

THE MYSTICAL TEACHINGS OF MUḤAMMAD 'ABD
AL-KARĪM AL-SAMMĀN, AN 18th CENTURY ṢŪFĪ

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on one of the most important *ṣūfī* figures of the 18th century, Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Sammān (1717/8-1775). This study examines al-Sammān’s metaphysical teachings as well as his views on ritual and devotion. In particular, we analyze the metaphysical teachings of al-Sammān’s Southeast Asian students on the concepts of God, the Cosmos and *waḥdat al-wujūd* (unity of existence). The development of the Sammānīyah *ṭarīqah* and al-Sammān’s influence on popular religion are also examined. This study shows us that al-Sammān and his Southeast Asian students were influenced by the teachings of previous *ṣūfīs*. With regard to the concept of the logos of Muḥammad, the most important of al-Sammān’s contributions is his teaching on the cult devoted to the posthumous existence of the Prophet Muḥammad.

RÉSUMÉ

Ce mémoire est consacré à un des *ṣūfīs* les plus importants du 18^{ème} siècle, Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Sammān (1717/8-1775). Cette étude tâche d’examiner les enseignements métaphysiques d’al-Sammān ainsi que sa pensée sur le culte et la dévotion. Il est aussi question des enseignements métaphysiques des étudiants de al-Sammān venant de l’Asie du Sud-Est et leur concept de Dieu, le Cosmos et le *waḥdat al-wujūd* (l’unité de l’existence). Le développement de la *ṭarīqah* Sammānīyah et l’influence de al-Sammān sur la religion populaire sont analysés aussi. Nous allons démontrer que al-Sammān et ses étudiants de l’Asie du Sud-Est ont été influencés par les *ṣūfīs* des générations précédentes. En ce qui regarde le concept du logos de Muḥammad, la contribution la plus importante de al-Sammān est son enseignement sur le culte dédié à l’existence posthume du Prophète Muḥammad.

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Abdul Muthalib

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INTRODUCTION

I

There is no doubt that Sufism plays an important role in Islam. Through its mystical teachings, rituals and institutions, Sufism has attracted many adherents throughout the Islamic world. There are two channels of paramount importance for the transmission of *ṣūfī* knowledge and practice, namely, direct intellectual personal contact between students and teachers on the one hand, and through reading *ṣūfī* literature on the other. The first channel involves individual contact with certain *ṣūfī* masters who guide the novice on the mystical path. The second involves indirect intellectual contact with previous *ṣūfī* masters, undertaken through reading *ṣūfī* writings.¹ Though personal spiritual masters are obviously required for the mystical path and even strongly emphasized in the post-classical period, the authority of *ṣūfī* literature is also recognized. It is clear that most great *ṣūfis*, such as Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 1111) and Ibn ‘Arabī (d. 1240), were inspired by the works of previous *ṣūfis*. Likewise, most *ṣūfis*, throughout the Islamic world, have quoted in their writings statements from previous *ṣūfis* or paraphrased them. The continuity of the textual *ṣūfī* tradition is undeniable.

This thesis will focus on one of the most important *ṣūfī* figures of the 18th century, Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Sammān (1717-8-1775). This figure deserves academic attention for his great contributions to Sufism. Al-Sammān was an important student of the great Khalwatīyah master Muṣṭafā ibn Kamāl al-Dīn al-

¹ *Ṣūfis* even claimed that there was a third channel, namely, the spiritual channel (*ṭariqah ruḥānīyah*) which they considered to be the most important way of transmitting mystical knowledge. Via this

Bakrī, who was considered by some scholars to be the reviver of the Khalwatīyah ṭarīqah (ṣūfī order). Al-Sammān was an important ṣūfī figure whose influence extended to various parts of the Muslim world, such as the Sudan, Eritrea, Afghanistan and Southeast Asia. However, his strongest influence was to be in Indonesia and the Sudan. Two of al-Sammān's direct students, 'Abd al-Ṣamad al-Palimbānī and Muḥammad Arshad al-Banjārī as well as his indirect student Muḥammad Nafīs al-Banjārī, became leading ṣūfī figures in Southeast Asia in the 18th century. 'Abd al-Ṣamad al-Palimbānī's works *Siyār al-Sālikīn* and *Hidāyat al-Sālikīn* as well as Muḥammad Nafīs' work *al-Durr al-Nafīs*, all of which were written in Jawi (Indonesian in Arabic script), frequently quote al-Sammān and remain popular ṣūfī literature amongst Southeast Asian Muslims up to the present day. The Sammānīyah-Khalwatīyah ṭarīqah developed in several parts of the Indonesian archipelago such as Makasar, Aceh, South Kalimantan, Palembang and Minagkabau. The popularity of al-Sammān was intensified in the region through his hagiography *Manāqib Muḥammad al-Sammān*, which seems to have been written immediately after his death by his two students Ṣiddīq ibn 'Umar Khān and 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Maghribī, and then translated into Jawi in the 18th century. Al-Sammān's popularity was very strong in Indonesia and in fact was even greater than that of Aḥmad al-Qushāshī, who also had a great influence on the region in the 17th century via his two Indonesian students, 'Abd al-Ra'ūf and Yūsuf al-Makassarī. And yet, we must note that, although the *Manāqib* of al-Sammān is still widely read by Indonesian Muslims today, most of its reciters have little if any connection with

channel, the ṣufis encountered the prophets and the saints who, of course, were no longer living, but the ṣufis met with them in spirit and obtained spiritual knowledge from them.

the Sammānīyah-Khalwatīyah *ṭarīqah*, which no longer has formal masters or representatives in the area and has not had them for over a century.

Furthermore, in the Sudan, al-Sammān's legacy was perpetuated by his direct student Aḥmad Ṭayyib al-Bashīr and his descendents. Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad, who was known as the Mahdī of the Sudan, even claimed to be part of the spiritual line that was connected with al-Sammān.

Unfortunately, this important figure has been little studied by scholars, especially those in the West, except in a few articles that include al-Sammān amongst the most important Muslim scholars of the 18th century. In fact, there are many broad areas of study that can be applied to al-Sammān, including his mystical teachings, the development of his (Sammānīyah) *ṭarīqah* in the Islamic world, his role in popular religion, his hagiography, etc.

My thesis focuses on the mystical teachings of al-Sammān. The development of the Sammānīyah *ṭarīqah* and al-Sammān's influence on popular religion will be touched on, but they are not the main topic of discussion. This study will examine al-Sammān's metaphysical teachings and those on ritual or devotion. He is said to have been an adherent of the theory of the unity of existence (*wahdat al-wujūd*), and it is probable that he preceded his student, al-Palimbānī, in adopting the concept of the seven grades of existence, an idea which remains popular in Southeast Asia to this day. Al-Sammān's concept of the light of Muḥammad is also explored. According to this notion, the Prophet is supposed to have had a pre-existence, his own historical existence and also a post-existence. Al-Sammān's metaphysical doctrines need to be examined in this connection. The investigation will also try to

show al-Sammān's relations to or reliance upon previous ṣūfīs. How did al-Sammān adopt their ideas? By al-Sammān's reckoning, did this happen through direct reading or direct spiritual contact with these authors, or through indirect knowledge such as via reading previous ṣūfī texts or via his own ṣūfī masters? This analysis will reveal the historical background of al-Sammān's thought and will examine the originality of his thinking.

Al-Sammān's thinking on ritual and devotion is no doubt very significant. In fact, he is believed to have personally founded the Sammānīyah ṭarīqah. Al-Sammān therefore had a distinctive doctrine of devotional and ritual practice. These theories and practices merit our attention.

II

Al-Sammān was not only a ṣūfī guide, but also a ṣūfī writer. R.S. O'Fahey, referring to Brockelmann's *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur* (GAL) and to the *al-Ku'ūs al-Muttarra'a* of Nūr al-Dā'im lists more than nineteen titles of works by al-Sammān, as follows:²

1. *al-Futūḥāt al-Ilāhīyah fī al-Tawajjuhāt al-Rūḥīyah*. MS: Cairo(Az) 602 (1934): see also GAL S. II, 535.
2. *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah*.
3. *Ighāḥat al-Lahfān wa Mu'ānasat al-Walhān wa-al-Futūḥāt al-Ilāhīyah fī al-Tawjīhāt al-Rūḥīyah lil-Ḥaḍrah Muḥammadiyah*. Khartoum: Aḥmad al-Badawī al-Sammānī, 1955, 20 pp.

² See R.S. O'Fahey, "The Sammāniyya Tradition," in *The Writings of Eastern Sudanic Africa to c. 1900. Arabic Literature of Africa*, vol. 1, ed. R.S. O'Fahey (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994), 91-122.

4. *al-Insān al-Kāmil*. Cited in *Nūr al-Dā'im*, *al-Ku'ūs al-Muttarra'a*, 28.
5. *al-Is'āf fī Mawlid Sayyid al-Ashrāf*. This may be a précis of no. 10 below; it includes a brief hagiography of the author. MS: Khartoum (NRO, Misc., 1/35), undated, 7ff.
6. *al-Istighāthah*. GAL S. II, 535.
7. *Jāliyat al-Kurab wa Munīlat al-'Arab (Tawaṣṣul)*. See 'Abd al-Maḥmūd ibn Nūr al-Dā'im, *Nafīs al-Qaṣab wa-Shifā' al-Waṣab*.
8. *Kashf al-Asrār fī- Mā Yata'allaq bi-al-Ism al-Qaḥḥār*. MS: Cairo (Dk) 687 (Taṣawwuf). Publ. as *Hādhihi Risālah fī-Mā Yata'allaq bi-Ismihi (al-Qaḥḥār) wa-Waṣīyatihī lil-Ikhwān wa-al-Tadhākūr*. Cairo: Aḥmad al-Badāwi al-Sammānī, nd., 32pp.
9. *al-Mawāhib al-Aqdasīyah fī Sharḥ al-Minḥah al-Muḥammadīyah*. Cited in *Nūr al-Dā'im*, *al-Ku'ūs al-Muttarra'a*, 28.
10. *Mawlid al-Nabī*. Publ. Cairo: Muḥammad 'Īsā al-Bābi al-Ḥalabī, 2nd pr., 1394/1974, 16 pp; n.p., n.d., 41 pp.
11. *Miftāḥ al-Qulūb fī al-Ṣalāt 'alā al-Rasūl*. [On prayer] in *Nūr al-Dā'im*, *al-Ku'ūs al-Muttarra'a*, 28.
12. *al-Minḥah al-Muḥammadīyah*. Cited in *Nūr al-Dā'im*, *al-Ku'ūs al-Muttarra'a*, 28
13. *Mukhtaṣar al-Ṭarīqah al-Muḥammadīyah*. According to O'Fahey, this is probably a précis of Muḥammad al-Birkawī's (d.1573; GAL II, 585), *al-Ṭarīqah al-Muḥammadīyah wa- al-Sīrah al-Aḥmadīyah*.
14. *al-Nafahāt al-Ilāhīyah fī Kayfiyat Sulūk al-Ṭarīqah al-Muḥammadīyah*. MS. London (BL), Or. 12694.
15. *al-Nafahāt al-Aqdasīyah* (or *al-Qaṣīdah al-'Aynīyah*). Cited in *Nūr al-Dā'im*, *al-Ku'ūs al-Muttarra'a*, 28.

16. *al-Naṣīḥah al-'Alawīyah lil-Sādat al-Ahdalīyah*. Cited in *Siyār al-Sālikīn* III, p 179.

(O'Fahey mentions that the Ahdal were and are still a well-known scholarly family of Zabīd, Yemen). Cited also in *Nūr al-Dā'im, al-Ku'ūs al-Muttarra'a*, 28.

16a. *Nuqṭa Dā'irat al-Wujūd*. Cited in *Nūr al-Dā'im, al-Ku'ūs al-Muttarra'a*, 28

16b. *al-Qaṣīdah al-'Aynīyah*.

17. *Tuḥfat al-Qawm fī Muḥimmāt al-Ru'yā wa- al-Nawm*. Cited in *Nūr al-Dā'im, al-Ku'ūs al-Muttarra'a*, 28.

18. *'Unwān al-jalwāh fī sha'n al-khalwah*. Cited in *Nūr al-Dā'im, al-Ku'ūs al-Muttarra'a*, 28.

19. *al-Waṣīlah fī al-da'awāt wa-al-adhkār*. Cited in *Nūr al-Dā'im, al-Ku'ūs al-Muttarra'a*, 28.

To this list, we may add the following:

*20. *Risālat Asrār al-'Ibādāt*. Cited in *Siyār al-Sālikīn* of al-Palimbānī, Vol. 3, 181.

From O'Fahey's list, it may be supposed that items nos. 1, 2 and 3, owing to their titles, are identical. It seems also that the item no. 3 may contain two different treatises. In *Siyār al-Sālikīn* (Vol. III, p 179), we find seven titles of al-Sammān's works which are included in O'Fahey's list, although it does conflate nos. 1 and 3 from the latter in the title *al-Futūḥāt al-Ilāhīyah fī Wajhat al-Rūḥīyah lil-Ḥaḍrah al-Muḥammadiyah*. Muḥammad Nafīs al-Banjārī mentions four of al-Sammān's works which are included in O'Fahey's list, namely, nos. 3 (only the first part of the title of no. 3 in O'Fahey's list), 12, 16 and 18.

In undertaking this analysis, I will make use of the available treatises by al-Sammān, and the works of his students and successors. Unfortunately, only works nos. 1 and 14 from the list are available to me. Thus, the main references will be to these titles. The available works of his students will be looked at as well, since his teachings are referred to frequently in their writings.

Work no. 1 (*al-Futūḥāt al-Ilāhīyah fī al-Tawajjuhāt al-Rūḥīyah*) is available in manuscript in both Cairo: (MS (AZ) 602) and Bankipore (XIII, 951). Of these two, only the Cairo version was available to me. This treatise deals with al-Sammān's metaphysical doctrine, especially the concept of *al-ḥaqīqah al-Muḥammadīyah* (the reality of Muḥammad). This work is very important for our examination of his exact conception of Muḥammad's nature as both man and Prophet.

Work no. 14 (*al-Nafahāt al-Ilāhīyah fī Kayfiyat Sulūk al-Ṭarīqah al-Muḥammadīyah*) is available in manuscript in both London and Jakarta (MSS (BL), Or. 12694; (DCL II) no. A. 652). Fortunately, this work was published (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Ādāb wa-al-Mu'ayyad, 1908-9). This work seems to have been the most significant for al-Sammān's students and successors. To understand the doctrines of al-Sammān in ritual and *ṭarīqah*, 'Abd al-Ṣamad al-Palimbānī insists on the importance of this work. It is even considered to have supernatural powers by al-Sammān's disciples. Al-Palimbānī tells us that when Shaykh al-Wāṣil Aḥmad al-Maqrī read it to his ṣūfī novices, he saw the presence of the spirits of all the prophets and saints.

IV

This thesis will be divided into four chapters as follows:

Chapter One is devoted to investigating the life and the influence of al-Sammān. The investigation will focus on several points. Firstly, it will deal with the life and religious education of al-Sammān, which will lead to an examination of his masters and his successors, both direct and indirect, and the students who made such a great contribution to spreading and reviving his teachings and *ṭarīqah* in the Islamic world. This chapter will also deal briefly with the subject of the role of al-Sammān in the spiritual life of Muslims. In the process, the function of his hagiography and sainthood will be briefly discussed. This will lead us to appreciate the importance al-Sammān for popular religion.

Chapter Two is devoted to examining al-Sammān's metaphysical teachings on the reality of Muhammad (*al-ḥaqīqah al-Muḥammadiyah*). This section of the study will be based mainly on his important work *al-Futūḥāt al-Ilāhīyah fī al-Tawajjuhāt al-Rūḥīyah* (MS: Cairo(Az) 602(1934)), which deals with his teachings on the concept and function of the reality of Muḥammad in ṣūfī ritual. In order to investigate the historical background of al-Sammān's concept of the reality of Muḥammad, a brief study of earlier ṣūfīs' works on this subject is imperative. Thus, three important ṣūfī figures who discussed the subject in depth, namely, Sahl al-Tustarī, 'Ayn al-Quḍāh al-Hamadhānī and Ibn 'Arabī, have been chosen for comparison. Other important teachings of al-Sammān on the function of the reality of Muḥammad in ritual will also be examined.

Chapter Three is dedicated to looking at al-Sammān's teachings on several important aspects of ṣūfī *ṭarīqah*, especially the Sammānīyah-Khalwatīyah *ṭarīqah*. This examination is based mainly on his published work *al-Nafahāt al-Ilāhīyah fī*

Kayfiyat Sulūk al-Ṭarīqah al-Muḥammadiyah. Here, several points will be examined: the important function of the *ṭarīqah* master as the representative of the Prophet Muḥammad, the method of initiation into the *ṭarīqah*, the way and the formula of *dhikr* (repetitive invocation of God's names) and the way and function of the *khalwah* (retreat). The last part of this chapter will be devoted to the practice of concentrating on the image of the *ṣūfī ṭarīqah* master (*rābiṭah*), a ritual tradition that is very popular in the Naqshbandīyah *ṭarīqah*. Also, this study will help us understand the historical background of the teachings on *rābiṭah* in the Sammānīyah *ṭarīqah* in particular and in other *ṭarīqahs* in general.

Chapter Four is dedicated to examining the metaphysical teachings of al-Sammān's Southeast Asian followers on the concept of God and the Cosmos and on the concept of *tawḥīd* (unity). In fact, this chapter aims at investigating al-Sammān's teaching on the concept of God and the Cosmos, which are germane to his concept of the unity of existence (*waḥdat al-wujūd*). However, due to the fact that I have at my disposal only the two abovementioned works by al-Sammān, which unfortunately do not deal much with the subject, this investigation will be based on the work of his direct student 'Abd al-Ṣamad al-Palimbānī, *Siyār al-Sālikīn*, and that of his indirect student Muḥammad Nafīs al-Banjārī, *Durr al-Nafīs*. This in turn will lead us to reveal the new directions in which Shaykh Muḥammad 'Abd al-Karīm al-Sammān pointed his disciples along the *ṣūfī* path.

Chapter 1

MUHAMMAD ‘ABD AL-KARĪM AL-SAMMĀN IN REALITY AND MYTHOLOGY

I. Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Sammān’s Religious Background and His Masters

Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Sammān (1717/8-1775), received his nickname “al-Sammān” because he one day let down a pail into a well and upon drawing it up found it filled with butter. He fed himself and his students with this butter and from that time onward was given the name “al-Sammān” (butter merchant).¹ Such stories about al-Sammān and his students figure prominently in hagiographical sources, but surprisingly, we find little information in the latter on al-Sammān’s own masters. Thus, neither the *Silk al-Durar* of al-Murādī nor ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jabartī’s writings give any complete or detailed information on his teachers. In addition, the *Jāmi‘ Karāmāt al-Awliyā’* of Yūsuf ibn Ismā‘īl al-Nabhānī (1849/50-1932) itself even leaves al-Sammān out of the chain of ṣūfī authorities. The *Silk al-Durar* mentions but two names: Muṣṭafā ibn Kamāl al-Dīn al-Bakrī and Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān al-Kurdī²; whereas, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jabartī only mentions that al-Sammān studied with his father, ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Sammān. However, al-Jabartī provides another interesting account of how al-Sammān, on being sent in 1760 to Egypt, held a *dhikr* meeting at Mashhad al-Ḥusaynī in Cairo that attracted a lot of people. Later, he apparently returned to Medina after his father passed away and

¹ See Muḥammad Khalīl al-Murādī, *Kitāb Silk al-Durar fī A’yān al-Qarn al-Thānī ‘Ashar*, vol.4 (N.p.: n.p., 1874), 60-61; see B.G. Martin, “A Short History of the Khalwati Order of Dervishes,” in *Scholars, Saints, and Sufis*, ed. Nikkie R. Keddie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 302.

² al-Murādī, *Kitāb Silk al-Durar*, vol. 4, 61.

was then appointed a shaykh.³ It is only through the works of his Southeast Asian student, ‘Abd al-Ṣamad al-Palimbānī, that we learn other details about his religious background.

1. Muṣṭafā ibn Kamāl al-Dīn al-Bakrī (1688-1749)

Muṣṭafā ibn Kamāl al-Dīn al-Bakrī was born in Damascus and died in Cairo⁴ and is described by Nabhānī, as “a great ṣūfī Master; the guide and the educator of the seekers; the *Imām* of the Khalwatīyah *ṭarīqah*.” Al-Sammān describes him as *quṭb* (pole) and the *khatm al-wilāyah* (seal of sainthood)⁵ and he always called him “*shaykhunā*” (our shaykh).⁶ Al-Bakrī’s teachers were Muḥammad al-Badrī al-Dimyātī, Muḥammad ‘Aqīlah al-Makkī, al-Shihāb Aḥmad al-Nahlī al-Makkī and ‘Abdullāh ibn Salīm al-Baṣrī al-Makkī. He read the works of Ibn ‘Arabī (1165-1240) with ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī and had some knowledge of *fiqh* (jurisprudence).⁷ Al-Nabhānī tells us that Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī was initiated into the Khalwatīyah by Shaykh ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Ḥalabī, whom he replaced as head of the order after his death.⁸ Al-Bakrī also belonged to the Qādirīyah and the Naqshbandīyah.⁹ M. Winter shows us that, from the time of al-Bakrī onward, the Khalwatīyah recruited many

³ See G.W.J. Drewes, “A Note on Muhammad al-Samman, his writings, and 19th century Sammaniyya practices, chiefly in Batavia, according to written data,” *Archipel* 43 (1992): 73-87.

⁴ The most comprehensive study of Muṣṭafā ibn Kamāl al-Dīn al-Bakrī is found in the work of Ralf Elger, *Mustafa al-Bakri : zur Selbstdarstellung eines Syrischen Gelehrten, Sufis und Dichters des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Schönfeld: EB-Verlag, 2004).

⁵ See Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Sammān, *al-Nafahāt al-ilāhīyah fī Kayfiyat Sulūk al-Ṭarīqah al-Muḥammadiyah* (Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Ādāb, 1908-9), 60.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 16-17, 24, 36-37, 39-40, 43, 45, 60.

⁷ See Yūsuf ibn Ismā‘īl al-Nabhānī, *Kitāb Jāmi‘ Karāmāt al-Awliyā’*, vol.2 (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Gharbīyah al-Kubrā, 1911), 476.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ See Fredrick de Jong, “Mustafa Kamal al-Din al-Bakri (1688-1749): revival and reform of the Khalwatiyya tradition?” in *Sufi Orders in Ottoman and Post-Ottoman Egypt and the Middle East : Collected Studies* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2000), 236.

adherents from various parts of the Islamic world who were of non-Turkish origin.¹⁰ He is considered by many scholars as the reviver of the Khalwatīyah, although, according to F. de Jong, this is an exaggeration. The reason for this is that when al-Bakrī began his effort to spread the Khalwatīyah, the order was far from dormant; rather, it was active in other areas under several shaykhs. Thus, al-Bakrī's contribution was nothing new, whereas that of 'Alī Afandī Qarabash was.¹¹ For, as Winter points out, before 'Alī Qarabash, the Khalwatīyah was essentially non-orthodox and engaged in practicing magical and superstitious exercises.

Like other *ṭarīqahs*, the Khalwatīyah was founded by 'Umar al-Khalwatī to bring believers nearer to God through seclusion, as the Prophet himself had done. But, much like the Rifā'īyah,¹² the Qādirīyah¹³ and even the Naqshbandīyah, the Khalwatīyah was also led by some of its shaykhs into superstitious practices. The general leaning of the Khalwatīyah, however, was clearly in keeping with the *sharī'ah* (Islamic law) since most shaykhs of this *ṭarīqah* were consistent in performing and obeying religious prescriptions.

2. 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (1641-1731)

'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, who was known for his extraordinary defense of Ibn 'Arabī's teachings, appears to have been one of al-Sammān's teachers. We learn, for instance, from the *Siyār al-Sālikīn* of 'Abd al-Ṣamad al-Palimbānī that al-Nābulusī in

¹⁰ See M. Winter, "Egyptian Society Under Ottoman Rule 1517-1798," Selection in *An Anthology of Islamic Studies*, eds. Boullata, Issa J. and Howard M. Federspiel (Montreal: McGill Indonesia IAIN Development Project, 1992), 130-2.

¹¹ de Jong, "Mustafa Kamal al-Din al-Bakri," 235-246.

¹² See Fritz Meier, "The Mystic Path: The Sūfī Tradition," In *The World of Islam: Faith, People, Culture*, ed. Bernard Lewis (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976), 121.

¹³ In Banten (Java), members of the Qādirīyah publicly perform "Dabus": they stab their bodies with knives and boil eggs on their heads and complete other magical feats even to this day.

fact was the master of both Muṣṭafā ibn Kamāl al-Dīn al-Bakrī¹⁴ and Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Sammān.¹⁵ The possibility that al-Sammān may have studied Ibn ‘Arabī’s books with al-Nābulusī, however, is still unclear.¹⁶ If al-Sammān really studied with al-Nābulusī, he must have done so at a very young age, such as 12, since al-Sammān would have been a boy of 13 at the time of the death of al-Nābulusī in 1731. Thus, the likelihood that al-Sammān would have progressed to the study of Ibn ‘Arabī with al-Nābulusī is extremely small. It is quite possible that al-Sammān may have had been present at the *ḥalqah* (teaching circle) of al-Nābulusī at this young age and that he might have exposed to the teachings of Ibn ‘Arabī too. However, it is hard to believe that he would have understood it, despite the claims in the *Manāqib* which depict him as a genius. In addition, al-Palimbānī does not state clearly what subjects al-Sammān learned with al-Nābulusī. If al-Sammān was not in fact a student of al-Nābulusī’s, or was too young to benefit fully from the master’s instruction, then it can at least be assumed that al-Nābulusī would have influenced al-Sammān indirectly via his own works and the teaching of his student Muṣṭafā ibn al-Kamāl al-Dīn al-Bakrī. And, despite the fact that Muṣṭafā’s influence on al-Sammān seems to have lain more in the ritual aspect of practice of the Khalwatīyah tradition, such as the rules, the disciplines and the practice of *dhikr* of the *ṭarīqah* (which we will discuss in Chapter Three), it is impossible however to discount completely the likelihood of his having transmitted to al-Sammān the

¹⁴ ‘Abd al-Ṣamad al-Palimbānī, *Siyār al-Sālikīn*, vol. 3 (Indonesia: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Kutub al-‘Arabiyyah, n.d.), 183.

¹⁵ Ibid., vol. 3, 181.

¹⁶ On the other hand, although some biographers such as al-Murādī in his *Silk al-Durar* and Brockelmann do not mention this, they do stress that Muṣṭafā ibn Kamāl al-Dīn al-Bakrī played an important role as al-Sammān’s teacher.

teachings of Ibn ‘Arabī. We know that al-Bakrī studied the teachings of the latter via the “commentator shaykh ‘Abd al-Ghānī al-Nābulusī.” This was the source of his enthusiasm for the works of Ibn ‘Arabī, especially *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah* and he stressed that both the *murshid* (master) and the *sālik* (seekers) could learn much from the works of Ibn ‘Arabī.¹⁷

It is certain that al-Bakrī was responsible for teaching of the four ontological principles of *tawḥīd* to al-Sammān himself and his students (or adherents) such as ‘Abd al-Ṣamad al-Palimbānī and Muḥammad Nafīs al-Banjārī. Al-Bakrī’s book on this subject was certainly popular among al-Sammān’s students. Al-Sammān himself thought highly of it. The book was then commented upon by Ṣiddīq ‘Umar Khān at the request of al-Palimbānī.¹⁸ It is important to note, however, that even though al-Nābulusī himself seemed to adopt the four ontological *tawḥīd* principles, al-Bakrī may only have been the mediator of al-Nābulusī’s concept to al-Sammān.

3. Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān al-Kurdī (1715-1780)¹⁹

Al-Sammān may also have studied with Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān al-Kurdī, who was born in Damascus in 1715 and died in Medina in 1780. This scholar was the Shāfi‘ī Mufti of Mecca. He wrote several works on *fiqh*, the best known being *al-Khawāsi al-Madānīyah*, a very popular text among Southeast Asian Muslims. His best Indonesian student, Muḥammad Arshad al-Banjārī²⁰ in turn authored the work *Sabīl al-Muhtadīn*, which has enjoyed immense popularity in Southeast Asia from the time

¹⁷ In his work *al-Ka’s al-Raqīq fī Sabab Ikhtilāf fī al-Ṭarīq*, he expressed the importance of Ibn ‘Arabī’s works, see al-Palimbānī, *Siyār al-Sālikīn*, vol 3, 186.

¹⁸ Ibid., vol. 3, 182.

¹⁹ al-Murādī, *Sīlk al-Durar*, vol. 4, 61.

²⁰ Ibid., 111-112.

of its appearance two hundred years ago until now.²¹ It appears that a shared Shāfi'ī background led to al-Sammān becoming the student of al-Kurdī. We do not know exactly whether al-Sammān studied mysticism with him, despite the possibility that al-Kurdī was also a mystic. The Shāfi'ī attraction to sufism was common and can be traced to Junayd (d. 910), whose teacher Abū Ṭawr belonged to the Shāfi'ī *madhhab*.²² According to the Iranian ṣūfī Abū Sa'īd ibn Abī al-Khayr (d. 1049), this preference was due to the fact that Shāfi'ī doctrine is more rigorous and exact in the practices of religious obligations.²³ And there are indications that al-Kurdī favoured sufism, to judge by the report of the great Shāfi'ī Muftī of Mecca, Aḥmad ibn Zaynī Daḥlān (1816-1886), that al-Kurdī defended ṣūfī practice from the attack of his former student Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb.²⁴ However, it must be noted that the mystical teachings of Ibn 'Arabī used to be attacked by Shāfi'ī 'ulamā' too. Like Ibn Taymīyah (1263-1328), al-Subkī condemned Ibn 'Arabī as a *murtad* or *kāfir*. The change in attitude of the Shāfi'īs towards Ibn 'Arabī began with al-Sha'rānī who supported Ibn 'Arabī. He, according to al-Qushāshī, belonged to the *ṭarīqah* of Ibn 'Arabī, and was initiated into it by al-Suyūṭī and al-Sayūṭī in turn was initiated by Kamāl al-Dīn ibn Muḥammad 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Shāfi'ī.²⁵

²¹ See Martin van Bruinessen, *Mullas, Sufis and Heretics: The Role of Religion in Kurdish Society: Collected Articles* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2000), 23.

²² See Heinz Halm, *Die Ausbreitung der šāfi'itischen Rechtsschule von den Anfängen bis zum 8./14. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden: L. Reichert, 1974), 40-41.

²³ Muḥammad ibn al-Munavvar, *Les Étapes mystiques du Shaykh Abu Sa'id: mystères de la connaissance de l'Unique=Asrar al-tawhīd fī maqāmāt*, trans. Mohammad Achena (Paris: Desclée De Brouwer, 1974), 36-40.

²⁴ Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb attacked ṣūfī beliefs and practices such as the intercession of the prophets and saints, the visiting of their tombs, the recitation of the *dalā'il al-khayrāt* etc. See Aḥmad Zaynī Daḥlān, *al-Futūḥāt al-Islāmīyah Ba'da Muḍī al-Futūḥāt al-Nabawīyah*, vol. 2 (Cairo: Mu'assasat al-Ḥalabī, 1968), 229-233.

²⁵ Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Qushāshī, *Kitāb al-Simṭ al-Majīd fī Sha'n al-Bay'ah wa-al-Dhikr wa-Talqīn al-wa-Salās al-Ahl al-Tawḥīd* (Hyderabad: Maṭba'at Majlis Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif al-Nizāmīyah, 1909), 105.

4. Muḥammad Ḥayāt al-Sindī (d.1749)

Muḥammad Ḥayāt ibn Ibrāhīm al-Sindī al-Ḥanafī (died in Medina in 1749), was born in Sind, where he received his early education. Following a pilgrimage to Mecca, he stayed in Medina to study with several leading scholars, among them Abū al-Ḥasan al-Sindī, Ḥasan al-‘Ajamī, ‘Abdullāh al-Baṣrī, and Abū Ṭāhir al-Kūrānī. He was initiated into the Naqshbandīyah order by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Saqqāf Bā’ ‘Alawī (d. 1727 in Medina). Muḥammad Ḥayāt al-Sindī seems to have been flexible towards his choice of *madhhab* and disapproved of certain popular practices such as visiting the tomb of the Prophet. This position was probably the result of his having mastered the *ḥadīth* sciences. Besides al-Sammān, Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb is among his important students. It is quite possible that Muḥammad Ḥayāt al-Sindī had a hand in inspiring Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb’s religious puritanism.²⁶ Al-Sindī’s enthusiasm for the study of *ḥadīth* may be reflected in al-Sammān’s attitude toward this source. Al-Sammān after all explicitly emphasizes in his *al-Futūḥāt al-Ilāhīyah* the importance of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī. However, it appears that he was not among al-Sammān’s most important masters because his name is absent from al-Sammān’s available works as well as from those of al-Sammān’s Southeast Asian students.

II. Al-Sammān’s Known Followers

²⁶ See John Voll, “Muhammad Hayya al-Sindi and Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhab: An Analysis of an Intellectual Group in Eighteenth Century Madina,” *BSOAS* 38 (1975): 32-39; see Azyumardi Azra, “The Transmission of Islamic Reformism to Indonesia : Networks of Middle Eastern and Malay-Indonesian ‘Ulamā’ in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries” (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, New York, 1992), 282-287.

Al-Sammān, as O'Fahey says, was in some ways a transitional figure--similar to al-Qushāshī and al-Kūrānī, as a Medinan ṣūfī who had students from different Muslims countries. His followers, who were widely separated geographically speaking, were united by a shared devotion to the use of the same prayers and litanies. Al-Sammān had a number of disciples. O'Fahey gives us the list of the names of those who were the students of al-Sammān.²⁷ This list, says O'Fahey, is based on the *Qifṭ Azhar al-Mawāhib al-Rabbānīyah min Afnān Riyāḍ al-Nafḥah al-Qudsīyah*, *Jīm Dhāl* by Ṣiddīq al-Madanī ibn 'Umar Khān, *al-Ku'ūs al-Muttarra'a* (24-27) by 'Abd al-Maḥmūd Nūr al-Dā'im and *Durrat 'Iqd Jayyid al-Zamān* (14) by Muḥammad Taqī al-Dīn. However, certainly there were other figures who are not mentioned in this list, such as Muḥammad Arshad al-Banjārī, 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Shinqīṭī who came from Mauritania and died at al-Sammān's *zāwīyah* in 1767,²⁸ and 'Uthmān ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn 'Uthmān died in 1779;²⁹ it is even said that the great *muḥaddith* Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī adopted the Sammānīyah directly from al-Sammān himself,³⁰ and certainly al-Sammān could have had other students not included in the list. But, from the following list given by O'Fahey, we can see how widely separated geographically al-Sammān's disciples were. This reality makes him a true transitional figure.

The list is as follows:

- Qāḍī 'Abbās ibn 'Abd al-Qādir al-Makkī (from Mecca)

²⁷ See R.S. O'Fahey, " 'Small World': Neo-Sufi Interconnexions between the Maghrib, the Hijāz and Southeast Asia," in *The Transmission of Learning in Islamic Africa*, ed. Scott S. Reese (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 277, 287-88.

²⁸ al-Murādī, *Silk al-Durar*, vol. 2, 330.

²⁹ Ibid., vol. 3, 151.

- ‘Abdullāh al-Sharīf
- ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Faṭānī al-Hindī (from Fatani, Thailand)³¹
- ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Hindī al-Multānī (from Multan, Pakistan)
- ‘Abd al-Khāliq ibn ‘Alī al-Mizjājī (from Zabid, Yemen)
- ‘Abd al-Raḥmān (Abū Zayd) ‘Abd al-Azīz (from North Africa)
- al-Tādilī al-Maghribī (from North Africa)
- ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Faṭānī (from Fatani, Thailand)
- ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jāwī (from Indonesia)
- ‘Abd al-Ṣamad al-Palimbānī (from Southern Sumatra)
- Aḥmad brother of Yāsīn, Muftī of Baṣra
- Aḥmad ibn ‘Isā al-Anṣārī (from the Sudan)
- Aḥmad al-Sūsī (from the Sudan)
- Aḥmad Ṭayyib ibn al-Bashīr (from the Sudan)
- Aḥmad al-Tijānī (from Algeria; the founder of the Tijānīyah order)
- ‘Alī al-Shāmī (from Syria)
- Ḥamad al-Abbādī (from Egypt, buried at Giza)
- Ḥamad al-Ḥumaylī al-Sa‘īdī (from Upper Egypt)
- Ḥasan al-Fayyūmī (from Egypt)
- Ibrāhīm al-Ghulām al-Shāfi‘ī (from Medina)

³⁰ See Stefan Reichmuth, “Murtada al-Zabidi (1732-1791) and the Africans: Islamic Discourse and Scholarly Networks in the Late Eighteenth Century,” 133.

³¹ Al-Palimbānī mentions the name ‘Abd al-Ghanī ibn Abī Bakr ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Qāsim whose famous nickname is “the scholar from India.” Al-Palimbānī tells us that this ṣūfī wrote a commentary on al-Sammān’s *Risālat Asrār al-‘Ibādāt* and also studied with him; see *Siyār al-Sālikīn*, vol. 3, 182.

- Ibrāhīm Khalīl al-Zabīdī (from Zabid, Yemen)
- Ibrāhīm al-Qulābawī and his son (probably from the Sudan)
- Muḥammad Taqī al-Dīn ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-Qādir Amīn (the author of *Manāqib al-Sammān*)
- al-Qurashī al-Maghribī (from North Africa)
- al-Qurashī al-Sinnārī (from the Sudan)
- Rajab al-Sa‘īdī (from Upper Egypt)
- Sa‘d al-Dīn al-Kābulī (probably from Afghanistan)
- Ṣalīḥ ibn Nūḥ al-Fullānī (from West Africa)
- Ṣiddīq al-Madānī ibn ‘Umar Khān (from India)
- al-Tāwudī ibn Sūdah (from Fez; teacher of Aḥmad ibn Idrīs)
- ‘Umar al-Shinqīṭī (probably from Mauritania, buried in Tripoli, Libya)

III. The Most Influential Figures of the Sammānīyah

1. Ṣiddīq ibn ‘Umar Khān

The exact years of birth and death of Ṣiddīq ibn ‘Umar Khān al-Madānī are unknown: all we know is that he was the student of al-Sammān,³² and perhaps even his most important student. His name is frequently cited by Muḥammad Nafīs al-Banjārī and ‘Abd al-Ṣamad al-Palimbānī in their works.

Nafīs al-Banjārī in particular quotes him on several issues: that the attributes of God are nothing other than God Himself,³³ that non-existence is

³² GAL S. II, 391.

³³ Muḥammad Nafīs al-Banjārī, *al-Durr al-Nafīs* (Surabaya: Bengkulu Indah, n.d.), 12.

analogous to a dream,³⁴ that a ṣūfī may lose his consciousness and that this in turn may cause him to say blasphemous words that seems contrary to the *sharīah*,³⁵ that in the state of *ma'rifah* (spiritual knowledge), the ṣūfī can perform miracles that cause everyone to submit to him,³⁶ that the light of Muḥammad functions as spiritual mediator,³⁷ and that *ma'rifah* is only gained by seeing God as the only true Existence.³⁸ From such quotations, it appears that Ṣiddīq ibn 'Umar Khān had developed a very elaborate system of thought.

Ṣiddīq ibn 'Umar Khān was one of the *murīds* closest to al-Sammān. This may be seen from his two works which emphasized the sanctity of his teacher: the first is *Manāqib al-Sammān* and the second, *Rātib al-Sammān* which constitutes the (*shaṭaḥāt*) (ecstatic utterances) of al-Sammān. He also seems to have adopted the Qādirīyah-Sammānīyah rather than the Khalwatīyah-Sammānīyah, as may be seen from his work *al-Fataḥāt al-Sammānīyah fī Ṭarīq al-Qādirīyah*.³⁹

2. Muḥammad Ṭayyib al-Bashīr

Muḥammad Ṭayyib al-Bashīr was the most important figure to introduce the Sammānīyah order in the Sudan. Perhaps there is no other area comparable to the Sudan where the Sammānīyah retains such a strong and significant influence over the people in terms of the formal way the *ṭarīqah* was transmitted and in terms of how its figures also play a political role. And the most important contribution of al-

³⁴ Ibid., 14.

³⁵ Ibid., 18.

³⁶ Ibid., 21.

³⁷ Ibid., 24.

³⁸ Ibid., 28.

³⁹ al-Palimbānī, *Siyār al-Salikīn*, vol.3, 189.

Bashīr is that it is via his descendants and disciples that the Sammānīyah has survived until now in the Sudan .

When the Sudanese born Ṭayyib al-Bashīr was 18 years old, he went to the Ḥijāz to accompany his teacher Shaykh Ḥasan Wadhusunnah al-Jumū'ī. He went to Mecca and met several 'ulamā' with whom he studied the religious sciences. He studied *ḥadīth* with the famous Meccan Shāfi'ī scholar Shaykh Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Salām. He also audited the science of *ḥadīth* with Shaykh Muḥammad ibn 'Aqīlah al-Makkī and Sayyid 'Abdullāh al-Mīrghanī. He furthermore met other scholars through whom he joined several *ṭarīqahs*: the Naqshbāndīyah through Shaykh 'Abdurrahmān al-'Idrūs and the Khalwatīyah through Shaykh Muṣṭafā ibn Kamāl al-Dīn al-Bakrī, from whom al-Bashīr also learned other sciences such as astronomy, mathematics etc.⁴⁰

Then, al-Bashīr moved to Medina when he heard about Shaykh Muḥammad 'Abd al-Karīm al-Sammān and became his student. He was a ṣūfī novice under al-Sammān's guidance for seven years and it is with al-Sammān that he was trained in depth in the practices of sufism. He benefited a great deal from al-Sammān with whom he also studied *ḥadīth*. Al-Sammān also confirmed him in the *ṭarīqahs* that he had already joined in Mecca because al-Sammān himself also belonged to these *ṭarīqahs* and gave him the authority to initiate others. According to Shaykh 'Abd al-Maḥmūd Nūr al-Dā'im (the grandson of al-Bashīr), after al-Sammān authorized al-Bashīr in the Qādirīyah, the Khalwatīyah, the Naqshbandīyah and the Anfāsīyah, he suggested that he return to his country. Al-Bashīr followed his master's

⁴⁰ Muḥammad 'Alī Bashīr al-Ṭāhir, *al-Adab al-Ṣūfī al-Sūdānī* (Khartoum: al-Dār al-Sūdānīyah, 1970), 45.

suggestion and returned to the Sudan. There he practiced and spread the *ṣūfī* teachings and the *ṭarīqahs* that he had received through al-Sammān.⁴¹ Al-Bashīr attracted so many people to the Qādirīyah and the Khalwatīyah *ṭarīqahs* that he received authority to teach from al-Sammān.⁴² It is said that he was the first figure to introduce the Qādirīyah *ṭarīqah* in the Sudan. Al-Bashīr also practiced the Shādhilīyah *ṭarīqah* which was already known in the Sudan and had been introduced there at the end of the 17th century by Shaykh Khuzly ‘Abd al-Raḥmān. Before coming to Mecca and before becoming al-Sammān’s student, al-Bashīr practiced the *wird* (routine praying) of the Shādhilīyah. Al-Bashīr also adhered to the Naqshbandīyah *ṭarīqah* into which he had been initiated by al-Sammān.⁴³

Al-Bashīr had 16 sons most of whom were involved in the Sammānīyah *ṭarīqah*, however only four are known and can be mentioned here: Shaykh Ibrāhīm al-Dasūkī, Shaykh Nūr al-Dā’im, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Jabbār and Abū Ṣāliḥ.⁴⁴ But, the most popular among them is Shaykh Nūr al-Dā’im who was only 27 years old when his father passed away. The authority to lead the *ṭarīqah* fell to his elder brother, Shaykh al-Dāsukī. Nūr al-Dā’im himself had a lot of sons and appointed many representatives who transmitted the Sammānīyah *ṭarīqah* in various regions. The most important son of Nūr al-Dā’im was Shaykh Muḥammad Sharīf who diligently studied the religious sciences of *fiqh*, *ḥadīth* and *taṣawwuf* with the famous scholars of his time. The most important grandsons of Ṭayyib al-Bashīr who continued the religious and intellectual legacy of the Sammānīyah *ṭarīqah* (especially through

⁴¹ Ibid., 46.

⁴² Ibid., 55.

⁴³ Ibid., 56.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 63.

their religious poetical works) are: Muḥammad Sharīf Nūr al-Dā'im (born in 1841) who claimed that he was initiated again by al-Sammān's descendant, Shaykh Muḥammad al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Karīm al-Sammān, during his *Hajj*,⁴⁵ 'Abd al-Maḥmūd Nūr al-Dā'im (born in 1845), Qarīb Allāh Abū Ṣāliḥ (born in 1866) and Muḥammad Sa'īd ibn Muḥammad Sharīf Nūr al-Dā'im (born in 1880).⁴⁶

3. 'Abd al-Ṣamad al-Palimbānī

Al-Palimbānī was the most important of al-Sammān's direct students from Southeast Asia. His full name is 'Abd al-Ṣamad ibn 'Abdullāh al-Palimbānī and he was born around 1704 in Palembang. It is said that his father originally came from Sana, Yemen and that before coming to Palembang he had stayed in Kedah and was appointed as the *qāḍī* there. He later went to Palembang, married a local woman and brought her and his newborn son (al-Palimbānī) back to Kedah. Al-Palimbānī died around 1787 most probably. It is assumed that he may never have returned to the archipelago. His basic religious education could have been accomplished in Kedah and Patani, after which he would have undertaken advanced studies in Mecca and Medina. Besides al-Sammān, his other teachers included Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān al-Kurdī, 'Abd al-Mu'īn al-Damanhārī, Ibrāhīm al-Rā'is, Muḥammad Murād, Muḥammad al-Jawhārī and 'Aṭā' Allāh al-Iskandarī.⁴⁷

Al-Palimbānī was a prolific writer. He has several works. The most extensive are the four-volume work entitled *Siyār al-Sālikīn* and other *ṣūfī* manuals, among them *Hidāyat al-Sālikīn*. He was especially enthusiastic about the works of Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī: his *Siyār al-Sālikīn* is based on the *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* while his

⁴⁵ Ibid., 90.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 178.

Hidāyat al-Sālikīn is based on the *Bidāyat al-Hidāyah*. All the same, he incorporated in them the teachings of other ṣūfīs, especially ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha’rānī, Muṣṭafā ibn Kamāl al-Dīn al-Bakrī, and Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Sammān. It was essentially through his works that al-Sammān became so popular in Southeast Asia. What is more important, al-Palimbānī provides us in his *Siyār al-Sālikīn* with important details regarding the career of al-Sammān and his teachings.

4. Muḥammad Arshad al-Banjārī

Muḥammad Arshad al-Banjārī had an important role in the Islamization of Southeast Asia via his works, disciples and descendants. Muḥammad Arshad was born in the village “Lok Gabang” in 1710 and died in 1812. It is said that his grandfather Sayyid Abū Bakr, who originally came from Palembang, was responsible for propagating Islam in Brunei, Sabah and Suku Island (in the Philippines). Like his grandfather, Muḥammad Arshad and his descendants too became leading Islamic scholars in the region. He studied in Mecca for 30 years and for another five years in Medina. Although he studied with several ‘ulamā’, it appears that al-Sammān had the greatest influence on him. After getting permission from al-Sammān, he and al-Sammān’s other students, al-Palimbānī and Shaykh Da’ūd ibn ‘Abdullāh al-Faṭānī returned to Southeast Asia.⁴⁸

On returning to Martapura, Shaykh Muḥammad Arshad acted as the *qāḍī* of Sulṭan Tamhidullah. Unlike al-Sammān’s other Indonesian students, however, Muḥammad Arshad al-Banjārī seems not only to have favoured Shāfi’ī *fiqh*, the dominant Islamic school of law in Southeast Asian Islam, but was also advocate of

⁴⁷ See Azra, “The Transmission of Islamic Reformism to Indonesia,” 494-495.

Sunnī theology and an opponent of Mu'tazilism and Shī'ism. This may be reflected in the fact that Muḥammad Arshad, although a prolific author, wrote no influential works on sufism, unlike al-Palimbānī and Muḥammad Nafīs al-Banjārī. He is best known, in fact, for an influential work on *fiqh*, the *Sabīl al-Muhtadīn*. Similarly, although Muḥammad Arshad is said to have introduced the *ṭarīqah* Sammānīyah among South Kalimantan's Muslim population,⁴⁹ he can also be said to have demonstrated a puritan theological approach, especially when faced with the local superstitions or syncretic tendencies of the South Kalimantan people. This may well have been the result of his religious education in the mainstream Islam of the Middle East, as well as perhaps a reflection of al-Sammān's attitude too.

As for Muḥammad Arshad's role in spreading Islam, the majority of South Kalimantan's people, it has been pointed out, had already become Muslims, albeit superficially. The Islamization of this region was not through the Philippines (Mindanao and Zulu) as R. A. Kern argued⁵⁰ (which, according to B. H. M. Vlekke, seems to be right in the case of the Islamization of Brunei),⁵¹ but rather, as has been indicated by J. J. Ras, was via Demak, as stated in the *Hikayat Banjar* written in 1663.⁵² When Pangeran Samudra faced the revolt of Pangeran Tumenggung, he asked for military assistance from Demak. The assistance was given on condition that the

⁴⁸ See HJ.W. Mohd. Shaghir Abdullah, *Syeikh Muhammad Arsyad al Banjari, Pengarang Sabilal Muhtadin* (Kuala Lumpur: Khazanah Fathaniyah, 1990), 7-13.

⁴⁹ See Martin van Bruinessen, *Tarekat Naqsyabandiyah di Indonesia. Survei historis, geografis, dan sosiologis* (Bandung: Mizan, 1992), 187.

⁵⁰ According to Kern, the Islamization of South Kalimantan happened through the Philippines. It seems to me that this may have happened later, not in the earlier period. See, R.A. Kern, *De Islam in Indonesii* (The Hague: W. Van Hoeve, 1947), 18.

⁵¹ See Bernard H. M. Vlekke, *Nusantara: A History of Indonesia* (Bandung: W. Van Hoeve, 1959), 94.

⁵² See J.J. Ras, "Hikayat Banjar and Pararaton: A Structural Comparison of two Chronicles," in *A Man of Indonesian Letters: Essays in Honour of Professor A. Teeuw*, ed. C. M. S. Helwig and S.O. Robson (Dordrecht: Foris Publications, 1986), 186.

Samudras adopt the new religion. Pangeran Samudra was converted to Islam by the *qāḍī* of Demak,⁵³ while a number of Muslims came over from Java, suppressed the revolt and began the process of conversion among the people.⁵⁴

5. Muḥammad Nafīs al-Banjārī

We have very little information about the life of Muḥammad Nafīs al-Banjārī, but it may be supposed, on the basis of the date of composition of his treatise *al-Durr al-Nafīs* (1786)⁵⁵ that Nafīs grew up in South Kalimantan in the 18th century. He was born in Martapura and apparently came from one of the local ruling family. At the time he wrote the *Durr al Nafīs*, he was in Mecca. Nafīs did not perhaps come back right away to his birthplace because coincidentalypolitical turmoil struck the Banjarmasin Kingdom a year later in 1787. According to Lauts, there was a civil war in South Kalimantan in which Tamhidullah (Pangeran Nata) overthrew the last Sulṭān with military assistance from the Dutch. As a reward for this favour, the Dutch were given a certain area that was rich in minerals, diamonds and gold.⁵⁶ It is not certain whether Muḥammad Nafīs ever returned to that region, but some scholars say he was buried in Kelua (South Kalimantan). Muḥammad Nafīs is best known as a ṣūfī scholar, although only by virtue of his *al-Durr al-Nafīs*. His tomb, however, is not as popular as that of Muḥammad Arshad al-Banjārī at Kalampayan (Martapura).

⁵³ See J.J. Ras, *Hikajat Banjar : A Study in Malay Historiography* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1968), 436.

⁵⁴ See T.W. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam: A History of the Propagation of the Muslim Faith* (Lahore: J.A Saiyid, 1985), 361.

⁵⁵ Nafīs al-Banjārī, *al-Durr-al-Nafīs*, 1.

⁵⁶ G. Lauts, *Geschiedenis van de Vestiging, Uitbreiding, Bloei en Verval van de Magt der Nederlanders in Indië*, vol. 4 (Groningen: W. van Boekeren, 1859), 157.

It is doubtful that Nafīs was a direct disciple of Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Sammān, since there is no evidence for this claim in his writings. In his *Durr al-Nafīs*, he always calls al-Sammān “the teacher of our masters” and once calls him “the late” (*al-marḥūm*). It is more likely that he was a student of Ṣiddīq ibn ‘Umar Khān and of other famous masters such as ‘Abdullāh ibn Ḥijāzī al-Sharqāwī (d. 1812⁵⁷), ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Jawhārī (ca. 1720-1772),⁵⁸ Milāwī (d. 1789), Yūsuf al-‘Azrī al-Miṣrī, and Yūsuf Abū Dharra al-Miṣrī. Most of these masters belonged to the Khalwatīyah ṭarīqah.

His treatise, *al-Durr al Nafīs*, is written in Jawi and considered to be an important ṣūfī source among Southeast Asian Muslims and is popular among Indonesians, Malaysians, Singaporeans, Filipinos, and Patanis, having been reprinted many times. The reason for the popularity of the book lies in the fact that it deals with mystical knowledge at an advanced level in Jawi. It appears that *al-Durr al-Nafīs* mostly transmits the tradition of the Sammānīyah-Khalwatīyah. Nafīs al-Banjārī pays special attention to al-Sammān’s teachings on the reality of Muḥammad, *the martabat tujuh* (the seven grades of existence), the four ontological *tawḥīd* principles and the importance of recitation of the *ṣalawāt*.⁵⁹ It was via this book that the essential teachings of Ibn ‘Arabī were transmitted to Southeast Asian Muslims. In fact, the work still gives rise to polemics between those who support and those who reject the teachings of Ibn ‘Arabī.

6. Aḥmad al-Tijānī, the founder of the Tijānīyah ṭarīqah

⁵⁷ GAL S. II, 729.

⁵⁸ Azra, “The Transmission of Islamic Reformism to Indonesia,” 947.

⁵⁹ However, the treatise does not appear to follow Khalwatīyah ritual according al-Sammān’s *al-Nafāḥāt al-ilāhīyah*.

The religious experience of Aḥmad al-Tijānī (1737-1815) may well have been the result of his religious intellectual contact with Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Sammān.⁶⁰ Aḥmad al-Tijānī, who is known for his “reformist sufism” went to Mecca and Medina in 1772. In Mecca, he met an Indian ṣūfī by the name of Aḥmad ibn ‘Abdullāh. Two months later, this ṣūfī teacher passed away and al-Tijānī soon after declared that he had learned all the secrets of mysticism under his tutelage. Al-Tijānī then visited the tomb of the Prophet and met al-Sammān as well. It is said that the latter even predicted that al-Tijānī would become a great saint.⁶¹ The connection between al-Tijānī and the Khalwatīyah *ṭarīqah* was, however, not only due to contact with al-Sammān but also due to the efforts of Maḥmūd al-Kurdī. According to Margoliouth, Aḥmad al-Tijānī actually founded his *ṭarīqah* on the advice of al-Kurdī.⁶²

Al-Tijānī is said to have had an affinity with Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb in that he sought to purify ṣūfism of “bad innovations.” His visit to the Hījāz occurred, after all, only 28 years after the agreement reached in 1744 between Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb and Muḥammad ibn Sa‘ūd, then only a minor ruler in Najd. Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb recognized the legitimacy of Ibn Sa‘ūd in matters of temporal power, while Ibn Sa‘ūd recognized the religious legitimacy of Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb. In 1811, Ibn Sa‘ūd sent a delegation to the

⁶⁰ He was not initiated into the Khalwatīyah by al-Sammān, but rather by al-Hifnī and al-Kurdī who were also initiated by Muṣṭafā ibn Kamāl al-Dīn al-Bakrī. This fact can be found in the work of the Tijānīyah master, ‘Alī Ḥarāzīm ibn al-‘Arabī Barādah, *Jawāhir al-Ma‘ānī wa-al-Bulūgh al-Amānī : fī Fayḍ Sayyidī Abī al-‘Abbās al-Tijānī* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyah, 1997), 39.

⁶¹ See Hamdan Hassan, *Tarekat Ahmadiyah di Malaysia: suatu analisis fakta secara ilmiah* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 1990), 20.

Moroccan Mawlay Sulaymān to urge his people to purify Islam and embrace *tawhīd*. Mawlay Sulaymān responded positively to this request and to this purpose sent his son Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm and a number of ‘ulamā’ on pilgrimage. In Mecca, they met Wahhābī ‘ulamā’ to discuss doctrine. Mawlay Sulaymān was particularly interested in purifying ṣūfism of deviation and received support in this from Aḥmad al-Tijānī who had acquired a considerable scholarly reputation by this time. The Sultān sought to use the religious legitimacy of al-Tijānī to make changes and even appointed him a member of his cabinet.⁶³

The Tijānīyah spread rapidly through the Muslim world. After taking root in the Western Sahara,⁶⁴ it moved to the Middle East and to some places in Southeast Asia. In East Java and Madura especially, the Tijānīyah attracted a considerable number of adherents. In Java, the Tijānīyah even demonstrated a puritan character in its effort to prohibit the building of tombs and the celebration of *ruwahan* (a typically Indonesian prayer) to the dead,⁶⁵ a prevalent practice in Southeast Asia. These prohibitions could in fact be traced back to *ḥadīth*⁶⁶ and had been adopted by

⁶² D.S. Margoliouth quoted in Jillali El Adnani, “Les origines de la Tijāniyya : quand les premiers disciples se mettent à parler,” in *La Tijāniyya : Une confrérie musulmane à la conquête de l’Afrique*, eds. Jean-Louis Triaud and David Robinson (Paris: Khartala, 2000), 46.

⁶³ See Jamil M. Abun-Nasr, *The Tijaniyya, a Sufi Order in the Modern World* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 21.

⁶⁴ Unfortunately the development of the Tijānīyah in Indonesia has not been addressed in any scholarly article or monograph to my knowledge.

⁶⁵ The Madura and the Jawis who adopted the Tijānīyah way did not celebrate *ruwahan* or the building of tombs. The intercession of Aḥmad al-Tijānī is so important that other *ṭarīqahs* that developed in Madura, such as the Naqshbandīyah, do not bother to give promises of entering heaven. From an interview with Masran in 1981 (now professor at Indonesian State University of Jakarta), who studied the development of the Tijānīyah among the Madura.

⁶⁶ The *ḥadīth* was narrated by Mālik in the *Muwatta’*: *ḥadīth* no. 75. Abū Dā’ūd also narrates the same *ḥadīth* in his *Sunan*, vol. 2, *ḥadīth* no. 2042. It can also be found in the *Musnad* of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, vol. 2, *ḥadīth* no. 246.

the Shādhiliyah Aḥmad al-Zarrūq (d. 1493) much earlier.⁶⁷ As far as intercession was concerned, al-Tijānī exceeded Ibn ‘Arabī and ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (d. 1166)⁶⁸ in guaranteeing that everybody who adopted his *ṭarīqah* would enter heaven.⁶⁹ This easy key to heaven offered by the Tijānīyah seems to have attracted a significant following despite the fact that it was being criticized by non-Tijānīyah. Defenders of the *ṭarīqah*, however, emphasized that Aḥmad al-Tijānī never guaranteed easy salvation. For instance Shaykh Ṣāliḥ al-Burno (b. 1941), who defended the Tijānīyah, said that the assurance of salvation by al-Tijānī did not constitute the assurance of eternal salvation but rather the hope of being forgiven. Salvation is subject to a number conditions and the main point is to die in faith and repentance.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, it is true that the Tijānīyah seems to have emphasized simplicity in its ritual and its teachings on salvation. According to Muḥammad Niasse (1881-1956), a Senegalese Tijānīyah master, the *wird* of the Tijānīyah only comprises three elements: the recitation of the formula of repentance (*istighfār*), the salutation to the Prophet (*ṣalawāt*) and the confirmation of the unity of God (i.e. the formula, *lā ilāha illā Allāh*).⁷¹ Like al-Sammān, al-Tijānī also believed in the pre-existence of the Prophet; i.e., that the reality of Muḥammad was the first creation of God. He maintained that, from the time of the creation of the corporeal body of the Prophet,

⁶⁷ See Aḥmad Zarrūq, ‘*Uddat al-Murīd al-Ṣādiq*, in *al-Shaykh Aḥmad Zarrūq : Ārā’uhu al-İslāhīyah* (Rabat: al-Mamlakah al-Maghribīyah, Wizārat al-Awqāf wa-al-Shu’ūn al-İslāmīyah, 1998), 533.

⁶⁸ His disciple Ibn Muṣhrī asked him whether he was superior to ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī and Ibn ‘Arabī. Aḥmad al-Tijānī admitted that both saints are the highest, but he himself was superior to both of them. See El Adnani, “Les origines de la Tijāniyya,” 62.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 63.

⁷⁰ See Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ, *al-Mughīr ‘alā Shubuḥat Ahl al-Ahwā’ wa-Akādhib al-Munkir ‘alā Kitāb al-Takfīr* (Beirut: Mu’assat Fu’ād al-Tajlīd, 1986), 143.

⁷¹ See Ousmane Kane, “Muhammad Niasse (1881-1956) et sa réplique contre le pamphlet anti-tijānī de Ibn Mayaba,” in *La Tijāniyya*, 233-34.

the reality of Muḥammad was veiled between him and his revealed knowledge, but after the annunciation of his prophethood, the reality of Muḥammad appeared.⁷²

Al-Tijānī also claimed that he saw the Prophet in a state of full consciousness. It was apparently the Prophet himself who asked him to build a new *ṭarīqah* and the Prophet appointed himself as his direct master. The Prophet said: "You do not need any master because I am your master."⁷³ This experience is considered by his followers as a miracle of the Prophet.⁷⁴ However, Ibn Maybah,⁷⁵ who criticized the Tijānīyah, rejected the possibility of meeting the Prophet when awake. This critique was answered by Muḥammad Niasse,⁷⁶ an adherent of the Tijānīyah, who affirmed the possibility of seeing the Prophet by citing the words of several *ṣūfis* and theologians such as 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, Jalāl-al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, al-Shādhilī, 'Abd al-Karīm al-Maghīlī, Muḥammad Bāb al-Daymānī, and finally the commentary of al-Qurṭubī in which the same proposal was attributed to al-Bāqillānī.⁷⁷

7. Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad; the Mahdī of the Sudan

⁷² See Abdel Wedoud Ould Cheikh, "Les perles et le soufre : une polémique mauritanienne autour de la Tijāniyya (1830-1935)," in *La Tijāniyya*, 155.

⁷³ See Barādah, *Jawāhir al-Ma'ānī wa-al-Bulūgh al-Amānī*, 40.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 156.

⁷⁵ Ibn Maybah criticized the Tijānīyah and wrote a book about it. See Kane, "Muhammad Niasse (1881-1956) et sa réplique," 223.

⁷⁶ Muḥammad Niasse was born in 1881 at Selik and died in 1959 at Kaolack. After learning Islamic sciences such as *fiqh*, Qur'ānic exegesis, the prophetic traditions, theology, mysticism, philosophy, logic, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry and medicine, he went to Mecca to preform the pilgrimage in 1920.

The same year, he went to Fez to the Tijānīyah *zāwīyah*. In 1924, he obtained the *ijāzah* of the Tijānīyah from Maḥmūd ibn Muḥammad al-Tijānī (a great-grandson of the founder the *ṭarīqah*). Then, he continued to study in Morocco and Mauritania with some '*ulamā*'. He wrote more than ten books in Arabic. Most of these are apologetic and poems addressed to the Prophet. To Aḥmad al-Tijānī he also dedicated a number of poems. See Kane, "Muhammad Niasse (1881-1956) et sa réplique," 220-21.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 229-32.

Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad may have been the only Sammānīyah figure who actually achieved political prominence, having successfully stood up to both British colonialism and Egyptian Turko-Ottoman domination. He was not a direct student of al-Sammān's⁷⁸ and in fact lived much later than Nafīs al-Banjārī. Nevertheless, it appears that he may have been the most important Sammānīyah figure and one who continued the tradition of the Sammānīyah with regard to the direct meeting with, ritual and cult of the Prophet Muḥammad. But, unlike other Sammānīyah figures, in 1881 he claimed to be the *mahdī*, the highest rank of any ṣūfī master and saint, even surpassing al-Sammān in this regard. The claim is, of course, debatable from the standpoint of the Sunnī orthodoxy. That is why his contemporary, the Shāfi'ī Muftī of Mecca Aḥmad ibn Zaynī Daḥlān, was skeptical about his claim but nevertheless was proud of him for his victory in battle against British troops. Daḥlān writes that there were numerous *mahdī* pretenders in Muslim history such as the *mahdīs* of Umayyads, 'Abbāsids and Fāṭimids, to name only a few. Sometimes the *mahdī* pretenders were pious Muslims who wanted to reestablish the *sharī'ah* and imagined themselves to be the *mahdī*, when in fact they were not. The real *mahdī*, he insists, is *al-mahdī al-muntaẓar*, who will appear together with Jesus Christ before the Day of Judgement.⁷⁹ The real expected *mahdī* will never declare himself as the *mahdī*, and will not ask people to take an oath of allegiance to himself.⁸⁰ It was thus quite possible that the factors that made Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad easily

⁷⁸ See Daḥlān, *al-Futūḥāt al-Islāmīyah Ba'da Muḍī al-Futūḥāt al-Nabawīyah*, vol. 2, 292.

⁷⁹ There were a lot of *mahdī*-pretenders who claimed to have had authority from God to restore the *ummah* or to bring it back to pure Islam. Even in modern times, we see the phenomenon of *mahdī*-ship, as in the case of Muḥammad al-Qaḥṭānī who was involved in the rebellious movement against the Saudi Kingdom in 1979. He was a close friend and brother-in-law of Juḥaymān al-'Uṭaybī, the

accepted among the Sudanese ṣūfīs was not this orthodox concept of mahdism, but rather the concept popular among the theosophical ṣūfīs, that had been expressed by ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī. For al-Jīlī, that *mahdī* is the highest in the hierarchy of saints, who is also called the Perfect Man (*al-Insān al-Kāmil*), the pole or the seal (*khatm*). This mahdism therefore exists at all times because each such person is a manifestation of the divine essence.⁸¹ Therefore, mahdism in this sense is the well-known concept of *al-ghawth* (the pole) which is also adopted by most ṣūfīs such as al-Tirmidhī, al-Hujvīrī, Ibn ‘Arabī and others. However, according to Snouck Snouck, the main reason for Daḥlān’s campaign against Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad’s claim to be the *mahdī* is due to his position as an Ottoman official, namely, as the Muftī of Mecca. The rebellious political attitude of Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad against the authority of the Ottomans was seen by Daḥlān as a major error. The Ottoman Sultān, for Daḥlān, was the real legitimate ruler of the Muslims.⁸²

Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad was born on 12th August 1844 on an island called Labāb in the province of Dongola. He began his religious education under several masters, such as Shaykh Amīn al-Suwaylihī, and Shaykh Muḥammad al-Dikarya. Though his basic religious education may have allowed him to study in Cairo (at *al-Azhar*), in the usual tradition of young scholars from the Sudan, he preferred to adopt an ascetic and mystical way of life, a religious tradition highly respected in the Sudan. Thus he met and studied with the great ṣūfī master Shaykh Muḥammad

leader of the bloody revolt and occupation of the great mosque in Mecca in 1979. See Florian Peil, “Die Besetzung der grossen Moschee von Mekka 1979,” *Orient* 47 (2006): 387-408.

⁸⁰ Daḥlān, *al-Futūḥāt al-Islāmīyah Ba’da Muḍī al-Futūḥāt al-Nabawīyah*, vol. 2, 296.

⁸¹ ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī, *al-Insān al-Kāmil fī Ma’rifat al-Awākhir wa-al-Awā’il*, vol. 1 (Cairo: Maktabat wa-Maṭba’at Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa-Awlādih, 1981), 72.

Sharīf Nūr al-Dā'im. As we have mentioned, the shaykh was the grandson of Shaykh Aḥmad Ṭayyib al-Bashīr who had established the Sammānīyah order in the Sudan. Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad remained with him for seven years. He was then authorized by Muḥammad Sharīf to be the shaykh of the order and started disseminating its teachings around the country.⁸² Since his relationship with Muḥammad Sharīf was not always harmonious, he later formed a connection with another shaykh who claimed to have been directly initiated into the Sammānīyah by Shaykh Aḥmad Ṭayyib al-Bashīr. This shaykh was al-Qurashī. When al-Qurashī passed away, his disciples recognized Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad as their shaykh. It was at this time that he declared himself to be the *mahdī*.

The Mahdī claimed that he had seen the Prophet, who told him that he had been chosen to be the *mahdī*. The Prophet seated him upon his chair in the presence of the Prophet Khidr and Muḥammad Aḥmad's own followers. In this sense, he became the successor of the Apostle of God (*khalīfat Rasūl Allāh*). The Mahdī was even told that he had been created from the light at the core of the Prophet's heart.⁸⁴ It appears that the teaching of Muḥammad 'Abd al-Karīm al-Sammān on the manifestation of the light of the Prophet was fully realized in the theology of Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad (see Chapter Three of this dissertation). This is confirmed in a number of his letters and epistles that also contain a reflection of his mystical thought.

IV. The Sammānīyah: Khalwatīyah and Qādirīyah

⁸² See Snouck Hugronje, "Een rector der Mekkaansche Universiteit," in his *Verspreide Geschriften*, vol. 3 (Bonn: K. Schroeder, 1923), 69-114.

⁸³ See P.M Holt, *The Mahdist State in the Sudan, 1881-1898; A Study of Its Origins, Development and Overthrow* (Oxford: The Clarendon press, 1958), 37 -46.

The phenomenon of membership in more than one *ṭarīqah* was not uncommon among *ṣūfīs* from the end of the classical period to that of so-called “Neo-Sufism”⁸⁵ in the 18th century. Some *ṣūfīs* were initiated into various and different *ṭarīqahs*. Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Sammān was no exception. According to scholars such as M. Gaborieau, N. Grandin and M. van Bruinessen, al-Sammān belonged to at least four *ṭarīqahs*, namely, the Qādirīyah, the Khalwatīyah, the Shādhilīyah and the Naqshbandīyah.⁸⁶ His involvement with other *ṭarīqahs* was, moreover, facilitated by the fact that Medina was, during this period especially, one of the most important centres of sufism, at least until the Ḥaramayn were occupied by the Wahhābī rulers. However, as far as his mastership or authority in certain *ṭarīqahs* is concerned, based on the *silsilah* that we find in his *al-Nafaḥāt al-Ilāhīyah* and the Sudanese Maḥdī’s *al-Athār al-Kāmilah*, he is attributed with only two *ṭarīqahs*: the Khalwatīyah and the Qādirīyah.

Our next question is: to what does the term “al-Sammānīyah” refer? To which *ṭarīqah* does this term belong? To al-Sammān’s own interpretation of the Khalwatīyah or the Qādirīyah, or perhaps to the Shādhilīyah or the Naqshbandīyah?. The three scholars mentioned in the paragraph above maintain that the Sammānīyah is a result of a combination of these four *ṭarīqahs* but this study cannot confirm the truth of their opinion. Al-Sammān did not combine the

⁸⁴ Ibid., 98-99.

⁸⁵ “Neo-Sufism” is a term coined by certain scholars who see a “renewal” tendency among the *ṣūfīs* of the 17th -18th centuries, characterized by a return to the *sunnah* and the *sharī‘ah*. This idea is in fact misleading. Firstly, Sufism was never as separate from *sharī‘ah* as the scholars claim. Secondly, the trend among many *ṣūfīs* of this period seems, in fact, to have been to deviate from classical sufism, manifested in the cult to the reality of Muḥammad.

⁸⁶ See Marc Gaborieau and Nicole Grandin, “Le Renouveau confrérique (fin XVII^e-XIX^e siècle),” in *Les Voies d’Allah : les ordres mystiques dans l’Islam des origines à aujourd’hui*, eds. Gilles Veinstein and

four abovementioned *ṭarīqahs*, but rather taught every *ṭarīqah* according to its original teachings. The Khalwatīyah- Sammānīyah, for instance, was originally based on the teachings of Muṣṭafā ibn Kamāl al-Dīn al-Bakrī. Al-Palimbānī tell us, for example, that *al-Nafahāt al-Ilāhīyah* is the manual for the Sammānīyah Khalwatīyah *ṭarīqah*. As for his Qādirīyah, al-Sammān's best student Ṣiddīq ibn 'Umar Khān wrote a treatise on al-Sammān's practice of the Qādirīyah *ṭarīqah* entitled *al-Fatahāt al-Sammāniyya fī Ṭarīq al-Qādiriyya*.⁸⁷

The title "al-Sammānīyah" began to be used at the time of al-Sammān's direct students and even more so among the students of these students who lived in the 18th century. To repeat again, according to al-Palimbānī, al-Sammān's best student Ṣiddīq ibn 'Umar Khān wrote a treatise on al-Sammān's practice of the Qādirīyah *ṭarīqah*, *al-Fatahāt al-Sammāniyya fī Ṭarīq al-Qādiriyya*.⁸⁸ From the title of the treatise, it is clear that al-Sammān's approach as defined therein was linked to the Qādirīyah. The term "Sammānīyah" without reference to either the Khalwatīyah or the Qādirīyah, was also employed by Nafīs al-Banjārī in his treatise *Durr al-Nafīs*, where he relates his religious affiliation as follows:

The author is Muhammad Nafīs ibn Idrīs ibn Ḥusayn, born in Banjār, a resident of Mecca, an adherent of the *Shāfi'ī* law school and of the *Ash'arī* theological school, with Junayd his leader in *taṣawwuf*, the Qādirīyah his *ṭarīqah*, the Shaṭṭārīyah his clothing, the Naqshbandīyah his action, Khalwatīyah his food, and the Sammānīyah his drink.⁸⁹

In this instance, we see that Nafīs al-Banjārī claimed the Sammānīyah as a vital element of his *ṣūfī* identity. But was the Sammānīyah school independent? If we

Alexandre Popović (Paris: Fayard, 1996), 68-83; and M. van Bruinessen, "L'Asie du Sud-Est," in *Les Voies d'Allah*, 274-284.

⁸⁷ al-Palimbānī, *Siyār al-Salikīn*, vol.3, 189.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

investigate his thought on al-Sammān's teachings, it appears that the Sammānīyah can indeed be considered as such. The Sammānīyah in this context, referred to in terms independent of the Qādirīyah and the Khalwatīyah, can perhaps be seen as representing al-Sammān's view on the ritual and cult of the Prophet (see Chapter Two). Also important is his elaboration of the invocation of the *dhikr* that he proposed in

al-Nafahāt al-Ilāhīyah (see Chapter Three).

