him accompanying faithful students along the coast of Saida in modern Lebanon.¹⁵ He is also said to have been in Kairouan, in modern-day Tunisia. In short, he is reported to have sought Sufi guides early in his career, who helped shape his mystical experience, and that he continued to travel after he established himself as a Sufi master. Nonetheless, al-Kharrāz maintained relations with Baghdadī Sufis, as evidenced by letters he exchanged with them. Al-Junayd, who led the Sufi community of Baghdad, commented that “had God demanded of us to have the level of truth which al-Kharrāz had we would have perished.”¹⁶ The news of al-Kharrāz’s death, which probably happened in Mosul¹⁷ in 286/899, reverberated in Baghdad. As al-Junayd comments, “It is no wonder that his [i.e. al-Kharrāz’s] spirit flew towards God in yearning.”¹⁸ Ruwaym al-Baghdādī, who stood by al-Kharrāz’s deathbed, gives a memorable account of his companion’s final moments. Remarkably, “in his last breath,” as Ruwaym describes, al-Kharrāz disclosed in poetic form themes of love and mortified selves which he frequently expressed in his compilations. At the moment of his death, he spoke of being emaciated by love and likened the slumber of his approaching death to drunkenness. He saw that his death, like his life, was slumber of worldly existence and drunkenness “in an abode where lovers of God are like shining stars.” He said:

The hearts of the knowledgeable yearn for remembrance,
 For the recollection of the secret during intimate talk.
 Goblets of death were circulated among them,
 But they slumbered off this world like drunkard[s].
 Their worries roam in an abode where the lovers of God
 are like the shining stars.

13 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīkh madīnat Dimashq* v, 136–137.

14 Ibid. v, 140.

15 Ibid. v, 129.

16 Ibid. v, 139.

17 The general conviction has been that al-Kharrāz may have spent his final years in al-Fustāt, Old Cairo, and hence it was assumed that he died there. His death, however, may have been in Mosul, based on an account by Yāsīn al-‘Umarī (d. 1820), who says that al-Kharrāz’s grave is on an elevated ground (*nashaz*) in Mosul north of the Tigris River. See al-‘Umarī, *Ghāyat al-marām fī ta’rīkh maḥāsīn Baghdād Dār al-Salām* 237. Also see al-Kīlānī, *al-Imām al-Kharrāz shaykh al-fanā’ wa-l-baqā’* 50–51.

18 al-Sarrāj, *K. al-luma’* 211.

Their bodies on this earth are mortified in love for Him
 But their veiled spirits will rise to the summits at night.
 They will not halt except at the nearness of their Beloved
 Neither will they cede at misery nor harm.¹⁹

2 Compilations of al-Kharrāz

The lore we now have of al-Kharrāz includes a full text of his *K. al-Şidq* (The book of truthfulness), edited and translated by A.J. Arberry.²⁰ Five additional epistles were edited by Qāsim al-Sāmarrāī and appeared in one monograph under the title *Rasā'il al-Kharrāz*. The monograph includes *K. al-Şafā'*, *K. al-Diyā'*, *K. al-Kashf wa-l-bayān*, *K. al-Farāgh*, and *K. al-Ḥaqā'iq*. In addition to these complete works which have survived, some scattered fragments of al-Kharrāz's Quranic exegesis, central definitions of the components of the Sufi path, and the terminology of its science are found in a variety of sources, including Sufi monographs and biographical works.

Primary sources describe the content of other compilations by al-Kharrāz that are no longer extant. These include a work on the discipline of prayer (*ādāb al-şalāt*), described by al-Sarrāj in his *K. al-Luma'*.²¹ Al-Sarrāj also mentions that he found a book by al-Kharrāz that contains admonitions to companions and students from which al-Sarrāj quotes.²² Al-Sulamī, in his *Ḥaqā'iq al-tafsīr*, quotes from a treatise entitled *Darajāt al-murīdīn* (Stages of advancement of Sufi disciples).²³ The quotation is closely similar to statements in *al-Şafā'* (which is now published among *Rasā'il al-Kharrāz*). It is therefore likely that the *Darajāt* and *al-Şafā'* are the same work preserved under different titles. Moreover, according to al-Sarrāj, al-Kharrāz is said to have expressed heretical views in a book entitled *K. al-Sirr* (The book of the secret), upon which he was accused of being an infidel (*kufr*) and banished from Egypt.²⁴ The problematic view describes the Sufi as "a servant who returns to God, binds himself to the remembrance of God in proximity to Him. The servant encounters God's

19 Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'riḫ madīnat Dimashq* v, 142–143.

20 The text appeared in Islamic Research Association Series No. 6, London 1937. The same book by al-Kharrāz appeared in a noncritical edition, *al-Ṭarīq ilā Allāh aw Kitāb al-şidq* (ed. 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd, Baghdad 1963).

21 See al-Sarrāj, *K. al-luma'* 153.

22 Ibid. 264.

23 al-Sulamī, *Ḥaqā'iq al-tafsīr* i, 28.

24 al-Sarrāj, *Pages from Kitāb al-Luma'* 8.

magnificence which was allotted to him. He is oblivious of himself and of everything that is other than God. If you were to ask him ‘Where do you come from?’ or ‘Where do you wish to go to?’ He would not be able to give any answer. He can only say ‘God.’”²⁵ The statement also seems to be a condensed account of the argument presented in the aforementioned *K. al-Ṣafāʾ*. Is it safe to assume that *K. al-Ṣafāʾ* is none other than the *Darajāt al-murīdīn* and the infamous *K. al-Sirr*, or did al-Kharrāz utilize certain segments of his writings in multiple works? The latter opinion was favored by Nwyia,²⁶ whereas Qāsim al-Sāmarrāʾī suggests that all three titles refer to the same work.²⁷ In *K. al-Ṣafāʾ*,²⁸ al-Kharrāz expounds the progressive stations of proximity (*maqāmāt al-qurb*) that Sufi practitioners experience in their strife to obliterate their individual selves and subsist in the Divine. Al-Sāmarrāʾī’s suggestion appears plausible if we project the content of *K. al-Ṣafāʾ* against *Darajāt al-murīdīn* and *K. al-Sirr*. Al-Ṣafāʾ’s depiction of the various stages of proximity of Sufi adepts (*murīdīn*) may explain the title *Darajāt al-murīdīn*, whereas the title *al-Sirr* may be inferred from al-Kharrāz’s depiction of the last stage of perfect nearness, in which the friends of God experience a state of obliteration that fills their innermost being, or *sirr*, with a lasting and immense knowledge of God and His benefactions. Al-Kharrāz explains that those in this last stage of nearness exist without power, will, reason, desire, aversion, love, or loss, and they see God’s kingdom in its perfection and that His remembrance of them is perfect as He had wished it to be. Such knowledge, al-Kharrāz concludes, is *ʿilm al-yaqīn* possessed by the most elite of unifiers (*al-muwaḥḥidīn min ahl al-khālīṣa*), which itself is pure knowledge (*al-ṣafāʾ*), and hence the third title under which the epistle has been published.²⁹ In his *K. al-Ṣafāʾ*, al-Kharrāz reiterates that the apex of mystical experience is in the passing away of the individual self and subsisting in the Divine. He reflects that such existence in the Divine fulfills the primordial allotment given to spirits before the individual souls were created. This allotment defines one’s proximity to the Divine in this physical existence. He concludes that proximity cannot be reached by the performance of religious rites, or the lack of it, and adds that if the friends of God were created deaf, mute, and blind (i.e., unable to perform any acts of worship), or if they “did not remember God until the

25 Ibid. 8.

26 Paul Nwyia, *Exégèse coranique et langage mystique* 234.

27 al-Kharrāz, *Rasāʾil* 20.

28 It is *K. al-Ṣifāt* in Nwyia’s reading. For a commentary on and French translation of the epistle see Nwyia, *Exégèse coranique* 252–267.

29 al-Kharrāz, *Rasāʾil* 27–28.

day they were resurrected,” this would not reduce their reverence for God. Would al-Kharrāz’s conclusion, which seems to justify the elimination of basic acts of worship in Islamic law, be what really prompted the accusations of heresy?

Sources reveal an image of al-Kharrāz as a leading sheikh to aspirant Sufis and companions. He guided them by example and often narrated to them stories of his own quest that demonstrated his scrupulousness and the subsequent favors that befell him by the grace of God. He articulated Sufi concepts to them, the essentials of the path, and the various stages of awareness and development they were to pursue. His writings demonstrate an author concerned not only with the theorization of Sufi doctrine but also with penmanship, stylistics, and experimentation with various forms of expression. In his *K. al-Şidq*, for example, he employs a lucid style to instruct adepts on the purgative process that leads toward illumination and unitive life in God. That process, described primarily as a psychological and spiritual reorientation toward God and grounded in truthfulness (*şidq*), sincerity (*ikhlas*), and patience (*şabr*), is expounded further with Quranic annotations and affirmed through stories of prophets who are perceived as exemplars of the mystic quest. The book is cast in the form of dialogue, where al-Kharrāz assumes the role of an adept who enquires from an unnamed teacher about the meaning and nature of *şidq* and how it may be practiced. Arberry comments on the form: “That this is a mere literary fiction is clear, especially from the passages where it is stated that ‘this is all that can be mentioned in a book,’ no oral teacher would use such an expression.”³⁰ The five other epistles that have reached us in their entirety, edited and published by al-Sāmarrā’ī, vary greatly in style from the lucid form of *The book of truthfulness* and among each other. They are generally much shorter, have a limited scope, and focus on a single issue, such as we see in his refutation of Sufi *walīs* proclaiming higher status than prophets in his *K. al-Kashf wa-l-bayān*. The *K. al-Ḥaqā’iq* stands out stylistically among these shorter epistles, in that it is mainly a collection of concise definitions of around 70 Sufi terms. The *Risāla fī l-şifāt wa-‘ilm al-tawḥīd*, which is the topic of this study, varies greatly from all the above, in that it matches theoretical exposition with poetic utterances, as will be shown below.

30 al-Kharrāz, *Book of truthfulness* v–vi.

3 MS 17018 and *Risāla fī l-ṣifāt wa-ʿilm al-tawḥīd*

MS 17018 is a codex of 36 folios (1a–36b). It measures 17.5×34.5 cm and has 22 lines per folio written in clear *naskhī* script. The top line of the title page, folio 1a, states that the codex is a collection of sayings by al-Kharrāz (*min kalām al-Imām al-ʿArif Abī Saʿīd al-Kharrāz*). The next line says it contains 13 epistles (*rasāʾil*), the titles of which are listed as:

- *Suʿālāt fī l-aḥwāl wa-l-wāridāt fīhi* (Queries on states and divine visitations)
- *Risāla fī l-ṣifāt wa-ʿilm al-tawḥīd* (An epistle on attributes and the science of unification)
- *Risāla fī ḥaqāʾiq al-tawḥīd* (An epistle on the realities of unification)
- *Kitāb aḥwāl ahl al-malāma wa ādābihim* (On the states of the people of blame and their manners)
- *Murāsālāt Abī Saʿīd al-Kharrāz* (Correspondence of Abū Saʿīd al-Kharrāz)
- *Risālat al-hawā lahu* (An epistle on [Divine] love by him [i.e. al-Kharrāz])
- *Kitāb ṣifat al-awliyāʾ* (On the attributes of Sufi saints)
- *Maqāmāt al-awliyāʾ lahu ayḍan* (The stations of Sufi saints by al-Kharrāz too)
- *Risāla fī sharḥ al-tawakkul lahu* (Elaborations on the total reliance on God by al-Kharrāz)
- *Risālat al-murīd ʿan al-inqīṭāʿ ilā Allāh taʿālā* (An epistle on the Sufi novice’s total devotion to God)
- *Risāla fī l-ziyāda fī al-aḥwāl* (On the elevation of states)
- *Risāla fī l-tawakkul* (On reliance)
- *Juzʾ min kalām al-Imām Sahl ibn ʿAbdallāh al-Tustarī* (A collection of statements by Imām Abū Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh al-Tustarī). This last title is clearly not a work by al-Kharrāz.

The codex underwent severe water damage at some point in its history, causing the loss of nine of the works that it had originally included. In its current binding, only the first three works listed on the title page have survived, while the titles of the lost works have been crossed out, clearly denoting their loss.

The surviving works are:

- *Suʿālāt fī l-aḥwāl wa-l-wāridāt fīhi* (fols. 2r–6v), which is apparently a collection of queries posed to al-Kharrāz to which he provides explanation. These begin with a query on right and wrong. Unfortunately, the rest of this epistle is illegible.
- *Risāla fī l-ṣifāt wa-ʿilm al-tawḥīd* (fols. 7r–16r). The epistle is fully legible and is edited here.
- *Risāla fī ḥaqāʾiq al-tawḥīd* (fols. 17–36). The epistle is barely legible and appears to be a collection of various definitions of unification (*tawḥīd*) by Sufis, including al-Kharrāz.

The title page has two ownership notes, the oldest of which belongs to Ibrāhīm b. ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jarā’ihī, *al-Ḥalabī baladan al-Ḥanaḥī madhhaban al-Qādirī ṭarīqatan*, and is dated 1133/1720. The second belongs to Aḥmad ‘Abd al-Bāqī and is dated 1271/1854. A memorandum at the end of *Risāla fī l-şifāt wa-‘ilm al-tawḥīd*, on folio 16v, says the text was reviewed by a certain Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Bahlawān in Rabī‘ 11 978/1570, which means the codex was copied before that date.

The manuscript was originally put together and copied by Ismā‘īl b. Sawdakīn, as evidenced in the end of folio 1b. This folio presents us with a well-known story about al-Kharrāz as he encountered an ascetic *jinn* on one of his sojourns.³¹ The *jinn* recited two lines of poetry that speak of his desolation and loss of self (*tūh*). In eight lines of verse, al-Kharrāz challenged the *jinn*'s understanding of the true meaning of loss, which he considered to be not a loss of self but of all existence including the divine throne. The poem ends with a statement by Ibn Sawdakīn in which he clearly states that he collected all that what was available to him of the sayings of Abū Sa‘īd al-Kharrāz:

قال كاتبه الفقير إلى الله تعالى اسماعيل بن سودكين عفا الله عنه قد استخرت الله في جمع ما
تيسر من كلام الشيخ أبي سعيد الخراز رحمه الله فإنه كان رفيع الإشارة حلو العبارة ذو [sic.]
منازلة في الطريق وقدم راسخ في علم التحقيق.

Given Ibn Sawdakīn's above testimony, one may safely assume that the works listed on the title page indicate titles of works that were most likely authored by al-Kharrāz. The authenticity of the epistles may be further corroborated by the fact that they commence with a well-known story about al-Kharrāz's encounter with the *jinn*. Furthermore, compiling a collection of works by a single Sufi author was a practice attempted by Ibn Sawdakīn, a similar case of which is his collection of epistles by another notable Sufi author of the third/ninth century, namely al-Junayd. This latter collection was edited by Abdel Kader and included in the Arabic section of his *The life, personality and writings of al-Junayd*.³² It is noteworthy that the aforementioned *K. al-Şidq* by al-Kharrāz is included in this very same collection dedicated to al-Junayd.³³ The same collection mode is perceived in the codex studied here, whose title page says it is a collection dedicated to al-Kharrāz's works but that exceptionally contains

31 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīkh madīnat Dimashq* v, 140.

32 al-Junayd's writings are preserved as "Rasā'il al-Junayd" in Şehit ‘Ali Ms. No. 1347, as Abdel-Kader notes. See Abdel-Kader, *Life, personality and writings of al-Junayd* 59.

33 al-Kharrāz's *K. al-Şidq* lies between fols. 4a and 33a in "Rasā'il al-Junayd." Ibid. 59.

a single work by another Sufi author, namely al-Tustarī (d. 283/896). Finally, comments that follow the titles of some of the listed epistles reiterating that they are authored by al-Kharrāz (*lahu* or *lahu ayḍan*) give further proof that the collection is authentically Kharrāzi. I was unable to find statements from the *Risāla fī l-ṣifāt wa-ʿilm al-tawḥīd* in various Sufi or biographical compendia; however, the *Risāla* depicts Sufi strife as it leads to the obliteration of self and total absorption in the divine, which is consistent with the known doctrine of al-Kharrāz on annihilation and subsistence (*fanāʾ wa-baqāʾ*). Given Ibn Sawdakīn's confirmation that al-Kharrāz is the author of the works he collected, and given that the collection mirrors a similar practice he attempted with al-Junayd's writings, I find little reason to doubt that the *Risāla fī l-ṣifāt wa-ʿilm al-tawḥīd* was actually written by al-Kharrāz.

Al-Kharrāz begins his *Risāla fī l-ṣifāt wa-ʿilm al-tawḥīd* by discerning the means by which God is known. Ironically, he resorts to rational argumentation to prove the inadequacy of rational reasoning to acquire a true knowledge of God. He proceeds from the premise that God is One, Transcendent, and Inimitable and pairs the attributes of God with those of man to conclude that, unlike man's attributes, which can be recognized by sensual perception and intellectual induction, God's attributes are remote from the human intellect. He adds that God's action (*fīʿl*) is itself an attribute of God (*ṣifa*) that is variant from the action (*fīʿl*) of man. Man's actions are tied to movement and subject to stimuli and transformations. They are nonautonomous and created by God, who instills in man the power by which man acts. God's action in man, on the other hand, happens through no medium and occurs void of any tangency or transference between God and man. This, in essence, defines God's transcendence according to al-Kharrāz, who warns that misconceptions in this regard are grounds for associationism (*shirk*), in which many have fallen. Furthermore, al-Kharrāz connects comprehension (*idrāk*) to two faculties, the intellect (*ʿaql*) and the visual perception of the eye (*ʿayn*), and concludes that knowledge reached by the former is more solid and confirmed because it is capable of discernment or discrimination (*faṣl*), by which *ʿaql* corrects the misguided perceptions of *ʿayn*. *Faṣl* is an attribute of *ʿaql* by which the latter realizes that God is dissimilar to anything that signals to Him, such as light or beauty. Thus, knowledge of God by those whom al-Kharrāz calls "the sincere people of unification" (*ahl al-tawḥīd al-mukhlisīn*) is granted by God from His divine realm (*ghayb*). It is imparted in the clarified vision of the hearts that has obliterated all that is other than God, including the beholder himself. Such a state is coupled with total submission (*taslīm*). It is the first station (*maqām*) by which "the people of unification" realize true servitude, by which "the people of certitude" (*ahl al-yaqīn*) realize God's omnipotence, and by which "the people of

unification” (*ahl al-tawĥīd*) realize God’s Oneness in all sincerity. Submission is also connected to cessation of concern with time, place, or manner (*ayn, ĥayth, kayf*). Desolation (*wahsha*) will overcome the hearts that have deserted everything in their constant seeking of the Divine. Anxiety and vexation will be lifted off them by God’s deliverance, and their hearts will be purified and rid of all vestiges of forgetfulness (*ghafla*). Their souls will cast away the influence of their temperaments (*akhlāq*) and attributes (*şifāt*) by taming their desires and needs, and they will delight in peaceful worldly existence. Al-Kharrāz describes such state of the souls:

The souls’ aversions to abandoning their temperaments and attributes have the most profound influence on them. When they reach this state [of obliterating their original temperaments and desires] they experience pure pleasures and are firmly established in their solitude. They embark upon the journey with all their might and remain steadfast on the path motivated by their quest for true realization. Hence, the One, the Solitary and Kind reveals to them that it was He who called upon them in their endeavor, and that He summoned them to solitude and to sever themselves from all otherness to find unification. They rejoice at their transformation, and are satisfied with the toil they exerted and with ridding themselves of [their] subtle comforts. Then God, may He be exalted, reveals His Oneness to them in their solitude and shows them [His] Might and Glory. The call for unification overcomes them and incites them to behold Oneness in Might and Glory. Everything that belongs to this world and the hereafter is obliterated from their vision, every magnificent and mighty being, and every pride and glory. They dwell in pure solitude and retreat. They expel the here and the hereafter and persist in no shelter or refuge.

The above is clearly an elaboration of the Sufi concept of *fanāʿ* (annihilation of self), which al-Kharrāz is credited with developing. Al-Kharrāz expresses such state of existence in a very unique style, where prose discourse and poetry intertwine. Poetry, as a form of expression, strongly lent itself to describe the elusive nature of the mystical experience. It was commonly used in later Sufi manuals, where poetic references were inserted to substantiate or conclude a theoretical elaboration of certain concepts or practices. The *Risāla fī ʿilm al-şifāt wa-l-tawĥīd* is, however, a unique early Sufi text, in that its elaborate discourse appears to be a commentary on a single poem by al-Kharrāz. Both forms of expression here, poetry and prose, are symbiotic and interrelated. This exercise of shifting from prose to poetry appears elsewhere in al-Kharrāz’s work, though

on a more limited scale, as is seen in the poetic narrative of his encounter with the *jinn* that Ibn Sawdakīn used as an introduction to his collection of Kharrāzi texts. In *Risāla fī 'ilm al-ṣifāt wa-l-tawḥīd*, where al-Kharrāz acts as both poet and scribe, he describes in a poem of 17 lines the strife of those solitary mystics who have abandoned everything and have obliterated themselves to exist in God, who alone deserves true existence. The first ten lines of the poem are dispersed in the text, each of which is inserted to conclude an argument or an idea. The last seven lines, however, are combined together and stand alone, without any commentary, to serve as a conclusion to the epistle. Such a poetic conclusion is tied to the epistle's introduction in what seems like a full circle, having begun with knowledge and ended with knowledge, which is, after all, not reached by intellectual inquiry but granted by the grace of God. In the last line, al-Kharrāz professes that he stands alone in his knowledge of God, which is indescribable:

The knowledgeable who possess insight have gained their superiority by their realization of the Secret.

The knowledge I have now cannot be described, I am solitary among the knowledgeable.

4 Edition

رسالة في الصفات وعلم التوحيد
لأبي سعيد أحمد بن عيسى الخراز

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الحمد لله الذي بنعمته تتم الصالحات وبقوته تُدفع السيئات، الذي ما كان من حسنة فن عطائه وما كان من سيئة فن قضائه، المعبود في أرضه وسمائه، وهو الذي تتعم بالنظر إلى أوليائه. وصلى الله على الصفوة من أصفياه والمنتخب من أحبائه، ورحمة الله على أهل نصرته ومن أجاب دعوته وأحب عترته.

قال أبو سعيد أحمد بن عيسى الخراز رحمه الله عليه ورضوانه اعلم أنّ صفات الله تقدّس وتعالى ليس من جنس ما قد عقل وعلم أو قد غاب عنك أو تصوّر كبقية جنسه في فكرك، ولا من جنس ما رأت عينك أو قد أدركته حاسة من حواسك. جلّ وتقدّس أن يكون له عدل أو مساو أو يُقاس به نظير. واعلم رحمك الله أنّ فعلك غير فعل الله لأنّ فعلك بحركات وحواس وغير وانتقال وثوران، وفعلك مخلوق محدث مريب، وإثما فعلت بعباء من الله جلّ وعزّ ليست لك القوة التي بها فعلت. وقوتك غير مصحوبة لك بل الله جلّ وعزّ يجدها بسرعة صحبة القدرة فيك. وفعلُ الله فيك وفي الأشياء بلا حواس ولا انتقال ولا ثوران. وفعل الله عزّ وجلّ هو صفة الله ليس هو غيره ولا هو هو. فعل الله لا يوقع في شيء مخالطة منه ولا مماسة ولا ممازجة فاعقل وانتبه واحذر الغلط فقد أشرك أكثر الخلق بالله من ههنا وذهبوا عن الله عزّ ذكره. فإذا قويت معرفتك وصفاً فكرك وحسن نظرك فيما وصفت من أفراد الوجدانية وتجريد الإلهية خلص لك ذلك بخالص ضميرك، فقف بذلك واتخذة نجناً لقلبك من كلّ عارض له بذلك.

واعلم أنّ إدراك العقول فيما وقفت به على معرفته أثبت وأقوى من إدراك العيون لأنّنا قد رأينا العيون قد تنظر إلى شيء تترى غيره ممّا هو شبهه فيؤتى في نظرها أنّ ذا هو ذاك. قال الله جلّ وعزّ كلّما رزقوا منها من ثمرة رزقا قالوا هذا الذي رزقنا من قبل وأتوا به متشابهاً (٢٥:٢). فعلنا أنّ الرزق الذي يؤتون به مختلف لقول الجليل جلّ جلاله وأتوا به متشابهاً لأنّ الشيء لا يشبه الشيء إلا وهو غيره. فلا تكاد العيون أن تفرّق بين الشيء وشبهه إلا أن يكون العقل قد أدرك

من المنظور إليه شيئاً من لطائف التمييز والبيان بقوة العقل فيما لا تدركه العيون فيكون إدراك العقول بالتمييز يفصل للعيون الشيء من شبهه فيريها³⁴ أنّ ذا غير ذا وذلك الفصل هو نفس المعرفة ومعناها.

ألا وإن [ما] صحّ واستوى وخلص من إدراك أهل التوحيد المخلصين لله هو ممّا عقده الله جلّ وعزّ من غيبه بعين قلوبهم فيما خصّه التسليم وذلك أنّه عزّ وتعالى أوقفهم به عليه أنّه الله تعالى بلطيف الأوهام وقوة مكين الإعلام ببراهين الدلالات وشواهد الآيات. وألا ترى أنّ كلّ ما أدركته العقول أنّه لا بدّ له³⁵ فيه من التفتيش والتنقير والبحث عنه، وذلك هو صفة العقول في كلّ شيء أدركته فلا تسكن إلى علم شيء أدركته أبداً إلاّ بالبحث عن كَيْفِيَّتِهِ وماهِيَّتِهِ وعنصره وجنسه تفتيشاً أو تشبيهاً وامثالاً، وحتىّ تعلم بدّوه وما هو وآخره وتحديد جوهره. فإن لم تصل إلى علم شيء هكذا انصرفت عنه لأنّ معرفة العقل معرفة واحدة وليس الله معها. وإدراكها هكذا لأنّه قد بان لها أنّه غير ما استدلتّ به عليه، وأنّ كلّ ما أدركته أو عرفته من جميع الأجناس من الأجسام وجميع الأنواع من الأعراض وجميع الجوهر الذي استدلتّ به عليه أنّه تعالى خالقها وخالق كلّ شيء حسن. وكلّ نوع عرفته في شيء لله من نور أو بهاء أو ضياء أو بهجة أو حسن أو جمال أو جسم أو عرض فقد أيقنت أنّ هذه أجناس وأنواع هو خالقها وأنّها دلالات عليه، وأنّه أكبر وأعظم، وأنّه تعالى بخلاف ما رأته وعلمت لاّنها في بداية استدلالها عليه مكثت تجعله مثلاً أو شبهاً لها أو شيئاً منها. ورأت آثار التشبيه في التركيب والتخطيط والتأليف والتصوير هي الدليل عليه. فلو جاز أن يكون مثلاً أو شبهاً لها أو شيئاً منها إذا لبطل المدلول عليه. وألا ترى أنّ غيبها الآن معقود بغيب ما غاب عنها منه إيماناً وتسليماً، وهذا أكل ما يكون من اليقين بخالص التوحيد. فروّيته لها بأزليّته، والآن في بُعد الآن، واحد لا يختلف عليها فما وقفت به من توحيده شيء قد احتوى عليها التوحيد وأخلاها من صفاتها فيه وأقامها بصفته عليها.

ولأنّ صفة العقول ما قد ذكرناه من التفتيش والتنقير والبحث عمّا أدركته لا تسكن إليه ولا تسكن به دون تكيّفه واكتناحه. وقد أبانت الدلالات للعقول فيما استدلتّ بها عليه أنّه تعالى لا مثل له ولا شبه، وامتنع عليها الغيب فيما حاولت فقطعها عن تكيّف واكتناه، فأدركت بغيبها غيب ما أبدته لها الدلالات وأوقفها بها، فصارت بصفة التوحيد لا ضطرار اعترافه إليها. فقدّمت التفتيش والبحث والتكيّف والتشبيه وهو صفتها، فانعقد غيبها بغيب ما بدا لها وتلك صفة التوحيد محضاً خالصاً. وإذا

34 في الأصل: فيريه.

35 في الأصل: له.

وقفت القلوب بهذه الصفة من إخلاص التوحيد لم يكن للعدو عليها في ذلك لبس لأنه اللعين لم يدر ما الله ولا كيف الله، فيكون تمثل للقلوب شبهه ويوجد لها مثل صفته فإن أراها شبحاً مثلاً فقد تقدم منها في ذلك أنه لا مثل له ولا شبه. وليس يصل أحد إلى ما وصفت لك من إخلاص التوحيد فيعارضه من هذا شيء أبداً إن شاء الله.

فما أنبج الله جلّ وعزّ سبيله وأراك عزّته وثبت في صدرك نوره وانفتح له قلبك فتلك نعمة وحكمة أتاكها الله نغذ ما أوتيتَ وكن من الشاكرين. فإذا أثبتَ معرفتك بهذا فذلك هو الحقّ وعند ذلك يقوى نظرك بامتداد فكرك واجتماع همك في بدائع الفطن وعجائب الأمور، فبانت لك قدرة العزيز المقتدر فولعتَ بقدرته وسرعة تدبيره وشماخ سلطانه، وانحرق بصرك في لطائف القدرة في خفايا ينشئها ويخفيها فيما بدا عنها وظهورها فيما بدا لها ورفعتك بها إليها وصفا نظرك بها فأريتَ ما خفي عليك كما رأيتَ ما ظهر منها، فإذا ناطقتكُ بها شواهد دلالاتها وبيّنات آثارها ورأيتَ أكاليل ما لبسه الملك من بهاء آثار الصنعة ما نور ضياء وإشراقاً وبهجةً ونوراً، ألم تسمع إلى قوله جلّ وعزّ أَفَنَ شَرَحَ اللَّهُ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ فَهُوَ عَلَى نُورٍ مِّن رَّبِّهِ (٢٣:٣٩)، وقال جلّ وعزّ اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ (٣٥:٢٤)، فيبقى نظرك حينئذٍ معلقاً ولها بما انكشف لك من عظيم علم التوحيد وجلال الربوبية باختطاف سنا لوامع القدرة عن الغفلة عنها والاشتغال بما يداعيها من بدائع إنشاء المبديات وعجائب تكوين المحدثات. وإذا تعلّق نظرك بها واحتوى على همك وفكرك وصلت بمن هي عنه ومنه، وناطقتكُ بالدعوة الى القدير القادر الواحد الوجداني الفرد الفردي، فثبتها قلبك حينئذٍ بسرعة الإجابة قوياً مكيناً، وصفا نظرك فسحقت مبيناً مستبيناً.

وهذه الدعوة إنما هي شيء تذوقه وتراه بنظرها بمثل ما ذكرناه من التولّ والتعلّق ودوام الشخوص بالقدرة وعجائب بواديه. ثم حينئذٍ يرجع نظر القلوب منها إليها فترى عجائب ما ألبسته القدرة فتنتظر بنظرها إلى نظرها وبواديه وتواتر قوادحه فيها. فعند ذلك يكاد نظرها أن ينقطع لما يخزقه من بوادي القدرة. فإذا تمّت هذه الصفة فيها تمكّنت برؤية القادر القاهر بغامض صفاء فكرها برؤية غامض فعل الوجدانية وعظيم فعل الإلهية ما تفرد به شخصها وتعلّقها. وهذه أول دواعي إقرار دواعي الوجدانية في القلوب.

والصفة الأولى هي ترقّي القلوب بشواهد الدلالات وبراهين البيّنات إلى معرفة الوجدانية في القلوب. فعلاصة ذلك في العلم قبل المعاملة تحقيق إثبات اليقين. وشاهد ذلك أنه كذلك انقطاع خواطر التشكيك منها، والنقل من خفاء الشكّ فيها، وطهارتها بنور اليقين من ظلام الارتياح يوجد الطمأنينة والسكون وخضوع التسليم أنه الله الواحد الأحد الفرد الصمد.

ونخضوع التسليم فيها شواهد وهي: ينقطع منها وعنهما المحادثة بأين وكيف أو حيث أو من أيش أو في أي شيء. ولذلك شواهد تجري به المعاملة في العلم وأوله صدق ذلة الجأ والاعتماد به في الاكتفاء دون كل كاف وكفاية، والتسليم والاستسلام والتفويض وإفراده في كل ما أجرى من اختلاف القضاء والأحكام لما تحققت عندهم وفيهم من تفرده واحتوائه تعالى عليهم. فلما ثبتت هذه بالشواهد في القلوب علماً ومعاملةً هجمت المعرفة بالوحدانية، وتحققت فيها عظيم قدر الإلهية وانفراد فعل الربوبية وتقلب التدبير واختلاف قضايا التقدير، وأن العالم كله موضع لأبعاد القدرة وأشباح مجاري الأحكام، وأن العبد خلقه من إرادته وفسخ عزومه، وأنه مهلوك عليه [في] سكونه وأفكاره وفهمه، ألقى نفسه في كنف عبودية مالكة فصار مطروحاً بين يديه وتبراً من كل حول وقوة إليه.

وهذا أول مقام قامه أهل التوحيد من تحقيق العبودية، وأول مقام قامه أهل اليقين من تصحيح القدرة، وأول مقام قامه أهل التوحيد في إخلاص الوحدانية. فأما قلوبهم بنور الإخلاص والاستسلام والتفويض والخضوع والتسليم فقد حثت المعرفة في القلوب اتصال النظر بروية الجلال والكبرياء وعظيم القدر وعز السلطان. وقرب قربه منها بأنه تعالى ناظر بعلمه فيها وظاهر بقدرته عليها فارتعدت برويته حياءً وإجلالاً وإعظاماً أن ترى فيها غيره أو نصيباً لغيره. فأراها موجبات العبودية وموجبات الإخلاص لوحدانيته ففارتقت منه وله الإخوة والأحباب والمجالسين والأصحاب وكل ما ألفها ووطن عاداتها. وعملت في تغيير الذر من حركاتها وسكونها وخرجت إليه بما فيها مما خفي في سرها وبدا في إعلانها موقنة تضرب كلها أحبتة عنه فيها وذائقة في خروجها إليه بما فيها وحدانيته إذ لم يخرجها إليه شيء غيره، وأنها لا تريد فيما فارتقت منها غيره ولا تريد منها بذلك بدلاً غيره للذي نازلها من عظيم قدره وتحقق عندها من عظيم شأنه. فسارعت إلى إجابته مسارعة من تحقق عنده عظيم سطواته وسرعة حلول نعمته. فالساعة منها دهر والدهر منها أبد والأبد منها سرمد. وهاج حثيث الداعي لها بالتوحش من كل مأوى ووطن. وأزعجها لهب الإجابة ففارتقت كل قرار وعدم الهدوء واحترقت بالتوحش من كل ما قطع عليها إشارتها. واجتهدت في مفارقة صغير راحتها واستوطنتها دواعي الوحشة فأوحشتها من كل ذوق وذواق ومترح وارتياح. وملت دواعي الوحشة أعضاؤها استبطاناً حتى فاضت على سمعها وبصرها وجميع جوارحها. وتكاثفت عليها الموموم والكروب، وأكبت عليها الغوموم، وتقابلت دواعي الظاهر والباطن، وألبستها حتى أذاقتها طعم الوحدة، كل ذلك تصفية لها من أدناسها وإخراجاً³⁶ لها من غفلاتها وسهوها. والتهب فيها حراق الوحشة لها فهكذا أبداً حتى تجد حقيقة الفراغ من جميع آثارها المؤثرة بينها وبين قادحها والحاجة لها عنه والقاطعة لاتصالها به.

والأثر المؤثر في النفوس هو من النفوس وأخلاقها مثل الراحة بروح الدنيا وجميع أسبابها وشهواتها كبيرها وقليلها الغائب منها والحاضر. ثم إن راحة النفوس وصفاتها أعظم الأثر المؤثر عليها مثل طمعها وحرصها ورغبتها وغمها على ما فاتها وراحتها بما تطمع فيه وإن لم تنله، وفرحها بظهور قدرتها، وغضبها على ما نالها، ورضاها بما يرضيها منها جميع أمانها وآمالها وإن قلت. ثم إن كراهتها لمفارقة هذه الآثار والصفات أعظم الأثر المؤثر عليها وفيها. فإذا حلت هذا المحل صفت لها الطيبات، وصحت لها الخلووات، واستجرت بها المسير، واستجدت لها التسمير، واستقرت لها الطريق، وثار منها الطلب بالتحقيق. عند ذلك أبان لها داعي الواحد الأحد اللطيف في سياستها أنه هو الذي دعاها بالوحشة في وحدتها من كل غيرها من التوحيد لوحدتها فاستطارت فرحاً بتقلبها، وارتاحت ببذل جهدها، وخرج منها خفايا راحتها. ثم إنه تعالى كاشفها بداعي وحدانيته في توحيدها وبدا لها بوادي الجلال والكبرياء فهزتها داعي التوحيد بتفريد الجلال والكبرياء، فصغر كل شيء وفي في رؤيتها من جميع الملكين والدارين، وفي عندها وفيها كل عظيم وكبير وكل نخر وقدر. وصارت الداران عندها بعين واحدة في الصغر والتلاشي والفناء. فانفردت بصحة الوحدة وصفاء الخلووة وخرجت من كل الملكين والدارين جميعاً فصارت بلا مأوى ولا قرار، وانفردت بإفراء الجلال والكبرياء، وفي ذلك أقول (من الطويل):

تَفَرَّدَ بِاللَّهِ الْفَرِيدِ فَرِيدُ	وَصَارَ وَحِيدًا وَالْمَسْوقُ وَحِيدُ
وَذَلِكَ أَنَّ الْعَارِفِينَ رَأَيْتُهُمْ	عَلَى دَرَجَاتٍ وَالذُّنُوبُ بَعِيدُ
فَنُ مَفْرَدٍ يَسْمُو بِهَيْمَةَ قَلْبِهِ	عَلَى الْمَلِكِ جَمْعًا وَهُوَ عَنْهُ مُحِيدُ
وَأَكْثَرَ سِيرًا فِي السَّمَوِ تَوْحِيدًا	وَكُلُّ وَحِيدٍ بِالْبَلَاءِ فَرِيدُ

وهذا مقام من خلا وخرج عن الملك وانفرد بوحدانيتها سيده في وحدته وأمن من حظه من كل عاجل وأجل غيره.

وقال زوي عن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم أنه قال: قال الله جلّ وعزّ "من شغله ذكرى عن مسألتي أعطيته أفضل ما أعطي السائلين". ثم إنه تعالى كاشفها برؤية قدرته في قدرته وعظيم شأنه في ذاته فهامت انزعاجاً³⁷ وانصرفت عن كل شيء انخلاعاً وذعراً. وأقلقها داعي التوحيد عن توحيدها

بها فوقعت عليها إحراق الوحشة كالنيران توقدًا فارتحلها من وطنها ففارتقت مأواها منها، وانقطعت عن نظرها بنظرها، وأحرقها وجود حسّها، وأوحشها جميع حركاتها وسكونها، وانزعجت عن خلوتها بخلوها، فدلّها داعيها فهامت فرارًا من توحدها وانخلعت ذعرًا من حسّها، وأقوى إحراق ذلك لها وذلك أنّ احتراقها بنفسها وفرحها بوجدها في خلوتها من الأشياء دونها لمن أعظم الأثر المؤثر عليها، ومضرة هذا الأثر عليها أعظم لأنّه حجاب لها. ثمّ هو يخفي ويدقّ في رؤيتها، وما كانت الدعوة لتستبطن خفيّ دقّها إلاّ بأعظم الصفات، وهو ما تجلّى لها من عظيم قدر الواحد الوجدانيّ الفردانيّ الجبار العظيم القدر في قدره الكبير الشان في ذاته مع ما أدركته بصفاء نظرها نظره إليها. فأرهقها الحياة وآلمها إرهاقًا مزج فيها الوحشة من كلّ ما فيها منها ومن غيرها، وانصرفت عن نفسها وأدركت بنظرها في نظره إليها مثاقيل الذرّ من حركتها وسكونها فأبرز لها ذلك المختفي عنها منها، وناداه داعية الغيب بالشخص وبالارتحال عنها إلى تفريد وحدانيته وتجريد إلهيته والانفراد به عن كلّ ما ذكرناه. فلما تغيبت من ذلك وطهرت دعاها بإخلاص إرادتها له دون كلّ شيء إرادة ومرادًا، وإفرادها بحبّها له دون كلّ محبة ومحبوب.

ولما صفت وجملت وفنيت عن نفسها في نفسها وعن كلّ شيء غيره ألبسها ضياء قدس تقدّسه وبركات زاكيات رحمته أنس النظر إليه بوحى الإلهام ومكين سرّ الإعلام بخفيّ ما يبدو منه به إليه. ورفعهم بصروح الجنان بتصحيح التأمل له بحقيقة التبيان. وأغناهم بذلك فيه عن ممارسة الكسب والطلب والتطالب والذكر والتذكّر والرؤية والتمكين. فأقام لها في التسمي عند تلججهم في تيه الغيوب أعلامًا من بوادي شواهد موثقات لأبصار الناظرين. فرفعها في روضات زاهرات وتنسموا بذلك روح الحياة، حياة سرحت عندها قرباها من التسمي في تيه الغيوب بلآلى سبحات الجمال وبهجات أنوار الجلال. فسرحت أسرارهم بمراسلات سرّه واسترسلت أنفسهم بصافي أنيق أنسه. وتلك حقيقة بقاءها وفراغها منها ومن الأشياء. فذاقت عزّ الانقطاع وارتاحت بذوق الحرية من رقّ المكونات، فاختالت بذلك في جوفها فرحًا وزهت به اغتباطًا، وتاهت به مرحًا وفي ذلك خلصت لها الإشارة وحفت إليه به.

وقد روي عن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلّم أنّه قال في بعض دعائه: "فإنّما أنا لك وبك وإليك"، وهذا مقام ثانٍ من الفناء فيما أوجده الوله برؤية الوله برؤية قدر الجليل الجبار العظيم الشان. وفي ذلك أقول:

وَأَخْرَسَمُو فِي الْعُلُوفِ تَفْرَدًا
عَنِ النَّفْسِ وَجَدًا فَهَوَ مِنْهُ بِييدُ
وَأَجْهَدَ فِي السَّيْرِ الْحَثِيثَ مَطِيَّةً
إِلَى أَنْ خَلَا بِالْوَجْدِ فَهَوَ شَرِيدُ
فَهَذَا مَدَى غُفْمِ الْفَنَاءِ لِمَنْ سَعَى
بِهِمْ وَوَجِدٍ إِنَّهُ لَمُرِيدُ

فلما كادت أن يتوطأها بلذيد الاغتباط ويأتي إليها بعزير الانقطاع أراها البدو فيه³⁸ تعالى ما منه في علمه سبق واحتواءه على ما فيه وسوق ذلك عند مدلهمات غيوبه، وأضاف لك العشق بترتيب علمه وانفراد حكمه إذ كان ذلك مجموعاً في العلم المضمّن والسرّ المكنون. واتّصلت في جميع ما به جمعت قبل إبرازها فيما به ابتدعت وفيتت وفيها بها كلّ ذوق ومذاق ووجد وإرادة وعلم، وكان الله وحده لا شريك له وانفرد الله بها عنها لها باحتواء العلم بالترتيب وهم حينئذ معلومون لا مخلوقين في حقيقة العلم والمعرفة. وكذلك انفراده بهم وهم الآن كلا معلومين مخلوقين باحثوا الملك والتدبير وغلبة القهر والتدبير بإشهادهم لهم ذلك منه وبه ولهم. وفي ذلك أقول:

وَأَخْرَ مَغْلُوبٌ عَلَى كُلِّ هَمِّهِ
أَتَاهُ فَنَاءٌ غَالِبٌ وَجُمُودُ
وَأَفْقَدَهُ مِنْ كُلِّ عِلْمٍ وَشَاهِدِ
وَعَيْبِهِ فِي الْغَيْبِ فَهَوَ فَقِيدُ

ثمّ نقلهم إلى فناء شاهديهم وفناء من شاهده وذلك حين أدخل شاهديهم في الاحتواء فعرفه رسمه، فيقوم شاهده بطوال حقيقته فاحتوت منهم عليهم فاحتبسهم بها لها عليها فقامت هي بما لها على اختلافها منها، لهم من كلّ اسم منشأ ومعنى مبدأ من كلّ المكنونات الكامنة والأوقات الجارية أبداً، حتى يكونوا مقترفين فضائل اصطلامها وسمو عرّ مرامها. فالعبد حينئذٍ مُخْتَطَفٌ عَارِفٌ وَمُخْتَلَسٌ فَارٌّ عَنِ الْأَرْضِ وَالسَّمَاءِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا مِنَ الْمَلِكِ الْمُبْرَزِ وَالْعَالَمِ الْأَكْبَرِ³⁹ بانقطاعها له منه وله عنه حتى يتجرّد الاسم بخالص الجادة وفناء ما سواه.

كالم يزل فيه تيه العماء المرسل حيث لا حيث ولا وقت ولا زمان ولا فضاء ولا مكان ولا حسّ ولا جرس ولا رسم مرسومًا ولا سقف مرتوقًا. كذلك كانت صفته جلّ جلاله وتقدست أسماؤه قبل العالم والمعلوم وقبل الخلق والمخلوق. وبان بصفاته وانفرد بذاته وتعزّز بقدرته وقهر بغلبته وشمخ في

38 في الأصل: في.

39 في الأصل: والأكبر.

العلوم برفعته فانقطعت في ذلك العلوم وتلاشت فيه الهموم وخنست فيه الأوهام عن الفهوم. فهذه التالية نُقل الحقيقة في سنا البدء على تمامات أقسامه واستحقاق ملاسبات أحكامه. وفي ذلك أقول:

خَلَا حِسُّهُ مِنْ حِسِّهِ لِفَنَائِهِ فَمَنْ فَقَدَهُ فَقَدْ عَلَّيْهِ يَزِيدُ

وذلك ما جمعه فيما رتبته، وما أفنى فيما قبضه حتى يجد البينة على تجرد الاسم. فهذا تحقيق الفناء في قبض ما حكم به الحق على أهل التحقيق في شاهد الحق في تحقيق مكنين العلم وترتيبه وثبات المعرفة فيما أوجبه من الغلبة والقهر والتدبير والتقدير. وأما علم ما جرت به عليهم تحقيق المعاملة من إجراءاته عليهم تعالی بحفظ التولي، فإن النفوس لما بلغت أقصى محبوبها في علمها وسعيها وغاية ما دفعتها إليه حقائق ماهي معرفتها تعالت إليه بعلم ما بدأها به من بدو العطايا عند تفصيل القضايا، فطلبت دوام المواصلة منه به له إذ فني طلبها للمواصلة التي كانت لها طالبة من حيث غيبت وعلمت. فلما بلغت ذلك منه في غاية طلبها وكادت أن يتوطأها أبدى لها الحق منه تعالی حقيقة الترتيب على البدو والمبدئ لكل بدو وابتداء في تعالی ما منه نسق واحتواء على ما في علمه وسق. بأن لها عند ذلك تباين ما هي به من المواصلة الذي كان نهاية لها في بغيها. وموقع علم ما بدا له من الحق عونته إياها ليخرجها إليه شيئاً شيئاً. لها تَلَطُّفُهُ في تعالی درجات اليقين بثمار هدى الاصطفاء الذي يكون به الكشوف في المواصلة وانعقاد الغيب بها في المؤلفته من حيث إبدأؤه⁴⁰ عليها فيما منه أبدأه لها بلا اعتراض حال يكون بما حسبها فيما أبدأه وعمّا أخفاه عنها أبدأ، حتى تتلاحق صفاتها باحتواء الغيب لها ما أبدأه لها مما هي واقفة به منه ومنها احتواء فناء عنها حضورها بها وبه وغيبتها به عنها وعنه، وذلك عند تمام ما دعاها إليه الحق من حقائق تجريد توحيده بحقائق فناء كل شيء كما كان في أزليته بتعزز الاسم وتجريده وحده. ثم لاح من الحق لألح بانكشاف غيبه ما عنه تجلّى بإبراز ما نشأ من المنشآت وأوجدتها بعد ما بتجليه على جميع الأفق فهنالكَ أبرزهم بإبراز ما أبرز به له وأحضرهم في كل ما أظهر وغيّب له منه، فتشعشع ضياء الإشراق وتكَلَّل طواع الاستحقاق وكوافي التلاقي كضوء برق وشهود. وإبراز الحقائق⁴¹ له حد فاستعجزت كواشف الأغطية عن ثبوت المنشآت وعظيم فيض المكنونات فأبرزهم ببروز فيما عنه له منه. يبدأ بإبراز شاهد به له فيما بسط منه على كل الكلمات وبسطهم به له في إدراك ما لبسه منه

40 في الأصل: ابدأه.

41 في الأصل: حقائق.

له فجمعها الكلمات الذي رُدّوا إليه فهو بدو إيراد. وشاهدوا الأرضين والسماوات وما بينهما من كلّ إنشاء المكونات، فلم يرغب عنهم غائب ولا يبعد عنهم حاضر. وشاهدوا ذلك بشاهد الحق في حقيقة شاهدهم فافتقرت في اجتماعها بعد اجتماعها في افتراقها، واجتمعت في إشراقها فيما له ظهرت بشاهد العود إلى البدء، وهو البدو الأول الذي له أبدوا أولاً أولاً تضمّنه العلم في الذريّة كان إحاطة ما اكتتم فهم الآن مطّعون به له ومنه وإليه ومردودون منه وبه وعليه.

وأما هذا البدو الذي رُدّوا إليه فهو بدو إبراز ما اكتتم ترسمه فيما رسم وجمعه له فيما حكم فبقوا بامتداد رؤية الحقيقة به إليه. وانبسطت بهم منه له قائمات المنشآت في فضاء انفساح الملكوت بإيجاده فيما أبدى الواجد وتجريده بشاهده دون شاهد الواجد فاستثارت بواده طولعه واستنارت ضيا لومعه وثابتت بروق خواطفه وتقابلت ملاقة عواطفه في تكرير عوائده وتلوين بواده. فأثارت بجبرها وجداً شعثانياً وهاجاً أنفاً طروباً مستتراً عجّاجاً هيفاً مياساً موهجاً رجراجاً متلاحقاً بيوادي غيوبه متتالياً من صوب سخابه ومتألّفاً بمقابلات أشكاله، متلاحظات بخطوف البروق اللامعة ومتخارجات لقوادم النبل المارقة كأنما حثّ بعضها بعضاً بالانبساط. كذلك ضياء القمر في شعاع الشمس فقني ضياء القمر في وهج شعاع الشمس. كذلك تلوين فعال الشواهد واختلاف مذاقاتها في المواجيد واضطراب حرق الفوائد باتفاق كلّ مختلف واثملاف كلّ مضطرب وذلك لأنّ اختلاف تلويناتها معقودات باجتماع حقائق شواهد. فهذه من أعظم مقام وأغرب تشبيه في الإيجاد وأشرف صفة في الأفراد وذلك أنّهم نظروا بنظر طلع لهم من بدو بسوق الأشياء فأدّاهم تعالى ما أنشأ كيف برز بتشبيه ما أبداه بعد عدمه. وكان مع بدو ما أنشأ بادياً ظاهراً على ما شاء فأظهرهم برؤية ما ظهر فلم يرغب عنهم فيما ظهر لحظة ثمّ عاد باطناً لكلّ ما ظهر. يقول تعالى: وَالظَّاهِرُ وَالْبَاطِنُ (٣:٥٧) فكان تبارك وتعالى ظاهراً بالسلطان والقدرة باطناً بالعلم والخبرة، وقام في شواهد المواجيد ظاهراً باطناً بنسبة الكمال لا بنسبة التبويض والانفصال لأنّ كلّ اسم لله تبارك وتعالى فهو واقع بنسبة الكمال. فأروا ثبوت الأشياء بإشراق ما ظهر عليها منه تعالى وانخرق بهم صفاء النظر إلى رؤية بواطنها فأروا بإشراق ما لبسها منه تعالى. وكان نظرهم كأحد الأشياء الذي قد لبسها منه ما ليس من باده شاهد القدرة ظاهراً وباطناً وغامض مكنون لطيف المعلم والخبر. فتقابل إشراق بواطنها بإشراق ظواهرها ما لبسها تعالى من إحاطتها بها بعلمه وقدرته فأشهدهم ظواهرها وباطنها، غائبا وحاضرها. وفي ذلك أقول:

وَأَخْرَجَهُمْ لِقُدْرَةِ قَادِرٍ عَنِ الْقَصْدِ وَالْوَجْدَانِ فَهُوَ عَتِيدٌ
وَأَحْضَرَهُ فِي كُلِّ غَيْبٍ وَشَاهِدٍ وَأَظْهَرَهُ فِي الْمُلْكِ فَهُوَ شَيْهَدٌ

حتى إذا خلقت فيهم تجريد الأسماء وتكاملت فيهم إفراد النسب بما دعاها إليه الكريم الماجد المنان بأفضل الأفضال ووطأهم بأحسن الهدى وأتمّ البيان وأعظم البرهان ورفعهم بذلك إلى أشرف المنازل ومنتهى المنى وأكل النوال، ولم تكن الأنفس ترجوه ولا تطمع في بلوغه لولا بدأها به من جوده وكرمه. ثم أخرجهم بكواشف العلم العظيم المقذور بهجة القدم فبان لهم حقائق التفضيل وعلوم مراتب التفضيل ومجاري أحكام التدبير ومقادير الأشياء في قضايا التقدير بإفراد كل اسم ومعنى ونصب كل معناه على فخواه فنبت لهم بوادي العلم بنشر ما يوجد به منه في القدر وفي تيه العمى المرسل فيما أخفاه وعزّزه عن الأبد في صحّة الأزل بعلمه. وذلك قوله جلّ وعزّ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِهِ عَلِمًا (١١٠:٢٠) وقوله جلّ وعزّ لَا تُدْرِكُهُ الْأَبْصَارُ وَهُوَ يُدْرِكُ الْأَبْصَارَ (١٠٣:٦) وقوله جلّ وعزّ لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ (١١:٤٢).

وكلّما استتر فهنالك انفصال كلّما اتّصل وانفتاح كلّما ارتقت وانفتاح كلّما انغلق. وأبرزهم حياة الإفاقة ولاحت لوائح الإنارة بحقيقة الصحو في كلّ وجد وعلم وإشارة، فوصلتهم بحياة الأبد في الرسوخ بالعلم ومكين المعرفة. فأوردوا الأشياء مواردها مستتبّتين، وأصدروا مصادرها متمكّنين، وربّوها في مراتبها من المعرفة مفصّلين، وحلّوها بنسبها في مراتب العلم عالّمين بما بدأ وعاد وبقي وباد على حكم في ما شاء تعالى وأراد، وعلى ما حضر ممّا اصطنعه بلطف الوداد وما خصّه وخلّصه في التقريب بالوداد، وما أقصاه ورسمه للوحشة والخذلان في المعاد. فتلك مقامات من مقادير الله جلّ وعزّ فلن يجد عنه تحويلاً وأمّا من سنّة الله فلن يجد لها بديلاً. فتحقّقت بالله وحده معرفتهم، واتّصل بالحقيقة من الله عليهم على حقّ ما اشترط جلّ وعزّ على العلماء به الراخين والعارفين له الرّبّانيين. وتحقّقت حقائقهم على حقيقة ما حقّقه عزّ وجلّ لهم فشهدوا له بما أشهدهم وحقّق لهم ما أشهدهم بما شهد به عزّ وجلّ لنفسه عندهم ومكّنهم فيه وأمكّنهم شهوده بتمكينه إيّاهم، وأدركوه وحفظوه وأدّوه كما شهدوه إلى من شاء من صالحى عبادته فهم أمناؤه وسفراءه ومخلصوه وأخلّأوه من خلقه. ولعلّ قائلاً يقول: أوليس قبل أن تدخلهم في الفناء أحياء أصحّاء حاضرين مثبتين فما الذي أوجب ما أدخلتهم به من الفناء وما الذي أوجب إخراجك إيّاهم من الفناء؟ قيل له إنّ الله عزّ وجلّ لما أن دعا الخلق إلى توحيدِهِ كان عليهم أن يوحّدوه بكلّ اسم وصفة وحكم وقضاء وتدبير وتقدير وفعل، وكان ذلك عليهم في عقودهم في ثبات المعرفة ومكين العلم على حقيقة حقّه فكان حقّ فرضاً عليهم أن يخرجوا إليه من كلّ ما طلبهم به من ذلك في تحقيق ثبات العلم والمعرفة بعد خالص العقد به بخالص الضمير. ثم أرّتهم موجبات حقائق المعرفة والعلم به آية إبراز ذلك في المعاملة والإشارة. فأول ذلك ما برز منهم في تحقيق

ما أوجبه حقائق التوحيد صدق ذلة الحالة مع تخلّع أنفسهم في ذلك من الحول والقوة والملك والاستطاعة⁴² كما أوجبه إذ الأحكام والتفويض إليه [في] كل ما لهم وله إذ كان ذلك منه وفيه والقوام عليهم.

التجأ إليه العباد في العزم⁴³ وهو قوهم جميعاً أهل السموات والأرض لا حول ولا قوة إلا بالله عند الانقطاع والضرورات. ووجب على أهل الحقائق مداومتها في الفسح والضرورات وإدامتها بذوق صحة العبودية والتباس ذلة العبودية بحقيقة التبرؤ. فهذه بوادئ مقاماتهم بما طالبتهم به الحقائق ثم جرت سائر المعاملة بهذا. وعلى هذا غير ما انفتق من جملة العبودية ثلاثة أحوال: صدق اللجأ مع الاستسلام في كل القضايا والأحكام، والتفويض إليه كل ما لهم وله إذ كان ذلك منه وفيه وإليه، وقد روي عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أنه قال "فإنما أنا بك ولك وإليك"، وقد تكون هذه الصفة للمطلوبين والمطلوبين، ثم إبراز ما طالب به المطلوبين دون طلباتهم وهو ما أوقفهم على رؤية فعله فيهم من تحقيقه في علمهم وثباتهم في معرفتهم من خلع ارادتهم وفسخ عزومهم. فرأوا ذلك في قلوبهم بقلوبهم فتعالوا في تحقيق التفريد وازدادوا إخلاصاً في التبرؤ في ازدياد صحة العبودية بإخلاص التوحيد.

ولا تقوم العلوم في الفهوم مقاماً دون المحسوس في الوجود، ومباشرة القلوب لذلك من مؤلم وضرر مُفقد لوجود العادات من تخرم إدامته بالغفلات. ثم ما قدحت به حقائق المعارف في القلوب من إشراق ما أدركته من بواده القدرة وائتلاف جنس الصنعة وبه كان الخلاج الوله واستطارة القلوب بحس الشفقة. فأوفت عليهم حقائقها التفريد له دون كل محبة ومحبوب ولذة ومقرّ وذكر ومذكور. ثم ما لاقاها عند التسامي من بوادي الجلال وتألؤ سبحات الجمال، ففني من كل شيء حظها وامتنع من كل شيء ذوقها إيثاراً له وإعظماً وإبجراً له وإكراماً. ففني منها كل نخر وقدر أبداً حتى انفردت الأسماء العظام والصفات الكرام. وليس ممّا باشرته القلوب فاجتهدت به هيبه وإجلالاً ونعمت به أنساً والتذاذاً مثل ما كُلمته تفهيماً وتلقيناً. فلها حلت هذا المحلّ خرجت من رقّ المكرّمات وامتنعت من ملك المشينات فرغاً ولهوياً عن الأرض والسماء وما بينهما من الملك المنشأ إلى منتهى أقسام الفناء ليبيدهم توحيدهم بمباشرة ذوق قلوبهم كما أوجدتهم إياه معرفةً وعلماً. ثم أخرجهم الى تفضيل ما فضل من حيث فعله فانفصل ووصل ما وصل من حيث أوجب امتداده فاتصل وتفضّل وأفضل، وتعالیه في الرتب وتقديم ما قدّم باختلاصه واصطناعه لنفسه ما أحبّ وتشريف تسبيقه لما سبق

42 في الأصل: وملك واستطاعة.

43 الكلمة محوّة في الأصل وقد زيد في الحاشية "كأنه العزم أو القوة أو المعونة".

وتأخير ما أُنزِلَ لإحكام نفاذ المدة فيما علم وإبعاده ما أبعد لتتام إعظام ما به أنعم فجعلهم أئمة مؤتمنين على النصيحة الحاكمين على الخليفة وذلك بحقيقة الصحو بعد الخروج إليه من كل ما تطلب به طالبون. كما خرجوا إليه براءً من تباين الأحوال والعلوم وفي ذلك أقول:

وَأَخْرَجُوا مَفْكُوكٌ مِنَ الْأَسْرِ وَالْفَنَاءِ	فَأَصْبَحَ خُلُوعًا وَاجْتِبَاءً وَدُودٌ
وَأَخْبَرَ بِالْحَقِّ الَّذِي هُوَ رَاتِبٌ	لَهُ كُلُّ وَرْدِ الْوَالِدِينَ وَرُودٌ
وَأَصْدَرَ عِلْمَ الصَّادِرِينَ عَنِ الْفَنَاءِ	إِلَى عِلْمٍ سِرٍّ يَبْتَدِيهِ وَجُودٌ
وَالْبَسَّهْ ثُوبًا مِنَ الْعِزِّ وَالْبَهَاءِ	فَأَعْلَنَ نُورًا وَأَصْطَفَاهُ حَمِيدٌ
وَحُصِّصَ عِلْمُ الْوَالِدِينَ ذَوِي الْفَنَاءِ	بِحَقِّيقِي وَجَدٍ لِلْفَنَاءِ يَزِيدُ
وَفَضِّلَ عِلْمَ الْعَارِفِينَ ذَوِي النَّبِيِّ	بِحَقِّيقِي سِرٍّ وَالتَّقِيَّةِ عُهُودٌ
وَأَصْبَحَ عَلَيَّ لَيْسَ يُدْرِكُ وَصْفَهُ	خَلَا أَنِّي فِي الْعَارِفِينَ وَحِيدٌ

والله غالب على أمره ولكن أكثر الناس لا يعلمون.

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Shi'i Literature in the Late Ninth Century

Ishāq al-Aḥmar al-Nakha'i (d. 286/899) and His Writings

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1 Introduction

This essay is about the writings and teachings of a Shi'i author active in Iraq in the second half of the third/ninth century. The author's name is Ishāq b. Muḥammad Abū Ya'qūb al-Nakha'i al-Baṣrī, known by the nickname al-Aḥmar. He is important because, on the one hand, the extant fragments of several of the writings attributed to him constitute some of the very few texts produced in the Shi'i milieu from that period that survive to this day. Most of the extant Shi'i writings from that era survive in fragments in later texts.¹ On the other hand, and more intriguingly, Ishāq's writings constitute part of the newly discovered corpus of texts written by a group of early Shi'is called by other Muslims "extremists" (Ar. *ghulāt*; henceforth, Ghulat), for their "extreme" adoration of members of the Prophet's family and for some other "incorrect" beliefs.² And whereas most of the texts of this corpus can be dated with great difficulty and rarely attributed with certainty, the works ascribed to Ishāq, are, as I will argue, some of the very few parts of this corpus whose authorship raises little doubt and whose dating is certain.

The pages that follow contain a close reading of the information about Ishāq found in the writings of some Muslim authorities, against a number of fragments alleged to belong to his lost works, which are cited in the books of several Nuṣayrī authors of the fourth/tenth-fifth/eleventh centuries. Through a detailed cross-examination of these two types of sources, I will argue that the fragments in question can be attributed with a great degree of certainty to Ishāq al-Aḥmar.

In the first section I will present what is known about Ishāq and his writings from the works of several Muslim historians and bibliographers, ones that were not part of the Ghulat or the Nuṣayrīs. (I refer to them as "external sources.") The

1 For a study of early Shi'i literature surviving in later fragments, see Ansari, *Imamat*; Modarressi's *Tradition* is another useful guide to early Shi'i literature.

2 See Asatryan, *Controversies*; Gerami, *Nakhustīn*; Modarressi, *Crisis* 19–51.

information supplied by these authors is rather brief, but it contains several key points that are helpful in testing the authorship of the fragments attributed to Ishāq. In the second section, I will discuss these fragments in light of the information supplied in the abovementioned sources. Because the passages of the works attributed to Ishāq are themselves often fragmentary, to fully understand them, I will read them in light of other Ghulat texts of similar content.

2 Ishāq's Image in "External" Sources

The longest account about Ishāq al-Nakha'ī is found in *Ta'rikh madīnat al-salām* by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463/1071). Several short notes are supplied in *Murūj al-dhahab* by al-Mas'ūdī (d. 345/956); in *Rijāl* by the Imami bibliographer Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-Najāshī (d. 450/1058–1059); in *Rijāl* by another Imami author, Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Kashshī (early fourth/tenth century); and in *Kitāb al-fiṣal* by the Zāhirī theologian Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456/1067). Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī (d. 852/1449), along with many other authors, copies al-Baghdādī's and al-Mas'ūdī's accounts, while adding some minor details.³

Ishāq al-Nakha'ī was active in Iraq⁴ and died in 286/899,⁵ and al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067–1068) lists him among the contemporaries of the tenth and eleventh Shi'ī Imams, 'Alī al-Hādī (d. 254/868) and Ḥasan al-'Askarī (d. 260/874).⁶ Let us begin by examining al-Baghdādī's account, as it supplies most of the information about Ishāq al-Nakha'ī. Al-Baghdādī's entry on Ishāq opens with a rehashing of some of the negative stereotypes attributed to authors accused of "extremism," namely, that Ishāq al-Nakha'ī was "evil of belief" (*khabīth al-madhab*) and "wicked of faith" (*radī' al-i'tiqād*). Perhaps to add a negative detail about him, and to explain the moniker "al-Aḥmar" (the red one), al-Baghdādī tells us that Ishāq had a disease that caused the discoloration of his skin (*baraṣ*, probably referring to leprosy⁷). In order to conceal it, he rubbed himself with something that caused his color to change, presumably giving

3 For a summary of the main sources on Ishāq al-Nakha'ī, see al-Amīn, *A'yān al-shī'a* iii, 277–279.

4 In some sources his *nisba* is al-Baṣrī and in others al-Kūfī, and there are reports that he was seen in Baghdad; al-Kashshī, *Ikhtiyār* 440; al-'Asqalānī, *Lisān* ii, 74.

5 The date is supplied by al-'Asqalānī, *Lisān* ii, 75, referring to al-Ṭūsī's *Rijāl al-shī'a*, but in the currently available *Rijāl* by this author no date is provided.

6 al-Ṭūsī, *Rijāl* 384 and 397.

7 cf. Dols, *Djudhām*.

him a red hue.⁸ This is followed by some details that are more important for our purposes, namely, that Iṣḥāq believed that ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib is God (*yaqūlu inna ‘Alīyyan huwa Allāh*), and that there is in al-Madā’in⁹ a group of “extremists” called “Iṣḥāqiyya,” who are his followers. Further on, al-Baghdādī quotes an unnamed Shī‘i informant, according to whom Iṣḥāq had writings (*muṣannaḡāt*) describing his teachings, and that the Iṣḥāqiyya believed in these teachings. The richest piece of information in al-Baghdādī’s account, finally, comes from the now lost book by the famous Imami theologian Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan al-Nawbakhtī (d. in the first quarter of the fourth/tenth century¹⁰). It bears the telling title *al-Radd ‘alā al-ghulāt* (A refutation of the extremists),¹¹ and it provides still more details about Iṣḥāq al-Nakhaī’s views:

[Iṣḥāq] claimed that ‘Alī is God, and that He manifests in each era, and that he is al-Ḥasan [the second Imam] during the era of al-Ḥasan, and that he likewise was al-Ḥusayn [the third Imam], and that He is but one; and that He is the one who dispatched Muḥammad. He said in a book of his: “[Even] if they are one thousand, they are [just] one.” He narrated many *hadith*, and wrote a book, noting that it is *The book of divine oneness* (*Kitāb al-tawḥīd*), where he included folly (*junūn*) and confusion (*takhlīṭ*) that cannot be imagined—and let alone described! He was among those who said, “The esoteric meaning (*bāṭin*) of the afternoon prayer is Muḥammad, because he is the one who announced the claim (*da‘wā*¹²),¹³ for—he said—if its esoteric meaning were the kneeling and the prostration, this would contradict His words: ‘prayer restrains outrageous and unacceptable behavior’” [Q 29:45¹⁴], meaning that restraint only comes from a living (*ḥayy*), able (*qādir*) person.

8 al-Baghdādī, *Ta’rīkh* vii, 410.

9 Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī notes that the Iṣḥāqiyya live in Aleppo and in parts of Syria “to this very day”; see *Itiqādāt* 61.

10 cf. van Ess, *Der Eine* i, 220–224.

11 al-Baghdādī, *Ta’rīkh* vii, 410–411; on al-Nawbakhtī’s *Radd*, see Iqbāl, *Khāndān* 135–136.

12 The Arabic *da‘wā*, meaning “claim” and “demand,” could probably be amended to *da‘wa*, referring to religious call or propaganda; in fact, in his translation of this passage into Persian, Iqbāl (*Khāndān* 136) uses the Persian equivalent of just that word: *da‘vat*.

13 Here, the logic of this statement rests on the fact that both the word for “afternoon” (*ẓuhr*) and the word for “proclaimed” (more lit., “made apparent”: *aẓhara*) are derived from the Arabic root ẓ-h-r. The original reads as follows: *bāṭin ṣalāt al-ẓuhr Muḥammad li-iẓhārihi al-da‘wā*.

14 Abdel Haleem’s translation.

The accounts by al-Mas'ūdī and Ibn Ḥazm¹⁵ are rather similar (and probably related) to one another, the latter being slightly more detailed. Both state that Ishāq belonged to a group that was called 'Alyā'iyya¹⁶—who believed that Muḥammad is 'Alī's apostle, who is God¹⁷—and that he wrote a book titled *al-Ṣirāt*. This book, they go on, was refuted by two other individuals, al-Fayyāḍ and al-Nahikī, who belonged to another Ghulat group called the Muḥammadiyya, who believed Muḥammad is God.

Two more authors, finally, have left brief notes about Ishāq. After providing a few unflattering statements about him, al-Kashshī notes that Ishāq was in possession of hadiths about *tafwīḍ* by Mufaḍḍal b. 'Umar al-Ju'fi. The latter was another famous "extremist" who lived a generation earlier, in the latter part of the second/eighth century; and *tafwīḍ* is a well-known Ghulat teaching according to which God "delegated" the creation of and/or care of the world to Muḥammad and/or the Imams. (I will discuss this topic later in connection to Ishāq's writings.)¹⁸ Al-Najāshī likewise opens his short biographical note on Ishāq with a harsh denunciation, calling him "a mine of confusion" (*ma'din al-takhlīt*). Like the abovementioned authors, al-Najāshī is harsh on Ishāq for his Ghulat ideas (as he is on any other author of Ghulat tendencies), and the term he uses to denote them, *takhlīt*, is one of the standard words used in biobibliographical literature to describe Ghulat individuals.¹⁹ Like some of the surveyed authors, he also notes that Ishāq wrote books, which, like him, are full of confusion, then he mentions the titles of two of them: *Akhbār sayyid* and *Majālis Hishām*.²⁰

Summing up the information gathered so far, we now know several important details about Ishāq. One is his adherence to the ideas of the Shi'ī Ghulat, namely, that 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib is God. He was said to have belonged to the 'Alyā'iyya Ghulat group, who are said to have held a particular version of this belief. We also learn that members of another Ghulat group, the Muḥammadiyya, criticized one of his writings, *Kitāb al-ṣirāt*, and that they held a similar but distinct view, namely, that God is Muḥammad, and not 'Alī. Finally, the most recurrent information across many of the surveyed sources is that Ishāq wrote books, and we learn the titles of some of them: *Kitāb al-tawḥīd*, *Akhbār*

15 Ibn Ḥazm, *Kitāb al-fiṣal* 66; al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj* iii, 265–266.

16 Halm, *Die islamische Gnosis* 278–279; the name is spelled slightly differently in different sources; for a brief discussion, see Halm, 'Ulyā'iyya.

17 al-Qummī, *Kitāb al-maqālāt* 59; al-Shahrastānī, *Milal* i, 179.

18 al-Kashshī, *Ikhtiyār* 440.

19 Asatryan, *Controversies* 43; Modarressi, *Crisis* 22–24.

20 al-Najāshī, *Rijāl* 72.

sayyid, and *Majālis Hishām*, none of which survives (not with these titles, at any rate), and *Kitāb al-ṣirāt*. The latter book has survived in a number of fragments in the works of several Nuṣayrī authors, along with fragments from three other books, the titles of which are not, to my knowledge, mentioned in any source outside Nuṣayrī circles.

One more piece of information that the above authors supply is that there was a group of people named after Iṣḥāq, the Iṣḥāqiyya, who lived in al-Madā'in. Given the tendency of heresiographers and biographers to invent sects of followers of famous individuals by adding the ending *-iyya* to their name,²¹ it is not certain how trustworthy that information is. This does not necessarily mean the Iṣḥāqiyya is invented, but there is insufficient information to verify the existence of such a group. But this is not all. As the inheritors of the Ghulat literary heritage, the Nuṣayrīs, became established in Syria, more references to the Iṣḥāqiyya, or to individuals who belonged to it, became available in Nuṣayrī writings. They almost always have to do with the personal relations between Iṣḥāq al-Aḥmar and the eponymous founder of the Nuṣayrīs, Muḥammad b. Nuṣayr (d. in the latter part of the third/ninth century).

Some Nuṣayrī sources portray Iṣḥāq's rivalry with Muḥammad b. Nuṣayr, presenting an unflattering image of him, and stating that he resented the former's role as the Imam's Gate (*bāb*). The historicity of such reports seems uncertain, however, and more likely reflects the relations of the authors of these reports (who lived more than a hundred years after the death of both men) with their contemporary Iṣḥāqīs in Syria. In fact, one Nuṣayrī author does appear to have personal enmity with an individual claiming to be one of Iṣḥāq's followers,²² which explains his negative references to the Iṣḥāqiyya in general. Meanwhile, none of the above accounts about Iṣḥāq al-Nakha'i mention Ibn Nuṣayr. Conversely, none of the non-Nuṣayrī authors writing about Muḥammad b. Nuṣayr refers to Iṣḥāq,²³ which further suggests that their supposed rivalry is more likely the reflection of the relations between the Nuṣayrīs and the Iṣḥāqīs rather than the two men. Of course, the nature or scale of the conflict between the Nuṣayrīs and Iṣḥāqīs in Syria is not readily

21 Bausani, *Religion* 132.

22 The Nuṣayrī author who exhibits the most ardent enmity toward Iṣḥāq, the Iṣḥāqiyya, and a certain follower of the group known as Abū Dhuhayba, is Maymūn b. Qāsim al-Ṭabarānī (d. 426/1034–1035, provided that the texts in question are indeed written by him); cf. al-Ṭabarānī, *Kitāb al-ma'ārif* 148–150, *Majmū'* 130, *Kitāb al-hāwī* 59, 63, 74, *Kitāb al-dalā'il* 153, *Kitāb al-radd*. For a recent summary of the information about the Iṣḥāqiyya and the Nuṣayriyya, see Winter, *History of the 'Alawis* 44–46.

23 al-Nawbakhtī, *Firaq* 78; al-Kashshī, *Ikhtiyār* 433; al-Qummī, *Kitāb al-maqālāt* 100–101; al-Ṭūsī, *Kitāb al-ghayba* 244–245; Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī, *Rijāl* 99.

apparent from the personal attacks recorded in Nuṣayrī sources, and is further complicated by the fact that we only know of Ishāq's writings from Nuṣayrī sources.

In order to verify the authorship of the passages quoted on Ishāq's authority in Nuṣayrī sources, in what follows I will cross-examine their content with what we have learned about his beliefs so far. Because the ideas found in the surviving passages are often fragmentary, I will rely on other Ghulat writings of the period to reconstruct a fuller picture of the teachings found in them. This will also enable me to present a broader picture of the religious environment where Ishāq was active.

3 The Writings of Ishāq al-Aḥmar al-Nakha'ī

The four texts that were allegedly written by Ishāq al-Nakha'ī, the fragments of which have survived in Nuṣayrī sources, are *Kitāb al-ṣirāṭ*, *Bāṭin al-taklīf*, *Kitāb al-ṣalāt*, and *Kitāb al-tanbīh*,²⁴ and almost all of them begin with an attribution to Ishāq al-Aḥmar. The largest number of passages belong to *Kitāb al-ṣirāṭ*, followed by *Bāṭin al-taklīf*. From *Kitāb al-tanbīh* only one passage survives, copied by three different authors. And just one passage is extant from *Kitāb al-ṣalāt*, nearly half a page long, but it is cited as if it coincides with a passage from *Bāṭin al-taklīf*.²⁵ Let me begin by discussing the sources where they occur, then I will talk about their content.

The text that preserves the majority of the fragments is the work by the well-known Nuṣayrī author Ḥasan b. Shu'ba al-Ḥarrānī (active in the second half of the fourth/tenth century). He was a member of the family of Nuṣayrī authors all bearing the name Ibn Shu'ba al-Ḥarrānī, and he was, in his own words, in possession of a large library of books that included Nuṣayrī, Ghulat, Imami, and other works.²⁶ In fact, his *Ḥaqā'iq asrār al-dīn* cites a large number of fragments from a host of earlier Ghulat texts, both surviving in their entirety and

24 The fragments are found in the following locations: *Kitāb al-ṣirāṭ* in Ḥasan al-Ḥarrānī, *Ḥaqā'iq* 23, 48, 53, 135, 138, 141, 165, 167–168, 170, in 'Alī b. Ḥamza al-Ḥarrānī, *Ḥujjat al-'arīf*, 258, and in al-Jillī, *Ḥāwī*, 197–198, 200; *Bāṭin al-taklīf*, in Ḥasan al-Ḥarrānī, *Ḥaqā'iq* 36–37, 49, 112–114, 172, 174–175; *Kitāb al-tanbīh* in Ḥasan al-Ḥarrānī, *Ḥaqā'iq* 45–46, in Muḥammad b. Nuṣayr, *Kitāb al-mithāl*, 211, and in al-Jillī, *Ḥāwī*, 203; and *Kitāb al-ṣalāt* in al-Jillī, *Ḥāwī* 203.

25 The Arabic reads: *qāl Ishāq b. Muḥammad al-Aḥmar fī Kitāb Bāṭin al-taklīf wa fī Kitāb al-ṣalāt ...*, "Ishāq b. Muḥammad al-Aḥmar said in *Kitāb Bāṭin al-ṣalāt* and in *Kitāb al-ṣalāt*." Ḥasan al-Ḥarrānī, *Ḥaqā'iq* 113.

26 See his *Ḥaqā'iq* 12.

lost, which confirms al-Ḥarrānī's testimony about the size of his library. And it is his *Ḥaqā'iq* that contains the majority of the surviving passages from the texts attributed to Ishāq, and the only one to cite all four of them.²⁷ The book by his relative 'Alī b. Ḥamza al-Ḥarrānī, *Ḥujjat al-'ārif*, cites one fragment from *Kitāb al-ṣirāṭ*. Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Jillī (d. after 399/1009), another well-known Nuṣayrī author, cites several passages from *Kitāb al-ṣirāṭ* and *Kitāb al-tanbīh*.

The three Nuṣayrī authors seem very knowledgeable about Ghulat literature, for the sheer number of fragments of various Ghulat books that they cite, many of them now lost. I have been able to identify quotations from 18 different Ghulat texts in al-Ḥarrānī's *Ḥaqā'iq*, fragments from 13 texts in al-Jillī's *Ḥawī*, and 6 in 'Alī b. Ḥamza al-Ḥarrānī's *Ḥujjat al-'ārif*.²⁸ All of this makes the attribution of the passages to Ishāq rather plausible, for on the one hand, all three authors were closely familiar with original Ghulat writings, and on the other, there are no signs that these fragments are later Nuṣayrī compositions. Still, because all three lived a century after Ishāq, legitimate concerns about their authorship continue to arise, especially given the great number of pseudo-epigrapha among Ghulat writings.²⁹

Let us compare what has been related about Ishāq and the passages alleged to be his own writings. One of the accusations against Ishāq, which was leveled by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī on the authority of two different individuals, was that he considered 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib to be God. Two passages from texts attributed to Ishāq, *Kitāb al-ṣirāṭ* and *Bāṭin al-taklīf*, express this idea with varying degrees of explicitness. The first one is embedded in a section of al-Ḥarrānī's *Ḥaqā'iq* entitled "About the knowledge of the names, the attributes, the intellect, the descriptions, the degrees, and the Quran,"³⁰ and is about the two loftiest names of God:

Ishāq in *Kitāb al-ṣirāṭ* said: The two loftiest (*al-a'layayni*) names which, if they join together, call (*yad'uwāni*³¹), bring together (*yajma'āni*), sep-

27 On the authorship of this text, see Bagheri, Pazhūhishī.

28 For those Ghulat texts that have only survived in quotations in later Nuṣayrī writings, including the mentioned three, see Asatryan, *Controversies*, Appendix 179–181.

29 The best-known examples are the several texts attributed to Mufaḍḍal al-Ju'fī, such as *Kitāb al-ṣirāṭ*, *Kitāb al-haft*, etc. For a discussion, see my *Controversies*, chap. 2, 43–64.

30 al-Ḥarrānī, *Ḥaqā'iq* 40: *fī ma'rifat al-asmā' wa-l-ṣifāt wa-l-aql wa-l-nu'ūt wa-l-marātib wa-l-Qur'ān*.

31 I have amended this word from the original يدعيان, which makes little sense, for the only way it could be pronounced is *yadda'iyāni*, a verb usually used for (false) claims; or *yud'ayāni*, meaning "they are called, or named." Whereas the notion that God's two names "call" (*yad'uwāni*), presumably toward Him, makes more sense.

arate (*yafruqāni*), and are separated (*yaftariqāni*). They both entirely (*tamāmuhumā*) are in the entirety (*tāmm*) of one of them. Some scholars (*ba'd al-'ulamā'*) said: These are "Muḥammad" and "Alī." And the virtuous (*ashāb al-faḍl*) have especially said: These are "Allāh" and "Alī."

Among the two groups of people who name the two names of God, the author of the lines is clearly in favor of the second, for whom these are "Allāh" and "Alī," as he calls them "the virtuous" as opposed to "some scholars." It is not openly stated who the names belong to, but it is most likely God's transcendental form, called in Ghulat texts *al-Ma'nā* (the Meaning)³² and identified as such in another passage from the same *Kitāb al-ṣirāṭ*: "True belief in God's oneness (*ḥaqīqat al-tawḥīd*) is to view the Meaning as solely one, and to strip Him of His names and attributes."³³ Who the first group ("some scholars") are is not made clear, but the term could refer to any of the individuals who claimed divinity (or semi-divinity) for several members of the Prophet's family, including Muḥammad himself, or who taught that God successively dwelt in them at various times. Some of these individuals were subsumed in heresiographic writings under terms such as *mukhammisa*, from the Arabic *khamisa* (five) because of their belief that five members of the Prophet's family, himself included, were God's successive manifestations on earth.³⁴

A more explicit reference to 'Alī's divinity is found in a fragment from *Bāṭin al-taklīf*, also embedded in Ḥasan al-Ḥarrānī's *Ḥaqā'iq*. Following a discussion of God's manifestation in human "form and likeness" (*ṣūra wa-mithāl*), he states, "The Commander of the Believers (*amīr al-mu'minīn*) appeared (*ḡahara*) in the form (*ṣūra*) in which the Bald and Big-bellied One (*aṣla' baṭīn*) appeared (*ḡahara*) at the beginning of this historical cycle (*qubba*³⁵)." Given the overall context, "the Commander of the Believers," 'Alī's epithet, refers to God, who is said to have appeared in a certain form. "The Bald and Big-bellied One" is another epithet for 'Alī (indeed, he has been described as bald and portly³⁶), who also (judging from the sentence) appeared (*ḡahara*)—and this form is the same as the one in which the other epithet for 'Alī appeared. Now, this suggests there are two different Gods, each bearing a different epithet used for 'Alī,

32 See, e.g., al-Ju'fī, *al-Risāla al-mufaḍḍaliyya* 12–13; al-Ju'fī, *Kitāb al-ṣirāṭ* 169, 204; Nuṣayr, *Kitāb al-mithāl* 207–208, 223.

33 'Alī b. Ḥanẓa al-Ḥarrānī, *Ḥujjat al-'arīf* 258; the same passage is cited, with slight differences, in al-Jillī, *Hāwī* 200.

34 On the so-called *mukhammisa*, see Asatryan, *Moḡammesa*.

35 cf. al-Ju'fī, *Kitāb al-ṣirāṭ* 203.

36 Vaglieri, 'Alī.

both of whom appeared in the same form, but it is possible that the sentence is constructed in an awkward way, and that the author's intention was to indicate that "God (the Commander of Believers) appeared in the human form that belonged to the Bald and Big-bellied One," using the latter epithet to stress the physicality of the form in which God manifests. This becomes apparent as we read on:

Then he brought forth the form and the likeness in Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, and the line (*al-saṭr*), and these are the likenesses and the names (*asmā'*). And when the Commander of the Believers wanted to test (*ikhtibār*) the people, he hid the form of Ḥasan from the view of the onlookers, then appeared in the likeness of his form. And when he appeared in the likeness of Ḥasan's form, He brought about in the eyes of the people the form in this place, which is the name and the likeness. [It is] unlike what the ignorant think, namely, that the Bald and Big-bellied One (*al-anza' al-baṭīn*³⁷) [is himself] lying on the bed where dead bodies are washed. [It is] an image that [merely] resembles the image of he who was called "Big-bellied" (*'aẓīm al-baṭīn*).

