

Faith Practice Piety:

An Excerpt from the
Maktubat-i Imam-i Rabbani

Original: The Great Mujaddid Ahmad
Sirhindi

Translation and Annotation: Irshad Alam

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Reviews

Sufi Irshad Alam has produced an interesting and challenging translation of a part of the *Maktubat-i Imam-i Rabbani*. In coming to grips with the difficulties of his version, the reader may gain access to some of the meanings of Imam-i Rabbani.

Prof. Hamid Algar, Professor of Islamic Studies and Persian, University of California at Berkeley

I congratulate you for this successful translation from the *Maktubat*.

Sufi Shaykh Prof. Dr. Muhammad Masood Ahmed, Editor of 12-volume encyclopedia (Urdu) and author of three books and numerous articles on Imam Rabbani

I found the passages which I checked translated accurately.

Prof. Yohanan Friedmann Author of *Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi: An Outline of His Thought and a Study of His Image in the Eyes of Posterity*, Professor, Institute of Asian and African Studies, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israel

the translation is quite good and judicious

Prof. Sajjad H. Rizvi Lecturer in Islamic Studies, Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter, United Kingdom

marvelous

Prof. Alan Abdul-Haqq Godlas, Professor of Religion, University of Georgia

Irshad Alam’s scholarly translation of Sirhindi’s epistle and his commentary on it is a valuable source for any serious student of sufism. But it is of special value for any follower of the Naqshbandi tariqa, as it outlines some of the fundamental qualities of this path, and the esoteric science by which the Naqshbandi masters guide their disciples.

Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee, Naqshbandi sheikh and author, www.goldensufi.org

Sufi Irshad Alam has produced a remarkable, fascinating and challenging translation of a part of the *Maktubat-i Imam-i Rabbani*. In translating from Persian to English Sufi Irshad Alam has overcome the difficulties of this great task and has enabled the reader to gain approach to some of the meanings of Imam-i Rabbani. Sufi Irshad Alam needs to be commended for his meticulous and painstaking translation that produced this book. This

book gives insights into the original work done by the Great Mujaddid Ahmad Sirhindi. This book is concise and up to the point covering a lot of material that is unknown to ordinary Muslims, as well as scholars.

Prof. Ibrahim B. Syed, Ph.D., Islamic Research Foundation International, Inc., www.irfi.org

This is a long awaited important work in the history of Sufism which should be of interest to disciples of the Mujaddid as well as others.

Laleh Bakhtiar, Ph. D. Author, Translator and Editor of numerous Sufi and Islamic books, Kazi Publications Inc., www.kazi.org

Acknowledgements

In the beginning, I acknowledge the great debt that I have to my sufi shaykh. It is he who taught me the inner meanings and interpretations of the *Maktubat-i Imam-i Rabbani*.

To sufi shaykh Shah Muti Aftabi, who has been a great teacher to me, although I never met him in person. I learned the text of the *Maktubat* by studying the Persian original side by side with his amazingly accurate Bengali translation.

To all my teachers in the Arabic and Persian languages Dr. John Hayes, Sonia Shiri, Noha Radwan, Mavash Hariri and others.

To Dr. Giv Nassiri for reading most of this manuscript of this book and diligently comparing with the original Persian and writing an introduction.

To Prof. Hamid Algar, Sufi Shaykh Prof. Muhammad Masood Ahmed, Prof. Yohanan Friedmann, Prof. Sajjad H. Rizvi for verifying a few random parts of this book and writing reviews.

To Dr. Nazeer Ahmed, Rashid Patch, Grandmaster James Harkins, Nasr Ullah, Sheikh Nur al-Jerrahi for giving me encouragement.

To Valerie Turner for editing and Sukomal Modak and his brothers Satyajit and Souren for typesetting the book in LaTeX.

And to my parents, for funding almost all the expenses behind this book. And to Russell Bates, Semnani Foundation, and others for making grants that paid for a part.

May they all be drenched by the energy and blessings emanating from the Mujaddid.

Irshad Alam

Dedication

I am dedicating this book to my parents who
have nurtured me with love and care. Abba!
Amma! I love you!

Message from My Sufi Shaykh

I’m delighted to hear of the publication of the book *Faith Practice Piety* that contains annotated translations from the *Maktubat-i Imam-i Rabbani*. Irshad has been diligently learning the Maktubat and the sufi path of the Mujaddidi-Naqshbandi tariqa under my guidance for the last twenty years. I have also granted Irshad a permission or *ijaza* to teach this tariqa as my deputy. May Allah grant him success in transmitting both the verbal message and the spiritual transmission of this exalted tariqa. Amin!

Muhammad Mamunur Rashid
Kompong Sam, Cambodia

About My Sufi Shaykh

My sufi guide Muhammad Mamunur Rashid is a living saint who is a teacher of the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi sufi tariqa and the Grandshaykh or head of its Pure Mujaddidi branch. Originally from Bangladesh, he has relocated to Cambodia following divine inspiration. He is now absorbed in his mission to spread Universal Sufi Islam to Indo-China, China, Europe and the rest of the world.

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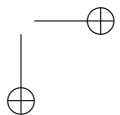
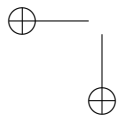
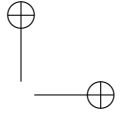
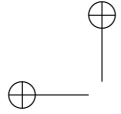
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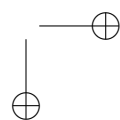
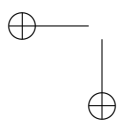
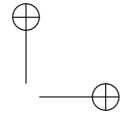
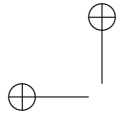
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CHAPTER 1

PREFACES

Verification of the Translation

Professor Giv Nassiri compared this translation with the Persian original word-for-word and wrote this review. He taught Persian language and literature at the University of California from 1991 to 1996. Since 1996 he has taught courses on Islam as an adjunct professor at the Graduate Theological Union and Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley.

I have reviewed Mr. Irshad Alam’s translation of the maktub or epistle 1.266 [Volume I, maktub #no. 266] of Imam-i Rabbani Ahmad Sirhindi’s *Maktubat* [his magnum opus that is his collected letters] that is in this book. I have checked it word-for-word in its entirety for accuracy in translation from Persian to English. Mr. Irshad Alam is a sufi of the Mujaddidi-Naqshbandi tariqa of Imam-i Rabbani Sirhindi.

To the best of my knowledge this is the only translation of an entire long maktub of *Maktubat-i Imam-i Rab-bani* translated directly from Persian to English.

The only other direct translation is one by Professor Muhammad Abdul Haq Ansari in his work, *Sufism and Shariah*. There he has translated a selection of passages of the *Maktubat*. Another work of translation into English is by Süleyman Hilmi Işık that is contained in his book *The Endless Bliss* published by Hakikat Kitabevi in Turkey—in fact, I was informed that Shaykh Işık had translated the Persian *Maktubat* into Turkish and his disciples re-translated part of that work into English. However, the quality of that English translation is such that it’s unintelligible to the native English readers. For that reason I have not attempted to compare it with sufi Irshad’s present translation.

From strictly a translation point of view, I believe this work can be characterized as one in which devotion and care to the accuracy of the message of Imam-i Rab-bani, Imam of sufi Irshad’s tariqa Mujaddidi-Naqshbandi, has led him to strike a distinctively fine and effective balance between being literal and interpretive in his translation. By so doing, I believe, he has succeeded in providing accuracy and accessibility.

Before I further describe the quality of this work of translation, I would like to point out that on a very few occasions this balance between literal and interpretive sways in favor of one or the other. But this is quite rare and when the text tends toward the literal, there is proof of sufi Irshad’s care for accuracy and his fresh look at the complexities of the classical Persian language, and when the text tends toward the interpretive, his approach is to make the inherent difficulties of the text accessible to a wider readership.

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In an effort to clarify and make accessible the difficult passages, at times the translation becomes interpretive rather than literal; this does not in any way diminish its devotion to conveying Sirhindi’s message literally and accurately. The rare use of interpretive translation is an exception, not a rule, and that does not diminish the work’s inspired and accurate translation of the sufi content.

On the other hand his effort to maintain a balance between the literal and the interpretive approaches on rare occasions also appears toward the literal, where the master’s language is colloquial and idiomatic. Sufi Irshad’s literal translation of such rare phrases is remarkable, given the amazing fact that he has had no formal Persian language training and that his meticulous and painstaking effort at an accurate translation is due to his devotion to the Mujaddid, Imam of Irshad Alam’s sufi tariqa.

An important and valuable characteristic of sufi Irshad’s translation is its meticulous attention to the translation of technical sufi terminology. Use of accurate English terminology for specific sufi terms is paramount in a successful and beneficial translation of such primary manuscripts and sufi Irshad has achieved this task with accuracy.

In addition to accurately conveying Sirhindi’s terse and measured use of sufi terminology and concepts, sufi Irshad, possibly because of his discipleship with his master, Imam-i Rabbani, has conveyed the meanings of such terminology effectively and consistently.

sufi Irshad’s translation also benefits from more recent standardization and refinement of Islamic terminology in English, whereas ten to fifteen years ago there were wide variations in the translations of the same terms

and concepts. He appears to meticulously follow Professor Chittick’s accurate and informed translation of technical terms of Islamic disciplines.

As I mentioned above, sufi Irshad resolves ambiguities of certain Persian sentences in the *Maktubat* through an interpretive translation. The reader, while attempting to decipher the interpretation of such complex discussions will gain insight into sufi terminology and concepts. At times what appeared to me as too literal a translation of a colloquial Persian term turned out to be a particular usage attributed to the Great Mujaddid Imam-i Rabbani, members of his eponymous tariqa the Mujaddidi, and some other sufis. For instance, in today’s Persian usage “*tavajjuh kardan*” simply means “to pay attention or accept.” So, I was initially quite surprised to find sufi Irshad’s translation into “to give a face-turning.” This is apparently a particular sufi practice expressed in that context by Imam-i Rabbani. His use of the term refers to a sufi guide’s practice of concentrating on the inner state of a disciple and by so doing also ridding the disciple of any turbidity of the heart of discernment.

By way of conclusion, I must say that there are a number of advantages inherent in this translation, which makes it a valuable work for those serious about a sincere understanding of Imam-i Rabbani’s writings. My endorsement relates only to the quality of the translation of the maktub at hand, maktub 1.266- I’ve not reviewed sufi Irshad’s commentaries or opinions or the translations from the other maktubs. Other reviewers may review those.

Giv Nassiri
Adjunct Professor of Islamic Studies
Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, CA
Ph. D. Islamic and Persian Studies, Univer-

FOREWORD BY THE TRANSLATOR

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sity of California at Berkeley, 2002.

*Doctorate in Islamic studies obtained under
the supervision of Prof. Hamid Algar
Ph.D. exam in Persian under the supervision
of the late Professor Muhammad Ja‘far Mahjub*

Foreword by the Translator

Thank you for your review of my book. It is primarily the annotated translation of *maktub* or epistle 1.266 (i.e., Volume I, maktub no.# 266) of the *Maktubat-i Imam-i Rabbani* from the original Persian (mixed with Arabic). I’ve also translated sections from many other maktubs in order to explain the original maktub. I am publishing this edition primarily for the reviewers. Based on your feedback, I shall prepare the next edition for the public. So I would like to request your help in my endeavor.

The translation of makub 1.266, which is most of this book, has been completely reviewed and compared word-by-word with the original Persian by Professor Giv Nassiri Ph. D., of the Graduate Theological Union in, Berkeley, California. While none of the errors that he found were significant in terms of accuracy, I have accepted some of the suggestions that he made, in my quest to make this a perfect translation. Most of his suggestions reflect differences of opinion between us rather than errors or inaccuracies in the translation.

Professor Nassiri is an Iranian scholar of Islam and sufism who, although born a Shia, has rejected Shiism and converted to mainstream Sunnism. He had started on the Mujaddidi-Naqshbandi sufi tariqa, taking his first bayat from a shaykh in Turkey; he has now taken his second bayat from our tariqa. May the flow of *faydh* and

baraka that he is receiving from the Great Mujaddid via our tariqa permeate this work!

I’m offering this book to you with the greatest humility. I’m not at all an academic scholar; I’m only a sufi and it’s a *karamat*, “miracle” of the Mujaddid performed through my sufi teacher Grand shaykh Muhammad Mamunur Rashid,-that I’ve been able to translate this from the original languages without really “knowing” them; i.e., I know very little Persian and Arabic, so little that I can’t honestly claim that I “know” them– I can neither speak nor write in them and; I can only read them with the help of dictionaries. Still I have made this translation from the Persian original, with the exception of a few lines that were not intelligible in the manuscript, and most of these have been identified in the footnotes. If you compare this translation with the original Persian, you will also come to the conclusion that it is indeed a very accurate translation.

It’s not just a scholarly work–it’s also a inspired sufi work, guided by the energy or faydh of the Mujaddid that I receive by the mediation of my shaykh. So my shaykh’s interpretation permeates this work.

In my translation, I’ve tried to be as literal as possible; I’ve taken an interpretive meaning only when the literal meaning is unintelligible. At the same time, I’ve been extremely cautious so that I do not distort the Mujaddid. I’ve also broken up the Mujaddid’s extremely long and convoluted sentences into smaller sentences for the sake of clarity. However, the poems are usually interpretive.

As an example of my translation style, I would point to the paragraph on section “Can Intellectuals Guide Us Without Revelation” that starts with the sentence, “There are some premises that the [sufi] masters hold as ax-

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iomatic truths.” If we look at the original Persian text contained in the footnote below, we see that it’s untranslatable “literally,” if by that term we mean word-for-word. And if you try, it would come out as meaningless gibberish. So I had to break up that sentence into many smaller sentences. Yet I conveyed exactly what the Mujaddid said, nothing more and nothing less (though in a more understandable format).

Yes! On the first look, it may seem as if I’m only “interpreting” the original text, that it’s not a “literal” translation. When Dr. Giv Nassiri was reviewing it, he had the same initial impression. In fact, he commented on the first sentence of that very paragraph, “Have you made it up as an explanation? I don’t see anything like that in the [original Persian] text.” So I pointed to the words *muqaddamat-i musallama*, which appeared later in that long convoluted Persian original sentence. I had to create a whole sentence to convey the meaning of that pair of words. So while sometimes it may seem that I’ve taken an interpretive approach, in fact I’m conveying the exact meaning of the original text. My translation is “more” in one sense- it is far more understandable; though I have never changed the message of the Mujaddid. After making the complete review, even Dr. Nassiri agreed. He said, “At the first glance, it seemed that you were interpreting the text in many places. But now I know that you’re really sticking to the text.”

In the worldly measures, this translation is accurate because what I lacked in language skills, I overcompensated for with sheer hard work and religious devotion- this translation project is not just a “project” for me, instead, as a devout disciple of the Mujaddidi tariqa, I see it as a means to my salvation in the hereafter. In my first reading of the maktubs that I’ve translated, I understood

nothing. But I diligently checked the meaning of every word in the dictionary and reference books, compared it with the Bengali translation, and finally deciphered the meaning and arrived at my translation. When I finished, I could read the Persian text, understand everything, and explain it to others.

Of immense help has been the superb Bengali translation of the *Maktubat* authored by sufi shaykh Shah Muhammad Muti Ahmad Aftabi of Bangladesh, which he translated from the original Persian. He learned the *Maktubat* from his father and shaykh Shah Muhammad Aftabuz-zaman who in turn learned it from his shaykh, Hazrat Barkat Ali Shah Bezwari of Kolkata, India. He was also a great saint and the Mujaddid guided him in his work spiritually. He completed this work over the span of eighteen years; whenever he could not understand something properly, he sat down in *muraqaba* (passive meditation) and found his answer through *ilham*, (inspiration.). So his translation has been an amazingly accurate work.

While I referred to the Bengali translation, I translated from the original Persian and my translation is not at all a re-translation from the Bengali translation. The Bengali translation was useful in helping me to understand the *Maktubat*. I have also diligently checked my translation with the Bengali translation and that has verified that my finished translation is indeed accurate.

You may want to send me feedback by emails or by letter after reviewing this book, according to the following terms.

Confirming the Accuracy:

I’ve translated it from the book *Maktubat-i Imam-i Rab-bani* edited by Nur Ahmad Amritsari published by Mak-

A NOTE ON TECHNICAL TERMS AND TRANSLATION¹⁵

taba’ Ahmadiya’ Mujaddidiya’ in Quetta, Pakistan in 1999. My translation is indexed to that original book.

I have also used the *Intikhab-i Maktubat-i Shaykh Ahmad SirhindI* edited by the eminent scholar Fazlur Rahman and published by the Iqbal Academy in Lahore, Pakistan. If you need a copy, you may contact them and they may send scholars complimentary copies.

Suggestions on the Annotations:

I’ll appreciate any suggestions on the annotation and explanation section. If you have any information on the sources of the poems and quotations, I would appreciate your help. You may contact me via email through the feedback button at www.sufipeace.org.

I am grateful for positive, constructive criticism and I will appreciate all that you can offer, in an effort to make the next edition of the book better. Thank you in advance!

Irshad Alam
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A Note on Technical Terms and Translation

Please note that I have followed Professor William Chittick’s scheme of translation. Except for a few instances where there were good reasons to do so (e.g., contingent instead of possible), I have consistently followed Chittick’s translations for the technical words that he introduces in his monumental translation of Ibn Arabi, *The Sufi Path*

*of Knowledge*¹ (abbreviated SPK), and revised in its sequel, *The Self-Disclosure of God*² (abbreviated SDG). I would suggest that readers refer to the SPK for the meanings of the technical terms, but also refer to the appendix in the SDG where he notes the changes he made in the second book. I have consistently used the newer terms for the translated technical words. Alternatively, you may use the “Index of Technical Terms” in SDG only, but then you may want to refer to the SPK for the definitions of the technical terms.

The Mujaddid follows the general system of Ibn Arabi. Although in many cases the Mujaddid holds very different opinions; still Chittick’s translations of Ibn Arabi’s terms can correctly translate those terms in almost all of those cases. If you are not well versed in the fundamental concepts of Ibn Arabi, you may want to read this book alongside Chittick’s *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, in which he explains them.

¹William Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989).

²William Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God*, (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998).

CHAPTER 2

LIFE OF THE MUJADDID

Birth and Family

The Great Mujaddid Ahmad Sirhindi was born in the city of Sirhind in East Punjab, India, at midnight on a Friday night,¹ 14th Shawwal 971 hijri / 1564 CE.² His full name was Badr al-Din Abu al-Barakat al-Faruqi.³ He is known better by two of his titles, *Mujaddid-i-Alfithani* (Mujaddid or Renewer of the Second Thousand Years) and *Imam-i Rabbani* (Leader sent by the Lord).

The Mujaddid’s father was Hazrat Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ahad Faruqi who was an eminent scholar of his times and a sufi Shaykh or teacher. Shaykh Abd al-Ahad was an initiate and caliph in both the Chishti *silsila* or lineage in which his preceptor was Shaykh Rukn al-Din, son of

¹Friday night in the traditional Muslim calendar is Thursday night in the modern western calendar because a Muslim day starts at the previous day’s sunset. *Halat-i Mashaikh, Tazkirah-i Imam Rabbani* both say at midnight.

²All dates in this biography are from the unpublished article “Imam-i Rabbani” by Professor Hamid Algar.

³Fazlur Rahman, *Intikhab-i Maktubat-i Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi*, p. 73.

the celebrated ‘Abd al-Quddus Gangohi (d. 943/1537), and of the Qadri, and the author of a number of monographs on sufism, especially on *wahdat al-wujud*.

The Mujaddid was a descendent of Caliph Umar Faruq with eighteen generations in-between, i.e., he was a nineteenth- generation descendant. This the reason the Great Mujaddid is sometimes called Ahmad Faruqi. Indeed, the Mujaddid was quite proud of his Faruqi lineage, as evidenced by a few of his writings in the *Maktubat*. However, his more common surname is “Sirhindi” that comes from the town of his birth.

According to the Mujaddidi tradition, this holy child was born circumcised (just as the Prophet Muhammad, (salam) was born). He did not cry like other children and he never dirtied his clothes. ⁴

Prophecies on the Mujaddid

The Prophet Muhammad himself prophesied on the advent of the Mujaddid. In a hadith report narrated by Imam Suyuti, the Prophet spoke thus,

At the head of the 11th century hijri, Allah will send a man who is a dazzling light. His name will be the same as mine. He will emerge between the reigns of two unjust rulers. Through his intercession, countless people will be saved.

This saying indirectly confirms the Mujaddidi belief that the Mujaddid is the greatest saint after the companions and before Imam Mahdi. The greatest enemies of God are the ones whom the Prophet specifically identified to

⁴Ihsan, Abul Fayz Kamaluddin Muhammad, *Rawdatul Qayyumiya*, Bengali translation, p. 70

PROPHECIES ON THE MUJADDID

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be the enemies of God, e.g., Abu Jahl, Pharaoh, and others. Similarly, the greatest friend of God is the one identified by the Prophet as well.

Shaykh Abdul Ahad once had a dream,

The entire world is engulfed in a deep darkness. Pigs, monkeys, and bears are attacking and killing people. At that time, a ball of light emerged from his breast. In that ball of light, there is a throne and a man of light was sitting there. All the oppressors, transgressors, apostates are being slaughtered before him as sacrificial animals. And someone is proclaiming in a thunderous voice,

“Say! Truth has been established and falsehood has been destroyed.”(Koran 17,80)

Hazrat Abdul Ahad went to Shaykh Shah Kamal Kaithali for the interpretation of that dream. Hazrat Kaithali interpreted,

You’ll have a son! All unfaithfulness, polytheism, heresy, apostasy, and deviation from the prophetic way, darkness, and corrupt customs—they all will die on his emergence. The blessed tradition of Prophet Muhammad will be renewed.

When he was an infant, he became very sick; and those around him had little hope that he would live. At that time, the Qadri sufi saint Shah Kamal Kaithali arrived at Sirhind. His father took the infant Mujaddid to Shah Kamal for his prayers and blessings. Hazrat Shah Kamal was exceedingly delighted to see the holy child! He consoled his father Shaykh Abdul Ahad, “Have no worry! Instead, have inner peace. Because your son will

have a long life and he'll be a great scholar and *a'rif*, knower of Allah!”

Out of his love and affection, Shah Kamal put his blessed tongue into the mouth of the Mujaddid and he suckled on that tongue for a long time. Hazrat Shah Kamal exclaimed, “This infant just attained the complete *kamalat*, perfection in the Qadri tariqa!”

First Stage in Education

The Mujaddid received his early education at home from his father and other scholars of Sirhind. He also memorized the Koran at an early age.

Then he went to Sialkot and studied under a number of eminent scholars. He learned hadith literature from Ya'qub Sarfi Kashmiri and logic from Mawlana Kamal Kashmiri. From Mawlana Qadi Bahlul Badakhshani, he learned and attained the Ijazat or certificate to teach advanced texts of Koranic exegesis or *tafsir* (*Wahidi* and others) and hadith literature (*Mishkat*, *Bukhari*, *Tirmidhi*, *Jami 'l-Saghir* of Suyuti and others) After completing this stage of his formal education in just three years, at the exceptionally early age of seventeen, he returned home to Sirhind.

Life in Agra

Some three years later, he came to the court of the Mughal Emperor Akbar at Agra, possibly aided by an introduction from his teacher Shaykh Ya'qub. There he came to know the two brothers Faydi (d. 1004/ 1595) and Abu'l Fadl (d. 1011/ 1602). The Mujaddid helped Faydi with composing his *Sawati' 'l-ilham*- a commentary on the Qur'an written entirely with dotless letters.

The Mujaddid’s dealings with Abu’l-Fadl were far less harmonious. He felt that Abu’l-Fadl was so devoted to rational philosophy that he cast doubt on the need for prophecy. So the Mujaddid attempted to correct this tendency by referring him Ghazali’s *al-Munqidh min al-Dalal*. Their disagreement culminated in a bitter public debate in which Abu’l-Fadl is said to have abused generally respected scholars of Sunni Islam.

It was during his stay at Agra that Sirhindi wrote his first work, an Arabic monograph titled *Ithbat an-Nubuwwa*. That book was designed to reassert the necessity of belief in prophethood as a corollary to belief in God, in the face of the skepticism fostered by Akbar’s syncretic cult, the *din-iilahi*. That book’s preface tells us of the debate Shaykh Ahmad had had with “a man [Abu ‘l-Fadl] who studied the science of *falsafa* ... and led people astray, as well as straying himself, with respect to prophethood and its attachment to a given person” (*Ithbat an-Nubuwwa*, pp. 11–13).⁵

The monograph named Ta’yid-i Ahl-i Sunnat (also known as Radd-i Rawafidh *or* Kava’if-iShi’a) is also related to the circumstances of the time. That book demolishes the Shia arguments and upholds the doctrines of the mainstream Sunnis. Written some time after 995/1587, this denunciation of Shi’ism was inspired by the sectarian polemics being exchanged between the Shii ulama of Iran and their Sunni counterparts in Transoxiana; Sirhindi endorsed the *fatwa* of the Bukharan scholars that condemned Shi’is as *kafir*. This monograph also presaged the strong hostility to Shi’ism that Shaykh Ahmad later bequeathed to the line of Naqshbandi tradition descended from him, partly as a result of his exaltation of Abu Bakr as the fountainhead of Naqshbani “sobriety.”

⁵Quoted by Dr Hamid Algar in “Imam-i Rabbani”, an unpublished paper

Return to Sirhind

Eventually, the Mujaddid left Agra to return to Sirhind. Precisely when he left Agra is unknown. It was his father who had come to Agra to fetch him and so he left with his father. On the way, he stopped in Thanesar to marry the daughter of Shaykh Sultan, a local nobleman.

Having returned to Sirhind, the Mujaddid now started the sufi textual dimension of his education. He studied with his father. It may be noted that his father Shaykh Abdul Ahad was a firm believer in *wahdatul wujud*. He used to say, “Whatever is seen is the One; only the headings are different.”⁶ He was also the author of a number of monographs on *wahdatul wujud*. And the young Mujaddid initially assimilated this with great enthusiasm.

With his father, the Mujaddid studied the fundamental texts such as Ta’arruf of a Kalabadhi (d. 390/1000), the *‘Awarif al-Ma’arif* of Shihabuddin Suhrawardi and the *Fusus al-Hikam* of Ibn Arabi (d. 638/1240).

It may be in this period that the Mujaddid wrote his monograph *Ma’arif-i Ladunniya* or it may even have been in the early period of his discipleship with Khwaja Baqibillah. That book indicates that he thoroughly studied Ibn Arabi in this period. He may have studied Ibn Arabi before, but perhaps not in such great depth. The scholar Fazlur Rahman places its time of writing much earlier but I believe that he has made a mistake.

Initial Sufi Training

At home, the Mujaddid learned the Sabri branch of the Chishti tariqa from his father. He also learned the Qadri tariqa from him as well. In the Mujaddidi tradition, it is

⁶*Nure Sirhind*, p. 22.

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said that he had already attained perfection in the Qadri tariqa in his infancy from Shah Kamal Kaithali, so at this time he really learned only the outward rules and methods of the Qadri tariqa from his father.

The Mujaddid also attained the *nisbat-i fardiyat*, the “transmission of solitariness” (*fardiyat*) from his father,⁷ which he had in turn acquired from Shah Kamal Kaithali.

He also attained perfection and the rank of a deputy or *khilafat* in the Kubrawi and Suhrawardi⁸ tariqas from Mawlana Ya‘qub Sarfi. However, some scholars believe that it was his father who taught him the Suhrawardi tariqa.⁹ Many other sufi Shaykhs taught him and so he attained perfection and was given the rank of a deputy (*khilafat*) in fifteen tariqas.

The Shadhili tariqa may be included there as well. Because the prayer, *du‘a-i hizbul bahar*, is a *wazifa* or litany of the Mujaddidi tariqa¹⁰ and that indicates that the Mujaddid may have been a shaykh of that Shadhili tariqa as well. Later he learned the Naqshbandi tariqa (the sixteenth) and he established the Mujaddidi tariqa (the seventeenth). So it is said that he had attained perfection in seventeen tariqas altogether.

⁷*Mabda’ va Ma‘ad*, Minha 1

⁸*Halat-i Mashaikh*, p. 14.

⁹*Rawdatul Qayyumiya*

¹⁰Although I have not found any documentary evidence supporting it, I feel that the Mujaddid attained perfection in the Shadhili tariqa and the Shadhili transmission is contained in the Mujaddidi tariqa. I feel it because the Shadhili litany Hizb al-Bahr is a litany in this tariqa as well. Now in the Mujaddidi tariqa, this is not a everyday litany as in the Shadhili tariqa, but instead it may be done on occasion with the shaykh’s permission. My Shaykh says that according to the tariqa rules, the permission to recite this litany may be granted only to the missionaries of this tariqa to realize success in their mission. However, Professor Algar told me that many tariqas recite the *hizb al-bahr* although they may not have any initiatic connection to the Shadhili tariqa.

Khwaja Baqibillah’s Mission to India

In the meantime, Khwaja Baqibillah embarked on his journey to India. According to the Mujaddidi tradition, his mission was to transmit the Naqshbandi nisbat to the saint who will be the Mujaddid of the second millennium hijri. It was his teacher Shaykh Khwajegi Amkangi who had entrusted him with this mission, however it was Khwaja Bahauddin Naqshband who had given him this mission originally.

Once, Khwaja Baqibillah was visiting the shrine of Khwaja Naqshband. He told Khwaja Baqibillah,

Soon a perfect vicegerent of the prophet will be born in India. Such a great friend has never been born after the honorable companions. He is center of attention of all the friends. They all are trying to bring him into their own silsilas (lineages) in the hope that their silsilas would spread all over the world via him and would last until the end of the world. The light of his good-guidance-giving would illuminate all that is from the heavens to the earth and until the end of the world. I fervently aspire that he would take up my silsila and I expect that my hope would be fulfilled by the grace of God. So you should go to India and meet that friend. Let it not happen that someone else would recruit him into their own silsila before you. The transmission that the prophet granted Hazrat Abubakr, it has reached me as an object left in trust and I have transmitted that to my caliphs. Currently, this transmission is in the hands of the greatest caliph of my silsila Khwajegi Amkangi. So

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you should first go to Khwajegi Amkangi and attain this transmission and then go to India and transmit it to that man. Then that object left in trust would reach its true recipient.

In accordance with this instruction of Khwaja Naqshband, Khwaja Baqibillah started his journey to Khwajegi Amkangi. Khwaja Naqshband also informed Khwajegi Amkangi through a dream. On the way, Khwaja Baqibillah had a dream where Khwajegi Amkangi told him, “Son! I am waiting for you.” When he finally arrived, Khwajegi Amkangi spent three days with him in seclusion and told him, “By the grace of Allah, the purpose for which Khwaja Naqshband sent you here, your nutruring, that is now complete. Now take this transmission and go to India, a great task is waiting for you there.”

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After he had been his shaykh for a long time, it was Khwaja Baqibillah (qaf) who told Hazrat Mujaddid:

Once Hazrat Mawlana Khwajegi Amkangi(qaf) instructed me, “Go to India! You’ll propagate this tariqa there!” I raised objections, as I could not find any sign of competence in me. So my shaykh asked me do *istikhara* [prayers to receive guidance from God through dreams or inspirations] and I did so.

At night, I had a dream, “I saw a parrot. I thought in my dream that if this parrot comes and sits on my hand then it would be a sign

¹¹Muhammad Ihsan, *Rawdatul Qayyumia* where he draws reference to Khwaja Hashim Kashmi, *Barakatul Ahmadiya*, I referred to the Bengali translation by Mahbubur Rahman, *Raojatul Kaiumiyah*, Khulna: Al-Hakim Prokashoni, Khulna, Bangladesh, 2004. pp. 82-3)

that my journey to India would be a success. And as soon as I had this idea in my mind, the parrot flew to me and sat on my hand. I put my saliva in its beak. In return, it put sweet saliva in my mouth.”

When I had woken up in the morning, I described that dream to Khwajegi Amkangi. He interpreted, “Parrot is the symbol for India.¹² You’ll go and nurture a great saint there. In return, he’ll also give you spiritual nourishment. Indeed, he’ll enlighten the whole world.”

When I reached Sirhind on the way, I had a dream in which someone told me, “You are now near a *qutb*, pole.” He also showed me the face of that pole. In the morning, I visited all the saints of Sirhind but none had the face that I saw in that dream. Then I decided that the pole in my dream would emerge in the future. Then when you came to me, I recognized that face in you and found that capability in you.

Another day I dreamt, “I’m lighting up a huge lamp. That lamp is burning brighter and brighter every moment. And that lamp is in turn lighting up hundreds and hundreds of new lamps. And all those new lamps are also growing brighter and brighter every moment. When I reached the outskirts of Sirhind, I saw that thousands and thousands of lamps are burning in Sirhind.” Through this dream also, I

¹²In olden times, India was known for its parrots. Even the *Masnavi* of Mawlana Rumi has stories about the parrots of India.

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believe that I received Allah’s sign towards you.

The exchange of saliva and sugar between Khwaja Baqibillah and the parrot later proved to be true. The Mujaddid learned all the *maqamat* stations, of the knowledge of the Naqshbandi tariqa from Khwaja Baqibillah, which explained why Khwaja Baqibillah in the dream put his saliva in the beak of the parrot. Afterwards, Hazrat Mujaddid received advanced stations, *maqamat* from Allah above and beyond all that was in the old Naqshbandi tariqa. And he taught those to Khwaja Baqibillah. That explained why the parrot in the dream put sugar into the mouth of Khwaja Baqibillah.

The Meeting with Khwaja Baqibillah

When his father died in 1007/1597, Shaykh Ahmad left Sirhind with the intention of performing the hajj. His route took him to Delhi where he had a decisive encounter with the Naqshbandi saint Khwaja ‘Abd al-Baqi (commonly known as Baqi Billah; d.1012/1603).

In Delhi, the Mujaddid stayed with his intimate friend Mawlana Hasan Kashmiri who took him to Hazrat Khwaja. When he looked at the Mujaddid then known as Shaykh Ahmad, Khwaja Baqibillah instantaneously recognized Shaykh Ahmad to be that parrot of his dream. He knew that Shaykh Ahmad is that fortunate man who is the rightful heir to this exalted transmission, who is that unique representative of the Blessed Prophet (salam), who is that auspicious man for whom he had come to India. It was against Khwaja Baqibillah’s nature to show interest to someone to make him his disciple. But Shaykh Ahmad became an exception to that rule. He requested Shaykh Ahmad, “Please be my guest in my khankah for a few

days.”

Shaykh Ahmad promised to stay there for a week. But his state, hal changed in a few days. Hazrat Khwaja’s jadhdhba affected him powerfully. He requested Hazrat Khwaja to accept him as a disciple.

Normally Khwaja Baqibillah was very selective about accepting new disciples. Indeed, he always made *istikhara* prayers, seeking divine signs indicating whether or not he should accept that disciple. But Shaykh Ahmad became an exception. The Khwaja immediately gave him bayat, initiation and gave him the first lesson, zikr in the subtle center qalb, heart. Immediately, his heart was filled with Naqshbandi nur, light. Shaykh Ahmad wondered,

Wondrous creation are the Naqshbandi saints
They radiate light in a unique manner
They give away the fragrance of love to those
who don’t even seek
Can you find a more generous one anywhere
in the world? Where will you find someone
who cares as much?
As much care as the Naqshbandis give

Baqi Billah was much impressed with his new disciple concerning whom he wrote to one of his devotees,

A person from Sirhind by the name of Shaykh Ahmad, highly knowledgeable and observant, has spent a few days with me ... it seems that he may become a sun illuminating the world.

Shaykh Ahmad attained perfection, kamalat in the Naqshbandi tariqa. Khwaja Baqibillah granted him khilafat, deputyship and *ijazat*, mandate to teach as a shaykh. Then

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he returned to Sirhind, accompanied by a few other disciples of Baqi Billah. There a near permanent state of ecstasy (*istighraq*) caused him to retreat into seclusion, much to the disappointment of his companions from Delhi. But once the ecstasy subsided, he began corresponding with Baqi Billah in a series of letters that were at the origin of his collected correspondence (the *Maktubat* contains a total of twenty-six letters addressed to Baqi Billah). After an absence of one year, Shaykh Ahmad paid a return visit to his preceptor in Delhi, and with some reluctance (that he showed as a symbol of humility) accepted to train some disciples on his behalf. Thereafter he communicated with Baqi Billah by letter, with the exception of a final visit in 1012/1613; on the occasion of this meeting, the master honored him by walking some distance to welcome him and he entrusted him with the spiritual training of his sons.

The Exalted Ranks of the Great Mujaddid

It's a Mujaddidi belief that the Mujaddid was not only the greatest *waliAllah* ever, but he more than that. Indeed, all the kamalat of all the *awliya* of the Muhammadan community (after the companions and before Imam Mahdi) were added together and given to him!

When non-sufis write on the Mujaddid, they stress his struggle with the Emperors Akbar, Jahangir, and their courtiers—because that is something that they can understand. But from the sufi perspective, it is his sufi dimension, e.g. the energy and the blessings that he radiates (*faydh va barakat*), that is more important.

This excerpt that describes a high rank of the Mujaddid i.e. the guardianship (*qayyumiyyat*). Hazrat Mujaddid wrote,

Once after the *dhuhr* prayer, I was in meditation, *muraqaba* and someone was reciting the Koran. Suddenly I noticed a heavenly robe hovering over me. An idea came upon my mind that this “robe of guardianship” (*qaiyumiyyat*) is all the creation. And I have been graced with this robe as I am the heir to the Last Prophet (salam) and I faithfully follow him. Then the Merciful Prophet (salam) appeared and tied a turban on my head by his own blessed hands; and congratulated me on my elevation to the rank of the guardian (*qaiyum*).

What is a Qaiyum? About that, the Mujaddid’s son Khwaja Muhammad Ma‘thum wrote,

Qaiyum is the khalifa or deputy of Allah (SWT) in this world.. All the poles (*qutb, aqtab*) and the substitutes (*badal, abdal*) are in his circle of shadow. The pegs (*watad, awtad*) are within the boundaries of the perfection of the Qaiyum. All the people in the entire world look towards him to fulfill their wishes and desires. He is the qibla of attention for the entire world. The whole world exists because of his holy person (*dhat*).

He further explained,

The habit of Allah (SWT) is such that once-in-a-while after many ages, by His own Grace, the Haqq (SWT) grants some knower, *’arif*, a portion from His own priceless Person and makes him His deputy and caliph as thei.e., qaiyum. It is through the intermediation of him [the Qaiyum] that the entire cosmos is sustained.

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Indeed, as the Mujaddid explained in the *Maktubat*, Allah granted three more his descendants the rank of Qaiyum, Guardian. And the rank of Qaiyumiyat is above all the *awliya* and just below the rank of the companions of the Generous Prophet (salam). And all the Qaiyums have been created from residue of the dough of which the Prophet Muhammad was made. Indeed, the Mujaddid himself declared, “I was created from the residue of the dough of which was made Prophet Muhammad, the Beloved of God (salam).” /footnoteHalat-i Mashaikh-i Naqshbandiya-Mujaddidiya, volume 2, pp.27-28

These first *qayyum* was the great mujaddid Ahmad Sirhindi and the second was his son Khwaja Muhammad Ma’sum. The third *qayyum* was his son Khwaja Hujjatullah Naqshband and the fourth was his grandson Khwaja Muhammad Zubair.

This story is narrated in the *Rawdatul Qaiyyumia* about his elevation to the rank of the Mujaddid alfithani or reformer of the second millenium Hijri.

It was hijri 1010 year, the 10th of the Islamic month of Rabiul Awwal, Friday night breaking into dawn. Shaykh Ahmad was sitting in his room alone. It was then that the Prophet Muhammad (salam) came there. Along with him came all the other prophets (salam), countless angels and friends of Allah. By his own holy pair of hands, the Merciful Prophet put a resplendent robe on him and told, “Shaykh Ahmad! As a symbol of your being a Mujaddid, I’m putting this magnificent robe on you. From now on, you’ll be known as the *Mujaddid-i Alfi Thani*, “the Mujaddid of the second millenium.” All the responsibility for my community (*ummat*) in both worldly mat-

ters and religious matters, is assigned to you.¹³

Usually prophets receive the position of prophets at the age of forty. Hazrat Mujaddid had just reached forty and it was at that age that , he received the position of the Mujaddid of the Second Thousand Years.

The Birth of the Mujaddidi tariqa

The following story is well-known in the Mujaddidi tradition. It is quoted in the primary hagiographies of the Mujaddid by his caliphs Badruddin Sirhindi and Hashim Kashmi and the secondary text *Rawdatul Qayyumiya*.

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Once, the Great Succor Muhyiuddin Abdul Qadir Jilani was absorbed in *muraqabah*, meditation in a forest. Suddenly, a light came down from the heavens and that light lighted up the whole world. The Great Succor was informed that after five hundred years, when polytheism and deviation from the prophetic way would spread throughout the world,; a true friend [of Allah] would emerge. He would demolish all polytheism and deviations and would resurrect the Muhammadan religion. His companionship would be alchemical [i.e., it would transform base metal into gold.]. And his sons and caliphs would serve the religion greatly.

¹³Rawdatul Qayyumia, pp. 99-100, 104

¹⁴*Hazratu 'l-Quds* written by the Mujaddid's devoted disciple and caliph Hazrat Badruddin Sirhindi and *Zubdatu 'l-Maqamat* by Hazrat Hashim Kashmi and from which it has been quoted in the traditional hagiographies the *Rawdatu 'l-Qayyumia*' and the *Halat-i Masha'ikh-i Naqshbandiya Mujaddidiya*

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Then the Great Succor selected a *khirqa*, (a cloak with spiritual significance in the sufi tradition) filled it up with his perfections and gave it to his son Tajuddin Abdur Razzaq and said, “When that great man will emerge, then give him this khirqa. That khirqa was transferred generation-to-generation and finally reached the hands of his descendant and Caliph Shah Sikander Kaithali. He once had a dream, “According to the instruction of the Great Succor, give that khirqa to the Great Mujaddid Ahmad Sirhindi.” But Shah Sikander was reluctant to part with this family heirloom.

So what ultimately happened is that once, Hazrat Mujaddid was meditating in *muraqaba* or sufi meditation; at that time, some one came and placed a *emphkhirqa*, an initiatic cloak signifying spiritual maturity and khilafat, onto the shoulders of the Mujaddid. That person was Hazrat Shah Sikander, grandson of the sufi saint Shah Kamal Kaithali.