Al-Sammān's connection with the Khalwatīyah *ṭarīqah* is obviously derived from his important master Shaykh Muṣṭafā ibn Kamāl al-Dīn al-Bakrī. This master, as was pointed out earlier, was known for his prominent role in this *ṭarīqah*. Al-Sammān's influence on Southeast Asian Muslims in the 18th and 19th centuries owed a considerable debt to the popularity of this *ṭarīqah*. The spiritual genealogy claimed by 'Abd al-Ṣamad al-Palimbānī in the *Siyār al-Sālikīn* is exactly the same as that of al-Sammān in his *Nafahāt al-Ilāhīyah*. And yet, despite the fact that in this treatise al-Sammān does not mention his Qādirīyah heritage at all, we find, in the *Ma'shūrāt* of the Mahdī of the Sudan, that his *ṭarīqah* lineage goes back to Muḥammad 'Abd al-Karīm al-Sammān. Beginning with the Mahdī, it extends backward to Muḥammad Sharīf, al-Qurashī, al-Ṭayyib, Muḥammad 'Abd al-Karīm al-Sammān, Muḥammad Ṭāhir al-Kurdī, Muḥammad 'Aqīlah and then, after a series of other names, it ends with Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī.⁹⁰ According to Ṭāhir Muḥammad 'Alī al-Bashīr, al-Sammān took the Qādirīyah *ṭarīqah* via Muḥammad

⁸⁹ Nafīs al-Banjārī, *al-Durr al-Nafīs*, 38.

⁹⁰ See Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Mahdī, *al-Āthār al-Kāmilah lil-Imām al-Mahdī*, vol. 1 (Khartoum: Dār Jāmi'at al-Kharṭūm lil-Nashr, Jāmi'at al-Kharṭūm, 1990), 50-1.

Ṭāhir al-Madanī in 1760 in Mecca and Muḥammad Ṭāhir took it from Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Aqīlah ibn Aḥmad ibn Sa‘īd, both of whom were residents of Mecca.⁹¹ It is tempting to assume here that the Muḥammad Abū Ṭāhir referred to here was the son of Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī (1615-1690), for, as had been pointed out by van Bruinessen, Muḥammad Ṭāhir replaced his father Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī as supreme master of the Medinan shaykhs of his day. Al-Kūrānī had in turn replaced the great Palestinian shaykh, Aḥmad al-Qushāshī.⁹² It appears that Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī belonged to and had authority for several *ṭarīqahs* such as the Naqshbandīyah, the Khalwatīyah, the Qādirīyah, the Shaṭṭarīyah and others. After his death in 1690, his son, Muḥammad Abū Ṭāhir,⁹³ who was then 20 years old, succeeded him as the *ṭarīqah*’s shaykh.⁹⁴

When Muḥammad Ṭāhir passed away in 1733, al-Sammān was only about 13 years old. And, just as we questioned the likelihood of al-Sammān’s ability to absorb Ibn ‘Arabī’s teachings while receiving instruction from al-Nābulusī, it seems equally doubtful that al-Sammān could have earned the *ijāzah* (license) of the Qādirīyah *ṭarīqah* at such a young age. Even though this was not unheard of in the ṣūfī tradition, the fact is, as has been pointed by Drewes, that al-Sammān started to be active in the mastership of the *ṭarīqah* in his old age. It was apparently only after his father passed away that he was appointed as a shaykh.⁹⁵ Muḥammad Ṭāhir was the teacher of several great scholars, among them Shāh Walī Allāh, Sulaymān al-

⁹¹ al-Bashīr, *al-Adab al-Ṣūfī al-Sūdānī*, 50.

⁹² See Martin van Bruinessen, “The origins and the development of the Naqshbandi order in Indonesia,” *Der Islam* 67 (1990): 154-157.

⁹³ al-Murādī, *Silk al-Durar*, vol. 3, 27.

⁹⁴ See Marin van Bruinessen, *Mullas, Sufis and Heretics*, 118.

⁹⁵ Drewes, “A Note on Muhammad al-Samman,” 73-87.

Kurdī⁹⁶ and Muḥammad Ḥayāt al-Sindī.⁹⁷ Thus, it is possible that al-Sammān learned the Qādirīyah via the students of Abū Ṭāhir's with whom he had studied, such as Sulaymān al-Kurdī and Muḥammad Ḥayāt al-Sindī.

We may assume that al-Sammān was introduced first of all into the Qādirīyah *ṭarīqah*. Our evidence for this assumption is that 'Abd al-Ṣamad al-Palimbānī frequently called al-Sammān "al-Sammān al-Qādirī al-Khalwatī;" here the *nisbah* "al-Qādirī" is mentioned prior to that of "al-Khalwatī."⁹⁸ Further confirmation that al-Sammān was also "Qādirī" comes from the *Rātib al-Sammān* where al-Sammān himself is said to have referred to his Qādirīyah affiliation. The writer of the *Rātib*, his student Ṣiddīq ibn 'Umar Khān quotes al-Sammān as saying, "I am the pole, I am Sammān al-Qādirī." This statement confirms the Maḥdī's affirmation that al-Sammān had authority within the Qādirīyah. In addition, we have further evidence, offered by al-Palimbānī, which shows the important position of al-Sammān in the order. According to al-Palimbānī, to repeat, al-Sammān's best student Ṣiddīq ibn 'Umar Khān wrote a treatise on al-Sammān's Qādirīyah *ṭarīqah* entitled *al-Fataḥāt al-Sammānīyah fī Ṭarīq al-Qādirīyah*.⁹⁹ It would be interesting to find this hitherto undiscovered treatise. Al-Murādī gives us the name of another *ṣūfī*, namely, 'Uthmān ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn 'Uthmān who was

⁹⁶ Azra, "The Transmission of Islamic Reformism to Indonesia," 211.

⁹⁷ al-Murādī, *Sīlk al-Durar*, vol. 3, 27.

⁹⁸ al-Palimbānī, *Sīyār al-Sālikīn*, vol. 4, 264, 267.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 3, 189.

initiated into the Qādirīyah by al-Sammān.¹⁰⁰ Thus, it is wrong to attribute only Khalwatī origins to the Sammānīyah.¹⁰¹

Even though the two manuscripts that I used do not mention his connection to the Qādirīyah *ṭarīqah*, in *al-Nafāḥāt al-Ilāhīyah* al-Sammān seems to show great respect towards Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī for his understanding of important issues in sufism and often quotes him. This sustains our assumption that al-Sammān, had already adopted the Qādirīyah by the time he came to write *al-Nafāḥāt*.¹⁰² Further evidence of al-Sammān’s connection with the Qādirīyah comes from the Malay *Manāqib* of al-Sammān, in which he is depicted as having been given a robe by Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī.

Except in the Sudan where al-Sammān is more known for his Qādirīyah links, in the rest of the Islamic world, and especially in Southeast Asia, al-Sammān is best known for his authority in the Khalwatīyah *ṭarīqah*. This may have come about due to his most important work *al-Nafāḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*, a manual of his Khalwatī ṣūfī practice following his great master, al-Bakrī’s, teachings, which became so popular among his direct disciples. Al-Sammān’s devoted attention is given to al-Bakrī. In his *al-Nafāḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*, his best work, none of his other masters are mentioned except Muṣṭafā ibn Kamāl al-Dīn al-Bakrī.¹⁰³ The popularity of the *al-Nafāḥāt al-Ilāhīyah* among Southeast Asian Muslims is thanks to its promotion by al-Palimbānī and Nafīs al-Banjārī.

¹⁰⁰ al-Murādī, *Sīlk al-Durar*, vol. 3, 151.

¹⁰¹ For example, this mistake can be found in J. Spencer Trimingham’s *Islam in the Sudan* (London: F. Cass, 1965), 226. Michel Chodkiewicz makes the same mistake attributing the Mahdī of the Sudan to the line of Muṣṭafā ibn Kamāl al-Dīn al-Bakrī. See his *An Ocean without Shore : Ibn ‘Arabī, the book, and the law*, trans. David Streight (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 11.

¹⁰² al-Sammān, *al-Nafāḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 16, 22.

Al-Palimbānī wrote in his *Siyār al-Sālikīn* that the best *ṭarīqah* at his time was that of al-Sammān: "Whoever takes the *ṭarīqah* from the *khalīfah* of al-Sammān, who has already attained the stage of *murshid* and practices it carefully, will achieve *ma'rifah*."¹⁰⁴ Al-Sammān assured eternal salvation to those who took the *ṭarīqah* from him.¹⁰⁵ It can be assumed that the *ṭarīqah* of al-Sammān to which al-Palimbānī refers here is the Khalwatīyah. This can be seen from the fact that he introduces only the Khalwatīyah *dhikr* from *al-Nafāḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*.¹⁰⁶ And he himself was initiated into the Khalwatīyah by al-Sammān.

Why then did al-Sammān's Southeast Asian students give all of their attention to his Khalwatīyah—rather than his Qādirīyah—teachings? This is strange considering the fact that the Qādirīyah *ṭarīqah* seems to have been already well-established in the archipelago. As Drewes and Purbatjaraka point out, the latter *ṭarīqah* was apparently adopted not only by ordinary people but also by the Sultāns of Aceh and Banten in the 16th and 17th centuries. It must be noted that the influence of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī did not, except in Aceh, dominate amongst Malay-speaking Muslims in Southeast Asia. Al-Jīlānī's *Manāqib* was favoured mainly by the Javanese, especially within the Bantenese tribe,¹⁰⁷ and there were many adherents of the Qādirīyah-Naqshbandīyah *ṭarīqah* in Demak (Central Java)¹⁰⁸ and among the Suryalaya in Tasikamalya. Thus, it can be assumed that the Malay-

¹⁰³ Ibid., 16, 18, 24, 36, 37, 60; he refers to him as "*shaykhunā*" on pages 39, 40, 43, 45.

¹⁰⁴ al-Palimbānī, *Siyār al-Sālikīn*, vol. 4, 266.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 266.

¹⁰⁶ 'Abd al-Ṣamad al-Palimbānī, *Hidāyat al-Sālikīn* (Indonesia: Shirkat Maktabat al-Madina, n.d.), 304-306.

¹⁰⁷ The oldest *manāqib* of Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī is written in middle Javanese which is comparable to the Kidung of Bali; see W.J. Drewes and Purbatjaraka Poerbatjaraka, *De Mirakelen Van Abdoelkadir Djaelani* (Bandoeng: A.C. Nix, 1938), 10.

speaking students of al-Sammān, such as al-Palimbānī and Arshad al-Banjārī, had not yet become acquainted with Qādirīyah doctrine by the time they encountered al-Sammān. Another reason may be due to the intellectual tradition of the Khalwatīyah. As de Jong has pointed out, the Khalwatīyah from the time of ‘Alī Qarabash onward had a very significant intellectual tendency towards the theosophical sufism of Ibn ‘Arabī. Most prominent shaykhs from al-Azhar adopted the Khalwatīyah.¹⁰⁹ Coincidentally, most of the great early Malay ṣūfī writers who lived in the 16th and 17th centuries, namely, Ḥamzah Faṣṣūrī, ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf of Singkeli, Shams al-Dīn al-Sumatrānī and also al-Rānīrī loved the works of Ibn ‘Arabī and his followers. This accounts for the strong tendency of Southeast Asian Muslims to love ṣūfī theosophy.

In addition to the above mentioned reasons, the Khalwatīyah *ṭarīqah* may have attracted many adherents because of the reputed power of the shaykhs of this *ṭarīqah* to perform wonders. In other words, the *ṭarīqah* also had a strong “popular appeal.”¹¹⁰ Like other ṣūfī masters who usually vaunted the superiority of their own *ṭarīqahs*,¹¹¹ Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī, too, boasted that his order was superior to all others, citing three reasons which seem to have inspired later Khalwatīyah adherents. These were three promises given by his teacher Shaykh Sha’bān Afandī. The first promise came from the leader of the *jinn*, who promised that he would never

¹⁰⁸ See Dudung Abdurrahman, “Upacara Manaqiban pada Penganut Tarekat Qadirīyah Naqsyabandiyah,” *Jurnal Penelitian Agama* 2 (1992): 49-55.

¹⁰⁹ de Jong, “Mustafa Kamal al-Din al-Bakri (1688-1749),” 235-245.

¹¹⁰ See Ernest Gellner, *Postmodernism, Reason and Religion* (London: Routledge, 1992), 11.

¹¹¹ There are numerous examples of this. The most popular one is the great shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī’s statement on the superiority of the Naqshbandīyah. He said, “*Ṭarīqah Naqshbandīyah* is the nearest, the best, the highest, the most perfect since the masters of this *ṭarīqah* followed the *sharī’ah* consistently.” See Aḥmad Sirhindī, *Intikhāb-i Maktūbāt-i Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī*, ed. Fazlur Rahman (Karachi: Iqbal Akādami, 1968), 130.

disturb anyone from the chain of Sha'bān Afandī's *ṭarīqah*.¹¹² The fact that a *jinn* should figure in such a story should come as no surprise since the Islamic tradition itself, based on the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth*, recognizes the world of the *jinn*. Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī himself claimed to have met a *jinn* (*'ifrīt*) who uttered this promise, but also to have initiated many *jinns* into the Khlawatīyah *ṭarīqah*.¹¹³

The second promise was that nobody who had been initiated into this *ṭarīqah* would ever drown. This promise was an attractive one to Muslims living in maritime regions, especially those of Turkish and Southeast Asian origins¹¹⁴ because, at that time, sea travel from one part of the country to another was cheap and the easiest way to perform the *Hajj*. Therefore, an assurance of safety from the perils of the seas proved an effective means of recruiting adherents. Finally, the third promise was that the Messiah would come from the Khalwatīyah, a belief that seems to have inspired certain adherents of the Khalwatīyah and the Qādirīyah-Sammānīyah such as Aḥmad al-Tijānī and Muḥammad al-Mahdī of the Sudan to proclaim their *mahdī*-ship. When the Islamic world was threatened either from within or from without, Muslims traditionally expected the coming of the *mahdī* to restore religion and society. This belief repeatedly emerged among Sunnīs until the beginning of the 20th century: hence the broad appeal of this promise.

Another reason for the success of the Khalwatīyah was socio-political, for, the order seems to have had a strong connection with the Ottoman elite and rulers,

¹¹² al-Palimbānī, *Siyār al-Sālikīn*, vol. 3, 40, 55.

¹¹³ See Yūsuf ibn Ismā'īl Nabhānī, *Kitāb Jāmi' Karāmāt al-Awliyā'*, vol. 2 (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Gharbīyah al-Kubrā, 1911), 473.

¹¹⁴ Going on pilgrimage or to other Middle Eastern and Muslim countries by "sea" was the most dangerous voyage that Southeast Asian Muslims could undertake up until the early 20th century. In the middle of the 19th century, two groups of Indonesian pilgrims never came back.

and al-Sammān himself indicates this connection. Several masters in the al-Sammān lineage had Turkish titles or honorifics such as Pāshā and Afandī. According to al-Sammān, ‘Alī ‘Afandī al-Qarabash initiated 446 representatives with the authority to teach this *ṭarīqah* elsewhere. His last representative, the teacher of al-Sammān’s teacher, namely Shaykh Muṣṭafā Afandī al-Adranawī, also initiated many representatives from the centre of the Ottoman Empire.¹¹⁵ The Khalwatīyah had in fact been introduced earlier in the Ottoman Empire by the representatives of Sayyid Yahyā Shirwānī who in turn had been initiated by Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Ḥalabī in Tabriz. After being appointed as the order’s representative, he returned to Baku in 1464. Shirwānī’s Turkish disciples, namely, Dede ‘Umar Ruseni (d. 1487), Muḥammad Ḥamīd al-Dīn Cemeli al-Bakrī (d. 1494) and Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Abī al-Barakāt Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan (d. 1597) attracted many adherents in the Balkans.¹¹⁶ There is no evidence that al-Sammān had any direct connections with these three Turkish Khalwatīyah figures; however, both Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Ḥalabī and his disciple Shirwānī were in the line of al-Sammān’s Khalwatīyah *ṭarīqah*. It appears that Shirwānī appointed many representatives besides these three Turkish figures, such as Muḥammad al-Ajanzanī, with whom al-Sammān had a linear connection.¹¹⁷ Shirwānī is considered as the second master after the founder of the Khalwatīyah, Abū ‘Abdullāh Sirāj al-Dīn ‘Umar ibn Akmal al-Dīn al-Aḥjī (‘Umar al-Khalwatī).¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ al-Sammān, *al-Nafaḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 18.

¹¹⁶ See Selçuk Eraydın, *Bazı Özellik ve İstilahlarıyla Tasavvuf ve Taṭikatler İslâmı* (İstanbul: Marifet Yayınları, 1981), 240-5.

¹¹⁷ al-Sammān, *al-Nafaḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 17.

¹¹⁸ Martin, “A Short History of the Khalwati Order of Dervishes,” 277-289.

Al-Sammān's inclination towards the Khalwatīyah may have come in part from the significant role this *ṭarīqah* played among the elites of the Ottoman Empire. The *Manāqib* of al-Sammān evokes the respect that the Ottoman rulers showed him, often expressed in the form of gifts that he in turn distributed to the needy. For, although we may question the reliability of the hagiography, such phenomena were not unusual in the relations between religious scholars and rulers. Still, worldly consideration could not have been his main reason for adopting the Khalwatīyah: indeed, as we see in his *Manāqib*, al-Sammān always counseled his novices to distance themselves from men of power and the rich. Conversely, al-Sammān urged his novices to respect the poor and the needy, who appear to have been the chief beneficiaries of the material rewards bestowed on him. Al-Sammān's attitude toward the rulers might be consistent with the principals underlined by 'Alī Qarabash. As Elger has told us, in Qarabash's view, the Ottoman ruler only has authority when it comes to worldly affairs (*al-khalīfat al-ẓāhir*); whereas, the ṣūfī shaykh is the true ruler because he has authority over the inner world (*al-khalīfat al-bāṭin*).¹¹⁹

V. The popularity of the *Manāqib* of al-Sammān

On November 13th, 1911, a hagiography of al-Sammān was completed by Muḥammad ibn Nūr al-Dā'im in conjunction with his teacher Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī and two other Sudanese figures (Aḥmad al-Bashīr and his son Nūr al-Dā'im).¹²⁰ This

¹¹⁹ Elger, *Mustafa al-Bakri*, 86.

¹²⁰ This hagiography is entitled *al-Ku'ūs al-Muttara'a fī Manāqib al-Sāda al-Arba'a, al-Sayyid Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī wa-al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Sammān wa-al-Shaykh Aḥmad al-Ṭayyib ibn al-Bashīr wa-al-shaykh Nūr al-Dā'im al-Ṭayyib al-Sammānī*, Publ. Cairo: Dār al-Zaytī lil-Ṭibā'a wa-al-Nashr, 1959, 136 pp. My knowledge of this work is thanks to: R.S. O'Fahey, "The Sammāniyya Tradition," in *The Writings of Eastern Sudanic Africa to c. 1900. Arabic Literature of Africa*, vol. 1 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994): 91-122.

manāqib (hagiography) was written almost a hundred years after the first appearance of the Malay adaptation *Manāqib al-Sammān*. Snouck Hugronje (1857-1936), who had undertaken a special survey of the lives and thought of the prominent Acehese people during the war between the latter and the Dutch during the late 19th century, writes how al-Sammān enjoyed great respect because of the *Manāqib* and *Rātib* attributed to him. The *Manāqib*, according to Snouck, was first written in Arabic and then translated into Malay and other local vernaculars. Snouck furthermore states that some Acehese recited the *Manāqib* as a meritorious task for both reader and listener to help them to recover from sickness and for other worldly and supernatural motives.¹²¹ The Malay *Manāqib*, based on the original attributed to al-Sammān's best student Ṣiddīq ibn 'Umar Khān, was the work of Tuan Ḥajjī Muḥammad 'Āqib ibn Ḥajjī Ḥasan al-Dīn al-Palimbānī (d. 1781). The reason for writing this hagiography, according to the supposed author of the Arabic version, came from a *ḥadīth* of the Prophet encouraging the writing of such works.

Stressing the miracles of a saint is usual in *ṣūfī* circles, especially from the post-classical period onward. The first collections of hagiographies began to appear in the 10th century.¹²² Not all saints have hagiographies dedicated to them; however, al-Sammān was special in that his miraculous life was celebrated in a hagiography circulated among his Southeast Asian and Sudanese adherents. It is E. Dermenghem's opinion that sainthood in Islam falls into two categories: the popular saint who is more folkloric and the serious saint who is the subject of

¹²¹ See Snouck Hugronje, *The Acehese*, trans. W.S. O'Sullivan (London: Luzac & Co., 1906), 216-18.

¹²² See Carl W. Ernst, *The Shambhala Guide to Sufism* (Boston, Mass.: Shambhala, 1997), 63.

hagiography.¹²³ According to this definition, Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Sammān can be classified as both a serious and a popular saint. The *manāqib* likewise served as an instrument for the transmission of the *ṭarīqah* and the spreading of its influence, whereas, for its individual adherents, the *manāqib* is the vehicle of intercession from the saint. For intercession and supernatural purposes, al-Sammān seems to have enjoyed greater influence and popularity than Shaykh Aḥmad al-Qushāshī, who had enjoyed considerable respect in the Indonesian archipelago a century earlier. In the 17th century, al-Qushāshī’s students, such as ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf of Singkeli (in Aceh), and Yūsuf al-Makassarī, transmitted the teachings of the Shaykh, but there was no *manāqib* dedicated to him. As far as I know, only two *manāqibs* have any widespread popularity in the archipelago, namely the *Manāqib* of Sammān and that of ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, both of which are frequently recited by Muslims there. The tradition of reciting a *manāqib* can be situated far back in ṣūfī history, as can be seen from the efforts of Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī (d. 996) and al-Ghazālī to motivate Muslims to recite the stories of the lives of saints in order to learn from their pious examples. An outspoken ṣūfī of the 15th century, ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha’rānī, who acknowledged the competition between ṣūfī shaykhs in attracting adherents, even suggested that ṣūfīs recite both the *manāqib* of their own order and those of their rivals. As he states, rivalry is a worldly matter and *manāqib* a religious one, so it is clear that the latter is the correct path to take.¹²⁴

¹²³ See Emile Dermenghem, *Le Culte des saints dans l’Islam maghrébin* (Paris: Gallimard, 1954), 11.

¹²⁴ See ‘Abd al-Wahhāb ibn Aḥmad al-Sha’rānī, *Tanbīh al-Mughtarrīn* (Cairo: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Kutub al-‘Arabīyah, n.d.), 80.

In the early years of the ṣūfī movement, the recitation of the historical or legendary lives of the founding ṣūfī masters was designed not to gain intercession, but rather to remember their good deeds as an example. After the classical period, the *manāqib*s of great saints were believed to confer supernatural blessings on the reciters and this gave rise to a phenomenon that emerged wherever a ṣūfī *ṭarīqah* prevailed, such as in Egypt, Morocco, Indonesia, the Sudan etc. This tendency may be ascribed to a firm belief in the miracles of the saints, expressed by both theologians and ṣūfīs. The early and the original thinker on the concept of sainthood in Islam, al-Ḥākim al-Tirmidhī (d. 898) argues that the friends of God have supernatural powers to produce miracles; they may be able to walk on water or fly in the air.¹²⁵ This leads to the question, posed by al-Bājūrī (1783-1860) regarding why the later generations seemed to witness more miracles than the earlier ones. The best example may be found in hagiographies of later scholars (*muta'akhhirīn*), such as al-Nabhānī's (1849-1932) *Jāmi' Karāmāt al-Awliyā'*, which records many more miracles than had ever been reported by previous generations. According to al-Bājūrī, this was due to the earlier generation's strong faith in the possibility of saints performing miracles, which, in turn, made these less remarkable. The later scholars (*muta'akhhirīn*) on the other hand, did not believe and so miracles happened to encourage their belief.¹²⁶ Al-Bājūrī's conclusion seems

¹²⁵ See Bernd Radtke, *al-Ḥakīm at-Tirmidī: ein islamischer Theosoph des 3./9. [i.e. 8./9.] Jahrhunderts* (Freiburg: K. Schwarz, 1980), 93.

¹²⁶ Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad al-Bājūrī, *Tuḥfat al-Murīd 'alā Jawharat al-Tawḥīd* (Semarang: Usaha Keluarge, n.d.), 91. This book is used for the higher level Islamic Pesantren (High School) students who have already mastered Arabic or are in the process of doing reading practice of Arabic.

to echo the argument of the theologians to the effect that the miracles of the prophets are conditioned by the challenges that the prophets faced.

Faith in the miracles of the saints, according to al-Bājūrī, falls into two categories of opinion.¹²⁷ One group believes that miracles only happen during the lifetime of a saint, whereas, the other group believes that the true saints must perform miracles not only during their lifetimes, but also after their deaths. The conviction that the dead can dialogue with the living from the grave goes back to classical times: an example of this can be found in the dialogue between the Caliph 'Umar the First and a dead youth, as mentioned by Sahl al-Tustarī.¹²⁸ It is said that the dead can speak in any language¹²⁹ and render help to the living. Al-Sha'rānī reports that he was told by some shaykhs that God stations an angel at the tomb of a saint to answer the needs of those who bring petitions and that sometimes the saint himself emerges from his tomb to fulfill the needs of the people.¹³⁰ Therefore, according to Daḥlān (the Shāfi'ī Muftī of Mecca), whose *fatwās* were respected by most Indonesian Muslims, it is acceptable to call directly upon certain prophets and saints to mediate between oneself and God. This was the practice of the Caliph 'Umar I, who called upon 'Abbās (the uncle of the Prophet) when praying for

¹²⁷ al-Bājūrī, *Tuḥfat al-Murīd 'alā Jawharat al-Tawḥīd*, 91.

¹²⁸ For instance, Sahl ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Tustarī narrated a story about a handsome young man who died because of his commitment not to commit adultery with a beautiful woman and then could converse with the Caliph 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb. It is said that he was rewarded with three paradises. See Sahl ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Tustarī, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm* (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-'Arabīyah al-Kubrā, 1911), 97.

¹²⁹ According to Muḥammad Amīn al-Kaylānī, Ibn Ḥajar and some others believed that Arabic was the only language of the afterlife, whether in paradise or in hell. However, Muḥammad al-Bāqillānī believed it was not Arabic but Syriac. Muhammad Manla however believes that from these two opinions, it is possible to conclude that the dead man speaks in whatever languages he spoke in while alive. See a work assigned to 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, *Safīnah al-Qādirīyah* (Tripoli: Manshūrāt Maktabat al-Najāh, n.d.).

¹³⁰ al-Bājūrī, *Tuḥfat al-Murīd 'alā Jawharat al-Tawḥīd*, 90-91.

rainfall.¹³¹ However, according to Ibn Taymīyah, it is only permissible to ask spiritual assistances from the living Prophet and the pious men. When the Prophet was still alive, people asked him to pray for them, and for his intercession and blessings. However, once the Prophet passed away, the Companions came to the family of the Prophet as when ‘Umar I came to ‘Abbās, but they did not come to their graves.¹³² For Daḥlān, it is not contradictory to the true faith as long as it is understood that God alone answers the prayers and not the prophets or saints who function only as mediators.¹³³ It is understandable that the Sammānīyah should have called upon the Prophet, the four companions and the poles, including the pious believers, to be the mediators for their prayers. And al-Sammān’s name itself is ultimately called upon for intercession.¹³⁴ Snouck, as we mentioned earlier, showed us how important al-Sammān was for popular religion. This popularity has remained strong in certain parts of the Indonesian archipelago until now, thanks to his *Manāqib*. For instance, al-Sammān’s spirit is called up by the Dabus performer Embah Juned besides other powerful spirits.¹³⁵

How did al-Sammān’s *Manāqib* gain so much popularity in the archipelagos? Apart from the religious reasons mentioned above, there are several other reasons as well. According to Gronke, one factor that makes a saint’s supernatural powers attractive and influential for the masses is socio-economic crisis. Gronke cites the

¹³¹ See Abī al-Qāsim Hibat Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Maṣṣūr al-Ṭabarī al-Lālakā’ī, *Karāmāt Awliyā’ Allāh*, ed. Aḥmad Sa’d Ḥamdān (Riyad : Dār Ṭibah, 1992), 135-6.

¹³² See Aḥmad ibn Taymīyah, *Majmū’ Fatāwā al-Shaykh al-Islām Aḥmad Ibn Taymīyah*, vol. 7 (Rabat: Maktabat al-Ma’ārif, 1981), 154-55.

¹³³ Daḥlān, *al-Futūḥāt al-Islāmīyah Ba’da Muḍī al-Futūḥāt al-Nabawīyah*, vol. 2, 222.

¹³⁴ *Rātīb Sammān*, lines 317-334; see Ahmad Purwadaksi, *Ratib Samman Dan Hikayat Syekh Muhammad Samman : Suntingan Naskah Dan Kajian Isi Teks* (Jakarta: Djambatan Yayasan Naskah Nusantara, 2004).

¹³⁵ See Martin van Bruinessen, “Shari’a court, tarekat and pesantren: religious institutions in the Banten

example of the success of the earlier Safavids in gaining religious power in the midst of socio-economic crisis under Mongol rule between the 14th and 15th centuries. The masses need material and spiritual security and therefore turn to the worship of saints, whose intercession is seen as the only solution.¹³⁶ In the case of the context of al-Sammān's *Manāqib*, this can be attributed to the fact that Dutch colonial power had sparked Islamic resistance. Opposition came from Tuanku Imam Bonjol in West Sumatra and Pangeran Dipenogoro in central Java, not to mention the Aceh War at the end of the 19th century. All of this led to suffering and uncertainty, and it is possible that the people welcomed the saint's intercession for their protection. The Sammānīyah *ṭarīqah* and the *Manāqib* of al-Sammān seem to have played a big role in satisfying the needs of the people at that time. According to van Bruinessen, the Sammānīyah was probably the first *ṭarīqah* to win mass popularity in Southeast Asia. Even though this *ṭarīqah* was patronized by the Sultān of Palembang, it also attracted the common people. A local chronicle tells of how it played a role in resisting the occupation of the city by Dutch forces in 1819. A group of people wearing white clothing, before fearlessly attacking their enemy, performed the invocation of the *dhikr* until they reached a state of trance. A similar event occurred in South Kalimantan, in the year 1860, when the Dutch encountered resistance from a group of *ṣūfīs* who followed the *Ratip Beramal*, a local adaptation of the Sammānīyah.¹³⁷

Sultanate," *Archipel* 50 (1995): 184.

¹³⁶ See Monika Gronke, "Der Heilige und die Gesellschaft. Soziale und politische Dimensionen der frühen Safawīya," in *Shi'a Islam, Sects, and Sufism*, ed. Frederick de Jong (Utrecht: M. Th. Houtsma Stichting, 1992), 51-64.

¹³⁷ van Bruinessen, "L'Asie du Sud-Est," 280-81.

Another indirect reason for the popularity of the *Manāqib* was the intellectual revolution that accompanied the growing participation in the *Hajj* during the 19th century. Due to the greater facilitation of the *Hajj* from the middle of the 19th century onward,¹³⁸ many more students stayed at and studied in the *Sammānīyah zāwīyah* in Medina which provided free accommodation. At the end of 19th century, Snouck observed that most Malays who had resided in Mecca were students and even religious teachers. Most of them in turn came from the middle class—a result of the strict policy of the colonial authority to select only those who had the means to undertake the *Hajj*.¹³⁹

Indonesian Muslims became more rationalist or puritan after independence in 1945 and saint worship became less popular as a consequence. This phenomenon may be attributed to the influence of Ibn Taymīyah,¹⁴⁰ the *Wahhābīyah*¹⁴¹ and Reformist figures such as the rationalist Muḥammad ‘Abduh from Egypt and the puritan al-Mawdūdī from Pakistan, who inspired the younger generations.¹⁴² However, it must be noted that the critique of the idea of saints’ miracles was not a

¹³⁸ See Marcel Witlox, “Mempertaruhkan jiwa dan harta jemaah haji dari Hindia Belanda pada abad ke-19,” in *Indonesia dan Haji: Empat Karagan*, eds. Dick Douwes and Nico Kaptein (Jakarta: INIS, 1997), 65-77.

¹³⁹ See Snouck Hugronje, “Über eine Reise nach Mecca 1887,” in his *Verspreide Geschriften*, 60.

¹⁴⁰ Ibn Taymīyah believes that the *awliyā’* exist but sometimes nobody knows them. However, he rejects the notion of the invisible saints whose physical characteristics are hidden. See Aḥmad ibn Taymīyah, *Majmū’ Fatāwa*, vol.7, 58.

¹⁴¹ It is the concept of *tawḥīd* of Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb which made legends about the miracles of saints unpopular. He divided *tawḥīd* into two: *Tawḥīd Rubūbīyah* and *Tawḥīd Ulūhīyah*. Most people believe in *Tawḥīd Rubūbīyah*; namely, that it is God who created the world. The only thing that can differentiate between Muslims and infidels is the implementation of *Tawḥīd Ulūhīyah*; namely, that a Muslim worship God only and only seek help from him, not from stones, trees, or the tombs of the dead, including the tomb or the spirit of the Prophet. Those who seek intercession from others than God are considered to be infidels by Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb. See Esther Peskes, *Muḥammad b. ‘Abdalwahhāb, 1703-92, im Widerstreit : Untersuchungen zur Rekonstruktion der Frühgeschichte der Wahhābīya* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1993), 16-29.

new phenomenon in Islamic society. The Ḥanbalī scholar Ibn al-Jawzī (1116-1201) was very critical of miracles and warned his co-religionists to be wary of the invented stories surrounding them. According to him, the famous mystic Rābi‘ah al-‘Adawīyah herself was aware of the dangers of the stories attributed to her. She did not allow people to enter her house because she did not want them to invent and attribute miracles to her. Ibn al-Jawzī also assumes that certain miracles are in fact only hallucinations or satanic deceptions. For instance, when someone sees something luminous in the sky—if it is during a night in Ramaḍān—he may think that it is a *laylat al-qadr* (i.e. the “night of power” when the Qur’ān was revealed to the Prophet), and if it is not Ramaḍān, he may think that he is receiving illumination. Ibn al-Jawzī reminds us that there are a lot of false stories about the miracles of saints which were invented by ignorant people.¹⁴³ However, he does not go as far as Ibn Ḥazm (994-1064) who completely rejects the possibility of the existence of the miracles of the saints.¹⁴⁴ According to the latter, what appears to be a miracle is in reality only a natural and accidental event which does not in fact break the laws of nature.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² This is because of the influence of puritanical movements such as that of the Muḥammadīyah, Persatuan Islam, DDI (Dar al-Da’wa al-Islamiyya), Al-Irshad and the rationalist-modernist movements.

¹⁴³ See Abū al-Faraj ibn al-Jawzī, *Talbīs Iblīs* (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl: n.d.), 477-79.

¹⁴⁴ ‘Alī ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥazm, *Kitāb al-Faṣl fī al-Milal wa- al-Ahwā’ wa-al-Niḥal*, vol. 4 (Cairo: al-Maṭba‘ah al-Adabīyah, 1900), 11.

¹⁴⁵ According to Ibn Ḥazm, there is a story about three people who were trapped in a cave but then, after they prayed to God, the stone which was closing the cave moved so that they were able to get out. This event is not a miracle, but rather a natural thing because, with or without praying, the stone could have moved to the other side and these three people could have escaped. See *Ibid.*, vol. 4, 10.

Ernest Gellner classifies Muslim society into “high Islam” and “low Islam.”¹⁴⁶ High Islam is espoused by intellectuals who prefer meditation and reflection, whereas, in low Islam or folk Islam, the most characteristic institution is the saint cult. Miracles, legends and the tombs of the saints are more important than meditation and reflection.¹⁴⁷ The behaviour of the adherents of the Sammānīyah support Gellner’s theory. The attitude of the intellectual elite among the Sammānīyah in fact indirectly contributed to making al-Sammān’s *Manāqib* unpopular. This shows us that there is a deep gap between the intellectual elite and the folk masses among the adherents of the Sammānīyah, with regard to the occurrence of miracles. The elite do not seem to have been interested in the *Manāqib* of al-Sammān, while the masses are very absorbed with it. However, we must not hurriedly assume that either group deliberately disapproved of or rejected the *Manāqib*. There is little comment on this, but it still seems unlikely that either group could have remained unaware of it. A certain dismissiveness can be seen in the attitudes of both al-Palimbānī and Nafīs al-Banjārī, neither of whom mentioned the *Manāqib* nor transmitted the story of the miracles of al-Sammān which are contained in it. It appears that, for them, spiritual miracles are more important than physical miracles and wonders.

It is obvious that al-Palimbānī and Nafīs al-Banjārī had a lot in common with the many great mystics and theologians who had belittled miracles in the past. It is important to note that Ibn ‘Arabī himself tells us that material miracles are not

¹⁴⁶ Certainly this idea is not new; Snouck Hugronje had already said that the saint cult and belief in magical powers were characteristic of folk Islam. See Hugronje, “Über eine Reise nach Mecca 1887,” in *Verspreide Geschriften*, 62.

¹⁴⁷ Gellner, *Postmodernism, Reason and Religion*, 11.

essential in sufism and that many ṣūfis did not want to exercise this power.¹⁴⁸ It is a surprising fact too that Ibn Taymīyah himself agrees with the ṣūfis about the possibility of the occurrences of miracles at the hands of saints. Certainly, like most of the ṣūfis, Ibn Taymīyah feels that immaterial miracles are much more religiously significant than supernatural ones. For instance, he asserts that the pious man may go on pilgrimage by flying through the air, but that this is not a bigger miracle than those who go on pilgrimage in the normal way. Ibn Taymīyah relates a conversation between Shaykh Ibrāhīm al-Ja'barī and those who claimed to have performed the pilgrimage by flying through the air. When they asked him to join them on the way to Mecca by flying, Shaykh Ibrāhīm refused to do so and told them that doing pilgrimage in such a way would not bring them a reward from God. Only by doing the pilgrimage as other Muslims did, would the Prophet and his companions give them a reward. The flying pilgrims ended up agreeing with Shaykh Ibrāhīm al-Ja'barī.¹⁴⁹

This position is also clearly expressed by Nafīs al-Banjārī in his *al-Durr al-Nafīs*.¹⁵⁰ Nafīs al-Banjārī insists that immaterial miracles (*karāmāt ma'nawīya*) are the best miracles. The most important for him were these immaterial miracles. Indeed, he does not deny the existence of miracles which break the laws of nature, but he believes that this sort of miracle is mostly given to those who have not yet attained the perfect *istiḳāmah* (straightforwardness). He relates several examples of immaterial miracles such knowing God, loving God, glorifying God by being shy in front of Him, being afraid of Him, obeying Him and doing what He commands and

¹⁴⁸ See Henry Corbin, *L'Imagination créatrice dans le soufisme d'Ibn 'Arabi* (Paris : Flammarion, 1958), 171.

¹⁴⁹ Ibn Taymīyah, *Majmū' Fatāwā*, vol. 7, 498-499.

avoiding what He forbids, remaining faithful to Him and being sincere and true to Him. In insisting on the importance of these spiritual miracles, al-Banjārī also puts forward the opinions of several great ṣūfī masters. Quoting Abū Ḥasan al-Shādhilī, Nafīs tells us that the *istiqāmah* here encompasses two sorts of miracles: the first are the miracles of faith (*karāmāt imān*), namely when faith and the witnessing of it (*shuhūd*) are increased; the second are the miracles of action (*karāmāt ‘amal*), namely, obeying what God commands and avoiding what He forbids. It is a great disaster if somebody who has these two sorts of miracles throws them away. If a miracle happens to someone without the satisfaction of God, it is not a miracle but an *istidrāj*, that is, a thing that will lead to a disaster. Repeating the opinion of Abū al-‘Abbās al-Mursī, al-Banjārī tells us, “It is not a miracle if someone can penetrate into the earth, or can suddenly be in Mecca or in other countries. However, the true miracle is that someone can control his soul and suddenly come to the presence of God.”¹⁵¹ Quoting Sahl ibn ‘Abdallāh, Nafīs al-Banjārī tells us that the biggest miracle is that someone should change his bad attitude and adopt good behavior.¹⁵² Nafīs al-Banjārī also states that some ṣūfī masters remind us not to wonder at somebody producing something that he wants from his empty hand, but to wonder at somebody with only an empty hand. According to Abū Muḥammad al-Murtashī, as al-Banjārī relates, “Do not wonder if you see that someone can walk on water or fly in the air; but you should wonder if you see somebody who can disobey his carnal soul.”¹⁵³ According to Nafīs al-Banjārī, Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī (d. ca. 874) himself was

¹⁵⁰ al-Banjārī, *al-Durr al-Nafīs*, 36-37.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 36.

¹⁵² al-Tustarī, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Azīm*, 107.

¹⁵³ al-Banjārī, *al-Durr al-Nafīs*, 36.

skeptical about material miracles: "Do not be deceived when you see somebody who can spread his rug over water and sit on it until you see whether he obeys what God commands and avoids what He forbids."¹⁵⁴ When it was said to Abū Yazīd that somebody could travel to Mecca in just one night, Abū Yazīd replied that Satan can walk from east to west in only a minute but he is cursed.

As we stated in the Introduction, despite the fact that the *Manāqib* of al-Sammān is still read by Indonesian Muslims today, its reciters have little connection with the Sammānīyah-Khalwatīyah *ṭarīqah*, which currently has no formal masters or representatives in the area. At the same time, al-Sammān is considered to be the patron saint for certain Dabus performers in Banten. In Banjarmasin (South Kalimantan) and Makassar (South Celebes), as noted by van Bruinessen, there are several Islamic *ṣūfī* congregations attributed to the Sammānīyah *ṭarīqah*, but they do not claim to come from the *silsilah* (chain of masters) of the *ṭarīqah*.¹⁵⁵ In Cianjur (West Java), "in the village of Cibaregbeg, there is a teacher of Bantenese descent, Kiyai Abdul Qodir, who still teaches this *ṭarīqa* along with the Rifa'īyah and a number of others."¹⁵⁶ The Sammānīyah in fact survives intact mainly in Medina and the Sudan. This is so primarily because, as O' Fahey indicates, al-Sammān's titular from Medina came to visit the Sudan.¹⁵⁷ The survival of this *ṭarīqah* in the Sudan is, to repeat, certainly due to the activity of the descendants of Abū Ṭayyib al-Bashīr. The survival of the Sammānīyah tradition in Indonesia is linked now to the person

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ van Bruinessen, *Tarekat Naqsyabandiyah di Indonesia*, 188, 197.

¹⁵⁶ van Bruinessen, "Shari'a court, tarekat and pesantren: religious institutions in the Banten Sultanate," 184.

¹⁵⁷ See O'Fahey, "The Sammāniyya Tradition," in *The Writings of Eastern Soudanic Africa to c. 1900*, vol. 1, 92.

of Muḥammad Idjay in South Kalimantan. He may have received the Sammānīyah *silsilah* from his own family tradition (in Kalampayan) which was introduced by his ancestor Muḥammad Arshad al-Banjārī (al-Sammān's student).¹⁵⁸ The late Hadji Idjay along with more than a thousand of his followers, used to recite the *Qaṣīdah Sammānīyah* "every Saturday in Martapura as though a revival of the Sammānīyah in this area was in preparation."¹⁵⁹

VI. The Story of al-Sammān's Miracles According to the *Manāqib*.

It is important to note that the most complete *Manāqib* of al-Sammān (its original title being *Hikayat Syekh Muhammad Samman*) was transliterated from Jawi into modern Indonesian by Ahmad Purwadaksi¹⁶⁰ and I rely mostly on this version of the *Manāqib* which the most complete one available. However, Purwadaksi fails to examine the significance of the mystical ideas that are brought forward in the *Manāqib*. The most important part of the *Manāqib* in fact is in the first part. After examining this most complete *Manāqib* here, we will see that the writer of this *Manāqib* was aware of the mystical teachings of al-Sammān in particular but also those of famous earlier ṣūfis such Ibn 'Arabī as well. This is understandable because this work is attributed to the two most important students of al-Sammān, namely, Ṣiddīq ibn 'Umar Khān and 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz. However, it also reveals some inconsistencies with the original ṣūfi doctrines adopted by the

¹⁵⁸ Van Bruinessen tells us that Sharwani Abdan (the great 'ālim of Banjar who lived in Bangil) said that Muḥammad Arshad al-Banjārī introduced the Khalwatīyah-Sammānīyah *ṭarīqah*. See van Bruinessen, *Tarekat Naqsyabandiyya di Indonesia*, 187.

¹⁵⁹ Unfortunately, Tuan Guru Hadji Muḥammad Idjay passed away in 2003.

¹⁶⁰ Purwadaksi's dissertation is certainly a great contribution to the study of al-Sammān's hagiography and I benefited greatly from his research. See note 131 above.

intellectual *ṣūfī* writers belonging to *Sammānīyah*. Similarly, the most complete account of his miracles relates that Ibn ‘Arabī foretold the coming of al-Sammān as a great saint. This reference, however, is baseless. I will also consider the short *Manāqib* of al-Sammān published in Southern Kalimantan by Hadji Kusayrin. But this *Manāqib* seems to be a summary of the more complete one or of another version of al-Sammān’s *Manāqib*; it is rather inconsistent with regard to the earlier great saints’ predictions about the coming of al-Sammān. It was stated in this short Malay *Manāqib*, that the *ṭabaqāt* of Shaykh Muḥammad Sharbūnī¹⁶¹ (d. 1586)¹⁶² foretold the coming of al-Sammān as a great saint. Its reference to al-Sharbūnī is certainly wrong because al-Sharbūnī lived much earlier than al-Sammān, but this kind of prediction is not unusual for *ṣūfīs*.

The *Manāqib* also seems to provide some reliable details about the life of al-Sammān. However, as I mentioned earlier, it is impossible to reconstruct the historical life of al-Sammān on the basis of this work. This is of course true of the *manāqibs* of all saints, since a work of this kind normally focuses on only one aspect of a saint’s life. Useful biographical information is normally limited to details mentioned in passing; the whole period of his miraculous feats is detailed and even his childhood is considered significant. Some hagiography even tells of the life of the saint in the ‘pre-natal’ period. The *Manāqibs* of al-Sammān cover three periods: his childhood, his career and his posthumous existence. They describe al-Sammān

¹⁶¹ It seems that the writer, the copier or the translator of the *Manāqib* was confused with the Malay *manāqib* of ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī which also refers to al-Sharbūnī. The Malay *Manāqib* of al-Jīlānī and another short Malay *manāqib* of al-Jīlānī’s, which contains only 16 pages, were published by the well-known Arab-language publisher Sayyid ‘Abdallāh bin Uthman Petamburan (Batavia) and also make reference to al-Sharbūnī. Thus, it is hard to believe that Ṣiddīq ‘Umar Khān and al-Muḥammad ‘Aqib al-Palimbānī could have made such a mistake.

as having been ascetic, pious and compassionate as well as capable of performing wondrous acts since he was a small child. He refused to sleep on a mattress and slept very little either by day or by night. He performed not only the obligatory prayers but also the supplementary ones. He criticized those 'ulamā' who wore luxurious garments and ate less than other children. When he was a small boy, his parents prepared bread for him that he refused to touch and yet he did not suffer any ill effects. His parents told al-Sammān's Qur'ān teacher about his behaviour and the teacher told them that their son was a saint. These examples are further proof of the ascetic tendencies of al-Sammān, which is perfectly in keeping with his teachings on the subject expressed in his *al-Nafaḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*.

The *Manāqib*s also tell us that al-Sammān loved and respected students of the religious sciences, the poor and the needy, and visitors to the tomb of the Prophet. We are furthermore told that al-Sammān always sat down and meditated in the mosque of Medina and visited the tombs of the wives of the Prophet in Baqi'. At the beginning of his spiritual journey, al-Sammān did not want to reveal his esoteric knowledge; however, after the Prophet came to him and told him to spread this learning, he undertook to do so, beginning with the city of the Prophet itself (Medina). After hearing the news about al-Sammān, people from many different countries came to Medina to be initiated into the *ṭarīqah*. Al-Sammān enjoyed respect from several classes of people. Kings and rich men sent him gold and silver as gifts, but this largesse was redistributed right away, so that nothing remained in his hands. The *Manāqib*s also gives us the exact dates of the birth and death of al-

¹⁶² See about the death of al-Sharbūnī, GAL II, 339:18, no. 3.

Sammān. According to the *Manāqib*, al-Sammān was born in 1132 A.H (i.e. 1720 C.E.) in Medina, and died in 1189 A.H. (i.e. 1775 C.E.) in the same city. He was buried near the tombs of the wives of the Prophet in Baqī'. G.W.J. Drewes prefers to rely on the date given by this *Manāqib* rather than that cited by al-Jabartī because the *Manāqib* was written only a few years after al-Sammān's death.¹⁶³ In any case, the *Manāqib* gives us some rather important facts about al-Sammān's life.

The most complete *Manāqib* quotes al-Sammān as repeating the sayings of Ibn 'Arabī and his school. It is obvious that the writers of this *Manāqib* made an attempt to interpret Ibn 'Arabī's teachings on sainthood as a means of supporting the sainthood of al-Sammān. However, in the attempt to exaggerate the supreme status of the sainthood of al-Sammān, the writer of the *Manāqib* does not always support his arguments according to the true standpoint of ṣūfī writers. Furthermore, the *Manāqib* seems to stress that al-Sammān's status as a saint is a sort of grace from God, that is, it was God who chose al-Sammān to be the His friend. This also impacted upon the place where al-Sammān was destined to be born, live and die; it was his fate that he was born in the most noble city, namely Medina, the second holiest city in Islam. Thus, the *Manāqib* repeatedly insists on the great importance of Medina and the fact that al-Sammān brought even more blessings to the city. When al-Sammān was born, the formula "there is no God but God" was heard in all corners of the city. The *Manāqib* also tells us that it was Ibn 'Arabī who predicted that one day a great saint would appear in Medina. The *Manāqib* then argues that the saint who was predicted by Ibn 'Arabī was in fact al-

¹⁶³ Drewes, "A Note on Muhammad al-Samman," 73-87.

Sammān. The *Manāqib* further indicates that al-Sammān was the saint that Ibn ‘Arabī had described as the saint who would follow the character of the Prophet Muḥammad. Indeed, the members of the Sammāniyah *ṭarīqah* witness that there are no more prophets after Muḥammad and that there are to be no more saints after al-Sammān and the *Manāqib* repeatedly insists upon the fact that al-Sammān is the *khatm al-awliyā’* (seal of the saints).

Furthermore, the *Manāqib* tells us that the friends of God stand up in the shoes of the Prophet Muḥammad; that is to say they inherited the knowledge of the Prophet. This is like the *ḥadīth* which says that the scholars are the inheritors of the prophets.¹⁶⁴ Every saint has a character that resembles that of a prophet. The most noble saint is the one who has the knowledge of all the prophets, but this can only happen by receiving one’s knowledge from the Prophet Muḥammad via the Prophet Ibrāhīm. The *Manāqib* insists that this was the case with al-Sammān. He is described as the last special saint (*khatm al-awliyā’ al-khāṣṣah*) because only he had the capacity to take in the light of the knowledge of the Prophet, having been granted the divine unveiling (*kashf*) by God. By giving the title of *khatm al-awliyā’ al-khāṣṣah*, to al-Sammān, the writers of the *Manāqib* seem to show a familiarity with the concept of sainthood according to Ibn ‘Arabī and his followers. For example, Ibn ‘Arabī distinguishes between two sorts of sainthood: the *khatm al-awliyā’ al-‘āmmah* (universal seal of sainthood), like the position of the Prophet ‘Īsā (Jesus), and the *khatm al-awliyā’ al-khāṣṣah* (limited seal of sainthood). Some ṣūfis after Ibn ‘Arabī even called him the *khatm al-awliyā’ al-khāṣṣah*. From Michel Chodkiewicz, we

¹⁶⁴ Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn*, vol.1 (Beirut: Dār al-Khayr, 1990), 12.

learn that Aḥmad al-Qushāshī and ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī considered Ibn ‘Arabī as the *khatm al-awliyā’ al-khāṣṣah* of his age. According to al-Sha‘rānī, ‘Alī Wafā’ declared that his father Muḥammad Wafā’ was the seal of the saints; whereas, the grandson of al-Nābulusī considered his own grandfather as the *khatm al-awliyā’ al-khāṣṣah*.¹⁶⁵

Even though the *Manāqib* emphasizes that al-Sammān was the final saint, this does not necessarily mean for the elite adherents of the Sammānīyah that he was the actual final one. This is because the term *khatm* here, according to Tirmidhī and Ibn ‘Arabī, meant the best saint of a given time. In addition, we do not find the term *khatm al-awliyā’ al-khāṣṣah* attributed to al-Sammān in the works of the intellectual elites of the Southeast Asian Sammānīyah, such as in those of al-Palimbānī and Nafīs al-Banjārī. Indeed, al-Palimbānī and Nafīs al-Banjārī, as well as the North African Tijānī, ‘Alī al-Barādah¹⁶⁶ call al-Sammān the pole of his time (*quṭb al-zamān*). This means that, for them, al-Sammān occupied the highest position in a hierarchical structure of saints. As described by al-Hujwīrī, the hierarchy of saints comprises three hundred *akhyār* (good saints) and forty ‘*abdāl*’ (substitutes), seven *abrār* (pious saints) and four *awtād* (pillars), as well as three *nuqabā’* (leaders) and one *quṭb* (axis) or *ghawth* (helper).¹⁶⁷ This idea was rejected by Ibn Taymīyah.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁵ See Michel Chodkiewicz, *Le Sceau des saints : prophétie et sainteté dans la doctrine d'Ibn Arabī* (Paris: Gallimard, 1986), 170-73.

¹⁶⁶ Barādah, *Jawāhir al-Ma‘ānī wa-al-Bulūgh al-Amānī*, 38.

¹⁶⁷ The number of saints as described by al-Hujwīrī is widespread in ṣūfī literature. See ‘Alī ibn ‘Uṣmān al-Hujwīrī, *The Kashf al-Mahjūb: The Oldest Persian Treatise on Sūfism*, trans. Reynold Alleyne Nicholson (London: Luzac, 1936), 214. See ‘Azīz al-Dīn al-Nasafī, *al-Kāmil: Majmū‘ah-i Rasā’il-i Mashhūr bih Kitāb-i al-Insān al-Kāmil*, ed. Marijan Molé (Tehran: Qismat-i Īrānshināsī-i Instītū-i Īrān va Farānsah, 1962), 320.

¹⁶⁸ According to Ibn Taymīyah, there is no such concept of the forty ‘*abdāl*’, etc. in Islam. This idea, he says, is similar to Shī‘ism. See his *Majmū‘ Fatāwā*, vol. 7, 57.

In *al-Durr al-Nafīs*, al-Banjārī expresses his most interesting idea about sainthood, namely, that sainthood never ends and will continue until the Day of Judgement. He specifically rejects the idea that sainthood has come to an end because there is no longer anyone capable or qualified to be a saint. Nafīs al-Banjārī says that this idea is unacceptable because the spiritual purity of believers is timeless. If God was able to create saints before, He is capable of creating them now as well. The idea that God cannot create a new saint now seems to imply that God is powerless. It is clear that al-Banjārī shares this idea with al-Tirmidhī. According to al-Tirmidhī, sainthood is not restricted by time; he quotes a *ḥadīth* according to which the Prophet compared his people to rain, of which one cannot say whether the first drop or the last drop is better.¹⁶⁹

Another important title given to al-Sammān is *mahdī*,¹⁷⁰ but this title is only mentioned once in the *Manāqib* and is not found at all in the works of al-Palimbānī and Nafīs al-Banjārī. However, in the anonymous *Manāqib* of Muṣṭafā ibn Kamāl al-Dīn al-Bakrī, al-Bakrī described himself as the *wazīr* of *al-mahdī* and claimed that, after his death, al-Sammān would replace him.¹⁷¹ Thus, neither of them was the actual *mahdī*. Thus, it appears that the title *al-mahdī* attributed to al-Sammān by the *Manāqib* is not that of *al-Mahdī al-Muntaẓar*, but rather, to repeat, that of the theosophical ṣūfīs, best described by ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī. For al-Jīlī, the *mahdī* is the highest in the hierarchy of saints, who is also called the perfect man, the pole or

¹⁶⁹ Several *ḥadīths* are, in fact, mentioned by Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī to support the idea that sainthood is timeless. See Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, *Kitāb Khatm al-Awliyā* (Beirut: al-Maṭba‘ah al-Kāthūlikīyah, 1965), 430.

¹⁷⁰ Purwadaksi, *Ratib Samman*, 168.

¹⁷¹ Elger, *Mustafa al-Bakri*, 128.

the seal (*khatm*). This mahdism therefore exists at all times because each such person is a manifestation of the divine essence.¹⁷²

Again, it is evident that the writer of the *Manāqib* was very familiar with Ibn 'Arabī's conception of sainthood. According to Ibn 'Arabī, as we learn from Claude Addas, every saint is the manifestation of a certain prophet or many prophets.¹⁷³ The *Manāqib* sustains this argument by giving us examples of several saints who claimed that they were the manifestations of certain prophets. Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī, for example, claimed that he inherited the character and the attitude of the Prophet Hūd because he could revive an ant by touching its feet with his hand. When Abū Yazīd blew on the ant, it revived. He also claimed to have inherited the character of the Prophet 'Īsā when he boasted, "Glorify to me how wonderful my being is."¹⁷⁴ This is equivalent to Jesus' statement in the Qur'ān, "peace be upon me when I was born, died and will be resurrected in a living condition" (Q: 19:33). The writer of the *Manāqib* also tells us that 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-Farīd inherited the characters of the Prophet Yaḥyā in the way that he loved only God and did not remember anything else except Him. The writer cites a statement of Ibn al-Farīd's where he describes himself as blasphemous if he remembers anything other than God in his heart.

It is not surprising that al-Sammān is depicted in the *Manāqib* as the manifestation of the Prophet Ibrāhīm. The *Manāqib* accounts for this by saying that most 'ulamā' unanimously believe that Ibrāhīm was the best prophet and the Prophet Muḥammad the best messenger of God. According to the *Manāqib*, al-

¹⁷² 'Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī, *al-Insān al-Kāmil fī Ma'rīfat al-Awākhir wa-al-Awā'il*, vol. 1, 72.

¹⁷³ See Claude Addas, *Ibn 'Arabī, ou, la quête du soufre rouge* (Paris, Gallimard, 1989), 72-73.

Sammān himself boasted once that he met the spirit of the Prophet Ibrāhīm in the seventh heaven. The position of Ibrāhīm in the seventh heaven is obviously taken from the *ḥadīth* of the *mi'rāj*.¹⁷⁵ The meeting of al-Sammān with Ibrāhīm is said to have occurred during his *mi'rāj* (a spiritual *mi'rāj*), as was the case with other *ṣūfīs* such as Abū Yazīd who was the first to at least partially imitate the *Mi'rāj* of the Prophet.¹⁷⁶ The *Manāqib* tells us that every saint has his own granted capacity to ascend to the heavens; some can attain the first heaven, others can attain the second or third, etc. The higher the saint can ascend, the higher his sainthood. Al-Sammān himself boasted that he had once ascended to the ultimate heaven, the seventh one. He says, "I ascended to the seventh heaven, then I met the spirit of the Prophet Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him) while he was leaning his body on the pillar of the *Bayt al-Ma'mūr*, then I greeted him and kissed his hand. This was a great victory for me because I mingled with him."¹⁷⁷ Al-Sammān then asserts that he was so happy because of his spiritual meeting with the Prophet Ibrāhīm that, although it took place over the course of three days, he forgot the days; he thought it was the Friday, but in fact it was not. By virtue of his meeting with the Prophet Ibrāhīm, he was able to meet all other Prophets as well. Again, the *Manāqib* repeats that because his mediator to the Prophet Muhammad was the Prophet Ibrāhīm, he was entitled to the last special sainthood (*khatm wilāyat Muḥammad al-khāṣṣ*).

¹⁷⁴ Purwadaksi, *Ratib Samman*, 219.

¹⁷⁵ Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn 'Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah*, vol. 6 (Beirut: Manshūrāt Muḥammad 'Alī Baydūn, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmīyah, 1999), 71.

¹⁷⁶ See Louis Massignon, *Essai sur les origines du lexique technique de la mystique musulmane* (Paris ; Vrin, 1954); E. Dermenghem, *Vies des saints musulmans* (Paris: Sindbad, 1981), 159; Pierre Lory, "Le *Mi'raj* d'Abū Yazīd Baṣṭāmī," in *Le Voyage initiatique en terre d'Islam*, ed. M. Amir-Moezzi (Leuven : Peeters, 1996), 223-225.

¹⁷⁷ Purwadaksi, *Ratib Samman*, 219.

As we have seen above, the status of Ibrāhīm is very important in the *Manāqib*. This is understandable because the role of the Prophet Ibrāhīm in fact is very significant in Islam and in its two sister religions, Judaism and Christianity. The *Manāqib* is furthermore inspired by Ibn 'Arabī's depiction of the status of Ibrāhīm. As we learn from Chodkiewicz, in Ibn 'Arabī's mystical thought too, the Prophet Ibrāhīm has a very significant position. The higher status of religious charisma (*karāmāt*) that is instituted when a ṣūfī attains the knowledge of the physical and spiritual germination, is based on the status of Ibrāhīm.¹⁷⁸

As we know, Muslims are divided in opinion over the nature of the ascension of the Prophet Muḥammad. An expert in *ḥadīth*, Abū al-Khaṭṭāb ibn Diḥyah (d. 1235) tells us that there are three opinions. One group believes that the Prophet's ascension was only spiritual, just like a dream, because the dreams of the Prophets are true; a second group says that it was physical when he went, awake, to al-Aqṣā Mosque and spiritual when he ascended to the heavens; whereas, a third group believes that the ascension was both, that is, spiritual and physical. Most Sunnīs also believe that this event took place both spiritually and physically.¹⁷⁹ The *Manāqib* tells us that all other prophets and saints experienced the *mi'rāj* only with their spirits and not with their physical bodies. It is likely that the *Manāqib* was influenced in this respect by the great mystic al-Qushayrī (986-1074), who insisted that all prophets and saints only experienced a spiritual *mi'rāj*, not a physical one, except for the greatest Prophet, Muḥammad, who experienced the *mi'rāj* both

¹⁷⁸ See Michel Chodkiewicz, *Un Océan sans rivage : Ibn Arabī, le livre et la loi* (Paris: Seuil, 1992), 132.

¹⁷⁹ Abū al-Khaṭṭāb ibn Diḥyah, *al-Ibtihāj fī Aḥādīth al-Mi'rāj* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī bi-al-Qāhirah, 1996), 14-19.

spiritually and physically.¹⁸⁰ The position of most ṣūfīs seems to be in line with that of al-Qushayrī. For example, a Shīʿī ṣūfī who followed the teachings of Ibn ʿArabī and Ḥaydar ʿĀmulī (1319-1385) even introduced a new approach stemming from the Qurʾān in order to emphasize both the spiritual and physical ascensions of the Prophet Muḥammad.¹⁸¹ Ibn ʿArabī himself certainly insists on both the physical and spiritual ascension of the Prophet and only affirms the spiritual ascension of the saints.¹⁸² The Muslim philosophers however only believed in the spiritual ascension of the Prophet. According to Ibn Sīnā (d. 1037), the body is something so rough that it cannot enter the heavenly realm; only when the spirit withdraws from the body can it gain entrance.¹⁸³

VII. The symbol of light as a proof of al-Sammān's higher sainthood status

Among the most important teachings of al-Sammān are those about the pre-existence of Muḥammad. In the introduction to the *Manāqib*, it is stated, "May God send peace to the one before whom the angels prostrated when he was still in the backbone of his physical father,"¹⁸⁴ an idea that in fact is mentioned by al-Sammān in his *al-Nafahāt al-Ilāhīyah* and then elaborated upon in his *al-Futūḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*. The *Manāqib* situates the position of al-Sammān at the highest rank of sainthood

¹⁸⁰ See Richard Gramlich, *Die Wunder der Freunde Gottes : Theologien und Erscheinungsformen des islamischen Heiligenwunders* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner Verlag, 1987), 113-114.

¹⁸¹ ʿĀmulī interpreted the term *Masjid al-Ḥaram* (the Great Mosque) in the Qurʾān as the corporeal realm and the *Masjid al-Aqṣā* (the Furthest Mosque) as the spiritual realm. See Hermann Landolt, "Ḥaydar-i ʿĀmulī et les deux mi'rājs," *Studia Islamica* 91 (2000): 91-106.

¹⁸² Ibn ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah*, 1999, vol. 6, 73.

¹⁸³ According to Ibn Sīnā, the corpse or body does not move or leave when the spirit takes a heavenly journey (*mi'rāj*). See Tobias Nünlist, *Himmelfahrt und Heiligkeit im Islam : eine Studie unter besonderer Berücksichtigung von Ibn Sīnās Mi'rāj-Nāmeḥ* (Bern: P. Lang, 2002), 324.

¹⁸⁴ This statement appears in a short work attributed to Šiddīq ibn ʿUmar Khān, *Risālat Manāqib Shaykh Muḥammad al-Sammān*, trans. Muhammad Muhyiddin bin Shaykh Shihabuddin al-Jawī (Banjarmasin, H. Kushayrin of South Kalimantan, n.d.), 3, but not in the more complete version transliterated by Purwadaksi. Thus, I believe that the *Risālat Manāqib Shaykh Muḥammad al-Sammān* may be using another version of al-Sammān's *Manāqib*.

and his existence is connected with light. We can see how "light" has a very significant value for al-Sammān. For instance, al-Sammān is described as having been transformed into light; 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Maghribī, one of al-Sammān's disciples, claimed to have seen three lights: the first was the light of God, the second the light of the Prophet Muḥammad and the third the light of al-Sammān. One day, Aḥmad al-Mughnī from Baṣra sat down facing al-Sammān in his mosque. Suddenly, al-Sammān was transformed into a dome made of light. When this form disappeared, then a light appeared which covered the whole world. When this second form disappeared, a third form appeared, namely, al-Sammān transformed into a thing that covered heaven and earth so completely that nothing could be seen except this manifestation. When Aḥmad al-Mughnī became conscious again, al-Sammān told him that he had attained the level of the real Gnostic (i.e. *ma'rifah*).

As we will see in the next chapter, the concept of the reality of Muḥammad was adopted by al-Sammān and his disciples; it is therefore not surprising that the reality of Muḥammad was also reflected in the miracles of al-Sammān. For instance, when a ṣūfī whose name was shaykh Sa'd al-Dīn al-Qabūlī sat down with al-Sammān in the mosque and concentrated his inner-heart on him, he saw the light which came from the heart of al-Sammān ascend through the sky. He was thereby made aware that al-Sammān was a perfect friend of God (a saint) capable of performing miracles. Then Shaykh Sa'd al-Dīn asked al-Sammān how to meet the reality of Muḥammad. After al-Sammān lowered his face for a moment, he advised him to visit the tomb of the Prophet. Sa'd al-Dīn then visited the tomb of the Prophet and

when he was voicing his greeting to the Prophet, the Prophet suddenly appeared to him and allowed him to kiss his hand.

On other occasions, the miracles of Sammān consisted in the transformation of his body into a huge object. For instance, Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm once saw al-Sammān's body grow so big that his height reached the utmost throne ('*arsh*) and his feet the utmost depth of the seventh earth. Then al-Sammān's body was transformed into a very big house into which a lot of people entered. After three days and nights, he saw this vision then he saw that the body of al-Sammān was so big that it covered the whole world. He saw this vision moreover for three days and nights.

The *Manāqib* also confirms the saintly status of al-Sammān and compares him with other saints. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Magribī saw in his dream that al-Sammān was higher in the rank of sainthood even than 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī and Aḥmad al-Badāwī. One day, 'Abd al-'Azīz Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Ra'ūf attended the congregation of the *dhikr* of al-Sammān in Betawi and there saw Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn Shihāb al-Dīn al-Jāwī, al-Sammān and the Prophet Ibrāhīm. On another occasion a pious man from the Akarda came to the Mosque of Mecca on the night of Ramaḍān. When he stood up to circumambulate the Ka'bah, he saw al-Sammān standing on its roof, this being one of the stances of the pole (*al-quṭb*). When Shaykh 'Umar al-Shinqīṭī participated in the *dhikr* of the *ṭarīqah* of al-Sammān, he saw a special object on al-Sammān not found on others. This also perhaps indicates that he was a pole.

VIII. The role of the Prophet Muḥammad in confirming the sainthood of al-Sammān

The aspiration to have a dream where one sees the Prophet or even meets the Prophet while awake is one of the most important teachings of al-Sammān (which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Two). It is not a coincidence that the *Manāqib* relates the dreams and meetings of several people with the Prophet to confirm the status of al-Sammān.

Firstly, let us we start with the dream of one of al-Sammān's students, in which the Prophet confirmed that he loved al-Sammān. Shaykh Tāj al-Dīn dreamt that the Prophet told him that the *khalwah* of al-Sammān was the best and he sent his greetings to al-Sammān via him. Similarly, 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Maghribī said that the Prophet told him that he really liked al-Sammān. A man who lived in the Ḥijāz was told to sleep in the mosque of al-Sammān and while there, he saw in his dream the Prophet Muḥammad, 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās and the Prophet Khidr. Shaykh Tāj al-Dīn had a dream that he met the Prophet who advised him to do all of God's commands and told him too that he really loved al-Sammān and prayed for all his disciples to have the grace of God.

In the dream of Aḥmad Yamanī, al-Sammān was described as being on the right side of the Prophet. This depiction is understandable since "the right side" in Islam is considered to symbolize the good and the true. The Qur'ān, for instance, describes the people of heaven as the people of the right side.¹⁸⁵ Between sleep and being awake, Aḥmad Yamanī heard the Prophet Muḥammad and Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq tell him that al-Sammān was on the right side of him (the Prophet). Similarly, another student of al-Sammān's, Shaykh Tāj al-Dīn dreamt that the Prophet told

¹⁸⁵ See Q:56:28, 56:38, 56:90-91 and 73:39.

him that al-Sammān was on his right side. Thus, the *Manāqib* tells us that whoever visits al-Sammān visits him on his right side.

As is known, the most popular definition of the *Ṣahābah* (i.e. the Prophet's Companions) is those Muslims who saw the Prophet when he was alive. However, from the *Manāqib*, we learn that al-Sammān was categorized as one of the Companions, even though he did not live in the time of the Prophet. According to the dreams of his own students, it was the Prophet himself who declared this. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Maghribī's dream reveals this. He is reported to have said that the Prophet told him that al-Sammān was among his Companions. On yet another occasion, al-Sammān was told to sit down together with the Companions, which confirms that he was considered to be one of them. For example, Shaykh Tāj al-Dīn had a dream in which the Prophet asked him about the name of a person who was in the gathering with the Companions of the Prophet. This man, said Tāj al-Dīn, was al-Sammān. This interpretation is in line with Ibn 'Arabī's teaching that whoever sees the Prophet in a state of awakedness (even after the Prophet's death) can be classified as the Prophet's Companion.

In addition, the *Manāqib* depicts al-Sammān as physically resembling the Prophet. Shaykh Tāj al-Dīn al-Shāfi'ī saw in his dream that the Prophet told him that whoever saw al-Sammān saw the Prophet himself and whoever saw him (the Prophet) saw God. This statement confirms the attribution of the teaching of *fanā'* on the part of the Prophet Muḥammad, a doctrine that we will discuss below in Chapter Two.

CHAPTER 2

MUḤAMMAD AS METAPHYSICAL REALITY: IN THEORY AND RITUAL

The theory of the logos of Muḥammad is popular among Muslims (both Sunnī and Shīʿī)¹ more especially perhaps among the ṣūfīs. The most often used term to describe this pre- and post-historical existence of the Prophet is “the light of Muḥammad” and sometimes more complicated terms such as “the reality of Muḥammad,” “the perfect of the perfect,” or an equivalent term such as *siddha*,² etc. Notwithstanding the possibility that this concept may have been influenced by other elements, particularly Neoplatonism,³ it can be argued that the notion of the light of Muḥammad may have been derived from within Arabian culture itself—beginning with ancient Arab mythology and continuing into the Qurʾān and the ḥadīth. According to al-Shahrastānī, the Arabs of the “ignorant times” (*jāhiliyah*) believed that the light was first passed by the Prophet Ibrāhīm to the Prophet Ismāʿīl. From Ismāʿīl, this light was next transmitted to ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, which is

¹ For example, according to Mūllā Ṣadrā, the reality of Muḥammad has two dimensions: *ẓāhir* and *bāṭin*. Each of these aspects has its manifestation respectively in the person of the Prophet Muḥammad and in the person of the Imāms, or, altogether, the Fourteen Pure Ones of Shīʿī Islam: The Prophet, Fāṭimah and the Twelve Imāms who all form the luminous light. See Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī (Mūllā Ṣadrā), *Le Livre des pénétrations métaphysiques : Kitāb al-Mashāʿir*, trans. Henry Corbin (Lagrasse, France: Verdier, 1988), 22. Similarly, another great Shīʿī thinker, Aḥmad ibn Zayn al-Dīn al-Aḥsāʾī held that the Fourteen Pure Ones were the manifestation of the reality of Muḥammad. See Armin Eschraghi, *Frühe Šaiḥī- und Bābī-Theologie : die Darlegung der Beweise für Muhammads besonders Prophetentum* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 79. About the Shīʿī theory of the pre-existent Imām, see Etan Kohlberg, “Some Shīʿī Views of the Antediluvian World,” *Studia Islamica* 52 (1980): 41-66.

² Dara Shikoh used the term *siddha* to mean “the Perfect” or “the Shadow” of the Prophet; see J. Filliozat, “Sur les contreperties indiennes du soufisme,” *Journal Asiatique* 268 (1980): 259-273.

³ Goldziher states that there is no doubt that the concept of light in Islamic mysticism was influenced by Neoplatonism; see Ignaz Goldziher, “Neuplatonische und Gnostische Elemente im Hadīth,” *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 22 (1909): 317-344.

why, al-Shahrastānī tells us, the elephants bowed to the latter. This light is also believed to bless the *Ka'bah*⁴. The idea of the light of Muḥammad is also found in the Qur'ān where Muḥammad is called *Sirajān munīrah*⁵. Finally, the prophetic source of the theory goes back to a well-known *ḥadīth* narrated by 'Abd al-Razzāq ibn Hammām al-Ṣan'ānī (744-827) from al-Jābir, a Companion of the Prophet, in which it is mentioned that the first creation was the light of Muḥammad.⁶ It must be noted that both 'Abd al-Razzāq⁷ and al-Jābir were known for their pro-Shī'ah positions.⁸ However, this accusation is considered by the editor of 'Abd al-Razzāq's *Tafsīr*, namely Maḥmūd Muḥammad 'Abduh, as groundless since 'Abd al-Razzāq did not consider 'Alī better than the other Companions.⁹ This *ḥadīth* appears to be known among the Sammānīyah and it is cited by Muḥammad Nafīs al-Banjārī in his *Durr al-Nafīs*. Moreover, the classic Muslim historian Ibn Sa'd likewise speaks of the pre-existence of Muḥammad, noting that the creation of Muḥammad is supposed to have occurred before that the creation of Adam.¹⁰

This theory was elaborated by several ṣūfī writers such as al-Tustarī, 'Ayn al-Quḍāh al-Hamadhānī, Ibn 'Arabī, 'Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī and others. Though Ibn

⁴ See Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī, *Livre des religions et des sectes*, vol. 2, trans. Daniel Gimaret and Guy Monnot (Paris: Unesco, 1993), 505-509.

⁵ Chodkiewicz, *Le Sceau des saints*, 81; see also Abū Jafar Muḥammad al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī: Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, vol.10 (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1986), 143.

⁶ According to Tor Andrae, 'Abd al-Razzāq ibn Hammām, who narrated the *ḥadīth* containing the theory of the light of Muḥammad, could have been influenced by Shī'ism. Andrae also says that Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal was his student. See Tor Andrae, *Die Person Muhammads in Lehre und Glauben seiner Gemeinde* (Stockholm: Kungl. Boktryckeriet, P. A. Norstedt & Söner, 1918), 316-318. See also Louis Massignon, *La Passion de Husayn Ibn Mansūr Hallāj: martyr mystique de l'Islam*, vol. 3 (Paris: Gallimard, 1975), 33 and note 8; and Chodkiewicz, *Le Sceau des saints*, 83.