As we see in the end, the author refers to the body of the Big-bellied One as something apart from God, who simply appears in his likeness, but not in the actual body. Lacking context, the passage seems somewhat unclear, but this is what it seems to be referring to: God first appears in the likeness of the person who is known as the Big-bellied One, then in Ḥasan, then in Ḥusayn, then in the *saṭr*, which likely is a reference to the "line" of the remaining Imams, and the ignorant think that the likenesses in which God appears to the world (the likenesses of the Imams) are the actual physical Imams themselves, which they are not. For one thing, the author stresses the distinction between God, the *amīr al-mu'minīn*, and the physical person known as *al-anza' al-baṭīn*. For another, it is stressed that He merely appears in the "likeness" of Ḥasan's form, or that Ḥasan, Ḥusayn, and the rest are merely "likenesses and names."

It is now sufficiently clear why Ishāq would be known as someone who considered 'Alī as God, for indeed 'Alī is identified with God in the above two passages. Of course, the presentation is more nuanced than just identifying the human person of 'Alī and the Creator, as it makes a distinction between the Commander of the Believers and the human person of 'Alī. This idea, of course,

37 Another epithet for 'Alī, which has essentially the same meaning as the previous one, cf. Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, s.v. *n-z-'* (online).

was not new, and occurs in many Ghulat texts produced during the time of Iṣḥāq or earlier, in the Ghulat milieu of Iraq. In a text also entitled *Kitāb al-ṣirāṭ*, but clearly distinct from Iṣḥāq's work by the same title, Ja'far al-Ṣādiq openly refers to 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib as "Lord" (*mawlā*), applying to him the honorific *jalla jalāluhu* (His glory be extolled), which is normally reserved for God;³⁸ or he tells how some people, who falsely claimed 'Alī's name, "made companions with him" (*ashrakū bihi*) and "led people astray from him" (*aḍallū 'anhu l-ālam*).³⁹ The latter two verbs are normally used to refer to God alone. In another text, entitled *Kitāb al-usūs*, the father of Jesus is said to be "*al-ʿayn* the most high" (*al-ʿayn al-a'lā*), or *al-ʿayn* is said to be the Lord (*rabb*), *al-ʿayn* being a common appellation for 'Alī in Ghulat literature derived from the first letter of his name.⁴⁰

Now for the remaining Imams. As I noted, it appears that the word *saṭr* in the above fragment refers to the line of the following Imams, and this is confirmed not just by the overall logic of the fragment, whereby God first appears in 'Alī, then Ḥasan, Ḥusayn, then in the Imams that follow; it also corresponds quite closely to al-Baghdādī's description of his beliefs, who (citing al-Nawbakhtī) notes that Iṣḥāq

claimed that 'Alī is God, and that He manifests in each era, and that he is al-Ḥasan during the era of al-Ḥasan, and that he likewise was al-Ḥusayn, and that He is but one; and that He is the one who dispatched Muḥammad. He said in a book of his: "[Even] if they are one thousand, they are [just] one."⁴¹

Just like in the passage from *Kitāb al-ṣirāṭ*, God is 'Alī, who appears in Ḥasan during his time, and in Ḥusayn during his, and, furthermore, He manifests

38 al-Ju'fi, *Kitāb al-ṣirāṭ* 97.

39 Ibid. 162.

40 Bar-Asher and Kofsky, *Nuṣayrī-ʿAlawī* 55. In a text of possible Ghulat provenance and purporting to be the narration of Iṣḥāq al-Aḥmar, the author directly states, "God is Amīr al-Naḥl and Muḥammad is his apostle" (*Allāh amīr al-naḥl wa rasūluhu Muḥammad*), where Amīr al-Naḥl (lit., the prince of the bees) also refers to 'Alī; see Abū Mūsā and Shaykh Mūsā (eds.), *ʿĀdāb ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib* 115; *ibid.* 270: "The Commander of Believers is his God" (*amīr al-mu'minīn ilāhuhu*); cf. also, *ibid.* 272, 275.

41 al-Baghdādī, *Ta'riḫ* vii, 410–411. 'Abd al-Jabbār supplies a much briefer version of the same notion, as held by Iṣḥāq: "It has been reported that Iṣḥāq b. Muḥammad al-Aḥmar said, He, the most high, veils Himself by all of them (*yaḥtajib bi l-kull*), and if they were one thousand, they become one (*law kānū alfan la ṣārū wāḥidan*)." 'Abd al-Jabbār, *al-Mughnī* x, 166.

in each era (*yazharu fi kull waqt*), suggesting that the process of manifestation continues into the time of the other Imams. In fact, the successive incarnation of God in human forms, including, variously, the biblical patriarchs, the prophet Muḥammad, and all of the Imams, is a recurring theme in Ghulat literature and in heresiographic descriptions of Ghulat teachings. The party of Bayān b. Samʿān al-Tamīmī (d. 737), an “extremist” of the late Umayyad period, believed that the divine spirit transmigrated (*tanāsakhat*) through the prophets, the imams, and Abū Hāshim into him, making him divine,⁴² and a similar belief is recorded for Bayān’s near-contemporary ʿAbdal-lāh b. Muʿāwiya.⁴³ The abovementioned *Kitāb al-ṣirāṭ* by pseudo-al-Juʿfi has an elaborate description of how the chain of God’s manifestations begins with Adam, continues through the lines of the prophets, and ends with the Imams.⁴⁴

We can similarly understand al-Masʿūdī’s and Ibn Ḥazm’s statements that Ishāq al-Nakhaʿī was a member of the group known as ʿAlyāʿiyya. Although the historicity of various groups described in heresiographic and related literature is often questionable because too schematic and neat,⁴⁵ the beliefs of the ʿAlyāʿiyya as described in the several known sources do resemble what we have seen so far. For example, the Imami heresiographer Saʿd b. ʿAbdal-lāh al-Qummī, Ishāq’s contemporary, writes that the “ʿAlyāʿiyya say that ʿAlī is the Creator Lord (*al-rabb al-khāliq*), who appeared in Hāshimī ʿAlī-ness (*bi-l-ʿalawīyya*), and brought forth his associate (*waliyyahu*), his servant (*ʿabd*), and his apostle (*rasūlahu*) in Muḥammad-ness (*bi-l-Muḥammadiyya*).”⁴⁶

The notion of ʿAlī’s divinity and Muḥammad’s role as His servant and envoy resembles another idea, widely attested in Ghulat texts and expressed in the only surviving fragment from *Kitāb al-tanbīh*. It is the notion of *tafwīḍ*, God’s “delegation” of the creation of and care for the world to Muḥammad:

Al-Makān is the creator of things; he is His servant (*ʿabduhu*), listening and obedient to God (*lillāh*), who created him unlike He created the human beings, but he is a creature of light—he only appears in human form as a proof for the servants.⁴⁷

42 al-Baghdādī, *Farq* 227; al-Ashʿarī, *Maqālāt* 14.

43 al-Baghdādī, *Farq* 242, 255; al-Nāshīʿ, *Masāʿil* 37.

44 al-Juʿfi, *Kitāb al-ṣirāṭ* 62–65, 204–205.

45 I discuss some of the problems associated with classifications of the Ghulat in *Controversies* 98–110; cf. also Bausani, *Religion* 132.

46 al-Qummī, *Kitāb al-maqālāt* 59.

47 The fragment is copied in three sources, *Kitāb al-mithāl* 211; Ḥasan al-Ḥarrānī, *Ḥaqāʿiq* 45; and al-Jillī, *Ḥāwī* 203. In fact, the latter two sources copy the fragment as part of a larger citation going back to *Kitāb al-mithāl*.

The identity of the mysterious al-Makān (lit., the space), who is a creature of light made by God and is himself a creator of things, becomes clear from other Ghulat texts. *Kitāb al-aẓilla*, a text also surviving in several fragments, similarly assigns to him the role of God's delegate, entrusted with the affairs of the world: "In the beginning there was God and no space (*makān*). Then He created space and delegated (*fawwaḍa*) the affairs to him. I asked, 'What is space?' He [Ja'far al-Ṣādiq] replied, 'Muḥammad, peace upon him.'"⁴⁸ The idea of *tafwīd* is expressed in many other Ghulat writings, including the abovementioned *Ādāb 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib*,⁴⁹ and one of the famous Ghulat personalities of the second/eighth century, Mufaḍḍal b. 'Umar al-Ju'fi, is said to have held Mufawwiḍa ideas. In fact, the discussion of *tafwīd* in the fragment attributed to Iṣḥāq explains al-Kashshī's abovementioned statement that Iṣḥāq was in possession of hadith on *tafwīd* by al-Ju'fi.

So far, virtually all of the points from the fragments attributed to Iṣḥāq that I have discussed have dovetailed quite closely with what other sources have told us about Iṣḥāq. There is one, however, where the correspondence is much more specific. Citing, once again, al-Nawbakhtī's lost text about Iṣḥāq, al-Baghdādī writes the following: "[According to Iṣḥāq,] the esoteric meaning (*bāṭin*) of the afternoon prayer is Muḥammad, because he is the one who announced the claim, for—he said—if its esoteric meaning were the kneeling and the prostration, this would contradict His words, 'Prayer restrains outrageous and unacceptable behavior' [Q 29:45]."⁵⁰ Neither al-Baghdādī nor his source explain what this means, and taken in isolation, the passage seems rather cryptic. However, numerous passages from *Bāṭin al-taklīf*, *Kitāb al-ṣalāt*, and *Kitāb al-ṣirāṭ*, along with similar references in other Ghulat texts and heresiographies, clarify what this means.

After the divinization of the Imams, one of the main vices the Ghulat were accused of was their alleged disregard for the obligatory rituals and for taboos, termed *ibāḥa*. Alongside the failure to perform the prescribed Islamic rituals, such as hajj, prayer, and almsgiving, they were accused of such offences as "adultery, theft, the drinking of wine, [the eating of] carrion, blood, pork, sex

48 Ḥasan al-Ḥarrānī, *Ḥaḡā'iḡ* 45; al-Jillī, *Hāwī* 203; for a study of *Kitāb al-aẓilla*, see Asatryan, Shiite underground literature.

49 Abū Mūsā and Shaykh Mūsā (eds.), *Ādāb 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib* 265. As I have shown in my *Controversies* 98–111, and as becomes apparent from the above materials, Hossein Modarressi's neat division of the ideas of Shī'ī extremists into Ghulat (*Crisis* 21–45), those who divinized the Imams, and the *mufawwiḍa* (i.e. those who believed in divine delegation) is untenable, for both ideas are frequently found in one and the same text.

50 al-Baghdādī, *Ta'rikh* vii, 411.

with one's mother"⁵¹—with some variations, the list occurs in the writings of several heresiographers.⁵² The facticity of these vices is impossible to verify, and a likely conclusion is that much of it is hostile propaganda. Still, not all accusations of an uncommon attitude toward taboos and rituals were invented. A more nuanced version of antinomianism is actually confirmed by the writings of the Ghulat themselves, including those attributed to Ishāq. It implies that obligations and prohibitions are in reality the names of various individuals, and that true performance of rituals (e.g., prayer) denotes not bodily movements but instead knowing the individual who stands for prayer. For example, writing about famous Shi'i "extremist" of the first half of the second/eighth century, Abū l-Khaṭṭāb al-Asadī, al-Nawbakhtī notes that his followers, the Khaṭṭābiyya, "named all duties after certain men and did the same with vile acts";⁵³ al-Kashshī records a tradition where Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq addresses Abū l-Khaṭṭāb as follows: "It has come to my attention that you claim that fornication is a man, that wine is a man, that fasting is a man, and that abominations (*fawāḥish*) are a man."⁵⁴ In a text known as *Risāla mayyāḥ al-Madā'inī*, the Imam rejects the view that, according to some people, the knowledge of an Imam makes fasting and prayer unnecessary.⁵⁵

Several important Ghulat texts clearly show that these accounts are not mere propaganda but instead quite accurate descriptions of Ghulat beliefs.⁵⁶ Among these, the fragments attributed to Ishāq provide some of the richest examples. Let me begin with the one that most closely echoes al-Baghdādī's description of Ishāq's beliefs. A passage said to be from Ishāq's *Bāṭin al-taklīf* and *Kitāb al-ṣalāt*⁵⁷ states that "the persons (*ashkhāṣ*) of the five prayers are

51 al-Nawbakhtī, *Firaq* 39.

52 al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt* 6, 10; al-Qummī, *Kitāb al-maqālāt* 41, 53, 57–58; al-Baghdādī, *Farq* 244, and several other heresiographies.

53 al-Nawbakhtī, *Firaq* 38; translation is by Abbas Kadhīm, in al-Nawbakhtī, *Shī'a sects* 93.

54 al-Kashshī, *Ikhtiyār* 246; translation is by Ron Buckley in *The Imām* 126.

55 The text is quoted by al-Ṣaffār in *Baṣā'ir* 546–555, reproduced in Ansari, *Imamat* 262–268; for a discussion of the text, see *ibid.* 245–247. For numerous other references to this idea, found in theological, heresiographic, and biographical sources, see al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt* 9; al-Kashshī, *Ikhtiyār* 430–431; 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī* x, 173.

56 e.g., al-Ju'fī, *Kitāb al-haft* 39, 41; Muḥammad b. Sinān, *Kitāb al-ḥujub* 34–35, 44; Muḥammad b. Sinān, *Kitāb al-anwār* 74. For a discussion of these passages, see Asatryan, *Controversies* 159–161.

57 The original states: "Ishāq b. Muḥammad al-Aḥmar said, in *Kitāb bāṭin al-taklīf* and in *Kitāb al-ṣalāt*" (*qāla Ishāq b. Muḥammad al-Aḥmar fī Kitāb bāṭin al-taklīf wa fī Kitāb al-ṣalāt*). Ḥasan al-Ḥarrānī, *Ḥaqā'iq* 113.

Muḥammad, Fāṭir,⁵⁸ Ḥasan, Ḥusayn, and Muḥsin.⁵⁹ Among these, the obligatory afternoon prayer (*farḍ al-zuhr*) is Muḥammad—just like in al-Baghdādī's passage.⁶⁰

Several more fragments from *Bāṭin al-taklīf* elaborate on the theme that some obligations, as well as some religiously charged objects are the names of persons, which is their true, "esoteric" (*bāṭin*) meaning—hence the title of the book, which denotes the "esoteric" (*bāṭin*) meaning of "obligations" (*taklīf*). Thus almsgiving (*zakāt*) has three esoteric meanings: the first *bāṭin* is the knowledge of the Imams, the second *bāṭin* the knowledge of the "Gates" (*abwab*), and third is the "right of one's brethren in beneficence (*muwāsāt*)."⁶¹ Further in the same text, Ishāq states that the "pillars of the *ahl al-bayt* are Muḥammad, Fāṭir, Ḥasan, Ḥusayn, and the hidden one is Muḥsin; the floor of the house is Fāṭima bt. Asad, the ceiling Abū Ṭalib ... the Grand Mosque (*al-masjid al-ḥarām*) 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib," and so forth.⁶²

Thus, one of the accusations of *ibāḥa* leveled against the Ghulat—that they contended that religious duties were redundant—is confirmed by their own writings. Furthermore, some passages in Ishāq's *Kitāb al-ṣirāṭ* show why here-siographers would accuse the Ghulat not just of skipping prayer but of committing more serious transgressions, such as sexual and other licenses. Two of the passages of *Kitāb al-ṣirāṭ* explain the allegorical meaning of *liwāt*, otherwise denoting homosexual acts between men,⁶³ and *saḥq*, referring to sexual intercourse between women.⁶⁴ In both cases, the action has two meanings, a laudable one (*maḥmūd*) and a blameworthy one (*madhmūm*); but interestingly, in all the surviving passages, the meaning of the terms is allegorical, not physical. It has to do with the symbolism of sexual intercourse as referring to the transfer of knowledge from a teacher, viewed by the Ghulat (as well as some later Nuṣayrī authors) as an allegorical intercourse between a teacher, who assumes the role of the male, and a disciple, who is viewed as female.⁶⁵

58 This is a code-name for Fāṭima frequently used in Ghulat texts, e.g., Abū Mūsā and Shaykh Mūsā (eds.), *Kitāb al-ḥujub* 34–35.

59 Muḥsin is believed to be 'Alī's unborn son and frequently appears in Ghulat texts; cf. Halm, *Die islamische Gnosis* no. 689.

60 al-Ḥarrānī, *Ḥaqā'iq* 114.

61 Ibid. 172.

62 Ibid. 174–175.

63 Ibid. 167–168.

64 Ibid. 135, and al-Jilli, *Ḥāwī* 197–198, which instead of *saḥq* has *saḥt*, but the latter variant does not make much sense.

65 cf. Muḥammad b. Sinān, *Kitāb al-ḥujub* 28, who states that the esoteric (*bāṭin*) meaning of intercourse (*nikāḥ*) is when someone gives the knowledge of God's oneness to him who

Thus, according to *Kitāb al-ṣirāt*, the praiseworthy aspect of *līwāt* in its esoteric meaning (*fi l-bāṭin*) is “to seek knowledge of *tawhīd* from someone who is more knowledgeable than you ... when a believer is above another in knowledge, the one above (*al-a'lā*) is male (*dhakar*) and the one below him (*dūnahu*) is female (*unthā*). The one above is called ‘sky’ (*samā*) and one below him ‘earth’ (*arḍ*).” The text further specifies that the *bāṭin* meaning of intercourse (*nikāḥ*) is “study” and “the exchange of knowledge.”⁶⁶

The passage does not specify what the other meaning of *līwāt* is,⁶⁷ but in the explanation of *saḥq* two aspects are present, praiseworthy (*maḥmūd*) and blameworthy (*madhmūm*). The praiseworthy one is when believers lacking in knowledge, who have no access to the great scholars (*al-ʿulamāʾ al-kibār*), study together and receive knowledge from one another. As in the case of *līwāt*, the more knowledgeable one is equated with male and the less knowledgeable one with female. Hence, the great scholars “are called male” (*yaqaʿu ʿalayhim ism al-tadhkīr*), and those below them “are called female” (*yaqaʿu ʿalayhim ism al-taʿnīth*).⁶⁸ The logic now becomes clear: because all the sides in the process of learning lack knowledge (lacking access to the great scholars), they all are “female”; hence their “intercourse” is one between “women,” and hence the use of the term *saḥq*.

The negative aspect of *saḥq* also has to do with the transfer of knowledge. It is the knowledge received from the enemies who have forgotten God, who impede people from following the path of God.⁶⁹

Whether the sexual symbolism described above was purely allegorical or whether it also entailed actual intercourse, is open to interpretation and cannot be verified before more sources come to light. Texts such as *Kitāb al-ṣirāt* do, however, explain why the Ghulat were so frequently accused of sexual libertinism by the likes of al-Nawbakhtī and al-Qummī.

does not have it. A Nuṣayrī author who uses similar symbolism is al-Ṭabarānī; cf. his *al-Ḥāwī*.

66 al-Ḥarrānī, *Ḥaqāʾiq* 167–168.

67 It ends in the following short phrase: “and the blameworthy one is the one that is weak and not sound/firm” (*wa-l-madhmūm al-ḍaʿīf alladhī laysa bimustaḥkam*). It is unclear, however, whether *madhmūm* here refers to one of the abovementioned two aspects of *līwāt*, as the explanation does not seem to make much sense in this context.

68 al-Ḥarrānī, *Ḥaqāʾiq* 135, and al-Jillī, *Ḥāwī* 197–198.

69 The version in al-Jillī, *Ḥāwī* 197–198 is more complete and makes more sense than the one in al-Ḥarrānī, *Ḥaqāʾiq* 135 (except that instead of *saḥq* it has *saht*, which makes no sense here).

4 Conclusion

To conclude, I would like to argue that the fragments of four texts that are cited in Nuṣayrī sources on the authority of Ishāq al-Nakha'ī were very likely produced by him. Their content very closely dovetails with the information about him supplied in the sources, some of which were written not long after Ishāq's death. Thus, al-Nawbakhtī's description (which is cited by al-Baghdādī), was written early in the fourth/tenth century, and al-Mas'ūdī's text, where he mentions the title of *Kitāb al-ṣirāṭ*, was written in the first part of the same century. Other than establishing the authorship of several textual fragments, this allows us to bring more clarity to the history of the literature and teachings of the Ghulat.

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The Treatise on the Ascension (*al-Risāla al-mi'rājīyya*)

Cosmology and Time in the Writings of Abū l-Ḥasan al-Shushtarī
(d. 668/1269)

Yousef Casewit

I am pleased to present this study, edition, and translation of *al-Risāla al-mi'rājīyya* by the celebrated Andalusī Sufi Abū l-Ḥasan al-Shushtarī (b. ca. 610/1203, d. 668/1269) to Gerhard Bowering as a small token of my gratitude to him. Fittingly, the *Mi'rājīyya* is a Sufi commentary on the Quranic verse, *He governs the command from heaven to earth; then it ascends unto Him in a day whose measure is a thousand years of your counting* (Q 32:5). It sheds light on al-Shushtarī's views on cosmology, eschatology, and cyclical time, subjects that Bowering has explored in several superb scholarly articles to which I am thoroughly indebted.¹

1 The Life and Writings of al-Shushtarī

Abū l-Ḥasan b. 'Abdallāh al-Numayrī al-Shushtarī was a product of the seminal seventh/thirteenth-century Andalusī-Maghribī mystico-philosophical tradition that counts figures such as Muḥyī l-Dīn b. al-'Arabī (d. 638/1240), 'Afīf al-Dīn al-Tilimsānī (d. 690/1291), 'Alī al-Ḥarrālī (d. 638/1240), and 'Abd al-Ḥaqq b. Sab'īn (d. 669/1270) among its many prominent representatives. Beyond the hundreds of followers who accompanied al-Shushtarī during his journeys across North Africa and the Middle East—followers who were eventually assimilated into the Shādhiliyya order—our author won widespread recognition as a Sufi poet and composer of popular songs that continue to be chanted in Sufi ritual and popular devotional gatherings to this day. One of his most famous classics, *Shuwayyikh min arḍ Maknās* (A little shaykh from the land of Meknes), has been recorded by dozens of renowned voices of modern Mashriqī and

¹ I must also extend my gratitude to William Chittick, Klaus Hachmeier, and Kaoutar El Mernissi for their feedback on this paper.

Maghribī Arabic music. The thousands of manuscript copies of his *dīwān* that remain scattered in libraries throughout the world bear witness to his prominence and popularity as a poet. Beyond Sufi poetry, al-Shushtarī was venerated as a friend of God (*walī Allāh*), Sufi theoretician, miracle-worker, and master of the religious and intellectual sciences of his day. His influence extends into the writings of the Catalan mystic Ramon Llull (d. 1315).² He is hailed by medieval biographers as the literary voice of renunciant Sufis who practice “disengagement” from all but God (*adīb al-mutajarridīn*),³ and one contemporary scholar has aptly called him the “Rumi of Western Islam.”⁴

Al-Shushtarī's poetry gained widespread recognition for his ability to transpose profane themes and symbols employed in the colloquial rhythmic poems of the preeminent Andalusī *zajal* composer Abū Bakr b. Quzmān (d. 554/1159) onto a spiritual plane. In other words, he is credited with being the first to compose religious *zajals*. His poetry employs the symbolism of wine and daring images of prostitutes to call upon seekers from all walks of life—from thieves to dancing girls—to turn to the love of God. In contrast to his *zajals* and strophic *muwashshaḥa*,⁵ which are interspersed with Andalusī vernacular dialect, al-Shushtarī's love poetry (*ghazal*) and formal monorhyme *qaṣīdas* are more expository and doctrinal in nature and have received formal commentaries by later Sufis.⁶

Al-Shushtarī also authored a number of short prose treatises covering a wide range of topics. These include cosmology (*R. al-Mi'rājiyya*), the classification of the sciences (*R. al-Ilmiyya*), theological debates over the Essence and its

2 Llull knew Arabic and reiterates al-Shushtarī's famous refrain, “What care have I for others? / What care have they for me?” in *Blanquerna*. See María Alvarez, *Abū al-Ḥasan al-Shushtarī* 5.

3 al-Ghubrīnī, *Unwān al-dirāya* 239.

4 María Alvarez, *Abū al-Ḥasan al-Shushtarī* 6.

5 The *muwashshaḥa* is a poetic form that is meant to be accompanied by music. It consists of an introduction of 1 or 2 verses, the *madhhab* (also referred to as *maṭlaʿ* or *ghuṣn*) and rhyming in AB. The *madhhab* is followed by the *juzʿ* (also referred to as *bayt*, *dūr*) consisting of 3–5 monorhyming verses in C or D. The *madhhab* is repeated as a refrain between the *juzʿ*. In contrast to classical Arabic poetry, in which the accent is generally on the first verses, the *muwashshaḥa*'s stress is on the last verse. This produces a powerful effect that overtakes the listener. His poems are still sung in Shādhili orders in Morocco, Tunisia, Alexandria, Syrian, Yemen, and Java. Massignon, *Investigaciones*, 43. See also *Encyclopedia of Arabic literature* entry *Muwashshaḥ*. Other relevant entries are *Zajal*, medieval; al-Shushtarī; Hebrew literature, relations with Arabic.

6 Zarrūq's commentary on his *muqaṭṭaʿāt* was edited by Lafqīrī (2012); Ibn ʿAjība's commentary on the *Nūniyya* was edited by al-Kayyālī (2006), and by ʿAdlūnī (2013). Al-Shushtarī's *qaṣīda Taʿaddab bi-bāb al-dayr* was commented on by Nābulusī in a work entitled *Radd al-Muftarī*, and reedited by ʿAbduh (2016).

attributes (*R. al-Qaṣāriyya*), and a defense of the practice of wearing the Sufi patched frock (*R. al-Baghdādīyya*). Some scholars have praised his prose treatises for their clarity of expression and literary value, while others note that they are almost as difficult to follow as the writings of his master Ibn Sabʿīn.⁷ Indeed, while *al-Risāla al-Baghdādīyya*, for instance, is a relatively straightforward read, *al-Risāla al-miʿrājīyya* may present considerable difficulties even to an experienced reader. For like his master Ibn Sabʿīn, al-Shushtarī employs complicated syntactical structures and coins his own expressions to articulate his thoughts. This renders the task of translating his prose text formidable.

Al-Shushtarī's life has been the subject of several studies in Arabic and European languages,⁸ and he receives a notice in a number of biographical dictionaries (*ṭabaqāt*). Internal fragments of biographical evidence can also be cautiously gleaned from his *dīwān* to enrich our understanding of his life. His earliest biographer was a contemporary and possible acquaintance, Abū l-Abbās al-Ghubrīnī (d. 714/1314) who, in his catalogue on the lives of scholars and holy men who lived or passed through his hometown Bijāya in northern Algeria during the seventh/thirteenth century (*ʿUnwān al-dirāya*), offers detailed anecdotes and miracles from al-Shushtarī's life.⁹ Another contemporary biographer, ʿUthmān b. Luyūn (d. 750/1349), appears to have been al-Shushtarī's own disciple. He wrote an important abridgement of his master's *al-Risāla al-ʿilmīyya fī ṭarīqat al-fuqarāʾ al-mutajarriḍīn al-Ṣūfīyya* which incorporates elements from al-Ghubrīnī's biographical report and adds details about his educational formation and family background.¹⁰ The eminent Granadan polymath Lisān al-Dīn b. al-Khaṭīb (d. 776/1374) also includes an entry on al-Shushtarī in his monumental *al-Iḥāṭa fī akhbār Gharnāṭa* some twenty years after Ibn Luyūn.¹¹ Drawing upon his two predecessors, Ibn al-Khaṭīb adds information about al-Shushtarī's teachers, miracles, and writings, as well as samples of his poetry and prose. Finally, Aḥmad al-Maqarrī's (d. 1041/1632) voluminous *Nafḥ al-ṭīb min ghuṣn al-Andalus al-raṭīb* gives a glowing report of al-Shushtarī and lists some of his

7 'Adlūnī, *Abū l-Ḥasan al-Shushtarī* 121–122.

8 See Massignon, *Investigaciones*; Nashshār, Abul Ḥasan al-Šuštārī; Nashshār, introduction to al-Shushtarī, *Dīwān* 3–20; Corriente, *Poesía estrófica: Céjeles y/o muwaššahāt*; Pérez, *Dépouillement*; 'Adlūnī, *Abū l-Ḥasan al-Shushtarī* 135–146; 'Adlūnī, introduction to al-Shushtarī, *Risālat al-Shushtarīyya* 5–27; al-Shushtarī, *Maqālīd al-wujūdiyya* 9–48; Ibn 'Arafa, *Abū l-Ḥasan al-Shushtarī*; Abou-Bakr, *Symbolic function*; Fierro, *al-Shushtarī*; María Alvarez, *Abū l-Ḥasan al-Shushtarī* 3–34.

9 al-Ghubrīnī, *ʿUnwān al-dirāya* 239–242.

10 *al-Risāla al-ʿilmīyya*, 41–44.

11 Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Iḥāṭa* iv, 35, 205–216.

acquaintances with spiritual masters and purported Sufi lineages.¹² In addition to these primary sources, some insights into the life of al-Shushtarī can be cautiously gleaned from remarks by Aḥmad Zarrūq and Aḥmad b. 'Ajība in their commentaries on his *Nūniyya*.

Al-Shushtarī was born circa 610/1203¹³ in Shushtar, a village near Guadix (Wādī Āsh) in the hillsides of the Sierra Nevada, northeast of the city of Granada.¹⁴ Ibn Luyūn and Ibn al-Khaṭīb note in passing that he was born into an eminent Andalūsī household.¹⁵ Massignon points out that al-Shushtarī's family was possibly of Arab ancestry since his tribal lineage (*nisba*), al-Numayrī, of Banū Numayr, refers to a sub-clan of the Arab tribe of Hawāzin that spread across the western lands of the Islamic world.¹⁶ This Arab designation should be accepted with caution, however, since Arab *nisbas* in al-Andalus frequently served as covers for mixed *muwallad* or Berber origins. Moreover, ethnic background in al-Andalus was not always known with precision, and interracial marriages with local women and the system of *walā'* produced a large group of people who claimed Arab parentage.¹⁷

Al-Shushtarī's life can be divided, albeit speculatively, into several distinct phases.¹⁸ The first is "the Andalūsī phase," in which al-Shushtarī received a refined educational formation as a young child in Loja,¹⁹ acquiring a solid grounding in the religious sciences—Quranic sciences, exegesis (*tafsīr*), Prophetic tradition (*ḥadīth*), and jurisprudence (*fiqh*)—and the study of language and grammar (*naḥw*).²⁰ He enjoyed a comfortable life as an aristocrat and functionary.²¹ He also adopted the literary tastes and lax customs of Andalūsī high society, and cultivated an urbane appreciation for Ibn Quzmān's popular *zajal* and *muwashshah* poetry, whose themes and symbols of profane love he later appropriated into his Sufi poems. This Andalūsī phase came to an end when

12 Maqqarī, *Nafh al-ṭīb* ii, 185–187, 205–207; vii, 17.

13 al-Shushtarī's date of birth has not been definitively determined. See 'Adlūnī, *Abū l-Ḥasan al-Shushtarī* 61.

14 Maqqarī, *Nafh al-ṭīb* ii, 185; Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Iḥāṭa* 205.

15 Ibn Luyūn, *Risāla al-Shushtariyya* 41. Ibn Isrā'īl states that he was "born a prince, son of princes, and converted as a *faqīr*, son of *fuqarā'*." *Nafh al-ṭīb* ii, 185.

16 Massignon, *Investigaciones* 32.

17 Colin, al-Andalus, in *ET²* under Population of al-Andalus (online).

18 For a detailed discussion, see 'Adlūnī, *Abū l-Ḥasan al-Shushtarī* 59–106.

19 al-Shushtarī is sometimes referred to as "al-Lūshī," in reference to Lūsha (Loja), where he spent his childhood.

20 For al-Shushtarī's discussion on the legal sciences (*al-ʿulūm al-sharʿiyya*), see Ibn Luyūn's summary of al-Shushtarī's *al-Risāla al-ʿilmīyya*, entitled *al-Ināla al-ʿilmīyya*, ed. 'Adlūnī 127–131.

21 Massignon, *Investigaciones* 32.

al-Shushtarī, now in his thirties, set out on commercial journeys through the politically afflicted seventh/thirteenth-century regions of al-Andalus.

During his travels, al-Shushtarī witnessed the devastations that ensued after the collapse of the Almohad regime and felt drawn to the Sufi tradition of Abū Madyan (d. 594/1197).²² Around 644/1246, he appears in the Moroccan cities of Meknes, Fez, and the Algerian coastal town of Bijāya, then an important Ḥafṣid center for religious learning and mysticism. By the time he reached North Africa, he may have already been initiated into the Sufi tradition as transmitted by the Granadan judge Muḥyī l-Dīn b. Surāqa al-Shāṭibī (d. 662/1263), a disciple of ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī (d. 632/1234) in Ribāt al-‘Uqbā.²³ He practiced an intense form of renunciation, or *tajrīd*, consisting of total withdrawal from the workaday world, and he donned the Sufi patched garment (*muraqqa‘a*). After his stay in Bijāya, he set out for Qābis, in present-day Tunisia, where he encountered Abū Iṣḥāq al-Waraqānī and Abū ‘Abdallāh al-Ṣanhājī (d. 723/1323). He then traveled to Ṭarāblus, in present-day Libya, with a growing group of followers. Owing to his expertise in *fiqh* and *ḥadīth*—according to Ibn ‘Ajība, he taught and granted licenses (*ijāzas*) to teach al-Ghazālī’s *Mustasfā* in legal theory (*uṣūl*)—he was offered the position of judge (*qāḍī*) in Ṭarāblus but turned it down. Al-Shushtarī’s time in Ṭarāblus was marked by controversy, and he was purportedly accused of madness by the local jurists and government authorities and subsequently returned to Bijāya.

Al-Shushtarī’s encounter in 648/1248 with ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq b. Sab‘īn (d. 666/1268) marks the beginning of the third phase of his life and is characterized by a shift from Abū Madyan’s praxis-centered Sufism to a more philosophical orientation promulgated by Ibn Sab‘īn. During their encounter, which is recorded in *Nafḥ al-ṭīb*, Ibn Sab‘īn reportedly exclaimed: “If you seek Paradise then follow Abū Madyan; but if you seek the Lord of Paradise, then follow me!”²⁴ Al-Shushtarī became Ibn Sab‘īn’s loyal disciple even though the latter was younger than him.

Under Ibn Sab‘īn’s tutelage, he deepened his knowledge of the intellectual sciences (*ḥikma*), including theology (*kalām*), philosophy (*ḥikma*), Hermetic, and perhaps “Hindu” teachings. Al-Shushtarī mentions by name in his prose and poetry a number of important Sufis and philosophers.²⁵ He also evinces familiarity with the poetry, teachings, technical terms, and major writings of

22 Cornell, *Way of Abū Madyan*; Maḥmūd, *Shaykh al-Shuyūkh Abū Madyan*.

23 Massignon, *Investigaciones* 33.

24 Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-ṭīb* ii, 185.

25 For a detailed list and discussion of these figures, see al-Shushtarī, *Maqālid al-wujūdiyya* 22–31.

Ibn al-'Arabī in his prose treatises.²⁶ Given the cosmological contents of *al-Risāla al-mi'rājīyya*, it is plausible that al-Shushtarī authored it sometime during this third phase of his life.

Al-Shushtarī and Ibn Sab'īn traveled extensively with their followers and performed several pilgrimages. In 650/1252, al-Shushtarī joined the Syrian *ribāt* of the Qalandariyya wandering Sufi dervishes and fought against the crusades. There he also met Ibn al-'Arabī's direct disciple, al-Najm b. Isrā'īl al-Dimashqī (d. 667/1268).²⁷ Around 652/1254, al-Shushtarī assumed leadership of the Ṭarīqat al-Sab'īniyya and took the title Imām al-Mutajarridīn (Leader of the withdrawn Sufis).

The developmental arc of al-Shushtarī's thought, the chronology of his works,²⁸ and the full story of his relationship to Ibn Sab'īn remain largely unresolved. Later biographers stress that al-Shushtarī broke away from Ibn Sab'īn at the end of his life. However, early biographers confirm a solid and long-lasting relationship between the two figures. Ibn al-Khaṭīb, for example, states that "despite Abū Muḥammad [Ibn Sab'īn] being younger in age [than his disciple Shushtarī], he *continued* to follow him (*istamarra bi'ttibā'ihī*)."²⁹ The early sources, however, do indicate that al-Shushtarī's own followers had qualms about their master's loyalty to Ibn Sab'īn. Al-Ghubrīnī records that "many followers preferred him [Shushtarī] over his master Abū Muḥammad b. Sab'īn." To this, al-Shushtarī would respond defensively: "If this is said, it is because they do not have knowledge of the state of the master, and because of the shortcomings in their own nature."³⁰

It is worth noting that both al-Shushtarī and Ibn Sab'īn were regarded by some scholars as controversial figures during their lifetimes. Al-Shushtarī was involved in controversies during his Madyanī phase before meeting Ibn Sab'īn, and attacks on the thought of Ibn Sab'īn were underway already during his lifetime by contemporaries such as the prominent Sufi hadith expert of Mecca Quṭb al-Dīn b. al-Qaṣṭallānī (d. 686/1287). However, in contrast to the gradual intensification of polemics leveled against Ibn Sab'īn within a century after his death—i.e., enter Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328) and Mamluk debates over Ibn al-'Arabī—al-Shushtarī's poetry continued to gain popularity. Post-Ibn Taymiyyan biographers and admirers of al-Shushtarī's poetry and Sufi teachings from the

26 Ibn Luyūn is explicit about al-Shushtarī's indebtedness to Ibn al-'Arabī in *Ināla* 53.

27 Massignon, *Investigaciones* 35.

28 For a brief discussion of the plausible chronology of al-Shushtarī's works, see Massignon, *Investigaciones* 57.

29 Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Ihāṭa* iv, 206.

30 al-Ghubrīnī, *Uwān al-dirāya* 239.

Mamlūk period onward, including Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī (d. 852/1449), Aḥmad Zarrūq (d. 899/1493), and even Aḥmad b. ‘Ajība (d. 1224/1809), claim that al-Shushtarī broke away from Ibn Sab‘īn and renounced the controversial dimensions of his thought. This claim, which is a palpable attempt at rescuing al-Shushtarī from Ibn Sab‘īn’s marred reputation, is not substantiated by any early biographical sources or internal references.

Whatever the case, the final phase of al-Shushtarī’s life unfolds in Egypt when his followers were absorbed into mainstream Shādhilī Sufism. Toward the end of his career, al-Shushtarī presided over 400 disciples, who followed him on his travels. Massignon postulates that he may have met the founder of the Shādhiliyya order, Abū l-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī (d. 656/1258), along with his two foremost disciples, Abū l-‘Abbās al-Mursī (d. 684/1285) and Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh al-Iskandarī (d. 709/1309), whom he cites in his writings.³¹ Around this period, al-Shushtarī’s followers began self-identifying as “Shushtariyya” rather than “Sab‘īniyya.”³² Al-Shushtarī himself began to express his attachment to the Shādhiliyya order in rhyme: “My masters, they are Shādhilī; in loving them, my heart finds pleasure.”³³ This is a marked shift from al-Shushtarī’s earlier descriptions of himself as the “slave” of Ibn Sab‘īn. On the basis of such verses, contemporary scholars such as ‘Adlūnī echo claims made by Zarrūq and Ibn ‘Ajība that al-Shushtarī reverted to a doctrinally “moderate” form of Sufism late in life. This claim, however, assumes a polarized typological distinction between law-abiding “moderate” Sufism, represented by the Shādhiliyya, on the one hand, and Ibn al-‘Arabī’s theologically “extreme” school of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, on the other. This typology became crystallized in the wake of Mamlūk polemics over Ibn al-‘Arabī.³⁴ In my opinion, what al-Shushtarī’s absorption into the Shādhiliyya order indicates is precisely the fact that these typological binaries are a later development that were retrospectively projected onto al-Shushtarī’s life in order to validate his popular poetry.

Al-Shushtarī is reported to have died on his way back to Dimyāt from one of his trips to Syria. He fell ill in the plain of al-Ṭīna near the port of Būr Sa‘īd in northern Egypt. “My clay (*ṭīna*) longs for Ṭīna” (*ḥannat al-ṭīna ilā al-Ṭīna*) was his poignant final statement on record. He died on 17 Ṣafar 668/16 Octo-

31 Ibn Luyūn, *Ināla* 38.

32 Massignon, *Investigaciones* 42. Abū ‘Uthmān Sa‘īd Ibn Luyūn, and Ibn Mubashshir, the hermit of Bab Zuwayla in Cairo (ibid.) are the only names of members of the Shushtariyya that have survived. For the *isnād* of the Shushtariyya *ṭarīqa* that branched off from the Sab‘īniyya, see the appendix to Fetugière’s *La Révélation d’Hermès Trismégiste* 390, 400.

33 See al-Shushtarī, *Maqālid al-wujūdiyya* 30.

34 See Knysh, *Ibn ‘Arabī in the later Islamic tradition* 87–270.

ber 1269 and was carried by his disciples to Dimyāt, where he was buried.³⁵ His body was soon disinterred by his disciples and transported to Cairo and reburied there out of fear that it would be desecrated by Crusaders. His tomb is located in Cairo's El-Moski, an old neighborhood named after the Ayyubid emir and cousin of Saladin, 'Izz al-Dīn Mūsik.³⁶

2 The Treatise on the Ascension (*al-Risāla al-mi'rājīyya*)

The work presented below is a heretofore unstudied and unedited treatise based on two extant manuscript copies. The first (MS A/1) is from Yale University's Beinecke library (Yale Arabic MSS Supplement 104, fols. 105r–113r). It is part of an undated codex containing three treatises by al-Shushtarī's student Aḥmad Ya'qūb b. al-Mubashshir, and two treatises by Ibn al-'Arabī, *R. al-Tilāwa* and *K. al-Isrā'*. The three treatises of Ibn al-Mubashshir quote al-Shushtarī and Ibn Sab'īn with great reverence, which casts further doubt on the purported rift between al-Shushtarī and Ibn Sab'īn.³⁷ The Beinecke manuscript was copied in clear *naskhī* by a certain Naṣr b. Yūsuf b. 'Alī b. 'Abdallāh al-Shāfi'ī, who unfortunately did not provide us with a date in the colophon. The second treatise (MS B ب) is from Süleymaniye's Hz. *Nasūhī Dergāhu* collection in Istanbul (00275-004, fols. 38v–55r). It was copied in clear—but less elegant and unprofessional—handwriting of a copyist named Muḥammad b. al-Darwīsh on 8 Dhū al-Qa'da 946/March 16 1540.³⁸ The codex contains other al-Shushtarī treatises, including *R. al-Qaṣāriyya* and *R. al-Baghdādiyya*.

The style of the *Mi'rājīyya* is representational of its author and it is safe to assume that it is an authentic work. The use of expressions such as *al-ḥamdu li-Wāhib al-'aql* at the opening prayer of the treatise, and stylistic and doctrinal parallels, all point to the authenticity of this work. The treatise does not appear to have been cited by later Sufis, and its value lies primarily in shedding light on the thought of al-Shushtarī as it developed presumably after his encounter with Ibn Sab'īn in 648/1248. Spanning 17 folios in both manuscripts, the *Mi'rājīyya* is structured around eight discrete “levels” (*marātib*), or discussions of key words contained in Q 32:5. These levels are: (1) the governance

35 Massignon claims to have identified al-Shushtarī's grave in the cemetery of Dimyāt. See *Investigaciones* 35.

36 This has been conclusively established in a recent article by the Moroccan scholar Benarafa, in Abū l-Ḥasan al-Shushtarī 139–144.

37 See María Alvarez, *Abū al-Ḥasan al-Shushtarī* 192.

38 See marginal note on fol. 38r.

(*al-tadbīr*), (2) the command (*al-amr*), (3) the heaven (*al-samāʿ*), (4) the earth (*al-arḍ*), (5) the ascension (*al-ʿurūj*), (6) the day (*al-yawm*), (7) the measure (*al-miqdār*), and (8) the millennium (*al-alf sana*). Thematically, the *Miʿrājīyya* can be divided into two complementary parts. Part I, which consists of levels 1–5 (paras. 1–22), delineates the basic principles of al-Shushtarī’s cosmology. Part II, which consists of levels 6–8 (paras. 23–44), builds upon part I to expound his concept of time. The treatise culminates in a concluding discussion of the millennium (level 8, paras. 34–44) and tenders three eschatological interpretations of Q 32:5, with speculations on the duration of the Muslim community and the coming of the Hour.

Al-Shushtarī begins with a discussion of *tadbīr*, God’s “governance” or “directing,” which accompanies the existentiating command (*amr*) and permeates the world of creation. Divine governance first takes on as its object the First Intellect (*al-ʿaql al-awwal*) by bringing it forth from nonexistence into existence. When the command descends upon the First Intellect, the latter becomes aware of the Day of the Aeon (*al-yawm al-dahrī*), or the Cloud (*al-habāʾ*), in which the world of creation emerges. Although most of the treatise deals with metaphysical realities, al-Shushtarī briefly comments on the appropriate human response to these realities. For instance, in response to God’s governance of creation, the knower of God (*ʿarif bi-Llāh*) should abandon his own governance of worldly affairs in order to let God take charge.

The term *amr* (level 2) carries a variety of meanings depending on the context. It is synonymous with divine governance, the suprasensory meaning of the existentiating command (*kun*), and the spirit (*al-rūḥ*). Cosmogonically, the *amr* is what brings the Cloud into existence, and from the human perspective it is the engendering Word (*al-kalīma*). Al-Shushtarī traces the descent of the command down to the Cloud, then to the Tablet, the Pen, the Throne, the Pedestal, and the seven heavens, down to the realms of minerals, plants, and animals. The command differentiates as it descends into lower cosmic realms, and all events that occur in the lower worlds descend from on high through the command. Al-Shushtarī then explains the terms “heaven” (*samāʿ*, level 3) and “earth” (*arḍ*, level 4) as they relate to the ascent and descent of the command. These terms are not only relational—that is, whatever is above is a “heaven” for an “earth” below it—but can be employed to describe both macrocosmic and microcosmic realities. Thus, the Divine Throne is the “heaven” of the water beneath it, just as the human spirit (*rūḥ*) is the “heaven” of the heart (*qalb*).

The term “ascension” (*ʿurūj*, level 5) refers to the cyclical return of the governed command (*al-amr al-mudabbar*) back to God. All commands that descend to earth must ascend back to God, and everything that is good in creation has its own ascension: angels, spirits, and beautiful deeds possess unique path-

ways back to their home base beneath Throne. In their ascension, they pass through heavenly gates, and all ascending pathways are encompassed by an all-encompassing ascension. In all of this, al-Shushtarī stresses that there is no spatial or mental distance involved, for metaphysical distance is merely perspectival (*i'tibārī*), as is our lowliness vis-à-vis divine exaltedness.

Al-Shushtarī dedicates the rest of his treatise (paras. 23–44) to explaining the concept of time (*zamān*) and divine determination (*taqdīr*) in the context of his cosmological vision. It should be noted that the technical terms and concepts he employs here are similar to those found in the earlier Andalusī writings of Ibn Barrajan (d. 536/1141),³⁹ which are carried over into Ibn al-'Arabī.⁴⁰ Furthermore, it is important to emphasize that speculations about the time span of the earth and cycles of time are not specific to Sufi writings. They are rooted in explicit Quranic verses and ḥadīth accounts, and discussions about the duration of the world (*muddat al-dunyā*), its “days” (*ayyām*) and “measure” (*miqdār*) can be found in mainstream exegetical literature on Q 22:47, 32:5, and 70:3–4 and in ḥadīth commentaries beyond the writings of Sufis. What is unique about the *Mi'rājīyya* and similar Sufi discussions is that these scriptural references are worked out and assimilated into a cosmological scheme and therefore carry a particular significance within that Sufi cosmology.

Al-Shushtarī explains that the term “day” denotes a cyclical span of time. The shortest “day” is the Monad of Time (*al-zamān al-fard*), which is the smallest instant or individual unit of time. The Monad of Time stands in contrast to the longest “day,” the Day of the Aeon (*yawm al-dahr*), which engulfs the entirety of time from the beginning to the end and is therefore the first “day” from which all other “days” are differentiated. All cycles of time are contained between the indivisible Monad of Time and the archetypal Day of the Aeon. The Day of the Aeon “begins” at the moment of the origination of the First Intellect. It has no end since it represents an intermediate stage between eternity that is beyond time and temporality. It is the first and therefore the last day, and it contains all cycles of existence, or the cosmic days, within it. There are six cosmic days that the Quran refers to: (1) the Day of the Covenant (*yawm al-mīthāq*), when humanity affirmed God's lordship in preexistence (Q 7:172); (2) the Day of This World (*yawm al-dunyā*), which is the predetermined time span of this world, which al-Shushtarī suggests is 7,000 years; (3) the Day of the Isthmus (*yawm al-barzakh*) in the grave, when the dead await the Hour in a state of bliss or torment; (4) the Day of the Gathering (*yawm al-jam'*), when all humanity is

39 See Casewit, *Mystics of al-Andalus* 266–293.

40 See Böwering, *Concept of time in Islam*, and Böwering, *Ibn al-'Arabī's concept of time*; Haj Yousef, *Ibn 'Arabī*.

gathered on the Plane of Resurrection to await the accounting of their deeds and the divine self-disclosure (Q 42:7); (5) the Day of Division (*yawm al-faṣl*), when the groups of heaven and hell are separated (Q 77:13); and (6) the Day of Heaven and Hell (*yawm al-janna wa-l-nār*).

Al-Shushtarī discusses these six cosmic days in relation to specific durations mentioned in the Quran as well as scattered ḥadīth reports that allude to the duration of this world and the Muslim community. These durations are keys to gaining an understanding of the actual length of the six cosmic days. The first is the Day of the Lord (*ayyām al-rabb*), which spans one millennium (Q 22:47). Al-Shushtarī equates the Millennial Day (*al-yawm al-alfī*) with the 500-year descent of the divine command through the levels of the cosmos down to earth, in addition to its 500-year ascent back to God. The Day of this World (*yawm al-dunyā*) spans 7,000 years,⁴¹ or seven Days of the Lord. The duration of the Muslim community is approximately 1,000 years, since the duration of this world is 7,000 years, and the prophet Muḥammad was sent at the end of the sixth millennium. Accordingly, it seems that al-Shushtarī expected the coming of the Hour at the end of the first millennium AH, or the end of the sixteenth century AD, roughly 250 years after his composition of the *Mi'rājīyya*. Finally, he explains that the Day of the Aeon contains the Day of 50,000 Years (Q 70:4), which contains the 7,000-year Day of the World, which contains the millennial Day of the Lord, which contains the common 24-hour day, which contains the 60-minute hour, which contains the simple Monad of Time, a unit from which nothing in the world of creation can escape.

41 In his introduction to the *Ta'rikh*, Ṭabarī relates a statement attributed to Ibn 'Abbās: "This world is a Friday/week from among the Fridays/weeks of the next world" (*al-dunyā jum'atun min juma'i l-ākhirā*).

4 Arabic Edition and Translation of *al-Risāla al-mi'rājiyya*

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 الرسالة المعراجية
 لأبي الحسن الشُّسْتَرِي

قال سيدنا الشيخ العالم الصوفي المحقق أبو الحسن علي بن عبد الله التُّمَيْرِي الشُّسْتَرِي نفعنا الله ببركته
 رسالة سماها المعراجية، فهمنا الله معناها:42

- ١ الحمد لَوَاهِبِ الْعَقْلِ، يَا أَيُّهَا السَّائِلُ عَنْ 43 قَوْلِهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: 44 يُدِيرُ الْأَمْرَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ
 يَعْرُجُ إِلَيْهِ فِي يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ مِمَّا تَعُدُّونَ (٥: ٣٢)، عَلِمَ عَلَيْكَ اللَّهُ الْعِلْمَ النَّافِعَ وَأَطْلَعَكَ عَلَى
 مُفَصَّلِ الْإِجْمَالِ بِالنُّورِ السَّاطِعِ، أَنَّ سَوْأَلَكَ يَشْتَمِلُ عَلَى ثَمَانِيَةِ مَرَاتِبٍ يَجِبُ مَعْرِفَتُهَا عَلَى التَّفْصِيلِ وَهِيَ:
 التَّدْبِيرُ وَالْأَمْرُ وَالسَّمَاءُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَالْعُرُوجُ وَالْيَوْمُ وَالْمِقْدَارُ وَالْأَلْفُ سَنَةً.

المرتبة الأولى: مرتبة التدبير45

- ٢ التدبير من الحادث هو الذكر في الأمر المدبر ليحمل على أحسن ما يمكن فيه، ومن القديم هو الإبداع
 والإتقان والتفصيل، والمدبر اسم من أسماء الله تعالى المشتقة. وقال تعالى: أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ، أَمْ
 يَتَفَكَّرُونَ46 فيه حتى يفهموا إعجازه بفهم معانيه، وإذا فهموا عنه علموا أنه من عند الله لعجز البشر عما

42 العبارة (قال سيدنا الشيخ ... معناها) غير موجودة في ب.

43 ساقطة من ب.

44 آ: عَزَّ وَجَلَّ؛ ب: تعالى.

45 العبارة (مرتبة التدبير) ساقطة من ب.

46 آ: يَتَفَكَّرُونَ؛ ب: يَتَفَكَّرُوا.

The Treatise on the Ascension
al-Risāla al-mi'rājiyya
 by
 Abū l-Ḥasan al-Shushtarī (d. 668/1269)

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

Our master, the erudite shaykh, the realized Sufi, Abū l-Ḥasan 'Alī b. 'Abdal-lāh al-Numayrī al-Shushtarī (d. 668/1269), may God benefit us from his blessing, has written a treatise entitled "On the Ascension." May God enable us to understand its meaning.

Praise belongs to the Bestower of the Intellect!⁴⁷ To the questioner concerning the verse *He governs the command from heaven to earth; then it ascends unto Him in a day whose measure is a thousand years of your counting* (Q 32:5)⁴⁸ know—may God impart beneficial knowledge upon you and give you insight into the details of its summary by the resplendent light—that your question comprises eight levels that must be comprehended in detail. These are, (1) the governance,⁴⁹ (2) the command, (3) the heaven, (4) the earth, (5) the ascension, (6) the day, (7) the measure, (8) and the millennium.

Level One: Governance (*al-tadbīr*)

Governing, on the part of the noneternal, is to recall the governed command so that it is put into effect in the most beautiful possible manner. On the part of the Eternal, it is creation from naught (*ibdā'*), meticulous perfection (*itqān*), and specific differentiation (*tafṣīl*). Moreover, the Governor (*al-mudabbir*) is one of the names of God derived etymologically [from scripture]. Furthermore, God says [in a different context]: *Will they then not ponder (yatadabbarūn) the Quran?* (Q 47:24), that is, reflect on it in order to understand its incapacitating miracle by understanding its meanings. And when they understand it, they will know that *it is from God* (Q 2:89), since humans are incapable of the knowledge

47 *Wāhib al-'aql* is a construction that is often found in al-Shushtarī's writings. See for example al-Shushtarī, *Maqālid al-wujūdīyya* 114.

48 Translations of Quranic verses are informed by Nasr et al., *Study Quran*.

49 *Tadbīr* is a polysemous Sufi term employed by al-Shushtarī throughout the treatise. It means at once directing, governance, and ruling of affairs.

- اشتمل عليه من علم الأولين والآخرين، وحصر معلومات الخير والشر التي لم يظهر في الوجود غيرهما.
- وقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: 'التدبير نصف العيش'⁵⁰ يريد بذلك فعل الشيء كما ينبغي من ٣ أمور الدنيا والآخرة، ومراده للعلماء بالله ترك التدبير معه،⁵¹ فمن يتقن أن كل شيء بقضائه وقدره، وأن الأمور قد فرغ منها، فهو من العلماء بالله، فيترك⁵² التدبير العرفي بالتدبير اليقيني الذي هو 'نصف العيش'. وهذا التدبير اليقيني⁵³ ينزل له من التدبير الأول القديم من سماء العزة إلى أرض العقل المحصور بعقال القدرة، فيطيب عيشه بذهاب الآمال من باطنه، ومن يتوكل على الله فهو حسبه إن الله بالغ أمره قد جعل الله لكل شيء قدراً (٣: ٦٥)، وإذا ذهب من باطنه حب الدنيا عاد حياً وأضيف إليه 'نصف العيش' لانقطاع حياة الدنيا، فإن العيش كله في الآخرة.
- ولا يضاف 'نصف العيش' لمدير الدنيا إذا لم يرد بها الآخرة، لأن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قد ٤ وصف أهلها بالموت في قوله لعائشة: 'إياك ومجالسة الموتى'⁵⁴ يريد أبناء الدنيا، وإذا كان أبناء الدنيا أمواتاً كان أبناء الآخرة أحياء. قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: 'لا عيش إلا عيش الآخرة'⁵⁵ فأطلق 'نصف العيش' على حياة أبناء الآخرة في الدنيا، والنصف هنا للتقليل، وأضيف لمن ترك التدبير مع الله بالتدبير النازل له من عند الله، وإضافة التدبير للعبد مجاز⁵⁶، وبالجملة كل تدبير يرجع إلى التدبير الأول الذي بدأ منه، والرجوع هو العروج، والعروج هو الرجوع.⁵⁷

50 انظر العجلوني، "كشف الخفاء" (٩٦٢)؛ ورواه القضاعي عن علي في "مسند الشهاب" (٥٤/١).

51 العبارة (ترك التدبير معه) زائدة في ب.

52 آ: فيترك؛ ب: ترك.

53 العبارة (الذي هو نصف العيش) وهذا التدبير اليقيني) ساقطة من ب.

54 سنن الترمذي، كتاب اللباس، ١٧٨٠ (بلفظ "... ومجالسة الأغنياء").

55 رواه البخاري في صحيحه، كتاب الرقاق، ٦٠٥٠-٦٠٥١؛ ومسلم في صحيحه، كتاب الجهاد والسير، باب غزوة الأحزاب وهو الخندق، ١٨٠٤-١٨٠٥.

56 آ: مجاز؛ ب: مجازياً.

57 العبارة (والعروج هو الرجوع) غير موجودة في آ.

it comprises; namely that of the earlier and later generations, and a listing of everything known about good and evil. Nothing other than [the knowledge of good and evil contained in the Qur'an] has ever become manifest in existence.

The Messenger of God says: "Governance (*al-tadbīr*) is half of livelihood (*nisf al-ʿaysh*),"⁵⁸ by which he means acting appropriately with regard to one's affairs in this world and the otherworld. For the knowers of God, however, what is intended here is the abandonment of governing alongside God [so as to let God's governance take over]. For the one who has certainty that everything is by God's decree and measuring, and that the affairs are already concluded, is indeed among the knowers of God. Such a person abandons the governance of common believers (*al-tadbīr al-ʿurfī*) for the governance of certitude (*al-tadbīr al-yaqīnī*) that is [the true] "half of livelihood." This governance of certitude descends upon him from the first, eternal governance (*tadbīr*) from the heaven of exaltedness to the earth of the intellect confined by the fetters of Power. His life is pure enjoyment because all wishes have left his inner being: *And whosoever trusts in God, He suffices him. Truly God fulfills His command. God has indeed set a measure for all things* (Q 65:3). And when love of this world disappears from his inner being, he comes back to life and to him is ascribed "half of livelihood" on account of the life of this world, for all of livelihood is in the otherworld.

Moreover, this "half of livelihood" (*nisf al-ʿaysh*) is not ascribed to the one who governs his own worldly affairs if he does not desire the otherworld through them. For the Prophet describes worldly people as dead in his statement to Aisha: "Beware of consorting with the dead,"⁵⁹ i.e., with the sons of this world. Given that the sons of this world are dead, the sons of the otherworld are alive. The Messenger of God says: "There is no livelihood (*lā ʿaysh*) save the livelihood of the otherworld."⁶⁰ Thus he ascribes a "half of livelihood" to the sons of the otherworld while they are alive in this world; and "half" here is to belittle it. It is ascribed to the one who abandons governing alongside God (*al-tadbīr maʿa Llāh*), for the governing that descends to him *from* God. Moreover, to ascribe any governance to the servant is metaphorical. And in short, all governing returns back to [God's] first governance whence it originated. And "returning" (*rujūʿ*) is "ascending" (*ʿurūj*), just as ascending is returning.

58 See al-ʿAjlūnī, *Kashf al-khafāʾ* #962.

59 al-Tirmidhī relates a different version of this ḥadīth in his *Sunan*, K. al-Libās #1780.

60 al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, K. al-Riqāq, #6050–6051; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, K. al-Jihād wa-l-sayr, Bāb Ghazwat al-Khandaq wa-huwa l-Aḥzāb #1804–1805.

٥ والتدبير يُطلق مع الأمر بِتَرَادُفٍ،⁶¹ فأوّل التدبير تدبير الله تعالى العقل الأوّل الذي دبره بالإبداع كيف شاء لما شاء، وهو يدبر الموجودات، وكلّ تدبير في العالم فهو منه، مبثوث فيه، قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: 'أوّل ما خَلَقَ اللهُ العقلَ، فقال له أَقْبِلْ فأقبلَ، ثمّ قال له أدبِرْ فأدبِرْ،⁶² فانقسمَ تدبيرُ الحادِثاتِ لذلك على ضربين، الضرب الأوّل تدبير الخير، والضرب الثاني تدبير الشرّ، فكلّ تدبير للخير⁶³ فن الإقبال، وكلّ تدبير للشرّ⁶⁴ فن الإدبار، وليس في قضيّة الإقبال والإدبار إلا ما أودع الله فيهما من التدبير.

٦ فإنحراج العقل من العدم إلى الوجود تدبير الله تعالى، وشعور العقل بمُدبِرِهِ تدبير مضاف للعقل يتنزّل له من التدبير الأوّل عند فتق سمائه في حجاب الكاف والنون، فأوّل فتقٍ تَدبِيرِهِ المضاف إليه، المجازي، عثورُهُ على يوم البدء، وهو اليوم⁶⁵ الدهري الذي لا نهاية له، ويحمل عليه البداية مجازًا،

61 العبارة (أوّل التدبير) زائدة في ب.

62 رواه الطبراني في 'الكبير' (٢٨٣/٨)؛ وأبو نعيم في 'الحلية' (٣١٨/٨)؛ والبيهقي في 'الشعب' (٤٣١٢)؛ انظر

العجلوني، 'كشف الخفاء'، رقم ٧٢٣.

63 ب: للخير؛ آ: الخير.

64 ب: للشرّ؛ آ: الشرّ.

65 ب: اليوم؛ آ: يوم.

Furthermore, the terms “governance” (*tadbīr*) and “command” (*amr*) are used synonymously. Thus, the first governance is God’s governing of the First Intellect. This He governed by creating from naught, how He wants and for what He wants. He also governs existent things, and every governance in the cosmos is from Him and is scattered throughout the cosmos. The Messenger of God says:

The first that God created was the Intellect; then He said to it: “Come forward,” and it came forward, then He said to it: “Turn away,” and it turned away.⁶⁶

Thus, the governance of noneternal things is divided into two sorts. The first is the governance of good, and the second is the governance of evil. All governance of good is from the “coming forward,” and all governance of evil is from the “turning away.” Moreover, there is nothing more to the “coming forward” or “turning away” except for the governance that God deposited within the two.

Bringing the First Intellect forth from nonexistence into existence is God’s governance. And the First Intellect’s awareness of its own Governor (*mudabbīr*) is a governance that is ascribed to the First Intellect that descends to it from the first governance, when its “heaven” was “unstitched” (Q 21:30) behind the veil of the “Kāf and the Nūn” [Be!].⁶⁷ Thus, the first “unstitching” [of the First Intellect’s own] governance, [a governance] that is ascribed to it metaphorically, is [the First Intellect’s] discovery of the Day of Origination (*yawm al-bad’*), which is the Day of the Aeon (*al-yawm al-dahrī*) that has no end, and to it “the beginning” is ascribed only metaphorically. It is on this Day of the Aeon that the

66 al-Ṭabarānī, *Kabīr* viii, 283; Abū Nu’aym, *Ḥilya* vii, 318; al-Bayhaqī, *Shu’ab* #4312. See also al-‘Ajlūnī, *Kashf al-khafā’* #723. For an analysis of this ḥadīth (the “Aqbilī tradition”) in early Sufi, philosophical, theological, and Shi’i sources, see Crow, *Role of al-aql* 1–38, 175–176.

67 The terms “heaven” (*samā’*) and “unstitching” (*fatq*) are explained later in the treatise. The First Intellect is God’s first creation. It is “innovated” (*mubda’*) by God from naught by the divine command “Be” (*amr*). The divine act of origination is God’s “governing” (*tadbīr*) of the First Intellect and it takes place at the moment when God says “be” and the First Intellect emerges into existence. Thus, the “tearing apart” or “loosening” (*fatq*, Q 21:30) is the manifestation, or the issuing of the command which was “stitched” or “sewn together” (*ratq*) in a state of unqualified unity in *divinis*. The existentiating command (*amr*) is the First Intellect’s “heaven” (*samā’*), since it lies above it; whereas the Intellect is an “earth” (*ard*) in relation to the command. The Intellect’s “heaven” is thus “unstitched” by the issuing of the divine command. The First Intellect thus comes to be, and it in turn governs what is beneath it.

وفي هذا اليوم الدهري⁶⁸ فُتِقَ العالمُ بأسره (٣١: ٣٠)، وهو الهباء والعماء الذي تظهر فيه الكائنات ويظهر فيها، فإنه لا يُستدلُّ عليه إلا منها وبها، وهو الدرّة البيضاء عند الصوفية، وهو الماء الذي⁶⁹ يحمل العرش، وهو البحر الذي خاض أبو يزيد البسطامي قدس الله سرّه العزيز⁷⁰، وهنا قال الشيخ محيي الملة والدين قدس الله سرّه العزيز⁷¹ [السريع]:

انظُرْ إِلَى الْعَرْشِ عَلَى مَائِهِ * سَفِينَةٌ تَجْرِي بِأَسْمَائِهِ
فَاعْجَبْ لَهُ مِنْ مَرْكَبٍ 72 دَائِرٍ * قَدْ أَوْدَعَ الْخَلْقَ بِأَحْشَائِهِ
يَسْبَحُ فِي بَحْرِ بِلَا سَاحِلٍ * مِنْ أَلْفِ الْخَطِّ إِلَى يَأْتِهِ 73

وقال آخر⁷⁴ [الكامل]:

فِي الْكَائِنَاتِ أَرَى الْعَمَاءَ وَفِي الْعَمَاءِ * وَجِدَ الْجَمِيعُ مُصْرَفًا وَمُسْخَرًا

واعلم⁷⁵ أنّ الأسماء هي التي فصلت أبعاضه، وفيه ترتب العالمُ ترتيباً على النظام المعلوم من⁷⁶ عالم الملك والملكوت، فالعقل والعلم⁷⁷ واللوح، ثمّ السماوات والأرض⁷⁸ على الترتيب المعلوم، والأفلاك

68 آ: الدهري؛ ب: الدهري.

69 ساقطة من آ.

70 العبارة (قدس الله سرّه العزيز) ساقطة من ب.

71 آ: شيخ محيي الملة والدين قدس الله سرّه العزيز؛ ب: سيدي محيي الدين ابن العربي رضي الله عنه وعنا به ونفعنا بعلو مقامه.

72 آ: مركب؛ ب: مركز.

73 ابن عربي، 'مواقع النجوم' في مجموعة رسائل ابن عربي، ج ٣، ص ٢٦٥.

74 آ: آخر؛ ب: بعضهم.

75 آ: واعلم؛ ب: فاعلم.

76 آ: من؛ ب: في.

77 كذا في آ، ب؛ ولعله "والقلم".

78 ساقطة من آ.

whole world was unstitched (Q 21:30),⁷⁹ and this [Day of the Aeon] is the Cloud and the Dust in which all beings become manifest while It becomes manifest in all beings. For indeed, proofs for [the Cloud] can only be sought from and through those beings [that become manifest in the Cloud]. [The Cloud is also terminologically equivalent to] the White Pearl of the Sufis,⁸⁰ the Water that carries the Throne, and the Ocean that Abū Yazīd al-Biṣṭamī [d. ca. 261/874–875] plumbed. To this effect, the master [Ibn 'Arabī (d. 638/1240)], reviver of the Muslim nation and the religion, says:

Behold the Throne upon its water, * A ship, running by His Names!
 Marvel at this turning vessel,⁸⁷ * As it deposits creation in its entrails.⁸⁸
 Sailing an ocean without shore, * From the *Alif* of the Pen to its *Yā'*.⁸⁹

Another [Sufi] says:

In the created being I see the Cloud, and in * the Cloud all is found controlled and subjugated.

Know, moreover, that the divine names differentiate [the Cloud] into parts. Within [the Cloud] the cosmos is ordered according to the known hierarchy of the Kingdom (*mulk*) and the Dominion (*malakūt*). Whence the [First] Intellect, the Pen,⁹⁰ and the Tablet, followed by the heavens and the earth according to the known hierarchy; and the spheres, the planets, and the movements; all of it is a governing sent down [by God]. *That is the measuring of the Mighty,*

7

79 *The heavens and the earth were stitched together* (kānatā ratqan) and *We unstitched them* (fa-fataqnāhumā) (Q 21:30).

80 al-Qāshānī defines the White Pearl in *al-Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Ṣūfiyya*, “the First Intellect. As the Prophet said: ‘The first thing God created was a white pearl.’ And the first thing created by God was the mind.” See *A Glossary of Sufi Technical Terms*, entry # 69.

87 The Divine Throne is the highest sphere, and hence a “turning” vessel.

88 The universe is surrounded by the Divine Throne.

89 Ibn al-'Arabī, *Mawāqī' al-nujūm*, in *Majmū'at rasā'il* iii, 265. This poem was written in Almeria in July 1199/Ramadan 595. Al-Shushtarī seems to have been quoting this poem by heart, since in the last hemistich (*min alif al-khaṭṭ ilā yā'ihī*) he skips over four hemistiches from the original poem. See Matthew Melvin-Koushki's forthcoming edition and translation of *Mawāqī' al-nujūm*.

90 mss A and B have *wa-l-'ilm* (and divine knowledge, *والعلم*); it is likely an orthographic corruption of *wa-l-qalam* (and the Pen *والقلم*), since *qalam*/pen is usually paired with *lawḥ*/Tablet, and divine knowledge is not cosmologically subordinate to the First Intellect.

والكواكب والحركات، كل ذلك تديبر منزل، ذَلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ (٩٦:٦) فَالْمُدْبِرَاتِ أَمْرًا (٧٩:٥)، فَتَنْزَلُ التَّدْبِيرُ الْأَوَّلُ بِإِبْدَاعِ مَوْجُودٍ بِالْقَضَاءِ وَالْقُدْرَةِ، وَإِنَّا كُلُّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَاهُ بِقَدْرِ (٥٤:٤٩)، فَتَخْطِيطُ جِسْمِ الْعَالَمِ فِي لَوْحِ الْهَبَاءِ، ثُمَّ تَفْصِيلُهُ لِلْعُلُوبِيِّ وَالسَّفَلِيِّ عَلَى⁹¹ شَكْلِ مَا وَهَيْئَةٌ مَخْصُوصَةٌ، كُلُّ ذَلِكَ يَدُلُّ عَلَى التَّدْبِيرِ، وَخَلْقَةِ آدَمَ وَتَسْوِيتِهِ وَالنَّفْخَ فِيهِ وَتَعَلُّمَهُ الْأَسْمَاءَ وَإِسْجَادَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ لَهُ وَإِهْبَاطَهُ مِنْ سَمَاءِ الرَّفْعَةِ إِلَى أَرْضِ الْخِلَافَةِ تَدْبِيرًا، وَكَلِمَا يَحْدُثُ مِنَ الْآثَارِ الْعُلُوبِيَّةِ وَفِيهَا، وَفِي الْأَرْضِ مِنَ الْكَاثِنَاتِ وَالتَّدَابِيرِ الظَّاهِرَةِ فِي الْمَعَادِنِ وَالْحَيَوَانَ وَالنَّبَاتِ هُوَ التَّدْبِيرُ الْإِلَهِيُّ، وَهُوَ الْأَمْرُ الْمَبْتُوثُ الْمَذْكُورُ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ، وَأَوْحَى فِي كُلِّ سَمَاءٍ أَمْرَهَا (٤١:١٢).

٨ فَمُتَعَلِّقُ التَّدْبِيرِ إِذَا هُوَ لِلْعَالَمِينَ لِإِبْدَاعِ الْخَلْقِ وَإِيرَادِ الْأَمْرِ عَلَى الْخَلْقِ، فَلَمْ يَظْهَرِ مَوْجُودٌ⁹² إِلَّا بِالتَّدْبِيرِ الْإِبْدَاعِيِّ، وَلَمْ يَتَحَرَّكَ أَوْ يَسْكُنْ إِلَّا بِالتَّدْبِيرِ الْأَمْرِيِّ، وَأَوَّلُ مَا وَرَدَ بِالتَّدْبِيرِ الْأَمْرِيِّ عَلَى الْعَدَمِ الْمُمَكِّنِ بِالْإِنْفِعَالِ حَتَّى تَجَسَّمْ، ثُمَّ بِالْحَرَكَةِ عَلَى الْجِسْمِ حَتَّى تَحَرَّكَ أَوْ سَكَنَ، ثُمَّ يَعُودُ بِالتَّدْبِيرِ الْمُسَمَّى بِالْعُرُوجِ، فَالتَّدْبِيرِ⁹³ يَلْزَمُ كُلَّ⁹⁴ أَمْرٍ أَهْبَطَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ فِي حَالِ هَبُوطِهِ وَفِي حَالِ عُرُوجِهِ، إِذْ لَا يَعْجِزُ إِلَّا بِالتَّدْبِيرِ، كَذَلِكَ يَلْزَمُ لِكُلِّ تَدْبِيرٍ سَمَاوِيٍّ أَوْ أَرْضِيٍّ، جِسْمَانِيٍّ أَوْ رُوحَانِيٍّ، جَوَاهِرٍ أَوْ أَعْرَاضٍ، عَالَمٍ خَلَقَ أَوْ أَمْرٍ، مُحْسُوسٍ أَوْ مَعْقُولٍ، فَلَا تَدْبِيرَ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَبْدَعَ الْخَلْقَ وَأَمَرَهُ، إِذْ لَا فَاعِلَ يَفْعَلُ غَيْرُهُ، وَهِنَا يُقَالُ [البسيط]:

سَطُورٌ كَوْنٍ وَلَا طَرَسٌ يُحِيطُ بِهَا	* قَدْ خَطَّهَا قَلَمُ التَّفْصِيلِ فِي الْعَدَمِ
إِنْ قُلْتَ فِي اللَّوْحِ مَا لِلَّوْحِ مَرْتَبَةٌ	* إِلَّا قُبُولُ نُقُوشِ الرَّقْمِ بِالْقَلَمِ
فَاللَّوْحُ وَالْقَلَمُ الْمَذْكُورُ سِرَّهُمَا	* فِي الْعِلْمِ وَالْعِلْمُ مَنْسُوبٌ إِلَى الْقِدَمِ
رَتَقَ وَفَتَقَ، وَاجْمَالَ يَفْصِلُهُ	* مَا رَشَّهُ اللَّهُ مِنْ نُورٍ عَلَى ظَلَمٍ

91 آ: على؛ ب: كل.

92 آ: موجود؛ ب: موجودًا.

93 ب: فالتدبير؛ آ: بالتدبير.

94 ب: كل؛ آ: لكل.

the Knowing (Q 6:96); *And those that govern the affair* (Q 79:5). Thus, the first governance descends by innovating a thing [the First Intellect] that exists by God's decree and power. *Surely We have created all things according to a measure* (Q 54:49). Thus, the bodies of the cosmos are written out in the Tablet of the Dust, then its differentiation into upper and lower realms in certain shapes and specific guises; all of it indicates [God's] governing. And the created nature of Adam, his configuration, the blowing [of the Spirit] into him, his learning the names, causing the angels to prostrate before him, and lowering him from the heaven of elevation to the earth of vicegerency; [all of it] is [God's] governing. And all the traces that are occasioned by the upper realms and within them, and upon the earth with its beings and its manifest governance of minerals, animals, and plants; [all of it] is divine governing. And it is the aforementioned divine command that is scattered across the heavens, *And He revealed in every heaven its command* (Q 41:12).

Thus, it is to the cosmos [with all its inhabitants] that God's governing becomes connected. And this is in order to originate creation from nothing and bring about the command over creation. Indeed, no existent comes into existence except by way of the originating governance (*al-tadbīr al-ibdā'ī*), and nothing moves or rests except by the commanding governance (*al-tadbīr al-amrī*). Furthermore, the commanding governance first acts upon [the passive realm of] nonexistent possibility until it corporealizes, then [it acts upon that corporealized body] by way of motion until it moves or rests, then it returns [back to God] by a governance called the "ascension." Thus, God's governing accompanies every command that descends to the earth, both in its state of descent and in its state of ascent, for [the command] only ascends by [His] governance. It likewise accompanies all governance, be it heavenly or earthly, corporeal or spiritual, atomic or accidental, world of creation or world of command, sensorial or intelligible. For there is no governance except God's Who originated creation from nothing and commanded it, and no agent possesses agency other than Him. On this subject someone wrote:

Lines of existence, that no writing paper encompasses,
 were inscribed by the Pen of differentiation in nonexistence.
 If you were to say of the Tablet: "Its only rank is that it [passively]
 receives the engraved impressions by the Pen,"
 Then [know that] the secret of the Tablet and of the Pen,
 lies in [God's] knowledge, and [His] knowledge is ascribed to eternity.
 A stitched mass, unstitched; a first nondifferentiation, differentiated
 by the light that God shines upon darkness.

وَالرَّتْقُ يُفْتَقُهُ كَافٌ وَيَتَّبِعُهُ	* نُونٌ وَزَمَنُ هُمَا ⁹⁵ فِي أَحْرِفِ الْقَسَمِ
حَرَفَانِ سِرُّهُمَا أَمْرٌ وَمَا لُهُمَا	* غَيْرُ الْعِبَارَةِ عَنْ ذِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْ قَدَمِ
كَافٌ الْعَلُوُّ وَنُونُ السُّفْلِي قَدْ قُسِمَا	* وَبَاطِنُ الْأَمْرِ حَرْفٌ غَيْرُ مُنْقَسِمٍ
فَالْمَلِكُ وَالْمَلَكُوتُ اخْتَلَقَ رَسْمُهُمَا	* وَالْأَمْرُ أَصْلٌ وَوُجُودُ الْفِعْلِ وَالنَّسَمِ
أَمَّا الْأَوَائِلُ فَالْتَفْرِيقُ بَيْنَهُمَا	* تَرَادُفٌ وَهُوَ تَفْصِيلٌ لِلْمَتَمِّ
فَبِالْحُرُوفِ وَبِالْأَسْمَاءِ قَدْ عَقِلَتْ	* إِحَاطَةُ الْعَقْلِ حَتَّى تَاهَ بِالْهَيْمِ

المرتبة الثانية: مرتبة الأمر

- الأمر⁹⁶ لفظٌ مشترك، ويقال على كلٍّ موجود بالتواطي، والأمر والشيء هنا بنظرٍ ما يترادفان على الموجود، ويفهم منه هنا ما فهم من التدبير. والأمر أيضاً قول من الأمر يرد على المأمور بإحداث فعلٍ أو تركه، فقد يرد من الحادث على هذا النحو، ومن القديم بمعنى الإبداع والتكوين والإبقاء للبدعات والمكونات، وبالحرركات والسكات.
- ويطلق على الروح، قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي (١٧: ٨٥) وَكَذَلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ رُوحًا مِنْ أَمْرِنَا (٤٣: ١٠) (٥٢)، والصوفيّة تطلقه على عالم الروح خاصةً، والأمر هو معنى قوله تعالى كُنْ، وما من موجودٍ وُجد بعد أن لم يكن إلاّ تعلّق به هذا الأمر، ولا ظهر من الموجود المعقول بالأمر فعلٌ أو تركٌ إلاّ بالأمر، فلم تتحرّك الأفلاك إلاّ بالأمر، ولم تدبّر الأملاك إلاّ بالأمر⁹⁷، والأمر قد ملأ السماوات والأرض، اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ وَمِنَ الْأَرْضِ مِثْلَهُنَّ يَتَنَزَّلُ الْأَمْرُ بَيْنَهُنَّ لِتَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَحَاطَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا (٦٥: ١٢).

95 آ: وزمن هما ب: ورمز هما؛ ولعله وزمنهما.

96 ساقطة من آ.

97 العبارة (ولم تدبّر الأملاك إلاّ بالأمر) ساقطة من ب.

The stitched mass is torn apart by Kāf followed by
 nūn, and their time is in the oath particles!
 Two letters, whose secret is a command [be!=kun], which can
 Only express He who issues that command from eternity.
 The Kāf of elevation and the nadir Nūn were divided,
 Yet the inner command is an indivisible letter.
 Thus, the corporeal and the spiritual realms are creation's traces,
 and the divine command is the ontological root of all activity and life-
 breaths.

As for the archetypes, their [apparent] division is [in fact],
 synonymity, and a specification for the devoted servant.
 For it is by the letters [Kāf Nūn] and the divine names that the intellect's
 range is confined, until it was bewildered out of love.

Level Two: The Command (*al-amr*)

"*Amr*" is an equivocal expression. [When employed in the sense of "affair,"] it 9
 is said of all existents alike. "*Amr*" and "thing" (*shay'*) are from a certain per-
 spective synonymous with "existent being." In this sense, what is understood by
 "*amr*" is the same as what is understood by "governing" (*tadbīr*). Moreover, *amr*
 [in the sense of "command"] is a pronouncement from the commanding sub-
 ject (*āmir*) that reaches the commanded object (*ma'mūr*) to perform an act or
 refrain from it. [A command] may either come down from a temporal creature
 in this manner, or from the Eternal [Creator] in the sense of creating something
 from naught (*ibdā'*), the act of bringing to be (*takwīn*), and enabling the sub-
 sistence (*ibqā'*) of the things that are created from naught (*mubda'āt*) and of
 the beings that are brought into existence (*mukawwanāt*); and [the Command
 may come down] by [causing] movements and rests.

[*Amr*] is also applied to the spirit (*al-rūḥ*): *Say, the spirit is from the command* 10
(amr) of my Lord (Q 17:85); And thus have We inspired in thee [Muḥammad]
a spirit from Our command (amr) (Q 42:52). The Sufis also apply "command"
(amr) specifically to the World of the Spirit (*'ālam al-rūḥ*), and command here
 denotes the reality of God's creative fiat, "*Be!*" No existent that comes into exis-
 tence after having been nonexistent except that this [creative] command is
 connected to it; nor does any act or non-act become manifest from an intel-
 ligible existent except that it is by the [creative] command. For the spheres do
 not move except by the command; and the kingdoms are not governed except
 by the command; and the command fills the heavens and the earth: *God it is*
who has created seven heavens, and of the earth the like thereof. The command
(amr) descends among them so that you may know that God is Powerful over all
things and that God has encompassed all things in knowledge (Q 65:12).

- ١١ فأول ما تعلق الأمر بما تعلق به التدبير بإبداع الهباء الذي فصل فيه يوم البدء وفتق، وهو اليوم الدهري، ثم بالقلم المفصل مجمل الأمر، والأمر هو الكلمة من حيثها، ثم باللوح والعرش، ثم بالكروني، ثم سماء بعد سماء على نظامهن وما فيهن من النيرات والقوى المدبرات إلى سماء الدنيا، ثم إلى الأثير، ثم إلى الهواء وما فيه، ثم الماء وما أحاط به، ثم الأرض وما عليها، ثم المولدات. فإذا لا يحدث حادث في الأرض إلا بعد أن يحدث في السماء وعلم فيها، فالوقائع⁹⁸ التي وقعت في الأرض لم تظهر فيها حتى ظهرت في أجزاء الهواء بعدما عبرت على أجزاء الأثير من خزائن سماء الدنيا، من السماوات العلما، من الكروني الواسع وهو موضع الأمر والنهي العلي، من بطنان العرش المحيط، بل ظهوره جملة، وإنما التفصيل من حيثها.
- ١٢ ولا تتوهم مسافةً ذهنيةً ولا حسيةً، فاستجاب الأمر في السماوات، ووروده عليها، هو ظهوره في الأرض، وذلك مثل الملاحم، وغلاء الأسعار ورخصها، وتكون النطف والعلقات، والمضغ والمواليد، والطفولية والشبوية، والكهولة والشيخوخية، وقبض الأرواح، وأصوات الأفراح وصراخ الحزن، وإنشاء الصور في الصنائع، والأذكار والتلاوة، والزلازل والأمطار والأرياح، والنور والظلمة، وتكوين الحيوان على اختلاف أنواعه وأشخاصه، طائره وسابجه وماشيه، كل ذلك في زمان واحد، وهو الزمان الواحد الذي يجمل العالم وكأنه⁹⁹ صدف له، وهو مجمع الأضداد.
- ١٣ ومثال ذلك إذا رأيت صور الأفراح مجردة، ولا حظتها في قضية العقل الكلي، وجدت أضدادها من صور الحزن والفرح، والتولية والعزلة، والتكون¹⁰⁰ والفساد، فمن نطف واقعة في أزمنة مخصوصة لا يحرصهن إلا الله، ومن علقه ومضغ، وبالجملة جميع الأطوار موجودة في الزمان المذكور الظاهر.
- ١٤ وكذلك الزمان الفرد، وهو من جملة ذلك، وهو تحت النفس الناطقة، فإنها تظهره ويظهر بها فيها بنظر حكمي، وبالصوفي تطور وجودي¹⁰¹ ظهر في عالم الشهادة من الغيب، ومن العدم إلى الوجود بالأمر، وكذلك يرجع.