Hazrat Mujaddid opened his eyes and seeing Hazrat Sikander, stood up and embraced him with humility and courtesy. Hazrat Sikander said, “This khirqa originally belonged to my ancestor, Hazrat Abdul Qadir Jilani. My grandfather had told me on his deathbed, ‘Keep it for now! Whomever I’ll ask you to give it to, give it to him!’ Indeed, this khirqa has been passed down in my family from generation to generation in the same way. Now my saintly grandfather has appeared in my dream several times and asked me to give it to you.

But I didn't as I felt pain at the thought of giving this family heirloom away. Finally, I've been severely warned that if I don't comply then my sufi transmission would be taken away as a punishment. That's why, I've finally come to you.”

Hazrat Mujaddid wore that khirqa and retired to privacy. Then this idea floated on his mind, “The practice of the sufi shaykhs is that when they present their khirqa to someone, he becomes their deputy or ‘caliph.’ Or they give the khirqa as a first step, and make him their caliph at the second stage.” Hazrat Mujaddid narrated, “As soon as this idea came upon my mind, [all the saints in my Qadri silsila starting from the founder] Hazrat Abdul Qadir Jilani to Hazrat Shah Kamal Kaithali appeared and illuminated me with the lights of their nisbat.”

Then the Mujaddid thought, “I've been nurtured by the the Naqshbandis! Still such a thing happened!” He narrated, “In the mean time, all the saints in my Naqshbandi silsila from Hazrat Khwaja Abdul Khaliq Gujdawani to Hazrat Khwaja BaqIbillah, appeared and asked, ‘Shaykh Ahmad attained his own perfection as well as the ability to bring others to perfection, (kamal va takmil,) via our tariqa. So how is he related to your tariqa?’ The saints of the Qadri tariqa replied, ‘He received the first taste of the sweet from us.’”

By that, they alluded to an incident in Hazrat Mujaddid's childhood. Once, when the child

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Mujaddid had become very sick, his father took him to Shah Kamal Kaithali, who was a saint of the Qadri tariqa. The saint had put his tongue into the mouth of the newborn and it started to suck on his tongue. And Shah Kamal exclaimed, “This infant just attained the complete kamalat, perfection in the Qadri tariqa!”

In the meantime, the masters of the Chishti tariqa came and claimed the Mujaddid for their own. They reasoned, “His ancestors were servants of our tariqa.”

The masters of the Kubrawi, Suhrawardi, and many other tariqas came as well. Each of them argued, “The Mujaddid was a caliph in my tariqa before he was [even a disciple] for the Naqshbandis.”

The masters of all the other tariqas also appeared. They all wanted the Mujaddid to serve their tariqas.

Hazrat Mujaddid’s Caliph Hazrat Badruddin Sirhindi quoted the Mujaddid in his book the Holy Hazrats [Hazratul Quds] “At that time such a great number of spirits of the saints came to Sirhind that they thronged all the buildings, streets, and open spaces of the city. The saints were disputing among themselves so strongly that from dawn it continued until the time of *dhuhr*, the noon prayer.”

It was at that time that the spirit of the viceroy for both worlds, the prophet Muhammad (salam)

came and resolved the dispute with love and compassion for everyone. He stated, “All of you! You may transmit the perfections of your transmissions totally to the Mujaddid of the Second Thousand Years. He is the caliph of all of you. You will all receive equal rewards from his good deeds. However, the Naqshbandi tariqa originates from Hazrat Abu Bakr, the most exalted man after the prophets. And it strictly clings to the sunna and assiduously casts off deviations. And so that tariqa is most appropriate for the special service of renewal and revival of Islam that he will render.”

So the dispute was finally resolved! As per the prophet’s instruction, every imam of every tariqa transmitted all the perfections of his own tariqa to the Mujaddid. Added to that were the perfections and transmissions unique to the Mujaddid of the Second Thousand Years. Also added were the unique perfections granted by the Prophet (salam). Also added were the perfections unique to the Mujaddid, namely, the perfections of the Guardian, the Imam, the Treasury of Mercy and all others [*Qaiyum*, Imam, *Khazinatul-Rahmat*] As a result, a new tariqa was born.

Due to his extreme adab, courtesy, the Mujaddid still called this new Naqshbandi tariqa. However, within a few generations, this tariqa was named Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi or Mujaddidi for short. And this tariqa has two imams or founders, Hazrat Bahauddin Naqshband being the first imam and Hazrat Mujaddid being the second but more important imam. Although this tariqa can be called “new”

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in the sense that it is “more” than the old Naqshbandi tariqa, it’s not new in the sense that it is “different.” The base of this tariqa is still the old Naqshbandi tariqa. If the old Naqshbandi tariqa can be likened to a building, then it can be said that the Mujaddid renovated the building by adding more floors to it. That is the way he interpreted it in the *Maktubat*.

It should be noted that the old Naqshbandi tariqa soon died out, as all the Naqshbandis adopted this more energized version of the tariqa. With the exception of a few archaic Naqshbandis in Chinese Turkistan, the old tariqa has ceased to exist; ¹⁵ instead, their followers have taken bayat from a Mujaddidi shaykh. If you look at their *shajara*, lineage tree you’ll find Hazrat Mujaddid there.

This tariqa may be called Mujaddidi-Naqshbandi instead of what it’s called traditionally, which is Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi. The reason is that if you call it Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi, people often shorten it by calling it Naqshbandi and that is very misleading. Now Hazrat Mujaddid could call it Naqshbandi because that was adab for him. But now since so many great masters of our tariqa have adopted and agreed to the new name, it may be lack of adab for us to call it by the old name, because that would not showing the proper respect to the Mujaddid, the pre-eminent saint in the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi silsila, indeed the closest person to Allah after the prophets and before Imam Mahdi.

Who is the prophet of Islam? Is he Prophet Muhammad or Prophet Abraham? The Koran says that Hazrat Abraham was the first Muslim and ours is the same religion as his. Now can we claim that Prophet Abraham is more important than Prophet Muhammad? Would

¹⁵Source: Hamid Algar, the premier academic researcher on this tariqa in the West.

that not be a lack of adab for us? The relationship of Hazrat Naqshband and Hazrat Mujaddid can be compared to the relationship between Hazrat Abraham and Hazrat Muhammad. Yes! Prophet Muhammad shows great respect to Prophet Abaraham; but that does not mean that Prophet Abraham is superior to Prophet Muhammad. Instead, it only means that the Prophet had a great deal of adab. Similarly, the fact that the Mujaddid shows a lot of respect to Hazrat Bahauddin Naqshband in the *Maktubat* only confirms the perfection of his adab. Islam should be referred to as “Muhammadan” as opposed to “Abrahamic;” although both are true. Similarly, this tariqa should be referred to as Mujaddidi as opposed to Naqshbandi, although both are true.

Another reason why this tariqa should be called Mujaddidi instead of Naqshbandi is that the system of *lata'if* or the subtle center system for these two tariqas are also slightly different. The *latifa* or subtle center called *nafs* is located near the navel in the archaic Naqshbandi tariqa, but Hazrat Mujaddid changed that location to the center of the forehead for the Mujaddidi tariqa.

Also, the number of *maqamat*, i.e., the stations of spiritual enlightenment, are also vastly increased in the Mujaddidi tariqa. Now most shaykhs never ascend to such sublime stations, so they do not even know about these.

Since the Mujaddidi tariqa is so much superior, all the Naqshbandis today, even those from Bukhara or Samarkand, (with the exception of those archaic Naqshbandis in Chinese Turkestan) have adopted the Mujaddidi tariqa instead. If you look at their lineage tree or shajara, you will see Hazrat Mujaddid there.

THE PARTING FROM THIS WORLD

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The Parting from This World

After a life of great service to Allah as well as His beloved humanity, the Great Mujaddid left this world to meet his Maker at the age of sixty-three, the same age at which our beloved Prophet (salam) left his earthly life. It was the early dawn of Tuesday, the 28th or the 29th of Sa-far) ¹⁶ in 1034 AH/1624 CE. *Inna liLlahi wa inna ‘alaihi raji ‘un!* Verily we are from Allah and verily we will re-turn to Him! His shrine has become a place of universal pilgrimage for Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus-people of all reli-gions go there to pay their homage and drink that fragrant elixir wafting upward from his grave.

This is the translation of a Persian poem on the grave of the Great Mujaddid:

by Abdul Ghani Dihlawi

O the sacred soil of the grave! [You ooze the fragrance of] ambergris and musk!

Has become intoxicated by your [maddening] aroma, the entire universe!

[God] the Cupbearer has nurtured you with such fragrant essence! As a result, the people of the world!

Sane when they come to you, they leave as drunks!

That mystery of paradise is your secret! [Such that] the people on the surface of the earth!

¹⁶Due to disagreement on when the moon of Safar was sighted, there is dispute on the lunar date of death

[Having breathed] one breath from [that fragrance from] you, blast off into a heavenly orbit [far above the land of sand and dust!]

Before the Mujaddid, the progress for the friends of Allah was limited to the level of “friendship,” *walayat*. Breaking their rank, the Mujaddid progressed to the level of *nubuwat*, in the same way that the four well-instructed caliphs also progressed to the level of *nubuwat*.

Writings

The magnum opus of the Mujaddid is the *Maktubat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani* that contains a total of 536 maktubs that he sent to various people. Among them, twenty six were written to his own sufi guide Khwaja Baqibillah. One he wrote to the Emperor Jahangir. One he wrote to a Hindu named Hari Rama. And the rest were written to his disciples and devotees including two or three to his women disciples.

The Maktubat was divided into three volumes. The first volume had three hundred and thirteen maktubs after the three hundred and thirteen companions who fought in the battle of Badr. This number is also the number of major prophets (rasul). This volume was called the *Pearl of Knowledge, Durru 'l-Ma'rifat* and it was compiled by Khwaja Muhammad Jadid Badakshi Talqani. The second volume, completed in 1019 hijri, was called the *Light of the Creation, Nuru 'l-Khala'iq* compiled by Khwaja Abdul Hai. The compiler was Khwaja Abdul Hai who was the son of the Mujaddid's Khwaja Chakar Hasari, wrote that the volume had ninety-nine maktubs as the number of the attributive names (*ism, sifat*) of Allah is ninety-nine. In the preface, he also wrote that he had completed it by the instruction of the Mujaddid's son Khwaja

WRITINGS

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Muhammad Ma’sum. The third volume, the *Knowledge of the Realities, Ma’rifatul Haqa’iq*, was compiled by Khwaja Muhammad Hashim. Originally it had 114 mak-tubs that corresponds to the # number of the chapters of the Koran; later 10 more were added. Since the Mujad-did died after those ten maktubs, they were added instead of creating a new volume.

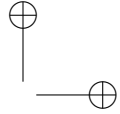
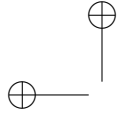
Additionally, the Mujaddid also wrote seven mono-graphs, *risala* on various topics. They are:

1. *Ithbat wa Nubuwwa*: Why mankind needs prophetic revelation to know God. The Mujaddid wrote it in Arabic, the Agra period, c.1585
2. *Ta’yyid-i Ahl-i Sunnat*:¹⁷ Refuting the Shia beliefs and establishing the mainstream Sunnite creed. The Mujaddid wrote it in Persian, also in the Agra pe-riod.
3. *Ma’arif-i Ladunniya*: Comments on Ibn Arabi, gen-erally positive but sometimes negative, even sar-castic; exaltedness of the Naqshbandi tariqa. Fa-zlur Rahman puts it in the Agra period but he is obviously wrong; the book talks about Naqshbandi tariqa. The Mujaddid wrote it in Persian early in the Baqibillah period, 1597-1603.
4. *Ta’liqat bar Sharh-i Ruba’iyat*: Explains and com-ments on the Quatrains of Khwaja Baqibillah; he showed it to the Khwaja. The Mujaddid wrote it in the Baqibillah period in Persian.
5. *Mabda’ va Ma’ad*: There are 51 *Minha* or chapters on many topics. The Mujaddid wrote it in the Baqi-billah period, 1597-1603; but I think after God-given Knowledge. It was also written in Persian.

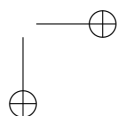
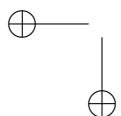
¹⁷Also known as *Kavaif-i Shiah* and *Radd-i Rawafidh*

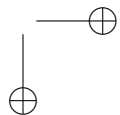
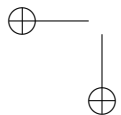
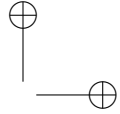
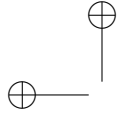
6. *Risala-i Tahliliya*: Not Reviewed. The Mujaddid wrote it in Arabic.
7. *Mukashifat-i 'Ayniya'*: Each chapter describes the hal on one of the 29 stations, maqamat on the way-faring, suluk of the Mujaddidi-Naqshbandi tariqa; he showed it to the Khwaja; refers to the *Mabda*. The Mujaddid wrote it in the later Baqibillah period, 1597-1603 in Persian.

This biography is partly sufi-inspiration taken from the Mujaddidi book of hagiographies, *Halat-i Masha'ikh-i Naqshbandiya Mujaddidiya* and *Rawdatul Qayyumia*, Bengali translations, and partly historical narratives taken from Fazlur Rahman, “Chapter 5: Shaikh Ahmad’s Life,” in the *Intikhab-i Maktubat-i Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi*, and Professor Hamid Algar’s unpublished article, “Imam-i Rabbani”



Part I





CHAPTER 3

Preamble: Ode to Khwaja Baqibillah

The Mujaddid wrote this maktub to Khwaja Abdullah and Khwaja Ubaidullah , who were the two sons of his sufi teacher Khwaja Baqibillah. Hazrat ¹ Mujaddid starts this maktub by showing his respect to Khwaja Baqibillah. He first describes the exalted sufi experiential knowledge that he gained and he acknowledges the sublime sufi “states” that he experienced via the intermediation of Khwaja Baqibillah. He recounts them as a mark of courtesy as he is writing to the sons of Khwaja Baqibillah.

Praise, salutations, and conveyance of the invitation toward God to the venerable and esteemed sons of my master! From my head to feet, I am drowned in the beneficence (*ih-san*) of your great father [Khwaja Baqibillah]

¹When used before a personal name, Hazrat (Arabic Hadrat) is an honorific title akin to “Venerable” or “His Eminence.” It is used before the name of the prophets as well as other holy men and women in the Islamic tradition in the Indian subcontinent. The Mujaddid also uses “Hazrat” before the names and attributes of God, but I omit them to avoid confusion.

. From him, I accomplished the lessons Alef and Beh of this tariqa and I learned the letters of the alphabet of this path. By the blessing of his companionship(*suhba*)²

I have attained the felicity (*dawla*) of “insertion of the end in the beginning” (*indiraj al-nihayat fi'l-bidaya*). I found the felicity of “journeying in the homeland”³ (*safar dar watn*) as the alms [that he offered me] for serving him. His noble face-turning (*tawajjuh*) for two and a half months made such an untrainable⁴

person like myself [able to] receive the Naqshbandi transmission (*nisbat*); it also granted me the gift of the elect presence (*hudur-i khass*) of these great ones. How can I describe the self-disclosures, the manifestations⁵, the lights, the colors, the “things without color,” and the “things without howness” (*tajalliyat, zuhurat, anwar, alwan, bi-rangiha, bi-kaiifha*) that surfaced by his intermediation [in this short span of time?] How can I explain them in de-

²companionship, *suhba*, refers to companionship with a spiritual master by dint of which energy and blessings flow into the disciple and he attains spiritual growth

³journeying in the homeland, or *safar dar watan* is another traditional saying in the Naqshbandi tariqa. One meaning is the aspirant’s “spiritual journey” within the microcosm of his own being

⁴untrainable, or *na qabil*: *qabil* is term used by Ibn Arabi to mean “receptacle” of God’s manifestation. Here the Mujaddid is saying, out of humility, that he is incapable of being a “receptacle” i.e., he is untrainable. See William Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989) pp. 91-92, hereafter referred to as SPK

⁵Self-disclosures, or *tajalliyat*, and manifestations, or *zuhurat*, are God’s display of Himself in the created things and their understandings and insights. SPK, pp. 91-92

tail? [A 1.266,105.7-13] ⁶

Face-turning (*tawajjuh*) is a sufi technical term. Chittick translates this as “attentiveness” in *The sufi Path of Knowledge*; thus he alludes to its standard Persian meaning. But in *The Self-Disclosures of God*, he translates it as “face-turning,” its literal meaning. The section that follows elucidates the meaning of some of the more important terms that the Mujaddid uses.

Sufi Technical Terms

It is useful to first define the sufi technical terms: energy or *faydh*, transmission or *nisbat*, presence or *hudur*, face-turning or *tawajjuh*, companionship or *suhbat*, mediation or *wasila*. These are all interrelated terms; they all refer to the experiential supernatural “energy” or *faydh* of any sufi system or tariqa. This energy flows in a supernatural channel or circuit from master to master in the lineage or silsila.

Literally, *faydh* means effusion and this is how Chittick translates it. In the sufi context, it refers to the supernatural “energy” that flows from master to disciple. The American spiritual community employs the word “energy” to mean this concept in their methods. I am also using the word “energy,” as I find it more intuitive.

Literally, *nisbat* means “relationship.” In the sufi context, it means the spiritual connection, the current of *faydh* (analogous to a current of electricity) that flows from master to master in the silsila along a supernatural circuit up to the disciple. Chittick translates it as “rela-

⁶[A 1.266, 105.7-13]: A refers to the Amritsari edition of the *Maktubat-i Imam-i Rabbani*, 1.266 refers to the maktub #266 in the volume I, 105 is the page number, 7-13 means line # 7 to 13

tion” or “relationship,” and that is correct literally, but incorrect in the sufi context. Some others translate it more accurately as “connection.” The American spiritual community employs the word “transmission” to mean this concept and this is also what I have chosen to use.

The sufi term *bayat* comes from Arabic word for house, *bait*; it literally means, “the act of becoming a part of the household [or the family].” It refers to “initiation,” the ceremony or process by which one is connected to the *nisbat* of any sufi tariqa. Generally in sufi tariqas, one holds the hands of his sufi shaykh and recites a pledge. This process connects him to the *nisbat*. An English translation for *bayat* may be “initiation,” but that word has a negative connotation today because it has become associated with cults; so I sometimes translate *bayat* by “opening,” meaning the process by which the door of energy and blessing opens up to the disciple.

Hudur is literally translated as “presence. ” The presence of a master refers to the domain where his *faydh* has an effect. Usually, it is the strongest near the master.

Tawajjuh is literally translated as “face-turning.” It means, “giving attention” in Persian/Arabic, but it also has a sufi technical meaning. The master focuses his attention toward the disciple when he wants to give a “face-turning” to a disciple. And in this way the disciple receives a powerful burst of energy.

So the disciple is affected by “energy” (*faydh*) from being in the “presence” (*hudur*) of the master. He attains that “presence” from being in the “companionship” (*suhbat*) of the master. A larger door of energy-transmission opens up to him when he takes the *bayat*. Whatever energy he receives, he receives it via the mediation or *wasila* of the master. Once in a while, the master gives him a “face-turning” or *tawajjuh* and he receives a pow-

SUFI TECHNICAL TERMS

erful burst of “energy.” When he is successful in attaining a “transmission” or *nisbat* from the master, he is connected to the continual flow of energy that flows from master to master in the “lineage” or silsila an energy that flows along a supernatural channel.

Indeed, any lineage of any inner discipline can be explained by the same paradigm of master-to-master metaphysical transmission of energy. Examples include the the Jewish inner path Kabbalah, the Hindu inner path Yoga, the Japanese inner path Zen, the Chinese inner paths including their science of energy-cultivation through breaths called Chikung and their system of internal martial arts like Taichi.

Arabic term	English translation	Electromagnetic analogy
Faydh	energy	electrons, photons
Hudur	presence	electromagnetic field
Suhbat	companionship	being so near a magnet that something gets magnetized
Bayya	bayat	clicking the switch on; or physically turning on the electricity
Wasila	mediation	node in a network
tawajjuh	face-turning	pulse of laser, lightning of static electricity
Nisbat	transmission	electric current

Table 3.1: Electromagnetic Analogies

The name for the structured method undertaken to reach God is *suluk* or wayfaring i.e. the curriculum for each sufi tariqa. This is the first meaning of *suluk*. And just as the curriculum of an educational institution is divided into courses or grade-levels, the *suluk* or curriculum of a tariqa is also divided into stations (*maqam*, plural *maqamat*). And these *maqamat* may be traversed by two methods.

The first method is called *suluk*, meaning wayfar-

ing [by the seeker’s own efforts]. By this method, the sufi seeker or student (*murid, talib*) takes the initiative to reach God through his own arduous efforts. The second type is *jadhdhba*, in which God Himself takes the initiative and attracts the seeker to Himself by his *jadhdhba*(attraction) of love and the seeker reaches God effortlessly, by His grace. Therefore, depending on the context, *suluk* may mean a structured system to reach God for a particular tariqa, or one of the two methods that is employed in those systems.

Arabic	English	sufi meaning	Educational analogy
<i>suluk</i> (first meaning)	Wayfaring-through-a-structured-curriculum-to-reach-God	structured, methodical path of each tariqa	Curriculum
<i>Maqam, pl. maqamat</i>	station	each stage of development	grade level
<i>suluk</i> (second meaning)	Wayfaring-by-the-seeker’s-own-efforts	One of the two methods of wayfaring that involves arduous efforts (prayer, zikr, fasting, etc.)to reach God	hard rigorous studies
<i>jadhdhba</i>	attraction from God	The other one of the two methods of wayfaring where one progresses easily, without arduous effort, by the elect grace of God	easy studies, with a superb teacher who explains things easily

Table 3.2: Terms for learning sufism

Insertion of the End in the Beginning

Insertion of the end in the beginning, or *indiraj-i nihayat dar bidayat*, is a traditional saying that describes a unique characteristic of the Naqshbandi tariqa. The Mujaddid himself explains why the method of this tariqa is called the “insertion of the end in the beginning.” He wrote,

The shaykhs of the Naqshbandi tariqa (*qaf*) have chosen to start their journey (*sayr*) from the world of command. And they have followed that [journey] up by the [journey in] the world of creation and that [journey] takes place next. That [sequence] is in contrast to the shaykhs of the rest of the tariqas who begin their journeys from the world of creation. And after traversing the world of creation, they place their feet into the world of command and arrive at the station of attraction (*jadhd-hba*). It is for this reason that the Naqshbandi tariqa is the nearest (*aqrab*) tariqa; and necessarily the ends (*nihayat*) of the others have been inserted in their beginning (*bidayat*).

*Can you foresee my rose-garden
How will it look in the spring?*

[A 1.145, 23.4-8]

Now what does the Mujaddid really mean? What is journeying in the world of command? The usual method that most tariqas employ at the beginning level is the method of *suluk* or wayfaring . In that method, the subtle center of the soul, *latifa-i nafs*, is illuminated first and the four elements, i.e., fire, air, water, and earth elements are illuminated next. These five centers belong to the “world of creation,” (*alam-i khalq*). This world of creation is

the seat of all evil and corruption. The disciple takes a journey along the stations of the sufi path, employing arduous, difficult practices, initially to cleanse those subtle centers and then to progress beyond them—this is the method of *suluk* or wayfaring.

The method of *suluk* is to be contrasted with the method of *jadhdhba*. The Mujaddidi-Naqshbandi tariqa employs the method of *jadhdhba first*—it starts with the cleansing of the subtle center heart, *qalb*, and then proceeds sequentially to the four other subtle centers of the “world of command” (*'alam-i amr*). These are the spirit or *ruh*, the secret heart or *sirr*, the arcanum or *khafi*, and the super-arcanum or *akhfa*. The prototypes of these subtle centers lie in the world of command that is nearer to the realm of God and so that world is holy and pure—so these subtle centers are easier to purify. Also God’s elect grace, as *jadhdhba*, purifies these centers easily and effortlessly. This is called the method of *jadhdhba*.

The subtle center *nafs* or soul is a thing of the world of creation; it is the seat of all evil and corruption; so aspirants need to undertake difficult, arduous practices in order to purify their souls. And this would take them a long time, if they even succeeded at all. After the purification of the *nafs*, the aspirants undergo the purification of the *qalib* or the “mold,” i.e., the physical body that consists of four subtle centers distributed everywhere—they are the four elements: fire, water, air, and earth. Naturally, all these centers of the world of creation take a long time to cleanse. This method of “undertaking difficult, arduous practices on the part of the aspirant” is called the method of *suluk*, or wayfaring.

In the alternate method, that is the method of *jadhdhba*, God attracts the aspirant to Himself through His love, and the aspirant proceeds to God quickly and eas-

INSERTION OF THE END IN THE BEGINNING 53

ily without any difficult practices. The five subtle centers of the world of command are cleaned through the method of *jadhdhba*. The prototypes of these subtle centers are in the divine *la-makani* or spaceless world. The subtle centers in the human body are a mere reflection of those sublime centers. Naturally, these subtle centers are cleansed quickly and easily without any difficult, arduous practices on the part of the aspirant because they are “essentially” pure.

The usual method of other tariqas had been to cleanse the subtle centers of the world of creation before the subtle centers of the world of command. Or undertake their *suluk* before the *jadhdhba*. Following the usual methods, it takes aspirants many years of arduous practice to complete their path. Many people either gave up or died before they reached the end of the path.

Sequence	Method	World of the Subtle Center	Subtle Center
1	wayfaring by the seeker’s effort, or <i>suluk</i>	world of creation	Soul or <i>nafs</i>
2			The four
3			elements: fire,
4			air, water, earth
5			
6	attraction from God, or <i>jadhdhba</i>	world of command	Super-arcnum or <i>akhfa</i>
7			Arcnum or <i>khafi</i>
8			Secret heart or <i>sirr</i>
9			Spirit or <i>ruh</i>
10			Heart or <i>qalb</i>

Table 3.3: Sequence in which the ten subtle centers are purified in other tariqas, e.g., Qadri, Chishti, etc.

Note; In the Chishti tariqa, the ten subtle centers exist as ten different steps, while in the Qadri tariqa, the cleansing of the four elements is brought together as one

step—their seventh step.

Hazrat Bahauddin Naqshband searched for an easier way that would take the aspirants to Allah faster. So he begged Allah, “Allah! Give me such a tariqa, whose students are not deprived of what they seek—You!” Allah finally accepted his supplication and gave him the system of God-realization that is the Naqshbandi tariqa. In this tariqa, the seeker’s heart center, *latifa al-qalb*, is purified first, in the beginning of the process. The origin of the heart center lies in the world of command, which is the otherworldly realm that is nearer to God. So it is quite pure to begin with. And therefore the heart center is purified easily. Then the seeker purifies the other four *lata’if* of the world of command and continues on to the *nafs*. Since all the *lata’if* of the world of command have already been purified, the seeker already possesses a foundation on which to stand, his *nafs* is also purified quite easily.

Sequence	Method	World where the subtle center belongs originally	Subtle center in the human body
1			heart or <i>qalb</i>
2			spirit or <i>ruh</i>
3	Attraction from God or <i>jadhdhba</i>	world of command	secret heart or <i>sirr</i>
4			arcnum or <i>khafi</i>
5			super-arcnum or <i>akhfa</i>
6		world of creation	soul or <i>nafs</i>
7-10	wayfaring by the seeker’s effort, or <i>suluk</i>		the four elements: fire, air, water, earth

Table 3.4: Sequence In Which The Ten Subtle Centers Are Purified In The Naqshbandi Tariqa

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In the other tariqas, the *jadhdhba* that is pure grace from God purifies the subtle centers of the world of command after *suluk*, i.e., difficult, arduous effort on the part of the seeker, who works to purify the five subtle centers of the world of creation. But in the Mujaddidi-Naqshbandi tariqa, that *jadhdhba* comes at the very beginning of the path. This is what “insertion of the end in the beginning” means—*jadhdhba* before *suluk*, or the cleansing of the subtle centers of the world of command before the subtle centers of the world of creation.

Now, does the concept of *indiraj-i nihayat dar bi-dayat* mean that the new initiate of the Naqshbandi tariqa is at the same level as the adepts in the other tariqas who have reached their ends? The answer is no, because you cannot compare a new adept with an advanced adept. But you can compare a new adept of the Naqshbandi tariqa with a new adept in another tariqa. Then you will see that even a new adept of the Naqshbandi tariqa has a portion of the gift that the adepts of the other tariqas receive at the end of their path. Another way to look at it is that while the new Naqshbandi adept may possess illumination of the heart, the strength of his transmission (*nisbat*) is much weaker than the *nisbat* of an advanced adept of the other tariqas who has also illuminated his heart, but after years of arduous practice.

Still another way of looking at it is that the *jadhdhba* that the aspirant realizes in the beginning of the Mujaddidi-Naqshbandi tariqa is really the shadow (*zill*) of the real *jadhdhba* that he realizes later. However, still he has received a taste of it in the beginning of his path. As the Mujaddid explains,

The proposition “insertion of the end in the beginning” (*indiraj-i nihayat dar bidayat*) that

proceed from these [Naqshbandi] masters, some shaykhs of the other silsilas (qaf) wonder if it is really true. They wonder what it really means.

And they do not agree with the proposition that the beginner on this [Naqshbandi] tariqa is a peer of those who have reached the end in the other tariqas. How surprising! How did they interpret “insertion of the end in the beginning” to mean that “the beginner of this tariqa will be a peer of those who have reached the end in the other tariqas?”

[The masters of the Naqshbandi tariqa,] they have not said anything more than “insertion of the end in the beginning.” What they have said does not indicate peerage.

Instead, it means that the competent shaykh in this tariqa who has reached the end (*muntahi*), employs his face-turning and power-of-intervention (*tasarruf*). And he bestows the taste from his treasures that he had received in his last station in the path, to the rightly-guided (*rashid*) beginner. And he puts the salty taste of his own end into the beginning [of the beginner]. So where is the peerage? Where is the room for a doubt? [A 2.43, 114.9-14]

Monist Ontologies

Now Hazrat Mujaddid eulogizes his teacher by recounting the knowledge that he learned from Khwaja Baqibillah. He says that he came to understand all the fine points of *tawhid* or monism and all the fine variations in that doctrine via Khwaja Baqibillah’s intermediation.

By the blessing of his exalted face-turning, what subtle point remains within the sciences of *tawhid* or monism, [and all its subtle variations e.g.,] *ittihad* or unificationism, *qurb* or nearnessism, *ma'iyat* or witnessism, *ihata* or encompassmentism, *sarayan* or penetrationism, etc. that he did not disclose to me! Or he did not grant me the cognizance of its reality [i.e., the reality of any subtle point in those sciences of *tawhid*!] [A 1.266, 105.12-13]

Reviewing the Monist Ontologies

Tawhid or monism refers to the doctrine that God is “one” with the cosmos—many variant doctrines are put together under the banner of *tawhid*.

One of these variants is *ittihad* or unificationism — the doctrine that God is one and the same as the cosmos. Chittick translates *ittihad* as “unificationism,” and that is its literal meaning. Its technical meaning in sufi ontology is that God is merged in the cosmos in such a way that these two cannot be distinguished from one another. This is diametrically opposed to the Islamic doctrine that comes from the Koran and the hadith literature, that God and the creation are distinct and separate.

Yes! If someone twists the Koran and hadith literature to arrive at unificationism, he is indeed an apostate. However, a sufi may “actually” see God merged in the cosmos in his “subjective experience” and in that case he should be excused. The Mujaddid explains that if some people such as many of the sufis following *ittihad*, love a person in the extreme, i.e., God, they may not even notice the shadow. Instead, they see only their beloved

person and say that only the beloved person exists. In that case, they may say that the shadow is “unified with” that beloved person, or that the shadow does not exist at all; only their beloved person exists. As the Mujaddid writes,

Mansur [Hallaj] who said “*Anal Haqq*,” meant neither “I’m the Haqq” nor did he mean “I’m unified (*muttahid*) with the Haqq”; for that would have made him into an apostate (*kufr*) who would deserve (*mujib*) execution. Instead he meant that “I do not exist and instead what [alone] exists is the Haqq (SWT)” In short, the sufis recognize the things [of the world] as manifestations of the Haqq. (Almighty! All-Holy!) And the locus [of manifestation] of the divine names and attributes. However, that recognition lacks any taint of descent (*tanazzul*) or the suspicion of change or substitution (*taghayyur va tabaddul*).

It would be useful to explain it with an example. If someone’s shadow falls somewhere, it cannot be said that that shadow is “unified” with that person. Nor can it be said that that person is “identical” (*’ayniyyat*) with the shadow. Nor can it be said that that person has made a “descent” (*tanazzul*) and appeared as the shadow. Actually, that person is exactly what he was before. (*sarafat-i asalat-i khod*) And the shadow has appeared without any “descent” or change in him whatsoever.

There may be times that some people do not at all see a shadow because they love the [original person] extremely and the shadow is hidden from their sight. [As a result] they do

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not see anything else but that person. In such a situation, they may say that “the shadow is identical to that person.” [However, what they really] mean is that “the shadow does not exist and the only thing that exists is that person.” [A 2.44, 116-7]

Therefore, if a sufi says that he sees that the cosmos is “unified with” God, he should be excused from the charge of apostasy.

The Mujaddid discusses more on these monist sciences in his book *Ta’liqat bar Sharh-Ruba’iyat*

. His essential idea is that these concepts that are in the Koran e.g., *ihata*, *qurb*, and others, should be treated as *mutashabihat* or allegorical verses—only God and His elect understand their hidden, mysterious meanings.

For example, *ihata* or encompassmentism, is the doctrine that God encompasses the cosmos. The Koran says, *Take note! Verily He [Allah] encompasses everything* (Koran 41:54). Many misguided sufis interpret “encompassment” as a sort of a “physical encompassment,” which is clearly wrong. However, encompassment may indeed be interpreted in a way so as to conform to the sharia.

Hazrat Khwaja Muhammad Ma’thum who was the Mujaddid’s son and spiritual heir explained it even better in his book *Maktubat-i Ma’thumiya*. It is written there that in a letter to him, one of his disciples cited the verse *Take note! Verily Allah encompasses everything* (Koran 54:41) and asks him to explain the nature of this encompassment. In answer, Hazrat Ma’thum writes,

You should know that encompassment has two meanings. [First,] you may bring encompassment down to “encompassment by knowledge”

(*ihata-i 'ilmi*). Some of the “verifiers” [*muhaqqiqan* or God-realized sufis who have attained the sublime station of *haqiqat* and “verified” this proposition via their experiential knowledge attained through unveilings and mystic visions] hold this opinion. This is also in line with what the noble Koran says, *Verily! Indeed! Allah encompasses everything by His Knowledge* (Koran 65:12). Therefore there is no reason for you to become bewildered or remain hesitant to accept it.

[Second,] you may also interpret encompassment [literally] as “physical (*bi-jism*) encompassment.” Then I would point out that encompassment and witness (*ihata va ma'iyat*) of the Haqq (SWT) is not the same as encompassment of a body by another body (*jism bi-jism*). [Such literal interpretation] would be incompatible with divine incomparability and holiness (*tanzih va taqdis*). So this encompassment should be classified as an allegory (*mutashabihat*). [Then you may believe them] in the same way that you believe in [the allegorical verses of the Koran that talk about God having] hands or a face.

Finally, the second Qayyum, Hazrat Ma'thum concludes,

He (SWT) is “all encompassing (*muhit*)” and “with us (*ba ma*)” but we should not be preoccupied with its nature (*kayfiyat*).”

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⁷Khwaja Muhammad Ma'thum, *Maktubat-i Ma'thumiya*, Volume III, maktub #16. I referred to the book *Muntakhabat az Maktubat-i Ma'thumiya*, (Istanbul: Ihlas Vakfi, 1979), p. 248.

Arabic name	English translation	Description
Itihad	Unificationism	God and the creation are unified
Ihata	Encompassmentism	God encompasses the entire creation
Qurb	Nearnessism	God is near everything in the creation
sarayan	Penetrationism	God penetrates the creation as fragrance penetrates the rose

Table 3.5: Monist Ontologies

Another ontology is qurb or nearnessism—the doctrine that God is “near” the cosmos. As Allah says in the Koran, *We are nearer to him [man] than [man’s] jugular vein* (Koran 50:16). It should also be understood as a *mutashabihat* verse whose meaning is beyond the limited human comprehension that most of us possess.

Now what about the monist ontologies that are not described in the Koran? One example is *sarayan*, or penetrationism—the doctrine that God penetrates the cosmos like fragrance penetrates the rose. The Mujaddid feels that even these verses should be treated as *mutashabihat*.⁸

If we adopt this Mujaddidi understanding, many of these monist ontologies can be brought within Islam.

Naqshbandi Science is Sublime

The science of “oneness in manyness” i.e., “seeing God in the many forms of the world,” or the science of “many-ness in oneness” i.e., “seeing the many forms of the world in God” are the most sublime of the sciences that the other sufi masters teach. On the other hand, the sciences that Khwaja Baqibillah taught the Mujaddid are far more

⁸Ahmad Sirhindi, *Ta’liqat bar Sharh-i Ruba’iyat*, I referred to the unpublished translation into Bengali by Mawlana Mominul Haq, 2005.

sublime than those false sciences of *tawhid* or monism; they propose that God is beyond the cosmos.

Witnessing “oneness in manyness” (*wahdat dar kathrat*) or “manyess in oneness” (*kathrat dar wahdat*) are only the preliminaries and beginnings (*muqaddamat va mubadi*) of this science [the science of dualism that one realizes in this Mujaddidi-Naqshbandi tariqa]. In short, where the Naqshbandi transmission and the elect presence (*hudur-i khass*) of these great ones [the masters of the Naqshbandi tariqa] are present, there even a name of these [anti-sharia monist] sciences should come to the tongue. Nor even a sign of these [false] witnessings or unveilings [that suggest that God is identical with the cosmos] should be discussed. If someone still does it, then [it means that] his gaze is toward the low [levels of knowledge.]

Shuhud: Here witnessing or *shuhud* means direct experiential knowledge. It is often used synonymously with unveiling, i.e., *kashf* or *mukashafa*;⁹ another synonym is *dhawq* or “tasting.”

Now the Mujaddid extols the superiority of the Naqshbandi tariqa, as being devoid of false sufi sciences that contravene the sharia e.g., the doctrine that God is one with the cosmos, and because its science is free from the abominable practices of the dancers who conduct deviant sufi practices that contravene the sunna e.g., loud zikr, dancing, singing, etc.

⁹For more on witnessing (*shuhud*) and unveiling (*kashf*, *mukashafah*), see SPK, pp. 225-228. Note that SPK shows that *mushahada* is often used to mean *kashf* or *mukashafah*, i.e., “unveiling” (SPK, p. 277).

The abode of the practices of these great ones [the masters of the Naqshbandi tariqa] is lofty! These [practices] are not at all like [the practices of] the charlatans (*zarraqi*) [who disseminate false sufi sciences that contravene the sharia] or [the practices of] the dancers [who conduct deviant sufi practices e.g. dancing that contravene the sunna]. Since I have received such a kind of sublime felicity [as the transmission of this most high Naqshbandi tariqa] from [your father] Hazrat [Baqibillah], then even if I lay my head on the feet of your servants of your court, for them to trample upon it for my entire life, still I would have done nothing!

The Mujaddid again engages in some polite hyperbole. He apologizes for not being more attentive to the two sons of his master and he shows his gratitude for his sufi brother Khwaja Husamuddin Ahmad who has been taking care of those two brothers.

What shall I present about my shortcomings? What shall I reveal of my shame? May the grant good compensation to the Authority of the Gnostic Sciences, Khwaja Husamuddin Ahmad! ¹⁰ On our behalf, he has taken upon himself the charge of defective ones like us. He has resolved to serve the servants of this exalted doorstep courageously. And he has given reprieve to us, the ones who have gone astray from the path.

¹⁰Khwaja Husamuddin Ahmad was an eminent disciple of Khwaja Baqibillah, the Mujaddid's shaykh.

*If there were a tongue on every hair on my
body*

*Still I would not be able to show a
thousandth of the gratitude that he deserves.*

[A 1.266, 105.15-106.3]

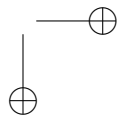
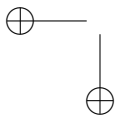
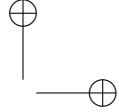
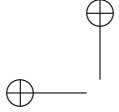
Hazrat Mujaddid lays the groundwork for writing this maktub; he recounts that Khwaja Baqibillah had him start teaching as a sufi teacher to his two sons, and he had instructed him to take care of them.

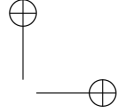
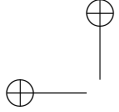
Three times I have been honored with the felicity of kissing the doorstep of his Hazrat [Baqibillah]. The last time, he told me, “I have become very weak physically and I don’t expect to live much longer! Do look after my children!” Then he brought you before him. At that time, you were with your wet-nurse. He instructed me to give you my face-turning. At his instruction, I gave you my face-turning before him. It was such a strong face-turning that clear traces of it were observed. Next he instructed me to give a face-turning to your mother. At his instruction, I also gave my face-turning to your mother while she was [behind a curtain and] unseen. I hope that by the blessing of giving those face-turnings in his [Khwaja Baqibillah’s] presence, they [my face-turnings] will bear many fruits.

Do not presume that I have forgotten his instructions or his last wish. His instruction must be obeyed and his last wish must be fulfilled! Nor am I neglecting them. Certainly not! Instead I have been waiting for your sug-

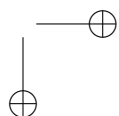
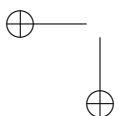
gestion and permission. Now I am writing a few lines in the way of advice. [A 1.266, 106.3-10]

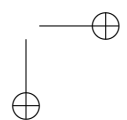
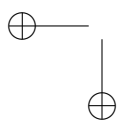
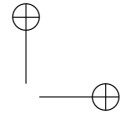
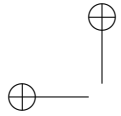
Trace (*athar*, pl. *athar*) is term used by Ibn Arabi to refer to a phenomenon in the cosmos, i.e., the things, the entities, the forms, and so forth. They are the “effects” of God exercising His influence. Chittick translates *athar* as “effect” in *SPK*, but he changes it to “trace” in *SDG*. He writes that the reason for this was that “effect” hints toward a cause and effect relationship and that was inaccurate. So “trace,” which lacks that connotation, is a more appropriate word.