⁷ Joseph van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra: eine Geschichte des Religiösen Denkens im frühen Islam*, vol. 2 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1991), 708-9.

⁸ See Etan Kohlberg, "An Unusual Shī'ī Isnad," *Israel Oriental Studies* 5 (1975): 142-149.

'Arabī's views seem to be incomparable to any further works on this theory, there has been continued development of the theory. A new idea which appears to have developed among post-classical ṣūfīs, consists in the implementation of the function of the logos of Muḥammad in actual ṣūfī ritual itself, undertaken in order to achieve the ultimate spiritual experience, namely, to meet the Prophet in a fully conscious state. It appears that al-Sammān was among the founders of this new tendency, which nevertheless seems relatively alien to classical Sufism. This apparent innovation casts doubt on the accuracy of the claims of the so-called Neo-Ṣūfī movement that characterized the 17th and 18th centuries, when ṣūfīs supposedly returned to the *sharī'ah* or orthodoxy.¹¹ This new practice may have contributed to making Sufism even more alienated from orthodoxy.

I. The Pre-existence of Muḥammad according to early ṣūfīs

Before investigating al-Sammān's concept of the pre-existence of Muḥammad, it is worth briefly surveying the ideas put forward by prominent early ṣūfīs regarding the theory. To this end, three important writers are looked at: Sahl al-Tustarī, 'Ayn al-Qudāh al-Hamadhānī, and Ibn 'Arabī. Al-Tustarī's view can be considered as representative of the classic ṣūfī position. 'Ayn al-Qudāh, the student of Aḥmad al-Ghazālī, on the other hand, though less traditional in his approach than the others, elaborates on the subject in greater detail. Ibn 'Arabī is very

⁹ See Maḥmūd Muḥammad 'Abduh's introduction in 'Abd al-Razzāq Ṣan'ānī, *Tafsīr 'Abd al-Razzāq: Taṣnīf 'Abd al-Razzāq Ibn Hammām al-Ṣan'ānī*, ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad 'Abduh, vol. 1 (Beirut: Manshūrāt Muḥammad 'Alī Baydūn, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 1999), 37-39.

¹⁰ Andrae, *Die Person Muhammeds*, 316.

¹¹ R.S. O'Fahey and B. Radtke, "Neo-Sufism Reconsidered," *Der Islam* 70 (1993): 52-87.

important since his theory of the logos of Muḥammad was more philosophical in character and inspired later ṣūfīs such as al-Jīlī, al-Jāmī and others.

1. Sahl al-Tustarī (d. 896)

There is no doubt that al-Tustarī made a great contribution to the concept of the pre-existence of Muḥammad. His influence extended not only to his student al-Ḥallāj, but also to many later ṣūfīs such as ‘Ayn al-Quḍāh al-Hamadhānī, Ibn ‘Arabī, al-Jīlī and others. What distinguishes al-Tustarī’s elaboration from these later figures however is the fact that his approach seems to be more mystical than theological or philosophical. Al-Tustarī holds that the physical origin of the historical Muḥammad can be traced to the very backbone of the Prophet Adam¹², which in fact served as the physical origin of all subsequent prophets. Like a vital seed, the backbone of Adam transmitted his essence from one prophet to the next,¹³ such that the Prophet Muḥammad was a descendant of the Prophet Ismā‘īl¹⁴ and could be said to have existed in at least this state before he was born. Yet, al-Tustarī also asserts the pre-existence of Muḥammad from a primordial time dating back to the creation of all other creatures,¹⁵ employing several terms to indicate the different aspects of this phenomenon such as *nūr* or light of Muḥammad,¹⁶ the heart of Muḥammad, the spirit of Muḥammad, the eyes of Muḥammad, etc. Later ṣūfīs saw the reality of Muḥammad in different terms such as the reality of reality, the

¹² al-Tustarī, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Aẓīm*, 41.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 40.

¹⁴ Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī, *Kitāb Qūt al-Qulūb fī Mu‘āmalat al-Maḥbūb wa-Waṣf Ṭarīq al-Murīd ilā Maqām al-Tawḥīd*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n.d.), 88.

¹⁵ The most comprehensive study on al-Tustarī and his ideas about the light of Muḥammad is Gerhard Böwering, *The Mystical Vision of Existence in Classical Islam : The Qur’ānic Hermeneutics of the Ṣūfī Sahl at-Tustarī (D. 283/896)* (New York: de Gruyter, 1980), 147-162.

¹⁶ The term *nūr Muḥammad* is also widely employed in the theory of the pre-existence of Muḥammad in folk Islam, especially among Southeast Asian ṣūfīs.

atom, the angel, the perfect man, etc. Nevertheless, this shows us that the theory of the pre-existence of Muḥammad was developed and elaborated in Islamic thought at every stage of its development.

Al-Tustarī seems to disagree with those who described God as light. This tendency can be seen in his interpretation of a verse from the Qur'ān in which it is stated that God is the light of the skies and the earth Q: 24: 35. Here, he does not interpret God as light but as “the decorator,” in the sense that God decorated the skies and the earth with light. Al-Tustarī seems to hold the opinion that God’s light is none other than the light of Muḥammad itself. This is suggested by his explanation of the statement “the example of His light (*mithlu nūrihi*)” (Q: 24:35). The meaning of God’s light here is, for him, the light of Muḥammad.¹⁷ He explains that God created Adam from the glorious earth from the light of Muḥammad.¹⁸ Moreover, on every tree in heaven the name Muḥammad is inscribed.¹⁹ God even told David that He created Muḥammad for His own sake and that He created Adam for the sake of Muḥammad.²⁰ The light of Muḥammad illuminates the angelic realm (*malakūt*), the hereafter and the mundane world; indeed, the light of all the prophets is derived from the light of Muḥammad.²¹ This light of Muḥammad—*nūr Muḥammad* is the term that al-Tustarī often employs—thus existed long before the creation of the universe. The outward aspect of the light consists in the eyes of Muḥammad, which al-Tustarī regards as a kind of creature (perhaps an angel) that glorified God with full devotion. Al-Tustarī’s statement is as follows:

¹⁷ al-Tustarī, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Azīm*, 67.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 47.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

When God wanted to create Muḥammad, He made the light appear from His own light. When this light was veiled by the veil of the divine great, it prostrated to God. From his prostration, God created a tabernacle of luminous light as its inner side; whereas, its outward aspect is the eyes of Muḥammad. He stands before Almighty God with his greatest faith, with full devotion for thousands of years. He honored God for thousands of years before God created creatures²².

The variety of terms used by al-Tustarī to designate the pre-existence of Muḥammad causes a problem, however. Are we to distinguish for instance the heart of Muḥammad from the spirit (*rūḥ*) of Muḥammad? Or, is the heart of Muḥammad identical with his spirit? Al-Tustarī does not clarify this, nor does he discuss what he means by the spirit of Muḥammad. It appears from the context, however, that the heart of Muḥammad is simply al-Tustarī's more common designation for the spirit of Muḥammad, namely, *rūḥ Muḥammad*, which is mentioned only once in his *Tafsīr*. This is in a passage explaining how the Qur'ān was sent down on the night of power from the Protected Tablet: "via the angel to the house of the glory in the skies of the Mundane World. The Qur'ān ascends to the spirit of Muḥammad as the blessed spirit (*al-rūḥ al-mubārak*)."²³ Elsewhere, al-Tustarī also mentions that the Qur'ān ascends to the heart of Muḥammad as the "tremendous treasure" to receive the revelation,²⁴ for, as he explains, the innermost portion of the heart of Muḥammad is the treasure of the divine knowledge given as a grace for his people.²⁵ The heart of Muḥammad does not therefore always pertain to the human nature of the Prophet. For instance, the Prophet Muḥammad did indeed cry when his son Ibrāhīm passed away, but this was the human element (of his heart) crying for

²¹ Ibid., 47.

²² Ibid., 41.

²³ Ibid., 89.

²⁴ Ibid., 4.

²⁵ Ibid., 46.

sympathy. The heart of Muḥammad, which is the locus of the soul of the luminous spirit, on the other hand, admitted the destiny of the death of his son.²⁶ The human nature of love is not considered as religious. Thus, when the Prophet Ibrāhīm loved his son too much, God tested him by commanding him to kill the boy. The purpose of the command was not however take the life of his son, but to purify Ibrāhīm's heart of love for anyone other than God²⁷.

2. 'Ayn al-Quḍāh al-Hamadhānī (executed in 1131)

The influence of al-Tustarī on 'Ayn al-Quḍāh's conception of the pre-existence of Muḥammad is widely acknowledged by scholars, but we can say that 'Ayn al-Quḍāh made his own new contributions. As H. Landolt explains, 'Ayn al-Quḍāh's independent ideas still remain unexplored,²⁸ just as his ideas about the pre-existence of Muḥammad also seem neglected. Another influence on 'Ayn al-Quḍāh may well have been Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, via his brother Aḥmad al-Ghazālī. Whether this Ghazalian channel may have had anything to do with 'Ayn al-Quḍāh's opinion on the reality of Muḥammad is however another matter. Scholars are of differing opinions as to Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī's ideas on the logos of Muḥammad. Tor Andrae states that al-Ghazālī held no such belief,²⁹ but contradicts himself elsewhere when he states that al-Ghazālī did conceive of Muḥammad's pre-existence. Andrae points out that al-Ghazālī's claim that the logos of Muḥammad can be called *al-'aql al-awwal al-muṭā'* (the first obedient intellect) or whichever

²⁶ Ibid., 64.

²⁷ Ibid., 79.

²⁸ See Hermann Landolt, "Ghazālī and 'Religionswissenschaft': Some Notes on the *Mishkāt al-Anwār*—For Professor Charles J. Adams," *Asiatische Studien/Études Asiatiques* 45 (1991): 55.

²⁹ Andrae, *Die Person Muhammeds*, 317.

other name seems suitable.³⁰ R.C. Zaehner, on the other hand, insists that al-Ghazālī believed in this logos of Muḥammad, claiming that this can be seen from al-Ghazālī's two works written at a later period, namely the *Miskhāt al-Anwār* and the *Risālat al-Ladunīyah*. I tend to agree with Andrae's later opinion and with Zaehner. However, Zaehner's claim that al-Ghazālī sees the logos of Muḥammad as identical with Allāh,³¹ is I believe incorrect. The position of the light of Muḥammad as envisioned by theosophical ṣūfīs is not that it is identical with Allāh, but rather that it is analogous to the function of the first intellect in emanationist philosophy,³² or as al-Tirmidhī holds, that it is the super-intellect.³³ Its relation to God is often compared by ṣūfīs to the relationship between the sun and its light. Is the sun identical with its light? The paradox is that they are neither different nor identical.³⁴

'Ayn al-Quḍāh's contribution to the doctrine may be said to be threefold. Firstly, he attempted to solve the problem stemming from the term "light," which some had objected to as an attribute of God, an objection that 'Ayn al-Quḍāh refutes based on his analysis of the Qur'ānic verse that describes God as the light of Heaven and Earth. Secondly, 'Ayn al-Quḍāh explored the theory of the light of Muḥammad in reference to the tradition of the Prophet's origin from light (the ḥadīth of 'Abd al-Razzāq ibn Hammām). Thirdly, 'Ayn al-Quḍāh traced the role of the pre-existence of

³⁰ Ibid., 335.

³¹ See R.C. Zaehner, *Hindu & Muslim Mysticism* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1994), 174.

³² See Ḥaydar Āmulī, *Kitāb-i Jāmi' al-Asrār va Manba' al-Anwār bih Inzīmām-i Risālat Naqd al-Nuqūd fī Ma'rifat al-Wujūd*, eds. Henry Corbin and Osman Yahya (Tehran: Anstītū-yi Īrān va Farānsah, Pazhūhish'ha-yi 'Ilmī, Qismat-i Īrān'shināsī, 1969), 988.

³³ Massignon, *La Passion de Husayn Ibn Mansūr Hallāj*, vol. 3, 301.

³⁴ This example is mentioned by Nafīs al-Banjārī, *Durr al-Nafīs*, 23.

Muḥammad in ṣūfī spiritual experiences in terms similar to those employed by al-Jīlī and al-Sammān.

The theological rationale for the attribute of light applied to God was not touched upon by al-Tustarī. ‘Ayn al-Quḍāh refuted the argument that stated that light cannot be attributed to God because light cannot exist eternally. He refers to the common Islamic theological conviction that *nūr* (light) should be recognized as one of the divine names and also points out that the term “light” can be employed to designate certain other objects such as the light of the sun, the light of the moon, the light from fire and sometimes the names of people, such as *Nūr al-Dīn*, etc.³⁵ Referring to al-Ghazālī’s definition that light is that by which something appears, ‘Ayn al-Quḍāh insists that being comes from nothingness (*ma’dūm*), which constitutes “darkness.” Because of the divine light, this darkness is transformed into light or real existence. In support of this idea, ‘Ayn al-Quḍāh cites the *ḥadīth* “God created creatures from darkness, then God splashed His light on them.”³⁶ In fact, according to ‘Ayn al-Quḍāh, the term ‘light’ can only truly be employed with reference to God, and if applied to other than God, it can be only in a metaphorical sense.³⁷ Thus it seems that ‘Ayn al-Quḍāh followed neither Yaḥyā al-Suhrawardī (al-Maqtūl, d. 1191), who maintained that God Himself is light,³⁸ nor the Ash‘arīs, particularly Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (1149-1210), who only countenanced employing *nūr* in a metaphorical sense when used to describe God. According to al-Rāzī, God

³⁵ ‘Ayn al-Quḍāh al-Hamadhānī, *Tamhīdāt* (Tehran: Kitābkhānah-i Manūchihrī, n.d), 255.

³⁶ al-Hamadhānī, *Tamhīdāt*, 256.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 256.

³⁸ In the list of the names of God, *nūr* is the 93rd. See Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh, *Traité sur le nom Allāh* (Qaṣd al-Mujarrad fī Ma‘rifat al-Isim al-Mufrad), trans. Maurice Gloton (Paris: Deux Océans, 1981), 236.

cannot himself be light since light is substance or inherent in substance; rather, He can only be the creator of light. Al-Rāzī seems to be influenced by the notion of Zoroastrian dualism, which leads him to believe that light has a parallel opposite, namely, "darkness," from which light is absent. But since it is impossible that God should be absent from anything, the idea that God is light must likewise be rejected; that in turn entails the absence of God but God cannot disappear.³⁹ In contrast, Yaḥyā al-Suhrawardī, who continues the Zoroastrian tradition in Islam, held that God is the most perfect of the perfect, having no cause and limit; therefore, God is the light of lights (*nūr al-anwār*). God's essence itself is light (*wa-huwa dhātuhu nūrīyah*), but not in the sense that light is added to His essence.⁴⁰ God is the light of lights because He gives life to others. He appears by Himself and makes others appear. Similarly, the extreme Shī'īs Hishām ibn Salīm and Hishām ibn Ḥakam described God as the real, super-luminous, light.⁴¹

In describing the relationship between the attributes or names of God and the essence of God, 'Ayn al-Quḍāh makes a metaphorical argument in which this relation is analogized with the mutual-interdependence that exists between atom and accident. The atom is the main element of being, whereas accident depends on the atom. Because God is a being (*mawjūd*), He is thus a *jawhar* (atom, substance), and an atom needs an accident (*'arad*). However, "He is not a perceivable substance or accident (*ghayr al-maḥsūs*)" but rather divine and transcendental.⁴² Similarly, the

³⁹ See Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, n.d.), 122.

⁴⁰ See Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā Suhrawardī, *Kitāb al-Masharī'a al-Mutarahāt* in *Majmū'ah-i Muṣannafāt-i Shaykh-i Ishrāq*, ed. Henry Corbin (Teheran: Académie Iranienne de Philosophie, 1976), 465.

⁴¹ For more analysis of the concept of *nūr*, see Daniel Gimaret, *Les Noms divins en Islam : exégèse lexicographique et théologique* (Paris: Cerf, 1988), 373-4.

⁴² al-Hamadhānī, *Tamhīdāt*, 257.

relationship between God and His light is described as a relation of mutual interdependence between substance/atom and accident.⁴³ He makes clear the distinction between God's essence (*dhāt*) and His attributes and accounts for this on the basis of the difference between atom and accident. Hence, the relation between God and His light is the same as the relation between God and His divine attributes. 'Ayn al-Qudāh takes a classical Sunnī position by affirming that the essence of God and His attributes are not identical; thus, "light" as the divine attribute is not identical with the divine essence, but rather subsists in the essence. Then he moves on to suggest a mystical interpretation by affirming that, because "light" is the attribute of God not the essence of God, it can therefore be seen. The Prophet must therefore have seen God in this manner during his ascension to Heaven. He analogizes this kind of vision as man's capacity to see the light of the sun, but not the essence of sun itself, because the flames that radiate from the essence of sun may burn the naked eyes.⁴⁴ However, this kind of vision too still occurred in the manner of a similitude. Even the Prophet Muḥammad could not bear the tremendous glory of the divine light; it was as if he had seen golden butterflies between him and God.⁴⁵

'Ayn al-Qudāh held the opinion that the light of Muḥammad emanated from God directly. In exploring this theory, Ayn al-Qudāh, like other ṣūfīs who followed this theory, did not fail to cite the well-known *ḥadīth* on the light origin of the prophet. The *ḥadīth* states, "the first creation is the light of your Prophet, and then

⁴³ Similarly, when he describes the love of God and the essence of God, he makes an analogy to the relationship between atom and accident; *Ibid.*, 112.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 304.

every good and every thing was created from him.”⁴⁶ According to ‘Ayn al-Quḍāh, the Arabic verb *khalaqa* may denote several meanings: (1) to create something as in the verse *Khalaqa lakum mā fī al-samāwāti wa al-arḍi*; (2) to determine; (3) to appear or to make appear. The verb *khalaqa* in the *ḥadīth* means to “appear” or to “manifest.” Thus, the light of Muḥammad does not in fact come from nothing, but rather from something which was hidden. This corresponds to God’s statement according to a *ḥadīth qudsī*, “I am the hidden treasure, I want to be known.” And God says, “If it were not because of you, I would not create two universes.”⁴⁷

‘Ayn al-Quḍāh seems to have been familiar with the *al-Tafsīr al-‘Azīm* of al-Tustarī, but he does not cite al-Tustarī word for word. One example of his dependence on al-Tustarī can be seen in his theory of the existence of the light of Muḥammad from time primordial. The pre-existence of Muḥammad emanated from God before the creation of the world and therefore existed long before this world came into being. The Prophet Khidr said that God created the light of Muḥammad from His light, designing it and placing it in His hands. The light remained before God hundreds of thousands of years. Every day and night, God looked at this light seventy times. With every one of these glances, He made a new light and miracle. Then God created all beings from them.⁴⁸ The *nūr Muḥammad* is also the most wonderful light. When ‘Ayn al-Quḍāh compares the light of Muḥammad with the light of the Angel ‘Izrā’īl, he analogized the light of Muhammad to the light of the

⁴⁵ Ibid., 286

⁴⁶ See Nūr al-Dīn Isfarāyīnī, *Le Révélateur des mystères = Kāshif Al-Asrār*, ed. Hermann Landolt (Lagrasse, France: Verdier, 1986), 105.

⁴⁷ al-Hamadḥānī, *Tamhīdāt*, 265.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 267-8.

Sun, whereas the light of 'Izrā'īl with the light of the moon. *Nūr Muḥammad* appeared moreover from the eternal east, whereas, the light of 'Izrā'īl appeared from the west.⁴⁹

Nūr Muḥammad also functions as the mediator between the other prophets and God. For example, when the Prophet Moses wanted to see God, God appeared to him in a sort of bright light near the tree on Mount Sinai and spoke to him using certain kind of voice. However, 'Ayn al-Qudāh explains that it was through the light of Muḥammad that God appeared and spoke to Moses. Thus, the light of Muḥammad is the real mediator between man and God.⁵⁰ 'Ayn al-Qudāh interprets the *ḥadīth* by stating that whoever knows himself, knows God. Knowing himself here means to know Muḥammad's personality or the *nūr Muḥammad*. And, if one knows the *nūr Muḥammad*, one automatically knows God's essence.⁵¹ 'Ayn al-Qudāh always cites a *ḥadīth* which, for *ṣūfī* theosophers, reflects the manifestation of God in Muḥammad: "whoever sees me, sees the Truth (God)." This *ḥadīth* is found in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim, but the interpretation of al-Nawāwī who wrote a commentary on this *ḥadīth* differs radically from that of 'Ayn al-Qudāh and other theosophical *ṣūfīs*. According to al-Nawāwī, the truth in this *ḥadīth* means the true dream. Thus, the *ḥadīth* means, "whoever sees me (in a dream), really sees the true dream."⁵² In contrast, for 'Ayn al-Qudāh and the Akbarian (i.e. Ibn 'Arabī's) school, this *ḥadīth* constitutes the image of God in Muḥammad.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 126.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 104.

⁵¹ Ibid., 57-8.

⁵² Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Nawāwī, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol 15 (Beirut: Dār al-Qalam, 1987), 30.

‘Ayn al-Quḍāh maintains that the *nūr Muḥammad* also appear in the realm of similitude (*tamāthul*). For instance, Imām Abū Bakr Qahtābī said, “I saw God Almighty in the form of my mother.” According to ‘Ayn al-Quḍāh, al-Qahtābī must have seen the Prophet in the form of his mother.⁵³ This is reminiscent of al-Jīlī’s vision of the Prophet in the form of his shaykh, Ismā‘īl al-Jabartī. If we accept the *ḥadīth* that talks about the manifestation of God in Muḥammad--“whoever sees me, sees God”—then these people in fact saw God in the realm of similitude. ‘Ayn al-Quḍāh interprets the *ḥadīth* that God created Adam and his descendants in the form of the most Merciful as meaning that he created them in the realm of similitude.⁵⁴ However, ‘Ayn al-Quḍāh considers those who see the light of God via the light of Muḥammad as mere beginners on the spiritual path. Those who advance along the latter see the light of Muḥammad less and less because this is obscured by the light of God.⁵⁵

Another very important point that may help us understand ‘Ayn al-Quḍāh is his conception of the role played by the light of Muḥammad in the case of the *shaṭaḥāt* of the *ṣūfīs*. These *shaṭaḥāt*, according to ‘Ayn al-Quḍāh, are the result of *ṣūfīs* having attained the stations of *fanā’* (annihilation) and *baqā’* (subsistence). To attain the latter, for ‘Ayn al-Quḍāh, *ṣūfīs* must behave like God. This means that the *ṣūfī* no longer behaves in accordance with his human nature, but rather with the divine behavior (*rubūbīyah*). However, the *ṣūfī* does not become “a lord” (*rabb*) by pretending or imagining that he is a lord; rather, he must completely fulfill his total servitude to God, which means that he must always think and act as a servant of

⁵³ al-Hamadhānī, *Tamhīdāt*, 266-7.

God. In order to be possessed by "lordness" (*rubūbiyah*), a *ṣūfī* must strive to serve God completely (*'ubūdīyah*). This kind of relationship must be based on love, where a *ṣūfī* is the lover, while the beloved is God. In this kind of love, both God and His servant trust each other. There is a continuous mutual response between them. This is his interpretation of the *ḥadīth* "the believer is the mirror of the believers."⁵⁶ The two believers here are God and man who love each other and trust each other. In this love, it is the man who expires in God as the moth perishes in the fire of the candle. At this stage, the heart of the *ṣūfī* becomes the mirror of God. God sees Himself in the hearts of all *ṣūfis*. Every day, God sees the heart of the believer three hundred and sixty times.⁵⁷

If a *ṣūfī* remains continuously in complete servitude, he ceases to exist. It is God who becomes his ear when he listens, his eyes when he sees and the tongue by which he speaks. At this station, a *ṣūfī* no longer retains his humanity (*basharīyah*).⁵⁸ It is for this reason that some of them uttered blasphemous words such as "I am the Truth" or "There is nothing in my robe but God." When a *ṣūfī* experiences this, he is in the station of the light of Muḥammad. As 'Ayn al-Quḍāh explains, the light of Muḥammad prevails in the totality of his life. A *ṣūfī* at this station is in two realms: the realm of *al-mulk* and that of *al-malakūt* because he is dominated by the Aḥmadian light (*al-nūr al-Aḥmadi*) and the everlasting beauty (*jamāl sarmadi*).⁵⁹ This idea seems to be very important for al-Sammān too.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 266.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 76-7.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 272.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 272.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 271.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 348.

3. Ibn 'Arabī

It is understandable that the theory of the pre-existence of Muḥammad attains its fullest elaboration at the hands of Ibn 'Arabī who lived three centuries after al-Tustarī. Ibn 'Arabī's findings are all the more remarkable for the fact that, as we have already seen, 'Ayn al-Quḍāh al-Hamadhānī did not elaborate greatly on the views of al-Tustarī, except in his theological approach to the issue. The pre-existence of Muḥammad in Ibn 'Arabī's thought is no longer simply defined as the light of Muḥammad as was the case with earlier mystics, such as al-Tustarī and 'Ayn al-Quḍāh, but is defined in different terms. The only term he employs that is close to what previous ṣūfīs used is the reality of Muḥammad (*al-ḥaqīqah al-Muḥammadiyah*). Yet, does this reality have any connection with the historical figure of the Prophet Muḥammad? The answer to this question may be different. For 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jāmī (d. 1492), who adopted the teachings of Ibn 'Arabī, this reality certainly has a connection with the historical figure of the Prophet Muḥammad. It is the supernatural reality of the Prophet that constitutes the universal all-emcompassing form of the divine name. Like al-Tustarī, al-Jāmī held the opinion that the Prophet had two natures: his divine nature as the reality of Muḥammad (or the heart of Muḥammad in al-Tustarī's conception), and his human nature. As a common human being, the Prophet stated, "say, I am a human being like you, but I receive the revelation of God." Here, the reality of Muḥammad obviously has a relationship with his historical figure.⁶⁰ However, for A. 'Afīfī, a modern scholar who does not adopt the teaching of Ibn 'Arabī, this logos has no

⁶⁰ See 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jāmī, *Naqd al-Nuṣūṣ fī Sharḥ Naqsh al-Fuṣūṣ*, eds. William C. Chittick and Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (Tehran: Anjuman-i Shāhanshāhī-i Falsafah-i Īrān, 1977), 277.

connection with the historical figure of the Prophet Muḥammad, but is rather a universal logos which has been transmitted from one Prophet to the next.⁶¹

In my opinion, both interpretations may be right, depending on which text of Ibn 'Arabī's is being consulted. If we refer to certain books, such as the *Kitāb Inshā' al-Dawā'ir*,⁶² we may see a concept of logos that resembles the idea of logos in the Platonic tradition, and that seems to have nothing to do with the Prophet Muḥammad. However, if we refer to Ibn 'Arabī's *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* or *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah*, the point made by al-Jāmī is confirmed; namely, this logos is a reality of the pre-existence of Muḥammad which is a part of the transcendental interiority of Muḥammad. It appears that Ibn 'Arabī did not try to disassociate this logos from the historical figure of the Prophet. On the contrary, it is in Muḥammad that the logos is to be fully associated. Ibn 'Arabī sees this logos as part of the process of divine determination. He bases his theory on both the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīths*, as well as his own philosophical-theological approach.

Let us look at the philosophical explanation that is given by Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī, a direct student of Ibn 'Arabī. Al-Qūnawī clarified the process of God's determination by arguing that His total absoluteness derives from His divine contemplation of His knowing Himself by Himself in Himself (*kawn al-ḥaqq ya'lam nafsahu bi-nafsihi fī nafsihi*).⁶³ This determination is the outcome of "the non-determination" in which God's total absoluteness defines His essence.⁶⁴ Given His

⁶¹ See A. 'Afīf's commentary on Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikām* (Cairo: 'Isā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1946), 321.

⁶² Ibn 'Arabī, *Kitāb Inshā' al-Dawā'ir*, in *Kleinere Schriften des Ibn al-'Arabī*, ed. H.S. Nyberg (Leiden: Brill, 1919), 135.

⁶³ See Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī, *al-Hādiyah*, in *al-Murāsālāt bayna Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī wa-Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī*, ed. Gudrun Schubert (Beirut/Stuttgart: F. Steiner Verlag, 1995), 144.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 143.

absoluteness, nothing emanates from Him, and nothing has any connection with Him, and His knowledge has no connection with anything realated to Him.⁶⁵ This situation is alluded to in the *ḥadīth* where He is described as a hidden treasure. Then follows the state in which God wants to be known or be freed from His state of hiding. This is the state, as al-Qūnāwī expresses it, in which God knows Himself with Himself in Himself, or the moment when God is in the state of unity (*waḥdah*) of existence, where His attributes and names appear.

Even though it appears that neither Ibn 'Arabī nor his followers offered a fixed description of this logos, he does refer to it as a simple substance (*al-jawhar al-basīṭ*): neither with nor in matter, but knowing its essence by its essence, such that its knowledge is its essence. However, it needs God almighty as the creator. Ibn 'Arabī asserts that its emanation is of two sorts: the essential and the voluntary (*fayḍ dhātī* and *fayḍ irādī*).⁶⁶ Furthermore, the logos has various names according to its functions, relationships and other aspects. In his *Kitāb 'Uqlat al-Mustawfīz*, Ibn 'Arabī affirms that both the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīths* refer to it under different names: in the Qur'ān it is called the truth (*ḥaqq*), the pen (*qalam*), and the Spirit (*rūḥ*); whereas, its names in the *ḥadīth* are the intellect (*al-'aql*) and others.⁶⁷ With regard to its function as the origin of static entities, it can be called the reality of reality (*ḥaqīqat al-ḥaqā'iq*), the primordial matter (*hayūlā*), the first matter (*al-māddat al-'ūlā*), the genus of the genus (*jins al-ajnās*), the scent of the realities (*sham al-ḥaqā'iq*), the first realities (*al-ḥaqā'iq al-awwal*) and the highest genus (*al-ajnās al-'āliyat*).⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Ibid., 144.

⁶⁶ Ibn 'Arabī, *Kitāb 'Uqlat al-Mustawfīz*, in *Kleinere Schriften des Ibn al-'Arabī*, 51.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 51.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 19.

Many of the above designations carry with them an idea of a sense of hierarchy, whether ontological or chronological. Thus, the logos is called the first matter because it is the first creation, created without a mediator or without a cause, but operating as the cause for other creation.⁶⁹

This logos is moreover considered as the second existence since it exists directly from God without mediator. Likewise, it can also be depicted as the third category of thing. In the *Inshā' al-Dawā'ir* Ibn 'Arabī introduces three categories of things. The first category is the Absolute Existence, who exists by Himself but is the creator of other beings. This being is the being of God, the absolute transcendent being to which nothing can be analogized (*laysa ka-mithlihi shay'*). The second one is the limited being whose existence depends on God. This limited being constitutes the Throne, the Chair, the heavens, the universe, the earth, etc.⁷⁰ The third being, which is the pre-existence of Muḥammad, acts as the mediator between the being of God and His creatures. Here, Ibn 'Arabī introduces the theory, following emanationist philosophy, that the third being emanated directly from the Absolute One; whereas, other creatures emanate from this third being.⁷¹ This third category is the reality of realities of the universal intelligible universe in the mind which appears to be eternal in the eternity and non-eternal in the mundane world. This third being has, paradoxically, a double nature. One can call it both a creature and God Almighty, or neither non-being nor nothing, but it is the universal all-encompassing the eternal and non-eternal.⁷²

⁶⁹ Ibid., 122.

⁷⁰ Ibn 'Arabī, *Kitāb Inshā' al-Dawā'ir*, in *Kleinere Schriften des Ibn al-'Arabī*, 15.

⁷¹ Ibid., 18.

⁷² Ibid.

II. Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Sammān’s opinion on the Pre-existence of Muḥammad

Al-Sammān dedicated a rather short treatise to the subject of the metaphysical existence of Muḥammad, entitled *al-Futūḥāt al-Ilāhīyah lil-Tawajjuhāt al-Rūḥīyah*. Unlike his main work, *al-Nafaḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*, this treatise neither refers to any ṣūfī sources, such as Ibn Arabī’s *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* or *Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah*, or al-Jīlī’s *al-Insān al-Kāmil*, nor mentions any spiritual masters. It seems that al-Sammān was inspired by a work by his predecessor Burhānpūrī, *Tuḥfat al-Mursalāh ilā Ruḥ al-Nabī*, which is dedicated to the Prophet. Al-Sammān’s *Futūḥāt al-Ilāhīyah lil-Tawajjuhāt al-Rūḥīyah* seems to be devoted to the Prophet too, although, unlike the *Tuḥfat al-Mursalāh* which is more oriented to the topic of the Divine existence, al-Sammān’s work seems to focus more on the cult of the Prophet, as can be seen from the second part of its title, *al-Tawajjuhāt Rūḥīyah*, rather than on the metaphysical logos of Muḥammad itself. Hence, for al-Sammān, the practical role of Muḥammad as logos is very important, and indeed may have influenced ṣūfis for whom meeting the Prophet in one’s physical body and in a conscious state was a fundamental doctrine, especially the Sanūsīyah, the Tijānīyah, the Idrīsīyah and others. Al-Sammān’s views on the logos of Muḥammad can be also seen in his *Nafaḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*; however, since his concern in this work is mostly with the Sammānīyah-Khalwatīyah *ṭarīqah*, he does not discuss the theory to any extent.

1. The Prophet as light

It is in fact a tradition among ṣūfis who believe in this theory to send their salutations to the Prophet in a language that reflects their belief in the reality of

Muḥammad. This is already reflected in *al-Nafahāt al-ilāhīyah*, where al-Sammān's salutation is composed in a language that indicates his conviction. He employs several terms denoting the function of the logos of Muḥammad as the locus of existence. In the introduction to *al-Nafahāt al-ilāhīyah*, for example, he bestows numerous titles upon the Prophet; "peace be upon the servant of the essence, the messenger of the Divine Name and Attributes, the first father, the real, the core essence (*a'yān al-a'yān*), and the *Nafs al-Raḥmān* (Breath of the Merciful), whom God makes into light."⁷³ Elsewhere in the same work, al-Sammān expresses the same idea: "the appearance of the real existence of God among human beings (*mazhar 'ayn wujūd Allāh fī al-ādamīyīn*) is His luminous existence (*dhātuhu nūranīyah*)."⁷⁴ It appears that al-Sammān was aware of earlier ṣūfīs who wrote on the pre-existence of Muḥammad. The problem is, however, that al-Sammān does not mention their names or their books in his *Futūḥāt al-ilāhīyah*.

Al-Sammān maintains that the luminous light of God is only granted to the Prophet Muḥammad; that is why only Muḥammad deserves to be given the title "light," a title that God never bestowed on other prophets. Even if the thousands of prophets and saints manifest themselves in various realities so that one of them becomes the real light, the title of light can nevertheless only be given to Muḥammad and all the attributes (of light) only given to him.⁷⁵ Muḥammad Nafīs al-Banjārī clarifies the reason behind why God gave the title (*nūr*) to Muḥammad, despite the fact that it is a name of His essence: this is because the Prophet is

⁷³ al-Sammān, *al-Nafahāt al-ilāhīyah*, 2-3.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 30.

⁷⁵ See Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Karīm al-Sammān, *al-Futūḥāt al-ilāhīyah fī al-Tawajjuhāt al-Rūḥīyah*, MS. (Cairo: (AZ) 602), 3.

nothing other than Him (God). The existential relationship between the Prophet and God is analogized with the relationship between the sunshine and the sun. The sunshine shows the existence of the sun, but it is not the sun itself. The absence of the sunshine shows that the sun does not exist. Thus, the sunshine itself is not the sun, but not something else.⁷⁶

In his *al-Futūḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*, al-Sammān never employs the term *nūr Muḥammad*; on the contrary, the term is more popular with ‘Ayn al-Quḍāh al-Hamadhānī who often introduces it into his *Tamhīdāt*. Al-Jīlī offers a better comparison in his *al-Insān al-Kāmil* and only mentions the term *nūr Muḥammad* once.⁷⁷ But, unlike ‘Ayn al-Quḍāh, al-Jīlī’s addresses several complicated issues such as the first intellect, the universal spirit, and also specific descriptions such as the Muḥammadan form⁷⁸ in which Adam was shaped, the Muḥammadan spirit,⁷⁹ and the Muḥammadan thought (by which God created the angel of the heaven and earth).⁸⁰ Al-Sammān in fact makes only two designations that relate to the concept of light; namely, *nūruhu*⁸¹ and the Aḥmadian light (*al-nūr al-Aḥmadī*).⁸² It is clear in the first designation that he is not explicitly mentioning Muḥammad, but simply using the possessive pronoun of the third person—the *hu* in *nūruhu*—to allude to him; whereas, in the second designation he mentions another Qur’ānic name of Muḥammad’s, namely, Aḥmad (*al-nūr al-Aḥmadī*). Thus, it is clear that he never connects the term light with the name Muḥammad; although he does use the word

⁷⁶ al-Banjārī, *al-Durr al-Nafīs*, 22

⁷⁷ al-Jīlī, *al-Insān al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, 29.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 57.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 59.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 57.

⁸¹ al-Sammān, *al-Futūḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 7.

ḥaqīqah in connection with Muḥammadīyah. This is not a coincidence in my opinion, but rather fits in with al-Sammān's belief in the everlasting name of the Prophet, namely, Aḥmad. The name Muḥammad interestingly is considered by some ṣūfīs as the pre-historic name of the Prophet, whereas Aḥmad is the name he bears now and will bear for all eternity. Muḥammad Nafīs al-Banjārī tells us that al-Sammān believed that the name Aḥmad is an element of the Prophet understood insofar as he inheres in everything in this world and universe, just as water is absorbed into plants and tress. The letter *alif* means to penetrate or to be absorbed so that the secret of God's essence runs through every atom, while the letter *hā* means to live (*ḥayya*) which means that the lives of everything in the world derive from him (Muḥammad).⁸³

Such an explanation seems very similar to that of Aḥmad Sirhindī (1563-1624). He maintains that after the Prophet's death, his human individuation disappeared. Its symbol, the first *mīm*, disappeared along with it and was replaced by an *alif* standing for divinity. Muḥammad came in this way to be Aḥmad. He was transformed into a purely spiritual being.⁸⁴ The name Aḥmad is actually found in the Qur'ān (61:6),⁸⁵ although it is also possible that Aḥmad Sirhindī was inspired by 'Ayn al-Quḍāh al-Hamadhānī. In his *Tamhīdāt*, 'Ayn al-Quḍāh relates the saying of the Prophet that affirms "my name on the earth is Muḥammad, while my heavenly

⁸² Ibid., 8

⁸³ al-Banjārī, *al-Durr al-Nafīs*, 23.

⁸⁴ See Yohanan Friedmann, *Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī: An Outline of His Thought and a Study of His Image in the Eyes of Posterity* (Montreal: McGill University, Institute of Islamic Studies, 1971), 15.

⁸⁵ See Annemarie Schimmel, *Mysical Dimensions of Islam* (Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 244.

name is Aḥmad.”⁸⁶ The death of the prophet, according to ‘Ayn al-Quḍāh, must be seen as ending his historical appearance as Muḥammad. To support this idea, ‘Ayn al-Quḍāh cites the verse of the Qur’ān that states that Muḥammad is only a messenger of God like the previous messengers of God, and he will die like all the others (Q: 3:144).⁸⁷ The heavenly name of the Prophet, Aḥmad, is also discussed by the great Ash‘arī theologian Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī. Al-Rāzī cites precisely the same *ḥadīth* as the one mentioned by ‘Ayn al-Quḍāh above which states, “I am Aḥmad in Heaven, but Muḥammad on the Earth.” But al-Rāzī explains this in another way: the Prophet is called Aḥmad because he is the only man who praised God to an appropriate extent. Al-Rāzī mentions other names of the Prophet, namely, al-Ḥamd (praising), al-Ḥāmid (he who is praising), and al-Maḥmūd (he who is praised).⁸⁸ Al-Sammān seems to have adopted this idea, but probably took it from ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī who may in turn have been inspired by Aḥmad Sirhindī.

It is worth noting here that al-Sammān’s use of the term *nūr Aḥmadī* did not have much of an impact on his Southeast Asian disciples. For instance, Muḥammad Nafīs al-Banjārī mostly used the term *nūr Muḥammad*. This moreover fits the Southeast Asian Muslim traditions where the term *nūr Muḥammad* was already well-known long before Muḥammad Nafīs. According to Ismail Hamid, there were many popular writings or stories of the Prophet in circulation, one them called *Ḥikāyat*

⁸⁶ al-Hamadhānī, *Tamhīdāt*, 200.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ See Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, vol. 1, 284.

Nūr Muḥammad written in Jakarta in 1668; this treatise was being read more than one hundred years before Nafīs al-Banjārī wrote his works.⁸⁹

2. The reality of Muḥammad

Al-Sammān employs several other terms to identify the metaphysical existence of the Prophet: the reality of realities (*ḥaqīqat al-ḥaqā'iq*),⁹⁰ the universal spirit (*al-rūḥ al-kullī*),⁹¹ the Muḥammadan reality (*al-ḥaqīqah al-Muḥammadīyah*), etc. Here, it appears again that he employed the terms given by Ibn 'Arabī. Al-Sammān does not clarify what he means by the above terms, namely, whether they are synonymous, identical or different. It is wrong, however, to assume that al-Sammān did not know or was confused about the theory of the logos of Muḥammad. As I mentioned earlier, his treatise is more focused on the ritual approach to Muḥammad rather than on giving a detailed analysis of the metaphysical theory of his logos. It is however possible for us to investigate his own ideas on the subject through the works of his disciple 'Abd al-Ṣamad al-Palimbānī. Al-Palimbānī explains in his writings the difference between the reality of Muḥammad and *nūr Muḥammad*, noting that the former is like God's universal knowledge about his essence, attributes and all existence; whereas, the light of Muḥammad is the source of all the spirit dwelling in man and other creatures.⁹²

Al-Sammān emphasizes that the reality of Muḥammad (*al-ḥaqīqah al-Muḥammadīyah*) proceeds from the level of *aḥadīyah* to that of *wāḥidīyah*. As we have already discussed above, at the level of *aḥadīyah*, God is hidden, which means that

⁸⁹ See Ismail Hamid, *The Malay Islamic Hikayat* (Malaysia: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1983).

⁹⁰ al-Sammān, *al-Futūḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 4.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 4.

He is absolutely transcendent since his divine names and attributes are still hidden. At the second level of *waḥdah*, God manifests himself in his divine names and attributes, but this manifestation is still in a universal or global way; it only becomes particular at the level of *wāḥidīyah*. From the above, we can see that it is not clear at which level the reality of Muḥammad starts to appear. Al-Sammān does not comment explicitly on this issue, but only says that this reality comes into existence at some point between *aḥadīyah* and *wāḥidīyah*. He may be suggesting that this already existed in potentiality at the level of *aḥadīyah* and then only appears in *waḥdah* as the Universal Spirit, and then multiplies at the level of *wāḥidīyah*. Again, we may refer to al-Palimbānī, who explains clearly that the reality of Muḥammad appears at the stage of *waḥdah*, namely, the second of the seven stages of existence; whereas, the light of Muḥammad is the realm of spirit. It is plausible that al-Palimbānī took this interpretation from al-Sammān, but not certain, since a Malay treatise dealing with this theory also expresses views compatible with those of al-Palimbānī. *Waḥdah* is known as the grade of reality that is Muḥammad. *Aḥadīyah* is the stage of the reality of man and the fixed prototypes. These fixed essences are the ideal prototypes of the four exterior worlds.⁹² Al-Palimbānī once again explains the difference between the reality of Muḥammad and *nūr* Muḥammad. The reality of Muḥammad, according to him, is like God's universal knowledge about his essence, attributes and all existences which lie at the second stage of the *martabat tujuh* (the seven grades of existence), namely, *waḥdah*; whereas, the light of

⁹² al-Palimbānī, *Siyār al-Sālikīn*, vol. 4, 105 and 265.

⁹³ See A. H. Johns, "Malay sufism as illustrated in an anonymous collection of 17th century tracts," *JMBRAS* 30 (1957): 22.

Muḥammad is the source of all spirit in man and other creatures and lies at the fourth stage of this scheme (*'ālam al-arwāḥ*).⁹⁴

3. The *barzakh* between two aspects: the transcendent and the mundane beings

Al-Sammān also comments that the creation of the logos of Muḥammad did play an important role in creation. The Prophet in fact is the mediator of creation, as is explained in the following quotation:

The Prophet is the mediator between God and his servants. For that reason, the Prophet says: I come from God, and the believers come from me. All the other prophets and messengers of God had already witnessed the Prophet (Muḥammad) because their perfection in reality belongs to him (Muḥammad). Compared to their nobility, they knew that the Prophet is much higher than they are He is the leader of all the prophets and the saints, both materially and spiritually Know! When the Prophet descends from the presence of the One (*al-ḥaḍrah al-aḥadiyyah*) to the presence of the Oneness (the presence of *waḥdah*), he manifests in various realities like the appearance of the name into the being named or like attributes being attributed. The true meaning of these sentences is very deep so that nobody knew this but him (Muḥammad) If for instance, one thousand prophets or saints manifest luminous realities until every one of them becomes the real light, then he has in addition the title "light;" unfortunately the title "light" only can be addressed to him, while all the attributes (of light) are only given to him. That is why God gives him the title "light" which He gives to nobody else.⁹⁵

Al-Sammān emphasizes that Muḥammad continues to be supremely important because he is *al-barzakh* (the mediator) between God and His creatures. The Akbarian term for this is *al-barzakh al-a'lā* (the highest mediator). According to Ibn 'Arabī, *al-barzakh al-a'lā* is the mediator between absolute existence (*al-wujūd al-muṭlaq*) and absolute non-existence (*al-'adam al-muṭlaq*). The *barzakh al-a'lā* has two

⁹⁴ al-Palimbānī, *Siyār al-Sālikīn*, vol. 4, 105, and 265.

⁹⁵ al-Sammān, *al-Futūḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 5.

dimensions, one dimension relating to existence and the other to non-existence.

Thus, *al-barzakh al-a'lā* becomes absolute possibility (*al-imbkān al-muṭlaq*).⁹⁶

Here, we can see that al-Sammān may have been inspired by al-Jīlī and Ibn 'Arabī. According to al-Jīlī, the Muḥammadian spirit is like the atom (*al-jawhar al-fard*).⁹⁷ Al-Jīlī gives different titles to the pre-existence of Muḥammad, which are apparently rational ones. With respect to its created being, it is called the highest pen and with regard to its absolute created being, it is called the first intellect, while, with respect to its relation to the perfect man, it is called the Muḥammadan spirit.⁹⁸ Al-Sammān too equates the reality of Muḥammad with the atom,⁹⁹ and like al-Jīlī, also calls it *al-rūḥ al-kullī*; whereas Ibn 'Arabī called it by both the terms: *al-naḥs al-kullī* and *al-rūḥ al-kullī*. It seems that *al-rūḥ al-kullī* and *al-naḥs al-kullī* are synonymous in this tradition. It is called *al-rūḥ al-kullī* (universal spirit) due to its function as the father of all other spirits. Our spirit comes from the spirit of Muḥammad. He is the father of the spirit and Adam is the father of our bodies.¹⁰⁰

Al-Sammān maintains that the reality of Muḥammad manifests itself according to the object in which it inheres. For instance, its manifestation in the sky is different from how it is manifested on the earth. Its manifestation in animate beings is different from how it appears in inanimate ones. Its manifestation in the *'ālam al-mithāl* is different from how it presents itself in the *'ālam al-arwāḥ*. Its manifestation in the Throne is different from how it manifests itself in the Chair,

⁹⁶ See 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, *al-Wujūd al-Ḥaqq wa-al-Khiṭāb al-Ṣidq*, (Damascus: al-Ma'had al-'Ilmī al-Faransī lil-Dirāsāt al-'Arabīyah, 1995), 75-6.

⁹⁷ al-Jīlī, *al-Insān al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, 9.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ al-Sammān, *al-Futūḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 7.

¹⁰⁰ Ibn 'Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah*, 1999, vol 5, 73.

and so on. This shows us that the light of Muḥammad is a flexible entity that can manifest itself in every nature. And, the nature of everything is also prepared to receive this manifestation. Al-Sammān explains more clearly

Know! that the Prophet is the universal spirit which penetrates in every single old or instantaneous existence The Prophet is emanated from the light of the divine Essence encompassing all divine attributes, all divine actions, all divine effects, all divine names.¹⁰¹

In addition to being the essence of all created things, the Prophet is the reality of the realities. For this reason, the Prophet is also described as functioning in the role of the *barzakh* (intermediary) between the true reality (*al-ḥaqīqah al-ḥaqqīyah*) and the created reality (*al-ḥaqīqah al-khalqīyah*). This means that he is the mediator between God and His creatures. On the occasions of the Prophet's ascensions, the *isrā'* and *mi'rāj*, the Prophet's lofty position of was demonstrated by his position above the Throne (*al-'Arsh*). This indicates, says al-Sammān, that the Prophet has the highest rank before God. Again, al-Sammān's statements on this matter are instructive:

You have known that the throne (*al-'Arsh*) is the utmost of (the highest of) creatures. If the Prophet's position is above the Throne, this means that the entirety of all creatures (including the Throne) are under him. That is why the Prophet is the *barzakh* (the intermediary) in the sense that he exists directly from God (*al-Ḥaqq*). And all creatures do exist from him (the Prophet). For this reason, the Prophet says, "I come from God and the believers comes from me." If you really understand what I say, the Muḥammadan Perfection will be very easy for you.¹⁰²

The above statement above was not new to ṣūfīs circles, since Ibn al-'Arabī and al-Jīlī had already explored this idea. Al-Sammān's contribution however can be

¹⁰¹ al-Sammān, *al-Futūḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 4.

¹⁰² Ibid.

better understood if we quote the explanation of his best student, Ṣiddīq ibn 'Umar Khān:

Know my dearest brother who wants to understand the origin of existence in its realization, that when God wanted to manifest Himself into existence, encompassing His divine Names and Attributes, He created the light of the Prophet from the light of his Essence, gave him a seat in the proximity of the First Presence, and appointed him to be responsible in the duty of the universal message. The light of Muḥammad remained in that place for its eternal servitude. He was (the light of) Glorified God when there was not yet the earth, the sky, clouds and warmth. Then, from that light, God created the prophets. He had created the angels two thousand years before Almighty God created Adam. When these angels heard Adam's praise from God, they shook their wings, glorifying God, while others prostrated themselves forever.¹⁰³

III. The Pre-historical Manifestation of Muḥammad in Adam

Al-Sammān too held the opinion that Muḥammad had already been the Prophet before the existence of Adam, even before the existence of water and earth.¹⁰⁴ This idea seems to be consistent with his interpretation of the angels' prostration to Adam, an event described in the Qur'ān. For al-Sammān however, this prostration was not addressed to Adam, but rather to Muḥammad during his pre-historic existence. This interpretation is strange however, since, according to Muslim tradition, the angels' prostration to Adam is seen from a variety of different perspectives. The question of why the angels should prostrate to Adam—when Adam himself was merely a human, undeserving of such courtesy—is discussed at length by Muslim scholars. According to the orthodox tradition, spelled out by al-Ṭabarī (d. 923),¹⁰⁵ Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī,¹⁰⁶ Ibn Kathīr (d. 1373),¹⁰⁷ Ibn al-Jawzī (d.

¹⁰³ See Ṣiddīq ibn 'Umar Khān, *Āthār al-Akwān bi-Mawlid Sayyid Walad Adnān*, MS. (Harvard University, Houghton MS Arab 316), Chapter 2.

¹⁰⁴ al-Sammān, *al-Futūḥāt al-Ilāhiyah*, 10.

¹⁰⁵ "The prostration of angels to Adam is not a sort of worship, but rather respect;" al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, 181.

1201)¹⁰⁸ and others,¹⁰⁹ however, the fact that the angels prostrated to Adam was not in order to worship him (*ta'abbud*), as people do in praying, but rather out of respect for him (*takrīm*). Therefore, Adam is still seen as the real Adam or as simply a man. The heterodox interpretation of al-Ḥallāj, however, insists that Adam did not deserve such high respect. Therefore, the angels who prostrated to Adam are in the wrong and guilty of polytheism. On the contrary, Iblīs and his confederates who refused to do so, are considered true believers (*ahl al-tawḥīd*) since they refused to worship or respect anyone other than God.¹¹⁰ Al-Ḥallāj's interpretation seems to have inspired al-Jīlī's view that, although he was condemned, Iblīs's argument that the element of fire in him outranked the earthly element in Adam was a good and rational one. Iblīs did not to prostrate himself before Adam because God had

¹⁰⁶ Like al-Ṭabarī, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī also suggests that the prostration to Adam is not a sort of worship, but rather a kind of respect to show humbleness because God appointed him as His Viceregent on earth and gave him knowledge. Whoever prostrates to something other than God in order to worship it becomes an infidel. To prostrate to somebody in the pre-Islamic era was a common way of showing respect. In the Islamic era, to prostrate to something or someone other than God was forbidden by the Prophet even though it is only a symbol of respect. However, according to the modern Shī'ī scholar al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī, it is permissible to prostrate to someone as long as it is only a sort of respect but not worship. See Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, 212-13; Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-A'lamī, 1957-1974), 121-25.

¹⁰⁷ Ibn Kathīr mostly cites the position of al-Rāzī, although he insists that the incorrect position is those who say that the way of prostration to Adam is putting the forehead to the ground. Thus, he seems to want to say that prostration to Adam is completely different from praying, where the forehead is put on the ground. See Ismā'īl ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Aẓīm* (Cairo: al-Maktabah al-Tijārīyah al-Kubrā, 1956), 78-79.

¹⁰⁸ Like all his predecessors, Ibn al-Jawzī also insists that the prostration to Adam is to show humbleness. He suggests that there are two opinions on this issue. The first one is that it is a prostration which resembles the way of praying, while the second one is that it is only a sort of bowing down of the body, like in *rukū'*. See Ibn al-Jawzī, *Zād al-Masīr fī 'ilm al-Tafsīr* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1984), 64.

¹⁰⁹ See Maḥmūd ibn 'Umar al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf 'an Haqā'iq Ghawāmiḍ al-Tanzīl wa-'Uyūn al-Aqāwīl fī Wujūh al-Ta'wīl*, vol. 1 (Riyad: Maktabat al-'Ubaykān, 1998), 254-55; Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-Manthūr fī al-Tafsīr al-Ma'thūr*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmīyah, 1990), 102-4; 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Tha'ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-Hisān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, vol. 1 (Beirut: al-Mu'assasah al-Waṭanīyah lil-Kitāb, 1985), 66-67; al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, vol. 1, 121-25. According to al-Zamakhsharī, *sujūd* to God is a form of worship (*'ibādāt*) and doing it to others is a symbol of respect and is allowed according to circumstances, as when the angels prostrated to Adam.

¹¹⁰ About this heterodox interpretation, see Benedikt Reinert, "Ḡunaid und Hallāḡs Iblīs," *ZDMG*: supplement VI (1985): 183-194.

already instructed him only to do so before Him. Iblīs failed to understand that to obey God's command is a form of obedience too; this is why Iblīs will remain close to God on the Day of Judgment.¹¹¹ Al-Jīlī, however, does not go as far as al-Ḥallāj who praised Iblīs for his uncompromising monotheism.¹¹²

In contrast, there is another interpretation which is considered just as blasphemous by the orthodox who admitted the angels' prostration to Adam only as a symbol of respect. This alternate interpretation insists that the reason why God asked the angels to prostrate to Adam is because the Divine Attributes manifested themselves in Adam. Thus, their prostration to Adam is also addressed to God Himself, an idea which was adopted by Ibn Fūrak (d. 1015)¹¹³ and condemned by Ibn Ḥazm as blasphemous. Therefore, their prostration can be considered as a sort of

¹¹¹ al-Jīlī, *al-Insān al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, 61-65.

¹¹² However al-Ḥallāj also blamed Iblīs for his arrogance and stupidity. Iblīs claimed that he was the earliest being in the Will of God so that he did not want to bow to Adam. Iblīs did not know that the spirit of Muḥammad was the first being in the Will of God. God, in fact, stated that if it were not for the sake of Muḥammad, He would not have created the world: see Rūzbihān Baqlī, *Sharḥ-i Shaṭḥiyyāt* (Tehran: Qismat-i Irānshināsī, Instītū-yi Irān va Firānsah, 1966), 517.

¹¹³ The interpretation of the *ḥadīth* which states, *inna Allāh khalaqa Ādam 'alā Ṣuratihi*, may lead Ibn Fūrak to have this opinion. According to Ibn Ḥazm, Ibn Fūrak and some Ash'arīs believed that the meaning of the *ḥadīth* that God created Adam in His image (Bukhārī and Muslim) is that there are several divine attributes which manifested in Adam; namely, al-Raḥmān (the most merciful), al-Ḥayāt (the most living), al-'Ilm (the most Knowing). Thus, the perfect attributes are manifested in Adam. Therefore, when God asked the angels to prostrate to Adam, it was like prostrating to God Himself. See Ibn Ḥazm, *Kitāb al-Faṣl fī al-Mīlāl wa- al-Ahwā' wa-al-Niḥāl*, vol.2, 168-9. Ibn Ḥazm is perhaps right that Ibn Fūrak made such an interpretation. It appears that the interpretation of this *ḥadīth* was felt by the later Ash'arīs, such as in the case of Imām al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwaynī, who was very careful about the interpretation of this *ḥadīth*. Without mentioning Ibn Fūrak's name, in the chapter on denying anthropomorphist theology, he argues that this *ḥadīth* was not included in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* and that even if it is in fact a reliable *ḥadīth*, it must not be interpreted literally and the possessive *hi* (his) in the word *Ṣuratihi* must only referred to Adam not Allāh. Thus, the right interpretation here is that God created Adam without father and mother. See al-Juwaynī, *Kitāb al-Irshād ila Qawāṭi' al-Adillah fī Uṣūl al-'Itiqād* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1950), 163-4. The next generation after Ibn Fūrak seems to follow this interpretation; thus, the idea that the divine attributes manifest in Adam was adopted by many ṣūfis such as Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī and Ibn 'Arabī.

worship. It is possible that this interpretation is derived from Jewish and Christian apocryphal sources.¹¹⁴

Al-Sammān's interpretation, on the other hand, is completely different from the foregoing. Adam, in his view, does not deserve the prostration of the angels as long as he is pure Adam, or Adam as he is. The truth is, however, that the angels' prostration was not given to Adam, but rather to Adam seen as the manifestation of Muḥammad. Al-Sammān further emphasizes that all the Arabic letters in the name of Muḥammad are manifested in Adam's body. He explains this as follows:

The prostration of the angels to Adam is a symbol of the respect shown by the lower to the higher in status because the name of the Prophet is manifested in Adam. The head of Adam is the *mīm* of Muḥammad. His two hands are the *ḥā*. And his heart is the *mīm*. His legs are the *dāl*.¹¹⁵

It must be noted that his description of the name Muḥammad manifested in the body of Adam was already explained by earlier sufis such as al-Ghazālī, who, however, had doubts as to its esoteric significance.¹¹⁶ It is quite possible that al-Sammān might know this from al-Ghazālī.

It seems that certain other early ṣūfis were the ones who inspired al-Sammān. Al-Makkī in his *Qūt al-Qulūb*, shows that there is reason to support al-Sammān's position, in view of al-Tustarī's statement that God created Muḥammad for His own

¹¹⁴ In the Jewish and Christian traditions, however, it is considered as a sort of worship. As has been discussed by Peter J. Awn, there is the possibility of the influence of pre-Islamic Jewish and Christian apocryphal sources on the myth of Adam in Islam. In these traditions, however, God is said to instruct the Angel (Michael) and other angels to worship Adam who was formed in His image; see Peter J. Awn, *Satan's Tragedy and Redemption: Iblīs in Sufi Psychology* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1983), 20-23.

¹¹⁵ al-Sammān, *al-Nafahāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 59.

¹¹⁶ Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *Faḍā'ih al-Bāṭinīyah*, (Cairo: al-Dār al-Qawmīyah lil-Ṭibāah wa-al-Nashr, 1964), 26, 67.

sake, and Adam for the sake of Muḥammad.¹¹⁷ In his *Tafsīr*, al-Tustarī explains that God created the name of the Prophet Muḥammad and that of Adam from the letters that constitute His own great name: namely *alif*, *lam* and *hā* (Allāh).¹¹⁸ Al-Tustarī's student al-Ḥallāj reiterated his teacher's position that the form of Adam was in fact the form of Muḥammad and that his spirit too was the spirit of Muḥammad.¹¹⁹ Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1256) also emphasized this idea in great detail in his *Kitāb Manārāt al-Sā'irīn wa-Maqāmāt al-Ṭā'irīn*. He analogizes the existential relationship of Adam to Muḥammad as that of a seashell to a pearl; thus, Adam is depicted only as a seashell, while Muḥammad is the pearl. Furthermore, he clarifies that the reason for this is based on a *ḥadīth* which states that when Adam was created, God was manifested in him with His attributes.¹²⁰ Al-Jīlī even declared that Adam himself was created from a part of the Muḥammadan form.¹²¹

Aḥmad Zaynī Daḥlān, the Muftī of Mecca, gives us another account from a *ḥadīth* which sustains al-Sammān's theory on the manifestation of Muḥammad in Adam. When Adam ate the forbidden fruit, he looked for intercession in the form of remission of his sin. When Adam saw the name Muḥammad written on the throne in the rooms of paradise and on the robes of the angels, he grew curious to know who this Muḥammad was. God told him that Muḥammad was one of his descendants. Then Adam prayed, "O God by the virtue of the honour of this son

¹¹⁷ al-Makkī, *Kitāb Qūt al-Qulūb*, vol. 1, 244.

¹¹⁸ al-Tustarī, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Azīm*, 8.

¹¹⁹ Rūzbihān Baqlī, *Sharh-i Shaṭhiyat*, 517.

¹²⁰ Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī quotes a *ḥadīth* which states that when God created Adam, He manifested in him and created Adam in His own image. The words "His own image" here mean that, for him, God is manifested in Adam with His attributes. See Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Kitāb Manārāt al-Sā'irīn wa-Maqāmāt al-Ṭā'irīn* (Cairo: Dār Sa'ād al-Ṣabāḥ, 1993), 58.

¹²¹ al-Jīlī, *al-Insān la-Kāmil*, vol. 2, 57.

(Muḥammad), love the father (Adam).”¹²² It is clear then that Muḥammad was already present in the life of Adam.

Based on the foregoing statements, al-Sammān’s interpretation that the angels’ prostration was directed not to Adam, but rather to Adam seen as the manifestation of Muḥammad is consequently understandable. It is likely that al-Sammān himself who explicitly encouraged this interpretation. Perhaps al-Sammān might have thought that it was logically right to interpret it in such a way because, if it is in Adam that Muḥammad was manifested, this leads to the logical conclusion that the angels’ prostration was in reality addressed to Muḥammad, not to Adam. However it appears that ‘Alī Wafā’ (d. 1363) inspired al-Sammān as well,¹²³ to judge from the following verse on the manifestation of Muḥammad in Adam and Ibrāhīm;

If the Satan had seen the luminous light of Muḥammad in the face of Adam, he would have been the first to prostrate to Adam. If Namrūd had seen the majesty of his beauty (Muḥammad), he and Ibrāhīm would have worshipped the almighty God together.¹²⁴

This interpretation therefore is not so different from that of Ibn Fūrak, because for the theosophical ṣūfīs the most perfect of God’s manifestations was in the form of Muḥammad, because Muḥammad was the full manifestation of the divine names and attributes. However, this interpretation too seems to deviate from

¹²² This account is based from the ḥadth which is considered by al-Samhūdī as reliable, but al-Dhahab maintains as un reliable one. See ‘Abd Allāh al-Samhūdī, *Wafā’ al-wafā bi-akhbār Dār al-Muṣṭafā*, ed by; Qāsim al-Sāmarrā’ī. (Jiddah : Mu’assasat al-Furqān lil-Turāth al-Islāmī, Far‘ Mawsū’at Makkah al-Mukarramah wa-al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, 2001) ., Vol 5, 66. See also, Daḥlān, *al-Futūḥāt al-Islāmīyah*, vol. 2, 222.

¹²³ al-Sammān quotes ‘Alī Wafā’ once about *khalwah* in his *al-Nafaḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 33.

mainstream thought in Islam. The notion that it was in Adam's body that the name of the Prophet Muḥamamad was manifested is a sensitive issue in Islam as a monotheistic religion. Al-Ghazālī reminded Muslims to be careful about interpreting the manifestation of the name of Muḥammad in Adam. He accused the Bāṭinīyah sect of doing so in accordance with their esoteric teachings which, in his view, contradicted the true religion.¹²⁵ But it is not clear to us how the Bāṭinīyah interpreted it since al-Ghazālī himself did not in fact reveal this. Thus, we are not sure whether al-Sammān's interpretation was inspired by this group or not.

Nor does al-Sammān derive this interpretation from the conventional views of experts on Qur'ānic exegesis. In his *Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, like al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr and Ibn Jawzī, makes no mention of this interpretation. Al-Sammān's idea not only suggests the superiority of Muḥammad over Adam, but also that Adam himself is of no account when Muḥammad's name is manifested in him. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī however would agree with al-Sammān on the superiority of Muḥammad over other prophets, and not the reverse. Adam, for Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, was the actual Adam to whom the angels prostrated, an event that al-Rāzī uses to support the Sunnī position on the superiority of man over angels. As a man, Adam is superior to the angels since he is composed of two elements: the spiritual, which comes from the realm of spirit and luminous light, and the corporeal, which comes from the corporeal realm (*'ālam al-ajsād*). The angels, on the other hand, are composed of luminous light only. Man also is superior to angels because he faces

¹²⁴ Bahā' al-Dīn al-Bīṭār, *Kitāb al-Nafahāt al-Aqdasīyah fī Sharḥ al-Ṣalawāt al-Aḥmadīyah al-Idrīsīyah* (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1976), 14.

¹²⁵ al-Ghazālī, *Faḍā'ih al-Bāṭinīyah*, 26, 67.

the terrible challenge to purify himself.¹²⁶ We find no trace either of the manifestation of the letters of Muḥammad's name in Adam in the works of the much earlier theologian, Muḥammad al-Māturīdī (d. 944). The angels' prostration to Adam is a symbol of the superiority of Adam over them. And, like other thinkers, he also emphasizes that prostration does not mean worshipping, but rather respect or simply the right direction (in the sense that Adam is like the Ka'bah).¹²⁷

IV. The Post-Existence of the Spirit of Muḥammad and the Possibility of Meeting the Prophet

As we learn from al-Sammān's treatise *al-Futūḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*, one of his key teachings was that a man can meet the Prophet while awake. This was not a new idea, but was in fact already popular before al-Sammān, especially after the start of post-classical era. Some ṣūfīs of this era, as Tor Andrae points out, came to believe that all prophets are still alive in their tombs. The Prophet Muḥammad was thus believed to be still alive in both spirit and body; thus, he could go anywhere he wanted on earth and in the heavens and could be seen anywhere, just as the sun can be seen from anywhere on earth.¹²⁸ The question is, however: Where in fact did these ṣūfīs actually meet the Prophet, that is, in which cosmological realm? In order to answer this question, we must first understand how they viewed the afterlife of the Prophet Muḥammad and other prophets. We should also look at how they

¹²⁶ Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, vol. 1, 228.

¹²⁷ Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Māturīdī, *Tafsīr al-Māturīdī al-Musammá Ta'wīlat Ahl al-Sunnah*, vol. 1 (Cairo: al-Jumhūrīyah al-'Arabīyah al-Muttaḥadah, al-Majlis al-A'lá lil-Shu'ūn al-Islāmīyah, Lajnat al-Qur'ān wa-al-Sunnah, 1971), 95-7.

¹²⁸ Andrae, *Die Person Muhammed*, 287.

understood the concept of the human spirit and its relation to the body after death in general.

The Qur'ān for its part does not explicitly state that the prophets are still alive in their tombs. Some Muslim scholars argue that if the martyrs are described as alive in their tombs in the Qur'ān (Q: 3:129), the prophets too must still be alive because the prophets are higher in status than the martyrs.¹²⁹ In addition, there is a *ḥadīth* in the *al-Ru'yā* chapter of Muslim's *Ṣaḥīḥ* which can be understood literally to support those who believe in the possibility of meeting the Prophet while awake. This *ḥadīth* states: "whoever sees me in a dream, he will see me while awake, or as if he saw me in a state of awakedness because Satan cannot resemble me." One commentator of the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, al-Nawāwī, maintains however that this *ḥadīth* was meant to guarantee to the Prophet's contemporaries that they would be able, upon immigrating to Medina, to see the Prophet. It also appears that al-Nawāwī maintained that it was impossible to see the Prophet in a state of awakedness after the latter's death, except in Paradise.¹³⁰ Al-Nawāwī's position is not unusual and classical *ṣūfī* thought is largely silent on this phenomenon. The *Qūt al-Qulūb* of al-Makkī, the *Kashf al-Maḥjūb* of Hujvīrī, and other standard works such as al-Kalābādhī's *al-Ta'arruf*¹³¹ never mention it. Thus, it is a concept generally foreign to

¹²⁹ Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Karīm al-Kasnazānī, *al-Anwār al-Raḥmānīyah fī al-Ṭarīqah al-Qādirīyah al-Kasnāzānīyah* (Cairo: Maktabat Madbūlī, 1990), 125.

¹³⁰ al-Nawāwī, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol 15, 30.

¹³¹ Al-Kalābādhī only gives us the account of the meeting of some *ṣūfīs* with the Prophet in their dreams. See Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Kalābādhī, *al-Ta'arruf li-Madhab Ahl al-Taṣawwuf* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmīyah, 1993), 181-2.

ṣūfī thought.¹³² Nor is it surprising to see that the ability to see the Prophet while awake is fiercely attacked by the Mālikī Muftī of Medina, Shaykh Muḥammad al-Shinqīṭī.¹³³ With regard to fully conscious physical contact with the Prophet after his death in particular, he said that if the event really could take place, it would have occurred to the family of the Prophet and his closest Companions, and would have been recorded, at least, in the lives of the people who were historically and psychologically closest to the Prophet. For example, despite the fact that the Prophet's daughter Fāṭimah was despondent after the Prophet's death and had chosen to live nearby his tomb, she never experienced meeting the Prophet in a state of awakedness. Again, the Companions of the Prophet were at times in serious need of the presence of the Prophet, especially when faced with serious disputes about religious and worldly affairs, but the Prophet never appeared to assist them. That is why, when 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb faced difficulty in leading the *ummah*, he used to wish that he could ask the Prophet to help him solve his problem. Al-Shinqīṭī however tells us, based on the account of Ibn Ḥamzah, that one of the important Companions was able to see the image of the Prophet though only in a mirror. This is what happened to Ibn 'Abbās, who dreamt about the Prophet; after awakening from sleep, he then remembered this *ḥadīth*. After this, he met the wives of the Prophets, and perhaps it was Maymūnah who showed him that the mirror

¹³² However, Fritz Meier mentions that the tradition of the cult of Muḥammad had already started as early as Ibn Mashīsh (d. ca. 1228) and reached its climax in 'Abd al-Azz al-Dabbagh (d. early 18th century); see Meier, "The Mystic Path: The Sūfī Tradition," 117-126.

¹³³ See Muḥammad al-Shinqīṭī, *Mushtahā al-Khārīf al-Jānī fī Radd Zalaqāt al-Tijānī al-Jānī* (Amman, Jordan: Dār al-Bashīr, 1985), 30-141.

belonged to the Prophet. What Ibn 'Abbās saw in that mirror was not his own image, but rather that of the Prophet.¹³⁴ (His critique can be found in Appendix I.)

With regard to the meeting of ṣūfīs with the Prophet, we need also to investigate how Muslim scholars saw the existence of the spirit of the Prophet after his death. But before moving on to this issue, we should first investigate how Muslim scholars viewed the existence of the spirit and its relation to the body after death. To this end, the work of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah (1292-1350) is very useful. In his book, *al-Rūḥ fī Kalām 'alā Arwāḥ al-Amwāt wa-al-Aḥyā' bi-al-Dalā'il min al-Kitāb wa al-Sunnah wa-al-Āthār wa al-Aqwāl al-'Ulamā'*, which can be considered a virtual encyclopedia on rūḥ (spirit) in Islam, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah argues that, unlike the sense organs, the spirit is seen as a sort of subtle and luminous substance that is living and moving, and that penetrates every organ of the body, being absorbed into the veins where the blood flows in the living man.¹³⁵ The spirit can also move beyond the body, but unlike the movement of the physical body, the spirit ascends, descends and moves across distances very easily. The nature of the spirit is not the same as the nature of the body: "You may find two spirits together and close to each other even if they are far away in term of space. Similarly, two spirits may be angry and upset with each other even though they are near."¹³⁶

It is important to note that Ibn Qayyim believes that the spirit is also dead because it may be considered a created thing.¹³⁷ The death of spirit happens when it separates from the body; but the death of spirit does not mean it becomes non-

¹³⁴ Ibid., 91, 100.

¹³⁵ Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah, *al-Rūḥ : fī al-Kalām 'alā Arwāḥ al-Amwāt wa-al-Aḥyā' bi-al-Dalā'il min al-Kitāb wa-al-Sunnah wa-al-Āthār wa-Aqwāl al-'Ulamā'* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1991), 178.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 48.

existence, it continues to exist.¹³⁸ The spirit exists after its separation from the body and both spirit and body enjoy rewards or suffer punishment. However, the relationship between the spirit and body up to this point is only temporary and less complete than what it will be on the Day of Resurrection, when God will return the spirits completely to the bodies of human beings and resurrect them from their graves.¹³⁹ Ibn Qayyim disagrees with the opinions of Ibn Ḥazm and Ibn Muḍit who say that only the spirit enjoys and suffers in the grave. He affirms, however, that Muslims, Jews and Christians all agree about the resurrection of spirits and bodies on the Day of Judgment.

Ibn Qayyim discusses and approves the possibility of the meeting between the spirits of the dead and the living. However, Ibn Qayyim stresses that this event may only happen in a dream, and that this dream should be considered a true dream. God creates two deaths for each individual: the first is the lesser (i.e., temporary) death (*al-wafāh al-ṣuḡhrā*); and the second greater (i.e., permanent) death (*al-wafāh al-kubrā*). Like al-Tustarī¹⁴⁰ and ‘Izz al-Dīn ibn Abī Salām,¹⁴¹ Ibn Qayyim believes that God also gives man two spirits: the first is the spirit that God fastens to his body until death, whereas the second is the spirit that God releases from the body during sleep and that returns at the time of awakening. When a living man sleeps, he is temporarily dead; therefore, his spirit can meet the dead. This meeting is like that between the living themselves.¹⁴² According to Ibn Qayyim,

¹³⁷ Ibid., 145.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 37.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 54.

¹⁴⁰ al-Tustarī, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-Azīm*, 81.

¹⁴¹ Dā’ūd ibn ‘Abdallāh al-Faṭānī, *al-Durr al-Thamīn* (Singapore: al-Haramayn, n.d.), 64.