98 آ: فالوقائع؛ ب: من الوقائع.

99 آ: وكأنه؛ ب: وكان.

100 آ: والتكون؛ ب: والسكون.

101 آ: وجودي؛ ب: وجود.

Therefore the divine command first establishes a connection with what the governance (*tadbīr*) takes as its object, by creating the Cloud from naught. And [it is within the Cloud] that the First Day becomes differentiated and torn apart; this being the Day of the Aeon. Then [the command takes as its object] the Pen that differentiates the command's undifferentiated totality. Moreover, the command is the word [*Be!*] from our standpoint. [Then the command takes as its object] the Tablet and the Throne, then the Pedestal, then heaven upon heaven, according to their hierarchy and with their luminous bodies and governing forces, down to the closest heaven, then the ether, then the air with everything in it, then the water with everything it encompasses, then the earth and everything upon it, then the three kingdoms [minerals, plants, animals]. Thus, no event occurs on earth except after it occurs in heaven and is known therein. For all happenings that happen on earth do not become manifest on it until they become manifest in parts of the air, after having traversed the ether from the treasuries of the closest heaven, from the high heavens, from the vast pedestal which is the site of the high command and the prohibition, from the depths of the all-encompassing Throne; and in fact [the command's] manifestation is as an undifferentiated whole, and the differentiation is only from our standpoint.

You should not imagine [this descent of the command as] a mental or spatial distance. For the issuing of the command in the heavens, and its coming down to them, *is* its manifestation upon the earth. This is akin to [the various happenings that occur on earth simultaneously:] battlefields; the increase and decrease in prices; the creation of semen, blood clots, flesh morsels, and newborns; childhood, youthfulness, old age, and senility; the seizing of spirits [at death]; the sounds of joy and clamors of grief; the configuration of artistic forms; litanies and recitations [of the Quran]; earthquakes, rains, and winds; light and darkness; the creation of animals in all their variety of species and individuals; some that fly, others that swim or walk. All of this occurs in one time span (*zamān wāḥid*), a time span that carries this world like its oyster, and is the meeting place of opposites.

An example of this is when you observe the forms of celebration on their own, and then you behold them in the case of the Universal Intellect, only to find opposing forms of sadness and joy, friendship and seclusion, generation and corruption, [all are] from seminal-drops that inseminate at specific times—which are only embraced by God—and from blood clots and morsels of flesh. In short, all of the [developmental] stages are contained in this aforementioned and manifest time span (*zamān zāhir*).

فكّل¹⁰² ما ظهر في الكون لم يكن نزوله مقارنة مسافة ذهنية ولا حسية، وإنما عبر بالنزول لظهور¹⁰³ ١٥
 رفعة الفاعل، فلذلك يُقال نزل الأمر إلى الأرض من السماء، ونزل من اللوح إلى السماء¹⁰⁴، ونزل
 إلى اللوح من القلم، ونزل إلى القلم المفصل من الكلمة، ونزل إلى الكاف والنون من العالم القديم،
 يَنْزِلُ الْأَمْرُ بَيْنَهُمْ لِتَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَحَاطَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا (٦٥: ١٢)،
 فكّل ما ظهر من الموجودات عالم خالق أبداع بأمر الله، وكلّ ما ظهر من الحركات والسكّات فمن أمر
 الله، وكلّ أمر أو¹⁰⁵ نهي على السنة الملوك أولي الأمر وذوي القهر فيذن الله، فعاد الأمر كله لله،
 أَلَا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَصِيرُ الْأُمُورُ (٤٢: ٥٣) وهو معنى العروج. قال الناظم [البيسط]:

سُبْحَانَ مَنْ فَصَّلَ الْأَشْيَاءَ تَفْصِيلاً * وَنَزَلَ الْأَمْرَ بِالْإِيجَادِ تَنْزِيلاً
 مَشِيئَةً أَبَدَعَتِ الْأَشْيَاءَ¹⁰⁶ مِنْ عَدَمٍ * فِي غَيْرِ أَيْنٍ يَرَاهُ الْعَقْلُ مَجْعُولاً

المرتبة الثالثة: مرتبة السماء

١٦ السماء تُطلق على كلّ ما سما وارتفع، مأخوذ¹⁰⁷ من السموّ، فكّل ما علا على شيء فهو له سماء، وذلك
 الشيء أرض لتلك السماء، فالهواء سماء الماء، والماء سماء الأرض، والأثير أرض لسماء الدنيا، وسماء

102 آ: فكّل؛ ب: بكلّ.

103 آ: لظهور؛ ب: الظهور.

104 العبارة (ونزل من اللوح إلى السماء) ساقطة من ب.

105 آ: أو؛ ب: و.

106 آ: ب: لا شيء؛ ولعله: الأشياء.

107 آ: مأخوذ؛ ب: مأخوذة.

The same also applies for the Monad of Time (*al-zamān al-fard*),¹⁰⁸ which is a part of that [one time span that carries the world like its oyster]. It is under the rational soul, for [the rational soul] manifests the [Monad of Time], and [the rational soul] manifests by and within it [the individual time unit]—this is in regard to what pertains to the properties [of the rational soul]. Moreover, the Sufi undergoes an ontological development [from stage to stage]: he becomes manifest in the visible world from the unseen; and from nonexistence into existence by the divine command, and thus he returns. 14

Therefore, everything that manifests in existence, its descent should not be associated with any mental or spatial distance. Rather, [the Quran] describes this as a “descent” to stress the exaltedness of the [divine] Agent. That is why one says that “the command *descends* to earth from heaven,” and it “*descends* from the Tablet to the Heaven”, and it “*descends* from the Tablet from the Pen,” and it “*descends* to the differentiating Pen from the Word,” and it “*descends* to the Kāf and the Nūn from the world of eternity.” *The command (amr) descends among them so that you may know that God is Powerful over all things and that God has encompassed all things in knowledge* (Q 65:12). Thus, all things that come into existence constitute “the world of creation” that was created from nothing by God’s command. And all movements and rests become manifest by the command of God, and every mandate or prohibition uttered on the tongues of kings who possess authority or [uttered] by those who possess the power to subjugate others, are by the permission of God. Thus, the entire command returns to God. *Surely all commands (umūr) go back to God* (Q 42:53). And this [return of the *commands*] is the meaning of the ascension. 15

A poet once wrote:

Glory to the One who differentiated all things in detail,
And sent down the command by bestowing existence; such a descent!
A Will that originated all things from nonexistence,
In no “where” for the mind to observe and declare.

Level Three: The Heaven (*al-samā'*)

The [term] “heaven” (*samā'*) applies to anything that is ascendant and elevated. It is taken from “heavenliness” (*sumuw*). Anything that is higher than another thing is its “heaven,” and the latter is the “earth” of that “heaven.” Thus, the air is the heaven of the water, and the water is the heaven of the earth, and the ether 16

108 *al-zamān al-fard*, the indivisible shortest unit or instant of time. It stands opposite to the *al-zamān al-wāhid*, the single time span that engulfs the world.

الدنيا لما تحتها سماء، ولما فوقها كالأرض، هكذا وأنت صاعد إلى الكرسيّ الواسع، إلى العرش المحيط، والقلم العليّ، إلى الكلمة المقدّسة، هذا في الآفاقِ (٤١: ٥٣).

١٧ وأما في الأنفُسِ (٤١: ٥٣)، فالجسم أرض للنفس وهي سماء، والنفس أرض والعقل سماء، والقلب¹⁰⁹ أرض والروح سماء، والعقل الكلّيّ سماء لما تحته في المرتبة، وكذلك النفس الكليةّ، ثمّ العقول والنفوس على حسب مراتبها، ثمّ الأجرام العلوية على حسب مراتبها، فالعرش سماء الكرسيّ، والكرسيّ سماء لفلك¹¹⁰ المقابل، والمقابل سماء لفلك المشتري، والمشتري سماء لفلك المريخ، والمريخ سماء لفلك الشمس، والشمس سماء لفلك الزهرة، والزهرة سماء لفلك عطارد، وعطارد سماء لفلك القمر، والقمر سماء لفلك الأثير، والأثير سماء للهواء، والهواء لما أحاط به، والماء كذلك، والأرض لما أكنّت، والأمر نازلٌ بحجاب الكلّ للكلّ، مدبرٌ بالبعض للبعض والكلّ بالكلّ، وهو محبوب بالكلّ عن العليّ الأعلى الذي خلق الأرض والسّمَاوَاتِ الْعُلَا (٢٠: ٤)، [المجتث]:

جُحِبَتِ لِلْكَلِّ قَهْرًا	*	بِلاَ وُجُودِ حِجَابِ
إِلَّا بِسِرِّ كَيْانِ	*	كَلَامِ لِسْرَابِ
يُخْفَى وَيُظْهِرُ حِينًا	*	قَشْرُ بَدَا عَنْ لُبَابِ
لَا يَحْجُبُ الْأَمْرَ حَقًّا ¹¹¹	*	فَانظُرْ لِأَمْرِ حِجَابِ

المرتبة الرابعة: مرتبة الأرض

١٨ قد تقدّم أنّ كلَّ¹¹² ما تعلوه سماء فهو أرض لها وسماء لما تحتها، ففي الروحانيات تتفاضل الرتب، وفي الجسمانيات¹¹³ تتفاضل الأمكنة بالنظر إلى مبدأ ما وغاية ما. فيقال: ¹¹⁴ 'الجسم أرض'، فتفصّل

109 ب: والقلب؛ آ: فالقلب.

110 آ: لفلك؛ ب: الفلك.

111 ب: الأمر؛ آ: الوهم.

112 ساقطة من ب.

113 آ: الجسمانيات؛ ب: الجسمانيات.

114 ب: فيقال؛ آ: فقال.

is the earth of the closest heaven, and the closest heaven is the heaven for what is beneath it, and it is like an earth for what is above it, and so on up to the vast footstool, and to the all-encompassing Throne, and the supreme Pen, and the holy Word [Be!]. This is in regard to [the heavens within] *the horizons* (Q 41:53).

As for the [heavens in the] *souls* (Q 41:53), [the hierarchy is as follows]: the 17
body is the “earth” of the soul which is its “heaven”; the soul is the “earth” and the intellect its “heaven”; the heart is an “earth” and the spirit its “heaven.” [In the macrocosm,] the universal intellect is a “heaven” in regard to what is beneath its ontological level, and the same applies for the universal soul, then the intellects and souls [each] according to their levels, then the celestial bodies according to their levels. Accordingly, the Throne is the “heaven” of the Footstool, and the Footstool is the “heaven” of the sphere of Saturn, and the sphere of Saturn is the “heaven” of the sphere of Jupiter, and Jupiter is the “heaven” of the sphere of Mars, and Mars is the “heaven” of the sphere of the Sun, and the Sun is the “heaven” of the sphere of Venus, and Venus is the “heaven” of the sphere of Mercury, and Mercury is the “heaven” of the sphere of the moon, and the moon is the “heaven” of the sphere of ether, and ether is the “heaven” of the air, and the air [is the “heaven”] of what it encompasses, and the same for the water, and the earth and what it covers. The command descends by the veil of the all [that veils] the all, governing the part by the part and the all by the all, and it is veiled by the all from the High, the Most High, *Who created the earth and the high heavens* (Q 20:4).

Veiled it is from everything by compulsion	*	even though no veil exists!
It is only [veiled] by the secret of an essence	*	like a shimmering mirage.
It disappears one moment only to reappear,	*	[like] a shell disclosing its kernel.
In reality, it does not veil the affair	*	So behold this wondrous matter.

Level Four: The Earth

As mentioned above, whatever has a “heaven” above is an “earth” [for that 18
heaven] and a “heaven” for what is beneath it. Spiritual realities are ranked in degrees according to their cosmic levels, while corporeal realities are ranked in regard to a specific starting point and a specific endpoint. Thus, one can say:

بجمله لظاهر وباطن، فظاهره أرض وباطنه سماء، والحواس أرض والمحاس¹¹⁵ المشتركة سماء، والقلب سماء وهو أرض الروح، والقوى الجسمانية أرض والقوى الروحانية سماء، والنفس النباتية أرض للحيوانية، والحيوانية أرض للنطقة، وعلى حسب تطوراتها، فالسؤال¹¹⁶ أرض من حيث نزولها عن المطمئنة، والأمارة أرض للوامة، واللوامة سماء.

- ١٩ وصور الخير سماء، وصور الشر أرض، وظهر الخير سماء، وظهر الشر أرض،¹¹⁷ ثم الخير يفضل بعضه بعضاً بالإضافة، وقلب المتعلم أرض لسماء عقل المعلم، والتلميذ أرض للشيخ، والشيخ أرض لمن أخذ عنه، والجسم الكلي أرض والروح الكلي سماء، والجوارح أرض والقلب سماء،¹¹⁸ وعالم الخلق أرض لعالم الأمر، وعالم الملك أرض وعالم الملوك سماء، فمن مكن له في الأرض (١٢: ٢١) وارتفع عن القضايا الأرضية كلها فهو ممن عرج به على معراج السعادة، إن الأرض لله يورثها من يشاء من عباده والعاقبة للمتقين (٧: ١٢٨) والأرض جميعاً قبضته يوم القيامة والسموات مطويات بيمينه (٣٩: ٦٧) أَلَا لَهُ الْخَلْقُ وَالْأَمْرُ تَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ (٧: ٥٤). شعر [المجتث]:

بِهَا بَدَأَ كُلُّ دُونِ	*	الْأَرْضُ لِلنَّقْصِ وَضَعٌ
بِهَا يُشَابُّ بِهُونِ	*	عَذَابُ كُلِّ مُقِيمٍ
رَطِيَّ الْيَمِينِ	*	وَلِلسَّمَاءِ كَمَالٍ لِّسِ
نَجِدُهُ حَقَّ الْبَقِينِ	*	فَإِنْ فَهِمْتَ كَلَامِي

115 آ: والمحاس، ب: والمحاسن.

116 آ: فالسؤال، ب: والسؤال.

117 ب: وصور الخير سماء، وصور الشر أرض، وظهر الخير سماء، وظهر الشر أرض؛ آ: وصور (وظهر) الشر أرض، وصور (وظهر) الخير سماء.

118 العبارة (والجوارح أرض والقلب سماء) ساقطة من ب.

“The body is an earth,” whereby the totality [of the body] is differentiated into an outward aspect and an inward aspect. Its outward aspect is an “earth,” and its inward aspect a “heaven,” and the sensory faculties are an “earth,” and the common sensorium a “heaven.” Furthermore, the heart is a “heaven” and it is the “earth” of the spirit. The bodily faculties are an “earth” and the spiritual faculties a “heaven.” The vegetal soul is an “earth” for the animal soul, and the animal soul is an “earth” for the rational soul according to its developmental stages. Thus, the Seductive Soul (*al-naḥs al-sawwāla*, Q 12:18) is an “earth” inasmuch as it is beneath the Tranquil Soul (*al-naḥs al-muṭma'inna*, Q 89:27), and the Commanding Soul (*al-naḥs al-ammāra*, Q 12:18) is an “earth” for the Lamenting Soul (*al-naḥs al-lawwāma*, Q 75:2), and the Lamenting Soul is a “heaven.”

Moreover, good forms are a “heaven” and evil forms an “earth;” and the manifestation of goodness is a “heaven,” and the manifestation of evil is an “earth.” Some good forms are preferred over others relatively speaking; and the heart of the student is an “earth” for the “heaven” of the teacher’s intellect, and the student is an “earth” for the master, while the master is an “earth” for the one he learned from; and the universal body (*al-jism al-kullī*) is an “earth” while the universal spirit (*al-rūḥ al-kullī*) is a “heaven,” and the limbs are an “earth” and the heart a “heaven,” and the world of creation is an “earth” for the world of the command, and the physical world is an “earth” and the spiritual world is a “heaven.” Therefore, whoever is *firmly established on the earth* (Q 12:21) and rises above all earthly affairs is among those who are made to ascend on the felicitous route of ascension, *Lo! The earth is God’s. He bequeaths it to whom He wills among His servants. And the end belongs to the godfearing* (Q 7:128); *The whole earth shall be His handful on the Day of Resurrection, and the heavens will be enfolded in His right Hand* (Q 39:67); *Verily, the creation and the command belong to Him. Blessed is God, the Lord of the Worlds!* (Q 7:54).
Poetry:

The earth, an abode of imperfection; all lowly things appear through it.
The torment of every dweller, by it is soiled in disgrace!
And heaven reaches its perfection, by the secret of being *folded* in His
right Hand (Q 39:67),
Thus when you understand my speech, you will find it to be the truth of
certainty!

المرتبة الخامسة: مرتبة العروج

- ٢٠ العروج هو رجوع الأمر المدبر ليعود من حيث بدأ، فسَمَّى الله نفسه بذِي المعارج، وذَكَرَ معارجَ كثيرةً، فللهلائكة معارج، وللأرواح معارج، وللقلوب معارج، ولصور الأعمال معارج، والمعارج منصوبة من السماء إلى الأرض، كلُّ معراج منها يشبه السُّلَّم على عدد نفوس الخلائق، ويتفصّل معراج كلِّ نفس لمعارج، وكلُّ معراج لمراتب، فعراج للطائفة وللأمة،¹¹⁹ ومراتب في المعارج مرتبة بعضها فوق بعض، ومعراجٌ يجمع الكلّ، وهو كالجنس¹²⁰ المتفصّل لأنواع، وكالأنواع للأشخاص، وكذلك يتفصّل معراج كلِّ شخص لأنواع، فعراج لورود الحياة المحدثّة على الروح، ومعراج لصعودها،¹²¹ ومعراج للعمل النازل، وآخر لصعوده، ومعراج للرزق، وآخر لارتفاعه، ومعراج للنفوس المتوفاة في برزخ النوم،¹²² ولحفظّة الصّاعدين بالأعمال بالنهار معراجٌ، ولحفظّة الليل معراج. وللمعارج درجات ومقامات، وليس هنا مسافة ذهنيّة ولا حسيّة، ومثال التفصّل الذي في
- ٢١ المعارج التي للهلائكة هو مناجاتُ الملّك ربّه بالعروج، فإنّ العروج لا يكون إلّا من سُفل إلى علو، والسُّفل والعلو هنا مجاز، وإمّا ذلك هو¹²³ من حيثنا، والأمر ينزل من سماء العزة إلى أرض الإبداع وحضرة الانفعال، والمعراج لا يكون إلّا للخيرات، والتدبير يعمّ الخير والشرّ، وبيان معراج الأعمال أن يُنصَبَ¹²⁴ للصلاة معراجٌ وباب في السماوات تعرج إليه إذا قُبِلت، وإلّا عكست في عروجها لعروجها، كما جاء في الحديث 'إمّا¹²⁵ تُلفُ الثوبُ الخلقُ ويضربُ بها وجهُ صاحبِها'.¹²⁶

119 آ: وللأمة؛ ب: والأمة.

120 آ: كالجنس؛ ب: كالجنس.

121 ب: لصعودها؛ آ: لسعودها.

122 ب: النوم؛ آ: القوم.

123 غير موجودة في آ.

124 ب: ينصب؛ آ: يبصر.

125 ساقطة من ب.

126 رواه ابن أبي شيبة في 'المصنّف'، كتاب الصلاة، باب تفريط مواقيت الصلاة، ٥٨٧/١؛ والبيهقي في

'شعب الإيمان'، كتاب الصلاة، باب في الكفّارات الواجبات بالجنايات ٢٨٧٣.

Level Five: The Ascension (*al-'urūj*)

The “ascension” is the return of the governed command back to where it began. Accordingly, God calls Himself “the Lord of the Ladders of Ascension,” and He mentions many ladders of ascension. The angels have their ascensions; the spirits have their ascensions; the hearts have their ascensions; the forms of good deeds have their ascensions. These ascensions are erected from heaven to earth, and each ascension resembles a ladder corresponding to the number of created souls. Moreover, the ascension of each soul differentiates into multiple ascensions, and each of these has its levels. Accordingly, there is an ascension for the Sufis (*tā'ifa*)¹²⁷ and for the global Muslim community. There are levels of ascension whose parts are arranged hierarchically, and there is an ascension that gathers together the totality [of creation]. [This all-encompassing ascension] is like a genus that subdivides into species, and as species are to individuals. Likewise, the ascension of each individual subdivides into species. For there is an ascension for the inrush of originated life upon the spirit, and an ascension for the rise [of originated life]; there is an ascension for descending deeds, and another for rising ones; there is an ascension for provision, and another for its withdrawal; there is an ascension for the souls that are suspended in the death-like liminal state of sleep; and the guardian-angels that bring up good deeds during the day have their ascension; and the guardian-angels of the night have their ascension. 20

The ascensions also have ascending degrees and stations, but [again, this is] without mental or sensory distance. An example of the differentiation in the ascensions are an angel's intimate prayers to its Lord to ascend. For the ascension only occurs from a low place to a high place. However, lowliness and highness are metaphorical, and they only [appear real] from *our* standpoint. The command descends from the heaven of exaltedness to the earth of origination and the presence of passivity. Moreover, the ascension is only for good works, whereas God's governing includes good and evil. And to clarify the ascension for good deeds: an ascension is erected for [say,] the canonical prayer, and a door [opens] in the heavens to which it ascends if it is accepted. If not, then it is reversed in its rising ascension, as transmitted in the prophetic report: “Truly, it [i.e., the canonical prayer performed after its prescribed time] is folded up just as a worn-out cloth is folded up, and the face of its owner is beaten with it.”¹²⁸ 21

127 This may also mean “factions” or “human types.”

128 Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaḥ*, K. al-Ṣalāt, Bāb tafriṭ mawāqīt al-ṣalāt i, #587; al-Bayhaqī, *Shu'ab*, K. al-Ṣalāt, Bāb fi l-kaffārāt al-wājibāt bi-l-jināyāt, #2873.

وهكذا لكل عمل معراج وباب، ولسور¹²⁹ الأقوال الحسية كشهادة أن لا إله إلا الله وأن¹³⁰ محمداً ٢٢ رسول الله، تعرج على معراجها المنسوب إلى ساق العرش، وتدخل على بابها المعلوم في السماوات، إِلَيْهِ يَصْعَدُ الْكَلِمُ الطَّيِّبُ وَالْعَمَلُ الصَّالِحُ يَرْفَعُهُ (١٠: ٣٥) ومثل كلمة طيبة كشجرة طيبة أصلها ثابت وفرعها في السماء (١٤: ٢٤)، وللصيام معارج وباب في كل سماء وباب في الجنة كما جاء، وكذلك الزكاة والحج، وبالجملة لكل عمل من أفعال البر معراج، أو قول أو خاطر، لا تتحرك ذرة إلا بإذنه، والذرة وغيرها أمر من الأمور تنزل بالتدبير وتعود بالعروج، والعروج داخل تحت التدبير، والأمر يشمل الكل، وإليه يعرج الأمر كله، شعر [الطويل]:

عَجِبْتُ لِسِرِّ الْكُونِ بِالْأَمْرِ يَخْرُجُ * فَيُظْهِرُ حِينًا ثُمَّ يَخْفَا وَيُدْرَجُ
فَيَبْدُو بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ مِنْ عِنْدِهِ * كَمَا أَرَادَ وَعِنْدَ الطِّيِّبِ لِلَّهِ يَعْجُرُ

المرتبة السادسة: مرتبة اليوم

اليوم يُقال على حين ما من الدهر (١: ٧٦)، فتارة يُراد به التقليل، وتارة يُراد به التكثير، فأقل الأيام ٢٣ هو الزمان الفرد، وأكثرها هو يوم الدهر الكلي الذي تنفصل منه الأيام، وفيه الدنيا والآخرة، وبينهما أيام معلومات، فيوم الدهر هو المذكور قبل، وهو المفصول بالأولية، وهو الجنس للأيام¹³¹، وأول افتتاحه بدء خلق العقل والعرش والقلم واللوح، وهو يمر إلى غير نهاية، فإنه يمتد مع خلقة المخلوقات مع العرش والملائكة وأخذ الميثاق وخلق آدم والدنيا والبرزخ، ومع يوم الفصل، ومع الجنة والنار والخلود فيهما، وبقاؤهما لا نهاية له. فهذا اليوم أول يوم¹³²، وهو الآخر.

129 كذا في آ، ب؛ ولعله ولصور.

130 ساقطة من ب.

131 آ: للأيام؛ ب: الأيام.

132 آ: أول يوم؛ ب: أول.

In this manner every deed has an ascension and a door, and the forms¹³³ of sensory speech, such as “No god but God, and Muḥammad is the messenger of God,” ascend upon their ascension that is erected at the base of the Throne, then enters through its well-known door in the heavens. *Unto Him ascends the good word, and He uplifts the righteous deed* (Q 35:10); *A good word is as a good tree: its roots firm and its branches in the sky* (Q 14:25). Furthermore, the fast (*ṣiyām*) has ascensions and a door in each heaven and a door in paradise as has been reported, and the same for the alms tax and the hajj pilgrimage. In short, every deed among the righteous works, words, or passing thoughts, has an ascension. There is no grain that moves except by His permission, and the grain or anything else is a command from the commands that descend by the governance and return by the ascension, and the ascension falls under the governance, while the command includes the totality, and to Him ascends the entire command.

A poem:

I marvel at the mystery of creation: it emerges from the command,
 then manifests for a while, only to disappear and wrap up!
 It appears by God's permission from Him,
 as He desires, and at the folding, it ascends.

Level Six: The Day (*al-yawm*)

The [term] “day” is applied to a specific *span of time* (Q 76:1). Sometimes it denotes a short span, and sometimes it denotes a long span. The shortest day is the Monad of Time (*al-zamān al-fard*), and the longest day is the All-Inclusive Day of the Aeon (*yawm al-dahr al-kullī*) from which the days become differentiated, and it comprises this world and the next. Between these two “days” are other known days: the aforementioned Day of the Aeon is distinguished by its firstness. It is the genus of the days, and its initial outset is at the beginning of the creation of the First Intellect, the Throne, the Pen, and the Tablet. This [day] continues endlessly, for it extends with the created nature of creatures with the Throne, the angels, the taking of the Covenant, the created nature of Adam, the isthmus, and with the Day of Division, and with paradise and hell, and everlastingness therein, and their subsistence is endless. This day is thus the first day, and it is the last.

133 Both MS A & B have *sūr* (wall) or *suwar* (walls); but this may be a shared scribal error, and the correct word would be *ṣuwar* (forms).

والأيام كلها مجمولة عليه، ومفصلة منه وهنّ خمسة أيام، وهو السادس، والخمسة من بعض أزمائه، ٢٤ فيوم الميثاق، ويوم الدنيا، ويوم البرزخ، ويوم الجمع، ويوم الفصل، فهذه الستة الأيام¹³⁴ المذكورة فيهنّ كُلت¹³⁵ خَلَقَةُ السماوات والأرض، وهو آخر اليوم الدهريّ الكليّ الذي هو يوم البدء¹³⁶، أعني الخمسة المذكورة.¹³⁷

٢٥ وذكّر الله أياماً مختلفةً، فيوم من ألف سنة (٤٧:٢٢)، وهو يوم عروج الأمر، وهو المضاف لاسم الربّ، وإنّ يوماً¹³⁸ عند ربك كآلف سنة مما تعدون، ويوم من خمسين ألف سنة، وهو يوم عروج الملائكة والروح، وهو المضاف لذي المعارج، قال الله تعالى ليس له دافع¹³⁹ من الله ذي المعارج تعرّج الملائكة والروح إليه في يوم كان مقداره خمسين ألف سنة (٧٠:٢-٤). فهذه أيام الله، وذكّرهم بأيام الله (١٤:٥).

٢٦ ويوم الدنيا المنقطع هو من سبعة آلاف سنة، وهي جمعة قامت من أيام الربّ، كل يوم من الجمعة من ألف سنة، فجاءت جملة الجمعة من سبعة آلاف سنة¹⁴⁰، قال ابن عباس رضي الله عنهما، عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم: 'الدنيا جمعة من جمع الآخرة'¹⁴¹، وإذا نظرت إلى الجمعة التي اختلفت من السبعة الأيام المضافة للرب الذي كل يوم منها من ألف سنة، وجدتها زمان ملتنا، وهي الجمعة التي تقوم فيها الساعة في يوم جمعة من الجمعة المذكورة.

134 آ: الأيام، ب: أيام.

135 آ: فيهنّ كُلت؛ ب: كُلت فيه.

136 آ: البدء؛ ب: البداية.

137 كذا في آ، ب.

138 آ: يوم.

139 ب: من دافع.

140 العبارة (وهي جمعة قامت ... سبعة آلاف سنة) ساقطة من ب.

141 ذكره العسقلاني في 'فتح الباري'، ٦١٤٠.

All the days are engulfed within [the Day of the Aeon], and they differentiate from it. There are five days [that emerge from the Day of the Aeon], and it is their sixth, and the five are a part of its time span. Accordingly, [the five days are] (1) the Day of the Covenant (*yawm al-mīthāq*); (2) the Day of This World (*yawm al-dunyā*); (3) the Day of the Interworld (*yawm al-barzakh*); (4) the Day of the Gathering (*yawm al-jam'*); and (5) the Day of Division (*yawm al-faṣl*). These six aforementioned Days, then, mark the fulfillment of the creation of the heavens and the earth. And [the fulfillment of the heavens and the earth] is the “end” of the [endless and] all-inclusive Day of the Aeon, which is also the Day of the Beginning [since it encompasses all of creation]; I mean [the Day of the Aeon is the beginning of] the aforementioned five days.¹⁴²

God mentions a variety of days [in the Quran]. There is a Day of the Millennium (Q 22:47), which is the day of the ascension of the command that is ascribed to the name of the Lord [in the verse]: *And truly a day with your Lord is as a millennium of that which you reckon*. Then there is a Day of 50,000 Years, which is the day of the ascension of the angels and the spirit, and it is ascribed to the Lord of the Ladders of Ascension. God says: *None may avert, from God, the Lord of the Ascending Ladders. Unto Him ascend the angels and the Spirit on a day whose measure is 50,000 years* (Q 70:2–4). These are the Days of God: *And remind them of the Days of God* (Q 14:5).

The demarcated Day of This World consists of 7,000 years. It is one week (*jumu'a*)¹⁴³ from the [millennial] Days of the Lord (*ayyām al-rabb*). [That is,] each day of that week is a millennium, and the totality of the week equals 7,000 years. Ibn 'Abbās reports that the blessed Prophet said: “This world is a week from the weeks of the next world.”¹⁴⁴ And if you consider the week that is made of the 7 [millennial] days that are ascribed to the Lord, each day of that week spanning one millennium, you will find it [i.e., the millennium] to be the duration of our nation. This is the “Friday” (*jumu'a*) when the Hour arises,¹⁴⁵ at the [end] of the abovementioned [7,000-year] “week.”

142 It appears as such in MS A & B.

143 *Jumu'a* means Friday and is also used to denote a “week” since it is the final day of the week. Al-Shushtari plays on this double meaning in this paragraph.

144 al-'Asqalāni, *Fath al-bārī*, K. al-Riqāq #6140.

145 According to several well-known *ahādīth*, the final Hour will be on a Friday (e.g., *khayr yawm ṭala'at fīhi l-shams yawm al-jumu'a ... wa-lā taqūm al-sā'u illā fī yawm al-jumu'a*; al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, K. al-Jumu'a #488).

- ٢٧ وإذا جَمَعَتْ جمعةً من أيام الدنيا، كلَّ يومٍ منها من سبعة آلاف سنة، قام معك اليوم المضاف
 لذيِّ المعارج (٧٠: ٣)، سبعة آلاف في سبعة آلاف¹⁴⁶ تسعة وأربعون ألفاً، وهو يوم جمعة قام من
 سبعة أيام ألفية، وله ساعة من حيثه¹⁴⁷، وهي كذلك ألفية، فجاءت خمسون ألفاً، وذكر الخمسين هو
 تنبيهٌ على الساعة المذكورة، وهذا آخر الأيام الربية.
- ٢٨ واليوم الكلي هو الذي فُتق فيه هذا الخمسين، وفُتق في الخمسين يوم الدنيا الكلي، وفُتق في يوم الدنيا
 الكلي يوم الرب الألفي، وفُتق في الألفي اليوم العادي، وهو اليوم الدنياوي المعروف عند الجمهور
 باليوم، وفُتق في اليوم العادي الساعات، وهنَّ أيام، وفُتق في الساعات الأزمنة الأفراد، والزمان
 الفرد يوم، وسنذكر بقية هذا المعنى في مرتبة الألف سنة إن شاء الله تعالى، والحمد لله وحده.

المرتبة السابعة: مرتبة المقدار

- ٢٩ والمقدار هو الزمان الفرد الذي حصر العالم وأحاط به، وهو المقارن للأنفاس، ومنه تتركب الأيام
 كلها، وهو اليوم البسيط، ففي طرفه تبدو النفس وتظهر الموجودات من الغيب إلى الشهادة. والمقدار
 وزن الشيء وحصره والإحاطة به، مثال ذلك في مقدار العدد أن تنظر الوجود المقيد الماضي منه
 والحاضر والآتي¹⁴⁸ فتجد كلَّ موجود فيه من النفوس المتوفاة باقية أعيانهم، محصورة أعدادهم،
 وكذلك الأجسام البالية المتحللة للتراب، أجزاء كلِّ جسم يحصر ذلك العدد من حيث الوجود،
 وكذلك الأقطار قطراتهم معلومة عند الله موزونة، إذ كلُّ قطرة تنزل من مكان معلوم، والنبات
 أجناسه وأنواعه وأشخاصه تحت الحصر، فالنوع يتولد من نوعه على نظام مرتب.

146 العبارة (قام معك اليوم... آلاف في سبعة آلاف) ساقطة من ب.

147 أ: حيثه؛ ب: حيث هو.

148 غير موجودة في ب.

Furthermore, when you multiply the 7 [millennial] Days of this World by 27
 [7 millennial] days [i.e., 7,000 years by] 7,000 years, the result is the day that
 is ascribed to the Lord of the Ladders of Ascension (Q: 70:3-4),¹⁴⁹ that is,
 7,000 × 7,000, [which equals] 49,000, which is a Friday from among 7 millen-
 nial days. Then you add 1 hour that is proportional to the millennial day, and
 the result is 50,000 [years mentioned in Q 70:4]. This Day of 50,000 Years is
 mentioned in order to call attention to the aforementioned hour, which is the
 end of the [7 millennial] Days of the Lord.

Moreover, it is from the All-Inclusive Day [of the Aeon] that this Day of 28
 50,000 Years (*al-khamsīnī*) is pulled out; and from the Day of 50,000 Years is
 pulled out the All-Inclusive Day this World; and from the All-Inclusive Day of
 This World is pulled out the millennial Day of the Lord; and from the millen-
 nial [Day of the Lord] the common [24-hour] Day is pulled out; and from the
 common [24-hour] day the [60-minute] hour is pulled out; and [hours], too,
 are “days”; and from the “hours” the Monads of Time are pulled out; and each
 Monad of Time is itself a “day.”

We will continue this discussion [of time] in our commentary on the Mil-
 lennium below, God willing. And Praise belongs to God alone.

Level Seven: The Measure (*al-miqdār*)

The “Measure” is the Monad of Time (*al-zamān al-fard*) that confines this world 29
 and encompasses it. It is connected to each passing breath, and from it all the
 “days” are compounded. It is the uncompounded “day.” Each passing breath
 appears along its border, and existents manifest from the unseen to the visible
 [along its border]. Furthermore, the “measure” is [literally] the weight, confine-
 ment, and encompassment of a thing. Thus if you take numerical measure, for
 example, you consider its delimited existence in the past, the present, and the
 future. You see that all existents within it among the deceased souls in fact sub-
 sist in their [immutable] entities, and are confined in number. The same holds
 for disintegrated and decayed bodies in the earth: the parts of that body are
 confined in number ontologically. The same holds for raindrops: each one is
 known by God and measured, for every raindrop descends from a known loca-
 tion. Moreover, plants and their genera, species, and individuals are confined,
 for a species is generated by its species according to a hierarchical arrange-
 ment.

149 ... God, Lord of the Ladders of Ascension, unto Him ascend the angels and the Spirit on a day
 whose measure is 50,000 years (Q 70:3-4).

- ٣٠ ومثل ذلك الحيوان والمعادن، والفصول المرتبة، والمياه المخزونة،¹⁵⁰ وأوضاع السماوات وحركاتها وكواكبها، كل كوكب يتحرك¹⁵¹ حركة معلومة محصورة الأزمان معدودة، وكذلك الأوزان¹⁵² على نظام مرتب، والإنسان هكذا لأزمان¹⁵³ معدودة، تلك الأزمنة على نظام مرتب، والحيوان على نظام، والإنسان أعجب الحيوانات، وتركيب جسمه على عضو مخصوص بتركيب ما، وقواه الجسمانية والروحانية كل ذلك مرتب بحكم¹⁵⁴ موزون مقدر، وعمره أيام معلومة راجعة للأزمنة الأفراد.
- ٣١ ومثال¹⁵⁵ ذلك من عاش أربعين سنة، وأيام الأربعين أربعة عشر ألف يوم وأربع مائة يوم، كل يوم ينقطع بالساعات، والساعات بالأزمنة الأفراد، كل زمان فرد مكيال للعمر، قال الحسن البصري: 'يا ابن آدم إنما أنت عدد، فكلمها مرّ يوم مرّ بعضك'، وذلك الزمان الفرد هو الحاضر، والماضي منه صار غائباً،¹⁵⁶ والآتي كذلك.
- ٣٢ فإذا الدنيا ترجع لمقدار الزمان الفرد، وهو مقدار مقدر، ولكن¹⁵⁷ تجده يحصر الكائنات التي تحت الزمان، والأمر يحصره، والأرزاق وكل¹⁵⁸ ما يؤكل أو يشرب محصور معلوم لقيمات معدودات وشربات معدودات وخُطأ معدودة¹⁵⁹ معلومة. والأرض الموضوع عليها الأقدام معلومة، يُرْفَع القدم ويوضع في المكان الذي فيه ظهر الوضع لا يتعداه،¹⁶⁰ والملوك شخوص عدة معلومة.

150 ب: المخزونة؛ أ: المخروقة.

151 أ: يتحرك؛ ب: متحرك.

152 أ: الأوزان؛ ب: الأوقات.

153 أ: لأزمان؛ ب: الأزمان.

154 ب: بحكم؛ أ: بحكم.

155 ب: ومثال؛ أ: مثال.

156 أ: منه صار غائباً؛ ب: ما صار علينا.

157 أ: ولكن؛ ب: لكنّه.

158 أ: وكل؛ ب: كل.

159 أ: معدودة؛ ب: معدودات.

160 أ: يتعداه؛ ب: يتعدا.

Similar [measures] include animals, minerals, seasonal patterns, stored waters, and the positions of the heavens, their movements, and their planets: each planet moves in a manner that is known and confined in duration and number. The same holds for weights according to a hierarchical arrangement; and the human being also accords to a numbered span of instants, and his instants accord with an ordered arrangement. Animals also accord with an arrangement, yet the human being is the most wondrous animal, and the composition of his body is according to limbs that have specific compositions. His bodily and spiritual faculties are arranged according to a balanced and measured decree; and his lifespan consists of known days that stem from the Monads of Time. 30

Take for example someone who lives 40 years. The 40-year span consists of 14,400 days, and each day is broken down into hours, and the hours into Monads of Time. Each Monad of Time is a standard [of measurement] for his lifespan. Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī says: "Oh child of Adam, you are nothing but a number, and with each day that passes a part of you passes." This Monad of Time is the now, and what passes of it turns into the unseen; and the same goes for what is yet to come. 31

This world thus amounts to a measurement of the Monad of Time (*al-zamān al-fard*). It is a determined measurement, yet it confines all beings that fall under time, even as the divine command (*al-amr*) confines it. Provisions and all that is edible or drinkable are confined and known in accordance with numbered values, numbered drinks, and numbered, known footsteps. The earth upon which a foot steps is known. A foot is lifted and placed where it is placed, without exceeding its spot. And kings are numbered and known individuals. 32

ومثل¹⁶¹ ذلك أصحاب الخطط والصنائع كالتجار مثلاً والحداد والإسكافي وما أشبه ذلك، كل^{٣٣} صورة يصنعون بها محصورة أعدادهنّ، والمنّ أعداد محصورة،¹⁶² والأسعار بمقدار موزون لا يؤكل جزافاً، فالمكيال والموازين والعدد مقادير قد جعل الله وكلاء من عنده في الأرض، فلا يأكل أحد¹⁶³ إلا بعد وزن أو كيل أو عدد، ولا يمشي إلا كذلك، وبالجملة كل شيء بقضاء وقدر، وكما يعلم ذلك العارفون إنّا كل شيء خلقناه بقدر (٥٤: ٤٩)، الله يعلم ما تحمل كل أنثى وما تغيض¹⁶⁴ الأرحام وما تزداد وكل شيء عنده بمقدار (١٣: ٨)، وكل شيء أحصيناه كتاباً (٧٨: ٢٩)، وعلى مثل هذا الأتمودج فقس وتبصر تجد العجب العجاب¹⁶⁵ وتكتب في ديوان المتفكرين من ذوي الألباب.

المرتبة الثامنة: مرتبة الألف سنة

يَحْتَمِلُ هذا المقدار الألفي ثلاثة¹⁶⁶ معان: ^{٣٤}
الأول أنّ الأمر المدبر من السماء الكلية إلى الأرض الكلية من بدء الخليقة إلى منقطع الدنيا طوراً واحداً¹⁶⁷ أنزل من السماء إلى الأرض، والتدبير والعروج يكون من أول يوم البرزخ وعصرات يوم القيامة وهو كشف الغطاء (٥٠: ٢٢)، أي يرجع الأمر كله (١١: ١٢٣) لله فلا يبقى حجاب، والعروج هو الرجوع، وفي¹⁶⁸ ذلك اليوم ينادي بهن الملك اليوم (٤٠: ١٦)، وهو يوم من أيام الله المقدرة بالألف. ^{٣٥}
والألف مشتقة من التأليف، أي يؤلف¹⁶⁹ الناس كلهم في صعيد واحد يحصرهم المقدار، وهو اليوم المذكور، حتى يقع الفصل فيكون العروج في الألف، والتدبير مطلق، فإذا فرغت مدة التأليف

161 آ: ومثل؛ ب: مثل.

162 العبارة (المنّ أعداد محصورة) ساقطة من ب.

163 آ: أحد؛ ب: أحداً.

164 آ: تقضي.

165 ب: العجب؛ آ: العجائب.

166 آ: ثلاثة؛ ب: ثلاث.

167 آ: طور واحد؛ ب: طوراً واحداً.

168 ب: وفي؛ آ: في.

169 آ: يؤلف؛ ب: يألف.

An example [of this cosmic measurement can be illustrated by] scribes and artisans such as carpenters, metallurgists, shoemakers, and other such professions. Each form that they create is confined in number. Moreover, favors are numbered and confined; and prices are according to a weighed measure that are not exceeded unjustly. Thus, standards of measurement, weights, and numbers are determined measurements that God has put in charge as His trustees on earth. None eats except in accordance with a weight, standard, or number; and none walks except in such a manner. In short everything is by a decree and a measure, and the knowers of God know that,

33

Truly We have created everything according to a measure (Q 54:49); God knows what every female bears, how wombs diminish and how they increase, and everything with Him is according to a measure (Q 13:8); and everything We have enumerated in a book (Q 78:29).

So measure and observe all things according to this principle, and you will discover wonders upon wonders and will be counted in the registry of contemplatives.

Level Eight: The Millennium (*al-alf sana*)

This 1,000-year measurement carries three possible meanings:

34

The first is that the governed command (*al-amr al-mudabbar*) from the all-inclusive heaven to the all-inclusive earth from the beginning of creation to the severing of this world is one stage that was brought down from heaven to earth. [In this scenario,] the governance (*tadbīr*) and ascension (*'urūj*) take place from the first Day of the Interworld and the courtyards of the Day of Resurrection, which is the *removal of the covering* (Q 50:22); i.e., *the entire command (amr) returns* (Q 11:123) to God such that no veil remains. Moreover, the ascension is the return; and on that day the caller will call *to whom is the kingdom on this Day* (Q 40:16); which is one of the Days of God (*ayyām Allāh*) estimated to span 1,000 years.

Furthermore, a millennium (*alf*) is etymologically derived from “bringing together” (*ta'lif*), which is to say that all people will be brought together on one plane, confined by the measure (*miqdār*), which is the aforementioned [Millennial] Day. As such the division [between groups that are destined for heaven or hell] takes place and the ascension takes place at the millennium, whereas the governance is not delimited [by number]. Then when the period

35

واليوم الأثني، وقُضِيَ الأمر، بقي اليوم الخميس، فإذا دُبح كَبُش الموت،¹⁷⁰ واستقرَّ أهل كلِّ دار فيها، 'وخرج من النار من في قلبه مثقال ذرّة من الإيمان'¹⁷¹ انقضت مدّة الخميس، وهو يوم الفصل، ويبقى يوم الدهر المُفتّح بالبداية في الأزل، وهو من أيّام الله، وهو يوم الجنة والنار.

المعنى الثاني أن يكون اليوم يُراد به يوم أمة محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم، وهو يوم الملة، قال رسول الله 36 صلى الله عليه وسلم: 'إن صلحت أمتي فلها يوم،'¹⁷² وهو الألف سنة، ولا تشكّ أن في عشية هذا اليوم الذي هو آخر الزمان يُرفع القرآن والأمانة والعلم، وفي القرآن هي الأمور كلّها،¹⁷³ وإليه يرجع الأمرُ كُلُّهُ (١١: ١٢٣) ويُطوى العالم وهو كلّهُ أمور، ألا إلى الله تصيرُ الأمور (٤٢: ٥٣)، وأي أمر قدّرتُه ظهر في العالم فهو باق وظاهر، حتّى إن كلَّ ما كان قبلنا من الأفعال والأقوال والقضايا والأمور هو باق فينا وظاهر علينا، قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: 'لتسلكن سنن من كان قبلكم شبراً بشبر وذراعاً بذراع'¹⁷⁴ الحديث.

ولمّا دبر الله تعالى كلَّ الأمور وأهبطها إلى الأرض مع آدم عليه السلام وذريته، ولا تفهم من الهبوط ما يفهم الجمهور فتزل¹⁷⁵ قدمك، فبقيت الأمور بأمر المدبر إلى انقضاء مدّة الدنيا. فجاء التدبير من السماء إلى الأرض في ستة أيّام أخبر الله عنهنّ، وجاء العروج، وهو رجوع الأمر¹⁷⁶ لمدبره، بالنزول، وتُدبر بالرجوع في يوم واحد، وهو آخر يوم من جمعة الدنيا الذي تقوم فيه الساعة، وهو يوم أمة محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم، وهو تمام السبعة أيّام، كلَّ يوم من ألف، وهو عمر الدنيا، وهو سبعة آلاف.

170 رواه مسلم في صحيحه، كتاب الجنة وصفة نعيمها وأهلها، باب النار يدخلها الجبارون والجنة يدخلها الضعفاء، ٥٠٨٧-٢٨٤٩.

171 رواه البخاري في صحيحه، كتاب الإيمان، باب زيادة الإيمان ونقصانه، ٤٤.

172 ذكره العسقلاني في 'فتح الباري'، ١١ / ٣١٤؛ ورواه المناوي في 'فيض القدير'، ٣ / ٧٣١.

173 كذا في آ، ب.

174 رواه المروزي في 'السنة'، ٤١.

175 ب: فتزل؛ آ: فتنزّل.

176 ب: الأمر؛ آ: الأمور.

of “bringing together” (*ta'lif*) [on the plane of resurrection] and the Millennial Day (*al-yawm al-alfi*) come to an end, and the affair (*amr*) is concluded, there remains the Day of 50,000 Years (*al-yawm al-khamsīnī*). And when “the ram of death is slaughtered,”¹⁷⁷ and every group is settled in its abode, and “whoever has the grain’s worth of faith in his heart is taken out of hell,”¹⁷⁸ then the 50,000-year period will come to an end. And that is the Day of Division (*yawm al-faṣl*), and what then remains is the Day of the Aeon (*yawm al-dahr*) that opens at the beginning of eternity. It is one of the Days of God (*ayyām Allāh*): the Day of Heaven and Hell (*yawm al-janna wa-l-nār*).

The second meaning could be that what is intended by the “Day” is the Day of the Nation of Muḥammad (*yawm ummat Muḥammad*)—God’s blessings and greetings upon him—which is the Day of the Muslim Community (*yawm al-milla*). The Messenger of God says: “If my nation is righteous, then it will have one day,”¹⁷⁹ which is the millennium. You should have no doubt that on the evening of this Day at the end of time, the Quran, the sacred trust (Q 33:72), and knowledge will be lifted. And every *command* is in the Quran, *And to Him returns the entire command* (Q 11:123); and the world, [like the Quran] is folded up, and it is all *commands*, *Surely all commands go back to God* (Q 42:53). Moreover, any command you presume to have manifested in this world is subsisting and manifest, such that all previous acts, utterances, affairs, and commands subsist in us and are manifest in us. The Messenger of God says: “You shall surely follow the ways of those who came before you, inch by inch, cubit by cubit.”¹⁸⁰

Since God governs all commands and sends them down to the earth with Adam and his offspring—and do not understand this “sending down” how the majority understands it, lest your foot slips!—the commands then subsist by the command of the Governor until the time span of this world comes to an end. Thus, the divine governance comes from heaven to earth in six days mentioned in scripture (cf. Q 7:54); and the ascension—which is the return of the command to its Governor—comes by descent, and is governed by returning in a single day. [That single day] is the end of the last Friday of this world when the Hour comes. It is the Day of the Nation of Muḥammad, the completion of the seven millennial Days, and the lifespan of this world, i.e., 7,000 years.

177 Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, K. al-Janna wa-ṣifat na’imihā wa-ahlihā, Bāb al-nār yadkhuluhā al-jabbārūn wa-l-janna yadkhuluhā l-ḍu’afā’ #2849–5087.

178 al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, K. al-Īmān, Bāb ziyādat al-īmān wa-nuqṣānih #44.

179 al-‘Asqalānī, *Fatḥ al-bārī* xi, #314; al-Munāwī, *Fayḍ al-qadīr* iii, #731.

180 al-Marwazī, *Sunna* #41.

- ٣٨ فلن كان قبلنا ستة آلاف أيام¹⁸¹، ولنا ألف يوم،¹⁸² فلم يزل الأمر يتدبر في السماوات والأرض في الستة الأيام¹⁸³ إلى أن كل في¹⁸⁴ يومنا السابع، وعلى يدي نبينا محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم الذي هو موضوع اللبنة المشار إليها في الحديث،¹⁸⁵ الْيَوْمَ أَكَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ (٥: ٣)، ولما كل الأمر بالتدبير بدأ يرجع من حيث جاء من موت النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم والخلفاء من بعده، فلم يزل العروج في الأمور في يوم الملة السابع الذي هو جمعة الأيام لاجتماع الستة الأيام فيه إلى أن يتلاشى العالم ويطوى كله، والرجوع والطّي يلحق السماوات والأرض وما¹⁸⁶ فيهنّ، فلا رجوع أعمّ من الطّي، وهو آخر رجوع الأمر كله من حيث بدأ، فيكون التدبير في الستة الأيام¹⁸⁷ الألفية التي كل فيهنّ الأمر كله،¹⁸⁸ ويكون الرجوع من كمال الأمر في أول ملتنا إلى آخرها، 'بُعِثْتُ أَنَا وَالسَّاعَةَ كَهَاتَيْنِ'،¹⁸⁹ فلا يزال الأمر يعرج إلى انقضاء الملة وأول قيام الساعة، وعمر ملتنا ألف، فالعروج هو¹⁹⁰ زمان الملة.
- ٣٩ المعنى الثالث: يُجْمَل¹⁹¹ على أن يراد باليوم الألفي المقدار الذي ذُكر في الخبر من السماء إلى الأرض (٥: ٣٢)، وبالعكس، أنه مسيرة خمسمائة سنة، وفي جرم السماء كذلك، فهذا مقدار الألف سنة من الأرض إلى السماء الدنيا نزولاً وصعوداً، إذ الأمر الحادث في الأرض ينزل من السماء، وإليها يعرج.

181 غير موجودة في ب.

182 غير موجودة في ب.

183 آ: الأيام؛ ب: أيام.

184 غير موجودة في ب.

185 رواه مسلم في صحيحه، كتاب الفضائل، ٤٣٣٧-٢٢٨٦.

186 آ: وما؛ ب: ومن.

187 آ: الأيام؛ ب: أيام.

188 غير موجودة في آ.

189 رواه البخاري في صحيحه، كتاب الرقاق، باب قول النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم بُعِثْتُ أَنَا وَالسَّاعَةَ كَهَاتَيْنِ،

190 ب: هو؛ آ: هو في.

191 آ: يُجْمَل؛ ب: مجمل.

Therefore, those who came before us had 6,000 days, and we have 1,000 days. 38
 The governing of the command never ceased in the heavens and the earth during the 6 [millennial] Days until it was fulfilled on our 7th Day at the hands of our prophet Muḥammad—God's blessings and greetings of peace be upon him—who is the “cornerstone” [of the house of prophecy] alluded to in the hadith report,¹⁹² [and confirmed in the Quranic verse] *on this day I have fulfilled your religion* (Q 5:3). Once the command was fulfilled under God's governing, it began its return to whence it came, beginning with the death of the Prophet and the Caliphs after him. The ascension has not ceased in the commands on the Day of the Muslim Community, which is the seventh day, or the Friday of all days on account of the coming together of the 6 days within it. And [the ascension continues] until the world comes to nought and is folded up in its entirety, and the return and the folding subsumes the heavens and the earth and everything upon it. Thus, no return is more universal than the folding [of the heaven and the earth on the last day] (cf Q 21:104). God's governing thus takes place throughout the six millennial days in which the *entire command* (Q 11:123) is fulfilled. This return is part of the fulfillment of the command at the beginning and to the end of our community. [The Prophet says:] “I was sent forth and the Hour just as these two [fingers are close together].”¹⁹³ Therefore the command does not cease to ascend until the end of the Community and the coming of the Hour. And the lifespan of our community is 1,000, therefore the ascension is the duration of our community.

The third meaning could be that the measurement of the Millennial Day 39
 mentioned in the verse [*He governs the command*] *from the heaven to the earth* (Q 32:5) and conversely [*it ascends unto Him on a day whose measure is one thousand years*], is that it is a journey of 500 years [down to the lowest heaven], and the same [distance of 500 years up] in the heavenly body. This then is the measurement of one millennium from the earth down to the closest heaven and back again. For the command that occurs on earth descends from heaven and ascends back to it.

192 Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, K. al-Faḍā'il #2286–4237.

193 al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, K. al-Riqāq, Bāb qawl al-nabī (ṣ) *bu'ithtu anā wa'l-sā'a ka-hāṭayn* #6138.

- وكلّ الحوادث والأمر تنزل بالتدبير الإلهي من سماء العزة والجبروت والحكمة لسماء الدنيا، ٤٠ وهي خزانة الأمور، تنزل¹⁹⁴ من هنالك بالتدبير المقدّر، وَإِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا عِنْدَنَا خَزَائِنُهُ وَمَا نُنزِلُهُ إِلَّا بِقَدَرٍ مَعْلُومٍ (٢١:١٥)، ومن سماء الدنيا نزل القرآن، وفيه الأمور كلّها بعد ما أنزل إليها،¹⁹⁵ ينزل ربنا إلى سماء الدنيا¹⁹⁶ أي أمر ربنا على ما زعمت الأشعرية، ثم يرجع. فإذا أراد الله حدوث أمر، أعلم بذلك الملائكة فتحدّثوا به، فلا تزال الأخبار من سماء إلى سماء إلى سماء الدنيا كما جاء.¹⁹⁷
- ٤١ فلا بدّ من سماء الدنيا أن تجتمع الأمور المدبّرة فيها، ومنها تنزل إلى الأرض، وإليها تصعد الأعمال في العروج والأرواح السعيدة، إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا عَنْهَا لَا تُفْتَحُ لَهُمْ أَبْوَابُ السَّمَاءِ (٧:٤٠)، فصعود الأعمال والأقوال صوراً صوراً، وهو العروج، ولم تظهر في الأرض إلا بعد ما خطرت على السماء، وكذلك استراق¹⁹⁸ الشياطين السمع لتسبق الأمور قبل نزولها إلى الكهنة، ففي كلّ زمان فرد أمور نازلة بالتدبير، وأمور تعرج بالتدبير، يسأله من في السماوات والأرض كلّ يوم هو في شأن (٢٩:٥٥)، وَفِي السَّمَاءِ رِزْقُهُمْ وَمَا تُوَعَّدُونَ (٢٢:٥١)، ومنها ينزل المطر والبركات والأرزاق، وهي في

194 ب: تنزل؛ آ: تنزل.

195 غير موجودة في آ.

196 رواه البخاري في صحيحه، كتاب التهجّد، باب الدعاء في الصلاة، ١٠٩٤؛ ومسلم في صحيحه، كتاب صلاة المسافرين وقصرها، باب الترغيب في الدعاء والذكر في آخر الليل والإجابة فيه، ١٢٦١-٧٥٨.

197 رواه الترمذي في سننه، كتاب تفسير القرآن، باب ومن سورة سبأ؛ بلفظ إذا قضى الله في السماء أمراً

...

198 ب: استراق؛ آ: استرق.

All occurrences and commands are sent down by the divine governance from the exalted heaven of dominance and wisdom to the closest heaven, which is the treasury of the commands. The [commands] are sent down from [the exalted heaven] by God's measured governance: *Naught is there, but that its treasuries lie with Us, and We do not send it down, except in a known measure* (Q 15:21). It is also from the closest heaven that the Quran descends. Within [the closest heaven] are all the commands after they were sent down to it [from the exalted heaven]. [According to one ḥādīth:] "Our Lord descends to the closest heaven,"¹⁹⁹ i.e. the command of our Lord [descends to the closest heaven] according to the opinion of the Ash'arites; then it returns [back to God]. Thus, when God wishes to occasion (*ḥudūth*) a command, He announces it to the angels, who then relate (*taḥaddathū*) it [to angels below them]. The divine announcements therefore never cease from heaven to heaven down to the closest heaven, as described in the ḥādīth.²⁰⁰

It is indeed in the closest heaven that all the governed commands come together. From it they descend to the earth, and to it the deeds and the felicitous spirits rise in their ascension. *Truly those who deny Our signs and wax arrogant against them, the doors of heaven shall not be opened for them* (Q 7:40). Thus, the rise of deeds and words takes place form by form, and that is the ascension. Moreover, [deeds and words] only manifest on earth after passing through the heavens. This is also how the satans "gain a hearing by stealth" from the angels so as to outstrip the divine command before its descent [to earth] and [in order to relay that stolen information] to the soothsayers.²⁰¹ For at each Monad of Time (*zamān fard*) there are commands that descend by [His] governing, and commands that ascend by [His] governing:

Those in the heavens and on the earth entreat Him: every day He is upon a task (Q 55:29); *And in the heaven is your provision and that which you were promised.* (Q 51:22)

199 al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, K. al-Tahajjud, Bāb al-du'ā' fi l-ṣalāt #1094; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, K. Ṣalāt al-musāfirīn wa-qaṣriḥā, Bāb al-targhib fi l-du'ā' wa'-dhikr fi ākhir al-lāyl wa-l-ijāba fih #1261–758.

200 al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, K. Tafsir al-Qur'ān, Bāb wa-min sūrat Saba' #3223.

201 The Quran describes the satans, or evil jinn, as gaining access to the discourse between angels concerning the descending divine command, and relaying that stolen information to fortune-tellers and sorcerers. For an overview, see *The Study Quran* commentary on verses 15:16–18; 67:5; 72:8–9; 37:7–11.

قطراتها مكتوبة مخزونة مصونة، وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْمُعْصِرَاتِ مَاءً مُّجَاً لِنُخْرِجَ بِهِ حَبًّا وَنَبَاتًا وَجَنَّاتٍ أَلْفَافًا (٧٨: ١٤-١٦) هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً لَكُمْ مِنْهُ شَرَابٌ وَمِنْهُ شَجْرٌ فِيهِ تُسِيمُونَ يَنْبِتُ لَكُمْ بِهِ الزَّرْعَ وَالزَّيْتُونَ وَالنَّخِيلَ وَالْأَعْنَابَ وَمِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ (١٦: ١٠-١١).

وقد قلنا إن الأمر يطلق على كل شيء، وقوله تعالى يُدَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ (٣٢: ٤٢) (٥) أمر ينزل الحوادث والقضايا بالأمور من صور الأعمال والأقوال صوراً صوراً، وتظهر الكائنات بنزول²⁰² الماء المدبّر فيكون به الزرع والفواكه والأب الذي تأكله الأنعام، فيتكوّن²⁰³ لحمها بذلك، فيأكله الناس، فلحم الحيوان من النبات والزرع والفواكه، فيتكوّن²⁰⁴ الإنسان لحمه وعظمه وجسمه كلّ من النبات، ولحم الحيوان كلّ ذلك من النبات، والنبات من الماء، وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيًّا (٣١: ٣٠).

٤٣ والأرواح والنفوس أنزلت من السماء وإليه يعود السعيد منها، فنوع يأوي إلى قناديل تحت العرش كما جاء، ونوع معلق بشجر الجنة²⁰⁵ على حسب مراتبهم،²⁰⁶ فهذا نوع من التدبير من السماء إلى الأرض، والعروج رجوع الأرواح والأقوال والأفعال بعد ما نزلت بالتدبير.

٤٤ وقد يكون أيضاً نزول الأمر من السماء²⁰⁷ الدنيا إلى الأرض وعروجه في مقدار ما، إذا نظرناه من حيث مقاديرنا كان مقداره ألف سنة، وهو مسيرة خمسمائة كما ذكر، وصعود كذلك على تلك المسافة، فهذا مقدار الألف سنة، والله أعلم.

202 آ: بنزول؛ ب: ينزل.

203 آ: فيتكوّن؛ ب: فيكون.

204 آ: فيتكوّن؛ ب: فيكون.

205 العبارة (وهو مسيرة خمسمائة كما ذكر، وصعود كذلك) زائدة في آ.

206 رواه مسلم في صحيحه، كتاب الإمارة، باب بيان أنّ أرواح الشهداء في الجنة وأنهم أحياء عند ربهم يرزقون، ١٨٨٧.

207 آ: السماء؛ ب: سماء.

From [the closest heaven] rainfall, blessings, and provisions descend. Each of its drops are recorded, stored, and safeguarded:

And We send down water pouring from the rain clouds, that We might produce grain and plants thereby, and luxuriant gardens (Q 78:14–16); He it is Who sends down water from the heaven, from which you have drink, and from which comes forth vegetation wherewith you pasture your cattle. Therewith He causes the crops to grow for you, and olives, and date palms, and grapevines, and every kind of fruit. Truly in that is a sign for a people who reflect. (Q 16:10–11)

We have already said that the *amr* is applied to all things. The verse *He governs the command* (*amr*) *from heaven to earth* (Q 32:5) is a command (*amr*) that generates [lit., sends down] occurrences and circumstances through the affairs/commands (*umūr*) of the forms of deeds and words, form by form. [It is a command] that manifests all beings by the descent of the [divinely] governed water, and it produces wheat, fruits, and pasture as food for livestock. Their flesh matures through the pasturage, then it is eaten by humans. Thus, animal flesh is from plants, wheat, and fruits; and all human flesh, bones, and bodies are from plants. All animal flesh is from plants, and plants are from water, *and We made all things alive by the water* (Q 21:30). 42

Moreover, the spirits and souls are sent down from heaven, and the felicitous ones return to it. One species takes shelter in the lamps under the Throne, as per the ḥadīth;²⁰⁸ just as another is suspended from the trees of heaven according to their levels. This is a type of governance from heaven to earth, and the ascension is the return of the spirits, words, and deeds after they were sent down by [His] governance. 43

It could also be that the descent of the command from the closest heaven to the earth, and its ascent [back to the closest heaven] is according to a specific measurement. When we consider this [specific measurement] in view of our standards of measurement, it equals the measurement of one millennium; that is, a journey of 500 years as mentioned above, and an equidistant ascension [of 500 years]. This, then, is the measurement of the millennium, and God knows best. 44

208 Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, K. al-Imāra, Bāb bayān anna arwāḥ al-shuhadā' fi l-janna wa-annahum aḥyā' 'inda Rabbihim yurzaqūn #1887.

وصلّى الله على سيّدنا محمّد وآله وصحبه أجمعين
 تمّت بعون الله وحسن توفيقه على يد أضعف عباد الله
 نصر بن يوسف بن علي بن عبد الله الشافعي
 عفا الله له ولوالديه ولبن قاربه ولمن سطر فيه ولمؤلفه ولجميع المسلمين والمسلمات والمؤمنين والمؤمنات
 بمَنّه وكرمه وإحسانه ووصله (آ)

Blessings of God upon our master Muḥammad, his family, and all his
Companions
Completed by God's help and kind assistance at the hand of God's weakest
servant,

Naṣr b. Yūsuf b. 'Alī b. 'Abdallāh al-Shāfi'ī.

May God pardon him, his parents, associates, the scribes, the author, all
Muslim men and Muslim women, and believing men and believing women,
by His gratuitous kindness, generosity, beneficence, and association.

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The Image of *Qalandar* in the *Dīvān-i Shams*

Janis Esots

1

The word *qalandar*, as far as we know, came into use in Persian somewhere in the fourth/tenth century. Muḥammad Riḍā Shafī'ī Kadkanī, who published an important monograph on *qalandariyya* in 2007,¹ believes the earliest known text in which the word *qalandar* appears, to be the following rubā'ī quoted by Abū Sa'īd Abū l-Khayr (d. 440/1049):

من دانگی و نیم داشتم حبه کم
 دو کوزه نبی خریدم پاره کم
 بر بربط من نه زیر ماندهست و نه بم
 تا کی کوی قلندری و غم غم

I had a *dang*² and a half, or a bit less,
 [And] bought two jugs of wine, or a bit less.
 On my lute, neither the upper, nor the lower string is left.
 For how long the alley of *qalandarī* and grief, grief?³

According to Shafī'ī Kadkanī, approximately until the end of the sixth/twelfth century the word *qalandar* was used only as the name of a place (i.e., as a synonym for *langar*), whereas the individual who inhabited or frequently visited this place was called *qalandarī* or *rind*. Apparently, somewhere in the seventh/thirteenth century, it gradually came into habit to drop the final *-ī*, and *qalandar* began to metonymically denote an individual. However, until at least the end of the eighth/fourteenth century, *qalandar* was used in both senses, sometimes meaning a place and at other times an individual.⁴ It is, therefore,

1 Shafī'ī Kadkanī, *Qalandariyya*.

2 *Dang*: a tiny coin, whose value equals a sixth of a dirham.

3 Ibn Munawwar, *Asrār al-tawḥīd* 73.

4 This is well attested by the poems of Ḥāfiẓ. In several cases, he employs the word *qalandar* as the name of a place:

interesting that Rūmī always (the word appears in the *Dīvān* about 30 times) uses *qalandar* in its metonymical sense, applying it to an individual. It is even more interesting that the word never appears in his other major work, the *Mathnawī-yi maʿnawī*. Some Iranian scholars (such as Shafīʿī Kadkanī and Bay-āṭī⁵) have claimed that up to 30 percent of the poems included in Furūzānfar's edition of the *Dīvān* may have been composed by other authors (the people who belonged to Rūmī's inner circle). Can we establish with full certainty that the poems which mention the name of *qalandar* or *qalandarī* were composed by Rūmī himself? I am afraid we cannot. However, a fairly strong argument in favor of Rūmī's authorship is the consistent use of the word *qalandar* as a symbol of a non-delimited man (*mard-i muṭlaq*). Nevertheless, until Rūmī's authorship of the poems at issue is established beyond further doubt, it is perhaps more accurate to speak about the *qalandar* and *qalandarī*-hood in the *Dīvān-i Shams*, not in Rūmī's poetry.

2

A few general remarks about the phenomenon of *qalandarī* must be made before we begin to examine the relevant poems from the *Dīvān-i Shams*. It is thought that Qalandariyya as an organized movement came into existence owing to the efforts of Quṭb al-Dīn Ḥaydar Zāvaʿī (d. 613/1217 or 618/1221) and, in particular, Jamāl al-Dīn Sāvaḡī (d. after 620/1224). They distinguished themselves from both the regular Ṣūfis and the commoners by their habit of shaving head hair, beards, moustaches, and eyebrows. They also wore particular clothes

بر در می‌کده رندان قلندر باشند
که ستانند و دهند افسر شاهنشاهی

At the door of the tavern, there are rinds of the *qalandar*,
Who take and give the king's crown [at their will (?)].
(Ḥāfiẓ, *Dīvān* 278.)

In other cases, he uses it to refer to an individual:

وقت آن شیرین قلندر خوش که در اطوار سیر
ذکر تسبیح ملک در حلقه زنار داشت

Blessed [be] the time of that sweet *qalandar*, who at the stages of [his] [spiritual]
journey
Kept the remembrance of angel's purification in the circle of [his] *zunnar* (Zoroas-
trian belt).
(Ḥāfiẓ, *Dīvān* 143)

5 Ardavān Bayāṭī in his 1380 Sh./2001 edition of the *Dīvān-i Shams* attempted to establish the poems that definitely do not belong to Rūmī. According to Bayāṭī, most of these poems belong to Ṣalāh al-Dīn Zarkūb and Sulṭān Walad. See Rūmī, *Kulliyāt*.

and carried with them certain specific tokens, such as a banner (*‘alam*) and a battle-axe (*tabarzīn*). They were also famous for consuming hashish. Their moral code, according to the testimony given by Khaṭīb Fārsī, consisted of five pillars—modesty (*qanā‘at*), subtlety (*laṭāfat*), repentance (*nadāmat*), religiosity (*dīyānat*), and asceticism (*riyādat*).⁶ The proclaimed aspiration of the participants of this movement, which in the first half of the seventh/thirteenth century assumed a form of a semi-Ṣūfī order, was *tajrīd*,⁷ namely, (achieving the state of) separation, as is well attested by their surviving writings⁸ (wherefore the habit of shaving hair, beard, moustache, and eyebrows must be interpreted as an allusion to this aspiration). The proclaimed goal was, of course, never achieved in practice by the overwhelming majority of *qalandars*—partly because the methods employed turned out to be inadequate in most cases, and partly because the ambition was of such a nature that it could be fulfilled by very few. However, the ideal image of the *qalandar*—a man who has separated himself from all this-worldly and otherworldly concerns and left behind his mortal human nature (*bashariyyat*)⁹—lives in Iranian culture independently of the attempts and failures to attain and implement this ideal. It has its own story, as I will now explicate.

3

According to my research into the *Dīvān-i Shams*, at least 80 poems (mainly ghazals) refer to the habit of *qalandarī* in one way or another. However, only two ghazals (nos. 2774 and 3006) contain some sort of exposition of the *qalandarī* doctrine; the others give only brief (direct or indirect) references. I shall now attempt to discuss these two poems in some detail. First, I shall examine ghazal no. 2774.

6 See Fārsī, *Qalandarnāma* 42.

7 Hence, the Qalandariyya was quite different from the Malāmatiyya (if the latter ever existed as a distinct school/movement with its own—verbally expressed or implicit—creed, in the first place). It is possible that it never did and was invented by al-Sulamī in an attempt to give a systematic account of the Ṣūfism of Khurāsān (as different from that of Baghdad). See Shafī‘ī Kadkanī, *Qalandariyya* 109–117. The Qalandariyya had set for itself a higher objective of separation instead of reproach. The Malāmatiyya, it seems, had offered a method, without setting a clear objective to be achieved.

8 See the samples of genuine *qalandarī* letters and their imitations in Shafī‘ī Kadkanī, *Qalandariyya* 369–385.

9 This ideal image, apparently, was created by Abū l-Majd Sanā‘ī (d. 525/1131). The *Risāla-i Qalandariyya* is attributed to ‘Abdallāh Anṣārī (d. 481/1089), but, judging from its style, must have been written several centuries later. For evidence, see Shafī‘ī Kadkanī, *Qalandariyya* 40.

در فنای محض افشانند مردان آستی
 دامن خود برفشاند از دروغ و راستی
 مرد مطلق دست خود را کی بیآلاید به جان
 آخرای جان قلندر از چه پهلو خاستی
 سالکی جان مجرد بر قلندر عرضه داد
 گفت در گوشش قلندر کآن طرف میواستی
 کاین طرف هر چند سوزی در شرار عشق خویش
 لیک هم مطلق نه ای زیرا که در غوغاستی
 در جمال لم یزل چشم ازل حیران شده
 نی فزودی از دو عالم نی ز نفیش کاستی
 تو نه اینجایی نه آنجا لیک عشاق از هوس
 می کنند آنجا نظر کآنجاستی آنجاستی
 ای که از آلا تو لافیدی بدین زفتی مباش
 چشمها را پاک کن بنگر که هم در لاسی
 مرحبا جان عدم رنگ وجود آمیز خوش
 فارغ از هست و عدم مر هر دو را آراستی
 پاکی چشمت نباشد جز شه تبریزیان
 شمس دین گر او بخوهد لیک نی زانهاستی

Men throw up their sleeves in pure annihilation,
 Shaking off falsehood and truth from their skirts.
 When will an unbound man soil his hands with the soul?
 [After all], o [my] soul, what did the *qalandar* leave behind?
 A traveller showed [his] separated soul to the *qalandar*.
 The *qalandar* whispered in his ear: "You should be on the other side,
 Because on this side, although you burn in the fire of your love,
 You are not unbound, because you are in tumult."
 The eye of preeternity is bewildered by the beauty of the Eternal One,
 Which neither increases through [the existence of] two worlds, nor
 decreases through their negation.
 You are neither here, nor there, but the lovers because of [their] passion

Look toward that side [chanting:] “He is there! He is there!”
 O you who bragged of “except [God]!” Don’t be that stout!
 Wash your eyes [and] see that you are also in “no [God]!”
 Welcome, o pleasant soul, possessing the color of nonexistence
 [which is] mixed with [that of] existence!
 Disengaged from existence and nonexistence, you have adorned both!
 The purity of your eyes is none but the king of the people of Tabrīz
 Shams al-Dīn, if he consents—but you are not [one] of them.¹⁰

The first couplet goes:

در فنای محض افشانند مردان آستی
 دامن خود برفشانند از دروغ و راستی

Men throw up their sleeves in pure annihilation,
 Shaking off falsehood and truth from their skirts.

It appears to refer to the *samāʿ* ceremony, during which its participants annihilate (or aspire to annihilate) themselves in the Real. When this annihilation has taken place, the distinctions that pertain to the ordinary state of consciousness—such as those between truth and falsehood, good and evil, mildness and harshness—are eliminated, and multiple objects, previously discerned by our consciousness, disappear in the ocean of oneness. The verse describes the state of a Ṣūfī, who, after his annihilation in the Real, achieves the state of pure oneness. We can, therefore, say that, in order to become a *qalandar*, one must experience a complete annihilation of one’s self and immersion in the non-delimited Reality (upon which experience one stops perceiving oneself as something distinct and different from the things that surround him).

The second couplet teaches other important lessons:

مرد مطلق دست خود را کی بیآلاید به جان
 آخر ای جان قلندر از چه پهلو خاستی

When will an unbound man soil his hands with the soul?
 [After all], o [my] soul, what did the *qalandar* leave behind?

10 Rūmī, *Dīvān-i Shams*, ghazal 2774. Cf. Chittick’s partial translation in Chittick, *Sufi path* 169.

We learn that whosoever wants to become a *qalandar* must wash his hands from his soul (*jān*). Apparently, *jān* must be treated here as a synonym of *naḥs*, more precisely as *al-naḥs al-ammāra bi-l-su'* (the soul/self which urges [to do] evil). The soul was his spouse, at whose side he used to sleep, but then he rose from her side and left her. More important, the *qalandar* is identified here as an “unbound (i.e., non-delimited) man” (*mard-i muṭlaq*), which is, apparently, the highest degree of mystical perfection possible and the furthest limit the Ṣūfī can reach during his perfectionary journey. The word *muṭlaq* (unbound, non-delimited), as it was mentioned above, refers to the *qalandar*'s separation from all this-worldly and otherworldly affairs, his detachment and disengagement. Does this mean that he has experienced the essential self-disclosure of the Real, thus becoming free from all entifications (*ta'ayyunāt*), in which case he should be many levels above the “soul”? The verse does not give a clear answer. In fact, it is a reproach, apparently addressed to someone who claims to be a *qalandar* (i.e., an unbound man), while not actually being him. Who is this bluffer? We don't know for sure.¹¹ Could Rūmī be speaking to himself, on behalf of Shams?

The third and the fourth couplets are as follows:

سالکی جان مجرد بر قلندر عرضه داد
گفت در گوشش قلندر کان طرف میواستی
کاین طرف هر چند سوزی در شرار عشق خویش
لیک هم مطلق نه ای زیرا که در غوغاستی

A traveller showed [his] separated soul to the *qalandar*.

The *qalandar* whispered in his ear: “You should be on the other side,
Because on this side, although you burn in the fire of your love,
You are not unbound, because you are in tumult.”

Rūmī continues the discussion of separation (*tajrīd*) and unboundedness (*iṭlāq*). It becomes clear that, according to Rūmī (or whoever composed this poem), separation cannot be regarded as the end of the Ṣūfī path and the attainment of its principal objective. Rather, it must be viewed as one of the relatively early stages that is achieved before the crucial transformation of the wayfarer's spirit through the experience of annihilation in the Real. Separating

11 Ardavān Bayātī believes that all distinctly *qalandarī* ghazals (2774, 3006, and also 3004) in the *Divān* are addressed to Shams Tabrīzī. Bayātī, Introduction 13.

oneself from and becoming unattached to anything that exists in two worlds is not enough: as long as you continue to perceive both this world and the Real as something different from yourself and think in subject/object categories, you are not a *qalandar* (read: a true Šūfī).¹² The *qalandar*'s advice to the traveller is to get rid of the soul, annihilate one's self, and thus unite with the whole because, as long as one remains with one's self/soul, the latter will not stop quarrelling with and seducing the individual. It will never leave him at peace, thus depriving him of the taste of true oneness. The question is whether the annihilation of the self (*fanā' al-nafs*) can be achieved once and forever—or is this a Sisyphean task that can never be completed? The opposition “this side/the other side” in the verse seems to imply that Rūmī means a single experience, not a series of recurrent experiences.

The fifth and the sixth couplets go as follows:

در جمال لم یزل چشم ازل حیران شده
نی فزودی از دو عالم نی ز نفیش کاستی
تو نه اینجایی نه آنجا لیک عشاق از هوس
می کنند آنجا نظر کآنجاستی آنجاستی

The eye of preeternity is bewildered by the beauty of the Eternal
One
Which neither increases through [the existence of] two worlds, nor
decreases through their negation.
You are neither here, nor there, but the lovers because of [their] passion
Look toward that side [chanting]: “He is there! He is there!”

If taken at their face value, these verses seem to deal with the unboundedness of the Real, not with the *qalandar*. But is the *qalandar* not a likeness of the Real (or a polished mirror that reflects Him)? Like the Real, he does not care whether the two worlds exist or not, as is attested by the following verses of Farīd al-Dīn ‘Attār:

¹² cf. the following Sultān Walad's bayt:

The fame comes to one who becomes extinct
[And] goes beyond the veil of this “I” and “we.”
(Sultān Walad, *Waladhāma* 243)

شهرت او را رسد که گشت فنا
بگذشت از حجاب این من و ما

مستان می عشق درین بادیه رفتند
 من ماندم و از ماندن من نیز اثر نیست
 در بادیه عشق نه نقصان نه کمالست
 چون من دو جهان خلق اگر هست و اگر نیست

Those drunk with the wine of love went into this desert;
 I remained, but there is no trace of my remaining too.
 In the desert of love, the existence or nonexistence of
 the two worlds of creation
 Like my [own] existence or nonexistence, is neither
 imperfection, nor perfection.¹³

Thus, the *qalandar* has no needs in the two worlds—which means he does not belong to them and, consequently, is not created. The claim reiterates the famous saying of Abū l-Ḥasan al-Kharaqānī (d. 425/1033), “The Ṣūfī is not created.”¹⁴ Taking a different stance, it can be said that the *qalandar* is the eye of preternity, which is totally absorbed by the vision of the Real. This appears to be the gist of message of the following couplet:

نیست قلندر از بشر نك به تو گفت مختصر
 جمله نظر بود نظر در خمشی کلام دل

The *qalandar* is not a mortal human being. Thus, he told you briefly:
 “He is all a look, a look, in the silence of the speech of the heart.”¹⁵

13 ‘Aṭṭār, *Dīvān* 88.

14 Mīnawī, *Kharaqānī* 80. According to ‘Abdallāh Anṣārī, Kharaqānī himself explained this saying as follows: “The Ṣūfī is not the one who comes and goes, and speaks, and sees, and hears, and buys and sleeps. The Ṣūfī is one of the attributes of the Real.” ‘Abdallāh-i Anṣārī, *Maqāmāt-i Abū al-Ḥasan-i Kharaqānī*, quoted from Shafī‘ī Kadkanī, *Qalandariyya* 316. Cf.: “I created all this creation, but I did not create the Ṣūfī. That is, non-existent (*ma’dūm*) is not created.” Mīnawī, *Kharaqānī* 80.

15 Rūmī, *Dīvān-i Shams*, ghazal 1336. Cf. also:

خاموش کن و شه را بین چون باز سپیدی تو
 نه بلبل قوالی درمانده در این قالك

Be silent and watch the king, because you are a white falcon—
 You are not a chattering nightingale that has wasted her aspiration
 in her chatter.
 (Rūmī, *Dīvān-i Shams*, ghazal 1316.)

Like the Real, the *qalandar* is neither here nor there (i.e., he belongs neither to this world, nor to the hereafter and is neither existent, nor nonexistent; I shall return to this shortly). He is as elusive as the mythical phoenix (*‘anqā*): whosoever claims to have seen him—not to mention being him—in all likelihood, is lying.

The seventh couplet is a reproach:

ای که از آتو لافیدی بدین زفتی مباش
چشمها را پاک کن بنگر که هم در لاستی

O you who bragged of “except [God]”! Don’t be that stout!
Wash your eyes [and] see that you are also in “no [God]”!

It is apparently addressed to the same person whom Rūmī had addressed in the second *bayt*. Apart from pretending to be a *qalandar*, this individual had also, like Ḥallāj and Bāyazīd, claimed to be the Real (*ḥaqq*), and only the Real. Becoming the locus of the Real’s self-disclosure, the intoxicated mystic is sometimes unable to distinguish between the self-disclosure (which simultaneously is and is not the Real) and its locus, and he confuses the latter with the former. Rūmī advises him to ponder not only on his identity with the Real but also on the difference between him and the Real.

The eighth couplet, despite its apparent simplicity, is perhaps the most difficult to interpret:

مرحبا جان عدم رنگ وجود آمیز خوش
فارغ از هست و عدم مر هر دورا آراستی

Welcome, o pleasant soul, possessing the color of nonexistence
[which is] mixed with [that of] existence!
Disengaged from existence and nonexistence, you have adorned both!

What does it mean to possess the color of nonexistence, which is mixed with the hue of existence, and to be empty of both existence and nonexistence? Our reason tells us that every thing is either existent or nonexistent. It cannot, by definition, simultaneously exist and not exist, at least not in the same mode of existence. We can readily admit that certain things that exist in our mind do not exist in the outside, but does Rūmī mean this? No, he does not; he means that the *qalandar* (or the unbound man) neither exists nor does not exist: both existence and nonexistence are limitations, but the *qalandar* is not delimited.

The paradoxical claim of the *qalandar*'s simultaneous existence and nonexistence must be understood, apparently, as his annihilation in the Real, due to which he ceases to exist as the "self" (i.e., as a subject that is distinct from the object) and, instead, begins to exist through the existence of the Real. It can also be said that, since the *qalandar*'s properties are in complete equilibrium and none of them predominates over the others, there is no property (*ḥukm*) that rules him, as a result of which he leaves no trace (*athar*) through which he could be "found" (i.e., described as such and such).