Part II





CHAPTER 4

The Creed

Faith—The Sunni Creed

The Mujaddid begins his lessons on the sharia and the Naqshbandi tariqa, to the two sons of his shaykh by stressing the importance of adhering to the creed of the mainstream Sunni community.

May Allah (SWT) make you happy! Now listen with inner awareness! For intelligent people, the first obligation is to rectify their creed with the required doctrines of the mainstream Sunni community (*ahl-i sunnat va jama'at*) that is the saved sect (praise be to Allah who has kept me with it) and these doctrines are indeed correct. Now I am clarifying some of these doctrines that are somewhat hard to understand. [A 1.266, 106.10-13]

Sunnis—many people these days define Sunni by what the Shias conceive to be Sunni, i.e., anyone who is not a Shia. Indeed, the Shias hold that the Wahhabis, a non-

Sunni sect who call themselves Salafis, are the most extreme Sunnis because they are strongly against the Shias. On the other hand, what the Mujaddid means by Sunni is how the Sunni ulama define a Sunni—someone who believes in the Sunni creed. Thus a *Mutazila* or a *salafi*, although they are not Shia, still are not Sunni because they do not believe in the necessary creed of the Sunnis.

These definitions/translations may be adopted:

mainstream Sunni community: *ahl-i sunnat va jama'at*

Salafis: this includes all the reformist sects that believe in the four caliphs but do not support the required tenets of the mainstream Sunni community.

Shia/Mawdudists: Those who denigrate the companions of Prophet Muhammad (including followers of the modern Pakistani reformer Mawdudi, who denounces some of the companions in his book *Khilafat O Mulqiyat* and elsewhere).

Table 4.1: The Sects of Islam today

I have translated *firqa'* as “sect.” While it is true that the term sect is somewhat outdated, and has a negative connotation, I prefer it. In addition, it is still being used by some first-class translators today. For example, Professor R. J. McCarthy uses it in his superb translation, *Al-Ghazali's Path to Sufism*.

Existence

The Mujaddid proposes that Allah exists by His person (*dhat*), not by His existence (*wujud*). By this, he opposes two groups. First, he opposes Imam Ashari and some sufis including Ibn Arabi,

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who propose that divine existence is identical to His person. Second, he opposes the Muslim philosophers of the *faylasuf* tradition who proposed that God exists by His attribute of existence that is “additional” to His existence¹

While these *faylasufs* called God the “Necessary Being,” by this they meant “an actual being whose non-existence is not only ‘not a fact’ but an unthinkable absurdity.” However, those philosophers also affirmed the attribute of existence of God and that He exists by this attribute of existence.²

Indeed, Avicenna coined term *wajib al-wujud*, but he meant that God only possessed the attribute of existence necessarily. On the other hand, the created things may or may not possess the attribute of existence- if they do possess that attribute then they exist.

<i>faylasuf</i> tradition	Ashari / Ibn Arabi	Mujaddid
God’s existence is “additional” to His person i.e. He exists by that attribute of existence that is additional to His person	God’s existence is “identical” to His person	God exists “by” His person, not by His attribute of existence

Table 4.2: Three Opinions in the Theory of Existence

You should know that Allah (SWT) exists by His holy person (*bi-dhat-i muqaddas-i khod mawjud ast*) and everything else exists by His bestowal of existence (*ijad*).[A 1.266, 106.13-14]

¹Ahmad Sirhindi, *Ma’arif-i Ladunniya, ma’rifat 14*

²Fazlur Rahman, p. 4-5. (English section of the book)

The Mujaddid writes that the ulama of the mainstream Sunni community have proposed that God exists by His person, not by His attribute of existence. He elaborates on this point in his monograph, *Mabda’ va Ma’ad* and writes,

How eloquently have the Sunni ulama said, “The existence of the Necessary (SWT) is additional (*za’id*) to His (SWT) person (*dhat*).”

To claim that the existence is identical to the person or to establish nothing beyond existence is a result of a defect in the considerative faculty (*nazar*).

Shaykh ‘Ala’uddawla [Simnani] has said, “Beyond the world of existence lies the world of the loving Lord (*malikul wadud*).” [Mabda’ 11, 18.1-4]

In the *Mabda’*, he writes even more. The Mujaddid proposes that God exists by his “person, *dhat*”, not by his “existence, *wujud*”. *He writes,*

The Necessary Being (SWT) is unique in that that He exists by His own person and He need not depend on His [attribute of] existence in order to exist. It does not matter whether we maintain that the divine existence is identical to the divine person (*‘ain-i dhat*) or additional to the person (*za’id-i dhat*). [Mabda 19, 39]

He also writes,

The Haqq (SWT) exists by (*mawjud*) by His own person (*dhat*), not by His existence (*wujud*). That is unlike the others things that exist

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by existences. So He (SWT) does not need to exist by His existence.

And he contrasts it with Ibn Arabi who proposes that the divine existence is “identical” to the divine person

[Ibn Arabi] has proposed that divine existence “identical (*‘in*) to the divine person, not “additional (*za’id*)” to it. So God does not need to depend on something else to exist.

Now the Mujaddid comments on this matter.

However, we need solid evidence to prove that the divine existence is identical to the person. And also we will have to face the opposition of many scholars of the mainstream Sunni community. Because these great masters do not propose that the [divine] existence is identical [to the divine person]. Instead they recognize the [divine] existence to be “additional (*za’id*)” to [divine] person.

We should not forget that if we rule on the “additionality of existence (*ziyadat-i wujud*)”, then it necessitates that the Necessary needs others. However, if we propose on that He (SWT) exists by His own person and take this existence as an “ordinary qualifier (*‘ard-i ‘am*)” then it appears that the statement of many *mutakallimun* (kalam-scholars) of the “people of truth” is correct. And that objection [to the Mujaddid’s proposition] that the opponents make on the ground of [God] needing others vanishes. And the difference between these two propositions becomes clear, i.e., [the proposition] that the Necessary (SWT) exists by

His own person but [the divine attribute of] existence truly cannot enter there and [the proposition] that He exists by His own existence but this existence is established to be identical to His person.

Ibn Arabi	Mujaddid
God exists by His own existence but this existence is identical to His person	God exists by His own person not by His existence

Table 4.3: Existence of God: Ibn Arabi versus the Mujaddid

This knowledge is an elect knowledge that Allah (SWT) has uniquely granted me. Praise to Allah (SWT) for this [great gift], and salutation and peace to His messenger! [Mabda 18, 38-9]

A Review of Basic Concepts in Ontology

In Aristotelian ontology, the first thing that we consider is “substance.” It refers to the things or objects that the ontologist is concerned about, e.g., John, Robert, man, tiger, and so on. “Primary substance” is any “individual thing,” e.g., a specific and unique John, Robert, a particular man, a particular tiger, etc. “Secondary substance” is what we get after abstracting one level, e.g., the class called man, or the class called tiger, and so on.

Substance is called *jawhar* is Arabic that originates. The Arabic word *jawhar* comes from Persian *gawhar*, jewel. It refers to the idea that the substance is the most

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valuable thing, i.e., the primary subject of consideration for the ontologist.

The Arabic philosophical term *mahiya*, that literally means “what-is-it-ness,” is translated as “essence” - in keeping with modern English usage. It means the definition of a thing, i.e., the concept that defines a thing intrinsically or the set of attributes that make a thing what it is necessarily. It consists of qualities that are intrinsic to it, which are called “essential attributes.” For example, all roses have petals. So the attribute of “having petals” is an essential attribute of rose, and a part of the “essence” of rose.

Aristotle held that essence is more important than existence. He reasoned that we ask the question “What is it?” even before we ask “Does it exist?” Muslim philosophers who followed Aristotle reasoned along the same lines. Averroes (Ibn Rushd), who lived in medieval Spain, diverged from this trend and affirmed the primacy of existence over essence. Mulla Sadra, the seventeenth-century Muslim Iranian philosopher, broke away from that tradition as well. Averroes and Mulla Sadra, they both reasoned that only after we know that it exists, do we even bother to wonder, “What is it?”

Attribute or *sifat* refers to property of a thing. *Sifat* may be an intrinsic part of the thing, i.e., a part of its essence, in which case it may be called an essential attribute. Or it may be an accidental attribute, i.e., something that is not an essential part of the essence but instead something accidental or additional to it. In the case of an accidental attribute, the thing may or may not possess that attribute and even if the thing does not have that attribute, it is still that thing. For example, a rose may or may not possess the attribute of being of the color red. Here, the color red is an “accidental attribute” or an “ac-

cident” of the rose and not a part of the essence of the rose. On the other hand, having petals is an “essential attribute” or part of the essence of the rose.

When we talk about God, the term attribute or *sifat* refers to a reified attribute that has external existence. This is not at all like the human conception of attributes. However, God does have other subtler forms of attributes that lack external existence and are more like human attributes in that way. The first level of subtler attribute is “mode” or *shan* and the second level that is even subtler is “crossing-over” or *i’tibar*.

A “particular” or *juz’iya* is best defined by defining what it is not. It is not an abstraction; it is something that is concrete. It is also not “multiply-instantiated” rather it is one-of-a-kind or unique. For example, Socrates is “not an abstraction”; instead he was concrete. Additionally, he was “not multiply-instantiated”; rather he was unique. So Socrates is a “particular.”

A “universal” or *kulliya* refers to the “universal” essence that is contained in a class, genus, or species of primary substances. That is, the universal is something that is not an individual, e.g., the class of beings called man (as opposed to the particular individual named John).

Most scholars³ translate *dhat* as “essence,” especially when it refers to God; but I am using “person.” In Islamic philosophy, *dhat* may mean any one of these four things: 1) essence or *mahiya*, 2) existence or *wujud*, 3) thatness or *anniya*, or 4) substance or *jawhar*. Instead of preoccupying ourselves with the meaning of these terms, we ought to note that while “*essence* or *mahiya*” is a mere concept that does not have external existence, *dhat* is externally existent. This is one reason that I have cho-

³The philosopher Majid Fakhry also uses “person.”

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sen to translate *dhat* of God, Who is necessarily externally existent, with the word “person” rather than “essence.”

Uniqueness

The Mujaddid stresses that God is inherently unique; He is incomparable; He is transcendent.

He (SWT) is beyond the beyond and then beyond the beyond and the beyond the beyond and still then beyond the beyond. (*faHua subhanaHu wara' al-wara' thumma wara' al-wara' thumma wara' al-wara' thumma wara' al-wara'*). [A 2.1, 3.15]

Like His person, His attributes and acts are also unique, incomparable, and transcendent.

The person, the attributes, and the act of God are unique. No one can be “truly” associated with Him in any matter—with respect to existence or with respect to something else. However, we are not concerned with a nominal commonality or a verbal correlation.

Note: Here I am translating *af'al* as “act” instead of “acts” when it comes in the context of how the Mujaddid means it. While Imam Ashari understands it to mean multiple acts, the Great Mujaddid understands it to mean one single all-inclusive act. God may have such a nominal comparison but never a true comparison with the created things.

His attributes and act (like His person) are also “without what manner” (*bi-chuni*) and “without how” (*bi-cheguneh*). They have no

correlation with the attributes and acts of contingent things. [A 1.266, 106.14-17]

The Mujaddid quotes this poem to illustrate it:

*What will we say about the name of this
bird?*

*Who lives in the same nest along with the
'anqa*

*Before man, it is named the 'anqa
For my bird, that name is still hidden*⁴

The Mujaddid writes more on the divine incomparability in his *Maktubat*. There he wrote:

Allah is indeed perfect and exalted (*kamalahu subhanahu*). However, He (SWT) is also beyond these two attributes. Indeed, He (SWT) is beyond all the names and attributes (*jami 'il asma' wa 'l-sifat*), beyond all the modes and “crossing overs” (*jami 'il shu'un wal i'tibarat*), beyond manifestation and non-manifestation (*zuhur wa 'l-butun*), beyond “coming out in the open” and “becoming hidden” (*buruz wa 'lkumun*), beyond self-disclosures and manifestations (*tajalliyat wa 'l-zuhurat*), beyond all that where one arrives and where one is made to arrive (*mawsulin wa mafsulin*), beyond witnessings and unveilings (*mushadat wa 'l-mukashafat*), beyond all sensory things and intelligible things (*mahsus wa 'l-ma'qul*), beyond all illusory things and imaginalized things (*mawhum wa 'l-mutakhayyal*), and He

⁴This poem is quoted in the Fazlur Rahman text but not in the Amritsari text

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(SWT) is beyond the beyond, then beyond the beyond and still then beyond the beyond. [A 2.1, 3]

In the *Mabda’ va Ma’ad*, the Mujaddid wrote,

We do not worship a God who comes within the compass of witnessing (*shuhud*), can be seen, or can be known or can be imagined or conceived. Because that what can be witnessed, seen, known, imagined or conceived (*mash-hud, mar’i, ma’lum, mawhum, mutakhayyul*)- that is a crafted and newly-originated (*masnu’ va muhdath*) thing just like him who witnesses, sees, knows, imagines or conceives [i.e. man].

I am searching for that morsel
Which is more than a mouthful

[Mabda 20, 41]

The Mujaddid writes even more on God’s incomparability with the creation in his monograph *Mabda’ va Ma’ad*. There he explains that the Koranic verses that compare God with the creation are really allegorical verses.⁵ He also explains that we really do not know what those comparisons mean.⁶

Knowledge: The Chrono–Epistemology

The Mujaddid offers his unique solution to a quandary in the science of *kalam*, the science that could be most likened to the Muslim analogue of theology. We hold that divine knowledge never changes but we do see that the

⁵*Mabda’ va Ma’ad*, minha 35

⁶*Mabda’ va Ma’ad*, minha 60

information on objects does change with time (as the objects themselves undergo change), so how can this contradiction be rationalized?

In answer, the Ashari school of kalam proposes that while God does possess the attribute of knowledge and that knowledge is indeed timeless, that divine mind possesses one piece of information for each moment, for each object of knowledge. As a result, for each object of knowledge, the knowledge, i.e., the sum total or the entire body of information on it does not change; instead what may change is how that knowledge relates to the object of knowledge. The information on that object may change to a new and different piece of information as the moment of time changes. Or in their terminology, the divine mind’s *ta’alluq* or attachment with the object shifts to a new *ta’alluq* as time changes.⁷

On the other hand, the Mujaddid proposes a unique chrono–epistemology- that the divine mind “comes to know” each object of knowledge for the entire eternity in only a single event. Or in the Mujaddidi terminology, the divine mind has only one *ta’alluq* or attachment with each object for all of eternity.

Note: Is it correct to say God “knows” or “has known?” From the standpoint of God, He may only “know,” since He lives in a timeless realm. So in that context, I am using the term “God knows.” However, from the viewpoint of man, “God has known.” Because when He has known is in our past. So in that context, I am using “God has known.”

Note: *Ta’alluq* means an attachment, deep connection, or relationship. But this attachment is from a prin-

⁷This explanation is based upon what I understood from the text; the eminent scholar Fazlur Rahman explains it in the same way in his book the *Selected Letters of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi*, pp. 66-67.

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cipal to the subsidiary; from the prototype to the shadow; from the original to the derivative. In this context, it refers to the “the connection through which (or roughly the event when) the divine mind comes to know the information on the objects of divine knowledge.”

Now let’s go back to learn from the Mujaddid.

For example, let’s take the attribute of knowledge. It is a divine attribute that is truly eternal (*qadim*) and “indivisible”⁸ (*basit-i*) and it never has any multiplicity in that way [such that it could be dissected into constituent parts such as, knowledge of moment 1, knowledge of moment 2, and so on]. It is only “subjectively” (*bi-i’tibar*) [in the sight of human beings who live in time] that it [the divine mind] has multiple *ta’alluq*. [A 1.266, 106.17-.18]

It is only subjectively, i.e., in the sight of human beings who live in time, that the divine mind has multiple *ta’alluq* or attachments with an object of His knowledge. That is, it is only subjectively that the divine mind comes to know each object of God’s knowledge on a moment-by-moment basis. In that case, the divine mind has one attachment or *ta’alluq* for each moment. For example, human beings see that something happens to that object in moment 1, the next thing happens in moment 2, and so on. So it seems that what God “comes to know” about that object changing as time progresses. Actually, that interpretation is not true, because God is timeless. Instead, what is true is that God comes to know each object of His knowledge only once for all eternity and that single

⁸Indivisible (*basit*) literally means a “simple thing” - a philosophical concept that refers to a thing so elemental that it cannot be subdivided any further.

channel of knowing includes all the information on that object for all eternity. That is, God comes to know all the information on that object, all at once, in that eternal timeless instant in which the object lives.

For there is only one instance of being unveiled (*inkishaf*) that is indivisible (*basit*)- all the knowledge from the beginning of eternity to the end of eternity has been unveil in that same instance of unveiling. He has known everything in their similar and contradictory states, universally, or particularly (*kulliya va juz'iya*) for each specific moment in time- He has known all that in that “indivisible” one-in-all (*wahid basit*) [moment]. [A 1.266, 106.18-20]

Here I am using the past tense to refer to God’s knowledge. Yes! God only “knows” as He lives in a realm which is the realm of perpetual present. But from the context of man, God has “known” because when He came to know that, that time was in our past.

Above, the Mujaddid affirms that God knows everything- both universals and particulars. That contradicts a group of *faylasufs* who proposed that God knows only the universals but not the particulars.

Note: The philosophical term “universal” describes a common attribute that refers to all the members of a group, e.g., all tigers are brave. A “particular” describes one instance of an attribute, e.g., Ali is brave. So those deviant philosophers proposed that while God knows the universal: “All men will die one day;” He does not know the particular, “The day when Ali will die.”

In that very same moment, he has known Zayd [i.e., John Doe] both as existent and also as

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nonexistent, as an embryo and also as a child, as young and also as old, as alive and also as dead, as standing and also as sitting, as reclining and also as sitting, as laughing and also as crying, in pleasure and pain, as exalted and also as ashamed, in the grave (*barzakh*) and, also on the Day of the Mustering, in Paradise and also immersed in pleasures.[A 1.266, 107.1-4]

There is no more than one *ta'alluq* for all the objects of God's knowledge and that single *ta'alluq* attaches all the information on the objects of knowledge to divine knowledge for all eternity. If there were multiple time-periods in the domain of God, there could be multiple *ta'alluqs*. However, there is a single all-inclusive time-period in the timeless domain of God, and so consequently, there is only a single all-inclusive *ta'alluq*.

Therefore, there is no more than one *ta'alluq* in that homestead. [And there is only one *ta'alluq*] since a multiplicity in the *ta'alluqs* requires a multiplicity in moments and a multiplicity in the period of time (*azmaneh*). [A 1.266, 107.4-5]

Yes! In the timeless domain of God, there are no multiple moments; instead there is only one timeless time-period that stretches from the beginning of eternity to the end of eternity. So there are no “manyness” or no multiple time-periods; instead there is only one all-inclusive eternal period of time.

However, there is nothing but one-in-all “in-divisible” moment (*anun wahidatun basitun*) from the beginning of eternity until the end of

eternity [in the timeless domain of God]. And there truly is no multiplicity in time [since there is no more than a single eternal moment of time in the timeless domain of God]. For time does not flow before Him (SWT)-there is neither any prior nor any posterior.[A 1.266, 107.5-7]

Consequently, there is only one single all-inclusive all-encompassing all-spanning ta'alluq. And that ta'alluq will be of an unknown nature from the viewpoint of us, the earthlings who live in time.

Should we, in His mind, establish any *ta'alluq* to the objects of God's Knowledge,⁹ it will be a single *ta'alluq*, which will attach with itself all the information [to be known for the entire eternity]. That *ta'alluq* would also be “unknown in its howness,” *majhul al-kayfiyat*, [i.e., of an unknown nature] And that ta'alluq can be qualified as *bi-chuni va bi-cheguni*, “without what manner” and “without how,” just like with what the attribute of knowledge can be qualified.[A 1.266, 107.7-8]

Naqid and *didd*: it is useful to review our logic and define the terms contradictory, *naqid*, and contrary, *didd*. Contradictory or *naqid* means two opposites that cannot both be true (so they are mutually exclusive), but at least one of them must be true (for they are totally exhaustive). On the other hand, contrary or *didd* means two opposites that are only mutually exclusive. Two contraries both cannot be true, only one of them may be true; but they are not

⁹Ma'lumat (objects of God's Knowledge) is a term used by Ibn Arabi. Sometimes, Ibn Arabi also uses this term synonymously with the term “nonexistent things” (ma'dumat). See SPK, p. 11.

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mutually exhaustive and therefore both may be false. So “contradictory” is a subset of “contrary.”

Note that *wahid* has been translated as “one-in-all.” It refers to a “one” that is “all-inclusive,” one that maybe composed of components. It stands in contrast to *ahad* that means an absolute or numerical oneness, i.e., “one-in-number.”

The two very similar terms *bi-chuni* and *bi-cheguni* have been translated as “without what manner” and “without how” respectively.

In the continuation of the interpretation of the mak-tub, the Mujaddid next explains how God knows all the information on an object for multiple moments simultaneously. To explain this, he brings forth an example from Arabic grammar: “When a grammatically educated man knows a word in Arabic, he simultaneously knows all the variant morphological forms of that original word. So if a mere mortal can hold many pieces of contradictory information in his mind concurrently, why can’t God?”

By way of an example, we know that an individual [educated in Arabic grammar] knows an [Arabic] word in the same moment [in its variant morphological forms, e.g., in the forms denoting] several different parts of speech, several different tenses, or several different moods. That is, at that same moment, he knows that word in its noun forms, its verb forms, its preposition forms, its three-letter forms, its four-letter forms, in its fully-declined forms or in its indeclinable forms, in its diptote forms or non-diptote forms, in its triptote forms or its non-triptote forms. Or he may know it [that Arabic word] in its definite forms or in

its indefinite forms. Or he may know it in its present tense forms or in its past tense forms. Or he may know it in its affirmative forms or in its negative forms. So we can believe that the individual, at the same moment, sees all these forms that are in different parts of speech and different moods reflected in the mirror that is the prototype form. That is, all these contradictory things may be present at the same time in the mind of a contingent being [a man who is educated in Arabic grammar], or instead in the sight of a contingent being[or man]. Then why should that be impossible even in the mind of the Necessary whose analogy is most sublime? Allah has the highest analogy! So how will be there a conflict? [A 1.266, 107.8-15]

The Mujaddid explains that for an object, while the information on each particular moment in created earthly time may be different than the information on another moment, still that information is unique for each moment. And since God’s knowledge includes both the earthly moment of time as well as the information for that moment of time, there is no conflict. An easy way to visualize this may is to imagine that there is a “snapshot” of the cosmos for each moment of time. And all these snapshots are placed before God, who is timeless. So it is not that God knows the “future”; rather past, present, and future are all placed before Him, who lives in a timeless moment that is beyond time. This is much easier to visualize when one reads the theory in modern physics that time is not indivisible, that it is composed of “quanta” i.e., units called Planck time. Then one can easily visualize that God, who is above time, has a “snapshot” of

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the cosmos placed before Him for each quanta of time, i.e., Planck time. Ibn Arabi also believed in a “quantum theory of time,” he refers to each quanta of time (or Planck time) as *al-zaman al-fard*.¹⁰ And it seems that the Muslim kalam scholars, like the Asharis and the *faylasufs* also believed in this way.

You should know that although it appears that there is a conflict, actually there is not any conflict. This is because in one and the same moment, He knows Zayd both as existent and nonexistent; He also knows in that same moment that Zayd came to exist after 1000 AH, that Zayd had been nonexistent before and that Zayd ceased to exist after 1100 AH. So there is actually no conflict [since those events occur in different times.] The same reasoning can explain the other conflicts [in this section on divine knowledge]. So understand! .[A 1.266, 107.15-19] {insert object 1–two diagrams}

The Mujaddid compares and contrasts the three theories of time of the three schools: the *faylasufs*, the Ashari and the Mujaddidi school. First, the Islamicate philosophical tradition or the *faylasuf* tradition proposed that God lives in time and He learns new things as they occur in time. Second, the Ashari tradition proposes that while God is timeless Himself, His *ta'alluq* or “relationship with a created thing” may shift to a new relationship over earthly time. Third, the Mujaddid proposes that God’s knowledge is timeless; it does not change over time. Since God lives in a timeless (*la-zamani*) domain, he is not subservient to time and instead time is His cre-

¹⁰Chittick, William, *The Self-Disclosure of God*, p. 98.

ation. There is only a single, “indivisible,” eternal period of time that may be “called a moment for the lack of a better word; but it is not even a moment.” As my sufi shaykh explained, “In this world, time is ever-flowing and there is really no ‘present’; it is either the past or the future. We blink our eyes and things either happened before the blink of our eye or will happen after the blink of our eye. On the other hand, in the next world, there is neither past nor future. In that realm, there is only one, uninterrupted, continuous period of time, it is the perpetual present.”¹¹ Divine knowledge is time-

Philosophers	Asharis	Mujaddid
God lives in time and He learns new things as they occur in time.	God’s knowledge is timeless itself. However, <i>the ta’alluq</i> or relationship that divine knowledge has with a created thing may shift to a new relationship over earthly time. For each temporal object, divine knowledge knows it through one <i>ta’alluq</i> for moment 1, another <i>ta’alluq</i> for moment 2, and so on.	God’s knowledge is timeless; it does not change over time because He already knows what happens to any object for each moment, from the beginning of eternity until the end of eternity.

Table 4.4: Chrono-epistemologies: A Comparison

less. No part of His knowledge is created in time or newly originated (*hadith.*). There are many particulars of God’s all-encompassing knowledge- one particular for each unique object of knowledge. And divine knowledge

¹¹sufi Shaykh Muhammad Mamunur Rashid, in a discussion with the author in 1998 in his khanqa in Dhaka, Bangladesh

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has one *ta'alluq* for each unique object of knowledge. In that context, divine knowledge has many *ta'alluqs*. That context stands in contrast to the Ashari context. In the Ashari context, for each object, God's knowledge has one *ta'alluq* for each moment of time. So each one of these Ashari *ta'alluqs* is newly originated. But the Mujaddidi *ta'alluqs* are different, they are timeless.

This verification clarifies that although God's knowledge has many *ta'alluq* with various particulars [of that knowledge where each particular refers to the information for a unique moment of time], still knowledge is not tainted by a taint of modification (*taghayyur*). [A 1.266, 107.19-20]

The chrono-epistemology of the *faylasufs* is wrong. They maintained that God's knowledge is created in time, not timeless. God lives in time and He learns new things as time progresses- things that He did not know beforehand,

And even a suspicion of newly-originatedness (*huduth*) should not be found in that divine attribute [of knowledge] as the philosophers maintain. [A 1.266, 107.20-108.1]

The Mujaddid proposes that God's knowledge is primordial and none should even suspect that even a part of that knowledge is originated newly, i.e., God would learn something new that He did not know beforehand. The philosophers of the *faylasuf* tradition maintain that God lives in time and He comes to learn new information as time elapses. But the Mujaddid denies that.

The Mujaddid continues,

When things are known one after another you may conceive a change in the predestination.

[A 1.266, 108.1-2]

The Mujaddid explains that when things are known one after another sequentially in a linear model of time, we may conceive a change in predestination or God’s fore-knowledge of future things. That would be a chrono-epistemology wherein God lives in time and comes to know new information as He traverses through time- just like human beings do.

However, the chrono-epistemology that follows the Mujaddid’s verification is quite different and there lies no possibility of new or modified information.

[On the other hand, in this alternative scenario which is a holistic model of time,] all is known in a single moment so there is no possibility of any modified or newly originated information. [A 1.266, 108.2]

According to the Mujaddidi science, God lives in a timeless domain and so His Knowledge is also timeless. God comes to know all and every bit of information encompassing past, present, and future in a single primordial moment so there is no possibility of having any information that is modified in time.

Verification (*tahqiq*) refers to the knowledge of the great sufis who have “verified” the truth of their knowledge through unveiling, *kashf*, or direct vision or witnessing, *mushahadat*. Epistemologically, this is contrasted with *ijtihad*, individual striving for the interpretation of the law, and also with *taqlid*, following the authority of the learned predecessors. In the *Self-Disclosure of God*, Chittick introduces a new translation of this term, namely, “realization”; this brings home the meaning of *tahqiq* more accurately. But “realization” is a common word used in a number of non-technical senses. So to avoid

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confusion, I employ the word that he used in the *sufi Path of Knowledge*, “verification.”

Newly originated (*hadith*) refers to something was not pri-mordially existent i.e. that has been created in time. It is to be contrasted with eternal (*qadim*). Chittick translates it as “temporally originated” in SPK; but he changes it to “newly-arrived” in *SDG*. I am using “newly originated” instead.

If we agree to the Mujaddidi chrono-epistemology, the Ashari chrono-epistemology becomes irrelevant. The Asharis propose their chrono-epistemology so that they can defend against the arguments of the philosophers, “How can God know several conflicting pieces of information for the same thing at the same time? Then there are conflicts. Or how can He learn new knowledge? Then His knowledge is not unchanging.” However, in the Mujaddidi chrono-epistemology, there is no conflict because God knows both the particular moment of time and the information on the object- both pieces of information— for each moment of time in eternity.

So the Mujaddid continues,

That way, there is no need to establish multiple *ta'alluqs* for it so that modification and newly-originatedness (*taghayyur va huduth*) can be attributed to those *ta'alluqs* instead of the attribute of knowledge. That is what some scholars of the science of kalam propose in order to negate the reservations of the philosophers. [A 1.266, 108.2-4]

The Mujaddid explains that that way, there is no need to establish the Ashari chrono-epistemology where there are multiple *ta'alluqs* for the divine attribute of knowledge. In such a case, there would be one *ta'alluq* or “at-

tachment of coming to know” for each moment, for each object of divine knowledge. Ashari scholars of the science of kalam propose this traditional chrono-epistemology so that they could defend against the arguments of the *faylasufs*. who argued, “How can the Asharis say that the divine knowledge becomes modified?” Therefore, in this way, the Asharis would not have to say that the divine attribute of knowledge itself undergoes modification. Instead, they could say that it is those *ta'alluqs* which become modified and are newly originated.

However, employing that Ashari chrono-epistemology is not really necessary; the Mujaddid’s alternative chrono-epistemology

On the other hand, when man looks at the world, he indeed sees multiple *ta'alluq* (each *ta'alluq* for each event of coming to know).

Take note! It is fine if we establish that objects of God’s knowledge [i.e., man] themselves have multiple *ta'alluq*. (*Ari! Agar ta'addud-i ta'alluqat dar janib-i ma'lumat ithbat kunim gunjaish darad*) [A 1.266, 108.4]

Yes! Man indeed may come to know each object of his knowledge through multiple channels of coming to know, one channel for each moment. However, man is not like God. He is Incomparable! He is timeless! He is beyond having any similarity with man, with respect to time as in other matters. As the Mujaddid explained,

[God is] not a creature of time because time is His creation (*zamani nist keh zaman makhluqi Ust*)." [A 1.167, 50.9]

And God who is timeless “comes to know” each object “only once” for the single timeless moment in the nec-

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essary domain that comprises the entire eternity in the contingent domain. On the other hand, man as a creature of time may come to know things through many events or channels as he lives in time.

Another interpretation of the hard-to-interpret line above may be as follows.

Yes! If we establish multiple *ta'alluq* [from divine knowledge] to the objects of God's knowledge then it would be fine. (*Ari! Agar ta'addud-i ta'alluqat dar janib-i ma'lumat ithbat kunim gunjaish darad*) [A 1.266, 108.4]

This is a scenario where each *ta'alluq* comes down to a unique object of God's knowledge; and since there is more than one object of God's knowledge, there is more than one *ta'alluq*. However, please remember that more than one *ta'alluq* from divine knowledge to a certain object of God's knowledge is not allowed in a scenario in which each *ta'alluq* refers to a unique moment of time. This is because there are no multiple moments of time; instead there is only one "indivisible" moment of time for God.

The Great Mujaddid describes elsewhere the timelessness of God, as discussed in the above chrono-epistemology. He wrote, explained above suffices.

You should know that among those contingent beings who have realized the station of nearness (*qurb*) of the divinity (*ilahi*) (SWT), those ones who have stepped their feet outside the circle of contingentness (*dai'ira'-i imkan*) find the beginningless beginning and the endless end (*azal va abad*) unified (*mut-tahid*) together.

While on his stations of ascent (*maqamat-i ‘uruj*) on the night of Heavenly Ascension (*miraj*), Hazrat [Muhammad] the Seal of the Messengers (salam) found Hazrat Jonah in the belly of the fish. And he found the storm of Hazrat Noah taking place. (salam) And he saw the people of paradise in the paradise and the people of hell in hell. He found five hundred years [of earthly time] equal to half a day after entering the paradise. [The Prophet] saw a rich companion named Abdur Rahman ibn Auf¹² entering paradise late, so Hazrat Prophet asked him the reason for coming late and he gave news of his own trials and tribulations (*‘aqibat va mihn*) [that he suffered on the way.] He [the prophet] saw all that in one moment—there was neither past nor future.

Through the grace of [Prophet Muhammad] the Friend of Allah (sal), I have experienced such “states” [i.e., unveilings and mystic visions] once in a while. [In one those mystic visions,] I [the Mujaddid] saw the angels prostrating before Adam (salam) and at that time their heads were not raised from the prostration. I saw the angels of the [Highest Paradise] *‘illiyyin* not performing these prostrations, they were not ordered to prostate. In my vision, they were absorbed [in seeing that. All these past events as well as] all the happenings (*ahwal*) that will happen in the last world, they were all seen in that same [one

¹²Refers to the hadith report, “The rich will enter paradise five-hundred years after the poor.” This is reason this rich companion, Abdur Rahman ibn Auf, is reaching paradise late.

single all-inclusive] moment.¹³

Speech and Time

God’s speech is one single utterance that is indivisible and timeless. All the different worldly forms of divinity (e.g., the Koran, the Torah, the Gospels, etc.) have originated from that one single indivisible utterance.

God’s speech (*kalam*) is one indivisible utterance (*kalam*). From the beginning of eternity to the end of eternity, God has spoken with that one utterance. If it is a command, it has come from that [same utterance]. If it is a prohibition, it has come from it as well. If it is a notification, it has been derived from it too. If it is an inquiry, it is from the same place too. If it is hope, it has acquired existence from it too. If it is anticipation, it is from it too. All the revealed books and the delivered scriptures are a page of that indivisible (*basit*)¹⁴ utterance. If it is the Torah, it has been transcribed from it. If it is the Gospels, it has taken the sound of words from it. If it is the Psalms of David, it has been copied from it. If it is the *Furqan*,¹⁵ it has been revealed from it.

By Allah! The divine speech!

It is truly one and that is all

Therefore, it is in its descent

¹³*Mabda’ va Ma’ad*, minha 40

¹⁴*basit* is a philosophical term that refers to a substance so elemental that it cannot be subdivided any further

¹⁵Koran, literally means the criterion

*that it traced different worldly
forms*

[A 1.266, 108.4-10]

The Mujaddid corroborates the above explanation on divine speech elsewhere. He writes,

The Haqq (SWT) has spoken with only one one-in-all (*wahid*) utterance from the beginning of time until the end of time (*azal ta abad*). That utterance cannot be partitioned or subdivided. This is because it is impossible for the Almighty to be silent or to be dumb. The surprising matter is that from the beginning of time until the end of time there is only one one-in-all moment. It is because time does not flow over the Exalted Lord. Clearly when it is all within one one-in-all moment, what can take place but an utterance that is one-in-all and indivisible (*wahid basit*). [Mabda 40, 62.1-4]

The Mujaddid now explains the timelessness of divine speech.

The surprising matter is that from the beginning of eternity until the end of eternity, there is only a moment in that place [which is the realm of God.] *Time does not flow over Him (SWT)*. Within one moment, what can be spoken but one one-in-all utterance that cannot be subdivided (*kalam-i wahid-i basit*)?

That one one-in-all utterance has become the origin of so many types of [individual] utter-

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ances [each] in the context of multiple *ta‘alluq* or “relationships”.

For example, if it has a *ta‘alluq* of commandingness (*ma‘mur*), then a command originates. Or if it has a *ta‘alluq* of prohibitingness (*manhi*), then it is called a prohibition (*nihi*). Or if it has a *ta‘alluq* of news-givingness (*ikhbar*), then it becomes news. In short, [that God speaks on not only the news of the present, but also] the news on the past and the future - that throws people into confusion..

The priority and posteriority of the ‘turner [of time]’ [God] (*dal*) indicates the priority and posteriority of the ‘things that are turned [or put in sequence in that linear time]’ (*madlul*). *It is not something hard to understand!* It is so because the past and the future are special qualifiers (*sifat-i makhsus’-i dal*) with which the ‘turner [of time]’ qualifies [or puts into sequence the events in that linear time. And He qualifies the events] in that moment that has been stretched (*inbisat*) [from a wholistic one-in-all model of time into a linear model of time stretching from the beginning of eternity to the end of eternity.]

And in the view of the ‘things that are turned [sequentially in that linear time]’ (*madlul*), since that moment [when God speaks] is unchanged and it [that timeless moment] has not been stretched out (*inbisat*) [to create a linear time as it has been stretched out in the mundane, temporal realm], then there is no past

or future there [in that timeless moment when God speaks.]

The philosophers say, “The essence (*mahiya*) of a thing may have a distinct and separate (*‘alihadeh*) [characteristic] with respect to [that thing’s] external existence (*wujud-i khariji*). [However, the essence] may not have that [same characteristic] with respect to [that thing’s] mental existence (*wujud-i dhihni*).”

[So we see that] a thing can have contradictions in its qualities and inseparable qualifications (*tabayin-i sifat va lawajim*) with respect to its existence and it-ness (*huwiyat*).

And we also see that] the ‘turner [of time]’ and the “things that are turned [sequentially in that linear time]’ are [already] essentially separate from one another (*dal va madlul keh fi’l haqiqat az yek digar juda’ and*).

Therefore, they are also permitted [to differ in their qualities and inseparable qualifications] as in the previous [illustration].

What has been told is that it is only a moment from the beginning of eternity to the end of eternity. And that [they have said one moment] is due to the insufficiency of the language (*tangi-i ‘ibarat*). Actually, we may not even say “one moment”. [That time period is so infinitesimally short that] to call it even a moment would be hard.

The Act and Time

The Mujaddid now teaches us about oneness of the act(s) of God.

Likewise, God’s act (*fa’l, af ‘al*) is one. All His handiwork (*masnu ‘at*) from the beginning of time to the end of time (*azal ta abad*) has come to exist by that one act. This Koranic verse points toward that, *Our command is none but a single glance of the eye* (Koran 54:50). Be it the giving of life or the giving of death, it depends on that act. Be it the giving of pain or the giving of bliss, it depends on that same act. Be it the bestowal of existence or the bestowal of nonexistence, it has grown out of that act. So it is established that the divine act(s) does not have multiple *ta’alluq* or attachments [with the created things]. Instead, all the created things from the beginning of time to the end of time have come into existence in their unique times of existence by that one *ta’alluq* [or attachment with the divine act(s)]. Like the divine act, this [single one-in-all] *ta’alluq* is also “without what manner” and “without how” (*bichun va bichugun.*) For “what manner” cannot be an analogy for that which is “without what manner.” None but the royal chariot may carry the royal tributes! [A 1.266, 108.10-16]

In the same way as it is with divine knowledge, God’s act is also one, indivisible and timeless. All the individual actions of God that we see in the world, they have all originated from that one all-including timeless act.

The Mujaddid now comments on the divine act(s).

Not understanding the [chronological] reality of the act of the Haqq (SWT), Imam Abul Hasan Ashari said that [the act(s) of] engendering is newly originated; and the [rest of the] His (SWT) act(s) are newly originated as well. He did not understand that these [what he understands to be the multiple activities of God] are really the “traces” (*athar*) of the beginningless one act of the Haqq (SWT), not His multiple acts [themselves]. [A 1.266, 108.16-18]

Imam Ashari proposed that act(s) of God are newly originated or “created in time” and what appears to be human activity is really the “direct” act(s) of God. On the other hand, Ibn Arabi proposed that the divine act(s) is more remote and human activity is the self-disclosure of divine act(s) instead of being divine act(s) themselves. The Mujaddid goes even one more step in the direction of Ibn Arabi on the remoteness of the divine act(s)—he proposes that the human activities are really the “traces” of the self-disclosure of the act(s) instead of being the self-disclosure of the act(s) “directly.”

That is, the Mujaddid proposes that God acts through a one-in-all timeless all-inclusive act and it is not God directly acting when human beings act, instead those human actions are the “traces” of the timeless one-in-all divine act. That timeless one-in-all act self-disclose into human activities that are multiple in number and created in time.

The Mujaddid continues his explanation,

The same explanation answers those sufis [like Ibn Arabi] who propose that the divine act self-discloses [into human activity i.e., they

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	Imam Ashari	Ibn Arabi	Mujaddid
Divine Act(s)	Many-in-number and newly originated or created in time	One-in-all and timeless	One-in-all and timeless
Human activity	Direct, act(s) of God directly	Indirect, Self-disclosure of the Act(s) “directly”	Even more indirect, (self-disclosures of the) “traces” of the act(s)

Table 4.5: Reality of the Act(s): Ashari, Ibn Arabi, Mujaddid

propose that human acts are “directly” the self-disclosures of divine act(s)]. They see only a one-in-all divine act [reflected] in the mirror of the activity of the contingent beings [i.e., man] in that homestead [of human activity].

Actually that self-disclosure [that is human activity] is the self-disclosure of the “traces” of the divine act, not the self-disclosure of the act itself. It is because the engendering-act [is not reflected] in the mirrors that are newly originated things. Neither is it manifested in the loci of manifestations that are contingent things. It is because the engendering-act is an act of God that is “without what manner,” “without how,” eternal and abiding in divine Person (*bichuni, bichuguni, qadim, qa'im bi-dhat-i U (SWT)*).

In the close quarter that is “outward form” (sura)

How can meaning be contained?