¹⁴² Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah, *al-Rūḥ*, 24.

many scholars believe that the spirits of the dead and the living meet each other at the time of sleeping and ask each other about their situations and exchange information about themselves. The dead may tell the living something that the latter do not know about themselves such as about a debt or unknown wealth, or even about the reward and punishment they may expect. Ibn Qayyim puts forward a number of examples of such meetings, even including the experiences of those who had the extraordinary experience of meeting the Prophet in a dream, such as in the case of Mazahim the slave of 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz.¹⁴³ Ibn Qayyim even accepts the dream of the opponent of Ibn Taymīyah who saw the latter and asked him about some difficult issues and received the right answers.¹⁴⁴ The capacity of the spirit of the living is not limited to seeing the spirits of the dead only among family, friends and others, rather it can also ascend to heaven and witness God and see Paradise.¹⁴⁵ Ibn Qayyim tells us that 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib said that, during sleep, the spirit ascends to heaven; whatever he sees there is truth, but what he sees in the air is from Satan. However, some earlier scholars (*ṣalāf*) said that it is in the air that spirits meet each other during sleep and that this is mediated by the angel of Dreams.¹⁴⁶

It is safe to assume that Ibn Qayyim was, to a certain degree, influenced by Ibn Ḥazm, whose ideas he reproduces in his *al-Rūḥ*. Ibn Ḥazm discussed this issue extensively in his *Kitāb al-Faṣl*. According to him, the spirits of the prophets, especially that of the Prophet Muḥammad, do not cease to exist. It is the prophets'

¹⁴³ Ibid., 23.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 36.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 32.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 34.

stories of *mī'rāj* that prove the continuing existence of their spirits. The Prophet Muḥammad met the spirits of several other important prophets in the heavens. He met Adam in the first heaven, Jesus in the second, Joseph in the third, Idrīs, in the fourth, Hārūn in the fifth, and Moses and Ibrāhīm in the sixth.¹⁴⁷ Thus, the spirit is considered as something eternal and endless. Ibn Ḥazm moreover refutes the opinion that the spirits of the prophets perished at their deaths, as well as another opinion, attributed to the Mu'tazilī Abū Hudhayl, that if one dies, one no longer has a spirit; this would include the prophets because the spirit is like a sort of air which is hot and becomes cold after it comes out through our breath. Ibn Ḥazm considers such opinions to be un-Islamic.¹⁴⁸ He also refutes the position, which he attributes to the Ash'arī al-Bāqillānī, that identifies the spirit as an accident (*'araḍ*).¹⁴⁹ According to many Ash'arī theologians, an accident cannot exist for two instants and its existence must be renewed at every instant. Thus, at every instant, each individual has a spirit which is different from that of the previous instant, that is, one no longer has the same spirit as before because at every moment God renews it. In less than an hour, the spirit of a man would have gone through more than a thousand different spirits.¹⁵⁰ However, this was not a monolithic position of the Ash'arīs, for, as we learn from Ibn Qayyim, this idea of al-Bāqillānī's was in fact rejected by al-Juwaynī and other Ash'arīs as well.¹⁵¹ Al-Ash'ārī himself was more reserved in discussing the spirit since he saw it as the affair of God. Al-Juwaynī's position was also adopted by his student al-Ghazālī who also believes that the spirit does not

¹⁴⁷ Ibn Ḥazm, *Kitāb al-Faṣl fī al-Milāl wa- al-Ahwā' wa-al-Niḥāl*, vol. 2, 5.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., vol. 4, 215.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., vol. 3, 88-89.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., vol. 4, 69

perish and is considered as something eternal.¹⁵² The Southeast Asian Ash'arī, Dā'ūd al-Faṭānī, whose work *al-Durr al-Thāmīn* is still very popular amongst Muslims of the Malay-Indonesian archipelago, puts forward two opinions. The first is that the spirit is also dead since the Qur'ān asserts that "everything dies" (Q: 29:54) and "everything will perish except the divine face (i.e., essence)" (Q: 55: 26-27). The second is that the spirit does not perish because it is among the seven everlasting things: namely, the pen, the table, paradise, hell, the throne, the chair and the spirit.¹⁵³ The Sammānīyah, however, seem to follow the teaching of 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī. As we learn from Nafīs al-Banjārī, al-Nābulusī holds that the spirit is not dead;¹⁵⁴ what is dead is the soul. The spirit does not die because it is dependent on God and has a connection with the concept of the logos of Muḥammad as the origin of all spirits.¹⁵⁵ The notion that the spirit does not die is also adopted by 'Umar al-Suhrawardī. According to him, there are two spirits in a human being: the heavenly human spirit that has its origin in the *'ālam al-'amr* (world of sovereignty) and is therefore eternal, and the human living spirit which originates in the *'ālam al-khalq* (the temporary world). The latter is the place where the former stands. And it is the

¹⁵¹ Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah, *al-Rūḥ*, 54.

¹⁵² al-Ghazālī, *Tahafut al-falasifah* (Frankfurt am Main : Institute for the History of Arabic-Islamic Science at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University, 1999), 363.

¹⁵³ Even though the Qur'ān states that everything other than God will perish, there is an exception. The concept of the eternity of beings other than God is recognized by Muslim theologians. However, it is clear that these beings were created by God and He fastens their existences into eternity. Thus, they do not share the absolute eternity of God who has no beginning and ending. Among the things which belong to this category are: *al-'arsh* (the throne), *al-kursī* (the chair), *al-nār* (hell), *al-jannah* (paradise), *al-arwāḥ* (the spirit), *al-lawḥ* (the table), and *al-qalam* (the pen). See al-Bājūrī, *Tuḥfat al-Murīd 'alā Jawharat al-Tawḥīd*, 97.

¹⁵⁴ According to some later Ash'arīs, such as Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī, the spirit does not die and it is considered eternal. That is why it can experience reward and punishment after death; al-Bājūrī, *Tuḥfat al-Murīd 'alā Jawharat al-Tawḥīd*, 96.

¹⁵⁵ Nafīs al-Banjārī, *al-Durr al-Nafīs*, 33.

heart which controls the human living spirit and makes the body move and feel the senses.¹⁵⁶

With regard the reality of the spirit, al-Ash'arī himself was more reserved in discussing this subject, since he saw it as the affair of God. Based on the Qur'ānic verse which asserts that the nature of the spirit is only known by God (Q: 17:85),¹⁵⁷ al-Faṭānī insists that it is obligatory to believe that no one knows about the reality of the spirit.¹⁵⁸ Al-Ghazālī, in contrast to most Ash'arīs, maintains that God in fact revealed the reality of the spirit to the Prophet Muḥammad, other prophets and even to some saints; but God asked them not to reveal it to ordinary believers because it is as a subtle thing that is beyond the common people's understanding.¹⁵⁹

Ibn Ḥazm is silent on the possibility of a meeting between the spirit of the dead and the living, except for the story of the *mi'rāj* of Muḥammad during which, he believes, Muḥammad really met the spirits of other prophets. It can be assumed that Ibn Ḥazm would not accept that pious Muslims (or saints) might have similar spiritual experiences because he does not believe in the existence of the miracles of the saints. For Ibn Ḥazm, none of the Companions of the Prophet approved of the possibility of miracles occurring to a man considered to be a saint.¹⁶⁰ Ibn Ḥazm never discusses the possibility of a believer's meeting with the Prophet Muḥammad in a dream, let alone in a state of awakedness. With regard to Ibn Qayyim, there is

¹⁵⁶ See Abū Ḥafṣ 'Umar al-Suhrawardī, *Kitāb 'Awārif al-Ma'ārif* (Cairo: al-Maktabah al-'Alāmiyah, 1939), 312.

¹⁵⁷ al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, vol. 4, 65.

¹⁵⁸ al-Faṭānī, *al-Durr al-Thamīn*, 66; al-Bājūrī, *Tuḥfat al-Murīd 'alā Jawharat al-Tawḥīd*, 97.

¹⁵⁹ al-Ghazālī, *Qawā'id al-'Aqā'id* (Beirut: 'Ilm al-Kutub, 1985), 118-119.

¹⁶⁰ Ibn Ḥazm, *Kitāb al-Faṣl fī al-Mīlāl wa-al-Ahwā' wa-al-Niḥāl*, vol. 4, 8-11.

no doubt that he believes in the continuing existence of the spirits of the prophets, including the Prophet Muḥammad. However, unlike Ibn Ḥazm, Ibn Qayyim admits the possibility of a pious believer dreaming of the Prophet Muḥammad, nevertheless, he says nothing about meeting the Prophet Muḥammad when awake.

Such events were in fact considered by many later ṣūfīs as the most important experiences that a Muslim could have. We must be grateful for Fritz Meier's contributions on this subject.¹⁶¹ Long before al-Sammān, 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Anṣārī al-Sāḥilī (d. 1353), as Meier tells us, maintained that there are five ways to have a vision of Muḥammad. The first way is when somebody is tired, and yet thinks about seeing the Prophet, then suddenly falls asleep, and sees the Prophet in a dream. A second way is when somebody is busy and then imagines the presence of the Prophet and also sends him salutations, then he will see the Prophet better in a dream later. Thirdly, one need only fall asleep and then suddenly see him. The fourth way, which is a higher way, is to close one's eyes, then see him with inner vision, even while awake. The fifth is the best way; namely, that somebody should see him with his real physical eyes and face to face.¹⁶²

From Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (1445-1505), we learn that such events were debated among scholars contemporaneous to him. In fact, even though Ibn 'Arabī seems to have had a great influence on al-Sammān with regard to this issue, it is safe to assume that the latter was somewhat inspired by al-Suyūṭī. This is made more likely given how al-Suyūṭī viewed the afterlife of the Prophet. Like Ibn Ḥazm

¹⁶¹ See Fritz Meier, *Nachgelassene Schriften: Vol. 1: Bemerkungen zur Mohammedverehrung*, ed. Gudrun Schubert (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 375.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 377.

and Ibn Qayyim, al-Suyūṭī, in his *al-Ḥāwī*,¹⁶³ quotes several *ḥadīths* that indicate that the Prophet was not unreachable after his death. Al-Suyūṭī furnishes many accounts of believers who saw the Prophet either while awake or asleep. According to al-Suyūṭī, Shaykh Akmal al-Dīn al-Barbaṭī lists five conditions that facilitate two individuals meeting each other either awake or in a dream. These conditions consist in the two parties having five things in common: their essences, attributes, circumstances, actions and levels. Thus, it is possible that a believer have a connection with the spirits of the previous perfect ones (namely, the prophets and saints). Therefore, meeting with the Prophet Muḥammad is possible. Al-Suyūṭī offers a number of stories about those who have had this experience.

The question then is whether these ṣūfīs believed that they could meet the Prophet in his real and intact form—in both body and spirit like a flesh and blood person—or in his imaginal form. It is a likely that they did not mean that they had met the Prophet in his flesh and blood form, but rather in his transcendent essence with his spirit in another realm, not in this worldly realm. I do not agree with the interpretation of certain scholars who confirm that these ṣūfīs, who claimed to have met the Prophet while awake, believed that they had met him in flesh and blood.¹⁶⁴ In order to correctly understand these ṣūfīs' experiences and

¹⁶³ Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *al-Ḥāwī lil-Fatāwī fī al-Fiqh wa-'Ulūm al-Tafsīr wa-al-Ḥadīth wa-al-Uṣūl wa-al-Naḥw wa-al-I'rāb wa-Sā'ir al-Funūn* (Cairo: Idārat al-Ṭibā'ah al-Muniriyyah, 1933), 147.

¹⁶⁴ R.S. O'Fahey, Bernd Ratdke and Knut Vikor state that ṣūfī experience of the vision of the Prophet (using the Arabic term *fath*, meaning illumination) confers the capacity to perceive, while in a state of awakenedness, the Prophet himself—in flesh and blood as it were. See Aḥmad Ibn Idrīs, *The Exoteric Ahmad Ibn Idrīs: A Sufi's Critique on the Madhāhib and the Wahhābīs: Four Arabic Texts with Translation and Commentary*, trans. Bernd Ratdke et. al. (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 25. R.S. O'Fahey in fact mentions on page 3, note 8 of Chapter 1 of *Ibid.*, that ṣūfīs see the Prophet, "*Fī shuhūdi dhātihi*," and this may mean seeing the essence of the Prophet. O'Fahey adds that Meier suggested that *dhāt* may be interpreted as seeing the Prophet in flesh and blood after his death. But, in my opinion, Meier's translation or interpretation of *al-dhāthi al-sharīf*, which means the intact body of the Prophet with blood and flesh,

statements, we must also refer to their cosmology. The concept of two different worlds, namely, a mundane world and a transcendent one, is also known in Sufism. The idea of the realms of *al-mulk* and *al-malakūt* is very popular in Sufism, and these *ṣūfis* described their meeting with the Prophet in a state of awakenedness based on these concepts. These cosmological notions were already expressed by earlier *ṣūfis*, such as al-Makkī in his *Qūt al-Qulūb* and then elaborated by Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī. As al-Ghazālī tells us in his *Mishkāt al-Anwār*, there are different levels of worlds; the *‘ālam al-mulk*, which means the corporeal, sensible, or inferior world, and the *‘ālam al-malakūt*, which means the spiritual, intelligible and superior world.¹⁶⁵ Al-Makkī had already clarified how these two realms can be perceived; through reason in the case of the visible world (*al-mulk*), and in the case of the realm of *al-malakūt*, through faith alone.¹⁶⁶ Many events cannot be perceived by the ordinary senses because they happen in the realm of *malakūt*; for example, the tortured dead feel their punishment in the grave.¹⁶⁷ Furthermore, al-Ghazālī confirms the validity of the vision in the angelic world. The quality of a vision of the visible world (*‘ālam al-shahādah*) is much lower than that of the angelic world because the forms that appear in the visible world may represent either the real or wrong forms, which sometimes completely contradict its real quality, whereas the form that appears in the angelic world (*‘ālam al-malakūt*) always retains its true quality. For instance, if

is not correct because al-Suyutī's opinion, with which he is dealing, only admits this meeting in the angelic realm; see Fritz Meier, "A Resurrection of Muhammad in Suyuti," in *Essays on Islamic Piety and Mysticism*, trans. John O'Kane (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 530.

¹⁶⁵ For further details about this cosmological concept, see A.J. Wensinck, *La Pensée de Ghazzālī* (Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1940), 80-89; see also al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' ‘Ulūm al-Dīn*, vol. 6. 240.

¹⁶⁶ al-Makkī, *Kitāb Qūt al-Qulūb*, vol. 1, 245.

¹⁶⁷ For instance, we have the example of the torture that the infidel feels in the grave when the servants and the scorpions beat him. The best interpretation is that this event happens in the realm of *malakūt*; that is why human physical vision cannot see it. See Wensinck, *La Pensée de Ghazzālī*, 100.

Satan is seen within the boundaries of the angelic realm (*'ālam al-malakūt*), he must appear in an ugly form, such as a pig or a dog. By the same token, when the Prophet saw the Angel Gabriel in the *'ālam al-malakūt*, he saw him in the form of a beautiful man.¹⁶⁸

However, al-Ghazālī reminds us not to confuse these two realms (the *'ālam al-mulk* and the *'ālam al-malakūt*), especially when one experiences them in one's spiritual life. These two realms are misunderstood by people to be unified with each other, as though there existed a union (*ittiḥād*) between, especially as many mistakenly think that there is no other realm than this worldly or this sensible realm. The truth is that both in fact have their own independent realities as well as a connection.¹⁶⁹ Thus, it appears that for al-Ghazālī these two realms cannot ever achieve unification because each has its own unique nature, the former is transcendent; while the latter is immanent and profane.

With regard to ṣūfī visions of the form of the Prophet, there are two opinions: the first only admits the possibility of seeing the Prophet in his imaginal form. Another opinion admits that the real form of the Prophet can be seen. The former is the opinion of al-Ghazālī, who asserts that it is not the body and the spirit of the Prophet that they see, but rather his imaginal form. For example, when someone asserts that he saw God, he did not see the essence of God, but rather saw something that can be perceived by the senses like light. Therefore, it was not the form of the Prophet buried in Medina who was seen, but only a figure in the realm of the

¹⁶⁸ al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, vol. 3, 159.

¹⁶⁹ al-Ghazālī, *Qawa'id al-'Aqa'id*. Taḥqīq wa-ta'līq Musā Muḥammad 'Alī (Bayrut : 'Ilm al-Kutub, 1985), 264.

imagination.¹⁷⁰ The second opinion is adopted by Ibn 'Arabī. Even though Ibn 'Arabī agrees with al-Ghazālī on the impossibility of seeing the spirit of Muḥammad, he nevertheless argues that the physical figure of the Prophet can be seen as well. Ibn 'Arabī does not deny the possibility of seeing the physical figure of the Prophet in a dream; what he denies is seeing the spirit of the Prophet and his subtleties. As he relates in the *Fuṣuṣ al-Ḥikam*, when the spirit of the Prophet enters into a person's dream, it is transfigured into the real physical form of the Prophet buried in Medina. Moreover, as he points out, because Satan cannot imitate the form of the Prophet's physical body, whoever sees the latter, really sees the Prophet (or his transfigured spirit). He can receive religious instructions from the Prophet, just as others did when he was still alive in this world.¹⁷¹ Moreover, Ibn 'Arabī and al-Jīlī hint at the possibility of the manifestation of the spirit of the Prophet to his living followers. If somebody purifies his heart by spiritual exercises, it is possible that the form of the Prophet may manifest itself to him; therefore, some people may see him in that form.¹⁷² Al-Jīlī states that he saw the Prophet when he manifested himself in the person of his teacher al-Jabartī. Al-Jīlī also gives an account of how, when Abū Bakr al-Shiblī was possessed by the spirit of the Prophet, he declared to his students that he was the messenger of God. His students did not contradict him because they knew that the Prophet had manifested himself in al-Shiblī.

Unlike both al-Ghazālī and Ibn 'Arabī, al-Suyūṭī tends to agree with those who believe that the intact body and spirit, or essence, of the Prophet can be seen,

¹⁷⁰ Meier, *Bemerkungen zur Mohammedverehrung*, 373

¹⁷¹ Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣuṣ al-Ḥikām*, 87.

¹⁷² Ibn 'Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah*, 1999, vol. 5, 103.

but he asserts that this sort of vision does not occur in this real sensible world (*'ālam al-mulk*). To defend this position, al-Suyūṭī gives us several quotations from other scholars. According to Abū Bakr ibn al-'Arabī (1076-1148),¹⁷³ if one sees the real attributes of the Prophet, one really sees him, but if one does not see his attributes, one sees him in an imaginal form. Nor is it impossible to see his essence with his body and spirit, because the spirits of all the prophets are alive after death and are allowed to depart from their graves and go to heaven and earth. According to Abū Maṣṣūr al-Baghdādī al-Shāfi'ī, the Prophet is alive after his death; thus, he is happy when his followers are obedient, sad because of their bad deeds and prepared to receive the salutations of his community. According to Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī, the lives of the prophets after their deaths are the same as their lives while living. The fact that the Prophet saw Moses praying in his tomb means that he saw him alive with a body because praying needs a body. The only difference is that the prophets' bodies do not need food or drink, even though they and others may have other intelligible senses such as listening and knowing.¹⁷⁴ Based on al-Subkī's statement, we learn that the nature of the body here does not constitute real flesh and blood, but is rather a transcendent body. It seems that this idea is approved of by al-Suyūṭī who then assumes that the meeting between a believer and the essence of the Prophet after his death does not happen in *'ālam al-mulk* (worldly life), but rather in the *'ālam al-malakūt*. And, because such a meeting happens only in the angelic realm, nobody can claim that he should be considered one of the Companions of the

¹⁷³ His full name is Abū Bakr ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Ma'āfirī ibn al-'Arabī. He was a student of Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī; see J. Robson, "Ibn al-'Arabī, Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh al-Ma'āfirī," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam. New Edition*, vol. 3, 1971, 707.

¹⁷⁴ al-Suyūṭī, *al-Ḥawā' il-Fatāwī fī al-Fiqh*, 156.

Prophet. Al-Suyūṭī sustains his position by arguing that all the Prophet's followers will see him and he will see them too on the Day of Judgement; in this case, however, the designation "Companion" cannot be attributed to all of them because this vision is in the angelic realm.¹⁷⁵ His position is therefore different from that of Ibn 'Arabī who maintained that a man who meets the Prophet in such a manner (awake, not asleep) can be among the Companions.¹⁷⁶

As we mentioned before, al-Ghazālī stresses that one can only see the imaginal form of the Prophet, which is perhaps how he limits the concept of *'ālam al-mithāl*: thus, there is no need to insist on the Prophet's bodily integrity. Blood and flesh are the elements of the pure *'ālam al-ajsām* (the realm of the body), which is limited by a definite time and space. In my opinion, Ibn 'Arabī also sees this as the boundary of the *'ālam al-mithāl*. However, according to him, in the *'ālam al-mithāl*, the real physical form can be seen. As 'Aḫfī points out, the *'ālam al-mithāl* is a luminous substance, but the luminous forms that populate the *'ālam al-mithāl* appear in the realm of the senses (the concrete world), in corporeal physical form or in a state of real individuation.¹⁷⁷ But, Ibn 'Arabī maintains that the capacity of the imagination (*takhayyul*) is much deeper and wider than the capacity of the senses. The imaginative capacity can perceive both the visible and invisible worlds, and this can occur both during sleep or when awake. In *'ālam al-mithāl*, the spirit can be embodied and the body can be spiritualized. As I have mentioned before, Ibn 'Arabī admitted that he, like the Prophet Muḥammad, had experienced an ascension to

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 265.

¹⁷⁶ Meier, *Bemerkungen zur Mohammedverehrung*, 384.

¹⁷⁷ Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikām*, 105.

heaven where he met the prophets from Adam to Muḥammad. Nevertheless, this experience occurred to him through the spirit, that is, without recourse to the sense organs; whereas, Muḥammad experienced the journey and the meeting with the prophets in both his spirit and body.¹⁷⁸ Elsewhere, namely in the *Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah*, Ibn 'Arabī maintains that a pole can see the Prophet in a dream or in *kashf* (mystical unveiling).¹⁷⁹ Here, it is clear that when ṣūfīs experience an encounter with the Prophet while awake, this does not occur to one in a fully conscious state, i.e; to the bodily senses, but in the *kashf*. Ibn 'Arabī insists that, in the state of revealing (*kashf*), one can see something or even supra-sensible beings within the boundaries of the unseen world, even though others standing beside him cannot see them because they are not in that state of revealing (*kashf*). For example, the angels are present in the congregation of the *dhikr*, even though the people who are participating in that congregation do not see them. But for those that God situates in the state of *kashf*, they see them.¹⁸⁰ The classical ṣūfī thinker Rūzbihān al-Baqlī (d. 1209), for instance, only admitted the possibility of seeing and meeting the Prophet in the state of unveiling (*kashf*).¹⁸¹

According to certain ṣūfī doctrines, *kashf* is not a vision through the physical organs such as the eyes, but through spiritual vision, which is beyond the capacity of physical vision. Vision by *kashf* is much more valid than physical vision, which

¹⁷⁸ See Ibn 'Arabī, *Les Illuminations de la Mecque : Textes choisis = The Meccan Illuminations : Selected Texts = al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyya*, trans. Michel Chodkiewicz and William C. Chittick (Paris: Sindbad, 1988), 361.

¹⁷⁹ Ibn 'Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah*, 1999, vol. 7, 271.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., vol. 6, 357.

¹⁸¹ Rūzbihān Baqlī is one of the greatest so-called theosophic ṣūfīs who had experienced a profound mystical knowledge. He declared that he met the Prophet and the four Caliphs in the state of unveiling (*kashf*) when he meditated on the roof of his *ribāṭ*; see Carl W. Ernst, *Rūzbihān Baqlī : Mysticism and the Rhetoric of Sainthood in Persian Sufism* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1996), 27.

is not free from mistakes;¹⁸² vision by *kashf* is animated by spirit¹⁸³ and perhaps by the eyes of the heart.¹⁸⁴ But al-Ghazālī confirms that such a vision may happen through one's physical eyes. It is within the boundaries of *kashf* that the supernatural experiences of the saints occur, such as hearing invisible voices or seeing the Prophet, but this always happens only in the realm of the imaginal. Al-Ghazālī, however, insists that this experience may happen in the state of awakedness and even, to a point, through the physical eyes.¹⁸⁵

Al-Ghazālī never revised this opinion, as is mistakenly assumed by Fritz Meier;¹⁸⁶ in fact he reiterates it in most of his works. For instance, in his book *Fayṣal al-Tafriqah bayna al-Islām wa-al-Zandaqah*, he states, "a beautiful image resembling the essence of angels may appear to the prophets or the saints while the latter are fully awake and healthy."¹⁸⁷ Again in his *al-Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl*, he confirms that the mystics experience revealing (*kashf*) until they are able—in a state of full awakedness—to see the angels and the spirit of the Prophet or to hear their voices.¹⁸⁸ Likewise, in his *Maqāṣid al-Falāsifah*, he maintains that the prophets and

¹⁸² Āmulī, *Kitāb-i Jāmi' al-Asrār*, 111; see also Muḥammad al-Sanūsī, *Kitāb al-Salsabīl al-mu'īn fī al-ṭara'iq al-arba'īn*, in *Kitāb al-Masā'il al-'Ashr*, al-Musammā bi-Bughyat al-Maqāṣid fī Khulāṣat al-Marāṣid (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Ma'āhid, 1934), 187.

¹⁸³ See Miguel Asín Palacios, *El Islam cristianizado: estudio del "Sufismo" a través de las obras de Abenarabi de Murcia* (Madrid: Editorial Plutarco, 1931), 218.

¹⁸⁴ There is a well known ḥadīth (for Sufism) that states that God created two physical eyes to be used by His creatures to see the visible things and He created two eyes in the hearts of believers to see the unseen and hidden transcendental realm; see Āmulī, *Kitāb-i Jāmi' al-Asrār*, 581.

¹⁸⁵ See Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *On the Boundaries of Theological Tolerance in Islam* (*Fayṣal al-Tafriqah bayna al-Islām wa-al-Zandaqah*), trans. Sherman A. Jackson (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 94; see also al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, vol. 3, 159.

¹⁸⁶ Meier, "A Resurrection of Muhammad in Suyuti," in *Essays on Islamic Piety and Mysticism*, 526.

¹⁸⁷ al-Ghazālī, *On the Boundaries of Theological Tolerance in Islam*, 94.

¹⁸⁸ al-Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnānī, 1985), 93.

the saints might be able to see supra-sensible beings not only while sleeping but also when awake.¹⁸⁹

V. Al-Sammān's Meeting with the Prophet in a State of Awakenedness

For *ṣūfīs*, the meeting with the Prophet while awake is the most tremendous experience that a human being can hope for. Al-Sammān claims that he himself and Shaykh Aḥmad al-Qushāshī experienced this event.¹⁹⁰ For al-Sammān, since the Prophet is the mediator between God and his servants, the meeting with the physical body of the Prophet while awake is an event that every Muslim must strive to experience. According to him, a believer can converse with the Prophet and ask him anything, and the Prophet will answer, all in a state of awakenedness.¹⁹¹ Al-Sammān does not doubt that the deserving *ṣūfīs* will gaze at the very face of the Prophet when fully awake and in real time.

The above theory is not new, but rather, as we have found in al-Suyūṭī's *Hāwī*, and as we have discussed it in detail before, this story was already widespread earlier, especially among previous post-classical *ṣūfīs*. This may be seen from various elements of al-Sammān's vision of the event. Thus, in his encounter with the Prophet, the grave of the Prophet seems very significant. He claims in *al-Futūḥāt al-Ilāhīyah* that he met the Prophet when he was sitting near the *minbar* of the mosque of Medina, one of Islam's holiest shrines; it is here that the tomb of the Prophet is found. Al-Sammān said that a *ḥadīth* of the Prophet described this area as the garden of Paradise. Al-Sammān insists on the blessed significance of this area,

¹⁸⁹ al-Ghazālī, *Maqāṣid al-Falāsifah: fī al-Manṭiq wa-al-Ḥikmah al-Ilāhīyah wa-al-Ḥikmah al-Ṭabīʿīyah*, vol. 3, (Cairo: al-Maṭbaʿah al-Maḥmūdīyah, 1936), 68-76.

and encourages pilgrims from all over the world to visit the grave of the Prophet. Al-Sammān reminds those who fail to visit the tomb of the Prophet that: "it is to be regretted if, after coming such every distance, you do not thank God for the great guidance that you obtain through the Prophet."¹⁹²

Al-Sammān's position seems to be in line with that of his teacher al-Kurdī, who defended the popular tradition of visiting the tomb of the Prophet, despite the fact that the practice was fiercely attacked by the Wahhābiyah. From Abd Allāh al-Samhūdī (d.911 H), who devotes a five volumes *Wafā' al-wafā bi-akhbār Dār al-Muṣṭafá* to extolling the religious value of the house of the Prophet on the basis of the Qur'an and hadith and the opinions of various Muslims scholars, we learn how one should behave correctly when visiting the tomb of the Prophet. It is apparent that most of the scholars from whom he draws his information seems to conform with al-Samman's position that the more visiting is done to the prophet's tomb, the better. The exception is for Ibn Rushd, who maintains that visiting the tomb of the Prophet every day and performing prayer there is not recommended because such actions will automatically make the tomb become like a mosque, which is prohibited by the Prophet himself.¹⁹³ It is a common position among Maliki scholars that frequent visits to the tomb of the Prophet are not to be tolerated. Such an action is defined by them as non-recommended, whereas it is recommended according to the rest of the three madhhabs.¹⁹⁴ Thus, it is

¹⁹⁰ al-Sammān, *al-Nafahāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 65.

¹⁹¹ al-Sammān, *al-Futūḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 3.

¹⁹² al-Sammān, *al-Nafahāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 69.

¹⁹³ See 'Abd Allāh al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā bi-akhbār Dār al-Muṣṭafá*, ed by; Qāsim al-Sāmarā'ī. Vol 5, 112.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, Vol 5, 113.

understandable why al-Samman, who subscribed to the Shafiit madhhab, would have encouraged his disciples to visit the tomb of the Prophet as much as possible.

It must be noted that previous ṣūfis had in fact similar opinions on the spiritual value of visiting the tomb of the Prophet.¹⁹⁵ In order to gain such spiritual value, one should have a spiritual connection with the Prophet, and one of the best ways to achieve this according to al-Ghazālī, is to visit his tomb and make an effort to have a psychological connection with the Prophet. Certainly, one will receive the warmest acceptance from the Prophet, who in fact knows who has left his family and travelled a vast distance full of the emotion of love and longing, with the object of visiting him. He must keep in mind that the Prophet is aware of his presence, his prayers and his visit to the tomb. Thus, in order to have a spiritual connection to the Prophet, it is efficient to visualize the physical body of the Prophet in one's mind as if his body were still in his tomb and alive.¹⁹⁶ Similarly, when one leaves the prophet's tomb, just as one feels sad on separating from one's loved ones. One should feel very sad to be absent from Prophet's audience.¹⁹⁷ By using this method of visualization, the visitor will realize how important the Prophet is to his spiritual experience.¹⁹⁸

The tomb of the Prophet seems always to have been assigned a special status by the ṣūfis. According to al-Kalābādhī, some previous ṣūfis had dreamt of seeing the

¹⁹⁵ For example, al-Ghazālī insists that for the purpose of gaining benedictions, it is recommended to make an effort to visit the tomb of the Prophet Muḥammad and other prophets, the Companions, the generation after the Companions, the saints and the scholars; see his *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, vol. 2, 352.

¹⁹⁶ See 'Abd Allāh al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā bi-akhbār Dār al-Muṣṭafā*, ed by; Qāsim al-Sāmarrā'ī, Vol 5, 97.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., Vol 5, 124.

¹⁹⁸ See Ibid, Vol 5, 97.

Prophet at this location as well.¹⁹⁹ ‘Alā’ al-Dawlah al-Simnānī insists on the importance of visiting the tomb of the Prophet since the latter’s spirit can sense the extra effort and hardship of the journey and, in return, will assist the pilgrim to attain the full realization of the inner meaning of the pilgrimage.²⁰⁰ According to al-Sha’rānī, some ṣūfī shaykhs even claimed to hear the response of the Prophet to their salutations in their prayers, and this when they prayed near the tomb of the Prophet. Al-Sha’rānī was aware of the objections of some shaykhs of his time to the likelihood of this claim. Their objection was based on two points. Firstly, the Companions of the Prophet and the generations after the Companions, including the early ṣūfīs, never claimed to have experienced such a miracle. Secondly, examples of such miracles never happened to the previous generation. However, al-Sha’rānī seems to disagree with this objection. According to him, other ṣūfī miracles also had no forerunners in previous generations. In addition, he states that Shaykh Abū al-‘Abbās al-Murshī had said that it is possible to hear the answer of the Prophet to the pilgrims’ salutations and on other occasions as well. Whoever has not enjoyed this experience, must be veiled from God and the Prophet.²⁰¹

Interestingly, the details of al-Sammān’s meeting with the Prophet are precisely the same as those experienced by Yaḥyā al-Suhrawardī in his meeting with Plato, who was gradually transformed from a bright light into a physical body.²⁰² Al-Sammān too, on first beholding the reality of Muḥammad, saw the “Aḥmadian light

¹⁹⁹ al-Kalābādhī, *al-Ta’arruf li-Madhhab Ahl al-Taṣawwuf*, 182.

²⁰⁰ See, Carl Ernst, *The Shambhala Guide to Sufism* (Boston, Mass.: Shambhala, 1997), 73.

²⁰¹ See ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha’rānī, *Tanbīh al-Mughhtarīn* (Beirut: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1937), 64-65.

²⁰² Yaḥyā al-Suhrawardī said that he met Plato between waking and sleeping. Like al-Sammān’s experience, al-Suhrawardī saw a luminous light that gradually transformed into the physical body of

come out. This light stretched from up to the pulpit of the Prophet, and was gradually transformed into the noble form of Muḥammad (*al-ṣūrah al-sharīfah*).” From his statement, it appears that it is the reality of Muḥammad that produced the “Aḥmadian light.” Then, the light transformed into the honorable form of the Prophet. Here, he does not say *al-dhāt al-sharīf* (the noble essence), which might imply that he did not follow al-Suyūṭī. Thus, we may assume that he did not see the real essence of the Prophet, but rather only his form. Nevertheless, it is not clear whether he too thought that he saw the Prophet’s form within the boundary of the imaginal world, as in al-Ghazālī’s version. However, I suggest that he was more in line with Ibn ‘Arabī. Thus, he might have believed that he really saw the actual form of the Prophet. As I said before, Ibn ‘Arabī maintained that nobody can see the spirit of the Prophet, but the spirit will eventually transform into the form of the buried body of the Prophet in Medina. Thus, al-Sammān does not agree with al-Ghazālī that nobody can see the physical form of the Prophet.

Al-Sammān does not go into any detail about what he did in the presence of the Prophet; he does not tell us if he spoke, shook his hand, or asked about the authenticity of the *ḥadīths*, or about any mystical or legal issues.²⁰³ This did not stop his hagiographers from insisting that al-Sammān was instructed by the Prophet to disseminate esoteric teachings. There are none of his own statements that the Prophet instructed him about mystical and legal issues. However, he inspired the later Sammānīyah to transcend the boundaries of *madhhab*. For instance, a century

Plato. Plato came to him as a teacher to answer Suhrawardī’s philosophical inquiries; see his, *Majmū’ah-i Muṣannafāt-i Shaykh-i Ishrāq*, vol. 1, 70.

²⁰³ al-Sammān, *al-Futūḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 8.

later, his Sudanese followers claimed to communicate directly with the Prophet to ask about mystical and legal issues. The members of the Sudanese Sammānīyah were able to claim that they transcended the *madhhab* by communicating directly with the Prophet via dreams or visions.²⁰⁴

It must be noted that this type of experience was very widespread among Middle Eastern and North African ṣūfīs, but does not appear in the accounts of Indian ṣūfīs such as Aḥmad Sirhindī (d. 1624) and Shah Walī Allāh al-Dihlawī (d. 1762).²⁰⁵ Similarly, most Southeast Asian ṣūfīs never speak of any experiences such as meeting the Prophet, and this includes early figures like Ḥamza al-Fanṣūrī and Shams al-Dīn al-Sumāṭrānī and later ones like ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf and Yūsuf al-Makassarī. However, this experience possibly did happen to al-Sammān’s students or to those who were directly or indirectly influenced by him. The *Manāqib* of al-Sammān relates that one important miracle of his was the ability of his disciple Shaykh Sa’d al-Dīn al-Qabūlī to experience the vision of the light of Muḥammad, which was then transformed into the figure of the Prophet at the tomb of the Prophet.²⁰⁶ One ṣūfī figure who seems to have been directly influenced by al-Sammān is Aḥmad al-Tijānī, who also claimed to have encountered the Prophet while awake. His Senegalese defender, Muḥammad Niasse upheld al-Tijānī’s claim as typical, insisting that this

²⁰⁴ See Albrecht Hofheinz, “Transcending the *madhhab*--in practice: The case of the Sudanese shaykh Muḥammad Madhub (1795/6-1831),” *Islamic Law and Society* 10 (2003): 229-248.

²⁰⁵ See Walī Allāh al-Dihlawī, *al-Taḥfīmāt al-ilāhīyah*, vol. 2 (Bijnaur: Madīnah Barqī Press, 1936), 248-50. Shāh Walī Allāh said that he met the Prophet thirteen times in dreams, not while awake.

²⁰⁶ To repeat, the *Manāqib* tells us that Sa’d al-Dīn al-Qābūlī asked Muḥammad al-Sammān how he could see the reality of Muḥammad. Al-Sammān told him to visit the tomb of the Prophet, and when he was visiting it, he saw the light of Muḥammad which transformed into the figure of the Prophet. He shook hands with him. Then, he told al-Sammān about the event and the latter was very happy to hear it; see Ṣiddīq ibn ‘Umar Khān, *Risālat Manāqib Shaykh Muḥammad al-Sammān*, n.d.

type of vision may be traced back to al-Bāqillānī.²⁰⁷ This claim seems doubtful, although Niasse may have been influenced by al-Bāqillānī's admission that believers will meet and converse with the Prophet in paradise.²⁰⁸ However, although al-Bāqillānī believed that God endows the saints with a sixth sense which is beyond the capacity of the five senses,²⁰⁹ he never explicitly claimed that the saints were able to meet with the Prophet in a state of awakedness. It appears that the concept was unknown; indeed, none of his contemporaries or predecessors claimed to have had such an experience.

However, al-Sammān's Indonesian disciples, such as al-Palimbānī, Muḥammad Arshad al-Banjārī and Muḥammad Nafīs al-Banjārī, never revealed that they had met the Prophet while awake. As far as I know, the experience of meeting or seeing the Prophet while awake was only admitted to by one Indonesian mystic and is found in the biography of the founder of an internationally widespread and multifaith mystical movement—the *Subud* (*Susila Budi Darma*, i.e. The Ethic of Mind) spiritual movement--Muhammad Subuh (1901-1987). He admitted that he had had an extraordinary mystical experience in which he saw a picture of the Prophet vividly in the supernatural mysterious book that he saw during his enlightenment. In this vision, he saw the Prophet looking at him smilingly. It is obvious that Subuh wanted to show that he had spiritual legitimacy for his *latihan* (exercises) taken from the Prophet.²¹⁰ Even though there is no strong evidence that he was indirectly

²⁰⁷ Kane, "Muhammad Niasse (1881-1956) et sa réplique," 230.

²⁰⁸ Muḥammad al-Bāqillānī, *al-Insāf fīmā yajibu l'tiqadahu wa-lā yajūzu al-Jahl bih* (Cairo: Mu'assasat al-Khānjī, 1963), 169.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 163.

²¹⁰ In his autobiography, Muhammad Subuh tells us, "On another night, some time after this last experience, having received and followed of the *latihan kejiwaan* (spiritual exercises), I was sitting

inspired by al-Sammān, we can assume that he was aware of the significance of seeing the Prophet. It is likely that he knew this via the popularity of the teachings of al-Sammān. And, as we have mentioned in Chapter One, al-Sammān and his *Manāqib* were popular and widely-circulated in the archipelago.

Of course, as I have already mentioned, al-Sammān is not the first *ṣūfī* who claimed to have seen the Prophet while awake. To repeat, the claim to this experience was already widespread at al-Sammān's time and can be found in the works of later *ṣūfīs*. This tendency appears to have widely circulated earlier and to have been notorious long before al-Sammān, but we do not know exactly when it started. It appears, furthermore, that most of those who claimed to have had this type of vision were figures who were particularly influential for al-Sammān. The closest *ṣūfī* figure to al-Sammān, Muṣṭafā ibn Kamāl al-Dīn al-Bakrī, himself claimed to have seen the Prophet nineteen times.²¹¹ Nor was a claim of this type of vision new among *Khalwatī* shaykhs. It has been said of one of the founders of the *Khalwatīyah*, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Karīm al-Dīn, that he received the *ṭarīqah* from the Prophet in a state of awakedness,²¹² and many other *Khalwatī* masters claimed to have had a vision of the Prophet. His contemporary, Shaykh 'Alī al-Hijāzī al-Khalwatī (d. 1769) admitted to seeing the Prophet and his Companions

performing *zikir*. Suddenly, I received a large book as big as an atlas. I opened the book and on the first page there was a robed figure, under which was a caption in Arabic. Before I was able to finish reading it, the letter changed into Latin characters and formed the words: Prophet Muhammad, Messenger of God. Strange: as I read these words, the robed figure nodded his head and smiled approvingly. Understandably, I was amazed, for as long I had lived, I had never seen a picture that could move and smile." See R.M. Subuh Sumohadiwidjojo, *The Story of My Life* (Jakarta, Subud Publication International, 2001), 76.

²¹¹ Regarding Muṣṭafā ibn Kamāl al-Dīn al-Bakrī's vision of the Prophet and Khidr, see al-Murādī, *Kitāb Sīlk al-Durar*, vol. 4, 196; see also de Jong, "Mustafa Kamal al-Din al-Bakri," 236.

²¹² See Maḥmūd 'Abd al-Ra'ūf al-Qāsim, *al-Kashf 'an Ḥaqīqat al-Ṣūfiyah li-Awwal Marrah fī al-Tārīkh* (Amman, Jordan: al-Maktabah al-Islāmiyah, 1992-3), 364.

while awake.²¹³ Another contemporary, Maḥmūd al-Kurdī al-Khalwatī, is said to have been able to see the Prophet any time he wanted.²¹⁴ Another shaykh, Maṣṣūr al-Ḥalabī al-Qādirī al-Khalwatī was able to see (or was not veiled from seeing) the Prophet both when awake and asleep.²¹⁵ However, it is wrong to assume that this was only typical of the Khalwatīyah, for it also occurred within the Shādhilīyah and other *ṭarīqahs*. Al-Sha'rānī indicates that in his time, the tendency already existed among some Yemeni mystics who claimed that, by virtue of the *ṣalawāt*, they could see the physical body of the Prophet in a state of awakedness. In the hagiography of 'Alī Wafā', this latter is said to have encountered the Prophet twice. The first of these meeting occurred when 'Alī was a boy studying Qur'ānic recitation. After a difficult lesson, he is quoted as having described the following vision: "in a state of awakedness, I saw the Prophet. He was wearing a white cotton shirt, which suddenly appeared on me. He said, 'read,' so I read for him *Sūrah al-Dhuḥā*." The second vision occurred to him at the age of twenty one when he was visiting the grave of his father.²¹⁶

'Abd al-Wahhāb Sha'rānī's position seems to be in line with that of his teacher 'Alī al-Khawwāṣ, who maintained that nobody attains sainthood until he meets the Prophet and Khidr.²¹⁷ Besides 'Alī Wafā' and 'Alī al-Khawwāṣ, this position seems to have been adopted by al-Sha'rānī's other teachers as well. Al-Sha'rānī admitted the virtues of the recitation of the *ṣalawāt*, especially as an avenue for meeting the

²¹³ See 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Jabartī, *'Ajā'ib al-Āthār fī al-Tarājim wa-al-Akḥbār*, vol. 2 (Cairo: Maktabat Madbūlī, 1997), 633.

²¹⁴ al-Nabhānī, *Kitāb Jāmi' Karāmāt al-Awliyā'*, vol. 1, 362.

²¹⁵ Ibid., vol. 1, 495.

²¹⁶ See Richard McGregor, "A Study of Sainthood in Medieval Islamic Egypt : Muhammad and Ali Wafa" (Ph.D. diss., McGill University, Montreal, 2001), 81.

Prophet while awake. In this matter, he quotes his shaykh al-Zawāwī, “our *ṭarīqah* is to recite abundantly the *ṣalawāt* to the Prophet (peace be upon him), so that we can sit side by side with the Prophet while awake; we communicate with him as did the Companions; therefore, we can ask him about religious issues and about the *ḥadīths* which were questioned by our *Ḥuffāz*.²¹⁸ This experience is also recorded in the generation before al-Shaʿrānī. According to the latter’s account, al-Suyūṭī²¹⁹ met the Prophet while awake and asked him about the authenticity of some *ḥadīths*; al-Suyūṭī ended up meeting the Prophet seventy times.²²⁰ The experience of meeting the Prophet also happened to the great mystic Majd al-Dīn al-Baghdādī. When this great shaykh met the Prophet in a state of awakedness, he asked him about the way of Ibn Sīnā who wanted to reach God without the Prophet as an intermediary, but this way was not approved by the Prophet.²²¹ The experience can, as noted above, be found in the Shādhilī tradition. In Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh’s (d. 1309) *Laṭā’if al-Minan*, it is said that Shaykh Abū al-‘Abbās al-Murshī claimed that he shook hands with the Prophet and also claimed that if at any moment his eyes were to stray from the vision of the Prophet, he would consider himself a non-believer.²²² Thus, it appears that for most of the prominent post-classical *ṣūfīs*, the meeting with the Prophet was a condition of attaining the status of sanctity.

²¹⁷ al-Shaʿrānī, *Tanbīh al-Mughṭarrīn*, 64-65.

²¹⁸ See ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʿrānī, *al-Anwār al-Qudsīyah fī Bayān Qawā’id al-Ṣūfīyah*, (Lawāqih al-Anwār al-Qudsīyah fī Bayān Qawā’id al-Ṣūfīyah) (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1999), 284.

²¹⁹ On the life of Suyūṭī, see E.M Sartain, *Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī: Biography and Background* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 19-26.

²²⁰ See ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʿrānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣuḡhrā* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Qāhirah, 1970), 29-31.

²²¹ The Prophet said that he would hinder it by his own hand and such an idea could bring someone to Hell; see Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Simnānī, *Farḥat al-Āmilīn*, in *Rasā’il*, ed. W.M Thackton (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1998), 148.

²²² See Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh, *Laṭā’if al-Minan* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma’ārif, 1992), 110; see also al-Shaʿrānī, *Tanbīh al-Mughṭarrīn*, 65.

VI. Meeting with the Prophet in dreams

The value of a dream is very important in Islam. Von Grunebaum points out the fact that there "is hardly any phase in the life of the Islamic community and the individual where dreams . . . [do] not play a part,"²²³ and it is not surprising that the interpretation of dreams is even recognized by the fundamentalist Wahhābiyya."²²⁴ Due to a dream, some Muslims can even change their way of life. The rebellious Wahhābī, Juhaymān al-'Utaybī, who briefly controlled the great Mosque of Mecca in 1979 through bloodshed, even based his friend Muḥammad al-Qaḥṭānī's status as the *mahdī* on a dream.²²⁵ The experience of meeting the Prophet in a dream which brings a remarkable religious awakening or theological movement is found, for example, in the story of the Ash'arī movement. Al-Ash'arī²²⁶ changed his way of life from being a supporter of Mu'tazilism to founding his own school. And, it is an interesting fact too that some jurists in the later period even relied on their dreams when issuing their *fatwās*.²²⁷

Thus, it is understandable that the second type of vision involves seeing the Prophet in a dream. Al-Sammān considers this important as well, but less so than

²²³See G.E. Von Grunebaum, *The Dream and Human Societies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 10.

²²⁴Ibn Sa'ūd himself relied on the interpretation of dreams by 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Šāliḥ al-'Ulayyān. Some other Wahhābī scholars also engaged in dream interpretation; see Guido Steinberg, *Religion und Staat in Saudi-Arabien: die wahhabitischen Gelehrten 1902-1953* (Würzburg: Ergon, 2002), 141-2.

²²⁵In 1979, al-'Utaybī dreamt that God told him that his best friend Muḥammad Qaḥṭānī was a *mahdī*; see Peil, "Die Besetzung der grossen Moschee von Mekka 1979," 387-408.

²²⁶Al-Ash'arī dreamt of the Prophet three times; see Tilman Nagel, *The History of Islamic Theology: From Muhammad to the Present*, trans. Thomas Thorton (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2000), 149.

²²⁷Leah Kinberg has researched the phenomenon of dreams in the context of the history of the Islamic *madhāhib*; see Leah Kinberg, "The legitimization of the *madhāhib* through dreams," *Arabica* 32 (1985): 47-79.

meeting the Prophet while awake. It is understandable that al-Sammān should address this type of vision because this is the kind of encounter that the Prophet himself referred to. The Prophet said that whoever sees him in a dream really sees him, since Satan cannot resemble him in appearance.²²⁸ According to the ṣūfī point of view, Satan is a lower spirit consisting of a sort of subtle corporeal element and has the potential to transform or to penetrate into coarse earthly corporeal elements.²²⁹ The reason why Satan cannot imitate the Prophet's form is due to the fact that the physical body of the Prophet was purified by the angels when he was a child. From that time onwards, the Prophet no longer had any earthly elements that Satan could penetrate.²³⁰

Even though the meeting with the Prophet is usually regarded as a sort of dream, Islam, and particularly Sufism, recognize that some dreams contain the divine truth. In fact, a *ḥadīth* that is very popular in ṣūfī literature affirms that the dream of the true believer contains one forty-sixth or perhaps one forty-seventh of real prophethood.²³¹ Before receiving the revelation from God, the Prophet himself had the same true dream for six months.²³² The belief is that a tiny part of prophethood remains to be given by God to the believers.²³³ Ibn 'Arabī says that the value of the dream in the Islamic tradition is so high that the Prophet Muḥammad asked his

²²⁸ Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikām*, 87.

²²⁹ According to al-Ghazālī, Satan consists of a subtle, not a coarse body, and also has two forms: an original form and a imaginal one. He can transform himself into any imaginal form; al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, vol. 3, 159. See also 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, *Kitāb al-Faṭḥ al-Rabbānī wa al-Fayḍ al-Raḥmānī* (Beirut: al-Maṭba'ah al-Kāthūlīkiyah, 1960), 115.

²³⁰ al-Jīlī, *al-Insān al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, 32.

²³¹ See Ibn 'Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah*, (Cairo: al-Hay'ah al-Cairoīyah al-'Āmmah lil-Kitāb, 1972), vol. 12, 188.

²³² Ibid., vol. 12, 188-189.

²³³ Ibid., vol. 12, 185.

Companions every morning whether they had dreamt or not.²³⁴ A dream, however, must be interpreted, and the most important time to interpret a dream is in the morning. According to Ibn Sīrīn (654-728), who was renowned for his interpretation of dreams²³⁵ and for the reliability of his information regarding the *ḥadīths*, morning is the best time to interpret a dream, because this is the time when the mind is still fresh and has not yet become burdened with the tasks and affairs of the day. He insists that this is the reason why the Prophet said that his community is blessed in the morning.²³⁶

Speculative *ṣūfī* thought holds that one becomes so spiritually pure during sleeping that one may have contact with supra-sensible beings. According to the early *ṣūfī* Abū Saʿīd ibn Abī al-Khayr (d. 1049), when a believer sleeps, his body is in pause; his spirit is freed from “lust and satanic whispers and is released from the material realm (*al-ʿālam al-suflā*), and the angels bring his spirit to the angelic realm (*al-ʿālam al-ʿulyā*).²³⁷ That is why the state of sleeping is better than that of being awake, since during sleep the spirit returns to its purest nature.²³⁸ An even more interesting *ṣūfī* theory on the dream is revealed by al-Tustarī. According to him, there are two sorts of souls in human beings: a subtle part of soul of luminous spirit and a subtle part of coarsely natural soul. When a person sleeps, the former remains

²³⁴ Ibn ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah*, 1999, vol. 6, 308.

²³⁵ In fact, dream interpretation was already well known before Islam. The Greek thinker Artimides wrote on this matter and his work was eventually translated into Arabic. According to some scholars, Ibn Sīrīn borrowed from Artimides. This, in my opinion, must be questioned because it seems that the Arabic translation did not exist at the time of Ibn Sīrīn; see Yūsuf Zaydān’s comments in *Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, Fawāʾiḥ al-Jamāl wa-Fawāṭiḥ al-Jalāl*, ed. Yūsuf Zaydān (Turath, Kuwait: Dār Suʿād Ṣabāḥ, 1993).

²³⁶ See Muḥammad ibn Sīrīn, *L’Interprétation des Songes = Tafsīr al-Aḥlām al-Kabīr*, trans. Rima Ismail (Beirut : Dar el Fiker, 1992), 4.

²³⁷ Allāh Muḥammad Abū Saʿīd ibn Abī al-Khayr, *Ḥālāt va Sukhanān-i Shaykh Abū Saʿīd Abū al-Khayr Mayḥanī* (Tehran: Furūghī, 1963), 50.

in him but the latter departs. Because the subtle part of the luminous spirit remains in him, the sleeper becomes a subtle person. If this subtle luminous soul is no longer present in him, then there is no movement in him and he becomes dead. Thanks to the subtle luminous spirit, man can see the angelic realm and think rationally.²³⁹

The early *ṣūfis*, such as al-Makkī²⁴⁰ and others, for the most part believe that by virtue of the *ṣalawāt*, a Muslim can see the Prophet in a dream. In the *Awārif al-Ma'ārif* of 'Umar al-Suhrawardī, the dream of meeting the Prophet comes not only as a reward for the recitation of the *ṣalawāt*, but also as a means for religious instructions²⁴¹ or for other purposes. The early *ṣūfī* figure al-Kalābādhī gives us an account of some *ṣūfis*' experiences of seeing the Prophet in dreams but does not say that they were granted such experiences due to having recited the *ṣalawāt*. Some *ṣūfis* may have dreamt of the Prophet regularly, such as Abū Bakr Muḥammad al-Katānī, who dreamt of the Prophet twice a week on Mondays and Thursdays.²⁴²

VII. Visualization of the Prophet and *Fanā'* and *Baqā'* in the Prophet.

The third vision is not a real meeting or a real vision, but rather an exercise in imagining the presence of the Prophet. Al-Sammān counsels his novices to perform this type of vision all the time or at least during the recitation of the *ṣalawāt*. Even though this is considered to be the lowest level of *ṣūfī* experience with the reality of

²³⁸ al-Nābulusī, *Kitāb al-Fatḥ al-Rabbānī wa al-Fayḍ al-Raḥmānī*, 186.

²³⁹ al-Tustarī, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm*, 81.

²⁴⁰ al-Makkī, *Kitāb Qūt al-Qulūb*, vol. 1, 13.

²⁴¹ In my reading of the *Awārif*, I did not find any accounts of meeting the Prophet in the state of awakedness; see 'Umar al-Suhrawardī, *Kitāb 'Awārif al-Ma'ārif*, 128, 131 and 228.

²⁴² See Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Kalābādhī, *al-Ta'arruf li-Madḥhab Ahl al-Taṣawwuf* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmīyah, 1993), 181.

Muḥammad, it seems that this type of vision was considered a vital step towards attaining the experience of the first or second levels. Through visualizing the presence of the Prophet all the time, al-Sammān stresses that one may attain the levels of “passing away” or *fanā’* and then “persistence” or *baqā’* in the Prophet Muḥammad. Al-Sammān can be considered one of the pioneers of the theory of *fanā’* in the Prophet. The ṣūfīs of the classical era introduced the theory of *fanā’* in God, but not in the Prophet. This idea can conceivably be traced to Ibn ‘Arabī’s theory on the Viceregent of God, but this Viceregent is considered as only one entity that may manifest itself in different persons and at any time. Al-Jīlī too—although he may be said to have inspired the theory of “union” with the Prophet—never used the terms *fanā’* or *baqā’* in connection with the Prophet. He did introduce the idea of the manifestation of the reality of Muḥammad in the figures of certain people. Al-Jīlī might have been inspired by ‘Ayn al-Quḍāh al-Hamadhānī who claimed that when the ṣūfīs are in ecstasy or *shaṭaḥāt*, it is the *nūr Muḥammad* that possesses them.²⁴³ Al-Sammān, however, seems to have taken this idea from al-Jīlī, for he employs the term *al-taṣawwurāt al-Muḥammadīyah*, a term also employed by al-Jīlī. But while *al-taṣawwurāt al-Muḥammadīyah* literally means “the Muḥammadian forms,” this does not necessarily signify the physical form of the Prophet. Al-Jīlī clarifies this by saying that “it is not the physical figure of the Prophet which is manifested, but rather the spirit of the Prophet. When the spirit of the Prophet manifest itself in somebody, his spirit withdraws, while the spirit of the

²⁴³ al-Hamadhānī, *Tamhīdāt*, 348.

Prophet remains in him.”²⁴⁴ Al-Jīlī seems to follow Ibn ‘Arabī’s lead in insisting on the impossibility of seeing the spirit of the Prophet. The spirit of the Prophet can only be seen in the form of the Prophet or in another similar figure in the *‘ālam al-mithāl*. Al-Sammān’s teaching on the Prophet thus seems to implement al-Jīlī’s teaching on *al-taṣawwūrāt al-Muḥammadiyah*.²⁴⁵ This is made even more obvious by the fact that al-Sammān himself mentions in his *Nafahāt al-Ilāhīyah* that he wrote a treatise on this subject with the title *Risālat al-Taṣawwūrāt al-Nabāwīyah*.²⁴⁶

An attempt at attaining *fanā’* and *baqā’* in the Prophet seems to be considered as a first step in achieving the further experience of meeting the Prophet in a state of awakedness. It appears that one must first pass away in the Prophet before the Prophet will appear in one’s visions. In order to obtain this visualization, one must attempt to attain *fanā’* in the Prophet. This station is attained through love and longing for the Prophet. The Prophet must be loved and obeyed more than anyone else. Al-Sammān cites the passage, Qur’ān 33:6, “the Prophet is more worthy of the believers than themselves (*al-Nabīy awlā bi-al-mu’minīn min anfusiḥim*),”²⁴⁷ as well as a *ḥadīth* that urges the Muslims to love the Prophet above all others, “nobody among you becomes a true believer until he loves me more than he loves himself, his wealth, his children and his parents.”²⁴⁸ The believer’s love for the Prophet must become so deep that he feels it in his spirit, blood, flesh, hair and skin. Therefore, his eyes are never absent from the presence

²⁴⁴ al-Jīlī, *al-Insān al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, 32.

²⁴⁵ al-Sammān, *al-Futūḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 6-7.

²⁴⁶ al-Sammān, *al-Nafahāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 59.

²⁴⁷ al-Qur’ān 9: 24.

²⁴⁸ al-Sammān, *al-Futūḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 6.

of the Prophet.²⁴⁹ Al-Sammān encourages the novices to love the Prophet as he does, “I feel a strong love for the Prophet even in my bones, my spirit, my hair and my eyes, like cold water refreshes in terribly hot temperatures.”²⁵⁰ It is worthwhile noting that insistence on loving the Prophet is a universal teaching in Sufism that can be traced back to the earliest writings on mysticism in Islam down to the present day. However, the description of how this love affects the physical organism varies widely, even though it is agreed that it should dominate a *ṣūfī*’s entire self. Al-Sammān’s ideas seem to be repeated phrase by phrase by later *ṣūfī* who had direct or indirect intellectual connection with him. For instance, a disciple of Aḥmad al-Tijānī, ‘Umar al-Fūtī, who also claimed to have encountered the Prophet while awake, expressed the same mode of love, “God gives me love for the Prophet with a love which touches my heart, my intimate existence (ego), my spirit, my flesh, my blood, my ears, my veins, my skin, my language, my hair and all of my organs.”²⁵¹

In order to be in *fanā*’ with the Prophet, a novice must always strive to have the image of the Prophet before his eyes. Here, al-Sammān employs the expression “*istiḥḍār al-Nabī*,” which means to “make present” or “to visualize” the Prophet as though he were physically present to the novice. A novice must imagine that the Prophet is near him at all times. If a novice cannot visualize the Prophet all the time, he should at least do so during his recitation of the *ṣalawāt* to the Prophet.²⁵² One must imagine, says al-Sammān, that the light of Muḥammad penetrates all his

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 9.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 7.

physical organs: his blood, his limbs, his skin, etc. If somebody attains *baqā'* in the Prophet, he no longer exists, but the Prophet is in him. For this reason, al-Sammān notes, "when you recite *ṣalawāt*, remember that it is not you who recites it, but rather the Prophet himself. Every atom, including your organs, is created from him (his light)."²⁵³

Al-Sammān seems to have been inspired by other *ṣūfīs* who developed a method for imagining the Prophet. According to Shaykh Amīn al-Kurdī, this ritual was suggested by Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, who advised the Muslims to imagine the presence and personality (figure) of the Prophet in their hearts whenever they sent the *ṣalawāt* in their praying.²⁵⁴ Sha'rānī confirms that one of his own teachers, 'Alī ibn Wafā', the founder of a branch of the Shādhilīyah known as the Wafā'īyah, insisted on the possibility of visualizing the real images of the prophets Moses and Jesus simply by calling out their names.²⁵⁵ According to al-Palimbānī, to visualize or imagine the physical body of the Prophet during *dhikr* had already been conceived of by the great *ṣūfī* 'Abdullāh al-'Idrūs (1409-1461), an early figure of the 'Alawīyah *ṭarīqah*.²⁵⁶ Al-'Idrūs advised the *ṣūfī* to imagine before him the physical bodies of three figures while performing *dhikr*: the Prophet Muḥammad, al-Ghazālī

²⁵¹ See *Bicentenaire de la naissance du Cheikh El Hadj Oumar al-Futi Tall, 1797-1998 : Colloque International, 14-19 Décembre 1998, Dakar - Sénégal* (Rabat: Institut des Études Africaines, 2001), 379.

²⁵² al-Sammān, *al-Futūḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 7-9.

²⁵³ al-Sammān, *al-Futūḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 7.

²⁵⁴ See Najm al-Dīn Amīn al-Kurdī, *Tanwīr al-Qulūb fī Mu'āmalat 'Allām al-Ghuyūb*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 1992), 519; see also al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, vol.1, 224.

²⁵⁵ See Fritz Meier, *Zwei Abhandlungen über die Naqṣbandiyya* (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 1994), 97.

²⁵⁶ See Esther Peskes, *Al-'Aidarūs und seine Erben : eine Untersuchung zu Geschichte und Sufismus einer Ḥaḍramitischen Sāda-Gruppe vom fünfzehnten bis zum achtzehnten Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2005), 41-46.

and the shaykh from whom the ṣūfī had taken the *bay'ah*.²⁵⁷ The notion of *istiḥdār* (visualization), for instance, can also be found in the method introduced by Aḥmad al-Qushāshī. In this respect, al-Qushāshī recommended that the novice who wanted to be initiated into the *ṭarīqah* recite the *Fātiḥah* 1000 times every night before sleeping and send the reward of this recitation to the Prophet. The novice should visualize the Prophet, and imagine that the Prophet had come to him and made him sleep. Al-Qushāshī maintains that by virtue of this ritual, a novice can see the Prophet in a dream.²⁵⁸

Another great ṣūfī who introduced the method of visualization is 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Dabbagh. It is reported, as al-Bīṭār tells us, that al-Dabbāgh believed the ṣūfī's encounter with the Prophet in the state of awakedness to be a great gift of God bestowed on those who love the Prophet with a perfect passion. But he emphasizes that this vision mostly happens by virtue of one's effort to concentrate on the Prophet all the time. The Prophet must be present in his mind when he is eating, drinking, and sleeping, and even when he is talking with somebody. Nothing can prevent him from remembering the Prophet. By virtue of this effort, a ṣūfī can meet the Prophet while awake.²⁵⁹

How should one visualize the Prophet? Can one just imagine the Prophet's physical form according to whichever form one likes? This question was clearly and explicitly answered by al-Bīṭār. Even though the theosophical ṣūfī believe that the appearance of the Prophet Muḥammad may differ from his original form because it may occur in the realm of similitude (*'ālam al-mithāl*), nevertheless,

²⁵⁷ al-Palimbānī, *Siyār al-Sālikīn*, vol. 3, 47.

in the case of visualization, al-Bīṭār maintains that one should visualize two dimensions of the Prophet, the first being his physical dimension and the second his spiritual one. The visualization of his physical figure must be according to the descriptions contained in the ḥadīths that speak of the Prophet's physical appearance. Visualization of his spiritual dimension, on the other hand, should be done while keeping in mind that the Prophet is the light and reality of every thing (logos, monad).²⁶⁰ Al-Sammān had clearly anticipated this technique, which can be seen from the fact that he also emphasizes that one should visualize the Prophet in both his physical form (*ṣūratan*) and his hidden reality (*m 'nan*), namely as the logos. Even though he does not mention explicitly that the physical form of the Prophet must be imagined according to the description of the ḥadīth, however, it is obvious he implies this. In insisting on the importance of visualizing the presence of the Prophet in his *al-Futūḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*, he not only discusses the spiritual dimension of the Prophet as the logos but also two other dimensions, namely his physical form and the glimpse we have of the noble character of the Prophet according to the ḥadīths. It is likely that he attempts to emphasize that all of these dimensions should be imagined together while visualizing the Prophet. Al-Sammān seems to be aware that, in order to visualize the Prophet correctly, one should know these three dimensions of the Prophet. And perhaps only by recognizing the existences of these three dimensions as inherent in the person of the Prophet, one can visualize the Prophet as if he were vividly and perfectly present in one's mind. Based on such an approach, it may be safely assumed that despite the fact that at one level Islam

²⁵⁸ al-Qushāshī, *Kitāb al-Simṭ al-Majīd*, 26-27.

²⁵⁹ al-Bīṭār, *Kitāb al-Nafahāt al-Aqdasīyah*, 153.

vigorously prohibits any kind of real iconization of the Prophet Muḥammad, a sort of mental icon of the Prophet is not only tolerated but also considered as a necessity by some Ṣūfīs. I believe that their flexibility toward a sort of mental icon was not really new, in the sense that it can be traced back to the attitude of the Prophet Muḥammad himself who asked his followers to save the icons of Abraham, Jesus and Maryam when they destroyed all the statutes around the Ka'aba.²⁶¹ Surprisingly, the reason given by these Ṣūfīs for the necessity of this mental icon is the same as that offered by other religious traditions which tolerate actual icons. It seems that they agree that some sort of icon is a kind of efficient "short cut" to visualizing their religious figures.

We do not need to discuss the Prophet as the logos according to al-Sammān again, so let us now investigate how al-Sammān elaborates on two other dimensions briefly in his *al-Futūḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*: the physical appearance and the behaviour of the Prophet. With regard to the physical appearance of the Prophet, the Prophet was described as the most beautiful man. And the most interesting thing to be mentioned here is how al-Sammān remarks that the beauty of the Prophet is much better than that of the Prophet Yūsuf. The length of the Prophet's body was not extremely tall, but more than medium. His skin color was not dark, but not extremely light. His hairs grew up under his ears. He had only twenty grey hairs and a thick and beautiful dark beard. He had a well-arranged teeth. He had a wide forehead. Again the Prophet's body was illuminated by a sort of transcendental light as if it were a light from the full-moon. It was reported in a ḥadīth that the wife of

²⁶⁰ al-Bīṭār, *Kitāb al-Nafahāt al-Aqdasīyah*, 153.

the Prophet discovered how the face of the Prophet lit up when the candle in her hand fell down to the floor. Whenever the Prophet perspired, his sweat became luminous.²⁶² At the same time, the Prophet was described as the most humble man on earth. It was he who first greeted whomsoever he met. He always walked behind his companions. If he looked at something, he looked at it thoroughly. However, he turned his face more toward the sky than the earth. He led an ascetic life. He was always in sorrow and deep thought, and was continuously silent. He did not talk if it were not necessary. However, when he explained something, he explained it clearly. He never complained about food. He never got mad for his own sake but only that of God. His way to laugh was to smile.²⁶³

VIII. Possession by the Spirit of Muḥammad and God's Manifestation in Him

We mentioned earlier that a ṣūfī's attainment of the stations of *fanā'* and *baqā'* in the Prophet was very important for al-Sammān. It seems that this was not only a matter of speculation for him, but a reflection of a real spiritual experience. It can be assumed that al-Sammān had already experienced this station before he succeeded in meeting with the Prophet in a state of consciousness, which he relates in his *al-Futūḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*. None of al-Sammān's writings tell, however, of how he managed to "pass away" in the Prophet. It is the *Rātib al-Sammān* which relates his statements as recorded by his best student, Ṣiddīq ibn 'Umar Khān, who reveals that al-Sammān was believed to have been possessed by the spirit of the Prophet. Al-Sammān's experience gets some confirmation thanks to al-Jīlī's theory of *al-*

²⁶¹ See Maxime Rodinson, *Mahomet* (Paris: edition du Seuil, 1961), 296.

taṣawwūrāt al-Muḥammadiyah. In other words, he exhibited signs of having attained *fanā'* and *baqā'* in the Prophet. Al-Sammān uttered several statements that resemble those of al-Shiblī (d. 945) when the latter was possessed by the spirit of the Prophet. In his statements, al-Sammān declares that he was the pole of the time; he even goes so far as to claim that he was the luminous light itself. If we keep in mind the opinion of 'Ayn al-Qudāh al-Hamadhānī, these *shataḥāt* may well be considered equivalent to the manifestation of the light of Muḥammad in al-Sammān. Let us quote his statement:

I am al-Qādirī al-Sammān and my name is Muḥammad. My popularity is widespread among people. I am the pole of this time and forever. By my virtue, O disciples, your prayers will be accepted. I am the only luminous light by which the saints are enlightened.²⁶⁴

In his dissertation, Purwadaksi explores al-Sammān's *shataḥāt* and cites ten important statements by al-Sammān:²⁶⁵

1. My station is above all existences.
2. My station is high, at the locus of the unity of God.
3. I am the pure light; other saints are enlightened by my light.
4. I am the *imām*; I am the *quṭb* of all existences.
5. I am Muḥammad, whom you seek.
6. I am incomparable with anything; I am the pole of all times.
7. All are in my hands.

²⁶² al-Sammān, *al-Futūḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 8.

²⁶³ al-Sammān, *al-Futūḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 9.

²⁶⁴ See 'Umar Khān al-Madanī, *Rātib Sammān*, MS. Jakarta 27.

8. All mankind is proud of me.

9. Every saint drinks my drinking.

10. Every pole bows to me.

At first glance, al-Sammān appears very arrogant to make these statements. However, it is true that, for ṣūfīs, seemingly arrogant statements by a saint are not unusual, but are indeed a proof of sainthood. Sultān Walad (the nephew of Rūmī) indicates that there are two categories of saint—the arrogant and the humble—of whom the former are possessed by the divine attribute of majesty (*al-jalāl*). Human characteristics no longer exist in such a saint; his carnal soul is already dead. For, whereas the arrogance of a common man comes from his carnal soul, that of the saint comes from the divine majesty (*al-jalāl*).²⁶⁶ This view in fact was espoused by al-Sammān himself. He maintains that occasionally some masters are controlled by the divine attribute *al-jalāl*, and thus, utter ecstatic statements; or, they may be controlled by the divine attribute *al-jamāl*.²⁶⁷ It is impossible to judge ṣūfī masters because their stations can change from one to another without it being very noticeable.²⁶⁸ It is thus quite possible that this is also how the author of the *Manāqib* saw the sanctity of al-Sammān. Furthermore, Muḥammad Nafīs al-Banjārī quoted

²⁶⁵ Purwadaksi, *Rātīb Sammān*, 96.

²⁶⁶ Bahā' al-Dīn Sultān Walad, *Maître et Disciple= Kitāb al-Ma'ārif* (Kitāb al-Ma'ārif), trans. Eva de Vitray-Meyerovitch (Paris: Sindbad, 1982), 66.

²⁶⁷ For a discussion of the history of the distinction between *al-jalāl* and *al-jamāl* in Islamic thought, see Robert Wisnovsky, "One Aspect of the Akbarian Turn in Shī'ī Theology," in *Sufism and Theology*, ed. Ayman Shihadeh (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 49-62.

²⁶⁸ al-Sammān, *al-Nafahāt al-Ilāhiyah*, 49.

Ṣiddīq ibn 'Umar Khān's statement to the effect that a ṣūfī may lose consciousness, which leads him to say blasphemous words which seem contrary to the *sharī'ah*.²⁶⁹

If we compare al-Sammān's *shataḥāt* with those of Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī, certain differences are apparent. Al-Bisṭāmī speaks as though it were God Himself who was talking, whereas al-Sammān speaks not as God, but as the Prophet or the reality of Muḥammad.

Al-Sammān's possession by the spirit of Muḥammad was perceived by his followers not simply in the sense of Muḥammad's identity as a man and prophet, but in the sense of the reality of Muḥammad—something quite different from the historical Prophet. In this sense, it is better to describe this spirit of Muḥammad as the Mirror of God. It seems that, for al-Sammān and other ṣūfis, the Prophet functioned not only as the mediator of God, but also as the best manifestation of God. Al-Sammān believes that the Prophet was "the appearance of the real essence of God in mankind."²⁷⁰ Certainly, this corresponds to a view of Ibn 'Arabī's from his *Tadbīrāt al-Ilāhīyah*, which is much cited by al-Sammān. Ibn 'Arabī describes the reality of Muḥammad as the Mirror of the Truth (God). However, Ibn 'Arabī reminds us that the term "Mirror" must not be understood in a literal sense, but metaphorically, since God is freed of any anthropomorphic attributes.²⁷¹

Al-Sammān's statement that Muḥammad is the appearance of God in mankind may be interpreted as the divine theophany in Muḥammad. Thus, it is

²⁶⁹ See Abdul Muthalib, "The Mystical Thought of Muḥammad Nafīs al-Banjārī : An Indonesian Sūfī of the Eighteenth Century" (M.A. Thesis, McGill University, Montreal, 1995), 27; Nafīs al-Banjārī, *al-Durr al-Nafīs*, 18.

²⁷⁰ al-Sammān, *al-Nafāḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 30.

²⁷¹ Ibn 'Arabī, *al-Tadbīrāt al-Ilāhīyah fī Islāḥ al-Mamlakah al-Insānīyah*, in *Kleinere Schriften des Ibn al-'Arabī*, 135.

understandable that al-Sammān should insist on the significance of the ṣūfī's encounter with the Prophet. The theosophical ṣūfīs believe that to see the Prophet means to see God. For instance, in *Tamhīdāt*, 'Ayn al-Qudāh cites the ḥadīth "whoever sees me, he sees God."²⁷² This is because the Prophet is the manifestation of the divine names and attributes. Most ṣūfīs believed that man cannot see God in this worldly life, like Ibn 'Arabī, and his opinion was not a new one.²⁷³ Al-Kalābādhī mentions in his *al-Ta'arruf* that ṣūfī shaykhs such as al-Junayd and Abū Sa'īd al-Kharrāj denied the claims of those who see God in this worldly life.²⁷⁴ Unlike the rationalists (the Mu'tazilah²⁷⁵ and the philosophers) who denied the ability of man to see God both in this worldly life and on the Day of Judgment, it is clear that the position of these ṣūfīs is in line with the Ash'arīs.²⁷⁶ With regard to the story of the Prophet's vision of God during his ascension, it is clear that the great Ash'arī thinkers, like al-Bāqillānī, likewise considered it possible that the Prophet could

²⁷² al-Hamadhānī, *Tamhīdāt*, 57, 212, 273-274, 303 and 323.

²⁷³ Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikām*, 216.