The final couplet is apparently addressed to the same person to whom the second and seventh *bayts* are aimed:

پاکی چشمت نباشد جز شه تبریزیان
شمس دین گر او بخوهد لیک نی زانهاستی

The purity of your eyes is none but the king of the people of Tabrīz
Shams al-Dīn, if he consents—but you are not [one] of them.¹⁶

Only Shams Tabrīzī can cure you of squinting, it says, but you are not of those worthy of his attention. Since nobody else can help you, in all likelihood, you will remain in your present state. The ghazal can, thus, be treated as a piece of Ṣūfī *andarz* (advice) that ends with a discouraging remark, to the effect that "you are not fit to be a *qalandar*." At the same time, it can also be regarded as a concise exposition of the author's doctrine of *qalandarī*. One notices that the standard set is extremely high: *tajrīd* (separation) is viewed by Rūmī as merely a prerequisite of becoming a *qalandar*, while the essence of *qalandarī*, to him, consists in the state of unboundedness and non-delimitation. Apparently, the status of the *qalandar* in Rūmī's thought is similar (if not identical) to that of the Perfect Man (*insān-i kāmīl*) in Ibn al-ʿArabī's teaching.

4

Let us now turn to ghazal no. 3006. It goes as follows:

سیرغ و کیمیا و مقام قلندری
وصف قلندر است و قلندر ازوبری

16 Rūmī, *Dīvān-i Shams*, ghazal 2774. Cf. Chittick's partial translation in Chittick, *Sufi path* 169.

گویی قلندرم من و این دل پذیر نیست
 زیرا که آفریده نباشد قلندری
 دام و دم قلندر بیچون بود مقیم
 خالی ست از کفایت و معنی داوری
 از خود به خود چه جوئی چون سر به سر تویی
 چون آب در سبوی کلی ز کل پری
 از خود به خود سفر کن در راه عاشقی
 وین قصه مختصر کن ای دوست یکسری
 نی بیم و نی امید نه طاعت نه معصیت
 نی بنده نی خدای نه وصف مجاوری
 عجز است و قدرت است و خدایی و بندگی
 بیرون ز جمله آمد این ره چو بنگری
 راه قلندری ز خدایی بیرون بود
 در بندگی نیاید و نه در پیغمبری
 زینهار تا نلا فد هر عاشق از گراف
 کس را نشد مسلم این راه و رهبری

“*Sīmurgh*” and “alchemy,” and “the station of *qalandarī*”
 Are the *qalandar*’s attributes, but the *qalandar* is void of them.¹⁷

You say: “I am a *qalandar*,” but the heart does not accept it,
 Because the *qalandar* is not created.

The *qalandar*’s trap and spell¹⁸ exist without “how”

[And] have nothing to do with aptness and the meaning of disputation.

What do you seek from yourself through yourself, [while]
 being yourself from top to bottom?

17 cf.

بزم و شراب لعل و خرابات و کافری
 ملک قلندر است و قلندر ازو بری

Feast, red wine, ruins (read: tavern) and denial (= faithlessness)
 Is the *qalandar*’s kingdom, but the *qalandar* does not belong to it.
 (Rūmī, *Dīvān ghazal* 3004.)

18 i.e., attraction (*jādhiba*) or charisma.

You are like water in a pitcher—the whole [which is] full of the whole.
 Travel from yourself to yourself along the way of love
 And cut this tale short at once, o friend!
 Neither fear nor hope, and neither obedience nor disobedience;
 Neither servant, nor god, nor the “neighbor” [of god].
 It is weakness and power, godhood and servanthood—
 If you look [better], [you’ll see that] this path is outside of everything.
 The path of *qalandarī* is outside of godhood and servanthood,
 It pertains neither to servanthood, nor to prophecy.
 [May] God preserve the lover from bragging [of being a *qalandar*],
 out of a habit to exaggerate.
 This path and [this] guidance was not handed over to anyone.¹⁹

Who is the “*Sīmurgh*,” and what is the “alchemy,” and what is meant by “the station of *qalandarī*”? William Chittick comments on these verses as follows: “In the present passage, the ‘phoenix’ (i.e., ‘*Sīmurgh*’—J.E.) seems to symbolize the spirit of sanctity, while the ‘alchemy’ is the shaykh’s power to transmute the spirits of disciples from copper to gold.”²⁰ I would add that “*Sīmurgh*,” apparently, alludes here to the Perfect Man, who possesses all the attributes of creation, but in such a way that none of them predominates over the rest. The “alchemy” should, perhaps, be understood as the skill to transform the bad character traits (essentially, these of oneself and, concomitantly, those of the others) into good ones, thus turning the drawbacks into advantages. “The station of *qalandarī*” refers to separation and disengagement—but note that a perfect *qalandar* is separated from the separation itself.

The second line of the second couplet is a variation of Kharaqānī’s saying, quoted above, that “the *Ṣūfī* is not created,” in which “*Ṣūfī*” is replaced with “*qalandar*”:

زیرا که آفریده نباشد قلندری

Because the *qalandar* is not created.

Perhaps Rūmī felt that the word “*Ṣūfī*” had become somewhat misleading: in Saljuq Konya; being a *Ṣūfī* or dervish was prestigious, and many were eager to attempt to travel the *Ṣūfī* path, or pretend to do so. The path of the *qalandar*,

19 Rūmī, *Dīvān ghazal* 3006. Cf. the partial translation in Chittick, *Sufi path* 189.

20 Chittick, *Sufi path* 358, n. 5.

which demanded an open disregard for the external aspects of the religious law and social rules, was not, unlike the common Ṣūfī path, compatible with maintaining a high social status and leading a luxurious life. Therefore, almost everyone wanted to be a Ṣūfī, while few dreamed of becoming *qalandars*.²¹ As a result, the word *qalandar* was less devalued (through appropriation to the taste of common people) than the word “Ṣūfī.”

More importantly, like ghazal no. 2774, this poem is also addressed to someone who claims to be a *qalandar* (“You say: ‘I am a *qalandar*’”), wherefore Rūmī (on behalf of Shams) had to answer the bluffer in his own terms. A true *qalandar*, explains Rūmī, does not claim to be a *qalandar*; this is his charisma, which makes you to recognize him. He does not care if he is suitable to be a *qalandar* and does not engage in disputations in order to prove the veracity of his claim.

Stop investigating your self by means of your self—this is useless, because, by doing so, you will not find the Real, Rūmī says. Instead, learn to perceive

21 cf. the ghazal 152 (in which one will easily identify the Turk as a “regular” Ṣūfī and the Hindu as a *qalandar*):

Yesterday a Turk and a Hindu were drunk and made debauchery,
 Like two enemies with the hearts of renegades, worthy of hell.
 At times, weeping, they fell at each other's feet, like repentant offenders
 Renouncing the soul and sacrificing the body.
 Again, having taken each other's hand, the Turk and Hindu
 Both fell upon their faces before our moon-faced one.
 The King filled a goblet and openly handed it to the Turk,
 And [simultaneously] secretly took another goblet and said
 to the Hindu: “Come!”
 [Thus] on the Turk's head a crown was placed: “We nicknamed
 thee ‘the Faith.’”
 [And] in the Hindu's face a mark was burnt: “Lo, this is unbelief!”
 This one has become a dweller of the hermitage of purity,
 And that gambler has taken his belongings to the ruins (*kharābāt*).
 When that temptation of the souls of houris appeared from afar,
 With a cup in the hand, drunkenness in the head and a face
 like an early morning sun,
 Due to this Christian idol, [the dwellers of] the hermitage were seized
 by the fear for their souls;
 The pure Ṣūfis drank wine and tied *zunnārs* (distinguishing belts,
 worn by non-Muslims)
 But the inhabitants of the ruins were madder than that.
 They broke the ewers and threw away the harps and flutes.
 Uproar and evil, and gain and loss, fear and trust, and body and soul—
 The [current of] the flood water has carried away everything and
 brings it toward “No.”
 When midnight turned into morning, the muezzins called:
 “O lovers, get up and prepare for the prayer!”

yourself as a pitcher full of water (one of Rūmī's favorite metaphors). This water is of the same substance as that of the sea (i.e., as far as the contents of the vessel are considered, you are not different from the Real). However, the pitcher (your self or, more precisely, your perception of your self as something delimited and, by virtue of this, different from the whole) prevents you from uniting with the sea and melting away in it. The solution is to destroy the "pitcher," that is, the illusory concept of one's self.

Since the *qalandar* has destroyed/annihilated his self, he cannot be described by any attribute. His spiritual journey is the journey in God, not the journey toward Him;²² therefore, it cannot be associated with any particular state or station (at least, not with those listed and discussed in Sūfī manuals). Describing the *qalandar* as one who possesses the attributes of godhood (*khudāī*) and servanthood (*bandagī*) and, simultaneously, is free from both of them, Rūmī comes quite close to Ibn al-ʿArabī's and Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī's teachings on the Perfect Man (who is neither the Real, *al-ḥaqq*, nor the creation, *al-khalq*, but a sort of intermediary between them, an isthmus between the unbound and the bound).²³

The final couplet appears to confirm that Rūmī views the *qalandar* as the symbol (*ramz*) of a Perfect Man and *qalandarī*—as the highest possible stage of man's spiritual perfection:

22 The teaching on two journeys—"the journey towards God" (*sayr ilā Allāh*) and "the journey in God" (*sayr fī Allāh*)—apparently first appears in Burhān al-Dīn Tirmidhī's (d. 638/1240) *Ma'ārif* (Tirmidhī, *Ma'ārif* 11, 14) (but perhaps belongs to Rūmī's father Bahā' al-Dīn Walad (d. 628/1231)). Cf. the following Sultān Walad's verse:

اولين سير الى الله شد عيان
اخرين في الله وهست ان بي نشان

The journey toward God appeared as the first one;

[The journey] in God [appeared] as the last one and it has no sign.

(Sultān Walad, *Intihānāma*, bayt 1518).

23 Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī writes in the *Fukūk*: "And the heart of all forms of finding (*al-ṣuwar al-wujūdiyya*) is the True Perfect Human Being (*al-insān al-kāmil al-ḥaqīqī*) [i.e., who is] the isthmus between necessity and contingency and the all-encompassing mirror of the essence and the level ... And he is the intermediary between the Real and the creation, and through him and from his level the effusion of the Real and the assistance (*madad*)—that which is the occasion of the subsistence of what is other than God—reach the world in its entirety, in its highness and lowness, and if he [the Perfect Human Being], in the aspect of his being the isthmus—that which does not differ from any of the two sides—did not exist, nothing of the world would receive the unique divine assistance, because of the lack of correspondence and relationship, and the former [i.e., the divine assistance] would not reach the world, and he was intended, and indeed he is the intention (*ʿamd*) of the heavens." Qūnawī, *Fukūk* 192.

زینهار تا نلا فد هر عاشق از گراف
کس را نشد مسلم این راه ورهبری

[May] God preserve the lover from bragging [of being a *qalandar*],
out of a habit to exaggerate.

This path and guidance were not handed over to anyone.

Because of its elevated and lofty nature, this station is hardly ever achieved by any traveller of the spiritual path. However, it exists as an ideal, or the ultimate metaphysical goal, toward which everyone is obliged to strive, while none can be confident that he will be able to attain it. Needless to say, such interpretation of *qalandarī* is miles away from understanding it as the state of separation (*tajrīd*), the achievement of which was the proclaimed goal of the Qalandariyya movement.

5

It can be said that in the two ghazals from the *Dīvān-i Shams* discussed above, Rūmī gives the lesson of true *qalandarī*. One might ask to whom it was given. As I mentioned earlier, Ardavān Bayātī believes that these ghazals are addressed to Shams Tabrīzī.²⁴ The following remarks can be made concerning this hypothesis:

(1) In the final couplet of ghazal no. 2774, Rūmī advises the addressee of his poem to seek help from Shams Tabrīzī

پاکی چشمت نباشد جز شه تبریزیان
شمس دین گراو بخوادد لیک فی زانهاستی

The purity of your eyes can be none but the king of the people of Tabrīz
Shams al-Dīn, if he consents—but you are not [one] of them.

If we assume that the addressee is Shams, then, apparently, Rūmī first asks him to seek help from himself, but then concludes that he is unworthy to receive help from himself. This does not make much sense. It seems more likely that Rūmī is addressing himself rather than Shams.

24 See n. 11.

(2) If we can trust the *Maqālāt-i Shams*, in his table talks Shams used the word *qalandar*, in its plural form *qalandariyān*, only once, and in the most negative context.²⁵ But Ardavān Bayātī writes: “Shams was a collection of opposite attributes, and, since Mawlānā strictly followed the religious law, he did not like some things Shams Tabrīzī was doing, because Shams was a *qalandar* and had an affection for shaykh Ḥarīrī, who was the leader of the *qalandars* of Damascus.”²⁶ Indeed, judging from two episodes related by Aflākī, Shams had a very positive opinion of ‘Alī Ḥarīrī and approved of his eccentricities.²⁷ Ibn Shākir al-Kutubī, the author of the *Fawāt al-wafayāt*, describes Ḥarīrī as a man of pleasure (*tībat*) and audition (*samā’*) and a lover of the beardless ones.²⁸ As we know, Shams also believed *samā’* to be an efficient (perhaps the most efficient) means of approaching God. Besides, he vigorously defended Aḥmad al-Ghazālī (d. 520/1126), who was often associated with *shāhidbāzī*.²⁹

None of ‘Alī b. Abū l-Ḥasan Ḥarīrī’s (d. 645/1247–1248) contemporaries calls him a *qalandar*.³⁰ But although he apparently was not a *qalandar* in the formal sense and did not belong to the Qalandariyya order, founded by Jamāl al-Dīn Sāvajī, on the basis of accounts given by al-Kutubī and Aflākī, he can perhaps be described as *qalandarī mashrab* (one who possesses a taste for *qalandarī*).

(3) As is well known, in many of his poems Rūmī spares no epithets to extol the virtues of Shams, calling him the “pole of the time” and even “his god.” In turn, in the ghazals discussed above, he reproves, admonishes, and instructs the addressee as a master would do with his disciple. Are these two attitudes compatible with each other? Can one at times treat his *murshid* as his *murīd*?

To this, I would answer the following: There is no doubt that Shams Tabrīzī served as a locus for several extremely intense self-disclosures of the Real witnessed by Rūmī. However, when the intensity of the experience abated, Rūmī was, perhaps, able to discern spots on the face of his “moon-faced beauty.” The two ghazals that I have examined above might have been composed during such intervals between the Real’s self-disclosures through Shams. I am unable to name anyone else, except Shams Tabrīzī and Rūmī himself, as the possible addressees of these two *qalandarī* ghazals, but I would gladly examine all meaningful alternative suggestions.

25 Tabrīzī, *Maqālāt* 221.

26 Bayātī, Introduction 12.

27 Aflākī, *Manāqib* ii, 641, 677–678.

28 Kutubī, *Fawāt* iii, 7. Cf. Shafī’ī Kadkanī, *Qalandariyya* 251.

29 Tabrīzī, *Maqālāt* 207–208.

30 Louis Massignon associates him with the Rifā’iyya order. Massignon, Ḥarīriyya.

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Pseudo-Shaykh Bahā'ī on the Supreme Name, a Safavid-Qajar Lettrist Classic

Matthew Melvin-Koushki

How vividly I remember my first formal introduction to lettrism (*ilm al-hurūf*)—at the hand, naturally, of Professor Bowering. It was the fall of 2006, and I had recently moved to New Haven to begin my doctoral work under his direction. On a typically crisp New England day, the trees riotous with color, we assembled for our reading seminar on Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān Sulamī, the famed fifth/eleventh-century Iranian Sufi sage and traditionist, on whose major *tafsīr* our Doktorvater had been working for several years; he announced that we would be reading (or rather, philologically ransacking) Sulamī's *Sharḥ ma'ānī l-hurūf*.¹ We plumbed that lettrist treatise over a period of weeks; little did I then suspect that the science it treated would become the subject of my dissertation, and thence the core of my broader scholarly vision to the present. Although there and elsewhere I have inveighed against the reflexive disappearing of the occult sciences, including lettrism, into Sufism,² that encounter with Sulamī, the Sufi lettrist, was nothing if not fateful.

Speaking of fate: in a nice bit of synchronicity (*az gharāyib-i ittifāqāt*), it just so happens that the first Arabic-Islamicate text I ever managed to slog through, back in Amman in 1998, with a new Hans Wehr to hand, was Sulamī's history of Sufism, *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya*. Curious, no?

1 For a translation and study of this treatise, see, of course, Bowering, Sulamī's treatise.

2 See e.g. Melvin-Koushki, *Quest*; Melvin-Koushki, *World as* (Arabic) text. This is not to suggest that these two distinct intellectual-cultural currents did not intersect and fuse in culturally productive ways; as Noah Gardiner has shown, it was precisely the *sanctification* of lettrism in particular, this through its association with Ibn al-'Arabī and al-Būnī in Mamluk Cairo and Damascus during the seventh/thirteenth and eighth/fourteenth centuries, that propelled it to mainstream status from the ninth/fifteenth century onward. Gardiner, *Esotericism in a manuscript culture*. This sanctification process similarly encompassed a number of other occult sciences, including alchemy and geomancy, whereby they, too, were increasingly classified as the sciences of *walāya*; at the same time, they remained a standard and significant subset of the natural and mathematical sciences, and especially the latter. Melvin-Koushki, *Powers of one*.

In tribute to Gerhard Bowering, then, who set me—unintentionally, and at times to his dismay!—on the straight path of Islamic occultism studies, few offerings could be more fitting than a philological exercise in the history of lettrism. Such an exercise follows. Building on my work on Timurid-Turkmen-Safavid Iran, I here take the example of Shaykh Bahā'ī, Safavid *shaykh al-islām* and renaissance man extraordinaire, to whom was attributed by or in the Qajar era a curious lettrist *maṣnavī* on the Supreme Name (*dar rumūz-i ism-i a'zam*) that remains in wide circulation to the present.³ Indeed, that the eminent ayatollah Ḥasan Ḥasanzāda Āmulī (b. 1928) saw fit to write a commentary treatise on this poem as recently as 1979 suggests it as a going Twelver scholarly, as well as popular, concern.⁴ But the different versions that circulate, in print and online, are all highly textually corrupt; while lettrist works of any era are frequently cryptic, to be sure, the lettrist procedures it hints at are obscure even to experienced scholars and specialists like Ḥasanzāda Āmulī, author of occult-scientific works in his own right.

The problem this odd yet enduringly popular text presents is thus first and foremost a philological one; but its analysis naturally debouches, I submit, onto themes of central importance to the intellectual, cultural, and even political history of Safavid Iran, as well as their reverberations and transformations in Qajar Iran and indeed in the Islamic Republic. I therefore here undertake to establish a more coherent version of the text as a basis for such analysis; provide an annotated translation to open it to specialists unfamiliar with lettrism; and briefly situate it in its originary Safavid-Qajar contexts. As I will confirm, this poem cannot be considered authentic; yet it does authentically represent the high Safavid culture of which Shaykh Bahā'ī was such a pivotal exponent and architect—as well as the Qajar scholarly and popular imaginary, naturally somewhat garbled, of that culture over two centuries later. For the bulk of the text is haphazardly extracted from a longer lettrist *maṣnavī*, the *Kunūz al-asmā'*

3 Most notably, it is included in standard editions of Shaykh Bahā'ī's divan; see e.g. al-Āmilī, *Kullīyyāt*, ed. Javāhirī 93–99 (the editor does note its doubtful attribution). For other versions see below. Note that the *Khavāṣṣ-i asmā'-yi ilāhī* attributed to Shaykh Bahā'ī and preserved as MS Majlis 319/12 (158–162) is presumably the same work, as is the brief didactic poem on the active properties of letters preserved as MS Malik 3505/5 (fols. 29a–38b, copied 1301/1883), which appears from its incipit and explicit to be a truncated version of the same. See Naṣrābādī, *Kitābshināsī* 627–628, no. 38. That the latter occurs in a *majmū'a* of occult-scientific works opening with a Persian treatise by Ibn Turka on the same topic is of particular salience in the present context.

4 Ḥasanzāda Āmulī, *Rumūz-i kunūz* iii, 371–425. See also Ḥasanzāda Āmulī, *Durūs-i hay'at* ii, 794.

(Nameboards), by Maḥmūd Dihdār Shīrāzī (fl. 1576), Shaykh Bahā'ī's teacher in the occult sciences and the most prolific Persian author on lettrism of the tenth/sixteenth century.⁵

Dihdār, in short, fairly epitomizes Safavid lettrist culture;⁶ and Shaykh Bahā'ī would seem to have been his greatest student. That our author wrote a rather popular commentary on his own poem, the *Javāhir al-asrār*, therefore makes it possible to discern precisely in what scientific and literary respects alike its Qajar bowdlerization departs from Dihdār's original. Such departures may in turn suggest a broader degree of intellectual-historical discontinuity between the Safavid and Qajar eras—but a discontinuity nonetheless rooted in a common textual tradition of remarkable continuity, and one that persists, at least in contemporary Twelver scholarly circles, even in the all-rupturing teeth of colonialist-capitalist modernity.

As for the Safavid intellectual-imperial context, this offering acts as supplement to my forthcoming book *The occult science of empire in Aqqūyunlu-Safavid Iran: Two Shirazi lettrists and their manuals of magic*, which features Maḥmūd Dihdār as one of the two case studies of the title; it also neatly slots into the framework developed by Kathryn Babayan in her landmark *Mystics, monarchs, and messiahs: Cultural landscapes of early modern Iran*,⁷ as well as the work of Cornell Fleischer and Azfar Moin on the contemporary Ottoman and Mughal imperial contexts respectively,⁸ and Evrim Binbaş's and my own on the Timurid.⁹ It is likewise conceived of as a modest contribution to Shaykh Bahā'ī studies. Unlike all other treatments of this towering figure to date, however, the present study takes seriously his reputation—one that began to grow in his own lifetime and burgeoned after his death—as *the most powerful practicing occultist of his generation*.¹⁰ For all its faults, the text at hand has propagated to

5 On this author see Melvin-Koushki, Maḥmūd Dehdār Šīrāzī; Melvin-Koushki, *Occult science of empire*.

6 Equally influential, if decidedly less *scientific*, was the lettrist cosmological approach of Rajab al-Bursī (d. 1411); see Melvin-Koushki, Safavid Twelver lettrism.

7 Babayan, *Mystics, monarchs, and messiahs*.

8 See e.g. Fleischer, *Ancient wisdom*; Moin, *Millennial sovereign*.

9 Binbaş, *Intellectual networks*; Melvin-Koushki, *Quest*.

10 Emblematic of the materialist-positivist valorization of Shaykh Bahā'ī in modern scholarship, wherein his occult-scientific interests are wholly elided, is C.E. Bosworth's list of his many professional roles (*Bahā' al-Dīn al-Āmilī* 12): "eminent theologian, philosopher, Qur'ān commentator, jurist, astronomer, teacher, poet and engineer." For a (similarly occultophobic) overview of Shaykh Bahā'ī's life, character, sociopolitical impact, and scholarly output see 'Abbās, *Bahā' al-Dīn al-Āmilī*. For the state of the field of Shaykh Bahā'ī studies see Stewart, *Brief history of scholarship*, and Stewart's numerous studies reprinted in the same volume; and Stewart, *Bahā' al-Dīn al-Āmilī*.

the present because it helps sustain that legend, and indeed shows it to have a substantial core of historical truth.

1 Safavid Philosophy as Occult-Scientific Practice

In recent decades, and watered by the labors of Henry Corbin in particular, the study of Safavid philosophy has emerged as a fertile subfield in its own right; it is routinely identified by specialists and nonspecialists alike as the early modern culmination of Islamicate metaphysical thought in its grand synthesis of all preceding philosophical, theological, and mystical currents—Avicennan, Illuminationist, Sufi, Sunni, Shi'ī.¹¹ We now have a general picture of the intellectual and religious commitments of the most prominent Safavid philosophers, including in the first place Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī (d. 1635) and his teachers, and their crucial role in the creation of a new Safavid imperial Twelver Shi'ī culture is universally acknowledged. We understand that the central focus of many Safavid thinkers is Neoplatonic *theosis* (*ta'alluh*), aka *theomimesis* (*tashabbuh bi-l-bāri'*), a concept signaling adherence to a specific set of ascetic-mystical practices aimed at purifying the mind and body and preparing them for transcendence.¹² But the history of the *practice* of Safavid philosophy has yet to be written; quite simply, we have little idea how its exponents lived their systems, how they constructed this new society.¹³

While our ignorance in this respect is a problem besetting the study of Islamicate philosophy in general, it is especially hobbling with respect to its Safavid subset. For the tenor of Safavid philosophy is strongly Neoplatonic in most respects, as is widely recognized;¹⁴ less recognized is the fact that, in practical terms, this philosophical commitment entailed an embrace of the Neoplatonic notion of sage (*ḥakīm*) as *occultist architect of the world*, theurgic invoker of the celestial and the divine through practices expressly magical in order to

11 Naturally, individual scholars have emphasized certain of these elements over others according to personal taste and training; Sajjad Rizvi identifies, for instance, four distinct approaches to Mullā Ṣadrā: esotericist, comparativist, Avicennist, and Iranian nativist. Rizvi, *Mullā Ṣadrā and metaphysics* 6–14.

12 Ibid. 24–26.

13 Rizvi, *Philosophy as a way of life* 44.

14 On this Neoplatonic turn see Pourjavady and Schmidtke, *Eastern renaissance?*; Rizvi, *(Neo)Platonism revived*.

understand—and shape—reality. That is to say, an investment in the occult sciences (*al-ʿulūm al-gharība*) was not only considered unproblematic by the majority of Safavid scholarly elites, but in fact indispensable to the practice of Neoplatonic philosophy.¹⁵ This point has long been appreciated by specialists of Late Antique or Renaissance Neoplatonism; but persistent scholarly positivism and occultophobia, on the one hand, and the Corbinian insistence on disappearing occultism into the uselessly flabby and expressly apolitical categories of “mysticism” and “esotericism,” on the other, means that this basic aspect of philosophical practice in Safavid Iran has yet to be acknowledged, much less studied.

The equally strong *Neopythagorean* tenor of Safavid philosophy is also routinely elided in the literature, and for similar reasons. Here again, it is well known among specialists that Neopythagoreanism as a distinct Late Antique philosophical current was effectively fused with Neoplatonism from Plotinus and Iamblichus onward (to the everlasting annoyance of Aristotelians). As such, the great resurgence of Neoplatonic-Neopythagorean-occultist thought in fifteenth–seventeenth-century Europe known as the Renaissance featured the lionization of Pythagoras, father of *philosophia* itself, as preeminent model of *sage-as-mage*, (occult) scientist and mystic in equal measure.¹⁶ The Neopythagorean cosmogonic doctrine positing number as the first and most fundamental principle of the universe, the intellect’s sole vehicle of return to the One, accordingly became foundational to early modern Christianate philosophy-science. This led in turn to the celebrated *mathematization of the cosmos*, a quest that culminated with Isaac Newton’s (d. 1727) *Principia mathematica*, universally hailed as the basis for “scientific modernity.”

Yet Pythagoras was lionized in precisely the same fashion by Safavid philosophers, antiquarianist-perennialists to a man; his synthesis of metaphysical speculation and mystical-magical practice was highly salient to those thinkers who sought to do the same. Given its Neopythagorean bent, therefore, we should expect Safavid philosophy to be characterized by a certain mathematizing tendency—and hence a commitment to *lettrism*, together with astrology

15 This rubric, meaning those sciences that are unusual, rare, or difficult—i.e., elite sciences—, includes astrology, alchemy, and a variety of magical and divinatory techniques, routinely designated as such in encyclopedias of the sciences, chronicles, biographical dictionaries, theological and legal tracts, etc.; less frequently used terms in the Persianate context are *ʿulūm khafīyya* or *ghāmīda*, sciences that are hidden or occult. Its nineteenth-century European flavor notwithstanding, the term “occultism” is here used to denote to a scholarly investment in one or more of the occult sciences.

16 See e.g. Celenza, Pythagoras in the Renaissance.

and geomancy, as a primary occult-scientific application of mathematics by the Safavid period, and the chiefest expression of Islamic Neopythagoreanism.¹⁷

Enter Bahā' al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Āmilī (d. 1621), aka Shaykh Bahā'ī. Widely famed as an authority on astronomy and the mathematical sciences, quite literally an architect of the new Safavid imperial capital of Isfahan and a founding member of its new philosophical school, the Baalbeki sage manifestly sought to incarnate this dual Neoplatonic-Neopythagorean ideal.¹⁸ That this ideal entailed the heavy use of the occult sciences—especially as a preferred means of *Shi'izing Iran*¹⁹—is confirmed by a wide range of contemporary sources, from chronicles and biographical dictionaries to philosophical-scientific treatises and encyclopedias of the sciences.

Three programmatic works may here be considered representative. Especially revealing is the schema offered by Abū l-Qāsim Anṣārī Kāzirūnī (fl. 1605), a prominent Shirazi scholar in the service, like Shaykh Bahā'ī, of Shah 'Abbās the Great (r. 1587–1629); this Kāzirūnī does in his *Sullam al-samāwāt* (Ladder to the heavens), which eclectic Persian work is devoted to constructing an intellectual-religious pedigree for his patron that is simultaneously Twelver Shi'i, Sufi, and occultist. To this end, the *Sullam* includes a long chapter taxonomizing the occult sciences as a subset not of the natural or mathematical sciences, as they were usually classified from al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā onward,

17 This is particularly pronounced in the work of Mīr Dāmād, explicitly following Ibn Turka; see Melvin-Koushki, *World as (Arabic) text*. On the process whereby various occult sciences were gradually mathematicalized in classifications of the sciences (sg. *taṣnīf al-ūlūm*) between the fourth/tenth and eleventh/seventeenth centuries in the Persianate world more generally, and its intimate intellectual-sociological connection to the parallel but far more celebrated mathematization of astronomy, see Melvin-Koushki, *Powers of one*; Melvin-Koushki, *Of Islamic grammatology*.

18 As Tunikābunī remarks in his *Qiṣaṣ al-ūlamā'* (295), "The Shaykh had an absolute mastery of most sciences, and was an exceptional mathematician in particular." The latter is the author of works on astronomy, including *Tashrīḥ al-aflāk* (Anatomy of the heavens), in Persian, and *Risāla fi Taḍārīs al-arḍ* (On the topographical features of the earth), a super-commentary on one section of Qāzizāda Rūmī's commentary on Chaghminī's *Epitome of astronomy*. In the field of mathematics, his *Baḥr al-ḥisāb* on arithmetic and its abridgement *Khulāṣat al-ḥisāb* were quite popular as teaching texts for centuries. On his works in both fields see e.g. Abisaab, *Converting Persia* 171; Qaṣrī, *Simā'ī az Shaykh Bahā'ī* 97–132; Bābāpūr, *Nigāhī bi Āṣār-i Riyāzi-yi Shaykh Bahā'ī*. On the mathematicalization of the occult sciences—a process that culminated precisely during Shaykh Bahā'ī's lifetime—see Melvin-Koushki, *Powers of one*.

19 Dihdār's lettrism, for instance, while smoothly continuous with Timurid Sunni precedent, involves the talismanic harnessing of the Fourteen Infallibles (*chahārdah ma'ṣūm*) for political and other ends; see e.g. his *Zubdat al-avvāḥ* (Choicest talismans), edited and translated in Melvin-Koushki, *Occult science of empire*.

but exclusively of *walāya*, here presented as Sufi-style sainthood rather than a Twelver theological category.²⁰ Similarly, the *Riyāz al-abrār* (Gardens of the righteous) of Ḥusayn ‘Aqīlī Rustamdārī, a comprehensive Persian encyclopedia written in Qazvin in 1571 for Shah Ṭahmāsb (r. 1524–1576) and treating of some 90 sciences in systematic fashion, features both a strong Twelver flavor and a heavy emphasis on the occult sciences. Most significantly, therein Rustamdārī, too, breaks with precedent to reclassify two occult sciences—astrology (*‘ilm al-nujūm*) and geomancy (*‘ilm al-raml*)—as mathematical, while strongly implying that most of the other occult sciences transcend even that category in their connection to the Imams as sole vectors of *walāya*, including in the first place lettrism (*‘ilm al-ḥurūf*) and alchemy (*‘ilm al-kīmīyā*).²¹

Finally, the philosophical *summa* of Mīr Dāmād (d. 1631), foremost philosopher of his generation and Shaykh Bahā’ī’s close colleague, likewise penned at the request of Shah ‘Abbās: titled *Jazavāt u mavāqīt* (Firebrands and epiphanies) in intimation of its author’s Illuminationist proclivities, this remarkable Persian work presents its royal patron with a new, explicitly Twelver, perennialist-antiquarianist, Neoplatonic-Neopythagorean philosophy—one whose primary scientific application is precisely lettrism. For all that this basic feature of Mīr Dāmād’s thought has been lost on modern scholarship, it was still duly appreciated by Qajar philosophers, and the circle of Mullā ‘Alī Nūrī (d. 1831) in particular. That great reviver of Sadrian philosophy thoroughly glossed both this and Mīr Dāmād’s *Nibrās al-ḍiyā’ wa-taswā’ al-sawā’* (Lamp of illumination and keeping the balance), another openly lettrist work, together with the seminal *K. al-Mafāḥiṣ* (Book of inquiries) of Ibn Turka (d. 1432), their primary source.²² As for the sage of Astarabad himself, he was clearly more concerned with theory than with practice, in rather sharp contrast to his enterprising polymath colleague Shaykh Bahā’ī, and does not figure in the sources as a major occultist. But Mīr Dāmād’s comprehensive Neopythagoreanization of Safavid philosophy provided a robust epistemological framework in which Safavid occult science could and did flourish. And this philosopher, too, does seem to have been willing to practice his theory at certain critical junctures; Mīr Dāmād’s great-grandson Mīr Muḥammad Ashraf ‘Alawī (d. 1718)

20 Kāzīrūnī, *Sullam al-samāwāt* 81–130.

21 This encyclopedia is unpublished; see Melvin-Koushki, Powers of one 166–168. Mīr Findiriskī (d. 1640), close colleague to Mīr Dāmād and Shaykh Bahā’ī both, was particularly invested in the latter science, though of course his alchemical works likewise remain unpublished.

22 Mīr Dāmād, *Jazavāt u mavāqīt*; Mīr Dāmād, *Nibrās al-ḍiyā’*; Melvin-Koushki, Quest 80–81, 113, 437, 573–574.

famously credits him, for instance, with saving Iran from Ottoman invasion by means of a letrist invocation.²³

2 Shaykh Bahā'ī as Safavid Mage

I am without peer in this era, the one
 whose glory is sung by the Scribe of Glory
 and inscribed on every building!
 Wherever you go you hear tell of me,
 in every country my mention is current.

SHAYKH BAHĀ'Ī²⁴

As quintessential Safavid Neopythagoreanizing sage, then, it is hardly surprising that Shaykh Bahā'ī comes off in contemporary and later sources as precisely one of the most powerful *mages* of the early modern era. From the Safavid period to the Qajar, and the Qajar to the present, he was and is celebrated as master of the talismanic magic square, seasoned spellcaster, seer of the unseen, author of fearful illusions. But how did this sage-mage learn his practical letrist arts? At the hand, some later sources suggest, of Maḥmūd Dihdār himself.²⁵

Regardless of the probability of a personal connection between the two men, however high, Maḥmūd Dihdār's manuals of letter magic and letter divination represent the state of the art in Safavid Iran during the second half of the tenth/sixteenth century, and as such would certainly have been absorbed by a polymath as voracious and unrelenting as Shaykh Bahā'ī. The open acclaim of his mastery of the occult sciences, even in official Safavid chronicles, thus provides a counterweight to the curious silence surrounding Maḥmūd Dihdār's career. Iskandar Beg Munshī (d. 1633), court historian to Shah 'Abbās, indites in

23 Ja'fariyān, *Naqsh-i khāndān* 409–410. As to the enduringly popular association of Mir Dāmād with Shaykh Bahā'ī precisely in letrist terms, an anecdote related by Nāẓim al-Islām Kirmānī (d. 1919), the renowned chronicler of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution, is representative: he reports having met, in Shawwāl 1326 (October–November 1908), a certain individual who claimed to be in possession of a talismanic shirt prepared by the two great Safavid scholars for Shah 'Abbās, with the virtue of rendering its wearer bulletproof. Kirmānī, *Tārīkh-i bidārī-yi Īrānīyān*, 235–236.

24 Al-'Āmilī, *Kullīyyāt*, ed. Kātibī 71 (ghazal: *agar kunam gila-yi man az zamāna-yi ghidār: man ān yaqāna-yi dahr-am ki vaṣf-i faẓl-i ma-rā / nivishta munshī-yi qudrat bi har dar u divār // bi har diyār ki ā'ī ishāratī shūnuvī / bi har kujā ravī zikr-i man buvad dar kār*).

25 See e.g. Mīr-Jahānī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Ravāyih al-nasamāt* 100.

encomium: Shaykh Bahā'ī, the ultimate scholar, is “possessed of eternal forms of knowledge (*‘arīf-i ma‘arīf-i azalī*), a master of sciences occult and manifest (*vāqif-i ‘ulūm-i khafī u jalī*).”²⁶ Shaykh Bahā'ī's student and servitor (*khādim*) Ḥusayn b. Ḥaydar al-Karakī al-Āmilī (fl. 1621) is reported to have said of his teacher: “He was exceptional in his knowledge of certain sciences [i.e., the occult sciences] that were ignored by (*lam yaḥum ḥawla-hā*) his contemporaries, and even by his predecessors as far as I know, among both elite and nonelite scholars.”²⁷

As noted, moreover, his reputation as an outstanding occultist has remained intact down to the present, or rather grown considerably. Writing in the high Qajar period, Mīrzā Muḥammad b. Sulaymān Tunikābunī (d. 1885) offers account upon account of the Shaykh's wonderworking ways: his miracles (*karā-māt*) include conversation with the dead, the creation of dragons, and the taming of lions.²⁸ His magic squares are reported to have protected Shiraz and Isfahan from the plague for centuries:

It is widely known that Shaykh Bahā'ī engraved a magic square (*mu-rabba'*) or other figure on a stone and buried it on Iran's frontier in the vicinity of Shiraz to defend against the woe of pestilence (*vabā*), which was thereby prevented from entering Iran from the time of the Shaykh to that of Fath 'Alī Shāh (r. 1797–1834), when Prince Ḥusayn-'Alī Mīrzā was governor of Shiraz and all the princes had designs on the throne and were therefore preoccupied with amassing money. The English were thus able to buy the stone from the prince-governor of Shiraz for 120,000 tomans,²⁹ who, out of his lust for wealth, turned a blind eye to Iran and its people, forgetting—*Say: O God, Master of the kingdom!* (Q 3:26)—that kingship is in God's hand alone. In any event, after the stone was sold pestilence came to Iran, and the plague (*tā'ūn*) followed; and to this day most years see an outbreak of plague. The Shaykh is also known to have constructed another magic square and buried it in the vicinity of Isfahan to defend against plague, and from that day to this it has not struck the city. Even

26 Iskandar Beg Munshī, *Ālam-ārā-yi Abbāsī* ii, 967. Cf. Kāshifī's definition of the division between the two types of sciences in the preface to his *Asrār-i Qāsimī*, or 'Alī Ṣafī's in his abridgement *Tuḥfa-yi khānī* (MS Majlis 12575/2, 273–284: 274): occult sciences (*'ulūm-i khafīyya*) are those sciences that are not freely discussable in madrasa or majlis settings, as they must be kept from the unworthy (*nā-maḥramān*).

27 Kh^wānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt* vii, 58; quoted in Nūrī, *Mustadrak al-wasā'il* xx, 228; and al-Muhājir, *Sittat fuqahā' abtāl* 269–270.

28 Tunikābunī, *Qiṣaṣ al-'ulamā'* 291, 293–294; Ishkavarī, *Maḥbūb al-qulūb* ii, 407.

29 *Dah davāzdah hizār tūmān*.

during the year of the great plague that overtook all the cities of Iran, it did not visit Isfahan.³⁰

Even today in his hometown of Baalbek, the Shaykh's spells are still famous:

To this day locals relate the story that when the Shaykh was hosted at a house near the river that divides the town, in the neighborhood that is still called Ḥayy Āl Murtaḍā, he was so annoyed by the constant croaking of the frogs that he was driven to cast a spell (*waḍa'a raṣd^{an}*) that would silence them forever. And as it happens, one now never hears frogs croaking within the city limits despite their abundance in its waterways—an inexplicable phenomenon.³¹

Strange as all these feats might seem, they were firmly rooted in an inquiring scholarly mentality; as Muḥaddiṣ Nūrī (d. 1902) reassures us, in explanation of al-Karakī's encomium above: "The wondrous acts (*gharā'ib*) that would manifest from him at times ... were the products of these [occult] sciences."³² In this case, then, the fame of the student would seem to enlighten the relative obscurity of the teacher, Maḥmūd Dihdār—and the teacher's lettrist oeuvre the sociopolitical and indeed biological feats of his greatest student.

Apart from such reports and Maḥmūd Dihdār's oeuvre itself, perhaps our best source for understanding the role of occultism in Safavid society generally and Shaykh Bahā'ī's association therewith in particular is, significantly, a Timurid-era grimoire: the *Asrār-i Qāsimī* (Qasimian secrets) of Ḥusayn Vā'iz Kāshifī (d. 1505), Sabzavari preacher, polymath, and famed occultist. Purporting to be a Persian translation of two Arabic works on *sīmiyā* and *rīmiyā*, the *Asrār-i Qāsimī* does not appear to have been much read in the late ninth/fifteenth and the tenth/sixteenth centuries; but in the eleventh/seventeenth century its popularity blossomed. Testifying to the magic manual's new cachet, in the early decades of that century it was expanded to include briefer sections on the three sciences mentioned by the author but deliberately left aside: *kīmiyā*, *līmiyā*, and *hīmiyā*.³³

30 Tunikābunī, *Qiṣaṣ al-'ulamā'* 295. On contemporary anti-plague letter magic—a primary application of the science for centuries—see e.g. the Ottoman plague treatises of 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Biṣṭāmī (d. 1454), Kemālpaşazāde Aḥmed (d. 1534), and Taşköprüzāde Aḥmed (d. 1561). Varlık, *Plague and empire* 11–12, 226–228, 233, 244.

31 Al-Muḥājir, *Sittat fuqahā' abṭāl* 229–230. My thanks to Hussein Abdulsater for alerting me to these accounts.

32 Nūrī, *Mustadrak al-wasā'il* ii, 228.

33 The definitive study to date of this seminal grimoire is Subtelny, Kāshifī's *Asrār-i qāsi-*

Most significant for our purposes here, the interpolated section on *līmīyā* (talismans) includes a wealth of detail as to the identities and activities of practitioners of letter magic during Shah ‘Abbās’s reign in particular—in effect, a who’s who of high Safavid occultism. The single most-cited authority is, not surprisingly, Shaykh Bahā’ī;³⁴ Sayyid Ḥusayn Akhlāṭī (d. 1397), the great Tabrizi Kurdish letrist-chemist of the late fourteenth century, teacher of Ibn Turka and primary model for Maḥmūd Dihdār, runs a close second.³⁵ Equally notably, the philosopher Mīr Ghiyāṣ al-Dīn Maṣṣūr Dashtakī (d. 1542) figures as personal letrist to Shah Ṭahmāsb.³⁶ A number of other prominent scholars and shaykhs feature as master letter magicians,³⁷ and great emphasis is placed on

mī. That Safavid elite interest in the *Asrār-i Qāsimī* already was already evident in the early ninth/fifteenth century is indicated by the fact that Kāshifī’s son ‘Alī Ṣafī (d. 1533) produced a simplified version of this work in 1522 at the request of Durmish Khan Shāmlū (d. 1526), Safavid governor of Isfahan and then Herat; this version is titled *Tuḥfa-yi khānī*, aka *Kashf al-asrār*, and like its source treats only of *sīmīyā* and *rīmīyā* (see e.g. MS Majlis 1065/5, 175–256; Subtelny, Kāshifī’s *Asrār-i qāsimī*; Melvin-Koushki, Quest 272). For his part, Kāshifī Sr. defines *sīmīyā* as the manipulation of imaginal constructs (*khayālāt*), and *rīmīyā* as terrestrial magic (*shu’badāt*). Although he lists three other related occult sciences in the preface—*kīmīyā*, or alchemy; *līmīyā*, or talismans; and *hīmīyā*, or astral magic—and various authorities and texts under the rubric of each, he explicitly states that the *Asrār-i Qāsimī* is conceived of as a translation-adaptation of two Arabic works in particular: the *K. Sīhr al-‘uyūn* of Abū ‘Abdallāh Maghribī (aka *Kitāb Ibn al-Ḥallāj*), and the treatise *‘Uyūn al-ḥaqā’iq wa-īdāḥ al-ṭarā’iq* by the seventh/thirteenth-century alchemist Abū l-Qāsim Aḥmad al-‘Irāqī al-Simāwī (al-Simāwī) (*Asrār-i Qāsimī*, MS Majlis 12559/2, 52–167: 54–55; on the latter see Holmyard, Abu’ l-Qāsim al-‘Irāqī; Saif, Cows and the bees). (It should be noted here that Kāshifī always bases his works on others; though his exemplars are typically in Persian.) *Kūnīyā*, *līmīyā*, *hīmīyā*, *sīmīyā*, and *rīmīyā* often occur in a series, their initial letters being combined to produce the occultist motto “the whole is a secret” (*KLHSR* = *kullu-hu sīrr*). Cf. ‘Allāma Ṭabāṭabā’ī’s (d. 1981) definition of these five sciences in his *Mizān* (i, 244); significantly for our purposes here, in the same section he quotes: “Said our Shaykh al-Bahā’ī: ‘The best book on these [five] arts is one I saw in the city of Herat titled *Kullu-hu Sīrr*—a phrase derived from the first letter of each of these sciences’ names: *al-kīmīyā*, *al-līmīyā*, *al-hīmīyā*, *al-sīmīyā* and *al-rīmīyā*.’”

34 See e.g. Ps.-Kāshifī, *Asrār-i Qāsimī*, lithograph 87, 98, 99, 102, 105; and Lory, Kashifī’s *Asrār-i Qāsimī* 537. Given the exclusively Safavid tenor of the interpolated section in question, Lory’s identification of this Shaykh Bahā’ al-Dīn Muḥammad with Bahā’ al-Dīn Naqshband is obviously incorrect.

35 See e.g. Ps.-Kāshifī, *Asrār-i Qāsimī*, lithograph 98. On Akhlāṭī see Binbaş, *Intellectual networks* 114–140; Melvin-Koushki, Quest 47–57 and *passim*; on Akhlāṭī as Dihdār’s model see Melvin-Koushki, *Occult science of empire*.

36 He is mentioned more generally as a master talismanist; see e.g. Ps.-Kāshifī, *Asrār-i Qāsimī*, lithograph, Bombay 1883, 85, 92, 97, 104.

37 E.g., Mīrzā Jān Kāshgharī (86), ‘Abd al-Laṭīf Gilānī (90, 91, 97), Mīrzā Kāshānī (96), ‘Abd al-Ṣamad Ardabilī (114, 116).

their prized and potent support of the various political actors of their day—even Ibn Sīnā (Shaykh Bū 'Alī) is cited as a lettrist to be feared.³⁸ The author of this section—most likely Shah 'Abbās's court astrologer-geomancer and historian Jalāl al-Dīn Munajjim Yazdī (d. 1619), as Maria Subtelny has shown—presents himself as a member of Shaykh Bahā'ī's scholarly circle, even reporting that the Shaykh once invited him to collaborate on the construction of a magic square at court.³⁹ That the *Asrār-i Qāsimī* has been attributed to Shaykh Bahā'ī himself is thus both unsurprising and significant.⁴⁰

Maḥmūd Dihdār, naturally, is one of the first authorities mentioned. In his case too his service to the Safavid ruling elite is the salient point:

On seeking an audience with kings (*dīdan-i mulūk*): One must inscribe a 4 × 4 square on gold and populate it with the numbers of the holy verse *God is All-gentle (latīf) with His servants, providing for whomsoever He will* (Q 42:19) [= 998], combining these with the letters of his own name. He should then insert the resulting number in the square, refraining from speech in the process. Of these two names [i.e., his own and the king's], he should write one at the top of the square and one at the bottom ...,⁴¹ and carry [the talisman] on his person. Thus when he sees the king he will be honored and shown generosity. This square was developed by Mawlānā

38 Ps.-Kāshifī, *Asrār-i Qāsimī*, lithograph 89. On the Safavid transmogrification of Ibn Sīnā himself, the second father of peripateticism, into a Neopythagorean-occultist authority see Melvin-Koushki, *World as* (Arabic) text. Most famously, the important occultist manual *Kunūz al-mu'azzimīn* (Spellcasters' treasures) was likewise attributed to Ibn Sīnā well after the fact, presumably in the Safavid period (ed. J. Humā'ī, Tehran 1331 Sh./1952).

39 Ps.-Kāshifī, *Asrār-i Qāsimī*, lithograph 93, 101; for a translation of this passage see Subtelny, Kāshifī's *Asrār-i qāsimī*.

40 'Abbās, *Bahā' al-Dīn al-Āmilī* 287; Nūrī, *Mustadrak al-wasā'il* xx, 228. The latter finds such an attribution offensive:

[Shaykh Bahā'ī's] popular reputation [for occult knowledge] grew to such a point that people attributed to him every kind of rare or strange act (*nādīra wa-gharība*)—the majority of such attributions being baseless and false. Indeed, one contemporary writer even went so far as to attribute to him the book *The Qasimian Secrets*, presuming it to be dictated by him to a man named Qāsim. Thus did a poor [scholar] make it seem as though this great scholar authorized the commission of great sins as prescribed in this book. [It instructs one], for example, to tie a cow up in a granary, have intercourse with it, then pour certain medicines in its vagina (among other such vain actions); this operation they call the Great Secret (*al-nāmūs al-akbar*), and assert that the parts of this cow when applied to the man [in question] allow him to achieve invisibility (*al-khafā'*) and other such operations.

On this (in)famous operation see Saif, *The Cows and the Bees*.

41 Two words here are indecipherable.

Maḥmūd Dihdār Shīrāzī, who constructed one for Amīr Khan;⁴² as a result he attained control over all of Fars (*imārat u iyālat-i Fārs-rā yāft*).⁴³

But lettrists were not simply props to power—they were also checks on that power. Here Shaykh Bahā'ī is presented as protecting hapless souls from royal wrath by exerting occult control over the shah's moods:

[On negating the anger of kings]: If a king becomes angry with someone such that the latter is at risk of execution, he should use this same number to inscribe this square on gold at an auspicious hour and donate some sweetmeats (*andakī shīrīnī*) to the poor; in the same hour the king's wrath will turn to graciousness and clemency. My own departed teacher saved many individuals from execution by virtue of this square, and Shaykh Bahā' al-Dīn Muḥammad [al-Āmilī] (may He sanctify his secret!) constructed one for Āqā 'Ināyat [Allāh], who as a result was protected from being the object of royal displeasure as long as he lived.⁴⁴

Needless to say, the ability to manipulate the mind and emotions of sovereigns was a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it made lettrists natural allies to ambitious up-and-comers seeking to unseat their superiors; on the other hand, it suggested them as a dangerous liability to any political players who, having achieved power, were more concerned with maintaining the status quo. Here Shaykh Bahā'ī deploys an operation attributed to Ibn Sīnā himself for the benefit of an imperially ambitious Shah 'Abbās:

If one wishes to bend the hearts of kings, sultans and rulers to one's will (*taskhīr-i qulūb-i pādshāhān u salāṭīn u ḥukkām*), such that they will not be able to contradict anything one says or bear one's absence even for a moment, and such that one rises in rank above all one's peers and is held

42 This figure would seem to be Amīr Khan or Amīr Beg II Maḥṣillu, a former Aqquyunlu commander who joined the Qizilbash in 1507 and became one of the most important officers of the Safavid state, holding such posts as guardian of prince Ṭahmāsb and governor-general of Khurasan. See Woods, *Aqquyunlu* 12, 166, 192–193. However, as Amīr Khan died in 1522, Maḥmūd Dihdār, at the height of his career between 1569 and 1576, would presumably have been no more than an infant at the height of the amir's own career. But if there is any truth to the relationship posited here between Amīr Khan and Maḥmūd, this suggests that the latter may have been born in the last decades of the ninth/fifteenth century and lived for almost 100 years.

43 Ps.-Kāshifī, *Asrār-i Qāsīmī* 85–86.

44 Ibid. 86.

in the highest esteem by sultans, one should, when the Sun is in exaltation, engrave the following number as a 6×6 magic square on a plate of gold, and *bismi Llāh bismi Llāh bismi Llāhi l-Raḥmāni l-Raḥīm* [= 1,122] at the top: 3,851.

This operation is one that Shaykh Bū 'Alī [i.e., Ibn Sīnā] took from Shaykh Yaḥyā 'Arab, a prominent scholar of his day, whence Mawlānā Aḥmad Lārī took it. One day this great seal talisman (*muhr*) was described to the king, [which prompted] someone present to remark that Mullā Aḥmad Lārī's books were in the possession of Allāh Virdi Khan. Someone was therefore dispatched to bring these books, and when they had arrived Shaykh Bahā' al-Dīn Muḥammad [al-'Āmili] (God sanctify his secret) carried out [on their basis] just this operation to subjugate the hearts of all creatures and kings. He did so in the year 1010 after the Hijra [i.e., 1601 CE] when the Sun was in exaltation, and bound [the resulting seal talisman] on the arm of the king. The first conquest [Shah 'Abbās] achieved [as a result] was his taking of Tabriz [from the Ottomans in 1603]; thenceforth his career of conquest (*jahāngīrī*) was daily furthered. [A similar seal talisman] was made for the renowned governor (*navvāb-i 'aliyya-yi 'āliya*) [Allāh Virdi Khan], who attained his exalted office thereby.⁴⁵ There is, in short, no better operation than this for the purpose of subjugation.

If one wishes to make [such a seal talisman] for other great kings, one must add to this number [that of] the holy verse *Now there has come to you a Messenger from among yourselves; grievous [to him is your suffering, anxious is he over you, and to the believers] gentle, compassionate* (Q 9:128) [= 2,782].⁴⁶ One must also, having performed a full ablution (*ghusl*), don a white robe, and during the operation hold [a piece of] sugar (*nabāt*) in one's mouth until its completion (a maneuver held to be most effective by practitioners of this art); one must also perform the ritual ablution and burn aloeswood and ambergris incense to perfume the air, thereby rendering [the operation] impressive and honorable to all.⁴⁷

45 The fact that Allāh Virdi Khan's onetime attendant and vizier of Fars, Siyāqī Nizām (d. 1603), introduced precisely a lettrist section in defense of Shah 'Abbās's imperial legitimacy in the introduction to his chronicle *Futūḥāt-i humāyūn*—in this following venerable early Timurid precedent—is highly relevant in this context; see Quinn, *Historical writing* 46–53.

46 A marginal note gives 2,898, which cannot be correct.

47 Ps.-Kāshifī, *Asrār-i Qāsīmī* 88–89.

Shaykh Bahā'ī's fame as the greatest sage-mage of Safavid Iran, in sum, was no later fiction back-projected by superstitious plebes of the Qajar era wistful for lost imperial glory, but already firmly established among scholarly elites during his lifetime and immediately after. For it precisely answered the needs of contemporary Safavid intellectual-imperial culture—which explicitly embraced occultism as a primary means of Shi'izing Iran. Because he himself wrote few overtly occult-scientific works, however, modern historians, occultophobic as a rule, have facilely discounted or even disappeared this central feature of his intellectual identity and sociopolitical role, emphasizing instead his brilliance in True Sciences like astronomy or law.⁴⁸ This reflexive and entrenched historiographical distortion of such early modern Muslim renaissance men as Shaykh Bahā'ī makes impossible—is indeed *designed* to make impossible—the comparative study of alternate Western early moderni-

48 Shaykh Bahā'ī's surviving oeuvre would seem to contain few authentic occult-scientific works, although several have been consistently attributed to him and indeed frequently published as such in modern editions. His popular *fālnāma*, dedicated to Shah 'Abbās, may well be authentic, and has been published at least 13 times in the last 70 years; see e.g. *Fālnāma-yi Shaykh Bahā'ī*, ed. M. 'Alī-Niyā, Tehran 1363 Sh./1984; Yādgar, 1374 Sh./1995; Gulī, 1384 Sh./2005; and Naṣrābādī, *Kitābshināsī* 640–641, no. 56. Perhaps also authentic is a manual of *jafr* sometimes entitled *Baḥr al-'ulūm al-jafrīyya* (Naṣrābādī, *Kitābshināsī* 225–226, no. 35). Various passages in his perennially popular *Kashkūl* are likewise suggestive, such as its brief discussion of *'ilm al-ṭilasmāt*, which concludes by asserting: “The science of talismans is easier to learn and deploy than the science of magic (*'ilm al-sihr*).” Al-'Āmilī, *Kashkūl* ii, 188. The fact that Shaykh Bahā'ī there cites Ibn Turka's *K. al-Mafāḥiṣ* in support of the epistemological superiority of oneness to existence is likewise highly significant. *Rumūz-i kunūz* iii, 79.

By contrast, the Persian *al-Sirr al-mustatir dar 'ulūm-i gharība u jafr u kh'ābnāma* that is often attributed to Shaykh Bahā'ī in modern printings is rather by one Muḥammad Rizā Saqqāzāda Vā'iz, who compiled it as an anthology of material on the various occult sciences (see [Tehran 1964?]); the Arabic print version has been published at least thrice: Qom 2005, Beirut 2005, and Qom 1427/2006. See Naṣrābādī, *Kitābshināsī* 628–629, no. 40. Further works whose authenticity Naṣrābādī doubts include the Arabic treatise *Aḥkām al-naẓar fī katf al-shāh*, on scapulomancy (ibid. 610, no. 4); the Arabic treatise *Istikhāra bā Qur'ān*, on two methods of quranic bibliomancy taken from Ibn Ṭawūs (ibid. 611, no. 7); and *Ijāz-i asmā' Allāh ta'ālā*, a short Persian treatise on the inimitability and effects of the divine names, written by the author for his son Muḥammad Amīn (ibid. 612, no. 9; it has been published as *Kashf-i rumūz-i ism-i a'zam*). (As he notes, Āqā Buzurg proposes as author of the last work Shaykh Bahā' al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Makkī al-'Āmilī, Bahā' al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥsin al-'Āmilī, or Muḥammad b. Muḥsin al-'Āmilī.) Ms Malik 618, a substantial (238 ff.) Arabic letrist work on the active properties of divine names copied in the fourteenth/twentieth century, is presumably the same treatise. For her part, 'Abbās rejects the authenticity of all such works, dismissing them—rather rashly, as this study suggests—as being flatly “incompatible with Shaykh Bahā'ī's approach and intellectual style.” 'Abbās, *Bahā' al-Dīn al-'Āmilī* 267, 286.

ties: only European Renaissance men are currently historiographically free to be the committed occult scientists they so frequently were.⁴⁹

To remedy such a massive imbalance in the literature on our Safavid sage-mage, thus making comparative study possible, I propose the oeuvre of his lettrist teacher as key to this crucial aspect of his scholarly and political identity: all the occultist operations with which Shaykh Bahā'ī is credited are there laid out in exhaustive scientific detail. Due to persistent scholarly occultophobia, however, Dihdār's many works on lettrism remain entirely unpublished; while certain of them do circulate rather widely online, they do so only in (usually poorly) scanned lithograph or manuscript form. His magnum opus, the definitive manual *Mafātiḥ al-maghālīq* (Keys to all locks), would seem to be particularly popular—a Google search on this title, unique to Dihdār, returns over 56,000 hits.⁵⁰ A huge amount of basic philological spadework thus lies before us; of the major lacunae that riddle our knowledge of Islamicate early modernity, none yawns wider or is more debilitating than the almost total absence of studies on the occult sciences and reliable editions of even the most seminal occult-scientific texts.

Let us, then, to the texts. The historiographical benefits that will accrue from such a philological renaissance are hinted at by the example of several recent editions of Safavid texts that, while not exclusively occult-scientific in focus, contain substantial material in that vein. I cited above Mīr Dāmād's *Jazavāt u mavāqīt* and *Nibrās al-dīyā'*, both featuring lettrist content, as well as Kāzīrūnī's *Sullam al-samāvāt*. (Rustamdārī's landmark *Riyāz al-abrār*, naturally, has yet to be published.) While such works shed much-needed light on Shaykh Bahā'ī's immediate intellectual and social context, a fourth recently published text is perhaps even more telling: Quṭb al-Dīn Ishkavarī Lāhijī's (d. btw. 1677 and 1684) *Latāyif al-ḥisāb* (Subtleties of calculation).⁵¹ This manual of mathematics, penned by the Safavid *shaykh al-islām* of Lahijan and protégé of Mīr Dāmād and Shaykh Bahā'ī both, complements the latter's far more popular *Khulāṣat al-ḥisāb*, used as a textbook for centuries after.⁵² But unlike that work, which has no occult-scientific content, Ishkavarī's features an appendix that explicitly presents lettrism as the discipline's *most immediate application*, especially for scholars of a Twelver persuasion: the introduction holds up 'Alī as mathe-

49 I call for such a comparative study, a new philological revolution, in Melvin-Koushki, *Tahqīq vs. taqlīd*; see also Melvin-Koushki, (De)colonizing early modern occult philosophy.

50 This as of August 2017.

51 Ishkavarī, *Latāyif al-ḥisāb*.

52 For a discussion of this seminal textbook see 'Abbās, *Bahā' al-Dīn al-Āmilī* 645–668.

mathematical exemplar, and the *khātima* opens with a letrist analysis of the names of Muḥammad and the Twelve Imams (all being ontologically intrinsic to Q 33:33), treats of finger counting (*‘uqūd-i aṣābī’*) and fraction of numeration (*taksīr*), then closes with a long section on logographs (sg. *mu‘ammā*) and riddles (sg. *lughz*) and their solutions, which prominently features Shaykh Bahā’ī as master of this art—a mainstay of letrist practice from Ibn Turka onward.⁵³

Ishkavarī’s manual, like those of Dihdār, thus makes explicit a social rule Shaykh Bahā’ī’s oeuvre leaves largely implicit: *to be a Safavid mathematician is to be a letrist, and to be a letrist is to magically protect and shape empire*. Such a conclusion can only further strengthen the emerging scholarly consensus that the epochal transposition of Safavid Iran to a hierocratic Twelver footing was accomplished less by state policy than by popular, saintly, charismatic, and syncretizing scholars like Shaykh Bahā’ī, primary architects and engineers, in every sense of those job titles, of the new Safavid Shi‘ī imperial culture.⁵⁴ Safavidists in particular, of course, have long contended with the question of saintly charisma and its historically transformative routinizations; but they must now account for the *scientific method* many prominent Safavid scholars successfully followed in its pursuit.

3 Pseudo-Shaykh Bahā’ī on the Supreme Name

That scientific method so rigorously on display in Dihdār’s authentic oeuvre is far less so in the popular letrist poem attributed to his greatest student; indeed, it is there downgraded, as it were, to mere “pop science.” I noted above, however, that pseudo-Shaykh Bahā’ī’s *maṣnavī* on the Supreme Name is nevertheless at core authentic: over half of its 104 lines are taken from Dihdār’s *Kunūz al-asmā’*, a 383-line didactic poem on letrist methods of deriving various divine names for magical and divinatory purposes, and the focus of *Javāhir al-asrār*, Dihdār’s autocommentary on this work, which reproduces the poem in its entirety.

53 Ishkavarī, *Laṭāyif al-ḥisāb* 12–13, 67–70, and 74–92 respectively; and Melvin-Koushki, *Quest* 382–385; Binbaş, *Intellectual networks* 84–85. My thanks to Mathieu Terrier for this reference.

54 See Anzali, “*Mysticism*” in *Iran*; Moin, ‘*Ulama*’ as ritual specialists; Melvin-Koushki, *Occult science of empire*; on Shaykh Bahā’ī as legal architect of the same see Abisaab, *New ropes for royal tents*. Significantly, it would seem that the architects of the Islamic Republic in Iran have returned to this ideal, consciously or otherwise; Imam Khomeini himself referred to the “Islamic republic system” (*nizām-i jumhūrī-yi islāmī*) as an expression of “divine geometry” (*handasa-yi ilāhī*). Tavakoli-Targhi, *Clerico-engineering*.

At the same time, the anonymous reworker of Dihdār's original did not simply take lines at random, but was clearly at pains to obscure the original import of those lines, whether by changing their wording at key junctures or by changing their order in the poem and supplying many new lines, from an as yet unknown source or authored for the purpose, to disrupt their logical flow. (Of the *maṣnavī*'s 104 lines, a full 45 are thus added.) Where the *Kunūz al-asmā'* treats of a range of letrist techniques as applied to various divine names, that is, the reworked version treats solely of a single Name, the *ism-i a'zam*, which is yet identified only very cryptically—and using lines that have very different referents in the original. Since its reworking, moreover, many corruptions have further muddled the text, due precisely to its popularity, and the various latter-day versions circulating widely in print and online are frequently divergent, and equally frequently nonsensical and nonmetrical.

In other words: both by design and through textual corruption over time, the letrist operations alluded to in the poem below are *scientifically invalid*, and hence do not admit of serious analysis. The value of this text rather lies primarily in its status as a popular vehicle for later imaginaries of high Safavid imperial-intellectual culture. I therefore see little need to follow Ayatollah Ḥasan Ḥasanzāda Āmulī's procedure in his 1979 commentary on the poem, *R. Rumūz-i kunūz* (On the allusions in [Dihdār's] *Kunūz*), wherein he does attempt to decipher these terminally cryptic allusions. Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥasan Mīr-Jahānī Ṭabāṭabā'ī (d. 1992) attempts the same in his own, though much briefer, commentary.⁵⁵ Both scholars recognize the highly corrupt nature of the text, and correctly associate it with Dihdār; Ḥasanzāda Āmulī goes further to establish a more reliable version of the text with reference to his personal manuscript copy of Dihdār's *Javāhir al-asrār*.⁵⁶

To make more historiographically usable this unique window onto Safavid high letrist culture at the turn of the eleventh/seventeenth century, as well as its afterlives to the present, I therefore provide a “corrected” edition, with modernized transcription, on the basis of manuscript copies of Dihdār's original. In this I do follow Ḥasanzāda Āmulī, although my reading diverges from his in a number of places, due in part to the different manuscripts of the *Javāhir al-asrār* I have at my disposal; I also note certain reasonable variations in the

55 Mīr-Jahānī, *Ravāyih al-nasamāt* 100–113.

56 He also references Dihdār's magnum opus, *Mafātih-i maghālīq*, throughout his commentary, as well as other seminal Safavid-era occult-scientific manuals, including Sayyid 'Abdallāh Balyānī's (fl. 1576) *Jahān al-raml* (World of geomancy); see Melvin-Koushki, Persianate geomancy.

footnotes, but ignore nonsensical corruptions. What minimal commentary I provide in the footnotes largely depends on his and Mīr-Jahānī's. I must stress, however, that no edition of the reworked poem can be definitive; that offered here simply seeks to approximate what it may have looked like at inception, when each line, however divergent from its source, presumably still made a measure of sense.

As for provenance: my tentative dating of this odd little text to the Qajar period (1779–1925) is likewise purely impressionistic; much further research into Qajar scholarly culture in general and its receptions of Shaykh Bahā'ī and Maḥmūd Dihdār in particular will be necessary to strengthen, deny, or confirm it. But there does exist, at least, a *terminus ante quem*: 1258 (1842), the copying date of a *majmū'a* that contains what appears to be a rather heavily abridged version of the same, with emphasis on the non-original section on the name Jochebed (*ramz-i nām-i mādar-i Mūsā*), but including Dihdār's original lines as well, under the *takhalluṣ* Bahā'ī.⁵⁷ That this version is focused on this name rather than the Supreme Name indicates that the poem, while already recognizable, was still textually very much in flux during the first half of the thirteenth/nineteenth century; this fact alone strongly suggests it to be a Qajar product.

In its various versions, moreover, sensical or otherwise, the poem is patently an exercise in cultural remembrance. What little scientific content has been retained from the original, then haphazardly recombined, is evidently deployed solely for symbolic purposes—the reworker was certainly no letrist adept. That is, the text rather smacks of the *neoclassicizing* ethos of the Qajar period, which saw a profusion of similar pseudepigrapha in all fields, from philosophy to poetry;⁵⁸ it also reflects the contemporary uptick in occultist prognostication ahead of the millennium of the Imam's occultation (1874 CE).⁵⁹

57 MS Majlis 1149/5, fols. 56b–57a. I did not have access to this *majmū'a* at the time of writing, but the Majlis catalog description, which includes a partial transcription, suggests that this version of the *masnavī* opens with line 9, moves directly to line 18, the beginning of the section on Jochebed, and ends much as the longer version does.

58 My thanks to Sajjad Rizvi for this observation; see e.g. Rizvi, *Hikma muta'aliya*; Rizvi, Shi'i political theology. This neoclassicizing impulse is epitomized by the twelfth/eighteenth-century *bāzgasht-i adabī* (literary return), an initially partial and decidedly local movement whose victory over “decadent” early modern Newspeak (*tāza-gū'ī*) was totalized in the late thirteenth/nineteenth and early fourteenth/twentieth centuries in colonialist-nationalist discourse. On the early modern tension between *perennialist progressivism*—espoused precisely by Safavid scholars like Shaykh Bahā'ī, Mīr Dāmād, and Maḥmūd Dihdār—and *declinist neoclassicism*, see Melvin-Koushki, *Tahqiq vs. taqlid*.

59 Rizvi, Shi'i political theology 698.

It must further be emphasized that the Shaykhi and Babi movements both embraced precisely lettrism in furtherance of their respective millenarian projects.⁶⁰ The lionization of Shaykh Bahā'ī specifically as preeminent Safavid mage, while rooted in indisputable historical and textual reality, thus accords particularly well with broader Qajar cultural tendencies, and the poem's disregard for scientific detail accords poorly with Safavid. As Tunikābunī's *Tales of the scholars* testifies most eloquently, patently legendary material had accreted to the persona of Safavid luminaries like Shaykh Bahā'ī by the mid-thirteenth/nineteenth century. Our text, romantically and unusably cryptic, accordingly points vaguely—though in this case quite rightly—to lettrism as the source of its hero's powers.

This is not to suggest that some Qajar scholars would have been unaware of the simultaneous bogusness and appropriateness of the poem's attribution to Shaykh Bahā'ī. The circle of Mullā 'Alī Nūrī here again deserves special mention: a philosophical neoclassicist, Nūrī was clearly cognizant of and much exercised by the lettrist writings of Mīr Dāmād and Ibn Turka both—the theory behind Dihdār's praxis. It is thus no surprise that one of his students, Mullā Muḥammad Ja'far Lāhījī (d. 1844), wrote one of his handful of works as an *'irfānī* commentary on another lettrist poem, wholly authentic, by Dihdār, dedicating it to the powerful Qajar governor Mu'tamad al-Dawla Manūchihr Khan Gurjī (d. 1847).⁶¹ Likewise, most of the manuscript copies of Dihdār's *Javāhir al-asrār* date to the Qajar period.

While not conclusive, such elite Qajar scholarly investment in Safavid intellectual culture thus suggests our text to be a product of a more popular, if still scholarly, milieu. As that may be, its rise in popularity would not seem to predate the early thirteenth/nineteenth century; and the commentaries thereon by such outstanding modern Iranian Twelver scholars as Sayyid Mīr-Jahānī Ṭabāṭabā'ī and Ayatollah Ḥasanzāda Āmulī testify to the remarkably durable salience to the present of this Safavid-Qajar lettrist classic.

4 Note on the Text

Maḥmūd Dihdār's *Javāhir al-asrār* is preserved in Iran in some 23 manuscript copies (one partial), of which I currently have access to three, all Qajar-era;⁶²

60 Cole, *World as text*; Melvin-Koushki, *Quest* 281.

61 Lāhījī, *Sharḥ-i abyāt-i Dihdār*.

62 MS Majlis 12653/1, fols. 1b–68a (copied 1231/1816); MS Majlis 12890/13, pp. 155–162 (19th c.); MS Milli 18796/1, fols. 2a–73b (n.d.).

these preserve the full text of the author's didactic lettrist poem *Kunūz al-asmā'*, interspersed with prose commentary. As for the reworked poem attributed to Shaykh Bahā'ī that is the subject of this study, of the many versions circulating in print and online I have relied in the main on those given in Javāhirī's 1993 edition of Shaykh Bahā'ī's *Kullīyyāt*,⁶³ Mīr-Jahānī's 1954 commentary,⁶⁴ and Ḥujjat Balāghī's 1971 compilation *Ya'sūb: Az har chaman gulī*,⁶⁵ but I have usually preferred Ḥasanzāda Āmulī's 1979 version, corrected with reference to the author's personal manuscript copy of the *Javāhir al-asrār*.⁶⁶ To highlight the authentic core of the poem, those lines not original to Dihdār have been bracketed in the translation.⁶⁷ Finally, again following Ḥasanzāda Āmulī, I have replaced throughout the three instances of Bahā'ī's *takhalluṣ* with Dihdār's: 'Iyānī, "Eyewitness."⁶⁸

5 Text and Translation

A! O you at whose command the two worlds are perfected: ای دو عالم به یک امر از تو تمام 1
 all beings from you are strung together and ordered!⁶⁹ کاینات از تو به تنسيق و نظام
 Whatever arises from these planes nine, هر چه بر جاست در این تسعه بساط 2

63 *Kullīyyāt* 93–99.

64 *Ravāyih al-nasamāt* 101–113.

65 *Ya'sūb* 2–8. Significantly, Balāghī attributes the poem to both Shaykh Bahā'ī and Maḥmūd Dihdār.

66 *Rumūz-i Kunūz*.

67 See also the unpublished but helpful draft translation by Stephen Lambden, which I discovered only after my own was complete; it is overliteral, however, and depends solely on Javāhirī's corrupt version: <http://hurqalya.ucmerced.edu/sites/hurqalya.ucmerced.edu/files/page/documents/rumuz.pdf> (accessed 7 June 2017).

68 As Dihdār declares in his *Javāmi' al-favā'id* (Tehran, MS Millī 18712 p. 33): "I have opened the door for you / and further explained my cryptic words: // thus is my penname Eyewitness ('Iyānī) / for in such wise do I find you an Entic Well (*ki dar īn shūva 'ayn-i'yān-am*)." (He here plays on the word series *'ayn-i'yān-i'yān*, the first meaning "eye," "spring" and "essence," the second "eyewitnessing" and the third "finding a spring or well.") Similarly, in his *Ḥall al-rumūz fī sharḥ al-kunūz* (MS Millī 7706/1, p. 412): "I have thoroughly explicated these cryptic statements, / have broken the talisman guarding the secret treasure—// hence have I been given the penname Eyewitness / and the overflowing knowledge of such arcana."

69 My translation here incorporates Ḥasanzāda Āmulī's reading of the vocative particle *ay* as a pregnant lettrist allusion to the preeternal nature of the *alif*. *Rumūz-i kunūz* iii, 373.

whatever appears from these lodges seven ⁷⁰ —	و آنچه پیداست در این هفت رباط	
all have their being from your bounty	همه از جود تو دارند و جود	3
and do bow and prostrate before your way;	پیش راهت به رکوعند و سجود	
for from our being from yours do we inhabit the traces,	چون به هستی ز تو در آثاریم	4
our eyes fixed upon your encompassing grace.	چشم بر لطف عمیمت داریم	
The <i>letter</i> , to the wise and perceptive,	ز د اهل خرد و اهل عیان	5
is a body whose spirit is its <i>number</i> .	حرف جسم و عدد اوست چه جان	
Had not the letters their numerical values	یعنی اعداد حروف ار نبود	6
prayers could never be answered.	سرّ دعوات مقرر نشود	
The effect of a Name, whatever it be,	اثر اسم به هر اندازه	7
and however invoked,	که بخوانند به هر آوازه	
is such that any prayer must be answered	هیچ شکّ نیست که در اسرع حال	8
immediately and exactly: of this there is no doubt.	به اجابت برسد بی اهمال	
And the letter is the imperial treasurehouse and jewelhoard	گنج اسمای الهی ⁷¹ حرف است	9
wherein God's Names are kept.	گوهر مخزن شاهی حرف است	
<i>Thirty and six</i> letters are they as spoken and heard; ⁷²	سی و شش حرف که در گفت و شنید	10
but their intimations are endless,	کس به پایان رموزش نرسید	
their range of effects eternally infinite:	اثرش نامتناهی به دوام	11
whether noble or common, all do benefit.	منتفع زو چه خواصّ و چه عوامّ	
They explicate the rarefied realm of high heaven	شارح عالم خاصّ جبروت	12
and open heaven and earth to conquest;	فاتح عالم ملک و ملکوت	

70 I.e., the nine celestial spheres and seven terrestrial climes.

71 The original here has rather *asrār-i ilāhī*.

72 The next line in Dihdār's original explains this with reference to the gematrical value (*hisāb-i jummal*) of the Name *ilāh* (36); but what the seven letters added to the 29 of the Arabic alphabet (28 and *lām-alif*) could be is not otherwise clear—perhaps the planets? Cf. Ḥasanzāda Āmulī's review of alternative alphabetical tallies. *Rumūz-i kunūz* iii, 384–388.

they summon divinity's very secret,	سر لاهوت از آن در حضر است	13
and enlighten humanity's soul.	جان ناسوت از آن باخبر است	
They are the origin of every atom,	نطق هر ذره از آن در قال است	14
as tradition tells us, and all mystics confirm; ⁷³	داند این هر که ز اهل حال است	
many are their effects in this earthly realm,	بس اثرهاست در این عالم خاک	15
as the spiritually alive are aware—	که کنند اهل معانی ادراک	
for naught of all that appears in this two-pathed cloister	هر چه پیدا است در این دیر دوراه	16
does so but it manifests God's Names.	نیست بی جلوه اسماء اله	
[Yet the Supreme Name is hidden from view,	اسم اعظم که نهان از نظر است	17
and no intellect can attain it.	عقلها جمله از آن بی خبر است ⁷⁴	
The Just has Names a thousand and one,	الف و یک اسم که دارد دادار	18
each with a special benefit when activated. ⁷⁵	هر یکی فایده ای را در کار	
One of them was known to a certain prophet—	یک از آن داشت یکی پیغمبر	19
Moses's mother's father, a nomad;	پدر مادر موسی ازیر	
but he kept it hidden from all,	لیک می داشت نهان از هر کس	20
and was content to simply be father of [Amram],	پدرش بود در این عالم و بس	
who, by command of the Lord of the world,	تا به فرمان خداوند جهان	21
was ennobled with its knowledge in turn.	یافت عمران شرف وصلت آن	
Having learned of this holy Name—	شد از آن اسم مقدّس آگاه	22
supreme among God's Names—	که بود اعظم اسماء الله	

73 Needless to say, to translate *ahl-i ḥāl* (usually, as here, contrasted with *ahl-i qāl*) as “mystics” is extremely problematic; I do so here only for reasons of style, as there is no proper term in English for “the folk of immediate experience.”

74 Lines 17–30 are not in Dihdār's original.

75 Ḥasanzāda Āmulī cites in support of this more unusual number (i.e., than the tropic 99) two verses from the opening section (on *tawḥīd*) of Sanā'ī's (d. 1131) *Ḥadiqat al-ḥaqā'iq*, as well as the 1,001 divine names included in the Greater Armor (*al-jawshan al-kabīr*) sup-
plication ascribed to the fourth Twelver Imam, Zayn al-Ābidīn 'Alī. *Rumūz-i kunūz* iii,

He prayed: "O Lord, by the virtues of this Name,	گفت یارب به صفات این اسم	23
by the utter sanctity of this Name,	به حقّ حرمت ذات این اسم	
grant me a noble son	که مراده ولدی با مقدار	24
possessed of wisdom, knowledge and authority!	صاحب معرفت و علم و وقار	
Make him one of Your prophets	نبی مرسل خود ساز او را	25
and console him at every turn;	در همه باب تو بنواز او را	
and grant him a son, O glorious Lord,	داد او را پسری ربّ جلیل	26
who shall cast Pharaoh's robe into the Nile."	که زد او جامه فرعون به نیل	
Noah likewise was saved from perishing in the Flood	نوح از برکت این اسم و صفات	27
solely through the blessing of this Name and its virtues.	یافت از مهلکه آب نجات	
Thus too did Moses speak with the divine manifestation	موسی از برکت این اسم به طور	28
as fire on the mount.	یافت گفتار تجلّی با نور	
When Jesus invoked this name,	عیسی این اسم چو برخواند اموات	29
the dead were raised by its power.	یافتند از اثر اسم حیات	
All that is in the world subsists through this Name:	هر چه در عالم از این اسم به پاست	30
hence its status as the treasury of all Names]. ⁷⁶	ز آن که این اسم کنوز الاسماست	
It is a pearl from the oystershell of mysteries,	که این دراز صدف اسرار است	31
a matchless royal jewel.	بی بدل چون گهر شهوار است	
Oh, what a Name is this,	وه چه اسم است که بسیار کسی	32
far beyond the ken of most! ⁷⁷	نیستش بر سر آن دسترسی	
Its properties are infinite;	خاصّیتهاش ندارد پایان	33
it irradiates its knowers.	عارفان نیز بدان در تابان ⁷⁸	

293. See Mullā Hādī Sabzavārī's (d. 1873) often letrist commentary on the same, *Sharḥ al-asmā'*.

76 i.e., the *kunūz al-asmā'*—a reference to the title of Dihdār's original poem.

77 This line in the original refers rather to the method of *taksīr*.

78 In the original: عارفانند به آن دانیان | خاصّیتهاست ندارد پایان

Worldly fortunes, whether good or bad, may be derived in general guise [from that Name].	34 وضع آفاق ⁷⁹ ز نیک و بدحال می توان یافت به سنج اجمال ⁸⁰
It is a special Name indeed—for in its letters are safely hidden all the secrets of the cosmos, which are known only to those chief among the righteous.	35 اسم خاصی است که اسرار جهان هست در کنز حروفش پنهان
If you utter this Name repeatedly, activating it according to mathematical usage, you will achieve your desire in every affair and revel in perpetual divine grace.	36 کس چه داند که چه اسرار است این خاصه زمره ابرار است این
[This Name confers 14 benefits in particular. ⁸² First, it enables you to break talismans. It makes your enemies run like mercury and enslaves them with its floodlike assault.	37 لفظ این اسم چو تکرار کنی چون به آداب عدد کار کنی
If you invoke it sincerely and with certitude, you will find buried treasure.	38 قفل هر کار گشایی به مراد گردی از فیض مداما دلشاد ⁸¹
Jinn will be your companions, all saints will associate with you, all people will defer to you— even the caesar of Rome will become your slave.	39 چارده نفع رساند آن اسم اولین آن که گشایی تو طلسم ⁸³
	40 دشمنت نیست شود چون سیماب بند گردد به دمیدن سیلاب
	41 گرجخوانی ز سر صدق و یقین کشف گردد همه گنج زمین
	42 جتیان با تو مصاحب گردند اولیا جمله به تو پیوندند
	43 جمله خلق سرافکنده تو قیصر روم شود بنده تو

79 Ḥasanzāda Āmulī suggests *awfāq* as a preferable reading. *Rumūz-i kunūz* iii, 402.

80 The original referent here is a comprehensive prognosticon (*jafr-i jāmi'*), significantly styled a cosmic *zīj*: جعفر جامع چه اگر مشهور است | سر آن لیک بسی مستور است || آن گایی: است که احوال جهان | هست در کسر حروفش پنهان || زیج دوران است که نیک و بدحال | ز آن توان یافت به هیچ اجمال || کسی چه داند که چه اسرار است آن | خاصه زمره ابرار است آن

81 Lines 37–38 in the original: لفظ هر اسم که تکرار کنی | چون به آداب عدد کار کنی || قفل هر باب گشایی به مراد | گردی از فیض قرائت استاد

82 A full 14 benefits do not follow in this or other printed versions at my disposal.

83 Lines 39–47 are not in Dihdār's original.

You will be beloved of all.	همه خلق حیبت گردد	44
You will also attain alchemy,	کیمیا نیز نصیبت گردد	
and easily master every difficult science.	هیچ علمی به تو مشکل نشود	45
Not for an instant will the Real forget you.	یک زمان حق ز تو غافل نشود	
You will be forever smiling and joyous	متصل باللب خندان دلشاد	46
and your worldly and spiritual affairs prosper alike.	دین و دنیای تو گردد آباد	
Yet each person's path to knowing	لیک هر کس به طریقی دیگر	47
this Name's potency is different.]	دارد از حالت این اسم خبر	
The secret of all Names is wholly comprised by its letters.	سرّ اسماء حروفش به تمام	48
But never disclose this to the public:	توان گفت مبدا که عوام ⁸⁴	
for having learned of it, they will attempt to use it	مطلع گشته به آن کار کنند	49
and harm many people in their ignorance.	خلق را بیده آزار کنند	
The cryptic teachings of the elite must never be elucidated	رمز خاصان توان گفت تمام	50
lest ignorant fools learn how to act on them;	تا نیابد اثرش جاهل خام	
such are they who deviate from the path of justice	زوروند از پی انصاف به در ⁸⁵	51
and are unwary of evils.	وز بدی ها ننمایند حذر	
[It is permitted only to mature individuals,	باشد از حسن عمل اهل کمال	52
who will act only worthily with the power of this Name,	چون بیابند از این اسم مجال ⁸⁶	
and never intend evil thereby,	در عمل عزم بدی ها نکنند	53
nor think of any unlawful thing.	فکر در باب ردی ها نکنند	
In the Torah, God called [Amram's wife] Jochebed,	یوخابد خوانده خدا در تورات	54
in other scriptures He called her Nakhvāt, ⁸⁷	در صحف خوانده خدایش عورات ⁸⁸	

84 The line's original referent is again *taksīr*: سرّ تکسیر حروفات تمام | توان گفت مبدا که عوام

85 This first hemistich repeats the second of line 78 below.

86 Lines 52–62 are not in the original.

87 I here prefer the alternative reading, although have not found evidence for Nakhvāt as a known alternative; Yārkhā/Yāwkhā and Yārkhāt are sometimes given, however, so Nakhvāt—perhaps Yakhvāt—could be a corruption of the latter.