*In the hut of the beggars
What business does the sultan have?*

[A 1.266, 108.18-109.3]

Ibn Arabi proposes that human activity is the self-disclosure of the divine act(s). The Mujaddid points out Ibn Arabi’s error by clarifying that human activity is too gross to be the self-disclosure of the divine act(s) “directly.” The divine act is sublime. And its self-disclosures are also sublime- too sublime to be “acts of contingent beings.” Ibn Arabi proposed that the “acts of contingent beings” are the self-disclosures of the divine act(s) “itself.” Alternatively, the Mujaddid proposed that it could not happen “directly”; instead, the “acts of contingent beings” are the self-disclosures of the “traces” of the divine act.

The nature of the self-disclosure.	
Ibn Arabi	Mujaddid
Direct; Human activities are “directly” the self-disclosures of the divine act.	Indirect; Human activities are the self-disclosures of the “traces” of the divine act.

Table 4.6: How are human activities self-disclosures of the one-and-all divine act?

So the Mujaddid proposes to modify Ibn Arabi.

I believe that a self-disclosure of the act and attributes cannot be conceived without a self-disclosure of the Person (SWT). For, the act and attributes cannot be detached from the divine Person (SWT). Therefore, the self-disclosures

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of [the acts’ and the attributes’] cannot be conceived without the self-disclosure of the Person. What are indeed detached from the Person (SWT) are the “shadows” (*zill, zilal*) of the act and the “shadows” of the attributes. Therefore, those self-disclosures are the self-disclosures of the “shadows” of the act and the attributes, not of the act and attributes themselves. But not everyone’s [e.g., Ibn Arabi’s] understanding can attain this perfection [in knowledge!] *This is the bounty of Allah! He grants it to whomever He wills! Allah possesses magnificent bounties!* (Koran 57:21). [A 1.266, 109.3-.7]

So the Mujaddid alternatively proposes that human activity is the self-disclosure of the “shadows” of the act(s) and the attributes. He argues that since human acts are not sublime enough to be the self-disclosures of God’s act(s) “directly,” it can only be so “indirectly” by being the “shadows” of His self-disclosure. This is a subtle point that Ibn Arabi did not understand when he proposed that human activity is the self-disclosure of the divine act “directly.”

It may be noted that the Mujaddid is saying the human activity is both self-disclosures of the “traces” (*athar*) of the divine act and the self-disclosure of the “shadows” (*zill*; plural, *zilal, azlal*) of the act. They may be equivalent.

Incomparability

The Mujaddid teaches us on the incomparability of God.

To proceed to the gist of the matter, He (SWT)

is not incarnated (*hulul*) into anything. Nor does anything dwell (*hal*) in Him. However, He (SWT) encompasses (*wasa‘at*) everything, is near (*qurb*) everything and is with (*ma‘iyat*) everything. However that encompassment, nearness and witness are not within our defect-prone comprehension. If they were, that would not be appropriate for His all-holy person (*janab*) [for He is Incomparable!]. He is also beyond that which He makes known through unveilings and witnessings. For the contingent beings may not receive anything from the reality of His person, attributes, and act except ignorance and bewilderment. You should bring faith in the Unseen [Being—that is, God]. [A 1.266, 109.7-11]

The Mujaddid says that God is far above what the sufis may see in their spiritual sight. He believes that the contingent beings cannot attain anything but ignorance and bewilderment when they try to understand His person, His attributes, or His act. We have to attain faith in God who is not seen, heard, or known. As the Koran says, Those who have faith in the Unseen (Koran 2:3). Especially the sufis should take heed of this — since they may often experience many interesting “witnessings,” i.e., mystic visions in their wayfaring. They should not take heed of them for that is not God, and it is God that they seek.¹⁶

Now the Mujaddid teaches us about the mystics visions of God that sufis may see.

And everything that you may unveil or wit-

¹⁶Indivisible (*basit*) literally means a “simple thing,” a philosophical concept in which a substance cannot be subdivided into components.

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ness [in your mystic visions as God,] you should obliterate that by bringing them under the scope of “no” or “la” in the formula of negation, [*la ilaha*]. [A 1.266, 109.11]

That is, when you say there is no “god” (*la ilaha*), you may include all those that you unveil or witness in that “god.” Now the Mujaddid quotes a poem to illustrate that none may comprehend God.

*None may hunt the phoenix
So pick up your trap
For you will find trapped in that trap
Nothing else but air*

Now the Mujaddid quotes a poem from his sufi mentor to illustrate his point.

This stanza from the *Masnavi* written by our Hazrat [Baqibillah] fits here:

*[In my journey], the throne of Self-Sufficiency is ever higher [than what I can attain].
Therefore, to me, to think of attaining it is not appropriate [A 1.266, 109.12-13]*

The above poem alludes to the incomprehensible nature of God. The mind of man cannot comprehend God, who is incomparable to the creation. He feels uncomfortable by this divine incomparability. So he seeks comfort by creating concrete analogies for God- this is why idolaters worship idols. He tries to bring God down into this world, but actually He is too high, far above this temporal realm. The Mujaddid illustrates this eternal human mind-set by the above poem by his sufi mentor.

Elsewhere in the *Maktubat*, the Mujaddid also writes on divine incomparability. He says that the sufis often see the created things that are *chun* (with a manner or how i.e., comprehensible) and mistake them for God, who is *bichun* (without what manner or incomprehensible).

[O disciple!] There do not find manyness in oneness (*kathrat dar wahdat*). And do not be content with “witnessing the [created things which are] *chun* [with how] instead of holding out for [God who is] *bichun* [without how]! For what appears in the mirror of *chun* is never *bichun*; and what appears in manyness is never the truly One (*wahid haqiqi*). [A 1.190, 76.15-17]

On God, the Mujaddid writes,

He [God] is blameless from having a likeness or resemblance (*shabh va manand*) and absolved from being a form or shape (*shakl va mithal*). Being a father or a son is not possible for Him. How will it be possible for Him to have a peer or model (*kafa'at va tamaththul*)? Even a taint of unification or incarnation (*itti-had va hulul*) is considered improper for His honor and even a suspicion of “coming out in the open” or “being hidden” (*buruz va kumun*) is considered ugly for His holy person. [A 1.167, 50.11-14]

Note: *Kumun* means to become hidden (*pinhan shodan*). *Buruz* means to come out to some foreign place (*birun amadan*) and become clear, evident, and public (*ashkara shodan*).

SIMILARITY IS MERELY ALLEGORICAL

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Technically, *kumun* means [for God] to come down (*farvad amadan*) and descend (*nuzul*) to some thing and thus become hidden from His abode.

And, *buruz* means [for God] to incarnate Himself in the creation and become clear, evident, and public and thus manifest Himself (*zuhur namudan hulul kardeh ashkara shodan*) in the body of something.¹⁷

Similarity is Merely Allegorical

What does it mean when God says that He is “near” everything, “with” everything and “embraces” everything? God does describe Himself in a limited way in His revelation. For example, He states, *We are nearer to Him than his jugular vein* (Koran 50:16). So we must bring faith into that self-description. Still God is Incomparable to His creation; His Incomparability transcends His Similarity—we do not know what those self-descriptions really mean. So while we admit those divine self-descriptions, we admit them only in a *bi-la kayf* (i.e., “without how” manner).

Therefore, let us have faith that He (SWT) encompasses (*muhit*) everything, is (*qarib*) near everything, and is with (*ba*) everything. However, we do not know what that encompassment, nearness, or witness (*ihata va qurb va ma“iyat*) means. To say that it means cognitive encompassment or cognitive nearness, and so forth, is like interpreting (*ta’wil*) the allegorical verses and I am against interpreting the allegorical verses. [A 1.266, 109.14-16]

¹⁷A synonym for the Koran; literally, the “Distinguisher,” meaning that which distinguishes between good and evil.

What is the Mujaddidi interpretation of witness (*ma‘iyat*)?
The Mujaddid himself explains it.

Man cannot become the Haqq (SWT), but by His grace, he is never separated (*juda’*) from Him. *Whomever he loves, he is with him.*¹⁸ Everything has realized the relationship of “witness” with the Haqq (SWT) [in some way] but this “witness” that grows (*nashi’*) from that “love” (*hubb*), is something else. Until [that] “love” is found, no one will understand anything about this witness (*ma‘iyat*). Just as [that] love has different levels, in the same way that witness has also different levels in the same way.

“This very witness” [i.e., the witness that comes from love] is that witness through which one purifies oneself from reflectedness (*zilliyat*) [by realizing a complete *fana fillah* or annihilation in the ultimate prototype (*asl*) who is Allah]. And this very witness is that witness that is the medium through which one may realize an effacement (*idmihlal*) in everything [i.e., a state where the sufi effaces all created things from his mind as he has attained a complete absorption in Allah or *fana fiLlah*.]¹⁹

This very witness is that witness that takes away (*muzil*) man’s servanthood (*riqqiyat*) [to someone other than Allah. Even that, man’s

¹⁸Ibn Arabi said that divine act(s) self-disclose into human acts. Please see SPK, 208-209.

¹⁹Mohammad Mamunur Rashid, *Islami Biswas* (Serhind Prakashan,1998), p. 14

ALLEGORICAL VERSES MAY NOT BE INTERPRETED109

slavehood to Allah also becomes perfect and he becomes wholly committed to Him, such that] the slightest slack in that slavehood disappears and vanishes (*muzil-i riqqiyat ast va mushabbat-i hurumiyat [ast] dar ‘in ‘abdiyat*).

This witness is that witness which silences I-ness. (*anaiyat*) Instead, it negates I-ness on the levels of perfection. [A 3.26, 67.7-12]

Allegorical Verses may Not Be Interpreted

I have translated *mutashabihat* verses as “allegorical” verses. Many people translate *mutashabihat* as “ambiguous,” meaning “something that has one out of several possible meanings.” I believe that “ambiguous” cannot be the correct translation of the Mujaddidi meaning of the term “*mutashabihat*.” What the Mujaddid means by the term *mutashabihat* is something much deeper, hidden, and mysterious. It is really far deeper than even an allegory. However, the second meaning of “allegorical” is “having hidden spiritual meaning that transcends the literal sense of a sacred text,” and that applies to *mutashabihat*. And so I am using the word “allegorical” to translate it and the word “categorical” to translate *muhkam*. Chittick also uses this scheme in one of his books.

The Mujaddid is against interpreting the allegorical verses. He writes that the allegorical verses indeed have profound meanings but they are much more than being merely ambiguous; instead, they are deep, hidden, and mysterious. Those meanings are revealed to the Prophet and the elect in his community. So anyone else may be able to interpret them. So instead of trying to interpret those verses, the common people should accept them as they are, i.e., *bi-la kayf* or “howless.”

The Mujaddid teaches us about allegorical verses in his monograph *Mabda’ va Ma’ad*. He says,

I have been shown that the terms nearness (*qurb*), witness (*ma’iyat*), and encompassment (*ihata*) of the Haqq (SWT) that are in the Sagacious Koran are among the “allegorical” or *mutashabihat* words of the Koran. [The words] hand or face [in the Koran that refers to God having hands or a face are examples of such allegories.] The words first (*awwal*), last (*akhir*), manifest (*zahir*), non-manifest (*batin*) and the likes of them are also the same.

So we say that the Haqq (SWT) is “near” us, but we do not know what that nearness means. Similarly, we say [that He is] the First but we do not know what does that “first” means. The meaning of that nearness and firstness does not come within the bounds of our knowledge or understanding (*‘ilm va fahm*). The Haqq (SWT) is untainted by those imperfections. And indeed [He is even] higher (*bar-tar*) than that. And [He is indeed even higher than] that what we know through our unveilings (*kashf*) and witnessings (*mushahida*). He (SWT) elevates Himself higher than that and He is pure from that as well.

Some sufis have realized the meaning of “nearness” and “witness” through unveiling. They consider the Haqq (SWT) to be “near us” and “with us” [spatially]. This is not proper! They have stepped into the school of *mujassima* or

Corporealists. And some of the ulama have interpreted those terms by allegorical interpretation (*ta'wil*). For example, by “nearness,” some have meant “cognitive nearness” (*qurb-i 'ilmi*). They have made allegories of that in the same way that they have made an allegory of “hand” by “power” (*qudrat*) and “face” by “person.” (*dhat*)

True knowledge is before Allah (SWT)! Peace towards those who follow guidance! [Mabda 35, 55-6]²⁰

Rejection of Unificationism

The Mujaddid rejects *ittihad* or unificationism—the sufi science that says that God is “unified” (*muttahid*) with the cosmos, i.e. God is merged in the cosmos in such a way that these two cannot be distinguished from one another

He (SWT) is not unified with (*muttahid*) anything else. Nor is anything unified with Him.

The Mujaddid then analyzes a sufi saying that apparently proposes unificationism and demonstrates that it actually does not do so.

That which people understand to be *ittihad* or unificationism from the sayings of some sufis is actually contrary to what they meant. For example, one such saying is “When neediness is complete, it becomes Allah. *Idha tamma 'l-faqr, fa Hua Allahu.*” Although it

²⁰[Mabda 35:55-56] means Mabda' va Ma'ad, minha or chapter 35, pp. 55-56

seems to propose unificationism, what it really means is that when [the sufi] completes *faqr* i.e., poverty or neediness [i.e the sufi realizes that he needs Allah for everything as he has no resource of his own] and [the sufi] realizes sheer nothingness (*nisti-i mahd*) [before God], then nothing remains but Allah. It does not mean that the *faqir* i.e., the needy becomes unified with God (*bi-khuda*) and becomes God himself. For that would be apostasy and heresy. “The Exalted Lord is far greater than what the transgressors imagine. *ta ‘ala Llahu subhanaHu ‘amma yatawahhamu al-zalimuna ‘uluwwan kabira.*”

Now the Mujaddid explains the mystery of Anal Haqq.

Our Hazrat Khwaja [Baqibillah]

(qaf) has said that “*Anal Haqq*” does not mean, “I am God”; instead it means, “I am nothing and God [alone] exists.” [A 1.266, 109.16-110.1]

My own shaykh in the sufi path, a living saint in the lineage of the Great Mujaddid, explains the above in a greater detail very eloquently- what Anal Haqq really means is,

I have lost my own existence as I am overwhelmed by the sheerness of God’s existence. Now I do not exist for only God exists. When I say “I,” I am not saying it on behalf of myself. Instead, I am saying it on behalf of God. Now I am just like the “burning bush”²¹ of

²¹hadith: *Al-mar’u ma’a man ahabba* [Bukhari, Muslim]

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Hazrat Moses that cried out, “*Verily I am Allah!*” (Koran 20:14, 28:30) That is, I am merely the announcer here as the “burning bush” had been. Or I am merely the medium through whom God speaks, like a loudspeaker is the medium through which the announcer speaks.

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Changelessness

The Mujaddid maintains that God experiences no change.

The person, attributes or the act of God do not change or be substituted (*taghayyur va tabdil*). So exalted is He whose person, attributes, and act(s) do not change like the [person, attributes and acts of the] engendered things that are newly originated (*huduth-i al-akwan*) do!

No aspect of God ever changes; neither His person nor His attributes nor His act(s). Change is the lot of “newly originated” things but God is too exalted to undergo change.

The Mujaddid then interprets Ibn Arabi and defends him against the false charge of contradicting the mainstream Sunni creed on the changelessness of God.

What the *wujudi* sufis [who follow the Ibn Arabi doctrine of *wahdatul wujud* or existential monism] establish as *tanazzulat-i khamisa*, the five descents, is not a modification or substitution (*taghayyur va tandil*) in the Necessary (*dar martaba-i wujub*), for that would

²²note from Bengali text v. V p. 85 [*Mabda* 35:55-56] means *Mabda' va Ma'ad*, minha or chapter 35, pp. 55-56

be apostasy and misguidance. Instead, they have relegated these descents onto the levels of “manifestations” of the divine perfection (*zuhurat-i kamal-i U*). That way a modification or substitution in the person, attributes or the act of He (SWT) would not take place. [A 1.266, 110.1-5]

Ibn Arabi held that the creation, i.e., the cosmos, emanates from God in five successive steps. These are emanations or “descents” called *tanazzulat-i khamsa*.

Level of descent	Name of the descent (emanation)	What changes?
1	Cognitive undifferentiated entification, <i>ta'ayyun-i 'ilmi jumali</i>	Ideas in the mind of the necessary
2	Cognitive differentiated entification, <i>ta'ayyun-i 'ilmi tafsili</i>	As above
3	Spiritual entification, <i>ta'ayyun-i ruhi</i>	Shadow of the necessary
4	Imaginal entification, <i>ta'ayyun-i mithali</i>	As above
5	Corporeous entification, <i>ta'ayyun-i jasadi</i>	As above

Table 4.7: Ibn Arabi’s Five Descents (Emanations) of the Necessary

Yes! If you do interpret that to mean that God Himself undergoes change, it would be a violation of the creed of the mainstream Sunnis that says that God is changeless. However, the Mujaddid interprets that Ibn Arabi must have meant that the “shadow” of God undergoes those emanations, not God Himself who is beyond change. That is, what does change is the “way that God manifests” Himself, not His person itself. So the charges against Ibn Arabi that he contradicts the mainstream Sunni creed are baseless.

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The Mujaddid seems to argue here in a *reductio ad absurdum* syllogism: Islamic creed says that God is changeless. So if someone believes that God Himself undergoes change, then he must be ruled faithless and misguided. So if Ibn Arabi or anyone else interprets the five emanations or *tanazzulat-i khamsa*’ as changes in God Himself, then he must be ruled an unbeliever. But the Mujaddid consistently rules Ibn Arabi to be a great saint of Allah. Therefore, Ibn Arabi could not have meant it as a “change in the Necessary.”

Self-Sufficientness

The Mujaddid states that God is absolutely self-sufficient. He does not need anything from anyone.

He (SWT) is unboundedly self-sufficient (*ghaniyy-i mutlaq*) in His person, in His attributes, and in His act. He does not need anything in any respect. Just as He does not need anything for His existence, He does not need anything for His manifestations (*zuhurat*) either.

The Mujaddid then comments on the Ibn Arabi proposition that God “needs” the created things to manifest His perfections

That which is understood from the statements of some sufis [e.g., Ibn Arabi] is that Allah needs us to manifest the perfections of His names and attributes. I find it hard to buy a proposition like that! I know that the purpose of the act of creation is that the created thing would attain perfection, not that His (SWT) holy person would attain perfection. As the Koran says, *We have created man and the*

Jinn so that they would worship Me (Koran 51:56). [Here I, the Mujaddid, interpret “they would worship Me” as] “they would know Me.” Therefore, the purpose behind creating man and Jinn is so that they would attain knowledge (*ma‘rifat*). That is, the purpose is “their [own]” perfection, not the perfection of something that belongs to the Haqq (SWT). It comes in a hadith report where God speaks in the first person: “I have created the created things for knowing.”²³ Here too, “knowing” means that the created things may know. It does not mean that God may be known and by this knowing God may attain some perfection. “Allah (SWT) rises far above this!” [A 1.266, 110.5-.14]

Here the Mujaddid disagrees with Ibn Arabi. He clarifies that actually it is the created things that need God to attain their own perfections, not the other way round. As my sufi shaykh explains,

The purpose behind creating man and Jinn is so that they desire to know God and attain perfection. We know the well-known hadith report wherein God speaks in the first person, “I was a Hidden Treasure. I wanted to be known. So I created the creation.”²⁴ What God really means is, “Let the creation come to know Me and attain their perfections. ” It is wrong to think that what He meant is, “Let Me, Allah, become known to the creation and gain some perfection in this process.” This is

²³hadith: *fa-khalaqtu al-khalq li-‘arafa* [Mulla ‘Ali Qari]

²⁴hadith: *kuntu kandhan makhfiyan. fa-ahbibtu an a‘rafa. fa-khalaqtu al-khalq li-‘arafa* [Ibn Arabi]

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because Allah is self-sufficient. He rises far above such wrong conceptions.²⁵

How does the Mujaddid jump from “so that they would worship me” to “so that they would know me”? My sufi shaykh’s companionship taught me the logic behind this connection between “worship” and knowing. Yes! God has asked man to worship Him. But how will we worship Him unless we “know” Him? That may be the Mujaddid’s logic behind interpreting “worshipping” as “knowing.” The pre-eminent Koranic exegete Ibn Abbas also interpreted “worship Allah” as “know Allah” here. All later commentators also interpreted it this way following his line of interpretation.

Perfection

The Mujaddid states that God is perfect and he elaborates on that perfection.

Allah is unblemished and exonerated by all attribute of imperfection and all burn-mark of newly-originatedness (*huduth*). He is not a body Himself; nor does He possess a body (*jism va jismani nist*). He transcends both space and time (*la-makani va la-zamani*).

The Mujaddid’s verification confirms the ulama of the mainstream Sunni community. Their ulama says that God possesses all the attributes in Himself in a non-entified manner except the eight real attributes, *sifat-i haqiqiya*, which exist in Him with an additional existence. The real attributes are eight according to the Maturidi school of kalam, which the Mujaddid follows. The predominant

²⁵Muhammad Mamunur Rashid, *Islami Bishwas*, p. 16

Ashari School of kalam has seven, as it leaves out “engenderingness” from the roll of the real attributes.²⁶

He possesses all the perfect attributes. Among these, eight perfect attributes exist in Him with existence “additional (*za'id*)” to the existence of the Person (SWT). They are: (1) livingness or life, *hayat*; (2) knowingness or knowledge, *'ilm*; (3) powerfulness or power, *qudrat*; (4) desiringness or desire, *irada'*; (5) seeingness or sight, *basr*; (6) hearingness, *sama'*; (7) speakingness or speech, *kalam*; and (8) engenderingness, *takwin*.

Attribute	Arabic/Persian name
livingness or life	<i>hayat</i>
knowingness or knowledge	<i>'ilm</i>
powerfulness or power	<i>qudrat</i>
desiringness or desire	<i>irada</i>
seeingness or sight	<i>basr</i>
hearingness	<i>sama</i>
speakingness or speech	<i>kalam</i>
engenderingness	<i>takwin</i>

Table 4.8: Eight real attributes [*Sifat-i haqiqiya*]

Note: In Arabic, these attributes are called by a morphological form which has dual meanings. For example, the attribute of “being capable of speaking” is called *kalam* and that also means “speech” or that what is being spoken. So people translate “the attribute of *kalam*” as “speech” and that is misleading. Instead, the attribute of *kalam* may be translated as the attribute of

²⁶Please see the Mujaddid’s monograph *Mabda' va Ma'ad*, minha or chapter 41 where he explains the error of the Asharis.

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speakingness. It is true that there is no such word in English called speakingness but the superb sufi translator William Chittick uses newly coined words in this style.

Confirming the ulama of the mainstream Sunni community, the Mujaddid proposes that the attributes of God have an external existence, i.e., they do exist in the “outside, *kharij*.” He criticizes the position of Ibn Arabi who denied the “external” existence of the Attributes²⁷ and who said that they are merely “relationships” that God has with the cosmos and those relationships exist only in the mind of God which is the abode of His knowledge (*ilm*).

These attributes do exist [and not merely cognitively in the mind of God, but] in the “outside” (*kharij*) [i.e. in the real world outside the mind of God with a true existence.”] It is not that they exist with an existence that is additional to the existence of the Person only “cognitively” while they are identical to the Person “externally”- like some sufis [who believe in *wahdat al-wujud*, e.g., Ibn Arabi, Muinuddin Chishti, and many others] consider.²⁸ They say:

*By the intellect, all are other than
the attributes*

*By the verification; all are identical
to Your person*

What they mean here is that while they know by the intellect, i.e., intellectually from the kalam that attributes

²⁷The Mutazilas and the faylasufs also deny the external existence of the Attributes

²⁸Please see SPK p. 5 for Ibn Arabi’s position

are disjointed from the person of God, they know from their “verification,” i.e., sufi experiential knowledge, that they are the same.

For example, the following sufi poem by Hazrat Muinuddin Chishti Ajmiri also supports the identity of the person of Allah and His attributes.

*I don't see the Attributes separate from the Person.
So wherever I look, I don't see anything but God.*²⁹

The Mujaddid says that to reduce the existence of divine attributes from external existence to cognitive existence, as Ibn Arabi does, is really to deny the existence of the attributes. There are several deviant sects of Islam who are recognized to have denied the existence of the attributes, e.g., the Mutazilas, the philosophers, etc.

Even those deviant sects accepted the cognitive existence of the attributes and only denied their external existence. So if someone else [e.g., Ibn Arabi] accepts the cognitive existence of the attributes but denies the external existence, he is indeed out of the mainstream Sunni community just as those deviant sects are recognized to be.

It is really denying the attributes (*sifat*), because even those who deny the attributes (i.e., the Mutazilas and the Faylsufs) have proposed that the person and the attributes of God are cognitively “other” and externally “unified.” That is, even they did not deny cognitive otherness and they did not propose that what “they

²⁹*Sifat va dhat az ham juda nemibinam - Be har che minegaram juz Khuda namibinam* [Jehadul Islam edited *Diwan-i Muinuddin*, p. 154]

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understand” to be knowledge is identical to what “they understand” to be the person, or power or desire. They have only proposed that the Person and the attributes are identical in the outside. Therefore, until they consider them “other” with respect to their existence in the outside, they will not break away from the group that denies the attributes. As you know, conceptual otherness is not a true difference! [A 1.266, 110.14-111.3]

It should be stressed that the Mujaddid still did not consider Ibn Arabi to be out of the mainstream Sunni community. As a sufi, he knew that Ibn Arabi did not arrive at it from mis-interpretations of the Koran and the hadith but instead he “verified” that science through his “unveilings,” which were erroneous in this case. And errors in unveilings are excusable just as errors in scholastic interpretation on the matters of the sharia law (*ijtihad*) are excusable.

Ulama of the manifest knowledge: The domain of knowledge can be divided into two sub-domains. One is the manifest knowledge (*‘ilm-i zahir*), the knowledge of the Koran, hadith literature and all that can be derived from those sources employing logic. The other is the non-manifest knowledge (*‘ilm-i batin*) that is experiential knowledge derived through *kashf*, *ilham*, *dhawq*, *shuhud*, etc. The ulama that deal with the Koran and hadith using logic are the ulama of the manifest knowledge. They include jurists (*fuqaha*), scholars of hadith literature (*muhaddith*) exegetes of the Koran (*mufassir*), and others. They are to be contrasted with the scholars of the non-manifest knowledge who are the sufi masters.

The ulama of the manifest knowledge say that the attributes exist “externally.” That is, the divine attributes

are not at all like “human attributes.” For human attributes also do not have an external existence, only a conceptual existence. Instead, divine attributes have a hypostasized or reified existence externally, just as the Platonic archetypes do.

The Mujaddid’s verification agrees with it but in maktub 1.234 he refines that position by saying that the attributes have only “shadow” existence. He notes that both Ibn Arabi and the mainstream Sunni ulama did not distinguish between the prototype existence and the shadow existence and he believes that it caused the divergence of opinion between them.

Note: The references from the *Maktubat-i Imam-i Rabbani* will be described as two numbers separated by a stop. The first number will be the volume number and the second number will be the maktub number. For example, maktub 1.234 refers to maktub 234 in the Volume 1

The Maturudi School

The Mujaddid followed the Maturidi school of kalam as opposed to the Ashari school. He writes on the superiority of the Maturidi school,

In a mystic vision, (*waqi‘a*) Hazrat Prophet (salam) stated, “You are a mujathid of the science of kalam.” After this incident, I started to form a distinct opinion in every matter of kalam. For most of the matters on which there are differences between the Ashari school and Maturidi school, at the first glance it seems that the truth is along the Ashari line. But when it is contemplated with a fine perspicacity and a keen gaze (*hunar-i firasat va huddat-*

i nazar), then it becomes clear that the truth is along the Maturidi line. I believe that in all the matters of kalam on which there is a dispute, the Maturidis are correct.

The truth is that because they perfectly follow the shining Sunna, these [Maturidi] masters have attained this high honor. Their opposition [in the mainstream Sunni community which is the Asharis] have not been able to attain this as they gave pre-eminence to the philosophical views. However, both of these groups are in the people of truth.

Eternalness and Beginninglessness

The Mujaddid confirms that God and only God is eternal and beginningless. If anyone believes that something other than God is also eternal or beginningless, as the philosophers of the *faylasuf* tradition (e.g., Avicenna, al-Farabi, and others) proposed, then he must be ruled to be a faithless person.

He (SWT) is eternal and beginningless (*qadim va azali*). Nothing else is established to be eternal and beginningless. All the Muslims are unanimous on this. And they have declared as unfaithful whosoever proposes that something other than the Haqq (SWT) is eternal or beginningless. It is for this reason that Imam Ghazzali has declared Avicenna, al-Farabi and everyone else to be faithless who proposes that intellects, souls, hyles, or forms (*nufus*, *‘uqul*, *haywula*, *surat*) are eternal. They also consider the heavens and everything else

in the heavens to be also eternal.

And he reconciles a statement of Ibn Arabi on the eternity of the spirits to the mainstream Sunni creed.

Our Hazrat Khwaja [Baqibillah] (qaf) has said that Shaykh Muhiyuddin Ibn Arabi has proposed that the spirits of the “perfect ones” [i.e., friends of Allah who have realized His nearness] are eternal.³⁰ This idea should be diverted from its outward meaning [i.e., it should not be construed to mean that the spirits are co-eternal with God] and instead should be taken in its “inner” (*ta’wil*) meaning [that is, for example, it may be taken to mean that those spirits were the first things to be created.] In that way, it [this proposition of Ibn Arabi] would not contradict the consensus of opinion of the people of religion [in the proposition that nothing but God is eternal]. [A 1.266, 111.3-111.9]

All-Powerfulness and the philosophers

The Mujaddid criticizes the deist doctrines of the “philosophers” i.e., the philosophers of the *faylasuf* tradition, e.g., Avicenna, al-Farabi, Averrois and others.

The ancient Greek philosophers, Plato, Aristotle, and others originated this lineage of thought and Plotinus, who lived in Alexandria, Egypt in the third century

³⁰This proposition of Ibn Arabi is found in the *Tafsir Ibn Arabi* under *Sura Dahr*, however some scholars believe that that tafsir was actually written by Kamaluddin Abdul-Razzaq ibn Abi Ghanaim al-Kashi (d. 736/1336). Some other scholars believe that it was written by Imam Ali ibn Muhammad al-Bagdadi al-Sufi popularly known as al-Khazin (d. 741/1341)

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CE, developed it. Subsequently, philosophers of the Islamic tradition, such as Avicenna, al-Farabi, and Averroes, added to and refined them to develop this *faylasuf* tradition. The *faylasuf* called themselves Peripatetic or Aristotelian, many people consider them instead Neoplatonic but really it is a third tradition that synthesized the first two and added to them.³¹

They propose that God lives in time and He created the cosmos with a single act that happened only once in time and then he left all the day-to-day happenings to natural law that they call the “Active Intellect.” That is, they were “deists,” who believed that God is like a clockmaker who has made the mechanism that would run the clock and then has let the clock run itself. Instead, Muslims (like Christians or Jews) are “theists,” people who believe that God is a personal God who is intimately connected to the day-to-day happenings of the world.

How is it that the Islamic philosophers follow Aristotle? Is he not a “Western” philosopher? We usually consider “Western” to be synonymous with “European.” So have Muslims borrowed their philosophy from Christians? The answer is that Islamic philosophy is indeed Western philosophy. In general, if one reads a survey book on Western philosophy that covers the period before the middle ages, Islamic/Islamicate philosophers are included there. In terms of philosophical tradition, philosophers divide the world into three regions. First is the Western realm that includes Europe, North Africa, and Western Asia to Iran- people there historically follows “Western” philosophy. The second is India and the third is China. Although there are differences between Indian and Chinese philosophy, still they share some fundamen-

³¹That is the view of Fazlur Rahman in the *Selected Letters of Ahmad Sirhindi* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1984)

tal characteristics and so they may be loosely grouped together as Eastern philosophies.

Western philosophers are dualists- they see the world as a dichotomy- something is either one or its contrary- e.g., good or evil, white or black, beautiful or ugly, etc. This dualist worldview went to the extreme in Iran, where their “prophets,” e.g., Zoroaster and Mani, even preached of two gods, one god as the creator of good and the other god as creator of evil. In another time, this dualism went to the extreme in northwest Europe—while the Romans saw nothing wrong with their emperor being the chief priest, *pontifus maximus*; the people of northwest Europe could never successfully integrate church and state together.

In contrast, Eastern philosophers, both of the Indian tradition and the Chinese tradition, are monists- they synthesize the opposites; to them, good and evil, God and the creation, existence and nonexistence are not antitheses but parts of the same whole. It is true that there are monist trends even in Western philosophy, e.g., Ibn Arabi or Spinoza; yet still this general observation holds. Many people today do not understand this and even many publishers and bookstores in the west classify books on Islam with books on “Eastern religion,” and group them together with Hinduism and Buddhism.

While it is true that Hinduism and Buddhism are indeed Eastern religions, Islam, like its two sister religions, Christianity and Judaism, are not Eastern religions. All three of them are “Western” religions and their philosophical traditions are in the mainstream of the the Western philosophical tradition. Indeed, modern Europe received its philosophical knowledge, even its knowledge of ancient Greek philosophy, from the Muslims. It is the Muslim philosophers who translated and

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studied and commented on the books of Plato, Aristotle, and others, and kept that tradition alive. Europeans learned about Aristotle from the Arabic translations of his original works, that were then retranslated into European languages, as well as the translations of his Muslim commentators e.g., al-Farabi, Avicenna, Averroes, and others.

First, the Mujaddid affirms the mainstream Sunni doctrine that God is all-powerful.

He (SWT) is the all-powerful chooser (*qadir-i mukhtar*) He is unblemished by even a taint of obligatedness (*ijab*) and exonerated from even a surmise of compelledness (*idtirar*).

Then the Mujaddid begins his diatribe against these philosophers of the *faylasuf* tradition and their deist doctrines.

The unwise (*bi-khord*) philosophers consider obligatedness (*ijab*) to be [the epitome of] perfection. As a result, they have negated free choice (*ikhtiyar*) from the Necessary (SWT) and instead, they have established obligatedness.

These unwise ones consider the Necessary (SWT) to be inoperative (*ta'til*)³² and inactive except that one single handiwork (*masnu'*) has come from Him (who is the creator of the heavens and the earth). They even propose that He made that [single handiwork] out of obligation. They relate the [continued] existence of the newly originated things (*wujud-i hawadith*) to the “active intellect (*'aql-i fa'al*)”, which

³²Inoperativity [*ta'til*]: the doctrine where God has nothing to do.

has not been even established to exist except in their imagination! They have nothing to do with God in their corrupted conception. Finding no other alternative, they turn to the active intellect in their times of trouble but do not turn to the Haqq (SWT) since they do not give Him any ability to intervene in the [continued] existence of newly originated things. They say that it is the active intellect that brings the newly originated things into existence.

These unfortunate ones (*bi-dawlatan*) in stupidity and foolishness (*bilahat*) [i.e., the *faylasuf*] are in the forefront of all misguided sects. Even the people without faith pray to God for help. And supplicate to Him to remove their misfortunes—unlike these unintelligent ones (*safihan*).

The Islamic belief is that God is perfect and so He is beyond the imperfection of being obligated to do anything in any way; in contrast, the *faylasuf* believe in obligationism. So the Mujaddid says that these philosophers are not wise; they consider God’s being obligated to do what He does as a fitting attribute for Him!

To the Mujaddid, the *faylasuf* tradition philosophers are worse than the other misguided sects of Islam for two reasons.

These worthless people have two things more in misguidedness and foolishness (*bilahat*) than all [the other misguided] sects. First, they do not believe, instead they deny the revealed law and they stubbornly resist and hold en-

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mity to the message of the messengers (*ikhtibar-i mursala*.) Second, they hierarchically arrange some corrupted premises and manipulate some invalid proofs and visions (*shawahid*) to prove their designs and baseless issues. In proving their designs, they have become so stupid that they exceed all idiots in their stupidity. The zodiac and the planets are perpetually unstable and wandering- still they hold that their movements and positions cause all that happens. They have shut their eyes before the Creator of the heavens, the giver of existence of the planets and their mover and the director of their affairs and instead consider Him far removed from their affairs. What unwise ones! What unfortunate ones! [The only one] less intelligent (*safih*) is he who considers them intelligent and wise!

First, they deny the “revealed message” that the prophets brought forth. Second, they try to prove their misbegotten beliefs via falsehood. He also decries their belief in astrology that suggests that planets control the destiny; instead he suggests that they turn to God who created the planets in the first place.

The Mujaddid shows his scorn for all the sciences of the philosophers.

Among their codified and systemic sciences is geometry that is totally useless. The sum of three angles in a triangle is two right angles- what benefit does it have? Those theorems that are close to their hearts³³- what purpose do they serve? Medicine, astronomy, and ethics

³³*shakl 'arusi va mamuni*

are the best of their sciences and even that they have stolen from the revealed books of the prophets who came before our prophet (salam). They use those extracted fragments [from those divinely-revealed sciences] to spread their own invalid sciences. Imam Ghazzali clarified it in his book *Munqidh ‘an al-Dalal*.³⁴

To the Mujaddid, many of the sciences of the *faylasuf* are useless. And the ones which are useful (medicine, astronomy, ethics) have their origins in the divine revelation.

However, it must be understood from the context that the Mujaddid villified geometry as “useless” only because he could not find any practical use for it; and so he rejected the study of geometry as an end in itself or as a means of God-realization. He found practical use for some of the other sciences and claimed that those sciences have divine origins. If the Mujaddid saw the practical uses for geometry, he would respect that as well. So the Mujaddidi view is that no science is worth studying as an end in itself; instead they should help one either in one’s path towards God-realization or in the practical world. And the only science one may study for God-realization is the science that is derived from the revealed message of the prophets.

The Mujaddid eulogizes the practice of *taqlid*, following authority of the prophets.

If the followers of godly religions and the prophets (salam) err in their proofs and demonstrations,

³⁴Imam Ghazzali, *Munqidh ‘an al-Dalal*. This translation is very good, R. J. McCarthy, *Al-Ghazali’s Path to Sufism*, (Louisville, Kentucky: Fons Vitae, 2000).

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there is no fear. Since the source of their practice is following authority (*taqlid*) of the prophets (salam). They bring proofs and demonstrations to establish their purpose only for the sake of added strength. Following the authority of the prophets is sufficient for them, unlike these unfortunate ones [the philosophers]. They leave aside following the authority of the prophets and instead rely on their proofs to establish their argument. “[They are] misguided [themselves;] therefore they misguide [others, who follow them, as well!]”³⁵

The Mujaddid also expresses his scorn for the philosophers’ conceit and their denial of the prophetic method.

When the invitation of Prophet Hazrat Jesus (salam) reached Plato,

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who was the giant among these unfortunate people, he responded, “We are a group who has already been guided! We do not need any more guidance!” How witless! [Jesus was] a man who could perform feats that are beyond their medical science- resurrecting the dead, healing those born blind, and healing the lepers! When they saw such a man, they should have understood his [sublime inner] “state!” It is utmost headstrongness and stupidity to answer without thinking.

³⁵hadith: *Dallu fa-adlu* [Muslim]

³⁶Plato possibly here stands for the typical philosopher with their characteristic mind-set the eminent philosopher by the name Plato died long before Prophet Jesus. Another possibility is that it might mean Plotinus (Flutinus), the third-century founder of Neoplatonism who influenced the Muslim world so immensely.

*Most of the letters of the word falasafah
is safah [and that means unintelli-
gent]
Therefore, the dominant verdict [that
the philosopher is] “unintelligent”
is the majority opinion*

The Mujaddid continues to denigrate the philosophers and mentions a book that exposes their errors.

May Allah save us from the darkness of their ill-intentioned beliefs! These days my son Muhammad Ma‘thum ³⁷ has completed the book *Jawahir-i Sharh-i Mawaqif* . ³⁸ While studying this book, the ugly beliefs of these unwise people have become clear and many benefits have come from it. *Praise be to Allah, who has guided us to toward this. We would not have been guided had Allah not guided us! Verily the Messengers from our Lord came with the truth! (Koran 7:43) [A 1.266, 111.9-113.3]*

Taqlid

Taqlid is a fundamental Islamic concept that is very important to the Mujaddid. Literally, the verb *qalada* means, “to put a collar on.” It refers to putting a collar on a beast of burden so that he cannot see left or right but moves

³⁷Muhammad Ma‘thum: Third son and the spiritual heir of the Mujaddid

³⁸The *Jawahir* by an unknown author seems to be short version of Ali ibn Muhammad Jurjani (d. 818/1415), *Sharh-i Mawaqif*; It is a commentary on the *Mawaqif*, the well-known book on kalam and one of the best books on that subject in Arabic written by Qadi ‘Add al-Din Abdur Rahman ibn Ahmad Iji (d. 818/1415.) (this footnote is taken from Fazlur Rahman text, p. 70)

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blindly to wherever his driver directs him. Figuratively it means “blind conformity” to the Prophet, the Salaf, or the Pious Predecessors and others worthy of humble imitation.

The Mujaddid explains the concept of taqlid in detail in his monograph *Mabda’ va Ma’ad*.

He has an abundant share of the tariqa of the sufis, indeed from the Islamic community (*millat-i Islam*) who abundantly possess the *fitrat*, habit of *taqlid* [following the authority of the predecessors] and the innate disposition (*jibilla*) of imitation (*mutaba’at*) [of those worthy ones].

Here the principal of affairs (*madarikar*) is *taqlid*. And the *taqlid* of the prophets (*salam*) elevates one to lofty levels (*darajat*) and imitation of the sufis brings one to the greatest station of ascent (*ma’arij*) [from where he can make a high ascent or *’uruj*].

Hazrat Abu Bakr the Truthful (*dwad*) is greatly endowed with this *fitrat*. [And because of this *fitrat*,] without any delay, he rushed to accept the felicity of attesting to the prophethood [of Hazrat Muhammad (*salam*)] and became the leader of the truthful ones (*ra’is-i siddiqan*). On the other hand, the accursed Abu Jahl had less receptivity to *taqlid* and imitation. [As a result] he was not receptive to that felicity and instead became the leader of the accursed ones.

The perfection that a disciple attains is through the *taqlid* of his own pir or guide. A pir’s error is the disciple’s correct method. Because

of this, Hazrat Abu Bakr (dwad) used to seek out the error of the Prophet (salam) and used to exclaim, ”How I wish that I could be the error of Muhammad!”