²⁷⁴ al-Kalābādhī, *al-Ta'arruf li-Madhhab Ahl al-Taṣawwuf*, 48.

²⁷⁵ Al-Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār discussed the Mu'tazilī arguments on the impossibility of man's seeing God, either in this world or on the Day of Judgement, in detail. Certainly, the most important arguments that he offers are the rational or logical ones that are typical of Mu'tazilī *kalām*. With regard to the Qur'ānic verses which support the traditionalist position, he takes a different approach. For example, the verse of the Qur'ān that states "they will see the face of God" cannot be understood literally, but rather means that the believers can expect a reward from God on the Day of Judgment. The Qur'ānic story about Moses is also used to refute the traditionalist position: when the Prophet Moses wanted to see God, God told him that He could not be seen and then He told him to see the mountain of Sinai. With regard to the ḥadīths that confirm the possibility of man's seeing God on the Day of Judgment, 'Abd al-Jabbār refutes their authenticity. See 'Abd al-Jabbār al-Asadābādī, *al-Mughnī fī Abwāb al-Tawḥīd wa-al-'Adl*, vol. 4 (Cairo: Wizārat al-Thaqāfah wa-al-Irshād al-Qawmī, al-Idārah al-'Āmmah lil-Thaqāfah, n.d.), 195-225.

²⁷⁶ Most Ash'arīs deny the possibility of man's seeing God in this world in a state of awakedness. Some ṣūfīs or theologians declared however that they had seen God in a dream. Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal claimed to have seen God 70 times in his dreams during his lifetime. However, since Islam is a monotheistic religion in which God must be freed from any kind of anthropomorphic description, what God looks like is not mentioned; al-Bājūrī, *Tuḥfat al-Murīd 'alā Jawharat al-Tawḥīd*, 69-70.

have seen God with his own eyes,²⁷⁷ as Ibn ‘Abbās insisted in spite of the denials of the Prophet’s wife ‘Ā’ishah.²⁷⁸ The Sunnīs preferred to rely on Ibn ‘Abbās because he was considered more knowledgeable than ‘Ā’ishah.²⁷⁹ It appears too that Ibn ‘Arabī follows Ibn ‘Abbās because he believes that the Prophet’s ascension was with his body and spirit. However, ‘Ayn al-Qudāh al-Hamadhānī, for his part, took a more moderate position on the dispute between Ibn ‘Abbās and ‘Ā’ishah. According to him, both were right. What ‘Ā’ishah means is that the Prophet did not see the essence of God, whereas Ibn ‘Abbās was trying to say that the Prophet saw God in the similitude realm (*‘ālam al-mithāl*), namely, as light—one of the names of God.²⁸⁰

However, the theosophist ṣūfīs did stress that man can see God in this world through His divine manifestation. These ṣūfīs say that they can see God in everything because they believe that God is manifested (in the sense of theophany) in everything. According to al-Jīlī, God shares with His creatures some of His divine names, one of which is *rubūbiyah* (lordship). In *rubūbiyah*, there are two kinds of theophanies or self-disclosures: the abstract theophany (*tajallī ma‘nawī*) and the “informed” or “eidetic” theophany (*tajallī ṣūrī*). In the first theophany, He appears purely in accordance with his perfection, free of any human traits; whereas, in the second concrete theophany, He manifests himself in anthropomorphic terms.²⁸¹ According to ‘Alā’ al-Dawlah al-Simnānī (1261-1336), Ibn ‘Arabī once saw God in the form a horse, and on another occasion, as a man sitting in a chair who saluted him

²⁷⁷ al-Bāqillānī, *al-Inṣāf*, 155-57.

²⁷⁸ al-Bājūrī, *Tuḥfat al-Murīd ‘alā Jawharat al-Tawḥīd*, 69

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 70.

²⁸⁰ al-Hamadhānī, *Tamhīdāt*, 302.

²⁸¹ al-Jīlī, *al-Insān la-Kāmil*, vol. 1, 48-9.

and shook his hands before standing up in his presence and saying, "you are my God, I am your servant." For al-Simnānī, these scenarios were not surprising, in that they conformed to his conception of the four levels of theophany or self-disclosure: 1) theophany of the form (*ṣūrī*), which relates to effects; 2) *nūrī*, which relates to actions; 3) *ma'nawī* which relates to the attributes; and 4) the theophany of *al-dhawq* which relates to the essence. Like al-Jīlī, in the first theophany (*tajallī ṣūrī*) God manifests Himself in various forms, ranging from the inanimate, vegetative, and animal to human beings. However, when God manifests himself in a being other than man, He does so in the best species of each category. For instance, when He wants to appear as a vegetative being (plant), He will choose the palm tree because the palm is the best of the plants. And when He wants to manifest Himself as an animal, He chooses the horse because the horse is the best form of animal. In the case of His manifestation as a man, on the other hand, He may manifest himself as anybody. When God manifest himself in a man, that man is no longer aware of himself; he is nothing other than God. Some of those in whom the theophany of form has taken place have said, "I am God (the Truth), nothing is in my robe but God."²⁸² Despite its momentous nature, however, al-Simnānī does not consider the *tajallī ṣūrī* as the highest *tajallī* of God in man. The best *tajallī* is the *tajallī ma'nawī* since it is the way of imitating the Prophets.

In order to better understand al-Sammān's position on the importance of *fanā'* and *baqā'* in Muḥammad, it is appropriate for us to review briefly the

²⁸² Therefore, if we look at this issue from al-Simnānī's point of view, the *Rātib al-Sammān* does not represent al-Sammān as the best *ṣūfī*; see Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Simnānī, *Chihil Majlis-i Shaykh 'Alā' al-Dawlah Simnānī* (Tehran, Iran: Shirkat-i Mu'allifān va Mutarjimān-i Īrān, 1979), 35.

elaboration of al-Bīṭār who agrees with al-Sammān on this matter.²⁸³ According to al-Bīṭār, God manifests himself in various forms, which he calls “mirrors.” God manifests himself in the mirror of human beings, especially of the prophets, such as in the mirror of Adam, Jesus and others. For instance, when God manifested in Adam, the speech of Adam was in fact the speech of God on the tongue of Adam.²⁸⁴ Similarly, when God manifested himself in Abū Yazīd or al-Ḥallāj, God spoke with their tongues.

The most perfect God’s manifestations was in the form of Muḥammad, because Muḥammad was the full manifestation of the divine names and attributes. From this perspective, al-Bīṭār emphasizes the importance of seeing the face of the Prophet because it means seeing God Himself. He quotes Ibn ‘Arabī’s statement, which describes how important it is to see God through the mirror of the Prophet. According to theosophical ṣūfīs, God’s form (His divine presence), namely, the manifestation of his divine attributes and names, is reflected in the universe because this universe is the mirror of the Divine. But, the perfect reflection of the divine form can only be seen in the mirror of a man, especially the Perfect Man because, as we have mention before, only in a man can God manifest completely. Because the noblest perfect man is the Prophet Muḥammad himself, he is also the perfect mirror of God. The ṣūfī can see the reflection of God in Muḥammad and this may occur whenever a ṣūfī is in the state of *fanā’* in Muḥammad. This is the greatest way of seeing God. Al-Bīṭār’s explanation is in the line with that of al-Sammān. Al-Bīṭār repeats that Ibn ‘Arabī remarked that to see God through the mirror of

²⁸³ al-Bīṭār cites and refers to Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Sammān. al-Bīṭār, *Kitāb al-Nafahāt al-Aqdasiyah*, 168.

Muḥammad is the greatest vision, because the best manifestation of God is in the form of Muḥammad.²⁸⁵ Whoever sees God in His Muḥammadian manifestation, really sees God with regard to God himself, not in respect to the manifestation of a particular divine name, but all of those names together.²⁸⁶ Not every person is capable of seeing the manifestation of God. Abū Turāb al-Nakhshabī, for instance, told his novice that he could see God mirrored in the face of Abū Yazīd and the novice then went to see Abū Yazīd. But, when God manifested in the mirror of Abū Yazīd, the novice of Abū Turāb lost consciousness and died.²⁸⁷ The mirror of God in Muḥammad is much more wonderful than that in Abū Yazīd because his Muḥammadian mirror is the combination of all the mirrors of all the messengers, prophets, angels and saints.²⁸⁸

IX. The Recitation of *Ṣalawāt*; the Ritual to the Prophet: New Phenomena in Post-Classical Sufism

The importance of the recitation of the *ṣalawāt* was recognized quite early in the history of Sufism, and can be traced back to classical ṣūfīs such as al-Tustarī, al-Makkī, al-Ghazālī and others. However, the ṣūfīs differed in their interpretations of the function of the *ṣalawāt*. It is true that some earlier ṣūfīs did not really want to give any attention to the Prophet because of the monotheistic commitments of

²⁸⁴ al-Bīṭār, *Kitāb al-Nafahāt al-Aqdasīyah*, 292.

²⁸⁵ Ibn 'Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah*, 1999, vol. 7, 271.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 343.

²⁸⁷ Ibn 'Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah*, 1999, vol. 7, 271. Ibn 'Arabī states that a man met a ṣūfī at the time of Abū Yazīd, asking him if he would like to see Abū Yazīd. The ṣūfī told him that he did not need to see Abū Yazīd because he saw God. The man told him that if he could see Abū Yazīd, it would be a thousand times better than seeing God. The ṣūfī then came to see Abū Yazīd, but when he was told that it was Abū Yazīd, he suddenly died. Abū Yazīd explained that the ṣūfī in fact had already seen God to the extent of his capacity, but when he saw God manifesting himself in Abū Yazīd, he could not bear it.

Islamic theology.²⁸⁹ The later *ṣūfīs* seemed to emphasize the function of the *ṣalawāt* not only as a special ritual addressed to Muḥammad as mediator to God, but also, as we have seen, to Muḥammad as the manifestation of God or the mirror of God. Al-Sammān appears to follow this new tendency, one that seems to differ from the position of classical *ṣūfīs* who consider the recitation of the *ṣalawāt* simply as a prayer to God for the Prophet. One example of the classical view on the function of the *ṣalawāt* can be seen in the writings of al-Tustarī. For him, the *ṣalawāt* to the Prophet are meant to ask God to forgive the Prophet for his sins.²⁹⁰ From this perspective, it appears that al-Tustarī viewed the Prophet as still in need of the prayers of the believers directed to God on his behalf.²⁹¹ As we have mentioned before, for al-Tustarī, the Prophet had two personalities. The first of these personalities was his human aspect, which sprang from his corporeal soul, by virtue of which he was like other men. One example of this personality was the Prophet's grief when his son passed away. The other personality was his infallible aspect, which sprang from his heart and which had existed from time immemorial; hence, the heart of Muḥammad did not cry when his son passed away. From this perspective, we may understand why Muḥammad himself asked forgiveness from God seventy times a day. However, according to 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī,

²⁸⁸ al-Bīṭār, *Kitāb al-Nafahāt al-Aqdasīyah*, 297.

²⁸⁹ Certainly, some classical *ṣūfīs* such as al-Wāsiṭī and al-Shiblī hesitated to recite *ṣalawāt* or the second *shahādah* because they did not want to remember other than God; see Massignon, *La Passion de Husayn Ibn Mansūr Hallāj*, vol. 3, 215. Another *ṣūfī* who hesitated to mention the name of the Prophet is Samnūn. Because of his strong love of God, when he heard the *mu'adhdhin* mentioning the name of the Prophet, he said that if it were not a commandment of God to send a salutation to Muḥammad, he would not have mentioned any name other than God's; see Ignaz Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien*, vol. 1 (Hildesheim: George Olms, 1961), 280.

²⁹⁰ al-Tustarī, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm*, 14.

Muḥammad's pleas were unnecessary since his faults were only due to his heart's being deceived by something else—a result of the Prophet's forgetting that there is no existence other than God.²⁹²

One example of the position of the later ṣūfīs is that of al-Sammān's contemporary, Shāh Walī Allāh al-Dihlawī, known as the restorer of religion in India after Aḥmad Sirhindī. He rejected the idea that the recitation of the *ṣalawāt* is useless since the Prophet no longer needs rewards or prayers from others. Even though Walī Allāh agreed that the Prophet was perfect or infallible, and did not need rewards, the recitation of *ṣalawāt* still could reflect positively on the reciters. No one can refute the importance of the recitation of the *ṣalawāt* because the Prophet himself urged the believers to recite the *ṣalawāt* for him: "whoever recites *ṣalawāt* to me once, God will give him back ten times."²⁹³ Moreover, some ṣūfīs believed that the Prophet was able to ask God to forgive their sins both during his life and after his death. In this regard, the shaykh of *ṭarīqah* Qādirīyah-Kasnazānīyah states, "the assumption that the Prophet is only able to intercede for us during his life is wrong; the Prophet in fact seeks forgiveness for us (*istaghfara*) in his sanctuary (tomb)."²⁹⁴

Most post-classical ṣūfīs considered *ṣalawāt* to allow for a direct spiritual connection to the Prophet. This method is called "the Muḥammadian way" or *al-*

²⁹¹ As I mentioned earlier, al-Tustarī believed that the corporeal spirit of the Prophet worked like the corporeal spirit of other men, but the Prophet's heart, which is enveloped by his subtle spirit, did not follow his corporeal spirit; al-Tustarī, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm*, 14.

²⁹² See 'Abd al-Raḥmān Badawī, *Shaṭaḥāt al-Ṣūfīyah*, vol. 1 (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahḍah al-Miṣrīyah, 1949), 151-8.

²⁹³ al-Dihlawī, *al-Taḥfīmāt al-Ilāhīyah*, vol. 1, 23.

²⁹⁴ al-Kasnazānī, *al-Anwār al-Raḥmānīyah*, 126.

ṭarīqah al-Muḥammadīyah, as Muḥammad al-Sanūsī explains in his *Salsabīl*. The ṣūfīs use the *ṣalawāt* to concentrate continuously on the Prophet's presence so that they may experience meeting the Prophet directly either in a dream or in a conscious state.²⁹⁵ This process had already been conceived of by al-Sammān, as we have noted above. Furthermore, recitation of the *ṣalawāt* as a devotional ritual to the Prophet in his capacity as mediator to God was already popular long before al-Sammān's lifetime. It is likely, in fact, that the Shādhilīyah mystical school might have influenced al-Sammān, his contemporaries and perhaps even other, earlier ṣūfīs. The function of the recitation of the *ṣalawāt* seems to have become almost obligatory amongst members of the Shādhilīyah. As we have indicated before, Shādhilīyah manuals are included in the list of references drawn up by al-Sammān's students. In one of the Shādhilī texts, *Miftāḥ al-Falāḥ wa Misbāḥ al-Arwāḥ*, a book also recommended by al-Palimbānī.²⁹⁶ Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh maintains that the *ṣalawāt* should be recited at the beginning of the *dhikr* in order to purify the hearts of darkness and unify the weak hearts of the novices with the strong heart of the Prophet. Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh refers to the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet that states, "prayer on my behalf is a light" and another *ḥadīth* that says, "the heart of the believer is made pure and cleansed of rust through prayer on my behalf." *Ṣalawāt* are an intimate conversation with God. The secret of the religious prescription of prayers upon the Prophet is that the spirit of man is weak and unprepared to receive the divine light. Through the recitation of the *ṣalawāt*, the heart of the weak man connects with the spirit of the Prophet so that the divine light that flows into the heart of the Prophet may reflect

²⁹⁵ al-Sanūsī, *Kitāb al-Salsabīl al-mu'īn fī al-ṭarā'iq al-arba'īn*, in *Kitāb al-Masā'il al-'Ashr*, 4.

onto the hearts of the reciters.²⁹⁷ Another master of the Maghribī branch of the Shādhilīyah, Aḥmad Zarrūq (d. 1494 or between 1515 and 1524)²⁹⁸ even maintains that the recitation of the *ṣalawāt* has a function similar to the prostration of the angels to the Prophet Adam. Al-Zarrūq considers it as a sort of way to greater nearness to God, and maintains that those who deny the value of the recitation of the *ṣalawāt* may be committing as great a sin as Satan's refusal to prostrate before the Prophet Adam.²⁹⁹ Another branch of the Shādhilīyah, the Jazūlīyah, which al-Sammān adopted, even prescribes the recitation of the *dalā'il al-khayrāt*, which contain the *ṣalawāt* to the prophets and angels as part of the daily cycle of prayers.³⁰⁰ It must be noted, however, that this tendency is not only common among the Shādhilīyah. Ibn 'Arabī himself tells us that some of his contemporaries could have been seeing the Prophet because they continuously recited the *ṣalawāt*. Ibn 'Arabī claims that the Prophet may appear to those who recite *ṣalawāt* to him abundantly, and that he met a ṣūfī who kept seeing the Prophet by virtue of his recitation of *ṣalawāt*.³⁰¹

Thus, it is understandable that some post-classical ṣūfis included the *ṣalawāt* in their routine ritual exercises. Let us keep in mind the account given by al-Sha'rānī, who told us that his master Aḥmad al-Zawāwī recited the *ṣalawāt* forty thousand times a day, and that his previous teacher, Nūr al-Dīn al-Shūnī practiced it ten

²⁹⁶ al-Palimbānī only mentions the short title *Miftāḥ al-Falāḥ* which he lists as the manual for novice ṣūfī students; see his *Siyār al-Sālikīn*, vol. 3, 177.

²⁹⁷ See Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh, *Miftāḥ al-Falāḥ wa Miṣbāḥ al-Arwāḥ* = *The Key to Salvation & The Lamp of Souls*, trans. Mary Ann Koury Danner (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1996), 95-97.

²⁹⁸ Zarrūq, *al-Shaykh Aḥmad Zarrūq*, 21.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 193.

³⁰⁰ al-Nabhānī, *Kitāb Jāmi' Karāmāt al-Awliyā'*, vol. 1, 276. I was initiated into the Jazūlīyah in September 1973 by Shaykhuna Hadji 'Abd al-Syukur al-Badrī al-Banjārī.

thousand times a day.³⁰² From this tendency, one may assume that the recitation of the *ṣalawāt* could have become more important than *dhikr* with the divine names. However, most *ṣūfis* continued to assign primacy to *dhikr* with the divine names. For instance, al-Sha'rānī continued to regard the *dhikr* of the divine names as more significant than the *ṣalawāt*, and used to rebuke his shaykh 'Alī al-Hawwāṣ for preferring the recitation of the *ṣalawāt* to the *dhikr*. 'Alī al-Hawwāṣ, in turn, suggested that his pupil continue the *dhikr* of the divine Names, "for the Prophet himself is happier if you are busy with the remembrance of God".³⁰³ In comparison with the *dhikr* of the divine names, the *ṣalawāt* is still "subordinate," since the *dhikr* is devoted solely to Almighty God. Similarly, praying to the shaykh (*du'ā'* to the shaykh) is less important than the *ṣalawāt*, for the position of the Prophet is much higher than that of any shaykh.³⁰⁴ Al-Sha'rānī's views may disprove some scholars who have claimed that *ṣalawāt* to the Prophet were more important than *dhikr* among post- classical *ṣūfis*. *Fanā'* in the Prophet by way of recitation of the *ṣalawāt* was thus no substitute for *fanā'* in God, as some scholars wrongly assume.³⁰⁵ *Fanā'* in God was still the highest hope of the *ṣūfis*, as has rightly been shown by Radtke in his criticism of the theory of "Neo-Sufism."³⁰⁶

For al-Sammān, as we mentioned before, *ṣalawāt* is an effective way to meet the Prophet, in a dream or in a state of awakedness, a spiritual experience granted

³⁰¹ Ibn 'Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah*, 1999, vol. 7, 271.

³⁰² al-Sha'rānī, *al-Anwār al-Qudsīyah fī Bayān Qawā'id al-Ṣūfiyah*, 284-285.

³⁰³ al-Sha'rānī, *Tanbīh al-Mughtarrīn*, 53.

³⁰⁴ Ibid., 53.

³⁰⁵ N. Ziadeh has argued that the Sanūsīyah seek to achieve direct contact with the Prophet Muḥammad and not with God, and therefore are different than other *ṣūfī* orders; Nicola A. Ziadeh, *Sanūsīyah : A Study of a Revivalist Movement in Islam* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1983), 88.

³⁰⁶ O'Fahey and Radtke, "Neo-Sufism Reconsidered," 52-87.

to the enlightened *ṣūfī*. Al-Sammān sustained his argument by asserting that the Prophet himself urged his followers to recite *ṣalawāt* as much as possible. Al-Sammān nevertheless does not specify how many times *ṣalawāt* should be recited or how many *ṣalawāt* he himself recited. It seems that the value of the recitation of the *ṣalawāt* lies more in the *ṣūfī*'s ability to concentrate on the Prophet, so that he can completely annihilate himself in the reality of Muḥammad, rather than in mere verbal recitation without spiritual sense. Even though al-Sammān does not introduce special *ṣalawāt* in his *Futūḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*, it is said that he in fact composed *ṣalawāt* which are recited by his followers as their daily ritual. His prayer is a bit longer than the usual simple ones and reflects his teaching on the pre-and post-existence of Muḥammad.³⁰⁷ In his *ṣalawāt*, to repeat, al-Sammān expresses that the reality of Muḥammad is the source of existence and interprets this through the word "Aḥmad." The *alif* means that Muḥammad (or the reality of Muḥammad) exists in every atom. The *ḥā* means that Muḥammad is the source of life from the beginning to the end. The *mīm* means that he is the sovereign of the divine kingdom. And the *dāl* means that he is the eternity without ending. Thus, the *ṣalawāt* is simply to glorify the logos of Muḥammad

According to al-Sammān's student, Ṣiddīq ibn 'Umar Khān, *ṣalawāt* is an important means to achieving spiritual enlightenment because the Prophet Muḥammad is the only mediator to God. 'Umar Khān emphasizes that it is impossible to know the essence of God itself because He is absolutely transcendent and beyond any anthropomorphic descriptions; therefore, it is only through

³⁰⁷ The text of the *ṣalawāt* can be seen in the Appendix 3.

imagining the presence of the light of Muḥammad that one may attain knowledge of the essence of God. The prophets and the saints who attained sainthood by the virtue of imagining (Jawi, *mushadatkan*) the *nūr Muḥammad* were categorized as saints under the part of the Prophet Muḥammad,³⁰⁸ the highest rank of sainthood.

Muḥammad Nafīs al-Banjārī too advised ṣūfī novices to recite the *ṣalawāt*, so that they might attain spiritual illumination. Nafīs al-Banjārī agreed with one of his shaykhs that if one were to continuously recite the *ṣalawāt* ten thousand times every night, one would attain knowledge of God (and therefore sainthood) in two years.³⁰⁹ Nafīs al-Banjārī also introduces the selected *ṣalawāt* invocation, *Allāhumma ṣalli ‘alā Muḥammad wa-‘alā ālihi wa-ṣaḥābihi wa-salām*.³¹⁰ This invocation of *ṣalawāt* is widely used by the Khalwatīyah.³¹¹ Contrary to expectations, Nafīs al-Banjārī does not introduce the method of *dhikr* from *al-Nafaḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*; he does borrow the method of recitation of the *ṣalawāt* from al-Sammān, but not from his *al-Futūḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*, rather from his *Ighāthat al-Lahfān wa-mu’ānasat al-walhān*. In this regard, the *ṣalawāt* are directed to the super-natural existence of Muḥammad which remains existent in his heavenly name Aḥmad. As we mentioned before, al-Sammān, according to Nafīs al-Banjārī, believes that the latter *alif* in Aḥmad signifies a process of penetration or absorption in which the secret of God’s essence flows through every atom; the letter *ḥā* signifies to live (*ḥayāt*), meaning that the lives of everyone or the world come from him (Muḥammad).³¹² Here we see that the *ṣalawāt* are recited in order to achieve union (*fanā’*) with the Prophet and the means of

³⁰⁸ Nafīs al-Banjārī, *al-Durr al-Nafīs*, 25.

³⁰⁹ Ibid., 25.

³¹⁰ Ibid., 25.

doing so are clearly spelled out in Nafīs al-Banjārī's quotation from al-Sammān's *Ighāthat al-Lahfān*. Let us quote the pertinent statement:

The way to send *ṣalawāt* to the Prophet is to sit and, while still ritually clean, turn your face toward the *qiblah* because you, at this moment, beseech him, and moreover imagine him in front of you. When you say these *ṣalawāt*, you should imagine (concentrate on) the Essence (the Divine Essence). At that moment, you ask Almighty God by saying *Allāhumma*. And when you say *ṣallaytu*, you should remember that the one who says these *ṣalawāt* is none other than the secret of his light which penetrates and is absorbed in everything that was endowed by the Prophet, because God creates everything from his light (*nūr Muḥammad*). For this reason, you should continuously recite *ṣalawāt* with perfect concentration (*Jawī, hadirkan*). This means that you spend your time in loving the Prophet. Because of this, God opens the most beautiful thing to you; that is, the reality of Muḥammad (peace be upon him).³¹³

Thus, the recitation of the *ṣalawāt* must adhere to five conditions:

1. sitting down (the manner of sitting down is not specified here);
2. being ritually pure; having performed *wuḍū'*;
3. facing the *qiblah*;
4. concentrating on God;
5. making an effort to imagine that the light of Muḥammad comes to penetrate all parts of one's body;

It is clear from the five conditions listed above, that the recitation of the *ṣalawāt* is not done in a conventional way,³¹⁴ but rather in a way that appears to be similar to that of the practice of *dhikr*, except that it excludes the ritual of imagining the figure of the master. It seems, however, that the recitation of *ṣalawāt* is not performed together with the *dhikr* of the divine names, but independently. Perhaps

³¹¹ al-Sanūsī, *Kitāb al-Salsabīl al-mu'īn fī al-ṭarā'iq al-arba'īn*, in *Kitāb al-Masā'il al-'Ashr*, 98.

³¹² Nafīs al-Banjārī, *al-Durr al-Nafīs*, 23; Muthalib, *The Mystical Thought of Muḥammad Nafīs al-Banjārī*, 90.

³¹³ Nafīs al-Banjārī, *al-Durr al-Nafīs*, 24; Muthalib, *The Mystical Thought of Muḥammad Nafīs al-Banjārī*, 92.

the most remarkable condition is the fifth one, in which the light of Muḥammad is given an important role. As we have noted before, to imagine the figure of the Prophet when saluting him in prayer was already discussed by Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī,³¹⁵ but al-Ghazālī did not make reference to the presence of the light of Muḥammad. For al-Sammān, the light of Muḥammad must be imagined to be present and to penetrate the entire body of the reciter. This teaching shows us that al-Sammān believed in the transmission of the light of Muḥammad. Here, he seems to be in line with the thinking of ‘Ayn al-Qudāh al-Hamadhānī about the transmission of *nūr Muḥammad*.

The question that arises, however, is whether this devotional ritual to the Prophet³¹⁶ is a feature of the Khalwatīyah and the Qādirīyah *ṭarīqahs* in which al-Sammān had some authority in his capacity as master, or of the Naqshbandīyah and Shādhilīyah *ṭarīqahs*. In his *al-Nafahāt al-Ilāhīyah*, al-Sammān does not mention the recitation of the *ṣalawāt* as a part of Khalwatīyah ritual. Thus, we may rightly think that the recitation of the *ṣalawāt* may not have formed part of it, let alone the recitation of the *ṣalawāt* while imagining the Prophet. It may therefore have been unique to the Sammānīyah, as described by Nafīs al-Banjārī. Furthermore, it seems to be taken from the Shādhilīyah tradition. Even if we agree, based on the general characteristics of the *ṭarīqahs* as described by al-Sanūsī, that the recitation of the

³¹⁴ The conventional way of reciting *ṣalawāt* is that the recitation be done freely; it does not require ablution or turning one's face to the *qiblah*.

³¹⁵ Al-Ghazālī says, "Imagine the figure of the Prophet in your heart and say *salām 'alayka ayyuhā-nabīyu wa-rahmatullāh wa-barakātuhu*;" see his *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, vol. 1, 224.

³¹⁶ Unfortunately, we also do not find the ritual to Muḥammad as described by al-Sammān in the work of Ralf Elger on the life and the teachings of Muṣṭafā ibn Kamāl al-Dīn al-Bakrī. Elger missed this point; see his *Mustafa al-Bakri*, 2004.

ṣalawāt is supposedly a part of Khalwatīyah ṭarīqah ritual,³¹⁷ this may well be a later development, since Sanūsī wrote his *Salsabīl* more than half a century after al-Sammān.

³¹⁷ al-Sanūsī, *Kitāb al-Salsabīl al-muʿīn fī al-ṭarāʾiq al-arbaʿīn*, in *Kitāb al-Masāʾil al-ʿAshr*, 98.

CHAPTER 3

THE SAMMĀNĪYAH KHALWATĪYAH ṬARĪQAH

I. The Relationship between the Novice and the Master

Before redirecting our discussion to the ritual aspect of al-Sammān's teaching, it is necessary for us to deal with the role of the master in Sufism as he saw it. In the *ṣūfī ṭarīqah*, the help of a spiritual master is imperative: it is impossible to attain spiritual enlightenment without guidance from a shaykh of the *ṭarīqah*. Thus, a master is not only regarded as the source of mystical knowledge which can sometimes be acquired by reading *ṣūfī* writings themselves, but also the indispensable key to spiritual illumination. It is through their masters that *ṣūfis* may connect with the Prophet Muḥammad and God.

In order to build a good relationship between master and novice, *ṣūfī* authors drew upon important principles that should guide conduct between them. Al-Sammān too pays close attention to the ethical conduct between novice and *ṣūfī* master, and the rules pertaining to *ṣūfī* brotherhood relations (*ṣuḥbah*). From his *al-Nafahāt al-ilāhīyah*, we learn that al-Sammān mainly drew on the 'Awārīf al-Ma'ārīf of al-Suhrawardī. Yet, even though most of the latter's statements were borrowed word for word without modification, there is a process of selection at work when it comes to how the quotations sometimes jump from one point to another. One is inclined to think that this may have been done deliberately by al-Sammān in order to avoid the accusation of plagiarism, but it is more likely that al-Sammān was thereby expressing his own ideas on the subject. Al-Sammān does not, after all, hide

his debt to al-Suhrawardī, for the latter's name and the book title (*'Awārif al-Ma'ārif*) are mentioned explicitly in the *Nafahāt al-Ilāhīyah*.¹ Besides al-Suhrawardī, Ibn 'Arabī is also quoted, and his name and that of his book *al-Tadbīrāt al-Ilāhīyah*² are explicitly mentioned as well. However, most of the principles mentioned by Ibn 'Arabī governing the relationship between master and novice are not repeated in al-Sammān's work.

What this tells us is that al-Sammān probably preferred the principles of ethical conduct between master and novice as proposed by al-Suhrawardī to those of Ibn 'Arabī. His reason for this seems to be that al-Suhrawardī's teachings in this subject are more flexible than those of Ibn 'Arabī. For the latter, the master–novice relationship is regulated down to the smallest details, so that there is little chance for novices to build a more flexible *ṣuḥbah* relationship with their masters. Ibn 'Arabī's theory of the master–student relationship in fact reflects the general trend in post-classical Sufism. Among the strict rules set by Ibn 'Arabī are the following: that the novice must not eat together or even in the same room with the master, that the novice must not walk in front of the master except at night, that the novice is not allowed to stare at the face of the master, that the novice is advised not to be continuously in conference with the master, that the novice is not allowed to do anything for anybody else—including his own parents—without the permission of the master. Moreover, if the master wants to eat and wants to be served, the novice must attend to his needs and must be always behind the door so that the master

¹ al-Sammān, *al-Nafahāt al-Ilāhīyyah*, 41.

² Ibid., 51. In this regard, al-Sammān only cites a short statement of Ibn 'Arabī's concerning the hardship of engaging in companionship.

can find him, just as he should come as soon as the master calls him, and if not called, he should just leave him alone. Ibn 'Arabī also gives many other details, too numerous to mention here.³

Al-Suhrawrdī's teaching does not contain quite so many details, rather, it restricts itself to general principles, leaving aside the finer points of daily and trivial conduct. In contrast, Ibn 'Arabī's strictness with regard to the *adab* between master and student, as noted above, is thorough-going, and may well be a reflection of his own life. As Addas has shown us, Ibn 'Arabī paid a great deal of attention to this matter when he was a young novice, out of the feeling that his own *adab* towards his master left much to be desired. His attitude toward his master, Shaykh Abū al-'Abbās al-'Uryabī, was corrected by the Prophet Khidr. Even though Ibn 'Arabī was higher than 'Uryabī with regard to spiritual intuition, nevertheless, in terms of discipleship, Ibn 'Arabī was far inferior to him. As a disciple, Ibn 'Arabī believed in obeying his master.⁴ We can suppose that he must have felt this way, given that his ideas on the master-novice relationship are so strict. The principles outlined by Ibn 'Arabī do not really allow novices to build a flexible *ṣuḥbah* with their masters.

However, al-Sammān too maintains that proper etiquette on the part of the novice towards the spiritual master is indispensable in order to attain spiritual enlightenment, even though the principles that he cites are not as strict as those of Ibn 'Arabī. In this regard, al-Sammān reminds us how central this etiquette is to Sufism. In Sufism, *adab* is to be observed, at every moment, in every situation and at every station. Anyone who faithfully observes this etiquette, will attain the quality

³ Ibn 'Arabī, *Kitāb al-Tadbīrāt al-Ilāhīyah fī Iṣlāh al-Mamlakah al-Insāniyah*, in *Kleinere Schriften des Ibn al-Arabi*, 226-231.

of manhood (*maqām al-rijāl*). Whoever does not observe it, will not achieve this quality and be rejected by his master.⁵

It must be noted here that the novice-master relationship appears to be quite different from the egalitarian or democratic relationships fostered in our secular system of education. Indeed, it seems to be more comparable to military discipline or some other authoritarian interaction. It must be noted again here that this tendency was more common among the ṣūfīs after the function of the ṣūfī shaykh shifted from being simply that of an instructor (*shaykh al-ta'lim*) to becoming an instructor and educator (*shaykh al-tarbīyah wa-al-ta'lim*). Most ṣūfīs, including al-Sammān, describe this relationship as being similar to the relation between a baby with its mother or between the body of the deceased and the person who washes it.⁶

This relationship requires submission and humility on the part of the novice towards the master. Submission to the master is repeatedly insisted upon in most ṣūfī manuals. In the *'Awārif al-Ma'ārif* of al-Suhrawardī and the *Anwār al-Qudsīyah* of al-Sha'rānī, the importance of such submission is considered to be an imitation of the relationship between Moses and Khidr. Moses had to submit to and obey Khidr who knew the secrets of knowledge better. Khidr apparently committed unlawful acts, but these were legitimated by God, since God had told him the reason behind certain events.⁷ However, it seems that while ṣūfī novices were not to judge the personal lives of their masters, this did not mean that a novice was allowed to

⁴ Addas, *Ibn 'Arabi*, 85-9.

⁵ al-Sammān, *al-Nafahāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 56.

⁶ Ibid., 55.

⁷ 'Umar ibn Muḥammad al-Suhrawardī, *'Awarif al-Ma'ārif*, 286.

follow a ṣūfī master who did not follow the true teachings of religion or held heretical doctrines. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha’rānī stresses these principles as follows:

It is obligatory for novices to realize that their masters’ religious lives are not their business, but rather their masters’ own business. The students must not judge their masters according to their rational judgment. Sometimes, the masters appear to do something which is apparently bad and condemned, but it is good inwardly, like what happened between Moses and Khidr....It must be noted, however, that the masters to whom the novices should submit, must be those who follow the teachings of the *ḥadīth* and the *Qur’ān*.⁸

In this regard, al-Sammān’s position seems to be in line with that of al-Sha’rānī. He provides an anecdote about a disciple who found his master committing adultery with a woman. The saint (his master) waited for his reaction, but the novice did not alter his attitude or devotion towards him. The novice told his master, “I devote myself to you not because I think that you are infallible and never commit sin; rather, I believe that you are a saint (a friend of God) who intercedes for me with God.” This anecdote is a common one in ṣūfī literature and was also cited by al-Nābulusī. Students were counseled not to withdraw from their masters because of a sin or mistake committed by the latter. In the event of such a sin, the novice was not to judge him so that the heart of the master towards the students remained unchanged. This principle seems to be unanimous amongst the ṣūfīs, who held, like the Sunnīs, that freedom from sin is only attributable to the prophets of God.⁹

Like other ṣūfīs, al-Sammān insists that the novice must learn his manners from the way in which the Companions treated Prophet. Indeed, this is

⁸ al-Sha’rānī, *al-Anwār al-Qudsīyah fī Bayān Qawā’id al-Ṣūfīyah*, 368-9.

⁹ Ibn ‘Arabī, *Kitāb al-Tadbīrāt al-Ilāhiyah fī Iṣlāḥ al-Mamlakah al-Insāniyah*, in *Kleinere Schriften des Ibn al-Arabi*, 226-227.

understandable because the shaykh is considered to be a legislator or an heir of the Prophet. Al-Sammān gives several examples of how the Companions behaved toward the Prophet Muḥammad. The Qur'ān told the Companions not to raise their voices higher than the voice of the Prophet and to give first place to him in every action. A ḥadīth from al-Jābir tells how the Companions were forbidden to make the sacrifice of *ʿīd al-Aḍḥā* until the Prophet did so first. Also, 'Ā'ishah is recorded as having said that one should not begin fasting before the Prophet. Al-Sammān, for his part, relates al-Kalbī's statement that no one was supposed to do or say anything before the Prophet himself did so.¹⁰ The function of the master with respect to his novice is that of a mediator of inspiration, just as the Angel Gabriel was the mediator of inspiration to Muḥammad. The master thus imitates the way of the Prophet. The master is the representative of the Prophet. Just as the believer must expect the grace of God to be bestowed on the Prophet, the ṣūfī student must not expect to attain a higher station or receive more grace from God than his masters. Indeed, students must expect that their masters have the ultimate grace of God.¹¹

It is important for a novice to respect any gifts given by the shaykh. Such gifts, whether a hat, *khirqah* (garment) or anything else, must be highly regarded. Al-Sammān cites several examples, such as that of a ṣūfī who always respected a handkerchief given to him by his shaykh since there was a kind of benediction within the gift. Another example is the story of Sayyid 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Qūnawī, who, when he saw a *khirqah* hanging from the neck of a dog, immediately stood up

¹⁰ al-Sammān, *al-Nafahāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 53.

¹¹ Ibid., 56.

out of respect for the shaykh who had presented it. According to al-Sammān, respecting the shaykh signifies respecting God Himself.¹²

The aspirant must not be reluctant to pose a question to his master unless the latter asks him to be silent. However, in so doing, the aspirant must behave well towards the master. It is better to pose questions gradually—one by one not altogether.

The aspirant must benefit and learn from the words, deeds and spiritual intention (*himmah*) of his master, and must remember these whether the master is present or absent. To be in the presence of the shaykh is nevertheless advisable, since Satan has no access to the presence of the *shaykh al-kāmil*.¹³

II. The Ethical Principles of Ṣūfī Brotherhood (*ṣuḥbah*)

Al-Sammān paid special attention to the *ṣuḥbah*.¹⁴ The general meaning of this term is a social and friendly relationship between people. The classical ṣūfīs transmitted ṣūfī learning and tradition through the *ṣuḥbah*. But, the concept of *ṣuḥbah* that al-Sammān emphasizes here is somewhat different from that of the *ṣuḥbah* of the classical ṣūfīs, where the ṣūfī-disciple relationship seems to have been less hierarchical. The version that al-Sammān stresses here is the relationship between master and novice, in which the master exercises a double function, namely that of instructor and educator, as well as the relationship between fellow ṣūfīs or between the novices themselves. We have already mentioned more than once that the position of the classical ṣūfīs on the role of master is adopted by al-

¹² Ibid., 57.

¹³ Ibid., 53.

Sammān. The standard ethics of *ṣuḥbah* are in fact found in the classic *al-Luma'* of al-Sarrāj; however, it seems that al-Sammān does not borrow directly from al-Sarrāj, but rather from al-Suhrawardī. It is worthwhile mentioning that the strict ethical rules of conduct between disciple and master had not yet been formulated by the time of early *ṣūfīs* such as al-Muḥāsibī and al-Tirmidhī, who are not supposed to have had important masters.

Ṣuḥbah with fellow *ṣūfīs*, for al-Sammān, is more risky than *ṣuḥbah* with secular rulers. Wrong interaction with rulers may lead to worldly punishment; but wrong interaction with *fuqarā'* (*ṣūfīs*) can lead to punishment in the hereafter. Similarly, *ṣuḥbah* with *ṣūfī* masters is more risky than with the fellow *ṣūfīs* because, if a novice makes an error that is not forgiven by his master, the goal of the *ṣūfī* path will not be achieved by the novice.

However, al-Sammān emphasizes that *ṣuḥbah* with the spiritual master and his companions is more important because, by virtue of engaging in *ṣuḥbah* with them, students receive sympathy from them and the heart of the master becomes opened to them.¹⁵ By engaging in *ṣuḥbah* with *ṣūfī* masters and their fellows, students may be able to witness the mystical station experienced by the masters, an event which is instructive. Occasionally, some masters are controlled by the divine attribute *al-Jalāl*, and thus utter ecstatic statements, or they may be controlled by the divine attribute *al-Jamāl*. It is impossible to judge *ṣūfī* masters because their stations can change from one to another without it being very noticeable.¹⁶ It seems that al-Sammān is speaking here about himself, for this was his own experience. His

¹⁴ Ibid., 45-53.

¹⁵ Ibid., 48.

ecstatic statements, which were compiled by his best student Ṣiddīq ibn 'Umar Khān, seem to have taken place during *ṣuḥbah* with his students.

In ṣūfī companionship, the aspirant has to forgive the mistakes and errors of his brothers in the *ṭarīqah*, to advise them if necessary and keep their secrets. The Caliph 'Umar was happy whenever someone criticized him for his mistakes. The aspirant also has to dedicate or devote his life to his brothers, and to be patient with them. He must be aware that he should live in a communal spirit, and thus he must adapt to communal ways. Individualism is discouraged. The essence of Sufism is to dedicate oneself to one's brothers and to suffer any pains they may bring. In brotherhood, there must be no claim of individual property. Ibrāhīm ibn Shaybān once said, "Do not make friends with somebody who says 'this is my sandal'."¹⁷ Al-Qushayrī relates al-Sarrāj's report about Aḥmad al-Ghalanashī, who told him that one day he met a group of ṣūfīs, and when he asked them where their clothing was, they lost all respect for him. The perfect example of altruism is found in the life of Ibrāhīm ibn Adham. He worked on a farm and shared what he grew with his ṣūfī brothers.¹⁸ He therefore applied three conditions to those who wanted to make friends with him: 1) to be dedicated to him; 2) to be patient with any suffering he causes; and 3) to share together whatever they received as gifts from God.

Therefore, the aspirant must share what he has and never demand things from his fellows. Al-Sammān insists on the importance of altruism, and in this regard, cites Abū 'Uthmān al-Ḥīrī's statement, as follows;

¹⁶ Ibid., 49.

¹⁷ Ibid., 46.

¹⁸ Ibid., 46.

The rule of *ṣuḥbah* is that you share your money with them; you must not be greedy with theirs. You should be fair to them, but you should not ask them to be fair with you. You should accommodate yourself to them, and do not ask that they should accommodate themselves to you. You should not underestimate the good things they do for you, and do not exaggerate what you have done for them.¹⁹

Al-Sammān also advised the aspirant to build friendlier relations with the senior (high-level) *ṣūfīs* than with the junior ones (the beginners). Here, al-Sammān stresses that making an effort to build a brotherly relation with respectful men will confer nobility, while relations with deviating men, will draw one into deviation. Conversely, the seniors too must have sympathy for juniors. Ibrāhīm ibn Adham is the best example of this attitude. Sometimes, when his younger friends ate and slept before him, he did not get upset, but rather forgave them.

Moreover, the aspirant must avoid those who only expect worldly things from a relationship. Problems in relationships arise mostly among worldly people because they build relations on the basis of money; whereas, the *ṣūfīs*, because they prefer to live in an ascetic way and are pious, build relationships on the foundation of God. Therefore, they like and dislike for the sake of God, not for themselves.²⁰

The aspirant should show politeness and be subtle. He must never be violent in any way with his fellows. In support of this principle, al-Sammān cites Abū 'Alī al-Rūzbādī who says, "An assault on those who are higher in status is stupid and shameless, and on those who are at same level with you is impoliteness, and on those who are lower than you is weakness."

III. Initiation into the *Ṭarīqah*

¹⁹ Ibid., 47.

²⁰ Ibid., 46.

According to al-Sammān, there are two kinds of discipleship upon initiation into the *ṭarīqah*: the formal (*al-ṣūri*) and the meaningful (*al-ma'nawī*).²¹ This idea was not original to him, but rather was taken from his predecessors, namely Shaykh Muḥammad al-Ghawth²² and perhaps also Aḥmad al-Qushāshī.²³ If a *murīd* wants to start on the spiritual path, he must be initiated into the *ṭarīqah* through one or both of these kinds of initiation. The first category of initiation involves the *murīd* taking an oath of initiation from a ṣūfī master (the *ṭarīqah* master), after which he obeys what the master suggests and advises and practices his teachings on religion. Al-Sammān seems to suggest that the second category is the better one because here, the *murīd* is not only initiated into the path but is also involved in companionship (*ṣuḥbah*) by which he dedicates himself to the master (*khidmah*). Only through companionship and dedication are the meaning and fruits of the initiation easily obtained. It is only by this second type that the *murīd* can inherit the spiritual perfection of the master, just as children inherit something from their biological fathers, or just as inheritance is bestowed upon the younger by their elders.²⁴

In discussing ṣūfī initiation, al-Sammān cites elsewhere the ideas of the Indian ṣūfī Shaykh Muḥammad al-Ghawth (1485-1562).²⁵ Apparently, al-Ghawth's personality and methods of teaching were very attractive and so acquired great influence. He studied Sanskrit and wrote the *Khālidi-i Makhāzin* (Key to Treasure), combining ṣūfī doctrine with astrological theories, and the *Baḥr al-Ḥayāh*, on the

²¹ Ibid., 10.

²² Ibid., 11.

²³ Al-Sammān's quotations are precisely the same as those of Aḥmad al-Qushāshī, in which both refer to Muḥammad al-Ghawth; see al-Qushāshī, *Kitāb al-Simṭ al-Majīd*, 30-32.

²⁴ al-Sammān, *al-Nafahāt al-Ilāhiyah*, 10-11.

²⁵ See M. Mujeeb, *The Indian Muslims* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1967), 301.

methods of self-discipline and breath control as practiced by the yogis. According to al-Ghawth²⁶--as al-Sammān tells us--before being initiated, a *murīd* should choose the right master. If the *murīd* cannot yet meet the great master directly, he can be initiated by those who have already been initiated by the master so that he has a spiritual chain connecting him with the latter. However, as soon as he meets the master, he must be initiated directly by him. The temporary initiation by the representative is analogous to the function of *tayammum* which is a temporary ablution. *Tayammum* is fine in the absence of water, but when water is available, full ablution must be performed. After being initiated, a *murīd* cannot retreat from his decision since the initiation is always valid, except in certain cases such as the death of the master or other unsolved obstacles.²⁷ The validity of initiation cannot be cancelled; in this way, it resembles the validity of an oath (*bay'ah*) by a certain Arab to the Prophet. When this Arab asked the Prophet to cancel it, the Prophet did not do so. This does not mean that the Arab was an infidel but only a grave sinner (*fāsiq*), since his oath with the Prophet remained valid. The same is true of initiation into the *ṭarīqah*, which is considered valid forever.²⁸

Even though a *murīd* may be initiated into hundreds of different *ṭarīqahs*, he must really belong to only one of them, and this is usually the one into which he was first initiated, since it is always valid. It must be noted that al-Sammān did not condemn the practice of belonging to various *ṭarīqahs*, a tendency which was later rejected by certain *ṣūfīs*.

²⁶ al-Sammān, *al-Nafahāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 12.

²⁷ Ibid., 11.

²⁸ Ibid., 12.

IV. The Methods of Initiation

1. The initiate places his hand in the hand of the master or the inverse if the former is a male, and if female, there must be some intermediating article such as a rope, clothing or water which connects her to the master. The master concentrates with all his spiritual strength on initiating the *murīd* into the *ṭarīqah*. Or, the master puts his hand into the hand of the *murīd*, while saying; "I will observe whatever He asks me to do; I will not abandon it willingly. I alone am your protector. I will not let you fall into unrecommended things."
2. Another method is where the initiate puts his two hands together, with the right one on the top. The master then places his hand on top of the hands of the initiate to symbolize the function of spiritual leadership. The master advises repentance (*tawbah*) for the initiate by saying, *Tub ilā Allāh bi-tawbatin naṣūha* (Repent unto God sincerely). The master advises the initiate to return to God's will by repenting sincerely. This is called the renewing of repentance. The initiate recites *istighfār*, asking God to forgive his sins. The master accepts the oath from the initiate, declaring and leading him to recite the *kalimah ṭayyibah* (*lā ilāha illā Allāh*) three times. Next, the master places a hat or a piece of clothing on the initiate to symbolize the latter's change of status and his new stage in life. The master then asks him to shake hands with the people in the congregation to symbolize his new membership with them and their acceptance of him. Their connection with the master is inseparable, like the connections between the parts of the body and the body itself. Finally, the master advises

him to observe religious prescriptions. (Al-Sammān relates that this method is also suggested by Shaykh Muḥammad al-Ghawth).

3. The initiate places his hand under the hand of the master if they are alone; if someone else is also present, his hand is put under that of the initiate. If there are many people, the hand of the master is extended over the hands of the initiates. The master then recites,²⁹ "I ask God to protect me from the cursed Satan, in the name of God the most beneficent and merciful. Those who pledge allegiance to you, they pledge allegiance to God. The hand of God is on top of their hands. Whoever ridicules it, he ridicules himself. And whoever accomplishes what he pledges to God, he will receive abundant reward." They recite this verse to symbolize the initiate's reception into the *ṭarīqah*. Then, the master asks the initiate to say alone or together with others,³⁰ "I agree that Allāh is my God, that Islam is my religion, that Muḥammad is my Prophet, that the Qur'ān is my *imām*, that the Ka'bah is my *qiblah*, and that the honoured shaykh is my master, educator and proof. The ṣūfis are our brothers. Only in obedience to God we unify, and by disobedience to God we split up." Then, the master asks every body to recite three times,³¹ "I ask Almighty God—there is no God but He—to forgive my sin, and I repent from my sin. The master recites *lā ilāha illā Allāh*, then the initiate repeats the formula three times while closing his eyes and concentrating his heart on the glory of the unity of God. Then the master prays,³² "O God! Take from him and accept from him. Open to him the

²⁹ al-Sammān, *al-Nafahāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 14-15.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

doors of good thing as you open them to your prophets, saints and your pious servants." Finally, the initiate is advised to shake hands with the others in the congregation to symbolize their acceptance of him. Once again, the master advises the initiate to observe religious prescriptions.³³

It must be noted that these three ways of initiation were not invented by al-Sammān himself, but rather formed part of the prescription by al-Qushāshī in his *Simṭ al-Majīd*. The latter maintains that the third method was very popular in Arab countries.³⁴ Thus, these three methods of initiation are not particular to Khalwatīyah or Sammānīyah *ṭarīqahs*.

V. The *Dhikr*

The *dhikr* (remembrance of God) is the daily activity of ṣūfīs, especially among *ṭarīqah* adherents. This practice, al-Sammān emphasizes, is based on the verses of the Qur'ān and the tradition of the Prophet. In his *al-Nafaḥāt al-ilāhīyah*, al-Sammān refers to several verses that motivate believers to remember God: "O believers! Remember God as much as possible (Q: 33:41)." In another verse God says, "Remember me! I remember you (Q: 2:152)." God also says in the Qur'ān, "Remember God! So that you will be happy (Q: 13:28)." Yet another verse says that to remember God can make one's heart more peaceful, "Surely only by remembering God, the heart becomes tranquil (Q: 13:28)." Al-Sammān also refers to several *ḥadīths*. One long *ḥadīth*, which is found in several *ḥadīth* collections,³⁵ and which appears to be incompletely cited by al-Sammān, tells of how angels travel to

³³ Ibid., 14-15.

³⁴ al-Qushāshī, *Kitāb al-Simṭ al-Majīd*, 38-39.

the world to participate with those who remember God in the practice of *dhikr*. When they return to heaven, God, the Most Knowing, asks them where they have been. They tell Him that they have witnessed those who praise and glorify and pray to Him. God then asks them what they prayed for. They say that these men hope for the paradise of God, and ask for God's protection from hell, asking forgiveness from God as well. God tells the angels that He forgives the sins of those men, that He will protect them from hell, and answer their prayers. The angels then ask God about the destiny of another man who only sat down in the congregational *dhikr*, and God says that He also forgives him. In another *ḥadīth*, the Prophet is also said to have portrayed the congregational *dhikr* as the garden of Paradise. One *ḥadīth qudsī* is also cited; this *ḥadīth* says that God will be with those who remember Him or whose tongues invoke His name; and God will be accompany those who remember Him.³⁶

Al-Sammān also indicates that remembering God is the continuous activity of those who love God, for it is said that whoever loves something, will remember it continuously. The lover never forgets his beloved whether near or far, joined or separated. For this reason, al-Sammān cites Ibn 'Abbās' opinion that all religious devotions are supposed to be done at specific times, except the *dhikr* which one should do without limit. In this regard, God says, "Remember and glorify God abundantly in the morning and at noon (Q: 76:25)."³⁷ As al-Sammān puts it, God

³⁵ See, for example, Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, II, 251; See also al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, vol. 1, 393-2.

³⁶ This *ḥadīth* is found in the *Sunan* of Ibn Mājah and *Ṣaḥīḥ* Ibn Ḥibbān; see al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, vol. 1, 391, note no. 9.

³⁷ al-Sammān, *al-Nafahāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 22.

remembers those who remember Him. God's occasion to remember man is much greater than man's remembering God.³⁸

Whether *dhikr* should be performed out loud or silently—an issue debated by many *ṣūfīs*—is an important topic for al-Sammān. Most later Naqshbandī masters preferred silent *dhikr*, although al-Sammān's opinion seems to be closer to that of al-Sha'rānī who considers both silent *dhikr* and voiced *dhikr* to have important functions. Al-Sha'rānī suggests combining both voiced *dhikr* and *dhikr* in the heart. According to al-Palimbānī, al-Sha'rānī maintains that, at the beginning, and especially for the *muḥtadī*' (beginner), *dhikr* must be done in a loud voice, but, as the *murīd* gets used to it, he can perform *dhikr* with his voice and in his heart altogether at the same time. The *murīd* must continuously perform this *dhikr* so that God becomes ever present in his heart. Furthermore, al-Sha'rānī emphasizes that the *murīd* must not perform other additional prayers or recitations of the Qur'ān, but rather only keep performing the *dhikr*, while other additional prayers and the recitation of the Qur'ān are only recommended for higher level *ṣūfīs* (*al-kummāl*).³⁹

Dhikr with voice, for al-Sammān, stems from the original founder of the *ṭarīqah*, namely the Prophet Muḥammad himself, through 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, whom he taught to say the invocation *lā ilāha illā Allāh*.

The Prophet said to 'Alī, "Oh 'Alī, if you want to achieve what prophethood does, you must remember God in retreat (*khalwah*)."' 'Alī said, "this is the benefit of the *dhikr* that most people do." The Prophet said to 'Alī, "The Day of Judgment will not come as long as somebody utters Allāh Allāh." Then 'Alī asked the Prophet, "How do I remember God, Oh Messenger of God?" The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Close your eyes and be silent until I speak three times and you listen to me. Then you speak three times while I listen to you." The Prophet then said *lā ilāha illā Allāh* three times, negating to the left side and affirming to the right side, and closing his

³⁸ Ibid., 23.

³⁹ al-Palimbānī, *Siyār al-Sālikīn*, vol. 3, 191.

eyes, raising his voice, while 'Alī was listening to him. Then 'Alī uttered *lā ilāha illā Allāh* three times, negating to the left side and affirming to the right side, closing his eyes and raising his voice, while the Prophet was listening to him. God then opened his heart ('Alī's) and he saw what he (the Prophet) saw. This is what God revealed to Gabriel and Gabriel revealed to Muḥammad.⁴⁰

Dance, ṣūfī congregational song (*samā'*) and mystical ecstasy (*wajd*) also appear to be tolerated by al-Sammān. This shows us that the influence of the Mujaddidīyah- Naqshbandīyah on this issue did not influence him. As we have mentioned before, most members of the Naqshbandīyah *ṭarīqah*, especially according to Aḥmad Sirhindī, did not approve of the practice of *dhikr* with voice. This sort of *dhikr* was considered to be an innovation. What is wrong with this *dhikr*, according to Sirhindī, is that it may stimulate people to sing, dance, and become ecstatic, while most Naqshbandī masters reject dancing and singing because these are vain, worldly entertainments.⁴¹ Sirhindī may have been inspired by 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, who saw the *samā'* as weakness.⁴² In contrast, al-Sammān maintains that ṣūfī dancing and singing should be tolerated because they have roots in the traditions of the Prophet, who placed no restrictions on them. When Ja'far ibn Abī Ṭālib danced in front of the Prophet, the latter allowed him. Furthermore, al-Sammān tells us that dancing and standing took place in gatherings for *dhikr* and singing held in the presence of some of the great shaykhs, such as 'Izz al-Dīn ibn 'Abd al-Salām. Al-Sammān also holds the opinion that most ṣūfī dancing and singing is a reflection of mystical ecstasy.⁴³ Clearly therefore, as we mentioned earlier, the Naqshbandīyah-Mujaddidīyah had no influence on al-Sammān in this

⁴⁰ al-Sammān, *al-Nafahāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 16-17.

⁴¹ Sirhindī, *Intikhāb-i Maktūbāt-i Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī*, 100-101.

⁴² See 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, *al-Faṭḥ al-Rabbānī wa-al-Fayḍ al-Raḥmānī* (Beirut: Dār al-Albāb, 1980), 23.

matter; indeed, it is apparent that he was inspired by early ṣūfis such as al-Makkī, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī (d. 1021),⁴⁴ al-Ghazālī⁴⁵ and ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī. It must not be forgotten, however, that al-Sammān may have been inspired by some *ṭarīqahs* that approved of and practiced *samā’*.⁴⁶

Whether or not dance and song were actually practiced in the Sammānīyah *ṭarīqah*, is debatable. However, in spite of the fact that al-Sammān tolerated them, there is no evidence that they formed part of the *ṭarīqah* rituals. The adherents of this *ṭarīqah* seem to have been sober and—since they preferred to perform the *dhikr* by sitting down and not standing up, as certain other *ṭarīqahs* do—it is less likely that dance formed part of the ritual. Hugronje indicated that there was a strange popular dance in Aceh that seemed to have Sammānīyah attributes; this dance however, performed to a mundane poem (*pantun*), had nothing to do with Sammānīyah religious rituals at all. It is necessary for us, in order to answer our question, to investigate how present-day adherents of the *ṭarīqah* perform the *dhikr*. Abu Hamid’s dissertation shows us how the Sammānīyah *dhikr* is performed by its adherents in South Sulawesi. Here, *dhikr* is performed in a loud voice, with body movements and with the congregation in attendance, in contrast to the adherents

⁴³ al-Sammān, *al-Nafahāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 29.

⁴⁴ See Etan Kohlberg’s introduction to Muḥammad ibn al-Husayn al-Sulamī, *Jawāmī’ Ādāb al-Ṣūfīyah ; wa, ‘Uyūb al-Nafs wa-Mudāwātuhā*, ed. Etan Kohlberg (Jerusalem: Ma’had al-Dirāsāt al-Asiyawīyah wa-al-Afrīqīyah, al-Jāmi’ah al-‘Ibrīyah fī Ūrushalīm, 1976), 12.

⁴⁵ al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn*, vol. 2, 273–74. See also Duncan B. MacDonald, “Emotional Religion in Islam as affected by Music and Singing, being a translation of the *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn* of al-Ghazzālī with Analysis, Annotation and Appendices,” *JRAS* (1901): 220–2.

⁴⁶ There are some *ṭarīqahs* that approved the *samā’* such as the Shādhilīyah in Alexandria, as witnessed by Fritz Meier in 1948 and the Jahrī in Samarqand, as witnessed by Henry Lansdel in 1885, as well as the present day Rifā’īyah. It is clear that the *samā’* performances by these *ṭarīqahs* took place long after the time of al-Sammān. The Sumadiyah *ṭarīqah* (a branch of the Qādirīyah) in Damascus has a long tradition of performing *samā’* from the 15th century onward. See Fritz Meier’s articles, “The Dervish Dance: An Attempt at an Overview,” and “The Sumadiyya: A Branch of the

of the Khalwatīyah of Yūsuf al-Makassarī's *ṭarīqah*, who perform *dhikr* silently, either alone or with the congregation.⁴⁷

VI. The Way of *dhikr*: the Remembrance of God

In performing the *dhikr*, there are twenty principles which must be observed. Five must be observed before performing the *dhikr*, twelve during the *dhikr*, and three after the *dhikr*. It must be noted that these twenty principles are written in a poem composed by al-Sammān's master Muṣṭafā ibn Kamāl al-Dīn al-Bakrī which al-Sammān quotes in his *al-Nafaḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*.⁴⁸ These principles are also adopted by al-Palimbānī in his *Hidāyat al-Sālikīn*.⁴⁹ It is noteworthy that these principles do not appear to be typical of the Khalwatīyah, and seem to be found in other *ṭarīqahs* as well. For example, they are also found in the *ṭarīqah* of 'Abd al-Ra'ūf al-Singkelī.⁵⁰ In his treatise, *Tanbīh al-Māshī al-Mansūb ilā Ṭarīqī al-Qushāshī*, 'Abd al-Ra'ūf also mentions these twenty principles. As we learn from this treatise, 'Abd al-Ra'ūf was initiated by al-Qushāshī into the Shaṭṭārīyah and the Qādirīyah *ṭarīqahs*. However, he does not specify to which *ṭarīqah* these twenty principles applied. It is possible that the Khalwatīyah of Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī took these twenty principles either indirectly from al-Qushāshī, or directly from al-Bakrī's Khalwatīyah master. But, to ascertain this, we need more convincing evidence, and unfortunately we do not have enough information. The link between al-Bakrī and al-Qushāshī would be

Order of the Qadiriyya in Damascus," in *Essays on Islamic Piety and Mysticism*, trans. John O'Kane (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 283-289.

⁴⁷ See Abu Hamid, "Syekh Yusuf Tajul Khalwahi: Suatu Kajian Antropologi Agama" (Ph.D. diss., University of Hasanuddin, 1990), 152.

⁴⁸ al-Sammān, *al-Nafaḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 24-25.

⁴⁹ al-Palimbānī, *Hidāyat al-Sālikīn*, 301-305.

tenuous, since they lived almost a hundred years apart, but we may guess that al-Bakrī had intellectual connections with al-Qushāshī via al-Nābulusī. In addition, due to the fact that these twenty principles are not typically Khalwatī, al-Palimbānī was inclined to extend their function to those not initiated into this order.⁵¹

The five principles that take place before the *dhikr* are as follows:

1. The first and most important thing that should be done is to repent of every sin and useless thing that is of no benefit to life in the hereafter.
2. One must take a bath or perform ablution.
3. The aspirant is also supposed to stay in one place while performing the *dhikr*; he must not move about. This is to achieve simultaneous agreement between the tongue and the heart.
4. When the aspirant starts to perform the *dhikr*, in his heart, he should ask for the assistance of the will (*himmah*) of his master.
5. The aspirant must believe that, when he asks for assistance from his master, he is actually asking for assistance from the Prophet Muḥammad, since the master is the representative of the Prophet.

The twelve principles to be observed during the *dhikr* are given as follows:

1. One must sit down in a clean spot. It is better for the aspirant to sit down as in prayer, since this will benefit his heart. For the more advanced, however, sitting down cross-legged is better.
2. The aspirant puts his two hands on his knees.

⁵⁰ For further details about 'Abd al-Ra'ūf, see Douwe Adolf Rinkes, *Abdoerraoef van Singkel: Bijdrage tot de Kennis van de Mystiek op Sumatra en Java* (N.p.: n.p., 1909), 22-46.

⁵¹ Al-Palimbānī addresses his book *Hidāyat al-Sālikīn* to all the different groups of Muslims in the archipelagos; he also assigned these twenty principles to all of them.

3. The aspirant perfumes the spot where he performs the *dhikr*.
4. The aspirant wears lawful and perfumed clothing. It should be noted that, both in *dhikr* and otherwise, al-Sammān always emphasizes the spiritual importance of cleanliness for the aspirant . Al-Sammān quotes a *ḥadīth* that states that cleanliness is part of the true faith and the foundation of religion.⁵²
5. The aspirant chooses a dark spot.
6. The aspirant closes his eyes.
7. The aspirant pictures the image of his master.
8. The aspirant performs the *dhikr* seriously; he must be equally serious about the *dhikr* whether in solitude or in front of others.
9. The aspirant performs the *dhikr* with sincerity; namely, his intention is for God Almighty alone.
10. He chooses the *dhikr* containing the words “there is no God but God,” uttered loudly.
11. The aspirant must introduce the meaning of the invocation of the *dhikr* into his heart. For example, when the aspirant mentions the words *lā ilāha illā Allāh*, his human attributes and affections disappear; his heart is cleansed of them. And, when his tongue repeats *lā ilāha illā Allāh*, his heart says, “*lā maṭlūba illā Allāh*” (there is none needed but God), and at this time, all affections (also the satanic and carnal souls) disappear. Finally, when he utters *lā ilāha illā Allāh*, his heart says *lā mawjūda illā Allāh* (there is no existent but God); at this moment, all things other than God are denied, since their existence depends on God’s power.

⁵² al-Sammān, *al-Nafahāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 66.

12. The aspirant should attempt to deny all existents other than God in his heart.

He should feel that the words *illā Allāh* have penetrated into all parts of his body.

There are certain principles after the *dhikr* to be observed as well.

1. After finishing the *dhikr*, it is better for the aspirant to remain silent in the same position for a while in the hope that the fruits of the *dhikr* may be bestowed on him by the grace of God. At this moment, his heart can be purified to the same extent as the performance of *mujāhadah* (striving), which sometimes takes thirty years to purify the heart.
2. The aspirant controls his breath. This will help his heart cut itself off from carnal and satanic affections (*khiṭr al-naḥs wa-al-shayṭānī*). For a while, after finishing *dhikr*, the aspirant should not drink water because this can cool the heat produced by the *dhikr* and make the longing for God disappear.⁵³

VII. The Invocation of the *dhikr*

1. The *dhikr* with *kalimat al-tawḥīd*

The invocation of *dhikr* is *lā ilāha illā Allāh*. When the words *lā ilāha* are uttered, everything other than God must be emptied from the heart, and when the words *illā Allāh* are uttered, they must be connected to the heart in order to strengthen the affirmation of the unity of God. During this affirmation, the meaning of this invocation should be felt to pervade the whole body. The invocation that there is no God but God has two aspects: negation and confirmation. These two aspects must also be felt to pervade through physical movement.

⁵³ al-Palimbānī, *Hidāyat al-Sālikīn*, 301-305.

The earlier masters of the Khalwatīyah offered a simple method for performing this invocation. Their way consisted of two physical movements: first, the *dhikr* is started on the right side of the body, and when the aspirant invokes it, he must prolong the words of negation, *lā ilāha*, to negate all created beings; second, he then must thrust the words of affirmation, *illā Allāh*, into his heart under his breast to stress the existence of God.⁵⁴

Al-Sammān, however, is inclined to depart from the above method, introducing other methods instead. The first is rather simple: the aspirant must sit down facing the *qiblah*, then start the *dhikr* with a physical movement that must begin from below the navel with the invocation of the negation, *lā ilāha*, while emptying everything other than God from his heart. Then, the aspirant brings or strikes *illā Allāh* into his fleshly heart, while moving his head to the left side with *illā Allāh*, and, at the same time, keeping the meaning of the invocation present in his heart. It must be noted here how the concentration of the physical movement starts from under the navel; this method seems to be popular in other *ṭarīqahs* as well. The second way is different from the first and slightly more complicated. Here too the aspirant must sit down facing the *qiblah* while remembering the glory of Almighty God, whom he invokes until he feels as though he has disappeared into the divine glory and beauty. Again, the face of the shaykh must be present or imagined when the aspirant starts the *dhikr*. He starts from the left hand side, turning his head down in order to feel humiliated, and, stressing the negation *lā* from the left knee to the right, he then raises it to the right shoulder while uttering the word *ilāha*. Finally, he pushes the confirmation of the existence of God, *illā*

⁵⁴ al-Qushāshī, *Kitāb Simṭ al-Majīd*, 154.

Allāh, into the fleshy heart.⁵⁵ In the right knee, *lā ma'būda illā Allāh* (there is no being worshipped but God) is uttered, while in left knee, *lā maqṣūda illā Allāh* (there is no goal but God) is invoked. And, in the right shoulder, *lā mawjūda illā Allāh* is recited.⁵⁶

Al-Sammān also includes the use of breath control in *dhikr*. This teaching is expressed clearly by his student al-Palimbānī, who, referring to al-Sammān, says, “as the aspirant continues to invoke *hū lā illā Allāh*, he at the same time controls his breath.”⁵⁷ However, he does not give a detailed explanation of how to control one’s breath in *dhikr*. Breath control in *dhikr* is a well-known and common method for many *ṭarīqahs*. This method is often regarded as the influence of the yogi on the *ṭarīqah*, but some *ṣūfīs*, especially the Naqshbandīyah, maintain that it was imparted by the Prophet Khidr to Khwāja ‘Abd al-Khālīq Ghujduwānī.⁵⁸ Breath control is indispensable for rendering the *dhikr* effective.⁵⁹ Some scholars are inclined to deny outside influences on the practice of breath control in *ṣūfī* ritual, insisting that it was the mystic’s experience itself that led to this method. Perhaps we should remember that Massignon, although he admitted foreign influences on *ṣūfī dhikr* with regard to some aspects of its technique⁶⁰ considered breath control in Sufism as an independent phenomenon, and said that it has parallels in Hinduism (Pantanjālī) and Catholicism (De Loyola). In this respect, he states, “Any mystic

⁵⁵ al-Palimbānī, *Hidāyat al-Sālikīn*, 307.

⁵⁶ al-Sammān, *al-Nafahāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 26.

⁵⁷ al-Palimbānī, *Hidāyat al-Sālikīn*, 307.

⁵⁸ See Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizwi, *A History of Sufism in India*, vol. 2 (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1978), 302; see now Carl W. Ernst, “Situating Sufism and Yoga,” *JRAS* 15 (Series 3, 2005): 15-43.

⁵⁹ Rizwi, *A History of Sufism in India*, vol. 2, 156; Ernst, “Situating Sufism and Yoga,” 24-25.

⁶⁰ This is from the eastern Christian mystics and their praying to Jesus and the Jewish mystics who converted to Islam. See Louis Massignon, “L’idée de l’esprit dans l’Islam,” *Eranos-Jahrbuch* 13 (1945):

(either Muslim, Christian or Hindu), who is an ascetic, knows that he has a body to conquer, and any human body breathes as long it is still alive.”⁶¹ Thus, it is natural that breath control was used.

Furthermore, al-Sammān seems to agree with certain groups of ṣūfīs who preferred to prolong the element of *lā ilāha* in order to emphasize the non-existence of other gods, and then stress the element of *illā Allāh* in confirmation of the uniqueness of God.⁶² In this regard, we find that he is consistent with the earlier Khalwatīyah. As we learned from al-Qushāshī, the prolongation of *lā ilāha* in order to stress the negation of all things other than God is in fact the method that was approved by the earlier masters of the Khalwatīyah, such as Dede ‘Umar (d. 1487) and even as far back as al-Rushānī al-Tabrīzī (from his Shaykh Yaḥyā al-Bakūnī) and ultimately ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī.⁶³

Al-Sammān advises aspirants to go on practicing the *dhikr* until they attain permanent tranquility in it. The basic level of the *dhikr* is when the performer of the *dhikr*, while repeating *lā ilāha illā Allāh*, encounters mundane existence trying to distract him from God, and he expels it from his heart. To negate everything other than God in one’s heart is the core of the *dhikr*. Al-Sammān cites certain Qur’ānic verses to suggest that the *murīd* negate everything other than God during the recitation. Al-Sammān cites a verse that is very popular among the mystics, “Do you see the man who replaces God with his carnal soul?” (Q: 17:22). God even answers this question himself by saying, “Do not take another god with Allāh” (Q: 17:39).

277-282; see also G.C. Anawati and Louis Gardet, *Mystique Musulmane : aspects et tendances, expériences et techniques* (Paris: J.Vrin, 1986), 194.

⁶¹ Massignon, *Essai sur les origines du lexique technique de la mystique musulmane*, 42.

⁶² al-Sammān, *al-Nafahāt al-ilāhīyah*, 31.

Rejecting others than God includes denying a place to money and wealth in one's heart. This is why the Prophet says of the misfortunes of the one who worships the dinar and the dirham, that even though they do not bow and prostrate before them, they do incline their hearts to them. Therefore the statement that there is no God but God is not valid unless one first negates everything but God alone. Then, al-Sammān insists on the realization that the words "there is no God but God" cannot be expressed by the tongue but only by the heart.⁶⁴ Al-Sammān maintains that both al-Ghazālī and Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh recommended the invocation of *lā ilāha illā Allāh* during *khalwah*, whereas Ibn 'Arabī preferred the word *Allāh* instead. Al-Sammān does not express a particular preference for either of these two invocations.⁶⁵

2. *Ism al-dhāt, Huwa* and certain sounds

Another invocation that al-Sammān recommends is the word *Allāh*. This word, as we know, is considered to be the supreme name of God. The *ṣūfīs* and theologians call it *al-ism lil-dhāt*⁶⁶ or the name of the essence. It seems that most *ṭarīqahs* also recommend invoking this word during *dhikr*. In addition, it is also recommended that one invoke the word *Huwa*. The word *Huwa* is in fact a third person pronoun, meaning "he" or "him," which here indicates *Allāh* or, for the *ṭarīqah* of Ibn 'Arabī, indicates the reality of Muḥammad. This is not the name of God, but a pronoun which refers to God. In the Qur'ān itself, God calls Himself *Huwa* (*lā ilāha illā Huwa*). The invocation of the word *Huwa* is also practiced by other

⁶³ See the method of the *dhikr* of the *Khalwatīyah* in al-Qushāshī, *Kitāb Simṭ al-Majīd*, 154-155.

⁶⁴ al-Sammān, *al-Nafahāt al-ilāhīyah*, 26.

⁶⁵ al-Palimbānī, *Siyār al-Sālikīn*, vol. 3, 50.

⁶⁶ According to Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī, the divine names fall into two categories: the names of the attributes and the name of essence. All divine names are the names of attributes, except "Allāh" which is the only the name of the essence. See 'Abd al-Raḥmān Badāwī, *Shataḥāt al-ṣūfīyah* (Kuwait: Wikālat al-Maṭbā'āt, 1976), 108.