88 Alternatively: یوخابد گفت حق اندر تورات | در صحف گفته خدایش نخوات

and in the sura that is the Gospels called [‘Imrān’s wife]	حَنَّهُ در سورهٔ انجیل بخوان	55
Hannah: all are perfectly correct. ⁸⁹	به درستی که همان است همان ⁹⁰	
In our own Quran there occurs [the same name]	هست در مصحف ما بعد سه میم	56
after the three Ms in the midmost sura among the <i>ḥāwāmīm</i>	در میان سوری از حامیم	
whose <i>bayyina</i> equals 70: ⁹¹	مخرج بیّنه اش هفتاد است	57
this is a master principle [to follow].	این همه قاعدهٔ استاد است	
For where one person [calls Jochebed] Ṭaysūm,	خوانده طیسوم دگریک قیسوم	58
another says Qaysūm, and a Maghribi Hayshūm, ⁹²	مغربی گفته به لفظ هیشوم	
while among the Arabs Jochebed (<i>Yūkhābad</i>) is standard—	هست مشهور عرب یوخابد	59
but a Persian says Barkhānad!	عجمی گفته و را برخانند	
[Likewise,] a Daylami will write <i>kāfilnā</i>	دیلمی کرده رقم کافلنا	60
but another group <i>rāhilnā</i> . ⁹³	باز جمع دگرش راحلنا	
Yet another group offers <i>jāmarruth</i>	نجیهٔ قوم دگرش جامرث	61
where a fourth prefers <i>gāmarruth</i> . ⁹⁴	هست یوخا به دگر گامرث	
[In short:] in recording and retelling names	در احادیث و روایات و خبر	62
everyone has their own version.]	هریکی را است طریقی دیگر	

89 In reference to Q 3:33–35, some Quran commentators draw an equivalence between Amram and Jochebed, parents of Moses, and ‘Imrān and Hannah, parents of Mary; similarly, an ontological equivalence is apparently being drawn here between the mother of Moses and the mother of Mary despite their differing names.

90 Javāhirī gives lines 55–61 as follows: حنه در سورهٔ انجیل بخوان | بحقیقت که هم اینست وهم آن || خوانده طیوم دگریک قیوم | مغربی گفت که هست او هیوم || هست مشهور عرب برجانہ | عجمی گفت و را برخانه || دیلمی کرد رقم کافلنا | باز جمعی دگرش راحلنا || نجیه قوم دگر جاهر شا | هست یوخانه دگر طاهر شا

91 Ḥasanẓāda Āmulī notes that the Name here in question is ‘*alīm*, All-knowing, and cites its uses in invocation. *Rumūz-i kunūz* iii, 407–409.

92 Cf. Mudarris, *Rayḥānat al-adab* vii, 26, who lists the variants of the name Jochebed (Yūchābadh, Abādkhā, Abādkhat), then cites Ibn al-Athīr’s further variants: “It is said that the name of Moses’s mother—by which all locks and bindings may [magically] be opened—is as follows: Ṭaysūm, Ayūm, Qayūm, Daymūm, Dayūm.”

93 I.e., “we contracted” and “we equipped for a journey” respectively.

94 This line is particularly corrupt—perhaps these are meant to be two further versions of Jochebed?

But for all that this Name is extremely famous,	گرچه این اسم بسی مشهور است	63
here I have something else in view. ⁹⁵	لیک اینجا نه چنین منظور است	
[My years now being one hundred ten,	سال عمرم به صد و ده چو رسید	64
I have therefore thought to rend this secret's veil]	فکرتم پرده از این راز درید ⁹⁶	
and so have brought forth the priceless provision	از ذخایر که کنوز الاسماست	65
that is the treasures of the Names, ⁹⁷	بنده این گنج برآوردم راست ⁹⁸	
and have carried out this task in all propriety	بهر آسانی ارباب طلب	66
to ease the way for serious seekers,	کردم این کار به آداب و ادب	
to put a spring in their step, so they may attain	خواستم تا که در این علم به کام	67
of this science what they desire—such was my aim.	بنهم بر قدم مردان گام	
God the One be praised, Who in this art	لله الحمد که توفیق احد	68
has granted me the effluxion of His aid!	داد در این هنرم فیض مدد	
So mightily have I striven in this science	من در این علم بسی بردم رنج	69
as to break all [treasury] talismans with this treasure, ⁹⁹	که طلسمات گشودم ز این گنج	
and have now opened it	سر این گنج گهر بگشودم	70
and brought out its jewels for inspection,	گوهر گنج عیان بنمودم	
and paraded its hours entirely veiless	حوریان راهمه بی ستر و نقاب	71
for the benefit of my friends. ¹⁰⁰	بنمودم به تمام احباب	
I have opened the treasury to seekers	بهر طلاب گشودم سر گنج	72
and freely given away its riches,	نقد این گنج نمودم بی رنج	

95 The original referent here is *ḥisāb-i-jummal*: همان | لیک اینجا نه همان | لیک مشهور است | لیک اینجا نه همان منظور است

96 This line is not in the original. The versions of Javāhīrī and Mīr-Jahānī both give the author's age as 71; in other printed versions the first hemistich reads: سال عمرم چو به آخر | رسید

97 *Kunūz al-asmā'*, again a reference to Dihdār's original.

98 In the original: از ذخایر که کنوز الاسماست | این عددها بدرآوردم راست

99 I.e., the protective talismans on treasury doors.

100 The line's original referent is the 14 light letters, i.e., the quranic *muqatta'āt*.

have brought forth jewels from the mine of work and removed their covering.	73 گوهر از کان عمل بنودم پرده از چهره آن بگشودم
The wage of those who work such a special mine is [to give] the jewels they find to the few deserving.	74 مزد مردی که از این معدن خاص گوهرش را چو بیابد به خواص
Because he's undertaken such charitable work remember 'Iyāni in prayer!	75 عمل خیر چو بنیاد کند از عیانی به دعایاد کند
In short, weariness can never turn aside serious seekers from their purpose.	76 غرض این است که ارباب طلب نکشند از پی مقصود تعب
When they have mastered these principles entirely let them recite a Fātiḥa for me,	77 این قواعد چو سراسر دانند بهر ما فاتحه ای برخوانند
and when they achieve results from this Name let them not deviate from the straight path.	78 چون از این اسم بیابند اثر زوند از ره انصاف به در
You who possess the secret of this science and its praxis— that the difficulty of this science be made easy for you, open your soul's ears and your heart's eyes so I may do precisely that.	79 ای که داری سرّ این علم و عمل تا شود مشکل این علمت حلّ
If you find my discourse attractive, listen well: for the time to discourse has arrived.	80 گوش جان باز کن و دیده دل تا کنم بهر تو حلّ این مشکل
If you make my words your heart's treasure you will reap wisdom's reward.	81 گرتو را میل به تقریر من است برگشا گوش که وقت سخن است
If you seek from 'Ali's science a lesson by way of blessing ¹⁰¹	82 سخنم گوهر گوش دل کن گوهر گوش خرد حاصل کن
[know that] of those who have searched that vast ocean the perfected have found many great pearls.	83 اگر از علم ولی الهی به تین سبقتی می خواهی
	84 بهر طلاب از آن لجة ژرف کاملان راست درّی چند شگرف

101 Lettrism is particularly associated with 'Alī and Ja'far by Sunni and Shi'i lettrists alike; see Melvin-Koushki, Quest 171 and *passim*.

I myself have taken a lesson from these	85	من از آن طایفه دارم سبقی
and recite it again for them in these pages.		خوانده ام در برایشان ورقی
[These my cryptic words that make manifest my thought	86	در رموزات که فکرم جلی است
are among the gifts of Muḥammad and 'Alī.]		از عطاهای نبی و ولی است ¹⁰²
Know you not that the [Supreme] Name	87	اسم او با سور قرآنی
is [in value] equivalent to the suras of the Quran? ¹⁰³		متساوی است اگر می دانی ¹⁰⁴
[Properly arranged, its letters are eight,	88	هشت حرف است به ترتیب و نظام
and expanded (<i>bast</i>) become 40 in total. ¹⁰⁵		بسط حرفیش چهل گشته تمام
As uttered its gematrical value is 19. ¹⁰⁶	89	لفظیش نوزده از روی جمّل
this basic point makes possible its operation. ¹⁰⁷		هست چون مدخل باسط به عمل
Its first letter is <i>M</i> , its fourth <i>L</i> ,	90	اولش میم و چهارم لام است
its third currently well known, ¹⁰⁸		سیمش شهره در این ایام است
and its last letter is <i>T</i> , which has letters six—	91	ط ¹¹⁰ بود آخر و شش حرف در او
understand a point comprehensible only to the pure. ¹⁰⁹		نکته فهمی که بفهمد نیکو

102 With the exception of line 87, lines 86–96 are not in the original.

103 Scil., 114—a value equivalent to the Name *jāmi'*, All-comprehensive, likewise used to describe the Quran itself as a Supreme Name, as well as *jafr* (i.e., Imam 'Alī's *al-Jafr wa-l-jāmi'a*); see Ḥasanzāda Āmulī, *Rumūz-i kunūz* iii, 413. An alternative calculation is proposed in Mīr-Jahānī, *Ravāyih al-nasamāt* 106–107.

104 In the original: این عدد با سور قرآنی | متساوی است اگر می دانی

105 As Ḥasanzāda Āmulī notes, the Name *jāmi'* fits this description; when subjected to *bast*, it produces 8 letters (*JYMALFN*), when then subjected to *ṣadr u mu'akhhkhar* over 5 lines become 40 letters in total. *Rumūz-i kunūz* iii, 413–414. Two basic letrist techniques, *bast* refers to the expansion of a name or word with the full name of each of its letters, while *ṣadr u mu'akhhkhar* refers to the reordering of letters in a line by alternately taking letters from the beginning and end of that line, e.g. *ALFMYBNW* → *AWLNFMBMY*.

106 See Ḥasanzāda Āmulī for a range of possible interpretations. *Rumūz-i kunūz* iii, 415.

107 The line's original referent is the 19 letters of the *basmala*.

108 Ḥasanzāda Āmulī notes that four Names matching this description occur in the the thirteenth section of the *Greater Armor* (*mudīl*, *munīl*, *muqīl*, *muḥīl*), and ten in the forty-ninth (*musahhīl*, *mufaḍḍīl*, *mubaddīl*, *mudhallīl*, *munazzīl*, *munawwīl*, *mufaṣṣīl*, *mujzīl*, *mumhīl*, *mujmīl*). *Rumūz-i kunūz* iii, 417. Cf. Mīr-Jahānī, *Ravāyih al-nasamāt* 107–108.

109 Ḥasanzāda Āmulī proposes the term Paraclete (*fāraqūt/fāraqūt*) as a possible referent. *Rumūz-i kunūz* iii, 418.

110 In some printed versions *zā*.

In three places its Name begins with <i>D</i>	از سه جا مصدر اسمش دال ¹¹² است	92
as at the beginning of a verse in the Sura of the Spoils. ¹¹¹	بر سر آیه ای از انفال است	
Its beginning is 17, its end <i>S</i>	اولش هفده و آخر سین است	93
forever in the middle of <i>YS</i> . ¹¹³	متصل در وسط یس است	
Its heart is conducive of happinesses varied,	قلب او باعث خوشحالیهاست	94
its nominative and accusative cases all of them light.	فتح و نصبش همگی نور و ضیاست	
This comprehends the cause of the letters' effects	شامل علت آثار حروف	95
and all of the letters' cycles. ¹¹⁴	جامع کلی ادوار حروف	
The product of its <i>bayyina</i> , [as noted,] is 70,	مخرج بیّنه اش هفتاد است	96
a master principle [to follow].]	این همه قاعده استاد است ¹¹⁵	
How happy the heart that grasps such allusions!	خرم آن دل که بیابد این رمز	97
Don't reveal them to just any winker.	نکند فاش رموزات به غمز	
'Iyānī, you have elucidated them [enough],	ای عیانی چو تو این کشف رموز	98
have found and disbursed these riches—	کردی و یافتی آن نقد کنوز	
now reveal no more of this secret,	بیش از این کاشف این راز مباحث	99
cease to be an informant!	راز پنهان کن و غماز مباحث	
It is strictly for those who are worthy,	هر که اهلیت این حالتش هست	100
who through prayer attain what has here been described	به دعا حاصل از این قالش هست	
But softly now, lest the evil unworthy	دم فرو بند که نا اهل شریر	101
learn of this elite method!	نشود ز این روش خاص خبیر	

111 Ḥasanzāda Āmulī here notes a number of Names beginning with either *Dh* or *D*. *Rumūz-i kunūz* iii, 420.

112 In some printed versions *dhāl*.

113 As Ḥasanzāda Āmulī notes, *H* has the value of 17 in the *AḤST* cycle, descending to *S* (the final letter in the Quran), as does *B* (the first letter in the Quran) in the cycle *AJNDh*. *Rumūz-i kunūz* iii, 420–421.

114 I.e., the different letter series used for different prognosticative purposes, including *ABJD*, *ABTTh*, *AYQGh*, *AḤTM*, etc.

115 This line repeats line 57.

It is only by leave of God the Forgiving	من به توفیق خداوند غفور 102
that I have revealed to seekers this method,	طالبان را بنمودم دستور
have discoursed cryptically on its theory and applications,	اصل و فرعی بنمودم به رموز 103
distributing freely the wealth of these treasures.	فاس کردم به همه نقد کنوز
Let all with utmost sincerity	به عیانی همه از صدق و صفا 104
offer a prayer for 'Iyānī!	بکنند از سر اخلاص دعا

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Sufism and Islamic Identity in Jalaluddin Rumi's Anatolia

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1 Introduction

The Sufi poet and teacher Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi, the founder of the Mevlevi (Mawlawi) order, enjoys wide popularity among Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Reading his poetry selectively and sometimes in impressionistic translations, his modern admirers construct images of him that reflect their own religious values and aspirations. Such imaginings of Rumi are not new, however, since the textual construction of his image began very shortly after his death in 672/1273. More than in the case of most other Sufi groups, the Mevlevi order has been shaped by memories of its founder, whose poetry, prose treatises, and letters, complemented by biographical accounts of him, are used to construct the order as a distinct neo-religious group, with Rumi as a founder figure, his poetry as scripture, and the Mevlevi as its adherents.

The Mevlevi take their name from Rumi's honorific title of Mawlānā (Persian) or Mevlāna (Turkish). It was shortly after his death that the sobriquet "Rumi" ("the Roman" or "the Anatolian") gained popularity, identifying him with Anatolia, where he spent his adult life and where his legacy is centered, although Mevlevi sources themselves frequently refer to him as "Balkhi," after the region of Afghanistan for which he came.¹

In this essay I focus on the *Manāqib al-ʿarīfīn*, the most important biographical work on Rumi and his immediate circle. Through a close reading of the text, I explore what it meant to be Muslim to these very influential Sufis in the premodern Turco-Persian world. In discussions of religious normativism, heterodoxy vs. orthodoxy, or heteropraxy vs. orthopraxy, observers sometimes lose sight of the fact that the majority of religious movements consider themselves normative, orthodox, and orthoprax. Yet, much scholarship on Islam either does not take this into account or, if it does, does not explore the implications of

1 There is a great deal of scholarship on Rumi's life, poetry, and teachings. The most comprehensive work is Lewis, *Rumi, past and present*. Although mostly supplanted by Lewis's book, a valuable English-language study of Rumi's writings is found in Schimmel, *Triumphal sun*.

a reoriented view of normativity in religious thought and history. The problem is particularly acute when a propensity to place hadith and *fiqh* at the center of the religion makes us treat socially, politically, and demographically dominant phenomena as peripheral or nonnormative. Put differently, for much of Islamic history and in the majority of its cultural contexts, those in authority and the majority of the population articulated complex notions of religion and frequently looked to different hierarchies of religious authority than the traditional *‘ulamā’*, yet the *‘ulamā’* are routinely treated as the sole representatives of Muslim normativity. By examining how religion is represented, and particularly how the written materials discussed here treat conversion and depict non-Muslims in relation to Muslims, I explore some problematic aspects of the concept of normativity and demonstrate how being Muslim in “Rumi’s path” was viewed as normative in a particular social and historical context.

2 Introducing Anatolia

The region under consideration—central Anatolia in the latter half of the seventh/thirteenth century—was a time and place in transition and flux. The major migrations of Muslim Turcoman pastoral nomads into Anatolia and Azerbaijan were complete by this time, but Anatolia was still very much a Muslim frontier when compared to its eastern and southern neighbors: Iran, Iraq, and Syria. In many respects, Anatolia figured prominently in the imagination of many Muslims: in addition to a substantial body of literature commemorating the battles on the Armenian, Georgian, and Byzantine borderlands, there was also a culture of warrior-saints (*ghāzīs*) and of other religious figures encouraging frontier warfare as well as competition between Muslim-ruled states.²

The crusades had an impact on the fate of Anatolia, in that the devastation of Byzantium in the First and Second Crusades encouraged the Byzantines to enter into strategic, short-term alliances with Muslim principalities in central Anatolia, which strengthened the latter in such a way that they were able to wrest territory away from Christian kingdoms along the Black Sea and consolidate Islamic rule in the region. Of these, the Karamanids (6th–8th/12th–15th centuries) are especially relevant because they ruled the region of Rumi’s Konya.

2 For more on Islamic frontier states in a comparative perspective, see Anooshahr, *Ghazi sultans*; various aspects of Anatolian Islamic culture at this time are dealt with in Peacock and Yıldız, *Seljuks of Anatolia*; for a study of one particularly influential Islamic frontier state see Yücel, *Kadı Burhaneddin*.

On the intellectual and cultural fronts, Islamic Anatolia was a major beneficiary of the Mongol invasions of the seventh/thirteenth centuries, since much of the intellectual class of Islamic Central Asia left for safer locales. They were welcomed in the regional courts of Anatolia (as they were elsewhere, such as in South Asia), where being a Persian émigré scholar carried great prestige. Rumi belonged to such a family. It was after his birth in 604/1207 in the town of Wakhsh in Tajikistan, near the more famous city of Balkh, that his father Baha' al-Din Walad, a Sunni religious scholar with Sufi affiliations, took his family west, eventually finding employment in Konya. On Baha' al-Din's death in 628/1231, Rumi inherited his father's position and retained this professorship for the remainder of his life.³

3 The *Manāqib al-ʿarīfīn*

Rumi had a tremendous impact on subsequent generations of Sufis, both through his own writings and through those of early members of his order. Here, I focus on the most important early work on his life and that of his immediate family, the *Manāqib al-ʿarīfīn* of Shams al-Din Ahmad Aflaki 'Arifi. Very little reliable information is available on the life of Aflaki 'Arifi (d. 761/1360) beyond what he volunteers in his work. He does not mention the circumstances of his birth or having spent any part of his childhood in Konya. Indeed, almost all the information about Aflaki is from the prime of his importance as a prominent disciple of Rumi's grandson, Ulu 'Arif Chalabi (d. 720/1320), at whose behest he wrote the *Manāqib al-ʿarīfīn* and whom he accompanied on Ulu 'Arif's travels through Anatolia and Azerbaijan. It is a testament to his devotion to Rumi's grandson that Aflaki came to be known by the *nisba* "Arifi." Given the degree to which he defined himself in relation to Rumi's family, perhaps it is no surprise that he gives almost no details about himself. Self-narration is not especially common among biographers in the medieval Islamic world.⁴ Nevertheless, in a large book full of a broad range of anecdotes and spanning three generations of a small religious group of which the author was a part, it is still noteworthy that the *Manāqib al-ʿarīfīn* yields so little information about its author.

3 For a comprehensive study of Baha' al-Din Walad, see Meier, *Bahāʾ-i Walad*; his major writings are published in Firuzanfar, *Maʿārif*.

4 For more on biography and self-narrative in the premodern Islamic world, see Reynolds, *Interpreting the self*.

Even Aflaki's name is of undetermined provenance. Perhaps it is a reference to a recognized talent for something metaphysical or spiritual (inasmuch as *aflākī* means "of the heavens" or "of the finite world"). On the other hand, it could also refer to his being trained as or being a practicing astronomer, although there is no written evidence to support such a hypothesis.

In short, the author of the most important biographical work on Rumi and the generations immediately preceding and following him is known almost entirely for his devotion to Rumi's family, and especially to his grandson. Aflaki mentions that he studied with a *Masnawī*-reciter (*Masnawī-khwān*) named Siraj al-Din and with two other figures, Nizam al-Din Arzanjani and 'Abd al-Mu'min Toqati.⁵ There is no date given for the beginning of his Mevlevi association, but he was devoted to Ulu 'Arif Chalabi for the entire period of the latter's leadership of the Mevlevi order during its formative period and, after Ulu 'Arif Chalabi's death, Aflaki attached himself to Ulu 'Arif's half-brother, 'Abid Chalabi (d. 739/1338), and subsequently to Ulu 'Arif's son, Amir 'Adil Chalabi (d. ca. 768/1368).⁶ Upon his death on 29 Rajab 761/15 June 1360, Aflaki was buried in Konya.

Aflaki commenced writing the *Manāqib al-'ārifīn* in 1318 at the behest of his master 'Arif, who requested a work comprising biographies of the nine individuals included in the *Manāqib*. Aflaki allegedly completed a first draft within a year and entitled it *Manāqib al-'ārifīn wa-marātib al-kāshifīn* (Feats of the knowers and stations of the revealers). He continued to revise and expand the work, however, until it was officially completed shortly before his death, maybe in the early 1350s. The *Manāqib al-'ārifīn* follows a chronological structure, with the first chapter devoted to Rumi's father, Baha' al-Din Walad; a second, shorter chapter is about Sayyid Burhan al-Din (d. 637/1239–1240), a disciple of Baha' al-Din who took over as Rumi's spiritual guide after his father's death. The third and fourth chapters focus squarely on Rumi's adult life and his relationship with his teacher, friend, and muse Shams al-Din Tabrizi. The third is the main chapter on Rumi and comprises almost half the book; the subsequent one is less about Rumi than about Shams.

The next three, relatively short, chapters deal with three of Rumi's disciples and successors, Salah al-Din Zarkub (d. 658/1258), Rumi's son, Sultan

5 Aflaki, *Manāqib* ii, 898, i, 559. Aflaki's esteem for and devotion to Toqati seems to have been greater than to Arzanjani, or perhaps he studied with him for longer. He mentions Arzanjani with respect but very briefly, referring to him simply as "Mawlana" and "Qazi"; in contrast, he refers to Toqati with ornate titles and declares him to be one of the greatest teachers of the religious sciences in all of Anatolia.

6 Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ'dan Sonra Mevlevîlik* 100–104.

Walad (d. 712/1312), and the latter's deputy (*khalīfa*) Husam al-Din Chalabi (d. 683/1284). The eighth chapter on Aflaki's own master Ulu 'Arif Chalabi is, in many respects, the most interesting section of the book since it recounts many events for which the author serves as an eyewitness. Individual anecdotes in this chapter are often longer than those in the previous ones, with a level of detail not encountered before. Interestingly, the ninth and final chapter (there is an appendix as well) on Ulu 'Arif Chalabi's successor, Amir 'Abid, is brief and lacking in the textured detail Aflaki provides in the eighth chapter.

4 Sources of the *Manāqib al-'arīfīn*

In addition to Aflaki's personal access to Rumi and his family, his *Manāqib al-'arīfīn* relies on a number of textual sources, the most important of which are as follows:

1. *Maqālāt-i Shams al-Din Tabrizi* (Discourses of Shams): This work comprises sayings and teachings attributed to Rumi's companion and teacher, Shams-i Tabrizi. It was supposedly put together by Shams's disciples, although little is known about them or the circumstances of the book's composition.⁷
2. The collected works of Rumi's son, Sultan Walad, entitled the *Walad-nāma* or sometimes the *Ibtidā'-nāma*.⁸
3. Rumi's writings, including his correspondence, the *Fīhi mā fīhi*, as well as poetry from the *Masnawī-yi ma'nawī* and the *Dīwān-i Shams*.⁹
4. *Risāla-yi Sipahsalar dar manāqib-i ḥaẓrat-i Khudāwandīgār* by Faridun ibn Ahmad Sipahsalar. The *Risāla-yi Sipahsalar* is the only biographical monograph on Rumi from that time, and much of its material appears in Aflaki's *Manāqib* in reworked form. However, the *Risāla-yi Sipahsalar* represents its own set of problems, in that it was written by someone who does not appear to have been a formal member of Rumi's inner circle yet still was an eyewitness (or a witness once removed) to events in Rumi's life. Because of the military title "Sipāhsālār" and the emphasis the author gives to administrative and political details, it is conceivable that the author was an officer married to one of the women in Rumi's family, which gave him close access to inner Mevlevi circles. There are

⁷ Muwahhid, *Maqālāt-i Shams-i Tabrizi*.

⁸ Sultan Walad, *Masnawī-yi Waladi*.

⁹ For more on Rumi's works, see Lewis, *Rumi* (especially chap. 7), and Chittick, *Sufi path of love* 5–7.

persistent questions about the authenticity of Sipahsalar's work, although prominent scholars of medieval Iran generally accept that it dates from the period on which it purports to report.¹⁰

Although often dismissed as an ahistorical document because of its overt hagiographical nature, the *Manāqib al-ʿarīfīn* is significant because it is frequently the only source for the events it describes. Given the diverse nature of material it contains, it remains a rich book to mine for information on medieval Islamic society, politics, gender relations, and the role of Christians, as well as other topics.

5 Charisma and Conversion

A key element in the real and imagined authority of Sufi masters is their ability to convince others of their religious and charismatic power and to *convert* them into disciples. This phenomenon is very apparent in the case of Rumi, who is noteworthy for the number of stories involving his interaction with and conversion of non-Muslims. One case related by Aflaki in the *Manāqib al-ʿarīfīn* is of particular importance:

It is transmitted that one day, Mawlana [i.e., Rumi] went [to visit his father's tomb] with some of his companions. They saw a large number of people milling around a person, and from that group a few youths came running and shouted: "For the sake of God! They are about to execute someone! Let Mawlana intercede, for he is a young *rūmī* [Greek or Christian] boy!" Mawlana asked: "What has he done?" They said: "He killed someone—they are retaliating."

The moment Mawlana stepped forward all the executioners and policemen lowered their heads and stood to one side. He placed his blessed cloak on [the young man]. The prefect of the city reported the details of what had happened to the Sultan of Islam, and he said: "Mawlana is the judge. Were he to ask for a city and intercede for it, he is capable of having it. Everyone is devoted to him—what does one *rūmī* matter?"

At that, the disciples grabbed [the boy] and took him to the bathhouse. After bringing him out of the bath, they brought him to the madrasa so that he received the faith at Mawlana's hand, and he became a Muslim. He was circumcised immediately and they held a great *samāʿ*. Mawlana

¹⁰ Sipahsalar, *Zindagī-nāma*.

asked: "What is your name?" He said: "Theryanus." Mawlana said: "From this day forth he will be called 'Ala' al-Din Theryanus." In the end, due to the blessings and favor of the life-giving gaze of [Rumi], he attained a rank where noble shaykhs and pious scholars were amazed by his enlightened discourse and his comportment, and they marveled at his humor and wit.¹¹

This is the longest narrative of conversion in the *Manāqib al-ʿarīfīn* and, although it does not fit within commonly established notions of so-called "true" conversions of an ideological or doctrinal sort, be they instantaneous or over time, it is a recognizable instance of a conversion through deliverance. What is noteworthy here is that the inner motivations of the convert are not discussed at all, though one could consider his outward motivations to be obvious. As illustrated by other examples in the following pages, conversion is represented as an instantaneous act wherein the narrative is concerned less with the *convert* and more with the *converter* along with *the signification of the moment of conversion*.¹²

This is clear from a second account of Theryanus's conversion given in the *Manāqib al-ʿarīfīn*:

It is also transmitted that the godly friend, 'Ala' al-Din Theryanus, was a great scoundrel and a rogue. This was when he was still a *rūmī* [meaning Christian in this context] and had not yet set his feet in the circle of Islam and his formal declaration of emancipation as a Muslim had not yet been documented. One night he dreamed that he was massaging Mawlana's blessed feet and rubbing them a lot. But he didn't know who or what sort of person this was. The next morning, Theryanus washed his own hands and face and, being perplexed by his dream, he set off from his village for the city. When he was midway on his route, he suddenly encountered Mawlana who said: "Hey Theryanus! How are you after last night's efforts?" The poor man let out a shout and fell unconscious.

11 Aflaki, *Manāqib* i, 273–274; Aflaki, *Feats* 189–190. English translations of selections from Aflaki's *Manāqib al-ʿarīfīn* are by John O'Kane (Aflaki, *Feats*) with my modifications, or my own translations.

12 There is considerable literature on Muslim relations with and depictions of Christians, although little of it deals with Anatolia at the time under review. For a general discussion of the arrival of Islam in Anatolia and Christian-Muslim encounters in that region, see Ménage, *Islamization of Anatolia*. Conversion during the Ottoman era is dealt with in Baer, *Honored by the glory of Islam*; the role of Christian converts in the Ottoman state is the subject of Graf, *Sultan's renegades*.

When he returned to his senses, he didn't see anyone there. He realized that this had been the person from his dream, and he lowered his head and set out in a distressed state. A few days later, he killed a cruel and violent man, and was condemned to death. Mawlana put his blessed cloak over him and rescued him from the hands of the executioners. Theryanus immediately became a Muslim; and, *thanks to [Rumi's] favor, he attained such a status that the judges and the teachers of the city ... were reduced to stammering when faced with his divine insights and they affirmed the higher truths (ḥaqā'iq) he expressed.*¹³

Theryanus's erudition is a significant factor in accounts that I will discuss later; here, I would like to highlight the multivalent use of the term *rūmī*, which can either be an ethnic designation (as in "Greek," "Roman," "Byzantine," or "Anatolian") or else a religious one, meaning "Christian."¹⁴ Furthermore, this anecdote constitutes a full-blown conversion story of a sinner marked for conversion by a saint who appears to him in a dream, confronts him with the miraculous event while he is awake, and finally delivers him from death, heralding his conversion.

Such conversion narratives are relatively rare in Islamic sources, in the sense that few go into such details of process. In the abovementioned anecdote, the focus is not on the convert Theryanus but on the converter, Rumi. Broadly speaking, medieval Muslim conversion narratives seldom emphasize spiritual salvific elements. Instead, they emphasize the Muslims' self-conception of their religion as a temporal abrogation of earlier ones, especially (though not exclusively) Judaism and Christianity. As such, conversion represents the realization of the real nature of truth by the convert and his or her turning away from an outdated or distorted understanding of reality (as distinct from turning away from falsehood or evil). Such a notion of realization as conversion is as equally applicable to wrong-thinking Muslims as it is to non-Muslims. This is clear from the way Aflaki often arranges individual narratives in the *Manāqib al-ārifīn*, pairing them in such a way that accounts of non-Muslims converting to Islam precede or follow ones of Muslims becoming followers of Rumi. In one such example, Aflaki relates the story of a Greek (*rūmī*) mason who was in Rumi's house; Aflaki intentionally uses the Persian term for Christian, *tarsā*, in a word play on its literal meaning of "fearful":

13 Aflaki, *Manāqib* i, 463–464; Aflaki, *Feats* 319–320. Emphasis added.

14 For more on the multivalent meaning of the terms *rūmī* and *rūm*, see Kafadar, *Rome of one's own*, and Krstić, *Contested conversion* 3–5.

The companions, by way of joking, said to him: "Why don't you become a Muslim, since the religion of Islam is the best of religions?" He said: "It is almost fifty years that I have belonged to the religion of Jesus. I fear him (*az ū mī tarsam*) and I would be ashamed to abandon his religion." Out of nowhere, the honorable Mawlana entered through the door and stated: "The secret of faith is fear (*tars*). Whoever is fearful (*tarsā*) of God, even if he is a Christian (*tarsā*), he has religion and is not without religion." Then he left again. *In that moment, the Christian (tarsā) mason adopted the faith and became a Muslim and, once having joined the Muslim path, he became a sincere disciple.*¹⁵

This is immediately followed by a story of *madrasa* students from Central Asia:

Similarly, one day some religious students who had come from Jand and Khojand asked: "In this world of forms (*‘ālam-i šūrat*) what purpose does the rat serve?" [Rumi] replied: "Nothing has taken form in the world without a wise purpose. If there was no rat, the snake would ruin the world and humankind. The rat eats the snake's eggs and destroys them; otherwise snakes would fill the world. The explanation of the particularities that are placed in all the atoms of the world and of humankind is infinite." *They [i.e., the religious students] lowered their heads and became disciples.*¹⁶

Madrasa students, like traditional religious scholars (*‘ulamā’*), often are treated in Sufi writings as individuals who purport to possess religious knowledge but do so without actually understanding it. The account of the *madrasa* students is explicit in its message of conversion as a noetic experience involving receipt of a new form of knowledge. The story of the Christian mason is less explicit in this regard, but noetic conversion still figures clearly as a feature of the anecdote.

Examples of conversion through realization are common in the *Manāqib al-‘arīfīn*. One story features two Christian painters, Kaluyan and ‘Ayn al-Dawla, both of whom were disciples of Rumi:

Kaluyan related [to ‘Ayn al-Dawla] one day: "In Istanbul a picture of Mary and Jesus has been painted on a tablet which, like Jesus and Mary them-

15 Aflaki, *Manāqib* i, 476–477; Aflaki, *Feats* 328–329. Emphasis added.

16 Aflaki, *Manāqib* i, 477; Aflaki, *Feats* 329. Emphasis added.

selves, has no equal. Painters have come from all over the world but are not able to fashion anything like this picture.”

Out of infatuation with these pictures, ‘Ayn al-Dawla undertook a journey. For a year he resided in that great monastery in Istanbul and served the monks of that place. Seeing his opportunity one night, he put the tablet under his arm and left. When he reached Konya, he had the honor of visiting Mawlana, who said: “Where have you been?” He reported the story of the tablet exactly as it had occurred. Mawlana said: “Let us gaze upon this spirit-giving tablet.”

It was indeed painted with great beauty and subtlety. After looking at it a long time, Mawlana said: “These two beautiful images are complaining greatly about you, saying: ‘He is not sincere in his love for us—he is a false lover.’” ‘Ayn al-Dawla said: “How is this?” Mawlana replied: “They say: ‘We never sleep and eat, continually staying awake at night and fasting during the day. ‘Ayn al-Dawla deserts us at night and goes to sleep, and during the day he eats. He does not do as we do.’” ‘Ayn al-Dawla said: “Sleeping and eating are completely impossible for them, nor can they speak. They are images without a soul.”

Mawlana said: “You who are an image *with* a soul and know so many arts and have been fashioned by the divine artist whose handiwork is the world, Adam, and everything in the heavens and the earth—is it permissible that *you* abandon Him and make yourself into a lover of an image without soul and without higher meaning? What can result from such unaware images, and what profit can you acquire from them?” *‘Ayn al-Dawla repented immediately, lowered his head and became a Muslim.*¹⁷

This anecdote is followed immediately by the story of a devotee of Rumi’s disciple, Awhad al-Din Khu’i; that man’s son wanted to become Rumi’s disciple, and the father was concerned that this would prevent the boy from reaching God directly. Awhad al-Din advised the father to test Rumi’s spiritual stature by coming to him but not mentioning his concerns about the boy. Subsequently, when they were in a gathering with Rumi, Rumi said: “By God, by God! This boy first reached God and then became my disciple! If divine favor had not exerted an attraction on him, he would not have come running in our direction.” The

17 Aflaki, *Manāqib* i, 552–553; Aflaki, *Feats* 382–383. Emphasis added. The implications of this story for the place of visual religious art and iconography in Islamic culture are discussed in Elias, *Aisha’s cushion* 98–99.

account then jumps forward to relate how Awhad al-Din used to spend his time listening to Rumi recite poetry. When Rumi died, Awhad al-Din came out bare-headed, weeping, all the while saying: "Oh my dear, my dear, my dear! How have you come and gone without anyone knowing you?" Then he recited these verses:

He came to the world for two days and showed us his face
 But he left so suddenly I don't know who he was.
*In this manner the gentleman (khwāja)—along with his whole family (bā ahl wa 'ayyāl)—became disciples.*¹⁸

The message of this anecdote is multifold, including providing evidence of Rumi's insight and the implicit question of whether or not devotion to a master compromises the Muslim ideal of individual connections to God. But it is primarily an account about realization, in that it is the behavior of Awhad al-Din—the father's master—at Rumi's death, coupled with a poem about Rumi's hidden nature, that reveals hidden truths to the man as well as to the rest of his family.

Another pair of anecdotes presents a different, more aesthetic or imaginal message in Rumi's teaching. The second of the pair concerns the conversion of a Jewish man:

Rumi's son said: "One day a Jew from among their rabbis encountered Mawlana. He said: 'Is our religion better or your religion?' Mawlana replied: 'Your religion.' *He [the Jew] immediately became a Muslim.*"¹⁹

The signification of this account is unclear unless one reads it in the context of the anecdote that precedes it because, together, they reinforce the idea that good behavior and taste are themselves a display of true knowledge. In the first of the pair, Rumi's son relates:

One day they asked my father: "Isn't the voice of the *rabāb* [rebec] a strange sound?" He replied: "It is the grating sound of the door of Paradise which we hear." Sayyid Sharaf al-Din [a traditional religious scholar who was there] said: "But *we* also hear the same sound; why is it that *we* do not become excited the way the honorable Mawlana does?" He replied:

18 Aflaki, *Manāqib* i, 553–554; Aflaki, *Feats* 383. Emphasis added.

19 Aflaki, *Manāqib* i, 484; Aflaki, *Feats* 333. Emphasis added.

“... *what we hear is the sound of that door opening, whereas what he hears is the sound of that door closing.*”²⁰

6 The *Masnawi* and the Quran

Examples of Muslim conversion to the truth as taught by Rumi can be dramatic in the *Manāqib al-‘arīfīn*: In one account, a disciple of Rumi complains that learned religious scholars were arguing with him, saying: “Why is the *Masnawi* called the Quran?” To this the disciple had replied: “It is the commentary (*tafsīr*) of the Quran.” When he related this incident to Rumi, the master was silent for a moment, then he burst out: “You dog! Why is it not the Quran? You ass! Why shouldn’t it be so? Your sister is a whore! Why shouldn’t it be so? Indeed, contained in the words of the prophets and the Sufis (*awlīyā’*) is nothing but the lights of divine mysteries. The speech of God has sprung up from their pure hearts and has flowed forth on the stream of their tongue.

*Indeed speech resides within the heart
And the tongue has been made a guide to speech”*

After this Arabic couplet, Aflaki continues with words attributed to Rumi and a couplet in Persian followed by his own testimony to a conversion:

Whether it be Syriac, the first chapter of the Quran (*al-sab‘ al-mathānī*),
or whether it be Hebrew or Arabic—

Be like this or that, Soul of my soul, you’re my soul’s soul

Speak with any tongue you wish O Khusrow with Shirin’s lips!

*When this explanation reached the ears of the religious scholars from the tongue of the possessor of insight, they all engaged in presenting apologies for their stupidity and ignorance. Having sought forgiveness, they joined the way of the companions.*²¹

As illustrated by these accounts, conversion is not only about non-Muslims becoming Muslims, but about everyone (Muslims included) becoming *true* Muslims. In light of the possibility of intra-Muslim conversion experiences, the way non-Muslims are represented and the roles they play are worth exploring

20 Aflaki, *Manāqib* i, 483–484; Aflaki, *Feats* 333. Emphasis added. The Persian text plays on the plural of the word for *rabbi* and the name of the bowed lute in this pair of anecdotes.

21 Aflaki, *Manāqib* i, 291; Aflaki, *Feats* 201–202. Emphasis added.

further. One anecdote about Rumi in the *Manāqib al-ʿārifīn* is related on the authority of a well-respected Christian monk who headed a monastery:

One day the honorable Mawlana came to Plato's Monastery (Dayr-i Afla-tun) which stands nested in a mountain, and he went into the cave there from which cold water flows forth. He set off to penetrate to the very end of the cave. I [the monk] waited outside the cave watching to see what would happen. He sat in the middle of the cold water for seven days and nights. After that, he came outside in an excited state and departed. Truly, there was no trace of change whatsoever on his blessed body.²²

The monk then swore that: "*What I have read about the person of the Messiah and I have observed in the sacred books of Abraham and Moses, as well as what I have seen in the histories of the elders concerning the magnitude of the physical exertions of the prophets—the very same, and even more, was in him*" (emphasis added).

The corollary of this anecdote of a Christian monk testifying that Rumi is in the tradition of the prophets and the messiah is the message that Rumi could engage in Christian practices in Christian spaces and excel at them, and that Christian monks can be reliable witnesses. The notion of religious normalcy and normativity extending to include non-Muslims is found on several occasions in the *Manāqib al-ʿārifīn*, one of the most important being the account of Rumi's death:

When they brought out the funeral bier, both the great and the small bared their heads. All the women, men, and children were present, and they raised a hue and cry that resembled the hue and cry of the Great Resurrection. Everyone was weeping, and most men walked along naked [probably meaning bareheaded], shouting and tearing their clothes. Likewise, all the communities (*milal*) with their men of religion and worldly power (*aṣḥāb-i dīn wa duwal*) were present, including the Christians and the Jews, the Greeks (*rūmīyān*), the Arabs and the Turks, as well as others. All of them, in accordance with their customary practices, processed forth while holding their books, reciting verses from the Psalms of David, the Torah and the Gospels, and lamenting. The Muslims were unable to push them back with whips, sticks, and swords. That crowd would not be kept away and great chaos arose. News of this reached the Sultan of Islam, the

22 Aflaki, *Manāqib* i, 294; Aflaki, *Feats* 203.

chancellor and the chamberlain. The prominent monks and priests were summoned and asked: “What does this event have to do with you? This king of religion is our chief, imam and guide.” They answered: “We came to understand the truth (*ḥaqīqat*) of Moses, the truth of Jesus and that of all the prophets from his clear words, and we beheld in him the behavior of the perfect prophets we read about in our scriptures. If you Muslims call the honorable Mawlana the Muhammad of your own age, we recognize him to be the Moses of the era and the Jesus of the age. As much as you love him and are devoted to him, we are his servants and disciples a thousand times more so.

Seventy-two communities heard their secret from us

Like a flute that fits two hundred creeds with one scale.

In the same way, the essence of the honorable Mawlana is a sun of higher realities (*ḥaqāʾiq*) which has shone on the people of this world and bestowed favor; the whole world adores the sun and everyone’s house is illuminated by it.”

Another *rūmī* priest said: “The similitude for Mawlana is bread—and one cannot do without bread. Have you ever seen a hungry person who shuns bread? But what do you know about who he was!”

All the nobles fell silent and said nothing. Meanwhile, from a different direction the euphonious Quran-memorizers recited marvelous verses with diligence, and the sweet-voiced Quran-readers raised their sighs to the clouds in the sky along with chants arousing lamentation and mingled with grief. And the beautiful-voiced muezzins—instead of calling out the arrival of the time for the prayer of Resurrection—announced this other event. And twenty groups of splendid singers chanted dirges for the honorable Mawlana that he had composed himself.²³

A significant point in the account of Rumi’s death is the way in which Christians and Jews are referred to in relation to Muslims. Aflaki’s narrative groups them in “all the communities” together with “the Arabs and the Turks” as well as others, including Greeks. In his use of the term *milla*—which can mean a national or communal group—Arabs and Turks are presented as distinct from “the Muslims” and the crowd was so great that “the Muslims” were unable to push back the members of these communities. Presumably the Muslims referred to in this passage do not include the Arabs and Turks, who are lumped together with Christians and Jews as the different communities (*milal*). Arguably then, con-

23 Aflaki, *Manāqib* i, 591–593; Aflaki, *Feats* 405–406.

fessional identity is less important to Aflaki than is communal identity, where communal includes the ethnolinguistic. Christians are different from Greeks in this context, perhaps indicating that Greeks are identifiable due to their numbers, whereas the category of "Christian" includes Armenians, Georgians, Syriac speakers, and so on. The reference to "others" at the end of the sentence might be a rhetorical device, but it might also refer to Kurds or members of other linguistic groups that were predominantly Muslim. "Muslim," then, refers to a subgroup of the Muslim community, and is probably synonymous with "Persian-speakers" in this context, since Persian-speakers and émigrés comprised the educated, urban, religious, and social elite, as well as the circle of Rumi's disciples, who would be judged to be the "true" Muslims in all cases in the *Manāqib al-ʿarīfīn*.

Ethnic differences among Muslims are certainly mentioned in the *Manāqib al-ʿarīfīn*. For example, Turks are depicted sometimes as coarse, uneducated people, as they often are in the Persian writings of this time. The distinction between Turks and Persians is made in the *Manāqib al-ʿarīfīn* using two paired anecdotes, where Persian-ness—defined linguistically—is clearly identified with Rumi and his way:

One day [Rumi] was walking in the bazaar of Konya. A Turk was clutching a fox skin and offering it for sale, shouting "*dilkū! dilkū* ["fox" in Turkish]!" The honorable Mawlana came whirling around and calling out "*dil kū, dil kū* ("where is the heart" in Persian)?" And he continued performing the *samāʿ* all the way back to the blessed madrasa.²⁴

This comes immediately after the following anecdote, which engages in a similar word play involving a Christian referred to using the aforementioned word *tarsā*, meaning both Christian and "fearful":

One day when he had become excited performing the *samāʿ* ... out of nowhere a drunk came into the *samāʿ* gathering, raising a ruckus and completely out of his senses. He hit the honorable Mawlana, so the dear friends beat him. He [Rumi] said: "*He is the one who has drunk wine and you are behaving like bad drunks!*" They replied: "*He is a Christian (tarsā)!*" He said: "*He is a tarsā (Christian) but why are you not tarsā (fearful)?*" Lowering their heads, they sought forgiveness.²⁵

²⁴ Aflaki, *Manāqib* i, 356; Aflaki, *Feats* 246.

²⁵ Aflaki, *Manāqib* i, 356; Aflaki, *Feats* 246.

Aflaki imagines legitimate religious spaces in which Sufi masters can act and effect change as extending beyond the Islamic world and its Muslim population. He includes an account of Rumi's son, Sultan Walad, who relates how Rumi told him to take some companions and go to Damascus to look for Rumi's enigmatic companion and muse, Shams-i Tabrizi. Rumi said: "Carry an amount of silver and gold and pour it into [Shams's] shoes and turn his blessed shoes in the direction of Rūm [meaning Anatolia and Konya]. And convey my greetings to him and present him with my loving prostration (*sajda-yi 'āshiqāna*)."²⁶

They were to find Shams in a caravanserai on a mountain outside Damascus. "When you see Mawlana Shams he will be playing backgammon with a comely Frankish (*farang*) boy. When he wins in the end, he will take the money from the Frank. When he takes the money, the boy will slap him. Do not make the mistake of becoming angry, because that boy is one of the cosmic pillars (*aqtāb*), but he does not recognize himself properly. He must—through the blessing of association with [Shams] and through his favor—demonstrate advancement toward the perfect state and become his disciple."²⁷

When Sultan Walad and his companion got to Damascus, events transpired exactly as Rumi had said they would. When they treated Shams with great respect, the Frankish boy got frightened, horrified at the rudeness he had displayed to someone who was clearly very important. Seeing the devoted interactions between Shams, Sultan Walad, and the other followers of Rumi, the Frankish boy converted to Islam and wanted to become a disciple. However, Shams said to him: "Return to the land of the Franks and honor the dear ones (*azīzān*) of those parts, and be the cosmic pillar (*qutb*) of that community (*jamā'at*). And do not forget us in your prayers."²⁸

Thus, according to Rumi (as recorded by Aflaki), not only can one of the axes of the metaphysical world reside in the land of the Franks, but he can be a Frank himself, his spiritual status predating his awareness and conversion to Islam.

7 From Rumi to 'Arif Chalabi

The invocation of Christianity and Christians is recurrent and nuanced in the *Manāqib al-‘arifīn*, extending beyond Rumi's time into that of his successors. For example, Aflaki's own master, Ulu 'Arif Chalabi, was notorious for his love of wine. Aflaki reports how once Ulu 'Arif Chalabi was at a feast with a group of

26 Aflaki, *Manāqib* ii, 695; Aflaki, *Feats* 482.

27 Aflaki, *Manāqib* ii, 695; Aflaki, *Feats* 482.

28 Aflaki, *Manāqib* ii, 695–696; Aflaki, *Feats* 482–483.

his disciples: "That day around twenty of the fortunate companions persisted in imbibing and drinking wine, and they indulged in a festivity in the manner of Jesus." The partaking in a feast in the company of disciples very clearly evokes the Last Supper in Aflaki's account. As the night progressed, the person in charge of providing the wine, Ulu 'Arif's grandson Ilyas Pasha, began to worry that they were running out of the beverage, and kept complaining about it to Ulu 'Arif. Eventually Ulu 'Arif fell asleep; when Ilyas Pasha came to him because they were down to the last jug, Ulu 'Arif awoke and scolded his grandson, using a word play on Ulu 'Arif's own name as meaning "a knower": "How often are you going to say that? Be silent! ... If a knower of God (*'arif*) works from a single jug until dawn, it would not be a miracle!" 'Arif then took the flask into his own hands before giving it back to Ilyas Pasha, who poured wine from it all night long, yet when the party was over the jug was still full.²⁹

Ulu 'Arif Chalabi does not invoke Jesus and his disciples again when talking about the ever-flowing flask of wine, but the implicit message is clear: having set the stage early in the account that their feast was "in the manner of Jesus," satisfying a group of disciples with one flask of wine is reminiscent of Jesus feeding a multitude with a few loaves of bread.

Another account describes Ulu 'Arif Chalabi carousing with Christian monks at the aforementioned Monastery of Plato during the week preceding the Hajj, a time normally associated with pious behavior. This incident serves as the occasion for the conversion of a Muslim aristocrat who comes to chastise him.³⁰ Yet another account, reminiscent of the drinking party described above, relates how 'Arif made cucumbers appear miraculously in a garden that had only just been planted, and with them fed a large group of people:

[‘Arif Chalabi] told them to bestow the cucumbers on all the companions and the inhabitants of the fortress, *and that day all the young men and commanders became servants and disciples*. It happened that Najm al-Din Dizdar remained preoccupied by this thought: "How did these cucumbers grow before their season, and what is this power and control over affairs which God Most High has bestowed on Chalabi 'Arif?" The Chalabi immediately said: "Amir Najm al-Din, have you not read the story of Mary where it says: 'Shake for yourself the trunk of the palm-tree' (Q 19:25)? If the God who was able to bring succulent ripe dates into existence from a dry tree for Mary untouched by a male, if He should also make appear

29 Aflaki, *Manāqib* ii, 937–938; Aflaki, *Feats* 656.

30 Aflaki, *Manāqib* ii, 904–905; Aflaki, *Feats* 632–633.

through the Divine Breath of Jesus (*ʿĪsā nafasī*) a few cucumbers for someone, that would not be strange and miraculous.” Najm al-Din immediately lowered his head and sought forgiveness. After the honorable Chalabi had departed, they saw that the garden had still not flowered; it was after one month that the fruits of the garden appeared.³¹

Jesus occupies an important place in Islamic thought and popular piety, such that invocations of him do not constitute Christian references in and of themselves. But, given the fact that Rumi and his followers lived in an environment with a substantial Christian population and that many of the anecdotes related by Aflaki explicitly involve Christians, the invocations of Jesus are significant and do not parallel references to other important Islamic prophetic figures such as Abraham or Noah. In fact, Aflaki’s accounts *need* Christian actors for their messages, as is apparent from the anecdotes featuring Rumi’s disciple Theryanus as the protagonist. In one, a local religious scholar comes to Theryanus and complains that he has read a donkey-load (*kharwār*) of books but has not found any justification for the practice of *samāʿ* in any of them. Theryanus replies that the scholar reads like a donkey (*kharwār*), whereas the Sufi reads in the manner of Jesus and attains the inner meaning of texts.³²

This anecdote does more than providing evidence of Theryanus’s famed erudition: the fact that it is a Christian convert who is speaking adds indexical value to the mention of Jesus. Put differently, Christian converts are useful in order to say and do things for which Christian credentials prove helpful. This can be illustrated with three accounts from the *Manāqib al-ʿarifīn*, all featuring Theryanus. The first is of his conversion story, two anecdotes concerning which have been discussed earlier. At the end of it, Rumi asks Theryanus: “What do these Christian priests and men of learning, may Allah guide them, say about the real nature of Jesus, peace be upon him?” Theryanus replies: “They call him divine (*khudā*).” Rumi then says: “From now on say to them: ‘Our Muhammad is more divine (*Muhammad-i mā khudā tar*)! Our Muhammad is more divine! Our Muhammad is more divine!’”³³

The other two anecdotes are in a similar vein but much more developed, since Theryanus affirms central Mevlevi doctrines in them. In one, a group of Muslim jurists accuses Theryanus in front of the chief qadi (*malik al-quḍāt*) of declaring that Rumi is God. Theryanus is arrested and brought before the chief qadi, who says: “Is it you who says that Mawlana is God?” Theryanus replies:

31 Aflaki, *Manāqib* ii, 902–904; Aflaki, *Feats* 631–632.

32 Aflaki, *Manāqib* i, 276–277; Aflaki, *Feats* 192.

33 Aflaki, *Manāqib* i, 274; Aflaki, *Feats* 190.

“God forbid! By no means! Rather I say Mawlana is a god-fashioner (*khudā-sāz*). Don’t you see how he has made me? I was an infidel, far removed and obstinate. He bestowed mystical knowledge (*‘irfān*) on me; he made me a religious scholar; he gave me reason and made me into a knower of God. He transported me from the rote behavior of invoking God (*taqlīd-i khudā khwānī*) to the reality of knowing God (*taḥqīq-i khudā dānī*). ‘Whoever knows himself knows his Lord’ became the coin of my life. Until godliness is not in someone’s heart, it remains impossible to know God, and this is definitive proof.”³⁴

The third anecdote is similar to the preceding one: “It happened that a group of masters of Sufism (*arbāb-i taṣawwuf*) caught [Theryanus] in their midst and reproached him, saying: ‘Why do you call Mawlana God?’ He replied: ‘Because I have not found anything above God or higher than that name which I might say. If there were something else, I would have said that.’” Then he uttered the following verse:

*Out of love I feel ashamed to call him a mortal
But I fear God if I were to say: “This is God.”*³⁵

Through these accounts, Aflaki is attempting to teach that the sincere disciple on the Sufi path is allowed to say anything regarding his master, to whom he should be perfectly devoted. The points made in these anecdotes concerning Rumi’s divine nature or how a disciple should venerate his or her teacher are not unique to Theryanus. However, value is added to the testimony by having the words spoken by someone who, through his Christian past, has greater expertise than the average Muslim in doctrines concerning divinity in human beings. Theryanus personifies the erudite Christian convert in the *Manāqib al-‘arīfīn* precisely because Aflaki needs Theryanus to make these points.

8 The Imaginal Master

The ideal Sufi master—as exemplified by Rumi—has several important characteristics that help attract disciples in the immediate term. In the preceding pages I have provided examples of how such qualities are projected. At the same time, the master’s character—as reflected in hagiographical descrip-

34 Aflaki, *Manāqib* i, 274–275; Aflaki, *Feats* 190–191. “Whoever knows himself knows his Lord (*man ‘arafa nafsahu faqad ‘arafa rabbahu*)” is a saying that has been popular among Sufis since the earliest period of Sufism’s development.

35 Aflaki, *Manāqib* i, 276; Aflaki, *Feats* 191.

tions—serves in a number of different ways as an exemplary life for posterity. The ability of the master to project himself in the imaginal realm in a manner that is perceptible to the disciple (or potential new followers) is an important part of his authority, as is his general ability to manipulate conventional rules of perception.³⁶ In Rumi's case, anecdotes that record such prowess serve the additional goal of explicitly placing Rumi above other respected Sufi masters and in going even further to demonstrate how Rumi is of equal rank to earlier prophets.

The *Manāqib al-ʿarīfīn* emphasizes Rumi's similarity to prophets on several occasions and clearly suggests that Rumi likened his disciples to the companions and followers (*tābiʿūn*) of the prophet Muhammad. For example, on one occasion Rumi is reported to have said to his disciples: "Allah! Allah! For as long as one is able to sit in discipleship (*ṣuḥbat*) and service (*khidmat*) to a master, everything other than this service and occupation is worthless. And if one cannot do this discipleship [to a Sufi shaykh], then you must sit in discipleship with the companions. And if you can't do that, then you must occupy yourself with their words and teachings. And if that is impossible, then you should busy yourself with religious duties and acts of worship (*ṭāʿat-i ḥaqq*)."³⁷

Rumi's authority is ratified by Muhammad in dreams and visions, as demonstrated in the following episode from the *Manāqib al-ʿarīfīn*:³⁸

Mawlana Shams al-Din Mardini said, "One night, I saw the honorable Messenger, upon him be peace, in my dreams. He was sitting. When I went before him and greeted him, he turned his blessed face away from me. I went around to that side and he did the same. I cried out in tears: 'O Messenger of God! For so many years I have endured hardship in the hopes of your affection and care. I have studied, working hard to verify hadith traditions and to answer religious questions, all for your sake. What is it that causes you to deprive this wretch?' The Prophet said, 'All of that is true, but you look toward my brethren (*ikhwān*) with disdain. This act does not please me; this behavior and this attitude are both sins and manifest bad deeds.'

*O you who consider the friends of God separate from Him,
If you have good thoughts, then why not for His friends?*

36 For more on the master-disciple relationship, see Bashir, *Sufi bodies*.

37 Aflaki, *Manāqib* i, 522; Aflaki, *Feats* 360–361.

38 There is a famous hadith tradition stating that all visions of Muhammad are veridical, such that his appearance in dreams is understood to be an ongoing form of prophecy. For more on religious dreaming in Islam, see (among others) Kinberg, *Literal dreams*; Lamoreaux, *Early Muslim tradition*; Ormsby, *Poor man's prophecy*; and Sviri, *Dreams analyzed*.

Especially toward Mawlana, who is a child of my spirit!"

He said: "When I awoke, I sought refuge in God and repented of that behavior. As yet I had not been honored by becoming a disciple of Mawlana. In the end, in obedience, I became one of [Rumi's] sincere followers."³⁹

The ability to appear to others in visions and to travel in the imaginal realm is one of the powers that links the Sufi master to Quranic prophets, both through evoking them and through mimicking an important quality of prophethood. According to one anecdote in the *Manāqib al-ʿarīfīn*, a merchant came to Rumi in order to understand why his business was going badly. Rumi told him that it was because he had treated a very important dervish saint poorly in the westernmost land of the Franks while he was conducting business there. Rumi went on to say that the only way for the merchant to fix his business problems was to go back and ask that dervish's forgiveness. He also commanded the man to convey Rumi's greetings to the dervish.

Sensing the merchant's amazement at his insight, Rumi said: "Do you want to see him right now? Look!" He then placed his hand on the wall, causing a door to open and allowing the merchant to see the dervish sleeping on a street corner somewhere in the land of the Franks. The merchant tore at his shirt and lost control of his senses. When he came to, he immediately set out for Europe to rectify his past error. Upon reaching his destination, he found the man sleeping exactly as Rumi had shown him. The merchant then begged the Frankish dervish's forgiveness, at which the latter said: "What can I do? Mawlana does not allow me to show you the power of God ..." He then spoke kindly to the merchant, embraced him and said: "Now look! You will see my honorable master and lord!" The merchant looked and he saw Rumi lost in *samāʿ*, dancing while reciting the following lines of poetry:

*His kingdom contains the coarse and the fine of all kinds.
If you wish, be ruby or carnelian, if you wish, be clay or stone
If you're a believer He seeks you, if you're a disbeliever he cleanses you
Go this way and be a Muslim (ṣiddīq), go that way and be a Frank.*

Upon returning to Konya, the merchant brought Rumi the greetings of the Franks and became a faithful disciple.⁴⁰

39 Aflaki, *Manāqib* i, 326–327; Aflaki, *Feats* 226.

40 Aflaki, *Manāqib* i, 97–99; Aflaki, *Feats* 71–72.

Other accounts place Rumi in relation to living and dead Sufi masters for the dual purpose of defining the parameters of Sufi authority and of demonstrating Rumi's superiority to others. According to one of them, once during a *samā'* in his madrasa, Rumi became moved to great ecstasy; he kept approaching the area of the singers and musicians, where he would offer praise and ask forgiveness before falling back into ecstasy. He kept doing this to the point that his disciples became bewildered, wondering whom he was addressing. When the *samā'* ended, one of the senior disciples politely asked Rumi about what had just transpired. Rumi replied, saying that "the secret of the spirit (*sirr-i rūhāniyyat*)" of Hakim Sana'i (d. before 1141) had appeared in bodily form (*mutamaththal shuda*). He had stood among the musicians playing the frame drum while reciting beautiful verses. Rumi had been going over to him to offer praise and make excuses so that Sana'i would be pleased with the gathering.⁴¹

The dead Sana'i's ability to imaginalize himself is similar to Rumi's and underscores how true Sufi masters necessarily possess this quality, with the corollary message that those who do not appear imaginally in such a way are lesser Sufi masters. In works such as the *Manāqib al-ʿarīfīn*, it is often the act of making oneself appear to others that demonstrates this spiritual superiority. In one anecdote Rumi himself tells how it is the power of travelling in another dimension that allows Sufi masters to make themselves apparent in the physical world in ways that confound physical rules:

[In] the city of Konya there was a gentleman (*khwāja*) named Amira who was reputable and a believer, and he was one of the devotees and lovers [of Rumi]. It happened that he vowed to visit the revered Ka'ba. Having sought Mawlana's permission and favor, he set out. He recounted: "In every way station, place and town that I reached, I would see a formed image (*muṣawwar*) of the honorable Mawlana and be astonished. When I arrived in Damascus, I saw he was walking on the roof of the congregational mosque and gesturing toward me. Due to the overpowering nature of the situation I lost consciousness and lay sleeping until close to the hour of the next prayer. When I recovered my senses, I didn't see anyone. Thus, bewildered and in a distressed state, I set out for the revered Ka'ba. Afterward, when I had been honored with circumambulating the Ka'ba, I saw the honorable Mawlana performing the circumambulation. And on top of Mount Arafat I saw him in intimate prayer with God (*munājāt*).

41 Aflaki, *Manāqib* i, 222–223; Aflaki, *Feats* 154–155.

When I was blessed to return to Konya, still covered in dust, I went directly to be honored by kissing Mawlana's hand. I saw a group of companions seated there, and Mawlana said: 'Yes, Haji Amira! Know that the men of God are always travelling about like fish in the ocean of divine power. Wherever they want, they stick their heads out and show their faces. And wherever their supporters seek them, they find them.' I lowered my head and kissed his blessed feet."⁴²

Elsewhere, Rumi uses his powers not to transport himself but to imaginalize (or perhaps existentiate) an object, in this case the Ka'ba. According to Aflaki, a saintly woman named Fakhr al-Nisa, who was widely known for her miracles and piety, used to visit Rumi often. After a number of religious people urged her to fulfill her obligation to go on Hajj, she decided to come and seek his advice in the matter. As soon as she entered the room, he said: "This is a very good intention and a blessed journey! I hope that we can undertake it together." Fakhr al-Nisa lowered her head silently, while Rumi's disciples were left wondering what was transpiring between Rumi and the saintly woman.

That night she and Rumi's disciples stayed at his house. After midnight, Rumi went to the roof of the madrasa and busied himself with his nighttime prayers. When he had finished, he began crying out loudly and signaled to Fakhr al-Nisa that she should climb up to the roof. When she had joined him, Rumi said: "Look up! Your objective has presented itself to you!" She looked up and saw the Ka'ba spinning and circling around Rumi. She then let out a cry and lost consciousness; and when she came to, she had lost her desire to go on the Hajj. Rumi then recited a ghazal that began with the following lines:

*The Ka'ba circles at the entrance to the alley of an idol!
What idol is this, O God? What affliction and disaster?
Before her, the full moon is a broken disc—
Before her sweetness, sugar cane is an annoying fly.*⁴³

9 Conclusion

The anecdotes from Aflaki's *Manāqib al-ʿarīfīn* discussed above stress the importance of imagining and the imagination in conveying intended meanings

⁴² Aflaki, *Manāqib* i, 460; Aflaki, *Feats* 317.

⁴³ Aflaki, *Manāqib* i, 287–289; Aflaki, *Feats* 199–200.

and symbols in Sufi writings at a number of levels. In the most basic sense, hagiography (and perhaps all biography) is an exercise in imagining, since it purports to represent a life or a collection of lives to an audience that is not the subject of the narration. The anecdotes in Aflaki's work cumulatively create an image of the lives of Rumi and the other principle characters of thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century Konya in the minds of the audience.

This broad purpose of imagining a life or lives has some specific goals, prominent among which is the attempt to create a picture of an ideal way of being Muslim, and perhaps even human. It is to this end that conversion from other forms of Islam, as well as from other religions, plays such a prominent part in the narratives. More than anything else, what a Sufi master does is *save* people by guiding them to a noetic salvation, an enterprise that depends entirely on the Sufi master already possessing the requisite knowledge and understanding he or she wishes to impart to the disciple. Anecdotal demonstrations of the master's control over physical, visual, and auditory representation provide cogent proof of such knowledge. Not only can the master only be seen when and where he chooses—he can also see what others cannot.

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India as a Sufi Spacetime in the Work of Jamālī of Delhi

Shahzad Bashir

The argument that Sufis played a crucial role in the establishment of Muslim communities in South Asia has had a number of iterations. An old version, still cited widely in public discussions, is that Sufis were originally the “peaceful” outsiders who accompanied military adventurers arriving into the Indian subcontinent from Iran and Central Asia from the fifth/eleventh century onward. Exhibiting exemplary piety and possessed of proselytizing zeal, these individuals are supposed to have attracted local inhabitants to Islam. This view has been critiqued convincingly by recent historians for being based on a simplistic understanding of socioreligious factors plausible for explaining change in religious affiliation. It has been replaced by theories that emphasize “conversion” as a lengthy community-based process that varies greatly depending on the types of religious communities that existed in different parts of India before the arrival of Muslims. In this version, the growth of Muslim populations is linked also to socioeconomic considerations such as agrarian expansion, deforestation, and evolution of networks spread across regions and oceans.

Charismatic Sufis do still matter in the more complicated understanding of how Muslims communities developed in South Asia. But in this instance, it is their dead bodies, and the stories told about them posthumously, that are seen as more important than their origins or what they may have said or done when they were alive. Interred in shrines controlled by descendants and other successors, these Sufis became nodes in pilgrimage circuits and were woven into community narratives. The shrines also received patronage from political elites seeking legitimacy, their caretakers often mediating between populations surrounding the shrines and rulers in urban centers located at a distance. Among other compelling attributes, recent historiographical interventions regarding the significance of Sufis are able to account for the great variance between regions of India when it comes to the expansion of Muslim communities. Local social and ecological factors explain, for example, why territories that today comprise Bangladesh and Pakistan are majority Muslim, while the area around Delhi, where Muslim dynasties were centered for many centuries, is not. The explanatory principles involved here are extendable to sit-

uations in other regions that have significant concentrations of Muslims, such as the Deccan, Kashmir, Gujarat, Kerala, and so on.¹

I am interested in addressing the issue of Sufis' relationship to India, but I want to change the questions we most often ask of Sufi literary materials. Instead of demography, my focus is temporal and social cosmology as this pertains to Sufis' imagination of India as a dwelling place and an element within the larger geography pertaining to Islam. My analytical reorientation is a reaction to the fact that seeking explanation for the expansion of Muslim populations in South Asia is a fundamentally modern political concern that aligns badly with the contents of premodern Sufi sources. The roots of the population question lie in British colonial demography, which mattered for the legitimation and administration of the colonial state. The partition of British India into, first, India and Pakistan, and later, Pakistan and Bangladesh, is the starkest long-term consequence of the colonial state's concern with religious demographics. All the postcolonial states of southern Asia—from Afghanistan to Myanmar, and from Nepal to Sri Lanka—are inheritors of the concern with religious demography, which is now articulated through majority-minority distinctions and efforts toward regional or communal autonomy that cite religious affiliation.

Attempting to answer the demographic question pertaining to Muslims in South Asia has always required extensive ad hoc projection because premodern sources (chronicles, hagiographies, Islamic religious literature, and so on) exhibit little curiosity or pragmatic concern with demography. Moreover, in materials produced by premodern Muslims, the idea of "converting" individuals or communities is, at best, a marginal issue. In hagiographical sources, which provide the most extensive descriptions of the social world occupied by Sufis, stories of conversions are isolated cases, where the claim about someone becoming Muslim is always tied to a larger point about the religious authority of the saintly figure who is the subject of the narrative. Discussing demographic change using these sources necessitates extensive extrapolation on the basis of general theories about socioreligious patterns concerning South Asia and elsewhere. When citing precolonial sources, accounts of "Islamization" in South Asia translate data couched in non-demographic terms into evidence that matters for modern concerns. All such accounts either ignore, or rationalize away, differences of framing of knowledge in order to make the sources usable for latter-day issues. Asking demographic questions of Sufi sources seems mis-

1 For summary information about the current state of understanding regarding conversion see Eaton, *Reconsidering "conversion to Islam."*

guided and may be akin to the attempt to extract chemical formulas out of a cookbook. The pursuit requires getting into the structures that make up the material that constitutes food, while the source one is reading is dedicated to matters of taste and smell. To make fuller and, I believe, better use of Sufi sources in this context requires changing the questions we pose regarding them.

For the moment, I am concerned with the work of a single premodern Sufi author, famous as “Dervish Jamālī” (d. 942/1536), relevant for adjudicating the creation of distinctively Indian Islamic identities. Rather than conversion to Islam from another affiliation, my concern is Islamic projection regarding geography and time that symptomizes socio-intellectual processes pertaining to community formation. This effort feeds into the larger field of the study of Islam in South Asia by considering a perspective found at the ground level of Sufi expression. My exploration rests on exploiting, rather than eliding, the epistemological difference that separates a precolonial author from the modern interpreter. I regard time and space as narrative constructions rather than as pre-given aspects of life. This approach runs contrary to presumptions underlying the demographic question, which is predicated on a seemingly settled understanding of South Asian geography and temporal progression. The base representational form for this is the familiar modern map of the subcontinent, which gives the landmass a distinctive shape bounded by coastlines and mountains. Inscriptions usually marking the map that reference human presence (states, empires, languages, castes, ethnicities, religious groups, etc.) introduce temporalities that vary based on what a given mapping is attempting to represent. For example, the representation of the physical terrain contains quite different overlaid textual and other markers when claiming to depict the subcontinent in the year 1200 CE versus 1950. Although maps did exist in premodern contexts, these look quite different from what we take to be the standard now. Moreover, maps were quite rare and did not govern how most people imagined the terrain that surrounded them.²

Inscribed maps carry presumptions about spacetime, a term that signifies inextricable entanglement between the two conceptual arenas signified by the words “space” and “time.” Modern narrative descriptions of South Asia correlate closely to the familiar standard map. As in the cartographic pictogram, South Asia is narrated as a set of contiguous regions with established passages from

² For the specificity of the modern perspective in this regard see Ramaswamy, *Terrestrial lessons*.

the past to the present. When reified, the modern spacetime regime makes some kinds of questions pertaining to the region valuable and others trivial. Since premodern Sufis simply did not share the modern reified view of Indian spacetime, their ideas and prescriptive injunctions are keyed to concerns quite different from ours. Hence the awkwardness of utilizing these materials to address modern questions such as those pertaining to demography. To interpret Sufi texts, then, it is important to try to understand how geography and time are imagined within them.

Premodern narrative constructions of spacetime do not presume the mapping that is familiar to us today. Rather, such narratives are distinctive ideological constructs tied to the imperatives and interests of those who composed them. Noting the variance between the two situations can help us to become better readers of premodern sources, along with appreciating the significance of our own intellectual and sociopolitical commitments. My exploration contributes to the discussion about the establishment of Muslim communities in India through an emphasis on understanding how some Indian Muslims understood their surrounding world and their own, distinctively Indian, place within it. Spacetime is a critical issue in this regard because of its constitutive role in cosmology.³

1 Jamālī of Delhi

Hāmid b. Faẓlallāh Jamālī (d. 942/1536) was an Indian Sufi whose important works, in Persian poetry and prose, have received occasional attention by modern scholars. Jamālī's political and socio-intellectual coordinates put him at the center of elite Indian Islamic culture in a crucial period. He spent most of his life in Delhi connected to courts. His works mention contact with Sikandar Lōdī (r. 1489–1517) and Ibrāhīm Lōdī (r. 1517–1526), the last two rulers in the dynasty that marked the end of the Delhi Sultanate. He is also known to have served the Mughals, the Lodīs' successors as North Indian kings. One of his works contains a wish for the flourishing of the rule of Humāyūn (d. 1556), the second ruler in the Mughal dynasty.⁴ Jamālī accompanied Humāyūn's army during a campaign to Gujarat and is said to have died there. His body was brought back to Delhi for

3 The perspective I am adopting is akin to Manan Ahmed Asif's recent discussion of a source on the origins of Islamic presence in South Asia. Asif, *Book of conquest*. However, the materials I am utilizing, as well as the overall point I want to emphasize, are somewhat different.

4 Jamālī, *Siyar al-'arīfīn* 3b.

burial, and his mausoleum survives to the present. It lies within the area of the Jamali-Kamali mosque in the Archaeological Village Complex in Mehrauli.⁵

Jamālī's works have a decidedly pedagogical bent and exhibit literary virtuosity. They include the prose hagiographical compendium *Siyar al-ʿarifīn* (Exemplary lives of knowers), which I discuss in detail below. In poetry, he penned a *maṣnavī* (a long poem in rhyming couplets), *Mirʿāt al-maʿānī* (The mirrors of meanings), which contains a comprehensive account of a version of Sufi cosmology. The work begins by detailing Sufi metaphorical meanings assigned to parts of the human body, followed by an account of the cosmos as a whole, and various discussions about the fickle relationship between sensory observation and purportedly truer reality. The work engages topics that are commonplace in premodern Sufi literature in Persian, with Jamālī's poetic voice providing evocative and memorable glosses.⁶ Jamālī is the author of a second elaborate *maṣnavī* as well, *Mihr-o-māh* (Sun and moon). This work follows what was, by Jamālī's time, the well-worn Persian literary practice of allegorizing a love relationship between a royal couple to exemplify emotions and the difficulty of correlating between sense perceptions and higher meanings attributable to human conduct. Jamālī left behind also a *dīvān* (collection of poetry), which consists of 8,000–9,000 verses in various forms (*qaṣīda*, *marṣīyya*, *nāʿt*, *ghazal*, *qitʿa*, *rubāʿī*, *tarjīʿ-band*, and *tarkīb-band*).⁷ The quantity and quality of Jamālī's extant literary output put him among the more talented authors in Persian literary history.

2 Traveling Away to Come Home

Jamālī's hagiographical *Siyar al-ʿarifīn* consists of biographies of Sufis in India clustered in chapters headed by the names of 13 prominent individuals. It follows in the tradition of similar earlier writing, in India and elsewhere, that presents the lives of Sufi masters in highly typological form.⁸ But Jamālī's work

5 The most comprehensive account of sources pertaining to Jamālī's life is Rāshidī, *Dībācha*, 19–145. A Persian translation of substantially the same introduction precedes Rāshidī's edition of Jamālī's work *Mihr-o-māh* (1–114). For the placement of the tomb see Asher, *Delhi's Qutb complex* 88–94.

6 In addition to the edition of the Persian text, this work is available in a somewhat insipid English translation. Jamālī, *Mirror of meanings*.

7 Rāshidī, *Dībācha*, 105–119. Jamālī's *dīvān* is extant in at least two manuscripts but has not been edited or published.

8 For a discussion of literary typologies pertaining to Sufi hagiography see Bashir, *Naqshband's lives*.

is different from its predecessors in one crucial respect: it presents itself as a repository of the correct details about Sufis whose paramount distinguishing feature is an identification with India (Hindustan). In Sufi literature produced in India, Jamālī's perspective comes at the heels of works that either document the sayings and acts of individual masters—such as Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā' (d. 725/1235) and Jalāl al-Dīn Bukhārī Makhdūm-i Jahāniyān Jahāngasht (d. 1383)⁹—or trace Sufi lineages, such as the Chishtīs and the Suhrawardīs, spread to various regions within and outside India.¹⁰ In both prior forms, narratives about the past are tied to exemplary lives, either individually or in a chain of time that progresses from one master to the next. Jamālī, by contrast, eschews glorification of an individual as a religious virtuoso alone or of a group tied by lineage. He makes Indian-ness the explicit basis of selection.

A review of the work's structure will help to clarify the novelty of Jamālī's formulation. The beginning of the *Siyar al-ʿarifīn* recalls the time when the author had come back to Delhi after extensive travels outside India. His old companions in the hometown were avid listeners to stories about what he had seen and the people he had met, and they urged him to write an account of the experiences for wider sharing. He demurred on the grounds that compiling such a work would require more time than he had. He proposed, instead, to write on Sufi exemplars of India, about whom inaccurate information was rife and was causing people to act waywardly. His companions indicated enthusiasm for the project, and he embarked on the work, abiding by the sentiment of the verse:

From the splendor of their coming it is a redolent orchard,
Hindustan is turned into the abode of paradise.¹¹

The body of the work consists of a series of chapters headed by the names of specific individuals as follows:

1. Muʿīn al-Dīn Sijzī [d. 633/1236, Chishtī]
2. Bahā' al-Dīn Zakariyā Multānī [d. 661/1262, Suhrawardī]
3. Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Ūshī [d. 633/1235, Chishtī]
4. Farīd al-Dīn Masʿūd Ganj-i Shakar [d. 664/1265, Chishtī]

9 For details see Lawrence, *Morals for the heart* 61–78, and Steinfels, *Knowledge before action* 165–168.

10 See, for example, Mīr Khvurd, *Siyar al-awliyā'*. Sobieroj, Suhrawardiyya.

11 Jamālī, *Siyar al-ʿarifīn* 2b. This work has recently been published in a nonacademic English translation as well. Jamālī, *Jamālī's Persian Siyar-ul-ʿArifin*. The translations presented in this essay are my own, and all the references are to the original Persian text in the Lucknow manuscript.

5. Ṣadr al-Dīn 'Ārif [ca. 684/1285, Suhrawardī]
6. Niẓām al-Dīn Muḥammad Badā'ūnī [d. 726/1235, Chishtī]
7. Rukn al-Dīn Abū l-Faṭḥ [d. 735/1335, Suhrawardī]
8. Najīb al-Dīn Mutawakkil [d. ca. 669/1272, Chishtī]
9. Muḥammad Ḥamīd al-Dīn Nāgawrī [d. ca. 641/1244, Chishtī]
10. Jalāl al-Dīn Tabrīzī [d. 642/1244–1245, Suhrawardī]
11. Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd Awadhī [d. 757/1356, Chishtī]
12. Jalāl al-Dīn Bukhārī Makhdūm-i Jahāniyān Jahāngasht [d. 785/1384, Suhrawardī]
13. Samā' al-Dīn [d. 901/1496, Suhrawardī].

The list as I have presented it here is in excess of what is in the original. The work itself provides no advance indication of its specific contents in the preface. The chapters dedicated to the individuals I have listed follow one after the other as the narrative progresses. In my listing, the square brackets add two further pieces of information that help to make the point about paths that Jamālī is not taking. The first of these are the years of death. These are absent in the original text, save for the thirteenth chapter. When provided, the dates show that the work does not follow a chronological sequence. Moreover, given that the work spans more than two and a half centuries (633/1235–901/1496), the concentration on only 13 individuals, placed in chronological disorder, suggests a lack of concern with calendrical time as such.¹²

The second piece of information I have added is the name of the Sufi lineage with which each individual was primarily affiliated.¹³ Jamālī's biographical notices make plain that he was aware of these masters' affiliations with the Chishtī and Suhrawardī *silsilas*, the two most pervasive lineages present in India up to Jamālī's time. However, he avoids using the internal sequencing of either group to organize his work. The notices also vary greatly by length, which likely reflects differences in the amounts of literary material that would have been at Jamālī's disposal. The two longest chapters are devoted to Niẓām al-Dīn Badā'ūnī and Bahā' al-Dīn Zakariyā Multānī. These two were much-celebrated figures by Jamālī's time, and their shrines were focal points for Sufi communities in major cities (Delhi and Multan). All the men who headline the chapters

12 Some manuscripts of the work contain 14 chapters, adding a notice on Badr al-Dīn Maḥmūd Khujandī. Storey, *Persian literature* i, 970–971; Ethé, *Catalogue of Persian manuscripts in the library of the India Office* i, 263–266. The malleability of Jamālī's arrangement is underscored by the fact that the Urdu translator has changed the order, which ends up having little effect on the narrative. The list of 13 I have provided follows the order in the Lucknow manuscript.

13 Affiliation with multiple lineages was quite common in this Sufi milieu. My identifications signal the primary way in which the men were remembered posthumously.

of *Siyar al-ʿarifīn* were dead by the time Jamālī was writing. In fact, Jamālī's own life overlapped with only one, Samāʾ al-Dīn, who comes at the end and was the author's own Sufi master. The chapter on Samāʾ al-Dīn contains the only instances of Jamālī speaking from personal experience with respect to interaction with the men who headline the chapters. This notice ends the work as a whole, after describing the scene of Samāʾ al-Dīn's death in Jamālī's presence.¹⁴

Neglecting calendars and expectations of coverage, the *Siyar al-ʿarifīn* nevertheless conveys the author's world to the reader with a sense of intimacy. While declining to write about his travels outside of India, Jamālī appears in his narrative as a traveler through both time and space. The work's overall effect can be conveyed through a spatial metaphor: he treats the lives of his saintly exemplars as conglomerations of events available to him as a landscape in which to roam. His address to the reader appears like a running commentary on his own encounters with the individuals and incidents that mark the lives that are his focus. The result is a highly personal, even idiosyncratic, account of time and space tethered to his own location in India.¹⁵

3 India as the World

The first two chapters of Jamālī's work substantiate the hierarchy of Indian Sufi figures relevant for his perspective. His accounts of Muʿīn al-Dīn Sijzī of Ajmer and Bahāʾ al-Dīn Zakariyā of Multan are two of the longest chapters in the work and refer to anchoring figures in the Chishtī and Suhrawardī Sufi lineages, respectively.¹⁶ The first of these predominated in Delhi through a link to Nizām al-Dīn Awliyāʾ, who is buried in the city; and the second was placed at the head of Jamālī's own Sufi lineage through his discipleship to Samāʾ al-Dīn, the last figure covered in his hagiographical work.

The account of Sijzī begins by taking the reader to Iran, where he was born, and where he is shown, as a youth, to have acquired training and affirmation of his innate spiritual qualities from older men. He then left his homeland to travel to cities such as Samarqand, Bukhara, and Nishapur, eventually ending

14 Jamālī, *Siyar al-ʿarifīn* 94a–b.

15 Jamālī's viewpoint also does not reflect the way Sufis writing in Persian had come to problematize time by the ninth/fifteenth century. For a survey of Sufi views on time see Böwering, *Ideas of time in Persian Sufism*.