Hazrat Prophet (salam) said about Hazrat Bilal (Allah be satisfied with him!): ”The *sin* of Bilal is shin to Allah.” Hazrat Bilal was a native of Ethiopia [where Arabic was not the mother-tongue and so] used to [mispronounce *ash-hadu as*] *as-hadu* [pronouncing the shin] like sin during the prayer call (*adhan*)

To God (Mighty! High!) that *as-hadu* was *ash-hadu*. Therefore, this Bilal’s error is better than other’s correct way. Like a poet has written:

*Overwhelms it when you cry out ash-
hadu
Bilal’s call as-hadu
Bar ash-hadi to khandeh
Ze nida as-hadi Bilal*

I have heard from an exalted man (‘*aziz*) about [this characteristic of] a prayer (*dua*) that is suggested by the sufi shaykhs, but in which the shaykh has made a mistake; and so he recites it in the corrupted way. If their followers recite those prayers exactly the same way (*bi haman sarafat*) [with the same mistake] that the shaykhs used to recite them, then the recitation would be effective (*ta’thir*). On the other hand, if they recite them correctly, then it would no longer be effective.

May Allah (SWT) keep us steadfast on imitating (*taqlid*) of the prophets and following (*mutaba‘at*) His friends (*awliya*) by His love of His beloved [Prophet Muhammad]! (salam) [Mabda 51, 75-76]

Ibn Arabi and *Wahdat-i Wujud*

The Mujaddid says that Ibn Arabi leans toward obligationism (*ijab*), the doctrine of the *faylasuf* tradition philosophers. Obligationism says that God has no free will; instead whatever He does, He is obligated to do it.

The expressions of Shaykh Muhiyuddin Ibn Arabi also point toward obligationism [the doctrine that proposes that God is obliged to do whatever He does]. His interpretation of “power” is analogous to the interpretation of the philosophers. In that interpretation, it is not allowed that capable ones abandon actions. And he [Ibn Arabi] holds that it is mandatory to act. [And since God is all-powerful, He is obliged to act or to create.]

Please note that the Mujaddid always uses the title “Shaykh” when referring to Ibn Arabi, thereby showing his respect for Ibn Arabi. And he always uses the traditional term “*quddisa sirruh*, may his secrets be sanctified” after Ibn Arabi’s name. That denotes that he considered Ibn Arabi to be a great saint.

The Mujaddid expresses his positive opinion of Ibn Arabi, and considers those statements of Ibn Arabi, that made others think that he deviated from Islam as errors in unveilings; and as such, excusable.

Amazing thing! That Shaykh Muhiyuddin [Ibn Arabi] appears to be accepted by God in my [sufi mystic] vision [i.e., unveilings or *kashf*]! On the other hand, many of his ideas seem to oppose the opinions of the “people of truth”³⁹!

And those [ideas] seem to be erroneous and incorrect! However, errors in unveiling [that Shaykh Ibn Arabi has for those few of his ideas] are excusable just as errors in strivings for interpretation (*ijtihad*) [in the matters of the sharia] are not to be blamed. This is my unique belief about Shaykh Muhiyuddin, “He is among the accepted ones of God but I see his opinions that oppose [the consensus of opinion of the ulama of the mainstream Sunni community] to be erroneous and harmful [to the common people].”

Some sufis criticize (*ta’an*) and blame (*mala-mat*) this shaykh. And consider [all] his ideas to be false (*takhtiya*). Some other sufis choose to follow the shaykh blindly and consider all his ideas correct. And they [attempt to] establish the “truth” (*haqiqat*) of that [Ibn Arabi’s] science through “[fraudulent] proofs and [defective] visions” (*dala’il va shawahid*).

Those “proofs” (*dala’il*) are from the realm of external knowledge, i.e., from the Koran and the hadith literature. Those two sources are indeed true but they misinterpret

³⁹People of truth (ahl-i haqq): The Mujaddid seems to mean the ulama of the mainstream Sunni community (‘ulama-i ahl-i Sunnat val jama’at) by this term. Please note that the mainstream Sunnis exclude deviant sects such as Wahhabis or Salafis, and the Mutazilas who may still accept the four caliphs

that knowledge and are so those proofs are unacceptable. Similarly those “witnessings” (*shawahid*) are sufi mystic visions and unveilings that are subject to errors and so are unreliable.

The Mujaddid continues,

However, there is no doubt that both of these parties have chosen to follow the [two extremes of] excessiveness and deficiency and (*ifrat va tafrit*) and remain far away from the middle path. How can I deny the shaykh who is an accepted friend of God only because of his errors in unveiling? On the other hand, how can I blindly accept [certain parts of] his science that is far from being correct and that is contrary to the opinions of the “people of truth” [i.e., the rightly-guided ulama of the mainstream Sunni community]? The truth lies in the middle. By His grace and generosity, Allah the Exalted has endowed me with that knowledge.

Rejecting extremists: Ibn Taymiyya and followers	The middle path: The Mujaddid	Accepting extremists: Ibn Arabi’s followers
Rejects all of Ibn Arabi’s ideas completely	Accepts most of Ibn Arabi ideas; “gently criticizes” a few (but still does not denounce him, as those are errors in unveilings and thus excusable)	Accepts all of Ibn Arabi’s ideas blindly

Table 4.9: Ibn Arabi: How Do They Consider Him?

It may be noted that many of the ulama of the mainstream Sunnis have also proposed the same opinion on

Ibn Arabi. Many have also forbidden the common people to read Ibn Arabi books. Because the common people would take his writings literally, and will not understand its deep hidden meanings and thus would go astray.

Ta‘an is translated as “criticize.” In this context, *ta‘an* means “gentle criticism”; it is not a type of “harsh denouncement.” And this is how the Mujaddid criticizes Ibn Arabi; gently as opposed to harshly.

The Mujaddid reconciles Ibn Arabi’s *wahdat-i wujud*

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with the ontology of the ulama of the mainstream Sunni community,

Take note! In the matter of *wahdat-i wujud*, a large group in this sufi community concurs with the Shaykh. Although the Shaykh has his unique style here, still they are unanimous in the gist of the matter. [On the first look], this matter may appear to contradict the opinion of the “people of truth.” Still one may pay attention to it, as it deserves the effort for reconciliation. By the grace of Allah (SWT), I have reconciled this matter in the *Ta‘liqat bar Sharh-i Ruba‘iyat*, [my monograph where I comment on the quatrains] of our Hazrat [Baqibillah]. There, I have reconciled this matter with the opinion of the “people of truth.” And I have relegated the dispute between the two schools to terminology. And I have resolved the mutual misgivings and suppositions in such a way that no room for any doubt and

⁴⁰*Wahdat-i wujud* is the Persian equivalent of *wahdat al-wujud* and this is the term that the Mujaddid uses, as he writes in Persian.

BRINGING-INTO-EXISTENCE

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ambiguity to remain. The text [of my monograph the *Ta'liqat*] itself is the proof of this for the reader! [A 1.266, 113.3-18]

The Mujaddid’s opinion on Ibn Arabi in the above section is very important, as many “scholars” (who never read the Mujaddid in the original Persian or even in an accurate translation) believe that the Mujaddid’s criticism of Ibn Arabi was a “roaring criticism.” Here it is clear that it was only a mild criticism of a small fraction of Ibn Arabi’s views. And the Mujaddid considered even those few errors to be “excusable” as they are errors in his unveilings. And he still viewed Ibn Arabi as a great saint.

Bringing-into-Existence

God has brought everything into existence. He also sustains everything.

You should know that contingent things, all of them- whether they be matters, accidents, bodies, intellects, souls, celestial spheres or elements (*jawahir, i'rad, ajsam, 'uqul, nufus, aflak, 'anasir*)- all are supported by the [power of] bringing-into-existence of the all-powerful chooser (*ijad-i qadir-i mukhtar*) who has brought them from their concealment in nonexistence into existence. As with their existence, they also need Him (SWT) for their sustenance. [A 1.266, 113.18-114.1]

Worldly Occasions and Their Effectivities

By His wisdom, God has hidden Himself behind the curtain of worldly occasions; but wise men see that curtain

as a proof of His existence.

God has made the existence of the worldly occasions (*asbab*) a curtain for His activity and He has made wisdom as the covering for His power. No! Instead, He has made worldly occasions as the proof of the fixedness of His own activity. And He has made wisdom as the medium for the existence [i.e., application] of His power.

The Mujaddid continues,

Possessors of sagacity are those whose insight has been embellished by the kohl of following the authority of the prophets. They know that worldly occasions and mediums need God for them to come into existence and to remain existing. They obtain from Him even the slightest degree of their fixedness and abidingness [*thubut va qiyam*]. In actuality, they are really sheer inanimate things. How will they bring about “traces” in other inanimate things like themselves? Or how will they effectuate or originate them?

So there must be an all-powerful Being above them who has brought them into existence and granted them their appropriate perfections. It may be compared to the scenario where intelligent people see inanimate things [such as puppets in a puppet show] acting and from that they deduce that those things must have an actor or a mover [such as the puppeteer] behind them. They do know that this act is not possible for it [to do on by itself]. There

WORLDLY OCCASIONS AND THEIR EFFECTIVITIES¹⁴¹

must be an actor above them who has brought that act into existence.

So the act of an inanimate thing is not a curtain hiding the real actor for the intelligent people. On the contrary, when he sees the inanimate thing acting, it points toward the real actor.

The same argument applies here! Yes! Less intelligent people may indeed see the act of an inanimate thing as a curtain for the act of the true actor. Since when he sees it acting, he considers the sheer inanimate thing as the possessor of power and denies the true actor. As God says in the Koran, *It misguides many and guides many* (Koran 2:26). This knowledge of mine has been learned from the niche of prophethood. Everyone’s knowledge does not reach there!

Wise men attain their wisdom by following the authority of the prophets. They know that “worldly occasions” prove the existence of their Creator. Worldly occasions lack any power in and of themselves. So if their Creator did not possess power, how else would worldly occasions attain power? Therefore, the fact that worldly occasions “apparently” possess power establishes that there is a Supreme Being that is giving them that power. It is like the puppet that acts in a puppet show, thereby proving that there must be a puppeteer who is controlling the puppets, and giving them their power to move.

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⁴¹“Worldly occasions” that are beings other than humans may indeed be compared to puppets, but human beings are not mere puppets in the Mujad-

There are many benefits of having “worldly occasions” as intermediaries. As a proof, the Mujaddid cites the story of Prophet Jacob in the noble Koran. He rebukes those who do not see the need for worldly occasions. It is via the medium of those worldly occasions that God Himself works. Our infinitely wise Lord employs worldly occasions, as He knows that there is wisdom in it. Such is also the sunna of the prophets.

There are many people who consider the elimination of worldly occasions to be perfection. First, they relate everything to the Haqq (SWT) without any intermediary. They do not realize that you eliminate wisdom when you eliminate worldly occasions. There is much benefit and wholesomeness in this wisdom [i.e., worldly occasions]. *Lord! You have not created this in vain* (Koran 3:191). The prophets held that all things proceed from God; however, they still always employed worldly occasions as if those were pious deeds. For example, in the case of Hazrat Jacob, he anticipated danger and suggested to his sons: *Sons! Don't enter through a single door. Instead, enter through different doors* (Koran 12:67).

Yes! Prophet Jacob did employ a “worldly occasion” for his sons’ safety; he did instruct them to enter through different doors. He was afraid that someone will look at them with “evil eyes” and harm them. So to avoid or, or at least to minimize the damage to one son only, he suggested them to enter through different doors. But even after employing that occasion, he put his trust and

didi scheme. Indeed, the Mujaddid grants human beings far more freedom than Ashari does. See the section below entitled “God the Desirer and Creator of both Good and Evil.”

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faith in God. And that attitude denotes the perfection of reliance on Allah. Ignorant people may think that throwing up their hands, sitting still without making any effort, and hoping that God will perform a miracle is the apogee of reliance on Allah. However, that is not what God suggests and this is not what His messengers do.

Along with [employing] these considerations (mara‘at) [i.e., worldly occasions, Jacob] relegated this matter to the Haqq (SWT) and said, *I will not be able to protect you from Allah in any matter. Verily there is no ruling except that of Allah. On Him I rely and on Him relies the reliant* (Koran 12:67). The Haqq (SWT) was pleased and He suggested that it came from Him and commented about Hazrat Jacob, *Verily he possesses knowledge for We taught him. However, most men do not know this much* (Koran 12:68). In the noble Koran, God Himself has also indicated to our prophet to take up intermediaries, *Dear Prophet! Allah and your faithful followers suffice for you* (Koran 8:64).

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The Mujaddid supports the ulama of the mainstream Sunni community by supporting the concept of “effectivity”—the ability of contingent things to effect. Employing the power to effect of the created things is not a negation of reliance on God. On the contrary, it is a demonstration of perfect reliance on God, who is the Creator of that

⁴²While most Koranic exegetes interpret this verse as translated above, a minority interpret it differently, as For you and your faithful followers, Allah is sufficient. Following the majority interpretation, the Mujaddid suggests that this verse hints the Prophet to take benefit from his companions as intermediaries. [IA]

effectivity. And when He wills, the worldly occasions become effective, and when He does not will it, they do not become effective.

Now what remains is the matter of “effectivities” (*ta'thir*) of the worldly occasions. It has been narrated that the Haqq (SWT) sometimes does create effectivities in the worldly occasions and so [in those cases] those things [worldly occasions] do become effective. And other times, He does not create the effectivities in them. Therefore, inevitably [in those cases] those things [worldly occasions] do not show any effect.

It is appropriate that the Haqq (SWT) creates effectivities in worldly occasions some of the time and then they become effective. And some other times, no effectivity manifests from those [worldly occasions]. To deny absolutely the effectivity of worldly occasions is evidence of intellectual arrogance. One must admit effectivities. One should also admit that effectivities depend on God's capability of bringing things into existence, just as the worldly occasions do. This is my opinion on this matter. AllahAllah (SWT) reveals the truth!

From the above, we can conclude that employing worldly occasions does not negate reliance on Allah; on the contrary, it denotes complete reliance on Allah.

This clarifies that employing worldly occasions as intermediaries is not contrary to reliance on Allah- although the “imperfect ones” [who have not realized the true knowledge]

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may think otherwise. On the contrary, the perfection of reliance on Allah lies in employing worldly occasions as intermediaries. Hazrat Jacob (salam) employed worldly occasions, left everything to the Haqq (SWT), and then relied on Him. As he [Prophet Jacob, (salam)] says in the Koran, *I rely on Him and on Him relies the reliant* (Koran 12:67.) [A 1.266, 114.1-115.13]

God Desires and Creates Both Good and Evil

The Mujaddid affirms the mainstream Sunni creed that says that God creates both good and evil. However, He is well pleased by good deeds and displeased by evil deeds. This subtle difference between “desiring” and “good-pleasure” is hard to understand- and has given birth to many schisms.

He (SWT) desires both good and evil. And He creates both of them. However, He is well pleased by good [deeds] and displeased by evil [deeds.] There is a subtle difference between desiring (*irada*) and good pleasure (*rida*). Out of all the sects of Islam, Haqq (SWT) has given [only] the mainstream Sunni sect guidance on this difference. The rest of the sects have not been given guidance on this difference and so they have remained in error. Here, the [misguided sect named] Mutazila says that man is the creator of his own actions. And it [the Mutazila sect] finds that he [man] brings his own lack of faith or disobedience into existence. [A 1.266, 115.13-16]

The Mujaddid explains and comments on Ibn Arabi’s proposition that good deeds come from God’s name, the Guide, and bad deeds come from His name, the Mis-guider, and therefore, He is obligated to like both good and evil equally; they both please God in the same way. The Mujaddid rejects this proposition of Ibn Arabi and comments that this view is similar to Obligationism, a discredited heresy.

It is understood from what Shaykh Muhiyuddin [Ibn Arabi] and his followers [who can be compared to another misguided sect]

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imply that faith and wholesome deeds please the name the Guide in the same way that lack of faith and disobedience please the name the Misguider. This proposition contradicts the “people of truth.” And it [this proposition of Ibn Arabi] also is inclined toward obligationism [the doctrine that God is obligated to do whatever He does]; He is obligated to be well pleased [at all activity] in the same way that the sun’s rise and its illumination is pleasing to the sun. [A 1.266, 115.16-19]

My sufi shaykh interprets this section above in the following way.

The sun rises and illuminates the solar system whether it wants to or does not want to is immaterial. Here, its volition is meaning-

⁴³The Mujaddid here equates Ibn Arabi and his followers with a sect. However, it should be noted that he means “sect” only in an allegorical sense. For he always considers Ibn Arabi as a great master of the mainstream Sunni community and his views that contradicts the mainstream Sunni community as errors of unveilings and thus excusable.

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less. Ibn Arabi says that those things, e.g., faith, wholesome deeds, lack of faith, disobedience, etc. will please God in the same way. That is, God is obligated to like all the deeds of man, good or bad; He has no choice in this matter, since all actions of man proceed from God Himself [i.e., the good actions proceed from His name the Guide, *al-Hadi*, and the bad actions proceed from His name the Mis-guider, *al-Mudill*].⁴⁴

The Mujaddid affirms that God is the Creator of all actions, however; He has given man power and desire so that he himself may choose whether to do a certain action or not. When he does choose to do it, Allah creates that act.

Haqq (SWT) has given man [the attributes of] power and desire so that he himself may choose to perform the action [or not]. Creation of the action relates to Haqq (SWT). And *kasb* or “earning the merit” [of the action as the wages of his free choice of performing that action over not performing that action] relates to man. Such is the habit (*adat*) of Allah (SWT). After man intends to act out an action, Allah’s act of creation attaches itself (*muta’allaq*) to that [intended] action. [A 1.266, 115.19-116.2]

And in this method God “creates” that intended action.

The concept of *kasb*, which means “acquisition,” or “earning merit,” comes from kalam, the Muslim religious science used to defend the traditional Islamic be-

⁴⁴Muhammad Mamunur Rashid, *Islami Bishwas*, p. 24

liefs against the argumentations of the philosophers of the *faylasuf* tradition and others. In contrast to the Christian science of theology, the only purpose of kalam was defensive, i.e. to defend against the arguments of the *faylasufs* and others. Imam Ashari, the first person to systematize the mainstream Sunni kalam, introduced this concept to answer this dilemma “God is the creator of human actions. All human acts are actually divine act(s). So how can man be penalized on account of God’s act? Would that not be injustice?” (Please note that rewarding someone undeservedly is not injustice, it is God’s bounty- punishing someone unjustly is the contentious issue.) On one extreme, the deviant Jabariya or Compulsionist sect held that God compels man to do whatever he does- both good actions and bad actions. This would make God unjust for His punishment of someone in the last world. On the other extreme, the deviant The Mutazila sect held that God granted man absolute freedom in his actions and man is the creator of his own actions, thus God would be unjust in sending someone to hell on account of his actions. Thus God becomes less than omnipotent, thus undeserving of His name all-powerful and not the Creator of everything, and so undeserving of His name All-Creating.

Complusionists (Jabariya)	Asharis (the dominant mainstream Sunni school)	Mutazilas
Man has no free will	Man has “limited” free will	Man has complete free will

Table 4.10: Free will of man: A comparison of the three sects

In answer to both, Imam Ashari, the predominant mainstream Sunni scholar of kalam, and his followers

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introduced the concept of acquisition or *kasb*. They explained that there is a distinction between the creation (*khalq*) and acquisition (*kasb*) of an action. While God creates all human acts, man acquires his acts from Him. Their viewpoint is summarized in this table. I also contrast the Ashari theory with the Mutazila theory, to understand the former better. As the poet Rumi wrote, “Things are known by their contraries!”

Now God has indeed given man both power and desire, but how much? The official mainstream Sunni teaching is that God has given man “limited free will.” Now what is the extent of this “limited free will? How is it limited? Imam Ashari has given man a very limited free will and the Mujaddid criticizes this in several of his maktubs. In contrast, the Mujaddid grants man a truer free will, in line with the Maturudi school of kalam that he followed. He proposes an ethics in which man is more responsible for his actions than Ashari proposes—he theorizes that while man’s act of choosing is “weaker” than God’s act of choosing, still it is sufficient to do the act and therefore, it is man who is morally responsible for the consequences of all his actions. Yes! Non-human “worldly occasions” may be compared to “puppets.” However, human beings are not mere “puppets” with God pulling the strings; they do possess a true “freedom” in their activity in the stage of the world, although it is a stage that God has set up.

When man’s action proceeds from [his own] act of intending and act of choosing (*qasd va ikhtiyar*), then it is he who deserves the praise, censure, reward, or punishment (*madha va dham va thawab va ‘iqab*). It is said that man’s act of choosing is “weak” (*da’if*). What does “weak” mean here? If it means

Ashari concept of kasb	The Mutazila concept (where it differs from the Asharis)
<p>All power belongs to God. Power is either a) original, i.e., eternal (<i>qadim</i>), or b) derived, i.e., newly originated (<i>hadith</i>). Ashari agrees with all Muslim sects that the power that man possesses is “derived”⁴⁵ from God. Where Ashari differs from the Mutazilas is that he proposes that the original power alone is effective; the derived power can create nothing.</p>	<p>All Muslim sects agree in that all power belongs to God and whatever power man has is power derived from God. But the Mutazilas differ from the Asharis in the belief that the “derived power” is sufficient to perform the human act; while the Asharis believe that even that derived power is not sufficient, man still needs God to perform the act for him</p>
<p>Ashari proposed that God creates the actions that are performed by man; man is not capable of creating any action.⁴⁶ “There is no creator except God and the actions of man are, therefore, His creation.”⁴⁷ But man may “acquire” God’s actions. Thus God is the creator and man is the “acquisitor” (<i>muktasib</i>) of human actions.</p>	<p>Mutazilas proposed that the power that humans possess (although it is originally derived from God) can indeed create and so man’s acts are his own acts.</p>
<p>How does God create human acts? It is a two-part process. Initiation Part: God creates in man the power (<i>qudra</i>) to perform the act and the power to make a free choice (<i>ikhtiyar</i>) between two actions.</p>	<p>Mutazilas agree here.</p>
<p>Completion Part: However, those two God-created human powers <i>qudra</i> and <i>ikhtiyar</i> are not sufficient to do the act. Man still needs God to complete his act. Now it is the habit or nature (<i>‘ada</i>) of God to create the action corresponding to the power and free choice of man. So God creates the act of man.</p>	<p>Here the Mutazilas do not need God to complete the human act. The “derived power” that man possesses (that originally came from God) is sufficient to complete the human act.</p>
<p>The Result: Therefore, it is God who performs all human acts, both as to initiation and as to completion.</p>	<p>Thus man is the creator of his own action.</p>
<p>So how is man responsible for that act, which is nominally attributed to him but is actually God’s act? Because man has “acquired or earned” (<i>kasb</i>) the merit of the act.</p>	<p>Man is totally free in all aspects of taking his act- in deciding between what act to do, in intending to do the chosen action, and finally in completing the act, (although it is God that originally granted man those powers).</p>
<p>How? Man is free in deciding between which actions to do, and in intending to do the chosen action. By doing so, man acquires (<i>iktisab</i>) the merit of the act, good or bad. So he “earns” the “merit” of that that divine act, i.e., he “earns” or “comes to deserve” the reward or punishment meted out</p>	<p>So the act of man is his own creation. Therefore, it is man who “earns the merit” of the act.</p>

that human act of choosing is “weaker” than the divine act of choosing, then it is correct. On the contrary, if it means that human act of choosing is not sufficient to do the act then it is not correct. Verily Allah (SWT) does not prescribe for someone an act that is not within one’s realm of ability. He wants the easy act for man, not the difficult act.⁴⁹ [A 1.266, 116.2-6; FR 74.2-20]

Jabariya (Compulsionists)	Asharis	Mujaddid	Mutazilas
Absolutely no free will	“limited” free will	“More and truer free will”	Complete free will

Table 4.12: Free will of Man: Comparison between the three sects and the Mujaddid

The Mujaddid proposes a “more and truer free will” than the Asharis, but still less than the complete free will that the Mutazilas propose.

Eternal Bliss and Damnation

The Mujaddid unveilings totally conform with the mainstream Sunni creed—the faithful will enjoy an eternity of bliss and those who are unfaithful to the core, lacking even a grain of faith, will suffer eternal damnation.

The gist of the section is that meting out an everlasting recompense for an action of temporary duration is the “measuring out” (*taqdir*)

⁴⁹The Mujaddid discusses more on predestination in maktub 1.289

by Haqq. He has decreed everlasting punishment to be the proper recompense for lack of faith for a temporary period of time [that is the earthly life]. And He has decreed everlasting bliss to be the proper recompense for faith lasting for a temporary period of time [that is the earthly life]- such is the “measuring out” of the Mighty and Wise. [A 1.266, 116.6-8]

The Mujaddid justifies eternal bliss and damnation. He argues that an “eternity” of bliss or pain is the proper recompense for possessing faith in God or not; since God is so sublime.

By the grace of Allah, we can also understand that it is He who is the Lord of all manifest and nonmanifest bliss and it is He who brought the heavens and the earth into existence; and also all the greatness and perfection that there is, all that is established for Him. The recompense for exercising a lack of faith in Him would also be a most severe punishment. And that punishment is eternal damnation.

Likewise, to have faith in an unseen God who grants us so much bliss should have a great recompense. And to hold Him to be True when the impediments of the [instigating] soul and Satan exist should also have a great recompense. Indeed, their recompense should be the greatest recompense. And that recompense should be everlasting bliss. So faith is the cause of being granted that greatest recompense, which is everlasting bliss! That re-

ally glorifies faith. Or instead, that glorifies God who is the object of that faith.

Some shaykhs [e.g., Ibn Arabi] have said that entrance into paradise truly depends on divine bounty. [However, [while I, the Mujaddid, agree to it, I also propose that God] has made it appear that it [entrance to paradise] depends on our faith ? and there is a reason for Him doing so. And the reason is that we find the compensation of our own acts to be more pleasurable. [So, we find paradise more pleasurable when we know that it is the result of us having faith than when we know that it is the result of divine bounty. Yes!] I consider that-entrance to paradise depends on faith. [However, faith is merely an intermediary reason here, not the ultimate reason.] And faith is His bounty and gift. [So ultimately, entrance to paradise depends on divine bounty.] Similarly, entrance into hell depends on faithlessness. And faithlessness grows out of the caprices of the instigating soul. *All the beautiful things that you receive are from Allah and all the ugly things that you receive are from your own selves* (Koran 4:79). [A 1.266, 116.8-16]

The Mujaddid refutes Ibn Arabi’s proposition on the eternity on punishment. Ibn Arabi proposes that after suffering hellfire for a long long time, everyone will be ultimately forgiven and granted paradise. The Mujaddid disagrees with that and instead supports the consensus of opinion of the ulama of the mainstream Sunni community- that the faithless will suffer eternal damna-

tion. He says it glorifies God to grant perpetual paradise only to those who have faith in Him; and to send those who reject Him to everlasting hell. Perpetuity in paradise or eternal damnation- such a bountiful reward or severe punishment on account of possessing faith in God or not, that only exalts God!

The Mujaddid explains that denial of God is such an enormous sin that eternal damnation is its proper recompense. Here he again contradicts Ibn Arabi and supports the ulama of the mainstream Sunni community.

You should know the following. You may enter paradise only if you possess faith. [Faith is so important that one receives such a great gift, like the gift of paradise, only if one possesses faith. And the reason behind it] is really to glorify faith; instead to glorify [God who is] the object of that faith. It is for this reason that such an exalted wage is meted out [on account of faith ? it glorifies God who is the object of that faith]. And you will enter hell if you lack faith. [Faith is very critical! So critical! So critical that one receives the dreadful punishment of eternal damnation for lacking faith. And the reason behind that rule] is really to denigrate lack of faith and to venerate (*tabjil*) Him [God], in whom is that lack of faith. It is for this reason that such a severe and everlasting punishment is meted out. [A 1.266, 116.16-20]

Now the Mujaddid criticizes Ibn Arabi who denied eternal damnation for the faithless and instead proposed that finally everyone will enter paradise.

What some shaykhs [e.g., Ibn Arabi and his

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followers] have said on it lacks this subtlety. Also, entrance to hell corresponds to that [lack of faith] and those shaykhs interpretations do not address this either. For entrance into hell truly depends on lack of faith. Allah (SWT) inspires the truth! Such as this! [A 1.266, 116.20-117.2]

The Vision

It is an article of faith of the mainstream Sunni community that the faithful will “see” God in the last world. The Mujaddid’s verification of this vision of Allah agrees with the mainstream Sunni creed.

The faithful will see the Haqq (SWT) in the last world in paradise. That vision will be “directionless” (*bi-jihat*); “howless” (*bi-kayf*); “without likeness” (*bi-shabh*) and “without analogy” (*bi-mithal*). [A 1.266, 117.2-3]

The Mujaddid comments that all Muslim sects except the mainstream Sunnis deny the vision. Even Ibn Arabi reduces the vision to a “self-disclosure in the outward form.”

This is such a matter that every sect, be it within our religion or out of it, denies- except the mainstream Sunnis- they [those outside the mainstream Sunni sect e.g., the Mutazilas] do not permit a vision that is “directionless” and “without what manner.” Even so, Shaykh Muhiyuddin Ibn Arabi has reduced this next-worldly vision to a “self-disclosure in the outward form” (*tajalli-i suri*) and he

does not permit any self-disclosure except with this [interpretation, that it is a] type [that is only in the outward form]. [A 1.266, 117.3-5]

The Mujaddid points out that the vision that the mainstream Sunnis propose and the Mutazilas deny is different from what Ibn Arabi calls the vision.

The Mutazilas deny the vision since they stress the incomparability (*tanzih*) of God and deny His similarity (*tashbih*). In the *reductio ad absurdum* syllogism, they argue in this line, “Since God is incomparable, His vision also must be incomparable. Therefore, the vision must be ‘directionless’ and ‘without what manner.’ However, we can not ‘see’ something that is ‘directionless’ or ‘without what manner.’ Therefore, the vision must be an absurdity.”

Ibn Arabi says that if the Mutazilas conceived the vision to be some kind of “self-disclosure in the outward form” like he conceives, they would not have denied it. His conception of the self-disclosure (that he calls self-disclosure in the outward form or *tajalli-i suri*) has both direction and “how”; so the Mutazilas would not have denied such a type of self-disclosure.

One day, our Hazrat [Baqibillah] quoted from the Shaykh [Ibn Arabi], “If the Mutazilas would not confine this vision to the level of *tanzih*, i.e., divine incomparability and instead would propose *tashbih*, i.e., divine similarity and would recognize the vision to be this self-disclosure [in the outward form], they would never deny this vision or consider it impossible. That is, their denial is on the point of it [the vision] being directionless and without-how (*bi-kayf*)

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[that is specific to the level of *tanzih*]. However, that [self-disclosure] which the Mutazilas conceive] is not at all like this self-disclosure [in the outward form, which I, Ibn Arabi, conceive], as this one has both direction and how.”⁵⁰
[A 1.266, 117.5-9]

The Mujaddid points out that the “self-disclosure in the outward form” of Ibn Arabi would not be a vision of God at all. And if someone proposes that the vision is a sort of “self-disclosure in the outward form,” then he is really denying that vision altogether and thus denying the mainstream Sunni creed.

It should be borne in mind that to drag down this last-worldly vision to a “self-disclosure as an outward form (*tajalli-i suuri*)” [a self-disclosure where God appears as a physical form, which Ibn Arabi proposes] is really to deny this vision. It is because although that [last-worldly] “self-disclosure in the outward form” is different from this [worldly] “self-disclosure in the outward form,” still it is not the vision of the Haqq (SWT). [A 1.266, 117.9-11]

*The faithful will see Him, lacking
any “how”
But will neither perceive Him nor
will take down an image [of Him]*

The poem above illustrates what the nature of that vision would be. It would be just as the Mujaddid explained in his monograph *Mabda’ va Ma’ad*,

⁵⁰For more of his writings on the vision, see the Mujaddid’s monograph *Mabda’ va Ma’ad*, Minhas i.e., chapters 20 and 42; and also maktub 3.44

Tomorrow [on the Day of the Resurrection] all the faithful will see the Haqq (SWT) with their [own physical] eyes; but none will be able to perceive Him. *Sight would not be able to perceive Him* (Koran 6:103).” [Mabda 42, 66.1-.3]

Dispatch of the Prophets is Mercy

The Mujaddid discusses the benefit of sending prophets to mankind. ⁵¹ To the Mujaddid, prophets are critical in order to tell us about God and His attributes. While intellect is a proof, it is only an incomplete proof. Therefore, the dispatch of the prophets is critical.

The dispatch of the prophets is an act of mercy to the inhabitants of the world. If these great ones were not the intermediaries, then who would guide lost people like us toward the knowledge of the person and the attributes of the Necessary Existence (SWT)? Or who would distinguish between the things that please our lord well and the things that do not please Him well? Without the support from the light of their invitation toward God, our imperfect intellects are far removed from this knowledge. And without following these great ones [who are the prophets], our incomplete understandings cannot understand it. Yes! Intellect is always a proof but it is an incomplete proof. It has not reached the level of maturity. Dispatch of the prophets is the mature proof.

⁵¹The Mujaddid writes more on the same theme—the need for prophets—in his monograph *Ithbat wa Nubuwwat*

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That is why the last-worldly reward and punishment depends on it.

The Mujaddid answers the question, “If one disobeys the prophets, he is subject to punishment in the last world. If the prophets did not warn him, God would not have punished him. So prophets can be said to be the cause of his punishment. So how then, can the dispatch be termed as an act of mercy?”

Question: Since the last-worldly punishment always depends on this dispatch [of the prophets], how could one possibly call this dispatch a “mercy to the inhabitants of the world?”

In answer, the Mujaddid first recounts all the numerous benefits of the dispatch of the prophets.

Answer: This dispatch is identical to mercy, as it is the worldly occasion, which leads to the knowledge of the person and the attributes of the Necessary Existence (SWT), and that [knowledge] guarantees felicity, both in this world and the next world. By this felicity of dispatch, we attain the cognition of that which is appropriate to the Holy Majesty that is He (SWT) from that which is inappropriate to the Holy Majesty that is He (SWT). Our lame and blind intellect is branded by the brand of contingentness and newly-originatedness! How will it know which name or attribute or [what is the reality of the] act(s) that is appropriate to the Necessary Presence who is necessarily eternal? So that it [our lame and blind intellect] may know which ones [of the names, attributes, or act(s)] it should apply to

Him and which ones it should not? On the contrary, due to its own imperfection, it [the intellect] often considers perfection as imperfection; and imagines imperfection as perfection.

I consider [the knowledge of] this distinction above all obvious and hidden bliss. He is most unfortunate who applies inappropriate things to the Person (SWT); and associates an undeserved thing to His exalted presence. By this dispatch, [man can] separate truth from falsehood. And he can distinguish right worship from the false [worship]. Through the means of this dispatch, they [the prophets] invite man to the Haqq (SWT), and bring the servants to felicity of the nearness and “arrival” to the Master. Through the means of this dispatch, one may be informed on how to well please the Master (lofty are His modes!) as it has been mentioned before. And one can distinguish when one may intervene in the possession of the Almighty and when one may not. There are many more benefits of this dispatch. So it is now decided that the dispatch of the prophets is a mercy.

He notes that he who disobeys this dispatch has only himself to blame for his punishment, not the dispatch. Therefore, the dispatch is still mercy, as it has numerous benefits.

So one who obeys the caprices of his instigating soul (*nafs-i ammarah*) is the one who disparages this dispatch at the instigation of the accursed Satan and who does not practice

in accordance to the message of that dispatch.
So why should that dispatch be blamed there?
Instead, why should not that [dispatch via the
prophets] still [be considered to] be mercy?
[A 1.266, 117.11-118.11, FR76.12-11.22]

Intellects and Revelation

Here the Mujaddid answers a question that is extremely relevant to modern times, as many spiritually-minded people (“New Agers” in America and elsewhere) ask, “Why do we need to bother with divine Revelation? Why can’t we just follow our hearts instead?”

First, we need to note that the gods that many of these new-agers follow are not even within their hearts but instead their *nafs-i ammarah*, instigating souls. They do what they want to do, i.e., what their instigating souls want to do. But even when some of them (the more spiritual ones) do follow their hearts, even then they may be misguided. This is true even for their masters who have some realization of God, or even sufi masters. This is why we need to follow the divinely revealed code of conduct sent to the prophets for our salvation.

Here, the Mujaddid explains that even the purified intellects, even those of their masters who have “realized God,” are not free from human frailties. And therefore, even the rulings derived by the purified intellects of those masters (let alone the impure intellects of ordinary people) are not reliable. Only the divine revelation that the prophets receive is free from such errors and so is entirely reliable.

Question: The intellect is essentially imperfect and incomplete in realizing the divine rul-

ings in itself or by itself. Even then, having been cleansed and purified [i.e., refined and polished] it [the intellect] does find a correlation and conjunction (*munasaba va ittisal*) in an “other than how” manner [i.e., it finds an unqualified connection] to the level of Necessaryness (*wujub*). (SWT) As a result of that correlation and conjunction, why can’t it [the intellect] acquire the divine injunctions from there [i.e., from God directly and without the intermediation of any prophet]? Why should there still be a need for a dispatch [by the prophets to mankind] via the angels?

Answer: Although the intellect may create such a correlation and conjunction [with God] still the *ta’alluq*, [the intimate attachment that comes down to the intellect] from the “hylomorphic form” [i.e., the essence of an individual man who is receiving the knowledge] does not completely disappear or disengage. So the faculty of imagination [that is an integral part of the essence of man] is always holding fast onto it [the intellect]. Illusions never leave the screen of its mind. The faculties of anger and appetite are its constant companions. The vices of eager desire and covetousness are its continual confidants. Absent-mindedness and forgetfulness that are characteristics of man are squandered on it. Errors and mistakes that are the lot of mankind do not leave it. Therefore intellect is not dependable. And the rules derived by it are not well protected from the power of imagination and the intervention of illusion. And they [those

rules] are not preserved from the taint of forgetfulness and the surmise of error. The case of the angels is its contrary. They are pure from these ascriptions and exonerated from these vices. Therefore, they are necessarily dependable. And the rules derived by it [the method of transmission via the angels] are well guarded from the taint of illusion and imagination and the surmise of forgetfulness and error.

On the hylomorphic form, Aristotle proposed that primary substances, i.e., individual things (e.g., the man Karim or the man Zahir, the thing A or the thing B, etc.) are hylomorphic compounds made of matter poured into the mold that is the “hylomorphic form” or *pikar hayyulani*. So hylomorphic form means “essence” of a thing. In Ibn Arabi’s ontology that follows that tradition here, the hylomorphic form is the “fixed entity”⁵² and matter is *wujud*. Or the hylomorphic form is the “receptacle” or *qabil* of divine *wujud*. Or the hylomorphic form is the “essence” while the substance is the outer form, the *sura*. In this context, hylomorphic form refers to the “essence” of man that includes human frailties like the vices of forgetfulness, error, imagination, etc.

Another question, “It is the God-realized sufi masters who have said sayings like ‘All is He (*hama ust*),’ ‘I am the Haqq (*anal Haqq*),’ ‘I am the Exalted (*subhani*),’ etc. So why aren’t they true?” The Mujaddid clarifies that even for those great masters, the messages that they presume to be from God may be false. First, those messages may have been corrupted during their transmission to those masters.

⁵²On fixed entities (*a’yan thabita*), see SPK p. 89. For a definition of “fixed entity” see SPK, pps. 11-12, pps. 83-86.

Metallic thing	Individual thing	Individual thing	Outer form	Outer form
Mold	Hylomorphic form	Fixed entity	Essence	Reality (<i>haqiqa</i>)
Metal	Matter	<i>Wujud</i> (existence of God)		

Table 4.13: Things and their compositions

There are some premises (like All is He, *hama ust, subhani, anal haqq*) that the [sufi] masters hold as axiomatic truths (*muqaddamat-i musallama*.)⁵³ They have been attained by the way of illusion and imagination along with other things. [So, necessarily] they are far from the truth. Sometimes I sense that when a science that is [really a body of] spiritual conjectures (*bi-talaqqii ruhani*) is spiritually received, that science is contaminated with some of those false premises. That happens in that interval of time when the sensory faculties spiritually take down that science. At that time, some of those false premises are sometimes unintentionally contaminated with that science in a way that those premises cannot be distinguished [from that science] at that critical interval of time [of reception]. While in that state [of reception], sometimes those [false premises] can be distinguished

⁵³*muqaddamat-i musallama* (premises that [sufi] masters accept generally and hold as axiomatic truths.) *Musallama* means premises that are accepted and held as axiomatic truths by the "experts and the elite," in this context "sufi masters," as opposed to the common people in general

[from that science that was originally received from God] and some other times they cannot be distinguished. Therefore, that science [that was originally true and pure] has necessarily attained the form of falsehood as it has been contaminated with those false premises. Therefore, none should rely on that [contaminated] science any longer.

Note: When the Mujaddid wrote it, he directed this not only against the misguided sufis and “spirituals,” but also against the *faylasuf* tradition philosophers. The misguided sufis believed that when they would receive their “enlightenment,” they would attain an arrival (*wasl*) with God; and through that relationship, they would establish a correlation with God and receive knowledge from Him directly. In the same way, many of these *faylasuf* tradition philosophers (Avicenna, al-Farabi, Ibn Bajjah et al) proposed that a elect few may attain enlightenment through the acquisition of knowledge⁵⁴. And when the enlightened minds of the seekers-of-knowledge will attain true enlightenment, those minds will attain “conjunction (*ittisal*)” with the active intellect. And then those “enlightened philosophers” will attain knowledge directly from it.

Note: The Mujaddid writes in his monograph the *Mabda’ va Ma’ad*⁵⁵ that initially the heart receives a spiritual knowledge and it is only then that the knowledge is transmitted to the sensory faculties. On the other hand, the sensory organs receive a worldly knowledge first and it is only then that knowledge is transmitted to

⁵⁴Fakhry, Majid, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004) p. 271

⁵⁵Ahmad Sirhindi, *Mabda’ va Ma’ad*, minha 43; I referred to the Bengali translation p. 97

the heart, which is the repository of conviction. Probably, the Mujaddid means the same thing here that the heart receives this science spiritually and then this science is transmitted to the sensory organs. He may also mean that the heart is the repository of the conviction that those are false premises and they ‘mix with that science while that science is being transmitted from the heart to the sensory organs. Remember that in Islamic sciences, especially in sufi epistemology, the heart, *qalb* is the organ of cognition, not the brain.