ṭarīqahs. In addition, it is also possible to invoke other sounds despite the fact that these sounds do not seem to have any definite meanings such as “lā” or “a” , “ah,”⁶⁷ “ha” , “hay,” or any kind of sound that can be spelled.⁶⁸ It is possible that these sounds are abbreviations of the word *Allāh* or the word *Huwa*. But this was not al-Sammān’s own idea; it seems that this method was taken directly from al-Sha’rānī’s *al-Anwār al-Qudsīyah*, even though al-Sammān does not quote al-Sha’rānī’s words precisely.⁶⁹ Both al-Sammān and al-Sha’rānī maintain that this is the best way for voiced *dhikr*, whereas *dhikr* with the heart has no need for this kind of method.⁷⁰ According to al-Sha’rānī, the method was mentioned earlier by the ṭarīqah founder Yūsuf al-‘Ajamī.⁷¹ Al-Sha’rānī, however, may have been inspired by the Shādhilīyah because the method was mentioned by the great Shādilī master Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh. The latter maintains that, in addition to the invocation of *lā ilāha illā Allāh* and *Allāh*, the practice of merely pronouncing “lā,” “a” or “h” or indeed any sound, for that matter, is acceptable.⁷² It is worth noting that due to this practice, the Sammānīyah and other ṭarīqahs are sometimes criticized by outsiders for mispronouncing the name of God.

3. The *dhikr* with the seven divine names:

As an independent ṭarīqah, the Khalwatīyah also had its own devotional rituals and ceremonies, one of them being the invocation of the seven divine names. According to al-Palimbānī, the Khalwātīyah masters sometimes demanded that

⁶⁷ The word “ah,” according to al-Tustarī, is the name of God. And the word “akh” is the name of Satan. See Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, *Fawā’ih al-Jamāl wa-Fawātiḥ al-Jalāl*, 227.

⁶⁸ al-Sammān, *al-Nafahāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 24.

⁶⁹ al-Sha’rānī, *al-Anwār al-Qudsīyah fī Bayān Qawā’id al-Ṣūfiyah*, 61.

⁷⁰ al-Sammān, *al-Nafahāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 24; al-Sha’rānī, *al-Anwār al-Qudsīyah fī Bayān Qawā’id al-Ṣūfiyah*, 61.

⁷¹ al-Sha’rānī, *al-Anwār al-Qudsīyah fī Bayān Qawā’id al-Ṣūfiyah*, 61.

their students invoke the *dhikr* of the seven divine names, namely, *lā ilāha illā Allāh*, *Allāh*, *Huwa*, *ḥaqq*, *ḥayy*, *qayyūm*, and *qahhār*. These seven names seem to have been adopted by the Sammānīyah. Al-Palimbānī admits that he adopted this kind of *dhikr* from al-Sammān himself and is right say to that this *dhikr* is typical of the Khalwatīyah. However, he wrongly cites *al-Nafahāt al-Ilāhīyah* as his source,⁷³ where, in fact, the *dhikr* is not mentioned at all.

The *dhikr* of the seven divine names is performed according to the spiritual level of the soul of the *murīd*.⁷⁴

a. Carnal soul (*al-naḥs al-ammārah*) with the invocation of *lā ilāha illā Allāh*

The characteristics of the carnal soul are greed, anger, jealousy, stinginess, arrogance, and other bad traits. Those who are at this level of the lowest soul are characterized by talking and eating too much. Those who are at this level are advised to repeat that there is no God but God day and night until they can escape from this kind of soul and reach the soul of admonishing.⁷⁵ Interestingly, the idea that the invocation *lā ilāha illā Allāh* can control the carnal soul is dated back at least to al-Jīlānī. Al-Sammān tells us that the formula *lā ilāha illā Allāh* was the most effective means used by al-Jīlānī to motivate sinners to liberate themselves from the carnal soul. When thieves, killers or adulterers come to al-Jīlānī to repent of their sins, the shaykh only told them to repeat that formula.⁷⁶ The idea that the invocation of *lā ilāha illā Allāh* can control the carnal soul is also repeated by Sirhindī.

⁷² Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh, *Miftāḥ al-Falāḥ wa Miṣbāḥ al-Arwāḥ*, 18-19; see also Anawati and Gardet, *Mystique Musulmane*, 200.

⁷³ al-Palimbānī, *Siyār al-Sālikīn*, vol. 3, 12.

⁷⁴ al-Palimbānī, *Siyār al-Sālikīn*, vol. 3, 12-13.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 37-8.

He asserts that most of the great shaykhs of the Naqshbandīyah chose this invocation to purify their souls from wickedness. If the carnal soul is in this state of wickedness, it can be purified by repeating this *kalimah al-ṭayyibah*.⁷⁷ Another early Naqshbandī shaykh, ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Jāmī, maintains that the masters of the Naqshbandīyah chose this invocation since the Prophet had said that it was the best invocation of the *dhikr*. He also confirms that this *dhikr* has two functions: firstly, negating other existents and secondly, affirming God as the only existent.⁷⁸

b. The soul of admonishing (*al-nafs al-lawwāmah*) with the invocation of Allāh

This *dhikr*, which consists in repeating the divine name Allāh, can bring the *murīd* to the stage of *tawhīd al-af‘āl*. The nature of the soul of admonishing is to blame itself when it commits a sin and to repent of it. The characteristics of this soul are arrogance, jealousy and envy. Furthermore, the worst characteristics of this soul are insincerity and hypocrisy, that is, its intention in doing a good deed is not sincere for the sake of God, but to become popular. However, the most unique thing about this soul is that it can differentiate between right and wrong.

c. The inspired soul (*al-nafs al-mulḥimah*) with the invocation of Huwa

The *dhikr* using *Huwa* can help the *murīd* attain the level of *tawhīd al-asmā’*. The nature of this soul is to be generous, very gentle and kind, patient, humble and forgiving. The man who attains this level of the soul is achieving annihilation in the actions of God, that is to say, he sees nothing in all actions or other creatures

⁷⁷ Sirhindī, *Intikhāb-i Maktūbāt-i Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī*, 189.

⁷⁸ ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Jāmī, *Sih Risālah dar Taṣawvuf: Lavāmī’ va Lavāyih: Dar Sharḥ-i Qaṣīdah-i Khamrīyah-i Ibn Fāriḡ va dar Bayān-i Ma‘ārīf va Ma‘ānī-i ‘Irfānī; Bi-Inḡimām-i Sharḥ-i Rubā‘īyāt* (Tehran: Kitābkhānah-i Manūchihri, 1981), 97-98.

but God. Other good traits of this soul are that it longs for God and is busy with religious devotion.

d. The tranquil soul (*al-nafs al-muṭma'innah*) with ḥaqq

The *dhikr* using the divine name ḥaqq can help the *murīd* attain the level of *tawḥīd al-ṣifāt*. The nature of this soul is patient, gentle and kind. It relies on God, is satisfied, can endure pain and suffering, emulates the character of the Prophet and obeys his command. This is the level of endurance (*tamkīn*), 'ayn al-yaqīn and the perfect faith. The spiritual travel of this soul is with God (*ma'a Allāh*). Its realm is the reality of Muḥammad in the first determination, namely, the second level of the seven stages of existence (*martabat tujuh*).⁷⁹

e. The contented soul (*al-nafs al-raḍīyah*) with ḥayy

The *dhikr* using the divine name ḥayy can help the *murīd* to attain the level of *tawḥīd al-dhāt*. This soul has an ascetic nature, its life is only for the sake of God and it escapes from the lure of the world. The most important feature of this soul is that it is satisfied with whatever happens without resentment because it sees the beauty of God. The spiritual journey of this soul is in God (*fī Allāh*). Its realm is the divine realm (*'ālam al-lāhūt*), namely the realm of the essence which lies in the first level of *martabat tujuh* (*al-aḥadīyah*). The *dhikr* using the divine name ḥayy (the most living) is assigned to this soul in order to help it to move from the station of *fanā'* to that of *baqā'*.⁸⁰

f. The approved soul (*al-nafs al-murḍīyah*) with qayyūm

⁷⁹ al-Palimbānī, *Siyār al-Sālikīn*, vol. 3, 10.

⁸⁰ Ibid., vol. 3, 11.

The nature of this soul is to purify itself from anything other than God, and to be compassionate and kind to all human beings.

g. The perfect soul (*al-nafs al-kāmila*) with *qahhār*

The nature of this soul is to contain all the good characteristics that belong to the other souls. The spiritual journey of this soul is together with God (*bi-Allāh*). Its realm is the unity in multiplicity and the multiplicity in unity.⁸¹

It must be noted that the *dhikr* with seven names is not universally practiced by the Khalwatīyah, according to Muḥammad al-Sanūsī in his *al-Salsabīl al-Muʿīn*, the later Khalwatīyah, especially in the Maghrib, practiced the invocation of the *dhikr* with ten names; namely *huwa*, *ḥaqq*, *ḥayy*, *qahhār*, *wahhāb*, *fattāḥ*, *wāḥid*, *aḥad*, *ṣamad*, *qayyūm*. The *murīd* is not allowed to practice the second name before he achieves the result of the first name, and this rule is applied to all subsequent names.⁸²

VIII. The Invocation of the *Fātiḥah*

The *Fātiḥah*, the first *sūrah* of the Qurʾān, seems be very important. Al-Sammān suggests that the aspirant recite it every time after finishing the obligatory praying. He admits that he had been incited by some ṣūfī masters to recite the *Fātiḥah* 18 times after the morning, noon, afternoon and sunset prayers, and 28 times after the evening prayer. Al-Sammān maintains that by the grace of the recitation of the *Fātiḥah*, the aspirant will achieve spiritual victory, acceptance and benevolence.

⁸¹ Ibid., vol. 3, 12.

⁸² al-Sanūsī, *Kitāb al-Salsabīl al-muʿīn fī al-ṭarāʾiq al-arbaʿīn*, in *Kitāb al-Masāʾil al-ʿAshr*, 98.

As for his prescription to recite the *Fātiḥah*, al-Sammān admits that this idea came down to him from the following line of people: he took it from Shaykh Muḥammad al-Daqqāq, this latter took it from Shaykh Aḥmad ibn Nāṣir, who took it from his father Shaykh Muḥammad ibn Nāṣir, and Muḥammad ibn Nāṣir took it from the Prophet Muḥammad. From this line, it is clear that al-Sammān met Muḥammad al-Daqqāq spiritually, since the latter lived several centuries before al-Sammān.

Al-Sammān also admits that he has a connection, in relation to the recitation of the *Fātiḥah*, to the great ṣūfī master who was also popular in the archipelagos, Shaykh Aḥmad al-Qushāshī, the teacher of Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī and ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf al-Singkelī. According to al-Sammān, al-Qushāshī met the Prophet on the mountain of Uḥud. This chain of transmission affirms that there is no connection between the *basmalah* and the *ḥamdalah*. It is not clear, however, through whom al-Sammān has a connection to al-Qushāshī who lived a century earlier. If this connection did not occur spiritually, that is, if he did not meet the spirit of al-Qushāshī, apparently his connection with this great master could have happened via Muṣṭafā ibn Kamāl al-Dīn al-Bakrī who had a connection with ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī who seems to have had a direct relationship to al-Qushāshī’s disciple Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī.

When he decided to promote the recitation of the *Fātiḥah*, al-Sammān says that he was also influenced by another long line of masters. He was motivated by Shaykh Aḥmad al-Ḥusnī who had an indirect lineage to Ibn ‘Arabī. And from Ibn ‘Arabī, al-Sammān continues to mention a long list of names who transmitted a relevant *ḥadīth* about the matter. In this *ḥadīth*, the Prophet said that God declared,

By virtue of My majesty and power, and My existence and glory, whoever recites *Bismillāh al-Rahmān al-Rahīm* not separating [it] from the *Fātiḥah* once, you witness that I forgive him and accept his good deeds and I help him to avoid bad thing. I will not burn his tongue with fire, and I will release him from punishment in the grave, in hell, on the Day of Judgment, and from the greatest sadness. And he will meet Me in front the prophets and the saints.⁸³

IX. The *Khalwah*

It appears that the seclusion (*khalwah*) is a ritual of paramount importance in the *Khalwatīyah* or *Sammānīyah ṭarīqahs*. Most prominent masters of these *ṭarīqahs* preferred to perform it at length. If other *ṭarīqahs* practiced it for between three and forty days, the *Khalwatīyah* thought that it must be done for a specific period of time without limit, but it seems that it was not prescribed for a whole lifetime. Muṣṭafā ibn Kamāl al-Dīn al-Bakrī tells us that the masters of the *Khalwatīyah* sometimes performed *khalwah* for months and years, and the important example is the thirty years of the *khalwah* performed by Shaykh Sha'bān al-Afandī.⁸⁴ It is understandable therefore that al-Sammān also does not forget to discuss this issue, and he himself considers at least forty days of *khalwah* to be necessary.

In discussing this issue, al-Sammān relies on several ṣūfī books. For example, he uses the '*Awārif al-Ma'ārif*' of 'Umar al-Suharawardī and cites it very frequently, although its ideas are not always given preference. Ibn 'Arabī's precepts on *khalwah* are also cited. In addition, certain reference is also made to masters with a Shādhilīyah background. In this context, we find the names of 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha'rānī,⁸⁵ 'Alī Wafā',⁸⁶ and also Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh. Last but not least, reference is made

⁸³ al-Sammān, *al-Nafahāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 65-66; the same ḥadīth, but with a different isnād, is also found in al-Qushāshī, *Kitāb Simṭ al-Majīd*, 159.

⁸⁴ al-Palimbānī, *Siyār al-Sālikīn*, vol. 3, 55.

⁸⁵ al-Sammān, *al-Nafahāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 34.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 33.

to Khalwatī figures such as Ayyūb al-Ṣāliḥ al-Khalwatī and Muṣṭafā ibn 'Umar al-Khalwatī. Thus, it can be said that al-Sammān's teaching on *khalwah* is not especially original, but rather a synthesis of different ṣūfī view points and traditions. Like other ṣūfīs, al-Sammān believes that the tradition of the *khalwah* is an imitation of the Prophet's practice. Before he was appointed as the Prophet, Muḥammad isolated himself in the cave of Hira, minimizing his eating, drinking, sleeping and talking, and then God revealed to him the secret of the divine names and essence.

According to al-Sammān, there are three sorts of *khalwah*: 1) the *khalwah* of the *sālik* (the ṣūfī novice); 2) the *khalwah* of the 'ārif (the initiate); 3) and the *khalwah* of the *muḥaqqiq* (the expert). The *khalwah* of the *sālik* is the common ṣūfī practice of purifying one's soul by isolating oneself in a space of a certain size during a certain period of time, coupling this with spiritual and mental exercises such as prayer, fasting, etc. The *khalwah* of the 'ārif is another kind of *khalwah* which only constitutes a kind of mental seclusion, not a physical one. In this regard, God becomes ever present in one's heart, even during one's social intercourse with the public. This *khalwah* is called the absolute seclusion. Al-Sammān reminds us that this kind of *khalwah* is reserved for those who have already attained the understanding of the principle of the unity in multiplicity and the multiplicity in unity (*shuhūd al-waḥdah fī al-kathrah wa-shuhūd al-kathrah fī al-waḥdah*); namely, this is when a ṣūfī attains the station of meeting (*jam'*) and separating (*farq*). The *khalwah* of the *muḥaqqiq* is the exclusive seclusion of the Perfect Man with God alone. Only the highest rank of saint, namely the pole (*al-quṭb al-ghawth*) deserves to achieve this *khalwah* because it represents the station of the pole, of which there is only one

in the world at any given time. If the pole passes away, God replaces him with a new one.⁸⁷

Even though al-Sammān suggests that the novice perform the first kind of *khalwah*, and considers it to be a common practice of the *abdāl* (the lower saints), he nevertheless considers the second kind of *khalwah* to be the best. This implicitly shows that al-Sammān does not suggest that his followers should totally isolate themselves from the community and the public. The reason for this, according al-Sammān, is that this *khalwah* (the second kind) was practiced by the Prophet Muḥammad and his Companions. These forerunners of Muslim society did not avoid the reality of life, but rather played important roles in improving society, while remembering God in their hearts. Thus, al-Sammān prefers ṣūfīs to live normally in society rather than in perpetual seclusion. This position is then in line with the Naqshbandīyah principle of *khalwah dar anjuman* (Pers. solitude in a crowd).

X. The way and condition of the *khalwah*

As with other rituals, the first important thing which must be observed is the true intention which motivates a novice to perform it. The intention is oriented to God alone, and not for other purposes such as for miracles, obtaining supernatural powers, or obtaining a good reputation in the hearts of humankind. This is why, while performing *khalwah*, the performer should not pay any attention to any strange voice, or to any kind of light or to the appearance of certain illusions which seem “supernatural;” the heart should only be focused on remembering God. This kind of thing may happen during the *khalwah* because the performer may be

⁸⁷ Ibid., 34.

bothered by something other than God which prevents him from achieving the goal of *khalwah*. In this regard, al-Sammān reminds the novice to perform self-introspection or self-control by observing the four kinds of affections which should come to his mind. The theory of the four kinds of affections or the stray thoughts, namely, *al-khiṭr al-rabbānī* (divine thoughts), *al-malkī* (angelic thoughts), *al-nafsī* (soul-derived thoughts) and *al-shayṭānī* (satanic thoughts), are used to help the ṣūfīs focus their minds and attention on God alone or keep their hearts only under the control of the *khiṭr al-rabbānī* or *khiṭr al-malkī*, and keep them safe from the control of the *khiṭr al-nafsī* and *khiṭr al-shayṭānī*. The ṣūfīs pay a great deal of intention to keeping their hearts present with God so that their minds, emotions, affections, thoughts and even reason are purely under divine control. The heart, however, cannot always sustain such a situation because the stray thoughts of the carnal soul and of Satan (*khiṭr al-nafsī* and *al-shayṭānī*) may overcome the power of the divine and angelic affections. It must be noted that the concept of the stray thoughts is already known in classical Sufism: in the *Qūt al-Qulūb* of al-Makkī and in some works by al-Jīlānī for instance. Surprisingly, even though al-Sammān belonged to the Qādirīyah *ṭarīqah*, he does not refer to al-Jīlānī. In fact, al-Jīlānī's elaboration of this theory appears to be very fascinating since he includes other important functions of the human faculties, namely the thought from reason (*khiṭr al-'aqlī*) his discussion of which seems to have been inspired by al-Makkī. According to him, there are six affections; both *khiṭr al-nafsī* and *khiṭr shayṭānī* drive people to error, whereas *khiṭr al-rūḥ* (of the spirit) and *khiṭr al-malkī* drive people to obedience to God, and *khiṭr al-'aqlī* is ambivalent since it can be dominated by any of the other four affections. The

last one, *khiṭr al-yaqīn* (affection of certainty), is assigned to the elite of the saints.⁸⁸ However, in the *ʿAwarif al-Maʿārif*, ʿUmar al-Suhrawardī admits only the four affections: *khiṭr al-rabbānī*, *al-malakī*, *al-nafsī* and *al-shayṭānī*. It appears that al-Sammān prefers to follow al-Suhrawardī.

There is no doubt that al-Sammān was aware that it is very difficult to differentiate between the divine and angelic affections, but that both stimulate a pure action of obedience and devotion. Similarly, it is not easy to understand the satanic affection (*al-khiṭr al-shayṭānī*) because it sometimes appears to stimulate devotion and obedience, but also brings in intentions which are not pure. In this respect, al-Sammān relates the teachings of Ibn ʿArabī from his *Risālat al-Khalwah*, where he says that in order to avoid obstacles and disturbances during *khalwah*, there are two conditions which must be observed. First, the novice should keep in mind the principle of the non-anthropomorphism of God; thus, whatever form of image comes to mind, the novice should not pay attention to it and continue to remember God. The second condition is that the intention of doing *khalwah* is for the sake of God only.⁸⁹

The *khalwah* must be performed in a special small room, which is typically *Khalwatī*,⁹⁰ and during a limited period of time, which, for al-Sammān, is not necessarily the forty days al-Suhrawardī imposed, but can be less or more, which

⁸⁸ See Mehmet Ali ʿAynī, *ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī: Shaykh Kabīr min Ṣūlahāʾ al-Islām*, 470-561/1077-1166, trans. Muḥammad Ḥajjī and Mohammed Lakhdar (Casablanca: Dār al-Thaqāfah, 1993), 172.

⁸⁹ al-Sammān, *al-Nafahāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 44.

⁹⁰ Canon Sell, a Christian missionary, tells us about the nature of the *Khalwatīyah*, "In the *Zawiyah* of the *Kahlwatīyah* there are a great number of cells where the brethren shut themselves up for stated periods, often for forty days, in solitary seclusion for contemplation and prayer." See Edward Sell, *The Religious Orders of Islām* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1976), 54-55.

seems also typical of the Khalwātīyah.⁹¹ The height of the room for *khalwah* should be commensurate with the height of the performer when standing in prayer and its size must be according to his width while seated. The room must be dark, and light must be prevented from coming in, and it must be far away from people and noise. The door of the room must be facing the *qiblah* and must be narrow and short. While performing *khalwah*, a novice should also limit his body movements and should control his eyes so as not to see or hear anything that can interfere with his concentration.

The ritual activities during *khalwah* involve remembering God, reciting the Qur'ān, and performing the five daily prayers as well as the supplementary ones. With respect to the manner of performing the compulsory prayers, al-Sammān offers two opinions. The first is al-Suhrawardī's, namely, that the compulsory prayers must be done in congregation, including the Friday prayer. According to al-Suhrawardī, the congregational prayer is important to save the heart from confusion. The second opinion is the Khalwātī position which expresses a preference for abandoning the Friday prayer. Al-Sammān says that his master (al-Bakrī) told him that Shaykh Muṣṭafā ibn 'Umar al-Khalwatī had once asked Shaykh Manlā Ilyās al-Kurdī about the possibility of abandoning the Friday prayer and was given permission to absent himself. The reason for this was that the condition of the performer of the *khalwah* is comparable to that of one who is sick; because the performer of the *khalwah* is suffering from spiritual illness—which is more dangerous than physical illness—he has every right and more to be absent from

⁹¹ The duration of the *khalwah* and *dhikr* of the Khalwātīyah, as R. L. Moreau notes, can be three days, forty days or more, but al-Sammān does not specify this. See René Luc Moreau, *Africains Musulmans* :

Friday prayer. In addition, according to the *madhhab* of Ibn ‘Abbās, the Friday prayer is a communal obligation, not a personal one.⁹² However, although himself a member of the Khalwatīyah, al-Sammān remains neutral regarding these two extreme opinions, and even tends to recommend what is more commonly practiced by the majority of Muslims, namely, that Friday prayer should be performed as usual. On this issue at least, we see that al-Sammān did not want to deviate from the practice of the majority.⁹³

Al-Sammān also suggests that the performers of the *khalwah* remember God not only with those formulas given to them by their shaykhs, but also with common formulas of *dhikr*, such as the formula *lā ilāha illā Allāh*. Referring to al-Ghazālī and others, al-Sammān says that *lā ilāha illā Allāh* is the best formula for the *dhikr*, but he repeats Ibn ‘Arabī’s opinion that the formula *Allāh* is better.⁹⁴

Before entering the room of *khalwah*, the performer should make his ablution, then pray two *raka’āt*, and finally recite both the *Fātiḥah* and the formula *sunnat^{an} man qad arsalnā wa-lan tajīd^a li-sunnatinā taḥwīlah*. However, if in performing the *khalwah* the student is accompanied by his master, the latter should enter the room of the *khalwah* before the student. The student is allowed to pray with the permission of his master, and then they recite the *Fātiḥah* together if the master is present. If not, the student asks permission from his master with his heart. The student then uses his master as a mediator to God and concentrates on his master

des communautés en mouvement (Paris/Abidjan: Présence Africaine/Inadès Éd., 1982), 159.

⁹² al-Sammān, *al-Nafahāt al-ilāhīyah*, 37.

⁹³ In his *Risālat Asrār al-‘Ibādāt*, al-Sammān holds that Friday praying is obligatory, see al-Palimbānī, *Siyār al-Sālikīn*, vol. 3, 189.

⁹⁴ al-Sammān, *al-Nafahāt al-ilāhīyah*, 39.

(*tawajjuh*),⁹⁵ --an exercise, as we have said before, that is practiced in the Naqshbandī *ṭarīqah*.

Spiritual exercises must also be undertaken while doing the *khalwah*. In this regard, there are four exercises to be observed: hunger, silence, being awake and isolation. These four exercises, according to de Jong, are the typical of the teachings of ‘Alī Qarabash in the Khalwatī tradition, later continued by Muṣṭafā ibn Kamāl al-Dīn al-Bakrī.⁹⁶ It appears, however, that these exercises were also adopted by other ṣūfīs since these exercises, as ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī says, are part of the universal teaching of Sufism.⁹⁷ Ibn ‘Arabī considered them as beneficial physical exercises for ṣūfī *murīds*, particularly for those who have not yet met the true master.⁹⁸ Similarly, al-Makkī encouraged ṣūfī aspirants to practice them in their daily routine, and he tells us that these four *arkān* (principles) were introduced by al-Tustarī.⁹⁹ Al-Sammān states that these exercises are the devotional actions of the lesser saint (the *abdāl*), an idea which had also been mentioned by al-Tustarī.¹⁰⁰ These four exercises are intended for achieving spiritual purity. However, only to reduce eating and drinking is not enough; an effort to purify the heart from bad moral imperatives is also important. Reducing eating, drinking, sleeping and talking can help someone to purify his heart from bad characteristics.¹⁰¹

These four exercises can be done in gradual way. Isolation, for instance, is done gradually until the performer gets used to it and becomes stronger in this

⁹⁵ Ibid., 37-8.

⁹⁶ de Jong, "Mustafa Kamal al-Din al-Bakri," 243.

⁹⁷ ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī, *‘Awarif al-Ma‘ārif*, 331.

⁹⁸ Ibn ‘Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah*, 1999, vol. 1, 314.

⁹⁹ al-Makkī, *Kitāb Qūt al-Qulūb*, vol. 1, 94.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 95.

¹⁰¹ al-Sammān, *al-Nafahāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 34.

seclusion during the days of *khalwah*. Similarly, reducing eating and drinking water are also undertaken gradually until one only consumes the smallest amount possible of food and water. To reduce one's consumption of water seems to be a very hard exercise. In this respect, al-Sammān cites the statement of al-Bakrī's teacher, Shaykh Qāsim al-Maghribī. According to this master, one's ability to reduce one's water intake to a minimal amount is considered as a sign of the ability to be an ascetic away from the world. This statement inspired al-Bakrī to gradually drank less water until he was able to drink only once a week, and sometimes he only consumed water once every two weeks. To minimize drinking water is also stressed by Ibn 'Arabī. Al-Sammān says that, in his *Risālat al-Khalwah*, Ibn 'Arabī relates that thirst is one of the false passions. That is why Ibn 'Arabī suggests that ṣūfīs minimize drinking as much as possible. Al-Sammān also cites the teaching of al-Būnī that the spiritual exercise of the 'ārīf is to minimize water consumption until he is able to drink only once in a five day period. This exercise also seems to have been practiced by another Khalwatī figure. Al-Sammān relates that Shaykh Ayyūb al-Khalwatī said that it is recommended that the novice minimize eating and drinking, but trying not to drink water is the more important task because it is the harder one.¹⁰²

XI. Concentration on the Image of the Face of the Master

The tradition of concentrating on the image of the master of the *ṭarīqah* during the *dhikr* seems to be important in many *ṭarīqahs*, including the Khalwatīyah. Al-Sammān classifies it as one of the ways of the *dhikr*. Al-Sammān maintains that

¹⁰² al-Sammān, *al-Nafahāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 35-6.

when a novice closes his eyes while performing the *dhikr*, a novice must visualize in his mind's eye that the shaykh is present. This exercise is important because, in the tradition of the Islamic orders, as we have discussed before, the shaykh plays a fundamental role in bringing the novice to the Prophet. The shaykh is indeed the representative of the Prophet,¹⁰³ and this tradition is emphasized by many *ṣūfī* thinkers. Al-Sanūsī, for instance, maintains that the bond with the shaykh is made by the novice in order to conjure up the image of the shaykh in a vision, while seeking protection in him from the attack of the wild beasts of the valley of destruction.¹⁰⁴ The Naqshbandī master Amīn al-Kurdī even insists that the image of the shaykh is as protected as the image of the Prophet, inasmuch that Satan cannot emulate it; thus, al-Kurdī reminds the aspirant, there is no fear of becoming misguided if one concentrates on the image of the shaykh.¹⁰⁵ According to al-Sha'rānī the image of the shaykh is considered to be the mirror which reflects the spiritual state of the disciple. It is through the image of the master that a novice can see his inward spiritual state.¹⁰⁶

However, it would seem that, in the process of performing *dhikr*, it is not the image itself which is ultimately important, but rather the heart of the master. Al-Sammān maintains that the heart of the shaykh is important for getting access to the transmission of spiritual overflow from the Prophet who, in turn, has a direct spiritual connection to God. In order to connect the novice's heart to that of the

¹⁰³ Ibid., 24-25.

¹⁰⁴ al-Sanūsī, *Kitāb al-Salsabīl al-mu'īn fī al-ṭarā'iq al-arba'in*, in *Kitāb al-Masā'il al-'Ashr*, 48.

¹⁰⁵ al-Kurdī, *Tanwīr al-Qulūb fī Mu'āmalat 'Allām al-Ghuyūb*, 519.

¹⁰⁶ al-Sha'rānī, *al-Anwār al-Qudsīyah fī Bayān Qawā'id al-Ṣūfīyah*, 282-283. In this regard, al-Sha'rānī tells us about the story of al-Bisṭāmī and his disciple. The latter said to the former that he had seen him (i.e. al-Bisṭāmī) in the form of a pig. Al-Bisṭāmī told him that in fact it was the form of his spiritual state (i.e. the state of his disciple) which was reflected in al-Bisṭāmī's face.

shaykh, the novice must imagine the figure, the face or a physical picture of the master. Thus, the core here is the heart of the shaykh, so that imagining the face or a picture of the shaykh seems to be an instrument or a device for making a connection with the heart of the shaykh. This seems to be based on the assumption that the heart of the shaykh has extraordinary spiritual power, an idea which no doubt stems from classical time.

In classical Sufism, the heart is already considered to be the most important spiritual part of the human being. Certainly, the heart here is not the conical organ of flesh, situated on the left side of the chest—though there is certain a connection, although its modality is unknown. Thus, the heart here is a modality of subtle physiology elaborated on the basis of mysticism.¹⁰⁷ One early ṣūfī who elaborated the concept of heart is Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī (d. 857) who maintains that the heart is the centre of religious importance, for the heart recognizes its need for God and its approach unto Him and to the invisible world.¹⁰⁸ Another early ṣūfī and contemporary of al-Muḥāsibī’s, al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī had already hinted at the infinite nature of the heart of the saint in its capacity to acquire wisdom, mercy, kindness, unveiling and the radiance of faith—all tokens granted by God.¹⁰⁹ As he states, “There is no limit to the heart because hearts travel to Him (God) who

¹⁰⁷ al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā’ al-‘Ulūm al-Dīn*, vol. 1, 73; see also al-Palimbānī, *Siyār al-Sālikīn*, vol. 3, 5; see also Henry Corbin, *Creative Imagination in the Ṣūfism of Ibn ‘Arabī*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981), 221.

¹⁰⁸ See Natalie A. Pavlis, “An Early Sufi Concept of Qalb : Hakim Al-Tirmidhi's Map of the Heart” (M.A. Thesis, McGill University, 2001), 10 .

¹⁰⁹ See Muḥammad Ibraheem al-Geyoushi, “Al Tirmidhī’s conception of the areas of Interiority,” *Islamic Quarterly* 16 (1973): 166-168.

has no limit.”¹¹⁰ Another *ṣūfī* of the classical period, al-Biṣṭāmī, also believed in the tremendous divine quality of the heart of the saint. The reason for this is that God sees the heart of saints seventy times a day and night. If God sees the name of one of the faithful in the heart of a saint, God will love him. Thus, the best way to be close to God is by being loved in the heart of a saint.¹¹¹

Such ideas continued to be influential even after the classical period. Ibn ‘Arabī also dealt with the importance of the heart. He said that when God creates a human body, He makes the heart into the *Ka’bah* of that body. Thus, the heart is the most respected part of the believer.¹¹² A direct student of the founder of the Naqshbandīyah, Muḥammad Pārsā, emphasizes the importance of the hearts of good believers. It is through the heart of the Perfect Man and the knower (the gnostic) that the divine manifestation—*tajallī al-dhāt, al-asmā’ wa-al-ṣifāt*—takes place. For their hearts are ready to receive the divine self-disclosure.¹¹³ According to Majd al-Dīn al-Baghdādī, it is the heart of the shaykh which protects the novice from his three enemies: the carnal soul, Satan, and the world (*dunyā*). He explains, “when the physical light of the shaykh falls on the region of the inwardness of the disciple, Satan runs away or necessarily perishes.”¹¹⁴ ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī equates the immunity of the hearts of the prophets and the saints with the hearts of the shaykhs when it comes to infiltration by Satan. According to him, Satan has no chance to enter the hearts of the prophets and saints because God has already

¹¹⁰ See Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, *Thalāthat Muṣannafāt lil-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī: Kitāb Sīrat al-Awliyā’*; *Jawāb Masā’il allatī Sa’alahu Ahl Sarakhs ‘anhā*; *Jawāb Kitāb min al-Ray*, ed. Bernd Radtke (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 1992), 96.

¹¹¹ See ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Badāwī, *Shaṭaḥāt al-Ṣūfiyah*, vol. 1, 115.

¹¹² Ibn ‘Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah*, 1999, vol. 5, 370.

¹¹³ See Khvājah Muḥammad Pārsā, *Sharḥ-i Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* (Tehran: Markaz-i Nashr-i Dānishgāhī, 1987), 273.

uprooted the entangled veins from their hearts. When Satan asked permission from God to enter the hearts of ordinary men, God told him that it was not allowed for him to do so, but he had a chance to enter through the vein entangled with soul (*nafs*). Therefore, if Satan enters that vein—due to its narrow penetration—when he sweats, his sweat mixes with the water of mercy sprinkled from the heart into that channel, and thus his power comes to the heart. However, God plucks out that vein from the hearts of whomever He chooses to be a prophet or saint. Their hearts therefore become peaceful. Then, al-Suhrawardī insists that ṣūfī masters are included in those who have peaceful hearts. This purification occurs because the heart obeys the spirit (*rūḥ*) and the soul (*nafs*) obeys the heart.¹¹⁵

The heart of the shaykh is considered to be a reflection of the heart of the Prophet, which has a divine quality. Regarding the divine quality of the heart of the Prophet, it is relevant to repeat what we have already discussed in Chapter Two, namely, that al-Tustarī upholds the divine nature of the heart of Muḥammad. The heart of Muḥammad was chosen to be the tremendous treasure which received revelation.¹¹⁶ The inmost bottom of the heart of Muḥammad is the treasure of the divine knowledge as a grace for his people.¹¹⁷ Al-Tustarī tends to believe that the heart of Muḥammad has a divine nature. As we have mentioned, for instance, the Prophet was crying when his son passed away. The heart of Muḥammad, which is the locus of the soul of the luminous spirit, admitted the destiny of the death of his

¹¹⁴ See Hermann Landolt's introduction to al-Isfarāyīnī, *Le Révélateur des mystères = Kāshif al-Asrār*, 51.

¹¹⁵ al-Suhrawardī, *ʿAwārif al-Maʿārif*, 65.

¹¹⁶ al-Tustarī, *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿAzīm*, 4.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 46.

son, but his human nature cried for sympathy.¹¹⁸ The heart of the pious believer, for *ṣūfis*, can almost attain the quality of the heart of the Prophet. For example, Ibn 'Arabī tells us that the heart of those who pray eleven *raka'āt* of *ṣalāt al-witr* get closer to the form of the heart of the Prophet with every *rak'ah* of prayer.¹¹⁹

The heart of the shaykh is considered to have a divine nature almost equivalent to that of the Prophet. This is understandable since, for novices, masters are the representatives of the Prophet Muḥammad or his inheritors. Al-Qushāshī holds the opinion that the heart of the shaykh is the perfect inheritor of the heart of the Prophet; the treasure of the vision, the knowledge, the secret and the light of Almighty God.¹²⁰

Now, let us go back and investigate the origin of the tradition of *ribṭ al-qalb bi-al-shaykh* in al-Sammān. It is clear from al-Sammān's quotations from al-Bakrī, as found in his *al-Nafaḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*, that this exercise was suggested by al-Bakrī himself and therefore not an invention of al-Sammān. This perhaps is a universal ritual tradition in the Khalwatī *ṭarīqah*. Considering that this exercise is very popular amongst all Naqshbandīyah, this brings up the question on the influence of the Naqshbandīyah *ṭarīqah* on the Khalwatīyah, via the Naqshbandī shaykh al-Nābulusī on Muṣṭafā ibn Kamāl al-Dīn al-Bakrī.¹²¹ Demirel, in his study of the political activities of the Naqshbandīyah, assumes that the Mujaddidīyah *ṭarīqah* may have influenced al-Bakrī's position on upholding a strict adherence to the *sharī'ah*. However, he does not mention the possible influence of Naqshbandī rituals

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 64.

¹¹⁹ Ibn 'Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah*, 1999, vol. 6, 227.

¹²⁰ al-Qushāshī, *Kitāb Simṭ al-Majīd*, 45.

on the Khalwatīyah of al-Bakrī,¹²² for example, the necessity of concentrating on the image of the shaykh, that is, *rābiṭah* and *tawajjuh*. However, Butrus Abu Manneh does argue that the Naqshbandīyah certainly influenced the Khalwatīyah and other *ṭarīqahs* in terms of *rābiṭah* and *khalwah*.¹²³

If we agree with Abu Manneh, we may be inclined to relate this issue to the relationship between al-Bakrī with two prominent Naqshbandīs: al-Nābulusī, with whom he studied in Damascus, and ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Bahrī with whom he studied in Ḥaramayn. This seems to be very likely and is further demonstrated by the fact that al-Sammān also mention the words *irtibāt al-qalb*, which he takes from a statement of al-Bakrī’s. From the account given by al-Palimbānī, we learn that al-Bakrī explained that the term *ribṭ al-qalb bi-al-shaykh* meant the aspirant imagining the figure of his master.¹²⁴ Thus, it appears that there is a possible influence of the Naqshbandīyah *ṭarīqah* on al-Bakrī.

It must be noted, however, that his exercise was practiced in the ṣūfī tradition prior to the Naqshbandīyah. Fritz Meier, in his *Zwei Abhandlungen über die Naqshbandiyya*, shows us the historical background of this tradition. The tradition of *rābiṭat al-qalb* to the shaykh can be traced back to the ṣūfīs of the classical period, for example in the line of al-Junayd (d. 910-1). This tradition can also be traced back even earlier to the relationship between Jesus and his disciples and to that

¹²¹ I am not certain about this possibility because I do not have available an account of the method of the *dhikr* of the Khalwatīyah prior to al-Bakrī.

¹²² See David William Damrel, "The Naqshbandī Political Tradition through the Early 19th Century" (M.A. Thesis, The University of Texas at Austin, 1984), 77-78 .

¹²³ Butrus Abu Manneh, "Khalwa and *rābiṭa* in the Khālidi Suborder," in *Naqshbandis : cheminements et situation actuelle d'un ordre mystique musulman : Actes de la table ronde de Sèvres, 2-4 Mai 1985 = Historical Developments and Present Situation of a Muslim Mystical Order*, eds. Marc Gaborieau, Alexandre Popović and Thierry Zarcone (Istanbul: Editions Isis, 1990), 293.

between Muḥammad and his Companions.¹²⁵ This tradition should not be attributed to the idea of Platonic love.¹²⁶ Nevertheless, it becomes very important in the history of Sufism because of the transformation of the function of the ṣūfī shaykh from solely that of a shaykh of instruction and teaching to a shaykh of education. The trend to adore the ṣūfī master seems to have developed from the 11th century onward, but this adoration became almost equivalent with the adoration of Muḥammad, as can be seen from the 13th century onward.¹²⁷ According to Amīn al-Kurdī, this exercise is based on Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī's suggestion to visualize the image of the Prophet during the recitation of the *tashahhud* during the prayer.¹²⁸ Al-Kurdī inclines towards legitimizing this practice by referring to al-Ghazālī, but al-Ghazālī himself never suggested that ṣūfis visualize the image of the master during the *dhikr*; therefore, we do not know what his exact position on this issue would have been. In fact, a disciple of Aḥmad al-Ghazālī, namely, 'Ayn al-Qudāh al-Hamadhānī, suggested this ritual in theory. According to him, novices should concentrate on the face or the image of their masters whether he was present or absent. If a master is absent, a novice should regard him as an observer, if present, then as a guide.¹²⁹

A standard example of this exercise comes from the practice of al-Jīlānī. When al-Jīlānī would meet a non-ṣūfī visitor, he would converse with that person

¹²⁴ al-Palimbānī, *Siyār al-Sālikīn*, vol. 3, 48.

¹²⁵ Meier, *Zwei Abhandlungen über die Naqšbandiyya*, 231.

¹²⁶ Trimmingham traces the origins of *rābiṭah* through Platonic love to the experience of Aḥmad al-Ghazālī, who adored watching youths and flowers; this trajectory seems to be incorrect. In this respect, Fritz Meier seems to be right in tracing this tradition back to Jesus and Muḥammad and their respective Companions. See J. Spencer Trimmingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 212; Meier, *Zwei Abhandlungen über die Naqšbandiyya*, 231.

¹²⁷ Meier, *Zwei Abhandlungen über die Naqšbandiyya*, 232.

¹²⁸ al-Kurdī, *Tanwīr al-Qulūb fī Mu'āmalat 'Allām al-Ghuyūb*, 519.

for quite a long time; however, he did not do the same when he received a ṣūfī visitor. He would meet with them for a while and then returned to his seclusion. The reason for this attitude was not to discriminate against ṣūfī visitors; rather, ‘al-Jīlānī believed that the ṣūfī visitor could communicate with him in a special way, namely, through binding the heart (*rābiṭat al-qalb*).¹³⁰ *Rābiṭat al-Qalb*, in this particular case, does not strictly mean the spiritual connection between the master and the disciple, like in the ṣūfī orders. Rather it implies a connection between al-Jīlānī and the ṣūfīs in general. However, if we consider how highly regarded al-Jīlānī is in the eyes of the ṣūfīs, then this relationship can be seen as a kind of master-disciple relationship too.

According to Meier, since the exercise of the *raḥīṭah* was already known in ṣūfī circles, the Naqshbandīyah traditions of *rābiṭah* and *tawajjuh* seem to be derived from the ṣūfī tradition itself.¹³¹

It appears that this exercise (binding one’s heart to the shaykh) began to be applied in the formal relationship between masters and disciples by the proto-Naqshbandīyah, namely the Kubrawīyah. Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā himself (d. 1221) classifies the exercise “to bind the heart to the shaykh” as one of the principles of the order. Al-Kubrā directed his student Abū Mu’ayyad al-Muwaffaq ibn Majd (d. 1236) to practice this exercise, and he described it as a result of the love of the disciple for the master. In this regard, Ibn Majd was also emphasizing that the

¹²⁹ al-Hamadhānī, *Tamhīdāt*, 33-34.

¹³⁰ al-Suhrawardī, *Awārif al-Ma’ārif*, 285-86; Meier, *Zwei Abhandlungen über die Naqṣbandiyya*, 17; and Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī, *Die Gaben der Erkenntnisse des ‘Umar as-Suhrawardī: (‘Awārif al-Ma’ārif)*, trans.

Richard Gramlich (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1978), 464.

¹³¹ Meier, *Zwei Abhandlungen über die Naqṣbandiyya*, 21.

spiritual master had a more important role than the parents. According to Ibn Majd, everyone has two fathers: a biological one and a spiritual one. Since the spiritual salvation of a novice is more important than his biological one, then it is the spiritual master who should be given more respect and love. Another student of al-Kubrā, Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1256), also considered binding his heart to the master as a beneficial way to nourish the spirit. So too, Nūr al-Dīn al-Isfarāyīnī (d. 1317) emphasized this exercise along with his student, ‘Alā al-Dawlah al-Simnānī (d. 1336). According to al-Simnānī, there are three difficult rules of discipline for disciples: to protect oneself from spiritual collapse, to bind the heart to the master, and to be satisfied with the test of God.¹³²

As we mentioned earlier, the *rābiṭah* became a very essential exercise in the rituals of the Naqshbandīyah *ṭarīqah*, although it must be noted that this exercise was not mentioned by the first founder of the *ṭarīqah*, Bahā’ al-Dīn al-Naqshbandī.¹³³ This exercise, according to Abu Manneh, was introduced into the Naqshbandīyah order by Shaykh Ḥasan al-‘Aṭṭār, the grandson of Bahā’ al-Dīn through the female line.¹³⁴ The most eminent Naqshbandī shaykhs imitated him. According to Kusmushanālī, the *rābiṭah* is an essential condition for performing the *dhikr*; without both *rābiṭah* and *fanā’* in the shaykh, the *dhikr* does not bring to the desired goal.

However, the founder of the Mujaddidīyah Aḥmad Sirhindī, does not see the *rābiṭah* as an essential condition for performing the *dhikr*. Sirhindī states, “the

¹³² Ibid., 18-20.

¹³³ Ibid., 26.

¹³⁴ Abu Manneh, “Khalwa and *rābiṭa* in the Khālidi Suborder,” in *Naqshbandis : cheminements et situation actuelle*, 293.

obligation that the *dhikr* must be done with the shaykh (by concentrating on him), is not a condition of our *ṭarīqah*. But rather, the master himself is free to decide what is the easiest and the most beneficial thing to be performed by his novice."¹³⁵ Sirhindī may have been inspired by Khwāja ‘Ubayd Allāh ibn Maḥmūd al-Aḥrār (d. 1489-90) another great early master of the Naqshbandīyah, who also felt that *rābiṭah* was not a very essential condition.¹³⁶

This exercise, as we have said before, is in fact practiced in other *ṭarīqahs*. For example, E. Geoffroy mentions that this way of concentrating on the ṣūfī shaykh is also practiced in certain branches of the Shādhilīyah. Geoffroy also mentions that Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh emphasized the importance of this exercise.¹³⁷ Geoffroy is right. In the *Miftāḥ al-Falāḥ*, Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh says,

Some say that if one is under the direction of a shaykh, one should imagine him in front of one’s self, because the shaykh is one’s companion and guide along the path. At the beginning of the invocation, the novice should ask with his heart for the help of the shaykh’s inspiration (*himmah*), believing that asking help of him is the same as asking help of the Prophet (peace be upon him), for the shaykh is his representative.¹³⁸

Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh does not use the terms *rābiṭah* and *tawajjuh* to designate the practice of concentrating on the features or face of the shaykh, but rather uses *takhayyul wajh al-shaykh*, an expression also mentioned by al-Bakrī and al-Sammān. Thus, it appears that Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh also inspired both al-Bakrī and al-Sammān. This

¹³⁵ Meier, *Zwei Abhandlungen über die Naqshbandiyya*, 77.

¹³⁶ According to Abu Manneh, Aḥrār did not emphasize the paramount importance of *rābiṭah*, rather that of the *ṣuḥbah*; see Butrus Abu Manneh, *Studies on Islam and the Ottoman Empire in the 19th Century (1826-1876)* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2001), 35-37.

¹³⁷ See E. Geoffroy, “La Chādhiliyya,” in *Les Voies d’Allah*, 516. However, Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh does not give any names of it in his *Miftāḥ al-Falāḥ*; see M. Chodkiewicz, “Quelques aspects des techniques spirituelles dans la ṭarīqa Naqshbandiyya,” in *Naqshbandis : cheminements et situation actuelle*, 75.

¹³⁸ Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh, *Miftāḥ al-Falāḥ wa Miṣbāḥ al-Arwāḥ*, 69.

possibility becomes more likely due to the fact that al-Sammān himself mentions the *Miftāḥ al-Falāḥ* in his *al-Nafahāt al-Ilāhīyah*.¹³⁹

¹³⁹ al-Sammān, *al-Nafahāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 37.

CHAPTER 4

THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN SAMMĀNĪYAH: THE MYSTICAL TEACHINGS OF ‘ABD AL-ŞAMAD AL-PALIMBĀNĪ AND MUḤAMMAD NAFĪS AL-BANJĀRĪ

I. The Shādhilī and the Akbarī (Ibn ‘Arabī’s school) Influence

In the previous chapters, we dealt with al-Sammān’s teaching on the concept of the logos of Muḥammad and the ritual methods of the Sammānīyah *ṭarīqah*. The next step is to consider al-Sammān’s view of God, His creatures, and the universe. But unfortunately, as was mentioned earlier in the Introduction, the only two works by al-Sammān available to me do not provide the full spectrum of his mystical teachings. For a more complete picture, we must look at the writings of his Southeast Asian disciples, namely, ‘Abd al-Şamad al-Palimbānī and Muḥammad Nafīs al-Banjārī. Their teachings on the nature of God and the Cosmos are surprisingly similar, suggesting that the Sammānīyah could boast of a uniform position on theosophy. There is strong evidence that al-Sammān was responsible for their ideas on this subject, either directly or indirectly. Thus, it is appropriate to investigate al-Palimbānī’s and Nafīs al-Banjārī’s ideas on the concept of God and the universe, since their position may be a reflection of their Sammānīyah background or the direct influence of al-Sammān himself.

Al-Palimbānī's and Nafīs al-Banjārī's ideas on God and the universe may ultimately have been derived from the works of Ibn 'Arabī and al-Jīlī,¹ and yet, it is likely that two influential commentators on Ibn 'Arabī, namely, al-Buhānpūrī (d. 1620) and al-Nābulusī, might have been more influential. Al-Buhānpūrī, whose views on Ibn 'Arabī triggered an acute debate among Muslims in the 16th and 17th centuries, was among the ṣūfī theosophers that al-Sammān and his disciples most admired. Almost as influential was al-Nābulusī, al-Buhānpūrī had a solid reputation in the Arab world and amongst Southeast Asian Muslims, while al-Nābulusī too was greatly respected in the Arab and Ottoman worlds, as well as in Southeast Asia. Al-Buhānpūrī, moreover, is representative of the extreme adherents of Ibn 'Arabī, who were responsible for al-Palimbānī and Nafīs al-Banjārī's intellectual links with the Southeast Asian ṣūfis of the 17th and 18th centuries. In contrast, al-Nābulusī represents the moderate adherents of Ibn 'Arabī, thus connecting al-Sammān, al-Palimbānī and Nafīs al-Banjārī with Middle Eastern ṣūfis. There is no doubt about the role of al-Nābulusī in transmitting the teaching of the unity of existence to the Sammānīyah school. Al-Palimbānī tells us that the best commentary on the *Tuḥfah al-Mursalah* of al-Burhānpūrī was written by al-Nābulusī, and also recommends that ṣūfis read the commentary of al-Nābulusī on the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*.²

This is not to suggest that Ibn 'Arabī was the sole influence on al-Sammān, for he was not. And this despite the fact that, after the post classical period (15th century),

¹ Al-Palimbānī mentions the important works of Ibn 'Arabī such as *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikām*, *Mawāqī' al-Nujūm* and *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah*, as well as al-Jīlī's *al-Insān al-Kāmil*; see *Siyār al-Sālikīn*, vol. 3, 182.

² Ibid., 182-3.

the teachings of Ibn 'Arabī had come to be seen as identical with Sufism.³ Indeed, it can even be said that the doctrine of Ibn 'Arabī served as the official ṣūfī thought of the Ottoman empire.⁴ Nevertheless, there were other schools that flourished, most notably the Shādhilīyah, which had a considerable impact on al-Sammān. It should be noted that Ibn 'Arabī's thought had much in common with Shādhilī doctrine, which may account for the popularity of the latter. With regard to al-Sammān's formal spiritual relationship with the Shādhilīyah, it is clear that he had authority in terms of Shādhilī ritual. Aḥmad al-Tijānī admitted that al-Sammān had initiated him into the *aḥzāb* of the Shādhilīyah, the *wazīfah* of Muḥammad al-Zarrūq, and *dalā'il al-khayrāt*, which al-Tijānī kept practicing even after founding his own Tijānīyah *ṭarīqah*.⁵

1. The Shādhilīyah: Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh (d. 1309)

The most influential disciple of the founder of the Shādhilīyah order was Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh al-Iskandarī, author of the popular work *al-Ḥikam*, as well as other works. Of the several "*Ḥikams*" known to Muslim scholars, al-Sammān seems to have relied on two: that of Ibn Raslān and that of Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh. Al-Palimbānī tells us that the first book he studied under al-Sammān was the *Ḥikam* of Ibn Raslān and its commentary by Shaykh al-Islām Zakarīyā' al-Anṣārī entitled, *Faṭḥ al-Raḥmān*. The *Ḥikam* of Ibn Raslān was also commented upon by al-Nābulusī, and there is no doubt

³ See Hermann Landolt, "Der Briefwechsel zwischen Kāšānī und Simnānī über *Waḥdat al-Wuḡūd*," *Der Islam* 50 (1973): 31.

⁴ The *fatwā* of Ibn Kamāl Pāshā who was the imām of the mosque of Ibn 'Arabī which was constructed near the moseleum of Ibn 'Arabī; construction was begun in 1517 by Sultān Salīm I. See Bakri Aladdin's introduction to al-Nābulusī, *al-Wujūd al-Ḥaqq*, 78-80.

⁵ Barādah, *Jawāhir al-Ma'ānī wa-al-Bulūgh al-Amānī*, vol. 2, 360.

that al-Sammān knew the latter work as well.⁶ Ibn Raslān was counted by Ibn Taymīyah as among the orthodox ṣūfis, and he may have lived in the same era. Paul Nywia believes that he was not the contemporary of Ibn Taymīyah, but rather lived a century and half earlier.⁷ Compared to the *Ḥikam* of Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh, the *Ḥikam* of Ibn Raslān is of uneven quality in terms of both beauty and depth of expression. Furthermore, the *Ḥikam* of Ibn Raslān is focused on giving moral advice and possesses little originality.⁸ Therefore, despite its usefulness as an ethical manual, Ibn Raslān’s work cannot have had much influence on al-Sammān, who was more interested in ṣūfī theosophy. The works of Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh, on the other hand, seem to have been especially influential on al-Sammān. Al-Palimbānī mentions that seventeen commentaries on Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh’s *Ḥikam* were available; some of them were short and some long. Among them, one can point to the works of Ibn ‘Abbād of Ronda, Sayyid Aḥmad al-Marzūkī, Shaykh Aḥmad Ibrāhīm ibn ‘Alān al-Naqshbandī and Aḥmad al-Qushāshī. Among these commentaries, that of Aḥmad al-Qushāshī is the most thorough.⁹ Among the works of Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh, the *Laṭā’if al-Minan* and *Isqāṭ al-Tadbīr*¹⁰ seem to have been widely used too.¹¹ According to Ibn ‘Abbād of Ronda (1332-1390), the *Isqāṭ al-Tadbīr* comprises all of the author’s teachings on Sufism—whether detailed or condensed—including both explanations

⁶ The former has not been edited, while the second was edited in Cairo 1962; see Paul Nywia, *Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh (m. 709/1309) et la naissance de la confrérie ṣāḍilite: édition critique et traduction des Hikam, précédées d’une introduction sur le soufisme et suivies de notes sur le Ḥikam al-‘Aṭā’īyah* (Beirut: Dar el-Machreq, 1990), 69.

⁷ Based on the account of Ibn al-Jazarī, Paul Nywia situates the death of Ibn Raslan between 1143 and 1154; see *Ibid.*, 68-9.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁹ al-Palimbānī, *Siyār al-Sālikīn*, vol. 3, 181.

¹⁰ The full title is *al-Tanwīr fi Isqāṭ al-Tadbīr*. See Mary Ann Koury Danner’s introduction to her translation of Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh’s *Miftāḥ al-Falāḥ wa-Miṣbāḥ al-Arwāḥ*, 1996.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 181

and concise expression.¹² Another commentary on the *Ḥikam* of Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh was written by an Egyptian ṣūfī, ‘Abdullāh al-Sharqāwī, who was a student of al-Ḥifnī’s and the teacher of Nafīs al-Banjārī as well.

If we look at the fact that so many commentaries were written on *al-Ḥikam*, even by followers of Ibn ‘Arabī’s school, we might conclude that the work is flexible, and can be adopted to any mystical approach. Ibn ‘Arabī’s followers thus interpreted it according to the Akbarian style.¹³ The question however arises as to whether Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh’s theories are compatible with those of Ibn ‘Arabī, and al-Sammān’s answer would have been that al-Shādhilī’s teachings were inferior to those of Ibn ‘Arabī. The evidence for this lies in the statement of al-Palimbānī that the aforementioned works of Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh were considered manuals for *murīds* at the intermediate level. As al-Palimbānī explains, “these books are not useful for those who are at the level of *‘ilm al-yaqīn* who have not yet attained the level of *‘ayn al-yaqīn* (intermediate) or the *ḥaqq al-yaqīn* (expert).¹⁴

It would seem that al-Shādhilī was much inspired by Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī. According to al-Yafī’ī (d. 1376), al-Shādhilī had a dream where he saw that

¹² Ibid., 16.

¹³ The passages above were interpreted by ‘Abdullāh al-Sharqāwī:

Whoever attains the level of knowing (*ma’rifah*), he will see Him appearing in the essences of beings (*‘ayān al-mawjūdāt*). Thus he will neither be afraid nor be longing for anything. Whoever attains the level of passing away, he will see nothing in existence, but God. He will disappear from himself and his senses because he does not think that he has existence. The man who attains the level of *baqā’* (persisting) sees both God and creation. However, he sees God appearing in everything and making everything appear without losing his consciousness of himself and his senses. The sign of he who attains this high level is that his (bad) willing and his carnal soul do not effect him. God is veiled because of His great nearness to you. The veil emerges due both to the very farness or the very nearness. If the hands are distant they can be seen, but if they are too close and attached to the eyes, they cannot be seen.

See al-Sharqāwī’s commentary on of Ibn ‘Abbād of Ronda’s *Ḥikam*; Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn ‘Abbād, *Sharḥ al-Ḥikam* (Cairo: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Kutub al-‘Arabīyah, n.d.) 8-9.

¹⁴ al-Palimbānī, *Siyār al-Sālikīn*, vol. 3, 180.

the Prophet was more proud of al-Ghazālī than the Prophets Moses and Jesus.¹⁵ Moreover, the theosophical tradition of the Shādhilīyah is sometimes depicted as having its own independent theory, different in certain aspects from that of Ibn ‘Arabī. As Nywia and R. McGregor have pointed out, although Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh offers only two direct quotations from Ibn ‘Arabī, al-Shādhilī was familiar with a certain Abū al-‘Ilm al-Yāsīn, identified as a disciple of Ibn ‘Arabī. There was also a meeting between Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh’s master al-Shādhilī and Ibn ‘Arabī’s best student, Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī¹⁶ (d. 1273), but there is little hint of the influence of Ibn ‘Arabī on al-Shādhilī.¹⁷ Al-Qūnawī’s discussion with al-Shādhilī may have demonstrated that the two had a great deal in common from the standpoint of doctrine, while differing in their respective approaches. Al-Qūnawī seems to have favored philosophical arguments, as can be seen from his correspondence with Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, where both express themselves in philosophical terms.¹⁸ The legacy of the philosophy-minded Ibn ‘Arabī is apparent here in Qūnawī’s approach, and this may explain why his encounter with al-Shādhilī was less than fruitful. Shādhilī theosophy is certainly more mystical than philosophical. Nevertheless, Ibn ‘Arabī did have an influence on Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh according to Mary Ann Koury Danner, who

¹⁵ ‘Abd Allāh ibn As‘ad al-Yāfi‘ī, *Nashr al-Maḥāsin al-Ghāliyah fī Faḍl al-Mashā’ikh al-Ṣūfiyah Aṣḥāb al-Maqāmāt al-‘Āliyah : al-Mulaqqab, Kifāyat al-Mu’taqid wa-Nikāyat al-Muntaqid* (Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1961), 347.

¹⁶ When Ṣadr al-Dīn went to Egypt for a mission, he met Abū al-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī and discussed various sciences in the presence of the latter who listened to him carefully but kept bowing his head. He did not make any comments, but asked one question about who the present *quṭb* was. Ṣadr al-Dīn did not answer the question. See Nywia, *Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh*, 26.

¹⁷ Richard McGregor, “A Study of Sainthood in Medieval Islamic Egypt,” 46-7. Unfortunately, neither Nywia nor McGregor tell us what they did not have in common. Even though we do not know exactly what Ṣadr al-Dīn told to al-Shādhilī, in my opinion, they in fact had many things in common, but differed in their approaches.

¹⁸ Besides Ibn Sīnā, al-Qūnawī also makes reference to Plato, Apollonius and the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’. See the conclusions of Gudrun Schubert in al-Qūnawī, *al-Murāsālāt bayna Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī wa-Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī*, ed. Gudrun Schubert, 52.

cites his *'Unwān al-Tawfīq fī Ādāb al-Ṭarīq* to support her argument.¹⁹ Thus, while Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh may have disregarded Ibn 'Arabī's philosophical arguments, he did draw on the latter's mystical approach, which stresses the heart more than reason. This explains al-Palimbānī's statement that Shādhilī teachings are useful for those who have heart.²⁰ 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd even depicts the Shādhilīyah as completely non-philosophical.²¹

Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh ingeniously employs a rich religious vocabulary, expressing himself in short but dense statements to explain the mystical relationship between God and man. For him, the state of *fanā'* (passing away) is of utmost importance.²² In addition to using Qur'ānic terms such as *Allāh*, *al-Ḥaqq*, or the third person *Huwa* when referring to God, Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh also employs the term "existence" (*wujūd*) a practice promoted by al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā. Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh may have actually been inspired by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, since he cites the latter in his book, *Miftāḥ al-Falāḥ wa-Miṣbāḥ al-Arwāḥ*.²³ Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī had pointed out that the term *wujūd* is unanimously accepted among Muslim scholars.²⁴ Al-Rāzī is correct in that

¹⁹ See Koury Danner's introduction to Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh's *Miftāḥ al-Falāḥ wa-Miṣbāḥ al-Arwāḥ*, 20.

²⁰ al-Palimbānī, *Siyār al-Sālikīn*, vol. 3, 180.

²¹ See 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd, *al-Madrasah al-Shādhilīyah al-Ḥadīthah wa-Imāmuḥā Abū al-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī* (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Ḥadīthah, 1968).

²² "Whoever knows the Truth (God), he witnesses Him in everything. Whoever passes away with Him, he will be unseen by everything. Whoever loves Him, nothing will affect him. God is veiled to you by His greatest nearness to you. And God is veiled by His clearest appearance. He is unseen by human sight because of His super-luminous light." See Ibn 'Abbād, *Sharḥ al-Ḥikam*, 8-9.

²³ See Koury Danner's list of key names in Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh's *Miftāḥ al-Falāḥ wa-Miṣbāḥ al-Arwāḥ*, 232.

²⁴ When the term existence is used to refer to God, says Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, it denotes two things. Firstly, His existence can be felt and known; this is commensurate with the verse in the Qur'ān "they find God," which means to know or understand God (*'irfān*). Secondly, it means that God is affirmed or realized in our mind (*ma'lūm*). Therefore, the word *wujūd* can be used to label God because this word denotes something that exists or is present and negates the opposite, which would be non-existence (*ma'dūm*). This means that this word can be used to glorify or praise God, and for this reason, it can be used to denote God; see Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, vol. 1, 118-9.

most earlier ṣūfis employed the term, namely, al-Junayd²⁵, al-Makkī,²⁶ al-Ghazālī,²⁷ ‘Ayn al-Quḍāh al-Hamadhānī²⁸ and certainly Ibn ‘Arabī.²⁹ However, unlike Ibn ‘Arabī who, in his *Inshā’ al-Dawā’ir*, categorizes existence into absolute and contingent, and necessary and possible, Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh avoids detailed discussion of ontology. Most importantly, Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh shares in Ibn ‘Arabī’s determination to equate the phenomenal world with nothingness, comparing it with darkness, just as the existence of God is equated with light.³⁰ This is precisely Ibn ‘Arabī’s position in the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*. According to Ibn ‘Arabī, this phenomenal world is not luminous because it is nothingness; it cannot be depicted as existence because existence is light. The existence of the phenomenal world is depicted as shadow (*ẓill*), while the existence of shadow is conditioned by light.³¹

It must be borne in mind that Aḥmad Sirhindī divided the monism of theosophical ṣūfis mainly into two schools: that of *waḥdat al-wujūd*³² and that of

²⁵ al-Simnānī, *Chihl Majlis*, 135. For further details on al-Junayd, see Marijan Molé, *Les Mystiques musulmans* (Paris: Deux Ocean, 1982), 63-4; and Julian Baldick, *Mystical Islam: An Introduction to Sufism* (New York: New York University Press, 1989), 44-5.

²⁶ al-Makkī, *Qūt al-Qulūb*, vol. 2, 86-7.

²⁷ Landolt, “Ghazālī and ‘Religionswissenschaft’,” 56.

²⁸ ‘Ayn al-Quḍāh al-Hamadhānī also points out that the term *wujūd* (existence) is the proof of God. The proof from existence is based on the axiom that “existence as such is the most general of all things, and may be divided into that which has a beginning (*al-ḥadīth*) and which has no beginning (*al-qādim*). The existence which has no beginning must exist by itself and must be necessary.” Then, like other ṣūfis, ‘Ayn al-Quḍāh also emphasizes that, since God is the necessary of existence, He must be the only existence. This is one of the doctrines which may have led to his execution because the statement that nothing exists but God sounds pantheistic. He nevertheless had the chance to write a defense that argued what he had said was not new but had already been exposed by earlier ṣūfis; see al-Hamadhānī, *Tamhīdāt*, 256-57; and Idem, *Šakwā-l-Ġarīb ‘ani l-‘Awṭān ‘ilā ‘Ulamā’-l-Buldān* (Shakwā al-Gharīb ‘an al-Awṭān ‘ilā ‘Ulamā’ al-Buldān), trans. Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Jalīl (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1930), 42-58.

²⁹ See William C. Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn al-‘Arabī’s Cosmology* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), 49.

³⁰ Nywīa, *Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh*, 40-41.

³¹ Ibn ‘Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikām*, 102.

³² The term *waḥdat al-wujūd* (the unity of existence), in fact, is not mentioned by Ibn al-‘Arabī himself, but rather by his followers. It seems that this term, as Claude Addas says, is used by Ṣadr al-Dīn al-

wahdat al-shuhūd. The former claims that unity is based on reason. The unity of existence is attributed mainly to Ibn ‘Arabī and his followers. This kind of unity affirms that multiplicity of things is either unreal or has no existence at all. The second school believes in unity-in-experience (*tawḥīd shuhūdī*). This unity is based on the mystic’s devotional concentration on God when everything else except God goes out from his consciousness; he therefore sees nothing but God. This school of monism is attributed to al-Ghazālī and other earlier ṣūfīs. In the experience of *tawḥīd shuhūdī*, for example, the ṣūfī does not see anything but God in his intense love; thus he affirms nothing but God. It is as though one could see nothing but the sun in the sky and as though no stars existed there.³³ Thus, this group actually does not deny that there is other existence that exists, even though this existence does not belong to the absolute existence. ‘Afīfī maintains that Ibn ‘Arabī accused this group of possibly falling into dualism, based on the latter’s statement: “If you say that you experience, integrate and annihilate in God, indeed this leads you to fall into dualism.”³⁴

Now, let us move on to the position of the Shādhilīyah. The first important question to be raised is: To which *tawḥīd* does it subscribe? To the unity of experience or to the unity of existence? When we try to answer this question, we realize that to attempt a strict categorization of the ṣūfīs’ views on God is a bit problematic. It also necessitates a quick review of ongoing debate surrounding the position of al-Ghazālī. As I have mentioned above, al-Ghazālī was said to subscribe

Qūnawī in his *Miftāḥ al-Ghayb* and *al-Nafāḥāt al-ilāhīyah*, by Ibn Sab’īn and especially by Farghānī in his commentary on Ibn al-Farīd’s *Ta’iyya*; see Addas, *Ibn ‘Arabī*, 249.

³³ Sirhindī, *Intikhāb-i Maktūbāt-i Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī*, 44-5.

³⁴ See ‘Afīfī’s commentary in, Ibn ‘Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikām*, 89.

to *waḥdat al-shuhūd*, although al-Palimbānī maintains that al-Ghazālī subscribes to the school of *waḥdat al-wujūd*.³⁵ We might feel suspicious about Palimbānī's view and suspect that he was simply using al-Ghazālī's name to legitimize *waḥdat al-wujūd*. However, al-Palimbānī is not the only one who attributes the concept of unity of existence to ṣūfīs prior to Ibn 'Arabī. As we learn from al-Bājūrī, al-Ḥallāj may be classified as belonging to the school of *waḥdat al-wujūd*.³⁶ However, the criteria he uses to make this classification seems to be better suited to the school of *waḥdat al-shuhūd*. This is reflected in his statement that *waḥdat al-wujūd* ṣūfīs are those who experience nothing but God.³⁷ We can suppose that al-Palimbānī was using the same criteria as al-Bājūrī to make a judgment on al-Ghazālī. Nevertheless, it seems to me that he was aware of the fact that these two schools of monism are quite distinct.

Al-Palimbānī tries his best to show that al-Ghazālī had in fact made some statements implying the idea of the unity of existence.³⁸ One important proof of this, according to al-Palimbānī, can be found in al-Ghazālī's elaboration of the four levels of *tawḥīd* and, in particular, in his belief in a fourth level of *tawḥīd* achieved only by the ṣūfī elite. Al-Palimbānī affirms, "At this level, they see nothing but the

³⁵ Al-Palimbānī says that the last stage of the four *tawḥīds* described by al-Ghazālī is identical with the *tawḥīd* of *waḥdat al-wujūd*. He states, "the fourth *tawḥīd* (of al-Ghazālī), or the last *tawḥīd* is called 'ilm hakekat and 'ilm ma'rīfat and *waḥdat al-wujūd*;" see, al-Palimbānī, *Siyār al-Sālikīn*, vol. 3, 103.

³⁶ al-Bājūrī, *Tuḥfat al-Murīd 'alā Jawharat al-Tawḥīd*, 32.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Al-Ghazālī divides *tawḥīd* into four levels. The first level belongs to the non-sincere believers because they only believe in God with their tongues, but not with their hearts. The second level belongs to the ordinary true believers. These people believe in God with both their hearts and tongues. The third level belongs to the spiritually elite believers. Through *kashf* (unveiling), they experience God. When they see the multiplicity of the phenomenal world, they see that it comes from the One Unique Being (God). This group witnesses God through the *tawḥīd* of the action, the name and the attributes. The fourth level belongs to the most elite ṣūfīs. At this level, they see nothing but the unique existence of God; they do not even see themselves as having an existence that

single existence of God, they even do not see themselves as having an existence that exists because they are overwhelmed by their concentration on God.”³⁹ But, it seems to me that if al-Palimbānī’s argument is only based on these statements, al-Ghazālī still remains at the level of unity of experience. This can be inferred from the last sentence of the passage quoted above which states that they do not see themselves because of their fixation on God. Thus, as Aḥmad Sirhindī points out, it is likely that these ṣūfīs do not in fact deny other existences, they simply do not see them because they are completely focused on remembering God. Nevertheless, it seems that al-Palimbānī must have been aware of the fact that he needed to provide further proofs in favour of his argument. Thus, he refers us to several works by al-Ghazālī which he also elevates to the same level as the writings of Ibn ‘Arabī.⁴⁰ Again in this respect, al-Palimbānī is not alone. In fact, Massignon himself (although he did not have access to al-Palimbānī’s works written in Jawi), reached the same conclusion as al-Palimbānī after examining al-Ghazālī’s works, the *Iḥyā’* and the *Mishkāt al-Anwār* in particular. Massignon confirmed that al-Ghazālī establishes a gradation in the mystical journey to God which passes from *waḥdat al-shuhūd* to *waḥdat al-wujūd*. But, according to Massignon, it is al-Ghazālī’s leaning towards *waḥdat al-wujūd* that makes him less mystical and more rational.⁴¹ It is clear here that Massignon does not see these two schools of monism as compatible. His view is likely inspired by Sirhindī. On the other hand, we could also say that

exists because they are overwhelmed by their concentration on God. Al-Ghazālī categorized al-Bisṭāmī as belonging to this group. See, al-Palimbānī, *Siyār al-Sālikīn*, vol. 3, 102.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ In particular, al-Palimbānī mentions al-Ghazālī’s *Mishkāt al-Anwār*, *Maqṣad al-Aqṣā’* and the chapters on *shukr*, *tawakkul* and *maḥabbah* in the *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn*; see Ibid., vol. 3, 82.

because Massignon proposes that *tawhīd*, according to al-Ghazālī, passes from the unity of experience to the unity of existence, then the two schools could in fact be compatible. Consequently, al-Ghazālī might not agree with a strict categorization of the ṣūfī concept of *tawhīd*, because both aforementioned forms of *tawhīd* are part of the mystical experience of all great ṣūfīs.

However, I suggest that Sirhindī's view that al-Ghazālī only belonged to the *waḥdat al-shuhūd* school is still legitimate because al-Ghazālī's statements about the possibility of *waḥdat al-wujūd*—as interpreted by either al-Palimbānī or Massignon—are still ambiguous. Based on my own reading of the *Iḥyā'* and the *Mishkāṭ al-Anwār*, I have come to the same conclusions as 'Afīfī, namely that in neither work do we find statements which denote *waḥdat al-wujūd*.⁴² However, if we read the *Mishkāṭ al-Anwār* closely, we can find some statements which are open to such an interpretation. To a certain point, al-Ghazālī's statements could resemble a doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, but it is still an ambiguous *waḥdat al-wujūd*. I think that, to conceptualize the real *waḥdat al-wujūd*, one would have to make a brave rupture with the theology of the past. And, this courageous step was remarkably made by Ibn 'Arabī who therefore constructed the finest notion of it. If Ibn 'Arabī had not transcended the Ash'arīs, the finest *waḥdat al-wujūd* would not have been discovered.

The real, striking, characteristics of the school of *waḥdat al-wujūd* are clearly underlined by Shāh Walī Allāh al-Dihlawī. From him we learn that *waḥdat al-wujūd*

⁴² See Mokad Arfa Mensia, "La Voie de Hallaj et la voie d'Ibn 'Arabi," in *Consciousness and Reality: Studies in Memory of Toshihiko Izutsu*, ed. Sayyid Jalal al-Din al-Ashtiyani et.al. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1998), 414.

is characterized by three points. The first is that a ṣūfī believe that the only existence is the existence of God; thus, the external existences (the phenomenal world) are manifestations of God. The second is that a ṣūfī view the relationship between God and the phenomenal world as, for instance, the existential relationship between a wave and the sea. The third is that one must see the phenomenal world as only made up of accidents, regardless of whether they are corporeal things or real accidents.⁴² It seems to me that, in al-Ghazālī's works, these three key features of *waḥdat al-wujūd* do not materialize at all. Yes, al-Ghazālī sometimes expresses himself in such a way as might imply the first aforementioned point, but he does not explicitly indicate that all of the phenomenal world is a manifestation of God. In Ibn 'Arabī's school, it is clear that the phenomenal world is regarded as the manifestation of the divine names and attributes. The second requirement, namely that expressed through the metaphor of the wave and the sea (or any similar metaphor), is not found in al-Ghazālī's works. Indeed, this point clearly seeks to emphasize that the existence of the phenomenal world in fact emanates from the existence of God through His manifestation. The third point is a theological theory of Ibn 'Arabī's, which transcends Ash'arism and which is also absent from al-Ghazālī's work. The Ash'arīs believed that the phenomenal world consists of atoms and accidents. Al-Ghazālī supports this position by refuting those (perhaps the Ḥanbalīs) who felt that employing the terms "atom" and "accident" was religiously dangerous because they were words of foreign origin and not used

⁴² See A. 'Afīfī's introduction to Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī, *Mishkāt al-Anwār*, ed. A. 'Afīfī (Cairo: al-Dār al-Qawmīyah, 1964), 15-16.