16 For recent reconstructions of the role of these lineages that take Sufi sources as straightforward historical reportage see Anjum, *Chishti Sufis*, and Suvorova, *Muslim saints of South Asia*. For summary information about the groups as a whole see Böwering, Češtīya, and Sobieroj, *Suhrawardiyya*.

up in a village near Baghdad to be in the company of the famous Sufi master ‘Abd al-Qādir Jilī (or al-Jilānī, d. 561/1166). At this point in the narrative, Jamālī inserts the comment that he had visited the village that had been the site of the meeting between Sijzī and Jilī and had partaken of the facilities for travelers provided by endowments now administered by Jilī’s descendants. Following this interjection, we return to the story of Sijzī’s travels through other parts of Iran and Central Asia, ratified through reference to written works and oral reports from other authoritative Sufis. Sijzī’s travels eventually brought him to India, where he progressed from Lahore to Delhi and, finally, Ajmer. Many inhabitants of Ajmer became Muslims after his arrival, although Jamālī also mentions that much of the local population accepted him as a spiritual authority without changing their religious affiliation to Islam. Peppered with stories about his miraculous interventions in various material and metaphysical matters, the notice ends by acknowledging Sijzī’s descendants and stating that he died on the sixth of Rajab, on a Monday.¹⁷

Jamālī’s account of Sijzī follows a pattern with features salient for the work as a whole. The origins of the saintly figure are located in a place, which in this case is Iran but changes to India in later chapters. No calendrical dates are provided, whether for the man’s birth or, more unusually, even his death (only the day of the week and the month are indicated). The protagonist’s exemplary life’s journey ends in his final Indian resting place, in this case Ajmer. Jamālī’s authority to speak on the matter rests on three sources: prior literature, receipt of oral reports from Sufi predecessors, and his experience of having seen the places outside India where the great man had a formative life experience. The last of these is especially important since it separates Jamālī from the vast majority of his Indian audience, who had not had the opportunity to travel. The insertion of the personal reminiscence is important also for marking Jamālī’s kinship with Sijzī as a traveling seeker after knowledge. But the two are different in that Sijzī starts in Iran and ends up in India, whereas Jamālī starts and ends in India, with emphasis on the religious preeminence of his homeland among places where Sufis might reside.

Jamālī’s notice on Bahā’ al-Dīn Zakarīyā of Multan follows the same pattern, except that the account of Jamālī’s own exploits during his travels are given stronger billing. In this case, the protagonist’s grandfather is said to have migrated, first from Mecca to Khwarazm in Central Asia, and then from there to Multan. He was born in a village close to the city (with no indication of the date), followed by local education and a trip lasting many years that took him to

17 Jamālī, *Siyar al-‘arifin* 3a–8b.

Mecca, Medina, Jerusalem, Shiraz, and Baghdad. He eventually ended up back in Multan, becoming the city's most renowned Sufi master.

Jamālī's own experiences are made present in the narrative through the report that he had prayed in the same places as his predecessor in Medina and Baghdad and had learned the details he was conveying from a man in Shiraz. In Damascus, he visited the burial place of the famous author Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 638/1240), next to whom is the grave of Fakhr al-Dīn ʿIrāqī (d. 688/1289), a disciple of Bahāʾ al-Dīn's. He also mentions visiting graves of well-known Sufi figures in Damietta (Egypt), Andabūs (?) (North Africa), and Nāʾin and Herat (Iran). The graves Jamālī visits in these places contain men who bear some connection to the life story that is Jamālī's main focus. In India, he provides details for being the special guest of Bahāʾ al-Dīn's incumbent successor at the shrine in Multan and for contacts with members of the Suhrawardī lineage in Uch and Sind. The chapter on Bahāʾ al-Dīn ends on the story of his sudden death in Multan, without providing a date for the event. But the death is situated with respect to that of other major Sufi figures of the age. Jamālī reports that Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyāʾ had said that the following men died in sequence, each three years after his predecessor: Saʿd al-Dīn Ḥamuwayī (in Baḥrābād, Iran), Sayf al-Dīn Bākharzī (in Bukhara, Central Asia), Bahāʾ al-Dīn (in Multan, India), and Farīd al-Dīn Ganj-i Shakar (in Ajodhan, India).¹⁸

In notices on Muʾin al-Dīn Sijzī and Bahāʾ al-Dīn Zakariyya, Jamālī's narrative gathers the space and time of the world relevant for him into a narrative meaningful for his Indian audience. The "world" is not defined by time arranged into a calendar or geographical space mappable in two or three dimensions. We get no dates or even cursory descriptions of locations such as India, Iran, Iraq, Central Asia, or the Arabian Peninsula. Rather, spacetime is defined by stories of interactions among Sufis, in which Jamālī is present in two ways. His travels to many places make him an eyewitness to events, and his recounting marks his extraordinary access to the valuable past.

From the way Islam is portrayed in modern geography and history, it might seem extraordinary that Jamālī's account makes precious few mentions of Mecca and Medina, the purported central holy cities of Islam, which few Indians were able to visit. Even when Jamālī brings up these places, it is in conjunction with the lives of the Sufis that concern him rather than out of a sense of intrinsic significance. The work also contains no references to topography or monuments anywhere. His accounts of places outside India depict them as frozen in time, imaged solely as aspects of the lives of Sufis destined to end up

18 Ibid. 8b–23b.

in India. His own interactions with people in such places are parts of loops into the valuable past rather than experiences worth reporting on their own. This is not, I would suggest, a case of geographical inversion, where Delhi and Mecca have changed places. The notion of geographical distance itself has been displaced, such that thinking on the basis of our modern sense of mapping would constitute a misunderstanding. Delhi and Mecca share the same spatial designation. They are backdrops for events pertaining to lives worth recounting. We are observing an arrangement of spacetime at odds with principles that structure our understanding of the world.

The last chapter of *Siyar al-ʿarīfīn* stands apart from the rest of the narrative because it describes the author's own master, Samā' al-Dīn. Here, Jamālī's presence is pervasive as an eyewitness to the man rather than his earlier role as one who has read about the subjects or met people connected to them. Although the modes of witnessing deployed in this chapter are different, the overall narrative effect is the same. Even though the report on Samā' al-Dīn occurs at the end of the work, the way it constructs the man's saintly life is a model for the reports that precede it. Jamālī wishes, quite explicitly, to take the reader to the sense of presence of the Sufi masters he is describing. His own experience with Samā' al-Dīn is the prototype in this regard, which is approximated through mediation of other sources for the men dead long before Jamālī's own lifetime. The chapter on Samā' al-Dīn recounts the master's daily routine and dedication to pious exercises. It also provides accounts of his interactions with people, ranging between kings and courtiers, his children, close confidants such as Jamālī, and other men and women from the general population. These people sought the master for spiritual guidance as well as the fulfilment of material desires

Jamālī's report on Samā' al-Dīn tells the story of the master's death in a way that accentuates the author's own credentials. He writes that, upon returning from his travels, he desired to see Samā' al-Dīn's son Shaykh 'Abdallāh Bayābānī, who had taken to being a hermit out of religious conviction. When he asked for Samā' al-Dīn's permission, the master was initially very happy and asked to convey a message to his son in a verse suggesting that he visit him:

Looking to this vast ocean, I no longer have the capacity for patience.
Step fast on the road, seeking the old man, fallen ill.

Jamālī then decided to leave for the cities and jungles of India in search of Shaykh 'Abdallāh, comparing this expedition to his earlier travels. But then Samā' al-Dīn asked him not to leave, stating that it was uncertain whether he would find Shaykh 'Abdallāh soon and, in the meantime, the travel away may

lead to his absence at Samā' al-Dīn's death and funeral. A week after this event, Samā' al-Dīn died and was buried near the Shamsī pool in Delhi. Some years before this, Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Ūshī (one of the men covered in Jamālī's work) had appeared to Samā' al-Dīn in a dream and indicated the spot where he would eventually be buried.¹⁹

In Jamālī's chapter on Samā' al-Dīn, the events that constitute the master's life are not put in a chronological order. His life altogether appears as a single complex, as if Samā' al-Dīn were an actor with the identical motivation throughout all moments of his life. India, predominantly Delhi, is the stage for Samā' al-Dīn's idealized vita, which signifies a kind of collapse of duration and three-dimensional geographical space into a set of meaningful human interactions.²⁰ To my reading, this collapse is mirrored in all of Jamālī's other chapters, where named individuals are abstracted from their historical surroundings and made to conform to the author's pretextual prototype. The overall effect is to make all the space and time of the world that matter con-spatial and contemporary. Geographical locations spread between India, Central Asia, and the Middle East, and the period from the sixth/twelfth to the ninth/fifteenth centuries, come to constitute a single idealized spacetime that mirrors Jamālī's didactic Sufi vision.

4 In and Out of India

It is helpful to discuss a contrasting position to appreciate the specificity of the perspective presented in Jamālī's work. Especially useful in this regard are the memoirs of Bābur (d. 1530), Jamālī's contemporary who founded the Mughal dynasty. The two men are inversions of each other. Jamālī was a Sufi and a litterateur with close connections to the Lodī and Mughal courts, while Bābur was born a prince, received literary training, and had an ancestral connection to Sufi groups. Jamālī traveled out of his Indian home, with which he identified strongly, while Bābur came into India at the head of an invading army and pined for his Central Asian homeland. Jamālī's work contains very few dates, while that of Bābur is strictly annalistic, describing years of his life in sequence. Jamālī's work glorifies Sufi forbears, with his self-exaltation tied to his claim of

19 Ibid. 88a–95b.

20 Jamālī's utmost glorification of Samā' al-Dīn features prominently in his work *Mir'āt al-ma'ānī* as well. Here, he is described as a cosmic center, the replacement for the prophet Muḥammad and earlier Sufi greats, and an embodiment of the divine (Jamālī, *Mir'āt al-ma'ānī*, 30–33).

knowledge about them. Bābur's work is predicated on the presumed privilege of royal status, and the author himself is the protagonist. Although sometimes regarded as a seemingly frank self-description, I believe Bābur's work can be read as a stylized account of a man of high ambition attempting to write himself into forms of political mythology and history that mattered in his context.²¹

Most of Bābur's narrative is concerned with his life before arriving in India. His reportage on the period immediately before the arrival in India is unavailable to us because the surviving text is missing the account of the years 1520–1525. The work also ends at 1529, a year before the author's death at the relatively young age of 49. Jamālī, in comparison, died in 1535 at an age likely to be around 70.²²

Bābur's work gives the clear impression of an expansion of spacetime into India as he travels eastward from Kabul into North India starting in 1525. This sense is conveyed through his actions as a military commander interacting with allies and foes spread over Indian territory in a complex way. His impressions of the people he encounters are conditioned by knowledge of prior contacts.²³ Following the account of the defeat of the Lodīs, Bābur provides details of the animals and physical and political geography of India, relying on literary works pertaining to his new territorial possessions. Bābur's account portrays him stepping into Indian time as much as in the subcontinent's space: he describes himself as the unlikely third Muslim conqueror arriving from the west, following Maḥmūd of Ghazna (d. 1030) and Shihāb al-Dīn of Ghūr (d. 1206).²⁴

Bābur's account of his arrival in Delhi makes him enter a world intimate to Jamālī in a specific way:

On Tuesday, after two bivouacs, I circumambulated Shaykh Nizam Awliya's tomb and camped beside the Jumna directly opposite Delhi. That evening I toured the Delhi fortress, where I spent the night; the next morning, Wednesday, I circumambulated Khwaja Qutbuddin's tomb and toured Sultan Ghiyasuddin Balban's and Sultan Alauddin Khalji's tombs, buildings, and minaret, the Shamsi pool, the Khass pool, and Sul-

21 For a detailed account of the complexity of Bābur's narrative see Dale, *Garden of the Eight Paradises*.

22 We have no reports on Jamālī's year of birth. The estimate comes from the fact that he describes his arrival back in India from his travels when his master, Samā' al-Dīn (d. 1495), was still alive. This corresponds also with the fact that he reports meeting the Sufi poet 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī in Herat, who died in 1491. Presuming that he began his travels at an age of between 20 and 25 makes him between 65 and 70 at the time of death.

23 Babur, *Baburnama* 309–325.

24 Ibid. 330–356.

tan Bahlul's and Sultan Iskandar's tombs and gardens. After the tour I returned to the camp, got on a boat, and drank spirits.²⁵

To correlate this description to Jamālī's work, Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn is the subject of the longest chapter in the *Siyar al-ʿarīfīn* and the most often cited authority from the past. Quṭb al-Dīn Ūshī is the subject of another chapter, while Sultan Sikandar Lodī was a patron to Jamālī's master, Samāʾ al-Dīn, and to the author himself. And Samāʾ al-Dīn had been buried adjacent to the Shamsī pool based on a premonition, as I mentioned above.

Marked by its monuments, gardens, shrines, and pools, Delhi is a subject of desire for both Bābur and Jamālī. But the two men's relationships to the city are framed within senses of timespace that are quite different. Reporting from the time of conquest in 1526, Bābur writes: "From the year 910 [1504–5], when Kabul was conquered, until this date I had craved Hindustan."²⁶ Bābur's ardor arose out of historical and geographical narratives absorbed as a part of his Central Asian upbringing that carried a particular vision of India as a place of political and economic opportunity and the site for writing oneself into history. For Jamālī, Delhi is the home that absorbed into itself the world he had seen through his wide travels. Bābur complained about the lack of running water in India and attempted to make himself marginally comfortable by arranging the available landscape in Agra into a garden: "In unpleasant and inharmonious India, marvelously regular and geometric gardens were introduced. In every corner were beautiful plots, and in every plot were regularly laid out arrangements of roses and narcissus."²⁷

At the beginning of his allegorical poem *Mihr-o-māh*, Jamālī recounts its composition during his stay in Tabriz, Iran. He had left Delhi to undertake the pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina. At a moment of acute homesickness, the people of Tabriz had shown him special kindness, inviting him to stay in the city and write a work celebrating the kind of pining for a beloved that is described in the much copied and illustrated work *Mihr-o-mushtarī* (Sun and Jupiter) by the poet Muḥammad ʿAṣṣār (d. 792/1390) of Tabriz. Jamālī says that he undertook the composition of his own imitative work while suffering the pain of separation from his companions. His solace in this situation came from the effort to put himself in the line of others who had composed works on the pattern he was about to emulate. Among these, Amīr Khusrow (d. 725/1325), a former master of Persian poetry located in Delhi, was particularly relevant for

25 Ibid. 327.

26 Ibid. 329.

27 Ibid. 364.

having combined the vocations of a Sufi and a poet.²⁸ People like this predecessor and the Sufi men who headline the *Siyar al-‘arifin* were the reason why, for Jamālī, India was paradise, as commemorated in the verse at the beginning of his hagiographical work that I have translated above.

Bābur and Jamālī both identified as Muslim, lived at the same time, and inhabited the same locations in India at certain moments. Their reports on what they perceived when looking at the landscape of Delhi seem like opposites. The difference alerts us to the crucial importance of presumptions about time and space that structure observers’ perceptions. The “world” one sees, experiences, and depicts is not simply there, available alike to all onlookers. It appears a certain way, is made to become so, based on prior knowledge and anchoring in varying ways of imagining it.

5 Conclusion

To end the essay, I would like to emphasize two conceptual issues engaged in my account of Jamālī’s work. The first is that when we utilize sources from the past for historical reconstruction, it is important to attend to questions regarding the framing of knowledge. What constitutes information, facts, and worthwhile interpretation varies between contexts, based on presumptions that predate the text we encounter. The subject that is being conveyed in a given work is predetermined on the basis of what is considered valuable information.

The second issue brought to the fore here is that it is a fallacy to think that Muslims present at a given moment in space and time must have a shared sense of geography and the past. This is an especially significant error because it can lead to problematic, politically consequential understandings regarding Muslims’ presumed alienation from, or affiliation with, a geographical location such as South Asia, the city of Delhi, or any other place. If senses of time and space can vary radically, as I have tried to show, it follows that we must expect geographical projections pertaining to identity to vary as well. On the surface, Jamālī and Bābur appear as part of the same group: the literate, elite ruling classes of Delhi, with a self-assured Muslim religious identity. Their works employ the same cultural lexicon even as they write in different languages (Persian and Chaghatay Turkish). Jamālī was an unhesitant companion to kings, including Bābur and his son, Humāyūn. This is not a case of a Sufi uncomfortable with connections to political power.

28 Jamālī, *Mihr-o-mushtarī* 15–19.

Despite shared sociopolitical positioning, the two men's investments in India and Delhi as places are diametrically opposed as a matter of sentiment regarding geography and the past. When we aggregate individuals into groups based on sociocultural markers, we erase differences pertaining to time and space that I have highlighted in this article. This ultimately results in diminishing the subjectivity of the human actors we wish to understand and portray. As I have tried to show, attending to texts and other materials at a granular level has the potential to substantiate complexities of subject formation even as we work with literary sources that adhere to high levels of generic formality. In the consideration of such materials, introducing questions pertaining to space and time as constructs and aspects of imagination enhances and diversifies what we can extract from them.

I do not wish to advocate extreme particularism, where every human interlocutor is presumed to be unique, unable to be classified. Rather, I am suggesting that we substantiate imaginations through specific reconstructions, and then argue for their relevance for groups through explicit theorization. The sense of the world we get from Jamālī's work was likely shared by elite Sufis in India who saw themselves as Indian. For them, India constituted the "Islamic" world, such that travel to other regions helped solidify their identification with India or with a city such as Delhi. Appreciating this perspective, which animates Jamālī's work, can help to clarify stories about the past we can tell. Additionally, this perspective can make us mindful of epistemological issues that go into understanding our own investments and the interpretation of human situations contemporary to us.

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PART 3

Philosophy



Knowledge on Display

Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's Universal Compendium

Amina M. Steinfels

Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210), the great Persian theologian, philosopher, and polymath, has recently attracted a considerable amount of scholarly interest. However, despite much work on his Arabic treatises and Quran commentary, little attention has been paid to his Persian writings, foremost amongst which is his compendium of knowledge, *Jāmi' al-'ulūm*, also known as *Kitāb-i sittīnī*. Those who have studied this work have either mined it for information on a particular topic such as music, religious sects, or mechanics,¹ or have limited themselves to an overview of its encyclopedic structure and contents.

Jāmi' al-'ulūm has elicited starkly different evaluations from scholars of the Islamic encyclopedic tradition. Hans Biesterfeldt views it as the end of the tradition of philosophical encyclopedias and the beginning of a “fragmentation and trivialization of knowledge ... more a list than an encyclopedia” with “no internal structure.”² Ziva Vesel, on the other hand, labels it the earliest Persian example of an encyclopedia, “in the strict sense of the term,” with a clear organization of subject matters.³ “Thanks to the immense erudition of the author the plan of the Iranian medieval encyclopedia reached its highest level in [*Jāmi' al-'ulūm*].”⁴ Gerhard Endress also describes Rāzī's *Jāmi' al-'ulūm* as “the first important example” of a comprehensive encyclopedia—“a truly catholic, and somewhat chaotic, survey of everything for everybody.” However, Endress's description of *Jāmi' al-'ulūm*'s inclusion of “hermeneutical and theological traditions” alongside “logical-philosophical” ones as “additive, not integrative,” and his use of terms such as “chaotic,” “sundry,” “assortment,” and “motley” to describe al-Rāzī's chosen topics, suggests that he shares some of

1 Tribuzio, Avicennian tradition and sound 265–298; Monnot, Histoire des religions en Islam, Ibn al-Kalbī et Rāzī 23–34; Monnot, Panorama religieux de Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī 263–279; Kheirandish, Science and *mithāl* 465–489.

2 Biesterfeldt, Medieval Arabic encyclopedias of science and philosophy 97–98.

3 Vesel, *Encyclopédies Persanes* 35.

4 Vesel, *Encyclopédies Persanes* 56.

Biesterfeldt's discomfort with the text's capaciousness and its lack of an explicitly stated principle of selection and organization.⁵

Although these judgements stand in contrast to each other, they are all responding to the same quality of *Jāmi' al-'ulūm*: its comprehensiveness. In 60 brief chapters, the text includes a vast array of information about science, religion, language, and society. The difference between these scholarly judgements depends, of course, on what one expects from an encyclopedia. Is an encyclopedia a classificatory system with an "epistemological orientation,"⁶ on the model of al-Fārābī's *Ihṣā' al-'ulūm*, as Biesterfeldt would have it? Or is it an attempt to "bring together all the knowledge of a given era," as Vesel defines a true encyclopedia?⁷

In his introduction, al-Rāzī describes the genesis and aim of *Jāmi' al-'ulūm* thus: the king 'Alā' al-Dīn Tekesh b. Khwārazmshāh (r. 567–596/1172–1200)

"asked me to write a book for his pious servants and followers to study by which they would acquire a variety of knowledges [*arwā' i 'ulūm*].

Since I did not know which *'ilm* amongst the sorts of knowledge [*funūn-i 'ulūm*] was most suitable and apt for the purpose, I collected most of the divisions of knowledge—rational [*'aqlī*] and transmitted [*naqlī*], fundamental [*uṣūlī*] and derivative [*furū'ī*]. I wrote nine sections on each knowledge [*'ilm*]⁸—three on clear and obvious matters, three on abstruse and obscure topics, and three further of problems—so that poor understanding of that *'ilm* would be illuminated and its deficiencies would be made apparent.

The purpose of compiling these areas of knowledge on this system, and demonstrating them with these explanations and refinements, is so that for any area of knowledge with which the servants of his majesty become more involved and towards which their attention is directed, there is a book written about that *'ilm*."⁸

Brief though it is, this statement contains a number of key points that are worth distinguishing.

1. *'Ilm* (knowledge) and its plural, *'ulūm*, are the defining terms for the contents of the text. Although *'ilm* is usually translated as "knowledge," in this context it does not mean anything and everything known. Rather, it refers

5 Endress, *Cycle of knowledge* 128.

6 Biesterfeldt, *Medieval Arabic encyclopedias* 97.

7 Vesel, *Encyclopédies Persanes* 35.

8 al-Rāzī, *Jāmi' al-'ulūm: Sittīnī* 70.

primarily to an area of scholarly investigation or an intellectual discipline. This is indicated by the use of *‘ilm* as a count noun with the plural *‘ulūm* (knowledges) rather than as an uncountable noun. Though this may seem a trivial linguistic point, it helps us understand what al-Rāzī covers in the text and how he chooses to organize it.

2. Al-Rāzī claims to cover not all but *most* of the intellectual disciplines. But he also states that this work will fulfill curiosity about *any* *‘ilm*.
3. These disciplines include both halves of the binary divisions commonly used to sort the *‘ulūm*, rational and transmitted (*‘aqlī* and *naqlī*), and foundational and derivative (*uṣūlī* and *furūṭī*). The *‘aqlī* *‘ulūm* were understood as the philosophical, scientific, and mathematical disciplines, while the *naqlī* were those associated with scripture, history, and literature.
4. Each chapter is meant to be consistently divided into three sections on the fundamental issues of the discipline, three on more complex topics, and three on answers to difficult problems or questions. In fact, though all 60 chapters are divided into 9 sections, only a little over a half follow this three-by-three scheme. Al-Rāzī’s explanation for abandoning the pattern in the case of history—that it is not a knowledge divisible into basic and advanced topics—is presumably applicable to other areas.⁹
5. The book is meant as a corrective to errors and misunderstandings about each *‘ilm*.
6. It is meant for study by the “servants and followers” of the king, that is, presumably, officials and courtiers. This suggests that the intended audience is neither completely general nor limited to a single professional class, such as secretaries or religious scholars.

A glance at *Jāmi‘ al-‘ulūm*’s table of contents (table 13.1), which appears to be as far as most commenters have gone, suggests that al-Rāzī’s claim of comprehensive coverage is borne out. As promised, it includes both rational or *‘aqlī* disciplines, such as logic, mathematics, and optics, and transmitted or *naqlī* disciplines, such as law, the Quran, and hadith. The contents of al-Rāzī’s *Jāmi‘ al-‘ulūm* partly reflect the example set by earlier philosophical encyclopedias in the Aristotelian tradition, such as al-Fārābī’s *Iḥṣā’ al-‘ulūm* and Ibn Sīnā’s *Dānish-nāme-yi ‘Alā’ī*, in their inclusion of chapters on logic, mathematical and mechanical sciences, music, and metaphysics.¹⁰ Added to these *‘aqlī* or “rational” *‘ulūm* are the *naqlī* or “transmitted” *‘ulūm* related to law, language, and scripture, as well as a number of practical topics and pseudoscientific or

9 al-Rāzī, *Jāmi‘ al-‘ulūm: Sittīnī* 163.

10 Vesel, *Encyclopédies Persanes* 11–13.

pseudo-religious disciplines. It is this greater range of subject matter that has led to *Jāmi' al-'ulūm* being labeled as a turning point in the encyclopedic tradition.

Although al-Rāzī does not provide much explanation for his arrangement of topics, the text is clearly organized into groupings of chapters on religious matters, language, philosophy, physical and mathematical sciences, and social and ethical topics. Theology, or *kalām*, is addressed first because, despite the challenging nature of the subject, understanding of this topic takes priority over all else.¹¹ Within each grouping, chapters tend to progress from more abstract and fundamental topics to more concrete and practical examples. For example, chapters 2 to 7, on legal matters, move from a discussion of the sources of law and the principles of its derivation, to grounds for legal debate, to specific rules about ritual and inheritance. The more abstract or theoretical chapters tend to follow al-Rāzī's proposed nine-fold scheme of three subsections of foundational matters, three of advanced topics, and three problems. Among the chapters on language, those on syntax and grammar, morphology, etymology, prosody, and rhyme all follow this pattern. But the chapters on figures of speech, novelties of poetry and prose, and eloquence simply consist of nine examples of each topic.

There are a number of chapters whose inclusion and position in the text appear idiosyncratic and unexpected: on practical matters such as agriculture, stain removal, the treatment of horses and falcons, and incendiary weapons, and on the so-called "occult sciences" of magic squares, geomancy, and talismans. However, there is usually some association between these chapters and their neighbors. Al-Rāzī's instructions on agriculture, stain removal, and the dosing of animals all involve the effective use of various chemical substances and thus sensibly fall at the conclusion of the group of chapters on the physical sciences. Similarly, the chapter on magic squares, constructed through the mathematical arrangement of numbers, concludes the section on mathematical topics. Astrology follows astronomy and is succeeded by geomancy and incantations.

Some have suspected that *Jāmi' al-'ulūm* was originally composed in Arabic and that the extant and widely disseminated Persian text is a translation.¹² Certainly, serious scholarship in both the *'aqlī* and *naqlī* disciplines covered by *Jāmi' al-'ulūm* was largely carried out in Arabic (including by al-Rāzī himself), so the text refers mostly to Arabic source material. However, there are earlier

11 al-Rāzī, *Jāmi' al-'ulūm: Sittīnī* 74.

12 Endress, *Cycle of knowledge* 128.

TABLE 13.1 Table of contents of Rāzī's *Jāmi' al-'ulūm*

1. Theology	31. Alchemy and chemistry
2. Law	32. Gemstones
3. Debate	33. Talismans
4. Legal controversy	34. Agriculture
5. Ritual law	35. Stain removal
6. Fixed shares of inheritance	36. Veterinary science (of horses)
7. Bequests	37. Falconry (diseases of birds)
8. Quranic exegesis	38. Geometry
9. Proofs of the inimitability of the Quran	39. Measurement (of areas and volumes)
10. The "readings" of the Quran	40. Mechanics
11. Ḥadīth	41. Weapons of war
12. Transmitters of ḥadīth	42. Indian calculation
13. History	43. Aerial (i.e. mental) calculation
14. Battles of the Prophet	44. Algebra
15. Arabic grammar and syntax	45. Arithmetics (i.e. number theory)
16. Arabic morphology	46. Magic squares
17. Arabic etymology	47. Optics
18. Arabic figures of speech	48. Music
19. Arabic prosody	49. Astronomy
20. Arabic rhyme	50. Astrology
21. Novelties of poetry and prose	51. Geomancy
22. Eloquence	52. Incantations
23. Logic	53. Metaphysics
24. Physics	54. Doctrines of the peoples of the world
25. Dream interpretation	55. Ethics
26. Physiognomy	56. Governance
27. Medicine/nutrition	57. Household economics
28. Anatomy	58. The afterlife (the inner meaning of religious obligations)
29. Pharmacology	59. Supplications to God
30. Properties of things	60. Conduct for kings
	Chess

Persian-language encyclopedias, some focused on the *ʿaqlī* disciplines, like Ibn Sīnā's *Dānīsh-nāma-yi ʿAlāʾī*,¹³ and others focused on the *naqlī* traditions, such as *Yawāqīt al-ʿulūm wa durar al-nujūm* composed before 573/1177 by an anonymous author.¹⁴ Furthermore, certain topics in the contents of *Jāmiʿ al-ʿulūm* point to its location within a specifically Persian courtly milieu. For example, the chapter on history begins with the ancient dynasties of Iran, then discusses the prophet Muḥammad and the caliphs, returns to Iran to describe the rise and fall of the Ghaznavid and Saljuk dynasties, and concludes with al-Rāzī's royal patron Tekesh b. Khwārazmshāh.¹⁵ The sixtieth chapter, on the conduct of kings (*ādāb al-mulūk*), reflects the Persian tradition of advice literature and mirrors for princes.¹⁶ The final (unnumbered) chapter, on chess, is also more indicative of a Persian-speaking courtly culture than an Arabic-using academic context—though chess is perhaps the most intellectual of pastimes.¹⁷

A reader of *Jāmiʿ al-ʿulūm* may learn a great many important, useful, and curious things: a proof for the temporal origination of the world; how to divide a straight line into three equal parts using only a compass; a method for killing weeds using a copper blade dipped in blood; the various divisions of the Khārījī sect; how to solve quadratic equations; the metrical system in Arabic poetry; the principle of “suitability” in constructing a legal analogy; incantations for controlling jinns; the number of bones in the human skeleton; how to make a Molotov cocktail; and much, much, more. Yet, despite this plethora of detailed information from across the fields of science, philosophy, religion, language, and the occult, *Jāmiʿ al-ʿulūm* does not, by any stretch, indicate all that was known in al-Rāzī's era, nor even all that might have been of interest to his contemporaries. Missing, for example, is geography. There are no descriptions of the seven climes or the wonders of the world. Different peoples or cultures are mentioned only as believers in different philosophical and religious doctrines. Missing, too, is the natural world of plants and animals, apart from some cures for the ailments of horses and falcons and some advice on planting and storing crops. These lacunae are striking when *Jāmiʿ al-ʿulūm* is compared to later works with greater encyclopedic breadth, such as Nuwayrī's (d. 732/1332) fourteenth century *Nihāyat al-arab fī l-funūn al-adab* (The ultimate ambition in the arts of erudition).¹⁸

13 Vesel, *Encyclopédies Persanes* 12–13.

14 Vesel, *Encyclopédies Persanes* 17–19.

15 al-Rāzī, *Jāmiʿ al-ʿulūm: Sittīnī* 163–184.

16 al-Rāzī, *Jāmiʿ al-ʿulūm: Sittīnī* 486–491.

17 al-Rāzī, *Jāmiʿ al-ʿulūm: Sittīnī* 492–499.

18 Muhanna, *World in a book*.

Just as the text as a whole presents a limited selection of knowledge, so does each chapter. Although many of the chapters that follow the proposed three-by-three organizational scheme do provide the foundational ideas in a field, for example the definition of geometry, lines, and angles,¹⁹ others, especially those consisting of nine sections, provide an overview or summary neither of a field nor of the field's roots and branches. Thus, for example, the only chapter on martial topics is one on weapons of war, and omitted is any discussion of military strategy, cavalry formation, military slavery, and fortifications, to name just a few possible areas of interest. Furthermore, though one might expect this chapter on weaponry to discuss the most widely used arms—perhaps swords, spears, and bows, or even catapults—it instead presents five sections on the construction of incendiary and chemical weapons (including life-size metal soldiers filled with noxious fumes) and four sections on the construction of drums.²⁰ In this case, one must suspect that al-Rāzī chose the most novel examples and those that best displayed his own cleverness.

To some extent the discrepancy between a stated ambition to include all or most knowledge and an ultimately limited set of topics is to be expected. No volume can ever really “bring together all the knowledge of a given era.”²¹ The choice of what to include illuminates both a culture and an author's understanding of what counts as worthwhile knowledge. In its placement of the religious intellectual disciplines alongside the philosophical, mathematical, and scientific *‘ulūm*, and in its neglect of such entertaining topics as the wonders of the world, *Jāmi‘ al-‘ulūm* presents a very academic and scholarly conception of knowledge. Al-Rāzī's own scholarly career included the production of treatises on most of these topics—treatises that he makes sure to mention wherever relevant. That *Jāmi‘ al-‘ulūm* is meant as a scholarly text rather than an artistic or entertaining production is also apparent from the plain, unadorned style of its composition. The only attempt at elegant writing is in the introductory panegyric to al-Rāzī's royal patron, ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Tekesh b. Khwārazmshāh.

The dry scholarly tone and contents of *Jāmi‘ al-‘ulūm* raise the question of the text's intended audience. Endress says it is “for everybody—and certainly not for philosopher-theologians and professional scientists.”²² And yet, although the text is too elementary to be of use to the professional philosophers, theologians, and scientists, it would appeal only to those who are interested in what philosophers, theologians, and scientists are up to. They would

19 al-Rāzī, *Jāmi‘ al-‘ulūm: Sittīnī* 351–353.

20 al-Rāzī, *Jāmi‘ al-‘ulūm: Sittīnī* 374–379.

21 Vesel, *Encyclopédies Persanes* 35.

22 Endress, *Cycle of knowledge* 128.

need to be literate not only in Persian but also in a fair amount of Arabic and be familiar with quite a lot of technical vocabulary. Josef van Ess labels *Jāmi' al-'ulūm* as meant for “beginners,”²³ while Vesel asserts that such encyclopedias “were intended for users who had a degree of erudition comparable to that of their authors.”²⁴ What prior knowledge would a reader need to have in order to understand or be interested in *Jāmi' al-'ulūm*? The internal evidence on this point is rather uneven.

Jāmi' al-'ulūm begins with a dive into an avowedly challenging proof of the temporal origination of the world that presumes the reader knows and understands a significant number of philosophical and theological terms and concepts.²⁵ By contrast, the chapter on “Indian calculation” seems absurdly elementary, with its listing of the numerical figures from 1 to 9, how to use them in positional notation, and explanations of basic operations such as addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.²⁶

This unevenness also extends to the material within many individual chapters. Let us take, for example, chapter 38 (on geometry). The first three fundamental sections of this chapter provide definitions of lines, planes, bodies, and angles. Although these sections contain various references to and arguments with al-Bīrūnī, Archimedes, and Euclid, they do lay out basic issues fairly clearly and understandably. But the next three advanced sections, on the construction of equilateral triangles, proof of the equality of the base angles of an isosceles triangle, and the division of a straight line into three equal parts, presume that the reader is already well versed in Euclid's propositions.²⁷ In a similar vein, the fundamental sections of chapter 3, on debate or disputation (*jadāl*), which explain the permissibility of debate, debate etiquette, and the basic types of propositions, do not require much prior knowledge. The advanced sections, however, presume a familiarity with technical legal concepts such as the “suitability” (*munāsaba*) of a characteristic of the object of a ruling to serve as the reason for the law.²⁸

The proposed chapter structure of fundamental sections, advanced ones, and problems suggests a progression in complexity and depth. However, the leaps from fundamental points to advanced topics is so steep that one wonders why readers who need no reminders of Euclid's propositions need a line

23 Van Ess, *Encyclopaedic activities in the Islamic world* 11.

24 Vesel, *Encyclopédies Persanes* 56.

25 al-Rāzī, *Jāmi' al-'ulūm: Sittīnī* 74–77.

26 al-Rāzī, *Jāmi' al-'ulūm: Sittīnī* 380–384.

27 al-Rāzī, *Jāmi' al-'ulūm: Sittīnī* 351–358.

28 al-Rāzī, *Jāmi' al-'ulūm: Sittīnī* 87–93.

defined for them, or how they can be ready to engage in debate about “suitability” without any preparation. If the text is meant to serve a pedagogical purpose, then it resembles a one-room schoolhouse in which all subjects and all levels are taught at once by the same teacher. Some beginners learn numbers and parts of speech, while others, having entered with more preparation, solve quadratic equations or consider whether nonexistence is a thing.

A key to understanding al-Rāzī’s choices in what to discuss on any given topic can be found in his introductory statement of purpose—“that poor understanding of that *‘ilm* would be illuminated and its deficiencies would be made apparent.”²⁹ That is, he is providing corrections to errors and misunderstandings in the received teachings on any given topic. Rather than summarizing those teachings, he is offering the latest, most advanced concepts and his own ideas about them. Why define geometry, lines, and angles for a reader already familiar with Euclid’s propositions? But al-Rāzī does not simply present definitions of these concepts; rather, he takes on the various definitions offered by the great figures in the history of mathematics—Euclid (fl. third century BCE), Archimedes (d. ca. 212 BCE), Ibn al-Haytham (Alhazen, d. 430/1039), and al-Bīrūnī (d. ca. 440/1048)—assesses their strengths, and propounds his own conclusions. Why choose the construction of equilateral triangles, proof of the equality of the base angles of an isosceles triangle, and the division of a straight line into three equal parts as the topics for the three advanced geometry sections? Because each of these proofs is *not* given by Euclid, as al-Rāzī makes clear, and is either his own invention or is quoted from Ibn al-Haytham.

Although some chapters of *Jāmi‘ al-‘ulūm* are completely derived from the scholarship of others—the algebra chapter, for example, simply runs through the definitions and examples from the first section of al-Khwārazmī’s (d. ca. 232/847) *Kitāb al-jabr wa-l-muqābala*, minus the demonstrations³⁰—many chapters either mention or present al-Rāzī’s own contribution to the field. The topic of *munāsaba* (suitability) might not be the most obvious legal topic to include in an encyclopedia, but it was one in which al-Rāzī had developed his own important theory.³¹ Similarly, in the chapter on theology (*kalām*), rather than giving a standard credal statement, al-Rāzī presents his own proofs for the temporal origination of the world, the existence of God, prophecy, and so forth. In the history subsection on the Prophet’s life, rather than a standard biographical overview, we find only a discussion of certain dates about

29 al-Rāzī, *Jāmi‘ al-‘ulūm*: *Sittīnī* 70.

30 al-Rāzī, *Jāmi‘ al-‘ulūm*: *Sittīnī* 388–394; al-Khwārazmī, *Kitāb al-jabr wa-l-muqābala* 15–27; al-Khwārazmī, *Algebra of Mohammad ben Musa* 5–21.

31 Opwis, *Maṣlaḥa and the purpose of the law* 88–131.

which there is scholarly disagreement.³² Here, rather than summarizing what one might already know, al-Rāzī focuses only on topics that are in dispute. This attention to the author's own scholarship, and his desire to set straight what he perceives as errors and misunderstandings, explain some of the idiosyncrasy of *Jāmi' al-'ulūm*. It is, at once, a general encyclopedia with a claim to comprehensiveness and also the purposeful display of a single scholar's erudition. At various points in the text, al-Rāzī states that he is providing a better or different proof, or a more effective technique than most.

The modern Western encyclopedia, with its multiple authors and editorial boards, its neutral yet authoritative voice, and its claim to universality and objectivity, has conditioned us to expect an effacement of the individual scholar in the presentation of collective and collected knowledge. "This is everything known" and "This is everything worth knowing" feel like very different statements from "This is everything I know" and "This is everything I know better than most anyone else." Yet, for al-Rāzī there is no difference. In the introduction to *Jāmi' al-'ulūm*, before the statement about the text, translated above, and before his praises of his royal patron, al-Rāzī starts with a panegyric on his own genius and erudition:

Since God Almighty has bestowed upon me gifts of knowledge and wisdom and opened for me the door of rational (*'aqlī*) debate and the path of traditional (*naqlī*) knowledge, I have been bound by the requirement of a God-given duty to strive to propagate this as far as possible; to untie the knot of the most intricate problems with the hand of contemplation; to communicate the fruits of thought and the proofs of mysteries to students and seekers; and to deliver the people of ignorance and the masters of error from the abyss of danger.³³

The motivation for the composition of this work, and its precondition for existing, are thus neither royal command and patronage, nor the need for a comprehensive text, but rather al-Rāzī's God-given scholarly brilliance. It is this brilliance, in combination with the prevalence of error and ignorance, that obliges him to disseminate what he knows in this text and, presumably, in his other, more specialized writings.

Al-Rāzī's claims about his erudition and intellectual abilities might appear unseemly. Yet, they are also indisputable. His numerous treatises on law, the-

³² al-Rāzī, *Jāmi' al-'ulūm: Sittīnī* 167–169.

³³ al-Rāzī, *Jāmi' al-'ulūm: Sittīnī* 69.

ology, philosophy, and the sciences, and especially his magisterial commentary on the Quran, all attest to the depth and breadth of his learning.³⁴ These works, and his well-known penchant for aggressive scholarly debate, speak to his intellectual independence and his conviction of the correctness of his own conclusions. *Jāmi' al-'ulūm's* comprehensiveness and its highlighting of topics of dispute is of a piece with the rest of its author's career. Not merely a comprehensive catalog of the scholarly knowledge of its era, *Jāmi' al-'ulūm* is a presentation of that knowledge filtered through one of the most extraordinary minds of the time, shaped by his intellectual agendas, and made available in a single volume.

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34 Jaffer, *Rāzī* 1–15.

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Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's Taxonomy of Extraordinary Acts

Tariq Jaffer

1 Aim, Scope, and Methodology

As a Muslim intellectual who was trained to operate in both the transmitted sciences—knowledge grounded in the Quran and prophetic traditions—and the rational sciences—knowledge constructed with reasoned concepts—Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210) aimed to develop a new Sunni worldview that united these two major divisions of learning in medieval Islam.¹ This tall order demanded that he reconcile the Aristotelian-Avicennian philosophical worldview with the methods of reasoning deployed by Muslim theologians (both Mu'tazili and Ash'ari) and with the many and diverse ways that authors working within these movements interpreted and expounded on the Quran and prophetic traditions. It could be argued that al-Rāzī's greatest accomplishment is that he systematized the Aristotelian-Avicennian philosophical tradition with Sunnī theology to an unequalled degree using innovative techniques and exegetical methods, and by building on principles and concepts that his predecessors al-Juwaynī (d. 478/1085) and al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) had established in the fifth/eleventh century.² The fruit of his theological program was a new Sunnī worldview that underscored Aristotelian-Avicennian principles and Mu'tazili methods of "rationalistic" interpretation, but that also grounded this worldview in the authority of scripture—the Quran and prophetic traditions.³

Yet another one of al-Rāzī's fundamental aims is to organize and classify the content of the "transmitted" and "rational" sciences that was available in his intellectual milieu. Al-Rāzī's successful effort to organize and classify the components of these divisions of knowledge is conspicuous throughout his

1 I am grateful to Sophia Vasalou for reading this article with a critical eye and to Nicholas Heer for our conversations about miracles and other extraordinary acts in Islam.

2 On the process of integration or naturalization, see the narrative offered by Sabra, *Appropriation and subsequent naturalization* 223–243; Sabra, *Science and philosophy* 1–42; Wisnovsky, *Nature and scope* 149–191.

3 For further discussion, see Jaffer, *Rāzī, passim*.

philosophical and theological works, as well as in his encyclopedias, which by their very nature are designed to carry out these projects.⁴ To the degree that al-Rāzī is primarily interested in transmitting, critiquing, refining, and expounding on traditions of learning in his Quranic commentary (*Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*), he devotes much effort to classifying, organizing, and systematizing the ancient and Islamic knowledge that he had absorbed over the course of his career as an itinerant theologian in Iran and Central Asia.⁵ Indeed, in the *Mafātīḥ* alone, al-Rāzī produces hundreds of classification schemes by pressing into service a combination of exegetical techniques and logical arguments. The skill of classifying and schematizing the knowledge that was produced in all disciplines of learning in medieval Islam and of deploying interpretive techniques and logical arguments to do so is on display throughout the *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*.⁶ One could argue that it was by joining the forces of exegetical techniques and logical methods that al-Rāzī successfully carried out the tasks of transmitting, critiquing, refining, and expounding the knowledge that was developed by the two major divisions of learning in medieval Islam—the *‘aqlī* and the *naqlī*.

In this article, I will be concerned mainly with the method that al-Rāzī uses to classify and analyze extraordinary acts. By such acts, I am referring to two fields of interest in al-Rāzī’s system of thought: knowledge of “strange occurrences” (*al-umūr al-gharība*), which al-Rāzī discourses on in his philosophical works, including *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*; and the “custom-breaking” acts (*fi l-khāriq lil-‘āda*), which he discusses in his theological works and his Quranic commentary, expressions which belong to the discourses of *falsafa* and *kalām* respectively.⁷ In his *Mafātīḥ*, al-Rāzī analyzes extraordinary acts that are sanc-

4 This is especially the case for al-Rāzī’s Persian encyclopedia, *Jāmi‘ al-‘ulūm*, as argued by A. Steinfels in this volume. On classification systems of knowledge in medieval Islam, see Biesterfeldt, *Medieval Arabic encyclopedias* 77–98; Biesterfeldt, *Die Zweige des Wissens*; Muhanna, *Encyclopaedias, Arabic*; Muhanna, *Why was the 14th century a century of Arabic encyclopaedism?* 343–356; Endress and Filali-Ansary, *Organizing knowledge*. For a list of al-Rāzī’s works, see Shihadeh, *Teleological ethics* 7–11.

5 For further discussion on al-Rāzī’s education, intellectual pedigree, patronage, and philosophical works that shaped his intellectual trajectory, see Griffel, *On Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī’s life* 313–344. On the debates that al-Rāzī held as he traveled through Iran and Central Asia, see Kholeif, *Study on Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī*.

6 All references are to the 1933 Cairo edition of al-Rāzī’s *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*.

7 Following Avicenna, the expression al-Rāzī uses in his philosophical works (including *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*), to describe wondrous acts is “strange occurrences” (*al-umūr al-gharība*), and the expression he uses to describe such acts in his theological works and in his Quranic commentary is “custom breaking” (*fi l-khāriq lil-‘āda*). For further discussion on the notions of “custom breaking” (*khāriq lil-‘āda*) and “continuance of custom” (*ajrāh al-‘āda*) see Wolfson, *Philosophy of the kalām* 544 ff.

tioned by the Quran and prophetic traditions, and which are recognized as social realities within his intellectual milieu. Because these arts, and the acts that belong to them, are constitutive of everyday religious practice, the need to classify, interpret, and explain them was very real for al-Rāzī. Further, because these acts are integral to al-Rāzī's theological worldview, it was imperative that he explain their role in religious life, and that he begin this task by subjecting them to organizational rules and principles, as well as to logical and analytical categories.

My chief aim in this article is to probe al-Rāzī's vocabulary of extraordinary occurrences, including his definition of key terms, and to understand the concepts and principles that influence how he schematizes extraordinary acts. I will also be concerned with how al-Rāzī schematizes extraordinary acts by classifying them within a cosmological system that recognizes miracles, magic, and marvels as credible and effective; how he deploys analytical categories, notably possibility, necessity, and impossibility, to dissect such acts; and how he draws on preconceived principles from the Ash'ari-Sunni tradition that align extraordinary acts with conceptions of Muslim piety to accomplish these tasks.⁸

To more comprehensively understand how al-Rāzī analyzes extraordinary acts, it will be important to bring out the differences between the divergent ways that he approaches this topic working in the mode of a Quranic commentator and also while operating as a philosophical commentator in *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt* (Commentary on [Avicenna's] Pointers and Reminders) and *al-Mabāḥith al-Mashriqiyya* (The Eastern investigations). Although space does not permit me to compare these sources and the different approaches they take, let me briefly offer a directive for further investigation. Al-Rāzī's philosophical method is to analyze the causes of "strange occurrences"—causes that can be traced to the especially strong psychic abilities of certain persons, including prophets and magicians or sorcerers.⁹ And in his Quranic commentary, which we examine here, al-Rāzī's method is to classify the spectrum of extraordinary acts using the analytical categories of possibility, necessity, and impossibility; and further, to map extraordinary acts onto a scheme of Muslim piety.

8 On al-Rāzī's logic, see now Ibrahim, Fakhr al-Din al-Razi and Aristotelian science 379–431. See also the many references to al-Rāzī's logic and epistemology in van Ess, *Die Erkenntnislehre, passim*.

9 al-Rāzī, *Sharḥay al-ishārāt* 142 ff. Avicenna, *Remarks and admonitions* 106. On the reception of Avicenna's *Ishārāt* see Wisnovsky, *Avicenna's Islamic reception* 190–213; Wisnovsky, *Avicennism and exegetical practice* 349–378. On Avicenna's *Ishārāt*, see Marmura, *Eṣārāt wa'l-tanbihāt*, al-. See also now the new study by A. Shihadeh, *Doubts on Avicenna*.

2 Definition of Terms and Classification Schemes

In the recent history of Islamic scholarship, it was Yūsuf b. Ismaʿīl al-Nabhānī (d. 1350/1932) who appreciated the extensive scope of extraordinary acts in Islamic societies. He attempted to catalog the entire history of *karāmāt* (wonders or marvels) that were performed in Islamic societies in a single work, namely *Jāmiʿ karāmāt al-awliyāʾ*.¹⁰

Before turning to the classificatory method that al-Rāzī deploys to dissect extraordinary acts in his *Mafātīḥ*, let me also mention that discussions about such acts in medieval Islam cut across the disciplinary boundaries of philosophy, theology, and Sufism, in addition to theories of *ijāz*, which had become an autonomous field of inquiry by the late tenth or early eleventh century.¹¹ Authors working within these disciplines define key concepts variously, devise differing classifications systems, and they deploy radically different principles to explain and interpret extraordinary acts. Moreover, they exchange and borrow definitions, ideas, concepts, and principles from each other. As a result of these engagements, the meaning, significance, and implications of key concepts and principles shift from one discipline to the next and from one author to another. When we examine al-Rāzī's classification system, we are hearing just one voice within a long and complex history of conversations about the nature, significance, and implications of extraordinary acts. Moreover, we are hearing just one expression of that voice, since space permits us to deal only with one schema of extraordinary acts from his major works.¹²

When al-Rāzī discourses on extraordinary acts in *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, his aim is to classify, explain, and interpret the acts that the Ashʿari-Sunni tradition con-

10 See the useful appendix (pp. 166–168) in J. Brown's article, which lists the general works on *karāmāt* that were composed in medieval Islam; Brown, *Faithful dissenters* 123–168.

11 For further discussion on this subject, see Ouyang, *Literary criticism, passim*.

12 In Western scholarship the nature and significance of extraordinary arts and acts has been examined by Richard Gramlich in *Die Wunder der Freunde Gottes*, a volume that comprises a magnificent collection of translations, and which analyzes the many and diverse ways that extraordinary human performances were classified within medieval Islam. The extensive scope of such acts is evinced in the indices of Gramlich's volume. To name just a few of the most tantalizing examples from his indices: bewitchment, understanding the speech of animals, raising the dead, healing the sick, prognostication, the speaking of plants, the seeking out of a saint's blessings by animals, the effects of talismans and the evil eye. The schemas that Muslim theologians, philosophers, and mystics devise to classify these acts and arts are essentially attempts to assign them roles within cosmological systems and to explain their functions and meanings within Islamic religious life. For a recent overview of some of the issues pertaining to magic and miracles in early Islamic religious thought, see Zadeh, *Magic, marvel, and miracle* 235–267.

sidered *custom breaking* and to assign them a role in his theological cosmology. Under the influence of earlier Ash'ari-Sunni theologians, al-Rāzī ascribes miracles, marvels, magic or sorcery to a category of arts that are credible, effective, and authoritative. This is not only because the credibility and effectiveness of these arts are sanctioned by the Quran and prophetic traditions (more on this below), but also because they are constitutive of everyday religious practice. Al-Rāzī's aim to classify, explain, and interpret acts by assigning them a role within his cosmology, is thus an imperative on these grounds, but also because his theological cosmology intends to be a comprehensive and unified system that accounted for all kinds of phenomena, including those that have been erroneously seen as "folk" or popular practices within Islamic cultures.

Writing before al-Rāzī in Baghdad, the Ash'ari-Sunni theologian al-Bāqillānī (403/1013) attempted to differentiate between extraordinary acts in his *Kitāb al-bayān 'an al-farq bayna al-mu'jizāt wa-l-karāmāt wa-l-ḥiyal wa-l-kahāna wa-l-sihr wa-l-narānjāt*, a most important treatise in the history of Islam which aims to clarify the difference between the feats of miracles, marvels, trickery or sleights of hand, divination, magic, and spells. And in his *Ijāz al-Qur'ān*, al-Bāqillānī establishes the defining properties of *mu'jizāt* in the strict sense as a means of marking them off from other extraordinary acts that also disrupt customs which make up ordinary human experience. Al-Juwaynī, who flourished in Nishapur and represented the eastern trend in Ash'ari-Sunni theology, also attempted to draw distinctions between wonder inducing acts in his *Kitāb al-irshād* and other works. These two Ash'ari-Sunni thinkers attempted to establish principles that govern such acts by aligning conceptions of Muslim piety with such acts.¹³

Al-Rāzī, too, discovers ways to distinguish between the various custom-breaking acts that the Ash'ari-Sunni tradition recognized as credible and effective. Although his approach to this difficulty is influenced by earlier attempts that emerged from within this school of thought, and although he configures extraordinary acts and a conception of Muslim piety along Ash'ari-Sunni lines of reasoning, he uses logical and analytical categories of possibility, necessity, and impossibility to schematize such acts; and he deploys these categories to align extraordinary acts with expressions of piety and moral depravity. By conceptualizing custom-breaking acts in this way, al-Rāzī developed a neat and tidy classificatory system. This system succeeded in bringing to order scattered

13 On miracles in Islamic theology (specifically Ash'arism), see Antes, *Prophetenwunder in der Ash'ariyya bis al-Ghazālī*, *passim*.

ideas and principles within the Ash'ari-Sunni intellectual tradition and polishing their incomplete taxonomies.

It is in the process of discoursing on the companions of the cave, an old myth related by the New Testament and retold by Q 18:9–26, that Rāzī devises a system to classify extraordinary acts. The myth of the companions of the cave is historically invoked by Ash'ari-Sunni *mutakallimūn* in order to show that marvels (*karāmāt*) have a foundation in the revealed sources, although they are also regarded as possible from the point of view of reason, in the same way that sorcery (*siḥr*) is regarded as sanctioned by the revealed sources, as well as possible from the point of view of reason.¹⁴ Al-Rāzī considers this Quranic verse an opportunity to explain the term *walī* (friend or saint of God) and to expound upon this term in Sufi lore.¹⁵ His focus here is on those Sufis who have attained proximity to God and experienced presence with God by carrying out a multiplicity of acts of obedience with true sincerity, on the way in which the degree of *walāya* is attained through God's mercy, and on the marvels carried out by "saints" or "friends of God." For our purposes, what is important here is that while al-Rāzī's discourse on *karāmāt* is a digest of material that he has gathered from Sufi sources, one can glean from the classificatory system that follows it the steps that al-Rāzī took to systematize extraordinary acts and configure them along Ash'ari-Sunni lines of reasoning.

Al-Rāzī's system schematizes extraordinary feats by first reducing the sweep of arts that are generally subsumed under the heading of extraordinary to those that break the regular customs that human beings are habituated to (*fi l-khāriq lil-'āda*).¹⁶ What is expressed through the classification system are three main facets of al-Rāzī's approach to extraordinary acts: (1) the variety of acts that al-Rāzī considers custom breaking and therefore capable of inducing wonder on their audience; (2) how such acts are considered through the lens of possibility, impossibility, and necessity; and (3) how such possibility and impossibility of acts are shaped by preconceived conceptions of Islamic piety within the Ash'ari-Sunni tradition.

14 al-Juwaynī, *Kitāb al-irshād* 320–321.

15 On al-Rāzī's discourse on the companions of the cave, see Gramlich, Fakhr ad-dīn ar-Rāzī's Kommentar zu sure 18, 9–12, 99–152. On *walāya* see Landolt, *Walāyah* xv, 316–323.

16 The meaning and significance of this expression in the history of Islamic religious thought is extremely complex and will be treated in a separate study. One of the main difficulties that needs to be explored is the question whether "custom breaking"—the disruption in what we are habituated to—is ontological or conceptual. And this question of where to locate disruption can only be resolved through first understanding what Ash'ari authors understand by the term "custom."

The strategy that al-Rāzī devises to classify custom-breaking acts can be discerned in the following schema.¹⁷ A custom-breaking act is either:

- I. Accompanied by a claim, or: II. made in the absence of a claim
 1. If a claim is made in conjunction with a custom-breaking act, then that claim is either:
 2. I.1. to divinity; I.2. to prophethood; I.3. to sainthood; or I.4. to magic and obedience to Satan.
 - I.1. A claim to divinity when carried out with such a custom-breaking act is **possible**:
 - I.2. A claim to be a prophet when accompanied by an act that breaks custom:
 - I.2.1. A claim made by a truthful prophet, in which case the appearance of a custom-breaking act is **possible and necessary** (*muʿjiza*); or,
 - I.2.2. A claim made by a liar, in which case the custom-breaking act is either
 - I.2.2.1. **Impossible**, or
 - I.2.2.2. **possible** but capable of being replicated
 - I.3. Marvels (*karāmāt*): Differences of opinion about its **possibility**
 - I.4. Magic (*sihr*): **Possible**
 - II. If no claim is made in conjunction with a custom-breaking act, then:
 - II.1. Marvels (*karāmāt*): **possible** for pious persons
 - II.2. God's leading a person astray (*istidrāj*): **possible** for wicked persons

In the above classification system, al-Rāzī schematizes the preeminent acts that the Ash'ari-Sunni tradition to which he belongs considers custom breaking. The central arts that he deals with are miracles (*muʿjizāt*), magic (*sihr*), marvels (*karāmāt*), and [God's] leading a person astray (*istidrāj*).¹⁸ What is most noteworthy in the above schema is that al-Rāzī analyzes central extraordinary acts by dissecting them through the lens of possibility, necessity, and impossibility, and that he classifies such arts by using these analytical categories. Fundamentally, al-Rāzī posits that extraordinary acts disrupt the customs or the regular succession of events that human beings are habituated to. In so

¹⁷ al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb* xxi, 85; Gramlich, *Die Wunder* 19–20.

¹⁸ The classic examples of *karāmāt* that are referenced in the Quran relate to Mary. See for instance Q 3:37, where Mary is provided for by God in the temple. On the significance of Mary in the Quran, see Neuwirth, *Imagining Mary*, disputing Jesus 328–358. On *karāma*, see McDonald, *Karāma*.

doing, he establishes the notion of “custom breaking” as the most general definition of extraordinary acts. A disruption in the ordinary experience of human beings is thus the essential nature of an extraordinary act.

Further, al-Rāzī implies that such custom-breaking acts, which disrupt the customary or ordinary experiences that we are habituated to, include an array of works that are potentially realizable. The following works can be said to fall within the domain of possibility: (1) an act that is carried out in conjunction with a claim to divinity, as in the case of Pharaoh in the Quran, who expresses his claim by announcing, “I am your Lord, the Most High!” (Q. 79, 24);¹⁹ (2) an act that is carried out by a truthful prophet or an imposter in conjunction with a claim to prophethood; in the case of Muḥammad, such an act is necessary, and in the case of Musaylima it is possible but not realizable; (3) a marvel that is carried out by a saint in conjunction with a claim to sainthood; (4) a sorcerer’s work of magic, which when made in conjunction with an announcement, signifies obedience to Satan; and (5) custom-breaking acts that are made in the absence of a claim to any one of these, including the marvels ascribed to pious persons and the acts of wicked persons who are led astray by God.

Within the above classification system, al-Rāzī formulates further principles to draw distinctions between divinely sanctioned prophets (Muḥammad) and wicked pseudo-prophets or imposters (Musaylima). The principles that he expresses through his schema govern the distinction between the bona fide miracles performed by prophets and the fake miracles carried out by imposters. Here, al-Rāzī establishes the categories of possibility, necessity, and impossibility as a set of criteria that can be applied to extraordinary acts and the agents who perform them. So, al-Rāzī dichotomizes prophets and their imposters here by applying the criteria of possibility, necessity, and impossibility to their acts; and it is by applying these analytical categories that he thinks that one can discern the difference between the real prophet and his imposter.

To elaborate, when al-Rāzī classifies a *muʿjiz* act as a necessity for a true prophet, he applies the notion of necessity as an analytical category. What al-Rāzī has in mind when he calls a *muʿjiz* act a necessity is an actually realized act, as opposed to a mere theoretical possibility. In the above schema, the analytical category of the necessary applies solely to the case of the true prophet. Al-Rāzī’s reasoning here relies on a principle that is well established and highly revered in the Ashʿari-Sunni tradition: when an actually realized *muʿjiz* act is performed at the hands of a prophet, it serves to provide evidence that an agent’s

19 Trans. A.J. Arberry, *Koran interpreted*.

prophetic mission is divinely confirmed; and without such confirmation the prophet's mission would not be recognized.

To cite just one example from the history of Ash'ari-Sunni theology, al-Bāqillānī, writing in the late tenth/early eleventh century, argues that verification is an essential property of the divinely wrought miracle; and he understands verification to mean an act by which God vouches for or evidences the prophet's veracity. Al-Bāqillānī expresses the reasoning behind this principle in the following way: if the miracle did not take place through God's activity which verifies truthfulness, it would be possible for an agent who claims to hold the rank of a prophet to confirm himself as a prophet. In the course of defining *mu'jiz* to argue for the Quran's nature as a disruption in literary customs of the ancient Arabs and for its unclassifiability as a literary genre, he argues that in the absence of such divine confirmation, the miracle loses its validity or force.²⁰ He considers Muḥammad's prophetic status verifiable only through a bona fide custom-breaking miracle that discloses divine confirmation. No other custom-breaking act could provide evidence that the transcendent had intervened into the temporal order.²¹

Contrast this with the case of an imposter who falsely claims to be a prophet. The analytical categories that al-Rāzī deploys in his classification system to understand, interpret, and explain an imposter's acts are impossibility and possibility—1.2.2.1 and 1.2.2.2 respectively in the above schema. Here, al-Rāzī establishes the principle that an extraordinary act, namely a feat that disrupts the customs of ordinary experience that human beings are habituated to, is unrealizable for a pseudo-prophet. If an imposter's act is possible (1.2.2.2), then it will necessarily be imitable and will fall short of achieving the status of a truly *mu'jiz* act. Its imitability can be exposed as a fake by a person skilled in the arts of wonder, whose remonstrance (*mu'āraḍa*) of the act will disclose his deceitfulness and undermine his claim to prophetic authority.²²

The principle of differentiation that al-Rāzī underscores in the above schema relies on analytical categories and reinforces the following theological notion: while the imposter is powerless to produce an actual extraordinary act which disrupts our ordinary experience or customs that we are habituated to, the prophet's having been divinely sent requires that a *mu'jiz* act (not just

20 al-Bāqillānī, *I'jāz al-Qur'ān* 288 (para. 436). On al-Bāqillānī's theory of *i'jāz*, see Aleem, *I'jāz al-Quran* 64–82; von Grunebaum, *A tenth-century document*. See also Vasalou, *Miraculous eloquence of the Qur'an* 23–53.

21 This point is emphasized by Vasalou (see footnote 20).

22 On remonstrance (*mu'āraḍa*), see Schippers, *Mu'āraḍa*; van Ess, *Some fragments of the Mu'āraḍat* 151–163.

any custom-breaking act) be actually realized; and it requires that such a *muʿjiz* act be accompanied by the absence of a remonstrance (‘*adam al-muʿāraḍa*’) so that, unlike a fake or an act of sorcery, it cannot be overturned or shown to be false through a replication.²³

Two important assumptions underlie al-Rāzī’s efforts to classify extraordinary acts and the principles that run through his schema. First, al-Rāzī brings to his inquiry into wonder-inducing acts the idea that miracles and magic are opposing tendencies. The Quran dichotomizes miracles and magic as opposing principles, and this dichotomy runs through the classification systems of extraordinary acts in medieval Islam, so that the vast majority (if not all) of them pit miracles and magic against each other. The difference between these two principles, in view of the Quran, is essentially the following: while miracles are evidential signs (or proofs) that confirm prophetic status, magic or sorcery is associated with soothsayers and betrays moral depravity (or even obedience to the devil) rather than piety and obedience to God.

Second, magic or sorcery is a credible, effective art whose acts carry a sense of authority. The credibility and effective nature of the arts of magic is established by the Quran itself.²⁴ Q 2:102 affirms the reality of magic or sorcery and also describes its origin, and this occasion became the *locus classicus* for discussion about these ideas:

And they follow what the Satans recited over Solomon’s kingdom. Solomon disbelieved not, but the satans disbelieved, teaching the people sorcery, and that which was sent down upon Babylon’s two angels, Harut and Marut; they taught not any man, without they said, “We are but a temptation; do not disbelieve.” From them they learned how they might divide a man and his wife, yet they did not hurt any man thereby, save by the leave of God, and they learned what hurt them, and did not profit them, knowing well that whoso buys it shall have no share in the world to come; evil then was that they sold themselves for, if they had but known.²⁵

In the above, Q 2:102 presents magic or sorcery as an effective art, capable of bringing harm to the bewitched by dividing a man and his wife. But it con-

23 al-Rāzī, *Kitāb muḥaṣṣal afkār al-mutaqaddimīn* 207 ff.

24 On magic, see Khan, *Magic*; Margoliouth, *Magic* (Arabian and Muslim). For more theoretical literature on magic: Tylor, *Researches* chap. 6; Frazer, *Golden bough*; Jevons, *Definition of magic* 105 ff.; Hubert and Mauss, *Introduction* 163–203, 452. Further references to pioneering studies are given in the bibliography to Marett, *Magic* (introductory).

25 Trans. A.J. Arberry, *Koran interpreted*.

demns magic/sorcery on account of its origin: it was taught to man by “satans,” although angels were complicit of bringing it to earth.

Within the Ash‘ari-Sunni tradition, this Quranic myth was taken as evidence for magic’s credibility, its effective nature, and its authority as a bona fide custom-breaking extraordinary act. Al-Ash‘ari himself acknowledged the existence of sorcery as a social reality and equated sorcery with unbelief in both his *Maqālāt* and his *Ibāna*, and he naturally pitted magic against miracles.²⁶ Al-Juwaynī, in his *Irshād*, appeals to Q 2:102 and additional scriptural evidence (*shawāhid sam‘īyya*) to justify the credibility, efficaciousness, and authority of magic.²⁷ And al-Bāqillānī, especially when he attempts to define the properties of miracles in *Kitāb al-bayān*, affirms that sorcery is a credible and effective art.²⁸ What is important here is that al-Rāzī inherits a distinctively Ash‘ari-Sunni way of thinking about the relationship between miracles and magic. According to this view, magic is not a lower form of religion but the rival of miracles. Miracles and magic are opposing principles of piety and wickedness, and although magic is associated with unbelief, it nonetheless has the capacity to produce bona fide extraordinary acts.

It is thus under the influence of Ash‘ari-Sunni theology that al-Rāzī proposes that magic or sorcery are arts with authority equal to other custom-breaking arts. As evidenced in al-Rāzī’s schema analyzed above, miracles and magic are placed together in a class of extraordinary acts that also includes other acts of piety and wickedness: *karāmāt*, which are performed by the pious saints who God is satisfied with; and *istidrāj*, or “God’s leading a person astray,” which are acts performed by the wicked or morally depraved. Within the above schema, miracles and magic belong within the same genus and share a similar grammar or set of rules.

Following earlier authors who worked within the Ash‘ari-Sunni tradition, al-Rāzī classifies these arts within a single genus on the grounds that the acts which belong to them are custom breaking.²⁹ And, in the above, such acts can be said to constitute the grammar of the extraordinary acts, or to use *kalām* vocabulary, of effecting signs. For these reasons, Muslim authors tend to analyze these arts and their acts as a collective, although they distinguish them from one another by using various schemata.

26 See McCarthy, *Theology of al-Ash‘arī* 251.

27 al-Juwaynī, *Kitāb al-irshād* 322.

28 On the reality of magic, see al-Bāqillānī’s discussion in *Kitāb al-bayān ‘an al-farq* 77–78 and 88–90.

29 On the relationship between miracles and other arts, see Gramlich, *Die Wunder* 127 ff.

In the above schema, al-Rāzī expresses a salient principle that governs the way that he conceptualizes extraordinary acts: every *muʿjiz* act (miracle) is an extraordinary act, but not every extraordinary act is *muʿjiz*.³⁰ So, in the above classification system, *istidrāj*, which goes by several different names in the Quran—*makr*, *kayd*, *imlāʿ*, and *ihlāk*—is included alongside miracles.³¹ Further, magic, a principle that is diametrically opposed to miracles according to the Ashʿari-Sunni tradition, is catalogued alongside miracles. And *karāmāt*, too, belong to the same genus of custom-breaking acts. By schematizing acts using this principle, al-Rāzī implies that the entire array of the aforementioned acts are varieties of wondrous acts that fall within a single genus, and that they share a general definition of custom-breaking acts.³²

How does al-Rāzī mark off miracles from other custom-breaking acts that are sanctioned by the Quran, as well as by prophetic traditions, and are considered real, authoritative, and effective? If every miracle (*muʿjiz*) act is an extraordinary act, but not every extraordinary act is *muʿjiz*, by what criterion does al-Rāzī distinguish between *muʿjizāt* and other varieties of custom-breaking acts?

Within the above schema, the art of producing *muʿjizāt* is the prerogative of prophets. Saints can perform marvels, imposters can carry out pseudo-miracles, tricksters can deceive their audiences with their sleights of hand, and magicians or sorcerers can cast spells or bewitch people. But *muʿjizāt*, in the strict sense, are performed by true prophets. Support for this principle is evidenced in the above schema, in which *muʿjizāt*—to the exclusion of all other extraordinary acts—are classified as not just *possible* but also *necessary* for prophets. Al-Rāzī designates *muʿjizāt* as possible solely in the case of a true claim to prophecy made by a true prophet (Muḥammad); and he likewise designates *muʿjizāt* as impossible in the case of an imposter who makes a false claim to prophecy (Musaylima). From these principles expressed in the schema we are to understand the following: if a claim to be a prophet is made by a truthful person, it follows of necessity that the acts of wonder performed by him will be true *muʿjizāt*—not fakes, and not magic or sorcery. The principle that al-Rāzī expresses through his schema restricts *muʿjizāt* to the few instances in history when a true claim to be a prophet is made by an actual prophet.³³

To mark off *muʿjizāt* from other custom-breaking acts through the notion of necessity, as al-Rāzī does in the above, is to say that the performance of

30 Gramlich, *Die Wunder* 19.

31 al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb* xxi, 93–94.

32 On *istidrāj* and its related acts, see Gramlich's translation of al-Rāzī's discussion under "Die Verlockung" in *Die Wunder* 135.

33 al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb* xxi, 85; Gramlich, *Die Wunder* 20.

miracles is a requisite solely for a true prophet and not for those who produce other varieties of custom-breaking acts. This is because, as al-Rāzī underscores in his theological works, *muʿjizāt* are the means by which the truth of a prophet's mission is divinely verified, and divine confirmation or verification imparts the prophet with authority.³⁴ In the above schema, the performance of *muʿjizāt* at the hands of the prophet and the act of divine confirmation are inextricably bound: an act that is truly *muʿjiz* is evidential of the prophet's mission, and the latter gains its authenticity by evidencing that the transcendent God entered the temporal world to confirm the prophet's mission. What is important to underscore here is that al-Rāzī circumscribes true miracles from other custom-breaking acts by classifying *muʿjizāt* as necessary. There is, moreover, an important implication here: according to the theoretical schema, no other kind of custom-breaking act performed by a saint, pseudo-prophet, magician, sorcerer, or tricks of divine confirmation can qualify as *muʿjizāt* in the strict sense. The principle that is implied here is worth reiterating: not every custom-breaking act is *muʿjiz*, but every *muʿjiz* is custom breaking, as well as being an act of divine verification of the prophet's mission.³⁵

3 Islamic Piety and the Arts of Wonder

At this point it will be worthwhile to step back from al-Rāzī's classification system, to reflect on the methodology that it deploys to analyze custom-breaking acts. Observe that when al-Rāzī schematizes extraordinary acts, he does not argue for the credibility of miracles, marvels, magic, or God's leading a person astray. Nor does he argue for the effectiveness of the acts that fall into these central categories of extraordinary arts. His classification system assumes the credibility and effectiveness of these arts, since they have a basis in the revealed testimony of scripture and are considered permissible/possible from the standpoint of reason. The import of the schema is that it examines diverse acts of wonder and the varieties of extraordinary acts that belong to them using the lens of possibility, impossibility, and necessity. And, moreover, that by applying these analytical categories to extraordinary acts, it establishes criteria that

34 Jaffer, *Rāzī* 99–117.

35 al-Rāzī, *Mafātīh al-ghayb* xxi, 85; Gramlich, *Die Wunder* 20. For further discussion about the idea that *muʿjizāt* are defined by a divine act that confirms the truth of the prophet's mission, see Gramlich, *Die Wunder* 31–32. On the subject of whether God can tell a lie in such a case, see El-Rouwayheb, *Must God tell us the truth?* 411–429.

resolve an important difficulty that had troubled Muslims theologians since the time of al-Ash'ari (d. 324/935)—how to distinguish a true prophet from an imposter.

The schema that al-Rāzī devises to organize and classify extraordinary acts is influenced by preconceived ideas that color his analysis. In the final section of this article, my intention is to make these ideas visible by pointing to the social factors that shape the way al-Rāzī aligns custom-breaking acts with expressions of Muslim piety. Specifically, my aim is to show that al-Rāzī's schema binds a set of custom-breaking acts to expressions of Muslim piety and moral depravity; and to show that the preconceived alignments between extraordinary acts, on one hand, and such religious expressions, on the other, are the principal factors that shape how al-Rāzī classifies acts as possible, necessary, or impossible. By doing so, I underscore that these logical and analytical categories are molded by a well-established and highly revered distinction between the prophet and the magician: miracles are the perfect expression of the prophet's piety, and sorcery is the utmost expression of a sorcerer's moral wickedness. The two custom-breaking agents thus belong in separate categories that cannot cross over into one another or be mixed and matched (e.g., prophet and magic, or sorcerer and miracles).

Within al-Rāzī's classification system, specific extraordinary acts are aligned with clearly defined expressions of piety and moral depravity: miracles are schematized as attestations of prophetic piety, marvels as indications of saintly piety, and magic or sorcery as evidence of moral depravity.³⁶ Further, al-Rāzī's schema aligns these acts and expressions in such a way that it allows for the possibility of certain acts and implies that other acts are necessities. Yet, it also disallows other acts by classifying them as impossibilities. So, a true miracle (*mu'jiz*) is classified as possible and necessary for a truthful prophet, and it is categorized as possible (but replicable and hence not possible in reality) or impossible for a pseudo-prophet. Magic is classified as possible for a morally depraved person, and it is categorized as impossible for a truthful prophet.

To sum up, when al-Rāzī schematizes extraordinary acts and expressions of piety, he conceptualizes them using the logical and analytical categories of possibility, necessity, and impossibility. But the reason that any given act is placed in one of these categories is dictated by social forces that align spe-

36 Elsewhere in *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, al-Rāzī discourses on seven types of magic or sorcery, placing all seven under the category of unbelief (*kufr*). Here, he does not seem concerned with the difficulty of how to differentiate between prophets and imposters (or miracles and magic), and his discussion is not of immediate concern. See al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb* iii, 238 ff.

cific extraordinary acts with individual expressions of piety and wickedness. What his schema effectively does is to take the alignments between acts and expressions—alignments that are established by his predecessors within the Ash'ari-Sunni tradition—and map them onto the aforementioned logical and analytical categories.

Further preconceived principles are hidden in the schema, and these, too, shape how al-Rāzī dissects extraordinary acts. Among these is the rule that extraordinary works share a common definition, since they are not essentially different from one another but share a nature. The rule that al-Rāzī formulates here can be summarized as follows: every extraordinary act disrupts our ordinary experience by breaking the customs that we are habituated to—the regular order or sequence of events in the natural world. The miracles wrought by prophets, the marvels performed by saints, and the magic worked by sorcerers belong to a single genus and are intrinsically undifferentiated. The occasion when Muḥammad split the moon by pointing to it with his index finger (miracle), the “people of the cave” referenced at Q 18:9–26 who slept for over 300 years (marvel), and the occasion when Muḥammad was bewitched according to Muslim sources (magic), from the perspective of the acts themselves cannot be differentiated, since all are essentially custom breaking of ordinary experience.

But al-Rāzī's schema also expresses ways that such acts can be distinguished from one another through additional criteria. To differentiate between wondrous acts that are not intrinsically different from one another, al-Rāzī urges his audience to consider the status and character of the agent performing an act—rather than to consider the act itself. The nature or significance of an extraordinary act is discoverable through an agent's identity or character, which can be shaped by notions of piety, moral depravity, or wickedness. To take the most salient example from the classification system described above, what distinguishes a miraculous act from other custom-breaking acts is that it expresses the prophet's piety and signals divine obedience; and as an evidential sign (or proof), it confirms the prophetic status of Muḥammad's mission. And what distinguishes sorcery from other custom-breaking acts is that it expresses the wicked nature of a sorcerer or magician, betraying moral depravity and obedience to the devil.³⁷

37 In his *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, al-Rāzī devises a further classification system in which he organizes, divides, and analyzes the divisions of magic. See al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb* iii, 228 ff. The idea that miracles and magic are opposing principles that cannot be united is especially prominent in al-Hujwīrī's discussion on the topic. Al-Hujwīrī (d. between 465–469/1072–1077) is especially interested in finding ways to distinguish between magic and

The significance of this is not simply that within al-Rāzī's classification system, extraordinary acts are inextricably bound to expressions of piety or wickedness. What is consequential here is that the strict alignments between agents and acts, which express piety or wickedness, make it impossible for opposing tendencies or principles to be unified in a person: sorcery cannot be united with miracles, and true prophethood cannot be united with magic; nor can the notion of a lying prophet be united with a true miracle. The organizational system of extraordinary acts, including the strict alignments that it establishes, prohibits the crossover of opposing principles.

To conclude, the lens through which al-Rāzī examines extraordinary acts betrays that he is inclined to explain such acts using logical and analytical categories. But the way in which he applies the categories of possibility, necessity, and impossibility to dissect extraordinary acts discloses the influence of pre-conceived social principles that are handed down by the Quran and prophetic traditions, are reinforced by social forces, and are deeply imprinted in Islamic religious thought. Indeed, the classification system that al-Rāzī devises to analyze the array of custom-breaking acts worked by both holy and wicked persons in medieval Islam reinforces well-established ideas about the nature of extraordinary acts and those who perform them. The basic contours of Muslim piety, including the idea of the prophet as pious miracle worker and the sorcerer as wicked magician, determined which kinds of acts fall into each of the analytical categories of possibility, necessity, and impossibility.³⁸ Before al-Rāzī, al-Juwaynī seemed to recognize this. When he makes a similar argument prohibiting crossover between the strict alignment of agents and their acts, he implies that the impossibility of such crossovers is not known through reason, but only through the consensus of the scholarly community.³⁹ What al-Rāzī's organizational system thus offers is a neat schema of alignments of acts and piety and of their various possibilities through a new lens that conceptualizes them in logical and analytical categories. It retains, however, the stamp of well-established and highly revered social and theological ideas and distinctions that are characteristic of the Ash'ari-Sunni tradition.

miracles. He differentiates between the two by mapping these two principles onto God's attributes. Miracle as a human perfection of knowledge is a result of God's being pleased; magic as a perfection of human infidelity is a result of God's anger. Consequently, al-Hujwiri implies, the possibility of crossover between such opposing principles is impossible. See Nicholson, *Kashf al-Mahjub* 150–153.

38 al-Juwaynī, *Kitāb al-irshād* 323.

39 For further discussion on al-Juwaynī, see Nagel, *Die Festung des Glaubens*.

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Believing Is Seeing

The Universe in the Eyes of al-Bīrūnī and Ibn Sīnā

Mahan Mirza

When the scientist Abū Rayḥān al-Bīrūnī (d. 440/1048) and the philosopher Abū ‘Alī b. Sīnā (d. 428/1037) gazed up at the night sky, each saw a different universe. Ibn Sīnā witnessed a perfect division of two realms: one, a realm of generation and corruption, growth and decay, between earth and moon (sub-lunary); the other, a perfect realm of the sun, planets, and stars, beyond the moon (supralunary). Al-Bīrūnī challenged this picture of the universe. According to perennial custom and courtesy, the two engaged in a scholarly exchange to iron out their differences. The correspondence, initiated by al-Bīrūnī, has been preserved for posterity in a series entitled *al-As’ila wa-l-ajwiba* (“Questions and Answers”) by the younger and more prominent of the two interlocutors, Ibn Sīnā.¹ The historical foresight of the precocious philosopher indicates confidence; perhaps he surmised that he had bested his older contemporary. But history is not always kind to those who presume to have conquered it.

After dispensing with formal politeness, al-Bīrūnī begins by asking Ibn Sīnā a series of questions about Aristotelian cosmology in reference to Aristotle’s book *On the Heavens*.² Al-Bīrūnī’s very first question challenges fundamental beliefs that philosophers held about the physical nature of the cosmos. Do the elements that constitute the universe possess essential natures that compel them to move in certain directions? Are the supralunary and sublunary realms essentially different? Al-Bīrūnī is driven to this line of inquiry because he sees movements in the heavens that do not seem to be physically possible: he sees anomalies between empirical facts and philosophical explanations. The first question he asks revolves around one such anomaly concerning the irregular movements of planets. (This is, in fact, how planets got their name; the word comes from a Greek word that means “to wander,” a planet being a “wanderer.”) But in order to better understand this anomaly that troubles al-Bīrūnī,

1 al-Bīrūnī and Ibn Sīnā, *As’ila*. The entire correspondence has been translated by Muzaffar Iqbal (“provisionally,” according to him) serially in *Islamic Sciences* (formerly *Islam and Science*), 2003–2007.

2 Aristotle, *On the Heavens*; Latin: *De Caelo*; Arabic: *al-Samā’ wa-l-‘ālam*.

let us begin by unpacking the axioms of Aristotelian cosmology that Ibn Sīnā and the philosophers embraced.

According to Aristotle, the universe consists of five elements: earth, water, air, fire, and ether. The first four of these elements are found in the sublunary realm, while the fifth element—ether—is found in the supralunary realm. Each of these elements possesses an essential nature of motion: earth and water move naturally downward, air and fire move naturally upward, and the movement of ether is naturally circular. The circle represents a perfect geometric figure, without beginning or end. Movements along a circular path cannot, by definition, be contrary to each other *even if they are in opposite directions*, because the movement is always from the same point to the same point. In other words, all movements on a circle are always toward the same elusive end. Unlike circular motion, the end of linear motion depends on the direction of motion. Earthy substances, when moving naturally downward, travel away from things that remain above. The farther earthy substances go, the closer they come to the center of a stationary “earth” and the farther they get from the uncorrupted supralunary realm of ether.

Observers of the heavens see a sphere of fixed stars revolving around the earth in what appears to be circular motion. We now know that this sphere of fixed stars that is visible to the naked eye is in fairly close proximity to earth within our own galaxy. There are hundreds of billions of other stars in our galaxy beyond these that the ancients did not know existed, in a universe that consists of hundreds of billions of galaxies that are undetectable to observers unaided by powerful instruments. The apparent circular motion is the result of the rotation of the earth on its axis. Yet, it is impossible to detect anything but the circular motion of the sphere of fixed stars with the naked eye, which is a “fact” corroborated by the senses. Similarly, the earth, moon, and planets also appear to move in circles at various distances between the earth and outer sphere of fixed stars. The planets, however—particularly Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn—are different. They are observed to periodically stop, move backward for a brief period, and then continue again on their original path, as seen against the backdrop of the sphere of fixed stars rotating in the distance. This phenomenon of apparent reversal in the direction of movement is known as retrograde motion.

This anomaly of retrograde motion is the topic of al-Bīrūnī’s very first question to Ibn Sīnā. After all, how is it possible for elements that move in a natural circular motion to suddenly stop and reverse direction for no apparent reason? If the only element in the supralunary realm is ether, what causes the reversal? If there is a force acting on the planets, then what is the nature and source of this force? Might it be that the circular motion is not essential, or that the

realm of existence beyond the moon is neither simple nor eternal? Could it be that even a substance like ether might move toward or away from the center of the earth were it not for some other structural limitations built into the fabric of the universe? Instead of positing a difference between two realms—that beneath the moon with linear motion and generation and corruption, and that beyond the moon with circular motion and perfection—might there be just one single realm with similar forces and substances? Could the two realms have more in common than meets the eye? Al-Bīrūnī's pause at the anomaly of planetary retrograde motion inspires questions that threaten to unravel the entire worldview of Aristotelian cosmology.

Why does retrograde motion trouble al-Bīrūnī more than it does Ibn Sīnā, who never denies the existence of the phenomenon? The two observe the exact same thing, but that thing never undermines Ibn Sīnā's system. And he has an explanation: circular motion is circular motion; it has no contrary; a planet in circular motion moves away from the same point to the same point, regardless of the direction it moves along its circular path. Even though this explanation seems to baffle al-Bīrūnī, who calls it mere wordplay and sophistry,³ Ibn Sīnā never bats an eye. This is because there are two sets of commitments at play for every scientist and philosopher; one is a commitment to empirical phenomena, the other a commitment to a certain view of reality within which those empirical phenomena are situated. For Ibn Sīnā, the empirical fact of planetary retrograde motion is not able to revise his philosophical commitments. That is because a revision of the philosophical commitments requires a revision of not just one fact but an entire network of beliefs about the nature of reality.⁴ "When you think of Aristotle's beliefs," explains the historian of science Richard DeWitt, "do not think of them like a grocery list of unrelated items ... Think of the collection of beliefs like a jigsaw puzzle. Each piece of the puzzle is a particular belief, with the pieces fitting together in a coherent, consistent, interrelated, interlocking fashion, as the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle fit together."⁵ A jigsaw puzzle is an apt metaphor and will inform my reflections on how both scientific and theological worldviews operate. DeWitt explains:

To take just one example of how Aristotle's beliefs fit together, consider the belief that the Earth is the center of the universe. This belief is closely

3 al-Bīrūnī and Ibn Sīnā, *As'ila* 3.