Second, the Mujaddid explains that those messages are corrupt because they have been received in an impure heart. Please note that this argument is applicable in the case of masters who live their lives outside the sharia. Yes! The Mujaddid says that these “God-realized” masters may indeed receive inspirations, unveilings or perform miracles! However, one must follow divine revelation in order to purify his “heart”- and it is not the “soul,” *nafs* but the “heart,” *qalb* that is the primary organ of realizing divine knowledge in the Islamic tradition. He explains that for those masters, it is their “souls” that are purified but not their “hearts.” They may attain miraculous powers and unveilings of the unseen world through their purified souls but since their “hearts” are still impure, the messages that they receive there are also impure and are not worthy of reliance.

Or I can say that the cleansing and purification of the soul depends on practicing those wholesome deeds that satisfy the Master and depend on the dispatch—as it has been narrated before. Therefore, one may not realize the cleansing and purification without the dispatch. The purification that the faithless

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and the corrupt attain ⁵⁶ is the purification of the soul only but not the purification of the heart. And the purification of the soul alone does not increase anything but misguidance. And it points to nowhere except damage. The unveilings of some unseen things that come in the hand of the faithless and the corrupt is what leads one step by step to ruin. Their result is badness and damages that group.

May Allah (SWT) save us from these calamities by our reverence for the “prince of the prophets [Muhammad]” (salam). [A 1.266, 118.11-119.11; FR 77.22-79.6]

Prescriptions of the Sharia Are Blessings

The Mujaddid does not consider the imposition of the divine commandments on us as a burden; instead, it is a blessing. The Mujaddid notes that some people who reject the divine law ask the question, “Why did God impose a burdensome law on us? Instead, why did he not let us live like animals, unencumbered by any law?”

It is clear from this verification that the prescription of the sharia that is established by the prophetic method is also a blessing. It is not what the heretics who reject the sharia consider.

In Arabic, *taklif* does mean “prescription” but in Persian, the language of Islamic India, *taklif* means, “burden.” So what in Arabic means “God has prescribed

⁵⁶Elsewhere in the *Maktubat*, the Mujaddid writes that although the yogis and Brahmins of India engage in many arduous practices to attain God, they have come to naught, as those practices were not in conformity of the sharia

sharia for man” means in Persian “God has burdened man with the sharia.”

They mistakenly think that the word *taklif*, “prescription” derives from the word *kulfat*, “burden.” And so they think this way but it is irrational. They argue, “Where is the kindness of God if He would prescribe difficult deeds to people and say that if they would do this difficult prescription then they would be sent to paradise and if they do otherwise then they would be sent to hell? Why did He prescribe these difficult things instead of letting us eat and sleep and do whatever we like?”

Now the Mujaddid answers why we should follow the divine law. First, the intellect establishes the prescriptions of the law as necessary. Those prescriptions are not at all a burden; instead they are expressions of gratitude for God’s blessings to mankind.

These unfortunate and unwise people do not seem to know that man’s intelligence requires people to express gratitude [to God] for the blessings that they receive [from Him]. These prescriptions of the sharia are the clarification of this gratitude. Therefore, intellect establishes “prescription” as necessary.

Second, the Mujaddid explains that the law makes the world an orderly place.

Furthermore, the order of the world depends on this prescription. If everyone were left to his own whim, nothing but evil and corruption would appear. Every whimsical person

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would lay his hands on other peoples’ bodies and properties. And depravity and corruption would reign. They would destroy themselves and they would destroy him [on whom they have laid their hands]! May Allah save us! If the prohibition and the ban by the sharia were not there! *Your life lies in just retribution! Possessors of intelligence!* (Koran 2:179).

*The drunk Ethiopian would vomit
in the Kaaba
If the cane of the judge were not
ruling*

Third, the Mujaddid argues, “God is our absolute owner. So whatever He has ordered us to do must be done without any question. None may question whatever He does!”

Or I can also say that He (SWT) is the unbounded possessor and people are His possessions. So whatever ruling that He gives or whatever intervention He does to them are identical to goodness and wholesomeness. So these rulings are devoid of and exonerated from even a taint of injustice and corruption. *None may question whatever He does!* (Koran 21:23).

*Who has the courage?
(In fear of Him!)*

*To open up his mouth!
Until he has submitted to Him!*

If He (SWT) would send everyone to hell and decree eternal damnation, we may not protest

against Him. For that would not be a violation of the rights of others. Nor would there be even a taint of injustice. [This is] unlike our possessions, which are truly His possessions. Every use of that [divine possession by us] is transgression in itself. That is because [Allah] the Master of the Sharia, has given us those possessions for some wholesome purpose, although in reality, those are His possessions. Therefore, our violation of them [the divine possessions or rights] is permissible [only] to that extent that God the absolute and unbounded owner permits it and remains indifferent to it. [A 1.266, 119.11-120.10; FR 79.6-80.12]

Revelation is True

The Revelation that the prophets of God receive is indeed true.

What these great ones [the prophets of God] (salam) delivered as decrees from God and clarification of the rules, all that is true and conforms to true events.

Yes! The prophets may make errors, but that error is only temporary. God does not allow them to remain in error for long. For example, in the Koranic story of the Prophet Jonah (Koran 37:139–148), God dispatched him to his people and entrusted him with the obligation of prophethood. However, he was disheartened by his people’s adamant refusal to heed the truth. In desperation, he left the area leaving his mission and his people. God became angry at Hazrat Jonah and following the divine

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command, a big fish devoured Hazrat Jonah. He then repented and was forgiven by Allah. Another example lies in the Koranic story of Moses, who accidentally killed an Egyptian trying to defend an Israelite (Koran 28:15).

Although they may err in interpreting the rules, still they are not permitted to persist in their errors. It is said that soon they would be made aware of their errors. And when they realize that, they would be driven to that which is correct. So do not count their errors! [A 1.266, 120.10-13; FR 79.6-80]

Punishment in the Grave

The punishment of the grave as prophesied by the Prophet Muhammad is indeed true.

The punishment in the grave for the faithless and for some of the sinners among the faithful is true. For the truthful reporter (salam) has reported such. The questioning in the grave of both the faithful and the faithless is also true.

The punishment in the grave is more like the punishment of hell in its intensity.

The grave is the intermediary realm between this world and the next world. In one respect, that punishment [of the grave] can be correlated to a punishment of this world, which is of limited duration. [Because both punishments are of limited duration.] However, in another respect, it [the punishment of the grave] can be correlated with the punishment

in the next world, for it is really a punishment of the next world [in its severity]. The generous verse *Fire will be presented to them in the morning and evening* (Koran 40:46) was sent down in reference to the punishment in the grave. Likewise, the “ease” of the grave has two sides as well [a worldly side in that that ease- it is of limited duration and an otherworldly side- in that the ease is heavenly]. [A 1.266, 120.13-18; FR 80]

God May Judge or He May Forgive

Allah may forgive all the sins of some people and send them to paradise directly.

The man whose errors and mistakes Allah forgives by His perfect generosity and clemency, and does not take account of his sins at all, is truly fortunate. Even if He does take account, God shows him perfect generosity and expiates his sins by worldly pain and suffering. If any sin is left, God expiates them by the pressure of the grave and the sufferings he experiences there. Finally, God cleans and purifies him and then dispatches him to the Plain of the Mustering.

Or He may not forgive him at all and punish him in hellfire. However, all the faithful will be finally shown mercy! They will be taken out of hell and granted paradise!

However, it would also be justice if God does not do that and instead takes him on into the

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last world. Woe to those humiliated sinners! However, if those sinners come from the people of Islam, they will finally be shown mercy. And they will be protected from everlasting punishment. This is the great grace of Allah! By the revered status of the Prince of the Prophets [Muhammad] (salam) Please accept our supplication, *Lord! Complete our lights for us and grant us salvation! Verily You are powerful over everything!* (Koran 8:66). By Your love of the Prince of the Messengers! Salutation and peace be on him, on his progeny and on them! [A 1.266, 120.18-121.5]

The Day of Resurrection

The Mujaddid affirms the Day of Resurrection, when all existence will be initially destroyed and later everyone will be resurrected. This is contrary to the doctrine of the *faylasuf* tradition philosophers who believed that the cosmos would exist eternally.

The Day of Resurrection is true. That day, all the heavens, the heavenly bodies, the earth, the mountains, the seas, the animals, the plants, the mines- all will become nonexistent and destroyed. The heavens will be snuffed out. The stars will be scattered and put to flight. The land and the mountains will be swept away like dust. All of these will be brought into nonexistence and annihilated at the first blow of the Horn. At the second blow [of the Horn], everyone will be raised from their graves and assembled on the Plain of the Mustering.

Now the Mujaddid comments on the *faylasuf* tradition philosophers who deny the destruction of the cosmos. The Mujaddid comments that they are denying the definitive plain texts (the Koran and the hadith literature) and the consensus of opinion of the prophets by making that claim and therefore even their claim to be Muslim is suspect.

The philosophers do not concede that the heavens and the heavenly bodies will be brought to nonexistence. And they do not consider the annihilation and corruption of those things possible. They say that those things are beginningless and endless.

The Mujaddid observes the fact that the philosophers of the later period of the *faylasuf* tradition were even bolder in asserting their anti-islamic doctrines. Still they claimed to be Muslim and even practiced the rites of Islam!

Although they say all this, the later ones, out of their own witlessness, claim to be included in the class of the people of Islam and even observe some of the rules of Islam.

He finds it surprising that even many sincere Muslims support those philosophers of the *faylasuf* tradition when its adherents deny definitive articles of the Islamic faith derived from the Koran and the hadith literature.

It is surprising that some among the people of Islam believe these interpretations of theirs to be true. And they consider it wrong to criticize or condemn them whilst they deny definitive plain texts [the Koran and the hadith literature]. And they contradict the consensus of opinion of the prophets (salam).

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The Mujaddid brings his proofs for the destruction of the cosmos from the Koran.

Allah has said, *When the sun would be covered and the stars would be made turbid* (Koran 81:1–2). And Allah has said, *When the heavens will be pierced and they will listen to their Lord; that would be the right thing for them* (Koran 84:1–2). And Allah has also said, *The heavens will open up and sprout many doors* (Koran 78:19), i.e., the heavens will be pierced. There are many such evidences in the Koran.

In conclusion, he again suspects their claim to be Muslims since he believes that the denial of the philosophers of such a fundamental Muslim creed takes them outside the boundaries of Islam.

They do not realize that reciting the “verse of witnessing” is not sufficient for Islam. They are also required to attest to all the necessary doctrines in the religion. Also, they must be exonerated from faithlessness; [in their hearts] Islam will not form its form until then. Else all efforts [to get closer to Allah] will be in vain! [A 1.266, 121.5-17]

The Reckoning, the Scale, the Bridge

The Mujaddid confirms the mainstream Sunni creed and declares the Reckoning, the Scale, and the Bridge to be true.

The Reckoning (*hisab*), the Scale (*mizan*), and the Bridge (*sirat*) are true, as the truthful re-

porter [Prophet Muhammad] (salam) has reported.

The Mujaddid explains the critical importance of following authority or *taqlid* of the prophets: The prophetic method is beyond the intellectual method. Even when denied by the intellect, we should still believe in divine revelation derived by the prophetic method.

People ignorant of the prophetic method may consider the existence of these things far-fetched but that should not even be taken into account. For the prophetic method is beyond the intellectual method. To corroborate the true news of the prophets by the intellectual gaze is, in effect, to deny the prophetic method. There [in the realm of religion], one “transacts business” by following authority. They do not know that the prophetic method is opposed to the intellectual method. Indeed, the intellectual method alone may not guide one to that exalted destination [where one realizes knowledge of God] unless knowledge that came from the prophets (*taqlid*) corroborates that [knowledge that one has attained through the intellectual method.]. Opposition is one thing and not arriving is another thing. One may oppose after one arrives. [A 1.266, 121.17-122.3; FR 82.7-16]

Paradise and Hell Are Eternal

The Mujaddid agrees with the mainstream Sunni creed and affirms that paradise and hell exist; and that they will remain for eternity.

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Paradise and hell indeed exist. After the Reckoning on the Day of Resurrection, one group will be sent to paradise and another group will be sent to hell. The reward and punishment there will be for eternity without end; it will never end- as the assured and definitive plain texts have indicated.

The Mujaddid now comments on Ibn Arabi’s proposition that the punishment in hell is only temporary- all sinners will be finally forgiven. The Mujaddid proves that while all sinners who possess even a grain of faith will be finally forgiven, still those who are truly unfaithful will suffer eternal damnation.

In his book the *Fusus al-Hikam*, the author [Ibn Arabi] writes that everyone’s end result will be mercy. *My Mercy embraces everything* (Koran 7:156). He establishes that the faithless will suffer for three ages in the hell. He says that after that, the fire will become cool and peaceful for them, as it became for Hazrat Abraham. He holds that to break divine threats [for punishment] is permissible. He says that none among the “people of the heart” [i.e., sufis] agree to eternal damnation for the faithless. In this matter too, he has strayed far from the correct position. He does not recognize that the embrace of mercy that includes both the faithful and the faithless is only for this world. In the last world, the faithless will not even find the smell of mercy. As Allah (SWT) says, *Verily none would lack hope from the Spirit* [i.e., God] *except the faithless* (Koran 12:87). Allah also said, *My Mercy embraces everything. So We will ordain these*

[good things] *for those who venerate* ⁵⁷ *Me, pay zakat and believe in my verses* (Koran 7:156). The Shaykh recites the first verse but does not invoke the second verse. Allah has also said, *Verily the Mercy of Allah is to the pious* (Koran 7:56)

Here is one more verse [that they misinterpret], *Do not think that Allah will break the promise to his Prophet* (Koran 14:47). This verse should not mislead one into thinking that it points specifically toward the breaking of promises. Maybe God has mentioned only the breaking of promises because what He means here includes both helping the prophets and their prevailing over the faithless. Actually, this verse contains both the promise of rewards and the threat of punishment- promise to the prophets and threat to the faithless. They say that [rather, misinterpret this verse to mean] that this generous verse negates both the promise of rewards and the threat of punishment- promise to the prophets and threat to the faithless. So [actually] this verse proves the Shaykh wrong, not right.

Also, he who threatens punishment and does not carry it out is just as much a liar as he who breaks his promise of reward; he would not be worthy of being God(SWT).

⁵⁷The Koranic word *khawf* is usually translated as "fear" but I believe that the word that is more accurate in this context, is "veneration, awe, reverence or adoration" the respect mixed with fear that one experiences before a mighty and majestic power like God.

[This is to say] as if He knew from pre-eternity that “I would not exact eternal damnation on the disbelievers,” nevertheless- for some beneficial consideration contrary to His [pre-eternal] knowledge, He has then said that He would not exact everlasting punishment. To propose such a view of God is of utmost abhorrence.

Exalted is your Lord who is the Lord of Exaltation from with what that they qualify Him [i.e., the evil attributes like being a liar] and peace be on His emissary (Koran 37:180–181).

For these reasons, this Ibn Arabi proposition should not be accepted. First, it is only his “unveiling” and an unveiling may be indeed false. Second, it contradicts the consensus of opinion of all Muslims.

That the “people of the heart” unanimously agree on, that the faithless will not suffer eternal damnation, is only an unveiling of the Shaykh [Ibn Arabi]. There is a high possibility that an unveiling is erroneous. So that unveiling should not even be counted. This opinion of his also contradicts the consensus of opinion of the Muslims [as all Muslim ulama have a consensus of opinion on the proposition that the truly faithless will suffer eternal damnation.] [A 122.3-123.2; FR 82.16-84.1]

Ibn Arabi claimed that all the “people of the heart,” i.e., the sufis who have attained knowledge from God from an inner realization, agree that the faithless will not suffer eternal damnation. The Mujaddid points out that even if that were true, that the entire “spiritual [community]” agree on that, that knowledge is not the incontrovertibly

true knowledge that the prophets receive, instead it is only an unveiling- derived knowledge that is prone to error. On the other hand, the ulama say the truly faithless will indeed suffer eternal damnation. And the ulama derive their knowledge from the prophetic revelation that is indeed incontrovertibly true knowledge Therefore, one should disregard what Ibn Arabi said and instead believe what the ulama said which is that the truly faithless will suffer eternal damnation.

CHAPTER 5

Angels

The Mujaddid discusses the angels and says,

Angels are servants of God who are preserved from sins and protected from errors and forgetfulness. As the Koran says, *They do not rebel against the commands of Allah and they do what has been commanded to them* (Koran 66:6). They are pure from [the blemish that is the need of] eating and drinking [which is the characteristic of the creatures of the lower corporeal realm]. And they are unattached and exonerated from a conjugal relationship [that is another characteristic of those lower beings].

Angels are neither male nor female. So why did God use the masculine gender for them in the Koran? The Mujaddid explains that question here.

God uses masculine personal pronouns for them in the Sagacious Koran (*al-Quran al-Hakim*)

because of the nobility of the male over the female. It is in line with God’s using the masculine pronoun to refer to Himself.

Therefore, that should not be construed to mean that the angels are male.

The Mujaddid believes that angels can be prophets as well.

God has elected a few among them [the angels] for Messengerhood, just like He has ennobled a few humans with this felicity as well. As the Koran says, *Allah chooses His Messengers from the angels and humans*(Koran 22:75).

The Mujaddid affirms that the human prophets are ranked higher than even the elect angels who are not prophets.

Most of the ulama among the “people of truth” hold that the elect among humans are superior to the elect among the angels. Imam Ghazali, Imam of the Two Holy Cities,¹ and [Ibn Arabi], the author of the *Meccan Revelations* - they both proposed the superiority of the elect angels over the elect humans. What appears to me is that the friendship that the angels possess is superior to the friendship that the humans possess [i.e., the elect angels are closer to God than the elect human beings]. Nevertheless, prophethood and messengerhood are on an [exalted] rank that the angels may

¹Imam of the Two Holy Cities (*Imam al-Haramayn*): ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Abdullah Juwaini (d. 478 / 1085-86

not reach. That rank arises from the element of earth that is in the lot of humans only.²

The Mujaddid affirms that the prophet is far more exalted in his rank than the friends of Allah, and this is in agreement with the opinion of the majority of the ulama. Here he contradicts Ibn Arabi who says that the friend, *wali* is nearer to God than the prophet in his prophetic dimension. (Remember! A prophet is a *wali* too!) It is because the focus of the prophet is toward the people while the focus of the friend is toward God³

It has also been made manifest to me that the perfection of friendship has no comparison to the perfection of prophethood. Alas! This relationship is like the relationship of a drop of water to the ocean. Therefore, the adornment that comes from prophethood is far superior to the adornment that comes from friendship. So, absolute superiority belongs to the prophets. Angels [who are not prophets themselves] are superior to the [human] prophets only in certain aspects. What the majority of the ulama has said is indeed correct. Praise is to Allah who has kept me with them! It is clear from this verification that no friend may reach the rank of any prophet. On the contrary, the head of that friend will always remain below the feet of the prophet. [A 1.266, 123.2- 16]

²The Mujaddid writes more about the superiority of elect man over the angels in *The Mabda' va Ma'ad*, Minha i.e., chapter 23

³*Mabda' va Ma'ad*, Minha i.e., chapter 57

The Ulama is “More” Correct

The Mujaddid finds the ulama to be more “correct” in their interpretation of religion than the sufis.

You should know that in all the matters where the ulama and the sufis differ, when I observe it well then I find truth to lie with the ulama.

And this is because the ulama follow the prophets in their quest for the truth- they arrive at the truth by extracting information from the level of prophethood, i.e., from divine revelation that is preserved from error. On the other hand, the sufis attain their information from the level of friendship, i.e., from the unveilings and witnessings of the friends, and this is prone to error. Therefore, the information that the prophets attain through divine revelation, *wahi*, is far more correct than the information that the sufis attain through unveiling and inspiration, *kashf va ilham*. The ulama obtain their information by employing reason to that divine revelation and as a corollary, their information is also more correct than sufi inspirations.

Its mystery is that the gaze of the ulama, as they follow the prophets (salam), penetrates the perfection of prophethood and its science. On the other hand, the gaze of the sufis is focused on the perfections of friendship and its science. Therefore, necessarily, the science that is taken from the niche of prophethood is more correct and truer than that which has been taken from the level of friendship. I have included the verification of some of this science in the maktub that I have written to

my rightly guided son on the tariqa. ⁴ If you are not clear, you may refer there [to that maktub]. [A 1.266, 123.16-124.6]

Faith and Holding Enmity

The Mujaddid defines faith as attesting to all the required doctrines of Islam. Faith refers to the “attestation by the heart” of all the required and well-known matters of the religion that has reached us. Verbal attestation is also a pillar of the faith but sometimes that may be omitted [under extenuating circumstances, e.g., where it is dangerous to admit it].

Faith is the attesting by heart in all [the articles of the faith that are] required and well accepted. It is said that verbal attestation is also a pillar of the faith that [sometimes] may be omitted.

While the Mujaddid encourages us to harbor enmity toward faithlessness, this must be interpreted in the light of his times. At that time, ideas that compromised the purity of Islam were prevalent; indeed, as a result, Islam in India faced an existential threat. The Emperors Akbar and Jahangir synthesized the principles and the practices of Islam with other religions like Hinduism and Jainism and arrived at a corrupted version of Islam, which is not really Islam at all. The Mujaddid stresses that there is no joining the truth with the untruth. And we should hold enmity against all beliefs that go against Islam.

A signpost of this attestation is to proclaim distance (*tabarri*) from faithlessness; and to

⁴Maktub 1.260 written to Khwaja Muhammad Sadiq.

detest lack of faith and all the characteristic and necessary things of faithlessness, e.g., tying religious belts to mark one as an adherent to a different religion, etc. May Allah (SWT) save us [from doing that!]. If someone claims this attestation [of faith] but still does not distance himself from faithlessness, then he believes in two religions and so he is branded with the burning nametag of apostasy.

Truly, the ruling on him is the ruling of a hypocrite. *He is neither with this group, nor is he with that group* (Koran 4:143) . Therefore, in order to realize true faith, there is no alternative to distancing oneself from faithlessness. The lowest form of that distance is distance by the heart. The highest form of that distance is distance by both the heart and the body (*qalib.*) Here distancing one means holding enmity (*dushmani*) against the enemies of the Haqq. That should be done with the heart only if there is an apprehension that they would harm us. Otherwise, that should be done with both the heart and the mold when there is no such apprehension.

The Koran says, *Prophet! Struggle with the faithless and the hypocrites and treat them harshly* (Koran 9:73). For love for God and love for the Prophet does not materialize without holding enmity against their enemies.

*Nearness is not possible
Without “enmity” [A 1.266, 124.6-
11]*

Shias Wrongly Defame the Companions

The Mujaddid demonstrates that it is wrong to hold enmity against the companions.

Here it is true that the Shias apply this saying [that “being a friend is not possible without holding enmity”] to the friendship with the Prophet’s family. They hold that a precondition of that friendship is enmity to the [first] three caliphs [Hazrat Abu Bakr, Hazrat Umar, and Hazrat Uthman] and the other companions [who are outside the Prophet’s family]. That interpretation is not really correct, as the pre-condition is the “enmity to their enemies,” not the “unbounded enmity to everyone else” [except the Prophet’s family].

No intelligent person with a sense of justice would ever allow that the companions of the Prophet (salam) would hold enmity against the family of the Prophet. Instead, these great men spent their properties and even themselves for the love of the Prophet; and sacrificed their exalted rank and leadership. So how can one relate enmity of the Prophet’s family to them? How it is possible when definitive plain texts (the Koran and the hadith literature) establish the love of the near ones to that great man; and have made their love [love of the companions] as the wage [from us] of their invitation [of us] toward God.

As Allah has said, Say: *I do not seek anything from you as its wage except support for my near ones.* [I do not seek anything from you,

the members of the Muhammadan community, except support for my family-members, as the wage of the prophetic invitation]. *We will increase the rewards for him who will practice good deeds* (Koran 42:23).

Therefore, instead of holding enmity against the noble companions, you may hold enmity against the enemies of God! The Mujaddid comments elsewhere⁵ that while the Shias are always calumniating against the companions (who served the prophet) they never vilify his enemies, such as Abu Jahl (who was the principal enemy of the Prophet).

Now the Mujaddid brings the example of the Prophet Abraham. He became a friend Allah by his enmity to the enemies of Allah. The Mujaddid interprets the saying “Being a friend is not possible without holding enmity” to mean that that enmity is toward the enemies of Allah, not toward those who the Shias detest the first three caliphs and the companions in general.

Prophet Abraham, the Friend of the All-Merciful (salam), has attained such greatness that he has become the trunk of the tree of the prophets by [virtue of] his enmity to His enemies. It is for this reason that Allah said, *Verily for you there is a beautiful model [example] in Abraham and those who are with him. They told their people “Verily we are enemies to you and those who you worship in lieu of Allah. We reject you. An everlasting enmity and a wrathful relationship has begun between you and us until you bring faith in one Allah”* (Koran 60:4). I see no other practice as good

⁵*Maktubat-i Imam-i Rabbani*

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as this enmity [to the enemies of God] to realize the satisfaction of God. [A 1.266, 124.11-125.4]

God’s “Personal” Enmity with Faithlessness

The Mujaddid explains why the faithless will suffer eternal damnation in the last world; it is because His enmity with faithlessness is personal (i.e., related to His person) while his displeasure with the evil deeds is related to His Attributes.

I find that the Haqq (SWT) has a personal (*dhati*) enmity with the faithless and faithlessness. And the external (*afaqi*) idols, e.g., Lat or Uzzah [and other pagan deities] and their worshippers are the “personal” enemies of the Haqq (SWT). Eternal hellfire is the recompense for this abominable act. On the other hand, the human caprices that are the internal (*anfusi*) idols of the instigating soul; and all other bad deeds are not like that. For God’s enmity and wrathfulness with them is not “personal” wrath. Instead, the wrath [that God has with them] relates to [His] attributes. If there is a punishment or rebuke, then it is [imposed as a recompense] for their actions. That is why eternal damnation is not the recompense for such sinful acts. Instead, He may forgive them [even without any punishment at all] if He so desires. [A 1.266, 125.4-9; FR 87.2-10]

The Faithless Will Not Receive Mercy

The Mujaddid confirms the mainstream Sunni creed and establishes that the truly faithless will not receive divine mercy in the last world; they will suffer eternal damnation. This is because God’s enmity with the polytheists is “personal,” while His enmity with the faithful sinners is “attributive.”

You should know that since it is established that God’s enmity with the faithless and faithlessness is “personal,” His merciful attributes would not nullify His “personal” enmity in the last world. For what relates to the person is mightier and higher than what relates to the attributes. So that what is established by the attributes may not replace what is established by the person (*dhat.*) In a hadith report in which God speaks in the first person, “My Mercy precedes My Wrath.”⁶ refers to attributive wrath that is the lot of the sinful faithful, not the “personal” wrath that is the lot of the polytheists.

Now the Mujaddid verifies how the faithless receive divine mercy in this world while God is “personally” angry with them. He establishes by the Koran that that mercy is really only a mercy in appearance but actually divine wrath.

Question: In your above verification, the faithless do receive divine mercy in this world. So how can the attribute of mercy negate “personal” enmity in this world?

⁶hadith: *sabaqat rahmata adhabi* [Bukhari, Muslim]

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Answer: The mercy that the faithless receive in this world is merely in appearance or outward form. Actually, they are divine plans that take them step-by-step to ruin. As Allah has said, *Do they calculate that the respite that We are giving them with property and children is helping them by taking them to good? Nay! For they do not understand!* (Koran 23:55–56). It also says in the Koran, *We will take them step by step [to ruin] in a manner that they would not understand. Verily My scheme is strong* (Koran 7:182–183), and that establishes that meaning as well. So understand! [A 1.266, 125.9-19; FR 87.10-88.2]

Now the critical question is, who is truly faithless? Is anyone who does not have a “tribal” affiliation with Islam faithless? Let us look in the Mazharian Exegesis, *Tafsir al-Mazhari*, written by the eminent nineteenth-century Hanafi scholar and Mujaddidi sufi shaykh Qazi Sanaullah Panipathi. Hazrat Qazi Sanaullah is a highly acclaimed scholar who is greatly respected in Turkey, the Indian subcontinent, and many other countries that follow the Hanafi school. He named this exegesis after his sufi shaykh Mirza Mazhar Jan-i Janan Shahid who is found in almost all Mujaddidi-Naqshbandi silsilas. He named this exegesis after his shaykh because it was his shaykh’s spiritual nurturing that enabled him to realize true knowledge. The great scholar says in interpreting the verse, *Verily there are many among the People of the Book who have brought faith in Allah and what We have revealed unto you and what We have revealed unto them, in the spirit of veneration of Allah; and do not sell Allah’s verses at a meager price. For them, there is a great*

bounty as their wage with their Lord (Koran 3:199). Explaining this verse, Qazi Sanaullah Panipathi writes that it was revealed on the occasion of the death of Negus, the King of Ethiopia [who believed in the Prophet Muhammad being a messenger from Allah, i.e., Islam, but still followed his Christian practices]. The Prophet prayed the *janazah* prayer for him in Medinah. Upon seeing this, the hypocrites started to ridicule, “Look! Muhammad is now praying for a Christian!”⁷ The exegete explains, “All the People of the Book are not faithless. There are many among them who have faith. They possess the correct conception of the person and the attributes of Allah. They have faith in the Koran, and in the previously revealed heavenly books: the Torah, the Psalms of David, and the Gospels. Before Allah, there is a great prize for those among the People of the Book who have brought faith.” Now according to the exegesis of this eminent scholar, Allah and the Prophet Muhammad (salam) appear to be more generous in expanding the definition of “the faithful” than many “tribal” Muslims.⁸

All the Faithful Will Be Saved

Here the Mujaddid establishes that everyone who possesses even a grain of faith, even if they have committed grave sins and have been sent to hell, will be finally forgiven and allowed to enter paradise.

Question: Eternal damnation in hell is the recompense for lack of faith. However, what

⁷The Bengali text of the *Tafsir al-Mazhari* says “Jew” but that is clearly an error

⁸Qadi Sanaullah Panipathi, *Tafsir al-Mazhari*, I referred to the Bengali translation, Kayi Chanaullaha Panipathi, Taphsire Mayhari, (Dhaka: Hakimabada Khankaye Mojaddediya) p. 199

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about that faithful person who observes the rites of the faithless and glorifies their customs? The ulama rule him to be an unfaithful person and include him among the apostates. Most of the Muslims in India are afflicted with this calamity. So by the juridical proclamation of the ulama (*fatwa*), they should be afflicted with endless punishment in the last world. On the other hand, it comes in sound hadith reports that if someone possesses even a grain of faith in his heart then he will be taken out of hell and will not suffer everlasting punishment. What is your verification of this matter?

The Mujaddid clarifies that while those who are unfaithful to their cores will suffer eternal damnation; those who possess even a particle of faith (even after practicing other religions) will be finally forgiven and granted paradise.

Answer: If he is “completely unfaithful” (*kafir-i mahd*), then everlasting punishment is indeed his lot. (May Allah (SWT) save us from that grave predicament!) However, if he has even a grain of faith left [even] after taking up the customs of the faithless, he will [still] be taken out of hell [after a limited time of chastisement]. By the blessing of that grain of faith, there is hope that he will be delivered from eternal damnation. And he will be saved from permanent imprisonment [in hell].

The Mujaddid verifies that only the punishment of hell-fire may wipe out the sin of faithlessness. That means that a person who has committed a sin of faithlessness

and died before repenting, will have to face punishment in hell for a finite amount of time to expiate for his sin of faithlessness, though he will still be taken out hell after some time unless he is completely and totally faithless without even a particle of faith in him.

Once I was visiting a sick man who was on the verge of death. When I became aware of his “state,” I saw that his heart is very dark. Although I gave him a face-turning to remove that darkness, it failed to do that. After giving him a lot of face-turnings, I realized that that darkness arises from his hidden quality of lack of faith. The origin of that turbidity is his friendship with the faithless and faithlessness. Numerous face-turnings could not remove that darkness. For only the punishment of fire that is the recompense of lack of faith may purify the heart from that darkness. I also realized that if that person has even a grain of faith, then by its blessing he would finally be taken out of hell.

You should pray the funeral prayer, *janazah*, for even nominal Muslims, i.e., Muslims who profess faith but still observe the rites of the faithless peoples.

When I witnessed such a state [of merely nominal faith] in him, I seriously questioned whether or not I should pray his *janazah* [funeral prayer]. After I had concentrated on this matter, it appeared that I should indeed pray his *janazah*. Therefore, you should pray the *janazah* for even such a Muslim who possesses faith but still observes the rites of the faithless and glorifies their holy days. They should not be

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left as disbelievers [for the disbelievers to perform their customs on them]- as the people do these days. One should harbor the hope that by the blessing of that [grain of] faith they would finally be saved from eternal damnation.

There is no forgiveness for the faithless people. If he were a faithless person in his core, eternal damnation would be his lot. If he has even a grain of faith in him, he will suffer only a temporary punishment in hell. However, in any case, the faithless people will indeed be punished.

So now we know that there is no forgiveness or relief for the unfaithful. *Verily Allah will not forgive the polytheists* (Koran 4:48). If he is totally unfaithful, endless punishment is the recompense for his lack of faith. On the other hand, if he has even a grain of faith then a temporary punishment in hell will be his recompense. For the rest of the major sins, Allah may forgive or He may punish, as He chooses. I believe that punishment in hell- be it temporary or eternal is the lot of lack of faith [“itself”] and the “attributes” of lack of faith. Its verification will come soon [in the question and answer section below the next paragraph].

A truly faithful person, even if he has committed major sins, will never suffer punishment in hell.

Allah may forgive the major sinners [of those who possess faith] if they repent. Or He may forgive [them] through [someone else’s] intercession. Or He may forgive by His own

forgiveness and grace. Or He may forgive [them after they suffer] worldly pain and ordeals. Or He may forgive [them after] the hardships and agony of death.

For the rest, I hope that He would deem their punishment in the grave as sufficient punishment. Or in addition to that punishment, He would complete their punishment by the [painful] circumstances of the Day of Resurrection and the sufferings of that day. Thus He will not leave any sin that would need the punishment of hell [to expiate it].

Its proof is the word of Allah, *Those who have brought faith and have not clothed their faith by transgression (zulm) they are the ones for whom there is security.* (Koran 6:83) Here transgression means ascribing a partner to Allah. Allah (SWT) is most knowledgeable on the realities of things, all of them.

My sufi shaykh explained that the sins for which even a person of faith would suffer hellfire (e.g., murder, theft, etc.) are not the sin of faithlessness; they are still close to the sin of faithlessness.

Now the Mujaddid verifies his previously mentioned proposition that “punishment in hell- be it temporary or eternal- is the lot of those who lack faith [‘itself’] and the ‘attributes’ of the lack of faith.” While a sinful faithful person may still suffer in hellfire, the Mujaddid establishes that the sins that he commits must possess the attributes of the lack of faith.

Question: What if someone mentions that punishment in hell comes as the compensa-

tion for many other sinful acts in addition to the act of lacking faith? For example, the Almighty has said, *Whosoever murders a faithful person intentionally, he will be in the Gehenna*⁹ (Koran 4:93). It comes in the hadith literature that whosoever prays an obligatory prayer late without an excuse will suffer punishment in hell for one era. Therefore [it is established that] the punishment in hell is not the outcome for only the people without faith. [Therefore, how can you claim what you claimed a few paragraphs before, that the punishment in hell- be it temporary or eternal- is the lot of those who lack faith “itself” and the “attributes” of that lack of faith.]

Answer: My answer is that “he who murders intentionally” refers to that murderer who believes that murder is lawful. And the Koranic exegetes have explained that he who considers murder to be lawful is a faithless person. Those sins, for which the punishment of hell has been decreed, are not devoid of the taint of the attribute of faithlessness. Examples of such sins are to belittle that sin, to lack compunction having done that sin, or to hold the rules and regulations of the sharia in contempt.

The Prophet has promised salvation for all his true followers- they will all directly go to paradise. That establishes the verification of the Mujaddid that all the truly faithful will go to paradise without any punishment in hellfire.

⁹Gehenna, also written jahannam is one of the seven hells

The Prophet says in a hadith report, “I shall intercede for the major sinners of my community.”¹⁰ He says in another place, “My community is the community that has been shown mercy. There is no punishment for them in the last world”¹¹ and others. The following Koranic verse clarifies this meaning, *Those who have brought faith and have not polluted their faith by transgression, they are the ones for whom there is security* (Koran 6:83).

Now the Mujaddid comments on the case of polytheists who lacked the mental competence or who have not been warned through a prophet. God is just and He cannot be expected to punish people who lacked the mental competence, e.g., the children of polytheists or insane polytheists. God has also promised in the Koran, *I will not punish anyone until I have dispatched a Messenger [to warn him]* (Koran 17:15). Therefore, additionally, He cannot be expected to punish people who have not been warned through a prophet. So He may not punish the polytheists who lived in the mountains away from people and the message of the prophets, or the polytheists who lived in an era without a prophet, and so have not been warned through a prophet, and other such groups.

The situation of the children of the polytheists, those who live in mountaintops [away from people and the message of the prophets] and the polytheists who lived in an era without a prophet [and so haven not been warned through a prophet]- I have demonstrated them

¹⁰hadith: *shafa'ati lahil al-kaba'ir min ummati* [Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud]

¹¹hadith: *ummati ummata marhuma, la adhaba laha fi'l akhirati* [Ibn Najar, Abdullah ibn Darar]

clearly in the maktub that I have written to my son Muhammad Said.¹² So you may study it there. [A 1.266, 125.19-127.12; FR 88.2-90.12]

In that maktub, the Mujaddid proposes that on the Day of the Mustering (*qiyamat*), those two groups of people would be meted out their rewards and punishment and then destroyed, just as it would be in the case of animals.

Increase or Decrease of Faith

The Mujaddid discusses both Imam Shafi‘i and Imam Abu Hanifa’s positions on the question of whether faith may remain the same or may vary for a faithful person. He makes an analysis and argues in support of Imam Abu Hanifa’s position that faith remains the same amount.

The ulama diverge on [the question of] whether or not faith can increase or decrease in amount. The Great Imam [Abu Hanifa] the Kufi (d.w.d.) has stated, “Faith neither increases nor decreases.” On the other hand, Imam Shafi‘i says, “It increases and decreases.”

Faith’s Increase or Decrease	
Imam Abu Hanifa	Imam Shafi‘i
Faith is an all or nothing thing; though its brightness may increase or decrease	Faith itself may either increase or decrease

Table 5.1: Faith’s Increase or Decrease

¹²Maktub 1.259

The Mujaddid agrees that faith may not increase or decrease; what may do so is the “brightness” of that faith.

There is no doubt that faith is the expression of attestation or certitude by the heart and so an increase or decrease does not apply there. For that which may increase or decrease is within the realm of uncertainty. In short, doing wholesome deeds brightens that certitude and doing unwholesome deeds makes that certitude turbid. Therefore, an increase or decrease in faith refers to the “brightness” of that certitude, not that certitude itself.

Some people may call this “brightness” to be “more” in faith, and vice versa.

Some call a bright and illuminated certitude “more” compared to a certitude that lacks brightness and illumination. Some others do not even consider a certitude lacking brightness to be certitude at all; they consider only a bright certitude to be certitude and a certitude lacking brightness as imperfect. Some others have sharp gazes and they see that this increase or decrease refers to the “attribute” of the certitude, not to the certitude itself. Necessarily, they say that certitude itself may not be “more” or imperfect.

Now the Mujaddid shows through an analogy that those people are more accurate who say that faith may vary only in the brightness, not in the amount

An analogy for this is two comparable mirrors that differ in brightness and illumination. And someone observes the brighter mirror that

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reflects better and says, “This mirror is ‘more’ than the mirror that is less bright and reflects less.” Someone else says, “Both the mirrors are equal; neither one is more or less than the other. Their difference in brightness and reflectivity refers to the ‘attributes’ of those two mirrors.” Therefore the vision of the second person is correct and pierces the reality of the matter. On the other hand, the vision of the first person is limited to the surface. It does not go from the attribute to the essence of the matter.

Allah raises the levels of those among you who have brought faith and have been awarded knowledge. (Koran 58:11).

So the Mujaddid says that Imam Abu Hanifa was right when he said that faith neither increases nor decreases.

There are people who oppose Imam Abu Hanifa’s opinion that faith does not increase or decrease. However, I have demolished their arguments by that what I have revealed in this verification. Faith of the common faithful (that changes phases) [and so is less than perfect faith] cannot be compared to the faith of the prophets (salam) [whose faith is the perfect faith].

The Mujaddid clarifies that “more” faith means “brighter” faith.

The faith of the prophets that is perfectly bright and illuminated is far more fruitful and productive than the faith of the common faithful that is dark and turbid. They differ in

their levels and so on. The faith of Abu Bakr (dwaḍ) weighs more than the faith of all the Muslims added together.¹³ Here the word “more” should be interpreted in terms of its brightness and illumination. And that increase should be relegated to its [the faith’s] perfect attributes.

Now the Mujaddid explains the “increase or decrease in faith” with a paradigm from the humanness of the prophets.

Please note that prophets are equal to the common people in terms of their humanness. Both in terms of their outer bodies [that are human] and inner essences [that are human as well], both the classes are the same. However, the prophets are ranked higher in excellence in terms of their perfect attributes. He who does not possess those perfect attributes is out of that class. And he is devoid of the unique perfections and excellences of that class. Even with this difference, there is neither an increase nor a decrease in their humanness. So none may say that they increase or decrease in their humanness. Allah (SWT) inspires what is correct!

Some interpret the term “attestation of the faith” by the meaning that is commonly used in logic but the Mujaddid disagrees.

By the term “attestation of the faith,” some mean attestation as used in the terminology of the science of logic. That “attestation” includes both surmise and certitude. By this

¹³well-known hadith

interpretation, faith may indeed increase or decrease. However, the truth is that what is meant by the term “attestation” here is certitude and obedience of the heart, not its general (*‘am*) meaning that includes surmise (*zann*) with it.

Now the Mujaddid reconciles two seemingly contradictory statements of Imam Abu Hanifa and Imam Shafi‘i.