⁴³ See Shāh Walī Allāh al-Dihlawī, *al-Taḥfīmāt al-Ilāhīyah* (Bijnaur: Madīnah Barqī Press, 1936), vol. 1, 182-185.

by the Companions of the Prophet. He maintains that it is permissible to use them for the sake of the rational approach to understand God.⁴⁴ Both atoms and accidents are created through God's power and need to be recreated at every instant. He rejects the position of the Ḥanbalīs who hold that the creation of the phenomenal world happened through the word "be!" (*kun*),⁴⁵ which contains the voice and letters of God, and that God utters this word in every instance to every single thing in His creation. He also says that Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal mistakenly understood the verse about creation in a literal way.⁴⁶ The true interpretation is that God created every thing through His power, and that this is best explained by His creation of atom and accident.

It appears that Ibn 'Arabī was also, to a point, influenced by the Ash'arī notion of atom and accident. His objection to the atom as understood by the Ash'arīs, however, was that, while renewed existence of the accident is needed at every instant, the atom can sometimes retain its existence for more than two instants.⁴⁷ Thus, the atom may exist side by side with the Divine Essence. Therefore, he attempted to solve this problem by maintaining that all of the phenomenal world is made up only of accidents which need to be recreated at every instant through the self-closure and disclosure of God.⁴⁸ It does not mean however that Ibn 'Arabī simply replaces the atom of the Ash'arīs with the essence of God, rather he just wants to emphasize that only this Divine Essence causes the phenomenal world to exist. Here, it is clear that Ibn 'Arabī—unlike al-Ghazali, who

⁴⁴ al-Ghazālī, *Qawā'id al-'Aqā'id*, 90-1.

⁴⁵ Q: 16: 40.

⁴⁶ al-Ghazālī, *Qawā'id al-'Aqā'id*, 134.

⁴⁷ Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikām*, 145.

maintains that God's creation is through His power—believes that it is caused by God's emanation. I believe that al-Ghazālī failed to articulate this key point of *waḥdat al-wujūd* because he was still more heavily influenced by Ash'arism.⁴⁹ Thus, it is understandable that there are, in al-Ghazālī's opinion, other existences which exist side by side with God, even though they are not eternal but created. For this reason, Sirhindī's conclusion that al-Ghazālī belonged to the school of *waḥdat al-shuhūd* is still accurate.

Indeed, categorizing ṣūfī mystical concepts of God is not an easy task; not only a careful and a close reading of ṣūfī texts is needed, but also an open mind. We are right to wonder why both al-Palimbānī and Massignon assign al-Ghazālī to the school of *waḥdat al-wujūd* and we should question their objectivity when it comes to this issue. I think that because, for al-Palimbānī, *waḥdat al-wujūd* is the highest state of *tawḥīd*, he seeks the legitimization of al-Ghazālī. Another reason for al-Palimbānī's characterization stems from his great admiration for al-Ghazālī which keeps him from belittling his mystical thought, and thus his solution is to elevate al-Ghazālī to the level of Ibn 'Arabī. In the case of Massignon, the highest mystical state is *waḥdat al-shuhūd*, which he attributed to al-Ḥallāj. Thus, to place al-Ghazālī in the school of *waḥdat al-wujūd* is to make him less original than al-Ḥallāj in terms of mystical experience.

Therefore, with regard to the concept of God according to the Shādhilī Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh, if we refer to al-Palimbānī's view that his works are only recommended for lower level ṣūfīs, his position on *tawḥīd* in consequence is lower than *waḥdat al-*

⁴⁹ Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikām*, 125-126.

wujūd. But, al-Palimbānī did not call this lower level *waḥdat al-shuhūd*. His failure to use this term is understandable since it, in fact, could not be found in the works of the earlier ṣūfis and was only first clearly expressed by al-Simnānī⁵⁰ and then by Aḥmad Sirhindī, who mentions it in his *Maktūbāt*, mostly written in Persian. Nevertheless, it is likely that he was aware that there was a level of monism lower than *waḥdat al-wujūd*. Thus, Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh seems, for al-Palimbānī, to participate in this kind of monism. He seems to be right to class Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh in the school of unity of experience, because the state of *shuhūd*, or experiencing or witnessing God, becomes the core of his message. Moreover, the three key characteristics of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, as outlined by Shāh Walī Allāh, are not present in his works.

2. The influence of Ibn ‘Arabī’s school

a. al-Burhānpūrī

Muḥammad ibn Faḍl Allāh al-Burhānpūrī was the author of the *Tuḥfah al-Mursalāh ilā Rūḥ al-Nabī* or “The Gift Addressed to the Spirit of the Prophet.” A.H. Johns believes that al-Burhānpūrī himself wrote a commentary on this work entitled, *al-Ḥaqīqah al-Muwāfiqah lil-Sharī‘ah* or, “Reality Brought into Harmony with Law.”⁵¹ Al-Burhānpūrī’s *Tuḥfah al-Mursalāh* and its commentaries also seem to have influenced al-Sammān. Even though al-Sammān did not meet him, and despite the fact that al-Burhānpūrī’s name is not mentioned in al-Sammān’s available works, it appears that al-Burhānpūrī had a particular influence on al-Sammān and his disciples. We learn from al-Palimbānī that al-Sammān asked him to study the

⁴⁹ About his great position in Ash‘arism, see R.M. Frank, *Al-Ghazālī and the Ash‘arite School* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1994), 3-121.

⁵⁰ Massignon, *La Passion de Husayn Ibn Mansūr Hallāj*, vol. 2, 68.

Tuḥfah al-Mursalāh with Sayyid Shaykh ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn al-‘Azīz al-Maghribī.⁵² In addition, al-Palimbānī insists that the *Tuḥfah* was very important for the study of ‘ilm al-ḥaqīqah.⁵³ Thus, this work was acknowledged as higher in quality than the *Ḥikam* of Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh. A clear indication of its importance can be seen in the seven grades of existence theorized by al-Burhānpūrī, which are reflected in the thought of his two Indonesian disciples, al-Palimbānī and Nafīs al-Banjārī. It must be noted that the seven grades of existence had already been popular among previous Indonesian mystics, such as Shams al-Dīn al-Sumaṭrānī, ‘Abd Ra’ūf al-Singkel, and even for the Javanese Kejawen Muslims.⁵⁴

Johns convincingly argues that the work of al-Burhānpūrī represents an attempt on the part of the orthodox ṣūfī tradition to restrain the extremist tendencies of certain groups of mystics in India and elsewhere.⁵⁵ In addition, Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī (d. 1666), who condemned Ḥamzah al-Fanṣūrī and Shams al-Dīn al-Sumaṭrānī for being pantheistic, does not suspect al-Burhānpūrī, but rather regards him as the true teacher of Ibn ‘Arabī’s doctrine on God.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, al-Rānīrī contradicts himself in his attack on Ḥamzah al-Fanṣūrī and Shams al-Dīn al-Sumaṭrānī, which ends up being, in effect, an indirect assault on al-Burhānpūrī.

⁵¹ See Muḥammad ibn Faḍl Allāh Burhānpūrī, *Tuḥfah al-Mursalāh ilā Rūḥ al-Nabī* (The Gift Addressed to the Spirit of the Prophet), trans. A.H. Johns (Canberra: Australian National University, 1965), 5.

⁵² al-Palimbānī, *Siyār al-Sālikīn*, vol. 3, 187.

⁵³ Ibid., vol. 3, 186.

⁵⁴ The syncretic mixture of Islam with Hinduism and Javanese Shamanism is called *Kejawen Islam*. The influence of the seven grades existence (*martabat tujuh*) is still visible in the Kraton Joyga traditions. See Mark R. Woodward, *Islam in Java: Normative Piety and Mysticism in the Sultanate of Yogyakarta* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1989).

⁵⁵ Burhānpūrī, *Tuḥfah al-Mursalāh ilā Rūḥ al-Nabī*, 5.

⁵⁶ According to al-Rānīrī, al-Burhānpūrī said that even in the state of *fanā’*, a proper ṣūfī never thinks that the existence of God becomes the existence of the world or vice versa that the existence of the world becomes the existence of God. See Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī, *Twee malaise Geschriften van Nūruddīn al-Rāniri*, ed. P. Voorhoeve (Leiden: Brill, 1955), 26.

Although Johns was doubtful about al-Burhānpūrī's influence on Shams al-Dīn al-Sumatrānī, there is proof in the latter's own writings that he was acquainted not only with al-Burhānpūrī, but also with al-Burhānpūrī's son.⁵⁷ Thus, it seems that Shams al-Dīn al-Sumatrānī owes much to al-Burhānpūrī.

It seems, however, that the *Tuḥfah* was regarded by some as unorthodox, and that it gave rise to an acute polemic amongst Muslims of al-Burhānpūrī's and later generations, especially in Southeast Asia. Did al-Burhānpūrī belong to the extremist tendency, which tended to be pantheistic? It appears that Burhānpūrī's own commentary, which was intended to clarify his *Tuḥfah*, did not satisfy his Southeast Asian readers, or perhaps the commentary itself did not reach them. Some Southeast Asian Muslims were eager to better understand the real teachings on mysticism in the *Tuḥfah*, since the work was regarded as too brief and unclear, and thus in need of further clarification. For this reason, Drewes points out that some Indonesians asked Shaykh Aḥmad al-Qushāshī to clarify the problems in Burhānpūrī's text for them. In response, al-Qushāshī instructed Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī to write the commentary on the *Tuḥfah*.⁵⁸ Even this commentary, however, failed to satisfy them and the resulting polemic encouraged al-Nābulusī to try his hand. Al-Palimbānī in fact declares that, after consulting the available commentaries on the *Tuḥfah al-Mursalāh*, the commentary of al-Nābulusī is the best.⁵⁹

If we look at the polemic, which revolved around the concept and adherents of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, it is possible to divide them into two groups: the extreme and the

⁵⁷ See Shams al-Dīn al-Sumatrānī MS. Or. L.B. 1332; Shams al-Dīn quotes Shaykh Muḥammad, the son of Shaykh Faḍl Allāh; see, also C.A.O. van Nieuwenhuijze, *Šamsu 'l-Dīn van Pasai; Bijdrage tot de Kennis der Sumatraansche Mystiek* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1945).

⁵⁸ See G.W.J. Drewes, "[Review:] A.H. Johns, Malay Sufism," *BKI* 115 (1959): 280-304.

moderate. The extreme are those who consider the existence of God to be the only true existence, and negate all existences other than that of God. The phenomenal world is thus considered nothing more than an extension of the essence of God. This conviction is rejected by the moderate faction, whose members maintain the distinction between the phenomenal world and God. Al-Burhānpūrī is sometimes classified as extreme on the basis of certain statements in his *Tuhfah*. This is why, according to scholars such as Rinkes, Johns and Martin, the commentary by al-Kūrānī was intended to correct the heterodox or pantheistic understanding to which al-Burhānpūrī's text had given rise in the archipelagos.⁶⁰

Al-Burhānpūrī himself, in fact, was not really extreme. Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī, as we noted earlier, considered him a true adherent of *wujūdīyah*. Moreover, Johns identifies al-Burhānpūrī as an orthodox thinker. However, if the reader were only to look at the main body of the text of the *Tuhfah al-Mursalāh*—without any commentary—he would encounter certain “extreme tendencies.” As we know, in addition to explaining this phenomenal world as a manifestation of the divine attributes and names, some monist ṣūfīs claim that this phenomenal world is ‘*ayn al-ḥaqq*, meaning the essence of God or God Himself, which sounds pantheistic. Al-Burhānpūrī uses language to this effect. He may well have been inspired by al-Jīlī, although al-Jīlī in fact never made such a statement. He in fact said the exact opposite, “God is the essence of the phenomenal being.” As a result of this interpretation, al-Jīlī even goes further, “You yourself are God (*al-Ḥaqq*) with regard

⁵⁹ al-Palimbānī, *Siyār al-Sālikīn*, vol. 3, 186.

⁶⁰ See Martin van Bruinessen, “Kurdish ‘Ulama and their Indonesian Disciples,” in *Mullas, Sufis and Heretics: The Role of Religion in Kurdish Society: Collected Articles* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2000), 117.

to His existence in you.” Al-Jīlī’s statements as such in fact sound pantheistic. But al-Jīlī himself, as is noted by al-Nābulusī, condemned those who misunderstood the concept of the unity of existence.⁶¹ Al-Burhānpūrī’s statement, which seems in fact no more than an exchange of subject and predicate “the world is the essence of God (*al-‘ālam huwa ‘ayn al-Ḥaqq*)”⁶²—seems to be even more pantheistic and may be considered real pantheism, rejected by many ṣūfīs. Here we see how al-Burhānpūrī took an extreme approach in explaining the unity of existence. The objection to such a statement is surprising, because the earlier commentator of Ibn ‘Arabī, ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Kashānī, had already explicated such a statement. As we have seen, ‘Abd al-Razzāq sees all beings as an extension of the divine existence; He (God) is they (the beings) and they are He. This is the meaning of *lā huwa illā huwa; wa-kānā Allāh lā shay’a ma’ahu*, therefore, *wa-yabqā’ Allāh lā shay’a ma’ahu*. The phenomenal beings are only the determination of God, which is conditioned by definite time and the laws of nature. In reality, if all things return to the Divine, they become nothingness, just as in the beginning. Then, ‘Abd al-Razzāq concludes, “therefore you see that the creatures are the essence of the Truth.”⁶³ ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Kashānī may thus have inspired al-Burhānpūrī. Yet, why were so many ṣūfīs surprised by al-Burhānpūrī’s statement that “phenomenal beings are the essence of God?” This formulation may have led some ṣūfīs to think that God and the universe or all phenomenal being are identical, an idea which is pantheistic.

Al-Burhānpūrī’s pantheistic statement was being continuously debated among the followers of Aḥmad al-Qushāshī and Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī. One of al-

⁶¹ al-Nābulusī, *al-Wujūd al-Ḥaqq*, 251-252.

⁶² Burhānpūrī, *Tuḥfah al-Mursalāh ilā Rūḥ al-Nabī*, 1-6.

Qushāshī's students, Yūsuf al-Makassarī al-Khalwatī, attempted to clarify it. Al-Makassarī's clarification was written in response to al-Kūrānī's commentary on the *Tuhfah*. At first, al-Makassarī does not reject al-Burhānpūrī's assertion but tries to better explain it or clear up any misunderstanding. It is right, says al-Makassarī, that the phenomenal world is '*ayn al-ḥaqq*', as Burhānpūrī said, and this is shown in the affirmation "there is no God but God," which means that there is only one existence, not two.⁶⁴ However, al-Makassarī emphasizes that God cannot be considered as created being with regard to His essence, but He can be considered as such with regard to the appearance of His existence.⁶⁵ Apart from considering this phenomenal world as the appearance of the existence of God, al-Makassarī also uses a synonym for it, namely, *ẓill* or shadow of the absolute existence. For this reason, he denied or objected to considering the universe *ayn al-Ḥaqq* in all respects, except with regard to His appearance or shadow.

b. 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī

Al-Nābulusī's approach to the subject of the existence of God, in my opinion, can be considered moderate because he always made an effort to remind the *ṣūfīs* not to be confused into thinking that the essence and the existence of God and the phenomenal world are identical. In addition, elsewhere in his book, *al-Wujūd al-Ḥaqq*, he asserts that the *ṣūfīs* must not think that God is "existence" as such. The concept of existence is only a rational human endeavor to understand God, the real entity of God is unknown and beyond human reason. This explanation certainly is not new because, as we have mentioned before, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī maintained

⁶³ al-Qāsim, *al-Kashf 'an Ḥaqīqat al-Ṣūfiyah*, 209.

⁶⁴ See Shaykh Yūsuf al-Makassarī, *Tāj al-Asrār*, MSS. Yusuf Manuscript of the Nabila Lubis Collection.

that the term *wujūd* to describe God was unanimously accepted by Muslim scholars.⁶⁶ Al-Nābulusī states that Muslims are not only prohibited from worshipping physical idols such as statues, but also mental idols which can be the inclination to think of God as “existence.” Misunderstanding the idea of the unity of existence may make some Muslims reluctant to perform religious prescriptions such as praying, fasting, paying the religious tax and pilgrimage—all of which are in fact obligatory for them.⁶⁷ Because of al Nābulusī’s caution in elaborating the teachings of Ibn ‘Arabī, the scholar Zakī Mubārak thinks that he had no role to play in the development of the theory of the unity of existence.⁶⁸ Mubārak seems, however, to be mistaken, for as Bakri Aladdin’s research shows, al-Nābulusī did in fact subscribe to the theory of *waḥdat al-wujūd*.⁶⁹ Al-Nābulusī reminds ṣūfis to respect the works of the important shaykhs, especially those of Ibn ‘Arabī.⁷⁰ In the case of *ḥulūl* (the “infusion” of God’s essence), for instance, he argues that it cannot be applied to God because it means a combination of two different essences.⁷¹ For him, the only real essence is God’s essence; the essences of the phenomenal world exist in the essence of God. If the essence of the phenomenal world is compared to the essence of God, it turns out to be pure non-existence (*al-‘adam al-maḥd*).⁷²

Al-Nābulusī had already written a treatise to clarify the unity of existence entitled *Īdāḥ al-Maqṣūd fī Waḥdat al-Wujūd*, which was on the list of ṣūfī manuals

⁶⁵ Ibid., 188.

⁶⁶ Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, vol. 1, 118-9.

⁶⁷ al-Nābulusī, *al-Wujūd al-Ḥaqq*, 249

⁶⁸ Zakī Mubārak, *al-Taṣawwuf al-Islāmī fī al-Adab wa-al-Akhlāq*, vol. 1 (Cairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī, 1954), 187-88.

⁶⁹ See Aladdin’s introduction to al-Nābulusī, *al-Wujūd al-Ḥaqq*, 74-80.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 183.

⁷¹ This opinion is based on Ibn ‘Arabī’s critique of al-Ḥallāj. About Ibn ‘Arabī’s position on al-Ḥallāj, see Mensia, “La Voie de Hallaj et la voie d’Ibn ‘Arabī,” 397-422.

drawn up by al-Sammān's student al-Palimbānī. Al-Nābulusī believed that what he set down in that that treatise had never been included in other ṣūfī literature. Thus, it seems that he claimed to have arrived at his own independent ideas. Al-Nābulusī tried to clarify the concept of *waḥdat al-wujūd* so that people would not fail to understand the distinction between the essence of God and that of the phenomenal world. His explanation of this subject is praised by both Henry Corbin and Marijan Molé.⁷³ According to al-Nābulusī, the form and the essence of the contingent existent are distinct from those of the eternal existence. The eternal existence derives from its own essence, whereas the contingent existence comes from outside itself. The eternal existence exists by His own essence (*'ayn dhātihi*), whereas the contingent existence exists by the essence of the eternal. However, the eternal is not the essence of the contingent (temporal), and the contingent is not the essence of the eternal. The difference lies in the fact that the eternal exists without condition, whereas the temporal is conditioned by the essence of the eternal. Thus, it seems that al-Nābulusī tried to solve the problem at the heart of the ongoing debate on this matter. His stance however may be influenced by his background in the Mujaddidiyah- Naqshbandiyah, founded by Aḥmad Sirhindī.⁷⁴ This may account for his insistence on the distinction between the existence of the absolute and that of the temporal.

II. The seven grades *martabat tujuh*

⁷² al-Nābulusī, *Kitāb al-Faḥ al-Rabbānī*, 107.

⁷³ Molé, *Les Mystiques musulmans*, 121-2; see Henry Corbin, *Histoire de la philosophie islamique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), 430.

⁷⁴ al-Nābulusī, *Kitāb al-Faḥ al-Rabbānī*, 107.

The partisans of the unity of existence do not believe in the concept of creation “ex- nihilo,” but rather in the ontological existence of the Divine. This doctrine certainly contradicts Ash‘arī as well as Māturīdī dogma to the effect that “at some moment in a very distant past, God created of universe out of nothing.” In support of their position, the Ash‘arīs put forward the atomic theory of matter, maintaining that the physical world is composed of indivisible particles that God created out of nothing.⁷⁵ The followers of *wahdat al-wujūd*, however, maintain that creation occurs through the Divine self-revealing (*al-tajallī*). It is God who makes it come into existence from what already existed in His mind (in His inner knowledge). Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī says, “To know something means to acquire the forms that are known (knowledge) in the mind. Similarly, in the view of God, the forms of the beings are drawn in the essence of the almighty,”⁷⁶ He further clarifies, “And His knowledge of them is the cause of their beings or existences.”⁷⁷ Therefore, God’s creating is not similar to man’s creating, which needs a long process of production from something that essentially does not exist in him (man). No doubt, this theory was more or less influenced by the concept of emanation, which was already elaborated by al-Kindī, al-Fārābī and particularly Ibn Sīnā, who introduced an elaborate theory of emanations, intellects and existences. However, the ṣūfīs do not follow these philosophers blindly; rather, they have modified the schema in order to satisfy their mystical world-view. The result is neither a philosophical teaching, nor a mix of mysticism and philosophy, but “a mystical teaching sustained by the

⁷⁵ See Michael Marmura, “God and his creation: two medieval Islamic views,” in *Introduction to Islamic Civilization*, ed. R.M. Savory (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 46.

⁷⁶ Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī, “al-Hādiya,” in *al-Murāsālāt bayna Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī wa-Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī*, 151.

method of philosophy and theology.”⁷⁸ For instance, the ṣūfīs of this school reject the theory of the ten intellects or the theory of the chain of causes which, according to them, reduces the nature of God as the absolute creator who in fact is able to create though His essential creative emanation (*al-fayḍ al-wujūd al-dhāt*)⁷⁹ without the intermediacy of the first intellect.⁸⁰ Even though, in some ways, ṣūfīs certainly have certain points in common with the philosophers regarding emanation (*fayḍ al-aqdas*), or the eternity of the world, which is exposed by Ibn ‘Arabī and his followers⁸¹ (and even perhaps anticipated by Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī),⁸² nevertheless they differ from them greatly on the concept of divine manifestation. The ṣūfīs, and particularly the followers of Ibn ‘Arabī, provide a theory of God’s emanation as a process of creation over several stages. The best known is the theory of the seven grades of existences, which was adopted by most ṣūfīs in the time of al-Sammān.

The creation of this phenomenal world is considered as a manifestation of God and His divine attributes and names. In explaining this event, the ṣūfīs use several technical terms such as *aḥadīyah*, *waḥdah*, *wāḥidīyah*, *‘ālam al-arwāḥ*, *‘ālam al-mithāl*, *‘ālam al-ajsām*, *al-Insān al-Kāmil*, etc. Although some of the terms are in fact

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ We can see this, for example, in how Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī uses philosophy to support his mystical theories or in how Ibn ‘Arabī as his master uses the same method. See G. Schubert, ed., *al-Murāsālāt bayna Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī wa-Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī*, 52. See also James Winston Morris, “Ibn ‘Arabī and His Interpreters,” *JAOS* 106 (1986), 739.

⁷⁹ Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī, “al-As’īlah,” in *al-Murāsālāt bayna Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī wa-Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī*, 66.

⁸⁰ See al-Lārī’s commentary in ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jāmī, *The Precious Pearl = Al-Jamī’s al-Durrah al-Fākhīrah : Together with His Glosses and the Commentary of ‘Abd al-Ghafūr al-Lārī*, trans. Nicholas Heer (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1979), 150.

⁸¹ According al-Qūnawī, the great sphere (*al-falak al-a’zam*) is eternal since it does not have elements; whereas, the seven planets are not eternal since they have elements and their movements are compulsory; al-Qūnawī, “al-Hādiya,” in *al-Murāsālāt bayna Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī wa-Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī*, 168-9.

⁸² See Eric L. Ormsby, *Theodicy in Islamic Thought : The Dispute over al-Ghazālī’s “Best of All Possible Worlds”* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), 36.

traceable to the Qur'ān,⁸³ Neoplatonic elements many have had a significant influence on their elaboration. Some early classic ṣūfīs had in fact already attempted to elaborate such terms, but they did not achieve as refined and systematic an explanation as did Ibn 'Arabī and his followers. Al-Makkī, for instance, recognized that *aḥadīyah* is the highest level of our understanding of God, but he does not clarify further what he means by this.⁸⁴ This is understandable since, in order to elaborate this concept, a certain openness to philosophy is necessary.

Ṣūfīs differ with regards to the number of levels of existence at which God manifests Himself. Some say six, such as al-Jāmī, while others say seven, such as al-Burhānpūrī. Al-Sammān is not explicit as to how many of these levels there are, but it appears that he was well acquainted with the theory. The fact that he does not elaborate on the theory in detail in his *al-Futūḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*, may well be because this treatise was addressed to those who already understood the theory and the technical terms involved. Even al-Sammān's own students studied this theory through al-Burhānpūrī's *Tuḥfah al-Mursalah*. As we mentioned earlier, al-Palimbānī was directed by al-Sammān to study the *Tuḥfah* with 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn al-'Azīz al-Maghribī⁸⁵ due to its importance for understanding '*ilm al-ḥaqīqah*'.⁸⁶ It may even have been an important source for al-Sammān himself. The seven grades of existence, as described by al-Burhānpūrī, would therefore have been absorbed by

⁸³ Landolt, "Der Briefwechsel zwischen Kāšānī und Simnānī," 49.

⁸⁴ According to al-Makkī, our knowledge of God can be of four kinds: 1) knowledge of unity (*tawḥīd*); 2) knowledge of union (*ittiḥād*); 3) knowledge of the unity in existence (*waḥdanīyah*); and 4) knowledge of the unity in essence (*aḥadīyah*). The highest of these is *aḥadīyah*; al-Makkī, *Qūt al-Qulūb*, vol. 2, 90.

⁸⁵ al-Palimbānī, *Siyār al-Sālikīn*, vol. 3, 187.

⁸⁶ Ibid., vol. 3, 186.

his two Indonesian disciples, al-Palimbānī and Nafīs al-Banjārī, and the Javanese Kejawen Muslims.⁸⁷ Another remarkable fact is that Aḥmad al-Tijānī also shared with al-Sammān's Southeast Asian Students in adopting the concept of the seven levels of existence (called *martabat tujuh* in Jawi).⁸⁸ In addition, al-Sammān seems to have been acquainted with other important sources for this doctrine, including those al-Burhānpūrī himself may have used to construct the seven grades of existence, such as the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* and *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah* of Ibn 'Arabī, the *Insān al-Kāmil* of al-Jīlī, and perhaps also the *Naqd al-Nuṣūṣ* of al-Jāmī.

Scholars note that the doctrine of *martabat tujuh* is typical of Indonesian mysticism, for this doctrine can be found in the works of most Indonesian ṣūfīs. Though this doctrine goes back to al-Burhānpūrī, it came to Java, according to Johns and Simuh, through the works of Shams al-Dīn al-Sumaṭrānī and 'Abd al-Ra'ūf al-Singkelī, especially through the Shaṭṭārīyah *ṭarīqah*. The Shaṭṭārīyah *ṭarīqah* was propagated in Priyangan by 'Abd al-Muḥyī, a student of 'Abd al-Ra'ūf. It was in Tegal that the first Javanese language edition of the *Tuḥfah* appeared.⁸⁹ If we were to say that the doctrine is originally Shams al-Dīn al-Sumaṭrānī's or, in other words, that al-Burhānpūrī borrowed from al-Sumaṭrānī, then al-Burhānpūrī must have understood Malay, for some works of al-Sumaṭrānī's are written in Malay. This would not be an impossibility, for, according to Voorhoeve, some Indian Muslims in

⁸⁷ Woodward, *Islam in Java*, 177-200.

⁸⁸ Barādah, *Jawāhir al-Ma'ānī wa-al-Bulūgh al-Amānī*, vol. 2, 253.

⁸⁹ Burhānpūrī, *Tuḥfah al-Mursalāh ilā Rūḥ al-Nabī*, 11. See also Simuh, *Mistik Islam kejawen Raden Ngabehi Ranggawarsita: Suatu studi terhadap Serat Wirid Hidayat Jati* (Jakarta: Penerbit Universitas Indonesia, 1988), 280.

Gujarat learned Malay from the Malay population living there.⁹⁰ In addition, a few of al-Sumaṭrānī's works were written in Arabic and Burhānpūrī could have had access to these.

On the other hand, it is more likely that al-Sumaṭrānī is the one who borrowed from al-Burhānpūrī. This can be supposed for two reasons. First, al-Burhānpūrī died in 1620, and al-Sumaṭrānī, according to Nieuwenhuijze, died in 1630;⁹¹ thus, al-Sumaṭrānī lived ten years longer than al-Burhānpūrī and it was probably during this time that he wrote his treatise. Secondly, Johns tells us that the work of al-Burhānpūrī was known in Aceh before 1619; this would suggest that the concept of *martabat tujuh* actually came from al-Burhānpūrī. Drewes, moreover, tends to believe that it is al-Sumaṭrānī who quotes Burhānpūrī.⁹²

According to al-Burhānpūrī, there are seven grades of existences: *aḥadīyah*, *waḥdah*, *wāḥidīyah*, *'ālam al-arwaḥ*, *'ālam al-mithāl*, *'ālam al-jasad* and *Insān al-Kāmil*. These terms were not coined by al-Burhānpūrī, but had been used by previous ṣūfīs such as Ibn al-'Arabī, al-Jīlī and others. It appears that al-Burhānpūrī might have borrowed them through the works of the great Naqshbandī author al-Jāmī, especially his *Naqd al-Nuṣūṣ* and *Lavāyih*. Al-Jāmī, however, does not talk about seven grades but six: first determination (*ghayb al-awwal*), second determination (*ghayb al-thānī*), *'ālam al-arwāḥ*, *'ālam al-mithāl*, *'ālam al-ajsām*, *al-Insān al-Kāmil*. In his epistle, *al-Futūḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*, al-Sammān is not explicit as to the number of levels he recognizes, but rather randomly mentions the *aḥadīyah*, *wāḥidīyah*, *'ālam al-arwaḥ*,

⁹⁰ See Voorhoeve's introduction to al-Rānīrī, *Twee malaise Geschriften van Nūraddīn al-Rānīrī*, ed. P. Voorhoeve, 7.

⁹¹ van Nieuwenhuijze, *Šamsu 'l-Dīn van Pasai*, 15.

'*ālam al-ma'ānī* and *ālam al-aḡsād*. Therefore, we find one term, '*ālam al-ma'ānī* (the world of concept) not found in al-Burhānpūrī, but present in al-Jāmī's *Naqd al-Nuṣūṣ*. On the other hand, the term *waḥdah*, which is found in al-Burhānpūrī, is not found in al-Sammān. The latter jumped from the first term *aḡadīyah* to the third term *wāḡidīyah*, avoiding completely the notion of *waḥdah*. Al-Jāmī likewise fails to mention the term *waḥdah* explicitly, as a level of determination, although for him (as perhaps for others) it could be subsumed within the level *wāḡidīyah*.

In stating that '*ālam al-ma'ānī* is wider and softer than '*ālam al-arwāḡ*, al-Sammān conforms to al-Jāmī's opinion that the '*ālam al-ma'ānī* is, in fact, another name for the second determination. Thus, it is still at the level of God, not that of the universe. According to al-Jāmī, the second determination has several names according to its function, one of them being '*ālam al-ma'ānī* or the world of concept. This latter constitutes the realization of the universal and particular concepts and their differentiation.⁹³

It appears that, on the question of the grades of existence, al-Sammān did not only rely on al-Burhānpūrī, as may be seen from the position of al-Palimbānī. To prove this assumption, let us compare the conceptions of al-Palimbānī and Nafīs al-Banjārī with those of al-Burhānpūrī.

Al-Burhānpūrī lists: *aḡadīyah*, *waḥdah*, *wāḡidīyah*, '*ālam al-arwāḡ*, '*ālam al-mithāl*, '*ālam al-jasad*, and *Insān*.⁹⁴

⁹² G.W.J. Drewes, *The Admonitions of Seh Bari: 16th Century Javanese Muslim Text, Attributed to the Saint of Bonan* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1969), 28.

⁹³ al-Jāmī, *Naqd al-Nuṣūṣ*, 39.

⁹⁴ Burhānpūrī, *Tuḡfah al-Mursalāh ilā Rūḡ al-Nabī*, 129-137.

Al-Palimbānī lists: *aḥadīyah*, *al-waḥdah* (*al-ḥaqīqah al-Muḥammadīyah*), *wāḥidīyah* (*al-ḥaqīqah al-insānīyah*), '*ālam al-arwāḥ* (*nūr Muḥammad*), '*ālam al-mithāl*, '*ālam al-ajsām*, and *martabat al-jāmi'* (*martabat al-Insān*).⁹⁵

Nafīs al-Banjārī lists: *aḥadīyah*, *waḥdah* (*ḥaqīqat Nabī Muḥammad/ nūr Muḥammad*), *wāḥidīyah*, '*ālam al-arwāḥ*, '*ālam al-mithāl*, '*ālam al-ajsād* and *Martabat Insān*.⁹⁶

The technical terms that both Nafīs al-Banjārī and al-Palimbānī used are similar to those of al-Burhānpūrī. There are, however, some differences. Al-Burhānpūrī calls the last stage simply *Insān*, whereas al-Palimbānī at least once calls the same stage '*ālam al-insān*, although elsewhere he uses the term *martabat insān*.⁹⁷ Nafīs al-Banjārī never calls the last stage '*ālam*, but rather *Martabat Insān*. Al-Palimbānī calls the first stage *aḥadīyah lil-aḥadīyah* on one occasion, but usually, along with al-Burhānpūrī and Nafīs al-Banjārī, he simply calls it *aḥadīyah*.⁹⁸ Al-Palimbānī moreover sets the reality of Muḥammad at the second stage of the *martabat tujuh*, whereas the light of Muḥammad is at the fourth stage ('*ālam al-arwāḥ*), sometimes even calling this stage the light of Muḥammad. Nafīs al-Banjārī, however, sets the reality of Muḥammad and the *nūr Muḥammad* together at the second level (*waḥdah*), rather than in the '*ālam al-mithāl*. All that he says of the '*ālam al-arwāḥ* is that it constitutes the reality of all spirit. These observations allow us to assume that he does not make a distinction between the reality of Muḥammad and the light of Muḥammad, showing some consistency on this point with al-

⁹⁵ al-Palimbānī, *Siyār al-Sālikīn*, vol. 4, 103-105, 265-266.

⁹⁶ al-Banjārī, *al-Durr al-Nafīs*, 23.

⁹⁷ al-Palimbānī, *Siyār al-Sālikīn*, vol. 4, 105.

⁹⁸ Ibid., vol. 4, 105 and 265.

Burhānpūrī, who also situates the *nūr Muḥammad* at the second level (*waḥdah*).⁹⁹ Al-Palimbānī seems to use other sources to elaborate the concept of the *Martabat Tujuh*, despite the fact that al-Palimbānī was the direct student of al-Sammān.

a. The three internal levels

The theosophical *ṣūfis* held that the manifestation of the Divine does not yet happen at the level of Essence (*aḥadīyah*). For them, it is only at the level of God's unity in existence—the levels of *waḥdah* and *wāḥidīyah*—that God's self-disclosure occurs. According to 'Ayn al-Qudāh al-Hamadhānī, Ibn 'Arabī, al-Jīlī and many other *ṣūfis*, God is, at this particular level (*aḥadīyah*), in a state of His absoluteness. He is without names and attributes here, being in *kunhu dhāt* (merely His essence or oneness of essence), considered as the first level. At this level, God cannot be known. This does not mean however that God and the names do not exist, but rather that they are hidden in the absolute unity of God. God actually has attributes and names at this level, but these attributes and names pass away in the unity of God or *aḥadīyah*. According to al-Jīlī, *aḥadīyah* is the abstract notion of oneness, and although nothing else is manifested in it, it marks the first approach of the first essence to manifesting itself. Al-Jīlī says its nature is analogous to a wall viewed from a distance as a single whole without reference to the clay, wood, bricks and mortar of which it is composed; the wall is "one" in respect to its being, a name for maturity (*jidārīyah*).¹⁰⁰ In the same way, *aḥadīyah* comprises all particulars as negated by the idea of unity.

⁹⁹ al-Banjārī, *al-Durr al-Nafīs*, 23.

¹⁰⁰ See R.A. Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1921), 95; see also Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God*, 167-170.

Aḥadīyah is the absolute in the state of unconditional transcendence. There is, as yet, no *tajallī*. *Tajallī* is only expected of it in the sense that *aḥadīyah* is to be the source of the *tajallī* which has not yet begun. And since there is actually no occurrence of *tajallī*, there is absolutely nothing recognizable here. At this level, God, as the divine essence, is forever isolated in unconditional transcendence. According to a *ḥadīth qudsī* God once said “I was a hidden treasure and I wished to be known, so I created the creation that I might be known.” God, at this level, wanted to be known, but He was still unknown because his *tanazzulāt* had not begun to occur yet. *Aḥadīyah* is the level at which God is hidden, but it is also the starting point of his determination. One commentator on Ibn ‘Arabī, ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Kashānī, affirms that *aḥadīyah* derived from the word *aḥad* in *Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ* and that *aḥad* is the predicate of *Huwa* which indicates the pure essence.¹⁰¹ Ibn ‘Arabī even emphasized how *Aḥadīyah* must be understood as the ultimate expression of the divine lack of condition. God, at this level, is not adored and worshipped because this is the level where He does not know those who worship Him. At this Level, He is not limited by any condition, including His Lordliness; whereas, He is not adored except when He assumes His Lordliness. “The oneness in essence (*aḥadīyah*) does not know you, and does not accept you.” The result is that worship does not attain the object of worshipping. One desires the thing which does not want one in return, and one does so incorrectly. This is the worship of the ignorant. The prayer of the worshipper thus has no connection with *aḥadīyah* because *aḥadīyah* is an experience limited to God alone.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Landolt, “Der Briefwechsel zwischen Kāšānī und Simnānī,” 49.

¹⁰² Ibn ‘Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah*, 1999, vol. 4, 315.

At the level of *waḥdah*, however, God's manifestation starts to happen. Now, although al-Sammān does not mention the second level *waḥdah* at all in his treatise *al-Futūḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*, this does not mean he wanted to reduce or to deny the importance of this level; rather, he may have simply neglected to mention it, since this term is known and used by ṣūfis to explain the first determination of God. This is why, in his other treatise, *Kashf al-Asrār bi-Mā yata'allaq bi-hi Ism al-Qaḥḥār*, al-Sammān mentions the three eternal levels, *aḥadīyah*, *waḥdah* and *wāḥidīyah*¹⁰³ as al-Burhānpūrī did. *Waḥdah* is considered by al-Sammān as the first determination, because at this level, God manifests Himself with His Names and attributes in universal terms.¹⁰⁴ God can, at this level, therefore be known because He is no longer confined to His absoluteness. Here there is actually occurrence of *tajallī*.¹⁰⁵

Then, al-Sammān also maintains that, at the level of *wāḥidīyah*, God's determination is no longer demonstrated in a universal manner, but in particulars or in details.¹⁰⁶ If, at the level of *waḥdah*, the first *tajallī* begins actually to occur in universals and not particulars, then on the level of *wāḥidīyah*, the *tajallī* occurs in the form of particulars.¹⁰⁷ Al-Jāmī gives a very good explanation of this level, but does not call it *waḥdah* like other ṣūfis, rather he simply calls it *al-ta'ayyun al-thānī* (the second determination). From this level emerge the established archetypes.

b. The four non-eternal levels (the four worlds)

¹⁰³ al-Palimbānī, *Siyār al-Sālikīn*, vol. 2, 248.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 248; see also Nafīs al-Banjārī, *al-Durr al-Nafīs*, 21.

¹⁰⁵ 'Ayn al-Quḍāh al-Hamadhānī, *Zubdat Al-Ḥaqā'iq* (Tehran: Maṭba'at Jāmi'at Ṭihrān, 1961), 39, 6-18. I use the translation in Landolt, "Ghazālī and 'Religionswissenschaft'," 57.

¹⁰⁶ al-Palimbānī, *Siyār al-Sālikīn*, vol. 2, 248.

¹⁰⁷ al-Banjārī, *al-Durr al-Nafīs*, 21.

While the first three levels are eternal and sometimes called "the Divine Levels," the last four are non-eternal. The terms used for these levels--*'ālam al-arwāḥ*, *'ālam al-mithāl*, *'ālam al-ajsād* or *ajsām* and *Insān*--convey the idea that they are created by God.

1. *'ālam al-arwāḥ*

The word *rūḥ*, the singular of *arwāḥ*, is found in the Qur'ān, but the Qur'ān does not provide an exact meaning. Moreover, the Qur'ān says that the *rūḥ* is the affair of God, in which none can intervene. Besides this, it seems that the Prophet Muḥammad himself never bothered to clarify the concept of *rūḥ*. The concept has, however, been discussed at length by Muslim scholars, although they are usually careful in interpreting it, since they do not want to deviate from the orthodox doctrine. According to D.B. Macdonald, scholars can be classified into two groups on the basis of how they interpret the concept: the orthodox scholars and the philosophers of a mystical bent. For the orthodox, who are less inclined towards philosophy, *rūḥ* might be corporeal, but something subtle and fine in contrast to the body, which is coarse (*kathīf*). According to al-Ghazālī, this is the general position of the *mutakallimūn*, while philosophical theologians deny its corporeality, preferring to call it simply "a substance" in the Aristotelian sense. The most important orthodox figures were Ibn Taymīyah and his student Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawzīyah. For them, *rūḥ* is corporeal, but of a different texture. Some classical ṣūfīs had actually taken this orthodox view on *rūḥ*, namely, al-Hudjvīrī, al-Qushayrī and al-Anṣārī among them.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ See D.B. Macdonald, "The Development of the idea of spirit in Islam," *Acta Orientalia* (Hungary) 9 (1931), 317.

The philosophical view, however, rejects the corporeality of *rūḥ*. Macdonald writes that al-Ghazālī saw *rūḥ* not as a body (as water in a vessel), nor as an accident (*'araḍ*), located in the heart or brain as knowledge, but as a substance, because it knows itself and its creator and perceives intelligible things (*al-ma'qūlāt*).¹⁰⁹ Al-Burhānpūrī and at least two of al-Sammān's students seem to have held positions similar to that of the philosophical view. They held that the *'ālam al-arwāḥ* has no form, no composition and no elements,¹¹⁰ meaning that *rūḥ* is not a corporeal thing, but a substance. The state of *'ālam al-arwāḥ* therefore, is invisible, because it is very simple and is manifest in itself. For while, in the *'ālam al-mithāl*, which comes next, things can be visible as indifferent figures, in the *'ālam al-arwāḥ*, nothing is visible.

From the term *'ālam*, it is to be understood that *'ālam al-arwāḥ* is a creation of God and not something identical with God. God, however, creates the *'ālam al-arwāḥ* without the intermediacy of a second cause.¹¹¹ Although it is created without intermediary, *'ālam al-arwāḥ* is still regarded as creation, but it is of a nature quite different from other creation. The Qur'ān says that God creates everything by the imperative *kun* (Be!), yet the *rūḥ* (spirit) is not created out of such a word, but rather from two attributes of God: beauty (*jamāl*) and majesty (*jalāl*).¹¹² If the spirit had been created by the word *kun*, it would be humiliated. This is avoided through

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 317-19.

¹¹⁰ al-Banjārī, *al-Durr al-Nafīs*, 21.

¹¹¹ al-Nābulusī, *al-Wujūd al-Ḥaqq*, 35; see also Addas, *Ibn 'Arabi*, 192, note 5.

¹¹² Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī (Mūllā Ṣadrā), *Mashā'ir*, trans. Ghulām Ḥusayn Āhanī (Iṣfahān : Intishārāt-i Dānishkadāh-i Adabīyāt-i Iṣfahān, 1961), 77; see also Idem, *Le Livre des pénétrations métaphysiques*, 151-53.

the medium of the beauty (*jamāl*) and majesty of God (*jalāl*).¹¹³ Hence, to repeat, according to al-Suhrawardī, there are two kinds of spirits. The first is the celestial human spirit (*rūḥ*) which relates to the divine imperative, whereas the second is the human animal spirit (*nafs*) which relates to the material world. When the celestial spirit descends to the human animal spirit, the latter becomes specifically human; it becomes soul (*nafs*). It is because of the union between the spirit and the soul that the subtle heart comes to exist.¹¹⁴

The *‘ālam al-arwāḥ*, according to al-Nābulusī, is like the *‘ālam al-ajsām* which has its own sky and earth. The sky of *‘ālam al-arwāḥ* is the intellect (reason), while its earth is the *nafs* (soul). When the Qur’ān speaks of God as being in the sky, this does not mean that God is in the sky of the *‘ālam al-ajsām*, but rather that God is above mankind, or precisely speaking, that He is above the sky of the *‘ālam al-arwāḥ*, namely, above intellect (reason).¹¹⁵ Al-Nābulusī seems to have been influenced on this point by al-Makkī. According to al-Makkī, *rūḥ* (spirit) was created from the *‘ālam al-malakūt*; whereas soul was created from earthly elements.¹¹⁶ Al-Nābulusī maintains that the spirit inhabiting all bodies is only one spirit; what is multiple in all bodies is the soul. The soul dies with the death of body, whereas the spirit does not die because it exists with God.¹¹⁷

The *‘ālam al-arwāḥ* is considered as the starting point of man’s existence. The religious consciousness of Islam is thus not a product of history, but rather a fact of

¹¹³ al-Jāmī, *Lavāmi’* va *Lavāyiḥ* in *Sih Risālah dar Taṣavvuf*, 132. See also ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī, *Kitāb ‘Awārif al-Ma‘ārif*, 310.

¹¹⁴ Isfarāyini, *Le Révélateur des mystères = Kāshif al-Asrār*, 57.

¹¹⁵ al-Nābulusī, *Kitāb al-Faḥ al-Rabbānī*, 182.

¹¹⁶ al-Makkī, *Qūt al-Qulūb*, vol. 1, 121.

¹¹⁷ al-Banjārī, *al-Durr al-Nafīs*, 22.

meta-history or it is trans-historic.¹¹⁸ This condition originated, according to al-Palimbānī, at the moment when God asked, “Am I not your Lord?” and man responded positively, “Yes, we bear witness [that this is so].”¹¹⁹ This covenant took place in the realm of spirit (*‘ālam al-arwāḥ*).

2 . *‘ālam al-mithāl*

Al-Sammān’s student al-Palimbānī describes the *‘ālam al-mithāl* as the multiplicity of *‘ālam al-arwāḥ*. He analogizes these two realms with the sea and waves. Although a wave, the *‘ālam al-mithāl* is multiple in appearance, it originates from the one, namely the sea (*‘ālam al-arwāḥ*). This means that *‘ālam al-arwāḥ* must come before *‘ālam al-mithāl*, since the wave cannot exist if there is no sea. *‘Ālam al-mithāl* is, furthermore, an intermediate world between *‘ālam al-arwāḥ* and *‘ālam al-aqsām* (the world of body). *‘Ālam al-mithāl* therefore comes after *‘ālam al-arwāḥ* but before *‘ālam al-aqsām*. The spirit (*rūḥ*) must come first in the hierarchy of existence by the imagination (*al-mithāl*). Take the concept of beauty as an example. Beauty comes after love. If there was no love, the idea of beauty would not exist. Likewise, the *‘ālam al-aqsām* cannot exist without the *‘ālam al-mithāl*. Body or corporeal being came to exist after it received a spirit (*rūḥ*) and the idea of its existence (*al-mithāl*).¹²⁰ And yet, it seems that there is little difference between the *‘ālam al-mithāl* and the *‘ālam al-arwāḥ*; both are subtle, not liable to partition. Al-Jāmī clarifies this in detail. *‘Ālam al-mithāl*, according to him, is a spiritual world consisting of luminous substance which, to a certain extent, may be perceived by the senses. It is similar to corporeal substance, while in respect to its luminous aspect, it is like a pure

¹¹⁸ Corbin, *Histoire de la philosophie islamique*, 16.

¹¹⁹ al-Palimbānī, *Siyār al-Sālikīn*, vol. 3, 2-3.

intellectual substance. But, it is neither a material composition, nor a purely intellectual substance, since it is an intermediary which separates the two (*rūḥ* and *jasad*). What is intermediate must, by definition, be something different from the two things that it separates, but it must also be, to a certain extent, similar to each of them. Nevertheless, it can be described as a luminous body in accordance with its potentiality. It is a border between the pure subtle substance and the rough corporeal substance. This realm is called *mithāl* because it consists of images or forms which are similar to the realm of body and because it is the first imaginal form in the presence of God's knowledge.¹²¹

It is not surprising, therefore, that some *sūfīs* and prophets have experienced visions in the *'ālam al-mithāl*. The angels sometimes appear in the image of human beings such as the Angel Gabriel in the image of a man, or the angel who gives advice in the image of Ibn Diḥyah al-Kalbī. Even when Moses wanted to see God, he saw fire near the tree; this image and others like it fall within the domain of *'ālam al-mithāl*.¹²² When the Prophet Muḥammad saw the Angel Gabriel in the form of a man, according to Ibn 'Arabī, this was not real, but imaginal.¹²³ The Angel Gabriel, of course, does not at all look like Ibn Diḥyah al-Kalbī. As an angel, Gabriel is luminous intellectual substance, but he appeared as Ibn Diḥyah al-Kalbī in the imaginal world (*'ālam al-mithāl*).¹²⁴ Similarly, some *ṣūfī* shaykhs, according to Sirhindī, were able to appear in several places at the same time, but these

¹²⁰ See Henry Corbin, *Avicenne et le récit visionnaire* (Paris : L'Île Verte, 1979), 85.

¹²¹ al-Jāmī, *Naqd al-Nuṣūṣ*, 59.

¹²² See Muḥammad Sharīf ibn al-Hiravī, *Anvārīyah : Tarjumah va Sharḥ-i Hikmat al-Ishrāq-i Suhrawardī*, ed. Ḥusayn Ziyā'ī (Tehran: Amīr Kabīr, 1979), 195-6.

¹²³ Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-Hikām*, 100.

¹²⁴ al-Jāmī, *Naqd al-Nuṣūṣ*, 52.

appearances actually took place in the *'ālam al-mithāl*.¹²⁵ The appearance of Khidr in different forms, as al-Qūnawī hints, is also in this realm (*al-mithāl*).¹²⁶

3. *'ālam al-aqsām*

The *'ālam al-aqsām*, al-Jāmī says, is the final stage of existence. Existence begins in the first realm (*'ālam al-arwāḥ*) and expands in the realm of the imaginal (*'ālam al-mithāl*), and finally achieves complete existence in the realm of bodies (*'ālam al-aqsām*). *'Ālam al-aqsām*, therefore, is regarded as the final appearance of existence.¹²⁷ We may safely assume that al-Sammān shared with al-Jāmī the position that this realm constitutes the final existence. Al-Sammān may also have shared with his student al-Palimbānī the assumption that *'ālam al-aqsām* is constituted of the four elements: water, fire, air and earth. This would be the result of the influence of Ibn 'Arabī, who always emphasized the importance of these four elements in his cosmology.

According to Ibn 'Arabī, the four elements emerged from the combination of the four natures: heat, cold, moisture and dryness. The element of fire is a result of the marriage between heat and dryness, that of air is a result of the marriage between heat and moisture, that of water is a result of the marriage between cold and moisture, and that of earth (soil) is a result of the marriage between cold and dryness. Ibn 'Arabī maintains that heat and cold are active principles, which he analogizes with the function of the husband; moisture and dryness are passive, analogous to the wife. Inasmuch as they are the active, heat and cold have options;

¹²⁵ Sirhindī, *Intikhāb-i Maktūbāt-i Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī*, vol. 2, 101.

¹²⁶ However, Sirhindī says that original existence of Khidr is in the *'ālam al-arwāḥ*, but he has the form of a corporeal being since he is the perfect man. See Patrick Franke, *Begegnung mit Khidr: Quellenstudien zum Imaginären im traditionellen Islam* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2000), 215.

whereas, their passive counterparts, moisture and dryness, have none. When fire is hot and dry, its heat comes from its “father’s” side and its dryness from its “mother’s.” If air becomes hot and moist, its heat derives from its father, while its moisture is a product of its mother’s side. Water is cold and moist: its coldness comes from its father’s side, and its moisture from its mother’s. Soil (earth) is cold and dry; its coldness emerges from its father, its dryness from its mother.¹²⁸ It appears that this theory owes much to the philosophers, although it differs with regards to how it emerges ontologically. For example, al-Fārābī, as A. M. Goichon indicated, held that the four elements appeared from the tenth intellect.¹²⁹ For the theosophical ṣūfīs, however, the four elements come directly from the world of similitude, not from the tenth intellect.

These four elements are not new among ṣūfīs. Al-Tirmidhī, for example, had used them as part of his concept of cosmology.¹³⁰ ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī also held that the mixture of these four elements produced inanimate, vegetative and animal beings. He also pointed to several verses from the Qur’ān which show the existence of the four elements in our body (namely, *Sūrah al-Raḥmān* and *Sūrah al-Hijr*).¹³¹ The Muslim philosophers and the ṣūfīs may well have borrowed this idea from outside the tradition because it was already widespread among the philosophers and the

¹²⁷ al-Jāmī, *Naqd al-Nuṣūṣ*, 58-59.

¹²⁸ Ibn ‘Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah*, 1999, vol. 1, 218-19.

¹²⁹ See A. M. Goichon, *La Distinction de l'essence et de l'existence d'après Ibn Sīnā (Avicenne)* (Paris: Desclée, de Brouwer, 1937), 227.

¹³⁰ Radtke, *al-Ḥakīm at-Tirmidī*, 61.

¹³¹ See ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī, *Maqāmāt al-Ṣūfiyah* (Risālat Maqāmat al-Ṣūfiya), ed. Emile Maalouf (Beirut: Dār al-Mashriq, 1986), 31.

religious thinkers of the pre-Islamic era. Al-Shahrastānī hinted that the notion of these four elements had been mentioned by the Ḥanīf and Pythagoreans.¹³²

These four elements, according to the theosophical ṣūfīs, are fundamental for the corporeal existence of the world. However, as al-Qūnawī expressed in his letter to Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (1201-1274), all things constituted out of these four elements are not eternal and will pass away. The seven planets likewise too are not eternal, because they consist of these four natural elements, but the great sphere (*al-falak al-a'zam*), remains unchanged since it is free from these natural elements.¹³³ As for the destruction of these seven planets, the classic Ash'arī al-Bāqillānī seems to agree with al-Qūnawī.¹³⁴ However, these four elements, for him, are not material things, but rather simple accidents. The Muslim theologians, however, do not see these four elements as the fundamental elements of corporeal being; rather, it is the atom that they regard as the fundamental element of everything.¹³⁵ Thus, al-Bāqillānī refuted the fundamental necessity of the four elements for corporeal things. In this regard, al-Bāqillānī says, "The Almighty is so powerful that He can create everything even without the accidents of these natural elements."¹³⁶

It is clear that al-Bāqillānī's position is typically Ash'arī and therefore emphasizes the unconditional power of God. However, in the context of God's creation, the Ash'arīs are known for their atomist tendency. This was criticized by Ibn 'Arabī because this atomist view does not situate God as the only absolute

¹³² al-Shahrastānī, *Livre des religions et des sectes*, vol. 2, 119, 211.

¹³³ al-Qūnawī, "al-Hādiya," in *al-Murāsālāt bayna Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī wa-Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī*, 168-9.

¹³⁴ See Muḥammad al-Bāqillānī, *Kitāb al-Tamhīd*, ed. Richard Joseph McCarthy (Beirut: al-Maktabah al-Sharqīyah, 1957), 48-9.

¹³⁵ al-Bājūrī, *Tuḥfat al-Murīd 'alā Jawharat al-Tawḥīd*, 115.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 38.

unique Being. According to the Ash'arīs, and as al-Bājūrī tells us, the existence of a thing consists of two elements: atom and accident created by God.¹³⁷ Accident cannot exist by itself and, in order to exist, it needs an atom. That is why the accident is described as *qā'im bi-ghayrihi*; whereas an atom can exist by itself (*qā'im bi-nafsihi*).¹³⁸ What God renews at every instant is the perpetual existence of the accidents and the atoms,¹³⁹ although atoms sometimes retain their existence for more than two instances.¹⁴⁰ This position is attacked by Ibn 'Arabī because he accuses the Ash'arīs in general of failing to see that the only existence that really exists is the existence of God or the Divine Essence. Ibn 'Arabī sees a perpetual coming into being which takes place through the self-disclosure and closure of God. All the essences of the world, which consist of accidents, in fact are caused to exist by a single Divine Essence. Thus, the only real existing essence is the essence of God. There is no other substance, side by side with the essence of God that exists.¹⁴¹ This position is also adopted by al-Sammān. He maintains that the existences of the created world must be caused to exist by a single essence and only this essence exists (God).¹⁴² His position is reiterated by his student Ṣiddīq 'Umar Khān who accuses those who think that there is another existence which exists side by side with God as being polytheists.¹⁴³ Thus, for this school of monism (*waḥdat al-wujūd*), the notion of atom is no longer important because it is part of the phenomenal

¹³⁷ Ibid., 115.

¹³⁸ See Ulrich Rudolph, *Al-Māturīdī und die sunnitische Theologie in Samarkand* (New York: E.J. Brill, 1997), 270.

¹³⁹ Ibn Ḥazm, *Kitāb al-Faṣl fī al-Milal wa- al-Ahwā' wa- al-Niḥal*, vol. 4, 69. See also 'Abd al-Malik al-Juwaynī, *Kitāb al-Irshād ilā Qawāṭi' al-Adillah fī Uṣūl al-I'tiqād* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1950) 44, 45, 377.

¹⁴⁰ Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-Hikām*, 145.

¹⁴¹ Corbin, *Creative Imagination in the Ṣūfism of Ibn 'Arabī*, 204-205.

¹⁴² al-Sammān, *al-Nafahāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 12-13.

world; both corporeal things and accidents, as Shāh Walī Allāh confirms, are considered as merely accidents.¹⁴⁴ Because they are merely accidents, they therefore vanish and re-exist again through the self-disclosure and closure of God at every instant. This is expressed clearly by al-Nābulusī who argues that both corporeal and accidental things are pseudo-eternal (*mutawwahamāt al-baqā*). Even though the corporeal realm is not eternal, it consists of a kind of pseudo-eternality because, once its corporeal existence vanishes, it renews itself again in another corporality. By the same token, the accidents which are either perceivable or intelligible and imaginable, are not eternal. However, the time of its existence is at the same time that of its extermination; this is why it is regarded as pseudo-eternal.¹⁴⁵

4. *Martabat Insan*

Theosophical Sufism classifies the world into two kinds: macrocosm and microcosm. According to Ibn 'Arabī, the macrocosm, which is called *al-'ālam al-kabīr*, refers to the entire universe: the earth, skies and every thing they contain, including the angels and all spiritual creatures. The microcosm or *al-'ālam al-ṣaghīr* refers only to man.¹⁴⁶ Man is a part of *'ālam al-kabīr* with regard to his physical origin, which comes from the four elements too. God wants to be known, wants to reveal His hidden treasure (i.e., His pure essence). In order to be known, God therefore creates the world (macrocosm) through the manifestation of His names and attributes. The world (macrocosm), however, cannot accept all the

¹⁴³ al-Banjārī, *al-Durr al-Nafīs*, 27.

¹⁴⁴ Shāh Walī Allāh al-Dihlawī, *al-Tafhīmāt al-ilāhīyah*, 188.

¹⁴⁵ al-Nābulusī, *al-Wujūd al-Ḥaqq*, 35-6.

¹⁴⁶ Ibn 'Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah*, 1999, vol. 2, 221.

manifestation of God. But, Adam is able to receive the whole manifestation of God. In Adam, the essence, the attributes and the actions which are in the presence of God (i.e., in God's Knowledge) can be manifested.

Ibn 'Arabī's approach in fact is not really original. The notion that God's attributes were manifested in Adam had already been espoused by Ibn Furak, two centuries before Ibn 'Arabī. In his book *Kitab Mushkil al-ḥadith: aw ta'wil al-akhbar al-mutashabihah*, he provides several interpretations of the ambiguous ḥadīth according to which God created Adam in His own image or form (ṣūratuhu). According to this author, one possible interpretation of this ḥadīth is that God created Adam by bestowing on him His divine attributes, making him different from other creatures. These attributes were: the living, knowing, powerful, listening, seeing, talking, and willing. Even though these attributes were only manifested in Adam in a relative way (not absolute), they stemmed from the attributes of God Himself.¹⁴⁷ Later, this idea was also adopted by Ibn 'Arabī's contemporary Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1256), who interprets the same ḥadīth by maintaining that when God created Adam, He created Adam in His own image. The words "His own image" (ṣūratuhu) here mean that God is manifested in Adam by His attributes.¹⁴⁸

Based on the above view, *insān* (man) is regarded as very important, unique and significant in Sufism. The most important function of the human being is to

¹⁴⁷ Abi Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Furak al-Iṣbahani al-Ash'ari. *Kitab Mushkil al-ḥadith : aw ta'wil al-akhbar al-mutashabihah* / ; taḥqiq wa ta'liq Daniyal Jimarayh. (Dimashq : al-Ma'had al-Faransi lil-Dirasat al-'Arabiyyah bi-Dimashq, 2003), 21-27.

¹⁴⁸ See Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Kitāb Manārāt al-Sā'irīn wa-Maqāmāt al-Ṭā'irīn* 58.

reflect the perfect and entire manifestation of God in the microcosm (*al-‘ālam al-ṣaghīr*), namely man. Man, as Ibn ‘Arabī says, is the best of God’s manifestations. For this reason, the Prophet said, “whoever knows himself, he will know his God.”¹⁴⁹ Man and other phenomenal worlds, however, have different capacities for such divine manifestation. In man, the determination of God can be acquired perfectly. For example, when God manifested Himself as fire to Moses on Mount Sinai, the mountain itself had little capacity for accepting the divine manifestation; all it could do was shake and tremble, while the Prophet Moses lost consciousness. The mountain had no spirit to receive God’s form (*ṣūratuhu*), namely, the divine presence, which constitutes the divine essence, attributes and actions, while Moses was fully capable of receiving it.¹⁵⁰

With regard to his physical appearance, man is very small compared to the universe, but man has more capacity even than the universe because every part of his body constitutes the name of God.¹⁵¹ Ibn ‘Arabī maintains the superiority of human beings over all other creatures, ranging from angels and *jinn*s to animals, plants and inanimate things. Ibn ‘Arabī relates a *ḥadīth* where the angels asked God if He had created something superior to fire. God said, “yes” and that this creation was water. The angels then asked God whether He had created something superior to water. God confirmed this and said that it was air. The angels next asked God whether He had created something superior to air. God told them that He had created the descendants of Adam who were superior to air. God made the composition of human beings stronger than air and made water stronger than fire.

¹⁴⁹ Ibn ‘Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikām*, 69.

¹⁵⁰ Ibn ‘Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah*, 1999, vol. 4, 353.

Water is the greatest element in humans, while fire is the greatest element in *jinns*.¹⁵² Therefore, it is understandable, says Ibn 'Arabī, that God should say in the Qur'ān that the effort to deceive by Satan is weak (Q: 4:76), whereas human efforts are strong (Q. 12: 28). Intellectually, man is stronger than the *jinns* or Satan because of the dominance of the two elements of water and earth found in them, but not in *jinns*.¹⁵³ However, the ultimate superiority of man's strength rests on his spiritual purity. Ibn 'Arabī maintains that man shall remain superior to all creatures as long as he can release himself from the negative aspects of material things or be freed from material elements; namely, when he is in the purely intelligible state (*ḥālat al-'aqlīyah, nafsiyah mujarradah 'an al-māddat*). If a man attains this state, he is in the state of the best creation (*aḥsan al-taqwīm*). However, if he is controlled by material things, he risks losing this superiority.¹⁵⁴

II Muḥammad Nafīs al-Banjārī on *Fanā'* and *Baqā'* and the Four Ontological

Tawḥīds: The Divine Actions, Names, Attributes and Essence

Of the two works by al-Sammān that are available to me, neither offers much information on al-Sammān's view of the nature of God. For this, it is necessary to turn once again to the writings of al-Palimbānī and Nafīs al-Banjārī who have preserved some of his thought on this topic. What is immediately clear is that, despite the debt that al-Sammān owed to Ibn 'Arabī's concept of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, he seems to have tried to escape from the polemic over the issue. Al-Sammān appears to have taken great care in explaining the concept of the existence of God, such that

¹⁵¹ Ibid, vol. 3, 184.

¹⁵² Ibid, vol. 1, 205.

¹⁵³ Ibid., vol. 1, 206.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., vol. 4, 367.

ambiguous statements on this issue are hardly to be found in his works or in statements of his preserved by his followers.

From his *al-Nafahāt al-Ilāhīyah*, we learn that al-Sammān depicted the existence of God as the one true existence. Other existences or the existence of the phenomenal world are alternatively depicted as the shadow and the appearance of the existence of God. By describing the phenomenal world as a shadow, al-Sammān demonstrates a monist tendency, because a shadow has no existence at all. By the same token, when he depicts the existence of the phenomenal world as the appearance of God, that is, the appearance of the names and the attributes of God in this world, al-Sammān does not recognize a kind of independent existence of the phenomenal world.¹⁵⁵ In this regard, his position is the line with other theosophical *ṣūfīs* who promoted the idea of the unity of existence. According to the Shīʿī theosopher Ḥaydar Āmulī and others who followed Ibn ʿArabī, the term appearances (*mazāhir*) can describe the existence of the phenomenal world as an emanation from the existence of God. The ontological nature of this existence is analogized through the relation between wave and sea.¹⁵⁶

Al-Sammān avoids employing any ambiguous statements that may lead to pantheism. It seems that he is following al-Nābulusī's lead. This cautious attitude is also reflected in the position of al-Sammān's Indonesian student Muḥammad Arshad al-Banjārī. In his *Tuḥfat al-Rāghibīn* written in Malay, Arshad describes the followers of *waḥdat al-wujūd* as *wujūdīyah* "existentialist," due to the fact that their discourse is oriented towards the concept of existence (*wujūd*). Arshad al-Banjārī

¹⁵⁵ al-Sammān, *al-Nafahāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 12-13.

¹⁵⁶ Āmulī, *Kitāb-i Jāmi' al-Asrār*, 114.

classifies the *wujūdīyah* into two groups: monotheist existentialist (*wujūdīyat muwaḥḥid*) and atheist existentialist (*wujūdīyat mulhid*). The former (the right one) includes those who follow the teaching of ṣūfī masters; whereas the latter is simply wrong. The main mistake of the latter is that its members hold that the existence of God is the same as their existence. “We are the same with God and one existence with Him.”¹⁵⁷

The followers of Ibn ‘Arabī not only took the unity of existence as their “credo,” but also employed it in formulating their theory of contemplation. They invented the four ontological *tawḥīds*, which characterizes the Sammānīyah’s scheme of *tawḥīd*, namely, *tawḥīd al-af’āl*, *tawḥīd al-asmā’*, *tawḥīd al-ṣifāt* and *tawḥīd al-dhāt*. Al-Sammān, as the *Manāqib* explains, held the opinion that the four ontological *tawḥīds* were very useful in order to attain the station of *baqā’* and *fanā’*. This tendency also shows us how al-Sammān was consistent with his master al-Bakrī’s teachings. Al-Palimbānī informs us that the al-Bakrī wrote a treatise on the four ontological *tawḥīds* mentioned above, and that al-Sammān’s student Ṣiddīq ibn ‘Umar Khān wrote a commentary on it.¹⁵⁸ Nafīs al-Banjārī’s *al-Durr al-Nafīs* too deals mostly with the four ontological *tawḥīds*.¹⁵⁹ It is right to assume that al-Bakrī was inspired by al-Nābulusī, in view of the fact that ontological *tawḥīd* had already been

¹⁵⁷ See Muḥammad Arshad al-Banjārī, *Tuḥfat al-Rāghibīn* (Banjarmasin: Hadji Muhammad Kasirin, 1988), 1988, 30-1. The manuscript upon which this edition is based is in fact anonymous, leading some authors to attribute the work to al-Palimbānī. However, in my opinion, given that the book is published in Banjar and well-known in that area, the attribution to al-Banjārī is correct. For a different opinion than my own, see I. Katkova, “Revising History of Ṣūfism in Indonesia. 18th Century Treatise *Tuḥfat al-Rāghibīn fī Bayān-i Ḥaqīqat al-Īmān* by Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ṣamad al-Palimbānī,” *Manuscripta Orientalia* 13 (2007): 3-11. I would like to thank Steve Millier for bringing this article to my attention.

¹⁵⁸ al-Palimbānī, *Siyār al-Sālikīn*, vol. 3, 92.

¹⁵⁹ Muthalib, “The Mystical Thought of Muḥammad Nafīs al-Banjārī,” 59-74.

discussed by the latter in his work *al-Wujūd al-Ḥaqq*.¹⁶⁰ The theory of the four ontological *tawḥīds* can be found in the work Abū Ḥafs ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī, although we are not sure whether or not he influenced Ibn ‘Arabī and his school. Indeed, the ontological *tawḥīd* of the Sammānīyah is constructed within the framework of the unity of existence. However, in elaborating this concept, to a certain point at least, they have many things in common.

According to al-Suhrawardī, there are several degrees or levels on which a ṣūfī may find God. The lowest level is where a ṣūfī sees that there are no actions, except those of God. The second level is where the ṣūfī contemplates God’s attributes—*jalāl* and *jamāl*—and as a result sees all manifestations of such attributes in the universe as the attributes of God. Here, al-Suhrawardī differs from al-Sammān because al-Suhrawardī only emphasizes two important comprehensive attributes, namely, *jalāl* and *jamāl*. The third level is the *tajallī al-dhāt* (manifestation of essence) in which a ṣūfī contemplates his own existence and that of others, and then finds that only God has existence.¹⁶¹

In contemplating the four ontological principle of *tawḥīd*, Nafīs al-Banjārī employs the word *shuhūdkan*, a word also used by al-Nābulusī. The term *shuhūd* here reminds us of the theory of *waḥdat al-shuhūd*. However, it has nothing to do with this theory, but rather with *waḥdat al-wujūd* because, before they started to contemplate (*shuhūd*) the divine action, names, attributes and essence, these ṣūfīs already held the opinion that there is no real existence but that of God. God is considered as the sole existent, while things other than God are considered as pure

¹⁶⁰ al-Nābulusī, *al-Wujūd al-Ḥaqq*, 269-276.

¹⁶¹ Ibn ‘Abbād, *Sharḥ al-Ḥikam*, vol. 2, 40.

non-existence (*al-'adam al-mahd*).¹⁶² The existence of being other than God, with all its degrees and variety, is recognized only by human reason, not in reality.¹⁶³

From the four ontological principles of *tawhīd* of Nafīs al-Banjārī, we learn that *ṣūfī* contemplation here is also based on the rationalization of the existence of God. Here, we find that their understanding of God's existence is reflected by speculative Islamic theology and philosophy. Thus, there is a slight shift here from the classical *ṣūfī* contemplation of God, which was mainly based on the simple Qur'ānic concept of God as an absolute transcendent God, unknown and beyond human reason, but also an immanent God who is the nearest being to man.¹⁶⁴ The classical *ṣūfis* did not pay great attention to ontological or existential questions about God; they only focused their minds and emotions on loving Him. Certainly "love" is not only a typical classical *ṣūfī* tendency, but has an especially significant value for the post- classical *ṣūfis* as well.¹⁶⁵ However, speculative philosophy and theology had not yet effected the contemplation of these earlier generations. In this regard, let us keep in mind Massignon's view that one important means for the contemplation of the earlier generations was through reading the Qur'ān and remembering God in their minds.¹⁶⁶ This tendency is understandable because, at

¹⁶² al-Nābulusī, *Kitāb al-Faḥ al-Rabbānī*, 110.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 110.

¹⁶⁴ On God as transcendent, see for example Q: 42: 11, 112:1-4, 6:103 and 7:143. On God as immanent, see Q: 50:16, 56:85, 57:7 and 8:17.

¹⁶⁵ For example, even though Ibn 'Arabī is known for his more rational or pseudo-rational approach in his theosophical mysticism, he also underlines the importance of loving God. He divides love into three categories: physical, spiritual and divine. The first and the second are attributed to man, whereas the last one is attributed to God. He also stresses that man's relationship with God must be based on love. See Mensia, "La Voie de Hallaj et la voie d'Ibn 'Arabi," 397-422.

¹⁶⁶ Massignon, *Essai sur les origines du lexique technique de la mystique musulmane*, 27-28, 84-85.

that time, Sufism was not much influenced by the rationalization of theology and philosophy which in fact had not yet developed and attained its maturity.¹⁶⁷

However, it must be noted that the goal of the contemplation of the earlier classical and post-classical *ṣūfīs*—as well as *ṣūfīs* of our times—is to attain the stations of *fanā'* and *baqā'* in God. As is well known, the *ṣūfī* way is always described as a journey from one station to another. The highest station is *fanā' wa-al-baqā'* (annihilation and persistence). Because of the strict nature of Islamic theology, some *ṣūfīs* avoid interpreting these concepts within a mystical context. Abū 'Alī al-Daqqāq, for example, maintains that the concepts of *fanā'* and *baqā'* only signify that a *ṣūfī* obeys what God commands and avoids what He forbids. Other *ṣūfīs*, however, take another step and interpret it within the mystical context by saying that *fanā'* means that a *ṣūfī* loses psychological consciousness of his own existence. For instance, according to al-Ghazālī, a *ṣūfī* at this station forgets his personality, his psychological state, his religious stations and his qualities; his attention is absolutely absorbed by his lover (God).¹⁶⁸ *Baqā'* is the conscious psychological state of a *ṣūfī* subsisting in the existence of God.¹⁶⁹ 'Abdullāh al-Sharqāwī explains this more clearly in his commentary on the *Ḥikam* of Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh. He states that whoever attains the level of *fanā'* (passing away), he will see nothing in existence but God. He will disappear from himself and his senses because he does not think that he has existence. And whoever attains the level of *baqā'* (persisting) sees both

¹⁶⁷ In his research on the lexical terms of Islamic mysticism, Massignon maintains that Islamic mysticism was influenced by many aspects both from within and outside of the Islamic tradition. The primary origin of mysticism comes from within Islam itself, namely, the Qur'ān, the *ḥadīths* and Arabic grammar. Outside influences include Manichaeism and Hellenic sources; *Ibid.*, 27-34.

¹⁶⁸ Farid Jabre, *Essai sur le lexique de Ghazali: contribution à l'étude de la terminologie de Ghazali dans ses principaux ouvrages à l'exception du Tahāfut* (Beirut: Publications de l'Université Libanaise, 1985), 226.

God and His creatures. However, he sees God appearing in everything and makes everything to appear without losing his consciousness of himself and his senses.¹⁷⁰

Many scholars have argued that the concepts of *fanā'* and *baqā'* derived from Indian religions, namely, Hinduism and Buddhism. Others, however, argue for a Qur'ānic origin.¹⁷¹ 'Abdullāh al-Anṣārī proved that the term *fanā'* derived from a verse from the Qur'ān, "Kullu man 'alayhā fānin wa-yabqā wajhu rabbik" (Q: 55: 26-27), and the term *baqā'* from, "Wāllāhu Khayrun wa-abqā"(Q:20:75-73).¹⁷² In a certain sense, the concepts of *fanā'* and *baqā'* are similar to the concepts of *nirwana* and *moksha*.¹⁷³ But, *fanā'* and *baqā'* in Islamic mysticism are still based on the transcendental God.¹⁷⁴ In Islamic mysticism, *fanā'* and *baqā'* should not be separated; if *fanā'* ends without *baqā'*, this will lead to pantheism.¹⁷⁵ For this reason, according to al-Kalābādhī, *fanā'* does not occur continuously; if it did, it would cause a ṣūfī not to perform his religious obligations.¹⁷⁶ *Fanā'* is not merely the cessation of the self,

¹⁶⁹ Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, 189.