4 See DeWitt, *Worldviews*.

5 DeWitt, *Worldviews* 9.

interconnected with the belief that the element earth has a natural tendency to move toward the center of the universe. After all, the Earth itself is composed primarily of the earthy element, so the belief that the earthy element naturally goes toward the center of the universe, and the belief that the Earth itself is at the center of the universe, fit together nicely. Likewise, both of these beliefs are closely tied to the belief that an object will move only if there is a source of motion. Just as my pen will remain stationary unless something moves it, so too with the Earth. Having long ago moved to the center of the universe, or as close to the center as they could, the heavy elements comprising the Earth will now remain stationary, because there is nothing powerful enough to move an object as massive as the Earth. All of these beliefs are, in turn, closely connected to the belief that the basic elements have essential natures, and the belief that objects behave as they do largely because of the essential natures of the elements out of which they are composed.⁶

Ibn Sīnā was working with these various pieces of Aristotle's jigsaw puzzle of beliefs. If Ibn Sīnā were to concede that retrograde motion is the result of some kind of complexity in the heavenly sphere, his entire philosophical worldview would be in danger of shattering. Too many pieces of the puzzle would be impacted if Ibn Sīnā made such a concession. The core beliefs of Aristotelian philosophy distinguish between two realms: (1) a sublunary realm, in which elements have contrary movements that are imperfect because the elements experience change, generation, and corruption; and (2) a heavenly realm, which consists of eternal and perfect circular motion. Beliefs at the periphery may undergo revision, but beliefs at the core are anchors. Anomalies that challenge core beliefs are subversive and cannot be seriously engaged without risking a breakdown of the entire worldview. DeWitt further helps us understand this crucial distinction:

[A]mong Aristotle's beliefs we can distinguish between core and peripheral beliefs. Peripheral beliefs can be replaced without much alternation in the overall worldview. For example, Aristotle believed there were five planets ... But had there arisen evidence, say, of a sixth planet, Aristotle could easily have accommodated this new belief without much alteration in his overall system of beliefs ... In contrast ... suppose Aristotle tried to replace his belief that the Earth was the center of the universe, and

6 DeWitt, *Worldviews* 11.

replace it with, say, the belief that the sun was the center. Could Aristotle remove this belief ... while still keeping most of the rest of the jigsaw puzzle intact?

The answer is no, because the new belief ... would not fit into the jigsaw puzzle. For example, heavy objects clearly fall toward the center of the Earth. If the center of the Earth is not the center of the universe, then Aristotle's belief that heavy objects ... have a natural tendency to move toward the center of the universe has to be replaced as well. This in turn requires replacing a multitude of other interconnected beliefs, such as the belief that objects have essential natures that cause them to behave as they do. In short, trying to replace just the one belief requires replacement of all the beliefs with which it is interconnected, and in general, it would require building an entirely new jigsaw puzzle of beliefs.⁷

If Ibn Sīnā were to allow complexity in the supralunary realm, the implications would cascade through his entire system like a bowling ball attacks pins on a strike. But the question we need to ask is why al-Bīrūnī, given that he was working with the same set of empirical facts as Ibn Sīnā, was gripped by the anomaly. There are at least three possible answers to this question, the first of which is offered by biographers of al-Bīrūnī in the classical Islamic tradition. In their view, al-Bīrūnī was a great mathematician but a bad philosopher, who questioned Ibn Sīnā because he lacked an understanding of philosophy.⁸ He was simply unable to make all the empirical pieces fit neatly together into a philosophical system like his more sophisticated contemporaries. The second answer is offered by the Catholic scholar Alessandro Bausani who, in an article contrasting the philosophical and theological worldviews of al-Bīrūnī and Ibn Sīnā, suggests that Ibn Sīnā's problem was that he was straightjacketed in a philosophical system, which compelled him to fit new and strange observations into that system rather than allowing the system to evolve with new discoveries and experiences. By contrast, al-Bīrūnī—whose theological views may have been closer to the mainstream Sunni views that Bausani identifies with “orthodoxy”—was able to conceive of a world in which elements and forces operate arbitrarily because of his belief in an arbitrary god.⁹ A third answer is

⁷ DeWitt, *Worldviews* 11–12.

⁸ For example, al-Bayhaqī says: “And he [al-Bīrūnī] has debated Ibn Sīnā, but depth in the oceans of the intelligibles was not from amongst his [al-Bīrūnī's] interests, and everyone is facilitated to that for which they were created” in *Tatimma* 63.

⁹ See Bausani, *Some considerations*.

that the empirically minded al-Bīrūnī was simply unsatisfied with the explanation that Ibn Sīnā offered for the anomaly of retrograde motion: empirical facts, in his view, outweighed philosophical facts. This view inverts the perspective provided by Bausani, who argued that al-Bīrūnī's empiricism might have been inspired by theology. Could the opposite be true: Was al-Bīrūnī's theology inspired by his empiricism?

Let us take each of these answers one at a time. Was al-Bīrūnī just a bad philosopher? In order to answer this question, we should turn to the concept and activity of "normal science" developed by Thomas Kuhn. Kuhn helps us understand that scientists study the world with a preconceived notion of the nature of reality. The experiments they design, observations they make, and interpretations they apply to data are all puzzle-solving activities that are not in search of novelty: "The man who succeeds proves himself an expert puzzle-solver."¹⁰ Think about the activity of solving a puzzle. What is required is ingenuity, not novelty. The picture one is hoping to arrive at is already in the mind of the solver. The challenge is figuring out a way to configure the pieces to get to a solution. Crucially, when an apparently anomalous piece is noticed, the assumption is never that this piece belongs to a different puzzle or that it doesn't fit in the picture that is in the process of being completed. A scientist sees the anomalous piece not as an anomaly at all, but as a challenge awaiting an ingenious solution or explanation from within a given framework or picture of reality.

Anomalies have a subversive quality: "Normal science, for example, often suppresses fundamental novelties because they are necessarily subversive of its basic commitments."¹¹ The manner in which the constellation of beliefs realign is through an accumulation of anomalies that require a given worldview to undergo fundamental revision. But the accumulation of anomalies is only possible under the rules of the original game. In other words, one could not speak of an anomaly outside of a so-called standard view. In the case of al-Bīrūnī and Ibn Sīnā, the standard story is driven by Aristotle's view of the nature of the heavens, along with Ptolemy's mathematical modeling of the motions of heavenly bodies. A scientist who successfully observes anomalies cannot but be someone who has already mastered the standard model. Such a person will naturally be viewed as an outlier from those who continue to view "anomalies" as mere "problems" instead of potentially subversive data: "Normal science does not aim at novelties of fact or theory and, when successful, finds none."¹² In this

¹⁰ Kuhn, *Structure of scientific revolutions* 36.

¹¹ Kuhn, *Structure of scientific revolutions* 5.

¹² Kuhn, *Structure of scientific revolutions* 52.

sense, Ibn Sīnā was a genius because he was able to endlessly solve puzzles from within the Aristotelian framework; on the other hand, al-Bīrūnī was a “weak” philosopher: he was not only unsatisfied with Aristotelian explanations, he was actively advocating alternative conceptions of reality.

Al-Bīrūnī disentangled himself from Aristotle without a clear alternative. That made him an outlier in the philosophical community of his time, if not a complete outcast. According to Kuhn, the activity of puzzle-solving normally continues until the anomalies force a prevailing scientific paradigm to reach the point of crisis. Even at the time of epistemological crisis, a given worldview of reality is not immediately abandoned, says Kuhn, until a new theory comes along to provide a better explanation of all of the empirical facts:

Let us then assume that crises are a necessary precondition for the emergence of novel theories and ask next how scientists respond to their existence. Part of the answer, as obvious as it is important, can be observed by noting first what scientists never do when confronted by even severe and prolonged anomalies. Though they may begin to lose faith and then to consider alternatives, they do not renounce the paradigm that has led them into crisis.¹³

But in the case of al-Bīrūnī, it appears that he is tackling the problem of the nature of reality with a different set of pre-commitments altogether. Al-Bīrūnī, one should remember, was practicing normal science in the mathematical sense from within the paradigm of Ptolemaic astronomical models that describe the motion of the heavens. But he had already left the standard philosophical model that provided an explanation of these facts. On the other hand, Ibn Sīnā was practicing normal science, in the philosophical sense, from within an Aristotelian view of the nature of reality and of the divine. For Ibn Sīnā, mathematics was a mere instrument, perhaps like metaphor, in its attempt to symbolize reality. For al-Bīrūnī, the mathematical models describing the movements of the sun, moon, and planets had to have a real correspondence with the physical reality of the heavens.

What for Ibn Sīnā was a mere puzzle, turned out to be for al-Bīrūnī and the exact scientists an all-out crisis that led to the creation of an entire genre of *shukūk* or “doubt” literature.¹⁴ Ibn al-Haytham (d. 430/1040), a contemporary of al-Bīrūnī, called Ptolemy’s models false configurations (*hay’ā bāṭila*) that were,

13 Kuhn, *Structure of scientific revolutions* 77.

14 Saliba, *Islamic science* 94–117.

in some instances, false absurdities (*muḥāl fāḥish*), because “there is no perceptible motion except that which belongs to an existing body.”¹⁵ Among the physical absurdities that the Ptolemaic models had to hypothesize in order to make accurate predictions of the movements of the heavenly bodies was that of uniform circular motion around a point that is not its center. The imaginary point around which such motion takes place is called an equant (*muʿaddil al-maṣīr*). George Saliba portrays the reluctance of Ibn Sīnā to confront the challenges to Aristotelian cosmology by relaying a conversation he had with his student, Abū ʿUbayd al-Jūzjānī (d. 462/1070): “In his own rather humorous story Abū ʿUbayd informs us that when he discussed the proposed solution for this Ptolemaic absurdity of the equant, with his teacher Ibn Sina, he was told by Ibn Sina himself that he had also resolved it, but refrained from giving out the solution in order to urge the student to find it for himself. In the very next sentence the student went on to say that he did not believe that his teacher had ever resolved that problem.”¹⁶

Ibn Sīnā’s composure, even nonchalance, in the face of serious challenges is indicative of his strong commitments, which restricted his ability to imagine alternatives. It made him a particularly formidable philosopher. On the flip side, his ability at solving philosophical puzzles made him an ardent resistor to change. Al-Bīrūnī’s further questions posed in *al-Asʿila wa-l-ajwiba* make the differences in the philosophical commitments between the two even more clear. In one question, al-Bīrūnī asks why ice floats even though it is “more earthy” in nature than water. Ice should, according to standard Aristotelian philosophy, sink in water by moving closer to the center of all motion, as earthy substances are supposed to. Ibn Sīnā replies in classical fashion that when water freezes, it gets air particles trapped inside it, whose “airiness” is responsible for keeping it afloat. Changing his line of inquiry, but sticking to the topic, al-Bīrūnī asks why a flask breaks when water freezes in it. Here is the philosophical reply: since nature abhors a vacuum, and since substances contract when they are frozen, the flask breaks to let air inside the gap that is created between the ice and the glass as it contracts. Al-Bīrūnī follows up with his observation that it appears to him that the ice is pushing outward on the flask as it breaks—not contracting but expanding.¹⁷ Although we do not have a reply from Ibn Sīnā’s side on this last point, one would assume that he would easily be able to maintain his worldview by revising his explanation thus: “If it is indeed cor-

15 Saliba, *Islamic science* 100–101.

16 Saliba, *Islamic science* 95.

17 See Iqbal, Why does ice float?

rect that water expands as it freezes, it may be because of the space that the airy substance occupies when it is trapped within,” and one may find the exchange continue in this manner.

Al-Birūnī and Ibn Sīnā saw different worlds, asked different questions, and settled for different answers. Because they were not looking for the same thing, they did not have the same expectations of what they might find. They were solving different puzzles. Among the many examples that Kuhn gives to help us understand how the very act of perception is influenced by one’s worldview is an experiment with playing cards. In this experiment, subjects were flashed a series of normal cards mixed with a few anomalous ones, like a black four of hearts or a six red of spades. The outcome was stunning. Most observers did not even notice any discrepancy at first, because they were fitting the observations into their expected conceptions of reality, although they eventually got it right: “A few subjects, however, were never able to make the requisite adjustment. Even at forty times the average exposure required to recognize normal cards for what they were, more than 10 percent of the anomalous cards were not correctly identified. And the subjects who then failed often experienced acute personal distress.”¹⁸ Per Kuhn, “In science, as in the playing card experiment, novelty emerges only with difficulty, manifested by resistance, against a background provided by expectation.”¹⁹

Observations, whether one is reading texts, witnessing nature, or even interacting with others, are theory laden. Perhaps this is why we encounter spiritual sayings that advise us to “have a good opinion of others”²⁰ or, in a *ḥadīth qudsī*, “I am as my servant thinks I am.”²¹ Much of what we perceive of the world, and many (if not all) of the intellectual problems we choose to tackle, are conditioned by our prior experiences, which set in place future expectations. In a survey article on the philosophy of history, Robert M. Burns takes pains to illustrate this point:

[E]ven the simplest act of cognitive consciousness—your awareness, say, of the contents of the room in which you are reading this book—is extremely *selective*; that though your senses are providing an enormous amount to which you could attend, you will remain oblivious of most of it because of lack of *interest*. For example, if you *want* to, you can become aware now of the feeling of the surface of your foot touching the inside of

18 Kuhn, *Structure of scientific revolutions* 63.

19 Kuhn, *Structure of scientific revolutions* 64.

20 See Q 24:12 and 49:12.

21 Ibrahim and Johnson-Davies, *Forty hadith qudsi* 78.

your shoe, or your pulse, your breathing, the noise of distant traffic or bird song, or shadows on the walls, the colour of the flooring, the style of the window-frames, the number of electric lights, the heating installations, and so on, practically *ad infinitum*.²²

So let it be settled that al-Bīrūnī's lack of expertise in philosophy was not the issue; it was, rather, his philosophical commitments. It is here that we may pivot to the second and third explanations of why al-Bīrūnī and Ibn Sīnā saw the world differently: the difference could be the result of their respective theologies. What comes first, theology or philosophy? I think that it is hard to say whether it was theology that led al-Bīrūnī to empiricism, or whether his empiricism aligned better with a certain kind of theology. It is apparent, however, that an empirical worldview works better with normative Sunni theology and law, which embed some key positions that are in line with empiricism and skepticism: the inability to derive an *ought* from an *is*²³ (hence the concept of Divine Command), the atomism of space and time²⁴ (hence Occasionalism), and probability rather than certainty of human reason²⁵ (hence pluralism in law and the turn toward subjective mystical experience in search of certainty).²⁶ Looked at in this way, the adoption of a realist epistemology in Sunni rational theology is a paradox: How can one claim to have discovered certain or apodictic arguments to rationally demonstrate the foundations of a creed that, axiomatically, begins with an affirmation of things "unseen?" (Q 2:2).

Alessandro Bausani leans toward the first of these two possible relationships between theology and philosophy by siding with theology as the driver, but he does not foreclose the latter option, which is that philosophy (or in the modern situation, science) may in fact be the driver of theology. He affirms the relationship between theology and philosophy, and develops the implications of having a particular kind of theology for philosophy in reference to the differences between al-Bīrūnī and Ibn Sīnā. He does this by positing (1) that al-Bīrūnī's theology and Ibn Sīnā's philosophy frees or traps each of them, the former into an open universe with unrestricted possibilities, the latter into a closed system that is determined along a series of causal links; and (2) that the

22 Burns, On philosophizing 16.

23 Sayre-McCord, Metaethics. A reference to David Hume's famous formulation in his *Treatise of human nature*.

24 A reference to the title of Smolin's *Atoms of space and time*.

25 For a look at probability in Islamic epistemology, see Brown, *Did the Prophet say it?*

26 See Mayer, *Theology and Sufism*.

former is more in line with the worldview of the present scientific intellectual culture, while the latter has lost ground with the advent of modern science. Bausani writes:

Confronted with the “closed world” of Avicennian Aristotelianism, Biruni’s hypotheses, though naturally remaining merely intellectual paradoxes (this is the meaning of *şufisṭā’ī* to an Aristotelian) show the inner freedom that the Qur’ānic arbitraristic ideal of God was able to give certain Muslim thinkers ... Summing up, this anti-Aristotelian and anti-Avicennian polemic by Biruni show us a “different Biruni.” Al-Biruni who, free from the dogmatic and didactic form of his greater treatises, gives vent to his doubts about the validity of the generally accepted Neoplatonic-Aristotelian outlook, and shows an interesting combination of empiricism and demythologized and demetaphysicized “religion.”²⁷

The anti-Aristotelian turn of modern science and its alignment with concerns that preoccupied al-Bīrūnī provide a kind of retroactive vindication to the beleaguered figure who was maligned by his contemporaries as a “weak philosopher.” Bausani, perhaps realizing how deep he is reaching, leaves us with a tantalizing footnote to underscore this very point:

We have repeatedly hinted at the curious similarities between certain modern and progressive trends (atomism, anti-Aristotelianism, “absurdity” in Diderot’s sense ... evolutionism, etc.) and Muslim orthodoxy, whereas Muslim heterodoxies were chiefly Aristotelian and Neoplatonic. On the contrary, in the Western Middle Ages the “establishment” was (at least from a certain early moment), Aristotelian-Neoplatonic and the heterodoxy was often “atomistic.” Paradoxically, in my opinion, this is just one of the reasons for the progress of Western culture after the 16th century and the parallel stagnation of Muslim culture. It is more difficult to be radically revolutionary, if one is confronted by a comparatively more progressive establishment!²⁸

Bausani’s point is well taken, but historicism requires us to be sensitive to context. There was no way of knowing at the time of the great debate in the fifth/eleventh century how history was going to play out, what scientific

27 Bausani, *Some considerations* 85.

28 Bausani, *Some considerations* 85.

discoveries were going to be made, and what theories of knowledge would come to govern the spirit of inquiry in subsequent centuries. The Indian poet-philosopher Muhammad Iqbal makes the same mistake of projection in his lectures on the *Reconstruction of religious thought in Islam*:

This is what the earlier Muslim students of the Qur'ān completely missed under the spell of classical speculation. They read the Qur'ān in the light of Greek thought. It took them over two hundred years to perceive—though not quite clearly—that the spirit of the Qur'ān was essentially anti-classical, and the result of this perception was a kind of intellectual revolt, the full significance of which has not been realized even up to the present day.²⁹

What is of interest to us in this story is not some kind of timeless essence of the Quran that is somehow mysteriously obscured in certain philosophical ages only to become accessible in other ages, namely our own age of modern science. From a humanistic perspective, what is of interest is the capacity of human beings to witness the same sky and experience the same universe, yet see entirely different universes—a seeing that is the result of philosophical pre-commitments, not the direct outcome of the observations and experiences. This insight opens windows for theology: it is an invitation to rethink our own commitments and examine the dark corners of our minds, where hidden assumptions notoriously reside. The value of this lesson can't be overstated in an age of accelerating change.

One of the questions in which al-Bīrūnī's commitments shine concerns the possibility of multiple worlds. Al-Bīrūnī affirms the possibility of other worlds, whether they are like the one we inhabit, composed of elements with like properties, or made of different elements, with entirely different properties. This does not sit well with Avicennian Aristotelianism, which argues deductively and exhaustively to prove that there can be no other worlds with the same elements and properties as the one we inhabit; Ibn Sīnā further argues that to posit the possibility of the existence of other worlds with different elements ad infinitum is akin to sophistry.³⁰ Throughout the exchange, whether the topic is essential motion, the floating of ice, or the existence of multiple universes, it is clear that al-Bīrūnī and Ibn Sīnā talk past each other. How could they not? It is like each is wearing a different pair of glasses, one tinted blue and the

29 Iqbal, *Reconstruction* 3.

30 The question of multiple worlds is one of the three controversies analyzed by Bausani in his article.

other tinted red. They see different colors, and no matter how much one tries to convince the other, it will be impossible to see the other point of view unless they are able to trade glasses. That is one way to look at it. Another way is to imagine that one or both of them were actually able to see what the other saw, but simply thought he was wrong. There is no way of knowing what either of them believed, but I suggest that the latter is the position of al-Bīrūnī, while the former is the position of Ibn Sīnā. Al-Bīrūnī understood the philosophical paradigm—he had to in order to formulate his questions—but he did not accept it. Ibn Sīnā, on the other hand, was simply unable to see a world that was different from the one he had constructed through the lens of philosophy. He had yet to make a leap beyond it, but for al-Bīrūnī, who had already leapt and witnessed new constellations, there was no turning back. Returning to Kuhn,

Examining the record of past research from the vantage of contemporary historiography, the historian of science may be tempted to exclaim that when paradigms change, the world itself changes with them ... Transformations like these, though usually more gradual and *almost always irreversible*, are common concomitants of scientific training. Looking at a contour map, the student sees lines on paper, the cartographer a picture of a terrain. Looking at a bubble-chamber photograph, the student sees confused and broken lines, the physicist a record of familiar subnuclear events. Only after a number of such transformations of vision does the student become an inhabitant of the scientist's world, seeing what the scientist sees and responding as the scientist does.³¹

Al-Bīrūnī's mind had undergone a shift—a *Gestalt* switch had been flipped—that made him experience and interpret empirical facts very differently from the philosophers around him.³² Because he believed in a different reality, he saw things differently. Observation is theory laden; believing is seeing. We see in the world, at least in our initial observations, that which we believe to already be there. But with discipline and perseverance, and perhaps flashes of intuitive illumination, we can learn to view the same objects very differently, both

31 Kuhn, *Structure of scientific revolutions* 110 (emphasis added).

32 Bringing Gestalt psychology into conversation with the philosophy of science is another of Kuhn's insights. Cf. Bird, Thomas Kuhn: "Kuhn likened the change in the phenomenal world to the Gestalt-switch that occurs when one sees the duck-rabbit diagram first as (representing) a duck then as (representing) a rabbit, although he himself acknowledged that he was not sure whether the Gestalt case was just an analogy or whether it illustrated some more general truth about the way the mind works that encompasses the scientific case too."

in their natures and in their relations. Theory-ladenness is a term given to human prejudice in the philosophy of science, but the same phenomenon has been theorized widely by scholars. For example, in her work on the relation between temporal perception, narrative, and the retrieval of the ethical, Leela Prasad—drawing on her field research in Hindu ghats and the theoretical rigor of Ricoeur, who in turn relies in this case on Aristotle—observes how “a pre-narrative structure of experience undergoes interrelated mimetic transformations that could eventually result in transforming our perception of the world. ‘Prefiguration’ is an understanding of the world ... that precedes the narrative phase of mimesis.”³³ Schleiermacher draws on something similar when he articulates what comes to be known as the hermeneutic circle, suggesting “that the same way that the whole is, of course, understood in reference to the individual, so too, the individual can only be understood in reference to the whole.”³⁴ The celebrated Catholic theologian and mystic Thomas Merton expresses his spiritual conversion as a transformation of the entire world because his beliefs enabled him to see it in new light: “All I know is that I walked in a new world. Even the ugly buildings of Columbia were transfigured in it, and everywhere was peace in these streets designed for violence and noise. Sitting outside the gloomy Childs restaurant at 11th Street, behind the dirty, boxed bushes, and eating breakfast, was like sitting in the Elysian Fields.”³⁵ Iqbal echoes this very sentiment: in order to change the world, one must only change one’s perspective, which happens by developing a relationship with God through divine revelation. In expressing the transformative qualities of scripture, he rhymes:

Chūn bi-jān dar raft, jān dīgar shawad
Jān chū dīgar shud, jahān dīgar shawad³⁶

As it penetrates the soul, the soul becomes another
As the soul becomes another, the universe becomes another

The Ibn Sīnā and al-Bīrūnī exchange tells us how scholarly pre-commitments have the potential of coloring both the nature of inquiry and the outcome. The ability to see things from different perspectives is easier said than done, even

33 Prasad, *Ethical subjects* 187.

34 Mantzavinos, *Hermeneutics*.

35 Merton, *Seven storey mountain* 211.

36 Iqbal, *Kullīyyāt-i Iqbāl* 117. The verses come from the poem “Payghām-i Afghānī bā Millat-i Rūsiya,” part of the collection *Jāvid Nāma* published in *Kullīyyāt-i Iqbāl*.

for the greatest scholars in human history. This is probably the most important lesson I learned in graduate school. I started my journey of scholarship not necessarily to learn and be transformed, but rather to bolster my existing beliefs with academic arguments. But my very first encounter with Professor Bowering, when I visited him for admission to Yale's PhD program in Islamic studies, set me on another path. I recall my first audience with him: I was groomed with a long, flowing beard and dressed in a traditional "shalwar kameez," with waistcoat and pakol, a woolen cap worn in the northern areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Professor Bowering greeted me with one of his characteristic grins. He immediately sized me up as one of those young lads struggling to find the balance between tradition and modernity. We exchanged initial pleasantries—initiated by him—in Urdu. We hit it off instantly, and I was eventually admitted into the program. In our first class, I was instructed to leave my "believer's hat" outside the door. Only a "scholar's hat" could be donned at the seminar table. Himself a man of faith, Father Bowering explained that the rules were not intended as an affront to faith. Rather, the rules were designed to grow a fresh pair of eyes, to facilitate a return to the world, perhaps a different world, once the seminar's work was done. (I recall years later walking into the professor's office with longer hair, a shorter beard, in a pair of jeans, only to hear him quip: "What's happened to you: from maulvi to hippie!")

Faith without scholarship is like a bat at high noon or a blind eagle. Though it may soar, it will be an aimless and confused fluttering of the wings. Worse still, faith that does not know how to find repose in dispassionate reflection can be like a bull in a china shop, or a cornered panther—powerful, but raw and uncontrolled, pure destruction to everything it encounters. The tools of learning are to facilitate the harnessing of the higher functions of the soul, to enable it to see with more precision, and express one's thoughts with eloquence and persuasion. To the extent that I have succeeded in this endeavor, I am grateful to the indispensable and formative role of Gerhard Heinrich Bowering, reverend, scholar, mentor. The greatest gift he offered was the ability to experience, if not simultaneously inhabit, multiple conceptual universes. It is on the soil of competing patterns of thought, in creative tension, that scholarship in service of faith and praxis can sow its seed, take root, and flower.³⁷ Thank you, Professor Bowering, for teaching by example through a life of learning, and

37 The ability of al-Ghazālī to stand at the threshold of two intellectual traditions, in a place in-between either, to construct out of them a third, comes to mind, as captured by Ebrahim Moosa: "a liminal space between the inside and the outside." Moosa, *Ghazālī* 29.

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Al-Ghazālī's Philosophical Soteriology

Alexander Treiger

The present contribution focuses on the famous Muslim theologian Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī's (d. 505/1111) "philosophical soteriology"—i.e., his theory that human felicity in the afterlife depends entirely on the philosophical perfection of the human heart. This article is divided into two sections. In the first, I shall set the stage by reviewing some recent discoveries regarding al-Ghazālī's theological agenda. In the second section, I shall explore al-Ghazālī's philosophical soteriology—a core component of his theological project that has not received the attention it deserves. Special consideration will be given to al-Ghazālī's Persian writings: *Kīmīyā-ye sa'ādat* (The alchemy of felicity) and the Persian letters. They are occasionally more explicit than his Arabic treatises, or at least contain complementary information and, therefore, preserve crucial pieces of the puzzle.

1 Al-Ghazālī's Theological Agenda

Al-Ghazālī is often assumed to be a so-called "mainstream" Sunni thinker, and his works are deemed to be the hallmark of Sunni orthodoxy.¹ This misconception results from a combination of three factors: (1) al-Ghazālī's influential self-presentation, in his *al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl* (The deliverer from error), as a "reviver" of Islam at the turn of the sixth/twelfth century; (2) the popularity of his writings in both the Ottoman and the Safavid cultural spheres (and their descendant states today); and (3) the fact that many Western scholars of Islam—who have largely set the tone for how al-Ghazālī is viewed today both in the West and in the Islamic world—have come to see him as a congenial,

1 I do not wish to delve into the thorny question of how one might define "mainstream" and "orthodoxy" in a medieval Islamic context. My point is simply that such characterizations are often uncritically applied to al-Ghazālī in older Western scholarship. William Montgomery Watt even used al-Ghazālī's alleged "orthodoxy" (which he understood squarely as traditional Ash'arism) as a criterion for distinguishing authentic Ghazālīan writings from forgeries—see Watt, *Authenticity* 29–30; for an incisive criticism of Watt's method, see Landolt, al-Ghazālī and "*Religionswissenschaft*" 36–38.

almost “crypto-Christian” thinker, and have thus been disposed to consider him as a touchstone of Islamic orthodoxy.²

In reality, however, al-Ghazālī’s unquestionable appeal should not obscure the fact that he was a rather “heterodox” thinker by any standard and that he put forth and promoted—both openly and covertly—idiosyncratic ideas that boldly synthesized Sufism, Ash‘arite *kalām*, Islamic philosophy (particularly that of Avicenna,³ al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī,⁴ and the “Brethren of Purity”),⁵ and Isma‘ili cosmological speculations and methods of allegorical Quran exegesis (*ta’wīl*).⁶ As recently shown by Kenneth Garden, al-Ghazālī was a radical religious reformer who had a grand vision of how Islam had to be reimagined and who used Seljuk patronage to promote his agenda.⁷

It is also often assumed that al-Ghazālī was an “archenemy” of philosophy, responsible for its (alleged) demise in the Islamic world. Recent studies by Richard M. Frank, Jules Janssens, Frank Griffel, and Kenneth Garden, among others, have shown that this view, still widely popular, is completely untenable.⁸ In a recent article, “Avicenna’s Islamic reception,” Robert Wisnovsky has clearly formulated what now ought to become the consensus:

Even those who presented themselves as breaking away from either Avicenna’s philosophy or the Avicennian philosophy that succeeded it, still remained in [Avicenna’s] shadow in the sense that they largely responded to the philosophical agenda he had set, either decades or centuries earlier. Such was the case with al-Ghazālī, generally supposed to have been a philosophy-hater, but whose *Incoherence of the Philosophers* (*Tahāfut al-falāsifa*) had a relatively limited direct impact on subsequent Islamic thought ... As has become increasingly clear, al-Ghazālī’s importance in Islamic intellectual history rests at least as much on the role he played in

2 Asín Palacios, *Espiritualidad*.

3 Treiger, *Inspired knowledge*.

4 Madelung, Ar-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī; Daiber, Griechische Ethik; Mohamed, *Path to virtue*; Mohamed, Ethics of education; Mohamed, Duties of the teacher.

5 Özkan, al-Ghazālī and *Rasā’il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā*; cf. note 28 below. Ibn Sab‘īn even claimed that al-Ghazālī’s writing is “for the most part” derived from the *Epistles* of the Brethren of Purity, and is “as weak in philosophy as its source”—see Ibn Sab‘īn, *Budd al-‘arīf* 145; Tibawi, Ikhwān aṣ-Ṣafā 44.

6 Landolt, al-Ghazālī and “*Religionswissenschaft*”; De Smet, Attitude; Andani, Merits; and discussion below.

7 Garden, *First Islamic reviver*.

8 Frank, *Creation and the cosmic system*; Frank, *al-Ghazālī and the Ash‘arite school*; Janssens, al-Ghazālī’s *Tahāfut*; Janssens, al-Ghazālī and his use of Avicennian texts; Griffel, *al-Ghazālī’s philosophical theology*; Garden, *First Islamic reviver*; Treiger, *Inspired knowledge*.

integrating core elements of Avicenna's metaphysics and psychology into Sunnī theology and prophetology as well as into Sufi spirituality, and in appropriating the basic framework of Avicenna's syllogistic into Sunn[ī] jurisprudence.⁹

Moreover, it has been shown that al-Ghazālī's *Precipitance of the philosophers* (as the title *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* is to be more accurately translated)¹⁰ is, in fact, a "pseudo-refutation," in the sense that al-Ghazālī himself subscribed to several of the views that he ostensibly sought to refute. His aim in the *Precipitance of the philosophers* was not so much to disprove the philosophers' teachings as to rebut their claim that these teachings had been apodictically demonstrated. Having written the *Precipitance of the philosophers*, al-Ghazālī thus continued to feel at liberty to accept many of these teachings—though on the basis not of apodictic demonstration (*burhān*) but of what he called divine "inspiration" (*ilhām*) and spiritual "insight" (*baṣīra*).¹¹ Additionally, the fact that he had ostensibly "refuted" the philosophers availed him of a ready alibi, should some of their ideas be detected in his own works—as indeed they were, already in his lifetime, in the controversy around al-Ghazālī's works in Nishapur in 500/1106–1107.¹²

Most strikingly ("strikingly" because this is one of the tenets on account of which he proclaimed the philosophers—as well as the Isma'īlis—to be infidels, *kuffār*), al-Ghazālī apparently believed, just like the philosophers and the Isma'īlis did, in an incorporeal afterlife.¹³ Al-Ghazālī thus considered it necessary to allegorically interpret the Quranic descriptions of hell and paradise while casting aside their literal meanings. Quranic descriptions of paradise, whether as a sumptuous banquet or as sexual intercourse with wide-eyed houris, and of hell as a fire perpetually roasting human flesh are, according to him, symbols of the ineffable and strictly spiritual pleasures and pains, and they should be interpreted as such.¹⁴

9 Wisnovsky, *Avicenna's Islamic reception* 206.

10 Treiger, *Inspired knowledge* 108–115.

11 Treiger, *Inspired knowledge* 81–101. On the term *baṣīra*, see Lazarus-Yafeh, *Studies* 340, n. 64.

12 On this controversy, see Garden, *First Islamic revival*; cf. Treiger, *Inspired knowledge* 96–101.

13 On the Isma'īlis, see al-Ghazālī, *Faḍā'ih* 151–154 (*bāb* 8, *martaba* 2); Lange, *Paradise and hell* 209–210. For obvious reasons, al-Ghazālī was extremely careful not to express this belief publicly, with the exception of a few passages scattered throughout his works, the most important of which will be discussed shortly.

14 Treiger, *Inspired knowledge* 81–101; Lange, *Paradise and hell* 186–188.

This comes out most clearly in the following crucial passage from al-Ghazālī's book on the 99 divine names, *al-Maḡṣad al-asnā fī sharḥ asmā' Allāh al-ḥusnā* (The loftiest goal in explicating the meanings of God's most beautiful names).

No one can cognize the true reality of death and the true reality of paradise and hell until after death and after one's entry into paradise or hell. This is because "paradise" is an expression designating pleasurable causes (*asbāb mulidhdha*). If we were to postulate a person who has never experienced pleasure at all, it would be completely impossible for us to convey to him the meaning of paradise in such a way as to make him desirous to seek it. [Similarly, "hell" is an expression designating painful causes (*asbāb mu'līma*). If we were to postulate a person who has never suffered pain at all, it would be completely impossible for us to convey to him the meaning of hell. However, if he has suffered [some] pain, we can convey to him the meaning of hell by comparing it to the most intense pain he has suffered: the pain of fire. Likewise, if he has experienced some kind of pleasure, we can attempt to convey to him the meaning of paradise by comparing it to the greatest pleasures he has enjoyed: food, sexual intercourse, and [taking delight in a beautiful] sight. Now, if there is pleasure in paradise different from these pleasures, there is no other way to convey it to him except by comparing it to these pleasures, just as—as we have mentioned—the pleasure of sexual intercourse might be compared to the sweetness of sugar [in order to have it explained to a child]. But the pleasures of paradise are farther away from any pleasure we have experienced in this world than even the pleasure of sexual intercourse is from the sweetness of sugar. So the correct expression for the [pleasures of the afterlife] is that they are "that which no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor has it ever occurred to the Heart of man."¹⁵ If we symbolize it by food, we have to qualify: "It is not like this [earthly] food." If we symbolize it by sexual intercourse, we have to say: "It is not like the sexual intercourse available in this world."¹⁶

15 On this "sacred hadith," see Lange, *Paradise and hell* 2–3; Treiger, *Inspired knowledge* 46 and 137, n. 81; Treiger, *Mutual influences* 195–196.

16 al-Ghazālī, *Maḡṣad* 53:8–54:2 (part 1, *faṣl* 4), discussed in Treiger, *Inspired knowledge* 86–93. Al-Ghazālī frequently hints that the Quranic eschatological descriptions might be symbols of ineffable realities. He mentions this possibility constantly whenever the eschatological component of the science of unveiling is discussed. In addition to the present passage see al-Ghazālī, *Jawāhir* 30:13–15 (part 1, *faṣl* 3); al-Ghazālī, *Mizān* 353:21–354:19 (*bayān* 27).

According to this passage, there is simply no way to speak about paradise and hell except by means of what may be called “dissimilar symbolism.” Hence it is precisely this kind of symbolism that the Quran employs. Therefore, it is completely legitimate, indeed mandatory, to offer “dissimilar allegorical interpretations” of these symbols—by arguing, as al-Ghazālī does, that such Quranic images are nothing but pointers to otherwise ineffable realities. It may be noted that al-Ghazālī's position on the matter is extremely close to that of the Isma'ili theologian and missionary Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī (d. 411/1020–1021), who similarly argued that the pleasures and pains of the afterlife (*ma'ād*) are incorporeal and that, therefore, the prophets can convey their true meaning only by means of “sensory symbols” (*amthila maḥsūsa*).¹⁷

An important caveat is, however, in order: according to al-Ghazālī, such allegorical interpretations of the Quranic descriptions of paradise and hell could only be proffered by a highly qualified, philosophically and ascetically trained religious élite (*khawāṣṣ*)—an extremely narrow category, which for al-Ghazālī included himself and like-minded followers. Moreover, this had to be done in secret from the common folk (*'awāmm*)—an extremely broad category, which for al-Ghazālī included:

littérateurs, grammarians, scholars of hadith, [Quran] commentators, experts in [Islamic] law, and specialists in *kalām* (*al-adīb wa-l-naḥwī wa-l-muḥaddith wa-l-mufasssīr wa-l-faqīh wa-l-mutakallim*), indeed all scholars except those totally devoted to learning how to swim in the oceans of cognition (*al-mutajarridīn li-'ilm al-sibāḥa fī biḥār al-ma'rifa*), dedicate their lives wholly to this task, turn their faces away from this world and the desires, pay no attention to money, status, people, and other pleasures, are completely devoted to God in knowledge and in action, observe all the precepts and customs of religious law in performing acts of obedience and abstaining from what is objectionable (*munkarāt*), empty their hearts completely from everything except God for God's sake [alone], despise this world and even the next world and the supreme paradise in comparison to the love of God. They are the [pearl] divers of the sea of cognition (*ahl al-ghawṣ fī baḥr al-ma'rifa*), and even so, they too face a danger so great that nine out of ten of them perish, and only one comes out¹⁸ [of the sea alive] with the hidden pearl and the cherished mystery.

17 al-Kirmānī, *Maṣābīḥ* 51 (*miṣbāḥ* 6). On al-Kirmānī, see De Smet, *Quiétude de l'intellect*; Walker, *Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī*.

18 Reading *yaṣ'adu* for *yaṣ'udu*.

These are those who have a good lot (*al-ḥusnā*) from God awaiting them and who are the rewarded (*al-fā'izūn*).¹⁹

Thus, according to al-Ghazālī, “littérateurs, grammarians, scholars of hadith, [Quran] commentators, experts in [Islamic] law, and specialists in *kalām*” have to adhere to literal interpretations (i.e., in the case at hand, to the belief in a corporeal afterlife). This is why in his more popular, “orthodox” works—particularly those in which he rides the high horse of denouncing the philosophers and the Isma‘ilis—al-Ghazālī speaks in a completely different language, so much so that he categorizes the very same view that he promoted in the *al-Maṣṣad al-asnā* as “sheer infidelity” (*kufr ṣarīḥ*).²⁰

This is a clear instance of *taqīyya* (concealment of one’s views) on al-Ghazālī’s part, which raises serious questions about the proper methodology for determining his true beliefs. It is essential to keep in mind that in the last chapter of *Mīzān al-‘amal* (The scale of action), al-Ghazālī famously distinguished between three types of doctrinal allegiance (*madhhab*): (1) doctrine adhered to dogmatically in disputations; (2) doctrine employed in teaching, and hence “customized” according to students’ intellectual capacities; and (3) doctrine held in secret between oneself and God (*sirran baynahu wa-bayn Allāh*) and shared only with like-minded colleagues.²¹

Are we, then, to take al-Ghazālī’s condemnation of the philosophers and the Isma‘ilis at face value, or is he perhaps creating a smokescreen designed to conceal his own views and to deflect criticism from himself? Is al-Ghazālī, in other words, secretly more sympathetic to the philosophers and the Isma‘ilis than he informs us about? In the case of the philosophers, at least, the answer to this question is clearly positive. As for al-Ghazālī’s true attitude to the Isma‘ilis and his debt to Isma‘ili cosmology and methods of Quran interpretation, this subject remains to be carefully investigated with an open mind and without preconceptions.²² At the very least, it seems established that—in the case of

19 al-Ghazālī, *Iljām* 326–327 (*bāb* 1). Cf. Lazarus-Yafeh, *Studies* 352–357.

20 al-Ghazālī, *Iqtīṣād* 249–250 (*quṭb* 4, *bāb* 4, *rutba* 3) (against the philosophers); al-Ghazālī, *Faḍā’ih* 151–154 (*bāb* 8, *martaba* 2) (against the Isma‘ilis).

21 al-Ghazālī, *Mīzān* 406:5–408:16 (*bayān* 32). These three ways of teaching may be connected to the following saying of Sahl al-Tustarī: *li-‘ālim thalāthat ‘ulūm: ‘ilm zāhir yabdhu-luhu li-ahl al-zāhir, wa-‘ilm bāṭin lā yasa’uhu iẓhāruhu illā li-ahlīhi, wa-‘ilm huwa baynahu wa-bayn Allāh ta‘ālā lā yuẓhiruhu li-aḥad* (cited in al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā’* i, 154:1–3 (book 2, *faṣl* 2)). Cf. Frank, *al-Ghazālī and the Ash‘arite school* 96–97, 99, 101; Watt, *Forgery?* 18–21.

22 For a particularly promising beginning, see Andani, *Merits*; cf. studies mentioned in note 6 above.

the afterlife—al-Ghazālī secretly held the very same view which he accused the philosophers and the Isma‘ilis of holding and for which he publicly condemned them as infidels (*kuffār*).

2 Al-Ghazālī's Philosophical Soteriology

With this in mind, let us now turn to al-Ghazālī's philosophical soteriology. Its foundation is the doctrine of the “heart” (Ar. *qalb*, Pers. *del*), also called “spirit” (Ar. *rūḥ*, Pers. *rūḥ* or *jān*), which al-Ghazālī regards as a human being's true essence. The heart is construed as an immaterial and immortal entity distinct from the bodily organ of the same name. It is the “locus of [human] cognition of God” (Ar. *maḥall ma‘rifat Allāh*, Pers. *maḥall-e ma‘rifat-e Khodāy*).²³ To put it in simple terms, it is the heart in us that thinks and attains knowledge of God.²⁴

Clearly, the heart stands for what Greek, Syriac, and Arabic philosophers, as well as Greek, Syriac, and Arabic Christian theologians, have traditionally called “intellect” (Gr. νοῦς, Syr. *madd‘ā*, Ar. *‘aql*). At times, al-Ghazālī explicitly identifies the heart with the intellect,²⁵ though on other occasions he argues that, strictly speaking, the intellect is not the heart but the “eye of the heart” (*‘ayn al-qalb*), also called “the inner eye” (*al-‘ayn al-bāṭina*).²⁶

In opting for the term “heart” (rather than “intellect”), al-Ghazālī aligns himself with a venerable tradition, ultimately going back to the Hebrew, Greek, and Syriac Scriptures (Heb. *lēb*, Gr. καρδία, Syr. *lebbā*) and also prominently present in the Quran, the hadith, and subsequent Islamic literature, notably in Sufism.²⁷ What is significant, however, is that al-Ghazālī uses the term “heart” in the specifically philosophical, intellectual sense. For him, the heart is the seat of rational thought and knowledge, not the seat of sensations or emotions. This, too, is not without precedent in the Arabic philosophical tradition: the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’ (the Brethren of Purity) had used the term “heart” in precisely this sense. In one of their *Epistles*, they write:

23 al-Ghazālī, *Munqidh* 110:6 (§ 121); al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā’* iv, 427 (book 36, *bayān* 4); al-Ghazālī, *Kīmīyā* i, 53:14 (*‘onvān* 2, *faṣl* 3).

24 Treiger, *Inspired knowledge* 17–18.

25 al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā’* iii, 5:14–16, 22 (book 21, *bayān* 1); al-Ghazālī, *Kīmīyā* i, 15–16 (*‘onvān* 1, *faṣl* 1).

26 al-Ghazālī, *Mishkāt* 10 (part 1, § 26). On the spiritual eye see also al-Ghazālī, *Munqidh* 106 (§§ 108–109); Lazarus-Yafeh, *Studies* 295–297.

27 E.g., (Pseudo?)-al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī's *Bayān al-farq bayn al-ṣadr wa-l-qalb wa-l-fu‘ūd wa-l-lubb*; English trans.: Heer and Honerkamp, *Three early Sufi texts* 3–81.

You should understand that the term “heart” does not [refer] to the cone-shaped lump of flesh suspended within the chest and found in the majority of animals. It is not to this that we here refer when we speak of the heart. Rather, our Brethren’s intention is to point to a deeper reality, i.e., to the soul.²⁸

Similarly, in his last work, *Risāla fī l-kalām ‘alā al-naḥs al-nāṭiqa* (Epistle on the rational soul), Avicenna (d. 1037)—al-Ghazālī’s chief philosophical authority—calls the rational soul (i.e., the intellect), among other terms, “the real heart” (*qalban ḥaqīqīyyan*).²⁹

A remarkable feature of the Ghazālian heart must now command our attention: the heart, according to al-Ghazālī, is a “stranger” in this world; it has its origin in the angelic world and, therefore, its felicity (*saāda*) consists in rejoining the angels in contemplating “God’s realm” (also called “the Lord’s realm,” “the realm of divinity,” and the “realm of lordship”). This is most clearly expressed in al-Ghazālī’s Persian works. Thus in one of his Persian letters, al-Ghazālī responds to the accusation that his theory that the human spirit is a stranger in this world is the “teaching of the philosophers and the Christians” (*sokhan-e falāsefe va naṣārā*). Al-Ghazālī begins his rejoinder by pointing out that the fact that philosophers or Christians hold a certain idea does not, in itself, make the idea false.³⁰ Al-Ghazālī continues:

The teaching that the human spirit (*rūḥ-e ādamī*) is a stranger (*gharīb*) here, that its origin is in paradise (*behesht*), that its [proper] activity is the companionship of the highest assembly³¹ (*morāfaqat-e malā-ye a‘lā*), that its dwelling and abode is the yonder world, which is called “paradise” and “the supernal world” (*‘ālam-e ‘olvī*), is supported by the Quran and the Book.³² It does not become invalid (*bāṭel*) just because some

28 Ikhwān al-ṣafā’, *Rasā’il* iii, 287:21–23 (*risāla* 3.7 [38]). The connection between al-Ghazālī and the Brethren of Purity in this regard has been noticed by Diwald, *Arabische Philosophie* 336.

29 Avicenna, *Risāla fī l-kalām ‘alā al-naḥs al-nāṭiqa* 195:8–11; English trans.: Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian tradition* 67–75, here 68.

30 al-Ghazālī’s example is the (supposed) Christian teaching that “there is no god except God, and Jesus is the spirit of God.” Al-Ghazālī urges his opponents to follow the advice of ‘Alī: “Do not judge the truth by men; rather cognize the truth [first], and you shall know its adherents.” Cf. al-Ghazālī, *Munqidh* 81–82 (§§ 52–53). On the “Alī maxim,” see al-Akīti, *The good, the bad, and the ugly* 59–60.

31 The “highest assembly” (Ar. *al-malā’ al-a‘lā*) is a Quranic term (Q 38:69) referring to the angelic council.

32 “The Book” is another term for the Quran.

philosopher or some Christian accepted it. [This teaching] is evident from [Quranic] verses and [prophetic] reports. From the point of view of [spiritual] insight (*baṣīrat*), too, everyone who cognizes the true reality of the human spirit will have known that its characteristic (*khāṣṣīyat*) is the cognition of the realm of divinity (*ma'refat-e ḥaẓrat-e elāhiyyat*). This is its nourishment (*ghazā*).³³ Whatever is characteristic of this [i.e., sensory] world is foreign (*gharīb*) to [the spirit's] essence and is an accident (*'areẓī*) that can go away, such that nothing will remain with it except the cognition of the realm of lordship (*ma'refat-e ḥaẓrat-e robūbiyyat*), and [the spirit] will be made alive by it, and will abide [permanently], and will be awarded delight. A true explanation of this has been provided in the *Book of the Revival [of the religious sciences]* (*Iḥyā' [ulūm al-din]*), in the *Alchemy [of felicity]* (*Kīmīyā[-ye sa'adat]*), in the *Jewels of the Quran* (*Jawāhir al-Qur'ān*), and in other books. Whoever wishes to know this, let him consult these works.³⁴

It is noteworthy that al-Ghazālī does not dispute the fact that this peculiar theory may be shared by philosophers and Christians (it does indeed have Gnostic and Origenist overtones), yet insists that it is independently attested in Islamic sources and can be known through spiritual insight (Pers. *baṣīrat*). Three additional passages from al-Ghazālī's Persian treatise *Kīmīyā-ye sa'adat* (Alchemy of felicity) may be adduced to elaborate on these ideas.

The human spirit (*rūḥ-e ensānī*) ... is not from this world. It is, rather, from the supernal world (*'ālam-e 'olvī*) and is [one] of the angelic substances (*javāher-e malāyēke*). Its descent (*hobūt-e vey*) into this world is foreign (*gharīb*) to the nature of its own essence. The purpose of its exile (*ghorbat*) is that it may derive its sustenance (*zād-e kh'wish*) from [God's] guidance (*hodā*), as the Most-High God has said: "We said, 'Get you down (*ihbitū*) out of it, all together; yet there shall come to you guidance from Me, and whosoever follows My guidance, no fear shall be on them, neither shall they sorrow.'"³⁵

The nourishment and felicity of angels consists in contemplating the beauty of the realm of divinity (*ghazā-ye farīshdegān va sa'adat-e ishān moshāhadat-e jamāl-e ḥaẓrat-e olūhiyyat ast*) ... If you are, originally,

33 For this reading see Krawulsky, *Briefe und Reden* 226, n. 2 (to p. 22).

34 al-Ghazālī, *Makātīb* 22:4–14; German trans.: Krawulsky, *Briefe und Reden* 96.

35 al-Ghazālī, *Kīmīyā* i, 87 ('*ovnān* 4, *faṣl* 4). The Quranic citation is: Q 2:38 (here and below, the Quran is cited in Arberry's translation).

angelic in essence (*farīshṭe gowharī*), you should strive to cognize the realm of divinity (*tā ḥaẓrat-e olūhiyyat rā beshenāsī*), direct your steps toward contemplating that beauty (*moshāhadat-e ān jamāl*), and liberate yourself from concupiscence and irascibility (*shahvat va ghaẓab*). You should seek to understand why these animal and beastly features [i.e., concupiscence and irascibility] have been created in you. Have they been created so as to make *you* a prisoner, subject *you* to their service, and keep *you* subjugated day and night?! Rather, after they made *you* a prisoner, you must make *them* prisoners and, in the journey set before you, forge one of them into your boat, and the other into a weapon. On the day when you attain this station, you shall put them to work, so as to obtain, with their help, the seed of your own felicity (*tokhm-e sa'ādat-e kh^wīsh*). When you have the seed of your own felicity in hand, then trample them underfoot and turn towards your own abode of felicity (*qarārgāh-e sa'ādat-e kh^wīsh*)—that same abode which in the terminology of the elect (*khavāṣṣ*) is called “the realm of divinity” (*ḥaẓrat-e olūhiyyat*) and in the terminology of common folk (*avāmm*) is called “paradise” (*behesht*).³⁶

The body is a servant of the senses. The senses were created so that they may be informants to the intellect, so that they may be its dragnet by means of which it might acquire knowledge of the creation of the Most-High God. Therefore, sensations are servants of the intellect. The intellect was created for the sake of the heart, so that it could serve as the heart's candle and lamp by whose light [the heart] may see the realm of divinity (*be-nūr-e vey ḥaẓrat-e olūhiyyat rā bebīnad*). This is its [i.e., the heart's] paradise. Therefore, the intellect is a servant of the heart, while the heart was created for the sake of contemplating the beauty of the realm of divinity (*barā-ye neẓāre-ye jamāl-e ḥaẓrat-e olūhiyyat*). When [the heart] is engaged in this, it is a slave and a servant of the palace of the realm of divinity (*dargāh-e ḥaẓrat-e olūhiyyat*). This is exactly the meaning of the Most-High God's saying: “I have not created jinn and mankind except to serve Me.”³⁷

Taken together, these passages offer an extremely precise account of al-Ghazālī's philosophical soteriology. The human spirit (i.e., heart) is said to be angelic in essence (*farīshṭe gowharī*) and to have its origin in the angelic world, also called “paradise” (*behesht*). The spirit is said to have “descended” or “fallen”

36 al-Ghazālī, *Kīmīyā* i, 14 (*onvān* 1, introduction).

37 al-Ghazālī, *Kīmīyā* i, 20–21 (*onvān* 1, *faṣl* 6). The Quranic citation is: Q 51:56.

(*hobūt*)³⁸ into this sensory world, in which it is, therefore, a stranger (*gharīb*). Its goal is to rejoin the angelic “highest assembly” (*malā-ye a‘lā*)—in other words, to return to its primordial angelic state, in which its “nourishment” (*ghazā*), like that of the angels, will consist in the contemplation (*moshāhadat*) and cognition (*ma‘refat*) of the beauty (*jamāl*) of “the realm of divinity/lordship” (*ḥaẓrat-e olūhiyyat/robūbiyyat*).³⁹ This is what constitutes human felicity (*sa‘adat*) and is the true meaning of what the common folk call “paradise” (*behesht*).

Al-Ghazālī’s Arabic works highlight an additional feature of the heart. There, the heart is construed as a spiritual mirror that requires constant polishing in order that it might engage in contemplation. Thus, al-Ghazālī’s magnum opus, *Iḥyā’ ‘ulūm al-dīn* (The revival of the religious sciences), discusses two spiritual sciences that are supposedly on the verge of extinction and are, therefore, in need of being revived: the “science of praxis” (*ilm al-mu‘āmala*) and the “science of unveiling” (*ilm al-mukāshafa*).⁴⁰ The purpose of the science of praxis is defined as “polishing the mirror of the heart,”—in other words, purifying the heart from reprehensible qualities and adorning it with praiseworthy characteristics (combating the vices and cultivating the virtues). Once the heart has been so polished, divine “realities” (*ḥaqā’iq*) become reflected in it as in a mirror—which is how the science of unveiling is acquired. Here is a characteristic passage from al-Ghazālī’s *Iḥyā’*:

By the science of unveiling we mean the lifting of the veil to the point that the plain truth (*jalīyyat al-ḥaqq*) in these matters becomes apparent as [in the case of] eyewitnessing (*‘iyān*), which is never in doubt. This is indeed possible for the substance of a human being (*jawhar al-insān*) [i.e., for the heart], were it not for the fact that the mirror of the heart (*mir‘āt al-qalb*) accumulates rust and filth due to the defilements of this world (*qādhūrāt al-dunyā*).

38 The term *hobūt* (Ar. *hubūt*) reminds one of the pseudo-Avicennian poem, “There descended to you from the highest place” (*habāṭat ilayka min al-maḥall al-arfa’*), on which see Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian tradition* 453–456; English trans.: van Gelder, *Classical Arabic literature* 73–74. On the “descent” (*hubūt/inḥidār*) of the soul from the world of the intellect, see also the *Theology of Aristotle: Uthulūjiyā Aristāṭālīs* 22–25 (*mīmar* 1); cf. Adamson, *Arabic Plotinus* 75–83.

39 On “the realm of divinity/lordship” see also al-Ghazālī, *Mishkāt* 31–32 (part 2, §§ 33–34); al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā’* iii, 21:10–14 (book 21, *bayān* 6); al-Ghazālī, *Iljām* 337:9–13 (*bāb* 1). The theory of “realms” or “presences” (*ḥaḍarāt*) was later adopted and developed by Ibn al-‘Arabī and his school. See especially Chittick, *Five divine presences*; Chittick, *Ṣūfī path of knowledge* 5. According to Chittick, *al-ḥaḍra al-ilāhiyya* is the locus of God’s manifestation as Allāh, while *al-ḥaḍra al-rubūbiyya* is the locus of God’s manifestation as the Lord, *al-Rabb*.

40 Treiger, *Inspired knowledge* 35–47; Treiger, al-Ghazālī’s classifications.

By the science of the path to the afterlife [i.e., the science of praxis]⁴¹ we mean the science that teaches how to polish this mirror (*taṣqīl hādhihi l-mir'āt*) from these accretions. They are a veil [separating us] from God and from the cognition of His attributes and acts (*ma'rifat ṣifātihi wa-af'ālihi*). Cleansing and purifying [the mirror of the heart] is made possible only by abstaining from desires and following the prophets' example in all their states.

To the degree that the heart has been laid bare [by polishing] and has been directed toward the Real [i.e., God], His realities will shine in it (*yatala'la'u fihī ḥaqā'iquhu*) [thus imparting the science of unveiling to the practitioner] ... This is the knowledge that is neither to be committed to writing nor to be spoken about by those who have some of it revealed to them by God. [One may discuss it] only with those who are worthy of it (*ahlihi*) and already partake of it, [and even then only] by way of reminder and in secret (*'alā sabil al-mudhākara wa-bi-ṭarīq al-isrār*).⁴²

It is noteworthy that the science of unveiling is also called—especially in al-Ghazālī's *Jawāhir al-Qur'ān* (Jewels of the Quran)—the “science of cognition of God” (*'ilm ma'rifat Allāh*), sometimes abbreviated as the “science of cognition” (*'ilm al-ma'rifa*).⁴³ Its ultimate goal is cognition or gnosis of God, which secures the practitioner's felicity (*sa'āda*) in the afterlife.

Al-Ghazālī regards cognition of God as the apex of the science of unveiling. This cognition is attained when “God's realm” is reflected in the mirror of the heart; at this point, the practitioner realizes that “there is nothing in existence except God” (*laysa fī l-wujūd illā Allāh*)—a realization that al-Ghazālī calls “annihilation in God's unity” (*al-fanā' fī l-tawḥīd*), and which he describes in book 35 of the *Iḥyā'* and at the end of *Mishkāṭ al-anwār* (The niche of lights).⁴⁴ Prophets (such as Jesus—considered, of course, to be a prophet in the Islamic tradition) and saints (sg. *walī*, pl. *awlīyā'*) of the post-prophetic era (such as the famous Sufis al-Ḥallāj and al-Bisṭāmī) have attained this reflection. Crucially, however, al-Ghazālī stresses that this experience is just that: a

41 al-Ghazālī's terminology is somewhat inconsistent. Sometimes “science of the path to the afterlife” refers to the science of praxis and the science of unveiling combined; at other times—as is evidently the case here—this expression refers specifically to the science of praxis.

42 al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā'* i, 38:9–17 (book 1, *bāb* 2, *bayān* 2).

43 Treiger, al-Ghazālī's classifications 10–12.

44 More on this subject in Treiger, Monism and monotheism; Treiger, al-Ghazālī's “Mirror Christology” 703.

reflection. Contemplating “God’s realm” in one’s heart is not to be interpreted in terms of God’s inhabitation (*ḥulūl*) of the heart or of God’s union (*ittiḥād*) with it.

Just as the sky, the earth, trees, and rivers can be seen in a mirror, as if they exist in the mirror and as if the mirror encompasses them all, so also the entire divine realm (*al-ḥaḍra al-ilāhiyya*) can be impressed upon the human soul. The term “divine realm” refers to the totality of existents (*‘ibāra ‘an jumlat al-mawjūdāt*), because all of them [originate] from the divine realm, for there is nothing in existence except God and His acts.⁴⁵ When [the soul] is impressed therewith, it becomes as if it were the entire world, for it encompasses it, in representing [it] and receiving [its] imprint (*taṣawwuran wa-nṭibā’an*). At that moment, a person who lacks understanding might perhaps interpret this as an “inhabitation” (*ḥulūl*), much like someone who might think that a form inhabits (*ḥālla*) the mirror, but this is erroneous for [the form] is not *in* the mirror but only [seems] *as if* it is in the mirror.⁴⁶

Al-Ghazālī frequently argues that al-Ḥallāj and al-Biṣṭāmī misinterpreted their reflectional experiences as inhabitational/unitive, and that Christians, too, misinterpret Jesus’s reflectional experience in a similar way. A comprehensive analysis of six passages in which al-Ghazālī puts forward this argument is available in an earlier publication.⁴⁷ For our purposes here, one representative passage from the *Iḥyā’* will suffice.

45 Because this passage appears in a legal work addressed to jurists, rather than to like-minded mystical theologians, al-Ghazālī is being cautious here. Though he smuggles in (as it were) his concept of the divine realm, he glosses it in a rather innocuous way as “the totality of existents,” with the explanation that all existents originate “from the divine realm.” Ultimately, however, al-Ghazālī is speaking about contemplation of God.

46 al-Ghazālī, *Mustaṣfā* 69:7–15 (*muqaddima, dī‘āma 1, fann 2, imtiḥān 2*). Cf. Avicenna, *Metaphysics* 350:8–11 (book 9, *faṣl 7*): “The perfection proper to the rational soul is to become an intelligible universe. [In other words] there is impressed into [the rational soul] the form of the cosmos, the cosmos’ intelligible order, and the good emanated upon it starting from the Cause of the cosmos followed by the high ranking absolutely immaterial substances and then the immaterial substances associated with bodies through the celestial bodies, their configurations, and powers until the entire configuration of existence is completely contained within [the soul] itself” (cited here in McGinnis’s translation—McGinnis, *Avicenna* 219).

47 Treiger, al-Ghazālī’s “Mirror Christology.”

[The heart] is analogous to a polished mirror (*al-mir'āt al-majluwwa*), for it has in itself no color, but receives the color of what is present in it.⁴⁸ ... This is one of the stations of the science of unveiling (*maqām min maqāmāt 'ulūm al-mukāshafa*), and it is from here that the false imagining sprang forth of him [i.e., al-Ḥallāj] who claimed [to have] inhabitation and union (*idda'ā al-ḥulūl wa-l-ittihād*), saying, “I am the Real.” It is on this point too that the Christian discourse hinges, when they claim that divinity “united” with humanity (*ittihād al-lāhūt wa-l-nāsūt*), or “put it on” as a garment (*tadarru'ihā bihā*), or “inhabited” it (*ḥulūlihā fihā*)—in all the various ways in which they expressed it. This is sheer error, similar to the error of a person who judges that a mirror has the form of redness (*yaḥkumu 'alā l-mir'āt bi-ṣūrat al-ḥumra*), when the red color of an object facing it appears in it.⁴⁹

In short, al-Ghazālī believes that the hearts of prophets and saints are polished mirrors that reflect God and God alone. They become annihilated in God's unity, by experientially realizing that “there is nothing in existence except God.”

3 Conclusion

To recapitulate, al-Ghazālī argues that the human heart (by which he understands the νοῦς/*ʿaql* of the philosophers) is immaterial and immortal and that it originates from the angelic world, from which it “descends” or “falls” into a body. Its “felicity” in the afterlife consists in rejoining the angels in contemplating God, and this contemplation is its “nourishment.” The heart is a spiritual mirror, which needs to be “polished,” while in this world. This is how it attains cognition and contemplation of “God's realm,” which is precisely what becomes converted into felicity in the transition from this world into the hereafter. The highest cognition of God is, ultimately, the experiential realization that “there is nothing in existence except God,” combined with the realization of one's own nonbeing. This is why al-Ghazālī calls this experience “annihilation in God's

48 Here, al-Ghazālī quotes one of his favorite poems, by al-Ṣāhib ibn al-ʿAbbād (d. 385/995): *raqqa l-zujāju wa-raqqati* (or: *rāqati*) *l-khamrū / fa-tashābahā fa-tashākala l-amrū // fa-ka-annamā khamrun wa-lā qadḥun / wa-ka-annamā qadḥun wa-lā khamrū*. Cf. al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā'* i, 187 (book 2, *faṣl* 4, *mas'ala* 2) and iii, 556 (book 30, *bayān* 2); al-Ghazālī, *Maqṣad* 167 (*fann* 2, *faṣl* 1, *khātima*); al-Ghazālī, *Mishkāt* 17–18 (part 1, §§ 45–48); al-Ghazālī, *Mi'rāj* 85 (*mi'rāj* 4).

49 al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā'* ii, 411:16–25 (book 18, *bāb* 2, *maqām* 2).

unity." Both prophets and saints have attained this experience, though Christians and certain Sufis have misinterpreted it along inhabitational/unitive lines (*ḥulūl* and *ittiḥād*), while in reality it occurs when "God's realm" is reflected in the mirror of a prophet's or saint's polished heart.

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Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī and the Art of Knowing

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The role of philosophy in the thought of Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī has been a source of much debate among scholars of Islamic intellectual history and among Muslim intellectuals of varying disciplines.¹ If one takes al-Ghazālī at his word, his use of philosophy was calculated and reasoned. He was not its implacable adversary as earlier scholarship proposed, based upon passages from the *Incoherence of the philosophers* and statements in *The deliverer from error*.² Rather, he approached philosophy just as he advises one to approach all intellectual output:

Those with weak minds know truth by men, not men by truth. The intelligent person follows the saying of ‘Alī [b. Abī Ṭālib], “Do not know truth through men. Know truth and then you will know its people.”³ So the intelligent person knows truth then looks at the claim itself. If it is true he accepts it.⁴

Evaluating truth in and of itself, rather than by means of those who express it, means that one “must be zealous to extract the truth from the claims of those who are misguided, knowing that the gold mine is dust and gravel.”⁵ Al-Ghazālī thus advises that one learn to sift truth from falsehood and likens this process to that of a money changer who does not reject everything a counterfeiter brings, but instead uses his knowledge of true currency and false currency to sort the good from the bad and make use of the good. Commenting upon a similar passage in the *Ihyā’ ‘ulūm al-dīn*,⁶ M. Afifi al-Akiti observes that this

1 For the most recent examination of these debates, see Rudolph, al-Ghazālī’s concept of philosophy.

2 For an analysis of this approach originally championed by W. Montgomery Watt, see Treiger, *Inspired knowledge*.

3 This saying, attributed to ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, evokes a principle that comes to be central to al-Ghazālī’s methodology. It is also cited in the *Ihyā’ ‘ulūm al-dīn* i, 195, and in *Mizān al-‘amal* 155–156.

4 al-Ghazālī, *Munqidh min al-ḍalāl* 546.

5 *Ibid.* 546.

6 “He [the student] must never judge that any science is bad [simply because of the differences

position encapsulates al-Ghazālī's method, wherein "each science, even each theory, should be evaluated on its own merits. In that way ... even a science that is normally stigmatized as impious can be of benefit whenever it is correct."⁷ Although certain aspects of al-Ghazālī's intellectual autobiography are stylized (what autobiography is not?),⁸ it is clear that he saw himself as fulfilling the function of the money changer in relation to the intellectual currents of his day. He rejects arguments and conclusions that represent poor intellectual currency, and he presents himself as accepting those aspects of other intellectual currents that can be incorporated into a worldview that is grounded in the fundamental sources of the Islamic tradition, the Quran and the sunna of the Prophet.

Al-Ghazālī saw within the philosophy of Ibn Sīnā, al-Fārābī, and others powerful tools that, if not tempered by the light of revelation, could lead to a syllogistically imprisoned vision of the truth, a vision of the truth that is confined to logical reasoning (*nazar*) such that it does not illuminate the heart,⁹ the latter being the organ that al-Ghazālī, employing a Quranic perspective, understands to be the true organ of perception.¹⁰ Functioning as a money changer, he extracted and incorporated what he believed to be the beneficial aspects of peripatetic philosophy. In this process, he transformed the Islamic sciences and "firmly embedded Aristotelian logic and philosophical ethics into the Islamic tradition."¹¹

of opinion occurring among its scholars regarding it or because of one or two mistakes in it, or because they do not act in accordance with what their knowledge tells them they ought to do—so that a group can be seen to have abandoned logical reasoning [*nazar*] on theoretical as well as juridical issues, on the grounds that, were these to have a basis their specialists [i.e. the jurists and theologians] would have apprehended it ... On the contrary, one must know the thing itself, and not every science can be mastered by every person. For this reason 'Alī (may God be well pleased with him!) said, 'Do not know the truth by men; but know men by the truth and you will know those who possess it.'" *Ihyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* i, 195.

7 al-Akīti, Good, the Bad, and the Ugly 60.

8 For analysis of the manner in which Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī's autobiographical *Deliverer from error* is stylized to present him as the "Reviver" of his time, see Garden, *First Islamic reviver*.

9 For a discussion of the manner in which philosophy and logic in particular can darken the heart, see Kukkonen, al-Ghazālī on error.

10 For analysis of al-Ghazālī's identification of "the heart" as the locus of the highest modes of cognition, see Treiger, *Inspired knowledge* 17–18. I disagree with Treiger's contention that in choosing the heart as the locus of the highest forms of knowledge, al-Ghazālī is following Ibn Sīnā's noetics and simply employing the term to "make it palatable to the broader circles of religious scholars," 18. A deeper analysis of the sources of al-Ghazālī's technical vocabulary is the subject of a forthcoming study.

11 Hanson, Imām al-Ghazālī x.

Examples of al-Ghazālī's use of philosophy abound and have been covered extensively in recent literature.¹² For many years the incorporation of philosophical arguments into *The niche of lights* led to debates regarding its authenticity.¹³ More recently, Alexander Treiger has argued that much of al-Ghazālī's thought is rooted in the philosophy of Ibn Sinā, and that he is "a kind of 'Trojan horse,' which brought Avicenna's philosophy into the heart of Islamic thought."¹⁴ Similarly, Kenneth Garden demonstrates the manner in which philosophy continued to be an important concern for al-Ghazālī throughout his life and was incorporated into several parts of the *Ihyā'*.¹⁵ Many such studies follow upon the line of argument inaugurated in part by Richard Frank several decades ago. But as Ahmad Dallal has illustrated, much of Frank's analysis arose from a partial reading of the texts and inaccurate translations that led to and derived from inaccurate analyses.¹⁶

Among al-Ghazālī's most extensive borrowings from philosophy are those found in *The niche of lights*, where, as many scholars have observed, he employs a Neoplatonic emanationist scheme to explain the creation of the cosmos, and in his *Kitāb riyaḍat al-nafs* (Book on the training of the soul) in the *Revival of the religious sciences*, where he employs a Neoplatonic scheme to outline the human virtues. The latter has been well-documented by T.J. Winter in the introduction to his excellent translation.¹⁷ Here, al-Ghazālī's outline of the soul and the virtues is imported from the first chapter of *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq* (Refinement of character) of the Neoplatonic Islamic philosopher Abū 'Alī al-Miskawayh (d. 421/1030), a follower of the Avicennan philosophical tradition. Al-Ghazālī

12 Discussions regarding the place of philosophy in al-Ghazālī have expanded considerably since the publication of Richard Frank's two monographs, *Creation and the cosmic system* and *al-Ghazālī and the Ash'arite school*. Many of the oversights and mistranslations that were fundamental to his analysis were observed by Marmura in *Ghazali and Ash'arism revisited*; by Toby Mayer in his review of *al-Ghazālī and the Ash'arite school*; and by Ahmad Dallal in *al-Ghazālī and the perils of interpretation*. For summaries of the literature regarding the role of philosophy in al-Ghazālī, see Treiger, *Inspired knowledge* 1–4, and Griffel, *al-Ghazālī's philosophical theology* 179–182. For the most recent overview of al-Ghazālī's interaction with the schools of philosophy that preceded him, see Rudolph, *al-Ghazālī's concept of philosophy*.

13 Watt, *Forgery?*

14 Treiger, *Inspired knowledge* 104.

15 Garden, *First Islamic reviver*.

16 Dallal, *al-Ghazālī and the perils of interpretation*. The emphasis upon the philosophical background of al-Ghazālī's noetics has been necessary for correcting the mistakes of previous scholarship. Nonetheless, the pendulum seems to have swung too far. For a compelling analysis of the manner in which these various influences are combined, see Ormsby, *al-Ghazali*, chap. 6.

17 al-Ghazālī, *al-Ghazālī on disciplining the soul* xlv–lviii.

incorporates the Neoplatonic threefold division of the faculties of the soul into rational, irascible, and appetitive, and the fourfold division of the virtues, or the “principles of virtue” as they are called by al-Ghazālī, wisdom (*al-ḥikmah*), courage (*al-shujāʿa*), temperance (*al-ʿiffa*), and justice (*al-ʿadl*), from which all secondary virtues derive. As with al-Miskawayh and others before him, al-Ghazālī maintains that the human objective is to maintain the four cardinal virtues in perfect equilibrium (*iʿtidāl*). But he differs from al-Miskawayh in two fundamental respects. First, he maintains that the good deeds that result from equilibrium are not only what is recognized by the intellect, but also what is confirmed by revealed law, that is by *sharīʿa*. Second, he believes that the prophet Muhammad is the only person to have attained complete equilibrium. Furthermore, as with every book of the *Revival*, al-Ghazālī begins his discussion with citations from the Quran and hadith, then precedes his discussion of the four noble virtues with sayings attributed to Sufis such as Abū Bakr al-Wāsiṭī (d. ca. 320/932) and Sahl al-Tustarī (d. 283/896). Thus, even though the explanation of the four noble virtues is based upon Neoplatonic philosophy, the context in which they are presented has been transformed to cast them in a light that makes them appear to be in harmony with the foundational texts of the Islamic tradition and the teachings of Sufism. This use of philosophy accords with al-Ghazālī’s counsel to examine carefully the knowledge of other traditions, looking at what is said and not at who said it, and being zealous to “extract the truth from the claims of those who are misguided.”¹⁸ Implicit in his argument that only the Prophet could attain to complete equilibrium is a rejection of the belief that one can attain to equilibrium through philosophy alone. Implicit in the introduction of the discussion with Quran, hadith, and Sufi sayings is the contention that philosophy is not necessary for attaining equilibrium, though it is useful for its articulation. Al-Ghazālī’s use of philosophy in explaining the virtues should come as no surprise, since in *The deliverer from error* he admits that the philosophers have contributions to make in this field.¹⁹

Al-Ghazālī’s use of emanationist schemes in *The niche of lights* and in several books of the *Revival*, something for which Ibn Rushd and modern scholars have taken him to task, is a far more complex issue. Given that al-Ghazālī criticizes the peripatetic philosophers for their ontology, and especially for the

18 al-Ghazālī, *Munqidh* 546.

19 In his discussion of philosophy in *al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl*, al-Ghazālī indicates that the positive elements of the ethics of the philosophers have been drawn from and are consonant with Sufi teachings, but that many are led astray by the manner in which the philosophers present them. See al-Ghazālī, *Munqidh* 546–548.

related question of causality,²⁰ his use of philosophical language and schemas to explain these same phenomena appears to some as a contradiction in his thought. It has even led several scholars to consider him a successor of Ibn Sīnā.²¹ Here, al-Ghazālī is employing tools borrowed from previous Islamic philosophers to discuss “the reality of realities” (*ḥaqīqat al-ḥaqāʾiq*). Among the contested passages of the *Mishkāt* is a section wherein he discusses all levels of creation, from the substances of angels, which are suprasensory lights, to the lower lights of human and animal life as degrees of light through which subsequent degrees become manifest:

The low lights flow forth from one another just as light flows forth from a lamp. The lamp is the holy prophetic spirit. The holy prophetic spirits are kindled from high spirits just as a lamp is kindled from a light. Some of the high things kindle each other and their hierarchy is a hierarchy of stations. Then all of them climb to the Light of lights, their Origin, the First Source. This is God alone, who has no partner.²²

Al-Ghazālī’s presentation is distinguished from that of earlier Islamic philosophers in that, at every turn, he is careful to couch his discussion in language that preserves the integrity of Divine Oneness and omnipotence, precisely what he accuses the philosophers of failing to do.²³ As he writes in the *Mishkāt*, “The only true light is His light. Everything is His light—or rather, He is everything. Or, rather, nothing possesses selfhood other than Him, except in a metaphorical sense. Therefore there is no light except His light.”²⁴ In other words, for al-Ghazālī, God as light is the true light of everything, and nothing has any light in and of itself; it is God’s Light within it that allows it to be. It is God’s Light within it that is its very being. There is similarity to Ibn Sīnā’s discussion of existence insofar as all that is other than God is not truly existent within itself, but is a possible existent (*mumkin al-wujūd*) deriving its existence from necessary existence (*al-wājib al-wujūd*). But for al-Ghazālī this philosophical explanation does not suffice to preserve the integrity of God’s Oneness and singularity. His view of existence is much closer to the Sufi understanding of

20 For analysis of al-Ghazālī’s discussions of causality, see Marmura, Ghazalian causes and intermediaries, and Marmura, al-Ghazālī’s second causal theory.

21 This is the crux of Treiger’s discussion of al-Ghazālī’s noetics in relation to the noetics of Ibn Sīnā. See Treiger, *Inspired knowledge*, chap. 4.

22 al-Ghazālī, *Niche of lights* 20.

23 This is the crux of al-Ghazālī’s argument in *Munqidh min al-dalāl* 545–546.

24 al-Ghazālī, *Niche of lights* 20 (translation slightly modified).

the oneness of existence (*waḥdat al-wujūd*) than to that of the Islamic peripatetic philosophers, which focused more upon the principiality of existence (*aṣālat al-wujūd*). Although Ibn Sīnā's understanding of the nature of *wujūd* opens toward the oneness of existence, it is not expressed outright. This subtle difference turns out to be a cornerstone of al-Ghazālī's understanding and a point where he inclines more toward the ontology of the Sufis than to that of the philosophers. He does, however, employ the vocabulary of the philosophers to provide an articulation of a position that is more similar to that of the Sufis.

Following upon the well-known saying of the Sufi master Ma'rūf al-Karkhī (d. 200/815), "There is nothing in existence save God" (*mā fī l-wujūd illā llāh*), al-Ghazālī explains, using another distinction from Sufi discourse, that every created thing has two faces: a face toward itself and a face toward its Lord.²⁵ As regards the face toward itself, it is nonexistent. But as regards the face toward God, it exists:

Everything is perishing, save His face (Q 28:88), not that each thing is perishing at one time or at other times, but it is perishing from beginninglessness to endlessness. It can only be so conceived since, when the essence of anything other than He is considered in respect of its own essence, it is sheer nonexistence. But when it is viewed in respect of the face to which existence flows forth from the First, the Real, then it is seen as existing not in itself but through the face adjacent to its Giver of Existence. Hence the only existence is the Face of God.²⁶

Here, the tools of philosophy are used to unpack the meaning within one of the terse allusive sayings of early Sufism, giving a particular Sufi doctrine a more dialectical architecture. These two examples from the *Mishkāt* and the *Iḥyā'* reveal the manner in which al-Ghazālī employed the tools of the peripatetic philosophical tradition in his capacity as a reviver of the religious sciences and

25 The idea that every aspect of creation has a face turned toward creation and a face turned toward God is an intricate part of Aḥmad al-Ghazālī's *Sawāniḥ*. He writes, "The secret face of everything is the point of its connection, and a sign hidden in creation, and beauty is the brand of creation. The secret of the face is that face that faces Love. So long as one does not see that secret of the face, he will never see the sign of creation and beauty. That face is the beauty of 'and the face of your Lord remains' (Q 55:26). Other than it there is no face, for 'all that is upon it fades' (Q 55:26). And that face is nothing, as you know." al-Ghazālī, *Sawāniḥ* 27 (*faṣl* 12).

26 al-Ghazālī, *Niche of Lights* 20.

his capacity as a teacher for those who sought “knowledge of unveiling” (*ilm al-mukāshafa*) and witnessing.²⁷ In both instances, the tools have been appropriated and placed within a framework that he finds to be more consonant with the fundamental teachings of the Quran, the sunna, and Sufi tradition. In this sense, Ahmad Dallal’s contention that al-Ghazālī “agreed with the conclusions of the theologians but did not approve of their methods, and opposed the conclusions of the philosophers while subscribing to their methods”²⁸ could be reconfigured to state that al-Ghazālī agreed with the conclusions of the Sufis but saw value in explaining them through the methods of demonstration provided by the philosophers.

Although al-Ghazālī’s appropriation of philosophical tools to approach other disciplines is evident in his ontology and his discussion of ethics, the area that may be of greatest importance is his noetics and epistemology since, from al-Ghazālī’s perspective, “knowledge is the end destined for man and his special characteristic for which he was created.”²⁹ As he writes in *The book of knowledge*, “the intellect is the noblest attribute the human being possesses ... since through it one agrees to take on God’s trust, and by it one achieves proximity to God.”³⁰ The science of how we know is thus directly related to the science of what we are and the manner in which we achieve our final ends. In *Ayyuhā l-walad* (O young lad), al-Ghazālī writes that “knowledge without action is madness, action without knowledge is nonexistent.”³¹ From the perspective that he is employing here, one informed by Sufi teachings,³² “practice” does not refer to the outer actions of the body. Rather, it refers to inner actions whereby one disciplines one’s self by “severing the passions of the lower soul and killing its caprice with the sword of spiritual exercises.”³³ For al-Ghazālī this is the most important form of knowledge. As he writes in *Ayyuhā l-walad*:

If you study and examine knowledge, your knowledge must rectify your heart and purify your soul, as if you know your life span will not last more

27 For analysis of al-Ghazālī’s use of *mukāshafa*, see Treiger, *Inspired Knowledge*, chapter 2, “The science of unveiling.”

28 Dallal, Ghazālī and the perils of interpretation 777.

29 al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā’ ‘ulūm al-dīn* v, 34.

30 Ibid. i, 52.

31 al-Ghazālī, *Ayyuhā l-walad* 258.

32 For the grounding of al-Ghazālī’s understanding of the need to combine action with knowledge in Sufi teachings, see his discussion of “The paths of the Sufis” in *Munqidh min al-ḍalāl* 552–555.

33 al-Ghazālī, *Ayyuhā l-walad* 260.

than a week. It is necessary that you not busy that time with knowledge of jurisprudence, character traits, the principles [of religion and jurisprudence], theology and the like because you know that these sciences will not benefit you. Rather, you should occupy yourself with observing the heart and recognizing the qualities of the soul and the accidents resulting from its attachment to the world. You should purify your soul of blameworthy character traits and occupy yourself with the love of God and servitude to Him, and with being characterized by beautiful character traits. Not a day or night passes, but that the death of the servant may come.³⁴

Through this focus upon the heart, one opens the eye of the heart whereby one may reach the knowledge of unveiling that al-Ghazālī describes in *al-Risāla al-laduniyya* as “the very end of knowledge” from which all other forms of knowledge derive.³⁵ According to his own account, the understanding of the proper relation among the Islamic sciences that he developed in his later writings is based entirely upon the clarity of understanding he obtained by devoting himself to the discipline of Sufism, which, as he states in *al-Munqidh*,

is composed of both knowledge and action. The outcome of their action is cutting off the obstacles of the soul, refraining from blameworthy character traits and their depraved attributes, so that the heart may arrive from it to freeing the heart from what is other than God and to adorning it with the remembrance of God.³⁶

When this has been achieved, one can attain to immediate witnessing, which al-Ghazālī believed to be the only true path to certainty, all else being merely confirmation through the imitation of what others have said (*taqlīd*), especially jurisprudence and theology. Like many Sufis before him, he believed that most Islamic scholars were not on the path that leads to certainty. As he says of the knowledge acquired through Sufi practice in *al-Munqidh*, “This knowledge is not obtained through types of knowledge with which most people are occupied. Thus, that knowledge does not increase them in aught but boldness to disobey God.”³⁷ As such, he saw the need for a radical revival of the religious sciences based upon the preeminence of that knowledge received through

34 Ibid. 266.

35 al-Ghazālī, *Risāla al-laduniyya* 230.

36 al-Ghazālī, *Munqidh* 552.