The Great Imam [Abu Hanifa] the Kufi has said, “I am truly a person of faith.” On the other hand, Imam Shafi‘i has said, “Allah willing, I am a person of faith.” Actually, they differ only in manner of speech. The first school considers the “faith of the [present] state.” The second school considers [the state on] the return [of the soul to God on death], which is at the end of all deeds. However, it is better to exclude doubt [i.e., the expression “Allah willing”] here. It is not hidden from the just! [A 1.266, 127.12-129.3; FR 90.12-92.8]

The Greatness of Imam Abu Hanifa

It may be noted that the Great Mujaddid held the Great Imam in the highest respect. He writes in his monograph *Mabda’ va Ma‘ad* on the greatness of Imam Abu Hanifa:

How can I write about the lofty stature of Imam Abu Hanifa! (dwad) He was the greatest of these great ones! The Supreme Imam (*imam al-‘azam*)! The leader of the perfect ones! Be it in knowledge, be it in abstinence (*wara’*) or be it in Godwariness, (*taqwa*) he

was greater than all the *mujatahid imams*,¹⁴ more than Shafi‘i, or Malik or Ahmad ibn Hanbal.

Imam Shafi‘i said, “The *fuqaha*, [the scholars of Islamic jurisprudence] all of them are family members (*‘iyal*) of Abu Hanifa who depend on him for their living.” (*alfuqaha’-u kulluhum ‘iyalu Abi Hanifa.*)

It is said that when Imam Shafi‘i used to visit the mausoleum of Imam Abu Hanifa, then he used to reject his own *ijtihad* [or interpretations in Islamic practice] and stopped observing his own practice [that contradicted the *ijtihad* of the Great Imam]. And he used to say, “It embarasses me that in his presence I do anything that is contrary to his decision.” [At that time] he used to suspend both reciting Sura Fatiha when praying behind a imam and reciting the *du‘a qunut* in the *fajr* prayer. It was Shafi‘i who could properly appreciate his greatness.

When Hazrat Jesus (salam) will descend [to the earth] in the future, he will practice according to the school (*madh-hab*) of Abu Hanifa. Khwaja Muhammad Parsa (qaf) wrote in the *Fusul-i Sitta*, “This very honor (*buzurgi*) is enough for him that one of the great (*‘ulu’l ‘azam*) prophets will practice according to his school. A thousand other honors cannot be compared to this honor.”

¹⁴mujatahid imams refers to the four leaders of fiqh, the science of Islamic jurisprudence i.e. Abu Hanifa, Shafi‘i, Malik, Ahmad ibn Hanbal. They founded four eponymous schools of law

Our Hazrat Khwaja [Baqibillah] (qaf) said:

”For some time, I used to disagree with the Imam [Abu Hanifa] and recite Sura Fatiha [when praying following an imam]. Finally, I saw the Great Imam in a dream one night.

I saw he came to me clothed in a resplendent robe and recited a qasida,

*This signification is sufficient
That there have been many friends
of God in my school*

After that, I stopped reciting Sura Fatiha behind the Imam.” [Mabda 28, 49.8-50]

The Mujaddid discusses his insight into the important matter in jurisprudence of reciting Sura Fatiha behind an imam. The Hanafi school says that the imam’s recitation of Sura Fatiha in the salat is sufficient, so the followers should remain silent. Shafi’i school as well as all the other schools say that the followers must also recite Sura Fatiha- they draw their decision from a well-known hadith, “There is no salat without Sura Fatiha. *La salata illa bi-fatihatu’l kitab.* [Bukhari, Muslim]” The Mujaddid demonstrates that the decision of the Hanafi school is correct here.

For a long time, I had been wishing so that I could find an acceptable reason in the Hanafi school for reciting Sura Fatiha when praying behind a imam. Because reciting the Koran when following the imam is obligatory (*fardh*) at all times. So it does not seem intelligent to reject real recitation (*qirat haqiqi*)

and practice virtual recitation (*qirat hukmi*). At the same time, it comes in the hadith, “There is no salat without Sura Fatiha.”¹⁵

However, since I follow the Hanafi school, I decided not to stop reciting Sura Fatiha. And I started to count it as a kind of disciplined training and striving (*riyadat va mujahida*). Because rejecting one school of sharia in favor of another school is a type of rejection (*ilhad*).

At last, through the grace of following the Hanafi school, the Haqq (SWT) revealed the true meaning (*haqiqat*) of not reciting Sura Fatiha behind an imam. And through my insight (*nazar-i basirat*), I learned that virtual recitation is better than real recitation. Because the imam and the followers, they both mutually agree (*ittifaq*) to stand together as supplicants (*munajat*) [in the salat]. As it is said, *For the worshipper in salat supplicates to his Lord.* [lianna al-musalliya yunaji rab-bahu].

In salat, [the followers] make the imam their spokesman. So whatever speech the imam recites during the salat, he recites it on behalf of the group. It is like when a group of people appears before a magnanimous king to fulfill a need of theirs and elects a spokesman among themselves so that he can request it on behalf of everyone there. In such a setting, if someone else also talks while the spokesman

¹⁵hadith: *la salata illa bi-fatihati'l kitab* [Bukhari, Muslim]

is talking, that would be considered poor manners and that could displease the king. Therefore, the virtual speech (*takallam-i hukmi*) of this group through the spokesman is better than real speech (*takallam-i haqiqi*) of those people [individually]. It is analogous to the situation when the group recites [the Koran] (*qirat*) praying behind an imam — it [everyone reciting individually] would disturb the peace (*shaghab*), lack manners and create disunity (*tafriq*).

Many of the matters on which the Hanafi and the Shafi‘i schools differ are of this type. The Shafi‘i school takes into account the matter’s outer and formal aspect (*zahir va surat*) but the Hanafi school takes into account its inner essential (*batin va haqiqat*) aspect.

It was revealed to me that in the divergences of opinions in kalam, the truth is on the Hanafi side. For example, they recognize God’s [attribute of] engenderingness (*takwin*) as a real attribute (*sifat-i haqiqi*) while apparently it seems that engenderingness [is not a real attribute; instead it] is the result of the attributes of power and will (*qudrat va irada*). However, we learn via fine consideration and the light of perspicacity (*daqt-i nazar va nur-i firasat*) that engenderingness is a distinct and separate (*‘alihadeh*) attribute. Other matters may be solved through this analogy. In most of the matters where the jurists diverge (*khilafiyat-i fiqhi*), the Hanafi school is right. Only in a few matters, the Shafi‘is are right. [Mabda

28, 47-8]

Miracles

The Mujaddid establishes the “miracle of the prophets” and “miracle of the friends.” The Mutazilas and a few other misguided sects deny them.

The *karamats* or “miracles of the friends of Allah” are true. So many instances of the “breaking of habit”¹⁶ have taken place by the friends that they have become a regular habit of theirs. Denying it would be like denying knowledge that is habitual and self-evident (*daruri*).¹⁷

The prophets are required to demonstrate to the people that they are prophets. Therefore, prophets must claim that they are indeed prophets. And they may show miracles to the people to prove that they have God-given powers. These are parts of the prophetic call. However, the friends (*awliya*) are commanded to keep themselves hidden. And miracles are not at all a requirement of friendship (*walayah*). The friends preach as a representative (*naib*), of the prophet and their miracles or *karamats* only prove that they sincerely follow their prophet.

[However, while the] “miracles of the prophets” (*mu‘jiza*) are an integral part (*maqrun*) of the invitation of the prophets, the miracles of the

¹⁶The breaking of habits (*khawariq al-‘adah*) is an Ibn Arabi term that means miracles; see SPK, p. 99

¹⁷In this context, *daruri* means “self-evident.” The scholar R. J. McCarthy has done the same in a similar context. See McCarthy, *Al-Ghazali’s Path to Sufism*, p. 87n31

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friends are not so. Instead, those [miracles of the friends] prove (*maqrūn*) that [those friends] acknowledge and follow the authority of their prophet. So you should not suspect that those two, the “miracles of the prophets” and the “miracles of the friends,” are false- as the deniers [materialists who deny supernatural events like *mu’jiza* and *karamat*, e.g., the Mutazila] maintain. [A 1.266, 129.3-6]

Well-instructed Caliphs: Superiorities

The Mujaddid affirms the mainstream Sunni creed that says that the order of superiority of the well-instructed caliphs is in accordance to the order of their caliphates.

The order of superiority among the well-instructed¹⁸ caliphs is in accordance to the order of their caliphates.

He first establishes the superiority of the Caliph Abu Bakr and the Caliph Umar.

The superiority of the Two Shaykhs [Hazrat Abu Bakr and Hazrat Umar] has been established by the consensus of opinion of the companions and the followers.

Imam Ashari agrees to the superiority of the Two Shaykhs.

Many of the great imams have transmitted it as well. One of them is Imam Shafi‘i. The

¹⁸well-instructed (*rashidin*): *Rashidin* is usually translated as “rightly-guided.” However, I offer an alternative I translate *rushd* as good-instruction and *hidayat* as good-guidance. *Rushd* means specific good instructions for doing worldly deeds, whereas *hidayat* refers to a more “spiritual” guidance of the spirit toward God

great Imam Abul Hasan Ashari said, “Verily to recognize the superior qualities (*tafdil*) of Abu Bakr followed by Umar over the rest of the community is definitive.”

Imam Dhahabi concurs to it.

Imam Dhahabi ¹⁹ said, “Many people including numerous numbers of the Shias have narrated from Ali that since the time when he was the caliph and ruler, ‘Verily Abu Bakr and Umar are the most superior in the community.’” He [Imam Dhahabi] added that more than eighty people have narrated it from Ali. ”He [Hazrat Ali] had even named many of them. Then he [Hazrat Ali] had added, ‘May Allah punishes the dissenters, the *rawafid*, for they have shown ignorance!’”

Imam Bukhari confirms by a narration from Hazrat Ali.

Imam Bukhari narrates from Hazrat Ali, “Verily the most excellent man after the Prophet is Abu Bakr, next is Umar and the rest are after them.” According to the narration, at that point Hazrat Ali’s son Hazrat Muhammad ibn Hanafiya had interjected, “Next is you?” Hazrat Ali then replied [twice for emphasis,] “I am only an ordinary Muslim! I am an ordinary Muslim!” ²⁰

Imam Dhahabi also concurs by a narration from Hazrat Ali.

¹⁹Imam Dhahabi Imam ‘Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ahmad Dhahabi

²⁰Imam Bukhari, *Tarikh-i Bukhari*, a “less than sahih” hadith report collection by Imam Bukhari

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Imam Dhahabi and others have narrated sound reports from Hazrat Ali, “Be forewarned! It has reached me that many people elevate me over the two [i.e., Hazrat Abu Bakr and Hazrat Umar]. And if someone does elevate me over them, he is a slanderer (*muftar*). [I will punish] him the same way as [I would punish] a slanderer.

Imam Darriqtani narrates another saying from Hazrat Ali.

It has been narrated in *Darruqtani*²¹ from Hazrat Ali, “Let me find no one who gives me superiority to Abu Bakr or Umar. Be forewarned! I shall whip him just like a slanderer.”

There has been so many such hadith reports from Hazrat Ali that even many Shias agree on the superiority of the Two Shaykhs.

So many sayings like this are narrated from Hazrat Ali and from many other companions that there is no room for anyone to deny this. It has even reached the point that a prominent Shia named Abdur Razzaq²² says, “I hold the Two Shaykhs as the best. For Ali has given them superiority over himself. Else I would not have given them superiority. This sin is sufficient [to ruin] me—that I love him but I act against him.” All these are taken from the

²¹Imam Darriqtani, *Sunan-i Darriqtani*, a well-known book of hadith collection

²²Abdur Razzaq: A prominent Shia scholar quoted in the classical book the *Siwa'iq*

book the *Siwa‘iq*.²³

Now the Mujaddid establishes the superiority of Hazrat Uthman over Hazrat Ali.

Now what comes is the matter of superiority of Hazrat Uthman versus Hazrat Ali. Most of the ulama of the mainstream Sunni community hold the opinion that Hazrat Uthman is next in excellence to the two shaykhs and then comes Hazrat Ali. The imams of the four schools of jurisprudence are agreed on this. Imam Malik was initially hesitant on granting superiority to Hazrat Uthman. However, Qadi ‘Ayyad²⁴ reports that Imam Malik later reversed himself in his position regarding the superiority of Hazrat Uthman. And Imam Qurtubi said, “This is true! Allah willing!”

The Mujaddid establishes that Imam Abu Hanifa also supported the superiority of Hazrat Uthman. He clarifies a statement of Abu Hanifa that can be interpreted to deny that superiority. That statement may be misconstrued to mean that the Imam only believed that the two later ones only deserved love; they did not deserve to be considered superior. But the Mujaddid rationalizes that statement and demonstrates that the Imam must have agreed to their superiority as well.

From the following statement, it seems that the great Imam Abu Hanifa was hesitant on granting superiority to Hazrat Uthman. He

²³Shaykh Shihabuddin Ahmad ibn Hajjar, *al-Sawa‘iq al-Muhriqa’ al-Radd ‘Ala Ahl al-Bida’*

²⁴Qadi ‘Ayyad was an eminent scholar of hadith

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said, “A signpost of being in the mainstream Sunni community is to grant superiority to the Two Shaykhs and to love the Two Later Ones.” In consideration, I believe that this statement should be applied in a different context. Many disputes and conflicts appeared during the reigns of the Two Later Ones. And the hearts of men were turbid. In those circumstances, the great Imam applied the term “love” toward the Two Later Ones. And he made friendship with them a signpost of the sunna. It is not that he had even a taint of hesitation [on the superiority of Hazrat Uthman]. How could he have a hesitation? For the books of the Hanafite School are replete with the statement “the order of superiority of the caliphs is in accordance of their order of succession.” In short, the superiority of the Two Shaykhs is *yaqini*, certain. However, the superiority of Hazrat Uthman lacks that [certitude].

The Mujaddid affirms that the Shias indeed possess faith although they are deviants.

Therefore, it should be borne in mind that people who deny the superiority of Hazrat Uthman (or deny the superiority of the Two Shaykhs additionally) should not be ruled faithless. However, we should consider them to be deviants who have fallen astray. For the ulama has differed in ruling them faithless. And there are strong reservations if they are definitively unanimous in this [ruling]. Such a denier is, in effect, no different than the worthless Yazid. However, they [the ulama] have stopped short

of cursing even him, out of caution [as Yazid may have repented before dying].

The Mujaddid demonstrates that defaming any of the companions is an abominable sin.

The pain that Hazrat Prophet feels on account of the well-instructed caliphs is the same pain that he feels on account of the two imams. The Prophet said, “By Allah! By Allah! My companions! Do not mistreat them! Whosoever will love them, he will love them for his love for me. And whosoever will hold enmity to them, they will hold that enmity for his enmity toward me. Whosoever will hurt them, he will hurt me. And whosoever will hurt me, will hurt Allah. And whosoever hurts Allah, Allah will catch him quickly.”²⁵ For Allah said, *Verily whosoever hurts Allah or his Prophet, Allah will curse him in this world and in the next world.* (Koran 33:57).

The Mujaddid explains that while it is true that Hazrat Ali has been praised the most in the hadith literature, still he is not superior to his three predecessor caliphs.

In his *Sharh-i ‘Aqa’id-i Nasafi*, Mawlana Saiduddin²⁶ talks about “justice” on this [order of] superiority. However, what he considers justice is far from justice. And the manner in

²⁵Allah! Allah! Fi ashabi! La tattakhuzuhum ghardan min ba’di. Fa-man ahabbahum, fa-bi-hubbi ahabbahum. Wa man abghadahum, fa-bi-bughdi abghadahum. Wa man adhahum, fa-qad adhani! Wa man adhani, fa-qad adhiLlah. Wa man adhiLlah, fa-yushaka an yakhuzuhu. [Tirmidhi]

²⁶Mawlana Sa‘ad al-Din, *Sharh-i ‘Aqa’id-i Nasafi* [Commentary on the Creed of Nasafi] - it is a commentary on the original book written by Muhammad ibn Abu al-Fadl Burhan Nasafi (d. 791 / 1390)

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which he has overturned this [order of superiority] is fruitless. For it is decided by the ulama that the subject of superiority is the plentitude of rewards before God.

It is not superiority with respect to praise for excellences or virtues that the rational thinkers employ as the criterion [but not the ulama]. Instead, it is so because the pious predecessors and the followers have transmitted far more praises for the excellences and virtues for Hazrat Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, than any other companion. It has even reached the point that Imam Ahmad has said, “No companion has been praised for his virtues as much as Ali.” Even then, he himself still rules toward the superiority of the three caliphs.

Therefore, it is understood that the subject of superiority is something else beyond excellences and virtues. Only the witnesses of the treasury of divine revelation [i.e., the companions] have been able to realize it in form or in indication. They are the companions of the Prophet.

The author of the *Sharh-i ‘Aqa’id-i Nasafi* said, “If the subject of superiority is the amount of reward then there is scope for hesitation.” This statement should be rejected because hesitation would be relevant only then when we could not have learned it from the author of the sharia [Prophet Muhammad] directly or indirectly. If we have indeed known it, why hesitate? And if we have not known it, why rule toward superiority at all?

He who considers everyone as equal and the excellence of one with respect to another as meaningless talk is the one who talks meaninglessly. He is indeed the one who talks meaninglessly who considers the consensus of opinion of the “people of truth” as meaningless talk. Unless misunderstanding the word *fadl*, excellence has taken him to such *fuduli* or meaningless position.

Now the Mujaddid comments on what Ibn Arabi said on this order of superiority.

The author [Ibn Arabi] writes in the *Futuhati Makkiya*, “The order of their caliphates is in accordance to the order of their life-spans.” This saying of his does not point toward them being equal because the matter of caliphate is one thing and the arguments about superiority are another thing.

Much of Ibn Arabi’s science is derived from false unveilings or sufi ecstatic utterances. That portion should be rejected.

Even if we agree that this does point toward them being equal, even then this saying of his as well the other similar sayings should be considered as ecstatic utterances (*shathiyat*). And that should not be accepted. Much of his [Ibn Arabi’s] unveiling-derived science (*ma‘arif-i kashfi*) has strayed away from the science of the [mainstream] Sunni community; that is far from being correct. So none should follow that false [portion of the Ibn Arabi] science except a person sick in heart or a blind

follower. [A 1.266, 129.6-131.18; FR 92-95]

The Companions: Their Disputes

The Mujaddid confirms the mainstream Sunni creed; he holds that we should love all the companions and hold malice toward none. The conflict that arose amongst them arose because of their error in their *ijtihad*, “strivings for interpretations,” not because they were evil in heart. Therefore, their errors should be excused.

The disputes and conflicts that occurred among the companions should be held with a purely good interpretation. They [those disputes] must be kept far from caprices and chauvinism. Imam Taftazani had an excessive love for Hazrat Ali but still he said, “The disputes and fights did not take place on the question of winning the caliphate. On the contrary, they occurred due to their errors in their *ijtihad*, interpretation.”

It is written in the [Koranic exegesis] *Hashia’ al-Khiyali*,²⁷ “Verily [Hazrat] Muwawiya and the warring rebels were loyal. They recognized Hazrat Ali as the best person of the time and the rightful candidate to be the Imam. But they had a reservation, as he did not take retribution from the killers of Hazrat Uthman. He quotes from Hazrat Ali in the [exegesis] *Hashiya’-i Qurra’-i Kamal* ;²⁸ “Those who are fighting us are our brothers. They are neither faithless nor corrupt. For what they are doing is in accordance to their interpretation

²⁷Ali ibn Musa al-Khiyali, *Hashia’ al-Khiyali*

²⁸Kamal al-Din Isma’il, *Hashiya’-i Qurra’-i Kamal*

(*tawil*). There is no doubt that errors in interpretation, *ijtihad*, are beyond blame. And they are raised above denunciation and condemnation.

You should remember all the companions fondly, out of deference of the right of their companionship to the best of men (*salam*). You should love them for our love for the Prophet. The Prophet said, “Whosoever will love them, he will love them for his love of me; and whosoever will hold enmity to them will hold that for his enmity to me.”²⁹ What it means is the love that relates to me is the same love that relates to the companions and the enmity that relates to me is the same enmity that relates to the companions.”

We have no friendship with them who fought with Hazrat Ali. Still, they are the companions of the Prophet and we have been commanded to love them and forbidden to hurt or hate them. So we have no choice but to love them all for our love for the prophet (*salam*). And [we have no choice but] to refrain from hurting or hating them since that hurt and hate ultimately reaches that leader [the Prophet Muhammad (*salam*)].

However, we call those who were right as those who were right and call those who were wrong as those who were wrong. Hazrat Ali was on the right path and his opponents were

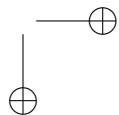
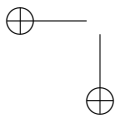
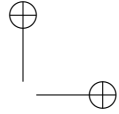
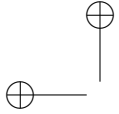
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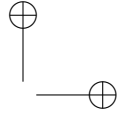
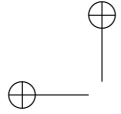
THE COMPANIONS: THEIR DISPUTES

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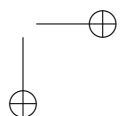
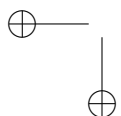
on the wrong path. To say any more is babbling. The verification of this discourse is in detail in the maktub that I have written to Khwaja Muhammad Ashraf.³⁰ If you have any question, please refer there.. [A 1.266, 131.18-132.15; FR 95-96]

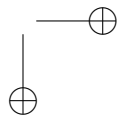
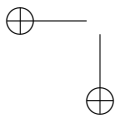
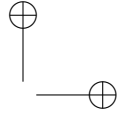
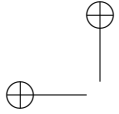
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Part III





CHAPTER 6

Practice

Practice

The second necessary component of Islam is the practice of the sharia. So having rectified the sharia, practicing the practice would be the next step.

After rectifying the creed, you should learn the rules of the science of jurisprudence. One should not neglect learning the science of jurisprudence, e.g., what is obligatory or *fard*, incumbent or *wajib*, lawful or halal, unlawful or haram, sunna, suspicious or *mushtabah*, reprehensible or *makruh*, etc. It is also required that you practice that which this science establishes. You should determine which ones are the required practices from the books of jurisprudence. A complete attempt to practice good deeds should be observed. Prayer is the foundation of religion. Now I am recounting a summary of its excellences and pillars. So listen!

Ablution

The Mujaddid explains how to make ablution properly since ablution is the key to prayer.

First, it is important to perform the ablution completely. It is required that you wash each limb three times completely and perfectly, so that the method of the sunna is observed. While wiping off the head, the entire head should be done. You should take care to wipe the ears and the neck well. While cleansing in between the toes, you should wash by the small finger of the left hand starting from the small toe of the left foot. You should be careful to do it right.

You should not consider taking up *mustahab* deeds insignificant. God likes *mustahab* deeds; practicing *mustahab* pleases Him. If you can learn of one single act that brings God’s satisfaction and love in exchange of the entire world, capture that spoil of war! This exchange can be compared to an exchange in which someone buys some priceless jewels for a few pieces of broken earthenware! Or an exchange in which one loses his spirit for a cheap inanimate thing!

Prayer

The Mujaddid now explains how to perform a proper prayer, which is the fundamental practice of Islam.

After a perfect purification and a complete ablution, you should make the intention for

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the prayer. Prayer is the heavenly ascension or *miraj* for the faithful. You should take care to perform the obligatory prayers only in a congregation so that not even the first glorification or *takbir* with the imam is missed. You should pray in the *mustahab* time. ¹ And you should perform the pious deed of reciting the sunna amount of the [Koranic] Recitation. ²

You should remain motionless when you bow or prostrate, for most narrations consider it obligatory or incumbent. Stand straight while standing so that all the bones return to their own places. It is necessary to become motionless for a few moments right after standing and you should practice that too. It may be obligatory, incumbent or sunna- there is a divergence in opinion here. Likewise, you should stay motionless while sitting between the two prostrations- as while standing.

While bowing or prostrating, you should repeat the glorifications or *tasbih* three times or at most up to seven times or eleven times- there is a divergence of opinion here too. The imam should repeat the glorifications taking

¹The Mujaddid wrote in the Maktubat that the early part of the allotted time period of prayer should be held to be the *mustahab* time except that the *isha*, night prayer, should be delayed in the winter months until one-third of the night has passed. However, many *ulama* also suggest that during the summer months, the *dhuhr* prayer should be delayed a little bit as well.

²It is sunna to recite a long chapter (from the beginning of the Koran until Sura Buruj) in *fajr*, the morning prayer; a medium-length chapter (from Sura Buruj until Sura Bayyinah) for *dhuhr*, the noon prayer, *‘asr* or late-afternoon prayer, and *isha*, the night prayer; and a short chapter (from Sura Bayyinah until the end of the Koran) in *maghrib*, the sunset prayer in the obligatory cycles, rak’ats of the prayer.

into consideration the state of the followers. I am ashamed when an able person praying alone repeats the least number of glorifications; if he can at all, he should repeat it five or seven times.

While prostrating, [the bodily part] that is nearer to the ground should be laid on the ground first. Therefore, lay the two knees on the ground first. Next, lay down the two hands. Next lay down the nose and then the forehead. While laying down the knees and the hands, lay down the right limbs first. While raising the head, the bodily part that is nearer to the sky should be raised first. Therefore, first raise your forehead!

You should “stitch” your gaze on the seat of prostration. While bowing, you should look toward your own feet. While prostrating, look at the tip of the nose. While sitting, you should look toward your two hands or your sides. When instead of being scattered, the gaze will be focused and “stitched” to the above-mentioned points, only then will the prayer be performed with concentration. And a prayer with humility will be realized- which is what has been narrated by the Prophet (salam).

It is sunna to keep the fingers spread out while bowing and to keep them together while prostrating. Those [acts] have been decreed to be pious deeds. Closing and opening the fingers has a purpose. Observing its benefits, the Master of the Sharia [Prophet Muhammad]

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has instituted those practices. I see no benefit equal to following the ‘master of the sharia’ [Prophet Muhammad] (salam).

All these rules have been written in the books of jurisprudence in detail and clearly. My intention behind mentioning them here is so that you long to practice these according to the science of jurisprudence. By the grace of the Prince of the Messengers [Muhammad], may Allah (SWT) grant us the opportunity to rectify our creed in the religion, and you as well! And then to practice wholesome deeds according to the science of the sharia! May the most bountiful salutations and the most perfect peace offerings be on him and all his progeny!

If you long to learn the excellences of prayer and find its perfections, then study the three maktubs ³ dispatched in sequence one after another. The first maktub has been written to my son Muhammad Sadiq. The second maktub is for Mir Muhammad Numan and the third is for Shaykh Taj. [A 1.266, 132.15-134.8; FR 96-99.3]

Now why does the Mujaddid specifically mention prayer (and ablution that is its prerequisite) in this section, among so many other acts of worship? The first reason may be that the five-time- daily obligatory prayer is the fundamental practice of Islam. However, even more important

³maktub 1.260 (written to his son Muhammad Sadiq.), 1.262 (to his caliph or ordained deputy Mir Muhammad Numan) and 1.263 (to his caliph Shaykh Taj)

may be the reason that we must possess piety or *ikhlas* during our prayer if we want God to accept that prayer. Piety is critical for prayer to be accepted; maybe that is why the Mujaddid is bundling these sections together.

Comments: The Purpose of Sufism

The following writing by my sufi shaykh clarifies the purpose of the tariqa according to the Mujaddid. Sufism or tariqa is merely a technology to realize pious intention, as clarified by my shaykh, who explains,

How to attain the pious intention? Intention originates in the heart. Pronouncing the intention is not obligatory. Intention in the heart is what is obligatory. It is obligatory to make a proper intention before performing any act of worship. It is in the hadith that all acts will be judged according to the intention behind them [Bukhari]. The heart is the seat of intention of all acts, be they good or evil. Satan, the sworn enemy of man, makes it his home and whispers evil suggestions to him. As long as Satan can rule over the heart, pious intention cannot grow there. Since Satan has made the human heart his home, it is impure. Intention of the impure heart must be impure. Therefore, in order to purify the heart, Satan must be driven out of there. Only then there can be pious intention behind acts. It is said in the hadith, “Satan sits in the hearts of men. If the heart is engaged in zikr of Allah, then Satan flees it. Instead if the heart is heedless from zikr, then Satan stays there and whispers evil suggestions” [Bukhari].

Satan tries his best to interrupt our prayers. He knows that if our prayer is purely pious, i.e., realizing the good-pleasure of God is the sole objective of that prayer, then he will be unable to defeat the power from Allah that we will gain through that properly performed prayer. It is only when our Prayer, the essence of all devotional acts, is done with a purely pious intention, that then we are able to abstain from all acts that Allah detests. Allah has stated, *Verily prayer restrains from shameful and unjust acts*(Koran 29:45). Allah accepts our prayer only when the devotee purifies his body, clothes, and mind. And his intention being only the satisfaction of Allah, he performs all the pillars of the prayer properly. Allah is Pure. Only the pure may succeed in worshiping Him. Not only the body; the mind of the devotee should be pure as well. Ablution or bathing creates outer purity. And the zikr of Allah that takes place in the heart creates inner purity. Therefore, the heart should always be doing the zikr of Allah spontaneously. And this zikr should be permanent. Whenever the heart is heedless of the zikr of Allah, Satan will rule it. He will then contaminate the heart that is the source of all good acts of man. And by ruining man’s single-minded attention to Allah during prayer, he will destroy it. Prayer is the key to salvation from all evil acts. It says in the hadith: “A prayer is not accepted without a presence of the heart.”⁴ And Allah has

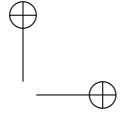
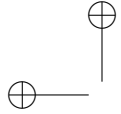
⁴hadith: La salata illa bi-huduril qalb

stated: *And establish prayer in order to do my zikr* (Koran 20:14).

To repel this satanic threat, we must learn *‘ilm al-qalb*, the “knowledge of the heart.” Then our hearts will always be immersed in the never-ending zikr of Allah and thus we can save ourselves from this dangerous predicament. So we should seek the help of an authority on the “knowledge of the heart.” The “real” sufi shaykh is an authority on this knowledge. The purpose behind enrolling in any sufi tariqa is to attain nothing else but *ikhlas* or “purely pious intention,” i.e., a true and godly intention. It is not those perverted aims with which many people throng the khanqas of the sufi shaykhs so often [e.g., to cure diseases, win worldly advancement, etc. through the spiritual powers of the shaykh]. And many people who call themselves sufi shaykhs nurture these aims, which are far from the true aim for which people should come to sufi shaykhs.

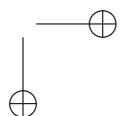
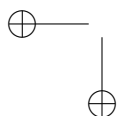
Now we understand why it is necessary to enroll in one of the many tariqas of the sufis. The purpose is to enable us to follow the sharia completely. Unless one enrolls in a sufi tariqa and learns the “knowledge of the heart” from this “educational institution,” one may not be able to realize “purely pious intention.” By this interpretation, sufi tariqas are servants of the sharia.” And this is the purpose of true *tasawwuf*.⁵

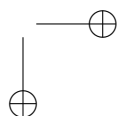
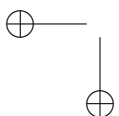
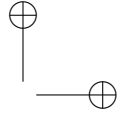
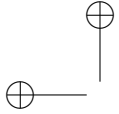
⁵Muhammad Mamunur Rashid, *Patha Parichiti*, originally written in Bengali and also its English translation *The Path* (Dhaka: Hakimabad

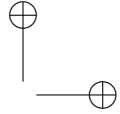
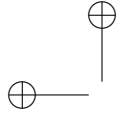


COMMENTS: THE PURPOSE OF SUFISM

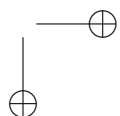
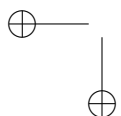
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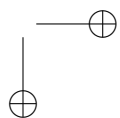
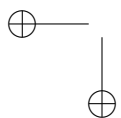
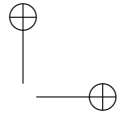
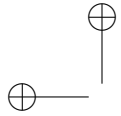






Part IV





CHAPTER 7

Piety: The Purpose of the Tariqa

The Purpose of Sufism

The third necessary component of Islam, after rectifying the creed and beginning to practice the practice, is engaging in the practices of sufism or tariqa, so that we may realize true piety. We realize piety when whatever we do; we do it for Allah — attaining the good pleasure of Allah becomes the purpose (*niyat*) behind all our deeds.

First, we need to attain the two wings of belief and practice. Next, there lies the [task of wayfaring in the] exalted sufi tariqas if divine grace guides us there. The purpose is not that anything additional to belief and practice is attained or something new comes in hand. Instead, the purpose is to strengthen the belief to one of certitude and inner peace, so that the skepticism of the skeptic may not void it, and the objection of the charlatan may not invali-

date it.

*The leg that is “reasoning” is like
a wooden leg [that is unstable]
Those who seek “reasoning” lack
the “stability.”*

Note: This poem in original Persian is as below:

*pa-i istidlal-i chubin ast
va mustadill bi tamkin.*

Here the Mujaddid paraphrases a Rumi poem
(that he also quotes verbatim in maktub
1.92):

*pa-i istidlalyan-i chubin bud
pa-i chubin sakht bi tamkin bud
The leg of those who engage in “reasoning”
is wooden
The wooden leg is entirely unstable*

My sufi shaykh explained that “stability” here refers to attaining *ikhlas* or piety; and that level of piety is realized when one travels on the path of sufi wayfaring and attains the station of the “heart in inner peace,” or *qalb-i salim* [at the completion of the ninth step, ‘annihilation in the messenger’ or *fana’ fi ’l-rasul*, in the Mujaddidi wayfaring or *suluk*]. This saying means that those who seek reasoning lack a heart that is in inner peace.

The Mujaddid continues on the benefits of sufi wayfaring. And its ultimate benefit is the realization of “inner peace.” He says that gimmicks like “seeing unseen lights and colors” i.e., the supernatural experiences like seeing lights and colors that normal people cannot see but sufis endowed with the power of *kashf*, unveiling or ethereal

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vision can see, are not at all the purpose of sufism — these are actually unimportant things.

The Koran says, *Take note! It is in the zikr of Allah that the heart finds inner peace* (Koran 13:28). The practice also becomes easy and spontaneous. Laziness and rebelliousness that originates from the instigating [soul] is eliminated.

It is not the purpose of the sufi wayfarer to witness unseen forms and shapes or to behold lights and colors. For these are games and joys!

What is the purpose of learning sufism? Is it to attain supernatural experiences like seeing forms, shapes, lights, and colors that are ordinarily invisible? Some sufis erroneously believe that having such supernatural experiences is the purpose of sufism. The Mujaddid ridicules them and wonders, if seeing shapes and lights is what they want then why are they not satisfied with seeing shapes and lights that are ordinarily visible. Instead why are they doing arduous sufi practices in order to see lights and colors that are ordinarily invisible.

What wrong do the “sensory” forms and lights do? So that someone would forgo them, and undertake self-mortifications and difficult practices (*bar yadat va mujahadat*), in the hope of seeing the unseen forms and lights?

Yes! These misguided sufis argue that seeing those unseen lights may be beneficial because they prove that supernatural things, e.g., God, angels, paradise, hell, do exist. However, the Mujaddidi counters them by not-

ing that even the existence of ordinarily visible lights and colors prove that a Creator exists who has created them.

Indeed these forms [that can be seen by everyone] and those forms [that can only be seen by those enlightened sufis] and these lights and those lights- all are the creation of the Haqq (SWT) and signifiers of His existence. [A 1.266, 134.8-16; FR 99.4-100.4]

Therefore, seeing supernatural things cannot be a valid purpose of sufism.

Naqshbandi tariqa Clings to the Sunna

The Mujaddidi-Naqshbandi tariqa is the most excellent tariqa, as it strictly conforms to the sunna.

Of all the sufi tariqas, choosing the Naqshbandi tariqa is the best and most advisable as their great masters cling to the sunna and cast off all deviations (*bid'at*). For this reason, if the felicity of following the sunna enriches them but they do not gain any “[sufi ethereal/physical symptom or] state,” still they are happy.

On the other hand, if [such] a state contributes to the slackening of the following [of the sunna] they do not like those states. For this reason, they do not permit singing and dancing [that are the accepted practices of many other tariqas]. And they do not consider the states that result from those [practices such as singing and dancing] as credible, [i.e., divinely inspired]. Instead, they even consider loud zikr

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as a deviation [i.e., a bad deviation or bad *bid'at*] and they prohibit it. And they do not turn toward the fruits [i.e., states] that those practices produce. [A 1.266, 134.16-135.1; FR 100.4-12]

Loud Zikr

Now the Mujaddid explains this important point of loud zikr.

Once we were present in his [Khwaja Baqibillah's] service, in a gathering for meal. A devotee of our Hazrat Khwaja named Shaykh Kamal pronounced the name “Allah” aloud at the start of the meal. Hazrat [Baqibillah] was displeased to such an extent that he rebuked him [shaykh Kamal] strongly and told us to forbid him [shaykh Kamal] from coming to his meal gatherings. I have heard from Hazrat [Baqibillah] that once Hazrat Khwaja Naqshband gathered the ulama of Bukhara together and took them to the *khanqa* [or sufi cloister or center] of Hazrat Amir Kulal to forbid him from loud zikr. The ulama told Hazrat Amir Kulal, “Loud zikr is a deviation. Do not practice it!” In answer, he stated, “[All right!] I will not practice it [anymore]!”. [A 1.266, 135.1-6; FR 100.4-12]

A fundamental rule of the Mujaddidi-Naqshbandi tariqa is that all zikr should be done in silence. Allah stated, *Do zikr of your Lord within yourself* (Koran 7:205). But can a Mujaddidi-Naqshbandi practice loud zikr at all, or even once in a while? The answer is a resounding “No!”

The Mujaddid strongly forbids them to practice loud zikr. He stresses that in addition of this practice being in violation of the sharia, it is also in violation of the tariqa. Now what if someone claims that some of the predecessor masters of the Naqshbandi tariqa used to practice loud zikr? So why can we not? Yes! It is true that these masters in the Naqshbandi line, Hazrat Abu Yusuf Hamadani, Khwaja Mahmud Injir Fagnawi, Khwaja Aziz Ali Ramitani, and Khwaja Sayyid Amir Kulal zRG used to practice loud zikr. However, they are not at all members of the Naqshbandi tariqa- that tariqa did not even exist at that time. The Naqshbandi tariqa starts with Hazrat Bahauddin Naqshband, our first imam and he has forbidden it. More importantly, our second imam, the Great Mujaddid Ahmad Sirhindi also forbade it in many different places in his writings. Yes! It is established beyond doubt that these practices such as loud zikr, singing, and dancing violate the fundamental rules of this “most high tariqa”. Now there may be other interpretations of the sharia or the hadith literature that approve those practices. However, the followers of this exalted Mujaddidi-Naqshbandi tariqa should still abstain from these practices so as to abide by the rules established the two imams of this tariqa.

What is the history of loud zikr among the *khwajegan* masters and their predecessors who are in our silsila and who preceded the formation of the Naqshbandi tariqa? Hazrat Bayazid Bistami Khwaja Abu Yusuf Hamadani’s method was loud zikr. But it was Hazrat Khidr who taught Khwaja Abdul Khaliq Ghujdawani first and it was by the method of “silent zikr.” When Khwaja Ghujdawani became the disciple of Khwaja Hamadani, Khwaja Hamadani told him, “Do zikr as Hazrat Khidr (salam) taught you.” Khwaja Ghujdawani’s successor Khwaja Arif Riwagiri

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also followed his master. But it was his successor Khwaja Mahmud Injir Fagnawi who first introduced loud zikr in that lineage of Hazrat Ghujdawani. And Khwaja Fagnawi’s successor Khwaja Azizan Ali Ramitani also practiced loud zikr. And so did Hazrat Amir Kulal, until Hazrat Bahauddin Naqshband and the ulama of Bukhara forbade him to do so, as it is a blameworthy deviation.

The sharia proscribes loud zikr and so this practice invited many critiques. In a council of the ulama, the Sun of the Imams, Hazrat Halwani, asked him, “Why do you practice loud zikr?” Hazrat Fagnawi answered,

I do loud zikr to awaken those asleep, to inform the heedless, to hold fast to the sharia and the tariqa, to bring people to this path and to make them desire God-realization (*haqiqat*).

Once he was asked,

Who can do loud zikr?” So he answered, “He whose tongue is free from lying and backbiting, whose esophagus is free from haram and suspicious food, whose heart is pure from vanity and hypocrisy, and whose head has not been lowered to anyone except Allah, it is he who can do loud zikr.¹

Now can this be construed to mean that loud zikr may be re-introduced today for the Naqshbandis? No! Because the above statement makes it clear that loud zikr was practiced as an exceptional measure and it was allowed only for an exceptional person, even for them- masters in

¹*Halat-i Mashaikh-i Naqshbandiya Mujaddidiya*, I referred to the Bengali translation, Maolana Mohammad Hasan Naksbandi Mujaddedi, *Halate Mashayekhe Naksbandiya Mujaddediya*, (Dhaka: Barakatiya Darul Ulum, 1997), v. I, p. 178, pp. 192-193; p. 196

our silsila who preceded the formation of the Naqshbandi tariqa. However, when our first imam Hazrat Bahauddin Naqshban formalized this tariqa, he absolutely forbade loud zikr as a rule of this tariqa. And our second imam sustained this ban. So the present day Naqshbandis may not even quote them to legitimize loud zikr.

Indeed, this ban on public display includes all supererogatory practices. As a general rule, my sufi shaykh has taught me to perform all supererogatory prayers at home instead of in mosques. He even taught us to hide our prayer beads from public eyes. And he taught us that if in a mosque or in public we do our tariqa’s silent zikr with prayer beads, we should hide those prayer beads. For example, I often used to close my eyes and meditate in public but the shaykh told me that I should not do that in public because then people would wonder what I am doing; it would make our acts of worship public. The only time that we, the adepts of the Mujaddidi tariqa, may close our eyes and meditate in public is in our sitting meditations (*muraqabas*) that are done after the dawn (*fajr*) and sunset (*maghrib*) prayers.