¹⁷⁰ Ibn 'Abbād, *Sharḥ al-Ḥikam*, vol. 2, 8-9.

¹⁷¹ On the controversy about Bisṭāmī, see Muhammad Abdur Rabb, *The Life, Thought and Historical Importance of Abu Yazid al-Bisṭāmī* (Dacca: Academy of Pakistan Affaires, 1971), 188-200.

¹⁷² Shaykh al-Islām 'Abd Allāh al-Anṣārī (1002-1089) who wrote the *Kitāb Manāzil al-Sāyirīn*, proved that almost all ṣūfī terms can be found in the Qur'ān. See Abd Allāh ibn Muḥammad al-Anṣārī al-Harawī, *Les Étapes des itinérants vers Dieu : Edition critique, avec introd., traduction et lexique* (Manāzil al-Sāyirīn), ed. and trans. Serge de Beaurecueil (Cairo: Impr. de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1962), 104-105, 129-131.

¹⁷³ Titus Burckhardt, *Vom Sufitum: Einführung in die Mystik des Islam* (München-Planegg: O.W.Barth, 1953), 50.

¹⁷⁴ According to Guy Monnot, Hinduism also developed a quasi-monotheism, but many Muslim scholars, including al-Shahrastānī, tended to regard Hinduism as polytheistic and prone to idolatry. What Monnot says is partly right because many modern Hindu scholars, according to K. M. Sen, have developed the concept of Upanishad which is closer to monotheism. In the real life of Hindu people, however, idols are very important for concentrating on God. I think that the view that regards Hinduism as an idolatrous religion is partly correct because most ordinary Hindu believers cannot pray without such idols. See Monnot's introduction to al-Shahrastānī, *Livre des religions et des sectes*, vol. 2, 61; see also K.M. Sen, *L'Hindouisme* (Paris: Payot, 1961), 37.

¹⁷⁵ See Abū al-Qāsim al-Junayd ibn Muḥammad, *The Life, Personality and Writings of al-Junayd : A Study of a Third/Ninth Century Mystic* (Rasā'il), ed. and trans. Ali Hassan Abdel- Kader (London: Luzac, 1962), 149.

¹⁷⁶ al-Kalābādhī, *al-Ta'arruf li-Madhhab Ahl al-Taṣawwuf*, 152.

like the Buddhist *nirwana*, but includes the integration of the worshipper's self in God.¹⁷⁷

The Sammānīyah's view of the concepts of *baqā'* and *fanā'* is not different from that of other ṣūfīs. As we learn from Nafīs al-Banjārī, the station of *fanā'* is when a ṣūfī feels that there is no existence except the existence of God, and thus he does not feel that he exists, but rather that he is passing away (*fanā'*), because he is sunk in the oneness of God. At this level, the ṣūfī does not feel that he exists; the true existence, therefore, is only the existence of God. However, it does not necessarily mean that, at the station of *fanā'*, one will experience pantheism.¹⁷⁸ As al-Junayd tells us, even at this station, a ṣūfī has lost his worldly individuality and yet he is still separated from God. It does not mean that man is unified with God and that God and man become identical. Man still remains a servant of God, but he experiences *tawhīd* as loosing his will, which characterizes his ipseity (*huwīyah*), being possessed by God and returning into the life of his eternal self in God.¹⁷⁹ And, at the level of *baqā'*, a ṣūfī sees ipseity and the persistence of God (*qayyūm*) in every existence. At this level, a ṣūfī comes to be sober and he therefore will uphold the *sharī'ah*.¹⁸⁰ For this reason, Nafīs al-Banjārī tells us, *baqā'* is higher than *fanā'*. This view is in line with that of other ṣūfīs. Al-Kalābādhī, for example, insists that at the station of *baqā'* a ṣūfī will do whatever God wills and avoid whatever God forbids.¹⁸¹ This means that at the station of *baqā'*, a ṣūfī returns to the *sharī'ah*. Thus, *fanā'* and *baqā'* in

¹⁷⁷ See Nicholson's introduction to Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj, *Kitāb al-Lumā' fī al-Taṣawwuf*, ed. R. A. Nicholson (London: E.J. Brill/Luzac & Co., 1914), 214.

¹⁷⁸ Nafīs al-Banjārī, *al-Durr al-Nafīs*, 18.

¹⁷⁹ al-Junayd ibn Muḥammad, *The Life, Personality and Writings of al-Junayd*, 82-87.

¹⁸⁰ Nafīs al-Banjārī, *al-Durr al-Nafīs*, 19.

¹⁸¹ al-Kalābādhī, *al-Ta'arruf li-Madhhab Ahl al-Taṣawwuf*, 148.

Islamic mysticism cannot be separated from the *sharī'ah*, and this makes them different from the concepts of *nirwana* and *moksha* in Hinduism and Buddhism.

Nafīs al-Banjārī maintains that *fanā'* consists of three levels. The first is *al-fanā' bi-al-'ilm* which is based on *al-'ilm*, that is, rationally contemplating the phenomenal being. At this level, the function of human reason is still important for understanding the real nature of the phenomenal world and comparing it with the nature of God. The result of this contemplation will bring the *ṣūfī* to understand that the phenomenal world is only imaginal, and thus he and it are passing away (*fanā'*). At the second level, *al-fanā' bi- al-'ayn*, the *fanā'* is based on mystical intuition (feeling) through the inner heart. This will lead a *ṣūfī* to feel that all creatures are passing away. The next step is *al-fanā' bi-al-ḥaqq*, in which a *ṣūfī* regards, with both reason and intuition, that the real existence is the existence of God and other existences are passing away. In order to attain the highest state of *fanā'*, a *ṣūfī* must contemplate gradually through three levels of *fanā'*. The first is *fanā' perbuatan* in which as *ṣūfī* regards that all actions are the actions of God. Then, a *ṣūfī* moves to the second one, *fanā' ṣifāt*, in which the *ṣūfī* regards that all attributes are the attributes of God. For instance, a *ṣūfī* thinks that God is the only real "living one" (*Ḥayy*), whereas others are passing away. Lastly comes *fanā' segala dhāt* where a *ṣūfī* thinks that there is no existence except the existence of God. This last is the final journey of *fanā'*.¹⁸² *Baqā'* and *fanā'* cannot be independent. The final state of *fanā'* includes *baqā'*, the abiding and continuing in God. *Fanā'* and *baqā'* mean the same state from different aspects. When one has reached the complete *fanā'* of

¹⁸² Nafīs al-Banjārī, *al-Durr al-Nafīs*, 26.

one's individuality in God, at the same time, one is remaining and perpetuated in God.

It must be noted that some *ṣūfīs* believe that *fanā'* and *baqā'* cannot be achieved by *ṣūfīs* through effort, but rather only through the grace of God.¹⁸³ We do not know whether Nafīs al-Banjārī agrees with this opinion or not. However, considering that Nafīs insists that *fanā'* and *baqā'* can be attained through the contemplation of the four stages of *tawḥīd*, it might be said that he believed that *fanā'* and *baqā'* could be attained through effort. However, he claims that the station of *baqā'* could only be reached by the Prophet Muḥammad because only the Prophet himself can fully contemplate the *tawḥīd al-dhāt*. Thus, he insists again upon the important role of the light of Muḥammad as the best and most substantial vehicle for attaining the station of *baqā'*. He confirms that one can skip the *tawḥīd al-af'āl* and *tawḥīd al-ṣifāt*, and just contemplate the light of Muḥammad and perhaps attain the *tawḥīd al-dhāt* faster and better.¹⁸⁴

1. The actions of God; *tawḥīd al-af'āl* and the predestination tendency

According to al-Nābulusī, ordinary believers only attain the level of witnesses of the action of God. They witness that there is no initiator of any kind of action other than God. Nothing (or no one) produces an effect in action, wither experimentally or intelligibly, except for God alone.¹⁸⁵ Nafīs al-Banjārī calls this stage *tawḥīd al-af'āl*. At this stage, a *ṣūfī* should contemplate in his heart that all actions and deeds are the actions of God. It is in fact difficult for Muslim theologians and the

¹⁸³ al-Kalābādhī, *al-Ta'arruf li-Madhhab Ahl al-Taṣawwuf*, 152.

¹⁸⁴ Nafīs al-Banjārī, *al-Durr al-Nafīs*, 25.

¹⁸⁵ al-Nābulusī, *al-Wujūd al-Ḥaqq*, 110.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

theosophical *ṣūfis* to explain this concept. One important question arises from this—a question that dealt with the core theological debate on “predestination.” If every action belongs to God, how can bad actions be attributed to Him? This question had in fact already been discussed by the classical Muslim theologians, and need not to be discussed again in any detail here. What is of interest, on the other hand, is how al- Sammān, his teachers and disciples stood on this issue.

Let us first quote what Nafīs al-Banjārī says on this subject:

The way to see every action as coming from God is to observe (*shuhūdkan*) and contemplate, either through your physical eyes or your inner heart, that all action, in reality, emerges from God. These actions can be referred to something else, either to human beings or other creatures, solely in a metaphorical sense. This is because all actions, whether yours or others, and whether directly emerging (from you) or indirectly, are, in reality, from God. Direct action means that these actions happen through the power of a mortal being: e.g, the movement of a pen in the hand of the writer. Whereas the derived (*tawallud*) action designates what emerges from direct action, for example a stone moving from the hand of the one who throw it If you always remain in your contemplation (*shuhūd*), in the sense that you see that every action comes from God, you make such contemplation your habit as well. You, then, will be very strong and established in this station. In this respect, you are in the theophany of God: you and God see each other..... As a result, there is nothing inward and outward.... As a result all actions and deeds of creatures become nothing in respect to the action of God. All the universe, in reality, regardless of being bad or good, is the action of God.¹⁸⁶

From the above statements, it may be assumed that Sammān’s students all considered action as belonging to God alone. Nafīs’ view is certainly in the line with al-Nābulusī, who writes,

Everything you witness is the action of the one actor. He Himself makes the action without the assistance or participation of others. However, the one actor is veiled from the the bounds of experience and reason. If the veils no longer exist, you see the real actor. You are no longer in doubt

¹⁸⁶ Nafīs al-Banjārī, *al-Durr al-Nafīs*, 4-5.

The actor who makes the action appear is *al-Wujūd al-Ḥaqq*, there is no God but Him.¹⁸⁷

Nābulusī emphasizes that God alone is the actor behind all action performed by His creatures, both the good and the bad.

We witness that God Himself is the creator of the actions of creatures, either good or bad, useful or not useful. However, we do not refer the bad to Him; what we refer to Him is what is good and useful.... [It is] God himself who creates the derivative nature from which emerge good and bad, as is the case with the clean and the dirty vessel.... just as when water is poured into a clean vessel, it remains clean; if it is poured into a dirty vessel, it becomes dirty. Whoever says that cleanliness is the original character of water, while the dirt is from the vessel, is right. This is commensurate with what God says, "*Mā aṣābaka min ḥasanāt fa-min Allāh*" because the action of God remains in the originality of goodness. [He also says] "*wa-Mā aṣābaka min muṣībāt fa-min nafsik*" because it is you who makes God's actions bad because they appear so according to your bad nature....¹⁸⁸

From the above quotations, it appears that the distinction between good and bad was seen as an accidental matter—a theory that can be traced back to Ibn 'Arabī. According to the latter, the distinction between good and bad is one of circumstance. The story of the enmity between Pharaoh and Moses, according to Ibn 'Arabī, was pre-determined by God. Though Moses apparently is good and Pharaoh is the symbol of evil, both, in fact, fought for the sake of God. Moses obeyed legal obligation (*al-amr al-taklīfī*), while Pharaoh obeyed natural obligation (*al-amr al-takwīnī*). Pharaoh will not be punished because, after all, he was Muslim according to the nature that was given him by God.¹⁸⁹ Another example offered by Ibn 'Arabī is the badness of garlic. The Prophet once said that what he disliked about garlic was its scent, not the garlic itself. This was because the thing itself is

¹⁸⁷ al-Nābulusī, *al-Wujūd al-Ḥaqq*, 271.

not to be condemned—what is to be disliked is only the manifestation of the thing.¹⁹⁰ Al-Jīlī also maintains that the distinction between good and bad is only accidental. What we call evil is really the relation between some parts and aspects of the whole; all imperfection arises from a thing *sub specie unitat*. Sin is not evil except insofar as we judge it to be forbidden by God.¹⁹¹ Al-Jīlī accused the ṣūfī who sees only “good” as deriving from God and “evil” as deriving from himself, of being a ṣūfī of lower order¹⁹² because he cannot see reality; in short, he is veiled (*maḥjūb*).¹⁹³ One commentator on Ibn ‘Arabī, al-Qayṣarī, insists that such an attitude can be classified as polytheism with respect to God’s action (*al-shirk fī tawḥīd al-af‘āl*).¹⁹⁴ Both of al-Sammān’s Southeast Asian disciples, al-Palimbānī and Nafīs al-Banjārī, seem to share this opinion. They both agree that all actions are attributable to God alone, human beings having no say over their own actions, whether good or bad.¹⁹⁵

If good and bad actions are said to be from God, then this position differs little from that of the Jabrīyah. The Jabrīyah claimed that human beings do not really act; rather, all action belongs to God Himself. No role is given to His creatures, except in a metaphorical sense. The Jabrīyah asserted that the function of the creatures is just like the movement of inorganic beings.¹⁹⁶ Nafīs al-Banjārī too

¹⁸⁸ al-Nābulusī, *Kitāb al-Faṭḥ al-Rabbānī*, 113-114.

¹⁸⁹ See ‘Afīfī’s commentary on Ibn ‘Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikām*, 299.

¹⁹⁰ Ibn ‘Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikām*, 276-278.

¹⁹¹ Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, 100-101.

¹⁹² We do not exactly know whom al-Jīlī means here. It must be noted, however, that al-Tirmidhī, in the *Kitāb Khatm al-Awliyā’* believes that good and bad comes from man, not God. See Radtke, *al-Ḥakīm at-Tirmidī*, 62.

¹⁹³ al-Jīlī, *al-Insān al-Kāmil*, vol. 1, 56.

¹⁹⁴ Mehmet Bayrakdar, *La Philosophie mystique chez Dawud de Kayseri* (Ankara: Editions Ministère de la Culture, 1990), 134.

¹⁹⁵ al-Palimbānī, *Siyār al-Sālikīn*, vol. 3, 12-13.

¹⁹⁶ See Muḥammad al-Shahrastānī, *Kitāb al-Mīlāl wa-al-Niḥāl* (Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Azhar, 1951), vol. 2, 136; see also Sirhindī, *Intikhāb-i Maktūbāt-i Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī*, vol. 1, 159.

sees human beings as little more than puppets who move according to how the puppeteer (*dalang*) moves them, and they will not move if the *dalang* does not make them move. Giving another example, Nafīs al-Banjārī describes the function of human beings or creatures as that of a pen which is only the instrument of writing, the agent of writing being the writer himself. Nafīs also maintains that the *ṣūfīs* (*ahl al-kashf*) believe that human beings or the creatures of God are like the leaves of a tree which move according to the wind; they turn to the west if the wind blows them in a westerly direction, and to the east if the wind blows them eastward. This position is very similar to that of the Jabrīyah, for whom the creatures of God are like inanimate beings.¹⁹⁷ The inclination of *ṣūfīs* toward the Jabrīyah doctrine is, in fact, nothing new. It can be traced back at least to al-Qushayrī, who in his classic *Risālah* quotes one *ṣūfī* master, Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā al-Jallā, as having said, "all action belong to God." Al-Muḥāsibī too opposed the Mu'tazilī position on predestination and instead favoured that of the Jabrīyah. Al-Muḥāsibī rejected the method of the theologians and preferred to base himself on revelation rather than on reason. For him, God is totally free to do whatever He wants: He has no obligations towards human beings. As for destiny (*qadar*), al-Muḥāsibī says that this is determined by God as stated in the Qur'ān (Q: 54:49).¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁷ In a letter in Persian, Sirhindī cites the opinion of the author of *al-Tamhīd*, "among the Jabrīyah are those who say that the actions of servants are metaphorical; in reality, they do not belong to them. A servant (or creature) is like tree, if the wind moves, [the servant] moves. A servant is *majbūr* (forced) like a tree. For that reason, whoever believes in this doctrine becomes an infidel;" Sirhindī, *Intikhāb-i Maktūbāt-i Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī*, vol. 1, 158.

¹⁹⁸ Chikh Bouamrane, *Le Problème de la liberté humaine dans la pensée musulmane : solution mu'tazilite* (Paris : J. Vrin, 1978), 49.

Al-Sammān seems to have had the same opinion, although he, like the Ash'arīs, believed that man has a capacity—given by God—to exercise an option of obeying and fulfilling the divine laws and avoiding sin. Let us quote his statement:

If one says all actions are the creations of God, then how is it possible for man to make an effort to struggle (to obey God) if he has no action. My response is that whenever God creates the divine laws and burdens man to fulfill them, it is because He creates the capacity of option (*ikhtiyār*) in man so that he can comply with them; otherwise there is no reward and punishment for good and bad. Thus, if one knows that he must obey God, he must right away comply to do so (obedience). He must not say, "If God makes it possible for me to obey, I will accomplish it," or "If God makes it impossible for me to do so, I will not do it." This argument comes from the whispers of Satan. Because when God burdens him to comply with something, there is no excuse for abandoning it. God Himself is the best proof. If [man] does not comply with what God asks him to accomplish, God will place the happy and the miserable ones in their appropriate places. If the predestined happy man makes a move (towards obedience), the divine eternal assistance will bring him nearer to eternal happiness. On the other hand, if the predestined miserable man makes a move (toward disobedience), the whispers of Satan will come to him and hinder him from attaining the higher spiritual station. However, all these things happen through destiny (*taqdīr*)—the will of God. But nobody should be satisfied with committing sins. And nobody should refer to the law of destiny (*al-qadā' wa-al-qadar*), whenever he commits sins, but rather repent and ask forgiveness from Almighty God.¹⁹⁹

Al Sammān here does not elaborate further on the origin of the Satanic whispers. It seems, however, that he would not say that satanic whispers have an origin independent of God. Like the follower of Ibn 'Arabī, al-Sammān may have believed that the whispers come from God Himself. To refer bad thing to beings other than God is recommended by Ibn 'Arabī himself, but even he recognizes that good and bad come from God; it is only an ethical decision that makes one say that "bad" must not refer to God, but to other beings. Ibn 'Arabī maintains that this ethical decision is introduced by the Qur'ān. Thus the Qur'ān, he says, is not

¹⁹⁹ al-Sammān, *al-Nafahāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 4.

ambiguous in stating that good and bad come from God; it is only “good-manners” that demand that bad things are not assigned to God.²⁰⁰

This position, however, is not adopted by all *ṣūfīs*. The earliest *ṣūfī* master, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, did not adopt such a stance. For him, it is man himself who has the option of choosing between good and bad.²⁰¹ It must also be noted that al-Tirmidhī, in his *Kitāb Khatm al-Awliyāʾ*, likewise believes, according to Radtke’s study, that good and bad come from man, not from God.²⁰² Most *Shīʿīs* share this opinion with al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, as demonstrated by the Zaydī Imām, Aḥmad al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh who wrote a long book against predestination.²⁰³ That the *Shīʿīs* adopted this position is understandable considering it is consistent with their position in the second *fitnah* when ‘Alī’s supporters condemned his enemies. But, earlier ‘Alids (until the first half of the second centuries A.H.) did not tend towards the *qādirī* position.²⁰⁴ The theosophical Sufism of Ibn ‘Arabī did not support the free-will position either, not because of historical politico-theological issues, but rather because of the concept of monism.

2. The divine names: *tawḥīd al-asmāʾ*.

²⁰⁰ According to Ibn ‘Arabī, the verse in question is only an example of ethical manners that man should show to God. In the story of Khidr, a good thing, such the construction of the wall of the house of the orphan is attributed to God; whereas, destroying the ship, since it seems bad, is attributed to Khidr. This is an example of showing ethical manners to God, in spite of the fact that good and bad come from God Himself. See Ibn ‘Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyah*, 1999, vol. 3, 270-272.

²⁰¹ Between the years 694-699, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī wrote a treatise in answer to a question by the Umayyad Caliph ‘Abd al-Mālik. Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī insisted on man’s freedom to choose between good and bad. See J. Van Ess, *Anfänge muslimischer Theologie: zwei antiqadaritische Traktate aus dem ersten Jahrhundert der Hīra* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1977).

²⁰² Radtke, *al-Ḥakīm at-Tirmidī*, 62.

²⁰³ See Aḥmad al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh, *Kitāb al-Najāh*, ed. Wilferd Madelung (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1985).

²⁰⁴ They were bought with material by the Umayyads. See Josef Van Ess, *Anfänge Muslimischen Theologie: Zwei antiqadaritische Traktate aus dem ersten Jahrhundert der Hīra* (Beirut: Orient-Institut; Wiesbaden: in Kommission bei F. Steiner, 1997), 19.

The principle of the oneness of God has always been the foundation of theosophical Sufism. Al-Qayṣarī for one maintains that the divine names are the exterior of the divine qualities, and the divine qualities are the exterior of the divine essence. Thus, a divine quality ontologically precedes a divine name.²⁰⁵ The phenomenal world and every event that occurs in this world are actualizations of a divine name; that is to say, a self-manifestation of the Absolute through a definitive-relative aspect called a Divine Name. That Adam was created from the image of God means that he was created from the divine presence.²⁰⁶ It must be noted that as al-Jīlī saw the perfect and complete manifestation of God as only occurring in the human being.²⁰⁷ From this perspective, it is understandable that these ṣūfis do not see man as responsible for his own actions; it is God Himself who makes these actions in man.

The phenomenal world and every event that occurs in this world are thus seen as actualizations of a divine name. All phenomenal events with their various natures come from the divine names. Although there are many divine names, they are nevertheless one, since they refer to the essence of God. Each divine name, however, has its own quality, in the sense that it manifests itself in accordance with the nature of the thing it manifests.

The divine names are described as the source of the phenomenal world. This is for two reasons. First, there exists no being except the being of God. Creatures are merely imaginary (*khayāl*) and have no reality in comparison with the being of God. Second, all the divine attributes, which are at the root of the divine names, in fact

²⁰⁵ Bayrakdar, *La Philosophie mystique chez Dawud de Kayseri*, 78.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 199.

come from God. The generosity of a man who is called “generous,” for instance, comes from God’s attribute “the most generous.” Similarly “patient,” “powerful,” “living,” “hearing,” “seeing” and other divine names, which manifest themselves in the phenomenal world, come from God. Whatever occurs in this phenomenal world, therefore, is an actualization of a divine name of God. It is important to note that God is absolute. Insofar as He is absolute, He does not need the names; it is His creatures who need them. In other words, the world depends on the divine names, for without them, nothing in the world can exist.

Among the divine names, there are two comprehensive ones: *al-qayyūm* and *al-bāqī*. These were seen as significant in the *Sammānīyah-Khalwātīyah* order. The role of these names was developed by ‘Abdullāh al-Ḥijāzī al-Sharqawī, the student of al-Ḥifnī. Nafīs al-Banjārī explains the issue in these words,

Brothers, if you attain this station, you are in a state of *tajallī* with God; other appearances (*segala yang dhahir*) become nothing in the Oneness of God’s being. Shaykh ‘Abd Allāh al-Ḥijāzī al-Sharqawī al-Miṣrī, my beloved teacher, says in his book *Wird Sharayn*, “If *tajallī* occurs, God Himself appears along with His attributes to His creatures. The servants of God then see all creatures in relation to God. Since the existence of creatures depends on God, even the beings of creatures (*makhlūq*) do not exist themselves. Also, one cannot distinguish or differentiate because all appearances of the phenomenal world depend on Him, particularly on His name *al-qayyūm*, “the most independent” (*maha berdiri sendiri*) and His divine name *al-bāqī*, “the most everlasting” (*kekal*). There is no independent being or existence without the existence of God. As a result, the servant of God will see and consider all names of creatures in the reality of God (*hakekat*). In this context, God says in the Qur’ān, “wherever you turn your faces, you will find the face of God.” The perfect meaning of this verse that “wherever you turn your faces, your hearts and your spirits, you only find the being or the existence of God.”²⁰⁸

²⁰⁷ al-Jīlī, *al-Insān al-Kāmil*, vol. 2, 119-125.

²⁰⁸ Nafīs al-Banjārī, *al-Durr al-Nafīs*, 9.

The divine names are then manifested in the phenomenal world in accordance with their own limited reality. Nafīs continues,

If you see a generous man, you will see that this generosity only comes from God. The appearance of the quality of this man is only the appearance of God's name *al-karīm*, "the most generous." If you see a patient man, you will see that this patience comes from the divine name *al-ṣabūr* "the most patient." The appearance of this man, in fact only comes from the name of God. The names "patient" and "generous" are the names of God. Everybody with such qualities refers to God, so that you only see the appearance of God.²⁰⁹

3. The attributes of God: *tawḥīd al-ṣifāt*

The adherents of Ibn 'Arabī's teachings do not uphold the independence of the divine attributes from the divine existence.²¹⁰ God's attributes, according to these ṣūfīs, are identical with the essence of God externally, but are super-added to it in the mind.²¹¹ Here, the teachings of Ibn 'Arabī approach more closely those of the Muslim philosophers and the Mu'tazilīs. Philosophers, like Ibn Sīnā, for example, apart from describing God as a pure intelligence, good, generous, wise and so on,²¹² acknowledge that God also has a number of negative as well as relative attributes. This is a concept comparatively familiar to Muslim theologians. God is living, knowing, willing and powerful. Ibn 'Arabī argues that these attributes are not super-added into the divine essence, but rather identical.²¹³ The Mu'tazilī 'Abd al-Jabbār (d. 1025) also described God as knowing, powerful, living, existent; He is

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ For further details, see al-Jāmī, *The Precious Pearl = Al-Jamī's al-Durrah al-Fākhira*, 42-47.

²¹¹ See Nicholas Heer's introduction to al-Jāmī, *The Precious Pearl = Al-Jamī's al-Durrah al-Fākhira*, 7.

²¹² Ibn Sīnā, however, does not refute the fact that God has attributes; according to him, like Ibn 'Arabī later, the divine attributes are identical to the divine essence.

²¹³ See Ibn Sīnā, *al-Najāh fī al-Ḥikmah al-Manṭiqīyah wa-al-Ṭabī'iyah wa-al-Ilāhīyah*, ed. Muḥyī al-Dīn Ṣabīrī al-Kurdī (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Sa'adah, 1938-9), 249-251.

endowed with these attributes, but not by virtue of knowledge, power, life and existence, but by virtue of His essence.²¹⁴

In spite of affirming the existences of the divine attributes, Ibn 'Arabī seems to distance himself slightly from the Ash'arīs. For him, God does not know by the quality of knowing, is not powerful by the quality of power, and does not see by the quality of sight, and so on with the anthropomorphic attributes.²¹⁵ Sunnī theologians, on the other hand, believe that the divine attributes are eternal but super-added into the divine essence.²¹⁶ For Ibn 'Arabī, God knows by Himself and sees by Himself, and so on.²¹⁷ In this regard, it seems that Ibn 'Arabī was slightly close to the philosophers. For, in addition to his insistence on the mode of oneness in essence (*aḥadīyah*), Ibn 'Arabī also affirms that it is not polite to assign certain attributes or qualities to God—who is transcendent being—because God Himself, though He describes Himself by certain attributes mentioned in the Qur'ān, is beyond any attributes or qualities by which human language describes Him.²¹⁸ Ibn 'Arabī's position is consistently held by his followers. For instance, let us quote the ṣūfī who was closest to al-Sammān, namely, al-Nābulusī. Like Ibn 'Arabī, for him, the divine attributes that we know both from the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* constitute the eternal concepts that exist in the divine essence. They are not the essence, but neither are they something else. Trying to explain the divine attributes, al-

²¹⁴ See 'Abd al-Jabbār al-Asadābādī, *Sharḥ al-Uṣūl al-Khamsah* (Cairo: Maktabat Wahbah, 1965), 182; see also Idem., *Kitāb al-Majmū' fī al-Muḥīṭ bi-al-Taklīf* (Beirut: al-Maṭba'ah al-Kāthūlīkiyah, 1965), 152. We note that Daniel Gimaret attributes the *Sharḥ al-Uṣūl al-Khamsah* to Qādī 'Abd al-Jabbār's student, Mankdīm.

²¹⁵ Ibn 'Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah*, 1972, vol.3, 268.

²¹⁶ See 'Alī ibn Abī 'Alī (Sayf al-Dīn) al-Āmidī, *Ghāyat al-Marām fī 'ilm al-Kalām* (Cairo: Jumhūrīyah al-'Arabīyah al-Muttaḥidah, al-Majlis al-A'lā lil-Shu'ūn al-Islāmīyah, Lajnat Iḥyā al-Turāth al-Islāmī, 1971), 38.

²¹⁷ Ibn 'Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah*, 1972, vol.3, 267.

Nābulusī insists that the mode of the divine essence lies in the principles of *waḥdanīyah* (oneness in existence) and *aḥadīyah* (oneness in essence). Again, like Ibn ‘Arabī, all the divine attributes, in his eyes, are the mediators in the relationship between God and the phenomenal world. The phenomenal world would not progress from non-existence to existence from the eternal essence, except through the eternal attributes.²¹⁹ In other words, the divine attributes are necessary for the existence of the phenomenal world.²²⁰ Like Ibn ‘Arabī, al-Nābulusī also insists that God is super-transcendent, therefore, He is beyond human description, language and expression, which are mundane. Al-Nābulusī adopts a position here that differs from both the literalists (*madhāhib salaf*) and the non-literalists (*madhāhib khalaf*) in understanding the anthropomorphic and the non-anthropomorphic attributes of God which are mentioned in the Qur’ān and the *ḥadīth*. Nevertheless, al-Nābulusī does not blame them for their different approaches because the Qur’ān itself is ambiguous in affirming the attributes of God. For him, all attributes and qualities which are addressed to God are “ambiguous” (i.e., anthropomorphic) (*mutashābih*). Take, for example, the divine attribute, “powerful.” Do we actually see His Power? And with His divine attribute “intending” (*irādah*), do we know exactly what His intention is? We know from the Qur’ān and *ḥadīth* that the anthropomorphic attributes of God—spirit, soul, eyes, hands, legs, face, laughing, happiness, anger, and so on—are qualities that we understand not in a literal sense, but rather by interpretation (*ta’wīl*). The same is true of other abstract anthropomorphic attributes, such as powerful, intending, knowing, living, listening,

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ al-Nābulusī, *Kitāb al-Fatḥ al-Rabbānī*, 95.

seeing, merciful, gentle, loving, angry, etc. We can also understand them by interpreting them by analogy or in a metaphorical sense.²²¹ In other words, al-Nābulusī affirms the incapacity of human language to understand the divine qualities perfectly.

Al-Sammān too adopts Ibn ‘Arabī’s theory of the divine attributes. This can be seen from the explanation of his close student, Ṣiddīq ibn ‘Umar Khān as quoted by Nafīs al-Banjārī in his *Durr al-Nafīs*. It must be noted, however, that al-Palimbānī does not follow al-Sammān, but rather al-Ghazālī’s theory which is typically Ash‘arī. For al-Palimbānī, God’s attributes are super-added onto His Essence. God is living with the quality of life, knowing by the quality of knowing, seeing by the quality of sight, and speaking with the quality of talking. Moreover, al-Palimbānī blames the Mu‘tazilīs who say that God lives, knows, sees and talks solely with His essence.²²² Nafīs al-Banjārī, on the other hand, tells us that al-Sammān followed Ibn ‘Arabī:

According to the ṣūfī ‘ulamā’ (the men who know God truly, may God sanctify their secrets), every quality of God is attributed to the existence of God, not separated from the existence of God. God thus, hears, speaks, sees and knows by His own existence, not by something else.²²³ Our ṣūfī master, the man who knows God— Shaykh Ṣiddīq ibn ‘Umar Khān—a disciple of the divine pole Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Sammān (may god grant His mercy to both of them), explains that the effective way to contemplate on this station [to contemplate the fact that attributes of God are not separate from His existence] is by the way of revealing (*kashf*) and contemplating (*mushāhadah*). Since they are always in theophany, God has re-veiled the veil of His attributes to them. They, as a result, merely find that all these attributes stand on the existence of God. They also support their opinion by the logical argument that if these attributes are not identical with the attributed existence (God’s essence), God then becomes unknown, because He needs something that can introduce Him. God is free from such a condition. God, however, is more

²²⁰ Ibid., 102-109.

²²¹ Ibid., 106-107.

²²² al-Palimbānī, *Siyār al-Sālikīn*, vol. 1, 29.

²²³ Nafīs al-Banjārī, *al-Durr al-Nafīs*, 10.

knowledgeable than other knowers.²²⁴.... These attributes (of God's), however, do not have their separate existence; they are contained in the existence of God. They are therefore eternal like the eternity of God. This doctrine is our main belief, by which we can attain epiphany and theophany. If we attain this station, we do not see these attributes as being different from the attributed existence (God).²²⁵

The Sammānīyah employed their understanding of the attributes of God in their notion of *tawhīd al-ṣifāt*. *Tawhīd al-ṣifāt* is to affirm that all attributes are, in essence, God's attributes, not those of His creatures. All attributes of human beings or creatures are only manifestations of the attributes of God. All attributes belong to God alone; human beings or creatures do not actually have attributes. To support this idea, Nafīs al-Banjārī, for instance, quotes a *ḥadīth* which states that God will be the eyes, mouth and hands of a pious servant. This does not mean that God has actual organs like those of human beings, but rather that human beings share in certain qualities with God. The attributes of sight, hearing, life, etc., which are found in God's creatures, for example, truly belong to God. Man only borrows them from God and possesses them only in a metaphorical sense. Let us quote Nafīs al-Banjārī,

In this station, you believe in the oneness of God in the term of His attributes. These attributes depend on the essence of God (*dhāt Tuhan*). This means that all attributes (qualities) of creatures, whether in their own essence or in relation with others, are nothing in relation to the attributes of God. The way to contemplate this station is to see, prove and believe that all attributes depend on the attributes of God, such as powerful, intending, knowing, living, observing. All of them are the attributes of God. These attributes, however, can be related to His creatures in a metaphorical sense. If you see these attributes in the personalities of human beings or other creatures, they, in fact, are not real attributes, but rather solely the manifestation of God's attributes. The creatures do not have real attributes, except as the manifestation of

²²⁴ Ibid., 12.

²²⁵ Ibid., 13.

God's attributes. A *ḥadīth qudsī* says, "If My servant approaches Me with supplementary prayer, I will love him. I will be with him in all his actions. I am his ears when he listens. I am his mouth when he speaks. I am his eyes when he sees. I am his hand when he touches. Moreover, I am his feet when he walks and his heart when he feels."²²⁶

4. The essence of God; *tawḥīd al-dhāt*

When al-Ghazālī discussed *ma'rifah* (gnosis), he asserted that the essence of God is extremely difficult to understand.²²⁷ This is perhaps reflected in a *ḥadīth* to the effect that the Prophet prohibited Muslims from thinking about the essence of God, but allowed them to think about God's creation.²²⁸ The *Sammānīyah*, as represented in this case by Nafīs al-Banjārī, maintains that God's essence is not corporeal, nor a substance, nor an accident, nor united with something (*ittiḥād*), nor inherent in something (*ḥulūl*). God is not limited by space or time. He is completely dissimilar to everything. God does not have a companion. He does not beget, nor is He begotten. Every thing needs Him.²²⁹ God's essence cannot be approached by human beings. "Nobody—neither angels nor prophets, can attain the essence of God." This confirms the earlier *ḥadīth* forbidding a contemplation of the essence of God and another similar *ḥadīth*, according to which, the Prophet said that all people are ignorant about the essence of God. In short, Nafīs concludes that knowledge of the essence of God is not available to anybody.²³⁰ The only person who can attain knowledge of God's essence is the Prophet Muḥammad, for no other creature has

²²⁶ Ibid., 10.

²²⁷ See Farid Jabre, *La Notion de la ma'rifa chez Ghazali* (Beirut: Editions Les Lettres Orientales, 1958), 27.

²²⁸ Shāh Walī Allāh al-Dihlawī, *Ta'wīl al-Aḥādīth* (Lahore, Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1973), 84.

²²⁹ Nafīs al-Banjārī, *Durr al-Nafīs*, 16.

²³⁰ Ibid., 13.

been created by God from His own essence, except for the Prophet.²³¹ All other prophets and saints, therefore, are lower in status than the Prophet Muḥammad.

This is the highest station of the ontological *tawḥīd*. This *tawḥīd* belong to the most advanced (or the most special) ṣūfīs (*al-khawāṣṣ*). At this level of *tawḥīd*, a ṣūfī must contemplate only the essence of God. A ṣūfī must believe that the only existence is the existence of God. The phenomenal world has no actual existence, its existence is derived from the existence of God. And yet, this does not mean that the existences of God and the phenomenal world are identical. The real existence is God's existence.²³² All existence, other than God, is imaginary or metaphorical, as Nafīs al-Banjārī explains,

The way to believe in the unity of the essence of God is to see with your physical eyes and with your inner heart that there is no existence except the existence of God. In this sense, our essence and the essence of the creatures pass away into the essence of God. Other existences cannot exist—either by themselves or by other things—except through the existence of God. They do not depend on themselves. Other existences, therefore, if they are referred to God, are imaginary, fancy and nothing. According to our master Shaykh Ṣiddīq ibn ‘Umar Khān (may God have mercy on him), all existences, but for the existence of God, are like existences that we see while dreaming, except that, they are not real, for, when we wake up, they disappear. Other existences, therefore, are like that. When we die, for example, we will disappear. Then we will be aware that there is no real existence except the existence of God, because the time of waking is the time when we die. This is commensurate with the tradition of the Prophet Muḥammad that all human beings are sleeping; the wake up when they die. The concept of death, according to the ṣūfīs, consists of two meanings. The first is the physical death when the spirit separates from the body, while the second is the relative death in the Prophet's tradition, “Die before you die.” Whoever wants to see a dead man who walks on earth should see Abū Bakr. He was regarded as dead because of the death of his passions and because he was convinced of the nothingness of other existences. In a sense, he regarded other existences as nothingness or mere imagination, not as real existences.²³³

In order to attain this station, there are two ways to contemplate *tawḥīd al-dhāt*:

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Ibn ‘Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah*, 1999, vol. 4, 312.

²³³ Nafīs al-Banjārī, *al-Durr al-Nafīs*, 14.

a. Via the theophany of the multiplicity in unity (*shuhūd al-kathrah fī al-waḥdah*)

By this concept,²³⁴ ṣūfīs regard the plurality and the multiplicity of existence as the shadow of God. Every possible existence that appears, though apparently different from the existence of God, is in reality the manifestation of the existence of God. It is like the wave and its foam, both of which are water.²³⁵ The universe or the phenomenal world are the shadow or the mirror of God. Another example describes this universe as being like ice, and God the water of which it is made; the name “ice” is lent to the congealed mass, but its true name is water.²³⁶

b. Via the theophany of unity in multiplicity (*shuhūd al-waḥdah fī al-kathrah*)

Ṣūfīs regards the reality of God as manifesting itself in the mirror of various creatures, or in other words, one looks at the One through the multiplicity of His creatures. The example that is offered is again the wave with its foam as the manifestation of water. The real existence in fact is water; when it moves, it becomes wave and foam; when it is extended over a large area, it becomes the sea. The reality of all this, however, remains water.²³⁷ God can be analogized with this example because the universe itself has no existence.

²³⁴ Ibid.,17.

²³⁵ Ibid.,14.

²³⁶ Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, 99.

²³⁷ Nafīs al-Banjārī, *al-Durr al-Nafīs*, 16.

CONCLUSION

This study is dedicated to the ṣūfī tradition of the 18th century and has been focused on the mystical teachings and rituals of a great transitional ṣūfī figure, Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Sammān whose life and teachings deserve investigation. It must be noted again that this study has mostly been based on his two available works, *al-Futūḥāt al-Ilāhīyah* and *al-Nafaḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*, and also on the works of his Southeast Asian successors, such as the *Siyār al-Sālikīn* of ‘Abd al-Ṣamad al-Palimbānī and *al-Durr al-Nafīs* of Muḥammad Nafīs al-Banjārī which are written in Jawi. Due to the fact that al-Sammān’s other works cannot be referred to directly, this study cannot be considered to be a complete picture of al-Sammān’s mystical teachings. This thesis, however, can be seen as a contribution towards a preliminary study of the teachings of this great master in a western language. Hopefully, there will be further study on him and his contribution to ṣūfism. As I mentioned in the Introduction, there are many areas of study about al-Sammān which should be examined, such as his historical life, his theosophy, his *ṭarīqah*, his sainthood and hagiography, as well as his influence on the Islamic world.

Now, by way of concluding this study, it would be helpful to revise what we have learned about al-Sammān and his teachings.

Al-Sammān enjoyed great reputation and respect not only from his disciples and successors but also from the common people, especially in the Southeast Asia and the Sudan. His hagiography *Manāqib Shaykh al-Sammān* was widely read among these people and his name was called upon for intercession. Not all saints have hagiographies dedicated to them, however; al-Sammān was special in that his

miracle-filled life was celebrated in a hagiography circulated among his Southeast Asian and Sudanese adherents. The *Manāqib* likewise served as an instrument for the transmission of his *ṭarīqah* and the spreading of its influence, whereas, for its individual adherents, it had a supernatural quality. With regards to the supernatural, al-Sammān seems to have enjoyed greater influence and popularity than Shaykh Aḥmad al-Qushāshī, who had enjoyed considerable respect in the Indonesian archipelago a century earlier. In the 17th century, al-Qushāshī's students, such as 'Abd al-Ra'ūf of Singkelī (in Aceh), and Yūsuf al-Makassarī, transmitted the teaching of their shaykh, but there was no *Manāqib* dedicated to him.

With regards to the nature of God and that of the Cosmos, al-Sammān and his Southeast Asian disciples adopted the theosophy of the unity of existence. According to this theory, the creation of this phenomenal world is considered to be a manifestation of God and His divine attributes and names. To explain this event, the ṣūfīs used several technical terms such as *Aḥadīyah*, *Waḥdah*, *Wāḥidīyah*, *'Ālam al-Arwāḥ*, *'Ālam al-Mithāl*, *'Ālam al-Ajsām*, *al-Insān al-Kāmil*, etc. Ṣūfīs have different opinions about the number of levels of existence in which God manifests Himself. Some say six, such as 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jāmī, while others say seven, such as Faḍl Allāh al-Buhānpurī. In his *al-Futūḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*, al-Sammān is not explicit as to how many of these levels there are, but it appears that he was well acquainted with the theory of the seven levels of the divine existences. We learn for instance that al-Palimbānī was directed by al-Sammān to study Nābulusī's commentary on the *Tuḥfah al-Mursalāh* with Sayyid Shaykh 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn al-'Azīz al-Maghribī.¹ It

¹ al-Palimbani, *Siyar al-Salikin*, vol. 3, 187.

is safe to assume that this work was chosen not due to its popularity in the archipelago, but rather due to its intellectual value, and this likelihood is expressed by al-Palimbānī himself when he says that the *Tuḥfah* is important for studying the real knowledge.² It may even have been an important source for al-Sammān himself.

Al-Sammān dedicated a rather short treatise to the subject of the metaphysical existence of Muḥammad entitled, *al-Futūḥāt al-Ilāhīyah lil-Tawajjuhāt al-Rūḥīyah*. Unlike his main work, *al-Nafaḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*, this treatise neither refers to any ṣūfī sources, such as Ibn ‘Arabī’s *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* and *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah*, or al-Jīlī’s *al-Insān al-Kāmil*, nor mentions any spiritual masters. It appears that al-Sammān was aware of previous ṣūfīs who wrote on the pre-existence of Muḥammad, especially Ibn ‘Arabī, Sahl al-Tustarī, al-Jīlī, etc. Al-Sammān’s conviction as to the logos of Muḥammad can also be seen in his *al-Nafaḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*; however, since his concern in this work is mostly with the Sammānīyah-Khalwatīyah *ṭarīqah*, he does not discuss the theory to any extent. He employs several terms denoting the function of the logos of Muḥammad as the locus of existence. In the introduction to the *al-Nafaḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*, for example, he bestows numerous titles upon the Prophet: “peace be upon the servant of the essence,” “the messenger of the Divine Name and attributes,” “the first Father,” “the real the core essence” (*Ay‘ān al-a’yān*) and “the breath of the Merciful” (*Nafs al-Raḥmān*), whom God transforms into light.³ Elsewhere, in the same work, he express the same idea:

² Ibid., vol. 3, 186.

³ al-Sammān, *al-Nafaḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 2, 3.

“*maẓhar ‘ayn wujūd Allāh fī al-ādamiyyīn*” (the appearance of the real existence of God among human beings), “*dhātuhu Nūranīyah*” (is his luminous existence).⁴

The most interesting teachings that al-Sammān stresses are those regarding the meeting of a novice with the Prophet Muḥammad and passing away and being possessed with the spirit of the Prophet (*al-taṣawwūrāt al-Muḥammadīyah*). Furthermore, he maintains that *ṣalawāt* is an effective way to unify with and become annihilated in the Prophet, and that this will lead the novice to meet the Prophet, whether in dreams or awake—a spiritual experience that is granted to the enlightened *ṣūfī*. Al-Sammān sustains his argument by asserting that the Prophet himself motivated his followers to recite *ṣalawāt* as much as possible.

His opinions on the important function of the light of Muḥammad and that of the recitation of *ṣalawāt* were adopted by his followers. One of them was his student, Ṣiddīq ibn ‘Umar Khān. According to him, *ṣalawāt* is an important means to achieve spiritual enlightenment because the Prophet Muḥammad is the only mediator to God. Ṣiddīq ibn ‘Umar Khān then emphasizes that it is impossible to know the essence of God itself because He is absolutely transcendent and beyond any anthropomorphic descriptions; therefore, it is only through imagining the presence of the light of Muḥammad that one may attain knowledge of the essence of God. The prophets and the saints who attained sainthood by virtue of imagining (*mushadatkan*) the *Nūr Muḥammad* were categorized as saints whose rank was just below that of the Prophet himself,⁵ the highest rank of sanctity.

⁴ See his praying, *Ṣallallahu ‘alā dhātihī al-nūranīyah*, 30,

⁵ al-Banjārī, *al-Durr Naḥs*, 25.

Al-Sammān maintains that, to become a member of a *ṣūfī ṭarīqah*, the novice must be initiated. In his discussion of *ṣūfī* initiation, al-Sammān cites the ideas of the Indian *ṣūfī* Shaykh Muḥammad al-Ghawth (1485-1562).⁶ According to al-Ghawth—as al-Sammān tells us—a *murīd* should choose, before being initiated, the right master. If the *murīd* cannot yet meet the great master directly, he can be initiated by those who have already been initiated by that master, so that he has a spiritual chain connecting him with the latter. However, as soon as he meets the master, he must be initiated directly by him.

Al-Sammān upholds the important role of the *ṣūfī* master in the *ṣūfī ṭarīqah*. As is well known, in order to build good relations between master and novice, *ṣūfī* authors drew up the principles that should govern their interactions. Al-Sammān too pays close attention to the ethical conduct between novice and *ṣūfī* master, and those rules pertaining to *ṣūfī* brotherhood relations (*ṣuḥbah*). For this, al-Sammān obviously and mainly drew on the *ʿAwārif al-Maʿārif* of ʿUmar ibn Muḥammad al-Suhrawardī. Al-Sammān does not, after all, hide his debt to al-Suhrawardī, for the latter's name and the work itself are mentioned explicitly in the text of *al-Nafaḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*. Besides al-Suhrawardī, Ibn ʿArabī is also quoted and his name and that of his work *al-Tadbīrāt al-Ilāhīyah*⁷ are explicitly referred to as well. However, few of the principles mentioned by Ibn ʿArabī governing the relationship between master and novice are presented in al-Sammān's work. What this tells us is that al-Sammān apparently preferred the principles of ethical conduct between master and novice proposed by al-Suhrawardī to those of Ibn ʿArabī.

⁶ See M. Mujeib, *The Indian Muslims*, 301.

⁷ al-Sammān, *al-Nafaḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*, 51. In this regard, al-Sammān only cites a short statement of Ibn ʿArabī's concerning the hardship of engaging in companionship.

As a member of the Sammānīyah-Khalwatīyah *ṭarīqah*, a novice must perform spiritual exercises such as *dhikr*, *khalwah*, supplementary prayer, the recitation of the Qur'ān and especially the invocation of the *Fātiḥah*, etc. Al-Sammān maintains that the *dhikr* (remembrance of God) is the daily activity of *ṣūfīs*, especially among *ṭarīqah* adherents. This practice, al-Sammān emphasizes, is based on the verses of the Qur'ān and the tradition of the Prophet. Al-Sammān also indicates that remembering God is the continuous activity of those who love God, for it is said that whoever loves something will remember it continuously. Among the important *dhikr* that al-Sammān emphasized was that of the seven divine names. Likewise, Khalwatīyah masters often demanded that their student invoke this *dhikr* (*Lā ilāha illā Allāh, Allāh, Huwa, Ḥaqq, Ḥayy, Qayyūm* and *Qahhār*). This *dhikr* seems to have been subsequently adopted by the Sammānīyah. Al-Palimbānī tells that he took this kind of *dhikr* from al-Sammān himself.

The tradition of concentrating on the image of the *mashāykh* of the *ṭarīqah* during the *dhikr* seems to be important in many orders, including the Khalwatīyah. al-Sammān classifies it as one of the ways (*ādāb*) of the *dhikr*. Al-Sammān maintains that when a novice closes his eyes while performing the *dhikr*, he must visualize in his mind's eye that the shaykh is present. This exercise is important because, in the tradition of the Islamic orders, as we have seen before, the shaykh plays an immense role in bringing the novice to the Prophet. The shaykh is indeed the

representative of the Prophet ⁸ and this tradition is emphasized by many ṣūfī shaykhs.

As the representative or the founder of the Khalwatīyah Sammānīyah ṭarīqah, to which he dedicated his *al-Nafahāt al-ilāhīyah*, al-Sammān seems to have felt that seclusion (*khalwah*) is a ritual of paramount importance for the Khalwatīyah and Sammānīyah ṭarīqahs. In discussing this issue, al-Sammān relies on several previous authorities. For example, he cites al-Suhrawardī, Ibn ‘Arabī, ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha‘rānī, ‘Alī Wafā’ and also Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh. Last but not least, reference is made to Khalwatīyah figures such as Ayyūb al-Ṣālīḥ al-Khalwatī and Muṣṭafā ibn ‘Umar al-Khalwatī. Thus, it can be said that al-Sammān’s teachings on *khalwah* are not especially original, but rather a synthesis of different ṣūfī viewpoints and traditions. We might therefore conclude by saying that al-Sammān was not only an important figure in his own age and an inspiration to later generations of ṣūfīs, but also a vital transmitter of the teachings of his ṣūfī predecessors.

⁸ al-Sammān, *al-Nafahāt al-ilāhīyah*, 24-25.

APPENDIX I

THE OBJECTION TO THE CLAIM OF MEETING THE PROPHET MUḤAMMAD IN A STATE OF AWAKEDNESS ACCORDING TO MUḤAMMAD AL-SHINQĪTĪ

Disagreements among the 'ulamā' over certain religious issues are nothing new in Islam. Even if there are proofs from the Qur'ān and ḥadīth to sustain an argument, Muslim scholars still arrive at different interpretations. Certainly, these divisions would become even more acute if there were no sources found in the Qur'ān and the ḥadīth that applied to the problems in question. These debates can sometimes become very harsh, even to the point of opponents accusing each other of apostasy or ignorance, such as in the case of al-Ghazālī's stance on Ibn Sīnā's position on the eternity of the world, or Ibn Taymīyah's criticism of Ibn 'Arabī's concept of monism.¹ Other 'ulamā', however, have taken more moderate positions, especially in the boundaries of legal issues among the four Sunnī *madhāhib*, claiming that divergences and differences in religious opinions are acceptable because the Prophet himself demanded that his community tolerate different interpretations on religious issues. The Prophet, in fact, declared that differences in interpretation on religious issues in his community were the grace of God. And it is even understood by Muslim jurists that, if they correctly resolve a legal issue, they will get ten rewards; but if they are wrong, they still get one reward. Unlike the hierarchical structure in other religious traditions, there is no pontifical leader who is followed

¹ On Ibn Taymīyah's critique of Ibn 'Arabī, see Alexander D. Knysh, *Ibn 'Arabi in the Later Islamic Tradition: The Making of a Polemical Image in Medieval Islam* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 87-106. See also Muḥammad Rashād Sālim, *Muqāranat bayna al-Ghazālī wa-Ibn Taymīyah* (Kuwait: Dār al-Qalam, 1975), 101-112.

by the whole *umma*. Thus, Muslim scholars never cease to debate theological and legal issues.

One key theological issue which was debated by Muslim scholars was the validity of the claim of meeting the Prophet Muḥammad with one's physical eyes in a state of awakedness. This objection was clearly presented by the Mālikī Muftī of Medina, Muḥammad al-Khaḍir al-Jakanī al-Shinqīṭī (d. 1936). Al-Shinqīṭī expressed his polemic in his book, *Mushtahā al-Khārif al-Jānī fī Radd Zulaqāt al-Tijānī al-Jānī*. This book was written to challenge a work by the Moroccan Tijānīyah shaykh, 'Alī Kharāzim ibn 'Arabī al-Barādah (1799-1856), entitled, *Jawāhir al-Ma'ānī wa Bulūgh al-Amānī fī Fayḍ Sayyidī Abī al-'Abbās al-Tijānī*. 'Alī al-Barādah states therein that he met Aḥmad al-Tijānī on 27 Sha'bān 1216 A.H., or January 2nd, 1802 and claims that the book was written under direct dictation from the latter.²

Let us turn to al-Shinqīṭī's book. Its main feature is a sharp critical argument against ṣūfī ideas and practices. But his criticism is not addressed to all ṣūfī traditions and teachings because, as we learn from it, it is clear that he still respects the ṣūfīs and shares in many views with them. His sharpest critiques are focused on ṣūfī visionary experiences of the Prophet Muḥammad, which he details in chapter three of the work. First, he wages a polemic against those who claimed to have seen the Prophet while awake. Next, he rejects the possibility of such tremendous miracles. Following this, he denies the religious value of the stories of meeting the Prophet Muḥammad in a state of awakedness after his (the Prophet's) death and

² al-Barādah, *Jawāhir al-Ma'ānī wa-al-Bulūgh al-Amānī*, vol.2, 452.

receiving religious guidance from him. Finally, he rejects unhistorical definitions of the Companions.

It is very strange, says al-Shinqīṭī, that later generations have claimed to have had these experiences. In this regard, he mentions several names, such as al-Suyūṭī, Abī Ḥamzah, ‘Afīf al-Yāfi‘ī, and Ṣayf al-Dīn al-Manṣūr, not to mention al-Shinqīṭī’s favourite target, Aḥmad al-Tijānī. Since al-Shinqīṭī does not include Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Sammān’s name, it appears that al-Sammān’s *al-Futūḥāt al-Ilāhīyah* was unknown to him.

In fact, as I show in Chapter Two of my thesis, al-Sammān can even be considered among the pioneers on the cult of the Prophet Muḥammad. Al-Sammān may well have inspired al-Tijānī to speak in terms of a direct contact with the Prophet. As ‘Alī al-Barādah tells us, it was upon the suggestion of Aḥmad ibn ‘Abdallāh al-Hindī³ that Aḥmad al-Tijānī met al-Sammān when he visited Medina after completing his Ḥajj and decided to study with him. Even though he only stayed with al-Sammān for three days, he acquired a great deal of esoteric knowledge from him.⁴ Al-Barādah does not specify what kind of esoteric knowledge al-Tijānī learned, except that he later admitted in a letter that al-Sammān had initiated him into the *aḥḏab* of the Shādhilīyah, the *wazīfah* of Muḥammad al-Zarrūq, and the *dalā’il al-khayrāt*, which he kept practicing even after founding his own Tijāniyyah *ṭarīqah*.⁵ In addition, it is obvious that Aḥmad al-Tijānī knew the teachings of al-Sammān on the visualization of the light of Muḥammad, either through the *Futūḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*, or at least via his earlier direct contact with him. In

³ Ibid., vol. 1, 37-8

⁴ Ibid., vol. 1, 38.

⁵ Ibid., vol. 2, 360.

al-Tijānī's mystical teaching, al-Sammān's ideas are expressed and the influence of his *Futūḥāt al-Ilāhīyah* is clearly discernable. Another remarkable fact is that Aḥmad al-Tijānī also shared with al-Sammān's Southeast Asian students in adopting the concept of the seven levels of existence (*martabat tujuh*).⁶ As I stated earlier, the pioneer of this concept was al-Burhānpūrī in his *Tuḥfat al-Mursalah* and, as we learn from 'Abd al-Ṣamad al-Palimbānī, it was al-Sammān, who asked al-Palimbānī to read the *Tuḥfah al-Mursalah* with 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz.

Moreover Aḥmad al-Tijānī claimed a status superior to that of previous ṣūfīs by virtue of his having been directly initiated by the Prophet himself and his having been ordered to build a new *ṭarīqah*. In this regard, it was the Prophet himself who was his direct master.⁷ Thus, there is no name prior to his in the *silsilah* of his *ṭarīqah*, other than that of the Prophet. The Prophet told him to abandon all the *ṭarīqahs* that he had belonged to, and only concentrate on this new one. This new *ṭarīqah* would be easy to practice but more effective in gaining salvation. The Prophet supposedly said, "Concentrate on this effective *ṭarīqah* without being busy with retreat and seclusion from people, and ignore all saints."⁸ The other *ṭarīqahs* that al-Tijānī had already adopted from ṣūfī shaykhs became invalid for him, except as means of acquiring benediction (*lil-tabarruk*).⁹ In the same vein, the most striking requirement of initiation into the Tijāniyyah *ṭarīqah* is that one must withdraw all membership from and practice of other *ṭarīqahs*.¹⁰ This new, innovative demand

⁶ Ibid., vol. 2, 253.

⁷ Ibid., vol. 1, 40.

⁸ Ibid., vol. 1, 40-41.

⁹ Especially his connection to the Khalwatīyah *ṭarīqah*, that he had taken from Maḥmūd al-Kurdī in the chain which goes back to Muṣṭafā ibn Kamāl al-Dīn al-Bakrī; see Ibid., vol. 1, 39.

¹⁰ Ibid., vol. 1, 91.

became one of the most controversial issues surrounding Aḥmad al-Tijānī's teaching.

Most of the meetings of al-Tijānī with the Prophet occurred in a state of awakedness and with his real, physical eyes. The claim to having had such an extraordinary vision is debated by al-Shinqīṭī. As we will explain in more detail later, al-Shinqīṭī affirmed that there was no religious proof for believing in such visions. He relates that those who support or agree with such claims have misunderstood the *ḥadīth* narrated by both al-Bukhārī and Muslim about the Prophet's statement that whoever saw him in a dream, would see him while awake as well. In fact, this *ḥadīth* was interpreted in many ways, seven of which are of particular interest. The first interpretation is from Ibn Ṭīn who explained it as meaning that everybody who believed in the Prophet, but had not seen him at some point, would see him while awake before dying. The second interpretation, according to Ibn Baṭṭāl, is that after one has dreamt of the Prophet, one can only interpret that dream after waking up or when awake. The third interpretation is that this *ḥadīth* refers to a likeness; that is, if one dreams of seeing the Prophet, then this will lead him to be in a state similar to seeing the Prophet while awake. The fourth interpretation is that one can only see the image of the Prophet in a mirror. According to Ibn Ḥamzah, this is what happened to Ibn 'Abbās who dreamt of the Prophet and after awakening from sleep, then remembered this *ḥadīth*. He then went to see the wives of the Prophet and perhaps it was Maymūnah who showed him a mirror belonging to the Prophet. What Ibn 'Abbās saw in that mirror was not a reflection or image of himself, but rather an image of the Prophet. The

fifth interpretation is that everybody, regardless of whether he or she dreams of him or not, will see him in the hereafter. According to Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ, it is possible that the dreamer really sees his real attributes. However, it is also possible that the great sinners will not see him in the hereafter, even once. Al-Shinqīṭī tends to favour this interpretation. The most important condition is that a believer must die in Islam (*ḥusn al-khātimah*). The sixth interpretation only insists that the meaning of the *ḥadīth* is not that one will see the real figure or image of the Prophet, but rather will see him in an allegorical sense related to the Islamic religion and its laws; that is, the dreamer will see the Prophet's religious qualities. The seventh interpretation—to which al-Shinqīṭī objects most strenuously—is that one will actually see the Prophet in a state of awakedness after his death. According to Ibn Ḥamzah, there were a great number of pious believers who claimed to have had such experiences; first, they saw him in a dream, but then later they saw him while fully awake and used the opportunity to ask questions about a variety of subjects.¹¹

According to al-Shinqīṭī, Muslim scholars are divided over the possibility of meeting the Prophet Muḥammad in a state of awakedness. He relates that Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī insisted on the possibility of such an event, and even claimed that his mastery of the science of the *ḥadīth* was due to the direct guidance of the Prophet who appeared to him while he was completely awake.¹² Al-Shinqīṭī denies this possibility and expresses deep regret that al-Suyūṭī, despite his extensive knowledge and memorization of the *ḥadīth*, could not corroborate this event with any kind of *ḥadīths*

¹¹ al-Shinqīṭī, *Mushtahā al-Khārif al-Jānī fī Radd Zalaqāt al-Tijānī al-Jānī*, 92-93.

¹² *Ibid.*, 118.

(whether *ṣaḥīḥ* or *ḍaʿīf*, *marfūʿ* or *mursal*), or from the experiences of the Companions and the generation after the Companions.¹³ According to Shinqīṭī, the claim of having met the deceased Prophet, in his real essence and while fully awake, is rejected by most Muslim scholars because it has no foundation in the Qurʾan, the *ḥadīth* or the accounts of the Companions and the Prophet's family.

Yet another controversial claim by al-Tijānī that was refuted by al-Shinqīṭī was his unhistorical definition of what it meant to be one of the *Ṣaḥābah*. Nevertheless, as I have pointed out before, such a definition is not in fact adopted by all those who accept the possibility of meeting the Prophet in a state of awakenedness, such as al-Suyūṭī. Al-Shinqīṭī also rejects the unhistorical definition of *Ṣaḥābah* which was adopted by some later *ṣūfīs*. According to this new definition, anybody who, while awake, meets the Prophet after the Prophet's death can be classified as one of the Prophet's Companions. Al-Shinqīṭī's definition only includes those believers who met the Prophet during the earthly lifetime of the Prophet. Thus, anybody who meets the Prophet after the Prophet's death in a dream or in some other imagined way (for example while awake) cannot be included among the Companions of the Prophet in al-Shinqīṭī's view.¹⁴ Al-Shinqīṭī ridiculed al-Tijānī's claim to be one of the Companions. "It is very odd that one who lived in the twelfth-century Hijrah should include himself among the Companions."¹⁵ It is clear that in claiming this status, al-Tijānī was inspired by al-Sammān. For, as we learn from *al-Futūḥāt al-Ilāhīyah*, al-Sammān insists that those *ṣūfīs* who met and communicated with the Prophet in a state of awakenedness

¹³ Ibid., 91.

¹⁴ Ibid., 141.

¹⁵ Ibid., 399.

attained a status like that of the Companions. However, even though al-Sammān also experienced such a vision, and his *Manāqib* includes him as one of the Companions, he never proclaimed himself to be among the Companions of the Prophet.

According to al-Shinqīṭī the early Islamic *ummah*, namely, the Companions of the Prophet, were the best generation of the Islamic community. After the prophets and the elite angels, the first generation of Muslims—namely, the Companions of the Prophet—were spiritually superior to all other creatures.¹⁶ In this regard, he cites several *ḥadīths* which confirm their important status. “The Prophet said that the best generation was his generation which was then followed by the second and third generations.”¹⁷ The Prophet assured his followers that those who saw him and those who saw those who saw him would be saved from hell.¹⁸ He also explained that his Companions, the *Tābi’īn* (the second generation after the Companions) and the *Tābi’ al-Tābi’īn* (the third generation) were religiously the most fortunate people. The Prophet equated the function and role of the Companions in the Islamic community to that of salt; no food would be as good without it.¹⁹ Thus, al-Shinqīṭī believes that later generations become less spiritually significant, an idea that was rejected by al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī. Al-Shinqīṭī ridiculed the notion that somebody living twelve centuries after the Hijrah could claim that he was superior to any of the prophets, perhaps alluding here to the claim of the Tijānīyah that Aḥmad al-Tijānī was superior to the Prophet Khidr.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 158.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 523.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 524.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

Al-Shinqīṭī disagreed with the view that the miraculous events of later generations could surpass those of the ones closest to the family of the Prophet and his Companions. And especially with regard to fully consciousness physical contact with the Prophet after his death, he says that if this could really take place, it would also have occurred to the family of the Prophet and his closest Companions, and would have been recorded, at least, in the lives of the two important people who were historically and psychologically closest to the Prophet; namely, his daughter Fāṭimah and his Companion ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb. Despite the fact that the Prophet’s daughter Faṭimah was despondent after the Prophet’s death and had chosen to live near his tomb, she never experienced meeting the Prophet in a state of awakedness.²⁰ Again, the Companions of the Prophet were at times in serious need of the presence of the Prophet, especially when faced with serious disputes about religious and worldly affairs, but the Prophet never appeared to assist them. That is why when ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb faced difficulties in leading the *ummah*, he used to wish that he could ask the Prophet to help him solve his problems.²¹ Al-Shinqīṭī also argues that the early ṣūfī masters never claimed that they had met or had been initiated by the Prophet directly. That is why the chain of *ṭarīqah* masters is still important to all ṣūfī orders. It is clear that this critique was directed at al-Tijānī’s founding of a new *ṭarīqah*, supposedly under the direct guidance of the Prophet.

In expressing his doubt about some ṣūfīs’ claims to having met the Prophet while fully awake, al-Shinqīṭī cites al-Qurṭubī’s strong objections to the idea.

²⁰ Ibid., 91.

²¹ al-Shinqīṭī, 100.

Basing himself on what seems to be a rationalist approach, al-Qurṭubī disagrees with the opinion that what one sees in a dream is the actual reality of the Prophet and especially with the idea that one could see him in a state of awakedness. Al-Qurṭubī ridiculed such claims by saying, "If one can see the Prophet after his death, he must have seen him in a condition when he had passed away; thus, this vision is rationally nonsense." And al-Qurṭubī insists on the impossibility of both reawakening of the Prophet from his tomb to communicate with his living followers. If this were possible, there would be no use in visiting the tomb of the Prophet because he would not be there.

In denying the possibility of this experience, however, al-Shinqīṭī seems to reserve most of his disapproval for the Tijānīyah. He does not attack other pious believers' claims about such experiences directly, but rather agrees with Badr al-Dīn al-Ahdal who argued that these pious believers had honestly exposed their spiritual experiences of visions of the Prophet in a state of awakedness. Therefore, it would be hard to deny them. Thus, in order to correctly understand them and avoid judging them unfairly, we should not take their statements literally. This kind of event may have constituted a spiritual experience, beyond the boundaries of human physical senses; it is inexplicable because it is a very personal experience. However, al-Ahdal also argues that most of the accounts of such visionary experiences were in fact wrong or just a product of the imagination. Furthermore, some of them experienced this phenomenon in a dream or spiritually, but thought that they had done so while awake and with their physical vision. Some in fact only had hallucinations. For example, they would see a sort of light and think that it was

the Prophet. And, it is possible too that it was Satan who deceived them by whispering to them that they had seen the Prophet physically and while awake. Satan frequently used to try to deceive Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, appearing to him in a cloud, telling him that he was God and advising him to ignore religious laws. But, he failed to deceive him because al-Jīlānī was aware that God would not do such things.²² According to al-Shinqīṭī, dreaming of a vision of the Prophet is secured from the deception of Satan because the *ḥadīth* assures us that if somebody dreams of seeing the Prophet, he really sees him, even though many ‘ulamā’ still considered such a vision part of the realm of the imaginal. But, seeing the Prophet while awake is not secured at all from satanic deceptions because there is no single *ḥadīth* that confirms this. Certainly, the Prophet assured his followers that Satan cannot imitate his image, but this is only in the case of a vision in a dream. A grave risk is posed when this vision comes during a state of awakedness. This is not because Satan resembles the Prophet, but because someone may mistake Satan for the Prophet. Al-Shinqīṭī maintains that this was maybe the case with Aḥmad al-Tijānī. Satan may have appeared to al-Tijānī, who might have taken him for the Prophet.²³ Yet, despite how critical al-Shinqīṭī was of al-Tijānī, he did not completely deny other ṣūfīs’ stories when they claimed having experienced such visions; he was still willing to trust their stories on the condition that these stories were not be understood literally. In this regard, he relates how al-Aḥdal understood correctly the story of Abū al-‘Abbās al-Mursī’s vision of the Prophet. Shaykh Abū al-‘Abbās al-Mursī, the teacher of Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh al-Iskandarī said, “If

²² Ibid., 108.

²³ al-Shinqīṭī, 109.

the Prophet were veiled from his vision in a single instance, he would consider himself an infidel.” According to al-Shinqīṭī, al-Ahdal argued that this statement does not really mean that al-Mursī kept seeing the spirit of the Prophet, but rather that he kept imagining the presence of the Prophet at every step of his actions and utterances.²⁴ Al-Shinqīṭī rejects al-Tijānī’s literal interpretation of al-Mursī’s statement. According to al-Tijānī’s student ‘Alī al-Barādah, al-Mursī really saw the Prophet with his physical eyes. In al-Tijānī’s opinion, the ability of the physical eyes to see the Prophet when awake was a common trait of those who attained the status of pole (*quṭb*).²⁵

Like other Sunnī scholars, al-Shinqīṭī does not deny the existence of saints among the faithful because he believes that this concept is traceable to the Qur’ān, the *ḥadīths* and the opinions of Muslim scholars.²⁶ Unlike Ibn Taymīyah, al-Shinqīṭī does not deny the existence of a hierarchy of saints, such as pole (*quṭb*), ‘*abdāl*, *afrād*, etc. However, it seems that he believes that the status of sainthood is not a matter of human affairs, but subject to God. Thus, he was skeptical when people declared somebody a saint. It is not impossible, he says, that somebody who was not a saint but was popular, might be considered a saint by many people.²⁷ For example, al-Shinqīṭī argues that the designation “pole” can only be bestowed on one person in every generation; nevertheless, it would seem that there were many poles in every

²⁴ Ibid., 98.

²⁵ al-Barādah, *Jawāhir al-Ma’ānī wa-al-Bulūgh al-Amānī*, vol. 1, 275.

²⁶ al-Shinqīṭī, *Mushtahā al-Khārif al-Jānī fī Radd Zalaqāt al-Tijānī al-Jānī*, 465.

²⁷ Ibid., 505.

generation. Thus, al-Shinqīṭī concludes that these claims could be completely wrong and untruthful.²⁸

Also, with regard to the saints' miracles, like other Sunnī scholars, al-Shinqīṭī does not deny the existence of miracles at the hands of saints or that the prophets could make miracles through the efforts of saints. It is obvious that al-Shinqīṭī agrees that it is obligatory to believe in the miracles of the prophets but is in complete disagreement with the idea that it is obligatory to believe in the miracles of saints, such as Abū Jamrah's statement that the meeting of a saint with the Prophet in a state of awakedness must be recognized by every Muslim. Al-Shinqīṭī insists that to believe in the miracles of saints is only an optional matter; it is absolutely not an obligation. Thus, ṣūfīs' stories about their supernatural experiences such as miracles, enlightenment, unveiling and their ecstatic statements cannot be automatically admitted by a believer. If their claims cannot be traced to the Qur'an, the *ḥadīths* or the accounts of the Companions, it is permissible to deny them. Al-Shinqīṭī was aware that Abū Ishāq al-Isfarāyīnī rejected the possibility of the similarity of saints' miracles to those of the prophets, but he did not agree with the latter; rather, he insisted that two varieties can be similar in quality. However, when al-Shinqīṭī raised a question as to whether it was possible that the saints might have the experience of meeting with the spirit of the Prophets, such as what happened to the Prophet Muḥammad when he had a vision of Moses praying at his tomb or when he met other prophets during his ascension to heaven, al-Shinqīṭī avoided answering this question directly, but appears to have

²⁸ Ibid., 508.

disapproved of it. It seems that his disapproval was not like that of al-Isfarāyinī, but was based on the irrationality of the stories told by these claimants. Thus, the claim by a great number of believers that they saw the Prophet Muḥammad and other prophets was rejected by al-Shinqīṭī because many of them pretended to have seen the Prophet in different places at the same moment. Al-Shinqīṭī does not refute the connection between spirit and body; but the spirit must only be connected with a single body at any given moment, not with various bodies.²⁹ Thus, like al-Qurṭubī, al-Shinqīṭī insists on the impossibility of multiple appearances of the Prophet in various places at the same time. According to al-Shinqīṭī, the *ḥadīth* of the *mī'rāj* clearly shows that the Prophet Muḥammad did not see Moses and the other prophets in different places at the same moment. The Prophet saw Moses praying at his own tomb and then saw him again in heaven, but never at the same moment. The first meeting in fact happened during his journey to Jerusalem; while the second occurred during his actual ascension to heaven. Al-Shinqīṭī also rejects the opinion that the prophets' appearances are similar to the rays of the sun which can be seen in different places. According to al-Shinqīṭī, this opinion is obviously wrong and irrational because even though the light of the sun can be seen anywhere; it nevertheless always shines in one certain direction, not everywhere. In the same vein, it is obviously impossible that one should see A at his own house and B at his own house at the same moment. However, al-Shinqīṭī does not completely reject the possibility of such visions; rather, he only states that this kind of vision is likely to happen within the realm of the imaginal. To substantiate his position, he refers

²⁹ al-Shinqīṭī, 112.

to Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī who says, “What the Prophet means by ‘see me in the state of awakedness’ does not mean to ‘see my real physical body,’ but rather an imaginal vision.” This is like how one sees God in a dream; it does not mean that one really sees God, because His true essence is devoid of forms and images.³⁰

Another reason for the impossibility of seeing the Prophet in a state of awakedness is the factor of the unequal nature of the spirit of the Prophet with the living believers. According to al-Shinqīṭī, the meeting between two individuals must be conditioned by their similar states in nature. Thus, it is impossible that the living and the dead should see each other and have real physical contact. The claim to having seen the Prophet when awake and with real physical eyes is impossible because of, to repeat, the different nature of the spirit of the Prophet after his death from that of his living followers. The existence of the spirit of the Prophet is in the eternal world, whereas the existence of the spirit of his living followers is still in this non-eternal world. Therefore, the eyes of those who belong to the non-eternal world (the lower realm) are not capable of seeing the ones who belong to the higher realm. For instance, no one can see the real transcendental form of the angels, except the Prophet Muḥammad who saw one in such a manner only twice. Furthermore, this happened because the Prophet himself was transformed into the state of the angelic realm. Because they both shared the same nature of existence, they could meet each other. By the same token, the Companions saw the Angel Gabriel not in his real nature, but rather after the transformation of Gabriel’s

³⁰ Ibid., 105.

angelic transcendental form into human form, which brought him down to the lower realm.³¹

³¹ *Ibid.*, 110.

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