37 Ibid. 564.

inner purification and constant remembrance of God—“knowledge from on high” (*al-‘ilm al-ladunī*).³⁸

In both the *Ihyā’* and his smaller treatise, *al-Risāla al-laduniyya* (Treatise on knowledge from on high),³⁹ al-Ghazālī outlines a hierarchy wherein all modes of knowledge are subordinate to “knowledge from on high,” since the latter is bestowed directly by God.⁴⁰ He promotes the position that the fundamental objective of all learning is to wipe away ignorance and return to the state of purity that is the human norm, the *fiṭra*. As he writes in *al-Risāla al-laduniyya*, “Learning is nothing other than the return of the soul to its substance and bringing what is within into actuality, seeking the completion of its essence and the attainment of its joy.”⁴¹ From this perspective, the goal of knowledge is wisdom that derives from a living intelligence that is able to see things as they are “in themselves” (*kamā hiya*) and is able to realize the proper application of such wisdom on all planes and in all affairs.⁴² Following the Sufi tradition before him, al-Ghazālī believed that when such a state is achieved, one realizes that one was a “knower” or “realizer” (*‘arīf*) before, but that attachment to the body and its concomitant desires and passions, as well as lower forms of knowledge, prevented one from achieving the knowledge for which the human being is created. This is knowledge that corresponds to the underlying human norm (*fiṭra*). Knowledge that is obtained through study and acquisition can help to actualize the knowledge that lies within the *fiṭra*. This is the way described by al-Ghazālī in several well-known passages wherein he follows an Avicennan epistemology and maintains that “the sensory world is a ladder to [the

38 In this vein Kukkonen observes, “Al-Ghazālī says that the righteous fix their sights on the real natures of things first, and their meanings, and that they do so by the aid of divine light; aided by such insight they then venture to view creation. The unbelievers go astray precisely because they try to reverse this proper order, attempting to reason their own way from the mundane world to the supernal, or from causes to effects.” Kukkonen, *al-Ghazālī on error* 26.

39 The debate regarding the authenticity of *al-Risāla al-laduniyya* has focused upon the presence of philosophical vocabulary; see Lazarus-Yafeh, *Studies in al-Ghazzali*. As recent scholarship has demonstrated, this can no longer be used as the criterion for dismissing the authenticity of works attributed to al-Ghazālī. Although the provenance of the treatise cannot be proved, I agree with Treiger that it is consistent with al-Ghazālī’s other writings and thus representative of his thought; see Treiger, *Inspired knowledge* 65–66, 73–74.

40 For discussions of al-Ghazālī’s classification of the sciences, see Bakar, *Classification of knowledge in Islam*, chaps. 8 & 9, and Treiger, *al-Ghazālī’s classifications of the sciences*.

41 al-Ghazālī, *Risāla al-laduniyya* 234.

42 For more extensive discussion of the manner in which al-Ghazālī sees knowledge of things as they are in themselves as being innate to the original human disposition, the *fiṭra*, see Kukkonen, *Receptive to reality*.

world of the] intellect.”⁴³ Nonetheless, “knowledge from on high” surpasses even the highest modes of acquired knowledge because it requires no intermediary: “Knowledge from on high is that which has no intermediary between the soul and the Creator for its acquisition. It is like the light from a lamp of the unseen [realm] falling upon a pure, empty, and subtle heart.”⁴⁴ Al-Ghazālī then states, “Those who arrive at the level of “knowledge from on high” have no need for much obtaining and toil in instruction. They study little and know much.”⁴⁵ This is the knowledge that is obtained through inspiration (*ilhām*); it is to the saints what revelation is to the prophets.⁴⁶ The preeminence of knowledge that has no intermediary is central to al-Ghazālī’s declaration that the knowledge of the Prophet surpasses all other modes of knowledge. In *Jawāhir al-Qur’ān*, he maintains that this is the highest mode of knowledge and the goal of all other modes of knowledge.

The Highest and noblest science is the science of the recognition of God (*‘ilm ma’rifat Allāh*), Exalted is He, for all the other sciences are sought for it and on its account (*lahu wa min ajlihi*), while it is not sought for anything other than itself. The path of gradual progression with regard to it is to ascend from the Acts to the Attributes, then from the Attributes to the Essence. Thus there are three stages: the highest among them is knowledge of the Essence. Most intellects (*afhām*) cannot attain it. For this reason it was said to them, “Contemplate God’s creation, but do not contemplate the Essence of God.”⁴⁷ The progression of the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, in his observations and his seeing allude to this progression, when he said, “I seek refuge in Your amnesty from Your punishment.”⁴⁸ This is the observance of the Act. Then he said, “I seek refuge in Your contentment from Your rage (*sakht*).” This is

43 al-Ghazālī, *Niche of lights* 26. Later in the same section, al-Ghazālī expands, writing, “The visible world is a ladder to the world of dominion and traveling the straight path is an expression of this ascent, and one could express it as ‘religion’ and the ‘waystations of guidance.’ Were there no relationship or connection between the two worlds, ascending from one world to the other would be inconceivable. The Divine Mercy made the visible world to accord with (*‘alā mawāzina*) the world of dominion. So there is nothing from this world, but that it is a similitude for something from that world.” 27.4–11. See also *Jawāhir al-Qur’ān* 48–49 (*faṣl* 6); 61 (*faṣl* 10).

44 al-Ghazālī, *Risāla al-laduniyya* 232.

45 *Ibid.* 233.

46 The manner in which this form of knowledge comes to the prophets and the saints is the subject of chapter 10 of book xx1 of the *Ihyā’*, “The wonders of the heart.”

47 Bayhaqī, *Shāb al-īmān* 458.

48 *Sunan al-Nisā’ī*, *Isti’ādha*, 62.

the observance of the Attributes. Then he said, "I seek refuge in You from You." And this is the observance of the Essence. For he did not cease to rise unto nearness degree by degree. Then at the end, he recognized [his] incapacity, and said, "I cannot count Your praise. You are as You have praised Yourself."⁴⁹ This is the noblest of all sciences. It is followed in nobility by the knowledge of the Hereafter (*ʿilm al-ākhirā*), which is knowledge of the return (*ʿilm al-maʿād*), as we mentioned regarding the three divisions [of the Quran]. And it is connected with the science of the recognition of God (*ʿilm al-marifa*). And its reality is recognizing the relationship of the servant to God, Exalted is He, at the moment of confirming Him through recognition (*taḥaqquqihi bi-l-marifa*), or [at the moment] of his becoming veiled through ignorance.⁵⁰

In book XXI of the *Revival*, *ʿAjāʾib al-qalb* (The wonders of the heart), al-Ghazālī provides a detailed discussion of the distinction between inspiration and revelation, the two modes of "knowledge from on high," and knowledge obtained through learning and instruction, or acquired knowledge.⁵¹ He maintains that the heart "has the capacity to have disclosed within it the true nature of the reality of all things."⁵² But five things prevent it from doing so: (1) the imperfection of its nature; (2) the dullness that results from acts of disobedience; (3) being turned away from the direction of reality due to being preoccupied with other things; (4) veils resulting from blind imitation (*taqlīd*); and (5) "ignorance of the direction from which the knowledge of the thing sought must be obtained."⁵³

49 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Ṣalāt 222.

50 al-Ghazālī, *Jawāhir al-Qurʾān* 42–43 (*faṣl* 4, *baḥṭh* 2). This passage is central to understanding other discussions of knowledge in al-Ghazālī's works. It demonstrates that he held open the possibility that one can know the Essence of God, but only through unveiling, while through *baḥṭh* and *burhān* one can attain knowledge of God's Actions and Attributes.

51 This book of the *Iḥyāʾ* has been misinterpreted by Binyamīn Abrahamov. Among other mistakes, he reads the criticisms of Sufism that al-Ghazālī attributes to the theologians (*aḥl al-naẓar*) as al-Ghazālī's own criticisms. See Abrahamov, al-Ghazālī's supreme way to know God.

52 al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ* v, 67; *wa ḥaqīqat al-qawl fihi anna al-qalb mustaʿidd li-an tanjaliya fihi ḥaqīqat al-ḥaqq fi l-ashyāʾ kullihā*.

53 al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ* v, 49–51. When analyzing this passage, Abrahamov states that al-Ghazālī maintains, "Whoever does not know the roots (*uṣūl*) of syllogism and the way in which they are connected cannot achieve knowledge." Abrahamov, al-Ghazālī's supreme way to know God, 150. What al-Ghazālī writes is, "Things that do not pertain to the *fiṭra*, which one desires to know, cannot be caught, save in the net of the acquiring sciences (*al-ʿulūm al-ḥāšila*); indeed no knowledge is acquired, except from two preceding items of knowl-

In discussing the nature of the heart, al-Ghazālī maintains that it has two fundamental ways of knowing, one wherein it is illuminated from above and a second wherein it derives knowledge by analyzing the material world and syllogistic induction: “The heart has two doors: one door opens toward the world of dominion (*‘ālam al-malakūt*), which is the ‘Preserved Tablet’ (Q 85:22) and the world of the angels (*‘ālam al-malā’ika*). The other door opens toward the five external senses that are tethered to the visible material world.”⁵⁴ He acknowledges that all people are familiar with the second door and employs the experience of dream visions (*ru’ya*) to argue for the reality of the first door, wherein one obtains knowledge “without any acquisition on the part of the senses” (*min ghayri iqtibās min jihat al-hawāss*).⁵⁵ This first door, he states, “is opened only to one who devotes himself exclusively to the remembrance of God, the Exalted,” which he describes as the way of the Sufis, who devote themselves to spiritual retreat (*khalwa*), reciting the name of God (*Allāh*), “until every trace of the word is effaced from the tongue and he finds his heart persevering in remembrance (*dhikr*).”⁵⁶ He goes on to state,

So this is the difference between the knowledge of the prophets and saints and that of the learned and the philosophers (*hukamā’*): the knowledge of the former comes from within the heart through the door that is opened toward the world of spirits, whereas the knowledge of the philosophers comes through the doors of the senses that open to the material world. The wonders of the world of the heart and its wavering between the visible and invisible worlds cannot be fully dealt with in a [study of the] knowledge of proper conduct. But this is an example that will teach you the difference of the entrance of the two [kinds of] knowledge.⁵⁷

edge that are related and combined in a special way, and from their combination a third item of knowledge is gained.” al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā’* v, 51. Here, al-Ghazālī specifies that he is discussing those forms of knowledge that do not pertain to the *fiṭra* and thus require acquisition, not all forms of knowledge. The point that al-Ghazālī makes is that if one does not engage in syllogistic acquired knowledge in matters that *do not* pertain to the *fiṭra*, it will result in obstacles to the attainment of knowledge. This passage thus cautions the reader regarding the requirements of acquired knowledge, and is not about the necessity of employing syllogistic reasoning for all modes of knowledge. Furthermore, it should be noted that, according to al-Ghazālī, the other four obstacles must also be eliminated, not only incorrect errors in syllogistic thinking.

54 Ibid. v, 77.

55 Ibid.

56 Ibid. v, 69–70.

57 Ibid. v, 78.

What enters the heart of the saint is inspiration (*ilhām*); it comes through “cleansing, polishing and purifying the heart until the reality of the Real shines forth clearly therein with utmost illumination.”⁵⁸ This is the knowledge that comes through unveiling, which, as al-Ghazālī clarifies in book I of the *Ihyāʾ*, is “knowledge of the inner, and it is the furthest reach of the sciences.” He goes on to specify,

It is the knowledge of the truthful (*al-ṣiddīqīn*) and those brought nigh (*al-muqarrabīn*). I mean, knowledge of unveiling. For it is an expression for a light that manifests in the heart when it is cleansed and purified of its blameworthy characteristics. From that light there are unveiled many affairs (*umūr*) whose names had hitherto been heard, but for which obscure unclear meanings had been imagined (*tawahhama lahā*).⁵⁹

After listing many things that are clarified through knowledge by unveiling, from knowledge of the Divine Essence, Attributes, and Actions to the nature of the Hereafter and the ways of angels and satans, he states that only this type of knowledge provides certitude, since it is the only knowledge that arises from direct witnessing: “We thus mean by knowledge of unveiling that the veil is lifted until the disclosure of truth (*jalīyyat al-ḥaqq*) in these matters becomes clear to him with a clarity like that of eye witnessing in which there is no doubt.”⁶⁰ Although the ability to realize such knowledge resides within human nature,⁶¹ the heart has been covered by the dross of attachments to this world. Therefore true knowledge can only be achieved through the purification of the heart:

This is possible in the substance of the human being, had not the rust resulting from the filth of this world accumulated upon the mirror of the heart. And we only mean by knowledge of the path to the Hereafter the knowledge of how to polish this mirror from this filth (*khabāʾith*) that veils from God, transcendent and exalted is He, and from recognition of His Attributes and Acts. The mirror is cleansed and purified by desisting from desires (*shahawāt*) and emulating the prophets, peace and blessings upon them, in all their states. So, to whatever extent the heart is cleansed

58 Ibid. v, 79.

59 Ibid. i, 76–77.

60 Ibid. i, 78.

61 See Kukkonen, Receptive to reality.

and made to face the truth, His realities shine within it. There is no way to this [knowledge] except through spiritual discipline (*riyāḍa*), learning, and instruction.⁶²

Al-Ghazālī concludes his discussion of this mode of knowledge with the caveat that “these are the sciences that are not recorded in books and that those who have been blessed with something of them discuss with none save those who are fit for it (*ahlīhi*).”⁶³ In this vein, the fact that he places spiritual discipline before learning and instruction is significant. For, as al-Ghazālī states in book XXI of the *Iḥyāʾ*, “The learned work to acquire knowledge itself and gather it into the heart, but the saints among the Sufis work only to polish, cleanse, clarify, and brighten the heart.”⁶⁴ This position aligns with the previously cited statement from the *Iḥyāʾ* that “to whatever extent the heart is cleansed and made to face the truth, His realities shine within it.”⁶⁵

The process of polishing the heart is presented here as the path that leads to greater certitude, since it involves cleansing the very organ of perception by which realities are witnessed directly. The knowledge of learning and acquisition employed by others, including philosophers, can attain to a very high level. Nonetheless, it pertains to the door that “opens toward the five external senses that are tethered to the visible material world.”⁶⁶ One can be trained in such knowledge, and it can be communicated, but, as regards the possibility of communicating knowledge of unveiling obtained through spiritual practice by the same means that one communicates acquired knowledge, al-Ghazālī states in his *Miʿyār al-ʿilm*, “Some kinds of certain beliefs (*al-ʿitiqādāt al-yaqīniyya*) cannot be made known to another through demonstrative proof, unless such a person participates with us in its practice, so that he can share with us in the knowledge extracted from it.”⁶⁷ As Ahmad Dallal observes, “Unlike Aristotelian demonstrative proof, the rules of the science of *mukāshafa* are not written in books.”⁶⁸ For this reason, when discussing *ilhām*, “knowledge of unveiling” (*ʿilm al-mukāshafa*) and “knowledge from on high,” al-Ghazālī maintains that such teachings should be “left under the cover of dust until the wayfarers

62 al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ* i, 78.

63 Ibid. i, 78.

64 Ibid. v, 78–79.

65 Ibid. i, 78.

66 Ibid. v, 77.

67 al-Ghazālī, *Miʿyār al-ʿilm* 203. I have followed the translation in Dallal, al-Ghazālī and the perils of interpretation 779.

68 Ibid. 779.

stumble upon them,”⁶⁹ and that when approaching such teachings in writing, “the reins of the pen must be drawn in.”⁷⁰

Although al-Ghazālī recognizes learning and syllogistic reasoning as a means whereby knowledge can be attained, and that it can even lead to a degree of certainty,⁷¹ he maintains that the method employed by the Sufis whereby saints open the door of inbreathing into the heart from the world of spirits is the higher way because the other ways remain “tethered to the visible material world” where one acquires knowledge through means that remain connected to the senses. In the path of acquisition and learning, the intellect builds up by extracting the intelligible realities through a process of syllogistic reasoning. The conclusions derived from this process can then be communicated to others through demonstration (*burhān*). But al-Ghazālī makes clear in the *Tahāfut*, *Mi’yār al-‘ilm*, and several sections of the *Ihyā’* that such reasoning can only take one so far if it is not accompanied by the light of inspiration (*ilhām*).⁷² As Taneli Kukkonen observes, for al-Ghazālī,

Isolated facts concerning creation will only reveal any of the deeper divine mysteries if they are examined in the light of divine guidance, and this in turn can only come from inside, following the heart’s purification and its awakening to the infusion of divine purpose in everything. By contrast, any attempt to build a system of thought from the ground up that is unenlightened—in the sense of not being conducted in the light of divine disclosure—can only end up in failure, both because of our tendency to let our baser motives skew the results and because the information conveyed by our senses only has limited utility when it comes to construing the rules that govern the supernal realm.⁷³

For al-Ghazālī, the knowledge obtained through unveiling or divine disclosure exceeds what can be reached through reason. Therefore, reason can at best demonstrate the veracity of that which has already been obtained by the Prophet:

69 al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā’* viii, 476.

70 Ibid. viii, 470.

71 Ibid. i, 73.

72 In this vein, Ulrich Rudolph observes that, for al-Ghazālī, “only when prophetic knowledge is accepted can philosophy become a respectable way to study the true nature of things.” Rudolph, al-Ghazālī’s concept of philosophy 43.

73 Kukkonen, al-Ghazālī on error 17.

Indeed, reason (*‘aql*) only demonstrates the veracity of the Prophet. It then absolves itself and concedes that it accepts what it receives from the Prophet regarding God and the Day of Judgment, among the things that reason neither perceives independently, nor deems impossible; for the revealed law (*al-shar‘*) does not inform of what contradicts reason, but it informs of what reason is incapable of perceiving independently.⁷⁴

Reason is here perceived as a neutral tool that provides human beings with the ability to weigh knowledge that has been received, but does not provide knowledge itself. Theoretical knowledge, which is built with the tools of reason, does not suffice to communicate those certainties that al-Ghazālī indicates in *Mi‘yār al-‘ilm* are beyond the realm of demonstrative proof and can only be communicated to those who, as indicated in book I of the *Ihyā’*, are “fit for it.”⁷⁵ In fact, for the theologians, “without the benefit of the light of insight (*nūr al-baṣīra*) the examination of religious questions will necessarily be both confused and confusing, even to the trained professional and proficient dialectician.”⁷⁶ When al-Ghazālī discusses the various levels of guidance in book xxxi of the *Ihyā’*, “The book of patience and gratitude,” he again maintains that the highest levels of knowledge cannot be obtained through reason by which the sciences are learned:

The third guidance is beyond the second. It is the light that shines in the world of prophethood and sanctity (*wilāya*) after the completion of striving (*kamāl al-mujāhada*). By it one is guided to that to which one cannot be guided by reason which acquires instruction and through which there is the possibility of learning the sciences. It is sheer guidance. And what is other than it is a veil over it or a propaedeutic to it.⁷⁷

Not only does this passage indicate a level of guidance beyond what can be acquired through reason and the intellect, it also indicates that while lower levels of knowledge can help one attain it, they may also serve as a veil that prevents one from attaining it. From this perspective, the sciences through which one builds the ladder that can lead from the realm of sensory perception to the world of dominion (*‘ālam al-malakūt*) may also be the very means by which one ceases to ascend if one becomes attached to these sciences. Therefore, striving

74 al-Ghazālī, *al-Mustasfā min ‘ilm al-uṣūl* i, 14.

75 al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā’* i, 78.

76 Kukkonen, al-Ghazālī on error 17.

77 al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā’* vii, 357–358.

(*mujāhada*) to purify the heart through spiritual perception is presented as the *sine qua non* for obtaining complete certainty.

Conclusion

In light of the limitations that al-Ghazālī ascribes to reason, the intellect, and the path of acquisition, it appears that we do not have enough to overturn his own assertion in *al-Munqidh*, the *Ihyā'*, and other texts that he saw the Sufi path as the supreme means of attaining the highest level of understanding and certainty. Although he does maintain that the Sufi path provides complete success in only a few limited cases, he does not, as Jules Janssens argues, give “preference to the path of learning by acquisition.”⁷⁸ This latter path pertains to demonstrative proof, which is the highest level of knowledge built upon that which is accessible through the senses and the well-trained mind, but does not, in and of itself, provide the highest degree of certainty. Problems in interpreting this aspect of al-Ghazālī’s thought derive from the fact that he “does not develop a single and unambiguous notion of what philosophy is and whether it is valid.”⁷⁹ When al-Ghazālī extols the virtues of acquired knowledge, he always has in mind its limitations. As Timothy Gianotti observes, “For al-Ghazālī every science has its scope and its limit.”⁸⁰ In this vein, al-Ghazālī states in the introduction to the *Mi’yār* that “theoretical sciences, since they are not given and bestowed through the primordial norm (*fiṭra*) and the innate disposition (*gharīza*), are no doubt acquired (*mustaḥṣala*) and sought.”⁸¹ This distinction between knowledge that comes through “the light of insight” and knowledge that is acquired is essential for understanding other subtle distinctions that al-Ghazālī makes when discussing the virtues of the speculative sciences. Debates regarding this aspect of one of the world’s most inspiring thinkers will no doubt continue. Some guidance could be provided by more detailed research into the influence of earlier Sufism on his thought, greater attention to the function of Sufi terminology in his corpus, and more studies of the place of Sufism in the intellectual milieu of Seljuk Iran.

78 Janssens, al-Ghazālī between philosophy (*falsafa*) and Sufism (*taṣawwuf*) 626.

79 Rudolph, al-Ghazālī’s concept of philosophy 45.

80 Gianotti, Beyond both law and theology 612.

81 al-Ghazālī, *Mi’yār al-‘ilm fi l-mantiq* 26.

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PART 4

Literature and Culture



Religious Satire in the *Maqāmāt* of al-Hamadhānī

Matthew Ingalls

The satirical intent behind many of Badī' al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī's (d. 398/1008) *Maqāmāt* has been suggested previously by Monroe and dismissed more recently by Kennedy.¹ While not proposing a definitive solution to this earlier debate, the present essay argues that reading al-Hamadhānī's *Maqāmāt* through the lens of social satire provides a further dimension of meaning to this entertaining work while simultaneously allowing for an important reconciliation between it and the author's autobiographical writings. After providing literary and historical justifications for a satirical reading of the text, this essay analyzes four satirical themes in the *Maqāmāt* of al-Hamadhānī, with a particular emphasis on the social and ethical implications that ensue from reading them as satire.

1 Reconciling al-Hamadhānī and the *Maqāmāt* through Satire

What we know of al-Hamadhānī's biography is largely confined to those instances in which the author's life intersected with major political events and personalities, in addition to records of his famous debates with Abū Bakr al-Kh^wārizmī (d. 383/993) in Nishapur.² It is safe to assume, however, that the social setting found in the *Maqāmāt* reflects an accurate picture of the tenth-century Buyid Iran in which al-Hamadhānī spent his formative years, albeit one painted in a humorous and exaggerated light. As recent studies have noted, it was during this same Buyid period that “the individual and the contemporary broke into the foreground,” while the *Maqāmāt* embody this new ethos in a literary form.³

In addition to the noteworthy episodes of al-Hamadhānī's life that Rowson has documented, al-Qaḍī further extracts valuable information on the author's social vision from his collection of letters (*rasā'il*). The latter source evokes

1 Monroe, *Art of Badī' al-Zamān* 39–46, 166, 169, and *passim*; Kennedy, *Maqāmāt* as a nexus of interests 171.

2 See Rowson, Religion and politics *passim*.

3 Hämeen-Anttila, *Maqāma* 47; also see Kraemer, *Humanism* 12 ff. and *passim*.

the image of an implied author who is committed to the external law, or ideally a Shafī'i interpretation thereof,⁴ and who sees dignity and authenticity as his defining values. Whether al-Hamadhānī the historical figure truly embodied these values is difficult to say, though al-Qāḍī points to his public scorn for al-Kh^wārizmī's libertine behavior as evidence of his letters' accuracy. Al-Hamadhānī, in other words, creates a foil in al-Kh^wārizmī for his own character, and, as he did so while al-Kh^wārizmī was still living, his description must be based in reality since "a gross falsification would have been foolish to make, for it would have been very easy to detect."⁵

According to al-Qāḍī's analysis of al-Hamadhānī's letters, knowledge (*ilm*)—the necessary acquisition of which implies much toil and patience—comprises both a theoretical and practical component which together form half of the criteria that al-Hamadhānī uses in defining his social values and passing judgment on people like al-Kh^wārizmī. A second criterion, perhaps more interesting to our present study, is that of *dīn* (conventionally translated as "religion"), which comprises both an intellectual and moral component. Though the two criteria of knowledge and *dīn* are only separated in an artificial manner, it is *dīn* that leads its possessor to a life of virtue.⁶ The author indirectly suggests two definitions for *dīn*, as he uses both sacred law (*sharī'a*) and moral virtues (*akhlāq al-faḍl*) as synonyms for the term.⁷ As for the former definition, al-Hamadhānī tactfully criticizes his father for drinking alcohol, while similarly reviling al-Kh^wārizmī for listening to music, playing instruments, gambling, drinking, pimping his slave girl, and even outright disbelief (that is, worshipping *al-dahr*).⁸ Al-Kh^wārizmī's legal vices, moreover, are presented as antithetical to all that al-Hamadhānī considers inviolable in terms of external behavior. As for al-Hamadhānī's broader definition of *dīn* as moral virtues, his letters repeatedly praise the virtues of generosity, chivalry, dignity, equity (particularly amongst rulers), and holding a correct self-awareness of one's own social status and intellectual capacities. In contrast, he condemns the vices of impudence, silliness, mendicancy, tyranny, inequity, Schadenfreude, nonconformity to one's social status, pretentiousness, and hypocrisy,⁹ the last of which he claims never to have indulged in, though he may have fallen into any of the other vices during the course of his life.¹⁰

4 Rowson, Religion and politics 653, 666–668.

5 al-Qāḍī, Badī' al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī 208.

6 Ibid. 202.

7 Ibid. 207.

8 Ibid. 207–208.

9 Ibid. 208–212, and *passim*.

10 al-Hamadhānī, *Kashf al-ma'ānī* 325.

We are then left with a conspicuous inconsistency. A purported advocate of Islamic social virtue, why does the author choose to portray religious vices in his *Maqāmāt*—vices such as hypocrisy, impudence, and mendicancy—that he expressly denounces in his letters? The *Rasā'il* were written throughout al-Hamadhānī's literary career,¹¹ and there is no evidence to suggest that the author underwent an ethical transformation at one particular moment in his life. Rather, we are left, on the one hand, with an author who is ostensibly upright according to the religious ethics of his day, and on the other hand, the same author's literary collection of licentious characters and their humorous debaucheries. What, then, to make of this discrepancy?

Although the *Maqāmāt* were no doubt intended to entertain, here I suggest that many of them functioned as a medium of social satire directed at the author's own society. When viewed independently, many of al-Hamadhānī's *Maqāmāt* either expose a prevalent social vice (their most common approach to satire), condemn it outright (a rarer occurrence), or appeal prescriptively to an antipodal virtue. In this light, when taken as a whole, the *Maqāmāt* complement one another in their satirical objectives, which are achieved chiefly, albeit not exclusively, through the use of parody. Stewart, in fact, speculates that al-Hamadhānī intended the actions of his protagonist Abū l-Faṭḥ to serve as a "reflexive parody" of the behavior of the secretarial class, "who occupy a precarious, almost parasitical position in the patronage system, and are induced by circumstances and the desire to make a comfortable living to undertake brazen linguistic manipulations of their patrons."¹² The character thus parodies Buyid-era secretaries to expose the absurdities of their profession, in which language is commodified in the crassest of manners. Lending further credence to this reading, Elliott argues that "the greatest satire has been written in periods when ethical and rational norms were sufficiently powerful to attract widespread assent, yet not so powerful as to compel absolute conformity."¹³ Although periods of absolute conformity to ethical and rational norms may be rare in pre-modern history, a common ethical and rational discourse certainly dominated al-Hamadhānī's society and is referenced in the words and actions of even the most profligate characters in the *Maqāmāt*.

Beyond adding a new level of meaning to al-Hamadhānī's *Maqāmāt*, while similarly reconciling the author's biography with this work, a satirical reading of the *Maqāmāt* also allows us to impose a theoretical order onto the text. To be sure, the recent scholarship of Orfali and Pomerantz has demonstrated that

11 al-Qāḍī, *Baḍī' al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī* 197–198.

12 Stewart, *Professional literary mendicancy* 40, 46, and *passim*.

13 Elliott, *Satire* 249; cf. Elliott, *Power of satire* 261 ff.

al-Hamadhānī never conceived of the *Maqāmāt* as a collection,¹⁴ and thus it is meaningless to speculate on an original order of the *Maqāmāt*, but Hämeen-Antilla has suggested that those *Maqāmāt* that call toward virtue may very well have concluded an earlier, shorter collection of *Maqāmāt*, the existence of which in North Africa has been speculated.¹⁵ As evidence for this theory, he notes that “al-Ḥarīrī (d. 516/1122) and many others ended their collection with a repentant rogue,” and thus he cautiously proposes al-Hamadhānī’s *Maqāma* of Exhortation (*al-Wa’ziyya*) as an appropriate conclusion to the shorter collection.¹⁶

In a similar vein, Elliott identifies within works of satire a “pressure toward order internally from the arraignment of vice and appeal to virtue.”¹⁷ Using a satirical reading to project an order onto the *Maqāmāt* merely extends the boundaries of such a principle. It furthermore frames al-Hamadhānī’s approach to satire as ameliorative in its gradual shift from the condemnation of vice through parody and other literary devices to the appeal to virtue through a concluding *Maqāma* like *al-Wa’ziyya*. Were we to arrange the *Maqāmāt* today according to this ameliorative structure, the final text would reflect the spirit of the author’s *Rasā’il* without undermining the manuscript tradition per se. Modern scholars have grouped the latter, for its part, into two general categories: an “Ottoman period” family of manuscripts of the *Maqāmāt* from the ninth/fifteenth century, and an earlier family of manuscripts from the sixth/twelfth to eighth/fourteenth centuries.¹⁸ What is clear from analyses of these manuscript families is that each generation enjoys broad latitude in arranging the *Maqāmāt* into ordered collections of its own, while surely a contemporary arrangement of the text carries as much legitimacy as any premodern arrangements of it.

As mentioned above, Monroe’s satirical reading of al-Hamadhānī’s *Maqāmāt* has been questioned more recently by Kennedy, who argues that “we do not conclude with moral outrage at the end of each *Maqāma*: we wait to see how the next will qualify our moral reflexes before trying to justify our

14 Orfali and Pomerantz, *Assembling an author* 109, 119 ff.

15 Hämeen-Anttila, *Maqāma* 59, 118–121.

16 Hämeen-Anttila, *Maqāma* 59 (fn. 45). In this vein, Stewart notes how many premodern Muslim authors were uncomfortable with protagonists like Abū l-Faṭḥ and found it difficult to “draw a neat line between [the classical *maqāma*’s] ironic and earnest elements.” The language and structure of later collections of *maqāmāt* often attempted to relieve the tensions inherent in these elements. Stewart, *Maqāma* 154–157.

17 Elliott, *Satire* 248.

18 Richards, *Maqāmāt* of al-Hamadhānī 89–99; Orfali and Pomerantz, *Lost maqāma* 246–249; cf. Orfali and Pomerantz, *Assembling an author* 114 ff.

perpetual search into what it is exactly the author, as a literary craftsman, is doing.”¹⁹ Imposing a theoretical order onto the *Maqāmāt* for the sake of satirical integrity might seem unpalatable to Kennedy, who celebrates the cyclical-ity of the text, “whereby unequivocal moral reproval is constantly deferred.” Nevertheless, Kennedy does extract a satirical objective from al-Hamadhānī’s *Maqāma* of Wine (*al-Khamriyya*). Here, he interprets Abū l-Faḥ’s outrageous hypocrisy—in this case, his public censure of the drunken narrator and his cohorts at the congregational prayer, followed by their later discovery of Abū l-Faḥ’s own nightly visits to the tavern—as rather a lesson in “a proper sense of context and social occasion,”²⁰ a virtue that al-Hamadhānī extols throughout his *Rasā’il*. Whereas other *Maqāmāt* use parody in the service of satire, *al-Khamriyya* relies primarily on irony to advocate for a virtue that is more complex than simply the virtue of avoiding hypocrisy. This and similar instances noted by Kennedy reveal a sophisticated social satire at the microlevel of individual *Maqāmāt*—a satire in which a character’s scandalous behavior may in fact shed light on social maladies that al-Hamadhānī noticed in his own society.

2 The Use of External Piety to Deceive

A recurrent theme in al-Hamadhānī’s *Maqāmāt* is that of patent hypocrisy. In no less than eight *Maqāmāt*, external piety, more specifically pious speech, is used consciously to deceive and cheat. In the *Maqāma* of Sijistan (*al-Sijistā-niyya*), for example, Abū l-Faḥ appeals to his captive audience with the words, “So let him buy from me he who is not averse to the station of [God’s] obedient servants, he who does not hold in contempt the assertion of God’s unity.”²¹ Although the narrator, ʿĪsā b. Hishām, ultimately recognizes Abū l-Faḥ’s quackery for what it is, the brazen insincerity of the latter is what attracts the narrator’s attention and thus functions as the central conceit that justifies the *Maqāma*’s existence. Similarly, in the *Maqāma* of Azerbaijan (*al-Adhar-bayjāniyya*), ʿĪsā b. Hishām suspects the sincerity of the yet unrecognized Abū l-Faḥ, who introduces his prayer with an especially unctuous doxology:

19 Kennedy, *Maqāmāt* as a nexus of interests 168.

20 Ibid.

21 al-Hamadhānī, *Maqāmāt* 23. In keeping with academic convention, I have relied on ʿAbduh’s 1889 edition of the *Maqāmāt*. For arguments against this convention, cf. Orfali and Pomerantz, *Assembling an author* 107–109; Gerles, *Maqāma* of Bishr b. ʿAwāna 125–126.

O God! O creator of all things and regenerator of them; reviver of bones and annihilator of them;²² creator of the sun (*al-miṣbāḥ*) and its mover; cleaver of the dawn and its kindler;²³ conveyer of copious bounties (*al-ālā'*) upon us and holder of the heavens that they do not collapse on us;²⁴ fashioner of souls in pairs;²⁵ He who made the sun a lamp,²⁶ the heavens a ceiling,²⁷ and the earth a carpet,²⁸ and who made the night for rest and the day for livelihood;²⁹ He who brings forth laden clouds and sends thunderbolts in warning;³⁰ He who knows all that is in the farthest reaches of the heavens and in the lowest depths of the earth (*mā fawq al-nujūm wa-mā taḥt al-tukhūm*)!³¹

Abū l-Faḥḥ subsequently beseeches God for patronage by way of one “fashioned by godly instinct (*al-fiṭra*), propped up by purity, blessed with the sound religion, who is not blind to manifest truth.” Despite the eloquence of his prayers, Abū l-Faḥḥ’s sanctimony fails to deceive the narrator, who is astounded at the audacity of the vagabond’s artifice (*kayd*) and angling (*ṣayd*).³²

In a similar manner, Abū l-Faḥḥ solicits money from his listeners with pious rhymed speech in the *Maqāma* of the Blind (*al-Makfūfiyya*), and upon receiving a dinar from the oblivious ʿĪsā b. Hishām, says to him, “Go unto God, [for there find] your recompense. And may God show mercy on him who binds [this dinar] to its like and acquaints her with her sister.”³³ Here, the beggar, who we later learn is feigning blindness, concludes his praise for his patron with a prayer for his next victim in order to augment his spoils.

Al-Hamadhānī also uses false piety as the means by which his protagonist establishes rapport with one of his future victims. In the *Maqāma* of Baghdad (*al-Baghdādīyya*), for example, Abū l-Faḥḥ utters pious words of grief and makes an empty gesture of charity to endear himself to a stranger whom he

22 cf. Q 26:78.

23 cf. Q 6:96.

24 cf. Q 21:20 and 22:65.

25 cf. Q 78:8.

26 cf. Q 78:13 and 71:15.

27 cf. Q 21:32.

28 cf. Q 2:22.

29 cf. Q 6:96 and 78:11.

30 cf. Q 13:12 and 8:13.

31 al-Hamadhānī, *Maqāmāt* 44. ʿAbduh suggests this more specific definition for *tukhūm*, which otherwise simply means “borders.” Al-Hamadhānī, *Maqāmāt* 44 (fn. 11).

32 Ibid. 45.

33 Ibid. 80. Read *qirn* for *qarn*.

subsequently swindles into paying for a costly feast.³⁴ In a similar manner, the *Maqāma* of Qazvin (*al-Qazwīniyya*) shows the rogue insinuating himself into a Muslim raiding party by claiming to have converted to Islam from paganism, which he describes in sumptuous detail. He then exploits the zeal of the Muslim fighters with an emotional speech and, through a rhetorical sleight of hand, requests that they aid him against the Byzantines with a generous donation to his personal coffers. He concludes his appeal by claiming a special relationship with God, as he promises to recompense any gesture of charity with two arrows: “One I will sharpen for our engagement [with the enemy]; the other will I notch with prayer (*bi-l-du‘ā*) and pelt the gates of heaven with my bow of burning thirst.”³⁵ In the end, Abū l-Faṭḥ’s ruse, though easily recognized by the narrator, succeeds in attaining its material objectives.

One of the more interesting twists on this piety-used-to-deceive theme appears in those instances where Abū l-Faṭḥ’s hypocrisy is allowed to achieve its goals only because of the underlying pretensions of the society in which it functions. Here, al-Hamadhānī describes a world in which hypocrisy, in all its forms, permeates every demographic of society, and the only difference between the deceit of Abū l-Faṭḥ and the pious ostentation of everyday people is one of degree. In the *Maqāma* of Mosul (*al-Mawṣiliyya*), by way of example, Abū l-Faṭḥ’s ingenious escape from the cheated villagers pivots upon the latter’s unwillingness to contravene the protocols of “pious” performance during the group prayer. Though they feared that he might have dozed off during the prostration, “they dared not lift their heads until he signaled for the sitting position” (*kabbara*). The predictability of the villagers’ mechanical performance enables Abū l-Faṭḥ and ‘Īsā b. Hishām to escape with their plunder without even knowing the eventual fate of their victims.³⁶

Almost the exact same scenario is reproduced in the *Maqāma* of Isfahan (*al-Isfahāniyya*), and this time the narrator finds himself unable to escape from a particularly long public prayer, as he fears for his life from the ferocity (*khu-shūna*) of the local population.³⁷ The inconvenience of his forced piety is so great, in fact, that when the prayer finally concludes, the narrator exclaims, “God has eased my exit and deliverance is at hand!”³⁸—a declaration appropriate to times of calamity and extreme tribulation. The narrator’s pious performance to this point has been motivated, at least partially, by fear of phys-

34 Ibid. 60–62.

35 Read *al-ḡamā’* for *al-ḡalmā’*. Ibid. 90 (see fn. 3 for this alternate reading).

36 Ibid. 103.

37 Ibid. 51–52.

38 Ibid. 53.

ical harm, but it shifts to a concern for his reputation once an unrecognized Abū l-Faṭḥ solicits money from the congregation immediately after the prayer. When Abū l-Faṭḥ announces to the congregation, “Whoever among you loves the Companions of the Prophet and the community of believers, lend me his ears for a moment,” the narrator immediately recognizes the public shame that awaits him should he rush away to overtake his caravan, explaining, “So I stuck to my place to preserve my dignity.” The beggar continues to exploit the power of social pressure when he subsequently declares to his audience that he will not share the “glad tidings” that he has received from the Prophet “until God cleanses this mosque of every depraved soul who rejects his prophetic office.”³⁹ The pressure, in fact, is so great for the narrator that he explains, “[His words] thus bound me with palm fibers and fastened me with iron cables” (*bi-l-ḥibāl al-sūd*).⁴⁰ In other words, the narrator’s social sensibilities leave him utterly powerless in such a situation, and his free will is effectively taken from him owing to the coercive nature of social performances.

To put the above examples in conversation with satire, we must ask: Is *al-Isfahāniyya* intended purely for the sake of literary gymnastics and entertainment—hypocrisy being a particularly humorous theme to play off—or does it in fact offer insights into al-Hamadhānī’s larger satirical objectives? Though they are no doubt exaggerated and embellished for the sake of literary appeal, Abū l-Faṭḥ’s ruses reflect phenomena to which the author’s intended audience could certainly relate. The wit employed by al-Hamadhānī, moreover, serves as a literary device by way of which “vice and folly are exposed to critical analysis,” for the “satiric spirit seems to fuse most readily with the comic genres.”⁴¹ Rather than confining the vice of hypocrisy to subtext, al-Hamadhānī brings it to the foreground for public display; it is no longer a subconscious reading of other peoples’ actions but now a tangible facet of human behavior that has been stripped of its subtleties. Furthermore, al-Hamadhānī spares no sphere of his fictitious society from the various faces of hypocrisy. Although Abū l-Faṭḥ embodies the premeditated extreme of pious deceit, his targets are often tugged by the nose rings of their own hypocrisies, which, in turn, enable Abū l-Faṭḥ’s ruses to succeed.

39 Ibid. 53. For the translation “Prophetic office” (*nubū’atah*), see Prendergast, *Maqāmāt* 58.

40 Read *bi-l-masūd* for *bi-l-quyūd*. Al-Hamadhānī, *Maqāmāt* 53 (see fn. 6 for this alternate reading).

41 Elliott, *Satire* 248–249.

3 External Piety and Internal Corruption

A related theme of the *Maqāmāt*—one that is as equally noteworthy as the piety-used-to-deceive theme, albeit less frequent—is al-Hamadhānī’s description of characters who reveal stark incongruities between their external façades and their internal states.⁴² Here, in other words, we find characters in the *Maqāmāt* who stand not to gain materially through their performance of piety but who rather embody hypocrisy for hypocrisy’s sake. Although Hämeen-Anttila notes that “the concepts of *bāṭin* and *zāhir* are, in fact, central for the *Maqāmas*, as the hero’s *zāhir* always diverges from his *bāṭin*,”⁴³ Abū l-Faṭḥ’s hypocritical behavior remains largely a performance with a tangible objective in mind, as we have seen above. Al-Hamadhānī, however, also includes instances of hypocrisy in his *Maqāmāt* whereby false piety defines a character’s true essence, while the author shows no intention of eliciting sympathy from his readers for such a character. An example of this is described vicariously on the tongue of Abū l-Faṭḥ in the *Maqāma* of Nishapur (*al-Naysābūriyya*), where the author directs a scathing diatribe against an unidentified judge who might otherwise uphold all of the injunctions of outward piety:

He is a worm who falls only upon the woolen [garments] of orphans; a locust who pounces only on forbidden fields; a thief who bores only into the vault of charitable endowments; a Kurd who raids only the weak; a wolf who ravages the servants of God only between his bowing and prostrating;⁴⁴ an insurgent who plunders God’s property only [behind the cover of] agreements and witnesses. He has donned his *danniyya* hat and yet divested himself of his devotion (*dīniyyatah*).⁴⁵ He has smoothed his shawl and yet corrupted his hand and tongue; trimmed his mustache

42 Kilito tracks the role of incongruity in the *Maqāmāt* from the level of characters’ actions to incongruities in their use of grammar and oratory; his conclusion is that incongruity allows one to appreciate the standards of congruity from a position of distance. Kilito, *Maqāmāt* 37–42.

43 Hämeen-Anttila, *Maqāma* 22 (fn. 20).

44 ‘Abduh explains that the bowing and prostrating could describe the actions of the servants of God or those of the wolf; I have opted for the latter interpretation because it better parallels the metaphor that follows. Al-Hamadhānī, *Maqāmāt* 199–200 (fn. 7).

45 Prendergast notes that one of the few descriptions of the man, that he had tied the extremity of his turban under his throat (*taḥannaka*), is in accordance with a Prophetic injunction, as relayed by Ibn al-Athīr. Prendergast, *Maqāmāt* 150 (fn. 4). The man’s donning of a hat known as a “*danniyya*” suggests that he is a judge according to ‘Abduh and Lane (s.v. “d-n-n”). Al-Hamadhānī, *Maqāmāt* 199 (fn. 2).

and yet let loose his snares.⁴⁶ He has evinced his clamoring bombast (*shaqāshiqah*) and yet covered up his fraudulence. He has whitened his beard but blackened his book of deeds (*ṣahīfatah*).⁴⁷ He has flaunted his scrupulous piety (*wara'ah*) and yet concealed his covetousness.⁴⁸

The sentences above juxtapose the external behavior of their subject with his internal vileness; they do so in a quick and acoustically pleasing style that functions to shake the audience awake to the absurdities inherent in these contradictions. Beyond serving as a personal invective against corrupt Muslim judges, the passage functions more generally as a condemnation of those who appear externally upright—or who abuse the letter of the law by hiding “behind the cover of agreements and witnesses”—but who are in essence misanthropes. It is noteworthy that al-Hamadhānī’s judge above does not necessarily draw upon his piety to exploit his victims, but rather he fouls the image of piety through his wickedness.

What, then, is the aim of such an exercise? Perhaps Kennedy’s reading of a call for “a proper sense of context and social occasion” in *al-Khamriyya* could apply equally well to *al-Naysābūriyya*. According to al-Qāḍī’s research on al-Hamadhānī’s *Rasā’il*, the knowledge and careful observation of correct social status, and the communal obligation to maintain a well-defined social order, are essential virtues and the key to the overall health of society.⁴⁹ Individuals must know their position in society, and their words, deeds, and beliefs must display a basic congruence. In fact, it is on account of their egregious two-facedness that al-Hamadhānī delivers especially vitriolic attacks in his *Rasā’il* against the rulers, secretaries, and judges of his time.⁵⁰ He excoriates the judges, in particular, for all of the transgressions noted in the passage above, including their acting unjustly toward the poor and orphans and their fleecing of waqfs. According to al-Hamadhānī, they do so, moreover, while remaining committed to outward displays of piety and status, which appear in the form of specialized hats and mantles, white beards and short mustaches, and “clamoring bombast.”⁵¹ In contrast, al-Hamadhānī at times seems to prefer public vice

46 Trimming of the mustache is in accordance with a Prophetic injunction. See, inter alia, *Ṣahīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Libās: Bāb Qaṣṣ al-shārib.

47 cf. Q 81:10.

48 al-Hamadhānī, *Maqāmāt* 199–200.

49 al-Qāḍī, *Badī’ al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī* 210–211, and *passim*.

50 *Ibid.* 220–221.

51 al-Hamadhānī, *Kashf al-ma’ānī* 162–173. Elsewhere in the author’s *Maqāma* of the Levant (*al-Shāmīyya*), which ‘Abduh does not include in his edition of the *Maqāmāt*, ‘Isā b. Hishām plays the role of a judge and threatens the plaintiff Abū l-Faṭḥ with haughty lan-

to hypocrisy. His condemnations of al-Kh^wārizmī's licentious behavior and of his own father's public consumption of alcohol in his *Rasā'il*, for example, function more as afterthoughts than judgments. The author does not dwell upon these sins in his letters, because—if for no other reason—they are done openly, and their perpetrators do not claim to be other than what they are. Rather, the worst sin, in the eyes of al-Hamadhānī, is to exist within the grey intermediary between two or more character schemas of society (viz. the pious tyrant), for if a hybrid schema were to be accepted by society, the ideological fabric of that society would crumble.⁵² The hypocrite thus poses the greatest danger to society according to al-Hamadhānī, as becomes evident through a satirical reading of passages like that found in his *al-Naysābūrīyya*

4 The Parody of Religious Language

“Parody,” Robert Falk writes, “usually makes its point by employing a serious style to express an incongruous subject, thus disturbing the balance between form and matter.”⁵³ In this light, al-Hamadhānī's frequent parodying of religious language in his *Maqāmāt* serves to disturb the balance between religious devotion and the external virtues that it purports to uphold. In al-Hamadhānī's masterful hands, this literary device thus elicits a powerful dissonance in the minds of the author's audience, which ultimately helps it to achieve its satirical objectives.

Al-Hamadhānī's *Maqāma* of Advice (*al-Waṣīyya*) provides an excellent example of the author's clever use of religious parody: it represents an entire *Maqāma* dedicated to parodying a specific genre of ethical writing, namely advice literature.⁵⁴ Here, Abū l-Fatḥ is shown solemnly seating his son before him to advise the latter before his upcoming trading expedition. It is only after “praising God and extolling Him and sending blessings upon His Prophet” that he addresses his son with the intimate, “O my dear son” (*yā bunayya*)—the same address used by Luqmān in the Quran when counseling his son toward a life of piety and virtue.⁵⁵ In conformity with a traditional pious exhortation,

guage that might exemplify the “clamoring bombast” noted here. For a summary of this *maqāma*, see Orfali and Pomerantz, *Maqāmāt Badī' al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī* 46.

52 See Douglas, *Purity and danger* 45, 48–49.

53 Falk, *Parody* 183.

54 See Marlow, *Advice and advice literature*. The essay is a necessary starting place for any examination of the genre.

55 cf. Q 31:13, 16, 17. On a parallel context from al-Ḥarīrī's *Maqāmāt*, see Kilito, *Maqāmāt* 50.

Abū l-Faḥḥ commences to warn his son of what might appear to be spiritual dangers, saying, “I am ill at ease with your [ability to withstand] the id (*al-naḥs*) and its power, the caprice and its demon.”⁵⁶ It is only a few lines later that the audience abruptly learns of the “sage’s” ulterior motives: miserliness and avoiding the consequences of a prodigal son. The tone of the *maqāma* immediately shifts in a deflationary direction when Abū l-Faḥḥ, recasting a classical Arabic proverb, explains that “generosity is surely faster in [consuming] wealth than the moth-worm [wool].”⁵⁷ The remainder of the *maqāma* employs otherwise pious speech for the furthering of avarice and deceitful trade practices; it culminates with a concluding maxim and prayer by Abū l-Faḥḥ:

So be like a chess player among men: take all that they have and protect all that you have. O my dear son, I have informed (*asmaʿtu*) and transmitted! If you then accept, God will suffice you, and if you reject, God is your reckoner. And may God send blessings upon our master Muḥammad, and upon his family and companions, one and all.

The rhetorical style here is closely akin to that of the Prophet’s farewell speech, delivered at the conclusion of his farewell pilgrimage:⁵⁸ both speeches rely on a disclaimer (viz. “I have informed and transmitted”) to convey a weightiness to the matter at hand. The content of Abū l-Faḥḥ’s rendering, however, stands exactly antithetical to normative Islamic behavior, and yet it is followed by a traditional concluding prayer upon the Prophet, his family, and Companions. Al-Hamadḥānī’s parody of religious rhetoric in this instance is blunt enough to be almost slapstick. Such bluntness further assists the passage in fulfilling the satirical objectives of its author—here, perhaps, a satirical commentary on business ethics and rampant avarice within al-Hamadḥānī’s social setting.

Beyond his parodying of advice literature in *al-Waṣīyya*, al-Hamadḥānī further provides a parody of legal language in his amusing *Maqāma* of Ḥulwān (*al-Ḥulwānīyya*). While visiting a public bath on his way back from hajj, ʿĪsā b. Hishām finds himself at the center of a violent dispute between two bath attendants. In the course of their feuding over exclusive rights to the narrator’s body, the two men narrow the locus of their dispute to their client’s head. Then, after a vicious exchange of blows:

56 al-Hamadḥānī, *Maqāmāt* 204.

57 Ibid. 205. The original proverb, according to Prendergast, is “more voracious than a moth-worm” (*ākalu min al-sūs*). Prendergast, *Maqāmāt* 154 (fn. 1).

58 cf., inter alia, al-ʿAsqalānī, *Faḥḥ al-bārī* viii, 103–110.

They deferred to arbitration in the matter that they had suffered,⁵⁹ and thus approached the bath's owner. The first man said, "I am the owner of this head, as I have daubed its brow and laid clay upon it." The second man said, "Rather I am its possessor, as I massaged its bearer and kneaded his joints." The bath keeper replied, "Bring the head's owner before me that I may question him as to whether this head is yours or yours." Hence, the two came to me and said, "We require your testimony (*lanā 'indaka shahādatur*), so take [this hardship] upon yourself." So I arose and went, whether I wished to or not. The bath keeper said [to me], "Man, speak not but honesty and testify to nothing but truth. Tell me, to which of these two [men] does this head belong?" I replied, "May God relieve you! This is my head. It has accompanied me in my travels (*fī l-ṭarīq*) and has circumambulated the Ancient House with me.⁶⁰ Never have I doubted that it is mine!" He replied, "Be silent, you meddlesome man!" Thereupon, he turned toward one of the plaintiffs and said, "You!⁶¹ How much longer will you vie with people over this head? Distract yourself from its worthlessness, [as it proceeds on its course] toward the curse of God and the heat of Hell.⁶² Let us suppose that this head was never [here], and that we had never seen this jackass."⁶³

The language of the passage is not in itself absurd, but it is the absurdity of the actors' decisions, as they perform a courtroom drama for the right to another man's head, that renders the situation ludicrous. The otherwise generic judgment scene morphs into a raucous parody of legal language through the substitution of a human head for a more mundane object of dispute.⁶⁴ What emerges in the end is a caustic satire of court proceedings, their detachment from reality, and the legal Manichaeism that al-Hamadhānī believes has pervaded the

59 Read *laqīyā* for *baqīyā*. Al-Hamadhānī, *Maqāmāt* 172 (fn. 5).

60 That is, the Ka'ba in Mecca. See Q 22:29.

61 *Yā hādhā*. Al-Hamadhānī portrays the bath keeper's terms of address as rudely informal and thus despotic.

62 I have opted for 'Abduh's second interpretation of this sentence. He also proposes that the curse of God and the heat of Hell could serve as an effective means of distraction for the plaintiff. Al-Hamadhānī, *Maqāmāt* 173 (fn. 3). Lane explains that *saqar* (here, "Hell") is either a foreign word or derives from *s-q-r* and thus means "the painful scorcher." See Lane, *Arabic-English lexicon*, s.v. "s-q-r"; cf. Q 54:48, and 74:26, 27, and 42.

63 al-Hamadhānī, *Maqāmāt* 172–173. The Arabic *tays* literally translates to "goat," though I have opted for "jackass" here as it better captures the connotations of stupidity in the Arabic term. See Lane, *Arabic-English lexicon*, s.v. "t-y-s."

64 For an analysis of the language of this *maqāma* and its larger literary function, see Kilito, *Maqāmāt* 40–41.

courts of his society. In fact, the author in his *Rasā'il* condemns the judges of his time not so much for their blatant despotism as for their ignorant intransigence, which usually stems from their irreligious upbringing.⁶⁵ Similarly, as the passage above illustrates, the bath keeper's superficial and detached understanding of the law only fuels his arrogance and despotism.

5 The Appeal to Virtue

Though the majority of the *Maqāmāt* demand a satirical reading to reconcile their content with the attitudes and ideals of their author, a minority reflect the virtues that al-Hamadhānī holds dear in a more direct manner. If we once again consider satire's internal pressure toward order "from the arrangement of vice and the appeal to virtue," as has been theorized by Elliott, the presence of such "principled" *Maqāmāt* is no anomaly but rather an essential prescriptive ingredient within al-Hamadhānī's satirical project. These *Maqāmāt* provide, according to Elliott, an explicit appeal "to virtue and rational behavior—to a norm, that is, against which the vicious and the foolish are to be judged."⁶⁶ Whether or not we impose a theoretical order onto the *Maqāmāt* based upon an anticipated structural shift from vice toward virtue,⁶⁷ the author's explicit appeals to virtue, both in his *Maqāmāt* and his *Rasā'il*, are critical to understanding his satirical intentions and method. If we fail to take these appeals to virtue into consideration, a satirical reading of the *Maqāmāt* would be impossible.

The *Maqāma* of Ahwaz (*al-Ahwāziyya*), for instance, finds the narrator and his young companions contemplating a night of drinking and revelry when they are interrupted by an ascetic, carrying a bier, who warns them of their impending death and judgment before God. The words of the old man move the youths to abandon their habits, and when they offer him "whatever [he] desires of the comforts and adornments of the world,"⁶⁸ the man replies that he

65 al-Qāḍī, *Baḍī' al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī* 220–221.

66 Elliott, *Satire* 248.

67 Admittedly, later arrangers of the *Maqāmāt* did not follow such a theoretical order, as is gathered from the manuscript tradition. On the other hand, of the three *Maqāmāt* mentioned here, one (*al-Wā'ziyya*) appears toward the end (number 44 of 50) of the second oldest extant manuscript of al-Hamadhānī's *Maqāmāt*, while another (*al-Ilmīyya*) appears consistently in the concluding ten *Maqāmāt* of the minority of manuscripts that contain it at all. See Orfali and Pomerantz, *Assembling an author* 108–109, 116–117.

68 al-Hamadhānī, *Maqāmāt* 58. I have relied upon 'Abduh's explanation of the exchange (at fn. 3).

needs nothing but that they “bolt forth [unto right action] rather than contemplate [his mere words].” What is perhaps most unusual about the anonymous ascetic emerges from an alternate ending of a different manuscript which is noted by both ‘Abduh and Prendergast in their footnotes; it reads: “Then I approached [the man], and lo and behold, by God, it was our shaykh Abū l-Faṭḥ al-Iskandarī!”⁶⁹

In a similar fashion, the *Maqāma* of Exhortation (*al-Wa‘ẓiyya*) depicts Abū l-Faṭḥ as a sincere sermonizer and a repentant sinner. The language of this and *al-Ahwāziyya* would fall within the genre of *zuhdiyyāt* (self-denial) poetry and prose, which the author imitates with no hint of parody.⁷⁰ Another example of al-Hamadhānī’s appeal to virtue appears in his *Maqāma* of Knowledge (*al-‘Ilmiyya*). Here, through the speech of Abū l-Faṭḥ, al-Hamadhānī provides a brief but detailed overview of his own romantic conceptions of true knowledge and the practices and tools necessary for its acquisition.⁷¹ Once again, the author depicts Abū l-Faṭḥ as both sincere in speech and as the exemplar of a virtue that is lauded in his *Rasā’il*.

The three *Maqāmāt* noted above are unique only in their explicitness. Of course, al-Hamadhānī’s values are reflected throughout the *Maqāmāt*, but these three *Maqāmāt* communicate such values directly, while the majority of the *Maqāmāt* rely on parody, irony, and humor to communicate the author’s values indirectly through satire. In the end, both literary approaches are necessary to meeting al-Hamadhānī’s satirical objectives.

The intention behind this essay has been to argue for a satirical reading of the *Maqāmāt* in order to reconcile its content with what we know of al-Hamadhānī’s personal convictions and ethical attitudes and to enhance the text’s structural integrity as well as its value as a literary artifact for contemporary readers. This is hardly the last word on the subject, and many avenues for future research on the *Maqāmāt* remain open, including future research into al-Hamadhānī’s use of satire. Comparative research on other satirical texts from Buyid times would especially complement the study, as would studies into the reception of the *Maqāmāt* and its satirical implications for later collections within the genre. In other words, can we find some of the satirical themes out-

69 al-Hamadhānī, *Maqāmāt* 58. ‘Abduh explains that if this reading is in fact correct, it is surely a “temporary lapse” (*falta*) on the part of Abū l-Faṭḥ. Cf. Hämeen-Anttila, who writes, “There is no reason to equate him with Abū l-Faṭḥ.” Hämeen-Anttila, *Maqāma* 59; cf. Kilito, who finds it unproblematic that Abū l-Faṭḥ might appear as a pious figure, as “disruptiveness is what defines his character.” Kilito, *Maqāmāt* 38.

70 See section three (“The literature of asceticism”) of Melchert, *Asceticism*.

71 See al-Qāḍī, Badī’ al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī 203–204.

lined above reproduced in later *maqāmāt* collections? If so, how do they differ, and do these differences parallel differences in the societies of the texts' respective authors? These and similar questions merit attention and are likely to yield important insights into al-Hamadhānī and his timeless *Maqāmāt*.

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Doctrinal Anxiety and Social Reality regarding Music and Dance in Mamluk Cairo

Ibn al-Ḥājj on al-Samāʿ, To Sing or Not: The Case against Music

Li Guo

In the year 661/1262–1263, the beginning of Mamluk sultan Baybars's reign (r. 658–676/1260–1277), word reached Cairo that some village people had been found clapping hands, singing and dancing, accompanied by tambourines and reed flutes, inside a mosque. The judgment against such practice, the so-called *samāʿ*, came down fast and furious according to Ibn al-Ḥājj (d. 737/1336), a Cairo-based Maliki jurist who later cited the event as a case study for his own verdict against music. The Shafīʿis called it “a disgusting distraction” (*lahw makrūh*); the Malikis recommended the expulsion of the transgressors from the mosque; the Hanbalis denounced the rights of these transgressors to lead prayers and even to witness marriage contracts in the future; whereas the Hanafis suggested to “throw away the rugs and to dust off the ground on which people danced.”¹ In his *Manual of ethics*, best-known as the *Madkhal*, Ibn al-Ḥājj goes on to explain why this ought to be so. There were many unsavory things in Cairo that could enrage the stern jurist—the *samāʿ* was no music to his ears.

It is commonly held that Islamic religious tradition was uneasy about, and often hostile to, all forms of entertainment, especially music and dance. Over time, some ambiguity remains. By the post-Mongol period, in the wake of the so-called “Sunni revival,” the call against music took a much sharper tone. One need only to glance at the litany of exhortations by the likes of Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328), Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 751/1349), Ibn Jamāʿa (d. 733/1332), Badr al-Dīn al-ʿAynī (d. 855/1453), al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505), and Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852/1449), to name a few.² Amidst this chorus against music was Ibn al-Ḥājj, whose view on the subject has yet to be analyzed by modern scholars (to the best of my knowledge). It is worthy of exploring, insofar as it offers a Maliki synthesis with a localized agenda. What interests me here is not the con-

¹ Ibn al-Ḥājj, *Madkhal* ii, 76.

² Kister, “Exert yourselves” 53–78.

clusion (since we know that already), but the ways by which the Maliki jurist articulated his views on the subject.

Titled “Fi l-samā‘ wa-kayfiyyatihi wa-mā yumna‘ minhu wa-mā yajūz” (On the *samā‘*: How to go about, what to do, and what not to), the chapter occurs in the third part (*juz’*) of the *Madkhal*.³ Like other chapters in the book, it frames the discourse within the author’s core doctrine of “virtuous behaviors stemmed from noble intentions (*al-niyya*),” which is spelled out in the title of the book. After a scolding opening statement condemning all forms of music making, comes a loosely organized series of topical elucidations of the subject. It begins with the alleged pagan origins of the *samā‘* ritual and moves on to the danger of *samā‘* performance in the public sphere—such as in mosques, Sufi convents, and religious schools—as witnessed in Cairo and the Egyptian countryside. This is followed by further elaboration of the rationale behind banning music, which, in the author’s words, “spies on one’s heart, robs one’s masculinity and sound mind [and] ... deludes one’s heart into hallucinations and imaginations.”⁴ Next, one finds segments that take a question-and-answer format dealing with a variety of scenarios pertaining to *samā‘*-related activities, such as the use of certain musical instruments, clothing, and costumes of the performers, certain physical postures and body movements, and so forth. For social historians, this portion is perhaps the more valuable, insofar as the questions posed had apparently come from the author’s circles in Cairo, and his answers would have contained observations and comments beyond formulaic doctrinal preponderances. Music and dance, Ibn al-Ḥājj concludes, is just one of the sources of *fitna*, namely “temptations” in this world that would divert a Muslim away from the righteous path to God and salvation. The imminent danger, as he emphasizes, is the wrong association of such *fitna*-prone activities—in the form of *samā‘* rituals during *dhikr* and *mawlid* celebrations—with true belief and true faith in Islam.

1 The Anti-Sufi Platform from a Maliki Perspective

It is clear that what Ibn al-Ḥājj targeted here is musical performance in general, but more so the Sufi styled *samā‘*.⁵ The chapter was purportedly prompted by the query of a man who had decided to lead a secluded ascetic life of “fast-

3 Ibn al-Ḥājj, *Madkhal* ii, 71–96.

4 Ibn al-Ḥājj, *Madkhal* ii, 71–72.

5 This anti-Sufi tendency of the *Madkhal* has been pointed out by Lutfi, *Manners and customs* 99–121.

ing, avoiding excessive eating and drinking, abstention from carnal desires, and staying silent,” seeking to enjoy “the blessings of seclusion (*al-khalwa*; the term also denotes Sufi retreat) and abstention,” and to avoid “indulging in curious impulses.” The author warns him that seclusion without proper guidance could lead him astray, given that the majority of ascetic-minded folk in his time ended up taking on a Sufi “mantle” (*al-khirqa*) or lifestyle that featured, ironically, “frequent gatherings” of *dhikr* during which singing (*al-samāʿ*) and dancing were an integral part of the ritual. The way Ibn al-Ḥājj saw it, this kind of activity would lead to various “states” (*ahwāl*) of ecstasy that were “psychotic (*naḥsāniyya*) and satanic.”⁶

In his all-out fight against the Sufi styled *samāʿ*, the Maliki jurist was nevertheless walking a delicate line, given the close affinity between the Maliki school and Sufism.⁷ It therefore comes as no surprise that Ibn al-Ḥājj’s articulation is often supported by direct citations from none but the earliest Sufi masters. This strategy of putting early masters against misguided later practitioners is best demonstrated in the following example, when the author cites al-Junayd (d. 297/910) to denounce Sufi practices in his own time. That the master al-Junayd had shunned *samāʿ* practices must have been common knowledge in Mamluk Cairo, insofar as a question was raised as to “why did al-Junayd refuse to attend the *samāʿ*?” Seizing upon the opportunity (or perhaps the question itself was made up on purpose), Ibn al-Ḥājj offers a detailed description of a *samāʿ* session witnessed by al-Junayd that apparently went wrong. Ibn al-Ḥājj was careful to note that the *samāʿ*, as described in the classical Sufi literature of tenth-century Baghdad, might not be exactly the same as that practiced in fourteenth-century Cairo, but the essential ingredients remained the same:

Rarely could anyone remain unharmed by the presence of women in places even under surveillance, on rooftops and elsewhere, while these women listened to poetry that would incite chaos (*al-fitna*), carnal lust, and sexual desire. It disturbs their peace and tranquility, in that singing is the incantation of fornication (*al-zinā*) because these women lack intelligence and faith. To add the fact that they might gain intimate access to men, and vice versa, the greatest *fitna* and calamity are waiting to happen. This is particularly true when the singer happens to be a handsome lad with a charming voice, who behaves in the manner of show girls, shak-

6 Ibn al-Ḥājj, *Madkhal* ii, 71–72.

7 On the close association of the Malikis and “classical” Iraqi Sufis, see Knysh, *Islamic mysticism* 86–87.

ing [their bodies], gesturing with those disgusting dirty moves. He (the male singer) would put on make-up, wear silk, fine fabric, and so forth. Some of them would even go further in stirring up the *fitna* by hanging amber necklaces around their clothes so they would smell nice; some would cover their heads with silk turbans that has wide colorful tinsels dangling like fancy braids on their foreheads. They have many ways to incite the *fitna*, too many to list here.⁸

With his trademark gusto, Ibn al-Ḥājj cries out:

How bizarre it is, then, for a poor man (*miskīn*) to arrange a *samāʿ* session for the folks and bring them together, [claiming] to pacify their minds, only to witness his fellow Sufi practitioners in the horrible situation described above? It is an utter disgrace, a grave *fitna*. Who can be safe from listening to it, and seeing it? ... Where is decency and honor (*ghayra*)? Where lies the salvation for virtuous men and women? Where are the noble determinations to fight off illicit activities? Where are the followers of the noble Salaf?⁹

Ibn al-Ḥājj's attack is, as usual, vengeful, and his language inflammatory. Responding to a question regarding an unnamed, most likely contemporary, Sufi shaykh's advocacy of the *samāʿ* by the analogue that a child would calm down upon hearing a soothing humming (*al-ghināʾ*) while a camel would suffer under harsh driving chanting, Ibn al-Ḥājj scolds, "animals can be incited by any sound, ... they circle around their mothers and sisters and ride their daughters! How awful for those folks—comparing themselves to animals!"¹⁰

A repeated theme, and favorite line of attack, is the Sufis' "indulgence in carnal desires" during their *samāʿ*-related activities: chanting, dancing, "compulsive excessive eating," and sex orgy. This music-food-sex symbiosis is further manifested in the alleged Sufi habit of including in their *dhikr* gatherings beardless boys wearing heavy make-up and sporting fancy clothes and opulent jewelry. The lengthy segment on the association of sodomy with Sufis, a conventional line of attack, is reiterated here.¹¹ Worse still for the author were other *samāʿ*-related phenomena, such as "beating drums, dancing and clap-

8 Ibn al-Ḥājj, *Madkhal* ii, 96.

9 Ibid. ii, 96.

10 Ibid. ii, 86.

11 Ibid. ii, 89–92.

ping, and shaving heads, as well as rending and shedding garments (*takhrīq al-thiyāb* and *tamzīq al-thiyāb*) under the spell of a music-induced trance.¹² Such acts, the author emphasizes, trace back to early Islam, and were condemned in Prophetic hadiths and by early Salafi authors, as well as by Sufi masters. It was, however, the anxiety over all things Sufi that ran amok in his own time (*hādhā l-zamān*), the post-Mongol Mamluk era, that really concerned the Maliki moralist.

Ibn al-Ḥājj's overall method is typical of that of medieval Islamic legal and ethics discourse. Verses from the Quran would be cited, to be followed by hadith quotations, then earlier writings, and finally the author's own comments. Time and again, Mālik is quoted, if possible. Regarding chanting the Quran (*al-alḥān*), for example, Mālik once declared that he disliked the practice "because it resembles singing (*al-ghinā'*)."¹³ But overall, the gap between classical discourse and Ibn al-Ḥājj's own is largely filled in by two Maliki masters of Muslim Spain: al-Ṭurṭūshī (d. 520/1126) and Muḥammad al-Qurṭubī (d. 671/1273). It is worth noting that while al-Qurṭubī's Quranic commentary, *al-Jāmi' li-aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, is noted for its utility and effective use of hadith material, his comments pertaining to music cite heavily from al-Ṭurṭūshī's treatise *Kitāb al-naḥy 'an al-aghānī*.¹⁴ It is also significant to note that Ibn al-Ḥājj did not cite any of his contemporaries, other than making vague statements like "the ulema said ..." It goes without saying that his presentation is to be viewed as an updated Maliki synthesis on the subject, to which I now turn.

2 A Maliki Hermeneutic Synthesis

Throughout his work, Ibn al-Ḥājj is often ready to admit that the hermeneutic formulas on which some commentators built their cases were, for the most part, a rather arbitrary exercise; worse still, they could also be used to support the legitimacy of music and dance. The opening segment of the chapter illustrates such trends. The chapter originated as an answer to a query from some Sufi practitioners, arguing that dancing during the *samā'* helped them "open up" to enlightenment and God. Some even went further to note that prayer itself could be seen as a form of dance, in that the act of *qiyām al-faqīr lil-raḡṣ* (the

12 Ibid. ii, 92–93.

13 Ibid. ii, 86–87.

14 No reference could be found; it is likely the same as the text known as *Kitāb taḥrīm al-ghinā' wa-l-samā'*. It was cited as the source for Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya as well; see Kister, "Exert yourselves" 63–65.

Sufi's rising up to dance) was reminiscent of the "rising up" (*qāmū*) of the men in the cave described in the Quran (Q 18:14). "Nonsense," says Ibn al-Ḥājj, citing al-Qurṭubī. The "tapping on the ground and dancing by wavering sleeves upon hearing the enchanting voices of the beardless youth and women" has nothing to do with the sober Quranic injunction for the believers to "rise up" and prostrate to God.¹⁵

As one can see, the Quranic verse cited here on "rising up" does not address dance directly. It was used by commentators for elaboration and insinuation. As a matter of fact, none of the terms used by the ulema in their discourse on music and dance—*samā'*, *raqṣ*, *ghinā'*—appears in the Quran at all. Ibn Taymiyya, the Damascene Hanbali, for example, quotes the Quran extensively in his treatise on music, but not a single Quranic word cited by him denotes "music" or "dance" per se.¹⁶

In the case of Ibn al-Ḥājj, of the 18 Quranic verses quoted in this chapter, only a few (4, to be exact) deal with music in some way, in light of the commentators' interpretations (see Appendix), while the remainder touch upon related issues, such as illicit sexual and same-sex acts supposedly induced by music. It is also remarkable that the Quranic verses cited by Ibn al-Ḥājj are not the same quoted by Ibn Taymiyya (except for one; see Appendix). This raises the question of how the ulema went about their business of issuing verdicts and opinions by negotiating between consensus building, schematic and sectarian preferences, and individual creativity, all in the name of the Quran. In this regard, Ibn al-Ḥājj's method is worthy of examination.

Responding to the question "When is music allowed (*yajūz*), if at all?" Ibn al-Ḥājj first refers to al-Qurṭubī's commentary on the *lahw al-ḥadīth* verse. In light of the commentators' interpretation of the phrase *lahw al-ḥadīth*, the conceptual core that ties all forms of musical performance—vocal, instrumental, and dancing—together is the wholesale condemnation of *al-lahw*. The "classical" interpretation of *lahw al-ḥadīth* as *al-ghinā' wa-l-mazāmīr* (singing, chanting, and playing flutes) is further insinuated as the incantation of fornication.¹⁷ This same verse is cited by Ibn al-Ḥājj repeatedly to back up his proclamation that "[playing] the lute, mandolin, and other kinds of instruments (*sā'ir al-malāhī*)¹⁸

15 Ibn al-Ḥājj, *Madkhal* ii, 72.

16 Shehadi, *Philosophies of music* 95–114, contains an analysis of Ibn Taymiyya's treatise, *Majmū'at al-rasā'il al-kubrā* (*Risāla* no. 13). Ibn Taymiyya's holistic take on the subject differs from Ibn al-Ḥājj's, with more philosophical orientation, citing Greek sources and philosophical works of al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā, in a point-by-point assault against music and dance.

17 Kister, "Exert yourselves" 67–68.

18 Musicians—instrumental and vocal—are often referred to in the sources as *arbāb al-*

is illicit (*ḥarām*); he who listens to the playing is morally corrupt (*fāsiq*).¹⁹ On another occasion, after citing the verse and elaborating on a much-quoted hadith (via ‘Ā’isha): “He who dies while keeping a singing girl at his side, do not pray for him.” Ibn al-Ḥājj concludes with his (and al-Qurṭubī’s) summary:

It is exactly because of these [negative] impacts [of music on people] that the ‘*ulamā*’ banned singing, namely the kind of singing that people are familiar with, the kind that stirs up hearts, inciting them into passionate infatuation (*al-hawā*), flirtation (*al-ghazal*), and debauchery (*al-mujūn*), which disturbs one’s peaceful mind and releases one’s suppressed [desires]. For this sort [of music], when sung with lyrics that rhapsodize about the beloved, describe their beauty, mention wine and illicit activities, no one disputes the ban on it. This kind of entertainment (*al-lahw*) and singing (*al-ghinā’*) was denounced by all.²⁰

Taken together, it is the effective use of hadith material for Quranic commentary that distinguishes the Maliki ulema from their peers. As this chapter shows, the Quranic verses, as metaphorical and allusive as they usually are, were being elaborated extensively through the selected hadith quotations that tend to be overtly hostile to purchasing singing girls, acquiring musicians, enjoying musical performance, and entertainment at large. The segment on the danger of *samā’* performance in public places, the longest segment in the chapter, is laced with elaborate discussion, based on the famous, and selected, hadith accounts that forbid raising one’s voice in chanting the Quran, selling, buying, reading poetry, and even shaving inside a mosque. Ibn al-Ḥājj extended the list of taboos to include dance, specifically targeting the related *tawājud* exercise, namely dance-induced ecstasy in Sufi prayers.

The following example illustrates yet another case of using this approach. Regarding the theme of the non-Islamic origins of the *samā’* rituals, citing al-Qurṭubī, Ibn al-Ḥājj refers to the “dance” (*qāmū*) described in the Quran (Q 18:14) as a pagan practice. Its danger lies in *takhlīt*, namely the free mingling of men, women, and beardless boys in public. To add enchanting sounds of music and suggestive body moves in dancing creates a calamity ready to explode. Worse still, the Sufi practice of bowing to the master during and after the ritualistic dance was no more than an imitation of Christian practices.

malāhī wa-l-maghānī, or simply *aṣḥāb al-malāhī*. The term *malāhī* specifies instrumental music playing; see Lane, *Arabic-English lexicon*, s.v.

19 Ibn al-Ḥājj, *Madkhal* ii, 78.

20 Ibid. ii, 94–95.

Once again, citing al-Qurṭubī's commentary on the Mu'ādh hadith concerning whether one should bow to another human being,²¹ our author exposes another source of danger. All too often, the Maliki jurist asserts, the gathering of men and women (*al-takhlīṭ*) through the *samā'* was no more than another kind of dangerous mingling in Mamluk Cairo, along with Muslims taking Copts for neighbors and "integrating with (*mukhālaṭa*) them." They might even mistake some Christian neighbors' ways for genuine Islamic customs (*al-sunan*), "The stupid Sufis act like [Christians] during their *samā'* ... Let them get lost! May their efforts fail!"²²

Speaking of protecting the integrity of the sunna, Ibn al-Ḥājj quickly rises to preempt yet another hypothetical challenge, namely the Salafī tradition that seemed to endorse the *samā'*. Some, for example, pointed out that Mālik b. Anas had himself accepted *samā'* as a Medinan practice. How then, they asked, did one justify the wholesale condemnation of the *samā'* in Mamluk Cairo by his followers, attributing it to Christian and Persian influences, given that *al-samā'*—namely, raising one's voice while reciting poetry—had long been known among the Arabs? The issue here, Ibn al-Ḥājj explains, is whether certain activities—categorized as *al-samā'*, *al-lahw*, and *al-la'b* and documented in sources as having been practiced by early Muslims (*al-salaf*)—should be allowed to continue. Citing another Maliki master from Muslim Spain, Razīn b. Mu'āwiya's (date unknown) notion that some later scholars wrongly attributed novel meanings to the ancient terms, Ibn al-Ḥājj's argument is that the *samā'* witnessed in Mamluk Egypt is not the same as that practiced in Medina in early Islam, therefore the lore around it ought not to be necessarily taken as a legitimate element of the sunna. He then pointedly elucidates the conditions and limitations of the *samā'*, even within early Sufi circles, through quotations from Iraqi Baghdadi Sufi masters, especially the ones representing the so-called "sober" trend of Islamic mysticism, al-Junayd and Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī (d. 386/996). They all, according to Ibn al-Ḥājj, reached a consensus on banning clapping, tambourine, and reed flute.²³

21 Mu'ādh b. Jabal, a Syrian convert, asked the Prophet whether he should bow to him in the way his fellow Syrians did to bishops and cardinals; hence the famous hadith.

22 Ibn al-Ḥājj, *Madkhal* ii, 73.

23 Ibn al-Ḥājj, *Madkhal* ii, 73–75.

3 Concluding Remarks: Doctrinal Anxiety vs. Social Reality

Overall, Ibn al-Ḥājj's opinions of music and dance stay close to the mainstream Sunni discourse at the time. Similar to Ibn Taymiyya's treatise on the same subject, Ibn al-Ḥājj's chapter also features an anti-Sufi platform; but, unlike that of his Damascene colleague, his is a response to the reality on the ground of Mamluk Cairo. Our investigation has shown the usefulness and limitations of Ibn al-Ḥājj's method of blending hermeneutic spins, legal maneuvers, and social comments. The Maliki ulema's creative use of hadith material for Quranic commentary is well demonstrated herein. To use early Sufis' anti-*samā'* traditions to fight back later Sufis' "wrongful" practices is another creative strategic tool utilized effectively by Ibn al-Ḥājj. The ulema from Muslim Spain loom large in his deliberation as well.

The general hostility towards singing and dancing among the Sunni ulema in the Mamluk period stemmed from their doctrinal anxiety in the post-Mongol era. But ideal is one thing and reality another. Alongside its prohibitions, Ibn al-Ḥājj's chapter on music also must address the permissible practices (*mā yajūz*). Regarding musical performance in everyday situations, the Maliki jurist largely tows the mainstream line: "As for the kind [of music] that is clean from (*salima*) that (the *samā'*-induced *fitna*), a bit of it (*al-qalīl*) at joyful times, such as weddings and festivals, should be permitted. It should also be allowed when people are undertaking activities that involve hard labor, such as digging ditches." Ibn al-Ḥājj also quotes from another Sufi master from Muslim Spain, Ibn al-'Arabī (d. 638/1240), that there is little harm in beating drums on the battlefield since it solidifies morale and terrifies the enemy. But he is quick to come back to cite Mālik, his master, in the latter's strong "dislike" of singing (*al-ghinā'*).²⁴ So ambiguity persists, even for a purist like Ibn al-Ḥājj.

As for the Mamluk rulers, their refusal to patronize entertainment and music, which was well documented and highlighted in chronicles, could thus be explained away as a policy-based measure that reflected their own anxiety over political legitimation and societal control during challenging times. Although the policy was largely in tune with the lines drawn by the "Sunni consensus," some leeway was also opened up, under certain circumstances. The following incident, also taking place during Baybars's reign, is telling.

The beginning of the year 673 (July 1274) saw the arrival of the ruler of Hama, the Ayyubid scion al-Malik al-Manṣūr, in Cairo. Sultan Baybars, a former slave soldier of the Ayyubids, threw a lavish banquet, to be catered at the luxurious

24 Ibn al-Ḥājj, *Madkhal* ii, 94–95.

royal houses on Kabsh Hill, where the Syrian entourage stayed. The sultan dispatched his major domo to deliver the food and to preside over the dinner party. The Syrian historian al-Yūnīnī (d. 726/1326) related that to show “respect and admiration” to the Egyptian host, who was standing up while overseeing the banquet procession, the Syrian prince al-Malik al-Manṣūr asked the Mamluk amir to sit down with him, and “allowed” (*abāḥa*) wine to be served and music performed.²⁵ It is worth noting that this incident—of drinking, singing, and “all sorts of music playing” (*sāʿir al-malāhī*)—was not mentioned in Egyptian sources.²⁶ It does not escape notice that Baybars himself was conspicuously absent, too. Fun was evidently still to be had on his watch, nevertheless. It is true that at stake here was a different kind of musical performance, in a nonreligious setting; yet one cannot help but wonder what Ibn al-Ḥājj and his like-minded peers would have thought about the situation. At least one thing is sure: this incident did not make its way, as a case study, into the Maliki jurist’s *Manual of Ethics*. The ambiguity regarding music and dance remains.

Appendix: Quranic Verses Pertaining to Music Cited by Maliki ulema according to Ibn al-Ḥājj

Four verses from the Quran allegedly denouncing music and dance, according to the commentators (chief among them al-Qurṭubī), are quoted in the chapter:

1. The famous *lahw al-ḥadīth*, “diverting talk” (Q 31:6: “who buy diverting talk to lead astray ...”).²⁷ The term alludes to *al-ghināʾ* (singing), according to many; or *al-ghināʾ wa-l-istimāʾ ilayhi* (singing and listening to it), or *al-maʿāzif wa-l-ghināʾ* (instrumental music and singing), according to some.²⁸ The term *lahw* itself appears ten times in the Quran, carrying various meanings, from “distraction” (Q 29:64) and “amusement, sport” (Q 62:11), to “playing, pastime” (Q 21:17). Despite the generally dismissive tone, there is no overt condemnation of the *lahw* in the Quran.²⁹ The two terms, *lahw* and *laʿīb*, are used interchangeably—“the life of this world is

25 al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl* iii, 84–85.

26 Ibn ʿAbd al-Zāhir reported the visit but did not mention the banquet (*al-Rawḍ al-zāhir* 429). Al-Maqrīzī recounted the banquet but, unsurprisingly (given his idealized puritanical “Turkish” dynasty narrative), omitted the part about drinking and singing (*Mawāʿiẓ* iii, 444–445).

27 For the Quran, A.J. Arberry’s English translation is used.

28 Ibn al-Ḥājj, *Madkhal* ii, 78, 93–94.

29 Badawi et al., *Arabic-English dictionary* 854.

nothing but distraction and amusement (*lahw wa-la'ib*)" (Q 29:64). Arab philologists drew a distinction between the two, in that *lahw* "has a more general application than *la'ib*; for example, the hearing of musical instruments or the like is *lahw*, but not *la'ib*."³⁰

2. The phrase *ṣawti-ka* (Thy [seductive] voice; Q 17:64) "and startle whomsoever of them thou canst with thy voice ... But Satan promises them naught, except delusion", which is explained by commentators as *bi-l-ghinā' wa-l-mazāmīr* (by singing and playing flute). This seems relevant, insofar as the topic of the verse is the temptation of Iblīs.³¹
3. The phrase *wa-antum sāmīdūn* ("while you make merry"; Q 53:61). The rare word *sāmīd* is interpreted by commentators, according to Ibn al-Ḥājj (based on al-Ṭurṭūshī), as "singing like a donkey's braying," or "singing" in a Yemeni dialect.³²
4. The warning *lā tamshī fī l-arḍ marāḥan* ("Do not walk on earth with insolence"; Q 17:37), which alludes to dance, according to Ibn al-Ḥājj, citing al-Qurṭubī and others.³³ This verse was also quoted by Ibn Taymiyya in his refutation of dance.³⁴

In addition, some Quranic verses are related by commentators to music by association. For example, the "club scene" (*nādī-kum al-munkar*; "Practice wickedness in your party"; Q 29:29), which is interpreted by commentators as entertainment sessions and gatherings (*al-majālis wa-l-maḥāfil*) associated with the "people of the Lot," namely sodomites.³⁵

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³⁰ Lane, *Arabic-English lexicon*, s.v.

³¹ Ibn al-Ḥājj, *Madkhal* ii, 78, 95.

³² *Ibid.* ii, 78.

³³ *Ibid.* ii, 95.

³⁴ Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū'at al-rasā'il* 298.

³⁵ Ibn al-Ḥājj, *Madkhal* ii, 91–92.

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