Following the rules of the tariqa, I always hide my prayer beads while doing zikr in public, on buses or mass transport in the United States and someone once suggested that I should not hide my prayer beads because showing them may help delivering the message, i.e., if people ask what I am doing, I could explain it and that would be another way to spread Islam and the tariqa. When I asked him, my shaykh overruled it and said that the rule of this tariqa is that all acts of worship should be *khafi* i.e., not only silent but also hidden from the public. Therefore, it is a rule of the tariqa to hide all our supererogatory practices- they should not only be silent but also hidden from the public. And the tariqa-rules must be

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meticulously observed to receive the *faydh* and *baraka* from the tariqa.

Songs, Dances, Ecstasies, Raptures

If you practice sufi songs and dances, you may still experience strong hal or states but those states produced by these non-sharia practices are evil. In another mak-tub, the Mujaddid compares the relative merits of prayer versus singing and dancing according to the sharia. He concludes that hal produced by prayer is superior to the hal produced by singing and dancing in the same way that prayer is a more meritorious act than singing and dancing.

When the great ones of this tariqa have forbidden even loud zikr so strongly, what can one say about songs, dances, ecstasies, and raptures (*wajd va tawajid*)! I consider the states and raptures (*mawajid*) that emerge by non-permissible means as a kind *istidraj* [practice] that leads step by step to ruin. States and longings (*ahwal va adhwaq*) come in the hands even for the people of *istidraj* or people who practice occult that lead them step-by-step to ruin. They see the unveilings of tawhid (*kashf-i tawhid*). And they see [God] unveiled in the mirror that is the forms of the world and they also identify Him with those forms.

Yes! *Tawhid* is unveiled before these misguided people as well- it is experienced by many mystics of many other religions. Let us read the following example from the

Hindu scriptures. In the Chandogya Upanishad ² Svetaketu asks his father the Rishi (sage) Aruni, “How shall I see the immortal divine Being?” Aruni threw some salt into a container of water and asked Svetaketu, “Son! Can you tell where the salt went? You will not see any salt anywhere. Instead taste the water! Then you will experience the presence of salt in every drop of that water. In the same way, Truth [i.e., God] is everywhere. You cannot see Him in the creation, but you can experience Him there through meditation. That is why, son, I say ‘Thou art Him.’”

So the Mujaddid says that realizing *tawhid* (i.e., that God and the creation, all are the same) is not the purpose of God-realization- instead it is the spontaneous observance of the sharia that is the destination.

The sages of Greece and the yogis and the Brahmins of India are also among these people [who practiced occult] that led them step-by-step to ruin. The sign that the states are real [i.e., of divine origin] is that those [states] conform to the science of the sharia and keep people away from taking up forbidden and questionable practices. [A 1.266, 135.6-10]

Yes! That is the real purpose of a spiritual quest according to the Mujaddid. It is to purify the inner realm so that man spontaneously observes the sharia. So if the practices of any “God-realized master” do not accomplish it, then that establishes that that practice is not of divine origin.

The Mujaddid writes more on the same theme elsewhere in the *Maktubat*.

²an ancient Hindu scripture that is the source of Vedanta monist tradition

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It is because the Brahmins and yogis of India and the philosophers of Greece have had plenty of the likes of these self-disclosures in [physical] form, imaginal unveilings, and monist ideas (*tajalli-i suri, mukashafat-i mithali, ‘ulum-i tawhidi*); but they have received nothing but negativity and dishonor (*raswa‘i*) as a result and nothing but remoteness (*bu‘d*) and disappointment (*haramani*) in their lot. [A 1.237, 37.15-17]

Singing and dancing do violate the sharia. The Mujahid now cites from the Koran, hadith, and opinion of the Salaf, the pious predecessors.

You should know that singings and dancing are really parts of “games and joys.” Allah has stated, *Among people, whosoever buys a game of words* (Koran 31:6), and this verse has been revealed to forbid singing. Mujahid, who was the student of Ibn Abbas, and a pre-eminent follower, has said that the “*game of words*” means “singing” here. It is written in the Koranic exegesis *Madarik*³ that “*game of words*” means “tales told at a night party” and singing. [These two great scholars among the companions], Ibn Abbas and Ibn Masud,⁴ both swear, “Verily it is singing.” Mujahid⁵ has interpreted the Koranic phrase *who does not witness falsehood* (Koran 35:72) as referring to singing.

³Abdullah ibn Ahmad Nasafi, *Madarik al-Tanzil wa Haqa’iq al-Tawil*

⁴Ibn Abbas and Ibn Masud were companions and great scholars and Koranic commentators

⁵Mujahid: An early Koranic commentator of the generation after the companions

Imam of Guidance Abu Mansur Maturidi ⁶ says, “Whosoever praises a qari [reciter of the Koran] of our times by saying ‘You recited well!’ - [that means that he approves of that qari’s ‘singing’ the verses of the Koran and that is haram since singing in all forms is haram and so, since he approves a haram act] he becomes an apostate, his wife gets an [automatic] divorce⁷ [as he would have become an apostate] and Allah makes all his good deeds come to naught [as he would have become an apostate].” [A 1.266, 135.10-16]

Imam Maturidi’s argument seems to be this: The qari of his time used to recite the Koran in a melodious-like singing. And singing is haram, even if someone sings the verses of the Koran. So if someone approved that qari’s “singing” the verses of the Koran and that is haram, then he would be approving a haram act. And since he approved a haram act, he would leave the folds of Islam. According to the sharia, if a Muslim leaves the fold of Islam, his marriage becomes null and void, i.e., wife gets an automatic divorce. Also, all his good deeds are erased from the records.

Abu Nasiruddin Dubusi narrates the following from Qadi Zahiruddin Khwarizmi. ⁸ He

⁶Abu Mansur Maturidi was the founder of one of the two major schools of kalam (apologetics or defensive dogmatic theology); it is the dominant school in Transoxiana (Uzbekistan, Tajikistan region) and India. Abul Hasan Ashari founded the other school that is dominant in the rest of the world. The Mujaddid followed the Maturidite school, on whose excellence he writes in his monograph the Mabda’ va Ma’ad, Minha i.e., chapter 28

⁷According to the sharia, if a Muslim leaves the fold of Islam, his marriage becomes null and void, i.e., the wife is automatically divorced. Also, all his good deeds are erased from the records

⁸Abu Nasiruddin Dubusi and Qadi Zahiruddin Khawarizmi were Islamic

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said, “He who listens to a singer or someone else singing a song or he who sees a forbidden act and likes it, he would immediately become an apostate in our opinion. It does not matter whether he believes in it [i.e., believes that that forbidden act is permissible] as a matter of creed or not. ⁹ [By “merely liking” that forbidden act] he invalidates a ruling of the sharia. And he who invalidates a ruling of the sharia no longer remains a faithful [Muslim] before the four interpreter Imams. ¹⁰ Allah will not accept any of his good deeds. All his good deeds will come to naught.” May Allah save us from this!

The jurists have narrated so many prohibitions on singing that there are just too many to number. Even then if someone quotes abrogated hadith reports or rarely transmitted narrations to establish that singing is allowable, then you should not even consider it. For no jurist in any time or place has ever made a juridical pronouncement that singing is allowed or that dancing or footwork is permissible—the Great Imam Diyaud-din Shami ¹¹ wrote thus in his book the *Multaqat*.

scholars

⁹According to the sharia, one who believes a haram act to be halal leaves the folds of Islam. However, if he does carry out that act believing it to be haram, he becomes guilty of that sin but he still remains a Muslim

¹⁰Interpreter Imam (mujtahid imam): This refers to the imams who founded the four schools of interpretation, i.e., Abu Hanifa, Shafi’i, Malik, and Ahmad ibn Hanbal

¹¹Diya’ al-din Shami was a great scholar, and qadi of Delhi. He was a contemporary of sufi shaykh Nizamuddin Chishti (d. 725 / 1325). His book *Nisab al-Ihtisab* is held in high esteem (Fazlur Rahman, p. 102)

Now the Mujaddid answers the question, “But many eminent sufis of the past used to practice these deviant practices. So why should they not be lawful?” The Mujaddid explains that the practices of the sufis are not evidence for lawfulness; instead, it is the opinions of the jurists and the scholars of the *fiqh* or the law of the sharia, that establish something to be lawful.

Practices of the sufis are not proofs of lawfulness or unlawfulness. Is it not enough that we consider them [those sufis] excusable, do not blame them, and leave their matter to God? Here the opinion of [jurists like] Imam Abu Hanifa, Imam Abu Yusuf, or Imam Muhammad ¹² is relevant, not the practice of [sufis like] Abu Bakr Shibli or Abul Hasan Nuri. ¹³

This time the Mujaddid answers the question, “The masters of many tariqas used to practice these “deviant” practices. So why can we not?” The Mujaddid answers that those master’s practices should not be a pretext because they practiced them only when “overwhelmed” by their “states.” So today’s sufis, who do not attain those sublime “states” and are not at all overwhelmed by those “states,” may not use their predecessor’s practices as excuses.

The immature sufis of this age have brought singing and dancing into their religion and community under the pretext that their own pirs practiced them. Even more, they have made them into pious deeds and acts of wor-

¹²Imam Abu Hanifa was the founder of the Hanafi school of jurisprudence, and Imam Abu Yusuf and Imam Muhammad were two of his greatest disciples

¹³Abu Bakr Shibli and Abul Hasan Nuri were eminent sufi masters

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ship. *They are the ones who take their religion as games and joys* (Koran 25:72), refers to those who are present in gatherings of singing.

The Mujaddid finds it horrible to glorify singing and dancing.

We learn from the preceding narrations that whosoever considers an unlawful act to be right leaves the fold of Islam and becomes an apostate; now you can imagine how horrible is it to glorify the gathering of singing and dancing, let alone to consider them pious deeds or acts of worship! Praise and glory be on Allah! Our pirs [i.e the great shaykhs of the Naqshbandi tariqa] are free from these [deviant practices]! And they have not guided us, their followers, into doing *taqlid* of them [i.e. following them] into these [deviant practices] either [with them being our role models!]. [A 1.266, 135.16-136.15; FR 101-102.15]

It may be noted here that while jurists hold singing to be haram, hadith scholars often approve of it. Even Hazrat Abdul Haq Muhaddith Dihlavi, the eminent hadith scholar and disciple of the Mujaddid, approves of songs in his book the Path of Prophethood or *Madarij-i Nubuwwat*, which is a biography on the life of Prophet Muhammad (salam.). It is possible that this book was written before he became a disciple of the Mujaddid. In any case, he has the right to differ from the Mujaddid as he was a great hadith scholar himself. However, what is certain is that songs are forbidden as practices of this tariqa, even if one could find an acceptable reason for singing in the sharia.

Now disciples in tariqas other than the Naqshbandi (e.g. Chishti, Shadhili, etc.) may ask, “Many of our predecessor shaykhs used to practice singing, dancing, etc. so why can we not?” The Mujaddid explains it in another maktub,¹⁴ by explaining that those shaykhs engaged in those anti-sharia practices only when predominated by their “states.” Since they cannot control themselves in that state, they are excused. However, their followers who practice those anti-sharia practices are not in that state and so they are not excused- even they should not engage in those practices. However, in the case of the Mujaddidi-Naqshbandi tariqa, even that suspicion is not available as none of its predecessor shaykhs used to indulge in these deviant practices.

Singing: Advice to his Pir’s Sons

In addition to the practices of loud zikr, singing and dancing violate the fundamental method of the Mujaddidi-Naqshbandi tariqa. They are blameworthy deviations from the practices of the tariqa.

I have heard that you two, the two sons of my venerable master, have taken a fancy toward singing. And you set up gatherings Thursday nights¹⁵ for singing songs and reciting qasidas. Most of our sufi brothers are agreeing to this practice! [A 1.266, 136.15-17]

The Mujaddid so strongly forbade them because these naats and qasidas (types of poems) were being indeed recited with musical instruments—i have learned it from

¹⁴maktub 1.291, Volume III, Bengali text p. 189

¹⁵In the Muslim tradition, the day starts with sunset and continues until the next sunset. First comes Friday night, then comes the Friday day. So the Muslim Friday night is the Western Thursday night

my living tradition, from my shaykh who learnt it from another shaykh ¹⁶ who in turn learned this from his sil-sila. Sunni ulama usually approve singing songs and reciting qasidas without musical instruments, especially in a mawlud. However, my shaykh added that the main person in the gathering (usually the shaykh), should not participate in singing—then the sunna will be observed because the prophet did not practice singing.

Mawluds

While previously, the Mujaddid forbade singing as it violated the sharia, now he is forbidding it as a violation of the Naqshbandi tariqa. He argues that it would be introducing a new alien practice in this tariqa and that is as bad as introducing such practices in the sharia.

Did the Mujaddid forbid all mawluds? No! It should be noted Mujaddid is not condemning all mawlud celebrations, instead only those celebrations where singing with musical instruments takes place, as it violates the sharia, and those where singing songs are performed as practices of this tariqa, as that violates the Naqshbandi tariqa. The ulama have generally approved singing naats and qasidas when sung with voice only and without musical instruments. Elsewhere in the *Maktubat*, the Mujaddid discusses more on what types of mawluds are permitted and what types are not. There, he responds to a question posed by a disciple,

In the matter of recitation of the Mawlud, you
have asked, “Regarding reciting the Koran with

¹⁶I learned it from my shaykh Muhammad Mamunur Rashid in his Khanqa in Dhaka in a private conversation in 1998. He in turn learned it from Shah Muti Aftabi, the translator of the Bengali *Maktubat*, in a private meeting in Sabhar, Dhaka in the 1980s

a melodious voice and reciting qasidas in praise and eulogy of the prophet (*qasa'id-i na'at va manqabat*), what stricture is there?”

In answer, the Mujaddid describes the practices that are forbidden in mawlud.

What is forbidden is the mispronunciation and changing of the sounds of the Koran. Also forbidden is the addition [to the recitation, the practice] of taking into account the musical modes. And [also disallowed is the recitation that is] outside of the way of a normal voice (*tardid-i sawt*) but instead the way of singing sweetly; And [also forbidden is hand clapping- practices like this are not allowed even in poetry- [recitation].

Now the Mujaddid discusses the strictures that regulate the proper forms of the mawlud.

If you recite in such a way that no phonetic corruption in the proper [method of pronunciation] of the Koran takes place; and when the qasidas are recited, the above-mentioned prohibitions are not broken and additionally [they are recited] with the right intention [i.e., to become closer to God, instead of having fun] then they may be permitted.

Then the Mujaddid voices his apprehension that if mawluds are celebrated at all, they would ultimately lead to deviations.

Sir! The idea comes to my mind that until this door is completely closed, idiots [who practice deviant forms of mawlid] will not be

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stopped. If you permit a little of it, that will lead to more of it [being practiced]. A little will increase to a lot! It is a well-known saying. [A 3.72, 157.8-14]

Now remember that the Mujaddid approves of mawluds when done in the sunna format. He now only voices his apprehensions that even proper forms of mawluds will degenerate into deviant forms of mawluds.

Inventing New Practices in the tariqa

The Mujaddid cautions his sufi brothers against inventing new practices in the Naqshandi tariqa. He says,

Surprise! A thousand surprises! The disciples of the other silsilas take these things up on the pretext that it is the practice of their own pirs. And they ward off the reverence for the sharia by the practice of their own pirs although even that is not really true. What excuse would our sufi brothers¹⁷ give for taking up this practice? On one hand, it destroys the reverence for the sharia! On the other hand, it is contrary to their pir’s practice! Neither the people of the sharia are pleased with this practice, nor are the people of the tariqa!

The Mujaddid has always held the opinion that inventing deviations (*bid’at*) in the tariqa is just as sinful an act as introducing deviations in the sharia. That is why he denounces introducing singing and dancing in this tariqa which is inventing new practices in the tariqa.

¹⁷sufi brother (yar): Literally yar means friend. But here, as well as in other places, the Mujaddid seems to mean his brothers in the tariqa, i.e., other students of Khwaja Baqibillah

Even if it were not violating the sharia, it would be inventing (*ihdath*) a new practice into the tariqa and that alone is abominable! So how can it be that that gathering [of singing with musical instruments that you are holding is] acceptable to the sharia?

Therefore, the Mujaddid forbids these new inventions in the tariqa.

I firmly believe that the esteemed Mirza Jiu¹⁸ is not pleased with this practice. He is not openly forbidding it only for the sake of *adab*, courtesy. It is also for that reason that he is not forbidding the sufi brothers from going to these gatherings. I do not anticipate going there [to your khanqa in Delhi] soon. So I have collected my thoughts and written a few lines. You should take this lesson [that is in this maktub] in the company of Mirza Jiu and read this letter in front of him from beginning to end. [A 1.266, 136.17-end-of-maktub]

What does the Mujaddid mean by the term “pir” here? What does he mean when he claims that none of our predecessor pirs used to engage in singing [with musical instruments] or dancing? “Pir” is a Persian word that literally means “elder”; however, in its technical meaning, it is synonymous with the Arabic “shaykh” or another Persian word, *bozorg*. In Iran and the Indian subcontinent, “pir” also means “guide in the tariqa”- it is a synonym for the Arabic “shaykh” in this technical sense, as well as literally. In this maktub, the Mujaddid is referring to his predecessor shaykhs in the Naqshbandi tariqa.

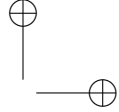
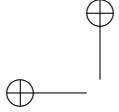
¹⁸another name for Khwaja Husamuddin Ahmed

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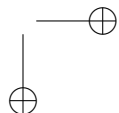
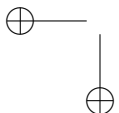
Here, one may comment that many shaykhs who are listed in the ‘lineage tree’ or the *shajara* of this tariqa like Hazrat Sayyid Amir Kulal and several of his predecessors used to practice loud zikr. (However, this *mak-tub* shows that Hazrat Bahauddin persuaded Hazrat Amir Kulal to give up loud zikr.) So why does the Mujaddid make the “false claim” that our pirs did not practice these? Did the Mujaddid not know the history of his tariqa? The answer is that although these elders are listed in the *shajara* or the lineage tree of the tariqa, still they are not members in the Naqshbandi tariqa “technically.” This is because the tariqa starts with the founder, the Imam who formalizes the rules of the tariqa and who is a primary source of the energy and blessings, *faydh va baraka*, of that tariqa. Our tariqa, the Mujaddidi-Naqshbandi tariqa, like several other tariqas, has two Imams: the first Imam is Bahauddin Naqshband and the second Imam is the Great Mujaddid Ahmad Sirhindi. So technically, the elders who are in our silsila but are before Hazrat Bahauddin Naqshband are not elders of our tariqa and so the Mujaddid does not even consider their practices as models of our practices. They are not at all our role models in defining the rules of the tariqa. It is the two Imams who make these rules.

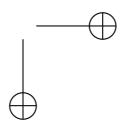
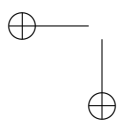
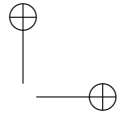
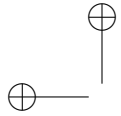
The term *silsila* literally means chain and it has two technical meanings in the sufi science. First, it means the *shajara* or the lineage tree, i.e., the list of consecutive masters in the tariqa- that cannot be the meaning here as some early masters in this *shajara* of this tariqa, prior to the formation of the tariqa by Hazrat Bahauddin Naqshband, indeed practiced loud zikr. So here, this term can only have its second meaning, whereby it is synonymous to tariqa- a formalized system of teaching “knowledge of the heart.” Here it refers to this Mujaddidi-Naqshbandi

tariqa that was originally instituted by its first Imam Hazrat Bahauddin Naqshband and later renewed, re-invigorated and expanded by its second Imam Hazrat the Great Mujaddid Ahmad Sirhindi.



Part V





CHAPTER 8

Rules of the Tariqa

What to do when one seeks to follow the sufi path and reach God? One may learn from the personal experience of the Mujaddid. He writes in his monograph *Mabda' va Ma'ad* about how he started his own sufi journey.

When I experienced the desire for this path, divine grace (*ilahi*) (SWT) took me to a caliph of the family of the *khawaja* hazrats (qaf). It is from there that I attained the tariqa of these masters and I clung to his companionship. [Mabda' 1, 3.1-4]

Yes! In order to attain Allah, one must attain the companionship of an authorized deputy or *khalifa* of any of the sufi tariqas and learn from him.

From which sufi tariqa should one learn? There are many tariqas and each one of them has their unique method for God-realization. However, as the Mujaddid says,

Know that the tariqa which is the nearest, fore-

most, most appropriate, strongest, most reliable, wisest, truest, most just, highest, greatest, most elevated, and most perfect (*aqrab, asbaq, awfaq, awthaq, aslam, ahkam, asdaq, adall, a'la, ajall, arfa', akmal*) is the most distinguished Naqshbandi tariqa. May Allah (SWT) sanctify the spirits of its family-members and the secrets of its adherents! [A 1.290, 90.7-9]

Why? The Mujaddid also explains the reason that has carried this tariqa to such greatness. It is because this tariqa strictly follows the sunna.

All the greatness of this tariqa and the high status of these masters result because this tariqa firmly follows the shining sunna (salam) and stays away from displeasing deviations. They are those for whom the end has been inserted in the beginning, as[it happened] for the honored companions (dwad)! [A 1.290,190]

What is the first zikr of the Naqshbandi tariqa? That is the zikr of the name of the person (*ism-i dhat*) i.e., “Allah... Allah... Allah...” And that is the first zikr that the Mujaddid learned from his guide Hazrat Baqibillah. The Mujaddid writes,

Brother! May Allah show you the straight path! When by the divine grace, I experienced a raving madness for this [sufi] path, he guided me to our shaykh, our Mawla, our Imam shaykh Muhammad al-Baqi who was a celebrated caliph of the family of the great Naqshbandi hazrats. He was the asylum of the friends [of Allah], one who is aware of the reality, (*walayat panah*,

haqiqat-i agah), guide to the tariqa where the end has been inserted in the beginning and which connects one to the path towards the degrees of friendship [of Allah], the supporter [of the religion that leads one to] the good-pleasure of God (*hadi-i tariq-i indiraj-i nihayat fi'l bidayat wa ila al-sabil al-mawsil ila darajat al-walayyat, mu'ayyid al-ridan*) [A 1.290,190]

Yes! That is the initial zikr of this tariqa. It is “Allah. . . Allah. . . Allah.” It is not Haqq, Hayy, Qayyum or any other name.

Now what is the proper method of zikr in this Mujaddidi-Naqshbandi tariqa? We know one thing for sure that the zikr of the Mujaddidi tariqa is always silent. We need to know it so that we can easily detect if some shaykh is following a deviant practice or the unadulterated Mujaddidi-Naqshbandi practice. The Mujaddid explains how to do the zikr:

Praise be to Allah who is the Lord of the worlds!
Salutation and peace be upon the Prince of the Prophets, his progeny and his pure companions!

Know and be aware that your felicity (*sa'adat*), instead the felicity of every child of Adam, and success and salvation (*durustagari*) for everyone, lies in the zikr of his object of worship (*ilahi*) (SWT). As much as possible, you should keep yourself “drowned” in the zikr of God all the time; you should not permit yourself even one moment’s heedlessness.

Praise be to the Allah (SWT)! What a divine

grant of good fortune! This perpetual zikr (*dawam-i dhikr*) is realized right in the beginning of the tariqa of the *khwajegan* hazrats. (qaf). [While this perpetual zikr is realized at the “end” of the other tariqas, it is realized in the “beginning” of this Mujaddidi-Naqshbandi tariqa] as “insertion of the end in the beginning.” (*indiraj al-nihayat fi-’l bidayat*), [which is a uniquely distinguishing characteristic of this tariqa].

Therefore, the students should choose this ‘most high tariqa’, as it is the best and the most appropriate. Even more, it is obligatory and incumbent (*wajib va lazim*). So [now] you should turn your focus of attention (*qibla-i tawajjuh*) away from all [the other] directions and instead turn your face totally towards the exalted persons (*janab*) of these masters of the ‘most high tariqa’. And beseech fervently [assistance for God-realization] from the inner realms (*batin*) of these great ones.

Some argue, “Loud zikr also used to be a Naqshbandi practice. Many shaykhs of this tariqa used to practice it in the past. So we are only re-introducing them. So why should it be blamed?” The answer is two-fold. First, is the case in which these masters are in the silsila of our tariqa but before the formation of the tariqa, that we have already discussed. Second, when it was indeed practiced after the formation of our tariqa, the answer is that the practice of the deviant branches of the tariqa should not be our model. Even in the *Maktubat*, Hazrat Mujaddid cautions many Naqshbandis who practiced loud zikr — and states that — they are the deviant branches of the

tariqa unfit to be our role models. This also proves that loud zikr among Naqshbandis was rampant even at that time; it is not a new deviation, rather it is a very old and common deviation among the Naqshbandis. The argument that because others have done it or do, it is acceptable, is known to be false and countless examples can be given to illustrate the faulty logic of this justification. Furthermore, the Mujaddid guarantees that those who participate in deviant practices are in fact blocked from receiving any *faydh* or *baraka* of the tariqa. Neither do they reach any *hal* of the tariqa; any *hal* they may receive is really a deception that leads step-by-step to ruin (*istidraj*).

Some modern-day nontraditional Naqshbandi shaykhs argue, “While silent zikr was appropriate in the past, with the change of time, the rules need to be changed. We feel that loud zikr is appropriate for the current time.” In answer, we may remind ourselves why all these deviant practices, e.g., loud zikr, singing, dancing, and so forth, are forbidden in this tariqa. A fundamental rule of this tariqa is strict (*‘azimat*) adherence to the sunna. Loud zikr is a deviation (*bid‘at*) from the sunna, and that is why it is prohibited, in contrast to the rules of the other tariqas, which do not follow the sunna as “strictly.” As the Mujaddid wrote,

Know! To attain the tariqa of the *khwajegan* hazrats, (qaf), you should believe in the beliefs of the mainstream Sunni community and observe the shining sunna of the Chosen One (on its owner [Prophet Muhammad] be salutations, peace and benediction!). And you should avoid the deviations [to the sunna or *bid‘at*] and the caprices of the [instigating] soul. And you should practice “strictly” (*‘az-*

imat) as much as possible. And you should remain cautious of a relaxed (*rukhsat*) practice. [A 1.290, 95.7-10]

Yes! Loud zikr and singing may be allowed by some ulama as a “relaxed” (*rukhsat*) practice. But the heart of the Mujaddidi-Naqshbandi tariqa is to “strictly” (*‘azimat*) follow the sharia and sunna, and this is why these practices are banned in this tariqa. The Mujaddid explains the message of the Naqshbandi masters again,

Brother! The great ones of the Most High Naqshbandi tariqa (qaf) cling to the shining sunna and choose a “strict” (*‘azimat*) practice [over a relaxed (*rukhsat*) practice]. Along with adhering to [the sunna] and choosing [a strict practice], if they are ennobled by states and raptures (*hal va mawajid*) then they consider it to be a tremendous bliss.

On the other hand, if they realize those states and raptures but find themselves slackening in adhering to [the sunna] and choosing that [strict practice], then they do not like those states and do not want those raptures. Instead, they consider that slackening to be a sign of their own badness. [A 1.237, 37.12-15]

This above section is an especially relevant response to today’s nontraditional Naqshbandi sufi shaykhs who say that these deviant practices are needed to attract people to the tariqa today. Yes! It is true that practices like loud zikr produce stronger *hal* (although only temporarily). And singing may attract people. But true Naqshbandis would not like that *hal* and attraction produced by those

deviant practices; instead they would consider that slackening of the sunna to be a sign of their own weakness.

The Mujaddid again wrote on the importance of avoiding a “relaxed” practice of the sharia in this tariqa.

Therefore, as a choice, the tariqa that would be the most appropriate and best suited is the one which requires you to observe the sunna and which conforms to the injunctions of the sharia. That tariqa is the tariqa of the Naqshbandi masters. These great ones have included the sunna and left out deviations from this tariqa. As much as possible, they do not permit a “relaxed” (*rukhsat*) practice even when that appears to benefit the inner realm. On the other hand, they maintain a strict (*‘azimat*) practice even when that appears to harm that inner realm. [A 1.243, 43.12-16]

Yes! Loud zikr indeed produces a stronger hal and so it appears to benefit the inner realm. And so many tariqas do permit this. However, even so, the Naqshbandi masters prohibit those deviant practices.

Still another maktub forbids loud zikr and all its deviations as being in violation of a core value of this tariqa, which is to observe the sunna. This maktub was written to Khwaja Muhammad Qasim, the son of Khwajegi Amkangi. And Khwaja Amkangi was the pir of Khwaja Baqibillah . It shows that these deviations have been creeping into this tariqa from a long time.

You may know that the Naqshbandi tariqa has attained superiority and has been elevated to a high rank because this tariqa firmly follows the sunna and meticulously avoids all deviations. It is for this reason, the great ones

of this Most High tariqa have avoided loud (*jahr*) zikr and instead directed towards silent (*khafi*) zikr. And they have forbidden songs, dances, ecstasies, and raptures (*sama' va raqs va wajd va tawajud*) that did not exist in the time of that Great Leader [Prophet Muhammad] (salam) or in the times of the well-instructed caliphs (dwad) Seclusion and forty-day retreats (*arba'in*) were not practiced in the time of the Great Master, instead they have chosen seclusion within congregation (*khalwat dar anjuman*).

Consequently, commitment [to the sunna] has yielded great results and avoidance [of deviations] has given them abundant rewards. It is for this reason that the end of other [tariqas] has been inserted in the beginning for these masters and their transmission (*nisbat*) is higher than all other transmissions. Their message is the medicine for the heart!

And their blessed gaze (*nazar-i shan*) is medicine for illness of the diseases of mental worri-ness (*'ilal-i ma'nuya*). And the face-turning of their noble presence (*tawajjuh-i wajih*) saves the seekers from the captivation of the two worlds [of creation, this world and the last world.]. Their power to elevate [others on the sufi path] (*himmat-i rafi'*) carries the seekers from the perigee of contingentness (*imkan*) to the apogee of Necessaryness (*wujub*).

Naqshbandis are such amazing leaders of the caravan!

*They lead from the hidden path to
the sanctuary of the caravan!*

*The attraction (jadhdhba) that come
from their companionship, from the
heart of the wayfarer!*

*Carries off any whispering of seclu-
sion (khalwat) or thought of chilla
(forty-day retreats or arba'in)*

In these times, that transmission (*nisbat*) has become as rare as the phoenix! And some from this grade [of nontraditional Naqshbandi shaykhs] have not found that great treasure and have been deprived of this rare bliss. They have looked around everywhere for these jewels but of no avail. So finally they have become contented with pieces of broken earthenware, or like children, they have found comfort in walnuts and raisins. Many of them have been confused and perturbed and so they have left the method of their own [tariqa's] past masters. And some times, they try to find peace through loud zikr. Other times, they search for comfort in songs and dances (*sama' va raqs*). Since they have failed to find seclusion in the congregation (*khalwat dar anjuman*), they have instituted forty-day retreats in seclusion (*arba' in-i khalwat*). It is even more surprising that they believe they are completing and perfecting this noble nisbat (transmission) with these newly-invented practices (*bid'at*). And they consider this destruction as renovation. May the Haqq (SWT) give them a sense of justice! And may He put a few of the perfections of the great ones of

this tariqa into the heads of the souls [of these deviant Naqshbandis!] By the letters Nun and Saad [in the Koran]! For Your love for the prophet and his noble progeny (salam)!

At this time, these new practices (*muhdathat*) are being instituted. And even the original tariqa of these great ones has been concealed. And both the commoners and the elite are practicing newly-instituted practices. And they are deviating from the original and ancient tariqa. So the idea came to my mind that I should inform the servants of your sublime court of all these matters ! And by that bring some of the pain in my heart out in the open! I do not know in which group these sufi comrades of your court belong? Which tribe?

I can't sleep [at night] worrying on this

In whose lap am I sleeping happily

My supplication to Allah (SWT) is that He saves you from this catastrophe! And He preserves your noble court from including these false practices!

Sir! Newly-instituted and invented practices (*ihdath va ibda'*) have become so prevalent in this tariqa that if those who are against this tariqa say that this is the tariqa that includes newly-invented practices (*bid'at*) and excludes sunna then they would have a point! [A 1.168, 52.6-53.12]

Yes! Practices like loud zikr, songs, dances, ecstasies and raptures may be allowed by many scholars, how-

ever; these practices do contravene the sunna and are new additions to Islam that emerged after the time of the prophet and the companions. And because the Naqshbandis “strictly” follow the sunna, they forbid these practices while other tariqas who maintain only a “relaxed” practice may still practice them.

Here is another prohibition of loud zikr.

You have also asked, “You [the Mujaddid] forbid loud (*jahr*) zikr as it is a deviation (*bid‘at*). However, it produces a taste and longing for God (*dhawq va shawq*). And you do not forbid other things that were not there in the time of that Great Leader [Prophet Muhammad] (salam), for example the [the outfit called] *fardi*, shawl and shalwar.”

Sir! The acts of that Great Leader (salam) are of two types [the first type is performed as an act] of worship (*‘ibadat*), [and the second type is performed as an act] of custom and habit (*‘urf va ‘ada*).

The acts of worship, if you contravene them, then I consider it a reprehensible deviation (*bid‘at-ha-i mankur*). And I proclaim that they are forbidden. Because “instituting a new practice” (*ihdath*) in religion is exceedingly wicked (*murud*).

On the other hand, if you contravene the acts that are performed as customs and habits, then I do not consider it to be a reprehensible deviation. And I do not proclaim it to be prohibited, as it is not connected to the religion. [A 1.231, 22.2-8]

Yes! With the changed times, Naqshbandi shaykhs can make some changes in the practice. But that does not extend to a fundamental practice like loud zikr. That is forever forbidden for Naqshbandis, even though that practice may be highly effective in producing a “taste” and “longing” for God.

Another prohibition on loud zikr follows,

Know that the tariqa of the *khwajegan* hazrats (*qaf*) is the nearest (*aqrab*) among the tariqas that connects one (*mawsila*) [to God]. And the end (*nihayat*) of others has been inserted in the beginning (*bidayat*) of these masters. And their transmission (*nisbat*) is above (*fawqa*) all other transmissions.

This tariqa has realized all these [excellences] because it clings to the sunna and discards deviations. As much as possible, they do not permit a “relaxed” (*rukhsat*) practice even when it seems to benefit the inner realm (*batin*). And they do not give up a “strict” practice (*‘azimat*), even when they consider it to be harmful to their journey (*sayrat*) [on the sufi path].

They place the “states and raptures” (*ahwal va mawajid*) below the rules of the sharia [in importance]. They consider [sufi experiences like] “longings” and the sufi ideas (*adhwaq va ma‘arif*) to be servants of the science of the sharia. They do not exchange the precious jewels of the sharia for walnuts and raisins as children do, or ecstasies or deep states (*wajd va hal-i ghaus*) [as the deviant ones among

the sufis do]. And they do not become deceived or charmed by false sufi expressions (*tarahat*). They do not leave the *nass* [the Koran and the hadith] to become engaged in the *fass*[the book *Fusus al-Hikam* by Ibn Arabi.]. And they do not revere the *Futuh-at-i Makkiya* [or the *Meccan Revelation* of Ibn Arabi.] more than the *Futuh-at-i Madaniya* [the *Medinan Revelations*, i.e., the hadith].

Their state (*hal*) is permanent (*dawam*) and their time (*waqt*) is perpetual. While the self-disclosure of the person of God (*tajalli-i dhati*) that the others experience is [transient] like the flash of a lightning, what these masters experience is permanent. And these exalted ones do not even take into account that self-disclosure which disappears the next moment after its appearance. Allah has said about them, *They are such men whom trade and business cannot distract from the zikr of Allah.* (Koran 37:24)

However, everyone cannot empathize with the “tastings” (*dhawq*) that these great ones experience. For this reason, many defective ones may deny many of the perfections of this most distinguished Naqshbandi tariqa .

If a defective one blames on this group a defect!

Allah forbid! I will bite my tongue from these complaints!

[A 1.131, 9.4-10.15]

Yes! Many such “defective” nontraditional Naqshbandi shaykhs do make the claim that the traditional Naqshbandi practice of silent zikr is ineffective. This is because those shaykhs are incompetent, not because the practice of this tariqa is ineffective. The Mujaddid continues his sermon,

See! Some of the later caliphs of this most distinguished Naqshbandi tariqa have instituted new practices (*ihdath*) into this tariqa and have lost the true method of these great ones [who preceded them in this Naqshbandi tariqa]. Many of the disciples [of these deviant Naqshbandi shaykhs] hold the belief that they [those deviant nontraditional Naqshbandi shaykhs] are making this tariqa perfect by these newly-instituted practices.

God forbid! Never! It is an exceedingly arrogant claim that they are making! On the contrary, they are ruining and losing it [this Naqshbandi tariqa, by these newly-instituted practices.] [A 1.131, 9.4-10.15]

another writing in which the Mujaddid prohibits loud zikr, because it violates the sharia and the sunna, follows,

The great ones of this most distinguished [Naqshbandi] tariqa make the states and raptures (*hal va mawajid*) subservient to the rules of the sharia. And make the longings and sufi ideas (*adhwaq va ma‘arif*) subservient to the science of the religion. They do not act like children and so they do not exchange the priceless jewels of the sharia with walnuts and raisins [as children do] or ecstasies and states [as the

deviant sufis do] (*wajd va hal*). And they are not deceived or charmed by the false sufi expressions (*tarahat*). They do not accept the states (*ahwal*) that are attained by practices that violate the sharia or contravene the shining sunna. Nor do they even want them. This attitude of theirs has even reached the point that they do not permit singing and dancing (*sama' va raqs*). Neither do they even approach loud zikr. [A 1.221, 7.18-8.2]

Here is still another writing on “strict” practice and deviant practices like loud zikr, singing, and dancing.

Therefore, the “nearest” (*aqrab*) tariqa of all the tariqas is that tariqa in which the opposition to the [instigating] soul is the most. There is no doubt that opposing the [instigating] soul is more in the Most High Naqshbandi tariqa than in the other tariqas. That is why these masters have chosen a “strict” practice and discarded a “relaxed” practice. Everyone knows that a “strict” practice includes discarding both the forbidden [or haram] (*muharram*) and the superfluous (*fudul*).¹ And this is in contrast to a “relaxed” practice that discards only the forbidden things.

If someone says that one may undertake “strict” practices even in the other tariqas, I would answer that most tariqas include singing and dancing (*sama' va raqs*), which may be considered at most “relaxed” practices only through

¹superfluous practices mean those practices that are mubah in the sharia, i.e., a practice that is permitted but has neither any merit in it nor any bad consequence

much deceptive argumentation They [the other tariqas] cannot be called “strict” at all.

What the Mujaddid means by a “strict practice” is a practice that strictly follows the sunna. On the other hand, what the common people mean is a practice that is difficult and hard-to-so. According to the way the Mujaddid defines the term “strict,”- that is, following the sunna strictly ? those deviant tariqas cannot be at all called “strict.”

The Mujaddid reiterates that point here.

Loud zikr is something that is just like that. It cannot be thought of as being anything more than a “relaxed” practice shaykhs of other silsilas [that are not Naqshbandi] have instituted new practices (*umur-i muhdath*) into their own tariqas [and they were only] intending to improve [their own tariqas.] Those [practices are really forbidden or haram according to the sharia and they] may [at most] be ruled “relaxed” [practices and even that] after a lot of rectification (*tashih*), [manipulative reasoning and stretching].

The masters of our most high [Naqshbandi] silsila are their antithesis. They do not permit even the slightest deviation (*mukhalifat*) from the sunna. And they do not support any newly instituted or invented practice (*ibda’ va ihdath*). Consequently, opposition to the [instigating] soul is complete in this tariqa.

Therefore, it is the “nearest” (*aqrab*) tariqa. And it is the best and most appropriate tariqa

for a seeker to choose. Because the path towards their final point is the “nearest” and what they seek (*matlab*) on [their sufi path towards] perfection is high.

Some of their caliphs of the later times has left the fundamental principles (*awda'*) that these masters have laid down and instead they have instituted new practices (*ihdath*) in this tariqa. And they have chosen singing, dancing, and loud zikr (*sama'*, *raqs*, *jahr*).

They imagine that they are perfecting and completing (*takmil va tatmim*) this tariqa with these newly instituted and invented practices (*muhdathat va mubda'at*). They do not know that destroying the “fundamental principles” (*awda'at*) of the tariqa will kill the tariqa. [A 1.286, 52.14-53.7]

Some nontraditional Naqshbandi shaykhs claim that with these newly-invented practices, they are modernizing the tariqa to fit the current place and time. The above text may be a proper response to them.

Prohibitions of deviations like loud zikr, singing with musical instruments, etc. are so critically important that the Mujaddid repeats this point in another maktub sent to Khwaja Husamuddin Ahmad in the khanqa of the sons of Khwaja Baqibillah . There he says that deviations in the tariqa are just as bad as deviations in the sharia. He again stresses the prohibition on loud zikr as well as songs and dances as practices of the tariqa. He even maintains that it is such a grave misdeed, that if the two sons of his teacher Khwaja Baqibillah persist in those anti-tariqa and anti-sharia practices,; he will cut off all

relations with them. Additionally, he forbids loud zikr in many other places as well and not as a temporary prohibition, but instead as a permanent ban, as it violates the very fundamentals of this tariqa, as well as the sharia, as he interprets it. He wrote,

Honored Sir! Instituting new practices (*ih-dath*) in the tariqa, I see as a ‘[blameworthy] deviation’ (*bid‘at*) and no lesser a deviation than inventing new practices in the religion (*din*). The blessings (*barakat*) of the tariqa will pour [onto the seekers via the transmission channel] until new practices are instituted therein. When new practices (*amr-i muhdath*) are instituted in the tariqa, then the channel of energy and blessings is blocked. So it is “the most important of the important matters” (*ahammi-muhim*) that we preserve [the traditions of] this tariqa and it is indispensable to desist from violating its [traditions] (*ijtinab az mukhalafat-i tariqat*).

Therefore, wherever, whomever you may see indulging [in acts that] violate [the traditions of] this tariqa, you should forbid him strongly and strengthen this tariqa. [A 1.267, 76.5-10]

Yes! The Mujaddid guarantees that those deviant nontraditional Naqshbandi shaykhs practicing loud zikr in the name of the Naqshbandi tariqa, along with their disciples, are not receiving any energy transmission or blessings from our tariqa. It is important for us to forbid them strongly and strengthen the Mujaddidi-Naqshbandi tariqa! May Allah help us and grant us success! Amin!

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